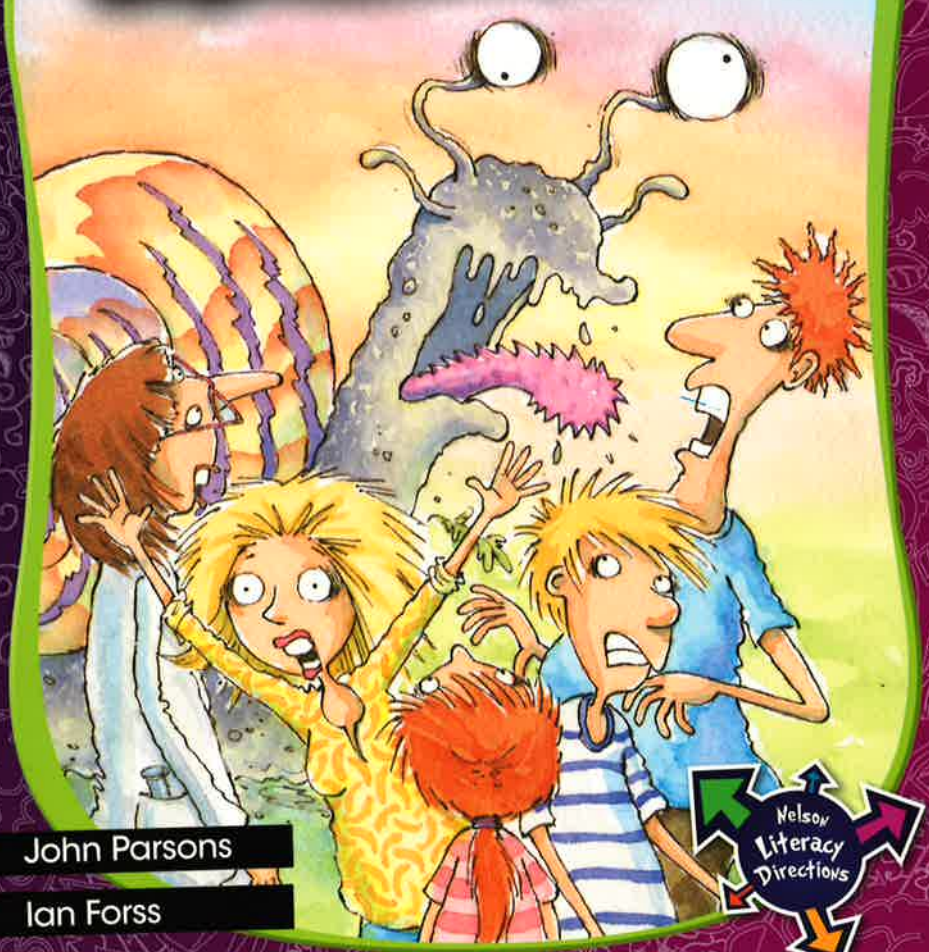
ATTACK of the GIANT MUTANT ZOMBIE SNAIL



John Parsons

Ian Forss

Nelson Literacy Directions

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Attack of the Giant Mutant Zombie Snail

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Written by John Parsons
Illustrated by Ian Forss

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Meet the Characters

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Aunt Augusta

A gastropod scientist.



Simon

Aunt Augusta's nephew.



Mum

Simon's mother and Augusta's sister.



Dad

Simon's father.



Amelia

Simon's sister.



A Giant Mutant Zombie Snail

One of Aunt Augusta's experiments.

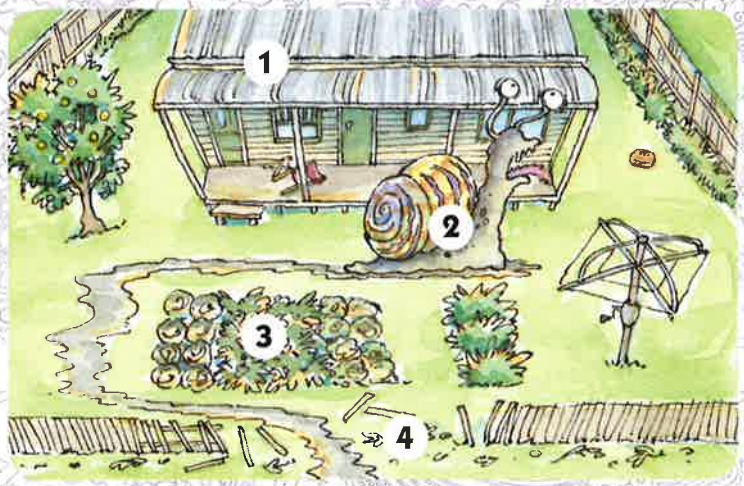
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Dear Reader

I was watching an old horror movie from the 1960s about a mutant alien monster that was terrorising a city, when I had the idea for this book. I wondered what would happen if a common garden creature suddenly became an enormous house-eating monster! Sometimes, science experiments have unexpected results!

John Parsons
Author

Our Backyard



1. The house
2. A giant mutant zombie snail
3. The vegetable garden
4. The back fence



Prologue

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One of the downsides of living in a wooden house is that once a ten-metre mutant zombie snail gets a taste for timber, there's very little that stands between you and a ravenous mountain of grey slime.

I used to think my Aunt Augusta, who at this minute is hiding under the bed in the spare room, was a clever scientist. When she initially came up with the idea of genetically modified, chromosomally recombined gastropods that would only eat weeds, it sounded good in theory. But after six months of experimentation, certain practical shortcomings became apparent.

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One of them was hungrily chewing its way through the living room wall right now!



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On the plus side, there are no more weeds in our garden which, in fact, looks fabulous, resplendent even, with excellent crops of healthy cabbage, broccoli and other vegetables. But even Aunt Augusta, if she ever comes out from her hiding place, would have to admit the splintered, slime-covered house in the midst of our yard looks less attractive.

If you haven't read about this latest scientific advance, you might not be familiar with ten-metre mutant zombie snails. So let me enlighten you about their background. That way, you won't be totally surprised if you wake up one morning without a bedroom wall.



2 Helix aspersa

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Aunt Augusta had long dreamed of working at the South Queensland University Institute for Research into Molluscs, or SQUIRM as it was fondly known by snail experts around the world.

She'd devoted her life to studying the common garden snail, *Helix aspersa*, so when she secured a six-month research grant from SQUIRM to investigate ways of genetically modifying it to transform it into less of a pest in gardens, she leapt at the chance.

Actually, she rolled around on her stomach, which was a gastropod scientist kind of behaviour. They celebrated good news in ways that only other snail scientists could really appreciate.

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At the time, she was living in tropical North Queensland, because they have really humungous garden snails up there – so she packed her bags, headed south to Brisbane and came to stay in our spare room.

Mum, Dad, my sister Amelia and I listened to her snail tales, sometimes enthralled for at least a minute. At first, I'd just assumed that snails were somewhat boring. But after hearing Aunt Augusta regale us with stories of snails racing along at top speeds of 47 metres per hour, her adventures finding nests of snails under doorsteps, and the challenges of heliciculture (or snail farming), I realised they were really quite interesting. Compared to snail scientists.

"Has Aunt Augusta ever had a hobby?" I asked Mum one evening.