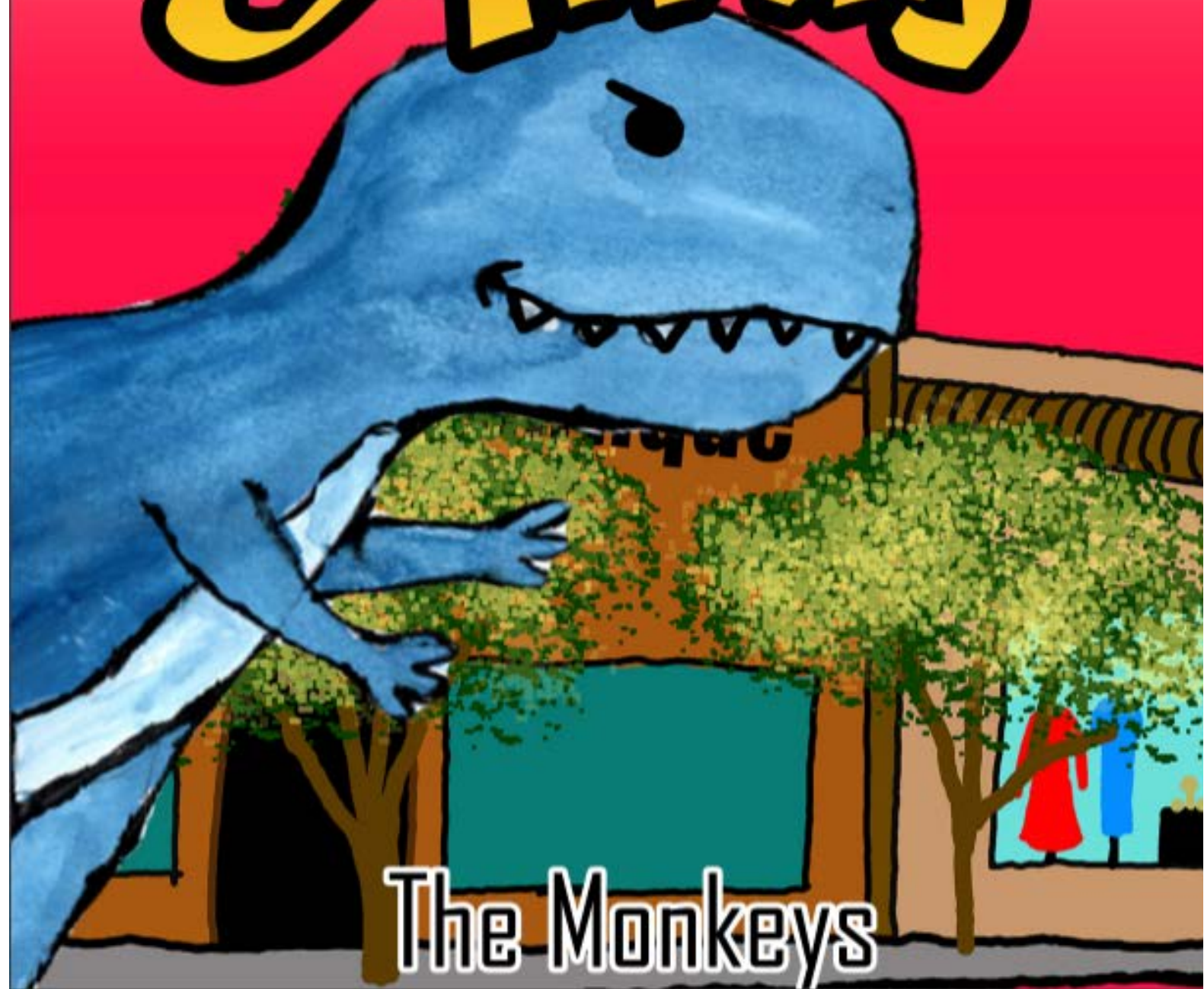


# Sounded Away



The Monkeys



## Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'  
CANCER  
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

### PARAMETERS FORM

#### TEAM DETAILS

STATE: VIC .....

DIVISION: Upper School .....

SCHOOL/GROUP: Nossal High School .....

TEAM NAME: The Monkeys .....

TEAM ID: 533 .....

#### PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

##### Parameters

Primary character 1 Podcast host .....

Primary character 2 Best friend .....

Non-human character Dinosaur .....

Setting Antique shop .....

Issue Magical headphones .....

##### Random words

pineapple .....

blue bottle .....

lifesaver .....

big brother .....

family .....

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at 8am
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count (remember every word on every page counts)!
  - include this parameters form in your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Remember: **Every** word on **every page** counts. This includes your front cover, back cover, blurb, acknowledgements and copyright form.
- **Be sure to give yourself enough time to submit your book and complete the following checklist before 9pm.**

Log on to the Team Coordinator Portal to:

- Check the spelling of your team name and team members' names (how these are spelt on submission will be how they are displayed on certificates)
- Complete the Declaration
- Submit your finished book in **both** PDF and plain text format by 9pm

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[Esha Vashisht, Drupad Venkatesh Babu, Joel Siaw, Aayush Khatiwada, Ravindu Maheepala  
Mudalige, Kisara Alwis, Noah Jose]

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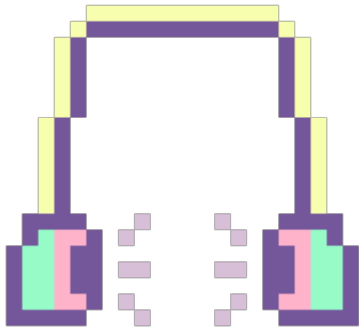
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Chapter 5: Predator and Prey

## Chapter 1: An Antique Store



The bright, yellow wattle trees surrounding the dull dusty store were still, as if they were holding their breath. Their intricate patterns arranged in compact, circular clusters looked like pom-poms with the capability to make anyone sneeze; many would walk by and double over in fits of coughs as the wattles' pollen was swept up into their nostrils. The contrast was frightening to the average person, but Johan wasn't surprised. His best friend had a knack of drawing attention to things in the weirdest ways.

The name of the store had been neatly carved into the deep mahogany mantle above the windows reading:

### ***'Lacy's Antiques and Ornaments'***

Johan kicked a crumpled soda can, and it echoed across the dead street. Frustrated, he jammed his cold hands into his shorts and stalked over towards the door.

"How can she even work here," he muttered incoherently, brushing a cobweb off from the top left corner of the door. The bell jingled as he stepped in, and the familiar, musty smell overtook the wattles' fresh fragrance as he brushed off the pollen that had settled on his shoulder.

"AYYYYY IF IT ISN'T MY FAVOURITE PODCASTER!! " a cheerful voice called out; a beanie popped up from behind the counter. A rush of colours followed as his best friend popped up.

"Hey Shanti," Johan mumbled.

Shanti's eyes crinkled as she skipped towards him, discarding whatever project she had been occupied with, her beanie had been painted over so many times that Johan struggled to make out the original colour. She was dressed in her trademark not-so-white overalls, which were splattered with bright paint stains, as if she had purposefully placed them there. The green, purple, yellow and red seemed to move on their own, alive and moving. Johan raised an eyebrow as Shanti skidded to a stop in front of him.

"Why you lookin' so glum?" she questioned, crossing her arms, which were adorned with neatly looped rainbow loom bands. Johan snorted after seeing them, to which she raised an eyebrow.

A sweet bubble-gum scent wafted through the air as she passed. "Just stuck," he hummed.

"Stuck with what Joey?" Shanti questioned him, her dark brown eyes sparkling. Before he could answer, an old voice called out.

"Shanti, come here dear," the old lady sharply ordered, emerging from the curtains at the back of the store. Shanti nodded and hurried over, leaving Johan to look at some of the artifacts on display.

A peculiar-looking keychain grabbed Johan's attention, prompting him to pick it up and inspect it. The shape of the keychain seemed oddly familiar, it felt like something he'd occasionally hold in his hand.

"Oh my..." he gasped, gently placing the object back down.

He continued browsing the cluttered shelves filled with eons-old artefacts, layers and layers of history no one cared to delve into, as well as the occasional souvenir, such as a peculiar **blue bottle** proclaiming its love for Australia.

"It's going to be fine, don't you worry Aunty," Shanti's voice floated over.

"I just don't want anything stolen and I don't want to come back to a burnt heap of a house."

"Yes, of course!"

"Oh and don't go out the back, don't touch the stuff out the back, don't take anyone out the back."

"Yes! "

"I will be back soon, I am just-"

'Auntie! Do you trust me?'

"JUST DON'T MAKE A MESS!!" She shouted finally, as she exited from the entrance.

Laughing to herself, Shanti joined Johan's side. He was leaning against a shelf, fiddling with some ancient-looking camera.

"What was all that racket about?" he said, glancing over to Shanti who was running her hand through her blue highlighted hair.

"Aunty has some stuff to do, so she left the store for me to take care of. She kept rambling about how I shouldn't go out to the back of the store" Shanti huffed, eyeing the camera in Johan's hands.

He raised an eyebrow and looked at Shanti.

"Let's go to the back."

"WHAT!! WHY?!"

"I need new ideas for my podcast...maybe there is some interesting stuff there," Johan grinned, as he started walking towards the back of the small store.

"That's literally the opposite of what she told me to do Joey!!" Shanti shrieked, her footsteps echoing in the cluttered store as she ran up to him.

Johan walked up to the curtains and pushed through, Shanti trailing after him frantically.

"Oh..." Johan whispered, disappointment filling him again. There was nothing of significance to Johan, a clutter of patchy books in the corner and a maplewood chair with a taped-up leg were all that occupied the dimly lit room.

Dust was settled everywhere.

"We should go back now, there's nothing here," Shanti whispered, tugging on his sleeve. Johan ignored her and walked forward to the books.

"Surely there is something good in here, good enough to make a podcast out of," he said.

A flash of red suddenly caught his eyes and his mouth fell open.

"Shanti check this out!" he said, putting the camera he was holding down onto the stacked books. He blew on the red and a cloud of dust blew up.

Coughing, he waved his hands in front of his face as words revealed themselves.

***'DO NOT OPEN'***

Johan gave Shanti a devious look and before she could protest, his hands were fumbling open the dusty box.

Excitedly, he looked inside to see a pair of black headphones. Disappointment flooded him.

He lived around headphones, they were always adorning his ears, his job was all about headphones. Whilst dissatisfied, curiosity got the best of Johan and he thrust them on, fumbling for the on-switch. The noise cancelling effect turned on and he felt a slight vibration echo.

"How do I look?" he exclaimed, shooting a flashy grin at Shanti.

Shanti was staring at him, annoyed.

"Let's leave, there might be customers Johan, please." Shanti started to walk back to the store front. Annoyed, Johan followed indignantly, the headphones still around his ears. So much for killing his writer's block.

They walked past the counter when Shanti turned to face him.

"You risked my job," she exclaimed, her eyes glinting, however. She could never get angry at her best friend.

Her eyes suddenly widened when she saw the headphones on him still.

"JOHAN!! PUT THEM BACK!" she hit him on the arm, laughing.

"AND WHERE IS THE CAMERA?!"

"Oh dear, I left them out the back", a mischievous smile spread across her face again and she shook her head at him, laughing.

"You're gonna get me fired, I swear."

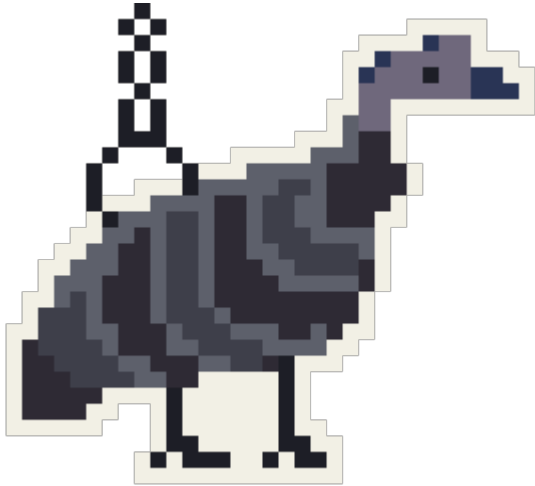
They quickly walked back, past the curtains unknowingly triggering something they would later learn to regret. A cool breeze followed them, and the chimes jingled.

Oblivious to the activity happening behind them, Johan and Shanti collected the camera.

A vibration echoed behind them, and they suddenly turned around.



## Chapter 2: Strange Events



As Johan and Shanti gazed around the store, they felt a chill up their spines. They could hear a mysterious rattling noise surrounding them, gradually becoming louder and louder and louder, until all of a sudden, it stopped.

"You heard that too, right?" whispered Shanti receiving a nod in response.

All of a sudden, the two felt the floor move underneath them, as if it were unravelling. As if on a treadmill, Johan and Shanti found that they had to run on the spot in order to stand their ground, to stay together. While they ran, sand began to appear on the ground, beneath their feet, almost as though they were stuck in a big, invisible hourglass.

The floor stopped moving abruptly leading to the friends clashing and knocking their heads together. As they stood back up, rubbing their hurting heads, the pair looked around in order to gather themselves, however this only perplexed the two even more. The shelves, of which the tallest had been only at eye level up until a moment ago now towered them with no end in sight, while the ground was covered in grainy, fiery red sand.

"Wow, it looks like we're in the Outback..." said Shanti, looking around what used to be an old antique store. The shelves that used to hold vases, pottery and old sculptures like any other regular antique store, now held keychains, stuffed animals and other odd tourist-y Australian items.

"This... can't be..." said Johan, trying to formulate some sort of explanation for the events that had just occurred. "What could've caused this..."

As Johan and Shanti tip-toed across the store looking for a way out, they found themselves lost, unable to find the exit. The aisles took them round and round to supposedly where they first began. The two of them had begun sweating, only just realising how hot it had gotten. Shanti wiped the sweat off her forehead.

"Woaaaaah, It's like we're in some sort of maz-". Shanti excitedly spoke until her flow of thought was discontinued.

"Um, Joey... I think I just saw a dinosaur," Shanti whispered, trying to alert Johan.

"A dinosaur? Don't be silly," Johan said, "dinosaurs are extinct, we both know that, but this situation isn't exactly normal by any stretch of the imagination. We should be careful."

Shanti nodded in agreement, trying to regain her composure. As they continued walking in search of an exit, Johan heard a deep voice speak to him out of nowhere.

"Hello, friend."

Johan jumps in shock.

"What's wrong?" Shanti asked, concerned.

"I just heard a voice... you didn't hear it, too?"

"No... are you alright?"

"Congratulations on finding the emu keychain" the voice repeats.

"There it was again!" Johan exclaims.

"I didn't hear it."

"I think it might be coming from the headphones..."

### Chapter 3: Kangaroo Hijinx



The headphones crackled with noise, a robotic voice speaking into Johan's ears. Entranced by the sound, he echoed what was heard, "Congratulations on finding the emu keychain. However, to return to your world and family, collect the remaining two special items".

"OHHHHH, I just picked that up 'cause I thought it was cute, but what about these other items?" asked Shanti in her bewilderment.

Johan, even in his frozen state wondered why Shanti hadn't questioned the normality of what had occurred. The spellbound Johan answered by repeating the robotic voice, "A keychain of koala and kangaroo, do not **falter**."

Shanti had a glint in her eyes, a smile appearing on her face. She began to feel a thumping through the floor, a beat could be heard echoing throughout the landscape from afar.

Johan continued, "Follow the sound for there lies what you so seek."

Returning to his normal self, a confused Johan questioned, "What? What sound? This thing is crazy. Shanti we have to get out of this loony land."

"Hey! Can't you hear me?"

"SHHH! Listen carefully... don't you hear that thumping? I reckon that's where we're supposed to go..."

Without another word shared between them, Shanti turned, moving towards the sound in a brisk movement. Johan followed, feeling reluctant and regretful; beads of sweat ran down his body, staining his already ruined clothes.

'I don't get how you can be so laid back about this?! Here! in this...strange place, where our lives can be in danger at any moment! Don't you remember that dinosaur?! God knows what awaits us!' exclaimed Johan.

'Ah young Joey, how cute. Don't you understand this is our chance for adventure? We should embrace this moment together!' she said excitedly.

Johan was quick to dismiss her remark. This wasn't the time for adventure, it was a matter of survival.

They trudged together through the red sand but slowly the ground began to harden, transforming into soil. Shanti, with her keen senses continued to follow the sound and noticed a small opening on one of the monstrous shelves. Without hesitation Shanti moved in, Johan watching her crawl through, it was clearly a tight fit. The last thing he wanted was to get stuck.

'Hey get over here! You'll want to see this', Shanti screamed out.

Despite his worries, Johan squeezed himself through the miniscule hole, curious to see what it was that got Shanti so excited. Johan took notice of the broken pieces of wood lying around him and noticed that what lay ahead of him was not an ally, but a creature of unknown ferocity. Muttering a silent prayer to himself he continued forwards.

It's polished wood body blinded them. The intricate patterns shifted with each movement, the wood bending in unnatural ways. Massive muscular legs protruded from its body, monstrous ears stood up, it was obvious what the creature was. Even Shanti was transfixed, someone who would otherwise be gleaming.

'Hmm, I think I'll call him Skippy. What do you think? Looks like a Skippy right?' said Shanti pointing towards the wooden kangaroo from behind a broken shelf, hidden from the creature's line of sight. 'Anyway, have a look at what's behind him, there it is, the first item'. A cheeky smile suddenly dawned on Shanti's face. 'Here's the plan, I'm gonna run out there full speed, you distract ol' Skippy.' Without sparing Johan a moment's thought, Shanti jumped past the barrier and made a dash towards the first item, which appeared to be a small glistening metallic kangaroo placed upon a pedestal sitting several hundred metres behind the monstrous creature.

Johan stood there for a moment, in complete and utter shock, taken aback by the rashness of Shanti. He knew she was volatile, but couldn't she at least be a little more thoughtful with her life on the line? As much as he hated the plan, he couldn't stand there doing nothing, he had to help Shanti. He readied himself to grab the attention of the beast, who at this point was yet to notice Shanti who'd discreetly snuck past.

"ARGHHH!! YOU WANT SOME, COME GET SOME!!!"

Johan charged at the beast, screaming as tears trailed down his face. The aptly named 'Skippy' took notice. Its ruby red eyes locked on Johan, his heart felt as it was beating outside his chest, beating as fast as a bullet train.

Skippy took a mighty leap, shaking the ground underneath. Somehow launching its titanic body across the sky, casting a shadow over Johan. Dread filled every part of his body as it came towards him.

Skippy's landing threw Johan off his feet, and he began to slowly fall to ground. Under normal circumstances, Johan would've lay on his back, simply staring reflectively. But these weren't normal circumstances, not only was his life in danger, but Shanti's too. At that thought an otherworldly courage was flowing through his veins. He remembered his brother, the courage he had, how strong he was. He needed to be that person now for his sake and for the sake of Shanti. He willed himself with all his might, catching glimpses of Shanti sprinting, her determined face only gave him more strength.

Johan pulled himself together and jumped back onto his feet. Skippy was approaching him; however, this time Skippy wasn't as fast. Sure, the creature was massive and covered a lot of ground with each step, but the time between each stride gave enough time for Johan to build enough distance, or so he judged.

Dashing left and right, Johan ran with this strength he never knew existed, making sure to remain just within Skippy's range. A minute had passed, and Shanti was less than a hundred or so metres from the pedestal, Johan was beginning to fatigue, yet his strong will pushed him on.

'10, 9, 8, 7, 6...' counted Johan again and again, praying that once he reached zero, he may finally rest, but Shanti was still 20 or so metres away from her goal and then...it was too late. Dust rose from the ground as Johan had finally collapsed from exhaustion. 'It's over.' he thought to himself, but he wasn't sad. Glimpsing past the creature, Johan noticed that Shanti had reached the item. While he rested on the ground, he closed his eyes with a smile.

'Hello, hello? Earth to Johan, are you there, Joey? If you're asleep then say something.'

'Oh what... I'm still alive.'

Shanti then embraced Johan tightly, as he began to awake.

'You actually worried me there for a sec. I guess we have one more item left, right? Have you heard anything else from the headphones yet?' At that moment, a strange, yet oddly familiar sound echoed around them once more.

## Chapter 4: Shifting Sands



‘Congratulations on finding the kangaroo keychain.’ praised the mysterious voice.

‘When will this end,’ Johan muttered as the sand began to shift under their feet. As if on cue, the voice in the headphones buzzed into his ear ‘Find the koala keychain in my forest and find your freedom’.

‘Another silly prize to find,’ Johan groaned as he threw his head back.

‘Cheer up Johan!’ Shanti called back. ‘One more item to go and we’re out of he-’ Shanti said before being rudely interrupted by a tree sapling bursting out of the sand next to her foot.

‘Johan?’ she whispered while rapidly poking him in the shoulder. ‘Johan? Johan? Johan!’ ‘Oh, sorry? What?’

‘Can you stop wearing those headphones for 5 seconds?’

‘Sorry, I’ll try and stop the habit.’

‘That’s fine, but we have bigger problems. For instance, do trees always grow that fast?’

‘How fast ...’ Johan trailed off as the sapling next to Shanti’s foot shot up. The soft stalk at the middle quickly expanded into a smooth, wooden trunk while it shot up, making both of them crane their heads to see its growth. The heat of the desert sand quickly disappeared as newly formed yet supernaturally mature leaves and gumnuts began to spread their shade over them.

In the blink of an eye, a fully grown gum tree stood right next to them as if it had been there the whole time.

‘No. No, that is not normal. And I don’t think that’s the last’ Johan responded as saplings began to spring up all around them. As if time had been sped up, all the saplings imitated the impressive growth of the first and soon towered over them creating a forest of smooth trunks and waving eucalyptus trees around them.

‘Well that might be the coolest thing I’ve seen all day’, Shanti said slowly in awe. She reached out a hand to the tree and touched it a few times before pinching her cheek. She then turned to Johan and pinched his arm suddenly.

‘What was that for?’

‘Just making sure you’re as real as the tree’ Shanti laughed back. ‘That was incredible, but how exactly do we get out of here?’ she asked while looking around at the dense forest. ‘Forward’ the voice commanded through the headphones now sitting around Johan’s neck. ‘I think it said forward?’

‘Sounds good to me!’

The two set off ahead into the woods, making their way through the newly created maze. A cool breeze seemed to blow through the trees, making the leaves above rustle in the wind as their fragrance wafted down. ‘Do you hear that?’ Shanti whispered while tilting her head. Johan tilted his head in kind, listening through the crunch of sand beneath their feet and the breathing of the trees. In the distance, the melodious chirping of birds ringed across the canopy.

‘Birds!’ Shanti shouted, causing a panic of feathers and chirping in the distance. ‘Oops, I think I scared them off.’

‘What did you think would happen?’ Johan chuckled. ‘Even if we’re stuck in this weird outback antique dreamscape forest, I think the birds would still get spooked by how loud you are.’

‘Stop it! I’m not that loud,’ Shanti laughed back. ‘But talking about the antique store, where are the birds coming from? I didn’t see any birds on a shelf on the way here.’

‘Yeah, maybe they came from another aisle,’ Johan replied as he stepped over the root of a massive tree. ‘Talking about the aisles ... where are they?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘They aisles disappeared, I can’t see them anymore. They’re definitely taller than these trees but I can’t see them for some reason’ he explained as he stood on his toes.

Shanti put her hand to her chin, deep in thought. ‘Well at least we can forget about being stuck in the store for a minute. That’s good, right? But now we need to worry about getting out of this forest ... let me get a better view’.

Shanti jogged over to a tree with rough bark, rubbed her hands together and asked for Johan’s jacket then used it to hug the trunk to start climbing.

‘Are you gonna be alright up there?’ Johan called from the ground.

‘You should worry more about yourself!’ Shanti laughed back as she began to reach the lowest branches of the tree.

‘I see something!’ she shouted after looking across the forest for a few seconds before shimmying back down the tree. ‘I saw a massive tree just a few hundred metres in front of us. The koala keychain has to be there!’

‘Do you think we’ll finally be able to get out of here after this one?’ Johan asked as they walked towards the tree.

'Why, still thinking about your podcast?'

'No, just want to get home safely. And also, my podcast.'

Shanti punched him in the shoulder jokingly and then ran ahead.

'Catch me if you can!'

'Hey, wait up!'

Within a minute of running, the massive eucalyptus tree appeared in a clearing before them. At the base, another pedestal stood with a small koala keychain, glinting in the sun.

'We're out of here!' Shanti shouted as she jumped for joy.

Johan ran into the clearing after her, panting for air. As Shanti approached the pedestal and picked up the keychain, an ear-splitting roar rang out from the forest behind them.



## Chapter 5: Predator & Prey

As Johan and the menacing reptile locked eyes, he could feel his fear radiating off of him in waves, the beast's beady eyes searching his own. Then, as if turning a switch, the creature shifted its weight to face Johan and Shanti's direction and lurched towards them. Adrenaline coursed through their veins and Johan screamed 'Split!', prompting Shanti to take off, the kangaroo keychain firmly in her grasp. They both ran out of the forest and in front of their eyes, the world was shifting back into the desert aisles from before.

The theropod flared its nostrils, searching for the bubble-gum scent that emanated from the two teens. She could see the footprints in the sand and followed them to help Johan. Her eyes landed on an antique ceramic pineapple leaning to the right on the shelf in front of him. Johan had gone in the opposite direction but realised the lizard was right behind him. He was already running out of steam and the rex was closing in.

At that moment, Johan tripped and fell over a **blue bottle** sticking out in the sand, twisting his ankle. Fear his eyes as the beast locked onto his vulnerable form splayed on the sand. Shanti saw the monster's head poking out a few aisles down and knew she had to rush to Johan's aid. While running towards him, her eyes shifted desperately, searching for anything she could use to distract the Tyrannosaurus. Shanti looked up and saw a large ceramic pineapple resting on the shelf to her right.

Without thinking twice about it, she swiped the ornament, swivelled around and bowled it at the monstrous reptile. The ceramic smashed against the beast's snout, bursting with an unnatural dispersion of bright lights. When it faded, the dinosaur was nowhere to be seen, the only remnants of its existence being the three toed footsteps in front of Shanti. Johan was still in shock, but Shanti glided over to comfort him. They were just about to catch their breath before they could hear a hum coming from Johan's neck.

'You're a lifesaver Shanti.' whispered Johan.

Johan, still paralysed with fear, asks Shanti to take them and listen. She anxiously places the ears on the headphones to hear the message:

***'Go towards the three pedestals and place the special items'***

The wind kicks up and the sand clears away to reveal a stone path. Two pedestals slowly rise from the ground, dust blowing away as it extends to its final position. They each bear a symbol, one of a kangaroo and the other of a koala. Shanti dragged Johan towards the pedestals with whatever strength she had left, her muscles aching and forehead glistening with sweat. She took the two keychains from her pockets and placed them on their respective pedestals.

The moment Shanti placed the keychains down, a bright light radiated from the pedestals, illuminating the vast cavern of the antique store. Just like before, the ground began to move under their feet but towards them this time as if time and space were being squeezed back

into their original proportions. The sand seemed to sink back into the acacia wood as the shelves creaked and groaned before relaxing into their original shapes. Exhausted and bewildered, Shanti and Johan shared a glance before walking to the front of the store while relaxing in the newly recovered coolness of the history around them. 'I'm back!' Auntie called from the front of the store. Shanti hurried over, desperately trying to hide any sign of the sand and heat. 'Everything OK? Nothing broken?' Auntie asked as she began to look her up and down

'Yeah Auntie, everything was...just...fine , responded Shanti, wiping the last drop of sweat off her forehead, while regaining her breath

Auntie stopped as if something caught her eye, leaning forward caringly as she saw the few grains of sand resting on Shanti's shoulder. Realising, Shanti began to protest.

'Auntie, it's not what you thin-'

'Just put the keychains on the store key ring.' Auntie smiled with a knowing wink.

The End

**WORD COUNT: 4438**

**Dust, antiques and magic?**  
**Follow Shanti and Johan**  
**as they discover new worlds**  
**in between a pair of headphones,**  
**key rings and a blue dinosaur.**

**10+**