



Megan and the Bridge of Life

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Level 4



Megan, Frits and Princess Elavuarasi hid amongst the roots and vines as tree trolls thumped closer. "GRRRR!" They flared their wooden nostrils, and sprayed snotty chlorophyll on everyone.

"Ewww..." the princess cried. "You've ruined my favourite dress, you... cauliflower!"

The trolls moved closer, swishing their trunk-thick arms, missing Megan, Frits and the princess by an inch. "This way!" Megan tugged on the princess' snot-covered clothes.

"I'm a princess and I follow no one," Princess Elavuarasi said.

"GRRRR!" The trolls splashed more goopy chlorophyll all over her face.

"Ugh, fine! I'll come," the princess said.

"Down here," Megan whispered, kneeling down on the bridge. She had found a crack large enough to slip through.



STOMP STOMP. The trolls marched closer.

CHOMP CHOMP. They almost bit Megan's nose off.

"Hmmm hmmm mmm," Megan began humming to calm herself. Princess Elavuarasi grabbed Megan by the shoulder and shoved her into the crack. The three of them slid down, crashing into branches and bumping into rocks as they tumbled onto the bridge below.





Megan dusted herself off the ground. “Hmm hmm hmm.”

She was surprised to hear voices humming back to her. Megan ran towards the sound.

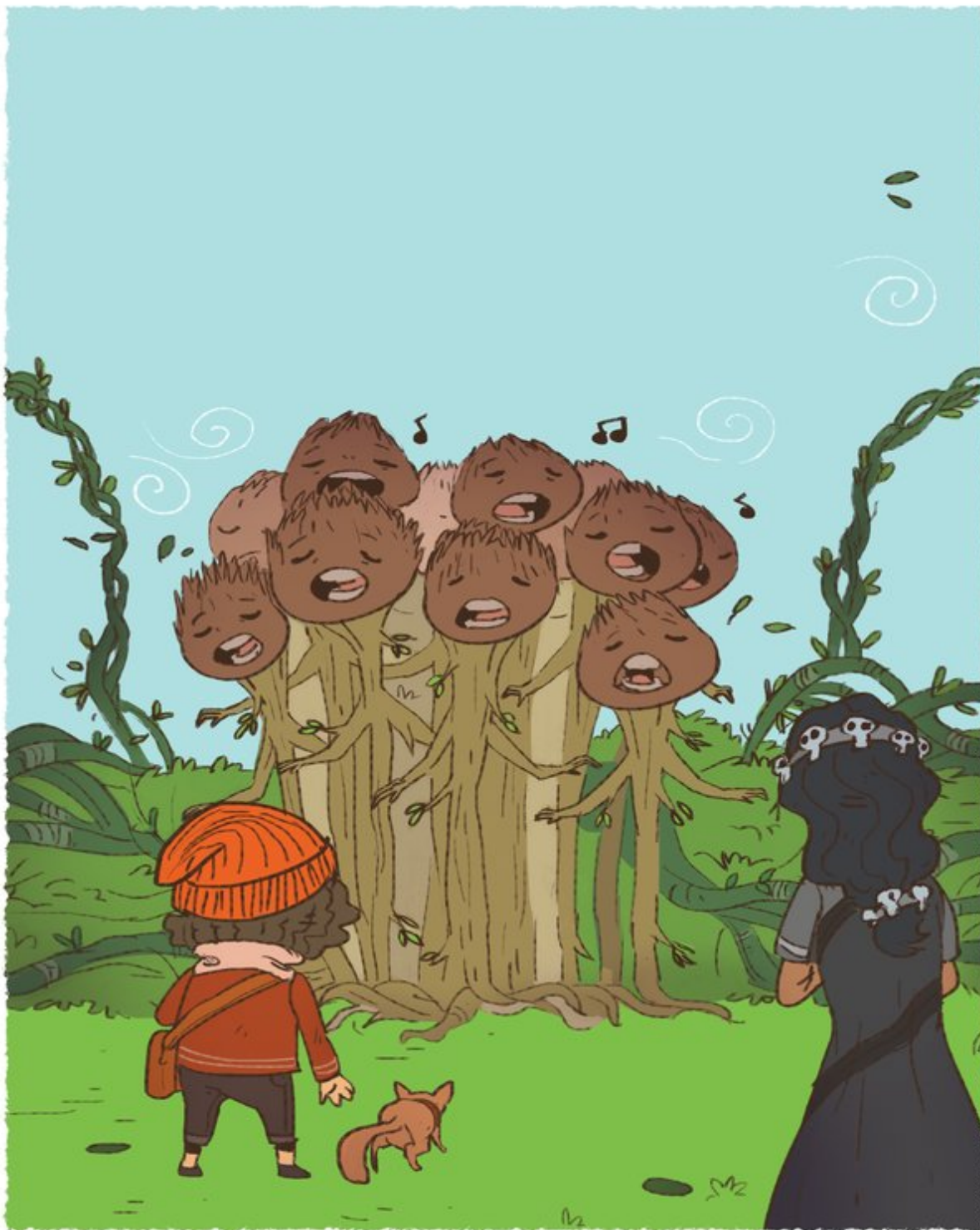
“WAIT UP!” the princess said, following Megan and Frits. She slid down roots, swung on vines, and jumped across large gaps.



Megan and the princess reached the centre of the bridge. “Wow!” they chorused. Roots twisted, turned, coiled, and braided to make walls, arches, and doorways.

“What are they?” the princess said, pointing at the centre of the room. There were at least a dozen men with twig-shaped bodies and tumbleweed heads, humming and singing as they bunched roots together.

“What are you doing?” Megan asked, peering over their shoulders.



“Making the bridge stronger,” the twigman replied. “Who are you and how did you get here?”

“My name’s Megan and I’m finding my way back home,” Megan replied.

“Back home?” the twigmen said. “You’ll never find your way back home.”

“But... but... this is the bridge to go back home!” Megan cried. “It has to be!”

The twigmen grabbed a bunch of roots. “You see this? There are a thousand little roots in this bunch, and your world is connected to just one of them.”

“THOUSANDS?” Megan was surprised.

“Only the Supreme Plant knows where they go. You could ask the Supreme Plant, but it’s a shame you can’t speak the plant language.”

“But I can speak plant!” Megan lied.

“Well, why didn’t you say so! Right this way. If you can’t speak plant you might be sent to a different world by mistake, and you’ll be stuck there forever!”





Megan followed the twigmen and saw a tree at the center of the bridge, its roots bulging out in every direction. “Mr. Supreme Plant,” Megan began. “I want to go home. Can you please show me how?”

“*He’s* not the Supreme Plant!” the twigmen snapped, “*she is!*” They pointed at a lone dandelion under the great tree.

“Oh,” Megan replied. “Can you tell me how to go home, Supreme Plant?”

The plant said nothing.



“I thought you knew how to speak plant,” The twigmen raised their eyebrows.

Megan began to tremble. “I... I...” she said. She noticed that the plant was shaking with her.

Megan flapped her arms and the plant in turn swayed with the breeze. Megan jiggled, wiggled, and spun around twice. The dandelion glowed. “I want to go home.” Megan said.

The Supreme Plant loosened a few of her feather-like seeds. The seeds began to float up slowly.

“It worked! She is showing us the way!” Megan ran after the seeds.



“What did the Supreme Plant say?” the princess asked, struggling to keep up with Megan.

“She told us to follow the seeds,” Megan said, “but we don’t have long!” They jumped through hoops, crawled through small spaces, and slipped through cracks until at last they found themselves in front of a large ladder made of old roots.

The seeds drifted upwards. And they followed.

One by one they returned to the top deck. Megan followed the glowing seeds into darkness. She saw the light on the other side of the bridge. "Frits we're almost home!" she squealed, but Frits didn't reply.

Megan turned, but neither Frits nor the princess were behind her.

CREAK! CREAK! The bridge began to shake. It was the trolls. They must have caught whiff of their scent.



Megan held on tight. She could see her town in front of her. Behind her, she heard the tree trolls. Megan thought hard. The seeds would open the gates. She couldn't leave without them. Megan took a step closer towards her town, but then she heard the princess scream.

"Mrrrowww!" Frits was yowling in pain. The last of the seeds drifted away. And with a sinking heart, Megan heard the gates coil shut.





“Frits, I’m coming!” Megan ran back the way she came. She burst through decaying roots, sliding across the bridge.

“Help me!” Elavuarasi was crying. An injured troll was hanging off the side of the bridge. Frits and the princess stood over it. They were desperately trying to step on its hands and send it falling. Frits was scratching the troll’s bark-covered fingers, and the princess was kicking it.

“Stop it!” Megan yelled, pushing Frits and the princess off the troll’s hand.

“GRRR,” the troll groaned. It slowly climbed back up and drew itself to its full height. “GRRR,” it growled, sending green snot flying everywhere.

Megan stood in front of the troll and swayed back and forth, flapping her arms. “GRRR,” the troll growled, softly this time.





“It does not want to hurt us!”
Megan yelled. “It’s here to
protect the bridge.”

“How do you know?”

“There’s something about this
place. I can now speak plant. The
troll... it’s scared and angry. It
says humans kill trees.”

Megan touched the tree troll’s
face. It winced. She stroked the
creature's nose. “We just want to
go home,” she mouthed.

The troll looked at Megan sadly. It swayed its arms. It was telling her that the seeds were gone. The troll looked down – there was a dandelion sprouting on its big toe. But unlike the Supreme Plant, the dandelion on the troll's foot had just one seed. The troll plucked the seed and gave it to Megan. The troll's branches creaked, its roots withered, its trunk turned to dust.

Megan looked at the seed in her palm. It glowed – dimly at first and then into a bright flash.



Megan woke up near the cable car, to the painful licks of a sandpaper tongue. “Meow,” Frits said, rubbing himself against her.

“Frits,” Megan smiled. She raised her head slowly and found a rock with a shoestring attached to its nose standing over her.

Megan grinned. She was right about the missing cats wanting to play with the strange rock. But somehow she couldn’t find the other cats.





Megan stood up and dusted her clothes. “What’s this?” she asked, glancing at a furry seed stuck in between her fingers. “It’s a mystery seed, Frits! Want to find out what it is?”

“Meow,” Frits replied, as Megan carried him.

“Raahi is going to be so happy. Isn’t it a beautiful day, Frits?” Megan flapped her arms as she walked into the sunset.

But Frits kept staring into the mist.

By the cable car, stood a figure dressed entirely in black. It was one of those things only cats could see. Frits watched the figure flap her arms in joy. "Meow," Frits said in farewell.

The princess brought her fingers together.

SNAP.



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Megan and the Bridge of Life

(English)

In the final instalment of The Home of Clouds series, Megan, Frits and Princess Elavuarasi find themselves in a strange land where roots form bridges and weird twig men are hard at work. Will Megan and Frits ever get back home?

This is a Level 4 book for children who can read fluently and with confidence.



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