

DARCY MOON AND THE DEEP-FRIED FROGS

Catherine Carvell

Illustrations by Michael Scott Parkinson

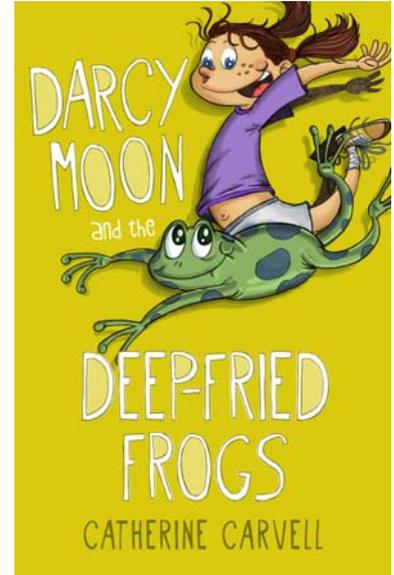
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Themes: Environmental protection, Conservation, Science

Year level: Y2 to Y6

Cross-curriculum: Sustainability



ABOUT THE BOOK

Darcy Moon is trying to stay alive in year five – but it isn't easy when your parents are obsessed with saving the planet! Dad has turned the backyard into a giant compost heap, so everywhere she goes she probably stinks like rotten veggies. Meanwhile, Mum has volunteered at Save-a-Species day at school, so she can play music to a bunch of saplings. Darcy is *mortified* – no wonder she isn't more popular! But then one afternoon at Aroona Park, something extraordinary happens – she starts to hear the animals talking – and they are in serious trouble! What if she is the only one who can help?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Carvell lives in Singapore with her husband, children and two pet turtles. Sometimes, Catherine talks to the turtles, but thankfully, they don't talk back.



STUDY NOTES

Literacy: expanding vocabulary

Scientific terminology

1. Children may be unfamiliar with some of the words in the story (especially scientific terminology – e.g. ozone). Before you commence reading, go through the following list with your students and explain each term. Alternatively, have students work in pairs to use the dictionary to locate definitions. Students who are already familiar with a word can explain it to others.

First mention	Word	Meaning
page 6	flint	
6	ozone	
6	gluten-free	
8	wetland	
10	hallucinating	
11	cicada	
13	guardian	
17	exhaust fumes	
17	compost	
30	trapezoid	
30	polygon	
30	habitat	
30	food chain	
31	cassowary	
31	quoll	
31	Daintree Rainforest	
32	extinct	
32	endangered species	
36	bulrushes	

44	tarpaulin (later: tarp)	
46	bitumen	
51	gutters	
53	mucus	
54	trespassing	
58	imported	
59	fire procedure	
63	memorabilia	
65	lint	
69	vertebrates	
69	invertebrates	
77	saplings	
84	panpipes	
89	vegetarian	
94	property	
103	khaki	
105	humanely	
121	recycle	
121	global warming	

Literacy: written activities

Creative and analytical writing exercises

2. This novel can be used as a springboard for many different aspects of literacy study, depending on the needs and interests of your class. It is ideal for integrated learning in science (Biology: life and living). For example:
 - a. Report writing
Research an endangered or extinct Australian species and present a written report detailing the physical characteristics, diet, lifecycle, habitat, threats and reasons for critical status.
 - b. Letter writing
Write a letter to your local government about a significant environmental issue in your area, offering your opinion on why it is important to take action.
 - c. Short story writing
Choose an endangered Australian species and write a short story about Darcy's adventure to try and save it. Try to select an animal from a different habitat (i.e. not the wetlands) to illustrate your understanding of another type of ecosystem (e.g. Darcy and her parents go on holiday and must save the bilby in the desert).
 - d. Recount writing
Write a recount of the major events in Darcy's adventure to save the wetland ecosystem.
 - e. Film/media study
Explore the codes and conventions used in a children's film about habitat destruction (e.g. *FernGully: The Last Rainforest*, 1992). Do you think film is a more effective medium to convey an environmental message? Or is a book like *Darcy Moon and the deep-fried frogs* equally effective? What makes these two mediums so different? What are the strengths and limitations of each?
OR
Watch a documentary on the Western Swamp Tortoise. Create a Venn diagram identifying how documentary style films differ from feature films.
OR
Create a two-minute advertisement (in groups of five) to educate young people about recycling and encourage them to do this at home. Hold a class screening and view all the advertisements, then write a critical review of each, identifying which was your favourite and why.

- f. Newspaper writing
Read newspaper and magazine articles on environmental issues such as global warming and recycling. Complete comprehension-based activities.
OR
Ask children to research a national environmental issue and write a newspaper article including the statistics and quotes they have accumulated during their research.
OR
Invite a representative from a local environmental organisation to visit and speak about their work.
- g. Poster design
Create a poster for an environmental organisation of your choice detailing what they do and how people can become involved.
- h. Advertising and packaging
Explore the list of ingredients on popular brands of potato chips. What ingredients should people avoid? What is disguised, like the secret ingredient in *Skippity Chips*?
- i. Diary writing
Set up a tadpole tank in your classroom. Keep a tadpole diary, recording daily or weekly observations of changes to your classroom tadpoles as they mature to become frogs.

Cross-curricular links

Ideas for activities across learning areas

- 3. Art
Create shoebox dioramas of different Australian or worldwide ecosystems/habitats.
- 4. Geography
Create a map indicating where different habitats are found across Australia.
- 5. IT
 - a. Children can create a PowerPoint slideshow about an endangered Australian species and present a short oral presentation in groups to their classmates.
 - b. Make a pamphlet on an environmental organisation using Microsoft Publisher.
- 6. Mathematics
 - a. Create tally charts to record numbers of the different types of insects found around the school, in your backyard and at your local park. Record your findings in a table.
 - b. Graph your results. Which location had the most variety of insect life? Why do you think that is?
 - c. Plan a fundraising campaign to raise money for a local environmental organisation. Organise budgets for time management and material costs. Develop a system of recording contributions, setting targets and achieving your class goals.
- 7. Science
 - a. Create a map of the life cycle of a frog.
 - b. Visit the wetlands exhibit at your local zoo to learn more about endangered species.
 - c. Initiate a school or classroom compost project (exploring the life cycle of earthworms).
 - d. Explore food chains and ecosystems in a range of Australian and worldwide habitats.
 - e. Create a recycling project at your school: what everyday classroom materials can be recycled?
 - f. Plant saplings in your local area.
 - g. Explore the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates.
 - h. Explore the classification of different kinds of animals – mammals, reptiles, amphibians etc.