

# Hansen's details are in the devil

*A Devilish Tale*  
by Alice Hansen  
Self-published. \$14.95

**H**OBART author Alice Hansen shows how a creative enterprise may assist the plight of the Tasmanian devil. Hansen's new book, *A Devilish Tale*, is more than an engaging picture book for little ones. Hansen has pledged that \$3000 of the sale proceeds will be donated to the Tasmanian Devil Appeal through the University of Tasmania.

Hansen's earlier book, *Tasmania: A Living Journey*, sold more than 3000 copies statewide. It's also available in 25 countries and used as a gift for international visitors at the University of Tasmania and as an in-house publication at a variety of hotels across Tasmania.

In *A Devilish Tale*, the story avoids concentrating on the Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease. It is implied rather than stated. Instead, we follow the adventures of Nevile the Tassie devil who, after falling asleep, is separated from his family.

The story is a simple tale of being lost and found and is sure to appeal to young children. This is partly because of Hansen's sharp use of

uncluttered images and exciting narrative. Hansen said that as a Tasmanian she felt moved to do something for the devils.

"Although I have wanted to do a children's book for a while, I also wanted to

do this book myself and reduce time for publication while maintaining control of the material. As an individual and writer, I thought a book was a way that I would be able to help the devils.

"Sometimes, I write for United States publications. I was surprised that they had not heard of the disease and I thought this was one way of introducing it to children and a wider audience."

Although the book is highly visual, there is a strong educational aspect as well. This is found in the way Hansen gives significant information into the habits of the devils — including what they eat and their social organisation. She said the book was not meant to be a teaching aid.

"I have a stall at Salamanca Market and when parents come along with their children, I am able to talk to them about the devils. Parents who read the book to their children then can discuss the devil illness.

"The Tasmanian devil is an animal which strikes a chord with locals. Even outside the scientific community, there is a growing concern as to how the devils can be saved. A lot of people are visiting devil parks and expressing an interest."

Besides *A Devilish Tale* focusing on the trials of Nevile as he searches for his family, it also provides a subtle tourism angle. Nevile happens to travel through some of the state's top tourist spots — Wineglass Bay and Port Arthur to name a couple. People are represented favourably and reference is made to people helping ill devils.



**GOOD CAUSE:** Alice Hansen's book aims to help the troubled Tassie devil. Picture: ROGER LOVELL



**BETWEEN THE LINES**  
CHRISTOPHER BANTICK

Although devils have a fearsome bone-crushing reputation, Hansen has softened this in the way she has portrayed Nevile and other devils. The devils lack a soft and cuddly image but Hansen said she hoped to shift this a little.

"When I saw devils in the wild, I found them fascinating but also very attractive. I have seen them taken out of traps for scientific study and they are very placid. They do have a name for being ferocious, perhaps over food, but I think

they are not like that at all. I think that their so-called aggression is a bit of a myth."

The publication of *A Devilish Tale* is something of an investment for the devils. Hansen said that because of the urgency of the need to find a cure for the devil illness she wanted the book to be available quickly.

"I didn't want to wait for a grant as I wanted to give some money back to the research into the devils. Initially, I have done a 3000 print run. My ambition is to sell as many as possible and generate funds. To keep costs down, I had to print offshore. I don't like admitting this, but it was the only way it was affordable."

The book is available in Hobart bookstores, gift shops, Salamanca Market, tourist outlets and on the Spirit of Tasmania ferries.

## Triumph, tragedy in US South

*Red River*  
by Lalita Tademy  
Headline Review, \$32.95

**'C**OME closer. This is not a story to go down easy, and the backwash still got hold of us today."

With this opening line, Lalita Tademy's 100-year-old great-great-grandmother Polly sets the hushed, raw tone for a painful story from a time perhaps deliberately forgotten.

It is a story of slavery, the joy of freedom, the shattered promises of Reconstruction and a fearsome plunge back into darkness.

Tademy, whose exploration of her mother's slave ancestry resulted in the best-selling novel *Cane River*, now looks to her father's side of the family and finds an even more harrowing story.

It is 1873, "a scary time" after the American Civil War when, for a brief time, black men are allowed to vote — and dare to hope.

Sam Tademy and his friend Israel Smith eagerly seize the new opportunity. They leave their farms and families to join a group of blacks determined that the Republican candidates they have elected will take office in the Louisiana town of Colfax despite white opposition. They stake out the courthouse and wait weeks for the promised federal troops to arrive.

But, instead of the troops, a band of armed white supremacists rides into town as the blacks hastily conclude their Easter Sunday service.

The black men are shot down, smoked out, tortured, or strung up from from trees. A few escape into the swamps along the Red River where their women and children are hiding.

In one of the Deep South's deadliest cases of racial violence, 150 blacks and three whites are killed. Yet white history will record the incident as a riot — not a massacre — and the town will erect a memorial to the slain whites.

In the bitter aftermath, Israel, badly injured, and Sam are left to pick up of the pieces, and keep alive their families' constantly thwarted dreams to set up a coloured school, buy their own land and further themselves in a hostile environment. Their greatest challenge will be to pass on to their grandsons their hopes for a limitless future.

Sam's hidden resilience will make him an unexpected leader — and the novel's backbone.

The name Tademy is a badge of honour. Sam received it the only time he saw his father, a runaway slave, who called at his mother's cabin and drew a map of the Nile Delta in the palm of his hand. The Tademy's went to work in America as free people only to be enslaved upon arrival.

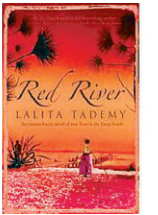
"We come from the part with the little rivers, call the Nile Delta," Sam recalls his father telling him. "Alexandria in Egypt and Egypt in Africa. That where you from. Not this place. We got a real name, a family name. Keep it here."

Sam's great-great-granddaughter now weaves historical fact, family folklore and fiction into a generational saga covering 60 years of the Tademy family history up until the 1930s when her parents are allowed to attend a black high school but not a Duke Ellington concert.

Tademy's account of the horrific events never shies away from gruesome facts or becomes overwrought.

*Red River* is a poignant story that sheds light on America's shameful past, the misery of injustice and the magnificence of sacrifice.

CARLENE ELLWOOD



## Copyright compo rules face changes

**T**HE Copyright Agency Ltd is an organisation which monitors copyright issues.

Part of this is to pay authors for work that has been copied and used in such institutions as government offices and educational establishments. This ensures that authors, who may have an article in a book of photocopies being used in universities and schools, for example, are paid.

In the current *Calendar*, the newsletter of the Copyright Agency Ltd, attention is given to new copyright amendments which may affect authors.

One initiative concerning Federal Government departments may have far reaching consequences.

"[The agency] is also developing new ways to capture use. One such initiative involves a simpler approach to capture photocopying of copyright material in Commonwealth Government departments," the agency says. The agency has also announced it will help expand the Tasmanian Writers' Residency Program so at least one writer from each state

and territory receives a residency over the next three years.

This is good news for writers nationally and in Tasmania.

Joe Bugden, director of the Tasmanian Writers' Centre which runs the highly desirable Island of Residencies program for visiting writers in the state, said in the Copyright Agency's newsletter:

"[The agency's] funding will ensure that we can reach those writers who live in and beyond the major centres, to become a truly national writers' residency program."

For authors interested in the agency's work, try its website: [www.copyright.com.au](http://www.copyright.com.au).



**BOOKchat**

### Coming events

**Friday, February 2:** Bill Bryson will speak about his book *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* at 5.30pm for 6pm, Hobart Function Centre, Elizabeth Street Pier. Tickets are \$5 or free if a book is bought from Hobart Bookshop. Details from Hobart Bookshop: 6223 1803.

**In 2007:** The Tasmanian Writers' Centre will continue the successful novel-writing courses in Hobart, Launceston and online. They start in March and end in December. Details: [www.tasmanianwriters.org/workshops.htm](http://www.tasmanianwriters.org/workshops.htm). **CB**

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