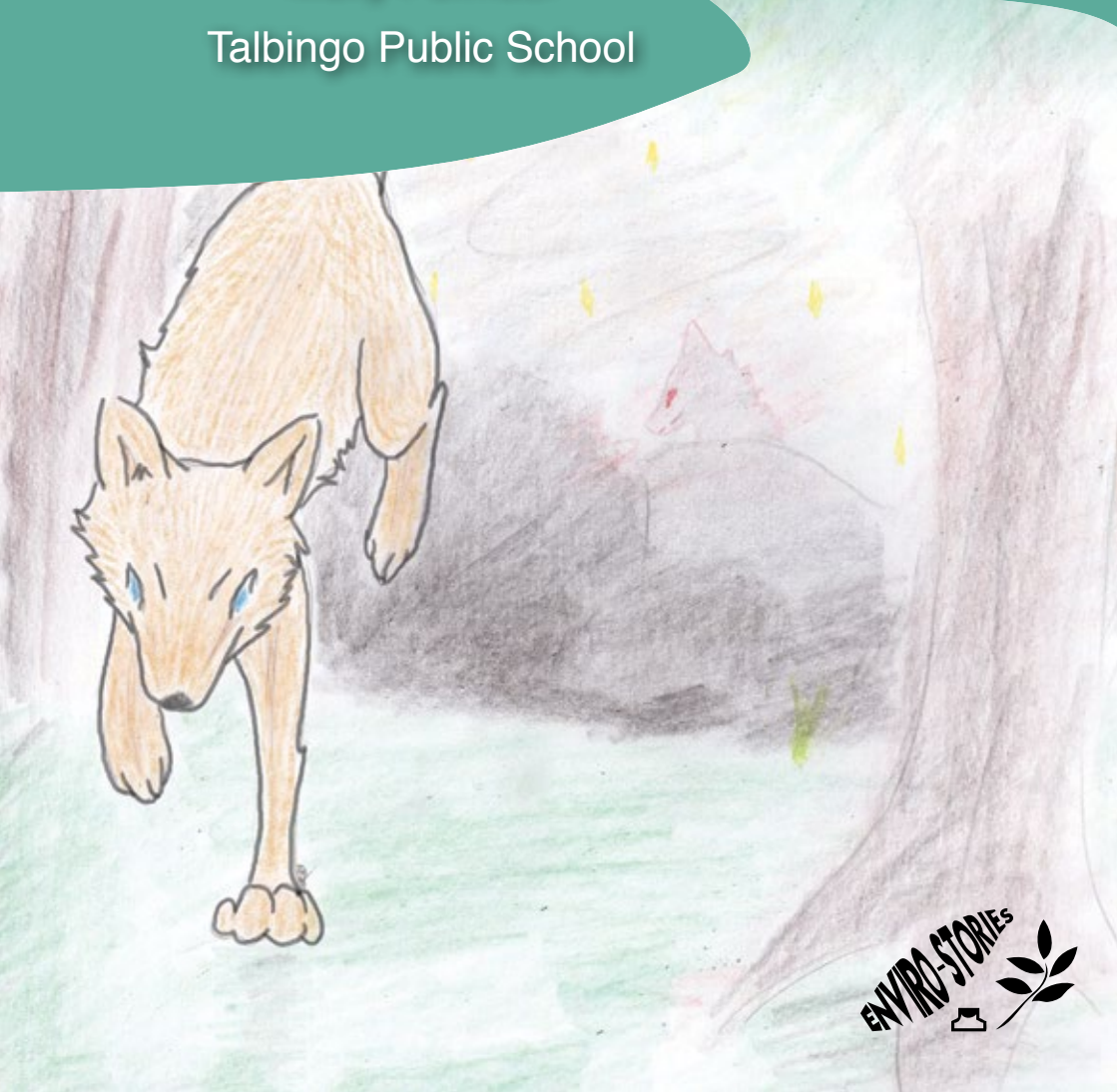


My Territory

Molly Polmeer
Talbingo Public School





Enviro-Stories is an environmental education program that has been developed by PeeKdesigns.



www.envirostories.com.au

This program provides an education and learning experience for kids through their active engagement with natural resource and catchment management issues. The final product is a published story written about local issues, by local kids, for local kids and future generations.

My Territory

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“Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program

In 2012, the Creative Catchment Kids program delivered the “Biodiversity of the Murray Catchment” Enviro-Stories Education Program. The project was initiated by the Murray Darling Association and Burrumbuttock Public School. It was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authorities, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and Teys Australia, Wagga. Additional support came from the Wirraminna and Riverina Environmental Education Centres.



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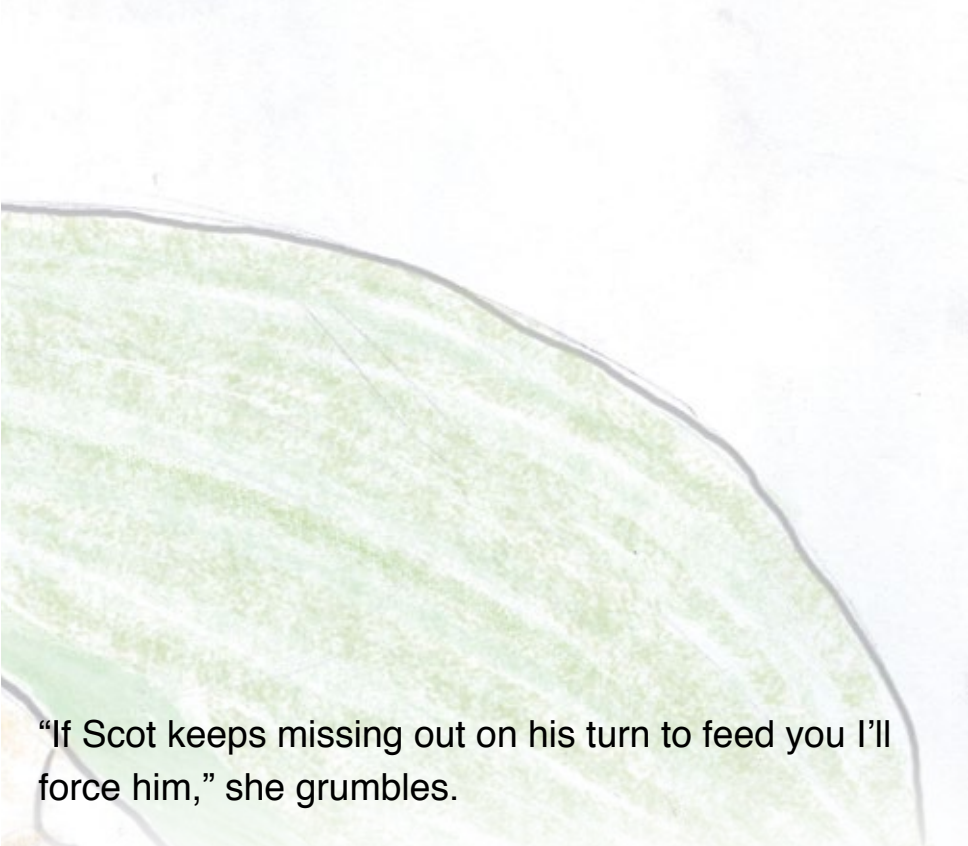
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I yawn as I open my Dingo eyes to the early morning.

“Just another ordinary day,” I tell myself as a drop of dew falls from a leaf onto the ground. I slowly walk out of my den which is nestled in a pile of rocks, across the dew coated grass and lift my head to find Red.

Red is an Australian cattle dog. Her appearance definitely fits her name. She is creamy white with dusty red on top and darker red spots splattered throughout her coat. She places meat in front of me, at my feet.



“If Scot keeps missing out on his turn to feed you I’ll force him,” she grumbles.

I raise my ear as I hear someone approaching, “Good day fellas!” Digs yells. He’s a Kelpie that’s brown except for little golden spots above his eyes, and on his chest. From halfway across the paddock, I can still see his wagging tail. “Huh? What’s wrong?” he questions.

“Nothing,” I reply. “Just you.”

“What’s wrong with me?” Dig mumbles as he jumps the fence. Red chuckles and so do I. As Dig approaches he starts laughing too.



The next morning I rise from my den starving. My stomach is moaning uncontrollably. My family used to live here until the last owner of the farm made us move out. I came back when my family was long gone.

The owner of the farm now is John, who is also the owner of Red, Scot and Dig. The thing I hate about people is they think of us as pests, but I do nothing wrong. John is aware of me and tries to kill me.

Red interrupts my thinking. A piece of steak is gripped into he mouth.



“Quickly!” she warns, “before Shadow comes to steal your food again.” She stops and looks around before giving me the meat. I eat the steak quickly. “Did you want to help me torture sheep?” asks Red as she yawns and stretches her body out, relaxing.

“Sure!” I reply. “But when?” My ears prickle up and my tail starts swaying side to side. I know that we wouldn’t do it with John around so I simply have to agree.

“Tomorrow morning.” So with that, we plan the attack all morning.

Bickering, arguing and tantrums are held during that time. Scot suggests that we leave that plan and go to helping John understand that I’m good, but Red disagrees.

“Well we can torture sheep afterwards, right?” Dig asks.





“Sure we can,” Scot guarantees.

“Well then, it’s settled.” I rise up and slam one paw to the ground.

Red says nothing at all. I guess that she is disappointed that her torturing sheep plan kind of went down the toilet. But I assure her that we can do it, so she is happy after that and so am I.



We declare that one of us will stand on each side of the fence. I am at the worst spot, which is in the front, nearest to the sheep and both John and Shadow.

Because our plan is going to be in progress in the morning, I sit in my den thinking about it all day. I am undisturbed by anyone, including Shadow, which is a miracle because he annoys me every day.



In the morning when we set off I am shaking nonstop. I meet up with my friends and we begin to execute the mission as planned. Despite that I still blurt out, “Maybe I can see the stuffed bear you’ve all been talking about!”

Dig turns, “Absolutely,” he agrees. “I’m so awesome! I’m so awesome to come up with this awesome idea.”



“You weren’t the one who came up with the idea Dig. It was the fabulous me!” Scot reminds. For once, he is in a playful mood.

“Oh wait! I hope only for the best for you,” Dig encourages me, then growls sarcastically, “and that you get attacked by John, Shadow and a bear!” He then turns and walks away.

There I am, all alone. Vulnerable to anything, my ears pricked down and my head lowered. I shiver as the early breeze digs through my fur.



Then I see him. My eyes widen as I identify him, red with a white tipped tail and black paws with a disgusted smile.

“What are you doing here?” he questions. “Get out of my way or else!”

I stand my ground and snarl.

“Or else, what?” I raise my head. “What’s wrong...?”



Shadow doesn't move. He's standing there with his eyes wide open.

"It's John isn't it?" I continue. I decide to ignore the fact that John actually could be here.

I snarl again and slowly walk closer. Shadow jumps in for an attempt to bite but misses and lands on all four feet. John's eyes are widened and his pupils have grown smaller in amazement as he holds down his gun.

Eventually I get Shadow to run away. With a flick of his tail he said, “I’ll be back,” and disappears behind the bushes.

Next thing I know, I’m being smothered by Dig. “You survived!” he cheers. Red and Scot congratulate me as well.

Now I am only waiting for the moment of truth. Will I finally be accepted into their family?

I turn with an untamed tongue hanging loose as John slowly walks over with caution. I give out a small bark and as he lunges his hand forward I urge my head forward, under his hand. Then he picks me up and holds me close.

He smiles and says, “Come on, show this dingo around!” He carries me closer and closer to the house.





“Does this mean I’m finally a part of your family?” I question.

“Yep!” Red replied.

“You’re one of us now!” I’m full of excitement!

When we get inside Dig immediately pulls me towards the next room and there it was. Big and brown, beady eyes, huge long sharp claws, on two legs and arms spread out forward. “Wow,” I murmur. “Why don’t they live here? Were they pests? Just like I used to be?”

“No,” Scot yawns “They don’t live here. They live in places like Alaska.”

“Okay,” I reply. I have now been accepted I have a nice home and welcoming family. All I need now is to get used to this ... and I already am.



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2012 Year 6, Talbingo Public School

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