

# A Devil's Survival

Isabella Marks

The Tasmanian Devil, one of the last of his fascinating species, creeps slowly into a hollow log. The bright sun glows down on the grass of the forest floor, creating sparkling rays on the many dewdrops. Being nocturnal, he nestles himself between leaves and sticks, ready for a big rest. A light breeze whispers secrets and leaves them hanging in the air as silence surrounds the poor creature.

This once spectacular creature miserably suffers from Devil facial tumour disease, a nasty cancer that causes a disfigured face and tumours in the mouth. His pounding heart fills with fear and sadness at the thought of him not being able to eat, and he wonders if he will even survive. As his tragically infected eyes slowly flicker shut, red and damaged by the horrible disease, he dreams of another world where food would only be a step away.

Glowing stars creep across the night sky, one by one, flashing eagerly like torches. The Tasmanian Devil cunningly creeps through the dark forest, ears alert for any tiny sound, ready to pounce on his prey. All seems quiet, when suddenly, a flash of movement pierces the surroundings. The devil stops dead in his tracks and moves slowly towards the sound when -“Aaarrrrrrrrrgh!” he opens its mouth to let out a deafening screech and jumps on an innocent wallaby, slowly digging his razor sharp teeth into its fur. This indeed would be an appetising meal for the Tassie Devil, if only it was real, not just another dream waiting to become reality. In the bush and woodlands around Tasmania, his countless friends and family members lie on their sides, tummies rumbling like vicious tigers.

The Tasmanian Devil lies on its back, unable to move a muscle. Still. Breathless. No-one to help, no-one to care, only selfish humans not interested in saving these marsupials. His eyes stay stuck shut, like someone has glued them together with superglue. Just when all hope is lost, and it seems there is no escape to death, muffled voices surround him. He tries with all his might to open his infected eyes to see what the fuss is, but no matter what, they just won't budge. He tries to relax his body, and as he does, he totally loses track of the outside world. Though he might not be able to clearly see or hear, he knows one thing for sure. He's not alone.

Silence. Peace. Comfort. The Tasmanian Devil's eyes open, no trouble at all. His eyes scan around him. White walls, bright lights, humans - lots of them. “What is happening?”, he wonders.

Strangely, the rumbling in his tummy had ceased, and he feels fuller than he's ever been. He feels calm, relaxed, and kind of sleepy. He feels like hours have passed, but he isn't sure how many, like he is in his own world. Suddenly, a voice breaks the silence;

“Don't worry lil' guy, we'll have you fixed in no time and back out into the wild!”

The Tassie Devil feels intimidated and he wants to defend himself by roaring, but something in his little body stops him. These humans aren't the type that usually are careless about Tasmanian devils, they are here to help. Maybe, just maybe everything will be alright.