

'Home and Other Hiding Places': an examination of the trauma that shapes our lives



Jack Ellis. (Photo: Ultimo Press)

by **Ria Pandey**

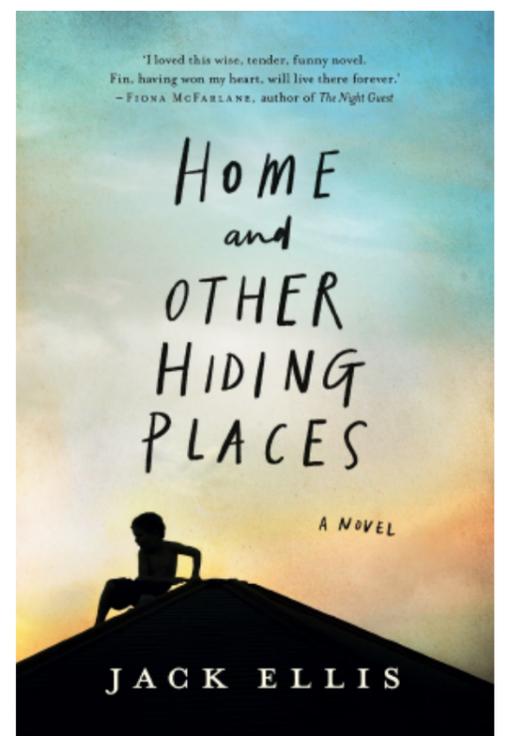
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Home and Other Hiding Places is an emotional meditation on the way childhoods can shape the complex adults that we become.

Home and Other Hiding Places frames a sharp observation of the complexities of familial dysfunction from the perspective of the eight-year-old Griffin, “Fin”. Following the seemingly-simple story of Finn and his mother Lindy as they travel

down to [Sydney](#) to spend Christmas with his “Gran” Antonella, Jack Ellis extracts the complex internal tensions that course through the bonds that tie their family together.

These nuanced, familial interactions are where Ellis excels. Fin’s experiences of bearing witness to the miscommunications, fuelled by the anxieties, traumas, and secrets that float in the consciousness of those older than him, see the [young protagonist](#) struggle to make sense of the increasingly chaotic family dynamics around him.





Jack Ellis. (Photo: Ultimo Press)

From his experience as working a family mediator, with a particular focus on the impact of dysfunction on children, Ellis' intentions behind *Home and Other Hiding Places* have been described in his own words as “challenging the myth of resilience in children.” In the same vein, as readers watch Fin's mother unravel in the presence of “Gran” from her own traumas, Fin's resultant uncertainty around who he can trust is explored vividly throughout the novel, as he concocts an elaborate scheme to save himself.

While heavy topics, like intergenerational trauma, mental illness, and coercive control, echo throughout the central tensions in the novel, Ellis' use of a child protagonist counterbalances this weight in an interesting way. Fin's curiosity and endearing sense of adventure keep the pages turning, elucidating the writer's acute observations of human failings, as they coalesce to an intense, yet cohesive exploration of family dysfunction.

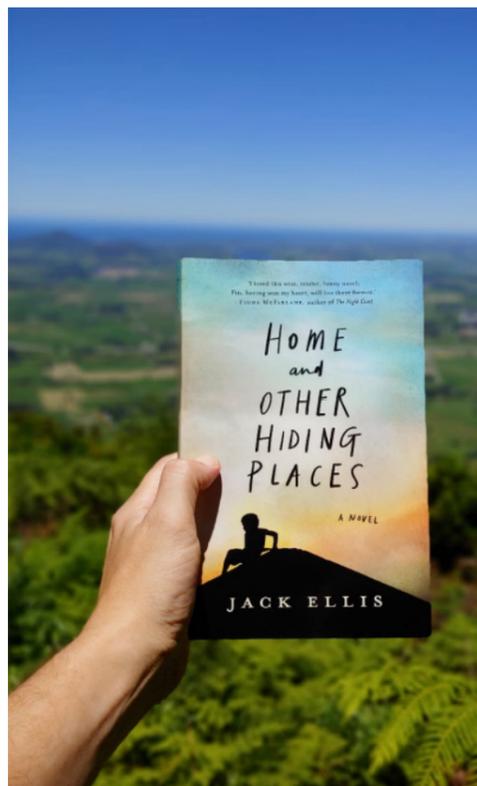


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Home and Other Hiding Places is out now via [Ultimo Press](#).