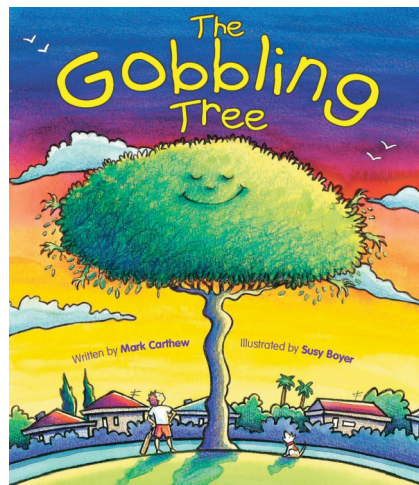




## **Teacher's Notes**



**Title: The Gobbling Tree**

**Author: Mark Carthew**

**Illustrator: Susy Boyer**

<http://www.newfrontier.com.au/resources.htm>

### **1. Synopsis**

‘Oh No!’ yelled Zac. ‘That tree won’t give my new ball back!’

‘Don’t fret,’ said Lisa thinking quick,  
I’ll hit that ball down with a stick...’

Children and adults will quickly relate to the familiar scenario of something becoming stuck up in a tree and trying all sorts of things to get it down again, only to have the other things thrown up to dislodge it become stuck as well!

This delightfully lyrical book uses rhyming narrative and alliteration to cleverly capture reader’s interest in this game of tug of war with the mischievous Gobbling Tree.

Mark Carthew’s clever word play will fire the reader’s imagination with his witty rhymes and descriptive imagery. Australian illustrator Susy Boyer, well known for her whimsical and warm illustrations, has combined with Mark to create a magical picture book destined to become a household favourite.



## **2. Author/Illustrator style or medium**

Mark's rhyming text quickly creates a humorous situational 'drama' and interactive storyline.

Introducing a fun packed range of predictable and highly familiar 'solutions' to try and solve the problem, Zac and his fiends soon find that this tree has a mind of its own!

Zac's faithful dog watches both the tree's every move and the helper's humorous attempts to retrieve objects, adding another special dimension to the ongoing visual narrative and humour.



The illustrations for *The Gobbling Tree* use pencil and watercolour on watercolour paper, highlighting Susy Boyer's artistic gifts and versatility. Her use of warm and vibrant colours and her characteristic blend of realism and fantasy create an inviting story for sharing.

The illustrations reinforce a great sense of fantasy and fun. Capturing the playfulness of this text was one of the highlights for Susy when she was painting the illustrations and creating the wonderful perspectives.





### 3. Author/Illustrator Motivation

Both Mark and Susy wanted to create a picture book that children and readers of all ages will want to enjoy over and over again as a shared reading experience and read aloud.

Mark's love of wordplay and the musicality of language motivate him to bring new angles to his lyrical narratives and this is often combined with a subtle and quirky sense of humour!

Having worked together before on education publishing projects Susy and Mark both delight in creating bright & evocative imagery for readers to enjoy.



#### **Author/Illustrator Background Information**

[http://www.bookedout.com.au/authors/Mark\\_Carthew/index.html](http://www.bookedout.com.au/authors/Mark_Carthew/index.html)

[http://www.showtell.com.au/authors/mark\\_carthew.htm](http://www.showtell.com.au/authors/mark_carthew.htm)

**Mark Carthew** is an award winning editor, author & primary teacher. Best known for his books and series exploring poetry, humour, music, movement and drama, he has always loved the joy of wordplay.

He is series editor for the internationally acclaimed illustrated play script series *VoiceWorks* which has won a number of awards and sold nearly a million copies worldwide. He has worked closely with some of the biggest names in children's publishing including Margaret Mahy, Graeme Base, Pamela Allen, Ann James, Michael Rosen and a host of other Australian and international authors and illustrators and loves the creative and collaborative process. Mark has a passion for creating quality books for children and in 2005 he was Highly Commended in the ***Dromkeen Librarian's Award*** for his success in bringing literary experiences to children.

His recent trade books include the beautiful picture book ***Five Little Owls*** illustrated by Mini Goss and the hilarious book of jokes rhymes and riddles ***Wicked Wizards & Leaping Lizards (ill Mike Spoor UK)*** and is releasing a major anthology of children rhymes ***Can You Keep a Secret?***



with Random House Australia in October 2008. In 2006 Mark was awarded a three year scholarship to pursue his PhD in writing with Swinburne University Victoria.



Illustrator **Susy Boyer** grew up in Brisbane, Qld Australia and she still loves living in Qld.

<http://www.susyboyerart.com/>

### SUSY BOYER

Susy Boyer has been a freelance illustrator for over 20 years, working mainly in publishing and advertising. After graduating from the Queensland College of Art she worked for 5 years in Sydney and London before settling on the Gold Coast where she is enjoying raising her three sons. She is passionate about art, design, photography, architecture and sport. A versatile artist, Susy works mainly in acrylic, chalk pastel, watercolour and pencil. She is inspired people and nature, particularly the ocean and beaches.

Susy delights in exploring colour and the endless combinations one can make to find a pleasing result.

Susy's next picture book is a project with well known Australian author Gary Crew.

### **5. Educational Applicability**



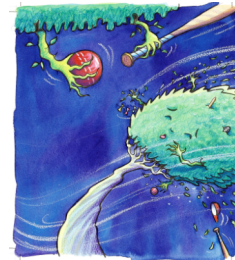
This read aloud picture book will resonate for early childhood caregivers, parents and teachers, providing a simple, yet wonderfully accessible narrative with lots of great ideas for follow up in educational settings.

There are also many fun things to search for and identify in both the text and art!



The use of repetition and interactive 'call and response' style stanzas and onomatopoeia makes this book perfect to read aloud and for teachers and caregivers to encourage group participation in the reading.

Children will also love the cat and mouse style 'tug of war' game developed throughout the narrative.



There are numerous discussions that can be facilitated by this book:

### Discussion topics

#### **Before reading the book**

1. Ask children if they have ever had anything caught up in tree? How did they try to solve their problem?
2. Discuss the different types of frustrating situations that occur in everyday life. What other similar stories revolving around funny 'common' scenarios can you think of?
3. Have felt board or pictures of all the objects used in the story on display. Cue children into the cumulative search element of the book by identifying all the objects in the tree eg rake, kite, ball, bat etc.
4. Discuss the onomatopoeic phrase – *Swish, crick, crack!* Children could help say this out loud as the story progresses.
5. Cue the readers / listeners into watching the dog carefully and to focus on the different perspectives used in the illustrations eg up view, side view, birds eye view etc.
6. Susy has used shadows very effectively in this book and this provides a wonderful discussion and shadow drawing.





## After Reading the book

### Discussion Questions:

1. Who's ever had something similar happen to them? Tell us about your experience.
2. How many things were lodged in the tree? Let's list them!
3. What did you notice about the dog we read through the book?
4. Do you think the tree was naughty or just having fun?
5. How could we have used other ideas to try and get things down?
6. Who can tell me what nocturnal means? Which creatures were in the tree at night time? What were they doing?
7. Do you think that trees could really be so mischievous?
8. Does anyone know some other stories where the trees have life of their own? eg *The Hobbit /Lord of the Rings & The Ents*, *Harry Potter & the Whomping Willow*, *Enid Blyton and The Magic Faraway Tree* etc

### Activities

#### Make a poster

- Ask each child to draw / create a large art picture of the tree with lots of hidden objects semi-hidden.
- Make a chart or legend of creatures to search for.

#### Art, Craft & Design

The children can make simplified versions of a **gobbling tree** using:-

- Felt boards
- Collage
- Soft sculpture
- Recycled materials etc.

Make objects and items to go in the tree eg kite, ladder, ball, rake, truck, library book, football boots, bat, thunder spear, hats, caps & other items! These could have Velcro ® backing for attaching.





- Make a granny rug for Simon.

Discuss the history and techniques of Knitting Squares in knees rugs etc using up end balls of wool from old jumper projects.

- Create a night scene featuring nocturnal creatures and collected objects!



- Draw **FANTASY TREES** with trunks , roots & branches that have life like features eg hair, eyes, mouths, noses, hands & fingers.
- Find examples in other art such as Arthur Rackham's Tree illustrations.

Discuss and Draw special features of TREES

– discuss techniques of using multi-colours and TEXTURE.



### Marketing Points

*Pan*

Illustration © Arthur Rackham 1906 from *Peter*

*in Kensington Gardens*

- Author Mark Carthew is touring Australia and New Zealand, featuring at numerous major children's literature events & festivals in both countries during 2008/2009 including the All Saints Literature Festival WA, Voices on the Range Toowoomba Qld, The New Zealand Reading Association 2008 conference, the Christchurch Writer's Festival and regional touring programs.
- This title is a wonderful follow up to Mark's acclaimed picture book *Five Little Owls* released in 2007 & illustrated by Mini Goss.
- Susy Boyer is a widely respected children's illustrator having worked extensively in educational and trade publishing.
- The joy of reading aloud and interactive language is strong feature of this title and emergent readers will enjoy engaging with the dialogue.
- The search element is a fun feature of the book. Children will love searching for and finding all the objects in the tree!
- The theme of this book is based on a humorous situational dilemma that boys, girls, children & adults from all cultures will relate to.



## **7. How the book is to be promoted**

Review copies to various magazines , metropolitan and regional dailies, online forums & catalogues eg Magpies, Reading Time, The Little Bookclub, The Reading Stack, Pass It On, Buzz Words and Junior Bookseller & Publisher et al.

It is also featuring at the New Frontier Publishing stand at the 2008 Bologna Book Fair and is being promoted by the Australia Licensing Corporation at The Frankfurt & London Book Fairs & New York Book Expo. Promotion will also include radio interviews, school and library network presentations and author/illustrator-in-school visits.

*The Gobbling Tree* is to be officially launched at The Children's Book Council of Australia Biennial conference, ***All The Wild Wonders*** Melbourne Friday May 2<sup>nd</sup> 10.30am 2008 along with an art exhibition at the Marks and Gardner Gallery , Tamborine Mountain Qld & celebration / book launch at the Gallery on Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup> @ 3.00pm. Regional and interstate launches and celebrations will be held at various major events and festivals including the Voices on the Range Festival and Show and Tell Visual Literacy Conference Qld.

Both Mark and Susy make regular visits to schools and community libraries and are involved in literary festivals in various states and regional centres across Australia & NZ in 2008. Book signing promotional events will be conducted in association with leading bookstores, school & library networks. Mark will be at Readings Port Melbourne Victoria book store June 7<sup>th</sup> 2.00pm & The Children's Bookshop Christchurch NZ , July 12<sup>th</sup> 10.30am.

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