



TRUMBLE AND LUDWIG'S FOREST ADVENTURE

Author and Illustrator: Jacqui A'Court

Publisher: Little Steps Publishing

Category: Children's junior fiction

STORY SUMMARY

Trumble and Ludwig's Forest Adventure is the story of two young Tasmanian Devils who set forth in the wilderness to try to find a mystical, magical 'Squorch' seed; a seed rumoured to be a cure for their beloved Granny's worsening ailment - 'the lumpy face'.

A magical but troublesome adventure ensues, and the Devil boys meet an array of characters, ranging from delightful to shrewd to highly unsavoury. Each character, whether wittingly or not provide important clues, knowledge or resources, all crucial to the boys on their journey. As the story progresses, Trumble and Ludwig learn a number of life lessons, encouraging good morale within readers. The story also gently grapples the topics of environmental awareness and personal loss, however the overall tone is uplifting and ends in a pleasing twist.

'The lumpy face' is a soft reference to the Devil Facial Tumour Disease; a disease which has caused large declines in Tasmanian Devil populations. There is a brief footnote referring to the Devil Facial Tumour Disease on the last page.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND

Jacqui has a background in Zoology and Fine Arts. She spent her early twenties studying and working in tropical Far North Queensland before moving to her home land in Western Australia where she currently lives with her partner, baby daughter, two dogs, nine chooks, three parrots and a carpet python called BoYang. When not working at the local hospital as an anaesthetic technician, Jacqui is working on commissioned paintings, upcoming exhibitions and more recently, children's books.





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IN THE CURRICULUM

This book could be used as complementary material towards the following areas in the curriculum:

- **English language and grammar** - The focus could be on the particular language used in the story, i.e. the use of descriptive language as a literary tool, how it can play a powerful role in characterisation, or how language can be used as a tool to paint a visual picture.
- **Environmental studies/Social Science** - The book is an exploration of the Tasmanian natural environment, with frequent reference to location specific plants and animals. The book also delves into environmental themes such as biodiversity, invasive species, threatened species and extinction.
- **Visual Art** - The story is accompanied by plants and animals depicted in an expressive manner in watercolour, ink, coffee and even tea on paper, steering away from the trend of graphically enhanced picture book illustrations.

THEMES

- Environmental conservation
- Australian flora and fauna
- Family and connectedness
- Loss and overcoming loss

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask the children what they believe the significance of the revealing last two paragraphs is (pg 73) and think about what effect this could have on Trumble and Ludwig's future. How does this vary from if Granny Nell had 'done what she was supposed to' with the last Squorch seed?

The last two paragraphs see the boys stumble across a newly formed Squorch tree, which has gone on to produce several new shiny plump Squorch seeds. The suggestion that Granny Nell has sacrificed her own well being and instead planted the seed, gives rise to the possibility that the dreaded disease 'the lumpy face' will now be curable for younger Devil generations with the regeneration of its botanical cure.

Had Granny Nell 'done what she was supposed to' and swallowed the seed to cure herself, then the boys' grandmother would have been cured and 'lived on to see a ripe old age', but with the last Squorch seed gone, the future of all other Devils would remain in the grip of 'the lumpy face'.

Who is the nasty character in this story? Have a think about this animal. What makes him different from all the other animals in this story?

The nasty character in this story is undoubtedly Fieblekorn the feral fox. Fieblekorn's character is the only non-native, introduced species in the story. The feral fox, being a declared pest in Australia, has brought problems with it, including the displacement of predators with a similar diet, as well as indiscriminate killing of prey animals that have not adapted to cope with such an efficient, high speed predator as the European fox or domestic cat.

Fieblekorn the feral fox makes it known





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that he usually enjoys the city life but has been enjoying 'all the new and exciting flavours of the forest', indicating he's not from this environment and he doesn't discriminate as to what he devours either. He also effectively tries to eliminate his competitors, the two Tasmanian Devils, because they are also predatory animals.

Why do you think Old Srivelneeb is happy enough to give up his special Squorch seed to help the boys' granny?

The situation Old Srivelneeb finds himself in is stated in personal reflection on pg 56. He reflects on how his own entire family of Tasmanian Tigers has already departed for savage rainbow (where the animals of Savage River go when they die) at the hands of the great white long-legged fur-less monkey (a

humoured reference to Tasmania's relatively recent humankind arrivals). Old Srivelneeb sees the handing over of the last Squorch seed as an opportunity to help his closest living relative, as he recognises that their status as a secure species is in trouble itself.

Deeper thinking

Think about the Tasmanian Tiger's location. Explain why you think the tiger lives where it does.

Mountains can provide cradles for biodiversity in our changing world. It's a known phenomenon that mountain ranges can provide key conservation areas in any given geographical location because they are somewhat buffered from development through challenging vertical landscapes, therefore often give a glimpse into a relatively untouched version of a region's pristine environment. While it's largely accepted that the Thylacine or Tasmanian Tiger is extinct, perhaps the highlands provided the species habitat for some of its last years.... or maybe there's a lurking Tasmanian Tiger upon a mountain top today.

Have a think about and describe two life lessons that were potentially learnt by Trumble and Ludwig whilst on their adventure.

A few life lessons could include, but are not limited to, the following ideas:

- Have faith. Despite sad times, things have a way of working out. While the boys were distraught to learn of their granny's passing, they also learnt that the grief they felt became easier to live with over time. They also learnt that the flip side to their granny's selfless act was that their own futures now looked a lot brighter, as did the future for Devil kind.
- Nothing is more satisfying than helping someone or something truly in need. This concept was observed and reflected upon by Ludwig when Old Srivelneeb's body 'gave off a luminous pulse' while offering the boys his most valuable Squorch seed (pg 57).
- First impressions are rarely true reflections of someone's character. On their journey, the boys discovered this concept in a few instances. Firstly, the echidnas of Upper Savage were, in fact, delightful creatures. Through the meeting at the forest picnic (pg 28) the boys vowed to get to know the echidnas living in their own home patch better when they did get home. Another first impression that was inaccurate was that of Miss Tindledoor, who appeared 'big and scary' but turned out to be a caring and extremely helpful character.
- Everyone has different strengths. Along the way, the boys met a whole array of different characters, all of whom had their own unique strengths. These unique strengths imparted their own important mark upon the boys' journey.

Old Srivelneeb's Portrait

Old Srivelneeb had his portrait painted. What do you think he looks like?

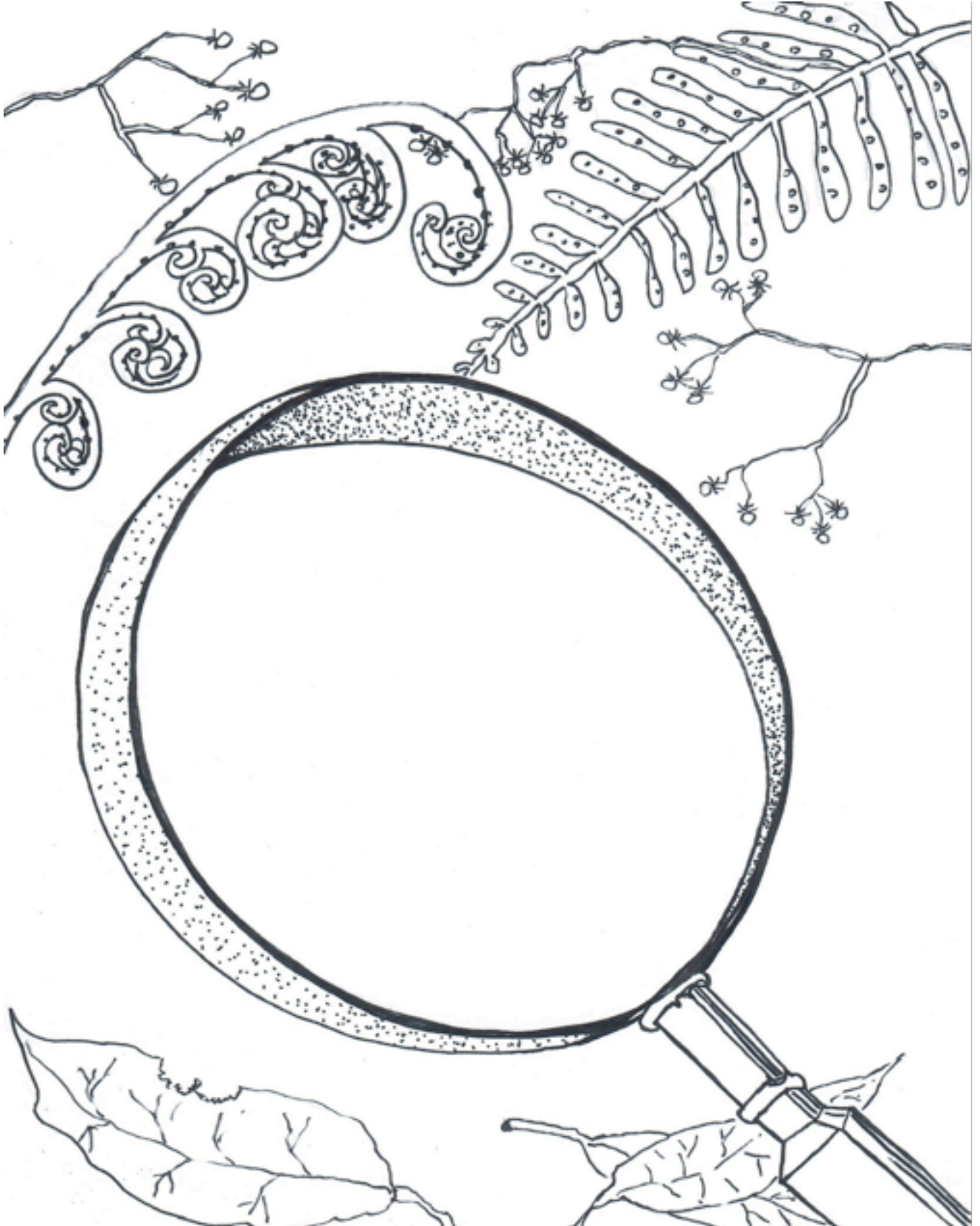
HINT: He is an old Tassie Tiger with five snaggle teeth



Magnifying Glass

You are looking through a magnifying glass at the picnic lunch of the forest animals. These animals include an echidna, a bandicoot, a potoroo and a wombat. What does their lunch look like?

HINT: Insects, molluscs, berries and leaves could all be on the menu



Whose Eyes are These?

Whose eyes are these? Complete the animals.

HINT: One goes 'Booo Boooo' and one likes to leap across lily pads



Wanted!

Draw what you think Savage River's most despicable, feral and cunning creature looks like!

