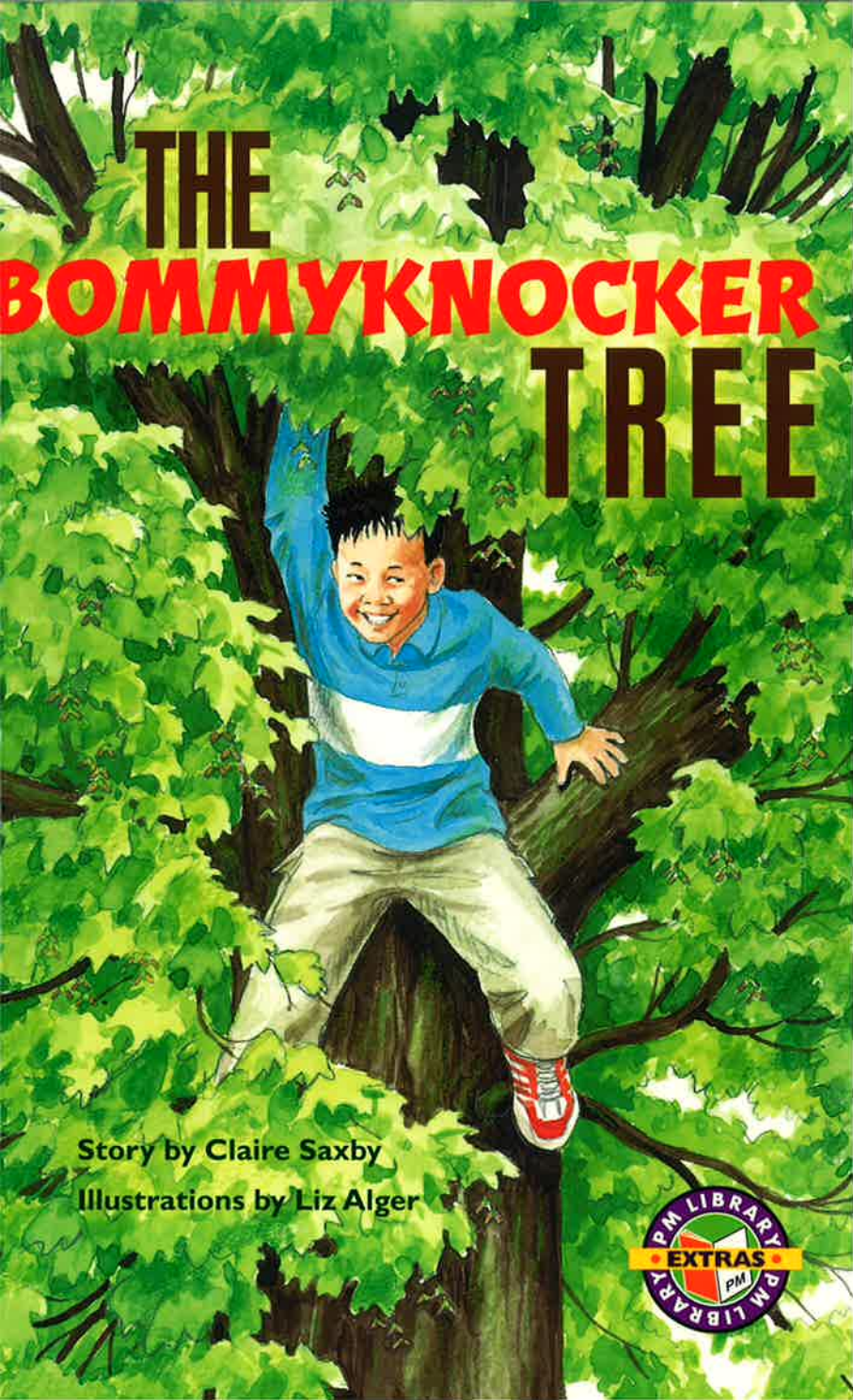

THE
BOMMYKNOCKER
TREE
Story by Claire Saxby
Illustrations by Liz Alger
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The Bommyknocker Tree

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Key vocabulary

Bommyknocker, camouflaged, canopy, chainsaws, chipper, cherry-picker, diseased, tree loppers

Grammatical conventions

- Action verbs: rummaged, squinted, slumped, thumped, wafted
- Adverbs: casually, hardly, hopefully, impatiently, tightly, suddenly
- Hyphenated words: cherry-picker, chopped-down, plate-sized, stilt-walking, tired-looking

Spelling

- Contractions: didn't, don't, he'd, that'll, we're, we'll
- Compound words: chainsaw, driveway, neighbourhood, newspapers
- Doubling the consonant after a short vowel before adding 'ing': cutting, potting, trimming

Creative thinking task – Knowledge



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CHAPTER 1

Not EVER



At first, Scott thought the noise was part of his dream, but he could still hear it after he opened his eyes. He lifted his bedroom curtain to have a better look, but still couldn't see what was making such a racket.

'Time to get up, sleepy,' called Mum, 'or you'll be late. Don't forget to collect your books. We'll go to the library after school.'

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Scott pulled on his shorts and shirt and found two cleanish same-colour socks near his bed. He licked his finger and wet the tip of his shoes, so the scuff marks didn't show so much.

'I hope that noise isn't going to go on all day,' Mum said, rubbing a hand over her tired-looking eyes. 'Or Jessie will never stay asleep. And she needs a *big* sleep.' Mum began cleaning the mess around Jessie's high chair.

'Where is the noise coming from?' Scott dumped his books on the bench and looked out the kitchen window. Over the back fence he could see a man in a cherry-picker.

'I think they're trimming the trees in the street,' said Mum.

'Why do they put big trees under electricity lines… and then cut them?' Scott wondered out loud.

'Some questions have no obvious answers, Scott,' Mum said without looking up.

'They had better not touch our tree,' he said. 'Or I'll…' Scott scowled but didn't finish.

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The tree in front of their house was a type of sycamore. Scott called it a bommyknocker tree because of the shape of the seeds – they were big and round and linked like a chain. That tree was perfect for climbing, even bigger than the tree in front of their old house. Scott spent just about every weekend up the tree with his friend Kali. Up that tree, they were invisible, camouflaged by the big leaves in their own world. They hung from branches and pretended they were famous acrobats performing in front of huge crowds, bowing to the loud cheers and lengthy applause.

Scott also sat in the tree when he needed to think. Up there he could let his mind wander…

He could watch Mr Jakob next door shooing his hens away from his plants. He could see Andy across the road sitting in his father's car listening to the radio. He could spot visitors' cars before they got to his house.

This tree was the best part about living here and they couldn't cut it down. Not ever.

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CHAPTER 2

MARKED for Removal



'How was your day?' asked Mum after school.

Scott slid into the back seat of the car, next to Jessie.

'Okay,' he said, tickling Jessie on her outstretched palm. Jessie grinned, showing her two new teeth. Scott pushed his bag into the gap under her feet.

'Belt up,' Mum said, watching for a break in the traffic. Scott fixed his seat belt and passed Jessie her water bottle. She took a sip, then dropped it.

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'Why are we going this way... oh, the library,' Scott remembered.

Mum nodded.

Through the car window Scott could see two Council workers throwing massive branches into one end of a noisy machine. At the other end, the machine spat chipped wood into the back of a truck.

Jessie began to grumble.



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'It's alright, Jessie,' soothed Mum, 'we'll be past the horrible noise in a minute.' And they were, but then they passed another team of workers with their chainsaws. Scott rattled Jessie's plastic keys trying to divert her attention from the noise outside.

'They must be cutting branches off every tree in the neighbourhood!'

'It seems like it,' agreed Mum. 'And they are cutting some trees down completely. Do you remember the huge tree outside our old house? I drove past this morning and it's gone!'

'NO! Not *that* tree!' Scott felt his stomach lurch. 'Why?'

'I don't know. There was only a stump left, and huge pile of branches waiting for the chipper.'

'How could they do that?' His throat felt tight. 'Why would they...'

'Local Council is responsible for the trees. Maybe you can ask at the library, at the Council Information desk. Maybe someone there can tell you why.'