



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Ages 10+; years 5 to 8

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English, science, technologies
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical Understanding

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Great action-adventure story from well-known Melbourne author George Ivanoff.
- Encourages discussions around friendship, prehistoric animals, biology and science, technology.
- A good example of a narrative with a strong adventure plotline and mystery elements.

THEMES

- Dinosaurs, prehistoric animals, cryptids
- New friendships, family
- Finding inner courage and self-belief

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9781761047244 (paperback);

ISBN: 9781761047251 (ebook)

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Monster Island

George Ivanoff

PLOT SUMMARY

After following his mum to her top-secret new job, Bernie finds himself on a mysterious remote island inside the Bass Strait Triangle. The scientists working there call it Monster Island, and Bernie soon discovers why . . .

Here, extinct and mythical creatures are alive! But that's not the only mystery. Why are there so many mushrooms? Where have the hostile drones come from? Who controls them? And why are they spying on the creatures on the island?

Bernie and his new friend Ivy are determined to find out.

An action-packed adventure where dinosaurs roam, secrets are dangerous and drop bears really do exist!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George Ivanoff is a Melbourne author who's written more than 100 books for kids and teens, including the interactive You Choose series, the non-fiction Survival Guides, the RFDS Adventures and the OTHER WORLDS series.

As a child, George loved reading interactive books, where he got to make decisions about the direction of the story. He has had more fun plotting and writing the You Choose books than pretty much anything else. Writing the Survival Guides has indulged his curiosity, interest in research and desire to learn new things. And writing the RFDS Adventures has opened his eyes to the amazing work done by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. With OTHER WORLDS George has ventured into the realms of science fiction and fantasy, two of his favourite genres, in order to tell stories about ordinary kids facing extraordinary circumstances.

George's books and stories have been shortlisted for numerous awards and he is thrilled that *You Choose: The Treasure of Dead Man's Cove* won the 2015 YABBA for Fiction for Younger Readers.

George drinks too much coffee, eats too much chocolate and watches too much *Doctor Who*. He has one wife, two children and an uncontrollable imagination.

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

To watch George Ivanoff talk about his inspiration for writing *Monster Island* follow the links:

<https://youtu.be/q1EflSwjAk>
<https://youtu.be/VcD-AmEiDmA>

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Before reading the book, look closely at the front cover. What do you think the story will be about based on the images you see there?
2. What genre do you think the book will be? What elements on the cover give you that impression? Can you think of other books, movies or television shows that might be in the same genre?
3. Why do you think Douglas Holgate, the illustrator, decided to use this colour palette? What does this tell you about the story?
4. How many creatures can you find on the cover of *Monster Island*? Are all of them *real* creatures/animals? What do you think this says about the narrative? Do you think it will be a realistic or fantastical story?

KEY STUDY TOPICS

Dinosaurs and Cryptids

Questions

1. What is a dinosaur?
2. What is a cryptid?
3. Why do you think the author has brought these two different types of creatures together into a story? What does this allow him to do from a narrative point of view? How would the story be different if he'd just used dinosaurs from the Cretaceous period? Or just dinosaurs from the Jurassic period? Or just cryptids?
4. Apart from cryptids and dinosaurs, what are the other types of creatures on *Monster Island*?
5. What is a poacher? Do they exist in the real world?
6. Who do you think hired the poachers? What do you think they wanted to do with the creatures?

Activities

- Look up the word 'dinosaur' and 'cryptid' in the dictionary. From their meanings, what are the main differences between the two?
- Make a list of the different creatures on *Monster Island*. Divide them into cryptids and other prehistoric creatures. Pick one of these and research it as if you were a scientist working on *Monster Island*. (You could include drawing, charts and detailed descriptions in your report.)
- Research a cryptid mentioned in the book. Try to find out how far back in history documentation of this creature goes. Would you say that the references to this creature are scientifically credible, or not?
- There are several Australian dinosaurs mentioned in the story – pick one and research where in Australia it used to live. What is known about this type of dinosaur?
- In a group, think of who might have tried to steal the creatures from *Monster Island*. Workshop 'next action plans' that that individual or group might take. (For example, do you think the poachers will try to steal the creatures of *Monster Island* again? How do you think they will go about this?)
- Find some different examples of poachers throughout history. Are there examples you can find of poachers today? What type of animals do they target and why?



Fungi

The fungal core is a big part of the mystery of *Monster Island*. Research fungi and mycelium and then use the questions below as a talking point with the class.



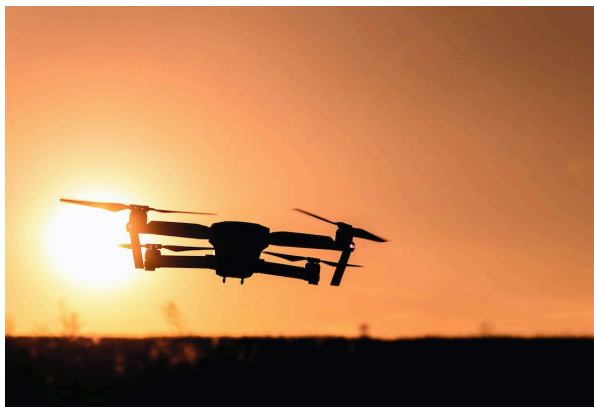
Questions

1. Is it possible for mushrooms and other fungi to communicate? Are there plants that can do this too?
2. What are the different ways that humans use fungi? Are they only used as a food/ingredient in cooking, or do they have other purposes?
3. How many different types of fungi exist. How many have you encountered around your home, garden or in the local park?
4. Bernie describes the fungi in the fungal core as having a glow (p.197) – can mushrooms and other fungi glow in real life?
5. What is the scientific term for this glow?

Science and Technology

Questions

1. The research centre run by Mr Meier is full of scientific and technological equipment. One of the more commonly used forms of tech are drones. In what different ways are drones used in our society? Do you think they are a positive technological advancement? Why or why not?

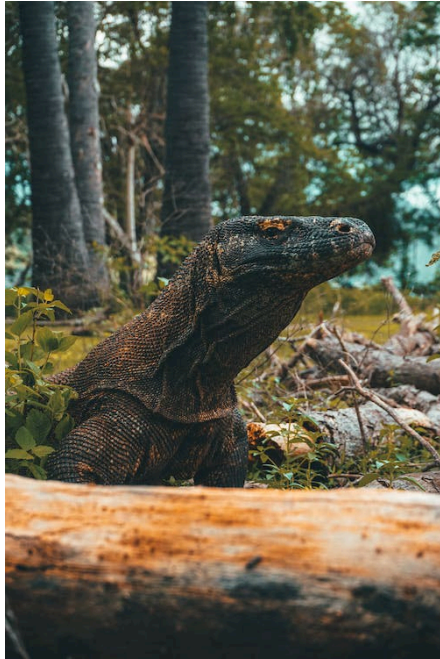


2. Do you think it was a good idea for the research team to electronically tag the creatures on Monster Island? Do scientists use this 'tagging' system in real life? Why do you think this is a good idea? How would it help scientist study different animals?
3. Mr Meier has discovered the island and its creatures. Do you think he has an ethical responsibility to protect and look after these creatures? Why or why not?

KEY QUOTES

1. *'He pushed the doors open and peered out. It looked like the car had been parked in a large garage. He hardly had the chance to register where he was when a clang made him retreat. He listened as footsteps echoed.'* (p. 15) What do you think would have happened if Bernie had been discovered at this point in the story? Write the next couple of paragraphs as if he had been found. Briefly outline who found him and what they decided to do about it. How could this ultimately have changed the story?
2. *'... Dad's got enough money to pretty much do whatever he wants and he wanted this place set up quick smart. The domes were originally designed by one of his companies for an upcoming international Mars mission. So he got the factory to prefab all the bits, shipped them out here and had them put together in under a month.'* (p. 59) Are there people like Mr Meier in the real world who have the resources and financial ability to launch this type of project? Research people like Elon Musk and Richard Branson and see if they have also investigated space travel.
3. *"Sure thing, Bee-Bee."*
Bernie groaned. He'd hoped that Ivy had forgotten her threat to call him by that silly nickname. He briefly considered asking her to not use it, but didn't want her to get crabby at him, so just swallowed it.' (p. 75) Have there been times when a friend of yours has done something that you didn't like? Did you confront your friend? Is there a way to approach this type of conversation so that nobody is hurt or upset by it?
4. *'The next photo showed the dragon with its open mouth raised to the sky, a column of flame soaring into the heights.'* (p. 93) The author has changed a lot of known animals – like here, the Komodo dragon is able to breath out fire. Choose an animal or prehistoric creature and create your own version of an animal that might be found on Monster Island. Draw your creation.





- It is hinted at in the story that the fungal core at the island's centre is creating the mysterious creatures found on Monster Island. Why do you think the creatures it's producing are *almost* like real creatures, but not quite. (For example, why does Lea-Lea have opposable thumbs?) Create your own creature to come out of the fungal core. Draw your creation.

This is a drawing of Shroomy by the author George Ivanoff. (See p.89) He used illustrations to help him realise how a lot of the Monster Island creature would look.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

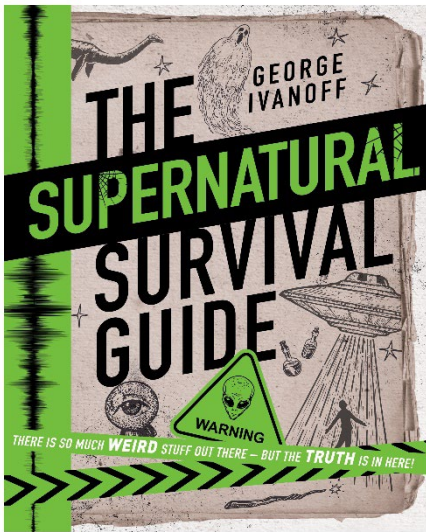
1. What's the difference between someone like Mr Meier in *Monster Island* and John Hammond in the movie *Jurassic Park*? Do you think they both have a responsibility to the creatures they are looking after/creating?
2. What type of scientific research do you think the researchers on Monster Island are doing? Do you think any medical benefits could be sourced from their research?

ACTIVITIES

- Bernie is worried about his mum going to the Bass Strait Triangle. Read his reasons on page 10 and then conduct your own research on the area. Do you think Bernie is right to be worried?
 - Research another mysterious part of the world (perhaps the Bermuda Triangle) where people have gone missing or other strange things have been known to happen. Create a power point presentation about this area and share it with your classmates.
 - Choose a mysterious incident, disappearance or cryptid and have a class debate. For example, if you choose something like the Yeti, half the class could debate that the creature exists and the other half that it doesn't exist. Or half the class could argue that the Bass Strait Triangle is a perfectly normal part of the world, and the other half argue that there *is* something 'otherworldly' about it that causes people to disappear without a trace.
- Draw a map of the island. Include the research centre, the fungal core and the different places Bernie and Ivy visit like the hide, the ditch where they see the strange throbbing ball of 'cotton wool' (p52/53) and the lake.
 - Look at the reports by Professor Bolete at the end of the book (p.228) Write another report from Bolete's point of view discussing the incidents during the climax of the story. Share what conclusions you think he would make after seeing the fungal core 'devour' the helicopter.
 - Write a police report about the poachers. But remember that they haven't been told the truth about what happened on Monster Island and think that it's happened a different island in Bass Strait. But do you think they would have found the situation suspicious? Why would that be so?



FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA



The Supernatural Survival Guide
by George Ivanoff

Have you had a close encounter with a UFO?

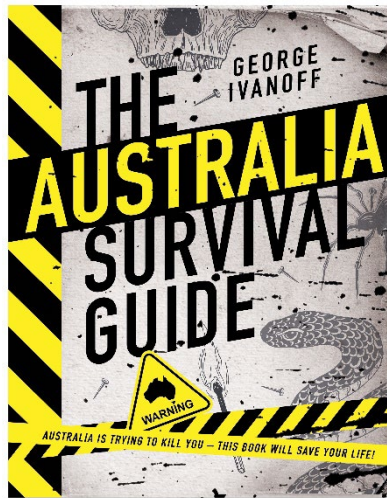
Is your house HAUNTED?

Have you seen a YETI?

Don't worry, THE SUPERNATURAL SURVIVAL GUIDE has all the info you need to survive a brush with the SPOOKY.

The world is a pretty amazing place, but there are still things out there that are full of mystery and make us wonder . . . Is the Loch Ness Monster real? Does Big Foot exist? Are there scientific reasons for hauntings? What is cryptozoology? What can explain UFO sightings by multiple witnesses?

THE SUPERNATURAL SURVIVAL GUIDE will tackle these and other questions about all things paranormal. There is so much WEIRD stuff out there . . . but the TRUTH is IN HERE!



The Australia Survival Guide
by George Ivanoff

Oh no! You've been bitten by an inland taipan? Don't worry, *The Australia Survival Guide* has the first-aid advice you need!

What's that? You're lost in the bush and need to know how to collect your own water? *The Australia Survival Guide* has got you covered.

Our amazing country has its fair share of dangers: sharks, snakes, cyclones and crocodiles can be a serious threat to your life! But don't worry. This book will help you by providing the knowledge you need to survive in all kinds of Aussie conditions – in the bush, in the desert or even at the beach!

So get out there and look around! Even if you think Australia is trying to kill you, *The Australia Survival Guide* can save your life!



OTHER WORLDS: Beast World
by George Ivanoff

Xandra finds a key . . .

It opens a doorway . . .

She and her brother are sucked through . . .

Into a crazy world that looks like steampunk London. Except in this world there are no humans – only animals. Xandra and Lex encounter rhino police, armadillo housekeeping staff, rodent inventors and even a lion on the throne. Here humans are the endangered species!

Will Xandra and Lex survive Beast World?



ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Monster Island	George Ivanoff	9781761047244	5	\$16.99		
The Supernatural Survival Guide	George Ivanoff	9781761043635	5	\$24.99		
The Australia Survival Guide	George Ivanoff	9780143796572	5	\$24.99		
OTHER WORLDS: Beast World	George Ivanoff	9780143786214	5	\$14.99		
TOTAL						

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