

YHBA Novel Resource 3

Quest for the Tree Kangaroo

Sy Montgomery

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Houghton Mifflin Books

Jenifer Reed

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The theme of conservation would tie
in well with Earth Day

About the Author



<http://www.authorwire.com/>

Honors and Awards

- Featured in People Magazine, O Magazine and Good Morning, America
- Christian Science Monitor
- ALA Booklist
- Outstanding Science Trade Book Awards
- Subject of National Geographic's *Explorer* TV Show
- Notable Children's Book in Language Arts, 2005

• Information from www.authorwire.com/s/s_bio.html.

Sy Montgomery is called "part Indiana Jones, part Emily Dickinson" by the Boston Globe. After reading the bio on her homepage, one might agree rather quickly what that assessment!

Ms. Montgomery is clearly an adventurer at heart. In order to research her books, films and articles, she has been chased by an angry gorilla, bitten by a vampire bat, been in a pit with 18,000 snakes, and undressed by an orangutan. After all of these adventures, it is ironic that her latest book is about a family pig. *

She has literally traveled around the world to provide such interesting books with a focus on animals. She has written, scripted and narrated documentaries for National Geographic TV, all while "avoiding being eaten" by the tigers in West Bengal.

Ms. Montgomery was inspired by Jane Goodall reaching out to chimps in National Geographic Magazine at a young age. She has always loved books about animals and adored *Charlotte's Web*.

Judith is a 1979 graduate of Syracuse University, double majoring in French Language and Literature and Psychology. Sy is married to fellow writer Howard Mansfield and resides in New Hampshire in a 150 year old house they have "mostly left alone".

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*information taken directly and paraphrased from www.authorwire.com



- Quest for the Tree Kangaroo* earned a
- Orbis Pictus Award from the NCTE
 - Robert F. Sibert Honor Book by the ALA, 2006
 - ASPCA Children's Book Award, 2006
 - School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, 2006
 - A Booklist Editor's Choice Award for 2006
 - NSTA-Council on Children's Books Outstanding Science Trade Book
 - John Burroughs Young Reader Award

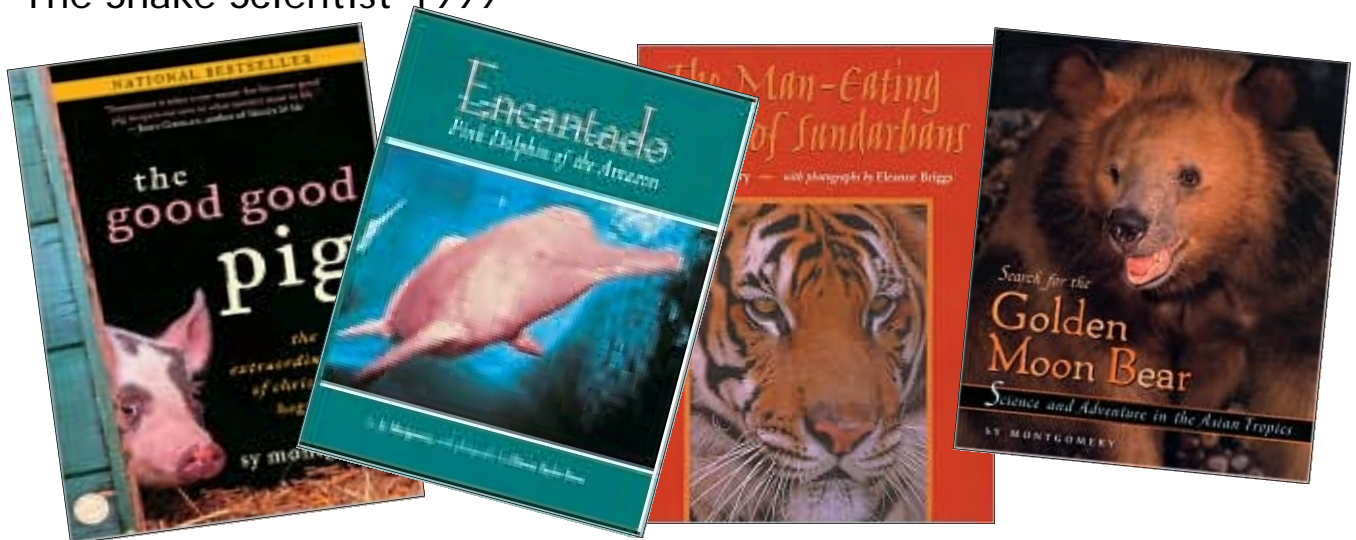
Other Books by Sy Montgomery

WRITTEN FOR ADULTS:

- The Good, Good Pig-2006
- Search for the Golden Moon Bear:
Science and Adventure in Pursuit of a New Species-2004
- Journey of the Pink Dolphins: An Amazon Quest-2000
- Spell of the Tiger: The Man-Eaters of Sundarbans-1995
- The Wild Out Your Window-2002
- The Curious Naturalist: Nature's Everyday Mysteries
- Walking With The Great Apes: Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey,
Birute Galdikas-1991

WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN:

- Quest for the Tree Kangaroo-2006
- Search for the Golden Moon Bear:
Science and Adventure in the Asian Tropics—2002
- The Tarantula Scientist-2004
- Encantado: Pink Dolphin of the Amazon-2002
- The Man-Eating Tigers of Sundarbans
- The Snake Scientist-1999



Annotation

Title: *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*

Author: Sy Montgomery

Annotated Summary:

Sy Montgomery has a passion for animals, and it is evident in her book *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*. In this book, we meet Lisa Dabek, scientist and leader of the research team as they venture into the cloud forest of Papua. Readers get a look into her past and where her interest in animals began. Her love of tree kangaroos began in Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. She "knew right away they were special."

Next up, Montgomery tells of the research team journeys to the Huon Peninsula. More interesting than that was reading the supply list which includes ethanol, to preserve dung and 48 rolls of toilet paper. Just as the adventure is to begin, Montgomery takes two pages and mentions the myriad of species on the island. Another page is dedicated to marsupials. While informative, Montgomery seemed to create a detour on the road to the real adventure which lies ahead.

Readers will enjoy hearing about the quaint village of Yawan, who are partners in this conservation with Dabek and her team. The villagers were welcoming and in tune with their traditions, which have remained strong into the 21st century. Children will especially like trying to Tok Pisin, a kind of "broken" English. Montgomery has provided a glossary of words and phrases in the back of the book.

Finally, Montgomery begins our climb into "heaven". The hike is long, and readers hear just about every possible detail. It is during this section when the book tends to lag a bit. Finally, Dabek's team captures a tree kangaroo and then....five pages about life in the bush...back off track. Dabek and her team collar and tag several new tree kangaroos and track several that had been tagged in the past. Montgomery writes about the limited areas in which they lived, how long they might live with their parents and witness a tree kangaroo date first-hand. It is easy to see how lovable these odd creatures are!

Photographer Nic Bishop provides breathtaking pictures as illustrations in this book. He documents the entire journey from first meeting Lisa, to the plane trip, to the village, its children and finally into the rainforest. Each page makes you feel as if you are on the adventure yourself. Not only do we get glimpses into the scenery and the tree kangaroos, Bishop has provided beautiful pictures which allow us to look directly into the eyes of the inhabitants of this beautiful place. There are also many pictures of odd, interesting animals the team encountered during their expedition.

As a "Scientists in the Field" series, Montgomery's book is a nice example of usable non-fiction easily used in the classroom.

Genre

Animals and Nature

Point of View

This story is told in first person. The author uses clue words like "I" and "we" and refers to other characters in the third person.

Theme

The themes present in this book are conservation/nature, death, teamwork and traditions.

The title of the book is rather straight-forward. The author and her expedition team were searching the cloud forests of New Guinea for a rare marsupial called a tree kangaroo

Conflict

There is no overt conflict in the novel. One could make a case for the following:

- Man vs. nature, as they fight the elements of nature living the bush to find the tree kangaroo.
- Man vs. man, as people need to realize that every action they take towards the environment might help or harm an animal and its environment

Resolution

The novel ends when Lisa returns to the zoo and she tells of her endless fight to help tree kangaroos. The books ends with the statement, "Lisa is working to help-by making people care."

Characters

- Lisa Dabek-scientific leader of the research team in search of the rare tree kangaroo.
- Holly Reed- 48, field veterinarian at Port Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in Washington State.
- Christine McKnight-37, from Minnesota Zoo works with many different animals.
- Gabriel Porolak-27, is a graduate student and one of Dabek's two field assistants.
- Joel Glick-28, field coordinator/scientist for the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program and training new field coordinator, Toby
- Toby Ross- 29, English and trained in reptiles, learning from Joel about Tree Kangaroos.
- Robin Wingrave-36, resides in Australia, artist who painted maps, plants and animals for the book.
- Nic Bishop-49, photographer and biologist and citizen of New Zealand.
- Sy Montgomery-47, author of Quest for the Tree Kangaroo.
- Dono, Pekison, James, Gosing and Bonyepe-residents of the Yawan village.
- Ombom, Jessie, Shelby, Tess, Christopher, Holly, and Joey-collared and tagged tree kangaroos found by the research team.

Setting

The story is set on the Huon Peninsula of Papua, New Guinea.

Interest/Reading Level

This book is written for 9-11 year olds. The lexile level is set at 830, which is equivalent to a beginning to mid 5th grade reading level.

Booktalk

What looks like a bear, lives in a tree and eats leaves? No, this isn't a riddle! It's a real-live animal found in Papua, New Guinea called a tree kangaroo. In Sy Montgomery's book, *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*, journey into the cloud forest of New Guinea and meet this unusual animal. Along the way, you will meet several other unusual animals found in this distant land. Tie up your hiking boots and take the road less traveled in this non-fiction book!

Bronx Zoo Video of Tree Kangaroo Joey

<http://video.yahoo.com/network/100000086?v=4684116>

Indiana Academic Standards

Language Arts: 4.1.7, 4.2.8, 4.3.6
5.1.6, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1
6.1.4, 6.2.3, 6.2.4, 6.3.5

Social Studies: 4.3.2
5.3.2, 5.3.6

Science: 4.4.2, 4.4.7
5.4.4
6.4.13

Vocabulary

Pert- p. 7 -boldly forward

Cannibal- p. 9-a person who eats human flesh, especially among tribal peoples

Cassowaries- p. 9-large, flightless birds of New Guinea with a bone on the front of the head

Outfit [with]- p. 13 -equipping for a specific purpose

Telemetry- p. 13-science of automatic measurement by radio thru receiving stations

Malaria-p. 17-a group of diseases with feverlike symptoms transmitted to the human bloodstream by mosquitoes.

Dung- p. 18-manure

Thatched- p. 20-materials such as straw, leaves or reeds used to cover roofs

Marsupials- p. 23- a special group of mammals with a marsupium, or pouch, which contains mammary glands and a place to protect the young

Bush-p. 31- uncleared land covered with plant growth, trees, etc., as a jungle

Leeches-p. 33-a bloodsucking aquatic animal

Saplings-p. 35-young trees

Canopy-p. 35- overhead covering

Botanist-p. 38- person who studies plants

Vials- p. 57-small glass containers, such as test-tubes

Hacking p. 67- cut, slice or chop

Clinometers- p. 67-an instrument that measures angles

Oximeter- p. 73- an instrument used to measure oxygen in blood

Anticipation Statements



Student
Thinking-
Anticipation/
Reflection

Name _____

Date _____

| BEFORE | | <i>Quest for the Tree Kangaroo</i> By Sy Montgomery | AFTER | |
|--------|-----------|---|-------|-----------|
| Agree | Dis-agree | | Agree | Dis-agree |
| | | I know what continent New Guinea is a part of. | | |
| | | All kangaroos, except those in zoos, live in Australia. | | |
| | | The bush is something you have planted in your front yard. | | |
| | | It takes many different kinds of people to help preserve nature. | | |
| | | Even children can be a part of the conservation of our Earth and its natural resources. | | |
| | | Everything you do affects an animal's life. | | |

Pick one of the statements above and write a short reflection. Why did your opinion change or not?

Read-Alouds

Title: *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*

Author: Sy Montgomery

Read Aloud 1 : p. 29

Read orally the passage about school and "wear traditional clothes to school day".

Pre-reading: What are some traditions that your family has for special events? Holidays? Get discussion going among groups.

Post-reading: How does this make you feel about the dress code?!?!?!? (j/k) Have each group discuss the following questions: "Why are traditions important? What do they mean to us? What do they mean to the people of Yawan?"

Read Aloud 2: p. 29

Read entire paragraph beginning with "I believe the future of conservation is with kids," Lisa says.

Pre-reading: Whose responsibility is it to pick up trash? Take care of animals? Clean up parks? Generate discussion and hopefully it will turn towards the fact that it is the children and not random adults.

Post-reading: Create a poster for conservation. Your conservation can focus on that a variety of things: habitats, electricity, natural resources or recycling. Mount on green paper and hang in hallway.

Read Aloud 3: p. 57-61

Begin reading on p. 57 beneath the circles and read until page 61 until the circles.

Pre-reading: Set purpose for reading, note-taking and sequencing. What are the major steps in collaring and tagging a tree kangaroo?

Post Reading: In teams, have children create flow maps with at least 5 stations with sub-stations on at least 3 stations.

Resources I Used

Author's Homepage:

"Judith S. George "

www.authorwire.com

helpful with providing information about books/awards, but little or no biographical information.

Dictionary.com

www.dictionary.com

Douglas MacArthur Elementary School Destiny link

(link to school library)

<http://destiny.msdp.k12.in.us/common/welcome.jsp;jsessionid=D312D7E311BD430470734E0531C5606C?site=106>

Montgomery, Sy, *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*, Houghton Mifflin Books, 2006.

Publisher's webpage:

Houghton Mifflin Books for Children

<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/hmcochild/> - 20.1KB

Publisher's webpage for the press release of this book:

http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/press_release/bishop/#author

Scholastic Book Club website

http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/contributor.jsp?id=165141&FullBreadCrumb=%3Ca+href%3D%22http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.scholastic.com%2Fbrowse%2Fsearch%2F%3Fquery%3Djudith%2Bst.%2Bgeorge%2B%26Ntt%3Djudith%2Bst.%2Bgeorge%2B%26Ntk%3DSCHL30_Sl%26Ntx%3Dmode%2Bmatchallpartial%26N%3D0%26_N%3Dfff%22+class%3D%22endecaAll%22%3EAll+Results%3C%2Fa%3E