

Crown Park



Jack Stewart hates his new life in Taupo. Everyone at school picks on him; his only friend is a stray cat called Chainsaw; and his parents are always away working.

Then he meets Fluoro, Taupo's most visible street person. Fluoro's home is an old explosion crater in Crown Park where steam and poisonous gases still hiss and ooze from the ground. Jack soon finds that Fluoro has chosen this place, not just for the heat coming from deep inside the earth, but because it provides a link to the last eruption of Lake Taupo, two thousand years before.

With the man's help, Jack learns how to take his mind back to when moa and other ancient animals faced the world's greatest eruption since history began. Along with a group of creatures called the Luce Crew, they embark on a rescue mission that threatens not only animals in the past, but humans in the present.

What the author says:

As a child I was fascinated by blocks of pumice that I found on Foxton Beach in the Manawatu. I was amazed that something so light and brittle could be called a rock. When told that it had been spewed out of a volcano, I had to know more. Thus began a lifetime interest in volcanoes, particularly the one we call Lake Taupo. Many years later when I first turned to writing fiction, high on my list was a story covering Taupo's most recent explosion. I wanted my characters to witness the event, which meant having them travel back in time. The problem was that I didn't write fantasy. After several failed attempts I came up with a structure that I thought would work. It meant writing the story for younger readers than were my usual target — aged 7 up rather than 9 up.

Classroom Activities

Reading

1. Where is Crown Park?
2. Name four important human characters.
3. When did Taupo last erupt?
4. How do the characters travel back to the time of the eruption?
5. Name the members of the Luce Crew and their species.
6. Describe the personality of each member of the Luce Crew.
7. What mammals lived around Lake Taupo back at the time of the eruption?
8. The main character Jack has a health problem. What is it, and how does it affect his life?
9. Who are the animal antagonists in the story?
10. Who are the human ones?
11. What character feature of the human antagonists makes sure they fall for Fluoro's trap?

Oral language

Take one of the following scenes and rewrite it as a play. Once done, act it out for others in the class.

1. The first section of chapter four where Jack follows Chainsaw into Fluoro's home. *Requires three players.*

2. Chapter six where Fluoro and Jack meet the Luce Crew. *Requires seven players.*
 3. Chapter eight — the Bennett brothers' first attack. *Requires four players.*
 4. The first two sections of chapter 13 where Jack saves the moho in the sinkhole. *Requires at least 10 players.*
- Written language*

Visual language

1. The story describes five main phases to the eruption:
 - a. Small steam eruptions in the lake.
 - b. Earthquakes and small ash eruptions.
 - c. A cone has formed in the lake, spewing ash.
 - d. The vent bulges and molten material forms a high column.
 - e. The column collapses and a pyroclastic flow occurs.

Use descriptions from the book to plan and create a poster that shows these five phases.

2. Redesign the cover of the book.

About the Author



Des Hunt was a science and technology teacher for forty years before becoming a full-time writer in 2007. Prior to that he wrote a range of text books stretching back to 1974. Since concentrating on children's novels he's had 16 books published, with three being finalists in the NZ Post Children's Book Awards, one a LIANZA finalist, and seven Storylines Notable Books. Crown Park is his first venture into independent publishing.

Publications — Fiction

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| 2013 | Project Huia — Scholastic NZ |
| | The Last Tuatara — Scholastic NZ |
| | Crown Park — Oceanbooks |
| | Phantom of Terawhiti — Harper Collins |
| 2012 | Steel Pelicans — Harper Collins |
| | Trail of a Kiwi Killer — APN Newspapers |
| 2011 | Cody's Unexpected Catch — Harper Collins |
| | Peco Incident — Harper Collins |
| 2010 | The Crocodile Nest — Harper Collins |
| 2009 | Whale Pot Bay — Harper Collins |
| | The Secret of Jelly Mountain — Scholastic NZ |
| | Cry of the Taniwha — Harper Collins |
| 2008 | The Tooth — Harper Collins |
| 2007 | Where Cuckoos Call — Harper Collins |
| | Shadows in the Ice — Harper Collins |
| 2006 | Frog Whistle Mine — Harper Collins |
| 2005 | The Moa Cave — Harper Collins |
| 2002 | A Friend in Paradise — Harper Collins |

Publications — Nonfiction

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| 2010 | The Naughty Kid's Book of Nature, illustrated by Scott Tulloch - Harper Collins |
| 1986 | Beyond 2000, a Seventh Form Physics Text - Longman Paul. |
| 1983 | Physics 2000, a Sixth Form Physics Text - Longman Paul. Complete with Teacher Guide and Study Guide. |
| 1982 | Five Science, a Fifth Form Text - Coronet Books. |
| 1974 | Unit Studies in Science, 8 units for junior science - Coronet Books. |
| 1973 | Earth, Sun and Moon - Heineman. |