

The Only Ones Left

Sandra Kendell

Sandra Kendell is an artist, illustrator and author of children's picture books who creates stories that celebrate and familiarise some of our most fascinating native animals. She is interested in how art, education and environmental science can interact. Sandra has had five children's picture books published and conducts illustration and writing workshops for adults and children in addition to exhibiting her artwork. She lives in Darwin in the beautiful northern Territory where she is surrounded by inspiration for her work.

We share our home with a myriad of fascinating and unique animals, some of which are on the very brink of extinction as we consume ever-larger amounts of resources. My passion is creating picture books that serve as conduits to inspire learning and encourage connections with the richness of Australia's biodiversity. I love to illustrate native animals and impart to each their own quirky personality that children can identify with. In this book I wanted to illustrate a sample of our endangered animals (many of which are little known) and prompt the reader to consider "what if we were the only ones left? What do we risk losing forever and what would our world be like?" The setting is a child's bedroom which is extended outwards via the children's imaginations, I hope this encourages children to see themselves as part of the natural world, to recognise their agency within it and realise their own potential to enact change. The book also includes information pages focusing on the work and positive outcomes of some species recovery projects.

Before Reading

What clues do the title and the cover illustration give you about what the story may be about?

After Reading

What are some of the issues raised by this book?

What do you think the author means by the following statements?

Chop up the green

Muddy the blue

Rubbish the rest

Can you think of some examples where these things are currently happening?

Do you think there are any solutions offered in the book?

Why do you think the author has chosen to portray children as the main characters?

What do you think you can do as young people to save these animals and the environment?

Can your class come up with a class list of goals to improve these animals habitat? These may be small things like reducing classroom waste or bigger things like writing letters to politicians.

Find all of the different species listed in the book and make a list of them.

Can you research them, find out about their habitat and what threats there may be to their existence.

Make a class map with these animals and some of the threats.

Can your class choose one endangered species and come up with some ideas to reduce the threat to its existence.

This books deals illustrated animals threatened by our treatment of the environment, but what are some of the other environmental consequences of our behaviour?

Writing exercises

Consider the question, what if we were the only ones left? And write a story that illustrates what this world would be like to live in.

Make posters for the classroom in the style of Missing posters for some of the animals featured in the book

If individual animals in the book could talk what would they say to us?