



Guru
Ganing

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PARAMETERS

Primary Character 1:	Scientist
Primary Character 2:	Art Gallery Owner
Non-Human Character:	Freshwater Crayfish
Setting:	A Desert
Issue:	Rare Fossil

Random Words which must appear at least once somewhere in the story:

Nurse
Heart
Joy-ride
Underground
Sneeze

Copyright

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Prologue

Dust blew from beneath the old, blue Holden Ute. It was cruising 140km down the long, dusty road. Hot, harsh wind whipped the driver's face as he blared down the remote road. The stinging midday sun illuminated the barren, desolate region. In the passenger side, a harsh Birdsville local puffed his cigarette glaring out into the desert wilderness. The boys were in the outback treating themselves with a joy-ride, and without warning, the Ute began to slow down.

"Oi Darrell! What's on earth happening! Give it some more juice aye!" yelled the passenger, "I've gotta get to Birdsville by sunset!"

"Shut up Bob!" Darrel replied, "I don't know what's happened!"

The dust ridden Ute completely halted. Smoke came from the Ute's bonnet, seeping the interior with a putrid smell.

"This is bitch of a car!" yelled Darrell, in a fit of rage. "Stay here. I will check the engine."

Darrell opened the door on the driver's side of the car and trudged out into the desert. Darrell began to sweat from the callous sun. He approached the bonnet of the Ute as a breeze began to lift around the Ute. Then a bizarre rumble began to advance towards the Ute.

Darrell's curiosity turned into fear.

The desert wind blew the dust into Darrell's face. The rumble grew louder into an unbearable screech. Darrell yelled to get Bob's attention, which was couped up in the Ute listening to the radio unaware of what was happening outside.

"Help me Bob!" screamed Darrell, "help me please!"

Darrell was caught up in the dust storm, holding his ears screaming in pain. He glanced over to what he believed was the position of the Ute, but he couldn't make out what the figure was in front of him.

But then he saw it.

Darrell's spine tingled with fear. The figure began to approach him. Darrell stumbled backwards, shaking with fear. He glared at the shadowy figure which raised an arm like object. Darrell was now underneath the figure, screaming. The arm-like object began to loom towards him gaining speed. There was a sickening CLUNK!

Darrell's head rolled away from his body.

The figure turned towards the Ute, glaring at its next victim. Bob realised he was amidst a dust storm. He opened the passenger door and stumbled outside.

"Darrell! Where are you?" yelled Bob. There was no answer. The dust whipped Bob's face. He could barely see what was in front of him. Bob kept stumbling into the desert. Suddenly he tripped over a half emerged rock and slipped down into a depression. Bob, now wheezing and coughing realised he was in what he believed was a cave. It was silent, an uncanny silence. But suddenly a loud piercing screech began to emerge from the depths of the cave.

A rush of cold blood went through Bob's body. Fear overwhelmed Bob. In the darkness of the cave, a large looming figure emerged from the depth of the cave. The screeching began to intensify. Bob was stunned by the screeching. Forced to hold his ears, he was yelling in pain. The figure came into view of Bob. He gaped at the figure shaking with utmost horror. The arm like object of the figure screamed towards Bob.

"No! Please don't! NOOOO!"

CLUNK!

Chapter 1

A low murmur of conversation filled the crowded art gallery, in Sydney's east. The popular gallery was packed on this day, the first day of its new exhibition featuring works from all over the world. Sarah Boyd, a young, enthusiastic and flamboyant scientist was amongst the many people there.

She had always had a love for art, but it was mainly the people that drew her to this scene, she was well known amongst the artistic crowd and she felt at home in their presence. In fact most of her best friends were all in the art gallery today, one friend was Seth, whom she had known for some time. Seth was short, stocky and had short black hair; he was the owner of the art gallery.

As she cruised throughout the gallery conversing with friends and viewing the many artworks, one of the many indigenous works there triggered her memory. Just the other day, as she was reading a report that discussed indigenous archaeology, a field that had always interested her, she read a passage that spoke of an undiscovered cave within central Australia. At the time she scoffed at the article, but this indigenous work that stood in front of her now puzzled her. The work was quite simple really; it was a dot painting that looked like a map. The fact that it looked like a map didn't puzzle her, as this was common in indigenous art. It was simply the fact that it implied that there was a cave located just above Lake Eyre. Around this painting there were also illustrations of aboriginal animals, there were snakes, kangaroos, crayfish and emus.

Surely it couldn't have been a coincidence. The article spoke of a cave just above Lake Eyre, which was exactly where this painting implied there was a cave. The connection was so strong that she couldn't dismiss it. She turned to see her friend Seth approaching her.

"Seth, how have you been?" questioned Sarah as Seth greeted her with a wide and shining smile.

"I've been great; things are going well today, how have you been?" He politely questioned back.

"Yes, things have been good. What do you make of this painting just here?" she asked as she gestured towards the work on the wall.

"It's interesting isn't it, it's a new one that came in the other day, I never found out who the artist was" replied Seth.

"I read an article not too long ago that spoke of a large cave just above Lake Eyre, surely this could not be a coincidence?" she stated.

"Wow that's interesting; you should really look into it, that region has never really been explored before, it's more or less untouched." Seth replied.

"Perhaps we should look into it," exclaimed Sarah. "I'll look into it, if things work out we'll get in touch."

Sarah left the gallery with an unusual feeling within her. Was she unreasonable or childish in thinking that there could be a large undiscovered cave in that region; she also knew that that particular region was well known for fossils? She ran eagerly to her bookcase when she arrived home to find the

article that she had read. She read over it and over it again many times. The words stood out to her, it could be possible she thought. At that point her curiosity got the better of her and she rang Seth. After greeting him she began to talk about the article.

"I've checked it out and it and it could well be true, no one has ever explored this region. It is only known to the indigenous people who have lived there for many years." She exclaimed with an excited tone.

"We have to go, this could be incredible." she continued.

Sarah shifted her focus to the door, where keys were rattling about. To save her fiancé Mike Robinson finding the right key, she hopped up and opened the door.

"Thanks." Said Mike with a wide grin on his face as he planted a kiss on Sarah's cheek.

Mike was tall, with short neat hair brown hair and with a memorable smile.

"No worries. How are you?" Sarah asked happily.

"Very well, busy at the uni though." Mike was following Sarah's lead to the office, where he sat down on a leather lounge with a big sigh of relief. "What's news?"

"Well, I have been doing some research. With you being a geologist, I would like to think you would show a large amount of interest in this mystery."

"Hit me."

"There is an undiscovered underground cave that is supposed to be the home of significant fossils worth millions. I want to go and explore, and I need your help," explained Sarah.

The look on Sarah's face was stunning, her blonde hair was let down to her shoulders, her bright blue eyes were glistening and her wonderful smile became radiant in eagerness of Mike's decision.

"How can I reject that offer? Having some quality time with you, exploring the outback and making new discoveries. Sounds like a great adventure"

"Umm, Seth is coming as well I think."

"That changes things!" Mike rolled his eyes in disgust.

"Don't worry, he won't bother us, he's too in love with himself."

"Haha okay, I'll contact my work and we'll organise the arrangements. Talk to Seth and sort it out with him. We can leave in a week if we sort out the plans."

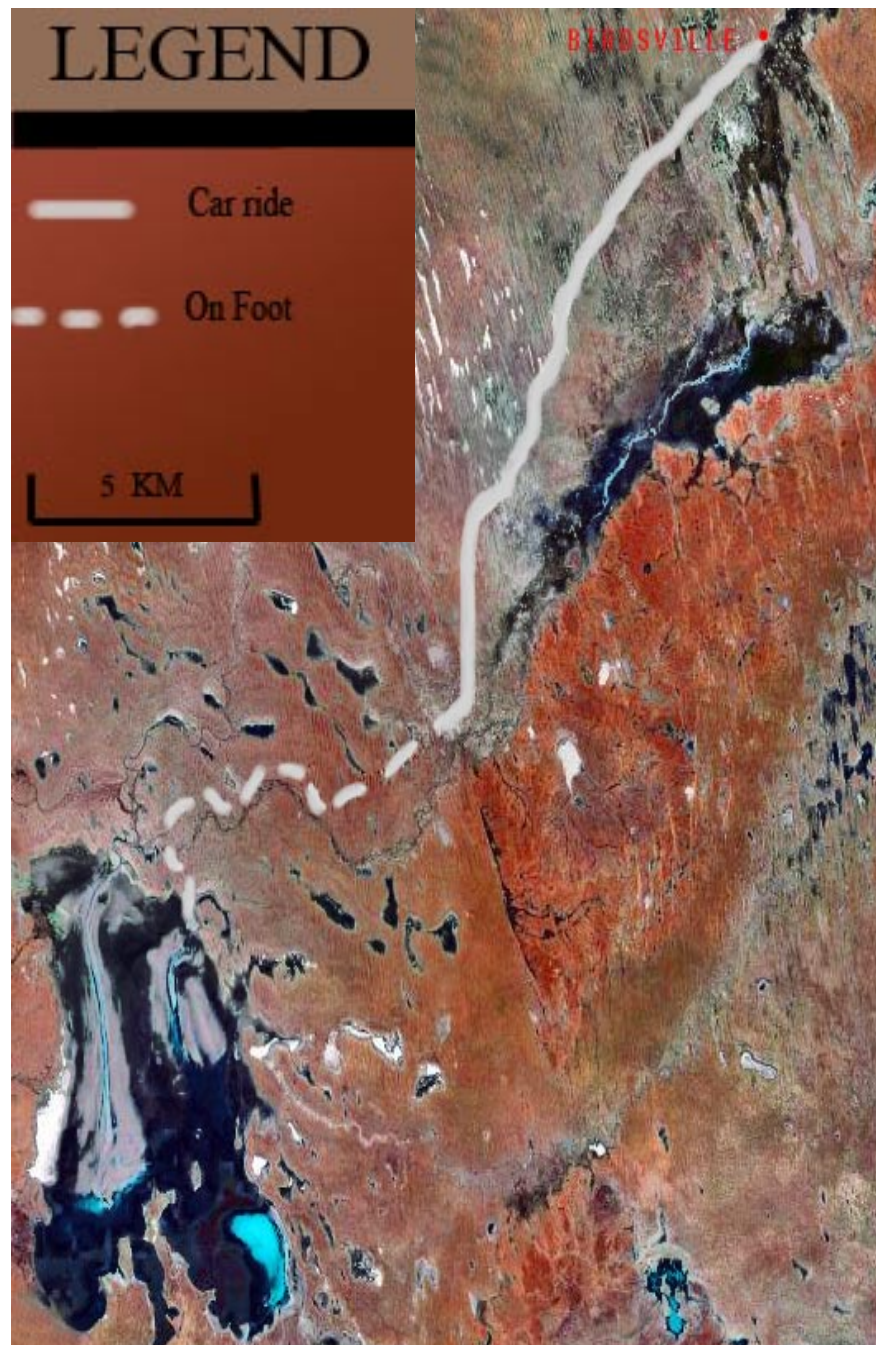
"I already have, we have organised the plane and we are leaving on Sunday week morning. Early" She had a sly look on her face. "And yes you will have to get out of bed early."

"Haha damn. Rightio Sarah. It's a deal."

"Thank you so much! I'm so excited!" She gave Mike a big hug and kept to her research.

At that point the three had agreed upon going, and began planning there journey. They organised their supplies, a flight to Birdsville a small town located to the north of Lake Eyre, and found an indigenous guide who knew the region well.

A short time after that particular conversation, eight days in fact, the three were seated in a small plane heading out for a dirt airstrip near Birdsville. The utterly flat landscape surprised them, but it was the array of light that shone through the clouds and dust that was astounding. The land below consisted of sweeping sand dunes and expanses of open and flat clay pan. There was very little vegetation; there were only rare stretches of grey and rough bushes, with very few small trees. Midway through their journey they flew over the tree lined Darling River, which snaked through the flat landscape. Late in the afternoon they landed at Birdsville.



Chapter 2

The group of three stood flustered in a world of dry heat of which they were not familiar with. They had become accustomed to the pleasant air-conditioned cabin of their plane. It was a typical summer's afternoon in Birdsville. It was 40oC, no wind apart from the lovely breeze that blew past every blue moon. The sky-high sun blared down on the wide-brimmed akubra's sitting on their heads, which were slightly titled down and to the right.

Mike wandered around the remote airport, expecting to find a building or structure of some sort. The place was deserted; Mike looked around the horizon and saw a red vehicle approaching in the distance. The vehicle pulled up and a man got out. The driver stepped out, he was dark skinned, tall and built with black wavy hair.

“Märr-ŋamathirri!” said the Aboriginal politely.

“Come again?” asked a confused Sarah.

“Welcome I'm Garan!” replied the indigenous man, “where can I take you?”

“We want to go to Lake Eyre, we are in search of a cave containing fossils,” stated Sarah.

The friendly expression faded from the man's face.

“I have heard of this place, we should not go there.” He instructed, talking slowly and uncertainly.

“Why?” Sarah questioned.

“It is a place that our tribe never go; I will take you there if you wish.” The man replied.



The group, consisting of Sarah, Mike, Seth and the indigenous tracker packed their gear onto the red four wheel drive and set out. As Mike opened the door to the worn car he noticed a sign. On it there were photos of two people who were supposed to be missing, the sign looked old and worn, Mike dismissed this sign at first but the thought lingered in his head.

They followed a straight, red and dusty track through the flat and barren desert. Sarah sat in the passenger seat, staring out the window quietly in a daze. She was watching the reflector posts pass by intently. Inside she was excited, thinking about the possible discoveries, however the attitude of the indigenous tracker worried her. They continued down the track for some time.

“We are not too far now, it’s just up here” the tracker stated.

Off in the distance, a shining blue light on the horizon caught Sarah’s attention. As they drew closer to it Sarah quickly realised that it was a broken down car. It looked as if it had been there for quite some time, it had rusted and the paint was worn. The indigenous man stopped the vehicle and turned off the ignition; he too was concerned about it. All of them, except for Seth who appeared to be asleep, left the car and approached the vehicle which looked greatly out of place in this deserted region. The most peculiar thing that caught their attention was that the car actually looked okay; it looked as if it could still work. The indigenous man noticed that the keys were still in the ignition; he leant into the vehicle and turned the key. Nothing happened; all that was heard was the grinding of the key within its socket. With the other vehicle turned off the silence scared Sarah all that was heard was howling of wind. With little to say the group walked back to their red car and sat inside it. Garan turned the key to the ignition in his car, and nothing happened, he attempted to turn it on again, but still nothing happened.

“I don’t know what’s wrong,” exclaimed Garan with a worried tone.

“This has never happened before.”



He continued to try but nothing happened. It seemed so unusual that his car broken down next to the other broken car.

“What are we going to do?” questioned Sarah.

“What can we do?” replied Mike. “My phone is out of reception, no contact can be made.”

“Like I said before the cave isn’t far from here, we should walk there and wait, we need to get out of the sun, there is also water there,” said Garan.

As a group they followed Garan’s instructions, they unpacked their supplies and began to walk to the cave. Within a surprisingly short time they arrived at the opening to the cave. Despite being stranded, Sarah was relieved as they found the cave, it actually existed.

They ventured into the cave with their gear; it was cool, unexpectedly cool. Sarah caressed the rough rocky wall to the cave, it too was cold. They continued into the cave where they began to settle and unpack their gear. Garan left them to go outside and set up some kind of signal so that they could be found. Mike, Sarah and Seth ventured further into the cave, leaving their guide behind. As time passed, they began to realise how large the cave actually was.

“Echo!” Seth shouted. “Sorry guys I couldn’t help myself.”

It reverberated throughout the cave network. As it faded a low rumbling replaced it. The rumbling grew until the floor began to shake slightly.

“What’s happening?” Sarah yelled.

Some rocks began to fall from the roof of the cave; they ran further inside as it appeared to be safer in there, at that point the cave in worsened and the opening of the cave collapse.

Chapter 3

After the rubble of the collapsing rocks drew to a closure, silence filled the air of the mysterious cave. The dark cave surrounded the trio and engulfed them in its gloom. They were now trapped in with nowhere to go, except into the cave. With time and energy already spent throughout the day they had limited time to find a way out and the rare mythical fossil.

'Is everybody alright?' questioned Mike.

'Yeah, I am' replied Sarah

'What do you mean alright, we nearly got killed by falling rocks' Seth exclaimed.

'Don't spit the dummy mate, I was only asking' Mike said sarcastically.

The three turned to look where the rocks had collapsed to find a way out, but the rocks where too heavy and big to move. They were stuck. With only one way to go the three searched for answers. If they did find the fossil how would they get out?

'Sarah where's your gear bag?' Seth questioned

'Right here,' she answered.

'You've got your torch in there haven't you?'

'Yeah, good idea.' She took the gear bag off her back and took out the torch. She clicked it on and the tunnels lit up.



To their amazement they saw what appeared to be thousands of rock carving and paintings lining the walls of the forbidden cave. They continued throughout the hundreds of network of tunnels that weaved into the depths of the cave. It seemed that everywhere they walked they were surrounded by rock carving and paintings. These artworks appeared to be telling a story as if the paintings depicted symbols and meanings. The artworks consisted of many drawings, pictures and carvings of what appeared to be crayfish and serpents. As the trio walked slowly into the heart of the cave the walls started to increase

in size and more and more painting and carvings were becoming more distinct. Still crayfish and serpents dominated the paintings but it was the colours and shapes of the images that were incredible. They were getting closer.

It was eerily silent. The darkness made everybody nervous, and the only that could be heard was the sound of the feet stumbling along the dusty floor. “We have been walking for hours Mike! Let’s stop and catch our breaths, walking in this gear is exhausting.” Sarah whined.

After weaving their way through the maze-like tunnels the torch unexpectedly ran out of battery and the tunnel was once again completely filled with darkness.

“Mike,” Sarah said scared

“Damn, any spare batteries,” Mike exclaimed

“Nah there isn’t,” Seth replied with disappointment.

“We’ll have to battle it out from here with our own eyes”

They cautiously walked a bit more feeling the walls of the tunnel for support. Suddenly the floor gave way and Sarah and Mike were falling down into the depths of the cavern. Sarah screamed and Mike shouted as they plunged



deeper into the cavern. Splash! They hit the water, hard and fast. Although the water was only a few metres deep it was enough to soften their landing and keep them safe from the fall.

In another part of the cave two people also heard the scream and carefully made their way towards the noise. Somebody was in the cave as well.

‘Sarah, Mike’ Seth shouted down into the cavern.

‘Yeah’ both replied.

‘What shall we do now?’ Sarah questioned

‘Keep going, try to find a way out, I’ll keep going straight’ Seth answered.

The pair of Sarah and Mike swam out of the cavern water and stare up at the magnificent open space before them. Light blinded their eyes. A huge object dominated the cave, glistening from the light entering the cavern. As they travelled towards it they could see that it was beautiful in its figure. Sarah and Mike moved up to the alter like area where the object was situated. They had found it! Of all the things in the world Sarah has seen this would have to be the best.

‘The fossil of the rainbow snake, can it be’ Sarah exclaimed.

The glistening radiated throughout the cavern.

Chapter 4

It was truly amazing; an ocean of brawny blues, gleaming greens and palpable pinks. It was the most stunning sight they had ever seen with their own two eyes. The size of the cave was vertically challenging. As compact as it seemed, the water they were wading in was of an incredibly large depth. As Sarah and Mike were wallowing in amazement, they were rather spaced out with the phosphorus lights glowing beneath their submerged waistlines. An easy flow of water was pouring through the midst of the cavern and the direction of flow was towards them. The sudden realization that the cavern was slowly filling was threatening the conscious of both of them- they had to escape. They swam around frantically trying to locate a way out, turning left, right, back and forth. Yet they couldn't find anything. They both calmed themselves down and thought aloud.

"What if we don't get out?" Sarah said, concerned.

"We will Sarah. As much as the joke that the glass is half empty amuses me, this situation isn't a laughing matter." Mike exclaimed.

Sarah calmly interrupted by saying "hey look over there. Is that Seth?"

"What? Where?" he replied.

"There's a large ledge over there right underneath the fossil. Isn't that him leaning over it? Let's swim over while we ponder our fate."

"Yeah it is and anyway we're not going to die Sarah! We're both going to die as rich as old prunes swinging on a patio out in Moree." He replied rationally.

As they paddled over towards the huge ledge they stopped in bewilderment. Seth was leaning over the fossil and reaching out to touch it in desire.

"No don't!" they both shouted aloud.

Too late; he started ripping off the skull from the leftover bones. Then instantaneously the room began trembling dramatically and water started to gush through the cracks that were only flowing gently just before. As the tides of water came gushing in they frantically swam towards Seth.

"Seth, it's us. Help us out mate? The waters getting really high!" said Mike

"Are you two ok? Here take my hand."

Seth leaned forward providing reach and Sarah scrambled up the wall of the ledge stretching for Seth's hand.

"Hahaha! Why the hell would I help you? I've got one of the greatest discoveries in history in my clutches!"

As Sarah and Mike continued struggling to stay afloat, Seth cackled in delight. Seth had an artefact to himself and his assistants would get no credit. It was an eccentric and creepy laugh.

Chapter 5

Seth felt no sympathy for the two he just left to drown in the rapidly filling cavern. He pulled out a spare torch that he had concealed from Mike and Sarah beneath his flannelette shirt and stumbled in the direction he thought the exit was. The sound of rushing water still filled the darkness. Slowly the sound of the water subsided as Seth moved further and further away from the spot where he left Mike and Sarah. Soon the cave was once again filled with an eerie silence.

An ear piercing screech cut through the air and sent shivers down Seth's spine as he fumbled around in the near darkness, his torch only illuminating the small area in front of him. More intense screams pierced the air and soon Seth was cowering at the edge of the cave, clutching his ears. The sound of scraping stone gradually filled the cave, Seth was scared. The sound grew louder and louder, Seth knew he was easily observable, as the light from his small torch faintly illuminated the small area around him. Although he was easily seen, he could see nothing beyond the circle of light around him.

Seth sobbed as the sounds of scraping stone and ear piercing screams grew louder. His head felt like it was going to explode, suddenly the sound stopped. Seth waited, all he could hear was the sound of his heavy breathing. Relief swept over him. He stood up and turned to face the darkness of cave once again. Seth flinched as the light of his small torch hit what he thought would be emptiness. A huge set of jaws dominated his view. Saliva dripped from the roof of the huge maw. Seth screamed. The beast took a swipe at him with one of its large claws. Seth nimbly dodged the blow and turned to run the opposite direction. His legs gave away beneath him as the beast swept them away with one powerful blow. Seth hit the ground and the wind was blasted from his lungs. He gasped for air as he struggled to rise and run once again. He managed to duck another blow and jump over another as he sprinted away from the terrifying creature.

Chapter 6

Seth's betrayal disheartened Mike and Sarah, but they needed to escape. Then suddenly they heard the echoes of another group of people approaching.

Throughout the depths of the cave, coming closer and closer as the water was rapidly rising. As the water was rapidly rising Mike pulled Sarah towards this crevice realising that the current must lead to air somewhere.

He yelled to Sarah "Hold on Sarah swim with me!"

As they both squeezed through the crevice and down a short passage way of turbulent water they swam for their lives. They swam until their vision was starting to blur, their lungs aching for air. As they began to swim upwards they struggled to the surface in a new dimly lit cavern. Surfacing with a gasp of air, consciousness still intact, just, scanning the room for danger they heard a scuffling of footsteps in the darkness. Panicking they swam to the edge of the still pool of water that was the top of the whirlpool. Pulling themselves out of the water, they were shaking with trauma.

"Don't move" a husky voice said, pressing a cold metal barrel of a revolver against the base of Sarah's neck.

Hearing this Mike looked up to see two men standing above them with a smirk of maliciousness on their faces. At that moment Seth surfaced with a sneeze and a splash of water. Everyone turned around and Mike and Sarah looked at each other in bewilderment. The tall man had a gun, and decided to introduce himself for the time being.

'My name is Vladimir, great hunter of treasure. This is my assistant Linden.'

'Why are you pointing that at me?' asked Sarah.

'You have my treasure. Give it to me now!'

Mike made a diversion by punching Linden. Mike saw that Vladimir had lost his concentration and dove for the revolver, knocking the deadly weapon out of his hands. Mike and Vladimir wrestled for control of the gun. Biting and kicking each other in a furore of arms and legs.

"Bang" light flashed from the muzzle of the gun as a scream of pain wrenched out.

They both laid there still for a split second. Then Vladimir rolled over and picked up the gun lying right beside him. His vision was dodgy, he took aim at a random target and shot. Seth was shot in the leg, and Vladimir took his last breath. Linden looked at Mike and put his hands up in the air, for he knew he was in grave danger.

"I give up, don't shoot" said Linden.

"Why shouldn't we? You would have shot Sarah" replied Mike.

"No that was Vladimir. I can help you escape!" Linden says.

In the midst they heard a deep rumbling and the walls began to shake once again.

'Leave Seth here, it's what he deserves.' Sarah said with her most masculine effort.

Linden started to sprint back down the tunnel. “Follow me!” he yelled behind him.

Chapter 7

The adrenaline rushing through Mike and Sarah provided them with enough energy to keep up with Linden. It was still fairly dark, but Linden seemed confident with his surroundings.

“I swear we have already been her Linden” Mike stated.

“Yes, I have to return the fossil head.”

“We don’t have time for that. Get us out of here!”

‘We must!’

‘Damn it Linden!’

They continued to follow Linden; they knew he was their only hope. Linden placed the marvellous fossil head back on the stand. The room lit back up again, and the rumbling stopped. The atmosphere calmed completely. Mike and Sarah were settled, but Linden was still rushing to escape the depths of the cave.

‘There are only two exits out of this cave’ Linden said.

‘Yep, and we blocked the first’ laughed Mike.

‘Follow me.’

The repetitive process of left and right turns made Sarah dizzy. Linden knew the cave inside out, and within an hour they reached the other exit. A huge sigh of relief was projected by Sarah, can she took this moment to lie down on the ground, breathing heavily for air.

‘I’m buggered mate,’ gasped Mike.



‘What makes you think I’m not?’ Linden had a cheesy smile on his face.

‘I’m bleeding Mike. Look at my leg!’

During all the action and excitement, Sarah had received a massive cut along her leg. Mike ripped off his flannelette shirt and rapped it around the wound.

‘We need help Linden!’

‘No worries mate. My friend Garan has organised a rescue.’

‘You bloody ripper!’ Mike exclaimed.

The newly found land from the alternate exit of the tunnel was covered with bush and dry grass. Amasses of open plain could be seen to the horizon. A loud sound revelled from the sky, and Mike looked up to see a yellow and red chopper. The longer grass waved in the wind produced by the chopper. As it landed Sarah seemed to be squirming around in more and more pain. Mike picked Sarah up and carried her to the chopper as quickly as possible.

‘Garan, you can fly a chopper?’ questioned Mike.

‘I can do lots of things Mike,’ replied Garan in his usual manner of cheekiness.

Chapter 8

Linden, Garan, Mike and Sarah flew back to Alice Springs hospital, where Sarah was attended to. The medical staff said she should stay for a night so they can nurse her back to good health. The boys stayed in her room, and Mike wanted clarification about the cave.

‘A long time ago, in the dream time,’ Garan started off. ‘There was a mythical legend of the Goorialla, the Great Rainbow Serpent. It is believed that this Serpent brought hills and rivers to the world in the ancient times. Guru Ganing is the home of the rare fossil of Goorialla.’

‘What’s Guru Ganing?’ Asked Mike.

‘Guru Ganing means “Deep Water Cave” in our language. It is the name of the cave that we were just in. A giant freshwater crayfish is the guardian of the fossilised head. It is the Yaralingi Tribe, Linden’s tribe, my tribe, our tribe. It is our most significant and prized possession. It was meant to remain a secret for all of time, and Wakaingurru (the crayfish) protects it. It will attack anyone who is within a close distance to the cave. Without this fossil, our tribe will be disheartened, and will have no reason to live.’

‘So you’re saying the room with the fossil head, was a whole room fossil?’

‘Yes, the bright colours on the walls were due to the fossilised body of the Rainbow Snake. The fossil is the most valuable asset of our tribe, we thank you so much for respected that.’

Mike and Sarah made a kind gesture, and the Yaralingi people left.

‘What an adventure, thanks for sharing it with me Mike’ said Sarah with the last of her energy.

‘Anything for you darling, now get some sleep. Ahh by the way, what happened to Seth?’

Epilogue

Blood seeped from Seth's wound in his leg. He moaned in pain as every step felt like hot irons piercing his flesh. The cave was quite except for his heavy breathing and shuffling of his feet. Half crouched; Seth dragged himself along the cave's wall, leaving a trail of blood behind him. After about 50 metres, Seth collapsed with exhaustion. He could go no further. An ear-piercing screech cut through the air, Seth clutched his ears to try to muffle the sound. "Not again!" He murmured to himself.

Seth gave one last effort to stand and run, but his legs would not support him. He collapsed into a tangle of twisted limbs. Seth panted as he tried to position himself so he could see both ends of the cave. More screeches filled the air, and soon Seth could once again hear the sound that imitated scraping stone. He sobbed in fear. Very slowly, the sound increased in volume and Seth could once again see the imposing figure that dominated one end of the cave. One of the large claws lashed out at Seth colliding with the rock just above Seth's head, he was showered with fragments of stone and dust.

The creature struck again... but this time did not miss.



The Australian outback is a dangerous place. Scientists Sarah Boyd and Mike "Robbo" Robinson and their long time friend Seth Williams find this out the hard way.

Seth, the owner of one of Sydney's most recognised art galleries, has invited Sarah to the opening of his new exhibition. While at this exhibition Sarah spots an artwork which reminds her of an article which she recently read. This article spoke of an unexplored cave under Lake Eyre. After speaking to Seth and her fiancé and fellow scientist Robbo they all set out to the small town of Birdsville in South Australia. From here they set out for Lake Eyre.

Upon arrival they find the underground cave and more than they bargained for....

Recommended for ages 12-14 years.