

## SAVING JAZZ

KATE McCAFFREY

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YEAR LEVEL: Y8–12

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Jasmine Lovely has it all – the looks, the grades, the friends. But when a house party spins out of control, Jazz discovers what can happen when your mistakes go viral ...

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate McCaffrey grew up in Perth's northern suburbs. She has a degree in English and Art and a diploma in Education. She is the author of award-winning novels for young adults: *Destroying Avalon* (2006), *In Ecstasy* (2008), *Beautiful Monster* (2010), *Crashing Down* (2014) and *Saving Jazz* (2016).

### THEMES

- Social media
- Cyberbullying
- Gender inequality
- Violence against women
- Sexual harassment
- Self-esteem
- Forgiveness
- Family
- Friendship

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y8–12 English

Y8–12 Health and Physical Education (mental health and wellbeing)

Y8–12 Digital Technologies

### USEFUL WEBSITES

Author website

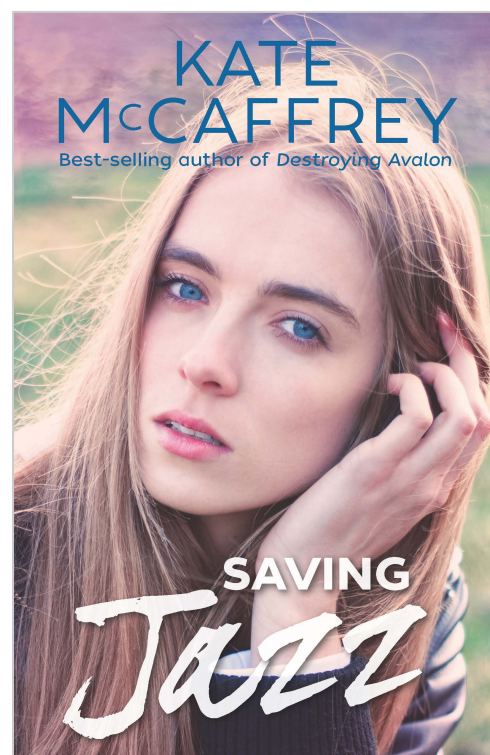
- [katemccaffrey.wordpress.com](http://katemccaffrey.wordpress.com)

Youth mental health and wellbeing

- [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)
- [www.bullyingnoway.gov.au](http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au)
- [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)
- [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au)
- [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
- [www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)
- [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)

Reporting online bullying

- [www.facebook.com/safety](https://www.facebook.com/safety)
- [help.instagram.com/safety](https://help.instagram.com/safety)
- [www.snapchat.com/safety](https://www.snapchat.com/safety)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. What is your first impression of Jasmine? How did you react to her confession that she raped Annie?
2. Why do you think the author has structured the novel as Jazz's blog? What impact does this have on your reading experience?
3. Evaluate Jazz and Jack's discussion about gender inequality on pp. 31–34. What is 'slut-shaming'? Create a definition for the term 'misogyny'. (p. 52) Which characters in the book do you think display this attitude?
4. What do you think Jazz means by the phrase 'social and emotional terrorism'? (p. 94)
5. *If Tommy hadn't recorded what we did, and if the images hadn't gone viral, all we would have had to do was apologise to Annie. I doubt she would ever have forgiven us, and I know we would have wounded her profoundly, but if she hadn't been made the source of such public and extensive ridicule and hate, I believe she would never have tried to end her life.* (p. 227) Do you agree? Why/why not?
6. Would you ever give up Facebook like Jazz? Create a list of the pros and cons of using social media.
7. Would you have agreed to see Tommy again if you were Jazz? (p. 233) Compare and contrast the characters Jazz, Jack and Tommy at the beginning and end of the novel – how has each changed as a result of Greenheadgate? Why do you think each had a different trajectory?
8. *I've fallen back into the social purge – airing one's innermost thoughts and actions online. It's a long way from Facebook, but it's a similar psychology.* (p. 247) Why do you think so many people fall into this 'social purge'? Using a Venn diagram model, compare and contrast blogging and one other form of social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). Read Jazz's ideas on p. 249 to get started.
9. What is sexual harassment? Why do you think it took Jazz so long to realise she was a victim of Earl's?

### Creative writing

1. Rewrite the week that the video of Greenheadgate was leaked from the point of view of either Annie, Jack or Tommy – how would your character feel?
2. Write a letter to Jazz from Jack in prison – what do you think he would want to say?
3. Write a short story of 1000–2000 words inspired by the following quote: *I'm being judged based on my actions of one night. It's like everything I did before that evening has ceased to exist.* (p. 14)
4. *'Yep,' Frank said. 'I'll never perform there again, of course. But when you love something enough, you always pursue it.'* (p. 206) Write a letter to your future self: what things do you love? What do you want to pursue in your life?
5. Write a critical book review of *Saving Jazz* for your school website. In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the novel? To whom would you recommend this book and why?

### Debate topics

In teams of four, debate for/against the validity of the following claims.

1. Video games desensitise people to violence. (Re-read pp. 51–55.)
2. Social media should be banned for under 18s.

### Essay questions/oral presentation topics

1. Analyse the representation of one or more of the following themes in *Saving Jazz*: sexism, regret, forgiveness, technology, trauma or anonymity.
2. Compare and contrast the representations of masculinity and femininity as embodied by two or more characters in *Saving Jazz*.
3. Discuss the role of the narrator in framing narrative structure in *Saving Jazz*.

### Mental health and wellbeing – discussion prompts for students

1. Have you or someone you know ever been bullied? How did this make you feel? Write a 500-word personal reflection for your eyes only.
2. What is the difference between a 'bully' and a 'bystander'?
3. What is 'cyberbullying'? How is it similar/different to 'physical bullying' or 'verbal bullying'?
4. What is your school's bullying policy?
5. What are some actions you can take if you (or someone you know) are being bullied? In groups of four, create a list. Share ideas together as a class.

6. Paper chains activity: have each student randomly select the name of a class member. They should then write a positive note to that student on a strip of paper describing something they admire about them. Connect all the strips to make a class paper chain to read together and display.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

***Saving Jazz confronts difficult themes of violence against women among young people and in society at large. Why did you choose to tell this story?***

I think so many young women fall victim to violence – whether it be physical or mental. Any violent act can have long-term ramifications, particularly on someone young. I want young people to be able to recognise violence when it presents itself in different forms – social, digital, mental.

***Saving Jazz deals with cyberbullying. So did your first novel, Destroying Avalon, which was published ten years ago. What has changed in that time?***

Technology. When I wrote *Destroying Avalon* cyberbullying was just being discovered and delivered through what we now regard as rudimentary devices. It allowed for anonymity and secrecy. Now, with a smart phone in every hand, access to the internet is unlimited, and with the evolution of the selfie has come greater identity exposure and therefore an even greater risk.

***This book looks at some of the darker sides of social media. Do you think social media can also be used as a force for good?***

I love social media. I love technology. It is a part of the world we live in now. It is great to be able to see what friends on the other side of the world are doing. However, with all this access come risks, and sometimes young people aren't aware of the risks from something as seemingly benign as a picture.

***What do you hope readers will take away from Saving Jazz?***

A good read. I hope they will like Jazz – I think she's my favourite, and I hope they take away with them a feeling of empowerment and the knowledge that this life is theirs to control.

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