

Freddie Jones: The Mystery of the Troublesome Tree

AUTHOR

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid Primary



SYNOPSIS

Freddie is off to join his parents at a luxury resort for his first ever holiday, along with his trusty assistance dog Hobnob and Grandma Lilly. He can't wait to see the rainforest and its incredible and dangerous inhabitants like cassowaries and crocodiles.

But it turns out there's more to explore – and in store – than Freddie ever imagined. The ecosystem is not behaving as it should, and noises, lights and sounds are popping up all around the resort, leaving behind a trail of mysterious and troublesome trees. Who, or what, is behind it?

Can Freddie, Hobnob and Grandma Lilly solve the mystery, or will it be too late?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Foster is a children's author writing about friends, family, and dogs. Originally from a small town in the south east of England, she now lives on the stunning Gold Coast in Australia with her family and second-hand dogs. She is passionate about encouraging and teaching a wider understanding of autism and mental illness via positive approach and representation.

STUDY NOTES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Before reading

- Before reading, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:
 - The title of the book
 - The author/illustrator
 - The publisher
 - The blurb
- What do you think the story might be about from looking at the title only? Do your ideas change after seeing the cover?
- Activity: Write your own story using the title of the book.
- Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/ end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.
- Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an

alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attentions and give them some idea of what the book is about.

Exploring the text

- Discussion:
 - Who do you think the audience for this book is? Why?
 - Is the book an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? How can you tell?
- Literary techniques allow a writer to convey a deeper meaning in their text.
 - What techniques can you find in this text? e.g. metaphor, imagery, alliteration, personification
 - What deeper meaning can you draw from the text?

EXPLORING THE TEXT IN DEPTH

- In the story, Freddie is excited to see a cassowary and learns a bit about them from Joy at the information centre. Write a short report or fact sheet on cassowaries, including pictures. You can use the information from the book as a starting point, but should do further research as well.
- Freddie has autism (as does the author of the book, Kate Foster!). What do you learn throughout the story about how Freddie's experience of the world is different to other peoples? What are some other ways autism might impact someone's day-to-day life? Discuss how other neurodiverse conditions and disabilities could impact people day-to-day, guiding the class towards understanding how experience is shaped by personal circumstance, and encouraging awareness of the adjustments we can make to be more inclusive of all types of people.
- This book is set in the Daintree Rainforest, which is the world's oldest tropical rainforest! Choose this or another rainforest to research for an assignment. What is a rainforest? What makes your chosen rainforest unique? What kinds of plants and animals grow and live there?
- This book, as the title suggests, is a mystery novel. What do novels in this genre stereotypically include? (e.g. clues, secrets, finding clues, suspects). What clues are there in the text that help the reader to solve the mystery, even as Freddie is solving it? Did you pick up on these clues before finishing the book, or after? How does the way in which the clues are spaced out throughout the book make it more or less interesting to read?
- In the book, Warren's experimental fertiliser causes the cassowaries to gain super-speed and super-poop! Write your own short story about another animal which gets superpowers from fertiliser – which animal, what powers do they get, and what chaos do they cause?