



N^{The}CTURNALS

The Peculiar Possum



Tracey Hecht
Illustrated by Josie Yee

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info@fabledfilms.com

Published by Fabled Films LLC, New York

ISBN: 978-1-944020-19-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018944489

First Edition: October 2018

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Cover Designed by Jaime Mendola-Hobbie

Jacket & Interior Art by Josie Yee

Interior Book Design by Aleks Gulan

Typeset in Stemple Garamond, Mrs. Ant and Pacific Northwest

Printed by Everbest in China

FABLED FILMS PRESS

NEW YORK CITY

fabledfilms.com

For information on bulk purchases for promotional use please contact Consortium Book Sales & Distribution Sales department at ingrampublishersvcs@ingramcontent.com or 1-866-400-5351.

The Peculiar Possum

by

Tracey Hecht

Illustrations by
Josie Yee

Fabled Films Press
New York

Chapter 1

The stars were twinkling.

The moon was bright.

But a fox, a pangolin, and a sugar glider
were wide awake.

They were nocturnal, and it was time for
their breakfast.



“Pah!” Bismark exclaimed.

“Where are all my pomelos?”

This tree is usually filled with them!

But tonight I can find only one!”



Bismark folded his
sugar glider flaps.

Bismark tapped his
tiny foot.



Bismark scratched the
bald spot on his head.



Suddenly, a strange noise
filled the night air.

CLUCK
CLUCK
CLATTER!
CHIT
CHIT
CHATTER!

“Oh goodness,” Tobin said.

Tobin scrunched his scaly shoulders.

Tobin clasped his pangolin claws.

“What was that?” Tobin asked.



The fox took a step forward.

The fox's name was Dawn.

"Hello?" Dawn said to the darkness.

"Is someone there?"



CLUCK
CLUCK
CLATTER!
CHIT
CHIT
CHATTER!

The strange noise sounded again!

Chapter 2

“Great gliders!” Bismark gasped.

“First, I cannot find my pomelos.

Then there is a strange chit and chatter.

I know what it is.

We have a prowler in our presence!”



“Oh goodness!” Tobin whispered.
“A prowler?”

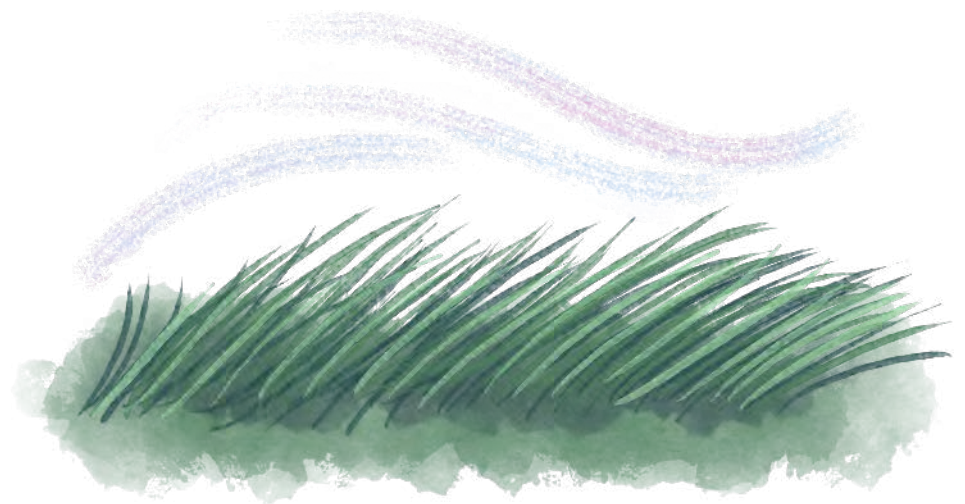
“Yes,” Bismark said. “A prowler of my
pomelos! A thief!”



Suddenly, the wind blew.

The shadows shifted.

A strange smell filled the air.



Tobin's eyes grew wide.

"That *is* an odd odor," Tobin said.

"I do not know that scent.
Maybe we do have a prowler!"



Dawn raised her head.

She sniffed the air with her snout.

"The smell is coming from up there."
Dawn pointed to the branches of the
pomelo tree.

WHISH!
WHISH!

Above them, the branches parted.
Out popped two shiny, brown eyes.
And a paw, holding a pomelo!



Chapter 3

“Popping peepers!” Bismark bellowed.

“There is the prowler!

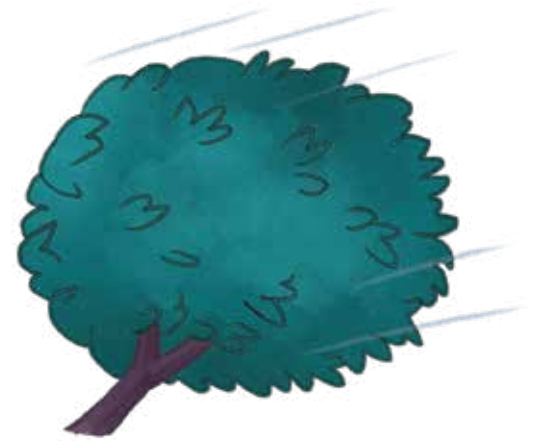
And it has one of my precious pomelos!”



WHISH!

The peepers vanished.

The paw and the pomelo disappeared, too.



The branches on the right rustled.



The branches on the left rustled.



And then, out rolled a pomelo!
It plonked right down onto the ground.



“Oh my,” Tobin said.

“I think the prowler has
returned the pomelo!”

CLUCK
CLUCK
CLATTER!
CHIT
CHIT
CHATTER!

The branches parted again.

This time, the prowler appeared.

The prowler blinked her big peepers.

The prowler wiggled her pointy ears.



The prowler swung
from the hairless
patch of her tail.

And then, the prowler
plopped right down in
front of them!



★ The NOCTURNALS ★ FUN FACTS! ★

What are The Nocturnal Animals?



Pangolin: The pangolin is covered with keratin scales on most of its body except its belly and face. Pangolins spray a stinky odor, much like a skunk, to ward off danger. It then curls into a ball to protect against attack. Pangolins have long, sticky tongues to eat ants and termites. Pangolins do not have teeth.



Red Fox: The red fox has reddish fur with a big bushy tail and a white tip. Red foxes are clever creatures with keen eyesight. They have large, upright ears to hear sounds far away.



Sugar Glider: The sugar glider is a small marsupial. It looks like a flying squirrel. It has short gray fur and black rings around its big eyes. It has a black stripe that runs from its nose to the end of its tail. Sugar gliders have special skin that stretches from the ankle to the wrist. This special skin allows sugar gliders to glide from tree to tree to find food and escape danger.

Brushtail Possum: The brushtail possum is one of the largest tree dwelling marsupials. They have a pointed face, long oval ears, pink nose, and bushy tail. They spend their days asleep in their nest and feed on plants at night. They rely on sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste to move around in the forest.



Nighttime Fun Facts!

Pomelos are fruits much like grapefruits. They are the Nocturnal Brigade's favorite food to eat. They have yellow or light green peels and pink citrusy flesh. They are the biggest citrus fruits in the world!



Nocturnal animals are animals that are awake and active at night. They sleep during the day.



Language Glossary

Bizarre

(bih-zahr) *adjective*
very strange, weird, or unusual

Perfect

(pur-fikt) *adjective*
having no mistakes; so good that it can't be better

Proud

(proud) *adjective*
very happy with yourself or others

Speak

(speek) *verb*
to talk or to say something

Unique

(yoo-neek) *adjective*
not like anything or anyone else

Language Glossary

	Bizarre	Perfect	Proud	Speak	Unique
Arabic	غريب (gha-reeb)	في احسن الاحوال (fi-ahsan-al-ahwal)	فخور (fahk-our)	أتكلم (a-tak-ka-lam)	فريد (fah-reed)
French	bizarre (bee-zar)	parfait (par-fay)	fière (fee-air)	je parle (zhe-parl)	unique (oo-neek)
Mandarin	奇异的 (chee-yee-duh)	完美 (wan-may)	骄傲 (jow-ow)	我说 (wo-shwo)	独特 (doo-tuh)
Portuguese	bizarro (bee-zah-ho)	perfeito (per-fay-too)	orgulhoso (our-gul-ozo)	eu falo (eeu-fahlo)	único (ouni-kou)
Spanish	raro (rah-row)	perfecto (pur-fect-oh)	orgullosa (or-gew-yo-soh)	yo hablo (yo ah-blow)	único (ew-knee-coh)

Be proud to be unique! Look up other languages at growandread.com or at your local library.

About the Author

Tracey Hecht is a writer and entrepreneur who has written, directed and produced for film. She created a Nocturnals Read Aloud Writing Program in partnership with the New York Public Library that has expanded nationwide. Tracey splits her time between Oquossoc, Maine and New York City.

About the Illustrator

Josie Yee is an award-winning illustrator and graphic artist specializing in children's publishing. She received her BFA from Arizona State University and studied Illustration at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. She lives in New York City with her daughter, Ana, and their cat, Dude.

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Ages 5-7



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