



Tippy and Jellybean

Sophie Cunningham

illustrated by Anil Tortop

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Format: Hardback picture book

Recommended for 3-6 year-olds

Summary

Tippy and her baby Jellybean live in a beautiful eucalyptus forest.
One day, they wake up and sniff the air. It's smoky, hot and windy.

Kangaroos and wallabies are bounding.
Wombats are scrambling to their burrows.
The cockatoos take off in an enormous flock.

Tippy can't hop. Or run. Or fly.
So she shelters her baby in the only way she can...

This is the uplifting true story of a koala who saved her baby from a bushfire, and the dedicated vets who looked after them until they were healed and ready to go home.

Themes

- Bushfire • Wildlife rescue • Hope • Courage • Australian animals • Vets •

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Discussion questions



- Show the cover of the book to the class, reading out the title (*Tippy and Jellybean*), and asking the following questions:
 - What sort of animals do you think Tippy and Jellybean are?
 - What country are those animals native to?
 - What do they like to eat?
 - Where do they live – in trees or in rivers?

Now focus the class's attention on the book's subtitle (*The True Story of a Brave Koala Who Saved Her Baby from a Bushfire*) and ask these questions:

- What does 'True Story' mean?
 - What is a bushfire?
 - Does anyone remember the bushfires in 2019? What happened to lots of animals then?
 - Can you see the bandage on Tippy's front leg? Why might she have needed to wear it?
 - What is the name of a doctor who looks after animals when they are injured?
- Help students process some or all answers to the above questions by asking them to guess what will happen to Tippy and Jellybean in the story before opening the book.
- Read the story through once and ask students to complete the following comprehension questions:
 - Why do you think Tippy was described as brave?
 - Why do you think Tippy protected Jellybean?
 - What did Kami the vet do to help Tippy and Jellybean?
 - Did this story have a happy ending? Why?
- Now read the story again, spending more time examining the details on each double-page spread.

First Spread: Ask students to identify each of Tippy and Jellybean's good friends in the image. Next ask them to find the cockatoo in the image. Finally, ask them to find and name any animals not mentioned in the story. [Hint: there are two bats at the top of the left page and two wombats on the right-hand page.]

Second Spread: How have the colours on the page changed to show a bushfire is approaching the koalas? The words tell us it is very windy but how does the illustration *show* us? Look closely at the koalas' faces. How do their eyes, eyebrows and mouths show they are worried? Now look at the wombat scrambling into its burrow. Which is a better place in a bushfire do you think, a burrow or the top of a tree?

Third Spread: What colours has the artist used to show the bushfire has arrived at Tippy and Jellybean's tree? In good times Jellybean sits on Tippy's back, so why do you think Tippy curled around Jellybean here? What do you think Tippy and Jellybean can feel as the fire is upon them?

Fourth Spread: What does the word *singed* mean? What sort of colours has the illustrator used to show so much of the beautiful forest has been singed? But there still are signs of life here. Can you find other animals on the right-hand page that are still alive? [Hint: the wombat and wallaby.]

Fifth Spread: How has the illustrator shown it is a long way down for Tippy and Jellybean? [Hint: we are looking down, like Tippy and Jellybean, and the man looks a long way away because he looks little.] Now look at the image of Kami and the plane. Which is being emphasised as being huge and which looks very small in comparison?

Sixth Spread: The words tell us that Kami takes care of Tippy but what does the picture show us she is *actually* doing to take care of her? [Hint: performing an operation and putting special creams on Tippy's back to heal the burns.]

Seventh Spread: Do you think Tippy and Jellybean are comfortable in this picture? What in the image tells you they feel that way? Why do you think Jellybean is holding on to a gum leaf? What does Evelyn mean when she says, 'Those two are a team.'?

Eighth Spread: Why do you think Tippy and Jellybean have to go a long way away from their home to recover? What object on the right-hand side of the spread tells us they have travelled a very long way?

Ninth Spread: How does the word MUNCH change on the right-hand side of the spread? What does the fact that it is repeated and made bigger tell us about how much Tippy and Jellybean are eating? In the pages leading up to the Ninth spread, there are small changes in Tippy as she begins to heal – can you see what they are? [Hint: Tippy's fur gets slightly longer, her scar gets healed and they appear happier on each spot illustration until she's totally healed.]

Tenth Spread: How has Kami helped the animals to resettle in the forest? [Hint: look at the carrots on the forest floor and the soft pouches in the trees.] What other things do you think she might leave for Tippy and Jellybean?

Eleventh Spread: Six months later the forest is almost back to new. What are some of the signs of this in the illustration? Find each of Tippy and Jellybean's friends in the forest.

- Remind students that the front cover described this as a 'True Story' and show them the pictures of the real-life Tippy and Jellybean at the back of the book and on the back cover. For even more information about them you can go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCKTResLOY0> to watch footage of them being released back into the forest.



Author's comments

'I wrote *Tippy and Jellybean* because I really love Australian wildlife and bushwalking and trees. Every day I'm amazed by stories of animals' resilience, courage and occasional ridiculousness. I also wanted to find a way to talk to kids about some of the difficult things that they hear about every day. It is also important to me that we all understand that koalas are precious. Fires are really hard for them because they don't fly or live underground, and they don't move quickly. I liked writing the story of Tippy and Jellybean so much that I've decided I want to keep writing books about amazing animals, for amazing small humans to read.'

— Sophie Cunningham

Illustrator's comments

'My inspiration came with the story; the koalas, Tippy and Jellybean. Who doesn't love koalas! The human heroes inspired me too because what they do is awesome. I haven't personally experienced a bushfire but we all lived those terrible times and the horrible sights were very fresh in my mind during the illustration process.

'As opposed to many other books I've illustrated, this one isn't funny. The mood changes from spread to spread. I had to keep the balance between sad and happy/hopeful. I used different colour palettes and compositions to give different moods. Since the story is based on true events, I tried to capture some elements slightly realistically. My editor helped me a lot with researching reference images.

'And note to self: never underestimate leaves and fur. They take an enormous amount of time to illustrate!'

— Anil Tortop

About the author

Sophie Cunningham is the author of five books, *City of Trees*, *Geography*, *Bird*, *Melbourne*, and *Warning: The Story of Cyclone Tracy*. She is a former publisher and editor, was a co-founder of the Stella Prize and is now an Adjunct Professor at RMIT University's Non/fiction Lab. In 2019 Sophie Cunningham was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her contributions to literature.



About the illustrator



Anil Tortop was born and raised in Turkey. She moved to Australia in early 2011 and has been trying to get used to the local eight-legged house intruders and slithering visitors to her garden ever since. Anil also works as an animator and character designer, and lives with her husband in Brisbane. Her previous books include *A First Time For Everything* by Tiffany Hall & Ed Kavalee and *Bat vs Poss* by Alexa Moses.

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