



SUSAN

**Susan and  
the Memory  
Blanket**



**Australian  
Childhood  
Foundation**

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Susan's best friend is a bird called Mabel. For as long as they both remembered they had played with each other in and around the Big Tree. They had danced and skipped across branches, sung songs and jumped in and out of the tree's many nooks and crannies. Mabel had lived in the Big Tree since she hatched. She and Susan had met in Tree school soon after Susan first appeared in the Big Tree.



Mabel's mother had told Mabel about the night when Susan first arrived. It was very late and there was a great storm. The moon delivered Susan to the foot of the tree. She was skin and bones and soaking wet. The moon entrusted her to the creatures of the tree. He said that she had been through a difficult journey and needed a safe place to stay. She had nothing with her but a filthy, wet blanket. The Big Tree had welcomed her with open arms. Now Mabel's fur shone and she glowed with health. The Big Tree was her home and she loved it there.



It was Saturday night and Susan had arrived at Mabel's for a sleep over with her old blanket and some cupcakes. After a fun evening of hanging out, eating cupcakes and gazing at the stars the friends tucked up on branches to share a midnight snack before sleep time. Susan wrapped her blanket around her and waited. She eventually nodded off, but tossed and turned until Mabel woke her up in the early hours of the morning looking worried. "I think you had a bad dream" said Mabel. "You were crying out." Susan felt ashamed.



Susan admitted that she sometimes had bad dreams and worries that visited her during the day. She said she thought they were sent to her from the time before she came to the Big Tree. The friends sat beside one another on Mabel's favourite branch and talked until the sun woke up. Its warm golden rays felt like a rainbow after a storm.

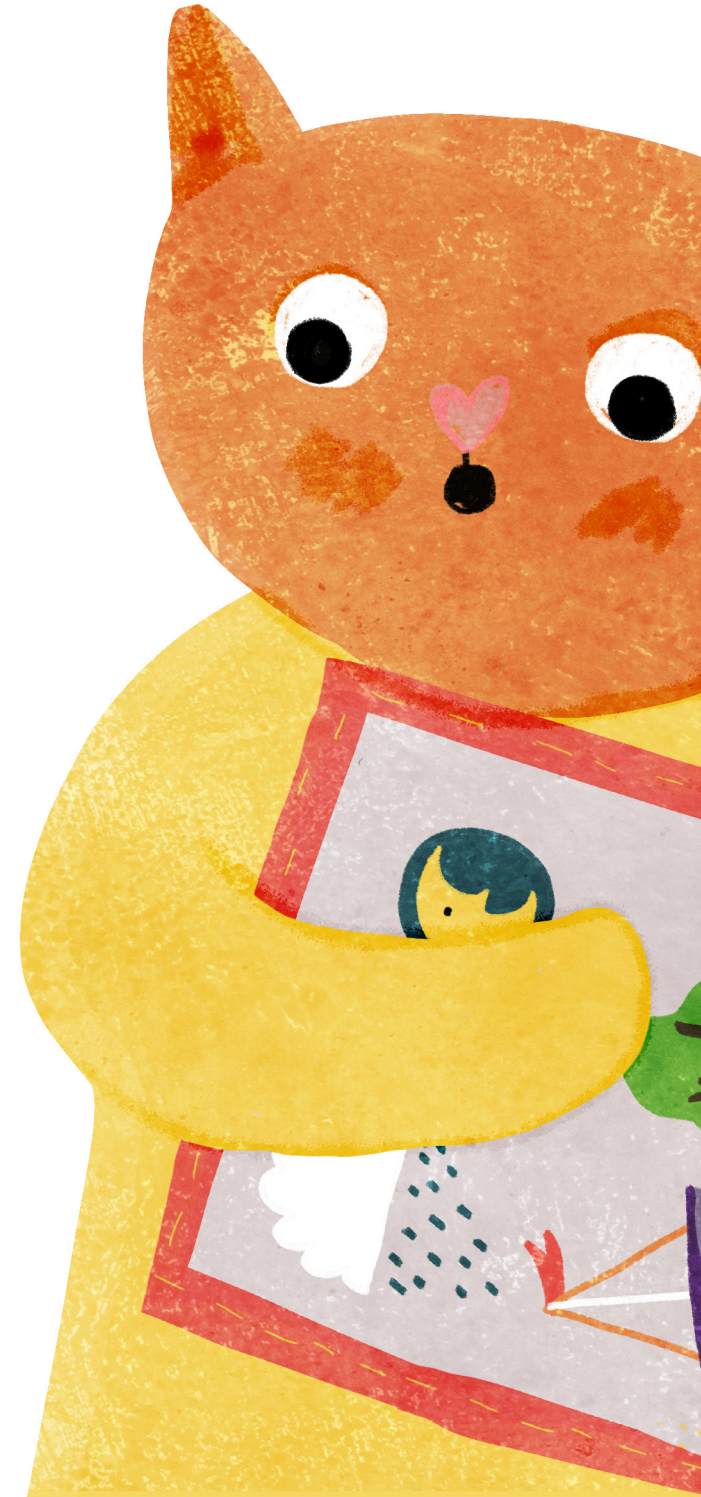


Later that morning Mabel and Susan shared pancakes with banana and maple syrup for breakfast before Susan had to leave for an appointment on the other side of the tree. Mabel said she should pick her blanket up on her way back through. Mabel secretly had a plan. She waved Susan off and launched into action. She picked up Susan's blanket, and her sewing things, and set to work.





Susan returned to Mabel's place later that day. Mabel looked like she had been up to something. "What's this?" Susan said, as Mabel handed her a bulging shopping bag. Susan pulled her blanket out of the bag. "I did some sewing today" said Mabel. Susan opened out her blanket. Mabel quickly added, "I can change it back if you don't like it." Susan's mouth fell open. Her old blanket had been transformed.





The blanket shone with shapes and colours.

“I sewed memories on there from your life. Like a picture of the big storm and your journey to get to the Big Tree. But I also added other stuff, like the Moon that brought you here, and our Big Tree, and me, and the sunrise from this morning, and every other morning.” Susan’s eyes welled with tears. “I saw the way you wrapped up in your blanket when it was time to go to sleep. Like you hoped that it would protect you from something. I can’t change whatever happened before you came to the tree, but I can show you that you don’t have to face that stuff on your own. We are all with you now, sewn on, permanent.” Susan gave her friend a big hug. It was the best thing anyone had ever given her.





That night, Susan wrapped her precious blanket around her little body. It felt different from all the nights before. She smiled to herself. She knew that she mattered and that she wasn't alone. Her friends from the Big Tree not only lived on her blanket, they also lived in her heart and her mind and that was the best feeling in the world.



If you had a precious blanket that had the most important things in your life sewn on it- what would they be?

Who matters to you?

Who do you matter to?

Do you have someone in your life that you can talk with or just sit beside comfortably like Mabel?