

# ***The Greenhouse Effect* Teacher's Guide**

## **Background**

*The Greenhouse Effect* is the first in the Project Earth-Mend Series of junior novels. As well as being an entertaining read, the novels are intended to inform children about key environmental issues confronting society today. The novels extend the notion of us 'all being in this together' to include animal species as active participants in the way we live our lives. Having many environmental truths be discovered by the animal characters in the book is an undercut of the view of human supremacy over other species. The message is that humans are largely responsible for the mess the Earth is in and that perhaps others are in a better position to find ways to restore a balance, especially those species that have continued to live in harmony with Nature.

A team of extraterrestrial characters play important parts in the novel. Aside from the attractiveness of beings from Outer Space to younger readers, these characters provide an objective view superior to the prevailing human-centric outlook on how we should relate to our environment. This makes it difficult for readers to dismiss the conclusions reached by Tiger and his native companions as just those of animals.

Above all, *The Greenhouse Effect* seeks to *suggest* rather than preach its themes. Readers are invited to participate in the adventures as equals and to discover environmental messages along the way.

## **Chapter 1**

1. Tiger, Cleo and Tony can all 'talk'. Why does the author give them that ability?
2. What do we know about Adelaide? What is Canberra?
3. Why did the author choose a cat rather than a dog or some other animal for his main character?
4. Alexander is Tiger's human, yet Tiger sometimes feels superior to him. Can you find any examples of this? Why would the author want to suggest that animals might be superior to humans in some ways?

## **Chapter 2**

1. When Tiger goes into the park, he's nervous. Have you every felt nervous in a strange place? Why?
2. Prince, the giant bullfrog, accuses him of being "feral". What does that mean? What other animals can be feral?
3. Is Prince really a bullfrog? What suggests that he might be something more than that?
4. Prince mentions a "very special group", and Tiger immediately wants to join it. Have you ever wanted to join a group and been told you couldn't? How did you feel about that?

## **Chapter 3**

1. Wanda the blue-tongue lizard has a beef against humans involving snails. What's her point? Does it make sense?
2. Wanda thinks she's superior to Tiger. What does this have to do with her notion of Introduced Species?
3. When Bradley and Myrtle Gower drop over from next door to welcome Alexander to the neighbourhood, Tiger makes a bit of a pest of himself. Does he remind you of any other cat characters you have known? Is there a point to this humour?
4. Bradley is a *secondary* character in the novel, that is, he's not as important to the action as characters like Tiger and Prince. But he does have a role to play in preparing us for what will be happening later in the story. Can you find any examples of this?

## Chapter 4

1. What do we learn about Tiger from the way he relates to the Grey Cat? Have you ever found yourself in a similar position with another child?
2. Tark, another of the magical frogs, has it in for the preying mantis. Why? Does this tell us something about the way animal species relate in the wild?
3. What more do we learn about the frogs in their encounter with Tiger at the Sacred Pool? Can we guess where their sacred powers come from at this stage?
4. Why do the Members require that Tiger stand up to the Grey Cat before he can be considered as a Member of the Few?

## Chapter 5

1. Tiger gets Wanda, Tony and Cleo to work with him to turn the tables on the Grey Cat. Is that fair? Do you think the Members will accept that as meeting their requirement?
2. Wanda has learned her death roll technique from a crocodile. Do you think that animals can learn from others? Why would this be important to Project Earth-mend?

## Chapter 6

1. Alexander decides to build a greenhouse. Does that make sense in a cold climate? How does the Greenhouse Effect actually work in a positive way inside a greenhouse?
2. Discussing the plans for the greenhouse with Alexander, Bradley brings up the notion of spotting UFOs with a telescope at night. Is this important to the story? How?
3. Do you believe in UFOs? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. Without reading ahead, have you made the connection between UFOs and the frogs at the Sacred Pool? Why would the author want to keep us unsure at this point?

## Chapter 7

1. Tiger passes his first test for Membership, but then the others are interested in getting Alexander involved in the Project. Why is that important to the story?
2. We finally get to meet Eudora. Is she more powerful than Prince? How do you know?

3. Why does Prince appoint Tark to lead Tiger to the next step in becoming a Member? Is that a wise choice?

## **Chapter 8**

1. Alexander sets about getting his greenhouse under the watchful eye of Tark and Tiger. Why would the Members be interested in having the greenhouse built?

2. After being mistrustful of Tiger at first, Tark is won over to the idea of him becoming a Member. What changes his mind?

3. Do we have enough clues from this chapter to make the connection between Tark and the UFOs? If so, what are they?

4. Does the author want us to believe in UFOs? Does it matter if we don't?

## **Chapter 9**

1. Tiger invites Wanda to be his guest at the Sacred Pool, but Wanda has her doubts about the whole thing. Why is it important that Wanda has a different view on magic and UFOs than Tiger?

2. Why does the incident with the rosella finally convince Tark that Tiger should be accepted as a Member?

3. Why is it important that Tiger walks on water as his final test?

4. What do we learn about the Great Danger here?

## **Chapter 10**

1. On his own in the greenhouse, Tiger wonders if "plants have feelings". Do you think they do?

2. Alexander has installed a spa in the greenhouse. Is there a reason for this other than having fun?

## **Chapter 11**

1. The idea of a spaceship arriving is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Why mention it before the spaceship actually arrives?

2. When the spaceship appears, Tony is whisked away. Were you frightened when this happened? What led you to feel like that?

3. Cleo is very sad when Tony disappears. Can you think of pets you have had that have pined when another animal goes missing or dies?

4. Do you agree with Myrtle's view that Tony is being held for ransom? Why would the ETs have taken him?

## **Chapter 12**

1. Why doesn't the reporter take Bradley's word for what has happened to Tony?
2. Does Bradley have his own reason for wanting to talk to the reporter?
3. Why does the reporter pay more attention to Tiger than Bradley?
4. From what we learn about Eudora in this chapter, can we guess who she really is?
5. Tark decides to challenge Alexander's computer to a game of chess? Who do you think will win?

### **Chapter 13**

1. If Sargon (the computer) wins the chess match, Tark will get Eudora to bring Tony back from the planet Griffon. What do you think will happen if Tark wins?
2. Do you know enough about chess to follow what happens in the match? What are the key pieces in a chess game?
3. Tark seems to soften a bit after Myrtle pleads with him to save Tony. Do you think that will make a difference?

### **Chapter 14**

1. When Prince and his team form a procession to approach the greenhouse, does the description remind you of any other stories you have read?
2. Do you think it works to blend fantasy elements like the frogs pulling the carriage up from the park with real details like a driver narrowly missing the carriage?
3. Bradley thinks the procession is incredible. What did he mean by comparing it to the ANZACs?
4. Do you understand Eudora's explanation for why the Griffs have come to Earth?

### **Chapter 15**

1. Before this Chapter begins, can you predict how everyone will live "happily in the ever-after"?
2. Why is it important that the Prime Minister turns up to buy one of Myrtle's Greenhouse Ginger Cheesecakes?
3. From what you see of Tony and Bradley's life on the Planet Griffon, would you want to live there?
4. How do we know that Project Earth-mend will carry on beyond the end of the novel? Can you guess where the team will go next and what characters will join Tiger in his adventures in *Global Cooling*?