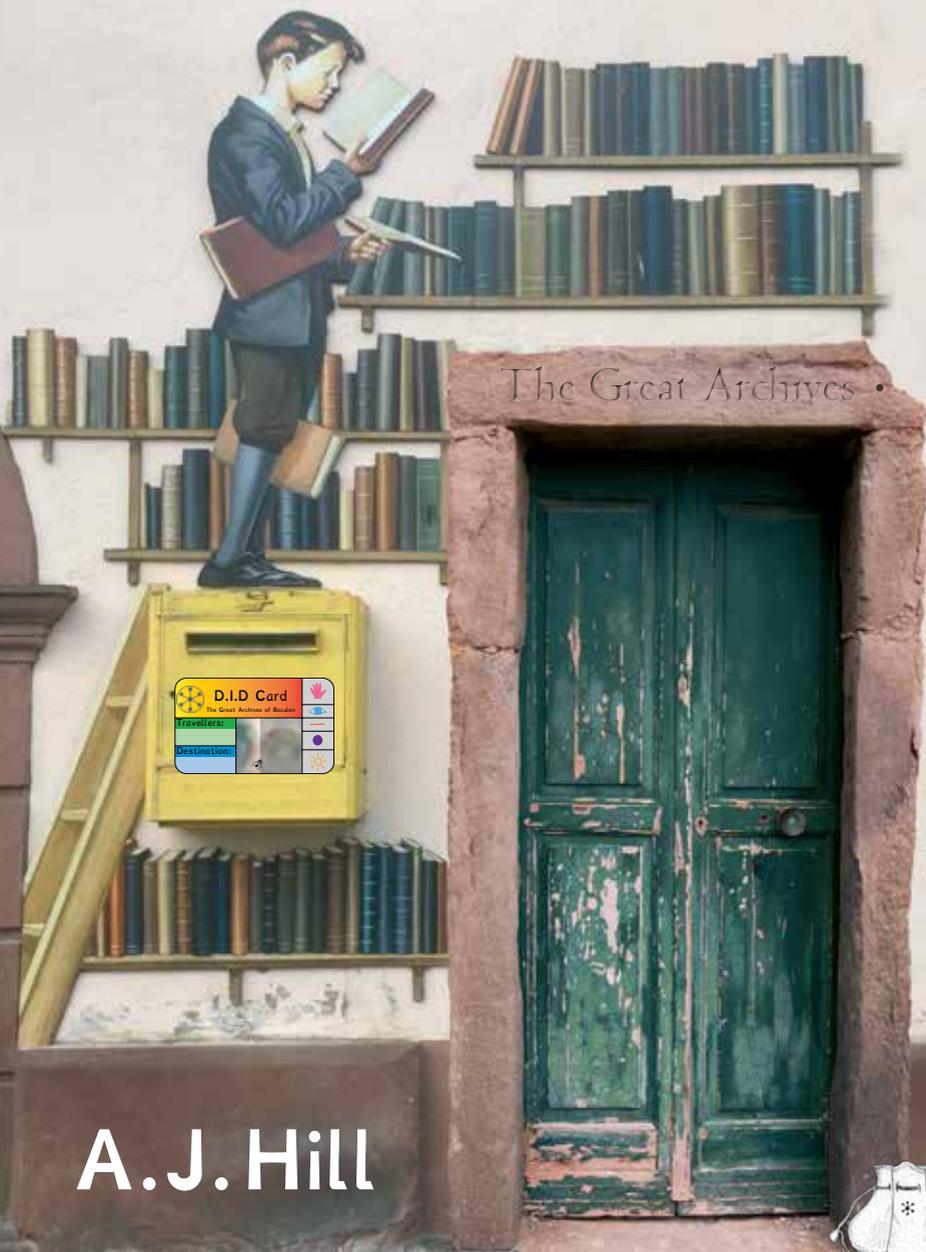


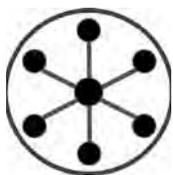
The Story Weavers of Bacalen

# The Story Snatchers



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.*

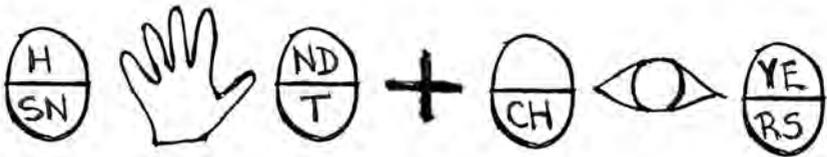
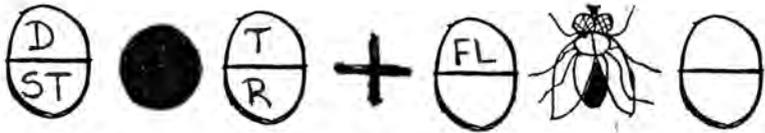
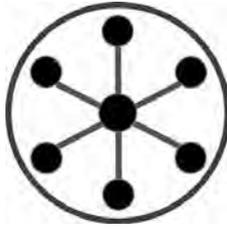
*Diegesis Script will protect this story from the steals of Story Snatchers who prowl our world, searching for books so that they can change their stories.*

*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.*





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

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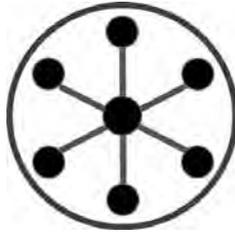
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**Back Cover illustration:** Ned ‘Elly: the original painting, ‘Ned Kelly’ by Sidney Nolan resides in The National Gallery of Australia in the capital city of Canberra. The picture has been transformed by The Picture Pinchers (or by Annabel Bowcher!). 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!).

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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;

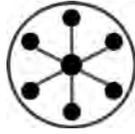
If stories are changed;

Then our lives;

Then our world;

Changes too.”

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



## Chapter 7:

# When are Story Weavers most powerful?

Whoosh!

Then the air in the room was still. Four children materialised in front of the chute. It's like watching an incredible magician or illusionist!

These new arrivals were not Story Snatchers—they were Story Weavers!

Three girls about my age and a slightly older boy, dressed in an orange soccer jersey, walked towards us. They obviously knew each other well and greeted Miss Paige, Meg and Spinner by name. Miss Paige beckoned to me to come forward.

“This is Samuel, the sixth Story Weaver. The Book finally located him today,” she said to the four eager faces who were trying not to stare at me too hard.

“Hello!” They greeted me in a chorus of

excited accents.

“Hi,” I said, a little shyly but I looked at them with great interest. They were all very different in height, hair and skin colour but one thing was the same. They all wore coloured lenses. Not the same colours, but definitely coloured lenses.

Why are we all dyslexic? There must be a reason for it.

The boy was the first to introduce himself. He was slightly taller than I was, with black hair and an olive complexion. His wore light orange lenses and had brown eyes that twinkled—just as authors often described in books.

“Hi, I’m Leo. I’m from Holland,” he said. “This is my cousin, Caitlin.” Leo turned to introduce his cousin and I could see he had the name of a famous Dutch football player on the back of his jersey, Van Persie. “Caitlin comes from Ecuador in South America.”

Caitlin smiled. Her brightly coloured aqua and purple dress swished around her when she moved. She had long, curly, black hair pulled back with a blue headband. There were little, sparkly horse earrings visible through her curls.

Her dark blue glasses also sparkled and had lenses with a slight blue tint.

“So you’re the new **Story Weaver**,” she said in a quiet voice. “We’ve been waiting for you to be chosen.”

“And we’ve had plenty to learn during those months—you’ve got a bit of catching up to do! I hear **Meg’s** started teaching you about story-suggestion!” said one of the other girls cheekily. She wore a long-sleeved shirt, with words across the front that said ‘Do **EWE** love **NZ Wool?**’ and a pair of bright green and pink jodhpur pants. Her blonde curls bounced across her blue eyes as she walked toward me.

“Anna,” she said. Her elfin face beamed with a contagious smile.

My face immediately broke into a grin. I liked this outspoken girl. Anna brushed back the ringlets from her face so that she could adjust her glasses. They were pale pink lenses in flower-patterned frames.

“I’ve come all the way from **New Zealand**.” She proudly pointed to the words on her pink shirt.

The other girl stepped forward and smiled shyly. She was slight like Anna but a little

taller and had long, brown wavy hair.

“Meg and Leo have been **Story Weavers** for a little longer than us but we all still have things to learn! You’ll get used to Anna’s jokes, Samuel! I’m Bella from Belgium!” Her serious, blue eyes studied me through violet lenses.

We **ARE** children from across the world!

So how are children going to find and defeat **Story Snatchers**?

There was no time for any more talking. Miss Paige beckoned to us to sit on the rug in front of The **Great Storyteller’s** grand chair.

Spinner waited until we were seated on the worn and fading carpet. This carpet probably has a few stories to tell too.

The **Great Storyteller** shifted in his chair and made himself more comfortable. He observed us wisely, through his thick, magnifying glasses.

“Welcome **Story Weavers** of Bacalen. I wish we were not welcoming you under such a dark cloud. We should be celebrating Samuel’s arrival. Instead, we must tell you that our story-threads are still rapidly disappearing. This sort of theft has never happened before. Most

disturbing is the removal of The Archetypes.”

The other Story Weavers gasped.

Those things must be really important! I wonder what they are.

Spinner’s hands created the wave-like motion in the air again and the bookshelf began forming images of glowing, coloured threads.

“Samuel, these are The Archetypes. They are the most important and ancient of all story-threads and somebody has stolen them from this very room.”

We all looked at each other.

How could that happen? Surely, something as important as old story-threads would be well guarded?

Spinner and Miss Paige responded to the gasps and the amazement on our faces.

“We’re still trying to work out how this happened but we will find the person responsible.” Miss Paige sounded grim and determined.

Spinner continued with the story, “These ancient threads are the ones from which all stories have been made. The origin of every story can be traced back to one of these six threads.”

My mind was racing. “These threads sound just like the strands of stuff that is in our bodies,” I said.

“DNA,” said Meg. “You mean the strands of DNA that are in every living cell and are the building blocks for life.”

“Yes,” I replied. “That’s what I meant.”

“You’re right, Samuel.” Miss Paige moved closer to Spinner’s chair.

Leo joined in. “The DNA in our cells is made up of many, many combinations of four chemical bases. The information in DNA is stored like a code. The order or sequence provides the information for building and keeping a living thing working properly. I once read that human DNA has 3 billion combinations and 99% of the combinations are the same in all people.”

*Wow!* Reading can teach you so much! Leo must read some amazing books!

“Story-vessels are made up of many story-threads that are joined and woven together,” Spinner said. “It is the amount of each archetypal story-thread that determines what sort of story-vessel will be created.”

Spinner’s hands motioned to the books

and they formed another image. It looked like a type of cloth. It was being woven from many brightly coloured, fine threads.

I was fascinated by the story-thread information. I would never hold or look at a book in the same way again.

Spinner continued, “There are six archetypal story-threads. Each of them has a distinct colour. That colour dominates the completed vessel.”

“What are the arche-typ-al thread colours?” I asked, stumbling a little over this new word.

Spinner looked at Meg encouragingly. “Recite The Six Archetypes, please Meg.”

Meg held up her hand and counted them out on her fingers.

“Well, Yellow is for Mystery and Adventure stories; Pink is Fantasy and Magical Tales; Purple is Non-fiction—you know, real stories about real events; Blue is for Travel and Places in the World; Grey is for stories about Human Relationships—that’s my speciality; and Orange is all about Information and Factual things—I guess you would call it the Reference section of a library.”

“There are six archetypes,” I exclaimed proudly—the word was getting easier to pronounce, “and six **Story Weavers.**”

“Absolutely correct **Samuel,**” Miss Paige beamed. “You are a bright and imaginative problem solver—an excellent attribute for a **Weaver.**”

That’s good to hear! I’m starting to enjoy this new role as a **Story Weaver.**

“So do I have a specialty, my own archetypal story-thread?” I asked.

“Could you take a guess at what that may be?” Miss Paige looked through her green lenses at me with that penetrating but encouraging stare.

Think, think, **THINK!** It’s like I’m back in the school library searching for those three elusive books to borrow. But I’m not at school, I’m in an extraordinary adventure.

“**Mystery and Adventure!**” I shouted in triumph. “My archetype is the yellow story-thread, and **Weavers** wear lenses that match the colours of **The Archetypes!**”

“**The Book** has again chosen well,” **Spinner** said, patting **The Book** hidden under his cloak. “The power of **The Story Weavers** is strongest

when you are together and have the archetypal story-threads with you. Together you must locate The Archetypes and draw all the stolen story-threads back to the Yarn Room.”

The Yarn Room?

This is another mystery.

“In the Yarn Room,” continued Spinner, “The Bookworms, with your help, will reweave the lost story-threads into their proper story-vessels.”

The books on the shelves formed an image that showed an enormous room filled with busy people. Some were sorting coloured threads into piles. Others were at great weaving machines producing richly coloured, rectangular pieces of cloth of various size and thickness. The cloth was being carefully folded and stitched. It was then placed into what looked like thin, labelled boxes.

This must be The Yarn Room! The boxes glowed strangely for a moment and then transformed into something I recognised. A book! They were actually putting completed story-vessels into the books.

Spinner’s voice interrupted my thoughts and I concentrated on his words again.

“The Snatchers have become extremely bold and sly,” Spinner said, his deep voice sounded both worried and serious. “I have never known them to poach so many story-threads. Snatchers have certainly never tried to remove The Archetypes. However, their increased level of thieving has meant that perhaps they have not been as careful during a snatch. We are hopeful that some of the newly transformed and less experienced Snatchers may have unravelled the threads and left bookmarks behind.”

What would a bookmark tell us? Why would new books have bookmarks in them?

Spinner was certainly a good storyteller. He must be able to see these questions in my face because he immediately explained about bookmarks.

“The bookmarks you will be searching for are not like the ones in your world. These bookmarks hold the completed story-vessel inside a book. When a story-vessel becomes unravelled, a bookmark can fall out. Bookmarks contain information about where a story-vessel has been. They can also show you where the unravelled story-threads have been taken.”

“They sound like an important clue to

solving this mystery,” I said. “Have you found any?”

“Only Weavers can see the bookmarks once they become separated from a story vessel,” said Miss Paige. “It is one of your gifts.”

“Weavers are also the only ones at The Great Archives who can see the bookmark’s image map,” said Spinner. “That is another gift.”

And something else that is new to me—so many things to learn about!

“This type of map is made of pictures—images that can identify the location of the lost story—threads,” added Spinner.

Miss Paige continued with the story. “When a Story Weaver closes their eyes and concentrates, they can see the images that have been collected by the bookmark. Together, you will work out where the images have come from. The image map will guide you to where The Snatchers have taken the bookmark’s story—threads. This may also be the location of The Archetypes.”

The six of us sat still.

My mind was whirling with ideas and possible hiding places for the ancient story—

threads and the excitement of finding a bookmark. I supposed the others were thinking about this too.

“Those image map pictures could come from anywhere in the world,” exclaimed Bella.

Anna looked thoughtful. “We will need to make sure we concentrate hard and remember all the places that we have ever read about, heard about or visited!”

We all seem so determined to succeed, even though it’s a huge task. How were we going to find the Archetypes?

