The Animal Parliament: Book Three Hidden scandals

Chapter: High Hopes, Hidden Scandals

The scandal broke quietly at first. A small article tucked into the back pages of The Cockatoo Chronicle whispered accusations of favoritism within the Transport Ministry. By midday, the whispers had turned into a cacophony of squawks as every media outlet picked up the story. Minister Glenda Glide, once lauded for her innovative transport solutions, was suddenly in the eye of a storm.

Scene 1: The Prime Minister's Office

Kangaroo Prime Minister Iva Hoppit sat behind her desk, her powerful tail thumping against the wooden floor as she read the headlines. She sighed, setting the newspaper down with a deliberate calm that belied the storm brewing within her. Across the desk, her Chief of Staff, a no-nonsense frilled lizard named Freddy Fringe, stood with a stack of reports in his claws.

"We have a problem," Freddy said, his frills twitching. "The media's on this like flies on roadkill. Protected airline routes, first-class tickets—it's bad, Iva."

Iva leaned back, her ears twitching thoughtfully. “It’s only bad if we let it stick,” she said. “Glenda’s a problem, yes, but she’s our problem. I’m not going to let this ruin us when the election’s around the corner.”

Freddy arched a brow. “And by us, I assume you mean you? I heard about your dinner with the airline’s CEO last week. Cozy, wasn’t it?”

Iva shot him a sharp look but didn’t deny it. “Let’s focus on what matters. We’ll announce an investigation—one of those…what do you call them?”
“A kangaroo court,” Freddy said dryly.

“Ha. Funny,” Iva said. “Make sure the review panel is full of our people. Release a statement tomorrow. Something about transparency and due process.”

Freddy scribbled notes but didn’t look up. “And Glenda?”

Iva tapped her claws on the desk. “She’s too visible right now. Tell her to take a vacation—somewhere remote. Somewhere quiet.”

Scene 2: Glenda's 'Vacation'

Glenda Glide sat perched on a branch in her secluded hideaway, a leafy retreat deep in the eucalyptus forest. Her usually bright eyes were dim with worry as she spoke into her phone.

"This is ridiculous, Iva. You know I did nothing wrong," Glenda hissed, her voice trembling. "Those tickets were for inspection tours. You've seen the paperwork."

Iva's calm voice came through the receiver like a soothing breeze. "Of course, Glenda, I understand. But you know how these things look. Perception is everything. Take some time off, let the heat die down."

"And when I come back?"

"When you come back," Iva said smoothly, "we'll have moved on. Trust me, Glenda. I won't let anything happen to you."

Glenda wasn't convinced, but what choice did she have? "Fine," she muttered, hanging up with a resigned flutter of her wings.

Scene 3: The Media Blitz

At a press conference the next day, the Cockatoo Media Spokesbird, wearing a dazzling yellow plume, took center stage to control the narrative.

“The government takes these allegations seriously,” she squawked to a packed room of journalists. “An internal review has been launched to ensure transparency and accountability. Minister Glide is fully cooperating and has taken a temporary leave to allow for an impartial investigation.”

From the back, a reporter shouted, “What about the first-class tickets? Is it true her family used them for vacations?”

The Cockatoo ruffled her feathers dramatically. “Baseless rumors! The minister’s travels were entirely work-related. Now, if you’ll excuse me, no further comments.”

Behind the cameras, Norman the Dingo Opposition Leader, a wiry figure with piercing eyes, growled in frustration. He turned to his advisor. “They’re burying this,” he snarled. “But we won’t let them. Draft a statement. Something sharp.”

Scene 4: Iva's Private Ambitions

Later that evening, Iva sat at a candlelit dinner with the CEO of the airline in question, a smooth-talking pig named Cecil Eatalot. The mood was jovial, but every word carried the weight of veiled intentions.

Cecil raised his glass. "To partnerships that… take flight."

Iva smiled, clinking her glass to his. "To mutual benefit. I trust you'll remember who kept those pesky competitors out of your skies?"

Cecil's grin widened. "Of course, Prime Minister. And when your term ends, there will always be a place for someone of your…caliber in our executive team."

Iva leaned back, satisfied. The scandal might have rattled the cage, but she knew how to keep the door firmly shut.

Scene 5: A Nation Distracted

As weeks passed, the media attention shifted. The Cockatoo Media Spokesbird trumpeted new government initiatives—a flashy infrastructure project, a wildlife sanctuary expansion. The public's focus waned, just as Iva had planned.

In a quiet corner of the parliament, Wombat Environmentalist muttered to herself, "The trees may stand still, but the rot runs

deep.” She knew the truth but could only watch as the scandal was swept under the carpet, leaving the nation none the wiser

Chapter: Turbulence and Tactics

Scene 1: The Dingo’s Discovery

Late one night, Dingo Opposition Leader sat hunched over his desk, a stack of documents in front of him. His trusted aide, a clever bandicoot named Beatrix, leaned over his shoulder.

“Here it is,” Beatrix whispered, tapping the papers. “Flight manifests. First-class tickets booked under fake ‘staff positions.’ Glenda’s friends and family used them—on trips to luxury resorts.”
Dingo growled low, his sharp teeth bared in satisfaction. “We’ve got them. No more rumors, no more spin. This is proof.” He slammed the desk. “Call a press conference.”

Scene 2: A Bombshell in Parliament

The next day, Dingo stood in Parliament, holding the damning documents high. His voice echoed across the chamber.
“Prime Minister Hoppit, how do you explain this? These so-called inspection tours were nothing more than lavish holidays for Minister Glide’s friends and family. Funded by taxpayers. Protected by your office!”

Gasps rippled through the chamber. Glenda Glide, seated in the back row, looked pale as a ghost. Iva remained calm, her ears perked as if she were listening to distant thunder.

“I demand answers!” Dingo shouted, his tail swishing furiously. “And I demand that Minister Glide resign immediately!

Scene 3: Iva’s Counterattack

Iva rose slowly, radiating composure. She took her time to survey the room before speaking.

“Opposition Leader, I admire your… enthusiasm for justice,” she began, her voice measured. “However, I must remind you—and this chamber—that allegations are not evidence.”

She gestured to Freddy Fringe, who stepped forward with a folder. “Our internal review has already investigated these claims. What you hold in your hand, sir, is incomplete. The full report shows that these trips were approved for legitimate purposes. Any personal travel was reimbursed.”

Dingo snorted. “Reimbursed? By whom?”
Iva smiled, the kind of smile that said she had already won. “Minister Glide’s personal account, of course. The receipts have been filed. I’d be happy to share them with you—after you retract your baseless accusations.”

Her tone turned icy. “What I will not stand for is the reckless

smearing of a dedicated minister. If this is your idea of leadership, Opposition Leader, then perhaps it's no wonder your approval ratings are lower than a wombat's burrow."

Laughter erupted from her party's benches. The Dingo Opposition Leader glared but said nothing, his moment slipping away

Scene 4: The Media Maneuver

Outside Parliament, Cockatoo Media Spokesbird took to the airwaves.

"Today, the Opposition embarrassed themselves with unfounded accusations against Minister Glide. The Prime Minister swiftly debunked their claims, proving yet again her commitment to transparency.
Meanwhile, the government continues to focus on real issues, like infrastructure and national security."
In the background, articles about the scandal mysteriously disappeared from several outlets, replaced by glowing reports about new government projects.

Scene 5: A Private Admission

That evening, Iva met Glenda Glide in her office. The sugar glider looked frazzled, her usual grace gone "You threw me under the bus today," Glenda said quietly, her voice trembling.

Iva leaned forward, her voice low but firm. “I protected you, Glenda. The receipts were fabricated, yes, but nobody will question them. You’ll keep your post for now—unless you’d like to take another vacation.”

Glenda hesitated, then nodded. “I... understand.”

“Good,” Iva said, standing. “Now go home. And for everyone’s sake, keep your family off airplanes.”

Scene 6: Dingo’s Investigation

Dingo, the Opposition Leader, leaned over his cluttered desk, eyes scanning a pile of incriminating documents. His assistant, Beatrix, dropped a new folder with a thud.
“This is what you were looking for,” she said. “The third government relief payment to Qantas under JobKeeper. It doesn’t add up.”

Dingo flipped through the folder. “They laid off baggage handlers and ground crew while pocketing taxpayer money. And then there’s this—first-class tickets for friends and family, reimbursed only after the scandal broke. This is a national disgrace.” He clenched his fists. “We’ve got them now.”

Scene 7: Confronting the Prime Minister

The next day, Dingo stood in Parliament, his voice cutting through the tense silence. “Prime Minister Hoppit, how do you justify allowing Qantas to exploit JobKeeper while laying off workers? And those first-class tickets—why reimburse only after being caught?”

Prime Minister Iva Hoppit, composed as always, rose from her seat. “Opposition Leader, these accusations are speculative. The government’s relief programs supported Australian businesses during a time of crisis. If mistakes were made, Qantas is addressing them. Our focus remains on the future.”

Dingo’s response was sharp. “Your cozy relationship with Qantas is no secret, Prime Minister. This reeks of corruption.”

Scene 8 The CEO’s Fall

The next morning, headlines exploded Cecil Eatalot Resigns Amid Scandal. The announcement followed mounting pressure from legal action by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), which sought a record $250 million penalty against : Quiantas for deceptive practices.

The airline had continued selling tickets for thousands of canceled flights, misled customers about refunds, and delayed credit issuance for flights disrupted by the pandemic. Combined with layoffs during JobKeeper and record profits during a cost-of-living crisis, public outrage reached a fever pitch.

Scene 9The Inquiry's Verdict

A government inquiry into: Quiantas soon released its findings, confirming the airline's misuse of government relief programs. The ACCC's investigation revealed violations of consumer protection laws, including failure to promptly issue refunds and layoffs inconsistent with the intent of JobKeeper.
The report was damning: : Quiantas had exploited taxpayer funds, breached consumer trust, and benefited from anti-competitive practices. The airline now faced severe financial penalties and an irreparably tarnished reputation.

Scene10: The Prime Minister's Fall

In Parliament, Dingo seized the moment. "Prime Minister Hoppit, the : Quiantas CEO has resigned, the inquiry has ruled against the airline, and your complicity is evident. How can you remain in office?"

Iva stood, her calm exterior cracking. "I've always acted in the national interest, and while : Quiantas actions are regrettable,

they are addressing the concerns. That said, I recognize the need for new leadership."

Her resignation was calculated—an attempt to escape accountability while angling for a future role within Qantas. But Cecil Eatalots resignation and the inquiry's damning findings shattered her plans. What once seemed like a lifeline had evaporated.

Scene 11: The Aftermath

Weeks later, in his office, Dingo sat with Beatrix, his victory hollow. "She's done it again," he muttered. "Stepped down to dodge accountability, but I doubt this is the last we'll see of her."

Beatrix nodded. "She's out of politics, but her ties to : Quiantas won't disappear. The public won't forget."

Meanwhile, : Quiantas braced for a reckoning as the fallout from the inquiry continued. For Prime Minister Iva Hoppit, the dream of a cushy post-: Quiantas career was gone. For Dingo, the fight for justice was far from over.