

KANGAROOS DON'T

Like coffee



KORTeATøes



THE KIDS' CANCER PROJECT
WRITE A BOOK IN A DAY

Parameters Form

Team Details

STATE: VIC

DIVISION: Middle School

SCHOOL/GROUP: Box Hill High School (BOX HILL)

TEAM NAME: KORTEATOES

TEAM ID: 905

Parameters and random words

Parameters

Primary character 1 Surfer

Primary character 2 Psychic

Non-human character Kangaroo

Setting Motel

Issue Sink hole in the road

Random words

ruby

melts

shiver

tasty

sponge

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Prologue

From the perspective of Lilith the psychic

Mmmmmmmmm. Mhm. That's good. I lick the foam off my lips. That's the kind of coffee people dream about. I set the cup down so Kris can try. He has a little lick and knocks the cup over. Yeah. As hard as I try, kangaroos won't ever like coffee. It's my last night in this motel, as much as Kris and I love the beach, I miss home. My little treehouse. Back there, there's nobody around to give us funny looks. A 'witch' and her 'beast'. The name calling is terrible in towns and cities. I head back inside, my favourite thing to do is get ready for a day of nothing. I fix up my hair in the mirror, there's a loc out of place. It doesn't bother me, though. Which lipstick should I-

I breathe deeply in.

Water and sun create blinding rays of light. The girl is surfing. The water rises, and a tsunami approaches. Everybody leaves. She's left nearly alone. She knows something is wrong. The waves

drag her toward the shore. She's pulled closer, too fast, board snaps. She will fall. She will be lost. There is a sinkhole. She will be gone, lost, fallen.

The images leave with my breath.

I open my eyes to find myself in the mirror. Just me. Just another vision. The visions have come since I've been a child. They always come true. I know the girl is staying around here somewhere. There's some surf competition this week. I feel her close, she may even be in the same motel. I won't go to find her. I've got better things to do. She can probably handle herself. I pick up my orange lipstick and head outside to find Kris.

He stares at me blankly. "No," I say to Kris, "Just a vision, it's fine."

He turns his hips and wacks the back of my knees with his tail. "Oh gosh, it's fine. Just some girl who's going to fall in a hole or something. It's none of our business. We have to go home, the tide is really going to come in soon."

Another wack. This one hurt a little. I roll my eyes so hard it strains me. We start walking. I suddenly close my eyes as images start to flash in my mind again. *Kris is jumping in. A heroic*



feat. *The girl is saved.* My eyes open slowly, I'm standing completely still. Kris looks back at me, he's metres ahead now. He wouldn't leave me to save someone he doesn't even know, right? "It's nothing. Just another stupid vision."

Chapter 1 - Encounter

From the perspective of Layne the surfer

It's over, I'm not ever getting my surfboard back. I can barely keep my head above water. The shore approaches, but the water does not get shallower. I should be walking on the road now but instead the water leaves me gasping for air. Something pulls me, there's something in the ground. I'm pulled deep under and the only thing I see is black.

"Ow, my head." I rub my forehead. *What just happened?*

"AHHH!!" I hear in the distance. Where is that coming from? I look around and see pretty much nothing except some grass with some trees and tall buildings in the distance. Above me is a gaping hole in the sky, and foamy water drips from it occasionally. It's too far up for me to see what's inside. Am I going crazy? This doesn't look like the Gold Coast. I winced, my head was throbbing, it's so painful.

"Ma'am are you alright?" I hear a voice next to me call out. I swing my head to the side, startled at the sudden change in volume. I look up and find an echidna with corks on its spikes staring blankly at me. I look at him with a confused look before realising an animal is talking to me.

"Oh um, yeah I'm okay." I reply, extremely confused about whether I'm imagining this or an echidna is actually speaking to me. The small echidna smiles at me with a small nod before strolling off.



Did an echidna actually speak to me or was I so out of it that I imagined the whole interaction?

There are some little signs around, lining the paths, I get closer to read them. Okay so, I was at the beach surfing in Gold Coast, the tide came in really fast, I lost my board, and now suddenly I'm here? This doesn't make any sense.

"Hey!" a voice comes.

"AH!" I screamed and whipped my head around.

"Sorry, didn't mean to scare you, just saw that you seemed really confused." Not this again. Is a kangaroo actually talking to me?

"Am I seeing things?" I think out loud.

"No you're not, My name's Kris, what's yours?" He lifts up his arm for me to shake. I hesitantly shake it.

“U-uh my name is Layne. Y-you’re a talking kangaroo?” I shakily speak up. I’m scared, what is happening, why are animals talking?

“Yeah, it’s way better than up there, right? I can talk here!” Kris says contentedly.

What is a normal thing here? Do animals just talk like humans? This kangaroo says, ‘from up there’.

“Are you... from up there?” I ask, hesitantly.

“Yeah, I wanted to save you. Thought you’d want help getting back. Although, now that I’m here, I wouldn’t mind staying for a while first.” He says thoughtfully, looking around the city.

“Well, I guess I’ll have to come with you. I can’t make it back myself.” I say. Somehow, I trust him. He seems... pure and full of good.

Chapter 2 - Acceptance

From the perspective of Lilith the psychic

I know exactly where the girl fell. I wasn’t planning to save her and I didn’t think Kris would either. I stand on the road by the seashore, next to the sinkhole that just goes down and down and down, it **melts** into the ground, so deep revealing diamonds and a **ruby** here or there. It was flooded by water a small while ago, my visions told me exactly when the tide would pull back. Humans are so much more complicated than Kris. I miss him.

I draw a deep breath into my lungs and concentrate...

Falling, down, down, down. I land in a new world. A strange world.

I breathe out, the vision disappearing with the breath and jump. Down and down and down.

I unsteadily land on my feet brushing my long locs out of my face. My throat itches from all the dust I kicked up in my not so graceful landing - I coughed and hack until a deep, wizened voice booms in my ears, I whipped my head around, my dangling earrings hitting the sides of my face, to see a deer, a deer dressed in a maid outfit. “Hello ma’am, can I help you?” It says in that deep voice.

“Umm uhh ahh-” I stuttered.

“It’s fine, I’ll leave you to it.” The deer turns and leaves taking a cart full of cleaning wipes, sprays and a single **sponge**.

I breathe in, I gotta find Kris.

The smell of chlorine, loud music and dancing. Drinks made of berries and leaves. The feeling of excitement and love.

A pool party.

Kris is somewhere in this place and he will be at a pool party.

I start wandering the streets, animals are everywhere, it’s strangely nice. Unlike humans, there are no looks of judgement or disapproval, no feeling of hatred. It’s comforting.

The streets are filled to the brim with birds wearing hats adorned with flowers, ribbons and anything they can find, a few sleepy koalas in comfy, fluffy looking



pants and even a quokka grinning ear to ear, clearly excited about something. Each animal that passes nods at me in a friendly acknowledgement, it's lovely. It would be better with Kris though.

Small, powerless, fear.

My breath is squeezed out of me. Something is wrong.

I walk towards a bush, my body being pulled by an unseen force. The bush is shaking with a small sniffing noise coming from within its leaves. Pushing apart the branches, a small dingo is crying, it looks up at me with big, wide eyes and sniffles, "I'm lost."

I blinked, taken aback by an animal talking at me again, I shook my head and looked around. "No ones going to find you if you hide, little one" I reply in my softest voice, helping the little fluffy dingo climb out into the open.

We walk down the streets together until its family yelps with joy and rushes up to us, they nod gratefully at me without an inkling of judgement or disapproval. Unlike what humans have done in the past.

I watch the family wander off and do the same myself, continuing to seek out Kris...

Chapter 3 - The Floating Sinkhole

Kris jumps around wildly. "This is it! Layne? Don't you get it?"

Layne can't help but smile at Kris's excitement. She's confused, sure, but he's so happy.

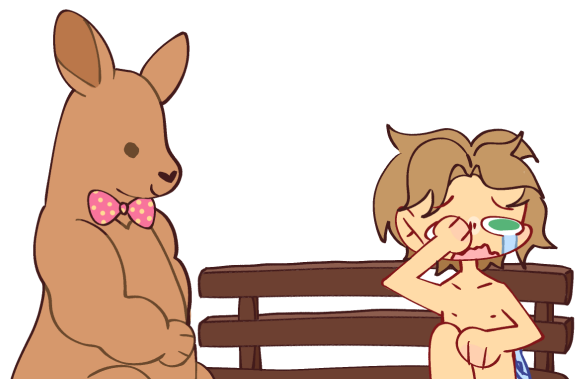
"My friend always told me stories about belonging. I never thought it could happen to me! She would love it here!" He slows down and looks at Layne. He gives the best smile a kangaroo can give and nudges her shoulder.

"I belong here. I mean something in this world." Layne pats his ear gently and smiles. Suddenly the smile drops. She starts looking around her surroundings.

"People are missing." she says, walking toward the town, "I heard screaming when I fell. I was stupid, I didn't stay to make sure everyone else was okay." Layne looks down in shame, shaking her head. Kris nudges her head gently. Even with his newfound ability to talk, no words are needed. He simply nudges her again and hops slowly away. She follows.

Layne feels no fear, following Kris into the unknown. Since the beginning, his character had been perfectly clear, even when he had no words to express himself. She follows him through the city, enjoying the view.

"There." says Kris. He hops over to a boy sitting on a bench. He has a broken surfboard under his feet and nothing but shorts on. Layne doesn't recognise him, he must have come internationally for the competition. Layne calls out, "Hey! I'm from the surf comp too! Come with us!" The boy's head turns up



in shock, a kangaroo shaped bodybuilder looms over a screaming girl. Kris and Layne look quite a pair from afar. The boy is not to be calmed, he retreats to the furthest corner of the bench. Layne looks to Kris, she wants him to go to the boy. Kris hops slowly to the boy, the boy stiffens up. It's clear he'd been crying just a little. Understandably so. Layne expects Kris to say some words of comfort, maybe to convince him there's no danger. But Kris just touches his head to the boy's shoulder. The boy looks at him, he relaxes himself and lets out a little smile. He is safe.

The trio walks briskly along the streets of the city. The boy opens up about how he had fallen through a hole. He had seen Layne fall too but he ran away.

"I don't know how to get back." He says to Layne.

"I don't know either. But he does." Layne turns her head to Kris.

"Is there anyone else still here?" Kris asks. His voice seems to change like a light switch. When he was talking to Layne, he was excited, bubbly and loud. And now, talking to the young boy, he's assertive, calm, and so comforting. It's like he can give anyone exactly what they need to be content in the moment. The boy shakes his head.

"In that case," says Kris, "We can get out of here." He hops along quickly.

Layne and the boy assume he's heading to where the sinkhole was, but they don't know the layout of the town.

The two humans stop walking when Kris points up at something. Layne's face drops.

"Is there where I fell?" she asks, flabbergasted.

Kris nods, "Suppose so. We can go back the same way."

The boy starts to breathe heavier, he'd been calm until he saw the sinkhole again. Though it looks like something out of a movie from here - just a hole in the sky with the gold coast on the other side just peaking through, you can even smell the sea air. His face drops, then his stomach feels as though it does. Kris doesn't even see the boy's expression before going to comfort him. With one touch, the boy knows that he is safe, he will make it back home. Kris stands right under the hole, his tail and muscles stiff and ready to propel him.

"Now, you two need to hold on tight to me." orders Kris. They grab on, on one each side. Kris hops, a small jump. Then a bigger jump. He stares up at the hole and with the third jump, he shoots up like a rocket. The sun gets brighter until all three need to shut their eyes tight.

Chapter 4 - Misunderstandings and Stereotypes

Up and up and up they go, practically flying out of the sinkhole, past the layers of soil and clay, past the occasional sparkling rock. Kris flies into the sunlight and lands in the sand right beside the sinkhole. Both of the surfers land with a thud.

"Sorry." Laughs Kris, "That was the softest landing I could manage."

The young surfer boy runs at Kris and wraps himself tightly around him.

“Thanks,” Says the boy, “I’m so glad to be home.” The boy smiles brightly at Layne and Kris, and gives a big wave. He’s eager to see his family.

Home. Repeats Kris in his head, *This is his home. What about mine?*

“He’s such a sweet kid.” Layne comments. Kris is forced out of his head once again, he stops thinking to reply, “He is. I’m glad I could help.”

“Hang on, you can still talk here?” Asks Layne, staring at Kris.

Kris lets out a chuckle.

“Wow,” Says Layne, “Maybe now you can calm people down like you did with the boy.”

As Kris slowly retreats back into his thoughts, he has an idea.

“Layne,” he asks, “Could you help me?”

Layne agrees instantly, she owes this kangaroo a favour, after he got her back home safely.

Layne and Kris stood outside a cafe. “Here’s the plan,” Layne whispers, “I know this guy. He always comes in here and harrasses the poor girl working. All you have to do is work your power on him! Calm him down and get him to never do it again, people will love you!”

Kris never really feels nervous but this is his one chance. If he figures out how to make people like him, it could be the answer. This could be his home, he could stay with his friend Lilith and be happy. Kris nodded at Layne and stood behind the man in line. Some heads turned and some people whispered to their companions.

“Is she allowed in here with that thing?”

“Why is that animal inside?”

Kris takes a deep breath and holds his ground. The man in front scoffs at Kris, and steps up to the counter. He starts talking to the cashier, a young looking girl, and jeers at her. He makes jokes that the girl seems really tired of. Kris nudges the man gently.

“You can go. You don’t have to come here every day.” Says Kris gently.

The man seems to feel embarrassed immediately, but he does not give one more glance in the cashier's direction, he just leaves. Kris feels hopeful, after seeing that feat, surely people would think of him differently? Some people start laughing and some people whisper.

“What did it do?”

“Is that dangerous?”

Kris hops out of there as fast as his big legs and tail allow. Layne follows quickly and slams the door shut.

Chapter 5 - A Goodbye

The pair sit in a field, there’s nobody around. Layne looks over at Kris, the kangaroo’s eyes are clouded with thoughts, he’s clearly concerned. The pair sit in silence for a while, just enjoying each other's company.

Kris sighs, his mind a storm of thoughts until he finally speaks.

“Have you ever had a home? Not a house but just a place where you can be yourself?” He asks genuinely. Layne’s head tilts in surprise.

“Well, yeah,” she replies.

“Well I do now, I liked it down there.” Kris says contently, not letting out the anxiety that bubbled inside.

The two of them resume their thoughtful silence, letting the wind blow on them and making Layne **shiver**.

Layne opens her mouth to speak but promptly shuts it, trying to choose her words carefully.

“It's ok to change, you've gotta do what's best for you.” Kris nods at this comment.

“That's kinda how I started surfing, most people in my life told me not to but I did it anyway. It was best for me.” Layne advises, shrugging.

Kris starts thinking, thinking about all he could do, he could have a life, a house, maybe even a family. He could be seen as more than just a wild animal, there is so much to explore, to do.

“Layne?” he inquires,

“Yeah?”

“I don't want to live here, I want to go back.” He glances down, unsure of how she would react. Kris realises he cares lots about Layne, despite them only knowing each other for a few hours. He likes how she can be quiet and insightful, like Lilith always is, he likes the quiet. He misses his psychic friend. He wishes he could talk all this through with her, she would know what to do. Layne breaks his train of thoughts, “So this is goodbye?”

“I think so... goodbye.” He nudges Layne gently.

Kris hops off to find his friend, bounding over hills, past leafy trees and the occasional cafe that had **tasty** looking coffees. Kris never cared for coffee but Lilith did, the smell always reminds him of her.

Kris finally comes to a clearing in the bush, high in a tree is a strange looking house, the house is covered in colourful tapestries, plants and paintings. Illustrated flowers swirl up the walls of the building and the sun shines through the stained glass windows casting purple and blue light across the balcony.

With a bit of a struggle Kris clammers up into the cosy, strange home of his psychic friend, Lilith, hoping, praying that she's here.

Inside the floor is raw wood with overlapping rugs scattered around, there are shelves of crystal balls, trinkets and books. It smells of teas, herbs and coffee. Just like his friend.

The house is empty.

A pang of guilt strikes Kris' heart. He won't get to say goodbye.

Chapter 6 - A Reunion

Kris began to use the typewriter sitting in the corner, with an ache in his heart he began to write...

To my dearest friend Lilith

I wish I could say goodbye in person but I can't, so I'm typing this out to you.

I'm so grateful for everything you've done for me but I can't stay here, not after going down the sink hole.

Here I'm just an animal, I'm your pet and your friend. But there? There I can do things that matter, I can be my own creature.

I can see others like me.

It feels like home.

I'm sorry to leave you like this but this is something I want.

All the best. From your friend,

Kris

Kris leaves the note, folded neatly, on his friend's desk. Off he goes to the crappy motel where everything started, following the same path to the sinkhole. The tsunami is over now and the sinkhole in the side of the road was exposed.. With one last look at the world around, he jumps.

Kris wanders and marvels, houses with doors that he fits through, ceilings that don't hurt his head, beds that look like home. He goes to the town centre and enjoys all the food and drinks, things that he actually likes the taste of. Nobody looks at him funny, everybody respects him. And they'd respect his friend. She would love it here. He misses the disgusting lick of coffee he has every morning. *This is my home now. And this is the right choice.* He repeats this in his mind, over and over. So focused on his own thoughts, Kris doesn't notice when a platypus is talking to his face.

"Hey!" says the voice for the third time.

"Oh," Kris shakes away his confusion and smiles, "Hey."

The platypus has been annoyed at having been ignored, but when seeing Kris smile, everything just **melts** away.

"There's a party down the street, you're new here! You should come." Says the platypus. It's only now that Kris registers the outfit, a bikini. A pool party sounds fun. He follows the platypus down the street smiling.

The party is lively, emus kicking a massive footy, dogs, dingoes and foxes play fighting and throwing each other into the pool. Food that looks amazing. Nobody bats an eye at Kris, just a few friendly nods. Something is still missing. Kris hops over to the food tables and smells something familiar. A cup of coffee sits on the edge of the table.

"Is that you?" Kris asks quietly. The hope inside him flares up, could his best friend really be here with him?



Lilith comes out from behind an arch, and wraps her arms around the kangaroo tightly. "You didn't get my note?" Kris wonders quietly.

Lilith shook her head, confused.

"I came right after you did. I can't believe you came in the first place but..." She sighs, "I understand why you stayed."

Kris immediately starts talking, he spills and spills about how sorry he is for leaving, and how much he wants to tell her, and that he didn't want to leave her.

"Stop." Lilith rolls her eyes. "Just stop, now that you can talk, you won't stop. I like it here. We should stay."

Kris's eyes widened.

"We can be us. I won't be called a witch and you won't be called a beast. Maybe my visions can help someone, if they believe me."

Kris wacked Lilith's knees with his tail like usual, "They will believe you here. I think that we can belong."

"Yeah, we can belong."

Epilogue - 3 Months Later

Lilith stood in front of her living room wall with a hand full of photographs. Lilith and Kris had visited Layne in the human world a couple weeks ago, along with many other animal realm adventures they took heaps of photos together and Lilith is now hanging them up.

Each contained a different memory; the first animal pool party, building a new treehouse, shopping on 'mane' street, Lilith finding all the best coffee spots.

They were always together.

"This was my favourite memory," Kris pointed towards the photograph Kris on a surfboard with Layne guiding him along the waves. Layne had taken them to the beach and taught them how to surf...well, attempted to. Lilith was easier to teach than Kris, which makes sense as Kris is a kangaroo.

Message From the Team

Authors:

Thanks for reading this crazy story, I had so much fun coming up with something that's a little silly and getting to write and illustrate with my friends - I hope whoever you are that your doing well and if not that's ok, hang in there, it gets better <3 - Oak

Enjoy yourself. Do what you like. Otherwise it's boring. - Kai

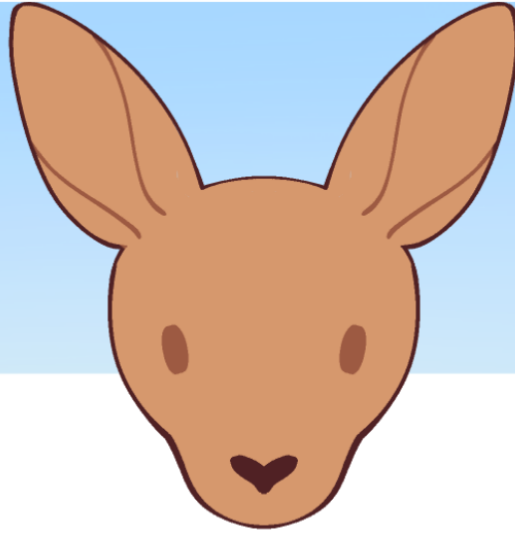
Thank you so much for reaching the end of our story. We spent a lot of time coming up with the perfect plot! We really enjoyed writing this book and we love doing this challenge every year. Coming up with the different characters and their back stories was lots of fun and we can't wait to do this again next year! <3 - Alyssa

Illustrator:

Thank you so much for reading our story :3! I had lots of fun bringing the characters and events in the story to life through illustrations and designs, and I hope you enjoyed seeing the simplistic style I chose for the illustrations in the book! I enjoyed myself very well and I hope that you can find some joy in this short story. We enjoy doing this every year and will continue to do so for as long as we can :D! - Katie

Editor:

Thank you for reading this story. I'm so glad that it's finally over, however it was fun during the process of creation! I hope you enjoyed this chaotic story and it at least made you laugh a little <3. - Grace



**after a strange sinkhole
opens at a surf motel a
kangaroo goes off into a
strange new world to
save those who have
fallen down. the
kangaroo and his psychic
friend find unlikely
acceptance and go on a
range of adventures
until they both have to
make a choice, return to
the lives they know or
give it up for a new
home...**



