

# The Tale of Norfolk Island

By GPCC Years 7/8



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## *Team Details*

State: NSW

Division: Middle Secondary

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Team Name: GPCC Years 7/8

Word Count: 3526

## *Parameters*

Primary Character 1: Athlete

Primary Character 2: Wrestler

Non-human Character: Witch

Setting: Church

Issue: Fell asleep on the bus

## *Random Words*

Tiptoe

Fresh

Community

Delight

Bruised

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## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to the young people in Australia fighting sickness.

You are as brave as Jenny and as kind as Denny.

We wish you all the best.

We hope you enjoy our story.

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am the Lord, your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

*-Isaiah 41:10*

# Chapter 1

It is night-time on Norfolk Island, a place prone to evening storms and wind. The population is small, the days are hot, and the weather is windy and unpredictable. In a pine-tree shaded edge of the woods, twins Jenny and Denny are confined to their small cottage by the weather. The sounds of a heated argument are coming from the living room. Jenny, an aspiring AFL player, is holding the remote high above Denny's head.

'No!' she shouts. 'The new women's season starts tonight, and I am NOT missing it!'

Jenny's bossy, powerhouse voice rises high above Denny's much softer but equally earnest one. This is the biggest difference between the twins. Denny's submissive, under-the-radar, personality is taken advantage of by my-way-or-nothing Jenny.

'But John Cena is coming on in FIVE MINUTES!' He complains. 'Please Jenny, why does everything have to go YOUR way?'

'Because I'm the oldest.' Jenny plants her hands on her hips.

'By three and a half minutes! We're TWINS, Jenny!' Denny, an amateur wrestler insists. He jumps up on the couch and locks his hands around the remote.

'Hey!' Jenny cries. 'Give. That. BACK!'

'NO!!' Denny yells. They wrestle with the remote, yelling and kicking and yanking until..... CRACK! The room goes silent. The back of the remote has gone flying across the room and several buttons are popping out on springs. It takes twenty seconds for the two of them to start yelling again. But this time they are quickly silenced by the television. The channel is stuck on ABC's "***Community Tales***". Jenny and Denny turn to watch.

'Tonight, on *Community Tales*,' the presenter says. 'The Myth of The Witch in The Church.' Jenny drops the remains of the remote on the rug and plops down on the floor, followed by Denny.

'For months now,' the presenter continues, 'there have been rumours circling Norfolk Island of a witch living in the abandoned church on Clarkson Street.' Both children sit stone-still, eyes fixated on the screen. 'The Witch of the Church has been sighted three times through the shattered windows of the three-hundred-year-old building. The Witch is thought to be a conjurer of dark magic, the kind that the whole of the Island never hopes to witness. Ever. Beware: The Witch of the Church. That is the latest on *Community Tales*.'



The screen goes dark. Denny trembles inwardly as he turns to look at his sister. Jenny has her defiant I'm-not-scared-of-anything-face as she glances at him.

'Jenny...do you think that maybe....?'

 Denny begins. Then,

'WHAT HAPPENED IN HERE?!' Jenny and Denny immediately swivel their heads towards the doorway. Mum is standing there, her hands planted firmly on her hips. Mum is the kind of woman who never takes "no" for an answer. She is a no-nonsense-whatsoever mum. Mum's sharp blue eyes make their way around the room. The couch cushions on the floor. The wrinkled rug. The broken remote. Jenny and Denny's guilty faces.

'What in the...'

 She shakes her head, pinches the bridge of her nose with her forefinger and thumb and squeezes her eyes shut tight. 'Please tell me,' she whispers, 'that you did not just trash my living room, break my remote, which I paid a fortune for by the way, give each other a good whopping and just sit here and watch....' she squints at the screen, '*Community Tales?!'*' Her voice jumps as she reads the credentials that scroll on the screen.

'Fine.' Jenny says, folding her arms. 'I *won't* tell you we did all that stuff.'

'But we did.' Denny adds quickly. Mum's eyes narrow and her face closes up hard.

'To your room!' she barks. Jenny and Denny don't immediately comply. 'NOW!' Mum yells as they scurry past her like track stars.

## Chapter 2

Jenny lays in her soft spongy bed tucked into her Sydney Swans sheets and doona. She tries very hard to get the frightening thought of the scary old witch out of her head. Jenny imagines her to have old wrinkles, greasy black hair, jagged rotten teeth, crusty, saggy skin, and big pimples of oozing pus covering the witch's face. Jenny also pictures the witch lurking in the old, crumbling church eating dirty rats with her mouldy bare hands. She shudders and sinks even further down into the mellow warmth of her bed.

*It's not real, it's not real* Jenny repeats in her head trying to reassure the thought that the story was just an old wives' tale and was most definitely not true.

"Are you actually scared, you little wimp?" Jenny says in a firm tone sounding a tad bit shaken.

"Well... I mean what if the story is real? I don't want to meet a scary old witch anytime soon," says Denny his voice squeaky and shaking with distress.

"Yeah, well even if it was true, I still wouldn't be scared. What is a bony old woman going to do to us, scare us with her ugly face?" Jenny asks trying to paint a brave voice over her panic.

The scared silence echoes around the room and Denny shuffles inside his covers. A mental image pops into his head of a witch staring at him through a shattered glass window beckoning him to come inside and join her. Denny trembles and a salty tear runs down his cheek, panic pulses through his body and he lets another few tears out complete with an anxious shake. Lightning flashes and thunder booms outside the quaint little cottage. Denny lets out a terrified cry and Jenny mocks him.

"Oh, stop being a little baby, I don't want to be kept up all night by your annoying cry!"

Denny doesn't reply; instead he buries his face into his pillow letting it soak up all the tears and muffle his sobbing.

The wind howls outside the cottage, mixing with the thunder and lightning to create perfect background noise to the frightening images in his head. Jenny and Denny both rest in their bed quietly keeping their eyes wide open in case the witch suddenly appears out of thin air and casts a spell on them. They both would never admit this of course, but this is both on

their worried minds as they lay in the petrified darkness hoping that daylight will come as soon as possible.



## Chapter 3

The following morning, Denny and Jenny wake up exhausted from worrying about the tale of the witch all night long. Mum drives them to school, but they are falling apart at the seams. They walk into school without acknowledging other people around them, shuffle into classes, unfocused and restless, scared that a witch will appear out of thin air and attack them.

The school day finally ends after what feels like hours upon hours of heavy labour. Denny and Jenny get onto the familiar, white, rusty school bus at 3:00pm as per usual. As they sit down, they hear a patter coming from the roof of the bus. Another storm. They watch the sheets of lighting cut through the sky and listen to the thunder laughing at their cowardice towards the witch story. Denny and Jenny decide to rest their eyes for a few peaceful moments and listen to the drops of rain hit the roof. Before long, they are falling into a deep, restful slumber.



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“Last stop! Everyone off!” Denny and Jenny are suddenly awoken by the billowing voice of the bus driver.

Denny and Jenny run off the bus, and being his usual clumsy self, Denny trips on the last step and, as her usual annoying self, Jenny teases him.

As soon as Denny is up again, Denny and Jenny start arguing about how they will get home.

“Come on, let’s just call mum!” Denny offers.

“No! Mum will be furious that we missed our stop! Let’s just walk home, it’s only about half an hour. We can just say we stayed after hours at school to finish our art assignment,” Jenny says.

Then, a sudden crack of lightning lights up the sky, and Denny and Jenny spin around in a panic to see a tall grey building with a massive, **bruised** wooden cross.

## Chapter 4

The sun is beginning to descend in the background, creating shadows that surround Denny and Jenny. A **fresh** breeze is howling past them as it crawls through the trees. The sky is filled with grey, angry clouds that dominate over the trees. They turn around and are met with the view of an old, broken-down church. Wooden panels are falling off the sides, the windows are shattered, and only sharp edges lined with glass are left.

“That church looks similar to the one on the television last night about the witch!” Jenny exclaims. Denny’s eyes widen.

“We should go in and see if the witch is home,” Jenny suggests.

“There is no way you can get me in there, I’m serious. What happens if the witch is there? I’m sure mum is at home worried sick about where we are. I don’t want to add a witch who could potentially kill us to the equation. Plus, that building looks really dangerous, it could fall at any moment especially with all this wind,” Denny pleads.

“There is no point trying to convince me. I have already decided that we are going to go in there and try to find ourselves a witch!”

Jenny is walking toward the entrance of the church; Denny hesitates for a second and then doubtfully follows behind. The entrance is guarded by matted weeds and overgrown grass and the doors are made out of a dark, rotted wood. The old silver doorknob is covered in rust and dirt making it screech as Jenny turns it. The moment Jenny’s foot hits the corroded planks of wood inside, a long screech erupts through the building, sending a wave of shock through Denny and Jenny’s bodies.

“It’s just the floor, let’s keep going.” Jenny insists.

They make their way fully into the church, as they begin to look around. Suddenly, the large front doors of the church slam shut, trapping them inside.



“Ahhhhhhh!” they both scream in unison.

“What was that? Now we are trapped! We have to find a way out of here now before something even worse happens!” Denny yells in a panic.

Jenny doesn't reply, her heart racing. She continues to walk further into the building, her legs shaking, but acting brave in front of Denny, curious and wanting to explore further.

## Chapter 5

Denny and Jenny look around the inside of the church. There are leaves flying all over the room and a strong wind causes the curtains to go mad. Lights flicker from dimly lit candles. Shadows dance in the wind. Jenny stanches forward, putting on a brave face for her brother. The room is a small area with two doors, a desk in the centre of the room, a few seats around and huge windows with a tattered look to them, as if they had been there for hundreds of years. Jenny walks up to the desk and looks around for something interesting. She moves past the desk when something catches her eye. There are windows next to each door. They are coated with dust, dirt, and grime. She reaches out and wipes her hand over the glass, clearing all the grime from the window. She screams.

“WHAT?! Jenny? What’s happened?” Denny runs over to her. Jenny slowly slides down the wall petrified by something. Denny looks through the window and sees a figure standing on a platform, head down and hair covering the front of their face. With a sudden movement the figure looks up at Denny and swiftly shuffles away.



CRASH! Denny jumps. Something hits the ground behind him. He turns around hastily and sees a broken vase, lying on the ground. A sudden thought dawns on him. The Witch. Jenny stands up and shakes Denny who is frozen from fear.

“Denny! Denny! We need to get out of here. Mum will be worried. We need to get home.”

Rapid footsteps echo throughout the church and wind is gushing through the windows. They rush towards the door and plant their bodies against it, and then they push with all their weight but there is a force holding the door in place. They turn around and see the witch again. Her head twitches and she take a small step towards them. Jenny and Denny sprint away towards the doors. They burst through and run past all the rows of seating.

The seats are worn down and dusted. The candles flicker rapidly in the wind and the room grows colder. Denny stumbles and falls, he screams for his sister, and she turns around like a bullet. But it’s too late; the witch has a hold of her brother. The candles flicker and then extinguish all at once. Lightning strikes, lighting up the room for a split second, illuminating the witch and her firm hold on Denny. He whimpers.

“PLEASE! PLEASE DON’T HURT ME!” a tear wanders down Denny’s cheeks.

“HURT?” the witch questions, “I would ne- ”

“LET GO OF MY BROTHER!” Jenny screeches, interrupting the witch.

Denny drops to the ground and the witch lets go and he stumbles over to Jenny.



The moon glares through an overhead window.

“Jenny, is that the witch?” Jenny gives a slight nod and holds her brother tight.

“Just stay calm, we’ll be fine. She can’t hurt us if she can’t catch us.” She grabs her brother’s arm and yanks him to his feet.

“RUN!” The kids run out of the room into the bathroom of the building. The tiles on the walls are cracked and the grout is a dirty brown. Jenny leads her brother to a stall and locks them inside.

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Minutes pass and it’s all silent. They unlock the stall door and **tiptoe** out. They open the door to the bathroom and step into a hallway a few metres away from the room where they first saw the witch. They look towards the entrance to the room and see her. The witch, staring at them. They start to run when the witch yells.

“STOP! Please.”

“NO, you’re a witch! You’re gonna kill us!”

She lunges at the kids and grabs them by their shoulders.

## Chapter 6

“I’M NOT A WITCH!” shrieks the young, frightening girl. Denny and Jenny are crying and still embracing. They don’t believe the odd girl.

She speaks again, “Please! Please believe me! Oh, don’t leave! My name is Agatha. I am *not* a witch, I just live here!” Agatha explains that the wind blew the door shut, she knocked over the vase when she was hiding from the other children, and it was her footsteps that Jenny and Denny heard. After Agatha tells them this, Jenny begins to calm down, but Denny is still hesitant. Agatha slowly crouches down beside them. Agatha is short, with long brown hair with streaks of red, big doe eyes, and old, black, baggy clothes. She looks kind and innocent.



“What are your names?” Agatha asks.

“My name is Jenny, and this is my twin brother, Denny,” says Jenny. She confidently thrusts her hand out for Agatha to shake while Denny gives her a small, timid wave and a tiny smile.

“We came here on the bus from Norfolk Island Central School. Last night we watched ‘*Community Tales*’ about this abandoned church and an old tale about a witch who lives here. It was called *The Witch of Clarkson Street Church* and that’s why we thought you were a witch at first. It was so scary we couldn’t even get to sleep last night. We fell asleep on the afternoon bus home and that’s why we missed our bus stop at our house and ended up here! We are very sorry about thinking you are a witch. You just scared us. A lot.”

“You scared me too!” Agatha chimes in. Denny doesn’t say anything but just nods and smiles.

“If you’re not a witch, then what are you doing here?” Jenny asks.

Agatha starts telling her story about how she came to live in the old church. “You see, I came here when I was eight, but I’ve lived on this island by myself for four years. My parents brought me over here six years ago, because they were really enthusiastic about starting a fishing business, so they decided Norfolk Island would be the best place. One day, four years ago they went out on their boat, but this time they decided not to bring me. There was a massive storm. Remember the massive hurricane that swept through here in 2018? They went out on their boat in that. The storm warning sirens went off, but they didn’t make it back in time. I waited for days, but I never saw them again. Our house was right on the beach, up the rocky cliff face. It got absolutely destroyed in the storm, so I ran away in fear I would be killed too. I found this old church and I’ve lived here ever since. I didn’t want to reconnect with the Norfolk People, so I have pretty much just stayed here for four years. I haven’t been to school or made any friends. I think it’s too late now,” Agatha starts to cry.

“Oh, I am so, so sorry that happened to you, Agatha, that’s horrible.” Jenny frowned. Denny, being so compassionate, started to cry along with Agatha.

Suddenly there is banging on the wide church doors. The kids jump up and gasp in shock. Officer John bursts through door and is standing there waving a torch light into the dark, dusty room. He spots Denny, Jenny and a girl, looking unkempt and timid.

“Sharon, the kids are in the old church on Clarkson Street! I have found them. Come quick!”  
the policeman speaks into his phone.

Mum eventually arrives at the old church, sobbing hysterically. Denny and Jenny’s faces  
light up with **delight** at the sight of their mum standing there, her arms wide open.

Officer John approaches Agatha, “Hello little one, what is your name? Are you hurt?”

## Chapter 7

Three months later, Denny, Jenny and Mum had a new housemate: Agatha.

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Officer John stood next to Agatha at the station.

"So, Agatha, what are we going to do with you?"

Agatha looked perplexed, "I don't know..."

"I've got an idea," Sharon piped up. "Agatha can come and stay with us."

They welcomed Agatha into their home. Jenny introduced her to AFL and Denny taught her wrestling. Although this was nice, Agatha did not take to them and began swimming. Instead of 'Agatha the Witch,' she was dubbed 'Agatha the Archer Fish,' which she much preferred. Their bedroom walls were covered in posters of AFLW, wrestling and swimming icons: Tayla Harris, Daisy Pearce, Hulk Hogan, The Under Taker, Ariane Titmus and Katy Ledecy. Every night before bed, there would be disputes over what to watch. It was often Jenny that got her way, as she was the alpha of their trio.

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Three months later and it was like Agatha had been there forever. On one night in particular no one could pick what to watch.

Jenny screamed angrily, "Oi, Denny, give me the remote!"

Denny jumped up on the couch and wiggled the remote wildly, "I don't think so Jen unless you do my chores for the week."

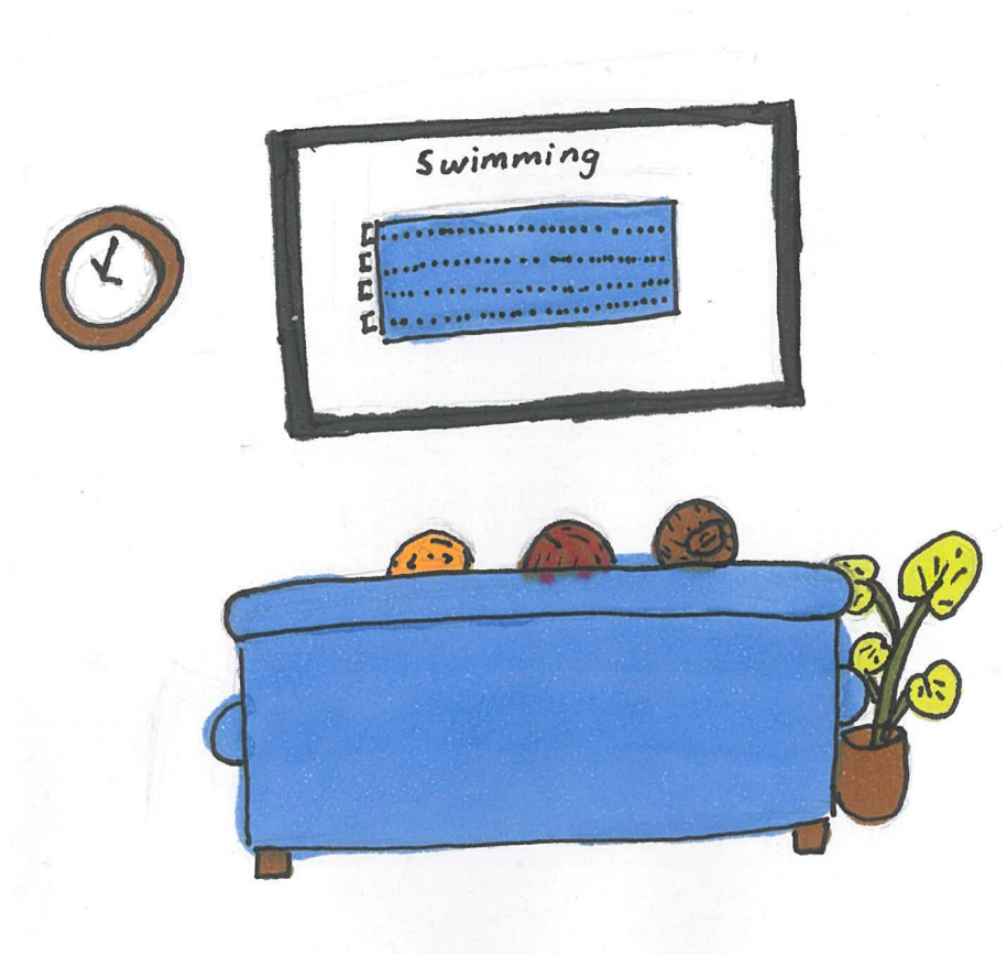
Jenny joined Agatha in her attempt to get it. Agatha took a pillow and threw it over Denny's head. The storm brewing outside matched the tempers inside. Grey clouds surrounded the cottage. The three evilly laughed and began a pillow fight. They were all exhausted eventually, but Jenny kept going - her hits had lost their strength. "Come on guys, whoever wins gets to pick the sport!"

“Nooooooooooooooooo, please no more hitting!” exclaimed Denny.

"Don't you want to be a wrestler?" Jenny and Agatha joked.

Agatha then seized the remote and switched the channel to FINA. “Ariane Titmus is about to race in the 400 freestyle. That trumps your silly footy and wrestling!”

The children continued to argue until they finally settled on the swimming and sat around the television. Ariane got on the diving block, the buzzer went, and she swam those eight laps of the pool in record time. All three kids cheered with jubilation. They hugged and smiled like a family. Because that’s what they were. A family.



The End.

**Two avid sports fans, twins, Denny  
and Jenny venture into the most  
unexplored part of Norfolk Island in  
hopes of solving an old mystery. But  
is the legend really true?  
Recommended for ages 10-15**

