

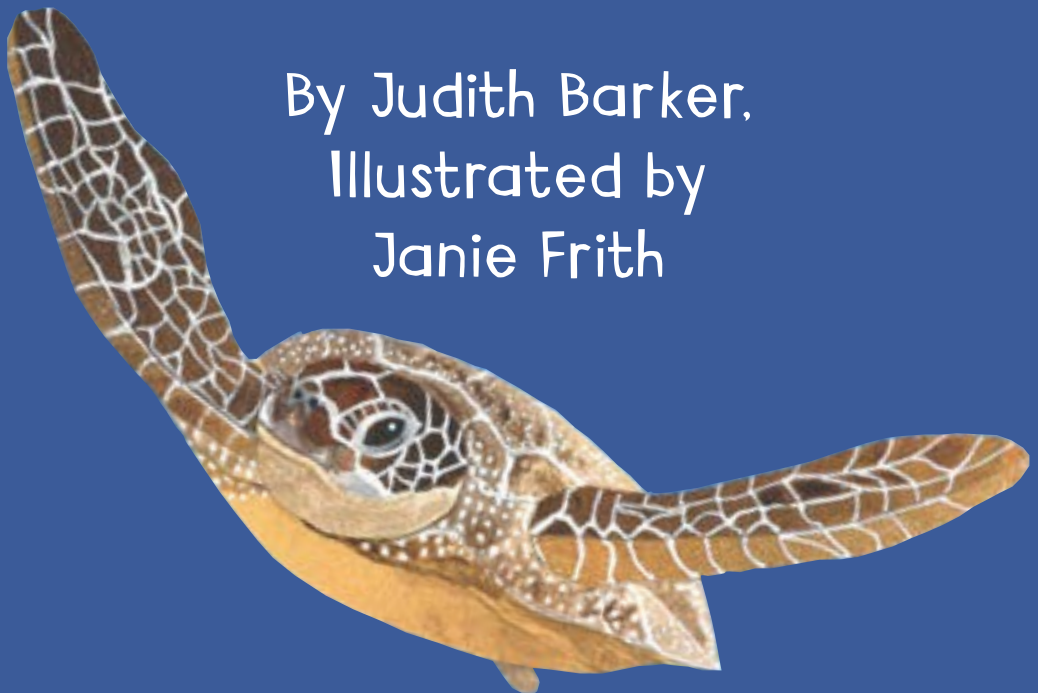


## TEACHING NOTES

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# THE EE IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA

By Judith Barker,  
Illustrated by  
Janie Frith



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## **AWARD-WINNING CHILDREN'S AUTHOR JUDITH**

**BARKER** attributes Dr Seuss' fantastical tales about faraway places to her love of writing children's books. She is a teacher, author, and education consultant. After teaching phonics and phonemic awareness to children in Europe, the Middle East, India and China, Judith saw a growing need to support literacy in schools. Her desire to lend a helping hand to those involved in the art of teaching basic reading skills has resulted in this wonderful series of beautifully illustrated, Australian phoneme-themed stories. Apart from developing reading skills, the books foster imagination, language, and sound-spelling recognition.

# OUTLINE

Wunyami (Green Island) is a coral cay within the sea country of the Guru-Gulu Gungandji people, and home to a diverse range of habitats and tropical marine life. Be spirited away with a boy who dreams of exploring the underwater world of a coral reef on a dolphin, as you embark on a phoneme-themed adventure to explore the land of the Gungandji people, finding the long vowel ee in different words along the way.



# AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

**THE JOY IN THIS UNIT OF WORK IS ITS FOCUS ON THE DIVERSITY OF UNDERWATER MARINE ENVIRONMENTS OF A CORAL CAY.** It can be taught over a week or four-week period, and supports teaching and learning in language arts, balanced literacy, phonemic awareness, phonics, humanities and social science, and geography across the primary school curriculum.

Topics include Indigenous Heritage and the Sea Country, Aboriginal Language and Culture, National Marine Parks, World Heritage Sites, UNESCO, Endangered Species, Crown of Thorns Seastar, Plants, Threats to Marine Life, and Responsible Practices. Creative arts can be incorporated across the unit.





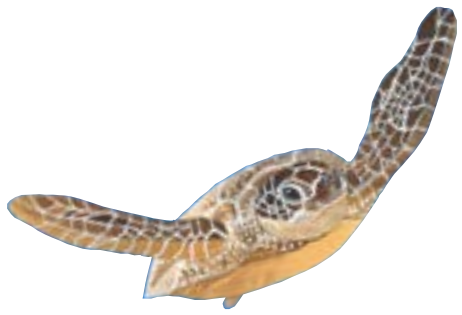
# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **The Great Barrier Reef** is the single largest living organism in the world, spanning a total distance of over 2,300 kilometres from the Torres Strait in the north to Bundaberg in the south.
- **There are over** 900 individual islands that make up The Great Barrier Reef.
- **The widest sections** of The Reef reach over 65 kilometres.
- **It is the largest** coral reef in the world with an overall area larger than the entire country of Italy.
- **Over 1,500 species** of tropical fish, 400 different types of coral, 200 types of birds, 20 species of reptiles, 30 species of whales and dolphins, 130 species of sharks and rays, plus various turtles, sea snakes, and molluscs such as octopus, are just some of the lifeforms which inhabit The Reef.
- **The Great Barrier Reef** is one of the few Australian features that can be seen from space.
- **The Great Barrier Reef** is a UNESCO World Heritage area and listed as one of the seven natural wonders of the world.
- **The depth** of The Reef ranges from 35 metres inshore to 2,000 metres on the outer rim.
- **The coral** of The Great Barrier Reef is gradually being destroyed by the Crown of Thorns Seastar, a marine organism that eats coral polyps.
- **Green Island** is a coral cay 27 kilometres offshore from Cairns, Queensland, located within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park World Heritage Area. Fragile branching corals and many soft corals grow in the sheltered lagoon. Soft corals are not preyed upon by starfish and are more predominant around Green Island.
- **The island** is surrounded by a coral reef and protected within the Green Island National Park.
- **Green Island** was formed around 6,000 years ago by a build-up of sand sediments, and animal and coral deposits, and it has become home to a diverse range of flora and fauna.



# BEFORE READING

- **View** the cover and title of the book, identifying: the title, the author and illustrator, the publisher, the blurb, and the long vowel ee.
- **Ask:**
  - What do you think the book might be about?
  - What do you think the title means?
  - What can you tell about the long vowel ee from the title?
  - Can you think of other words with the long ee sound?
  - How many spelling patterns do you know with the long ee phoneme?
  - What do you know about Green Island (Wunyami)?
  - What more would you like to know about Green Island?



# DURING READING

## Visual Literacy and Vocabulary

- **Pre-teach** any unfamiliar vocabulary: Gunggandaji, vast, aquamarine, cranks, gear, shimmering, swiftly, retreat, prance, anemones, swirl, lurking, crown of thorns, spine, triton, guise, diversity, quay, breaching, scouring.
- **After an initial reading** of the book, go back through each page, highlighting specific sounds, words and spelling patterns used in the text.
- **Discuss how words** with the long vowel ee contribute to the rhyme and rhythm of the story.
- **Draw attention** to the language and illustrations and ask students why the illustrator may have chosen particular images or colours to tell the story. What feelings does this imagery evoke in them?

## General Comprehension

- **What** is a coral reef?
- **What is the tribal name** of the Aboriginal people from Green Island?
- **What is the climate** and habitat of the fish and sea animals in The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?
- **What animals and birdlife** can be found in The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park?

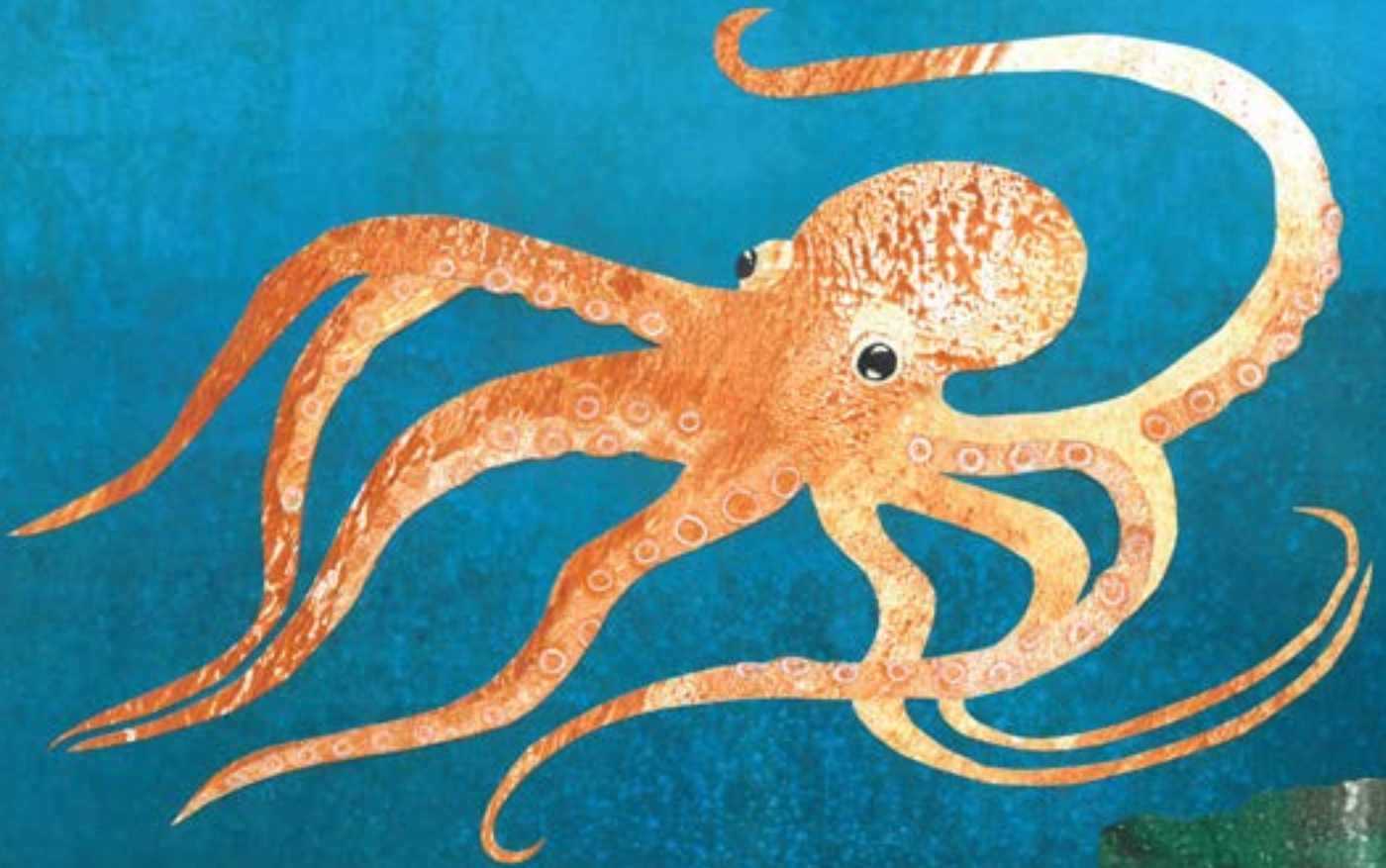
## Exploring the Text

- **This story has several layers**, so it is worth exploring the strong connection between the Gunggandaji people and the land.
- **Discuss** NAIDOC's Heal Country! theme. It includes three sections: Knowing Country, Connecting to Country, and Protecting Country.
- **Why is** The Great Barrier Reef so important to the Aboriginal people?

## Exploring the Illustrations

- **Develop** a connection with Country by acknowledging and illustrating the land of the Gunggandaji Country.
- **Identify** the native fish and sea animals from the story: seagulls, dolphin, shimmering fish, squid, hermit crab, seahorses, clownfish, anemones, angelfish, green moray eel, octopus, crown-of-thorns, giant triton, sea urchins, hump-head wrasse, black spotted puffer, barracudas, whales, turtles, dugongs,





# AFTER READING

- **This story has several layers to explore:**

- Various underwater environments, such as those inhabited by green turtles, giant clams, fluorescent corals, and fish of all colours. How many different fish or sea animals can students find in this book?
- Seagrass beds support a wide range of animals, from juvenile fish that use the grass for protection to predators and large sea turtles. What animal feeds on seagrass? (Dugong)
- The Crown of Thorns Starfish gets its name from venomous thorn-like spines that cover its upper surface. It is one of the largest starfish in the world. What is the relevance of it to The Reef?

- Why are coral reefs important? What are the threats and dangers to coral reefs?
- What are living and non-living things?
- What are the survival needs and features of marine life on Green Island?
- What are some of the relationships between animals, plants and living and non-living things on The Great Barrier Reef?
- Why is the health of marine life on The Great Barrier Reef so important?
- Are there ways The Great Barrier Reef can be protected? (Recycling is one way to help places like The Great Barrier Reef stay beautiful and its fish to stay healthy.)
- Discuss Indigenous heritage relating to the Reef.

# ACTIVITIES



## Cultural Connections

- **Discuss** what Indigenous land The Great Barrier Reef is on.
- **Research** the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as the traditional owners of The Great Barrier Reef region.
- **Illustrate** how Indigenous Australians historically cared for The Great Barrier Reef. They had large outrigger canoes that enabled them to travel to the islands and outer reefs. They moved their settlements up and down the coast for thousands of years before the coming of Europeans.
- **Explain** the relevance of The Great Barrier Reef to Aboriginal people. Recognise that the cultural significance of The Reef has largely been documented through paintings, songs and stories passed down through generations. The Aborigines and Torres Strait people used these waters to gather fish and other natural resources required for their sustenance.
- **Demonstrate** the various totems of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Their totems can be birds (sea eagles or pelicans), reptiles, sharks, crocodiles and fish. They are an important part of cultural identity and are especially significant in song, dance and music, and on cultural implements. Some clans forbid individuals from eating the animal that is their totem, while other tribes make exceptions for special occasions.
- **Explore** Indigenous language. Discuss how clan groups could speak not only their own language but also the language belonging to their neighbours. Recognise how language helps us to understand and identify the many Indigenous groups in Australia.
- **Identify** how language groups can differ greatly. For example, the Guugu Yimmathirr language group (which originates in Cooktown and the area north to the Starke River) call a dugong Girrbiti and a turtle Ngawiya, while the eastern Torres Strait Islander language groups call the dugong Deger and the turtle Nam in their Meriam Mir language.
- **Research** other examples of the languages spoken along the Queensland coast: Meriam Mir, spoken throughout the eastern islands of the Torres Strait; Kuuku Ya'u, one of three closely related dialects spoken at Lockhart River, situated near Iron Range on Cape York Peninsula; and Wulguru language, spoken at the south end of Halifax Bay and around Townsville, including Magnetic Island and inland to Hervey Range.



## What is a habitat?

<https://www.reefhq.com.au/education/teaching-resources>

- **Identify** the needs of fish and how those needs are met in an aquarium habitat. You might ask:
  - What is a habitat?
  - What is an example of a habitat for a fish?
  - Do all fish need the same habitat?
  - Do all fish need the same things in their habitat?
  - What are some of the different requirements for different fish/different animals in an aquarium habitat?
  - Ask students to share experiences they have had with keeping fish in aquariums at home or what they have observed in aquariums they have visited.

## Set up an Aquarium

- **Set up** a fish aquarium in the classroom for students to observe and care for throughout the unit.

- **Ensure** to follow The Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 and The Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes, 2013, 8th Edition, in accordance with Education Queensland Guidelines when setting up the aquarium. See <http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/area/science/animals-ed.html> for more information. Discuss with students the needs of the animals and make them aware of the guidelines they must adhere to when caring for them.
- **As a class**, draw an annotated diagram of the aquarium, equipment needed, and instructions on how to set it up.
- **Draw** up a care roster. Make daily observations and record the animals' behaviours and eating habits. Throughout the unit, use this information to reflect on and find patterns in behaviours and eating habits.
- **Add** new words to a class word wall as they arise throughout the unit.



## Living versus Non-living

- **Ask** students to share anything they know of that is either living or non-living. Jot down ideas on the board. Discuss:
  - What are some living and non-living things you know of?
  - What makes something living?
  - Can you give examples of things that are non-living? How are they different to living things?
  - Is there anything you can think of that you are not sure is either?
- **Note** down any questions students have, or examples of anything they are not sure of. Return to these at the end of the lesson.

## Grouping Things

- **Divide** the class into groups of four or five. Provide each group with a piece of butcher's paper divided into three. Label one column Living, another column Non-living, and another Not Sure.

Provide students with images of a wide range of living and non-living things from different environments. Include things that were once alive, eg a wooden statue, a ball of wool, or leather shoes. Each group does not need to have the same images. Note that the category non-living includes things that were never alive, eg a rock, as well as things that were once-living, eg dead leaves. Often things that were once living are the most confusing for students, so it is good to include such examples. Images of animals and plants can be sourced at <http://a-z-animals.com/animals/> and <http://www.gardenersworld.com/plants/>

- **Have** students observe and discuss each image and place it in the appropriate column. If they are unsure or think something can be classified in another way, add it to the Not Sure list. Students should be prepared to justify their choices.
- **Walk** around the classroom to view and discuss each group's decisions. Identify



similarities and differences between groups. Discuss anything students were not sure of. Discussion questions could include:

- What similarities are seen between living things?
- What do all living things seem to do? (Discuss growing, moving, reproducing and response to stimuli, eg light or touch.)
- Is there anything that was once living? What does once living mean?
- Is there anything that was never living?

- **As a class** decide on a definition for the terms living and non-living and display these in the classroom.
- **Add** new words to the class word wall.
- **Ask** students to record their learning and reflections in their science journals.

## Classifying Things from The Great Barrier Reef

Students will compare things on The Great Barrier Reef and classify them based on observable features.

Remind students of the definitions of living and non-living things, including things that were never living and once living. Use an example, eg coral, and classify it using the class definitions. Observe the coral, consider its living characteristics, and place it under the correct heading.

- **Break** students up into pairs or groups. Give each group a classification key on A3 paper or they can draw it out on butcher's paper.
- **Provide** each group with the same set of pictures, toys and/or models of living and non-living things from The Great Barrier Reef. Try to include similar animals, eg two or three types of fish, seaweed/plant life or crustaceans. Also include things that were once alive and never alive, eg shells, dead animals, sand, rocks, and things that are threats to reefs, eg marine debris such as fishing line/nets and plastic bags.
- **Ask** students to classify and divide their items and to be prepared to justify their choices.
- **As a class**, discuss everyone's choices and justifications. Identify similarities and differences. Discuss things that do not belong to the reef environment and can be problematic, eg marine debris.
- **Record** and display the final classifications, add any new words to the class word wall, and have students add their learning and reflections to their science journals.

## Investigations

- **Students will conduct research into, and record information about, corals, fish, and animals with special symbiotic relationships.**

## Setting the scene

- **Establish** scientific terminology students will use to research different animals and define the word symbiotic.
- **As information** about each animal is found, it could be inserted into a class table and used to create a retrieval chart. Extra columns can be added as necessary. The information gathered could then be used for a variety of activities if time allows, eg reports, posters, information booklets, newsletters and PowerPoint presentations.
- **Examples** of information collected for animals could include:
  - What is their life cycle?
  - Are they a herbivore, carnivore or omnivore?
  - What does it eat?
  - What is its habitat?
  - What are its external features?
  - Where does it live?
  - How does it move about?
  - What does it need to survive in its habitat?
  - Can you find out any interesting facts?
  - Is the animal endangered or vulnerable?





# OPPORTUNITIES TO MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING

- **Challenge** students to create a collage, poster, storyboard or book about a visit to Green Island or The Great Barrier Reef.
- **Explore** Dreamtime stories and ask students to create a storyboard about one of them.
- **Create** a word search with vocabulary from the book.
  - Write a cinquain or an acrostic poem using spelling patterns and words from the book.
  - Recall the various spelling patterns of the ee phoneme.
  - Draw a mind map with the various ee spelling patterns.
  - Play a game with unknown words from the book and identify meanings.
  - Use dictation to reinforce the learning of correct spelling patterns.
  - Practise new words in a poem or a cinquain.

# SUPPORTING READERS WITH PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- **Distinguish** between short and long vowel ee sounds.
- **Identify** the pronunciation of both short and long ee sounds.
- **Ask** learners to recall the different and various spelling patterns of the vowel digraph or long vowel ee sound.
- **Draw** a mind map of the different spelling patterns in the book.
- **Review** the vowel digraph ee and display the different spelling patterns ee, ea, -ey, e-e, ie, -y.
- **Practise** the different words and spelling patterns from the book.



**LEARNERS IN GRADES 1 TO 3** read texts that contain varied sentence structures, some unfamiliar vocabulary, and a significant number of high-frequency sight words. They recognise a wide variety of letter–sound relationships, and self-correct using knowledge of phonics, syntax, punctuation, semantics, and context. They listen for particular purposes and manipulate sound combinations and rhythmic sound patterns.

## Grade 1 Language

- Use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant digraphs and consonant blends when writing, and blend these to read single syllable words (ACELA1458).
- Understand that a letter can represent more than one sound and that a syllable must contain a vowel sound (ACELA1459).
- Understand how to spell one- and two-syllable words with common letter patterns.
- Segment consonant blends or clusters into separate phonemes at the beginnings and ends of one syllable words (ACELA1822).

## Grade 2 Language

- Understand how texts are made cohesive through language features, including word associations, synonyms, and antonyms (ACELA1464).
- Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience and purpose (ACELA1470).
- Orally manipulate more complex sounds in spoken words through knowledge of blending and segmenting sounds, phoneme deletion and substitution in combination with use of letters in reading and writing (ACELA1474).
- Understand how to use knowledge of digraphs, long vowels, blends and silent letters to spell one and two syllable words including some compound words (ACELA1471).
- Use most letter-sound matches including vowel digraphs, less common long vowel patterns, letter clusters and silent letters when reading and writing words of one or more syllable (ACELA1824).
- Understand that a sound can be represented by various letter combinations (ACELA1825).
- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to analyse texts by drawing on growing knowledge of context, language and visual features and print and multimodal text structures (ACELY1670).

## Grade 3 Language

- Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions, and different ways of constructing meaning (ACELA1475).
- Understand how to use letter–sound relationships and less common letter patterns to spell words (ACELA1485).

# DECODING AS A PATHWAY

## IN ORDER TO BECOME

**READERS**, children learn the systematic relationship between code (letters) and sounds, including knowledge of letter and spelling patterns to correctly pronounce written words. In coming to understand these relationships, children are given the ability to recognise familiar words quickly and to figure out words they haven't seen before. With 44 sounds in the English language and hundreds of ways to spell them, the mind boggles! This series of phoneme-themed stories will help to reinforce the teaching and learning of phonic awareness with the different and various spelling patterns of the long vowels (digraphs) in a fun and meaningful way.



## TEN TIPS FOR READING SUCCESS

Some strategies for supporting beginning readers are:

- 1** Use context and pictures to monitor sound, letter and word recognition.
- 2** Sound out letters, identify high-frequency words (common, or sight words) in stories.
- 3** Use repetition often to consolidate the teaching and learning of sounds and letters.
- 4** Support the teaching of spelling by helping children to understand that sounds create different letter combinations.
- 5** Help children to sound out unfamiliar words and encourage self-correction.
- 6** Support children to make predictions, to identify the main idea in paragraphs, and to practise summarising.
- 7** Teach children the separate sounds in a name, eg Sam has three sounds S-a-m.
- 8** Ask your child to clap with you as you sound out the syllables in words, eg wonderful has three syllables won-der-ful.
- 9** Take turns to come up with words that rhyme or sound the same. Play sound and word games, such as I Spy with sounds and letters.
- 10** Provide opportunities for reading a variety of texts, to obtain meaning from sounds, letters, and words.

## BOOKS IN THIS SERIES



**The OO in Uluru**



**The O in the Snow**



**The EE in the Deep, Blue Sea**



**The A in the Rainforest (coming  
February 2022)**

**The I in Island (in progress)  
The AU in Dinosaur (in progress)**

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**[www.woodslanepress.com.au/collections/author-judith-barker](http://www.woodslanepress.com.au/collections/author-judith-barker)**

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