



## RECOMMENDED FOR

Lower primary  
(ages 1–7)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English; Science; Geography

## THEMES

- Mystery
- Theft
- Suspicion

## PREPARED BY

Jean Yates

## PUBLICATION DETAILS

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## The Great Garden Mystery

Renée Trembl

### PLOT SUMMARY

Someone has been stealing the beetroots, but the animals don't know who the thief might be.

They decide to hold their own 'bush court' to discover who the culprit is. All of the animals gather and each explains why the clues prove their innocence.

All except roo, who bounds away in a panic.

Confident that Roo's behaviour proves her guilt, the other animals set about tidying up and repairing the damage left by the thief.

But have they really found the culprit? Or is the real thief still out there?

### PRE-READING

The story involves a number of Australian animals. Make a list of any animals you can think of that might be involved.

## VOCABULARY

- Detectives
- Suspects
- Guilty
- Culprit
- Suspicion
- Alibi
- Clues
- Evidence
- Bush court

## QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### Pages 4–5 ‘Someone is stealing the beetroots’

1. What animals can you identify on these pages?
2. What animals do you think might steal beetroots?
3. Do you think any of these animals is the thief?
4. How would the animals feel knowing that one of them is a thief?
5. Do you think the animals will treat one another as they usually do, when they know that they might be under suspicion?

### Pages 6–7 ‘Here come two curious curlews’

1. What type of animal is a curlew?
2. What does it mean to ‘play detective for sport’?
3. What are suspects?
4. What does the term ‘bush court’ mean?
5. How is a bush court different from a formal court of law?
6. Do you think that all of the animals will be treated fairly in this investigation?

### Pages 8–9 ‘The curlews call for order’

1. What type of animal is a hare? Do hares eat beetroot?
2. What clue are you given on this page?
3. Do you know of any animal with square poos?
4. As you read, imagine that you are the detective. Make a list of all the clues you find.

### Pages 10–11 ‘“Wasn’t me,” says the horse’

1. What clue does the horse provide?
2. How does this help to prove that the horse is not the thief?
3. Do horses eat beetroot?

### Pages 12–13 ‘I would have flown in’

1. Why is the cockatoo innocent?
2. What clue does she provide?
3. Do cockatoos eat beetroot?

### Pages 14–15 ‘Possum and bilby find a new clue’

1. Why can’t possum or bilby be the culprits?
2. Do these animals burrow?
3. Do they eat beetroot?

### Pages 16–17 ‘Koala eyes up the fox’

1. Do you think koala might be the thief? What do koalas eat? Do they burrow?
2. What does it mean to be sly?
3. Which animals are sly?
4. Why does koala think Roo is not the thief?

### Pages 18–19 ‘With a cheeky grin’

1. What defence does the fox use to prove it is not him?
2. The fox is the first animal to accuse another. How does this support the idea that foxes are sly?
3. Do you think the fox would be the thief? Why?

### Pages 20–21 ‘Roo knows this clue points to her’

1. Is Roo likely to be the thief?
2. What evidence suggests that it may be Roo?
3. Are there any clues that suggest it wasn’t Roo who stole the beetroots?
4. Why do the other animals think she hops away?



Pages 22–23 *'The others are slow'*

1. If Roo didn't steal the beetroots, why would she hop away?
2. Is there any other animal there who might be the thief?
3. Can you think of any animal we haven't seen yet who could be the culprit? Consider the clues: loves beetroot, burrows underground, is wide, has square poo.

Pages 24–25 *'Hooray! The mystery is solved'*

1. How do the other animals react when they think they have found the thief?
2. Does anyone stand up for Roo and defend her?
3. Why would they all have been happy to have found the thief?
4. Do you think the thief has been found?
5. Consider how differently the animals all react now that they don't feel they are under suspicion. Why are they all happily cooperating and working together?

Pages 26–27 *'Nighttime falls on the garden'*

1. What does it mean to be nocturnal? Why do some animals wake at night time?
2. What sort of special skills would an animal need to be able to be awake at night time rather than during the day?
3. What 'creature' is this?
4. What facts do you know about the animal on p. 27?
5. Does this animal have any characteristics that make him a suspect?

Pages 28–29 *'He strolls up to the fence'*

1. Why does the wombat happily dig a new hole and eat the beetroots?
2. Does he know that the other animals have been looking for the thief?

Pages 30–31 *'So that's who'*

1. If Roo hadn't run away do you think the other animals would have remembered about wombat? Why did they stop looking for the thief when she ran?
2. Why do we think that people who run away must be guilty?
3. What should Roo have done rather than run away?
4. How does the expression 'out of sight, out of mind' relate to this story?
5. Do you think the animals would have thought of wombat if he had been there?
6. What do you think Roo will do now?

Page 32

1. How do you think the animals feel when they discover more square poo and eaten beetroots?
2. Do you think they will apologise to Roo?

## ENGLISH

### Mystery

1. What are the elements to a mystery?
2. How can detectives use clues to help them solve the case?
3. What sort of clues might a detective look for to solve the mystery of disappearing beetroots?
4. How would you try to solve this mystery?

### Rhyme

1. How does the use of rhyme add to the story?
2. Does it make it easier to read or predict the storyline?

### Language

1. Make a list of words from each page that are new to you. Can you work out what they mean from the context (the way they are used)?
2. How does the writer use descriptive words to help us understand the characters?
3. How does the use of sound words (onomatopoeia) add to the story and help us know how to read the words out loud?

## ART AND DESIGN

### Layout

1. How does the highlighting of key words help to reveal clues?
2. How do the illustrations help to explain the story?
3. What is the impact of the solid colour in the background?
4. What is the impact of the beetroots being coloured, but all of the animals being black and white sketches?

## SCIENCE

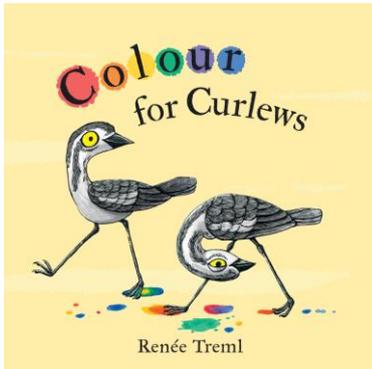
1. Research each of the animals mentioned in the story. What characteristics does each animal have? What do they eat? What size are they?
2. Research wombats. Their square poos are actually an important part of their nocturnal behaviour. Why do they have square poos?
3. Research nocturnal animals. What other animals are nocturnal? What adaptations have they made to help them survive at night?

### Activities

1. Write a script for a readers' theatre of the story. Consider how each character would speak, move and act towards other characters.
2. Create a 'hotseat' situation in which each character is put on trial to see if they are the thief. What questions might a real detective ask? How would they answer the questions and defend themselves. (Additional research on each of these characters would provide more evidence).
3. Create and write your own mystery and provide clues as to who the culprit might be. What animals will you include? What characteristics do these animals have?



FURTHER READING FROM RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



*Colour for Curlews*  
by Renée Trembl

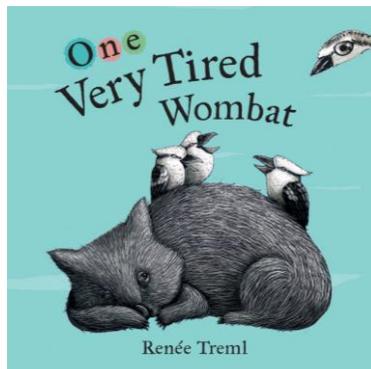
**Why this story?** A lively story that teaches children about colours and native Australian birds, including a short fact page in the endmatter

Who could resist a little dab of colour here and there?

Two curious curlews discover a stash of paints and brushes, and an adorable cast of Australian birds introduces readers to the joy of colours and colour mixing.

Readers will delight in seeing many of the characters from *The Great Garden Mystery* and *One Very Tired Wombat* in this story.

[Teachers' resources available.](#)



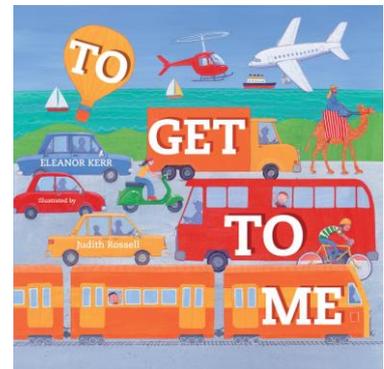
*One Very Tired Wombat*  
by Renée Trembl

**Why this story?** A counting book with a fun narrative for engaging early readers.

One wombat is very tired, and he just wants to rest. The birds try to be quiet – well, some of them, anyway – but it seems that they're not as quiet as they think.

Poor tired wombat. Will he ever get some sleep?

A charming counting book featuring some very cheeky Australian animals. This is the first appearance by the wombat who also features at the end of *Colour for Curlews* and in *The Great Garden Mystery*.



*To Get to Me*  
by Eleanor Kerr  
Illustrated by Judith Rossell

**Why this story?** A simple, easy-to-read story that lets readers look at different modes of transport and travelling around the world.

Peter is going to the zoo and he wants his friend Ahmed to come, too. To get to Peter, Ahmed just has to ride his camel through the desert, catch a bus to the airport, hop on a jumbo jet...

## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QUANTITY	TOTAL
The Great Garden Mystery	Renée Treml	9780857984166	P-1	\$19.99		
Colour for Curlews	Renée Treml	9781742759210	P-1	\$14.99		
One Very Tired Wombat	Renée Treml	9781742755793	P-1	\$14.99		
To Get to Me	Eleanor Kerr	9781742758831	P-1	\$12.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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