

The Story Weavers of Bacalen

# The Story Snatchers



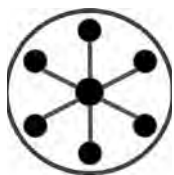
**D.I.D Card**  
The Great Archives of Bacalen

Travellers:		
Destinations:		

**A.J. Hill**

Junior authors: M.E. Grace & C.Höök





*Protect your books' stories:  
a warning to readers from  
The Great Archives of Bacalen.*

*The words on the spine and title page of this book are written in an ancient script from The Great Archives of Bacalen.*

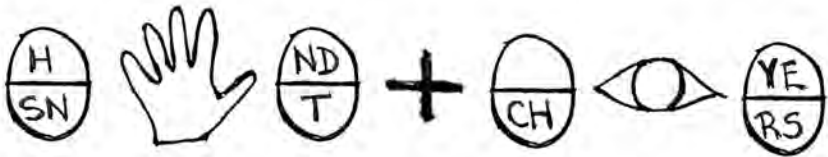
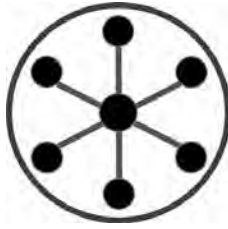
*Diegesis Script will protect this story from the steals of Story Snatchers who prowl our world, searching for books so that they can change their stories.*

*If you are truly a friend of The Great Archives, you can use this script to save other stories from The Snatchers.*

*Translate your book's title into Diegesis Script, write it on a bookmark or strip of paper and place it between the book's pages each time you have finished reading. The Snatchers can't remove a bookmark touched with Diegesis Script. It will protect the story forever!*

*To translate a book title into Diegesis Script, you will need to decipher the words woven into the magical bookmarks that the Story Weavers find in this adventure.*





Author: A.J. Hill

Junior Authors: M.E. Grace and C. Hook

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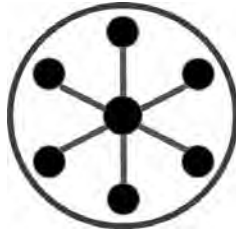
Back Cover photographs: Annabel Bowcher and James Heggie.

Back Cover illustration: Ned 'Elly: the original painting, 'Ned Kelly' by Sidney Nolan resides in The National Gallery of Australia in the capital city of Canberra. The picture has been transformed by The Picture Pinchers (or by Annabel Bowcher!). The important thing is that the author has acknowledged the source and original artist (sadly The Story Snatchers and The Picture Pinchers would not have bothered to do this!).

[info@bacalenbooks.com.au](mailto:info@bacalenbooks.com.au)

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## The History of Stories

“Stories are everywhere;

And in everything;

In all that we do;

In all that we see.

They are why we learn.

They are why we question.

But,

If stories are lost;

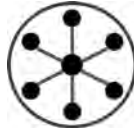
If stories are changed;

Then our lives;

Then our world;

Changes too.”

*(Diegesis, The First Great Storyteller  
at The Great Archives of Bacalen)*



## Chapter 11:

### Why do we judge a book by its cover?

The room was spinning. Then our destination came into focus. We had made it to **Multi-Story**. The journey hadn't been dusty. This book chute, from **The Great Archives** to **Multi-Story**, must be well-used!

Meg ran over to hug her mother as she walked towards us. Her mother wore a multi-coloured jumper—the colours of the six Archetypes.

“Welcome to **Multi-Story**, Weavers,” Meg's mother said, adjusting her red framed glasses.

She looked at me. All the others had met her many times but this was the first time I had met her as a **Weaver**.

“Hello **Samuel**,” she smiled. “Please call me **Janet**, like the other **Weavers** do. I've often seen you here enjoying books with your sister

and listening to Andy's storytelling. I think this visit to Multi-Story may be quite different!"

"Very different," I replied.

Now I knew why Meg's dad, Andy, was an amazing Storyteller!

"Follow me," Janet said, "Down this aisle and up the back stairs. We have assembled a number of books and we think they will be suitable for questioning."

It's just like we're in a spy story! We climbed the stairs to the top storey. Janet stopped at a plain, wooden door labelled, 'Book Deliveries'. She turned the knob and we entered a long, narrow room lined with bookshelves. Janet walked a little way down the room and beckoned us to follow her. We looked at the large, tall shelf behind Janet. It was filled with an array of interesting books. Thick and thin books, some with brightly coloured covers or pictures and others with fancy lettering.

"These are a selection of our best reads," said Janet. "Classics, with strong story-threads. You will immediately know if they have been altered. I thought it was the best place to start. As yet, we haven't found any that

have been replaced.”

We all turned to the books on the shelves and moved to different sections to read the titles.

There were exciting books about pirates hiding treasure on islands and adventurous children solving mysteries; an old Canadian series about a red-headed orphan girl; Australian stories about mischievous talking wombats and koalas; English classics about talking animals living like people; magical stories about extraordinary lands at the tops of trees or at the bottoms of rabbit holes...

I had read them all (well perhaps not the series about the orphan girl but Kate had told me the stories and would read them one day!).

“Oh my goodness!” Bella exclaimed. “So many of my absolute favourites are here! I suppose I should try and find one that’s a non-fiction book, so I can really use my gift and have a conversation with it.”

“Yes,” said Miss Paige, “see if any of the books will talk to you. The Book and I will be here in case you have difficulties connecting to them. Some may already contain a poached copy.”



“I’ll leave you to it,” said Janet encouragingly and she went back downstairs to the counter.

Now I have to find a special book.

“Concentrate Weavers, listen and feel your book calling to you. It will try to attract your attention in some way,” said Miss Paige.

How did a book usually attract a reader’s attention? Interesting cover pictures, bright colours, crazy titles?

Reading the first page is my ultimate test. It didn’t often let me down. Bella was beside me looking for her book. I heard her give a little cry of triumph.

“Let’s try this one,” she said, pulling out a book with a picture of a girl in a red headscarf on it. “This is a wonderful story about a girl in Pakistan speaking out about the importance of education for girls.”

“Yes, it’s an amazing story but are you and the book going to talk to each other?” Anna asked. Her voice was impatient and tense. “Remember, you’re not just here to read!”

Anna must know that Bella could easily get lost in a book. I hope I won’t forget why I’m here.

“I know what to do,” Bella said. Her calm, soft tone was reassuring. “Just wait a minute. I want to look at this book. You can’t rush these things!”

Bella sat down on the floor, legs crossed and placed her satchel beside her. She adjusted her glasses with both hands and opened the book. Her eyes flickered across the pages with accuracy and speed. Then I noticed her pace change.

Without looking up from the book, she whispered, “The words are starting to form pictures in my mind. The book wants to talk to me! I think I’ve found a good book here.”

“What’s it saying?” I crouched beside her.

“Let her be,” advised Miss Paige.

“Sometimes communicating with a book requires a quiet, peaceful place. If it really wants to talk and tell you something, then you need to focus and concentrate.”

I moved away from Bella and started to look more determinedly for my own books.

Time passed. Apparently, the process could not be hurried. The books needed to call to us. Connect with us. Trust us. I glanced around at the other Story Weavers, watching as they

began to slowly select their books from the shelves.

A book must very quietly call to a Weaver. I could not hear or feel their connection to their books. Or maybe I wasn't listening hard enough.

I noticed that when the Weavers chose their books, they also read the story summary on the inside cover or the first page. The first test of a good book! They were deciding if the words really spoke to them. If the book passed their first test, they would sit quietly and start to read, waiting for the story-threads to weave their magic.

All the Weavers were concentrating hard. They had their Book Translators beside them, ready to check words that they did not understand. Their books may have already told them the answers we needed.

Why hadn't I found mine yet? I anxiously scanned the shelves for MY book. Was it hiding? Perhaps I would not speak with a book today.

I had often heard Mum say, "Let the book talk to you with its words and paint pictures in your mind."

Books did paint pictures in my head when I read them. This time it would be different—I would actually be speaking TO a book! I could not wait to do that. I would be asking it questions not about its story but about The Story Snatchers. A real spy mission at last!

My eyes were drawn to a group of books on the shelf in front of me. There was that tingling in my body again. The same feeling as when I had touched The Book at the school library. I knew in an instant that the book was close.

My hand reached for one of the titles. A book almost leapt into my hand. It had a dust jacket that was slightly torn and I could see it covered a book of the same colour. There was no elaborate picture on the plain, blue dust cover. The book's title was in dark blue lettering and the author's name was printed underneath in smaller black letters.

This was the book. It had called to me. I had read the story with my mother at bedtime and loved it from beginning to end. It was part of a series that Kate had been given for a birthday present. The story most people have read is about four children and a magical

wardrobe. This book held a story that was set during their reign as Kings and Queens. An adventure about a boy, a girl and two talking horses on a desperate quest to find their way home.

The connection with the book was getting stronger. I found a comfortable space on the floor on which to sit.

I looked again at the cover of the book. It was not like Kate's copy. Her book had a wonderful picture of a boy riding a great grey horse, its mane flowing and muscles rippling. The pair looked like they were running for their lives! When you turned the book over, you could see they were being chased by a lion!

The book I had found had no pictures on its cover, only the same wonderful story inside it. This book wants to talk to me! I have finally found it! Never judge a book by its cover!

