

Chapter One





Green Country

I've got a secret and I'm so excited!

Actually, I've got two secrets and
that makes me feel really happy inside.

'What are you grinning at, Debbie?'
my brother Billy asks.

'Nothing.' I don't want him
guessing my secrets.

'You've got a secret, haven't you?'

'No I haven't.'

'Yes you have! I can tell! What is it,
Debbie?'

'I'm not telling you, Billy!'

He throws a honky nut at me. 'Go on, tell me!'

'No!'

He throws another nut. 'Well, I've got a secret too!'

'What is it then?'

'My special tree is bigger than yours!' Billy looks sly. 'I told you my secret Debbie, now you have to tell me yours!'

I laugh. 'That's not a secret, that's a fib. My special tree is much bigger than yours!'

Billy picks up a big honky nut and flings it at me. It hits my arm and really stings. Boy, am I mad! I yell, 'Actually I have two secrets and I'm not going to tell you about them now!'

'Keep your silly secrets then!' he says, storming off.

I know where he's going, back to the house to tell Mum I've been mean to him. Then I'll get into trouble. Why are little brothers so annoying?



I slump down under my favourite tree, the one that's taller than Billy's, and look out over the bush. I'm a Nyungar girl and I live in green country. At least, that's what some people call it. In green country there are lots of birds and animals and creeks and rivers, but most of all there are trees. Tall trees, short

trees, skinny trees and fat ones too. They're all different from each other, with different leaves, trunks and bark. Knobbly nuts grow on their branches and these nuts turn into pretty coloured flowers, which smell really nice. When the bees buzz around the flowers, Billy and I have to be careful we don't get stung. Birds and possums make their homes in the trees. I love climbing to the very top of my tree like a possum and looking out over the land to the blue coloured hills in the distance. High in the sky, no one can see me. It is my own personal hide out.

I've invented a secret name for my favourite tree. It's made up of three words – gorgeous, gem and Christmas.

I put them all together and made Gorgemas. Mum agrees that my tree is the best tree in the world. She says it's like a beautiful gem. At Christmas time Mum helps me decorate Gorgemas. We make paper cut outs of animals and stick bits of coloured wool on them. They are lovely, but the shiny string of bells and stars Mum makes out of silver chocolate paper looks the best.



I'm the only one who knows my tree's name. That's my first secret. But my second secret is even bigger. Gorgemas has a bird's nest with three eggs hidden



in a hollow in the trunk near the very top. The eggs are white with little brown specks.

I don't want to tell Billy my secrets because I don't think he really understands what a secret is. Besides, Mum told us she is expecting a visitor, and I don't want Billy blabbing my special secrets to just anyone.