



Reading Magazine

2009

Year 5

Helping our waterways

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An extract from

Little Hao and the Golden Kites

by Mavis Scott

Each year the Emperor watched a kite competition among the rich people who lived in his palace.

Soon it was time for all the people to gather by the steps of the Palace to see the rich nobles bring out their Golden Kites.

Little Hao heard drumbeats. The nobles were coming.

There they were!

First came Lord North Wind. His kite was like a dragon, shining golden in the sunlight.

“Aaaah!” said all the people. “That one will win the Emperor’s prize.”



Next came Lord Noble Horse. His kite was like a golden eagle with its wings spread wide.

It soared into the sky. The people cheered and clapped.

Last of all came Lord Black Mountain. His kite was made like the flames from a fire, and there were rich jewels in its tail. The fire kite sparkled all over the sky.

The people cheered their loudest.

“That one wins! That one wins!” they called.



Some students are investigating how pollution affects the environment. They have researched the effects of plastic bags. This is what they have written.

Should we pay for plastic bags?



People should pay for the plastic bags they use for their shopping. According to experts from Clean Up Australia, Australians use over six billion plastic bags a year and many of these are used for carrying shopping home from supermarkets. Making people pay for these plastic bags would encourage them to use reusable bags.

Some plastic bags can last in the environment for up to 1000 years before they disintegrate (break down). Plastic bags are harmful to wildlife as they can kill animals, especially in the ocean.

Also, when plastic bags are made, dangerous gases are released that pollute the atmosphere. If we use fewer plastic bags there would be less air pollution, as well as less land and water pollution.

We need to reduce the number of plastic bags in the environment. Making people pay will help to stop them using plastic bags and force them to use reusable bags for their shopping!

A Special Day

An extract from Finders Keepers by Emily Rodda

On Saturday Patrick woke up with a little shock, knowing that this was a special day. For a moment he couldn't think exactly why, and then, with an excited flutter of his stomach, he remembered. At ten o'clock today he was going to find out once and for all about Finders Keepers. He got dressed more carefully than usual, went downstairs and turned on the TV. Quickly he switched channels. Cartoons, cartoons, advertisement, man talking, snow, snow ... and still nothing at all on Channel 8.

"Patrick, tune it in, darling, if you're going to watch." Judith wandered past with the newspaper under her arm and her eyes half closed. She headed for the kitchen. Patrick turned off the TV and followed.

"What's for breakfast, Mum?"

"We'll see," Judith murmured vaguely, plugging in the electric kettle. She blinked sleepily at him and smiled. "You look nice, darling," she said. "You're all ready. But we can't go till eight-thirty at the earliest, you know. Nothing'll be open till then."

Patrick's stomach lurched. "We aren't going out, are we?" he asked anxiously.

She began to make the tea. "Don't say you've forgotten!" she said.

"I promised you, last Saturday. Your new sneakers, remember?"

"Oh—oh, but I can't go out this morning, Mum. There's something I've got to watch on TV. At ten o'clock. I've got to! My sneakers'll be all right for another week," gabbled Patrick, panic-stricken.

Judith faced him, hands on hips. "Patrick," she said wearily, "it's all organised."

Cities and towns in Australia are host to hundreds of bird species. Some live in these places permanently, others visit during the summer or pass through during annual migrations. The captions below give information about a few of the native and introduced species that may be seen in people's backyards.

Kookaburra: An Australian icon that enjoys gardens and parklands. They are carnivorous, feeding on lizards, insects and small mammals. **Voice:** A distinctive staccato "laugh". **Status:** Fairly widespread.

Australian King Parrot: A large brightly-coloured parrot; the male has a scarlet-coloured head and the female a green one. They feed on seeds and fruit and they are usually seen in pairs. **Voice:** Long, ringing whistle and harsh screeches. **Status:** Fairly widespread.

Galah: A native species that feeds on seeds, grains, nuts and insect larvae. They are found throughout Australia. Usually seen in pairs or flocks. **Voice:** Creaky. **Status:** Fairly widespread.

Common Myna (Indian Myna): An introduced species that thrives in urban habitats. They are omnivorous and are usually seen in pairs or flocks. They forage on the ground looking for insects to eat and scavenge fruit and soft berries. **Voice:** Raucous rattles. **Status:** Prolific and numbers increasing.

Australian Magpie: A large bird that digs for worms and grubs in lawns and parks. **Voice:** Loud musical flute-like song. **Status:** Widespread and numbers increasing.

backyard birds



Rain

An extract from 'Rain' by Libby Gleeson from *Kids' Night In*

I'm up my tree now. There's warm rain falling but the broad, flat leaves keep me dry enough. I can't actually see the river but I know it's there. First, there's the road and then it drops down to the market gardens all flat and brown with splashes of shiny green lettuces and other vegetables that I don't recognise. Then there's a line of trees. They straggle around like a line of kids and I know the river is there. We saw it in the first week. Dad took us for a drive, down across the river flats and over the old White Bridge, and we looked down on the slow-moving brown water. All the rivers are like that out here.

If there was another flood, when there's another flood, I can watch it from up here. I'll watch it and then I'll have something to tell.

At breakfast, Dad told me to shush, he wanted to listen to the weather report. I told him he wasn't a farmer so why did he bother? He said everyone should bother and why didn't I listen?

Over the crunching of my cereal, I heard them say it was also raining up north and the rivers were sending huge amounts of water down into New South Wales.

'In a few days,' said Dad, 'some of that water will reach us, and when it does, when it joins up with that river out there,' he pointed across the road, 'we could be in for something.'

'A flood?'

He shrugged.



Tim

On Monday, Tim dressed for school.

First he put on his shorts.

Then he put on his shirt.

Next he put on his socks.

Last he put on his shoes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Helping our waterways

'The Drain is Just for Rain' posters from the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au>

Little Hao and the Golden Kites

Text and illustrations adapted from *Little Ho and The Golden Kites* by Mavis Scott, A Little Ark Book, published by Allen & Unwin, 1995.

Should we pay for plastic bags?

Image: Ron Prendergast.

A Special Day

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Backyard birds

Adapted from the poster 'Backyard Birds of NSW', published by Birds Australia and The Australian Museum.

Rain

Extract from 'Rain' by Libby Gleeson, from *Kids' Night In*, edited by Jessica Adams, Nick Earls and Juliet Partridge, Puffin Books, reproduced with permission by Penguin Group (Australia), 2003.