

**The Kudzu Invasion**

The moment Marcus entered the forest, he knew something was wrong.

The trees usually welcomed him with a cheery song. Today they were silent. Every tree drooped with dangling limbs. The crisp smell of pine needles was gone. Instead, there was a musty odor of fear. Marcus always dabbed his finger in the wonderful syrup dripping from the maple.

The maple was his best friend and mother to all the plants in the area. Today the maple's sap felt slimy, not fresh and sticky. No magic tingle happened as Marcus licked the sap from his finger.

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Can you form a mental picture of the forest from the description in this paragraph? What would you see? What sounds would you hear? What would you smell??

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# DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

## UNIT 06: The Kudzu Invasion

"What's wrong?" Marcus asked, clutching the maple's trunk.

Mother Maple sighed. "Do you know what the kudzu is, Marcus?"

"Yes," Marcus answered. "It's a vine that grows everywhere."

"You are right," Mother Oak chimed in. "Kudzu isn't native to our forest, but it's a horrible pest. It's coming here fast. It has taken over South Field."



"There's no stopping the kudzu," cawed a crow circling above. "It eats and spreads and kills!"

"It can grow a foot in a day!" sobbed a sapling.

4



"This is awful!" Marcus cried. "Don't worry. I'll find a way to help. I promise!" Marcus hurried off to South Field.

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A glossary contains words related to a specific subject. A dictionary is where you can find most of the words in a language. I wonder what the word clutching means. Do you think it would be better to look it up in a glossary or a dictionary?

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Sapling! That sounds like something to do with plants. This story talks about a lot of plants and trees. I have a feeling this book's glossary will contain the word "sapling." What do you think?

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## DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

### UNIT 06: The Kudzu Invasion

Just past the clearing, Marcus saw kudzu vines. It looked like someone had thrown furry, green blankets over every tree stump, rock, and bush. Kudzu was even creeping up the telephone poles along the road. Its finger-like vines were reaching across the wire.

"I've come to talk about my friends in the forest," Marcus announced.



The patches of kudzu faced Marcus with dark, empty eyes. "Do not waste your breath, human," the kudzu said. "We can go anywhere. We can climb to the sun!"

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What would it look like if vines were creeping like green, furry blankets, covering everything. Can you picture it? Do you think the kudzu can actually climb to the sun in real life?

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Talking plants? That is surely a fantasy. But can you identify one element of realism in this paragraph—something that you would find in the real world?

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In the word "patch," notice how the "tch" sound is spelled -t-c-h. You will only find this spelling when "tch" follows a vowel. Look out for other words that are spelled in a similar way.

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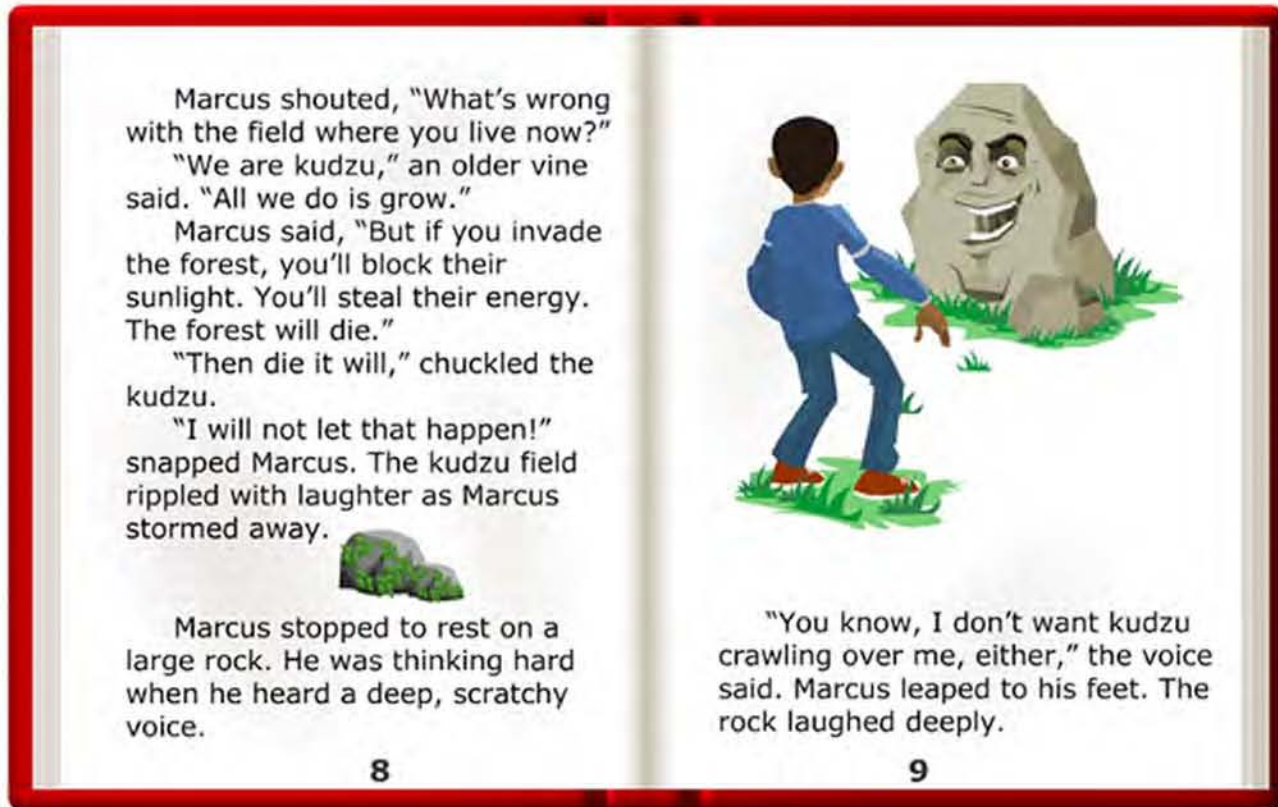


Do you think the kudzu can actually climb to the sun in real life?

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# DESTINATION READING COURSE 3

## UNIT 06: The Kudzu Invasion



If there's a glossary for this story, do you think the word "kudzu" would be in it? Why or why not?

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What does Marcus do that tells you he was surprised when the rock spoke to him?

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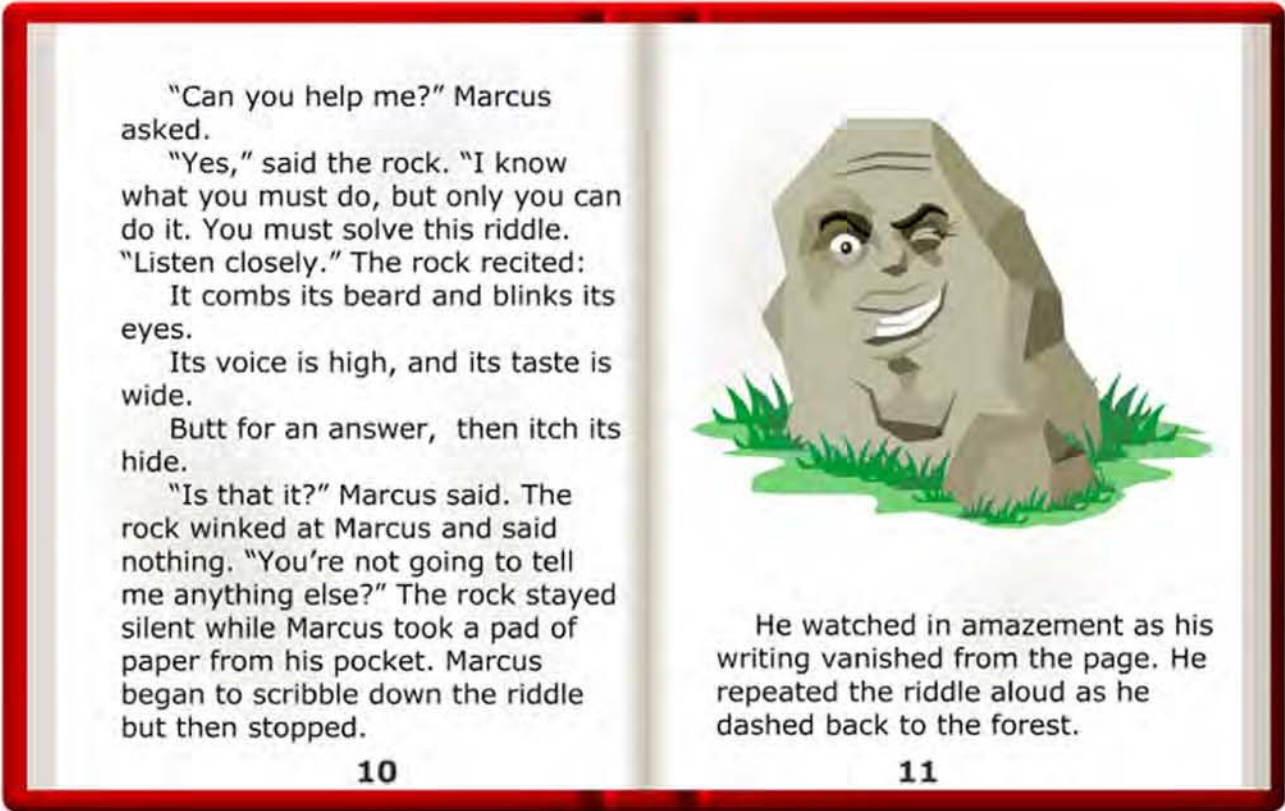


When Marcus sat down on the rock, did he know it could talk?

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Now, what can this riddle mean? Any guesses?

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Can you find one element of fantasy and one element of realism in this paragraph?

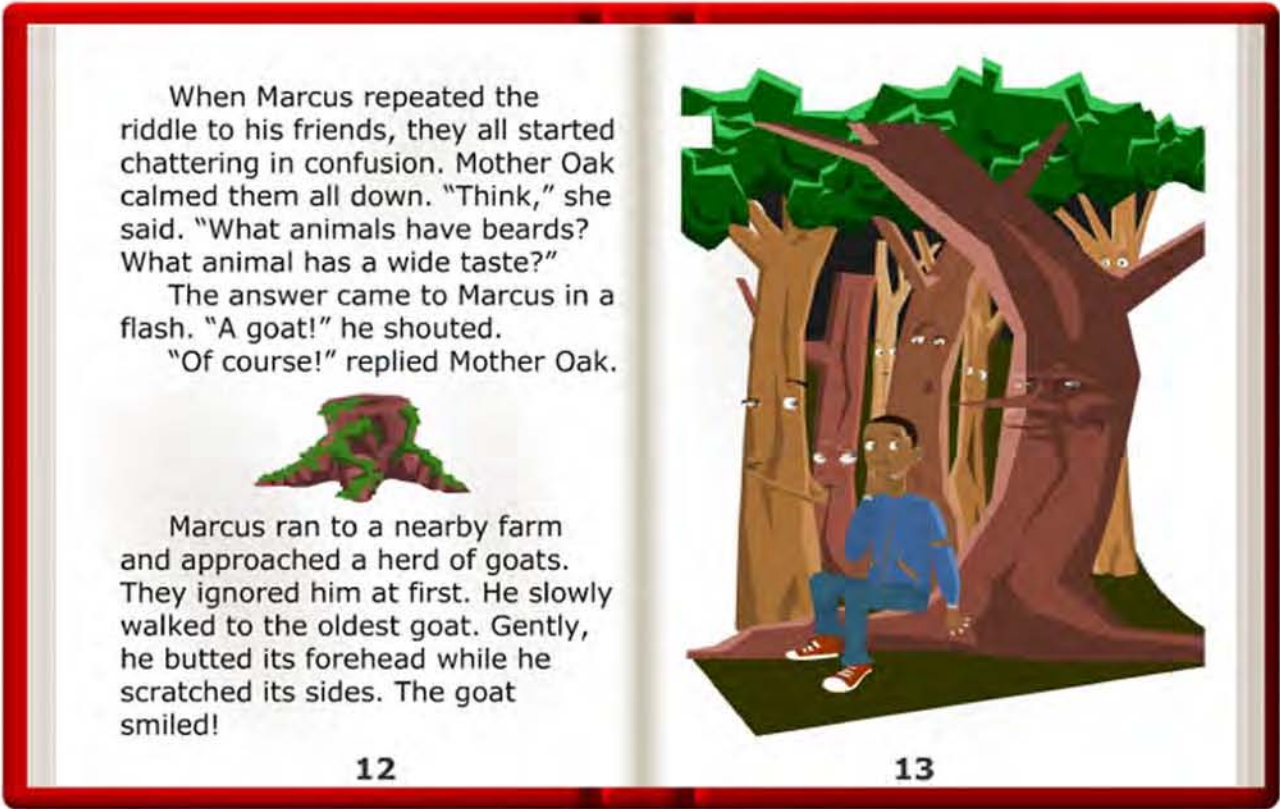
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Imagine what it sounded like when all of Marcus's friends "started chattering in confusion." How would it sound if the story said, "they all started whispering"?

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What if it had said, "they all started mumbling"?

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"Ah! That feels wonderful!" she said in her high, musical voice.  
"What can I do for you?"  
"Do you like to eat kudzu?"  
Marcus asked.  
"I love kudzu!" the goat answered. "Goats could graze on kudzu all day long!"  
"Then please come with me!"  
Marcus cried.

As he led the herd of goats through the woods, the plants all cheered and bowed their branches.



The goats just smiled with sleepy eyes. "Sorry we cannot stay to chat," said the old nanny goat. "We have a dinner party to attend!"



If the "tch" sound follows a consonant, it is always spelled c-h, not t-c-h. Can you think of some more words that are only spelled with -ch?

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