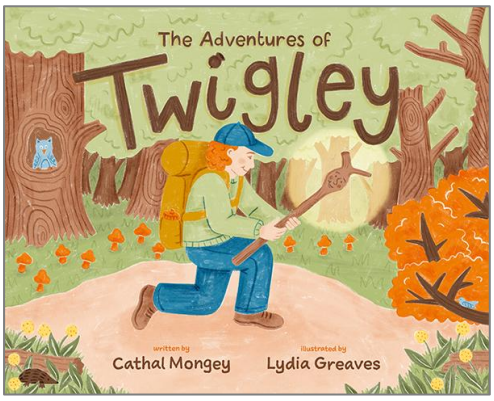
THE ADVENTURES OF TWIGLEY

CATHAL MONGEY & LYDIA GREAVES
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YEAR LEVEL: F–Y2



ABOUT THE BOOK

From supple sapling to broken branch and from strong hiking stick to brittle dog chew toy, you never know where your life is going to lead ...

Twigley is a small branch with big ambitions. Stuck at the top of his family tree, he longs to break free and see the world. One day, his mighty tree is felled by lightning. What seems like a fiery ending is, in fact, just the beginning.

The Adventures of Twigley is a warm, rhyming story about perspective, loss, love, family and courage. It reminds young readers that life can send us in unexpected directions, but with the right perspective, we can go anywhere. Gorgeous illustrations and a QR code with an original soundtrack take young readers on a hiking adventure they will want to revisit again and again.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Cathal Mongey grew up on stage in his local community theatre group, established by his grandfather Larry. He trained as a primary school teacher and this further fostered his love for storytelling and music. He has a master's degree in marketing and has been writing music for over 15 years. This is his first book.



Lydia Greaves studied illustration at university in the United Kingdom. She began her illustration career freelancing for international brands such as Starbucks Korea, Simon and Schuster US, and Frankie magazine in Australia. Lydia's playful artwork invites eyes and hearts into new worlds.

THEMES

- Adventure
- Natural cycles
- Appreciation of nature
- Music and rhyme
- Perspective
- Loss and grief
- Love and family
- Change
- Courage and resilience

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- F-Y2 English
- F-Y2 The Arts
- F-Y2 Science
- F-Y2 Health and Physical Education

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Creators' website: celticdogcreative.com.au/

CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion Questions

Before reading:

1. Before reading, look at the book's cover and make some predictions based on the illustrations, colour palette and title.
2. Explore the physical parts of the book with students, including the cover, spine and pages. Then identify text features, such as the title, author, illustrator, blurb, etc.
3. Twigley gets his name from the word 'twig'. Create a list of words you know for the different parts of a tree.
4. Pass around a real stick or twig. Where might it have come from? What might it have seen, and where might it go next?
5. Do you think you're an adventurous person? Do you like to explore new places?

During reading:

6. Why do you think Twigley's Grandfather Trunk kept him rooted to the ground?
7. Twigley wants to be 'free'. What do you think this means? What does being free look like for you?
8. Pause reading when the lightning strikes. How do you think Twigley feels? What do you think will happen to him and to his family tree?
9. Pause reading when Twigley lands on the ground. How might he be feeling now? What do you think he is hoping for?
10. Why was Twigley passed from one hiker to the next?
11. Can you find word pairs that rhyme in this story? Reread lines from the story and have students fill in the final rhyming word.

After reading:

12. The hikers in the story use Twigley to help them hike, and the dog uses Twigley as a toy. Can you think of other uses for sticks?
13. How did the hikers in the story show their appreciation and respect for nature?
14. Twigley is a branch, a hiking stick and a dog toy. Which of these do you think he enjoyed most? Did Twigley change, or did the way he saw his life change?
15. Twigley starts the story wanting to leave his tree. How does he feel about home at the end of the story?
16. What messages do you think the creators of this book would like readers to understand after reading it?
17. In this story, the main character is not a human or animal. Can you think of any other stories with an object as a character?
18. Did you enjoy this story? What was your favourite part?

Creative Writing

1. Write or draw a letter from Twigley to his family tree, telling them about his adventures with the hikers and the dog.
2. Retell the story using words or illustrations, using a beginning, middle and ending template. If appropriate to your classroom context, use sequencing words like 'first', 'next' and 'then' as writing prompts.
3. Draw a map of Twigley's journey from his family tree to his new home. Label each place he visits and add a speech bubble or face to show how he feels at each stop.
4. Write or draw Twigley's next adventure. Where might he go? Who might he meet?

The Arts

Visual arts.

1. Explore the illustrations in more depth.
    a. How do the illustrations help you understand the story? For example, when Twigley's friend hatches, is there information you understand from the illustrations that is not in the text?
    b. How do characters' facial expressions help you understand what they're feeling in the story?
    c. Do you think the illustrator's style and colour choices fit well with the story? Why/why not?
    d. Which is your favourite illustration? Why?
2. Twigley enjoys the view from the summit, **'The valleys spread out, a green patchwork below, and the ocean stretched endless, with a sapphire glow.'** Using materials of your choice, create an artwork showing a view from a real or imagined summit.

3. Illustrate your own family tree, showing how members of your family are connected. Invite students to include anyone who is important to them, including family, carers, friends and pets.
4. Create your own 'Twigley' from a fallen stick found in the school grounds. Decorate it with paint, wool, leaves or fabric, then tell the class about the places it has been and the things it has seen.

Drama.

5. Working in pairs or small groups, create simple plays based on scenes from the book. Students should use the story, character actions and expressions, and their own imaginative ideas as inspiration.
6. Create 'freeze frames' of key moments in the story, such as the lightning strike, Twigley's first hike and arriving home. Tap students on the shoulder to say aloud what their character is thinking or feeling.
7. In pairs, have students roleplay a conversation between Twigley and the kookaburra, or Twigley and the dog.

Music.

8. Listen to the soundtrack that accompanies this book (accessed using the QR code in the book).
    a. How are the musical and text versions similar and different?
    b. How does the musical version make you feel?
9. Listen to the song *Lost and I'm Low* in the soundtrack.
    a. Describe how Twigley is feeling in this song.
    b. What in the music tells you this? Think about whether it is fast or slow, loud or soft, high or low.
    c. Have you ever felt this way?
10. Listen to the final song, *Long Way From Home*.
    a. What mood, or feeling, is created in this song?
    b. What musical elements (such as instruments, rhythm or lyrics) help create this mood?
    c. How is this song different from *Lost and I'm Low*? What has changed for Twigley between the two songs?
11. Listen to the soundtrack with a pencil and paper. Draw a line that moves with the music: up when the music goes higher, down when it goes lower, thick when it is loud and thin when it is soft. Compare your drawing with a partner's.
12. Make a class 'mood map'. Choose three or four songs from the soundtrack and sort them by feeling (for example, excited, calm, sad, hopeful), using colours, faces or pictures. Discuss any songs that students feel differently about.
13. During one of the songs, use simple percussion instruments to experiment with rhythm, tapping along to the beat using short and long sounds.
14. Listen to the soundtrack and dance along, using a variety of body movements, and express actions and emotions through gestures, facial expressions and posture.
15. Play a 'hiking beat' game. Students walk on the spot to a steady drum or clapping beat. Change the tempo to make hiking uphill (slow), strolling along the trail (medium) and racing down the hill (fast).
16. Create a class 'storm soundscape' for the lightning strike. Start with fingers tapping softly for rain, add rubbing hands for wind, then stamping feet and drums for thunder, and a sudden shaker or clap for lightning. End with silence. Use a conductor to show students when to get louder and softer.
17. Same scene, different soundtrack. Choose one page from the book. In small groups, use classroom instruments to create two short pieces of music for that page: one where Twigley feels excited and one where he feels worried. What changed in your music? Discuss how the same moment can feel very different depending on how we see it.
18. Discuss some other favourite songs and how they make you feel. Is there a song that reminds you of someone you love or a place you call home? Invite students to share songs from home or from their family's culture.
19. The author of this book is also a musician who wrote the soundtrack. Why do you think he chose to tell Twigley's story in music as well as words? What can music do that words and pictures can't?
20. Listening for musical elements. Use these prompts to help students talk about what they hear. Introduce one or two elements at a time and revisit them across several listens.

Element	What it means	Try this
Beat	The steady pulse in the music, like a heartbeat or footsteps	Walk, march or pat the beat. Does the beat stay the same or change?
Rhythm	The pattern of long and short sounds	Clap the rhythm of words from the story, such as 'Twig-ley', 'hik-er' or 'kook-a-bur-ra'.
Tempo	How fast or slow the music is	Move like Twigley tumbling, then hiking, then resting. Which tempo suits each?
Dynamics	How loud or soft the music is	Whisper, speak and shout a line from the book. Where in the music does it get louder or softer?
Pitch	How high or low the sounds are	Stretch up high for high notes and crouch down low for low notes.
Timbre	The sound quality of different instruments and voices	How many different instruments can you hear? Which instrument sounds most like Twigley?
Lyrics and rhyme	The words of the song and the sounds at the ends of lines	Listen for rhyming words. Can you predict the next rhyme before it arrives?

Science

1. The seed that becomes Twigley's tree 'hitches a ride' with a bird. Discover some other ways seeds can be dispersed (spread) and describe how the seeds end up on the ground to start growing. For example:
    a. by wind
    b. eaten by animals
    c. floating in water
    d. caught in animal fur
    e. exploding seed pods
2. What does a tree like Twigley's need to survive?
    a. Create a diorama, identifying the features of the tree and its environment that enable the tree to meet its needs.
3. Twigley's tree goes through a natural cycle of growth and change. Make and record observations of seasonal or weather changes to a plant in your school or local environment, such as colour or dropping of leaves, and growth of flowers or fruit.
4. Twigley's egg friend becomes a bird and flies away.
    a. What type of bird do you think is shown in the illustration? What physical features help you identify the bird?
    b. Create an illustration showing the life cycle of a kookaburra.
5. Fire destroys Twigley's tree, yet it is a part of the natural cycle of Australia's bush ecosystems. What effects can fire have on bushland in Australia?
    a. Look at photographs of bushland before, soon after and long after a fire. What changes do you notice? Many Australian plants can regrow or release seeds after fire. Why might this help the bush recover?
6. List all the animals you can see in the illustrations, then classify them as 'native' or 'non-native' animals.
7. Twigley is a stick, so go on a stick hunt in the school grounds. Collect fallen sticks and sort them by length, thickness, colour or texture. Which is the longest? Which is the lightest? Do you think they will sink or float? Test your predictions in a tub of water.

Health and Physical Education

1. Many people in the story enjoy bushwalking and observing nature. Try a 'mindful walk' around school grounds: stop and look up, look down and look close. What can you see, hear, smell and feel? How does being outside make your body and mind feel?
2. What are some ways to stay safe while walking in nature? Which safety behaviours can you see characters doing in the book?
3. Discuss how the fallen hiker would have felt and reacted. How could they seek help if needed?

1. Play movement games themed around trees and nature, for example:
    a. Students pretend to be seeds and move according to weather prompts called out: rain (grow), sunshine (stand tall), wind (wave arms), storm (shake), lightning (mimic fire), snow (shiver), etc.
    b. Students move around like different animals. When the teacher calls 'tree', students freeze in a tree pose.
2. Play 'feelings charades'. Students act out a feeling Twigley has in the story, such as excited, scared, sad, proud or relieved, using their faces and bodies, and the class guesses the feeling. Talk about what helps us feel better when we have big feelings.

Exploring Big Ideas

The activities below use the story to open up conversations about perspective, loss, love and courage. Choose the ones that suit your students and your classroom context.

Perspective

1. Twigley's story could be told by many different characters. Choose a moment from the book and retell it from another point of view, such as a hiker, the dog, Grandfather Trunk or the kookaburra. How is the same moment different when seen through different eyes?
1. Use the sentence starter 'At first Twigley felt ... but then ... Now he feels ...' to describe how Twigley's feelings change across the story. What changed: the things that happened to Twigley or the way he thought about them?
2. Look at an ordinary object (such as a leaf, a shoe or a stick) from different viewpoints: up close, from above, from below, through a cardboard tube. Draw or describe what you notice from each viewpoint.
3. Together, think of a time something didn't go to plan, such as rain on a picnic day. What are two different ways of looking at it? Is one more helpful? Why?

Loss and grief

4. Twigley loses his home and his family tree. What are some of the feelings he might have? Use a feelings chart or faces to name them.
5. What are some things people can do when they feel sad about losing something or someone special? Who can they talk to?
6. Draw or write about something that you will always carry with you from a special place or person, just as Twigley carries his family tree with him.
7. Sadness and hope can be felt together. Where in the story can you see both?

Love and family

8. How does Twigley show that he loves and misses his family? How do others in the story show care for Twigley?
9. Families come in many different shapes and sizes. Talk about the people who care for us and make us feel safe, including family, friends, neighbours and teachers. Remind students that all families are different and that this is something to celebrate.
10. Make a class 'kindness tree'. Each time a student sees someone show kindness, add a leaf with a short description or drawing to the branches.

Courage, resilience and new beginnings

11. When was Twigley brave in the story? Is being brave the same as not being scared? Talk about times when it takes courage to try something new.
12. Make a 'brave moments' jar. Students record or draw a time they were brave or tried something new, then share some as a class.
13. Fire ended Twigley's time in his tree, but it also began his adventures. Can you think of other times in life when one thing ends and something new begins, such as starting school, a new season or moving house?
14. Twigley ends the story at home with the dog. What does the word 'home' mean to you?

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