



Barry S. Brunswick's

Bits N Bobs

The Best of Imaginationgeneration.fun



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Hello and welcome to a world of wondrous wizardry and thanks for signing up to my email list. As a reward, I present you with Barry S. Brunswick's Bits N Bobs.

Inside this book is a wonderful and fun collection of poems, short stories, jokes, limericks and quotes. There are introductions to some of my characters and there's also a special bonus prize at the end!



**A Poem That's got Nothing to do with
Christmas: If I Was**

If I was a rabbit, think I'd hop it.

If I was a dog, I'd feel 'Ruff!'

If I was a horse, I'd see my 'naaaybour'.

If I saw a quack, I'd be a duck.



If I was a frog, I might well croak it.

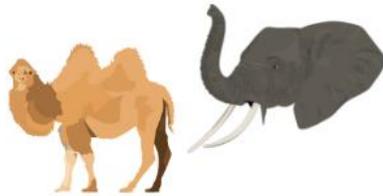
If I was a fish, I'd be so deep.

If I was a snake, I'd throw a hissy fit.

If I was a bird, I'd send a tweet.



If I was a mouse, I'd be so quiet.
If I was an elephant, pack my trunk.
Like a hyena I'm always laughing,
But like a camel got the hump.



If I was a cow, I'd 'moovve' over.
If I was a goat, I'd be a kid.
If I was a monkey, I'd be cheeky.
If I was a parrot, I'd be sick.



If I was a rat, I'd be so dirty.
If I was owl, not give a 'hoot'.
If I was a bat, I'd be a blind one.
If I had no hair, I'd be a coot.



If I was a crab, I'd be a hermit.
If I was a fisher be a king.
If I was a bee, I'd probably 'buzz' off.
if I was a cricket, I would sing.

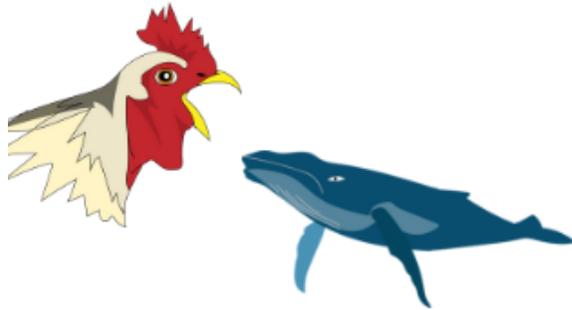


If I was a peacock, I would strut round.

If I was a rooster, I would crow.

If I was an ox, I'd be a strong one.

If I was a whale *'thar she blows'*.

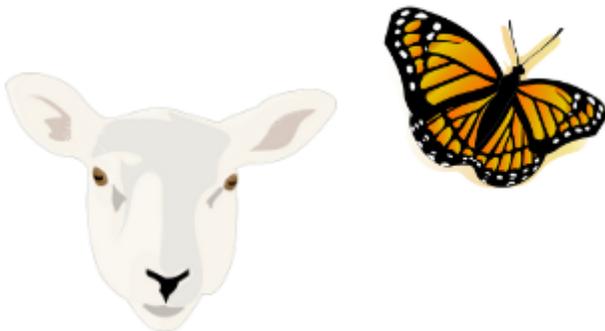


If I was a sheep, I'd be bloomin' *'baaaarmy'*.

If I was a tick, I'd need a host.

If I was a flea, I'd jump inside your ear.

If I was a butterfly, on toast.



If I was a flower, I'd have some power.

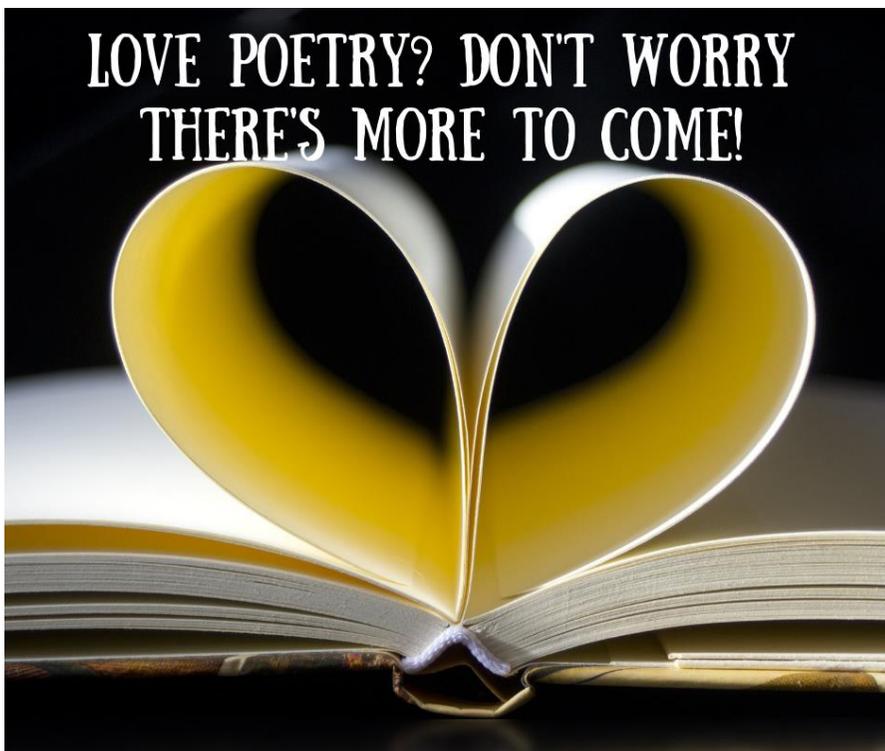
If I was a fairy, I'd believe.

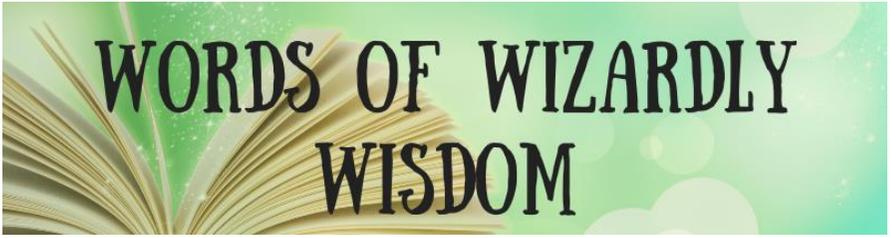
If I was a dragonfly, I'd breathe fire.

If I was a tree, I'd have to leave.



**LOVE POETRY? DON'T WORRY
THERE'S MORE TO COME!**





WORDS OF WIZARDLY WISDOM

'Inspiration is all around. You just have to learn how to see it.'



'Don't try to be perfect, just try to get better everyday.'



'Only those who break the shackles of convention can ever achieve greatness.'



'Only through reflection can you get a true image of self.'





8 Animal Jokes

What do you call a bird that never chews?... **A swallow!**



Did you hear about the shy turtle?... **He refused to come out of his shell!**



I was trying to annoy a fish the other day, **but he refused to take the bait!**



What do you call a bird that's scared of the dark?... **A chicken!**



What do you call a flat fish with roller blades?... **A skate!**



What do you call a man who lives at the bottom of the ocean?... **Ray!**



What do you call a bird with loads of money?... **An ost-rich!**



What do you call a cat with 8 legs?... **An octopussy!**



STORY TIME

What do Jellyfish Talk About?



"Keith."

"Yeah Trev."

"You know we just float around in the ocean, right?"

"Yeah."

"Do you ever wish we did some other stuff too?"

"Stuff like what?"

"Well, you know we just kind of drift and flap about with our tentacles dangling, just trying to ensnare some little fishies."

"Yeah."

"Well, don't you think it would be better if we were more like sharks?"

"What on Earth do you mean?"

"Well, you know everyone's always banging on about how scary sharks are, what with their teeth and swimming fast and hunting and stuff."

"Yeah."

"When we just kind of float about kind of like parachutes in the ocean."

"S'pose."

"I bet sharks don't get scared. Do you ever get scared?"

"Scared of what?"

"Scared we'll get munched by a turtle or something?"

"Nah not really, I just hide behind one of those plastic bag things that humans chuck in the water and they eat that instead and choke."

"Oh, like sort of jelly camouflage."

"Yeah."

"I think it would be better to be like a shark, they eat turtles."

"Nah, being a shark sucks."

"What makes you say that?"

"Well people like eating sharks, like shark fin soup and stuff, in fact they kill millions a year as by-catches because they're scared of 'em. Whereas they think turtles are cute, so they protect their nest sites and stuff."

"But humans aren't afraid of us are they?"

"Oh, their terrified of us."

"How so?"

"Well, what with our stingers and that, it turns out we're the most venomous creatures on Earth so people don't much like eating us at all. In fact, they do their best to stay out of our way."

"Are we really?"

"Oh yeah, it's official."

"I thought humans ate up everything until its gone. Anyway, what about jelly and ice cream then? People are always eating that at parties and stuff."

"No no no, that's the wrong kind of jelly silly."

"What do you mean, isn't jelly, just jelly?"

"Well, that's like fruity jelly and we're like fishy jelly."

"So, humans don't eat us then?"

"No Keith they don't."

"Oh, sorry my mistake."

"Why were you thinking about that stuff anyway?"

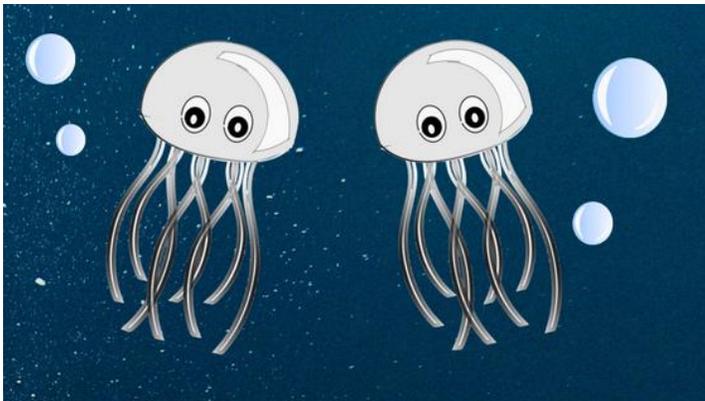
"I was just trying to think outside the box for once."

"Don't be silly, you can't possibly think outside the box."

"Why not Trev?"

"Cos you're a box jelly fish Keith."

"Oh yeah, sorry."



The End

Loopy Limericks



There once was a young man called Dave,
Who decided that he would be brave.
As though he didn't care, he tried fighting a bear,
And now he's face up in his grave.



There once was a fella called Lee,
Whose brain was the size of a pea.
He had a tickly nose and was going to blow,
And he shot out his brain when he sneezed.



There once was a woman from Aire,
Who put a hot flame to her hair.
With no time to think, she dived in the sink
With her bottom stuck up in the air.

Catching Stars

Come with me on a trip across the sea,
Up into space and through history.
Anything is possible, anything can be,
Anything you can imagine, anything we dream.

Take a little journey, deep inside your mind,
A trip inside a worm hole or through the mists of
time.
Feel the sand between your toes, the moonbeams
in your eyes.
Nothing's out of reach you can vanish, you can fly.

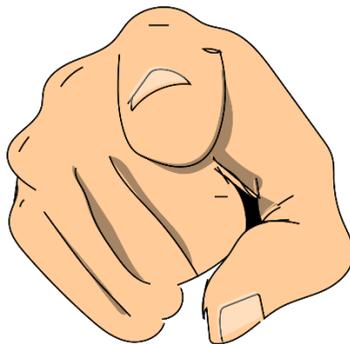
Dive deep into the ocean, down to the abyss,
Ride upon a whale, swim just like the fish.
Jump higher than the moon, give the stars a kiss,
Dance among the raindrops, frolic in the mist.

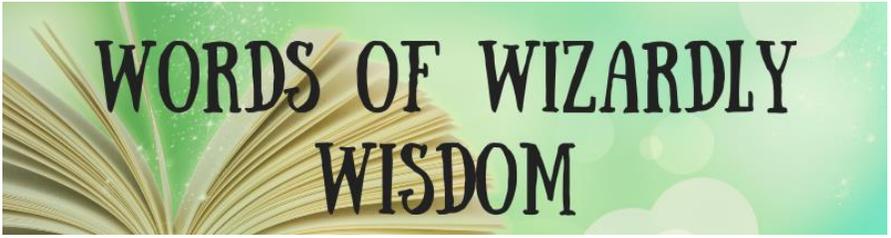
Play football with an alien, have some tea and
biscuits with a king,
Jump round like a kangaroo, run just like the wind.
Jump into a puddle, while you loudly sing,
Be tickled by a feather, if that is your thing.

If we dare to dream it, it might well just come
true,
If we're brave and we're creative, then there's
nothing we can't do.

If you're not sure how to get there, I'll give you a
clue.

The journey lasts forever but it begins with you.





WORDS OF WIZARDLY WISDOM

'Hey you, don't be a human being, be a human doing.'



'Learning is like the time, it never stops.'



'Anything you can dream can come true in the words of a story.'



'You only fail when you give up.'



10 Silly Jokes

What do you get if you cross a reptile and a kangaroo?... **A leaping lizard!**



Did you here about the woman who spent all her money on a rock?... **She couldn't budge it!**



Did you hear about the mortgage that couldn't get a girlfriend?... **He spent his life a loan!**



What's a mountain goats favourite movie?... **Rocky!**



A pot of honey asked me to go on holiday with them. **I said sweet!**



What do you call a man who can't stop nodding his head?... **Bob!**



Did you hear about the man who piddled on a piano?... **Well he did say he was going to tinkle the ivories!**



What do you call a rock star who's always throwing fruit?... **Chuck Berry!**



I saw an ad for referee's holidays. **It was a whistle stop tour!**



What do you call a shapeshifting robot in a rockpool?... **Octopus-prime!**



Loopy Limericks



There once was an old guy from France,
Who had a bad itch in his pants.
He twitched and he scratched, round the front
and the back
And he found they were full up with ants.

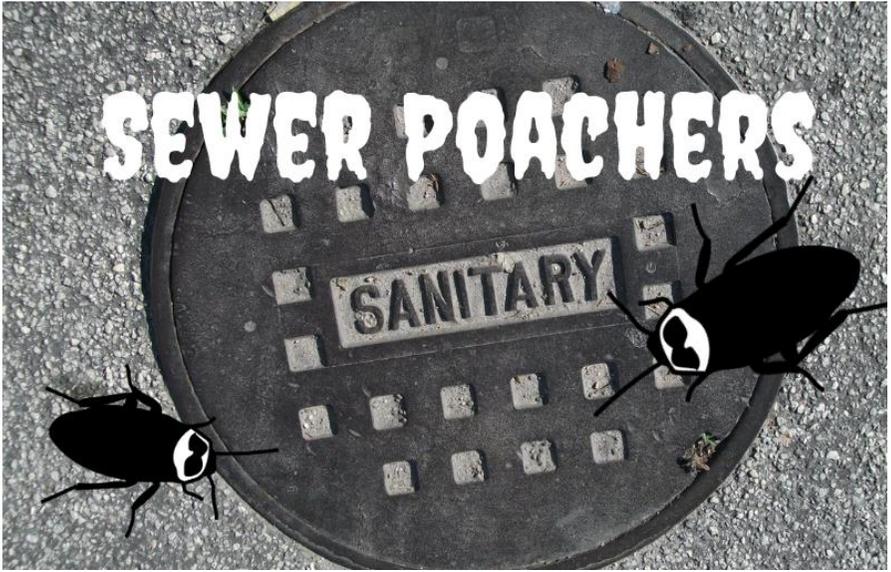


There once was a man from Bellaire,
Who was drastically losing his hair.
He put on some cream and man did he scream,
When he woke up and looked like a bear.



There once was a lady called May,
Who was always scoffing down hay.
Who would have thought, she'd turn into a horse?
And whenever she laughs, she goes 'neigh'.

STORY TIME



"Now just shimmy down this," said grizzle, holding the string in his hand.

The four rats, equipped with backpacks and their legendary cunning, gently climbed the down the string into the dark sewer.

Their toes soft touched the cold slimy concrete. They were surrounded by smells that would make you or I shudder to the soul, but this was their world. Where others would perish, these creatures survive and thrive.

The four warriors stood, ears pricked, eyes alert and noses twitching. The hunt was on.

Grizzle, Hibert, Dana and Sneak were charged with feeding the tribe. They were the hunters, the ones the little rats looked up to and aspired to be. Yes, there was always plenty of rubbish for their kind to gorge on, but at times, they needed meat, and one type of meat was the most prized of all, cockroach meat!

"Right, grab the harpoon," Grizzle whispered in his rasp.

You see, the cockroach can hear a whisper through the dark from a mile away, so they had to be quiet.

Sneak grabbed the harpoon gun, and away they went, scurrying silently in shadows. Sharp senses alive and hearts skipping with the thrill of the hunt.



Deep in the darkness...

'What was that?' I heard a whisper from far away, as always, I panicked and scurried on. I wished the fear wouldn't always control me. I wished the urge to hide didn't haunt me all the time, but alas, it

did. So many times, I have questioned myself, my nerve always on the edge of breaking. I stayed low in the shadows, tucked in the corners for protection. I had a terrible feeling that I tried to shake away, the feeling something was hunting me, but these feelings, I have had often and were not proven to be true.

'Come on Francesca you can do this!'



"Shhh." Grizzle put his finger to his lips, wiping filthy sewer slime all over his face. He neither noticed, nor cared.

"I got me a scent boss." Hibert, who was the tracker, rushed over. He pointed towards it and stared the hundred-yard stare, the lust for blood boiling within him, and equally, within them all.

Without speaking, they moved further on expertly blending in, silent and deadly, slinking in the darkness.

"I can hear one," said Sneaky at the bottom of her voice. There was a clear scratchy scurrying type of noise ahead.

They ran towards their unsuspecting target.



'Oh my word! I heard some more whispers. They're chasing me!' I heard them coming, and I was filled with panic. What could they want with an innocent cockroach? So long have we hidden in the shadows. I must stay low; I must stay out of sight. That is what is drilled into us when we are young. That is the path we are forced to take. So often our brothers and sisters fall; so often we are prey. My duty is to survive, for I am a special one, for I am a gleaming cockroach with a shell hard and black.

It was time to go, I really had to get out of there. They were coming!



"I senses her, I does. She a hundred jilks ahead," Dana whispered. She bristled in anticipation as she started moving, followed by the others. It was clear they were on to the scent of their prey. Onwards they marched bravely, never a fear, even in the darkest of places. They were in the shadowy places which most would fear to tread, but this was their home. They were one-minded in their goal and one minded in their mission. They didn't

need thought for they had instinct to guide them and guide them well it did.

The four rat-shaped shadows melted like smoke into the background, relentless, hairs on end, the excitement growing. The end of the deadly harpoon poised and gleaming occasionally in the light that made it down there. Any cockroach faced with such a deadly weapon, so small and weak, would have no chance. Before they could even breathe, it would all be over.

They tore ever on, their determination never wavered. Turning down every tunnel they passed, each brought hope they would find what they sought, only to find nothing again. Their senses felt the cockroach was nearby, but still it eluded them. It seemed these rats, were facing a very wily and elusive foe indeed.

They turned down one more tunnel, the stench of cockroach was clear to them, even above the stench of sewage. They went to the end, scanned every corner but still they found nothing.

Grizzle's frustration was growing. "Still nothing? This doesn't make sense." He was louder than he should have been, but his emotions betrayed him.

They were left with little choice but to leave the tunnel and carry on searching. Never before had they returned to the nest empty handed and they certainly were not going to this time either.



'They didn't see me.' I looked down as they scurried below. My legs stretched as I desperately cling to the ceiling of the tunnel, lost like a ghost in the inky blackness. I could see them leaving. I was filled with relief 'I might just get out of this alive.' I listened to the footsteps leaving the tunnel and waited a moment longer. Only then did I dare move from my hiding place. I scurried down the wall and back into the filth that lined the tunnel floor. On edge, I nervously scuttled forward. The opening at the end was in view.



The four rats waited by the tunnel's entrance huddled, hidden from sight, and waited. A moment passed and the black shell of a cockroach became clear. In an instant, Sneak pulled the trigger of the harpoon gun. With a *whoosh* the deadly spike went forward. The string unwound as the weapon

found its helpless target. There was a squeal of pain as it pierced the cockroach's shell. The insect struggled but knew it was helpless. The four rats grabbed the line and started to reel in their stricken prey.



'Oh no, Simon!' My friend was taken before my eyes. I was exposed, out in the open; I needed to get out of there. I scurried like the wind, for all I was worth.



"Hey guys, there's one there!" Grizzle yelled.

"Looks like a big'en too,"

"Did you get a good look at it?" Hibert asked.

"No, just a glimpse of the shadow passing. It headed down that tunnel." He pointed a paw towards it.

They quickly restrained the cockroach they had already. They expertly taped up its legs and stuffed it into a bag. Dana slung it on her back, and Sneak reloaded the harpoon. On they went, ready to claim another bigger prize.



I ran with all I had; I could hear footsteps coming. They were close and the shadows wrapped 'round me and closed in further as the tunnel reached an end. There was nowhere to go; it was a dead end!



"Come here, roachy roachy roachy," Grizzle's gruff voice called out menacingly. They edged further and further down the tunnel, the harpoon ready, poised to strike. They stood side by side so nothing could get by them unnoticed or unchallenged.



They were coming and I was trapped. I had nowhere left to go! There was no choice. I couldn't run; I couldn't hide, so I needed to fight!



The rats moved ever closer, piercing the black with their gaze. Out of the darkness like a flash sprung a cockroach, huge and hissing. It clamped its solid jaws around Hibert's neck, and with a snap, his head came off his body, and he fell down dead.

Grizzle looked up, eyes wide in fear. The mutant cockroach was far huger than any rat.

Sneaky fired the harpoon, but it was useless, as it bounced off Francesca's solid armour. The rats turned tail and ran. How quickly the hunters had become the hunted. The cockroach scurried up the wall, overtook them and then dropped down in front of them. In moments, they were torn apart and consumed, and just like that, Francesca the mutated cockroach melted like a ninja, back into the dark.

The End



Meet the Characters



Name: Norman

Story: [The Secret Tale of a Cupboard Gnome](#)

Description: Although Norman may look like the run of the mill garden gnome, he is in fact, a cupboard gnome.

He's a little guy with a massive heart who always speaks in rhyme.

See if Norman and his friends can stop the bad bandito gnome Sancho Gnomez and foil his deadly plan.



Name: *Ginger*

Story: [The Secret Tale of a Cupboard Gnome](#)

Description: She's called *Ginger* even though she's blue. She's a secret squirrel and she becomes Norman's best friend, sidekick and companion.

She is a secret creature with secret powers, so it stands to reason that it's called a secret tale. The only place you can find out about secret squirrels and cupboard gnomes is in this book.



Name: The Wizard of the Woods

Story: [The War of the Turnips](#)

Description: The wizard was once a man until he was cursed to roam the woods forever. Both ancient and wise, he watches over the trees in the Dark Dark Woods.

He will go on the adventure of a lifetime with the Heroes of Chutney. He is a powerful being with the power of the trees at his whim. Together they must return the villagers' turnips from a cursed king.



Name: Captain Edgar

Story: [The War of the Turnips](#)

Description: Edgar is Little Timmy Thompson's father, and Captain of Chutney's guards.

He will serve Chutney and defend her with his life. Which is lucky as he has a fire breathing dragon to deal with. Will he live a hero, or die a legend?



Name: Saffron

Story: [The Dreamland Trilogy](#)

Description: Saffron may look like a delicate butterfly but she is a super powerful Dream Queen. She is an ancient and magical warrior for the light.

Her duty is to train Eric the Nightmare Crusher and help him get ready to step into the darkness and face his destiny.



Name: Jamelia

Story: [The Dreamland Trilogy](#)

Description: Jamelia is a Flazzling, a being of pure light. She is Eric's guide and best friend. Her infectious giggle, her beautiful golden hum and she holds powers that will blow minds.

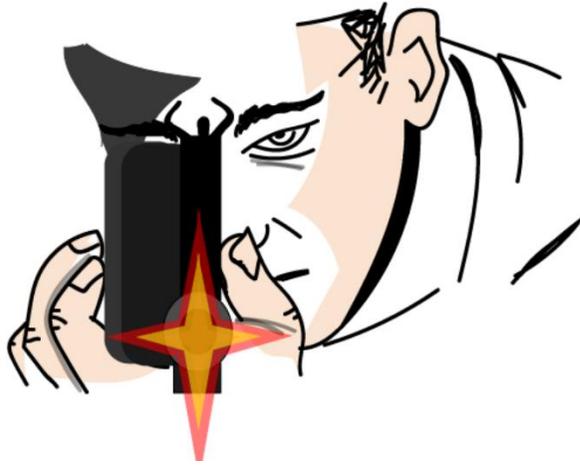
See her in action and fall in love in an instant within the pages of my latest adventure trilogy, Dreamland.



Name: Mr Bleegley

Story: [Flesh and Blood](#)

Description: Mr Bleegley is a zombie and in the mean streets of a zombie apocolyspe, looking after his family is becoming hard. What with humans blowing heads off all over the place and the vampires lurking in the shadow. This hilarious and nightmarish tale will have you on the edge of your seat and a unique twist will keep you asking for more.



Name: Major Hollows

Story: [Flesh and Blood](#)

Description: The leader of the human camp Checkpoint Beta. A man, big and strong and unwavering in his duty. He will lead the humans against the zombie uprising.

A sequel to *Flesh and Blood* will be coming soon.

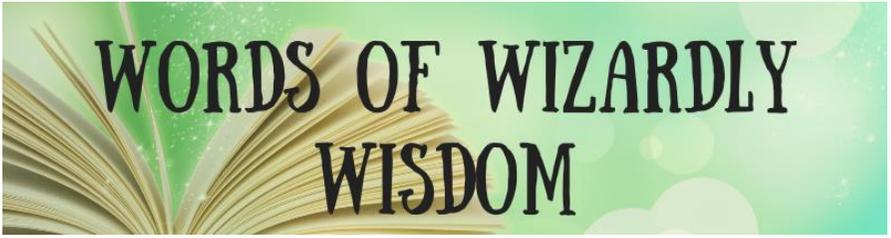


Name: Thunderwing

Story: [The Savage Wild](#)

Description: Thunderwing is the chief of the magpie tribe. They live day to day collecting food and minding their own business but this warrior is fierce and fearless. Only foolish birds will tangle with him and his tribe. The trouble is the crows want revenge.

The day to day life for the wild things can be savage.



WORDS OF WIZARDLY WISDOM

'I wrote a poem, I sang a song, I wrote a story. Why? Just to make you smile.'



'Don't judge a person by their words or their actions, judge them by their intentions.'



'Nobody ever said the road to greatness would be an easy one.'



'Put your hands in the air and scream woo hoo because you rock!'



10 Silly Thoughts

Do you think knights... Ever went out during the day?



If you snooze you lose... So why aren't we lost every morning?



You call it a dream... I call it a head movie!



If a fly's called a fly... Why is an ant, not called a walk?



If the army's always marching... Why isn't it called the leggy?



If ants and moles live in nests... Why does a rabbit get a warren?



If trees have leaves... Why do they always stay in the same place?



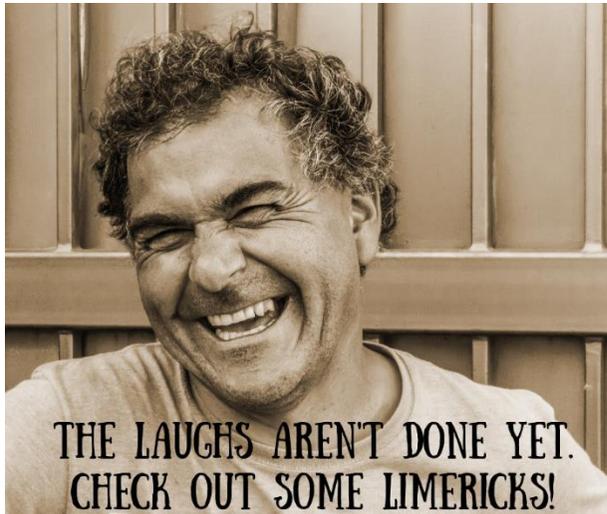
Just playing solitaire with a couple of friends!



Always remember folks: The mocked man mocks the mocker!



Do you think butterflies could have evolved from fairies?



Loopy Limericks



'There was a young man known as John
Who held his breath for too long.
"Oh no!" I said, as his face turned so red,
And his head went off like a bomb.'



There once was a woman called Sue,
Who was well known for being so rude.
She went out in the road, without putting on
clothes.

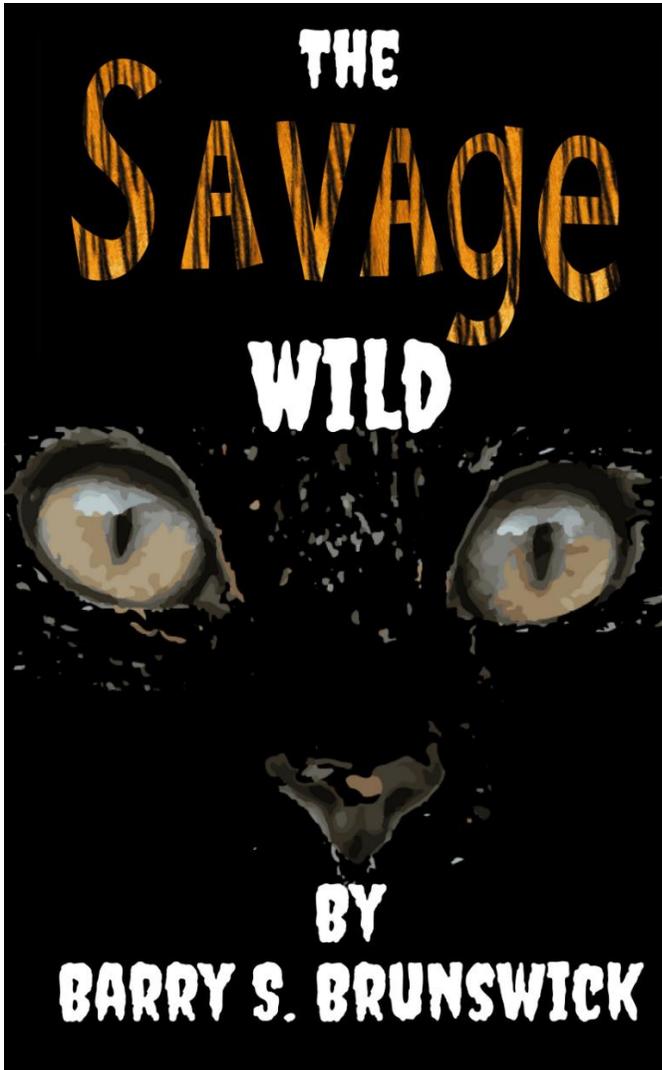
And went to the shop in the nude.



There once was a man from Peru,
Who was constantly chewing on shoes.
He had grit in his teeth, and his breath smelled
like cheese,
And the laces come out in his poo.

STORY TIME

As a special bonus I promised, here is a free copy of my great short story: [The Savage Wild](#).



5.30am

They were in the park again this morning, as they were every morning. As soon as the sun was up, the four of them stepped out onto the dew-soaked grass. The wind whipped the trees, taking away what had seemed the endless heat of the summer.

They were a family of four. The mother, plump and proud, watched on as her children bickered and argued, as they did all the time. She didn't seem to mind; maybe she even found it amusing. Who could tell? The father was skinnier and older; his eyes flashed bright, angry and impatient, ready to chastise them when their bickering got out of control, and, every time, in the end, he did. I often wonder if they actually enjoyed themselves, enjoyed being together or it was like an instinct or a habit that took them round that park each morning, no matter what weather greeted them.

The children were very active, and showed off and screeched, trying desperately to win the attention of their parents, who showed them little.

The family preferred the quiet of the morning long before the joggers started to circle. They felt like it belonged to them, just for that hour, the hour between sunrise and when the workers crawled out their door clutching their coffees, heading like zombies towards the train station.

The noisy kids from the corner chatted excitedly as they rushed past, screaming and laughing in a jumble of speech, enthusiastic showing off and attention seeking filling the

air. The voices grew ever louder as each tried to outdo the others. They didn't need coffees like those train goers. They were alive, alert, from the very second one eye opened. They cared little about being quiet, even though most of the world was still snoozing lazily beneath blankets. They screamed and laughed wildly in their vibrant clothing, chasing each other all the while, a cacophony of voices, each shouting out to be heard above the others. It became a tangled medley where any one voice could no longer be made out, much like a hundred school kids on a bus, even though they numbered only seven.

Then came the grey gang next door, each in their matching uniforms, who loved to intimidate all that went by. They gave off the illusion that they were tough. They wished they were, but alas, they were not. They thought all others on the street were afraid of them, but truthfully, they were deluded. They lacked either the muscle or the numbers to truly rule the street. Their endless ambition was to rule supreme in safety, in comfort, but no matter how they wished, the world simply doesn't work that way.

They screamed insults, cheekily and loudly, to those who passed, those without the courage to take them on, as long as they were far enough away to stay out of reach. They were like a child poking a caged animal with a stick. They would run as fast as possible, should the animal get free. They were the petty and the childish, they were the cowards.

Then there went that huge guy, handsome and confident, with his head held high. He wore a suit of white. Some days he appeared with a friend or two, but mostly he was alone. He had no fear of loneliness. It allowed him to follow the wind and do whatever he chose to do, whenever he should choose to do it. It was easy to sit back and admire him, and many did, as he swaggered by. He was so nonchalant, so brave and so free.

The married couple in the his and hers pink hats looked upon the scene. They waited around for a while until their friend arrived, then off they went again, on another adventure to who knows where. They wouldn't be seen again until daybreak the following morning.

Skulking in the shadows, the one with the evil eyes stared out, staring through whoever was unfortunate enough to meet her gaze. They would shudder as they felt the hate, the spite, the jealousy. In her heart, her rage burned and her envy boiled and she stared more. Her scream filled everyone's ears. She wanted you to look at her, as if she thought you might turn to stone.

The true king watched silently. He did not need to speak, he needed no gang. He was majestic and wise, unafraid and intimidating. He feared none; he didn't even know fear. Fear was a stranger to him. His chin was high and his eyes danced with mischief. He would laugh crazily in the face of a challenge from which all others would run. The king was mighty, the king was brave, his heart was true. He had no time for any other than his wife, his queen and his ever-growing brood: his son, who he trained, teaching

him to be a king so that one day he would rule a kingdom of his own, and his daughter, so beautiful, who would one day take another king as a husband and become the queen. And these are the birds of my street at sunrise...

The Prowler

As King Karnoo the kookaburra laughed, cackling like a monkey in defiance of the waking world, in the park, the magpies were feeding. They were a small tribe by comparison to others in their species. Just the four. The chief, Thunderwing, was the head, the male bird, silent and at times cruel. But he would protect his family by pain of death against any attack. Rarely would he run from a challenge, never had he, except against Raptor, the mighty sea eagle that showed his face every now and then. Against him he had no chance. He and his children would be killed by the enormous hooked beak and vicious talons.



Thunderwing was old and wise, having seen many seasons come and go. He ruled with an iron fist but with a never wavering sense of duty to his tribe.

His wife, Yarrah, was his most loyal companion, and though he would chastise the children, even sometimes with what humans would consider to be violence, she was always loyal to him. She doted on him and never would they quarrel between them. She was as dedicated as any mother in all the animal kingdom. But, as is the way of the magpie, first they are the most devoted parents, fetching food endlessly from the moment they wake until the moment they turn in for the night. But then, as their children grow to adolescence, eight months later, they would cast them away and make ready for the next spring, where the whole cycle of magpie life would begin once again.

The family's territory was small but it had everything they needed: trees in which to sleep, a grassy park to dig up grubs and worms, and relative safety from the larger predators that lived amongst the threatening veil of the nearby national park.

The children were Strongfoot, the son, and Kacoor, the daughter, both full of mischief and constant quarrels. But even these siblings on the brink of adulthood and soon to be banished forever, were as brave as lions when a threat came into their territory.

The whole family called out from the highest point on the powerlines in the morning, to let all know that the punishment would be harsh if ever they dared invade their

precious territory. The kookaburra and the cockatoo in his suit of white, the lorikeet with rainbow feathers and the noisy myna birds who were the grey gang, had nothing to fear from the tribe. They fed on different things. But Kork the kurrajong was their sworn enemy. During nesting season, the magpie and the kurrajong would attack pretty much anything they considered a threat, including people. It is not known why, but most of all, they loved to fight each other, each threatened by the mere presence of the other, especially when the nests were fresh, and hungry chirping mouths needed feeding. Their swooping dog fights and screaming calls filled the spring backdrop. But even these two sworn and ancient enemies would join forces to fight Fazlar the crow and his friends.

The crows were green-eyed fury, smart and devious; they were the eaters of eggs and chicks. The worst thing of all, they worked cunningly together. Calling out their moaning cry, they would circle the trees that had fresh nests, to draw out the swooping attacks of the parents. When the unsuspecting new parents tore out of the branches to repel them in all their fury, one would sneak in from behind and raid the nest of eggs and chicks. A few moments later their precious brood and all hope would be gone. The full-bellied crows would moan away to break the heart of the next expecting or new parents, until their bitter emptiness could be filled the following year. Such is the way of savage nature.

Thunderwing was trotting a few metres away from the rest of his tribe. Strongfoot and Kacoor were arguing. They were trying to get their mother to feed them, squawking

endlessly, louder and louder, with mouths wide, even though they had long since been able to feed themselves. It was as though they were trying desperately to cling to the last vestiges of childhood, for all too soon, they would be unceremoniously forced away from the tribe. Magpie tribes can have many members, but in their little street there was not enough food for any more than Thunderwing, his wife and the new chicks each year.

The chief had had more than enough of their frankly annoying endless squabbling for their mother's attention. He kept his distance before he should lose his temper and fly into a wild bestial rage. He would charge, squawking, pecking and flapping at his antagonist.

He grumbled to himself as he kept an eye on them.

Suddenly, the myna birds, the grey gang, started their car alarm like squeal. Loudly they screamed out, joined by another and another and then another. The noise got ever louder, as one voice joined the next.

Thunderwing was alert and all the magpies stopped pecking for worms and fixed their eyes upon something. The myna birds were the warning when trouble reared its head in the neighbourhood. Thunderwing gave out three long shrill whistles, the magpie language for "Take to the high point," and, in a split second, they were in the air, watching down below for the enemy that the mynas had seen.

"Who is it, Jargo?" Thunderwing asked the myna bird chief, as he perched next to him.

“It’s the hairy one with teeth, the cat!” he screamed breathlessly.

“We have nothing to fear from him. He is stupid, he can’t even fly.” Thunderwing looked down upon this clumsy enemy with disdain. The cat could only catch the birds that were off guard. He whistled his insult down upon the feline foe and gathered his family for the swoop.

“We’ll drive him off. We’ll make sure the brute cannot walk unhindered in the daytime.”

Jargo screamed excitedly, “He is the taker of chicks!”

“Fear not, Jargo, he is a coward. He sneaks in the shadows. He will not stand and fight as us brave magpies would. Follow my lead.”

And Thunderwing swooped down from his lofty perch. He pinned his wings back, and, with a frightful screech he dive-bombed the cat.

The cat looked up as the shadow of the mighty bird loomed over him. He raised a paw with razor claws drawn and took a swipe, a swipe that met nothing but air, as the bird had come and gone before he could react.

Thunderwing was far too quick. He was followed closely by his wife Yarah, and then his chicks joined the battle. Even the mynas followed his lead, and, just as predicted, the cat didn’t stand to fight. He cursed as he turned tail to run. He scurried back to the dwelling of his human. He was tired of being harassed every time he went for a morning stroll. So much so, he saved most of his

wanderings for the night when the birds slept and the bats ruled the sky. He skulked back to the safety of his human, muttering under his breath. He swore revenge on the feathered ones that were the bane of his existence. He vowed that he would feast on their bones, one day soon.

As is the way with nature, the mynas went back to their playful chasing and swooping. Thunderwing and his tribe returned to the ground and continued gathering worms and grubs, as though nothing had happened.

The Bird of Death

From a tree far away, glowing green eyes watched over the scene. With a moaning cry that simply could not be contained, he was envious, evil. His silk feathers were the deepest black, like his body was made of pure shadow. Fazlar the crow and his two brothers, Gloiner and Carpee, watched. They were nest raiders and were hated by the other birds.



Fazlar had hated Thunderwing and his tribe ever since he had tried to raid their nest three seasons before. Every day the three of them had come, two circling to draw out Thunderwing and his wife while Fazlar went to get his

beak into the white eggs that lay unprotected. But Thunderwing was brave and mighty and he had foiled them time and time again and driven them back to whence they came. Even the magpies' sworn enemy, Kork the kurrajong, had helped in the battle. They may have fought each other daily in the nesting season, but when their common enemy entered the street, they would forget their differences and join forces to drive the birds of death away.

Today the crows' bellies were full, but their mission was one of petty revenge. With a moan that gave away their presence, they spread their huge wings, and their velvet coats shimmered in the sun. Like a shadow they loomed over the park above Thunderwing's unsuspecting tribe.

Once again, the mynas squawked out their alarm.

Thunderwing shifted his gaze from the juicy morsel he was about to swallow and turned his head upwards. He saw the shadows above.

“Strongfoot, Kacoor, danger! Take cover in the tree!” he yelled in the language of the magpie.

He took to the air, tearing bravely towards the three crows. His wife followed.

Then there was a mighty battle in the air above the park. Like a dogfight in World War Two, they circled and dived, each trying to get the higher position. The outnumbered magpies screamed shrill warnings towards the crows.

The crows circled above. They were wise, perhaps the smartest of all birds. They knew all too well, this would give them the advantage in battle.

Thunderwing cared not. He flew at them with wild abandon, and, like an acrobat, upon each approach he flipped himself upside down to scratch at their underbellies with his formidable talons. The crows turned their heads, pecking at him and his loyal wife. After each violent clash, with feathers drifting gently to earth, the magpies returned to their chosen perch.

The children screamed out warnings and insults. They twitched at the sight of the battle unfolding, until they could not contain themselves any longer. The warrior instinct in each of their kind called them to battle by their parents' side. Each took to the air, whistling shrilly.

Thunderwing saw them and instead of calling them to remain in the tree, his red eyes flashed with pride. His offspring were brave and true, just as he'd raised them to be.

The crows continued circling, undeterred by the numbers against them. They meant to take one of Thunderwing's children from him, their sworn enemy.

The scream laden charges continued again and again as the other residents of the street watched on in morbid fascination. Wide-eyed bloodlust filled each of their breasts, wild carnage tingling the senses, like a baying crowd in a gladiatorial battle.

The moans of the crows, the alarms of the mynas, the shrill whistles of the magpies, made a cacophony of noise accompanying graceful yet violent movement, fuelled by hatred, each yearning to peck out the throat of the other.

The crows' mission was to separate the magpies and isolate one of them. Then their superior size and strength would give them the clear advantage. As I said, wise and devious are the birds of death.

Suddenly, a flash of black and white zoomed past them, the flash preceded by mean yellow eyes. Kork the kurrajong joined the melee. Her eyes locked onto her target as she swooped from the lofty branches like a missile, her formidable beak set to strike. She was a fine bird, strong and sleek. She had mothered many a fine child in her time. Her beak, four inches long, snapped like a lobster's claw around the foot of Fazlar. He moaned shrilly as the pain surged through his foot. Kork returned to her perch, and, in her mind, visualised the next swoop. The crows had taken her eggs the season before and she hated them. She 'Ka karred!' twice, loud and shrill. She meant to take the crow's foot off with her next attack and she surely had the tools to do it.

Thunderwing went again at the shadowy figures above him, with Yarrah on his tail. She tried to claw the underbelly while Thunderwing pecked at the eyes of Gloiner. Strongfoot and Kacoor swooped in similar fashion, but their flying skills were not up to that of their elders. They never really threatened their target.

Kork charged again, with the call to battle of her kind shrill in her beak. Again, she headed for the circling Fazlar. Again, she snapped with her beak, such a beak that could rip flesh from bone easily. She snapped again and caught the toe of her enemy. With a scissor-like snip, one of the crow's toes came off as he screamed again. She spat the digit to the ground and sneered proudly as she returned to her perch. Once again, her yellow eyes blazed with fury, fixed on her target, preparing once again for the next burst of energy, the next surge of rage, but that burst never came.

Fazlar called out for his brothers. "Retreat, Retreat!" he moaned. The pain in his foot burned as they turned tail and flew out of sight. Outnumbered and outgunned, they had little choice but to flee.

Only now, as the crows flew away, did the mynas join the battle. They followed closely behind them, squawking out, calling them cowards in their own tongue and warning that, should they return, the mighty grey gang would kill them all. Soon enough, they turned around and returned to their perches. The mynas never left their little street.

In the tree above, Kork stared down at Thunderwing, her evil eyes flashing, burning bright.

"Thankyou for helping me, Kork." Thunderwing hated her, but he was humble enough to thank her.

"I didn't do it for you! The birds of death took my eggs from me last season and I want revenge!" she screamed.

“They have taken from us all. I seek revenge too. I propose a truce, only when the birds of death return. We shall fight them together.”

“Only when the birds of death return. You are our people’s sworn and ancient enemy and so shall it remain!” She glared at the magpie and his instinct told him what she would do next. Her eyes blazed, and, pinning her wings back, she dive-bombed him, as if to prove a point. Then, like a shadow, she disappeared towards the west.

The Balance of the Day

The magpies went back to the most important and time-consuming duty of the day – feeding. They swooped gracefully back to the ground. They were bold and brazen as they hopped from place to place, pecking endlessly at the dry ground. Even passing dogs didn't frighten them into the air. They would hop a few steps away and stare them down, almost daring them to attack. They knew that they were a clumsy, if not enthusiastic opponent. They would gaze, chests puffed out, into the eyes of the humans, as they assessed the bravery of each. In all the things of nature, nothing impresses more than bravery, and bravery, the tribe had in abundance.

Occasionally between feeds, the tribe would take to the highest perch, the power cables, to survey all in the kingdom. They would raise their heads into the air and call out their territorial warning. Many times, the boundaries of the tribe would be tested by the neighbouring tribes. Thunderwing never gave an inch. This land was his and he would fight to the death to protect his seemingly insignificant kingdom. Insignificant to you or me, but to him it was everything.

Jargo and some of his friends sat next to the magpies, constantly antagonising them in their petty way, baiting them. Thunderwing would stare him down, never moving a muscle. He would stand casually while they tried to intimidate him. So, you ask, why were the tribe and the grey gang friends? Though it is true to say that Jargo and

his gang were the worst kind of cowards, the cowards that believe that they are actually brave, these little playful cheeky birds were the alarm system of the street. They appointed sentries at key points of the street at all times. They were always the first to spot danger. There was no way a tribe as small as Thunderwing's could ever be safe without them. Jargo, on the other hand, needed the bravery and warriorship of their black and white companions as muscle. They were the ones who would face the enemy head on and chase the danger away. The crows, the kookaburra, or even the kurrajongs could easily raid the nests of the myna birds without the protection of the magpies. It was a relationship that, just as their forefathers before them, Jargo and Thunderwing did not acknowledge, but one which, deep down, they both understood. And although at times they squabbled over food, mostly they tolerated each other for the sake of both the tribe of Thunderwing and the grey gang of Jargo.

The wind had calmed, and the sun was high in the sky, when from high above, a loud squawk filled the air. It was a squawk so mighty that it echoed for miles around. Two of the grey gang, giving unenthusiastic alarms, flapped up to the power cable. They took a perch either side of Whitefeather, the mighty cockatoo. The little grey birds stood on either side of the snowy giant, edging as close as they dared. He towered above them, his majestic yellow crown erect. He bobbed his head playfully up and down. He stood four times the size of the cheeky mynas; he was huge and proud. With his mischievous black eye, he looked at one and then the other. He squawked again, but

this time it finished in a whistle. He shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly and smirked. He stood up as tall as he could and he pulled back the feathers on his mighty crown. He twisted his body, opened his huge wings and went zooming down. He plummeted like a stone towards the earth, and, at the last moment he swooped and glided above the ground, his belly feathers tickled by the taller blades of grass. He slowed his descent and landed lightly on his feet. Again, he squawked. He liked to make sure that all around were watching him. He was a beautiful specimen and he knew it.



“Hey, Thunderwing!” the cockatoo called loudly.

The magpie appeared just seconds later. They competed not for food or territory, so they were as close as different species of bird can be to friends.

“Whitefeather, greetings,” Thunderwing said, as he took a perch next to his friend. “What brings you to my kingdom?”

Birds waste no time with small talk; they get straight to the point. They don’t ask you if you’re well. If you’re not well in the wild, you’re as good as dead.

Whitefeather spoke. “I bring news of the birds of death. They are angry. They will regroup, and they shall return in the morn. They mean to wreak havoc amongst your tribe.”

“Thanks for your warning, old friend. Feel free to feed in my territory on this day.”

The cockatoo didn’t need permission. He was as capable as any of the other birds. His hooked beak was certainly a weapon to fear but not nearly as intimidating as his call to numbers. He could summon hundreds of his kind from the national park. He knew neither fear nor anger. He squawked and flew into one of the trees and started to feed, keeping one watchful eye on all around him.

Unfortunately, Thunderwing could not make as much use of the information that Whitefeather had given him, as you or I would have done. The magpie is a creature of the moment; never do they make plans. They don’t plan what to do tomorrow and they don’t store food for when times

get harsh. The only plans they have are the instincts that they were born with. Thunderwing and his family took back to the air and perched high, calling out the tribe's warning and challenge, their complex and shrill song.

The day wore on, with lorikeets zooming through, chirping and cheeping in their deafening tones. They drank nectar from the trees and were almost drunk with the sugar. They shouted and laughed and zoomed about like green squawking darts.

The laugh of the butcher bird came from the tree on occasion. He showed his face with his little hooked beak. None are as good in the air as the butcher bird; he is the king of flyers. He's shy and timid but an acrobat on a different level to all others. He dashed about catching flies from perch to perch. He never needed to fight, as none could catch or outmanoeuvre him.

As the sun started to sink and the sky turned pink, Kork sang out her ka karrs, her shrill call to her mate. A few seconds later, a call would come back.

“Kork!” Thunderwing called. “The crows intend to return in the morning. Maybe if you're nearby, it could be your chance for revenge.”

Kork seemed little impressed or thankful for the information, but her breast bristled with the yearning for vengeance on their shared enemy. Without her saying a word back, he knew she would make sure she was in the vicinity come sunrise.

The call of the magpie and the kurrajong spelled the end of the day. Before long, the chattering of the bats and their looming shadows floated across the ever-darkening sky.

Revenge

The morning, as always, awoke with the kookaburra king chuckling like a monkey at the sinking moon, calling his challenge to the world, should it dare toy with him.

Dilly the galah whistled out, surveying the scene with his wife, as they often did. They didn't stay there. They merely popped in to get their fill of grass seed in the park. They wore vibrant pink hats and grey coats and held their heads proud. They were social creatures, and at times there could be fifty of their number, but today it was only them. They were of little interest to Thunderwing and the tribe.



For the magpies, the first duty of the day was to call out their territorial cries, backed by the unmistakable sound of Kork and her mate. Once again, the mynas screamed out at

the cat as he passed. His tail was twitching proudly after a night on the tiles. He dreamed of sinking vicious teeth and razor claws into those grey birds that mocked him daily. Today the magpies paid him little attention. They were more than safe from his deadly grasp at the top of the powerlines.

From his lofty perch, Thunderwing could see all before him. He was as alert as ever, waiting, tingling in anticipation of the battle that was at some time or another, sure to take place. They called out louder than normal on that morning, suspecting and hoping the birds of death would hear them.

There was a strange calm in the air; it hardly moved. It was as though the world knew that a great battle would take place on this day. The sky was scarlet with the picturesque sunrise. Could it be the sky knew that blood would be shed on that day?

As the human world awoke, the magpies turned their attention to the endless task of filling their bellies with juicy grubs, bugs and worms. They pecked, hopping merrily around the cool grass. Seemingly they had nothing on their minds but the task in hand.

But the mighty chief Thunderwing was alert and ready. He kept one eye on the sky at all times. He was ready, should the shadows of the three crows rise above the tree line, which he knew, at some point, they surely would.

But the bird of death is wily. He would bide his time, the time when the tribe expected it least. The crows watched from a distant branch, hidden and silent.

Fazlar whined beneath his breath, barely able to contain his anger. The pain of his wound still stung fresh and he was in the grumpiest of spirits.

Beneath him, his two brothers pecked away at the carcass of a bird, the dirtied white feathers of a cockatoo. It seems Whitefeather should never have betrayed the brothers. He should never have told Thunderwing of their plans and he had been punished in harshest possible way. Now he was little more than crow, maggot and worm food. His snowy coat was stained scarlet, as he lay face down in the mud. It seems that they were not called ‘the birds of death’ for nothing.

They waited their opportunity still, as the day wore on.

By the afternoon, Thunderwing was more relaxed. It was not the first time the crows had failed to do what they had said they would. As is the way of the evil heart, they tell lies and deceive, almost without realising they have even done it. He thought that they wouldn’t actually come now; it was far too late.

He might like to speak with Whitefeather, to learn if he had any news. He was always the one bird who could walk amongst all others without discrimination or suspicion. He was free to roam wherever he pleased. And so, Thunderwing, being the wise creature he was, had befriended him to keep him informed of the happenings of

birds. But Whitefeather would not come by on this day or on any other, for that matter.

It was the early afternoon when the tribe were strolling nonchalantly, having forgotten the previous day's threat. The way they saw it, if the morning had been and gone, then they were safe for today.

Fazlar had very different ideas. They waited endlessly with the patience of a lion, waiting their moment: the moment Thunderwing would lead his tribe to the shady corner of the park and would not therefore see them coming until the very last moment. Fuelled by hatred, spite and rage they watched, silent, ready.

Then, as one, without so much as a word, they took to the air. Their opportunity had arrived.

The Battle

It wasn't until the crows were right upon the magpies that Jargo and his followers cried out their first warning. Thunderwing turned and took to the air in an instant, giving the three shrill whistles that was their warning cry. They all turned and took off. They were hardly off the ground before there was the first clash between Thunderwing and the crows. His wild heart fluttered with adrenalin and excitement. He clashed head on with Fazlar, and, grabbing him in his sharp flesh-piercing talons, the pair started to tumble to earth. The magpie kicked with all his might and less than a second before they hit the ground, he ripped his talons from the crow's body. Both birds flapped their wings frantically, trying to avoid contact with the ground and the pain it would bring. Yarah, not to be outdone by her chief, was upon the second crow in an instant, flipping over and reaching out to scratch him, tumbling backwards all the while. The children, wide eyed, joined the battle. Feathers flew, and the screams rang out for miles around.

The crows moaned and circled before diving in for their next attack. More aggressive than ever were the brothers. They had stewed on their hatred for so long that it had tortured them until they were insane. They were raging, and their strikes were filled with a mighty ferocity. Thunderwing and the rest of the tribe flew up and up again. He called out for Kork's help, but Kork was

nowhere to be seen. She was gathering food a long way away.

The myna birds chirped their alarm endlessly, increasing evermore, as more of their number joined the chorus. But their alarm would not help the tribe in the midst of such a battle.

One after the other, the magpies landed on their high perch and drew a breath before heading skywards for the next charge. They screamed their warnings and their insults as they went. They were the magpies' cries of war.

The crows would not be deterred easily on this day. Their determination burned through the hatred in their veins. The birds of death, with green eyes burning fire, were bristling in the thrill of battle. Their moans grew ever louder, edged with a savage bloodlust. The magpies, Thunderwing's brave tribe, of which he was proud, continued to be led by him into the heat of battle.

The rest of the world stopped and took a breath. They watched the battle from below. The other birds looked on as these two ancient enemies crossed beaks and talons in the sky above. The battle raged on for a full fifteen minutes that felt like a year.

Fatigue started to wear out wings as the battle of the skies raged on and on. Neither side took much but superficial damage but then, in a moment, a gut-dropping moment, Gloiner the crow caught Strongfoot's dangling leg in his huge beak. The adolescent magpie flipped over with his back towards the ground. The crow tore downwards,

flapping fury as he bore him to the ground. In a flash he jumped on top of the bird, pecking at eyes and throat. Strongfoot squirmed and flapped and screamed out as black feathers rolled along the grassy ground.

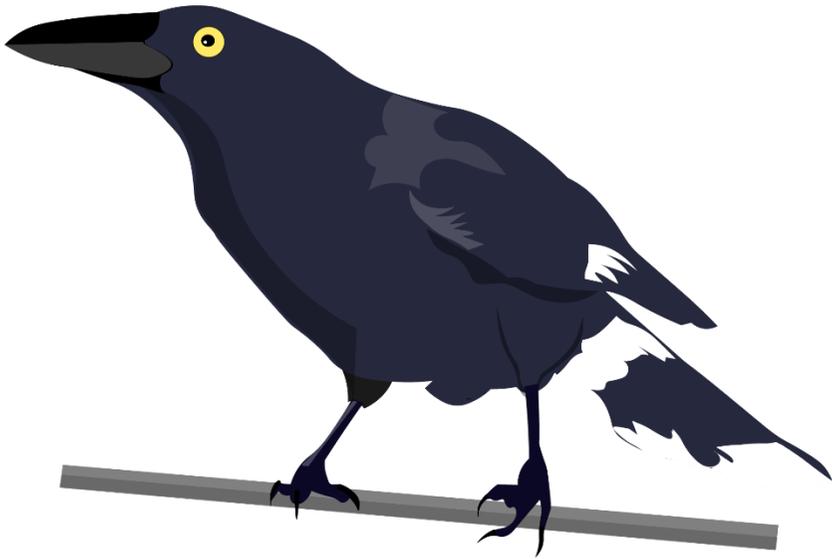
There was a mighty cry from above as Thunderwing appeared over the crow, his talons outstretched, reaching his hooked claws towards his precious son's attacker. Thunderwing grabbed the crow in his grasp, hooked his claws into flesh, and together they rolled over and over. Gloiner screamed out and writhed to shake the magpie off him. Thunderwing's grasp broke and the crow took off back to the air.

With Thunderwing and Strongfoot grounded, the magpies were vulnerable and Fazlar knew it. He ordered his brothers to follow his lead and they swooped down upon the two stricken magpies. Their calls were their only protection against the onslaught, the fury that tore down like black death upon them.

Soon, a fearsome pecking battle commenced. The magpies were stood back to back as the three brothers encircled them on the ground. The birds of death that shimmered in the light towered above Thunderwing and his son. The magpies pecked back bravely but for every nip they gave, the magpies received three. Yarah and Kacoor saw the scene unfolding below them and swooped into action, with renewed determination and vigour. They were desperate, furious and hyper-aggressive. Everything in their hearts and minds told them that they must not stop until they had

driven the vicious birds of death away. The backdrop was little more than a blur as they shot in like rockets of fury.

Suddenly they were overtaken as a black and white blur shot past them. The most welcome sight of the kurralong torpedo that was Kork flew by them and eagerly joined the battle. She snapped angrily as she approached Fazlar with her huge beak once again, the beak that made the crow shudder and take a step back. He paused, the pain still fresh from his missing toe, but he was not to give up so easily today. He reached up with his beak as Kork narrowly missed his head.



Yarrah swooped in with yet another fearsome attack. She didn't just swoop, she lunged for Fazlar's throat as she came screaming down from above them.

She grabbed him, and momentum and gravity drove him into the ground. She was pecking and squawking crazily, the fire of rage flashing in her red eyes. She scratched like

a lioness, and pecked wildly, even though the crow was nearly twice her size. She brought the fury of a mother protecting her child, the most formidable fury in this world. The crow, pinned on his back with feathers flying everywhere, scrambled with all he had. Kork came in for another blow and nipped ever closer with each attack.

Kacoor, not to miss out, joined the battle, and, against all her best instincts, she landed and joined the fight on the ground. She stood side by side with her brother battling Gloiner, as Thunderwing wrestled with Fazlar, and Yarrah did her best to peck out Carpee's eyes. Kork swooped again and again at whichever evil crow took her fancy.

Jargo even called his troops, and, following his lead, they started dive bombing the brothers. Of course, they never got close enough to be in any danger. The crows with their feathers torn, bloodied and beaten, took to the air and retreated, chased by Thunderwing, Kork and a gang of myna birds squawking all the way.

The battle was won through force of numbers, and the birds each called out their victory cry as one.

On the ground the three magpies stood, watching their brave chief chase away the birds of death. They called skyward.

Behind them, hidden deep in a bush, a pair of eyes watched them. A tail was twitching. Someone was gathering himself, making ready for the pounce on his unsuspecting prey.

The Jaws of Death

The cat that springs too early is the cat that goes hungry, so this cat was patient. He didn't hunt for food; he just hunted for the thrill. It was engrained in his soul. He hated the birds that mocked him daily and could barely stop himself licking his lips at the taste of blood that he longed for. He waited and waited until the anticipation nearly exploded out of him. The bird got closer and closer. Any moment now. One... Two... Three! The cat wobbled his rear and then sprang. He unsheathed his claws in a flash. There was a frightful squawk and feathers flew. The cat's jaws found their target in a well-tuned instant. The bird flapped and clawed for a second as he fought for life desperately, but for this bird, life was gone.

Thunderwing, Yarrah and Kacoor took to the sky in a flash. They looked down, stricken and useless. All they could do was watch from their lofty perch as the cat dragged away their tribesman, Strongfoot.

Why did they not fight? you ask. The birds knew that Strongfoot was dead and no good would come of them risking their lives fighting the well-armed feline. They knew and accepted as only wild things can, that their fellow, their family member was gone.

Never would the pain leave the tribe's hearts. Never would they forget Strongfoot's final harrowing scream, but they

accepted that it was the way of the creatures of the savage wild.

The worms eat the flesh of the fallen, magpies eat the worms and the cat eats the magpie. So, shall it be, so shall it happen. It is simply the way of the savage wild.

The End

