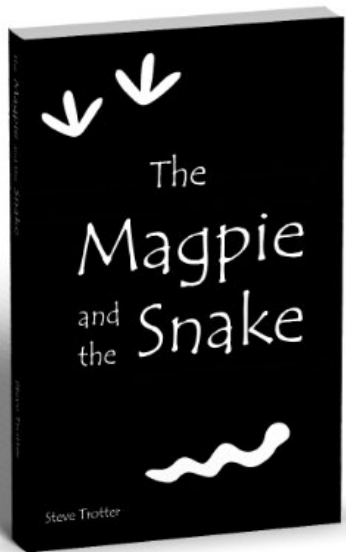


# STUDY GUIDE

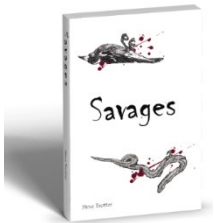


## 'The Magpie and the Snake'

Author: Steve Trotter  
Illustrator: Jill Trotter  
PUBLISHING DETAILS  
ISBN: 9780645178401  
Genre: YA historical fiction  
Date: 2021  
Publisher: Magpie Publishers  
Binding: paperback  
Pages: 232

Other books in the 'Australia's Black History' series by the same author:

- 'Gawngan and the Marriage Tree'
- 'Savages'



## IDEAS PRESENTED IN THE BOOK

- Aboriginal culture is ancient and wise; there is a lot we can learn from it.
- It is important to follow the rules to keep the peace.
- True love is worth fighting for.
- Courage can help you overcome great obstacles.
- People have lived sustainably in the past with great success.
- If you care for your environment; it will care for you.
- Bullying is not okay for the bullies and their victims.

## ACTIVITIES

- Draw a map of the Bullinaa and the creek.
- Identify the sustainable practices used by the Aboriginal people in their management of the environment.
- Explain the significance of the title, 'The Magpie and the Snake'.
- Create a Venn diagram of the differences and similarities between the Nyangbal people and the Newcomers.
- Compose a persuasive or discursive piece of writing comparing the way we live today with the way the Nyangbal people lived. Discuss the benefits of each lifestyle. Which one do you think is better?
- Create a character web of the characters in the book.

## ABOUT THE STORY

Balagaan and his cousins' clan had lived in harmony with the environment and their neighbours for thousands of years, but all that was about to change.

When young Balagaan meets Gawngan, he knows he has met his life mate; but there is one problem: he is forbidden to marry her. Bundjalung Lore was ancient and could not be broken. Despite this, Balagaan and Gawngan's secret love grows. Alarmed, the Elders send Balagaan to live with another mob, hoping the forbidden love between the boy and girl will die. While Balagaan is banished, his cousin, Yirinyin, faces his own trials. Unable to prevent a terrible kangaroo attack on his grandfather, he feels he is failing the old ways, but a chance encounter with the white Newcomers in their strange boat with wings makes him realise he and his family have bigger things to worry about.

While the Elders talk, Balagaan is summoned home, where he learns that Gawngan is betrothed to his rival, a bully, from another clan. Balagaan ignores the news of the sighting of the Newcomers, thinking of only one thing: his love for his childhood sweetheart. Sneaking out of camp, Balagaan visits the terrifying Aboriginal sorcerer for help; but the Clever Man cannot be trusted. His ways are mysterious and, sometimes, deadly.

Can Balagaan find a way around the Lore so he can marry Gawngan, or will the sorcerer play a

deadly trick on him that could see his rival, Dangan, finally get his revenge on Balagaan?

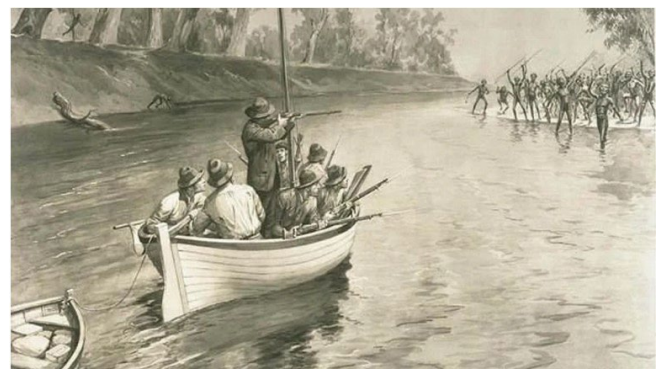


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