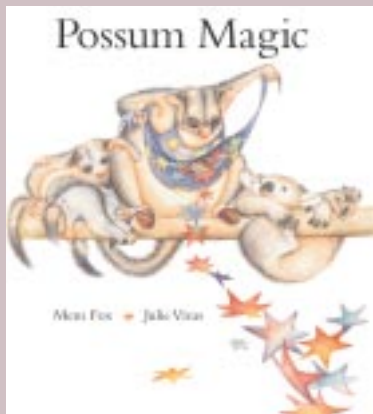


Books by Mem Fox

Younger readers

Possum Magic

Illustrated by Julie Vivas
Omnibus Books 1983



21st Birthday Edition

Grandma Poss makes bush magic, and her best magic was the one that made baby Hush invisible. But when Hush says that she is sick of being invisible, Grandma Poss must remember what that magic was. She knows it has something to do with food, but which food? Hush and Grandma Poss set off around Australia to find the food that will make Hush visible again.

For the new birthday edition, the book was redesigned and reset in close collaboration with Mem Fox and Julie Vivas. Julie also recoloured some illustrations to restore the bright colours of the original artwork.

Possum Magic Limited Edition Boxed Set

The collectors' set, limited to 500 numbered copies signed by the author and illustrator, includes a clothbound *Possum Magic*, a numbered Dancing Possums art print signed by Julie Vivas, and a copy of *From Mouse to Magic: The Making of Possum Magic*, presented in a clothbound box.

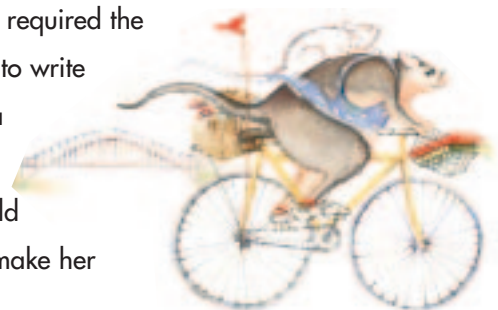


MEM FOX

Mem Fox is the author of many internationally published children's picture books as well as inspiring books for adults about her other passions, reading and teaching. In Australia she is perhaps best known as the author of *Possum Magic*, a latter-day classic among Australian picture books which celebrates its 21st birthday in 2004. *Possum Magic* was Mem's first picture book.

Mem, the Australian-born child of expatriate missionaries, grew up in Zimbabwe, and was raised on a steady diet of Australian stories and images by a homesick mother. 'My mother raved about everything Australian: the beaches, the animals, Holden cars and Anzac biscuits. She would sing us songs like *The Road to Gundagai* and read me and my sisters wonderful books such as *Snugglypot and Cuddlepie* and *Blinky Bill*, and she encouraged us, when we were older, to read the entire works of Mary Grant Bruce. She also made sure we had records of Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, which we listened to again and again. My dad was just as Australian. One of the first things he did on the mission was to plant a large grove of eucalyptus across the road from our house. So I grew up steeped in Australian culture, proud of it, and part of it.'

In the mid-1960s Mem went to London to study drama, returning to Australia with her husband Malcolm in 1970. Passionate about all things Australian, Mem wanted her daughter Chloë to read about her own culture in Australian picture books. She was shocked to find few in print. Her greatest wish was to write in celebration of all those things she had been taught to love in absentia. When her lecturer at Flinders University required the Children's Literature students to write a picture book, Mem wrote a story about an invisible mouse who travelled the world to find what was needed to make her



Illustrations by Julie Vivas

Younger Readers

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald

Partridge

Illustrated by Julie Vivas
Omnibus Books 1984



Wilfrid lives next door to an old people's home. He likes all the people who live there, but his favourite is Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper, who has four names, just as he does. So when he discovers that Miss Nancy has lost her memory, it is only natural that he should help her to find it ...

Time for Bed

Illustrated by Jane Dyer
Omnibus Books 1993



Darkness is falling and everywhere little ones are growing sleepy and being tucked into bed. Sleep tight!

Wombat Divine

Illustrated by Kerry Argent
Omnibus Books 1995



Wombat loves Christmas. He loves the cards and the candles, the presents and the pudding. Most of all he loves the Nativity Play, and now that he is old enough, he wants to be in it himself. But finding the right part for Wombat is no easy matter!

visible again, and finally found it in Australia. 'Hush, the Invisible Mouse', was quite long, and stories about mice a little too much in evidence at the time. Nine publishers rejected Mem's story, in spite of the set of ten paintings by Julie Vivas of Hush and her grandmother Grainy that accompanied it on its rounds.

'Jane Covernton and Sue Williams at Omnibus Books in Adelaide accepted my story – to my intense joy! – and then asked me to cut it by two-thirds, rewrite the rest more lyrically, and make it even more Australian by replacing the mice with more obviously Australian characters.'

Slowly the story and the illustrations came together and a legend was born. When *Possum Magic* hit the bookshops the first print run sold out in weeks. A reprint followed, then another, then another. The rest, as they say, is history.

As Omnibus Books publisher Dyan Blacklock says, '*Possum Magic* broke all the rules. It was fresh and vibrant, young and cheeky, and best of all it celebrated our Australianness: our food and animals, our plants and trees. Here was a book about us.'

Since the publication of *Possum Magic* in 1983, Mem has written many other picture books including *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, also illustrated by Julie Vivas, *Night Noises*, illustrated by Terry Denton, and *Wombat Divine*, illustrated by Kerry Argent.

Mem travels extensively to promote books and literacy. In between times she writes for publishers in Australia and America. In 1993 she was made AM for services to the cultural life of Australia in the Australia Day Honours list, and in 2003 Mem was awarded the Prime Minister's Centenary of Federation medal for services to Australian literature.



Illustration by Kerry Argent