

THREADS SYNOPSIS

Set along the Mid North Coast's 180km Rainforest Road, Waterfall Way, Threads is a poetic eco-musical that journeys through the vibrant rainforest's ecosystem, exploring the mycelium threads network beneath the surface that is invisible to the human eye. The story unfolds across two distinct realms: 'Earthside', where all plant, animal, and tree life exists, and the 'Threads', where trees can send their souls underground to interact, exchange nutrients, and communicate with one another.

The tale begins with Mama Blue, a wise and revered Blue Quandong Tree, and her companion Bere, a blueberry tree not native to the rainforest, brought across as a young seedling by Rusty the Bat. Rusty, known for his cheeky nature, brings seeds from all over to the Rainforest. Mama Blue and Bere communicate through the vital underground Threads, exchanging messages and nutrients to maintain balance within the ecosystem. Meanwhile, Ash, a dramatic Blue Ash Tree known for his "Prima Donna" flair, sends an urgent message to Mama Blue, begging for help due to dehydration. Whilst Mama Blue is not overly concerned with Ash's overdramatic plea, she waits for the right time so she can teach her young apprentice Pip how to send water through the Threads to sustain the plants. There's also an underlying tension in their relationship: Ash and Mama Blue have harbored unresolved romantic feelings for each other, having grown up side by side for decades. Being different species, their families disapproved of any relationship between them, leaving their feelings complicated and unspoken.

The focus shifts to Pip, Mama Blue's apprentice, who yearns to enter into the Threads. As part of her teachings, Mama Blue recounts the tragic tale of the Red Cedar trees, once the jewels of the rainforest 150 years ago, now nearly extinct due to over-logging by Zoomans (humans) who used them to build their "zoos" (buildings). Mama Blue also shares a rare Red Cedar seedling that Rusty the Bat brought to her, a symbol of hope amidst the loss.

Meanwhile, the residents of Waterfall Way like the grumpy Koko the Koala and the mischievous Eucalyptus Twins bring levity to the story with their antics and humor. The arrival of Thoth, an Ibis bird dressed in plastic couture (or "plasteek") which he struggles to free himself from - sparking a conversation about the harm caused by human pollution and the cruelty of labeling an ancient species like the bin chicken as a mere symbol of trash.

The community of Waterfall Way bands together to help Thoth, leading to a pivotal moment where they vow to fight for the survival of the planet. As a storm finally arrives, it signifies the possibility of renewal, symbolizing the power of collective action to heal the world. Mama Blue begins Threads Lessons 101 with Pip, teaching her how to enter the Threads and connect with the mycelium network below. Pip struggles initially, but after sharing her anxieties with Mama Blue, she is able to let go of her fear and enter the Threads. Through this underground network, Pip and Mama Blue reach Ash, delivering him the water he so desperately needed. However, Ash's response is just as dramatic as ever - he complains that Mama Blue didn't personally save him, yet begrudgingly thanks Pip for the water.

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The story takes another turn when Thoth returns, now covered in pink spray paint, a result of human interference. His distress represents the way nature is marked and scarred by human actions. In his emotional song, "Breadcrumb Love", Thoth expresses his frustration with the disrespect from humans - whom he refers to as "Zoomans"- and the harmful impact of their careless behavior. The characters of Waterfall Way unite to help Thoth remove the paint, working together to use the rainforest's natural resources to cleanse him.

Tensions heighten as Koko warns of an impending threat to Waterfall Way. Mama Blue and Ash prepare to venture into the Threads to uncover the messages others in the ecosystem are sending. The group faces the threat of Lantana, an invasive plant that marks trees with a symbol of doom. The characters rally together, determined to protect their home from this destructive force, emphasising unity and resilience in the face of growing danger.

Unable to locate the Eucalyptus Twins, Mama Blue decides to enter the Threads herself to warn them and others of the approaching danger. Meanwhile, Average Joe, a land manager, arrives to cut down the Eucalyptus trees that have been marked by Lantana. As the climax unfolds, the characters face the brink of annihilation. Lantana's increasing spread threatens the entire ecosystem, forcing the characters to make heartbreaking sacrifices to protect their home. In a deeply emotional scene, Mama Blue and Ash transition from Earthside to the Threads as their tree forms are felled by Average Joe, symbolizing the fragile balance between life and death, growth and decay. Though they can never return to Earthside, their souls remain together in the Threads, an experience they could never fully embrace as separate tree species.

Lantana's relentless spread suffocates Bere, who had been entrusted with the rare and precious Red Cedar seed - a symbol of humanity's over-exploitation of the land. Average Joe attempts to spray the Lantana in an effort to control it, but in doing so, he inadvertently sprays Bere, causing her to sacrifice herself in order to protect the precious seedling. As Pip transitions between the Threads and Earthside, she finally plants her unsettled roots into Mama Blue's fallen trunk and helps raise the seedling alongside Thoth and Koko, the last remaining characters.

In the final scenes, the battle against destruction leads to the realisation that new life will emerge from the sacrifices made. The musical ends on a hopeful note, reaffirming the characters' renewed connection to the earth and their collective commitment to protect its future. Threads is a celebration of the resilience of nature, the bonds between all living things, and the power of collective action in the face of environmental peril.

**STORY INSPIRED BY
DR. KARL KRUSZELNICKI'S
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