

It's a Miroocool!

Christine Harris
& Ann James

Teachers notes by Bec Kavanagh

Written by Christine Harris, Illustrated by Ann James
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Synopsis

Audrey lives way out in the outback, past the roads and off the map, so when she loses her tooth, Audrey worries that the tooth fairy won't be able to find her!

Audrey does everything she can to lead the tooth fairy to her tooth. She draws a map, leaves an arrow and even marks the way with footprints in the sand. But night comes and one by one, a terrible storm destroys all of Audrey's efforts.

She lies awake that night worried that the tooth fairy will not find her special tooth to add to its collection. But morning comes and despite the storm, there is a very special surprise waiting for Audrey in place of her tooth.

This is a lovely picture book that will act as a wonderful introduction to the later Audrey of the Outback books. Audrey is the Pippi Longstocking of outback Australia and young Australian readers will love growing up with her feisty spirit.

Themes

- Australian Outback
- Losing teeth/ Growing up issues
- Different lifestyles
- Family
- Communication

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About the Author/Illustrator

Christine Harris

When Christine Harris was a girl she had an imaginary friend called Jennifer Hobbar. When Christine Harris became a grown up she got in trouble for sitting on Wissy Bissy, her son's imaginary friend!

Christine grew up in different parts of South Australia. When she lived in Yorke Peninsula her house was 'the first fridge on the right, 15k after the last pub'. When she was growing up she would wander in creek beds and through ghost towns. Kangaroos would jump past the kitchen window and snake skins were sometimes found in the garden shed! Ekkk! She hated spinach and still does.

Two of Christine's favourite things are Kookaburras and chocolate. But not together. Eww! Christine thinks that the Outback is a place that you can't just go to once. You will want to return to it again and again and again. That's how much she loves it.

Ann James

Ann James grew up in North Ringwood in a house on a hill that their Dad built, surrounded by interesting bush.

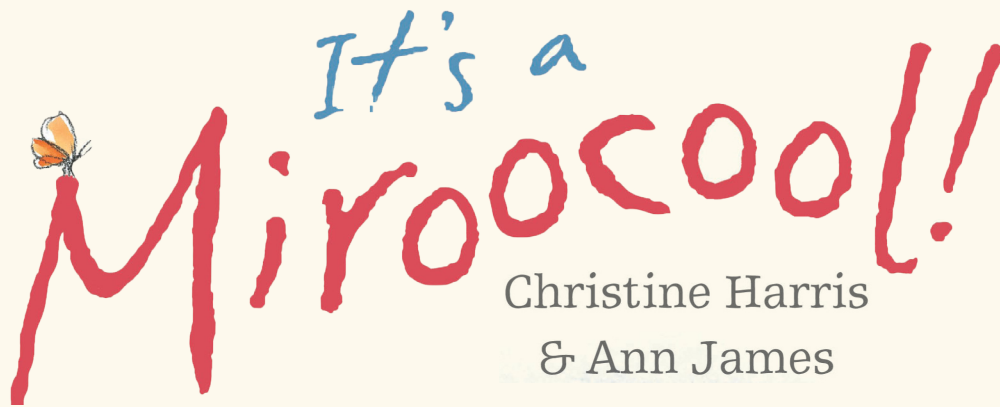
The house was on a dirt road, lined on both sides with blackberry bushes. The milkman's horse would clomp by at six every morning and swap two empty milk bottles for two full ones.

They walked to school each day with a gang of other kids who lived on the hill.

In summer their clay road had thick yellow dust to stomp through, but in winter it was gluggy and it stuck in great clods to your shoes and made your feet very heavy.

After school and on weekends they might go on long rides on their bikes, go blackberrying in the bush or yabbing if there were big enough puddles. They played in their billy-carts with other kids zooming down the hill with no brakes.

As far as she can remember, Ann didn't have any imaginary friends. But she did always have an animal best friend. There was Soxy, a black cat with white socks, Tammy a black-and-white-all-over dog, and Tuppy, a Siamese cat who could swim. There were also a few stray mice who escaped from a cardboard house with cellophane windows that Ann built for them.

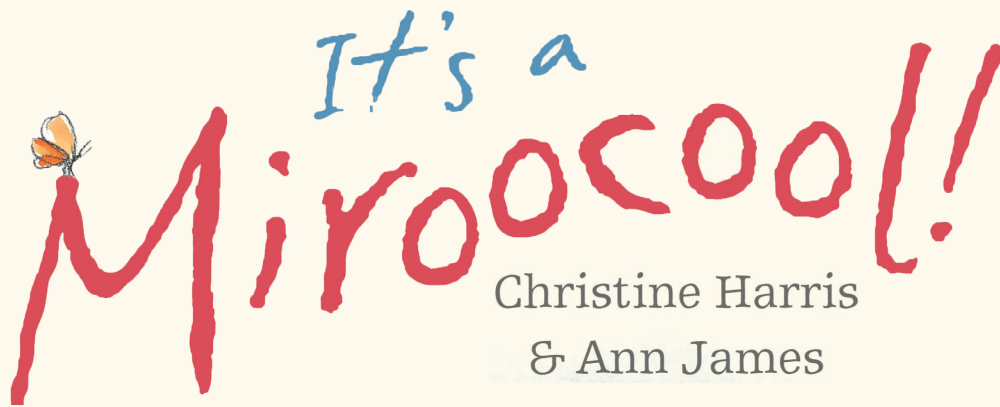


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Questions/ Comprehension

- What methods does Audrey use to show the tooth fairy where she lives?
- Does the book tell us how Audrey lost her tooth? How do you think she could have lost it? What does the book tell/show us about the tooth?
- What animals are mentioned in the book? Are they Australian animals? What other animals might Audrey come across near her house?
- What surprise does the tooth fairy leave for Audrey? Why is it special?
- Where does Audrey leave the clues for the tooth fairy? What other places could she have chosen?
- What does the story tell us about Audrey's family? How do each of her family members react to her losing her tooth?
- What do you think the illustrator has used to create the pictures? How do you know this?
- What kinds of colours are used in the book? Are they 'outback' style colours? Why do you think this?
- What do the pictures tell you about where Audrey lives?



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Activities

- If the tooth fairy had to find your house, how would you show where it is? Use the methods that Audrey used and make up some of your own to put together a kit that you could give the tooth fairy so it knew where you lived. You could include pictures, photos, a map or descriptions.
- Make a list of the animals that you have seen and another list of those that you haven't. Choose the animal that you know the least about and make a poster about it. Aside from basic information about the animal, try to find things that make it different or specifically Australian.
- Losing teeth is a pretty big deal. As a class, talk about the different traditions your families have when you lose a tooth. Write a letter to the tooth fairy explaining what losing a tooth means to you.
- As a class, read a chapter from one of the other Audrey books. Why do you think Christine Harris decided to write a picture book about Audrey? In groups write a short story about Audrey and present it to the class. This could be done as a picture book, a play or anything you can come up with!
- Audrey lives in the country, how is this different to where you live? Choose one thing that would be different about your life if you lived in the outback and make a poster about it to put up in the classroom. Talk about the positives and the negatives of the change that you have chosen. Would this change impact other things (such as family or the environment)? How would it change your relationships with your family and friends?
- Audrey is a fun character to read about. Why do you think this is? Does she remind you of characters from other books? Choose a character from another book that reminds you of Audrey (if you're stuck for inspiration Pippi Longstocking or Billie B Brown would work) and make a list of how they are similar or different to Audrey. Why do you think they would be friends? Write a mini adventure for Audrey and her new friend and either perform, draw it or read it to the class.

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Activities

- Audrey is such a popular character that there are books written about her for older readers as well! Make an 'Audrey' wall in the classroom. Include some of the following ideas and come up with some of your own.
 - * A big picture of Audrey doing something in the outback.
 - * Photos of outback animals and scenes that Audrey might live near
 - * Letters to Audrey.
 - * Words that describe Audrey and their meanings (eg feisty, spirited)
 - * A collection of outback 'trinkets' (this could include eggshells, feathers, leaves, red dirt – anything you can think of that looks like the outback)
 - * Profiles of Audrey's family members