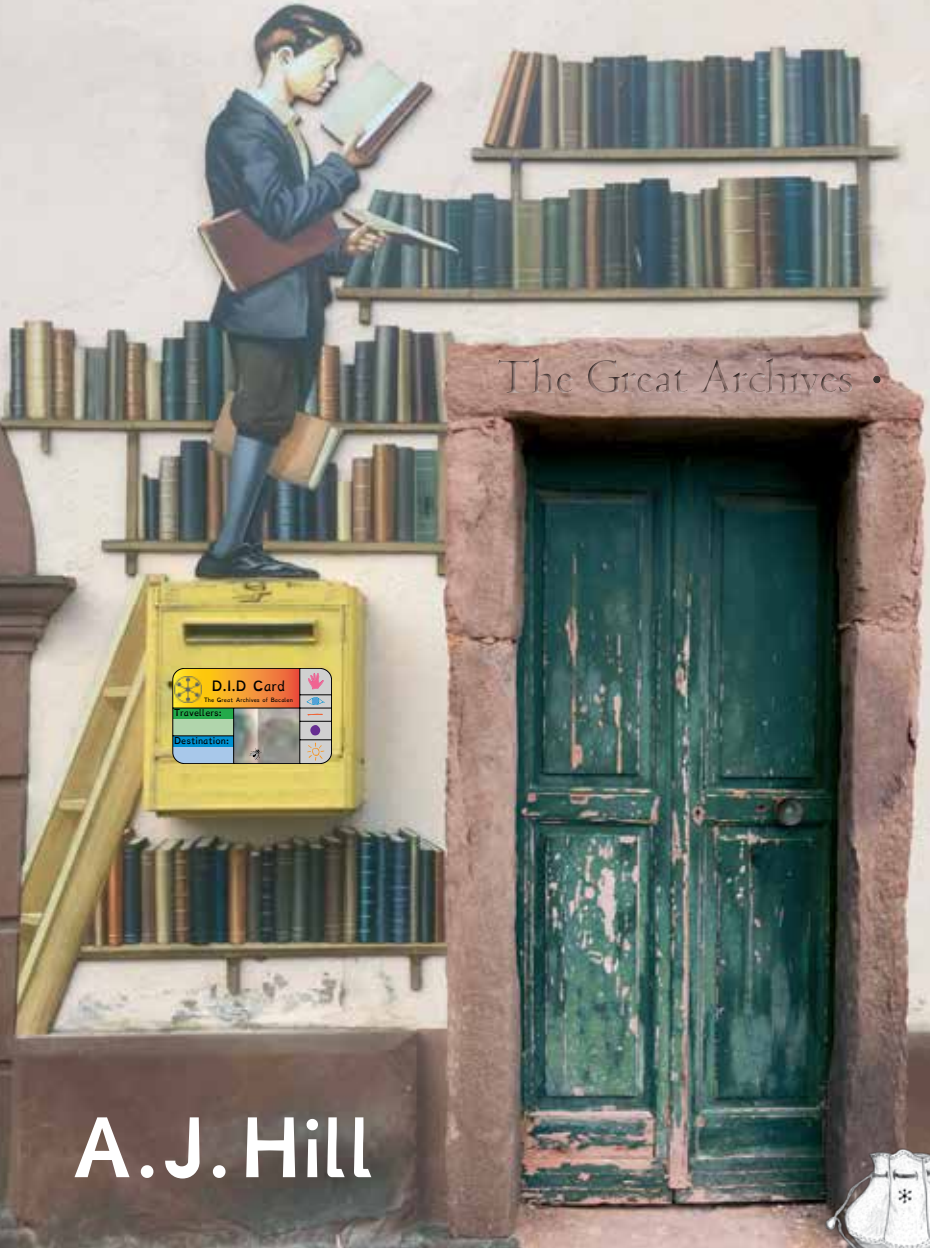


The Story Weavers of Bacalen

The Story Snatchers



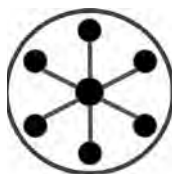
D.I.D Card
The Great Archives of Bacalen

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.

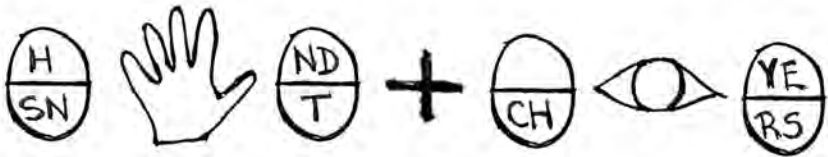
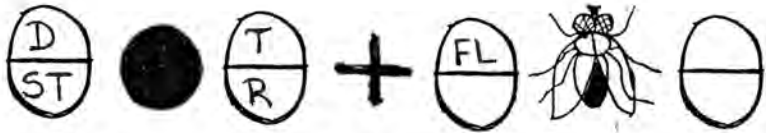
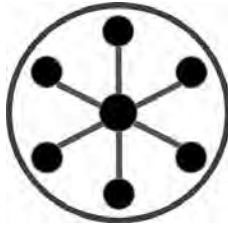
Diegesis Script will protect this story from the steals of Story Snatchers who prowl our world, searching for books so that they can change their stories.

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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A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

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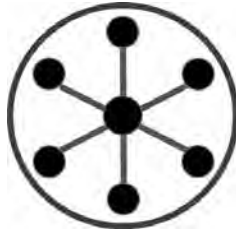
Back Cover photographs: Annabel Bowcher and James Heggie.

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

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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;

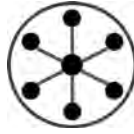
If stories are changed;

Then our lives;

Then our world;

Changes too.”

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



Chapter 9:

How do you find a good book?

Instead of opening **The Book** and reading from its pages, **Spinner** handed it to **Miss Paige**. She placed it on the colourful carpet in front of us.

“Do we need to open it?” I asked curiously.

Spinner let out a chuckle. “You had better see if **The Book** is ready to tell you more about your gifts—the ones that will help you find **The Archetypes**.”

Even **Meg** looked a little confused. “What are you talking about **Spinner**? I haven’t learnt about a gift that will help find the **Grey Archetype**.”

A soft, melodic voice, full of patience and wisdom, replied, “**Weavers** you must all now learn how to use that gift. I will teach you to talk to books and to form a link with

your Archetype, wherever it is. First you must immerse yourself in the text of some good books. Lose yourself in their stories. Only then will a strong link be formed. If it is strong enough, then The Archetype will be able to communicate with you and show you how to locate it. The difficult thing will be finding the right books.”

Crazy! Where was that voice coming from? I looked around in surprise. Everyone was quiet. Spinner and Miss Paige sat calmly waiting.

There’s somebody talking to me. I can hear the voice inside my head!

I wasn’t sure if Spinner and Miss Paige could hear anything but by the looks on the other Weavers’ faces, they had heard something too. I wondered if it was the same for all of us.

“The Book! The Book is speaking to us!” Anna almost leapt from the rug in excitement.

How can a book talk? I could not take my eyes off The Book that was sitting in front of me.

“It really is a magical book! Does it contain spells?” I asked. “Can it do magic?”

“Magic, Samuel,” Spinner explained

patiently, “Real magic, is just a spark that ignites change in the world. It is woven carefully into many books. Not just in magical books. Not just in books about magic. A story that can stir feelings deep inside us should be treasured. When a book makes a connection with its reader that is real magic.”

I felt the power of The Book’s connection flowing in my whole body—the excited, tingling that made me want to learn more from it.

“Do all books talk?” I’m sure we all wanted to know the answer to Anna’s question.

“I have never heard their voices in my head before,” Bella said.

“Books often try to talk to us,” Spinner continued. “Not many people on Earth hear them anymore. Most books have stopped trying to speak to people. People are becoming too busy to sit with a book. They don’t take the time to really connect with a book or enjoy its story. It’s because of your gifts that you are able to first see and then perhaps hear a book calling to you.”

I looked at Spinner and then at The Book.

“In the library,” I said, “The Book caught my attention by moving the words around!”

“Yes,” said Spinner. “It was part of the test to see if you were really a Weaver.”

I frowned. “But doesn’t my perceptual dyslexia make the words move?”

Miss Paige joined in the conversation. “Words move because the story-threads are trying to share their story with the reader. Some threads get quite excited and find it hard to stay still. A bit like children before the school bell rings at the end of term and the holidays start!” She smiled at me and I grinned back.

“Everyone who is a Weaver or a Bookworm or a Storyteller at The Great Archives has a form of ‘dyslexia’,” explained Miss Paige. “It may be mild or severe—no two dyslexics are alike. However we all have inquiring, intelligent and creative minds.”

Everyone here is dyslexic!

“This gift enables us to speak to the books, find out their true stories, and reweave or mend any missing sections,” continued Miss Paige. “At The Great Archives you learn that reading the words is not enough. You are taught to listen to the book’s story and let the words form images in your mind.”

Wow!

“Sometimes dyslexics on Earth find it challenging to read a book and understand it. Words move, letters change or become blurry. It can be quite difficult to focus on a story. There are ways for dyslexics to read more easily. The saddest thing is when people don’t know they are dyslexic or don’t know there are things they can do to manage the excited story-threads.”

“What happens to those people?” I ask.

“They give up trying to learn to spell or read. It becomes too difficult. They think they aren’t smart enough to read.”

“But they are smart enough!” I exclaim.
“They just don’t know about their dyslexia!”

“You’re right Samuel. We try and find as many as we can—it is never too late to help them.”

Miss Paige removed her green lenses. She must be able to see us soaking up her words because she had a little smile and her eyes were twinkling.

“So at The Great Archives of Bacalen many of us wear coloured lenses. We have learnt that the lenses stop the words moving

and allow the stories to be communicated to us. Story Weavers all wear coloured lenses. The lenses help them to unlock their special gifts.”

I looked at the others and their eyes were shining, I'm sure they felt the same excitement I did as I thought about what we were being told.

Do I really have a gift—a super power—that allows me to talk to books? I wanted to learn as much as I could about ALL these new gifts. Most comic book superheroes take off their glasses to save the world—my glasses were going to help me use my super powers!

“And people say books can take a long time to tell a story!” Again, the words from The Book formed in my head. This time they made me smile.

The Book was becoming impatient! As impatient as ME.

“Can somebody please open my cover? I would like to spend more time speaking to you using the words on my pages. I like to encourage people to read!”

Meg eagerly but gently, opened The Book.

“Ah thank you, Meg,” wrote The Book. The

words formed quickly in black ink on the blank, yellowed page. “It always feels invigorating to get some fresh air into these old pages.”

Its pages fluttered, like a hen ruffling its feathers after it has preened itself. For an instant, the words turned into a jumble of letters and symbols and then disappeared from the page. New words formed as The Book spoke to us again.

“Now Story Weavers, we must hurry. The Snatchers are moving quickly and quietly, from country to country, and there is no time to lose.”

Our eyes darted across The Book’s pages. There was no swirling of text or rivers running through the words so that it could get our attention.

We were all focused on the pages, needing The Book’s guidance.

“We can’t let The Snatchers win.” Caitlin’s quiet voice was full of determination.

“They want people to forget the stories that have been told from generation to generation,” Bella said thoughtfully. “Snatchers don’t like seeing people enjoying a book or reading to their children. They know by

replacing stories, people will lose vital links to their past and the world will become a more soulless, selfish place to live.”

“Exactly the type of world that a Snatcher would like. More and more people will become Story Snatchers if we don’t stop them now,” said Anna fiercely.

“Now that we are all here together, what can we do?” I asked.

The Book started to write a reply. “It is important that you wear your lenses and look for bookmarks that may have fallen out during a snatch. Bookmarks will have image maps. You may also find thread pieces that have broken off during the unravelling.”

“But where do we start to look?” Leo asked the question I had been wondering. “The world is a very big place!”

“You need to start at a place where The Snatchers have only removed some of the story-threads from the books. They always come back to finish a snatch. Speak to some good books with strong, undamaged story-threads. They will have a story to tell about The Snatchers,” The Book replied.

“How do you find a ‘good book’?” I asked.

“I mean, how do you really know it is **GOOD?**”

Spinner nodded thoughtfully and looked at me through his thick glasses.

“Ah, Samuel, good books are the ones that quickly form images in your mind as you read their story. When they do that, you know it has a strong story-thread. They are the hardest for **The Story Snatchers** to unravel. These good books have stood the test of time but it is still possible for them to be poached. Such books may be able to provide information about **The Snatchers** and who is helping them take so many story-threads.”

Meg jumped up. “Our bookshop has many of the ‘classics’. **The Story Snatchers** have started poaching stories with weak threads but there are plenty of good books on the shelves at **Multi-Story**. Perhaps even ones that will talk to us. My parents will be there to help and then we can plan our next move.”

Spinner and Miss Paige agreed to let us go to the bookshop.

“Remember,” said Spinner, “you must also search for lost threads or bookmarks. Look carefully—although **Story Weavers** can see bookmarks, they may not be in obvious places.”

“What if we find a Snatcher?” Anna asked, her eyes widening with excitement and glistening like a bright-blue, summer sky.

“If you see a Snatcher, you must try to catch them,” explained Spinner.

Catch them? That didn’t sound an easy thing to do!

I grabbed at the air with my hand. “So how can you catch a Story Snatcher before they melt into the shadows?”

Was it really possible?

