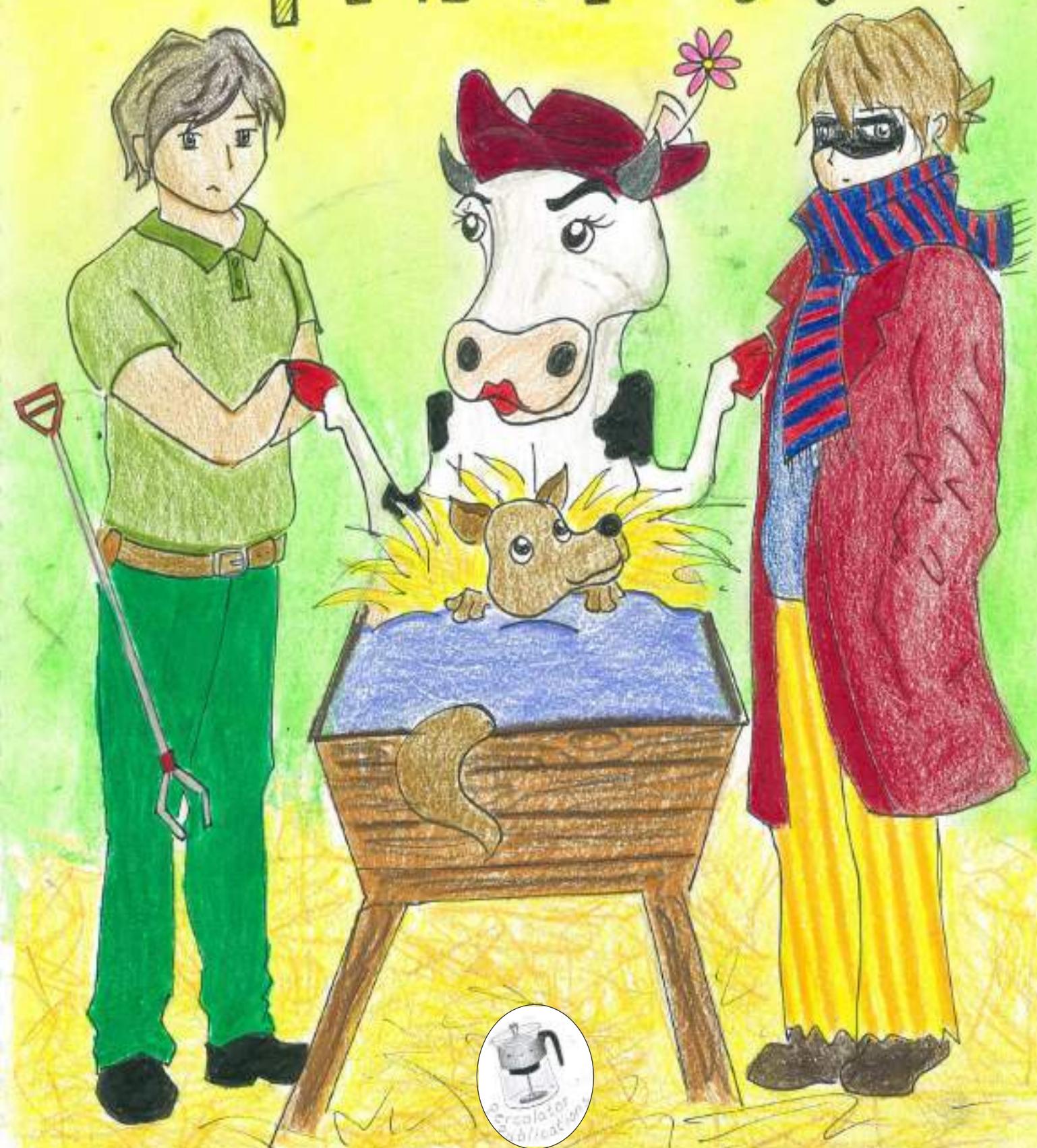
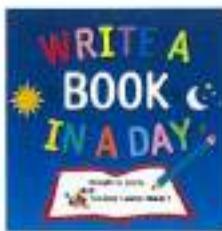


COW ABOUT THAT?!





Write a Book in a Day 2016

Book Summary



The Team Supervisor must confirm the details on this page. When the book is complete, please mark the checklist items and sign where indicated. Please add this page as the first page in the final book.

TEAM DETAILS

Writing Division:	Upper School (WA)	
Writing Date:	19-07-2016	
Group or School:	Kingsway Christian College	
Team Name:	Percolated Publications	
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PARAMETERS

RANDOM WORDS

Primary Character 1:	Garbage collector	Delicious
Primary Character 2:	Thief	Nonsense
Non-Human Character:	Cow	Hums
Setting:	Stable	Cracked
Issue:	Kidnapping	Danger

AFFIDAVIT

I, Susanna Bask, (Team Supervisor), certify that the above team:

- completed all work on their book in accordance with the competition rules
- completed all work between 8:00am and 8:00pm on the day of writing
- included all five random words
- Word Count: 11,026 words

Date: 19/07/2016 Signed: J. Bask

{Parameters}

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

Garbage collector

Thief

NON-HUMAN CHARACTER

Cow

SETTING

Stable

ISSUE

Kidnapping

RANDOM WORDS

Delicious, Nonsense, Hums, Cracked & Danger



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{Foreword}

Hello, it's us again. You may know us as Macchiato Madness (I'm sensing a theme in these names), the people behind Once Upon A Wine. I wrote the foreword a year ago, the last time we did this, and I've been asked to do it again, and I'm not going to change much, because I believe what's said there is all that should be said. Congratulations, you just read the foreword to the foreword.

I know that none of us can speak for you faithfully, because none of us are in your situation. To say 'oh, we understand what it's like for you, it's all going to be wonderful, with butterflies and lollipops,' is a lie.

Lollipops aren't even good for you. That fantasy idea is flawed.

But what we can say is that there is always a reason to have hope. Always. Even when you're stuck in a bed all day, all week, all year, there are a million things around you, if you look for them, that you can be hopeful about, and just as many little things to be happy about.

Thank you for being around, and picking this up. It's not as cheesy as it looks, or even as cheesy as the last book. It's far, far cheesier.

*By Timothy Dixon, on behalf of **Percolated Publications***

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PROLOGUE

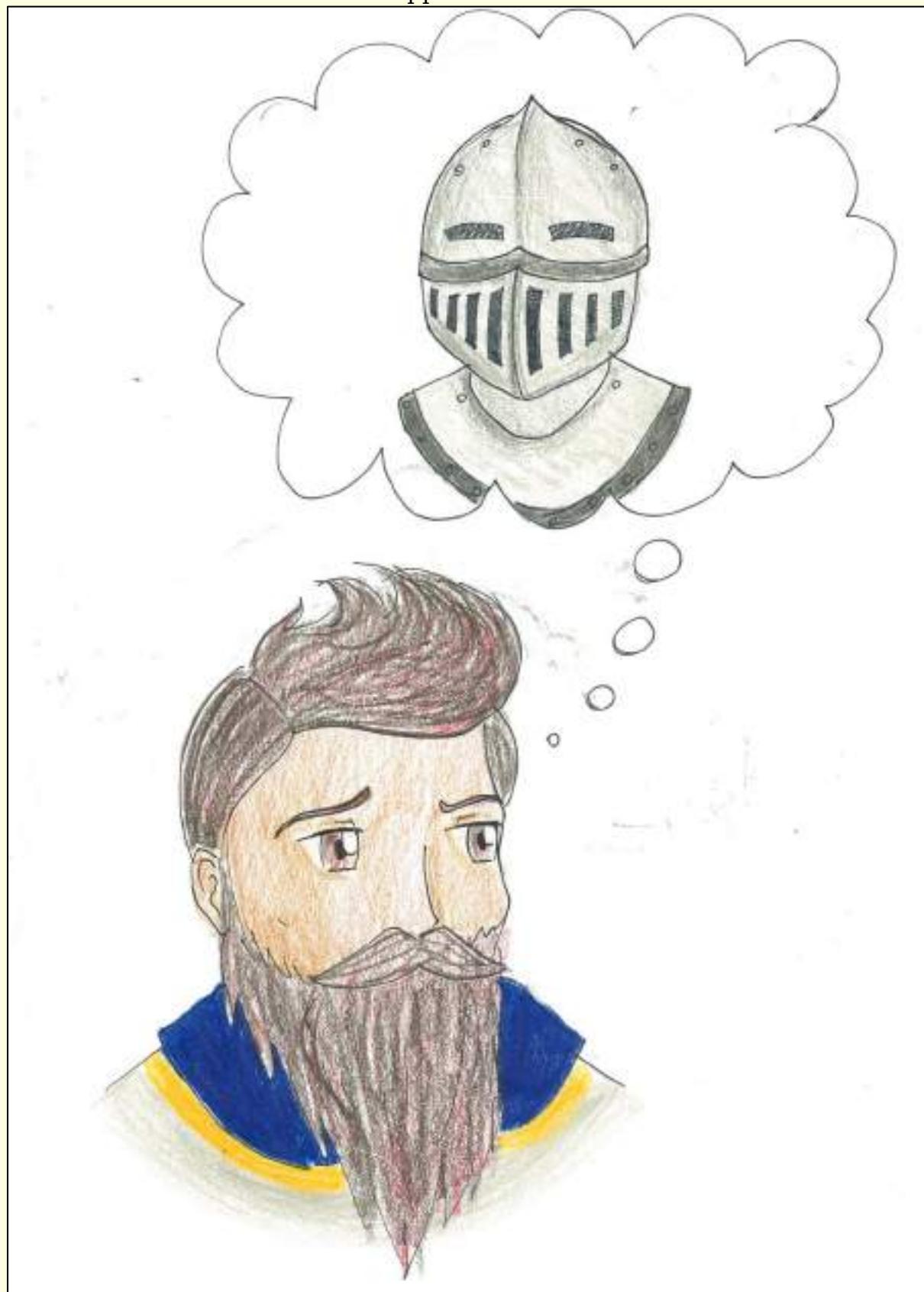
Out in the great outback, where the plains washed across smooth rock and left wispy patches of grass in their wake, a tiny homestead began to come alive in the first rays of infant sun. It wasn't much, but it was home to two laboring famers who worked day and night to harvest enough crops to support themselves and their lay about son, Theo. For even as his parents toiled out on the scorched earth in the parched country air, he sat about in the stables, strewn amongst stale hay and dreaming of life beyond the ranch.

Yet one night, disaster struck as a fire started in the main barn and killed the farmers in their sleep, leaving their son destitute and penniless. What little was left of the homestead was claimed as property of the state, and all the orphan had claim to after all the tedious proceedings was the family cow, Connie. Lowly and down on his luck, Theo slipped further into his melancholy and refused to take care of himself or his bovine counterpart.

Lucky for him, Connie was a rather special cow. Unlike many of her species, she was incredibly brainy and had a level head and logical demeanor that gave her the ability to speak to humans. She considered herself to be a bit of a Matriarch and motherly figure, and wasn't one to simply step back and let one of her own suffer. She took pity upon Theo and vowed to raise him under how own hoofs, by whatever means necessary.

Crops wouldn't cut it. A famine had wiped out any opportunity of achieving a fruitful harvest, so Connie had no choice but to resort to more... unconventional methods. It wasn't like Theo was going to do anything! When she first approached him with the idea of thievery, he was intellectually opposed to the idea, but too lazy to physically argue. And so the pair started out small- simple corner store raids and the like to make ends meet. Connie was the brains of the outfit- she planned out every signal, every step, and every steal with the precision of a true criminal. Theo was merely the brawn in the scheme of things, responsible for going where only human footsteps

were welcomed and opposable thumbs were needed.



Funnily the combination worked- man and his bovine, trotting round the countryside, pickpocketing, burgling and stealing from the rich and the poor.

Eventually, their operation became so professional that they began to extend their circles beyond that of rural New South Wales. No longer dependent upon their criminal activity for mere survival, Connie and Theo's operation became more deplorable by the day.

Harry Houdini's disappearance was thanks to the cunning hooves and hands of the odd pair, and the gold he took with him to the grave ensured they only ate the finest grass from 'Sir Walter Lawns' for the rest of their days.

Ned Kelly's rampage through the Australian bush was nothing more than the finest revenge mission, fuelled by the outlaw's rage after his traditional knights helmet 'went missing' with nothing but a hoof print left in the mud beside where it had lain. He found out later it had exchanged hands for a pretty penny at one of the shadier pubs in town, and ever since had promised to put holes in the culprit one day, even if it meant terrorizing every other town in the meantime.

Julia Gillard's string of pearls was misplaced. Archibald prize-winning portraits suddenly disappeared. And every Sunday, the local milk bar was one carton short of their Premium Harvey Fresh Orange Juice. For a time, the pair lived happily on the ranch, content in their loot and grass-topped pancakes. But for Connie, greed took over; she became enthralled in her criminal lifestyle. Every heist had to be bigger, bolder, and more audacious than the one before.

And then she had an idea. Ransom demands were rarely ignored, so what better way to get rich than kidnap an Australian icon and hold it hostage? She was so pleased with herself, the logic of it all! But who to abduct? Koalas were too sleepy and lethargic, emus were too fast for her sturdy bovine frame, Dingos just... weren't a good idea... but a kangaroo? Perfect! "And not just any kangaroo," she said to herself; "I'm going to capture one of the greatest mascots to ever grace our soil- The Qantas ambassador, Boomerang!"

Theo was less keen on the idea. He had always been uncomfortable with the idea of stealing from others, but to steal from all of Australia itself? It was too much. He refused to help Connie with her fraudulent mission, to which she responded with anger and dismay.

"But we're a team!"

she exploded, fury leaking from every word.

"Without me, you are nothing but lazy and ignorant of the real world. I do everything around here, and you just enjoy the fruits of my labor... I've got no time for your **nonsense**, and whether you are going to help me or not I will carry out this kidnapping!"

Faced with choosing between committing a national crime and confronting a bickering bovine, Theo realized that this was a problem he was too lazy to deal

with. He found a neighbour in need of cattle for his farm, and sold off Connie to him, making a tidy sum in the process. No more conniving cows, heinous heists or a nagging need to pick his clothes up from the floor. All of his problems were solved!

Or so he thought.

CHAPTER ONE

Theo the thief closed his eyes and sank back onto the couch with a resounding ‘thump’ that echoed through the wooden bearings of his expansive homestead. He reached for the tinny that he had left the previous night on the table beside the couch, but his hand found nothing. He slapped the table a few times in search of the can, and then sighed in frustration and gave up.

‘I’m buggered’ he yawned, reaching his arms up weakly in the air in an imitation of a stretch.

His Kundalini yoga teacher had told him to remember to stretch each day, and he had made sure to comply, stretching up on tiptoes every morning to reach the jam jar and stretching his arms each time he yawned. It made him feel more alive, he thought. It was a nice feeling; to feel like you were doing something productive. This particular morning, Theo had actually managed to empty his bins on time. He had slowly and lethargically taken out the bin bags that had lined up in his smaller lounge-room, wading through the army of flies that hovered stagnant in the sultry East-Australian air. The job had well and truly exhausted him, and he was now excited to relax in front of his flat-screen TV and catch up on recorded episodes of ‘The Brady Bunch’. He squeezed his hand between the cushions of the couch and rummaged around to find the remote, pushing back his scarf such that the ends dangled behind his back, technicolour in the soft afternoon light. As his hand gripped the familiar object, his fingers touched on something else, something crunchy. He yanked out his remote as well as the smaller mass that he held between his fingertips, and upon inspection, realised it was an old burger ring. ‘Grubs up!’ he exclaimed loudly, shoving the food into his mouth and reclining once more into the couch. It was the most **delicious** food he had eaten in days. Some days he even forgot to eat all together, too lost in all the classes he had been taking and all the new things he had been trying since Connie had left. Ah, Connie. He would show her. He could look after himself. He knew it. But every so often, he would find himself missing her spectacular grass pancakes, or the way that she lied to policemen.

But right this moment, Theo had no time to dwell on his misgivings and repressed feelings, he had re-runs to watch.

He aimed the remote at the TV just as a shrill sound escaped from the phone, sitting on the wall across the room.

‘Who’d be calling me at this hour?’ he asked, annoyed and staring out and watching the sun disappearing behind a group of green hills.

'I better get it,' he sighed, standing and ever so slowly shuffling over to the phone, just managing to pick it up, one handed, on its last desperate ring.

A conversation followed involving a succession of expressive words and shocked silence.

'Who's this?'

'Oh, Gday Tommo! How's Connie doin?'

'She left where? You were s'sposed to be keeping an eye on her!'

'My fault? Faulty cow?!'

'Well it's ya own fault for not keeping an eye, mate.'

'Streuth!'

'I'll see if she's round here. Bet ya bottom dollar she is up to no good'

'See ya, mate'

Theo had gathered a large amount of shocking information from the phone call to Tommy, the farmer he had sold Connie to. It seemed Connie had escaped from the farm and had already been missing for three days! Theo shook his head and sighed out a large breath. Connie was determined, and if she really had escaped the farm there was no way she would be going back without a fight. A fight that Theo did not want to be involved in. Connie was his past, and despite the tug in his heart that made him feel like he should set off to find her, he had better things to do on his homestead; like watch Brady Bunch re-runs.

'I could find that Sheila, but then I would be right back where I started.'

Theo the thief had come a long way since the end of his thieving career, despite missing his friend, and these days he was searching for something more.

'Nah,' he said softly, a stone dropping in his heart,

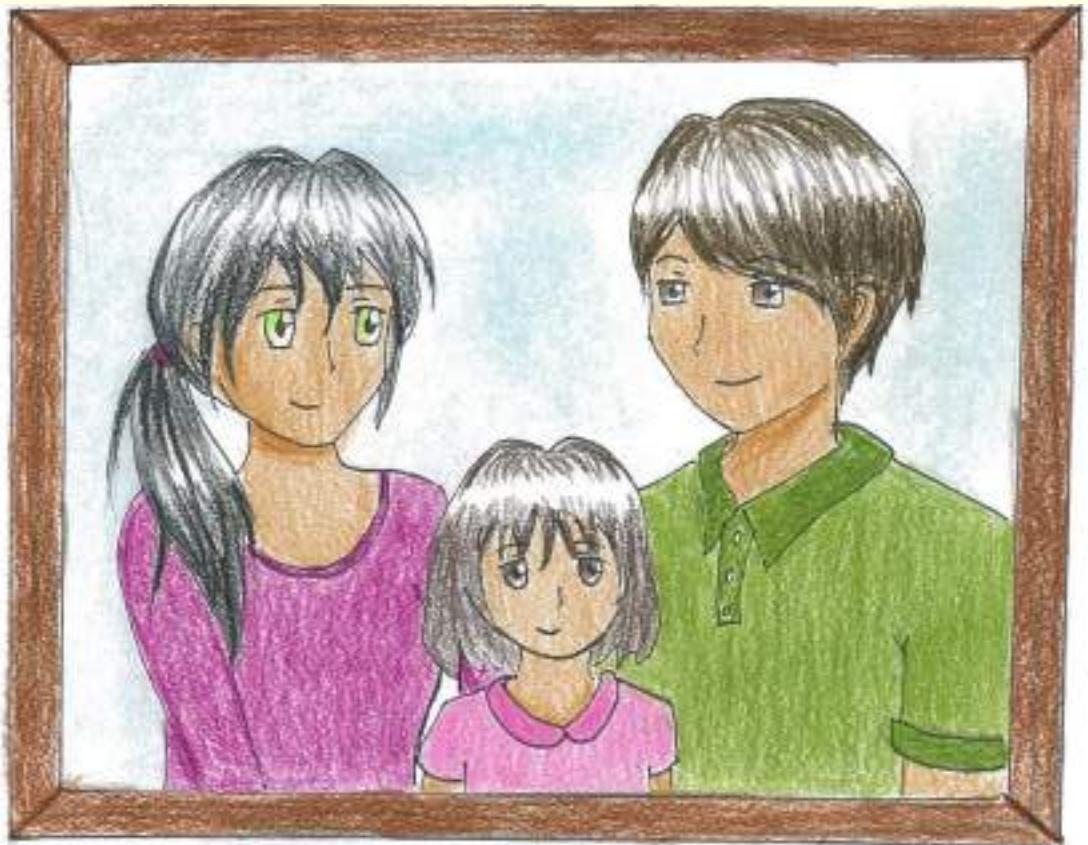
'I'm not gonna get myself into any more of this trouble.'

He slowly walked back to the couch, dropping back into it with an even bigger 'thud' than previously. His hand slapped for the remote on the cushion beside him and he nestled back into the cushions behind him as he pointed the remote at the TV to turn it on. The TV flickered on, flooding the thief with blue light.

CHAPTER TWO

After another long and rather tiring day of collecting garbage, Gafar parked his garbage truck in his yard and went in to his small but comfortable home. After a quick shower, he quickly placed his uniform into the wash. He may be a garbage collector, but that didn't mean he had to smell like it. He slowly went on to prepare some dinner for himself.

Gafar wasn't always a garbage collector. In fact, before he migrated to Australia he was the manager of a massive company back in Pakistan. However, dangerous circumstances forced him to leave his family behind and start a new life by himself. Although it made him sad, he knew that he would be able to support them better here.



Although it wouldn't have been his first choice as a job, he didn't actually mind collecting garbage that much. In fact, he felt quite honoured to be keeping such a beautiful and relaxed country clean. And he found the people very welcoming; every day at least one person will say hello to him or even have a quick conversation. They were but little things, yet they always made his day so much better and a lot less lonely.

The salary for a garbage collector wasn't much, but he still managed to support himself and his family. Every month, he transferred a portion of his salary to his parents, and another portion of it to the rest of his family. It

comforted him to know that he was able to support them even if he wasn't with them.

Every week since he had come, he had managed to collect the spare coins in his wallet and place them into his coin jar, with a silent and hopeful prayer following each addition. It would be just a few more months until he'd have enough money to go visit his family.

He thought about this as he stared at the framed picture of his family that he kept on the kitchen counter. His beautiful wife and daughter smiled back at him. His daughter would be turning ten in a month; finally hitting the double-digits. The thought of this brought sad tears to his eyes, but he quickly wiped them away, trying to rather focus on the positive; soon he would be able to see and hug her again.

It was almost six-o-clock, which meant that the news would start soon. Gafar generally preferred to not watch any television, but he always watched the news. He liked to stay informed about the current events that occurred locally, but also about what was going on in the world around him. Calling was expensive, and if something happened in his home country he wanted to know about it as soon as possible.

There wasn't really anything interesting on, just the usual politics and sport. It was, however, almost Christmas, and the Christmas Joy was evident; not only on the TV but everywhere around him. During the day he sang along to a few Christmas carols playing on the local radio stations.

Seeing that there was a cricket match on between Australia and Pakistan, he quickly switched over to the sport channel and made himself comfortable. He wondered if any of his friends were currently watching it as well. After a while, he slowly drifted off to sleep, the roar of the excited crowd growing fainter.

CHAPTER THREE

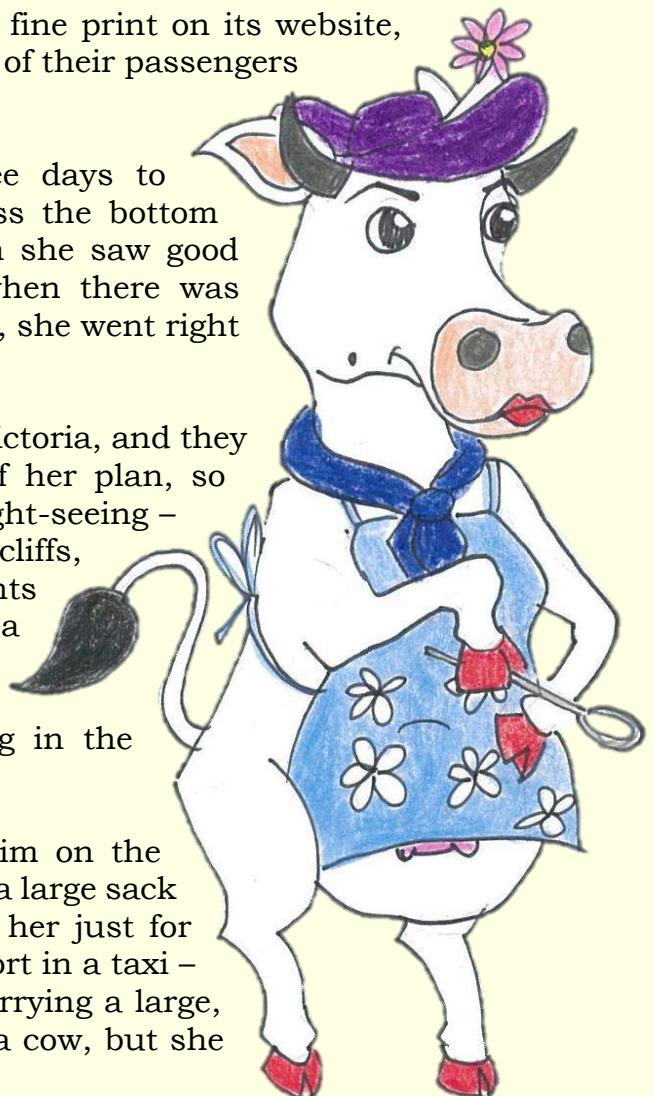
Connie the cow, or Connie the con-cow, as she liked to be called in her earlier days, was tired. Fully aware that it would be almost impossible to travel around the country on her own using public transport, she had taken it upon herself to make her journey alone. Her objective was, of course, to steal the ‘Spirit of Australia’ – Boomerang, the QANTAS kangaroo, for a ransom, all the way in Sydney.

She had considered using the Ghan – a train that travels from one end of Australia to another. But, checking the fine print on its website, she discovered that they limited the weight of their passengers to 500 kilograms each. She was appalled.

So, she walked. It took her about three days to complete her journey. She travelled across the bottom edge of Australia. She only stopped when she saw good grass, because he needed to eat, and when there was something interesting to see – so, of course, she went right past Adelaide.

She travelled past the cliffs at the edge of Victoria, and they were very pretty, but she was so sure of her plan, so focused, that she didn’t spend any time sight-seeing – and promptly nearly fell off one of the cliffs, because she wasn’t sight-seeing the sights right in front of her, either. Sydney was a sight for sore eyes, and, upon arrival at the Sydney airport, Boomerang was remarkably easy to find. He was relaxing in the business section of a grounded plane.

Connie easily overpowered him, hitting him on the back of his long head and stuffing him into a large sack she had dragged across the country with her just for this purpose. She stole away from the airport in a taxi – the driver noticed the fact that she was carrying a large, wriggling pack, and the fact that she was a cow, but she paid him generously.



“I’m sorry I had to hit you on the head, dear,” said Connie, washing her front hooves under a sink, little pieces of grass falling away from them. By the side of the sink, a plate could be seen, containing several grass-covered scones. Boomerang was tied to a chair in the middle of the room. It’s

impossible to tell exactly what kind of room it is – except for the small kitchen area, lit by a hanging light-bulb it is completely dark.

“No, mate. No, mate, no,” came from Boomerang’s mouth, and Connie looked at him sideways.

From the moment that she captured him, he seemed to be able to say only two things – ‘Yes, mate,’ and ‘No, mate.’ It made conversation simple, but Connie found it interrupted her tightly organised schedules by making it harder to get information out of him.

“Can you actually say anything aside from ‘Yes, mate,’ or ‘No, mate,’ Boomerang?” she asked him, directly.

He looked astounded by this question, and tired. The trip from the airport to here – wherever *here* was – had dishevelled him.

“Yes, mate,” he said, nodding his head sceptically, wondering if this might buy him his freedom.

“And what would that be?” asked Connie, raising her thick eyebrows.

“...Cowabunga.”

“Oh, lovely,” she said, turning around, finishing her scones with a seasoning of sea salt.

“Now, Boomerang – Boomer, maybe? - you can have these scones as soon as you do something for me,” she said.

He looked at them eagerly, his odd little kangaroo mouth seeming too small for his face as his tongue flicked in and out of it, his eyes wide. Connie was somewhat disturbed by this display, but shook off the feeling. She had a job to do.

Cracking the little knuckles in her front hooves, she walked over to a silhouette to the side of the room that Boomerang had not noticed. Reaching around it, she pressed a button, and on came a red light. It was a video camera, on a tripod.

Connie looked at Boomerang, and he looked back.

“No, ma-“ he started.

“Yes, mate,” she said.

CHAPTER FOUR

Theo flicked through the channels. There wasn't much on, he realised, not unless he wanted to watch 'In the Night Garden' on Channel 23. The other channels were all on an ad break, except the infomercial channels selling non-stick stone cookware and ab-workout machines promising guaranteed results. He settled on Channel 9 and waited for the news with a bowl of Chicken Twisties in his lap. The chips were sprinkled with soft, fresh grass from his field; a habit he had picked up when Connie first started cooking for him all those years ago, and a habit he had held onto in the tough months after he sold the old girl.

"We now cross to Michelle Scott, at the Perth Domestic Airport, where a bizarre series of events is unfolding." Began the newsreader.

Theo looked up from the chips with lazy half-interest: Connie had mentioned wanting to visit Perth someday.

"Yes Stan, what is happening today in the Qantas longue is simply beyond belief." Said a young journalist, her face alive with excitement.

The camera panned to a fleet of planes waiting like flightless birds on the tarmac and zoomed in to show their plain tails. *Those aren't Qantas planes,* thought Theo, *they're jolly well missing the Spirit of Australia!*

"Notice that the iconic kangaroo design of Qantas airlines is missing. According to several nightshift workers, everything appeared normal last night as they performed routine safety checks on the aircrafts ahead of a busy flight schedule for this morning.

"Throughout their shift, workers began to notice the smell of wet paint, and just before home time, one of them noticed the tails of the planes were entirely white – assumedly the kangaroos had been painted over. Immediately, thoughts turned to Boomerang, the living, breathing kangaroo who is the official ambassador of Qantas. Workers rushed to his enclosure and found the kangaroo missing, bright red hoof prints on the floor and the straw swept into a neat pile. It appears that the kangaroo has been kidnapped!"

"It gets stranger. Just minutes ago, a Qantas airhostess, who was found unconscious on the tarmac soon after Boomerang's disappearance, awakened. She is suffering a mild concussion and claims a cow –

Theo jerked upright and the chip bowl slipped off his lap and clattered to the wooden floor, scattering crumbs under the couch.

"Yes, a cow," continued the newsreader, "spoke to her last night. Uh, well, if Jaimie is feeling up to an interview, I'll let her tell the story herself."

Tensed up and straining as though every cell and muscle of his body was taking in the details of the case, Theo listened to the tale of the bruised air hostess. She was sitting, propped up on pillows in a grey hospital bed, and spoke confusedly as though she didn't quite believe the events herself. She had been on the night shift, rushing about getting things ready for the morning, when a cow appeared out of nowhere and started talking to her. Jaimie had fainted in shock, hit her head on the plane on the way down and woke up the next morning in hospital, with a pounding headache and a USB on a lanyard around her neck.

At the end of the news report, the newsreader played a short video clip that had been found on the USB. The clip opened with a blurry shot of a dark room and focussed to show a plump cow standing on her hind legs, with red painted hoofs and wearing a floppy straw hat.

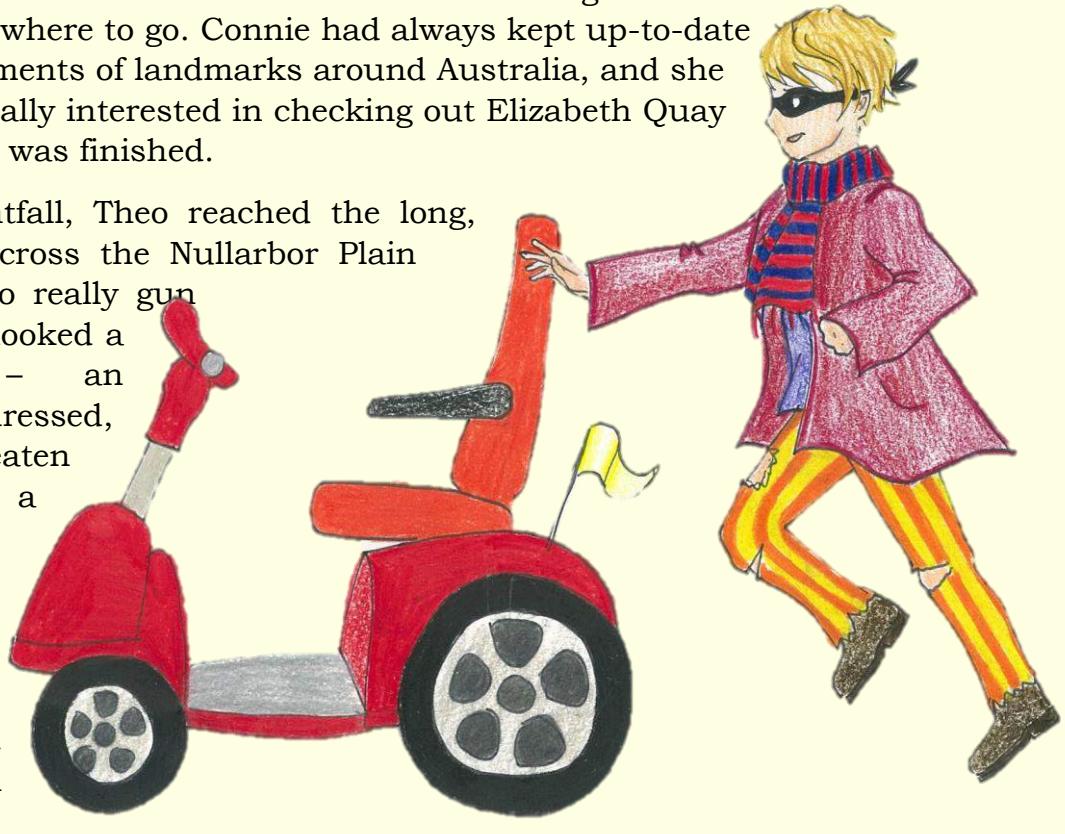
"Bloody oath, that's Connie!" Exclaimed Theo, throwing his mask at the TV.

The cow smiled indulgently out at the millions of news viewers and announced: "I have kidnapped the kangaroo. Listen up, I've got a clue for you: "I'm round and gold and fit in a door. Beneath me is a watery floor."

Theo snapped off the TV with a savage punch of the remote. "That's it! Ya gone and done it now, Connie," he said as he marched out his front door.

Theo hopped on his jacked-up mobility scooter – way more comfy than a motorbike, and faster too. He revved the engine and weaved his way through the last of the peak-hour traffic. Without even having to think too much, he knew where to go. Connie had always kept up-to-date on new developments of landmarks around Australia, and she had been especially interested in checking out Elizabeth Quay in Perth, once it was finished.

Finally, at nightfall, Theo reached the long, straight road across the Nullarbor Plain and was able to really gun the engine. He looked a fine sight – an eccentrically dressed, weather beaten farmer in a burglar mask, speeding away from New South Wales on a scooter with a bright yellow flag on the back.



CHAPTER FIVE

Gafar craned forward in his lounge chair to hear every word of the news report.

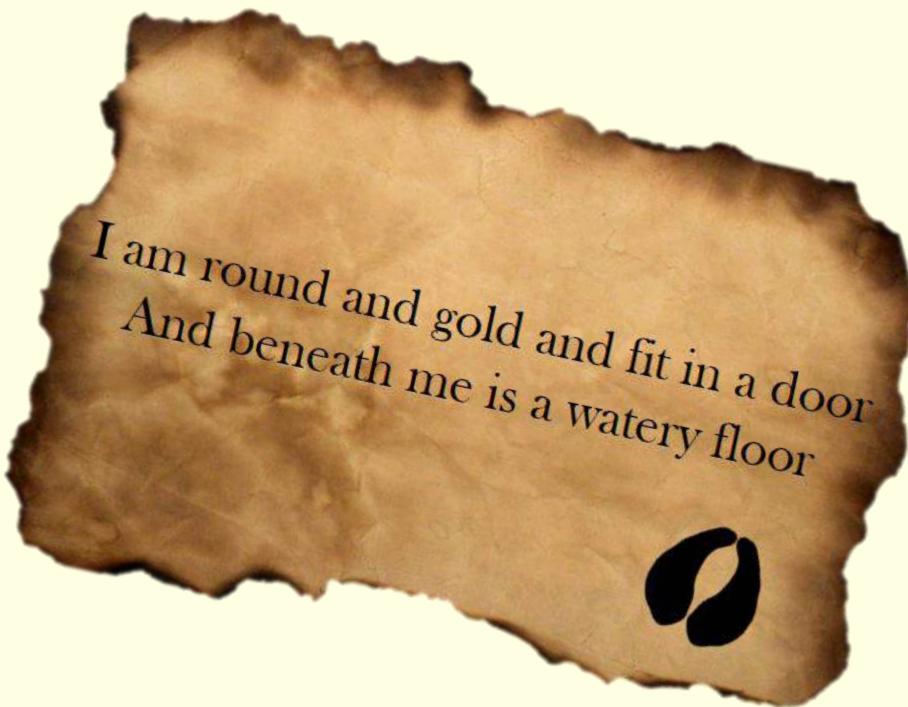
“I am round and gold and fit in a door
And beneath me is a watery floor.”

What a strange riddle! But he was intrigued. Early every Saturday morning he voluntarily walked around Elizabeth Quay picking up rubbish from the young adult’s parties that were usually held on a Friday night. They left such a mess! Though, Gafar wasn’t angry. This new country had helped him out so much and he just wanted to give back in the small way that he could. Even though it could be tiring, he preferred picking up rubbish to sitting lonely at home.

The clue on the TV that the obese cow had so mystically stated could very well be talking about Elizabeth Quay. “Why not?” he thought. He was getting pretty excited.

Even if the clue wasn’t referring to the Quay, he would keep his eyes open for anything unusual. His usually monotonous Saturday morning had a small hope of becoming slightly more interesting.

He wished his wife was there to share the experience.



CHAPTER SIX

The minute he heard the clue, Theo knew exactly where to go. Although the structure was relatively new, the Elizabeth Quay wasn't hard to miss. With the decorative statues and the beautiful, elaborate embellishment, it stood out from the tall buildings surrounding it. Standing next to it, he has to admit he felt rather small.

Suddenly, a small black mark on the bottom of one of the statues caught his eye. He looked around, surprised that no one else had seemed to have noticed it. Then again, it was quite early in the morning, and the few runners around seemed more concentrated on actually running than on the things around them. He started walking towards the statue when he noticed another man making his way towards it. He quickly analysed him; he was obviously a garbage man (his uniform and garbage stick gave him away), and his dark brown hair was combed neatly on his head. To be honest, if it came to it, Theo reckoned he could easily take him on. Theo noticed that the other man had also stopped, and appeared to be analysing him. He appeared to be judging Theo's choice of pants (bright orange and yellow striped) which made Theo feel self-conscious.

Shaking his suspicions off, Theo made a beeline towards the statue, but the other man got there at the same time. Irritated, Theo looked at him and said "What the heck are ya doing mate?"

Looking slightly taken aback, the man replied, "Looking for someone. You?"
"Same."

After a brief period of awkward silence, Theo looked down at the black mark and realised that it was actually a hoof print.

"Connie," he muttered under his breath.

Bending down to inspect it, he looked for anything that would give him a clue about Connie's location, but there was nothing.

Suddenly, a seagull came and landed on his head. He jumped in surprise, causing the seagull to fly off his head and land on the floor next to him. Looking at it, he noticed a tiny camera on its head (strange) and a tiny piece of paper attached to one of its feet with a ribbon. He bent down to retrieve it and saw the number '2' written on it. "The second clue!" the other man exclaimed excitedly in his ears. Theo jumped. He hadn't noticed that the other man was standing behind him reading the note.

"Oi, back off mate" Theo said rather annoyed.

"Don't you realise what that is? It's the second clue to the mystery of the missing Qantas Kangaroo!" He reached out and grabbed the note, but Theo pulled his hand back quickly, causing the note to rip in half.

"Look what ya made me do!"

"Let me help you solve it," the other man said.

"No, I can do this by myself. I'm a thief. That's my job" Theo said nonchalantly, and with that, he turned around, clambered onto his mobility scooter and drove off.

"A thief?" Gafar muttered. "That doesn't sound very good. I'd better follow him."

And with that, Gafar stuck the ripped piece of paper in his pocket, ran to his truck and hopped in the truck to follow the thief.



CHAPTER SEVEN

The stable was musty with the smell of Sunday dew and busy termites. Connie normally couldn't stand it, but when you had work to do, all things must be put aside to focus on the primary goal. Boomerang sat in the corner, a big, stupid grin plastered all over his broad snout. Connie doubted he even realised he had been kidnapped- after all, he only had a limited repertoire odd phrases that he could utter.

She heaved a sigh and looked out the window of the compact nativity set. Night had fallen, and the shopping centre was now derelict and sad-looking, with only the red security blinkers providing illumination.

Connie loved the thrill of thievery and abduction- part of it was all of the careful planning that went into all of her heists. Each and every move was calculated, taking into account each possible pitfall and problem. And then the adrenaline that ran through her as they carried out their crimes... it was exhilarating. But ever since Theo had sold her off to that insubordinate farmer, things hadn't been the same.

She had spent most of her time tied to a rotting wooden post looking out at the countryside. What killed her the most was the lack of freedom and having no one to talk to. If she was honest with herself, she missed Theo, even if he was just a lay-about. Part of her hoped that she had seen her broadcast, had a change of heart and would come back to help her pull off one of the greatest heists in history.

A sudden calamitous crash startled her out of the musings- a small bird had flown straight into the glass arches of the shopping centre and was now squashed across the glass like a bug on a windshield. It reassembled itself and managed to squeeze its way through the window. As it landed on the perch by her shoulder, she recognized its glassy, orange beak and slightly grey streaked feathers. It was the same seagull she had sent off with the clue!

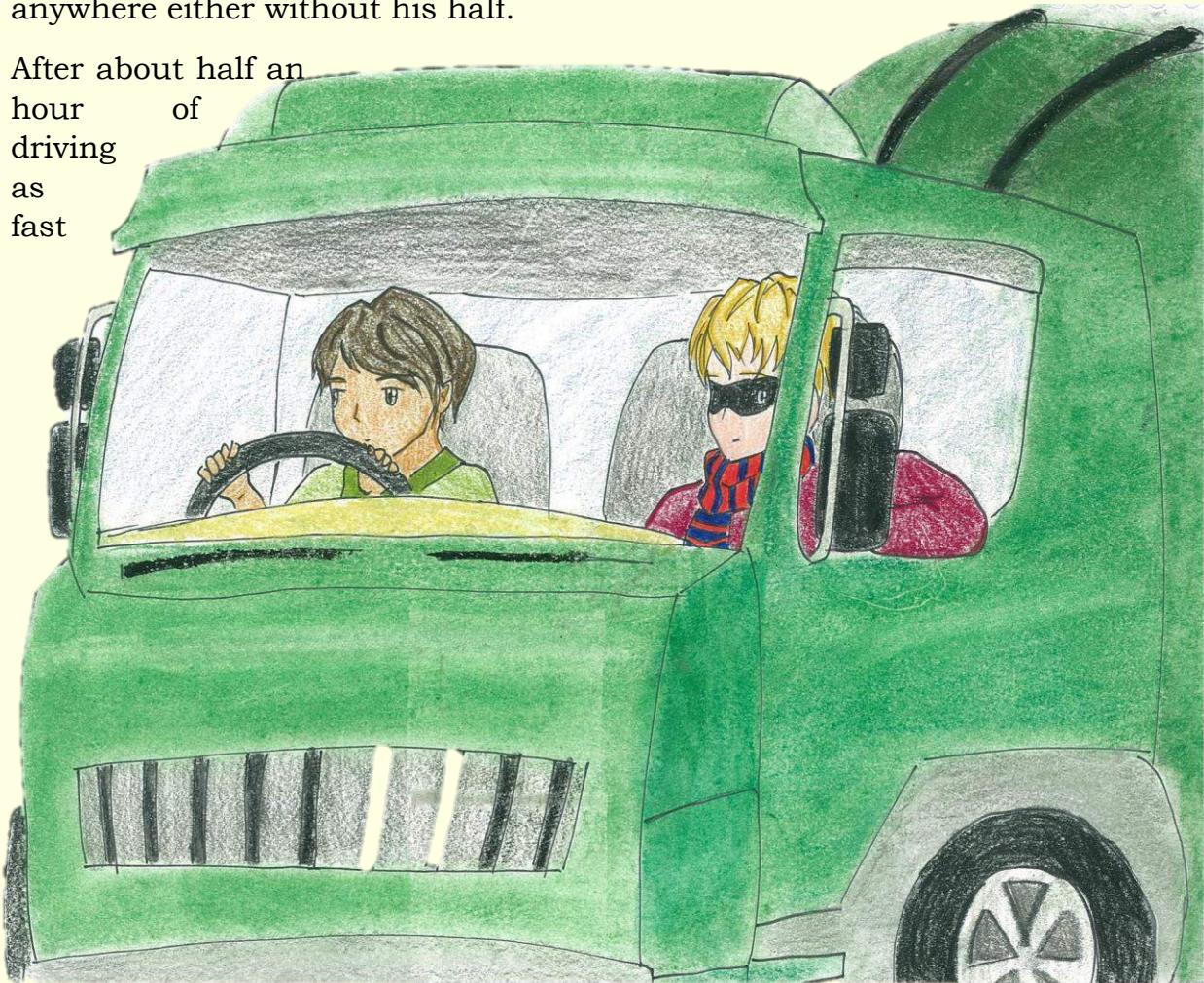
She crushed an Iced 'Vovo' with her hoof and the seagull gratefully pecked at the crumbs, hungry and exhausted from its lengthy flight. She removed the camera she had placed upon its head and nudged the SD card into its socket with great difficulty. Using the mouse was an even greater burden, but she eventually managed to access the footage from Elizabeth Quay. As she focused on the faces she let out a gasp- It was Theo! He had snatched up the clue from a stranger and ran off over the bridge.

She sat back and marvelled at it all- maybe he had changed his mind! And maybe... Just maybe... They could go back to being bandits. It was a pastime she certainly missed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Gafar turned the key in the ignition and sped off down the road. The red scooter was out of sight now, leaving a thick trail of smoke that lingered in the air. Gafar was angry. He had been polite to the man, but in return was treated with disrespect. What was worse was that he would have to chase him in order to find the other half of the clue. Besides, the man couldn't get anywhere either without his half.

After about half an hour of driving as fast



as his truck would take him, Gafar drove past a sign, indicating a service station a few kilometres away. As he approached the station, he noticed a flash of red out of the corner of his eye. Turning his head, Gafar was surprised to see the man from before, pushing his scooter on the footpath and wiping beads of sweat from his brow. It was obvious he had broken down. Driving past him, Gafar pulled into the service station and began to fill up his truck.

After a few minutes, Gafar heard a voice behind him.

"Look mate, I need the other half of that clue." said the man, red-faced and breathing heavily.

"And how do you propose you will solve it – your scooter has broken down." Gafar remarked.

"I'm sorry mate, I don't know. Just give me the other half of the clue. I'm the best person for the job and I need it."

"As much as we don't want to, we're going to have to work together if we want to solve this," said Gafar.

To his surprise, the man sauntered into the shop and returned with two 'Golden Gaytime' ice-creams. Taken aback, Gafar took it from him and shook his hand, then hesitated.

"Did you pay for these?" he asked. The man smiled, opened the door of the truck and got in, closing the door without an answer.

After filling up the truck, Gafar hurried into the shop, paid for the fuel and left a five dollar note in the tip jar to compensate for the ice-creams. Back at the truck, he got into his seat and produced his ripped half of paper from his pocket. The man did the same. Putting the two together, they read the clue.

You can breathe me in and inhale me too. I am sometimes a pebble under your shoe.

Gafar turned on the truck, pulled out of the petrol station and started driving. They would discuss the clue on the way.

CHAPTER NINE

Theo squirmed in the passenger's seat of Gafar's rumbly garbage truck. The seat covers were old but neatly patched and there wasn't any rubbish on the floor of the cabin.

"What's wrong?" asked Gafar, "Is your chair not comfortable enough?"

"No, mate, the seat's fine." Theo said.

"Perhaps not as nice as your scooter though? I'm sorry we had to leave it behind."

He's a nice guy, far too nice, and that's the problem! Thought Theo. Travelling with the kind, gentle garbage collector reminded him of visiting his posh Aunt Meredith as a little tacker – everything about Gafar and his truck was a little too clean and polite. It made him feel a bit rough and out of place, like a battered tin shed out the backyard of a palace.

"Nah, ya truck's good enough, as far as trucks go." Theo conceded, after a long pause.

Gafar smiled and they drove on in silence. Theo racked his brains trying to figure out what the mysterious clue could possibly mean. Aside from her obsession with Perth and the Quay, Connie had never really singled out any landmarks she was desperate to visit. As far as he knew, there was nothing really to draw her to anywhere in particular. He knew he certainly wasn't clever enough to puzzle out the clue himself. He would have to pick Gafar's brain sooner or later.

Finally Theo **cracked**. "Gafar mate, I'm lost," he said, "I lived with this cow for years, we were partners in crime, ya know, but she was always the brainy one. I don't have the foggiest idea what she's on about in these clues. Something you breathe in but step on at the same time – doesn't make any sense at all."

"Lived with her?" Asked Gafa as understanding dawned. "So you two were close, that's why you're getting involved in this mess?"

"Yeah, that's right." Theo said, and waited for Gafa to reply.

"Well come on then, what do ya make of it?" asked Theo, embarrassed and a bit angry to be made to ask twice.

"Nothing, nothing at all." Said Gafar. "I don't know what that cow has in mind. Although..."

"Yes? Go on!"

“Well I don’t think the next clue will be in Western Australia. Your cow seems much too clever and creative to make the hunt easy for us.”

“She’s a bright one alright.” Grinned Theo.

“Would you read me the clue again please?” asked Gafar.

Theo read it too quickly and Gafar asked him to repeat it. Annoyed, Theo spoke slowly and drew out each syllable. “You can brrreeeath the me in...”

“Ayer! Ayer!” Gasped Gafar.

“Well it’s obviously air mate, even I knew that one.”

“No, Theo, it’s Ayer! Ayer’s Rock! A pebble – a rock!”

Theo thumped him on the back. “Ayer’s Rock, you beauty!”

“Excuse me?”

“Good on ya, Gafar, you legend! Off we go to Uluru!”

You can breathe me in and inhale
me too

I am sometimes a pebble under
your shoe



CHAPTER TEN

Gafar the garbage man hopped out of the truck with a spring in his step. He felt like he had achieved something. He had found the next clue, he was sure of it. As he hopped out of the truck, red dirt blew up into his face like a miniature angry cyclone. Still inside the truck, Theo sniggered softly to himself.

'That's Straya, mate,'

He laughed.

Gafar had no idea what he was talking about.

'It's always fighting ya.'

Gafar realised that Theo meant that the climate was hostile, and smiled tightly back. He couldn't help but imagine blowing red dirt back up into his smug face, but he bit his vehemence back. Now was not the time. This was his chance to prove himself as an asset, he was sure the clue was here.

'Where do ya reckon it is mate?'

Theo had finally gotten out of the truck and was slumped against it, shielding his eyes from the sun. Gafar looked back at him, wiping the dust out of his own eyes.

'I think we should look around, and we will most likely stumble across it with a thorough search?'

Theo looked confused.

'What's 'thorough' mean mate?'

Gafar smiled politely, loosening the collar on his shirt.

'It means, to be very detailed'

Theo slowly lifted himself off the truck.

'Ahh, I got ya mate'

Gafar was relieved that Theo seemed to finally be engaging with him somewhat, all he had really done for the last few hours of the ride was to sleep. Gafar had come to expect nothing more from the man. Breaking into a light jog in an effort to re-energise himself and loosen up the muscles in his legs, Gafar made his way over to the incredibly large and beautiful Ayers Rock. He raised his hand, almost trembling, to the side of it and touched the ancient earth. He marvelled at the beauty, running his hand over the natural grooves and staring up at the towering height. It was incredible to live in a country

where the wilderness was left so protected and sacred, and where the natural sights were so tough and sunburnt. Everywhere he looked around him there were looming, jagged and reddened trees and bushes. He took a deep breath in. He wished he had brought his camera to show his family the view from here, but he made a silent vow to tell them as much as he could about it later.

'Ya doing okay, big fella?'

Theo the thief had caught up to him and seemed utterly confused as to why Gafar was stroking the rock and looking suddenly so solemn. Gafar cleared his throat and nodded, starting to speak

'We should get to looking now.'

Theo agreed, and the pair began to search the rock high and low. At first they searched separately, but after an hour of searching they came together. Theo attempted to lift Gafar onto the top of the rock but it seemed impossible, Gafar attempted to ease Theo into a crevice in the rock but this too seemed futile. They even tried to circle the rock from different ways, and in many different directions to ensure they had covered the entirety of the structure.

After several hours the pair collapsed on the red-dirt floor, already so covered in the colour that they nearly appeared to blend into the ground. Both felt exhausted, and defeated. Gafar rested his head in his hands, he had been so sure that the next clue was here. Theo spoke

'This is what ya get from the land down under mate, it plays tricks on ya'

He had attempted to make Gafar feel a little better, but really it made Gafar feel a little bit more defeated. The land down under. Down under. He thought about the statement for a moment and then jumped to his feet in a single, agile movement.

'I have got it Theo!'

Theo the thief stared up at him with despair. Had his companion gone crazy?

'It is beneath the Rock, Theo!'

Theo could not believe what he was hearing. He was torn between conversing with Gafar and picking him up and dragging him back to the truck in an effort to force some water into him and keep him hydrated. He hesitantly picked the former.

'What do ya mean beneath mate? Have you gone loopy?'

Theo slowly rose to his feet as Gafar hopped up and down impatiently on his own feet. He was so sure of it! What a clever place to hide the clue! He ran to the rock again and applied pressure to the side. It wouldn't budge. He tried again. It still wouldn't budge. He put all he could into it, but it wouldn't move. He had no idea what to do. He was not strong enough to push the rock, and his companion appeared too lazy and too weak to do anything past lifting a



can of beans. Gafar pushed away sadly from the rock and found that Theo had been watching him, amused.

'Want me to try it, Gafar?'

Gafar almost laughed, but he did not want to appear rude. There was no way the man he had spent the past day with could possibly push over this rock. Theo slowly stumbled over and squared his shoulders, placing his hands on the rock and breathing out. Theo pushed and pushed but the rock wouldn't budge. Gafar almost managed to crack an amused smile. Theo stood back, squaring his shoulders again, and readied himself to try something new. He wanted to try and lift the rock. Counting down, Theo crouched into a low squat and got a firm grip on the rock.

'3'

'2'

'!'

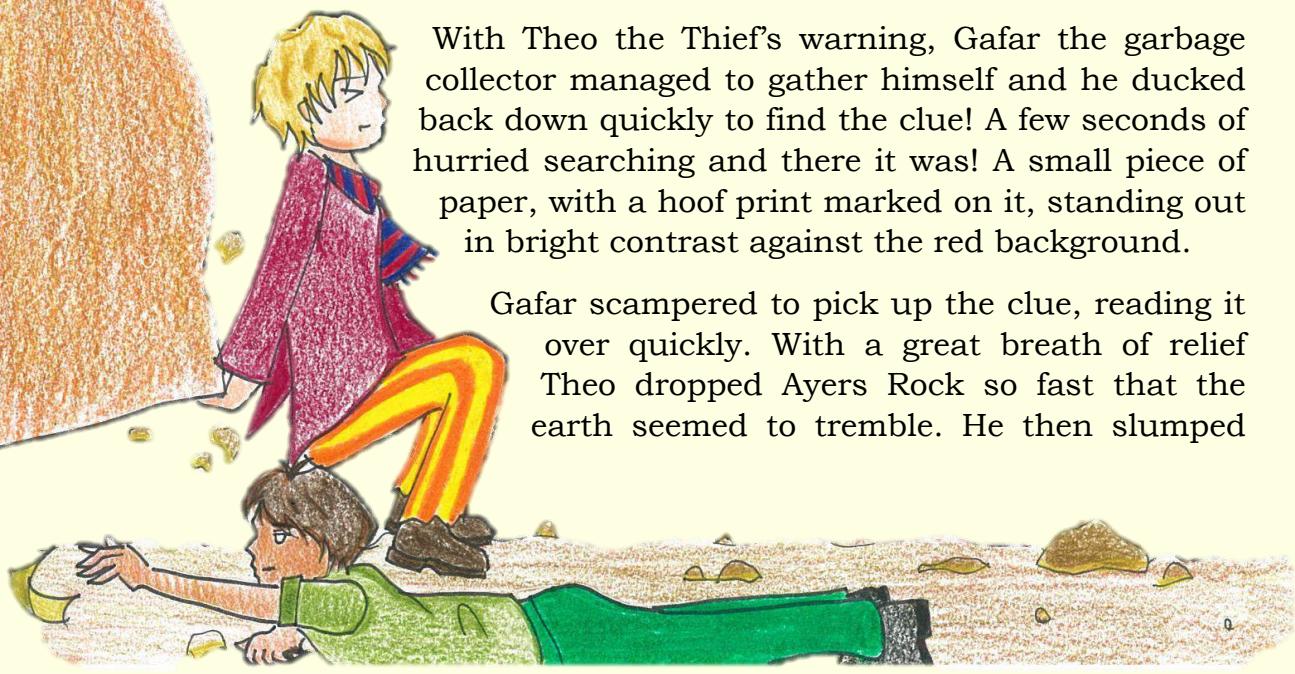
With Theo's last exclamation the rock lifted up! Gafar gasped, shocked into silence. Theo grunted in exertion.

'I need me a cold one, mate.'

Gafar broke into shocked laughter. How had Theo done it? Gafar felt terrible for underestimating him to the great extent he had. Theo had moved Ayers Rock! Gafar ducked down fast, attempting to search beneath the rock, then stood back up and slapped Theo on the back in gratitude. He swayed back and forth with the slap.

'Ya better hurry up Gafar, or this boy's gonna drop!'

Theo was sweating profusely.



With Theo the Thief's warning, Gafar the garbage collector managed to gather himself and he ducked back down quickly to find the clue! A few seconds of hurried searching and there it was! A small piece of paper, with a hoof print marked on it, standing out in bright contrast against the red background.

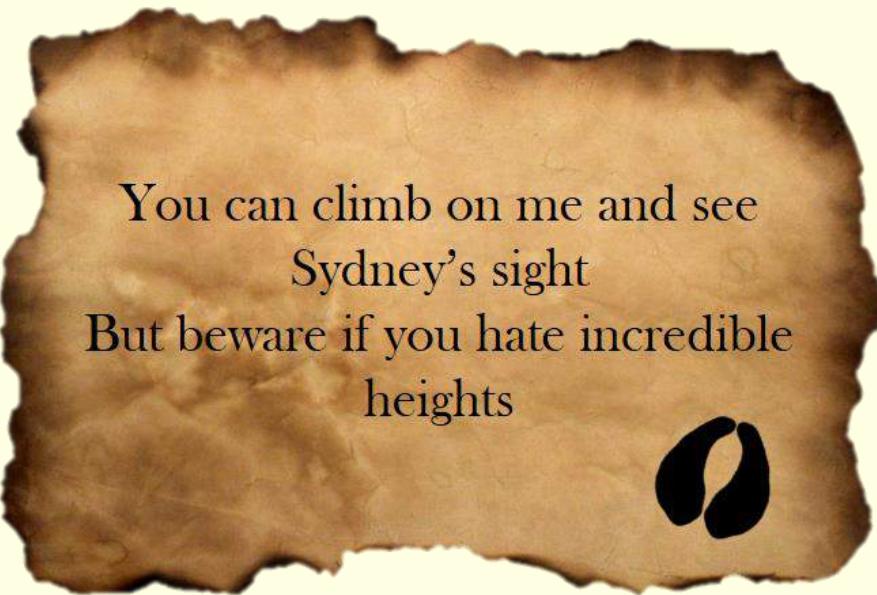
Gafar scampered to pick up the clue, reading it over quickly. With a great breath of relief Theo dropped Ayers Rock so fast that the earth seemed to tremble. He then slumped

back against the great structure, face as red as the Qantas kangaroo himself. Gafar slumped down beside Theo and turned to face him with a grin and spoke.

'I think we are going to Sydney... Mate.'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Connie the Cow giggled to herself. It wasn't the type of giggle you'd here from a young girl popping a bubble for the first time, nor the type of giggle you would hear from a wise old man telling another one of his 'classic' jokes. No, this giggle was sly and impish, like a garden gnome creeping through the night. An image of the crumpled clue reappeared in Connie's thoughts, still as vivid as when she was first wrote it:



"Mooooohuahahaha" Connie laughed.

Connie knew that Gafar and Theo were inching closer and closer to where she was hiding. She just could not wait.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The wind whipped wildly, causing Gafar to stop in his tracks and grasp onto the railings even tighter.

"Theo, I can't do this, you'll have to go without me," he said, his voice quivering with fear.

Theo turned around. He had become aware of Gafar's fear from the moment the two of them had discovered that the clue lead to Sydney Harbour Bridge, and Gafar was wearing the same panicked expression now as he had then.

"Come on mate, we're nearly at the top. Ya have a harness, ya not in any **danger** and we have to find the next clue. If ya give up now, all our effort will be wasted!"

Gafar had been terrified of heights for as long as he could remember, and even climbing a standard flight of stairs was sometimes difficult for him, let alone a structure so tall that he was almost in the clouds! Gafar slowly looked over the edge. The view from where he was standing was amazing, and even though he was terrified, he knew that he had to continue.



"Move it along please, people are waiting." said their tough looking guide. He had a thick black beard, dark sunglasses and was sporting a badge with the name '*Barry*' scrawled on it. Taking a long, deep breath, Gafar slowly began to walk, concentrating on the beauty of the harbour to distract him. The clear water sparkled in the sunshine, thousands of tiny looking people walked around the harbour and inside an old shopping centre, a huge nativity scene was set up in celebration of Christmas, which was only a week away. The giant star, connected to the roof of the stable by a thin piece of wire glowed in the sun. Suddenly, something unusual caught his eye.

"Theo, look over there!" He exclaimed, pointing to the stable with one hand, the other clinging to the rail tightly. Theo peered over the edge of the bridge, looking around frantically.

“The star!” Gafar yelled, trying to be heard over the wind. When Theo saw the star, his eyes widened in surprise. The entire star glowed yellow, except for the top corner, which was tainted by a round black marking. Gafar and Theo looked at each other for a moment, and then began to jog their way up the metal steps. All fear that Gafar had felt before was now at the back of his mind, and all he could focus on was getting to the other side of the bridge.

“Mates, you’re going to have to slow down!” called the guide. Fearing the guide, Gafar and Theo slowed down to a rapid walk and continued across the bridge, all the while wondering what was waiting for them in the stable.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Theo and Gafar followed the ominous star all the way to the shopping centre. Although, upon further inspection they found that this particular shopping centre was fairly neglected and worn, and only a few people stood sparse around the area. The pair decided to take a closer look at the place.

A filthy brown ‘Sorry, We Are Closed’ sign hung in the automatic glass doors. But Theo was not fooled.

“Look, I see the light inside!” Theo exclaimed, as they peered through the dirty glass to get a better look.

They searched around the building to find another way in. Soon enough, they found an emergency exit door behind a few skip bins in an alley behind the shopping centre. The door hung slightly and suspiciously ajar.

“It could be a trap,” whispered Theo quietly.

“We don’t have a choice. We must go on.”

Gafar was whispering too now. They were nervous. The sweat stood out on their foreheads. A warm breeze ruffled their hair and pushed the door slowly further open. It made a loud and painful creak that echoed through the alley.

“It looks like it’s our destiny...” murmured Gafar, as he looked at the ever-widening door.

He stepped inside.

The thief followed.

Before their eyes had adjusted to the light another gust of wind blew the door shut.

BANG!

Theo pushed against the door but it wouldn’t budge. There was only one way to go and that was forward. The hall they were in was lit with the dull green light from the emergency exit sign above the door. Their shadows stretched out in front of them; black roses in a shadowy forest of green. **Danger** filled the air.

The duo crept along the hallways to find the front area in which they had seen the flickering glow, constantly mindful of the deafening din their shoes made against the vinyl floor and the constant rustling of their clothing. The air was damp and musty. The air was far too cool for the middle of December.

The flickering light came closer and closer until they realised that its source was around the next bend.

The peered around the corner.

It was a...

It was a...

It was a nativity scene.

They had followed a bright star to a nativity scene. They would have laughed if the atmosphere hadn't been so tense.

The stable appeared fairly normal. There was a manger and what appeared to be plastic statues depicting Joseph, Mary, the wise men and all of the animals.

Would there be another written clue here? Would it perhaps be held in the baby Jesus' hands? Or hidden like a needle in the hay in the manger. Neither of them could tell.

They walked closer.

Gafar was becoming more confident and strode forward. The **danger** appeared to be his burden to bear.

Theo hung back a little.

"Wait!" he cried, in a loud whisper.

He knew the infamous cow like no-one else and he didn't want to take any chances. He grabbed a hold of Gafar's shoulder.

"Slow down mate. Curiosity killed the cat ya know!"

Suddenly, Gafar cried out.

Theo felt the material slip from underneath his hand.

He looked down. His words had been too late.

There was a trapdoor in the ground in front of the stable.

The trapdoor had closed behind Gafar.

Gafar was gone.

Theo was alone.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Gafar hit the ground rolling, even before he knew exactly where he was. He was almost positive that this was where the cow was keeping Boomerang, but he was too smart to ever be one hundred per cent sure of anything he assumed without evidence.

He crouched in the darkness, waiting for his eyes to adjust. To the left of him was a sink, a microwave, and an oven. To the right, what looked like a large bag of grass from Bunnings. He was *pretty* sure at that point that a cow *may* have been there. Then, he turned his head, and there was a silhouette, which Gafar was sure he had seen on the back of QANTAS aeroplanes.

“Cowabunga!” came a sudden voice, which made Gafar jump.

He glanced back down the length of the room, searching for any sign of the cow who had done all this.

“Please try and be a little bit quieter, she might hear us,” said Gafar softly, feeling around in the dark for the ropes holding Boomerang to the chair.

“Yes, mate!” exclaimed Boomerang, and Gafar cringed.

He reached around his head, looking for ropes, and accidentally felt around his oddly tiny mouth, with his little tongue peeping out, and furrowed his brow, quickly moving his hand. Finally, he found Boomerang’s arms, also small, and tried to find the end of the knot, but he could not.

He heard something shuffling, in the distance – the room was larger than he thought, just long and narrow – and knew he had to hurry.

What would Theo do in this situation? he thought to himself. *Nothing?*

“..No. He would use his... he would use his strength,” he thought, breathing in, feeling in the rope for the thinnest, weakest point, and pulled hard. The rope snapped, and Boomerang excitedly jumped in his chair even though his legs were tied, whispering;

“Yes, mate, yes!”

Gafar grinned, reaching down to find Boomerang’s legs, when suddenly he let out a cry. Gafar’s blood ran cold. The cry was a single word.

“Cow!” he turned, and the cow was there – Connie, her name was.

She was furious, and it took her a few moments to realise what was happening.

“...abunga,” mumbled Boomerang, drooping his head, as Connie began to move towards them.

She moved like a waddling freight train, not stopping at anything in her path.

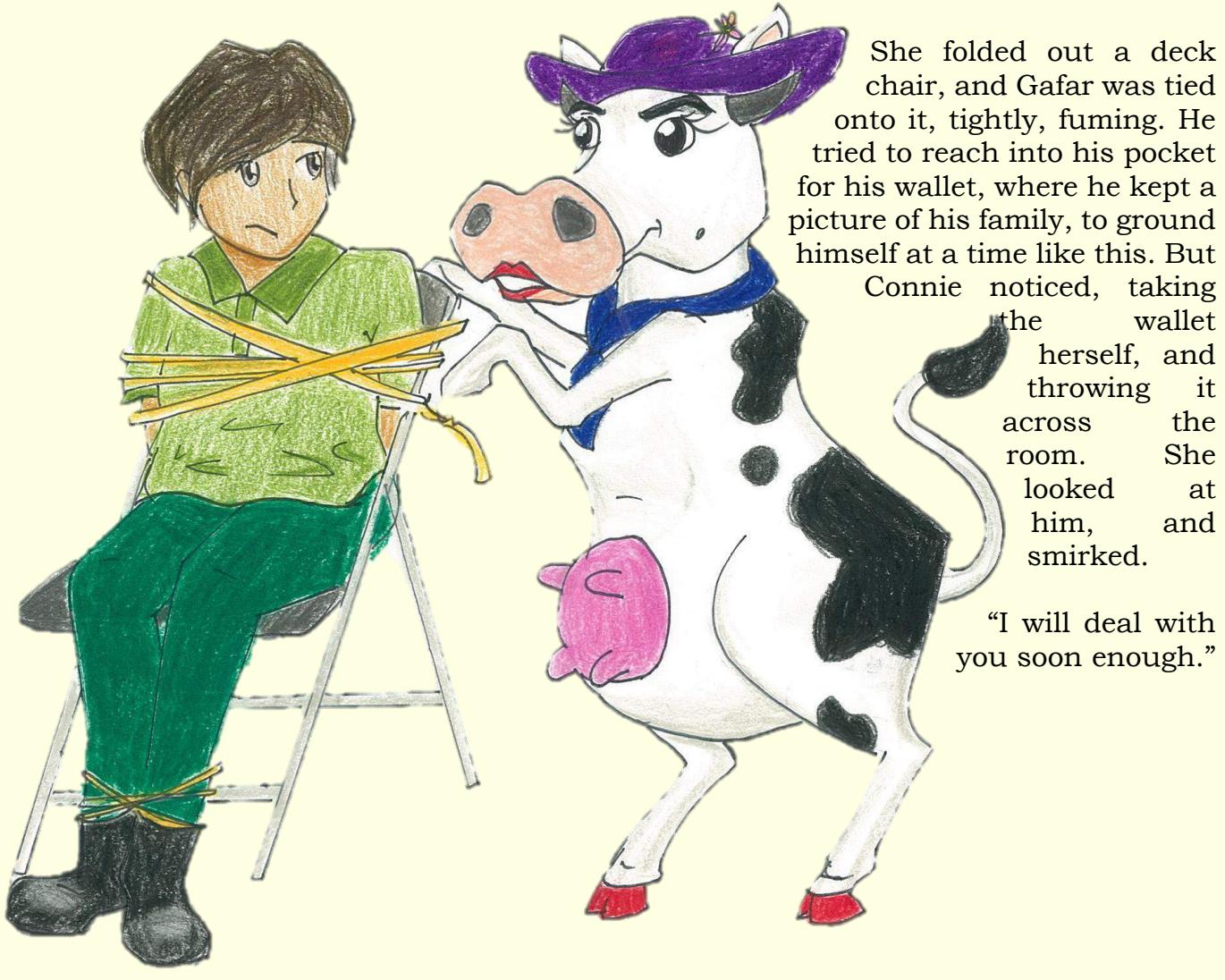
"Hop for it!" said Gafar, moving out of the way as he finished untying Boomerang, reaching for the ceiling. He used his intelligence. If the kangaroo is gone, that's all that matters. She wouldn't want anything with him – he wasn't tied to any major companies.

"Yes, mate!" shouted Boomerang, and he hopped for the trap door in the ceiling, showing only by a thin square of white light.

He leapt up, powerfully, his little hands reaching for the edge, the way out... and then the Connie-train hit at full force, and Boomerang was tackled onto the ground.

"No!" shouted Gafar, scratching his head and running to the sink, taking a metal spoon and crashing it against the metal of the sink, sending clang noises through the room, knowing cows were spooked by loud noises.

But Connie was a different breed. She overpowered them. In the enclosed space, Gafar's intelligence was rendered useless, and Boomerang's lack of intelligence was a massive weakness.



She folded out a deck chair, and Gafar was tied onto it, tightly, fuming. He tried to reach into his pocket for his wallet, where he kept a picture of his family, to ground himself at a time like this. But Connie noticed, taking the wallet herself, and throwing it across the room. She looked at him, and smirked.

"I will deal with you soon enough."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Theo the thief was in shock. Where had Gafar just disappeared into? After a few moments of confused blinking, Theo reached up and twisted his scarf a few more times around his neck to keep it from falling off and hurried over to the part of the floor that Gafar had seemed to fall through. He decided to keep at least a metre away in fear of falling in too, and dropped down to his hands and knees. Slowly, he felt around the floor, gliding his hands over the smooth linoleum until his hands gripped something jutting out of it, like a small handle. Theo lit up. Maybe he could be a professional trap-door finder. He had found the handle remarkably fast. He decided to keep in mind that he should book some trap-door classes to attend after this whole debacle had been resolved. Then, tentatively, he gripped the handle and slowly pushed the trap door open. He heard voices below, and in an incredibly uncharacteristic moment of strategy, he decided not to make his finding known, and quickly closed the trapdoor. This effectively kept him hidden and allowed him time to figure out how to get down below and save his friend.

Theo stared around at the nativity scene that he found himself in. There were several life-size plastic people, animals and gifts. Theo crawled over to one of the donkeys present and touched its back. Thick plastic. He then reached down, dropping to the ground in effort to see how the donkeys was secured to the floor. But it was secured so tightly he could not see beneath the hoof. Instead, he grasped the hoof in his hand and began to yank. The donkey did not move, and its hoof did not give way. It was very strongly secured to the floor. Theo the thief sighed. He had relied on Gafar the entire trip for information, strategy and common sense, and this was now what he needed most in an effort to save him. Squaring his shoulders and squinting his eyes shut, Theo began to think deeply. How could he get below without endangering himself or anyone inside, and at the same time make sure there was a safe route out. Theo tugged at his scarf nervously.

Suddenly, he had an incredible idea! What if he secured his scarf to the fake donkey and lowered himself down to Gafar? The inspiring thought filled Theo with joy. It seemed like a brilliant plan and he had come up with it all by himself. Within a minute he had managed to tie the rope around the stomach of the donkey and had opened the trap door once again. Tugging on the multi-colour scarf to ensure that it was tied safely, and could hold him, he began his descent down into whatever was below.

With a large bump, Theo fell off his makeshift rope and onto the floor, spread-eagled. So much for a sophisticated and strategic landing. He stood up quickly, the room was very dark and appeared empty.

'Theo!'

Theo spun around quickly as soon as he heard the call. He reeled on his heels in shock as he became aware of the sight before him. Connie the cow, his old friend, was facing him, about a metre away and a little further behind her were Gafar and the Qantas kangaroo, tangled and tied in ropes.

'You do look awfully thin, Theo, Dear'

Connie spoke with a sense of amusement and sarcasm in her tone, but there was a full-throated quality to her voice that suggested she meant something much deeper.

Theo found that at the sight of her he felt a sense of relief. Relief that she was okay? Relief that he had caught her? He wasn't sure. But after a second of that initial relief, he felt himself grow tense. This cow had tied his friend up.

'What have ya done, Connie? Look at this mess.'

At the tone of his voice, Connie became even more defensive and her biting remark came fast and harsh.

'This mess? The only reason I ever started stealing was to look after you and your mess.'

Theo took a step forward and Connie took a further step towards him. He could not believe what she had just said. He was so mad he could have shaken the whole room.

'I told ya not to do this Connie!'

How dare she tell him that this was his fault? He stared at Gafar, still tied up behind Connie and his anger was cemented. Connie raised her hooves to her hips, smacking her lips.

'I needed to look after you, Theodore.'

The statement started off very sharp but it ended softly. Her voice had broken and she turned her face away from Theo. For a second Theo thought that something may have gotten into Connie's eye. But then he realised, as her shoulders began to shake. Connie had begun to cry. Though, as soon as he realised what was happening she sniffed quickly, turned back to face him and wiped the wetness away with her hoof promptly. Connie almost never cried.

At the sight of Connie's tears, Theo's steely resolve faltered. He reached a hand out to her but did not touch her.

'You don't need to do that anymore, Connie. I can do that myself'

He meant it. Since she had been gone, he had struggled but he had done it. He was fed (occasionally) and he had learnt to do the chores (occasionally). On top of that he had started so many new classes, and was now much more aware of what he did and didn't like – even though he forgot to attend half of

them. Connie said nothing in reply to him, she just reached out and took his shoulders. There was a long silence, while Connie regarded Theo. The defensive fire in her eyes softened into motherly affection and a sense of burning shame. After an even longer silence, she mustered up the courage to speak.

‘Can you forgive me, Theo?’

Theo smiled, looking up at his bestfriend and pulling her into a well needed hug.

‘Of course, Connie, of course.’

The pair began to laugh in relief, and Theo had to wipe more tears from Connie’s eyes. There was only a short silence before a voice was heard.

‘Uh, this is all well and good but if you hadn’t noticed we are still tied up over here.’

Theo blinked, he had forgotten that anyone else was here. Gafar was struggling in his bindings, and was grinning mischievously at Theo, pushing his tied hands forward as if to say ‘could you undo these?’

‘Oh, of course mate. Real sorry, mate’

Theo blushed. He didn’t like showing his more affectionate side in front of others and he was pretty sure that just now he might have even shed a tear. He slowly ambled over to Gafar and the Qantas Kangaroo. He began to talk to them but was interrupted by a voice.

‘I’ll fix us some grass pancakes, yes?’

Connie disappeared in search of her fry pan and Theo’s stomach grumbled. He hadn’t had her pancakes in a long time.

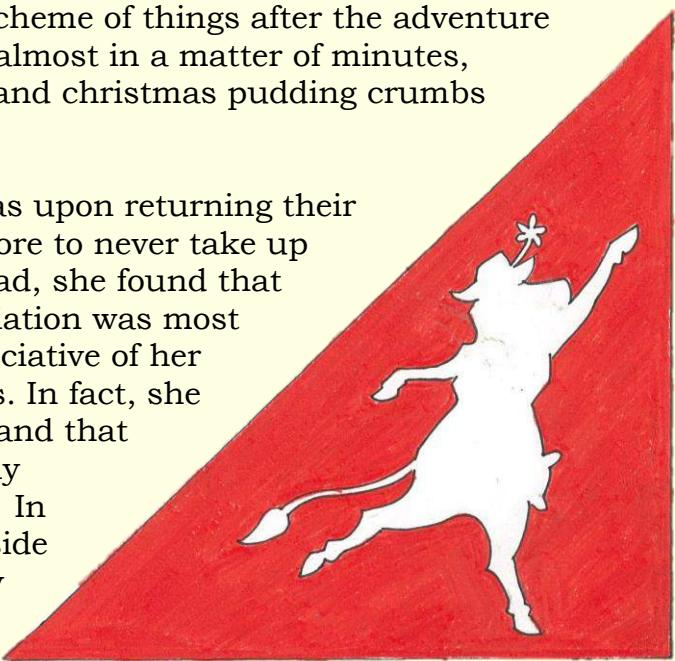
‘Yes mate!’ said the Qantas kangaroo.

EPILOGUE

Christmas seemed so short in the scheme of things after the adventure they had all had. It came and went almost in a matter of minutes, leaving nothing but fuller tummies and christmas pudding crumbs in its wake.

Connie apologised formally to Qantas upon returning their prized possession, and solemnly swore to never take up thievery and abduction again. Instead, she found that joining the Country Women's Association was most beneficial, and they were very appreciative of her innovative recipe for grass pancakes. In fact, she became so famous throughout the land that Qantas decided she too was a worthy mascot for the 'Spirit of Australia.' In mere months she graced the other side of the Australian plane tails, side by side with the kangaroo who loved to say "Cowabunga!"

After she began living her life as a law-abiding citizen, Connie wanted to help give back. All of the belongings she and Theo had stolen in



the past were put into a beautiful display in Canberra. The same structure has since been renamed the National Museum of Australia.

QANTAS

Theo left behind his lethargic ways and resolved that he would live life to the fullest. After going through countless more phases such as the paleo diet, professional Pokemon hunting and pilates, he finally settled on one cohesive career: becoming a pilot. It took several lessons with Boomerang, whose limited vocabulary provided an even greater challenge than first expected, but for the first time in his life, Theo persisted. In the end he even managed to graduate from the Australian Wings Academy with flying colours. Once he became a pilot, and Boomerang travelled all around the world together, seeing incredible places and visiting breathtaking landscapes.

Well, for the most part... Theo still spent a lot of time holed up in bed watching 'The Brady Bunch.' Some things never change.

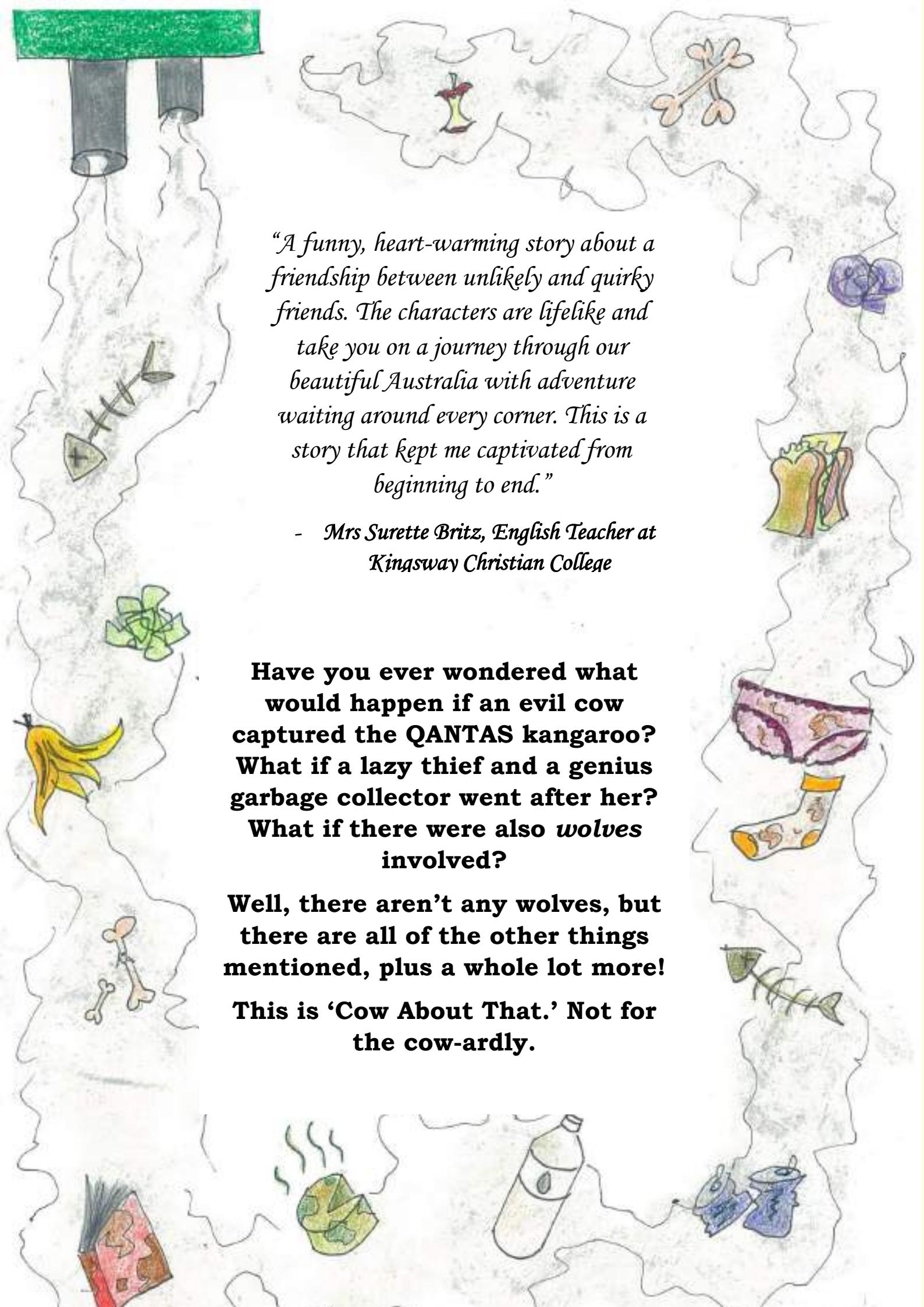
The summer air dissipated in the cool twilight, foreshadowing the cold winter to come. It didn't matter to Gafar though, as he looked forward to seeing his family again. His savings jar was brimming and abundant, propped up against the weathered photo of his wife and daughter, the corners and edges thumbed over and smoothed. Finally, he was going back

to his family, and this time it was more than just a mere visit. He had saved so much that he was now able to bring them to Australia to live for good!

Following their arrival, Gafar and his family built a holiday home in the country of New South Wales, just so they could be close to Connie and Theo. They got free flights, courtesy of Qantas and were always over visiting the quirky pair. The group enjoyed many a time on the farm, which was now well kept in equal measures (almost) by both Theo and Connie, and always delighted in a Sunday serving of Connie's famous grass pancakes.

And over cups of tea and orange juice in the afternoon sun, everyone laughed and remembered good times and old memories...

Memories that all started when a cow kidnapped a kangaroo, and two strangers travelled across the country after it, destined to become the best of friends.



"A funny, heart-warming story about a friendship between unlikely and quirky friends. The characters are lifelike and take you on a journey through our beautiful Australia with adventure waiting around every corner. This is a story that kept me captivated from beginning to end."

- Mrs Surette Britz, English Teacher at Kingsway Christian College

Have you ever wondered what would happen if an evil cow captured the QANTAS kangaroo? What if a lazy thief and a genius garbage collector went after her? What if there were also *wolves* involved?

Well, there aren't any wolves, but there are all of the other things mentioned, plus a whole lot more!

This is 'Cow About That.' Not for the cow-ardly.