

The Story Weavers of Bacalen

The Story Snatchers



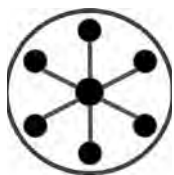
D.I.D Card
The Great Archives of Bacalen

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.

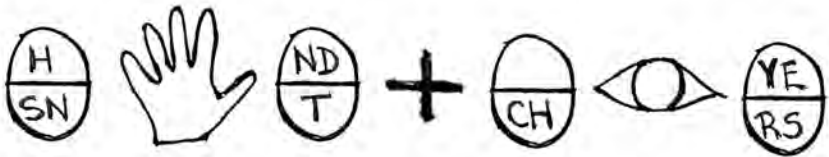
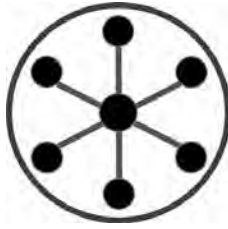
Diegesis Script will protect this story from the steals of Story Snatchers who prowl our world, searching for books so that they can change their stories.

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.





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

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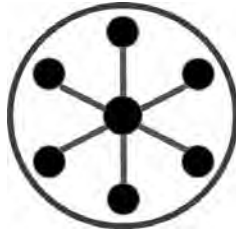
Back Cover photographs: Annabel Bowcher and James Heggie.

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!).

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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;

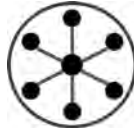
If stories are changed;

Then our lives;

Then our world;

Changes too.”

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



Chapter 8:

What if some words have been lost?

Spinner looked at each of us and turned to Miss Paige. “I think we should call for something to eat and drink. Once we start talking about how The Story Weavers’ gifts can be used to locate The Archetypes, there will be little time to take a break for tea.”

“I’ll call for it now.” Miss Paige removed a colourful card from her satchel and wrote something on it. Then she posted it into the book chute.

Is there nothing that chute can’t do?

Almost immediately, a small, lean man, with short, jet-black hair and a long, silvery moustache, emerged from the book chute. His dark blue clothing was a stark contrast to the colourfully woven basket that he carried.

“Thank you, Cetus.” Miss Paige took the heavy basket from him and placed it on the

carpet. She invited us to carefully unpack its contents. The room became filled with the aromas of the delicious smelling food. Meg and Leo poured us all a cup of sparkling, cold water from flasks that swirled with colour.

“Samuel, this is Argyros Cetus,” Spinner said.

Cetus’ intense, dark eyes seemed to look through me. He inclined his head slightly to acknowledge my presence. His smooth, silver moustache also fell forward in a brief bow.

Cetus handed Spinner a new, neatly folded coloured cloth.

Spinner thanked him, unfolded it, took off his glasses and cleaned them. He then handed Cetus the well-creased, coloured square from his pocket. Cetus placed the dirty glasses cleaner into a bag and placed it into his satchel.

“Cetus will assist you with any special things that you may need from The Great Archives, Samuel. You must be properly prepared for your journey to find the story-threads.”

Cetus’ eyes narrowed. A strange smile fleetingly flickered across his lips. Then without

a word, he silently slipped away through the chute.

“He’s always quiet.” observed Leo. “Can he speak? I’ve never heard him say a word.”

“Cetus lost the ability to speak when his speech-thread was damaged,” explained Miss Paige.

“Speech-thread?” Bella questioned. “Don’t you mean vocal chords?”

“No,” replied Spinner. “Have you not learnt about speech-threads in your training, Bella? People use the vocal chords in their throats to make sounds so that they can talk. Strong speech-threads are found in Storytellers. These threads give us our gift of storytelling and recall. They help link us to the story-threads in the story-vessels.”

“So was Cetus once a Storyteller at The Great Archives?” asked Caitlin.

Spinner again created some pictures to assist with his next story.

This time it was of a boy about my own age. He looked like a young Cetus. He was with a group of other children, sitting in front of a woman who was talking to them. She must have been telling an exciting story—the expressions

on her face were changing quickly and her hands were gesturing rapidly. The children were staring at her, the excitement also showing on their faces. They sat spellbound. The eyes of the boy sitting closest to Cetus widened, he turned briefly to Cetus. They looked at one another and grinned. Both boys were enjoying the story.

Wait! There's something familiar about that boy's face.

Spinner's voice interrupted my thoughts. "Cetus was chosen to train as a Storyteller. Young children are tested for this gift. They need a suitable voice, memory, and a flexible speech-thread. The trainees enter The Hall of Yarns. Cetus worked hard. We were all amazed at his progress. He hoped that one day he would be chosen to be The Great Storyteller."

"So how did Cetus damage his speech-thread?" Bella asked.

The image changed to show a young man walking back and forth, talking to himself.

"Cetus showed great promise. One day, despite numerous warnings, he overstretched his speech-thread telling a story that he was not yet ready to recount."

The young man in the picture suddenly clutched at his throat and stumbled forward onto his knees. He opened his mouth and touched his lips with his fingers. Something was very wrong. People surrounded him. A young man helped Cetus to a bench. He turned, and we could see his face clearly.

Dad! My Dad had been there the day Cetus damaged his speech-thread.

What did that mean? Why hadn't Dad told me about this place?

Spinner gave me his full attention and smiled kindly. "You've recognised somebody in the image, Samuel?"

"My Dad! He's been here too. Was he training to be a Storyteller?" My words rushed out.

"Yes," Spinner said. "Joseph Reid was also one of the best. After the accident, he decided to leave The Great Archives. It was hard for Joseph to watch one of his friends lose their ability to tell stories. Cetus shut himself away from his friends. He wouldn't let any of them visit him. He even changed his name from Alexis Craft to Argyros Cetus."

Meg tapped me on the shoulder. "Did

you know your father was training to be a Storyteller?”

I shook my head. “He’s never mentioned Bacalen or The Great Archives. He’s dyslexic, like me, and he’s always told us amazing stories at bedtime! We’ve tried to get him to write them down so others can enjoy them but he won’t.”

“I think you may have found out why he didn’t tell you,” said Spinner.

I nodded. I hope Dad will tell me about being at The Great Archives when I get home.

We all looked again at the image the books had made. Spinner continued his story about Cetus.

Two women appeared in the picture. We could not see their faces. They examined Cetus and looked in his throat.

“Speech-threads should be slowly strengthened. They develop by retelling ancient stories over and over again. This keeps the story clear and true. Sometimes students become impatient with their progress and try to tell a story that they are not yet ready to tell or to understand. This can damage their speech-thread. Cetus paid the price and has

not spoken since that day.”

“I was told speech-threads could be repaired.” said Anna, sounding so sad.

“In time, a speech-thread can be healed. The damage to Cetus’ was severe. The Threaders, our healers, tried to help him slowly regain control over his storytelling but the improvement was not fast enough for Cetus. He gave up trying to heal his speech-thread. I thought it was important to keep him connected with stories so he has helped me in the library ever since.”

I wanted to learn more about Storytellers and speech-threads and hear some of those ancient stories! Dad **MUST** remember some of the stories.

My thoughts were interrupted when I noticed Miss Paige opening her satchel.

“And now we must turn our attention to using your gifts.” Miss Paige took a number of small, coloured bags from her leather satchel.

Spinner reached into his cloak and produced The Book.

Would I be able to look at its magical pages again?

“These bags are Transporter Bags.” Miss

Paige handed each of us a bag that matched the colour of our lenses. “If you find a story-thread you put them into the bag.”

“Will they all fit? The bags look quite small,” Bella held her bag up and tried to stretch it open as far as it would go.

“The bags don’t need to carry many threads,” Miss Paige assured her. “Once inside these Transporter Bags, the story-threads will immediately return to the Yarn Room and be ready to reweave into their story-vessels.”

“A bit like popping into a book chute,” said Meg, who knew quite a bit about the magical things at The Great Archives.

“Exactly,” said her aunt.

“But what if we miss some threads? Stories can’t have words missing—they won’t make sense or be the same.” said Caitlin.

We all looked at her and began to wonder if the task of finding all the story-threads was even possible!

“That is why you must also locate The Archetypes,” said Spinner. “When Story Weavers connect with their Archetype it increases your power. You can easily locate all the other story-threads. Lost threads

can be brought back to the safety of The Great Archives and its Yarn Room. Without The Archetypes' power, a Story Weaver can overlook a very small fragment of story-thread. Words can be lost and stories will then remain incomplete, perhaps never to be told again in their true form or with their true meaning."

Spinner held out The Book so that we could see it.

"Now." He beckoned to us to come closer. "Let's make sure you and your gifts are ready to track down the threads."

Miss Paige handed out some little multi-coloured cloths, like the one Cetus had given Spinner.

"Use these cloths to remove smudges and specks from your glasses," she said. "You don't want to misread what The Book says."

I glanced at the other Weavers as I cleaned my glasses. They were intently focused on The Book as they removed any smears from their lenses. They too must feel the power of its pages—all eager for The Book to be opened and read.

Finally, we're going to see The Book again. Will it show us our gifts?

