



# Tri Unia

When People, Animals and Earth Unite  
MAGIC HAPPENS!

Cath Sherwood



‘FigRing’

## When People, Animals and Earth Unite Magic Happens

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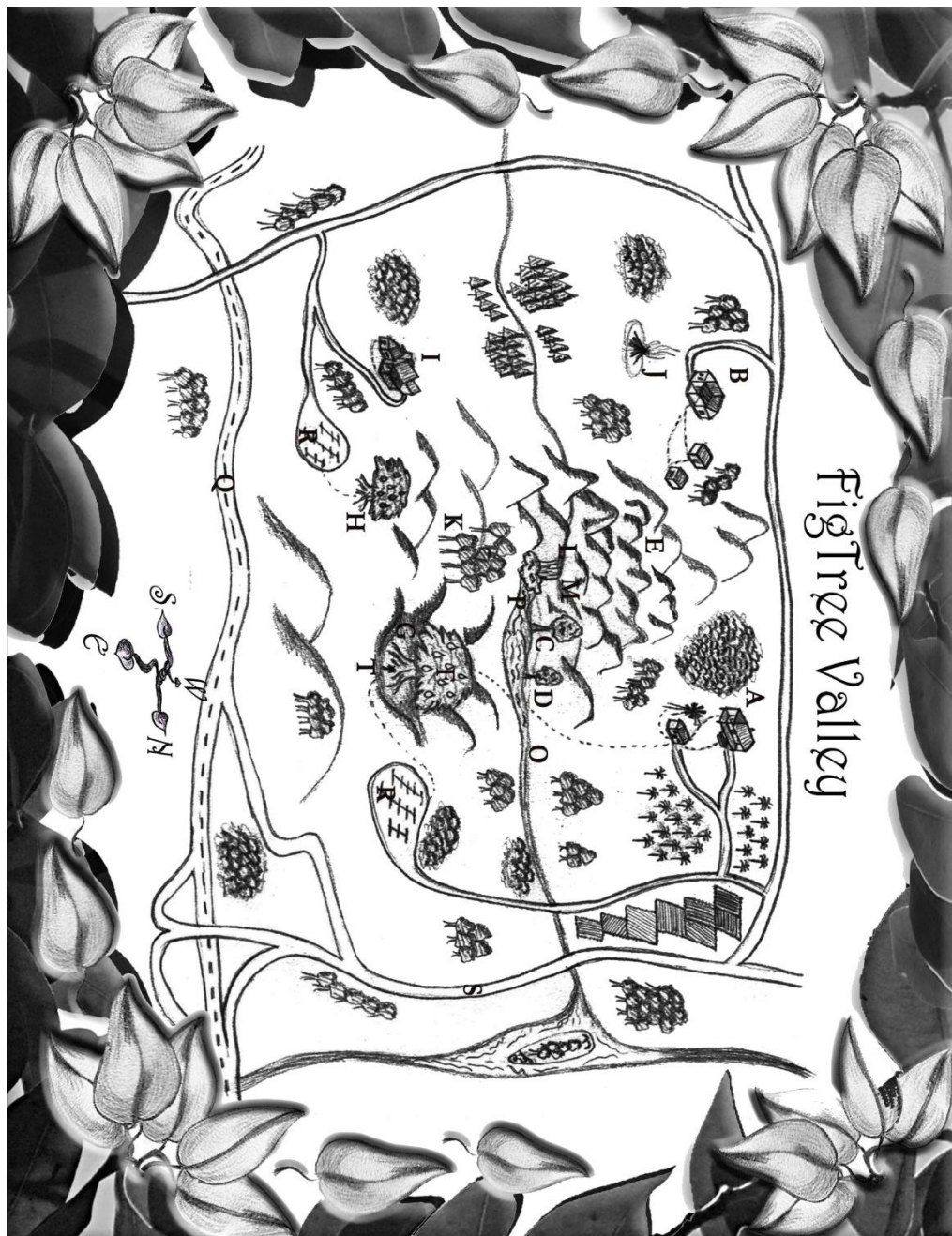
# FigTree Valley Key

- A...Frendly Banana Farm
- B...Wallaby Haven - Ruby and Eric
- C...Canal
- D...Delensis & StreamTree
- E...Rocky Gully - Goanna country
- F...Ficus - Grandmother Fig
- G...FigTree GathRing - Amphitheatre around Ficus
- H...Henneana Splace - Fig on Improvnia Farm for Zapquartzis
- I...Improvnia Farm - Joe's Farm
- J...The Bonfire Celebration
- K...Kanga and the koalas place
- L...Lillian Pond - Lillian and Nym live here
- M...MushWorm Glow - bank of Lillian Pond on up side
- N...NewingsVale - Eco Village west of Fig Tree
- O...Undine Frolic - the stream (creek) that flows through the Valley
- P...StreamTree Pond - where Phaea, the playpus and (D)
- Q...M1 MotorWay
- R...Visiting CarsPlace
- S...Valley Way - main road into M'Bah    T...Triunia





# FigTree Valley



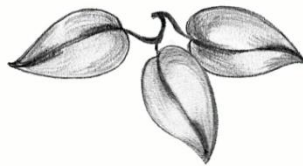


# Chapter One

## FigTree Valley

All was serene,  
The Valley green.

The birds did trill their song  
For indeed,  
It did seem  
Nothing  
could go wrong!

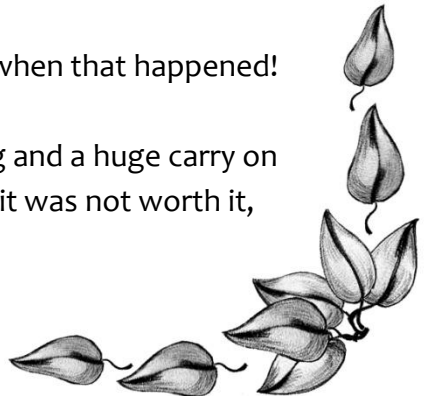




In a beautiful green valley with rolling hills and bubbling creek, all was serene. The wallabies nibbled on sweet grasses while magpies warbled their glorious song to each other as they flew from tree to tree. Cheeky Willy Wagtails twitched their purposeful tails to and fro as they gathered insects into their beaks and bellies. Sweet little wrens, the boys all bright blue chest and wings busied themselves making neat nests for their 'girl wrens'. The girls were all brown and not nearly so pretty, but their song was sweet all the same and the boys certainly liked them just the way they were. Brilliant blue kingfishers flitted from branch to branch streaking their colour through the air on their missions to find food. Songs of many different tunes hung in the bluest of skies and chirrups and chirps harmonised with them.

Lizards of various kinds darted here and there after insects, always on the lookout for birds that may just strike! The Kookaburras mostly liked snakes to eat, but every now and then, they were known to pluck a skinny lizard! You did not see the snakes much, they had a knack of slithering quieter than a mouse, through the grass, rocks and roots! Sometimes particular ones, the carpet and grass snakes, would wind their way up the trees looking for eggs and baby birds. There was a hullabaloo when that happened!

Squawking and screeching with dive bombing and a huge carry on until the snake either had its meal or decided it was not worth it, this time, and moved off.



Occasionally a goanna of monstrous size (*at least to all these little creatures*) would lumber through on his way from here to there and everyone would go quiet, watching until he passed. They certainly did not want to attract his attention ... he was the ‘big boss’ of the woods and liked to eat their eggs, swallowing them down in a single gulp! Goannas had big burrows dug in the hills, just like the rabbits only much larger, and long necks that let them see all around, a bit like a telescope. Even though most goannas were large, they managed to walk quietly, so if you were not alert they could be right there before you knew it! It was quite a shock to turn around and come face to face with a goanna when you least expected it!

Gigan was the king of the goannas around these parts and the scars all over him were proof of his ferocity and the number of battles he had fought. When he came near a wave of stillness emanated from the forest and everyone watched their step, even the other goannas. He had run up a tall TwoLegs one day and toppled him like a sapling! To cover his embarrassment at having mistaken the TwoLegs for a tree (*he was really trying to get away*) he had swung back with his tail and knocked the TwoLegs senseless. No one mentioned the fact that he had made a mistake at all – it was remembered as ‘the day Gigan had won the battle with the TwoLegs’, especially by Gigan. To everyone else he was a giant dragon and there was no doubt of his ability to eat smaller creatures in one go...

Due to his age and general demeanour, he tended to be a bit on the crabby side, rarely up for a chat with other goannas, even his son Varanus. The only one who would ever stop him was Varanidae the oldest of the females. She was used to getting her way... There were a few scars on her motley hide

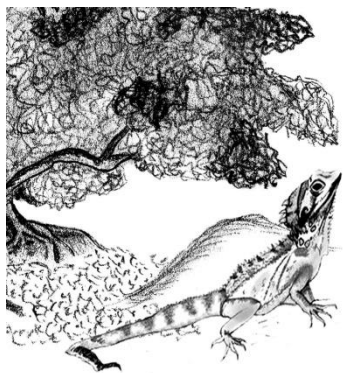




as well and she had lost a claw in one confrontation with a feisty underling who thought she could oust the older female. None of them had tried it since then – Sussina, the younger one, died not long after that beating.

Leapin' Lizard was waiting for his friends to bring his afternoon treat. The kids from the farmhouse in the next valley came to play after 'school' - a place they went to most days to learn stuff they could not learn in the valley. It was a bit beyond Leapin' how that could be possible, but then who knew what was out there far beyond his home?

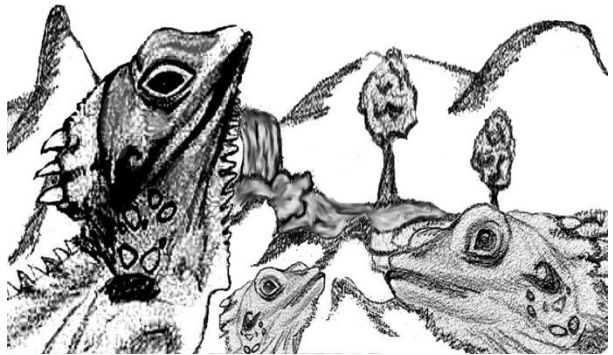
'Well, he certainly didn't care, it was mighty fine right here,' he thought as he snapped up a delicious beetle flying by. He was a most content lizard. The kids brought him bananas most days even if it was raining, but only if it was raining just a bit. He had everything he needed and more, a wonderful home under the gum tree, in a rocky ledge, all snug and dry. Rocks were good for that, the water didn't soak into them and they made it run off away from his bed. The pretty quartz crystals he had collected from the creek bed adorned his little sanctuary – there were clear ones, some streaked with orange and even smoky coloured ones; there were yellow and pink ones, and some were purple. The oddball lizard loved how the sun glistened through them and bounced off at different times of day making 'jiggly' spots of light on the creek bed wall.



Then there were also coloured rocks, the richest ochres and greens, reds and browns of many shades and even though they didn't play with the light, they went all different shades depending on how wet they were. This was by no means a normal habit of water dragons, but as Leapin' was not normal in any way, it was quite what one would expect from him! No one noticed the shadows that walked between the trees, watching him from time to time...

The sun light danced through his burrow as it rose above the hill each morning and he just loved that greeting for the day. As he emerged there would be gorgeous droplets of sparkling colour all over the valley when the sun sent rays of light through the dewdrops scattered on the grass and leaves; everywhere there was thousands of colours greeting him and winking brilliantly at whoever wanted to see. The view took in a whole chunk of the creek and everything downhill from there – not much went on down that way without him knowing! He liked having that vantage point – the goannas mostly lived on the other side of the valley and that was how he wanted it to stay. They needed bigger spaces for their burrows and the rabbits took up most of the flats.

Even though there were loads of water dragons living here, they all managed to avoid running into each other and such. There was always plenty of food for them all and the creek was just right for their needs. Water dragons like him didn't really need a lot of room 'cos they were so good at fitting into the smallest of spaces when they needed to and making a burrow was one of those times. It was so wonderful in summer when their tiny heads would appear at the entrances to their burrows, at first slowly and then all of a sudden all the baby dragons would pop out of the rocks and crevasses and see the sky for the first time. 'It just gets better every year!' Leapin' would often say to himself. That was another odd thing about him: most boy dragons just didn't care about that sort of thing and certainly would not talk about it! He had tried to be like that, thinking he was doing something wrong when he watched the babies come out and greeted them. It was just too depressing and he could not stop his feet from jumping or stop the excitement from making him want to dance. All those little ones looking so very cute and he could feel it



again, how it was for him the first time, coming out as he felt the earth under his brand new claws and tail and belly. The sun was awesome too – the way it heated up his entire body and soaked in through the skin, shone on everything and made the water glisten, sending reflections all over the place. No sir, this lizard was not going to miss that – EVER! It was way too much joy ... and they wondered why he kept looking so young!

Yep, everything was as good as it could get...



Amongst the water dragons, blue tongues and skinks of the lizard kingdom he had always stood out. He got his name because he had another odd habit – he sort of hopped from one spot to the next. It looked as though he moved in a series of leaps. All the other lizards scurried, which was much more usual. Leapin’s tail was twice as long as all the other water dragons’ tails and he had a tendency to be on ‘fast’ mode all the time, ALL the time! Up to now, everyone else just accepted that, although he was often the source of raucous amusement to the kookaburras and other creatures had a quiet chuckle. It did look even funnier from above, especially when he had his neck stretched up, trying to see who was laughing at him, mid leap.



The kids from the farm loved the way Leapin’ was and that is why they made sure to bring him bananas in the afternoons. It had started when they had thrown a bit of leftover banana from a snack one day. Leapin’ had appeared from out of nowhere and caught the morsel in mid air. You can imagine the games that followed! The other lizards soon worked out what time the kids came and arrived beneath grandmother fig just as Leapin’ and the banana bearing neighbours appeared. The kids lived on the banana farm in the next valley so there was always a plentiful supply.

There was something in the air that was different this day, even all the rain and minor flooding over the last few weeks didn’t account for it. It was drizzling and there was a dampening of spirits upon the whole valley. As though a huge ‘wet blanket’ had been laid over it. He had noticed that the birds didn’t have the same enthusiasm in their flitting and one or two that were usually the most ‘flitty’, had not been at all. Lesueurii dragon, who lived just down the slope from him hadn’t even come out today and that was most unusual in a disturbing way. She loved the morning as much as he



did and they usually sat at their front doors, surveying the creek and all below them with a nod or six and a few comments here and there. It was such a delightful way to begin the day; he missed her presence this morning and made a note to check in on her later on if she didn't emerge.

The bell frogs were not as eager in their crok, croks and croak, croaks not to mention the 'crawk, crawk' of the tree frogs being quieter than usual, especially with rain about. He usually enjoyed the sounds of their yakking as he went off to sleep; it lulled him gently into slumber as though being rocked off to sleep by mother earth herself. This was just another strange thing that Leapin' liked, also not common for a male water dragon. He knew they all liked it too, he didn't know how, he just knew! In his point of view that meant they were the 'scaredys', not him, because they cared what everyone else thought and couldn't have the fun of talking about it. Oh well, it did not matter to him, just would have been nice to have a chat and see what others heard, it was similar, but different every time.

Leapin' was pondering this when he heard the familiar and most welcome sounds of chatter and squeaky spokes coming down the track. Oh well, he certainly wasn't going to miss out on his treats and shrugged the glooming feeling off for now. When the three bikes arrived and turfed their riders off, or that was how it looked to Leapin', he was all mouth and legs in readiness to catch his first titbit. "Watch out Flitzy!" yelled Bogus as they nearly careened into each other in their eagerness to dismount. Kalim watched with his usual expression of amiable tolerance. These three kids had their own special ways about them – and they did seem unusual for TwoLegs.



Flitzy had a way of hearing just about everything that the creatures were thinking, even the trees, it had been a surprise at first when the valley inhabitants had realised this. She had interrupted a conversation

between two of the kookaburras and Ficus had done a funny shimmer thing when it happened. You should have seen the look on the kookas faces! Priceless, that was. They had been so intent on their argument about who should get the head and who should have the tail of a rather large grass snake they'd landed that they didn't quite realise she was talking to them, at first ...



‘Just take it in turns and stop all the jabber!’ had pierced through their raucous voices all-of-a-sudden and they’d sat there, stunned staring ahead as if someone had turned them off. It was so funny and then a lot of quiet as the dawning began. Bit by bit everyone in the vicinity realised that something immensely odd had just happened, especially when Ficus, the Great Grandmother Fig, began to have a ‘conversation’ rather tentatively, with the girl. It went on for quite a while and as it did, an awareness that something that had NEVER happened before, had happened. A day to remember that was – occasionally you could still hear a mother telling her little one about it, explaining that when the kids came, it was ok as you could always talk to the girl and she would hear you.

Bogus had a way knowing if anyone told a lie or tried to pretend something – not so much in words or thoughts, but he just did not buy it! One of the other kids from another farm had come one day and was throwing the eggs from the peewees nest at a rock. Quite a shock that was, no one had ever seen the like before; eggs were eaten sometimes, but never just smashed and killed like that for no reason. Bogus had caught up with him further down the track and asked him what he was doing. When the boy lied and said he was just throwing rocks at a target, Bogus did not believe

him and made the liar show him. When the kid tried to trick him and walk a different way, Bogus knew the right way and made him go to where he'd been doing it. Sure enough, there were the smashed eggs, streaming down the rock. Well, the kid was never going to come back to this valley once Bogus finished with him! That was how the valley creatures got to know and love Bogus.

Kalim was always the calm one of the three, keeping watch on them and if they got too excited or agitated he could get them to be more peaceful in seconds. He was the oldest. He had a 'presence' about him that spread to anyone near him. When Bogus got really mad at the boy who lied, Kalim just stood by, not saying a word and watched Bogus like a hawk. He knew how much his brother loved little creatures and if anything got his dander up, it was hurting them! Bogus was well and truly ready to throttle the kid, but every now and then he let out a breath and simmered down, looking at Kalim when he did. He got control of his anger and told the boy off, letting him know that if he came back again or hurt any animals, he **WOULD** throttle him good and proper! No one had any doubt about that.



Flitzzy, Bogus, Kalim and Leapin'

This had all been quite interesting indeed to the creatures of this quiet little domain and the trio were now pretty much part of it, the valley inhabitants knew they were ‘good eggs’ - even if they were TwoLegs. That was how the ritual of afternoon and weekend visits had begun ...

This day though, Leapin’ noticed that the kids seemed a bit more agitated. “Yes! We are Leapin!” exclaimed Flitzy. She often said stuff aloud so that the two boys knew what was going on and then she did not have to repeat everything over and over. The animals had to watch themselves sometimes when she was around – some things were just valley business and creature stuff and they could forget at times that she heard them or just ‘knew’ what was going on. Leapin’ really liked these kids, not only because of the food; they were fun and they did not hurt anyone here. In fact, everyone liked them all right.

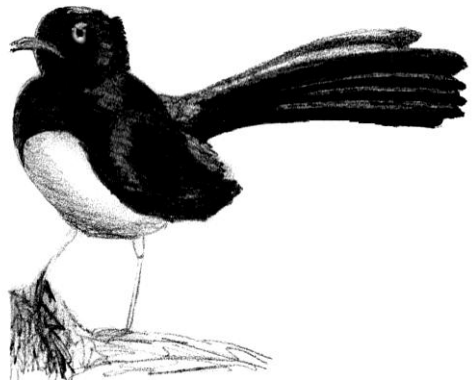




Some of the tall TwoLegs that came had nasty intent and even guns at times. If the valley went quiet when the goannas came it was deadly silent when those TwoLegs drove in with their fast trucks covered in lights. They mostly tried to kill wallabies, rabbits or foxes and sometimes went for the possums too. It was usually night time when they came and occasionally they would arrive in daylight. Their vehicles would roar in fast with lights blazing and would often blind a rabbit or wallaby. Then they would not be able to move because they could not see or they would just hop about frantically trying to get away, bumping into things in their panic. They were a 'gonner' then. It was terrifying and worse still when the big buffoons just left the bodies smashed up and bloody on the ground.

The little echidnas would get run over, and bandicoots too. Some nights the sounds of the men's raucous glee filled the whole valley. Little baby birds would drop dead with sheer fright. The extent of the frenzy depended on how many of those shiny things they tossed on the ground. Flitzzy said they were called 'cans' and had 'alcohol' in them. TwoLegs drank too much of it at times and got 'drunk', a bit like when the parrots ate too many of the red berries. The difference was that the parrots just got silly and would hang upside down from the branches or fall to the ground! These TwoLegs got nasty and took it out on the creatures who couldn't fight back. Bullies she called them. She said they did it to each other as well – showed them all in their heads, the fighting was ferocious. It wasn't even for mating or territory, seemed to be about nothing at all most of the time.

No other critters acted like that!



Flitzzy had one of those ‘far away’ looks she got sometimes. They all knew to wait, then she would tell. The boys flipped bits of banana and peach to the lizards while they waited. A cheeky possum dived in and nicked a few bits, darting back up Ficus. It was another little ‘oddness’ for a possum to be about at this time of day, they had started to add up to Leapin’... The waiting was getting to him and he was getting bored! Well, probably a bit nervous really, something was brewing. Bogus and Kalim were scuffling about with each other under the fig, she was called ‘Ficus’ and was the oldest of any still alive here. They loved climbing around her huge branches that hung low to the ground and were big enough to run on!

From the expression on her face when Flitzzy turned around, Leapin’ knew he had been right, something was up! A barrage of images and sounds flooded through his head - screams and crashes, metal giants tearing and stomping on the ground; feathers flying through the air with flurries of fur and red stuff ... blood! None of it was clear, and it was not good! An instantaneous hush filtered through the forest as a ripple of alert spread.

Each critter seemed to wait with baited breath to see what was coming next ... stunned by the ferocity of the sudden onslaught.



The two boys would have been oblivious to it all if it hadn't been for the sudden and overwhelming silence that took over the valley...