

# MOON DANCE

JESS BLACK | RENÉE TREML (Illustrator)



**ISBN:** 9781760150525

**RRP:** \$19.99

'When the moon is high and full, And the stars come out to play ...' so do the animals, bringing with them their own beat. From Kangaroo raising the dust as he jumps to Kookaburra making a merry cacophony, the Australian native animals each bring out their unique spirit to sing and dance in the night air. Under the light of the disco-ball moon, there is a chorus that shows us the beauty and magic of nature, particularly that of our nation.

## STUDY NOTES

- Look at the first spread. Identify as many animals and creatures as you can. Consider the point of view of the illustration. What effect does this have for the reader? How does it work with the words on the spread?
- Discuss any words that students might be unfamiliar with such as timbals, cacophony, spry. Were students able to guess what these words meant before being given a definition? If so how were they able to do this (context of other words and images)?
- Identify the Australian native flowers used in the illustrations eg banksia, wattle, kangaroo paw and waratah. Discuss with students why Australia has such distinctive flora and some of the characteristics of these plants. Do students know of any other Australian flowers?
- Organise the class into groups. Assign each group a state or territory of Australia. They are to research the flora and fauna emblems that belong to each state and present to the class their findings.

Study notes written by  
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SCHOLASTIC

- The animals are given human qualities in Moon Dance. This is called personification. Can you think of any other stories where animals are personified? Why do you think that animals are often personified in stories? How do you think this helps tell an interesting tale?
- Can you think of another animal that could join the moon dance? What action do you think they will add to the group energy?
- Consider having a dance day in class where students can do the conga and learn about other dances.
- 'Nature is all around us. So much beauty to be found.' Discuss this line with the class. Ask students what things they like and/or find beautiful about nature and their surroundings.
- How do the animals create their own soundtrack to dance to? Identify some examples (eg clap your paws, timbals strum, slither in a huddle).
- How do you think the animals feel as they are dancing? Identify the clues in the text and illustrations which show this (eg smiles, eyes expression, movement, word choice).
- How does the story establish rhythm (rhyming lines, alternating ensemble scenes with 'solos', words that start with the same letters (alliteration), repetition of vowel sounds (assonance))?
- Can you think of other stories and rhymes that feature the moon? Why do you think that the moon is so commonly featured in stories? What do you think about when you think of the moon?

