



# Puberty Blues

By Gabrielle Carey & Kathy Lette

First published in 1979

## Genre and Subject

*Australian fiction*

## Synopsis

For Deb and Sue, life is about surfies, panel vans, straight-leg Levis, nicking off from school, getting wasted and fitting in. But why should guys have all the fun? *Puberty Blues* is raw, humorous and honest: the definitive Australian story of teenagers navigating the chaos of life.

## Author Biography

**Gabrielle Carey** was born in Sydney and was raised in an atheist, humanist household. While in Ireland in the mid 1980s she converted to the Catholic faith, becoming convinced of the importance of spirituality in everyday life. After a year in Ireland she left and for several years lived in a small village in Mexico, returning to Australia in the early 1990s.

Carey has a daughter, Brigid, and a son, Jimmy. She lives in Sydney and is a freelance writer. She currently works as a lecturer in writing at the University of Technology, Sydney.

**Kathy Lette** was born in Sydney's southern suburbs and first attracted attention in 1979 as the co-author of *Puberty Blues*. As an adult, Lette became a newspaper columnist and sitcom writer, but returned to the novel form with *Girls' Night Out* in 1988 and has since written several more novels and plays, including *Foetal Attraction*, *Mad Cows* and *Dead Sexy*.

Lette lives in London and is married to a fellow Australian expatriate, Geoffrey Robertson QC, whom she first met while still married to Kim Williams, when appearing on Robertson's TV panel debate show *Hypotheticals*. They have two children, Julius and Georgina.

## Discussion Starters

- How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
- Describe the main characters, Sue and Deb—personality traits, motivations, inner qualities.
  - Why do characters do what they do?
  - Are their actions justified?
  - Describe the dynamics between characters
  - How has the past shaped their lives?
  - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
  - Do they remind you of people you know?
- Do the main characters change by the end of the book? Do they grow or mature? Do they learn something about themselves and how the world works?
- What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?
- Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?
- Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new about Australian surfing culture in the 1970s?

## If you liked this book, you may also like...

- *On the Jellicoe Road* by Melina Marchetta
- *The year of secret assignments* by Jaclyn Moriarty
- *Evil genius* by Catherine Jinks

*Author biography from Wikipedia.*

*Discussion starters from Litlovers.*

*Read-a-likes from Novelist.*