

**The Forbidden
Book Club**

The Yowie and the Bunyip



Book 4

The Yowie and the Bunyip

The next day after school, they knew the routine. They sat over their tea and rock cakes as they discussed their last adventure. Mrs. Quigley was pleased with them, but also asked questions to make them think. They talked about the possibilities that each story has. Darren frowned.

“Yes?” Mrs. Quigley asked.



“Does that mean that as many people as there are, there are different ways to read a book?”

Mrs. Quigley gave him a warm smile that made her look young again.

“It does. A book isn’t something that you just consume. It connects with your mind. Even on the same adventure, you will all have different thoughts and feelings depending on what has happened in your life and how you see the world.”

They thought carefully on that as they headed down to the machine.

This time as the rough lines began to appear in the dark, it was to a chorus of disgruntled townsfolk. A man was in the middle.

“I’m going to be honest, we’ve had no progress on tracking down the creatures,” he said.

There was uproar in response.

“But what we have done is set aside some funds as a reward. If somebody can catch the beasts and bring them to me, the cash will be theirs.”

Ada and Lachlan pricked up their ears. They liked the sound of that. The four of them set out into the bush looking for tracks.

“What are we looking for, exactly?” Skink asked.

Ada and Lachlan looked at each other. “Well, I’m sure we’ll know when we find it.”

“And I’m sure it’s just for the honour, right guys?” Darren said sarcastically. “Not for some silly reward.”

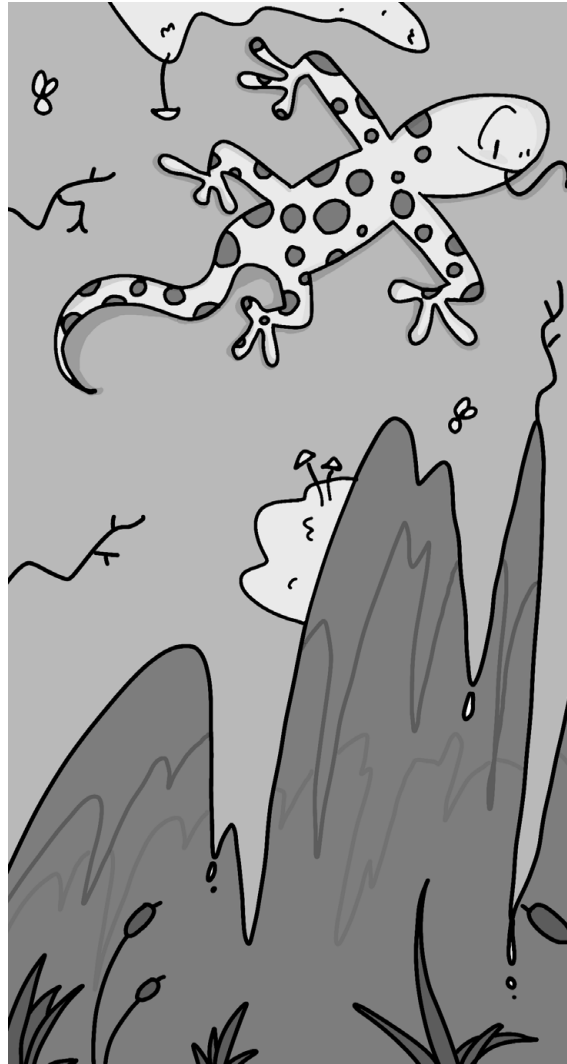
The four of them walked for hours, and were soon totally exhausted. Lachlan and Ada kept their eyes to the ground, looking for tracks. Darren kept a lookout for danger. They found odd clumps of fur that had snagged on shrubs. Ada began to feel knots in her stomach.



Finally, they got a whiff of a cave with a ghastly smell. They saw two, large shapes lumbering around inside. Lachlan grabbed a large tree branch so that he could whack them over the head, but Skink was already ahead of him. She had transformed into a little lizard and was climbing the walls of the cave.

“Get back here!” Lachlan whispered.

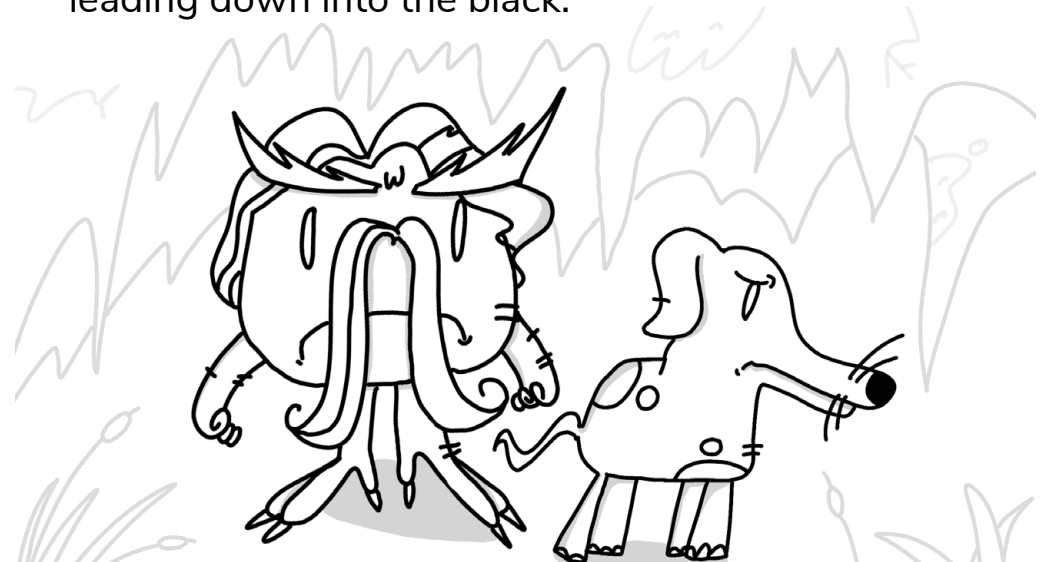
But Skink was already deep in the beasts’ den. Before long, they began to hear her voice. They crept closer and saw that she was talking to two monstrous animals. One of them was like a large, hairy man with a ghoulish face.



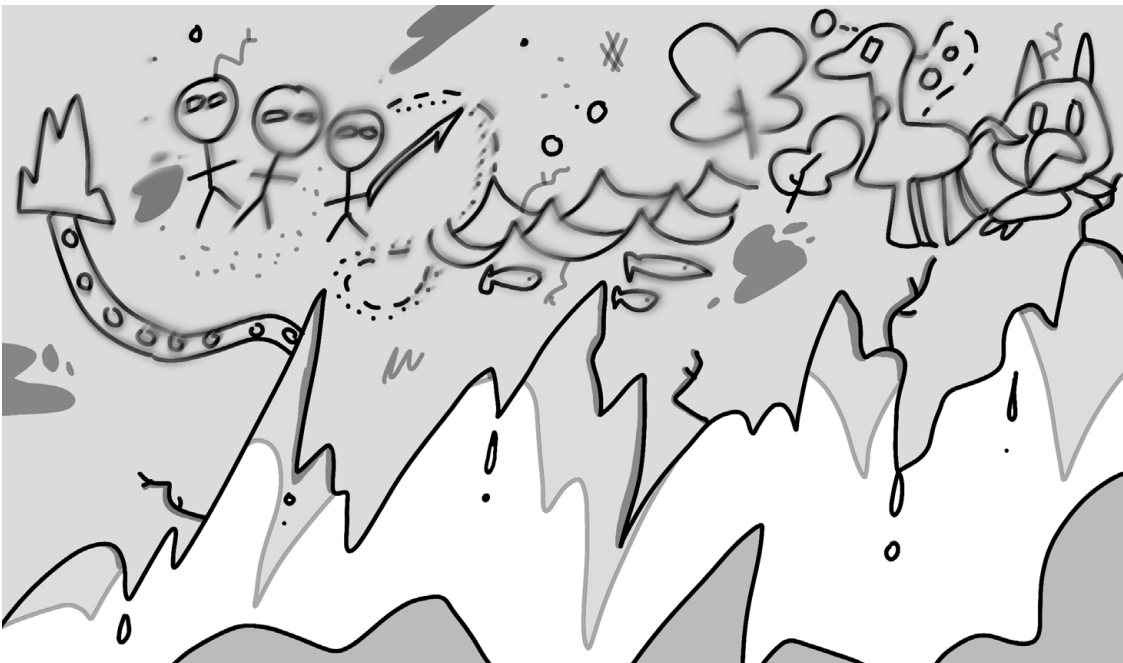
The other was on all fours, with thick, shaggy fur and long whiskers coming out of its snout. Skink was sitting at their feet, nodding at them in understanding. The creatures narrowed their eyes and growled as the others approached.

“It’s alright,” Skink said, putting a hand on the four-legged one. “They’re with me. Come on guys. This big fella over here is a yowie! And the cute, furry one is a bunyip!”

They were not sure quite how cute the beasts were exactly, but the three of them walked into the dank, drippy cave. They saw deep tunnels at the back leading down into the black.



“Go on, tell them what you told me,” Skink said softly. Pictures started playing in their minds. They saw groups of yowies roaming all over the land, and packs of bunyips by the water. They watched as people came to hunt animals, cut down trees, and dry up rivers with their dams. The yowies and the bunyips tried to protect the land, but there were too many people. They watched as the cities grew larger and the yowies and bunyips grew fewer until only these two remained, trekking through their tunnels to try to keep the last wild places in the world from the people that wanted to destroy them.



“Still want that reward now?” Darren asked.

Ada and Lachlan looked glumly at the poor beasts, the last of their kind.

“What can we do?” Ada asked.

“They told me about a place,” Skink said. “They have been making a raft to get there, but every time they leave the cave the townsfolk try to hunt them down.”

“Then we just need a distraction,” Lachlan said.



Skink focused on the bunyip and her body began to change. Soon, she was as ferocious as the bunyip itself. Lachlan tied her up and began walking her into town while Darren and Ada took the yowie and the bunyip through the tunnels to their raft. When Lachlan and Skink got near the town, they got a lot of attention. Then, Lachlan pretended to lose hold of the rope and Skink started to rampage through the streets, keeping all eyes on them as Darren and Ada began to sail away with the yowie and the bunyip.

When they were far enough away, Skink ran out of town and the four of them met back up at the cave.

“Did they make it?” Skink asked.

Darren and Ada nodded.

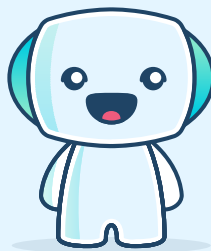
“It was a nice little place. It might not be much, but at least they will get to live in peace,” Darren said.

“You know what?” Lachlan asked.

They all turned to look at him.

“That’s an excellent reward,” he said with a grin.





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