



# THE SECRET

OFF THE RED LAND

by The Solaray Squad



# Write a Book in a Day



**THE KIDS'  
CANCER  
PROJECT**

Science. Solutions. Survival.

## PARAMETERS FORM

### TEAM DETAILS

STATE: VIC .....

DIVISION: Primary School .....

SCHOOL/GROUP: Solway Primary School .....

TEAM NAME: Solway Squad .....

TEAM ID: 145 .....

### PARAMETERS AND RANDOM WORDS

#### Parameters

Primary character 1 .. Musician .....

Primary character 2 .. Little brother .....

Non-human character .. Invisible friend .....

Setting .. Camping ground .....

Issue .. Hidden treasure .....

#### Random words

Silver .....

patch .....

struggle .....

clock .....

prickly .....

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Start at **8am**
- Write an original story:
  - based on all **five parameters** (above)
  - including all **five random words** (above), and in bold type
  - with some identifiable **Australian content** (in theme or setting or characters, etc)
  - keeping within the allowed word count
- **By 8pm**, log on to [writeabookinaday.com](http://writeabookinaday.com) to:
  - check (and update if necessary) your team name and team members' names
  - complete the declaration
  - submit your finished book in PDF format
- Bind this parameters form into your book **immediately after the front cover**
- Mail a hard copy of your book on the **next business day** to:

Write a Book in a Day  
The Kids' Cancer Project  
PO Box 6400  
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Written by:

Emma, Lana, Ella, Meg, Tara, Layla, Charlotte and Torbjørn.

Illustrated by:

Rohan, Angelique, Meg and Ella.

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Emma, Meg, Lana, Ella, Tara, Layla, Charlotte, Rohan, Angelique and Torbjørn.

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To anyone reading this book, or in a difficult situation. You are unique, and we wrote this story for you.

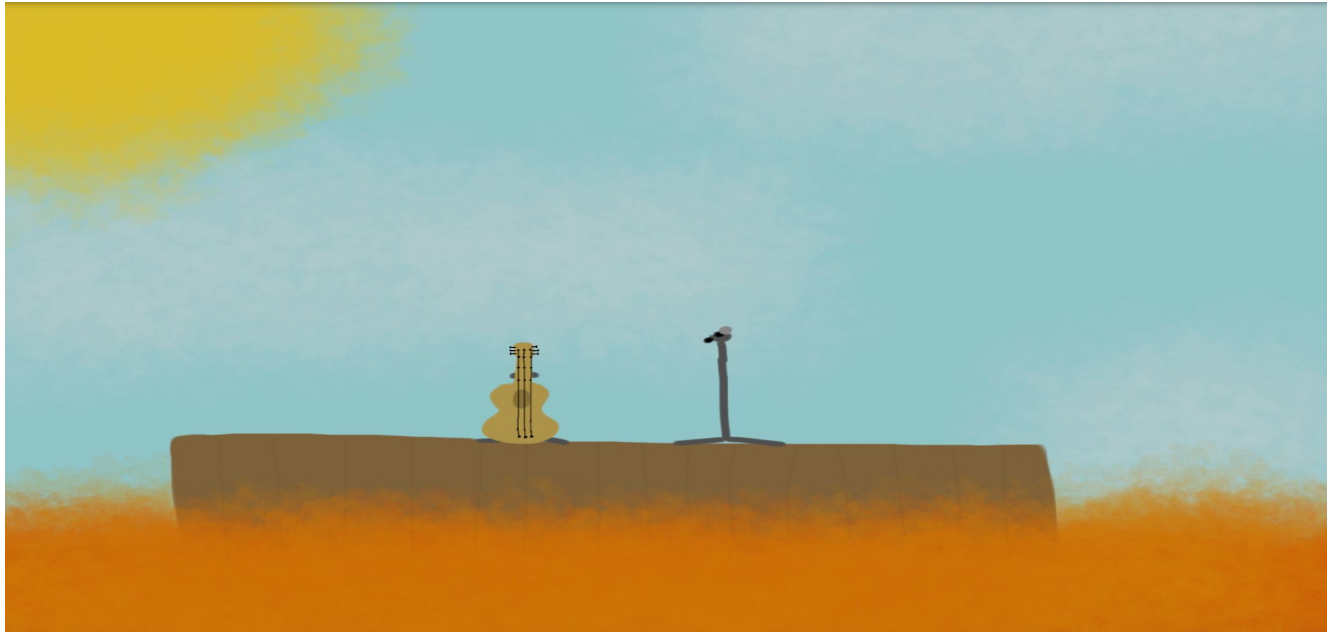
To all our teachers who made this writing opportunity possible, and to our parents, who encouraged us.

From the Solway Squad.



“Performing next is ... The **G]j Yf** Stars!” Shouted the director. The clear evening sky was a signature trait of the Australian outback. Not a rare sight either when you were sleeping at c@A camping ground, which was renowned for the view.

P[ c@A [ c@A ^'f i{ a &, I rolled my eyes. I hated these performances. My older brother, Banjo, was constantly playing on his guitar. And now that he had enrolled himself in a competition at this music festival, Banjo had been asking me, a nine year old, to work overtime. Crazy. P[, A] A} f A@A a ^• @A a ^ E thought routinely. A



“I wish we had more money,” I said, while walking towards my brother. Why did we have to be so poor? Clambering the stairs up to the stage, I looked at the audience. They weren’t even watching me, probably because I was Banjo’s backup, but it was still unfair. “Hmph,” I scowled.

“Come on, come on..,” stressed Banjo. “Where are you Koen?”

I spotted my older brother. “I’m right behind you!”

“Quick, get backstage. This is the semi finals!”

“I don’t care about whatever these semi-thingies are,” I grumbled.

“But I do!”

“~~Oh~~ ^,” I moaned. Banjo could be a real bore sometimes.

Once we had finished playing Banjo slid off the stage. “Rock and Roll!” He whooped, while high-fiving the crowd and stealing all the attention. “I’m off!” I declared,

exasperated with my brother's attitude. I stormed away. Y @Á[ ^•Á@Á^ÁÁ/Á@Á  
æ^} q̄ } ÑP^q ÁÁæÁ ~•ÁÁÁÁ ^, æÈ

Past the tents and outside the bedraggled campground, I sat on a rock, sulking. A blue wisp flickered around me. As soon as I saw it, I could sense a lonely soul. Maybe it could be my friend. My invisible friend.

Whoosh! And my invisible friend was blown away by the frigid wind.

"Well that was an eventful night!" I said, almost in hysterics. Now I needed to go back to bed or Banjo would actually kill me.



I woke up to the brightness of the sun blazing obnoxiously through the window at the end of our caravan. Banjo was already awake, and I could hear him in the bathroom, getting ready for the day. So I turned back around and squeezed my eyes shut. It was much too chilly to get up yet, so I slipped back into a doze.

About ten minutes later Banjo came in and whipped my blankets off the bed. I shivered as I rolled onto my back to face him.

“What are you doing?” I mumbled sleepily.

“Time to get up!” He replied, just a little too cheerfully.



“Go away, it’s too cold!” I complained, as I snatched my blankets off him and pulled them over my head.

“Too bad Koen, we need to be at the main stage in 30 minutes to find out if we made the grand finale, now get up, you need be ready in 20 minutes, and we can walk over to the stage.”

“Fine,” I replied.

We trudged over to the main stage, past all the tents, cabins, cars and caravans. After a long silent walk we finally arrived at the main stage, where the crowds were increasing by the second. When we went backstage a cold breeze flashed past my ear in a way that almost seemed spiritual, but I ignored it. I started to feel butterflies in my stomach as I made my way to the back of the stage.

“Banjo, I’m going outside for some fresh air.”

“OK buddy, make sure you’re back in ten minutes, you don’t want to miss the announcement to see who’s in the grand finale.”

As I walked outside I thought I saw a wispy figure surge past my eyes and I felt a little sick.

“Maybe I’m just seeing things,” I thought aloud. But could it be my invisible friend... Back on stage, I heard our name being called as one of the finalists.

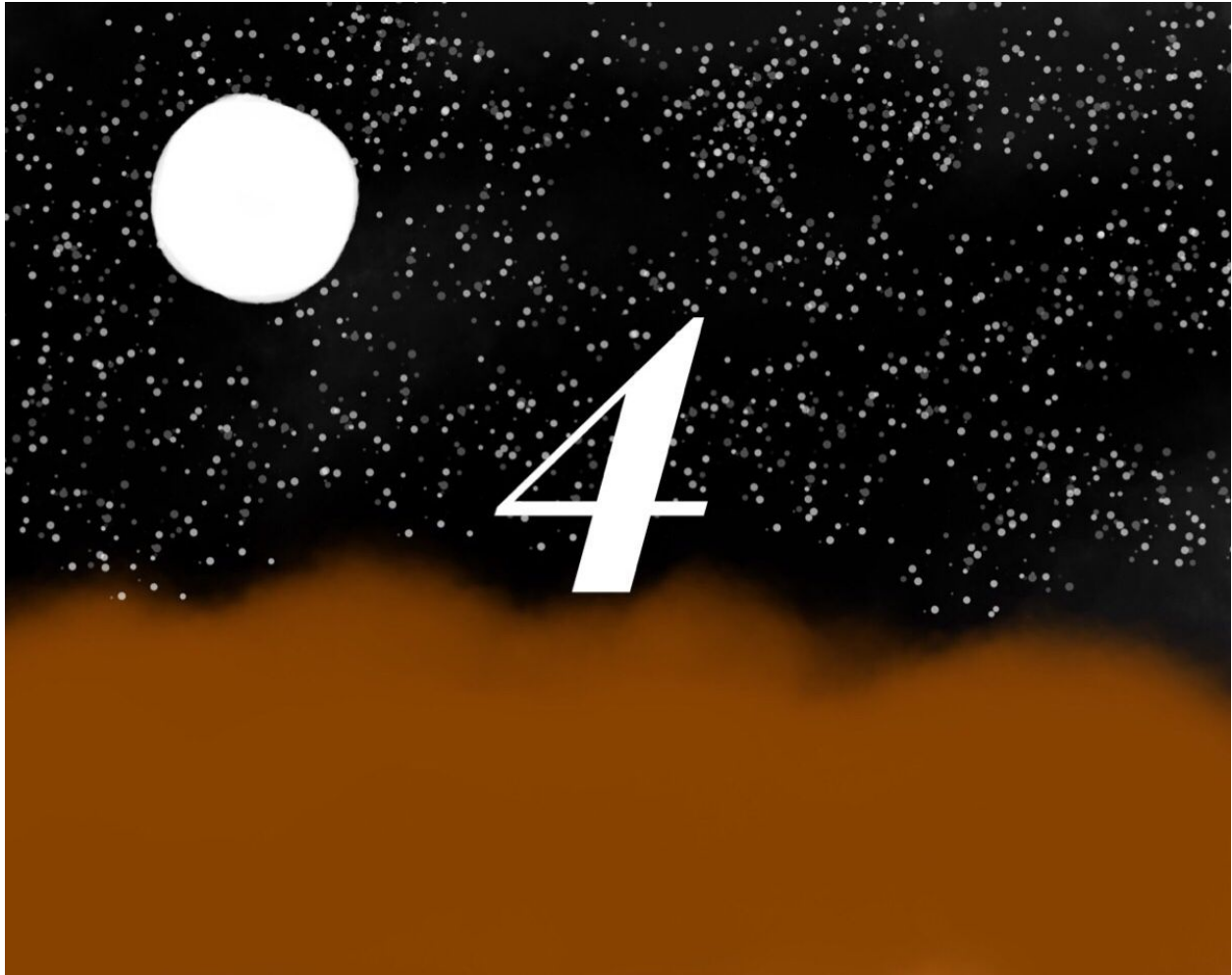


I saw the blue flicker again, but this time I knew I wasn't just seeing things. My invisible friend was humanlike. At least in a somewhat corporeal form. Similar to the colour of a stormy sky. It beckoned for me to follow. I was in two minds. Banjo would be so angry if he didn't know where I was. But did I really care? He was always controlling everything. Making my decision, I followed.

I could see my invisible friend better now. It was getting more visible, enough that I could tell that my invisible friend was a girl, her long black hair floating behind her. Every time I caught up with her she would drift ahead of me. As if she wanted me to follow, like she needed to show me something. But why, was it important? The only way I could find out was by following her...

I was still resentful towards Banjo. If he asked where I'd been I would just tell him that it was none of his business. I wouldn't ever tell him about her – no, not just her, my invisible friend. Not until he apologised. He didn't deserve to know about her, she was my secret, my invisible friend.

I kept walking. The sun burned like a fiery orb of light, the heat steamed off a **duw** of dusty sand, making a drop of sweat drip from my forehead down to my nose. I saw a humongous rock silhouetted in the sultry afternoon sun. Suddenly, I felt a tugging sensation in my gut as if some invisible force was pulling me towards the rock, whispering secrets that had never been heard before, millions of years of grief and hardship, of love and friendship. I took another step towards the rock. This was where I was meant to be.



The sky was darkening to a crepuscular dusk, and out here, the stars were dazzling. My scuffed runners caught on a **dfjW`mbush**, and I stumbled. The girl turned to me, then shrugged and ambled on. *Ù[ { ^Á çā ã | ^Á ã } á Ñ* thought.

She glided over the ground, her blue, wispy form illuminating the sand slightly. While my steps stirred up the red dust, hers didn't even skim the ground. "What are you?" I inquired.

Her silence made the crisp air around me chill further. "Why won't you talk?!" She shook her head soundlessly at me, and pointed at the horizon.

A shape loomed from the darkness, reddish and massive. "Is that Uluru?" I asked. She nodded, and led me across the arid sand.

~★~

I couldn't tell if it was her, or me. But something was getting stronger. Deep inside me, I could feel Uluru calling, bringing me to the stone. And my invisible friend was getting more and more opaque.

She led me down the winding sand path to the base of the rock. Uluru masked the moon, casting a dark shadow. Small shrubs lined the base and sand swirled around me as the brisk wind picked up.

Suddenly, it seemed as if she was gasping for breath, finally making sound. She seemed much more human, and her feet seemed more defined, as they touched the shadowed sand. "You wouldn't believe how much of a **glfi** [ [ `Y it was to get to your campground!"

"Who are you?" I asked, in disbelief.

"Alinta! One of your ancestors. I lived here!" She paused, giggling. "Before I died, of course."

"I'm... an Indigenous Australian?" I inquired.

"Catch on, Koen!" She gestured with a translucent hand to a cave mouth. "Your culture awaits, cousin."



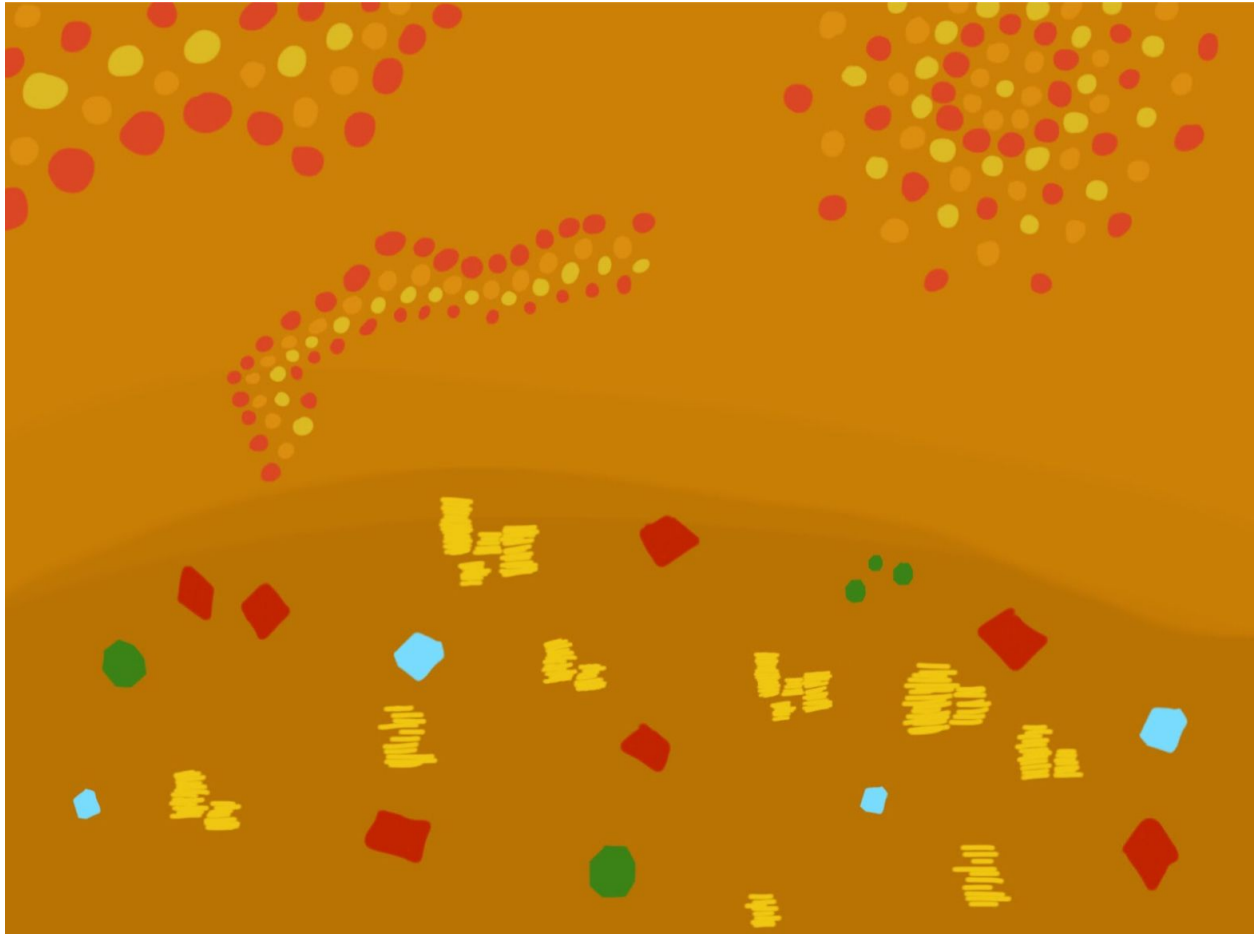
I looked at Alinta unsure what to do. “Are you sure I should enter?” I asked.

Alinta nodded. “Why else would you have travelled all this way?” She questioned.

I took a deep breath, taking in the musty air of the cave. I walked through the tunnel, upsetting dust with each step, as my runners padded across the sandy ground.

“Wow.” I said. I was in awe of my surroundings. **Gj Yf** and gold were overflowing in abundant piles scattered across the room. Dot paintings lined the walls, illuminated by the bluish white glow of Alinta. I turned around to her, but she had floated over to the other side of the room, slowly shimmering into opacity. “Whoa!” I gasped. “You-you’re actually there?”

“Yes, I know,” Alinta smirked, creases appearing under her eyes that shone with wisdom beyond her age. Or at least the age she seemed to be. “Koen, you know, I would’ve expected my cousin to be smart as me.”



I rolled my eyes, and walked over to a pile of gemstones. I squatted down, pretending to inspect a ruby. “What do you mean by cousin?”

“I’m the daughter of your great-great-great-uncle.”

“Wow. Oh, and um, why can I see you better now?”

“My spirit is linked to Uluru. I belong to the Pitjantjatjara tribe. We live around Uluru,” She informed me.

I then realised what actually mattered. “What is all this?”

“Oh. This? It’s our family’s treasure. Well, it’s yours as well of course, but whatever.”

“Wait – this is all mine?”

“Umm, yeah, that what I said,” she smiled cheekily.

“Why’d you choose me?” I bit my lip. “Why not Banjo? Everyone likes him more than me anyway.” I said sulkily.

“He isn’t a believer. And also, he’s too organised to forget the time of the grand finale.”

I felt as if someone had driven a fist into my gut. “The... Grand... Finale...”

“Yeah, it started around 3 hours ago.”

“ALINTA!” I started to sprint, hoping I wasn’t too late, with a pit of dread pooling in my stomach.





I sprinted back to the campsite, only to find Banjo pacing the room nervously, with his fists clenched. "WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WE WERE SUPPOSED TO PERFORM THREE HOURS AGO!" He exploded. I couldn't believe that he was that furious with me, but I guess I did deserve it.

I looked at the **WcW**. He was right, we were supposed to perform three hours ago.

"I, I was um, I was following Alinta. She showed me the treasure. Please don't hurt me!"

"Koen, who is ALINTA?!" He screeched, reaching out for my shoulders to shake me roughly. I ducked and slowly backed away.

"I-I'll show you where she is!"

"Fine," Banjo seethed angrily, rolling his eyes.

We trekked all the way back to the cave in silence. I walked purposefully towards Alinta and looked warily at Banjo. He was frozen, mouth open in shock, eyeing Alinta as if she was going to explode.

"Come, Banjo – to the treasure!" I said excitedly. Banjo was hesitant, but followed me anyway. The treasure room was as grandiose as before. Jewels, rubies and all kinds of gems littered across the floor.

"Is this ours?" he asked, gesturing to the treasure. I nodded, still shocked that his mood could've changed so quickly. He was obviously in complete awe of all that money.

"We're rich. Rich, rich, rich!" Banjo celebrated ecstatically. I took a deep breath and started to calmly walk out. But you could hear Banjo's whoops of joy from kilometers away.

I ran back to the campground with Banjo following right behind me. I looked back and saw him smiling and running blithely. From now on, our lives have changed forever.

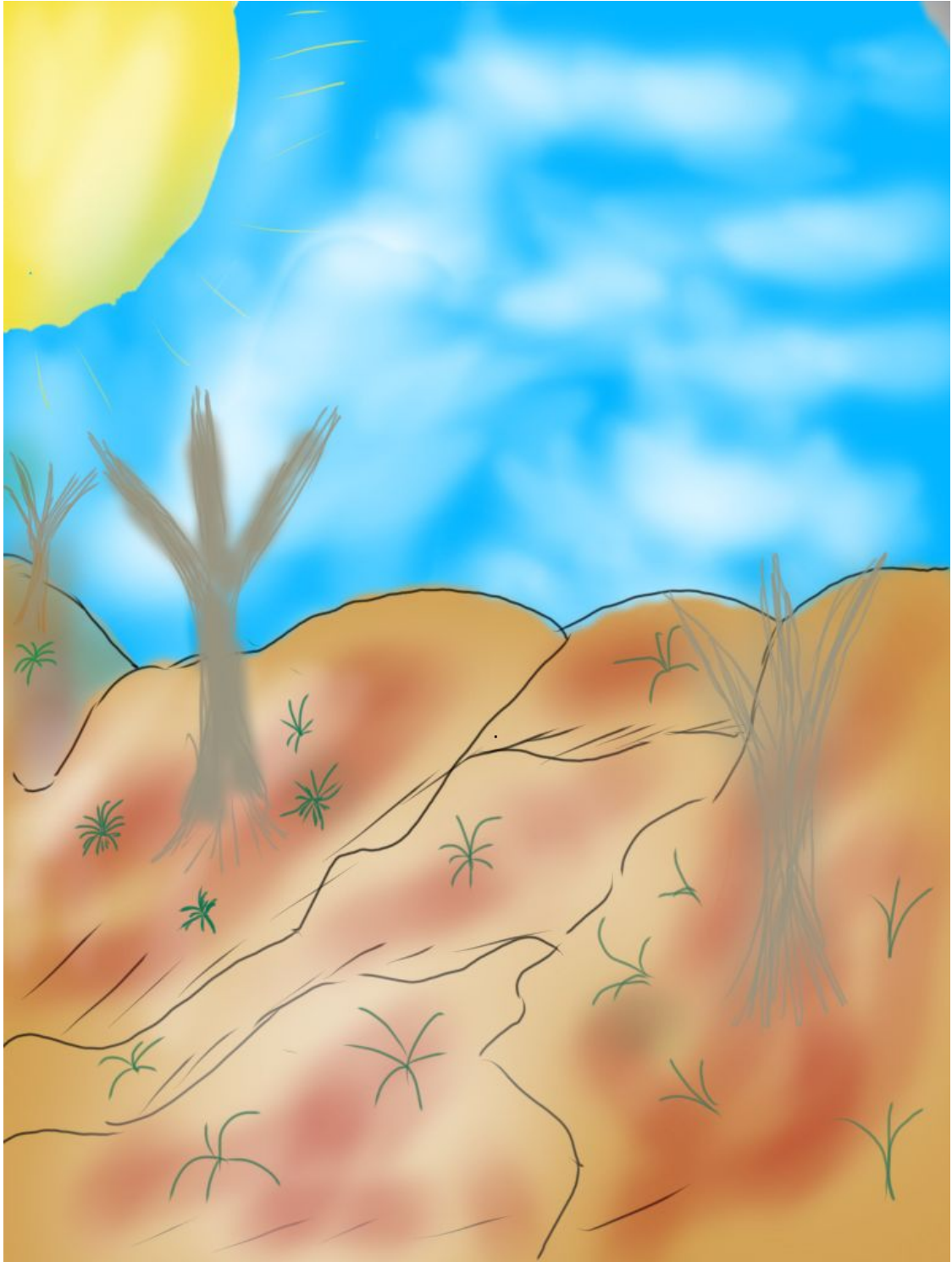




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“This is great, don’t you think?” I yelled to Banjo while we danced along to the music with the rest of Alinta’s old tribe, the Pitjantjatjara tribe. We sang and danced alongside the tribe and smiled as the sunlight peeked out from under the clouds. Uluru was looming over us, glowing red from the sun’s rays and as important part of our culture as ever.

“To the left now, okay, swing to the right, all together everyone!” The elder instructed, as he clapped to the steady rhythm of the drums. I looked to the side and saw Alinta’s wispy form smiling at me. I grinned back and wondered if I would ever see her again.



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## Glossary

Pitjantjatjara- the Indigenous Australian tribe that lives at Uluru and owns the land.

Alinta- the name Alinta means fire.

Koen- the name Koen means brave or thunder.

Banjo- the name Banjo relates to a musical instrument commonly played by Australian people.

