

The
Magic School Bus
Rides Again



Attack of the Plants



by
AnnMarie Anderson

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CHAPTER 4

BOOTING UP

Oh! Of course!” Ms. Frizzle said. Then she pressed a button on the remote control, and Carlos changed into—a horse?

“Nope, that’s not right,” Ms. Frizzle muttered. She pressed again and again, and he and Wanda turned into an elephant and a mouse, a hippo and a chipmunk, and a lemur and a hen. “Oh, I love this thing! Just say when!”

A second later, the kids were Carlos and Wanda again.

“When!” they both shouted.

“Aw,” Jyoti groaned, disappointed. “I wanted her to keep going!”

As the kids followed Galápagos Gil and Ms. Frizzle, Tim had a sudden thought.

“Galápagos Gil?” he asked. “With everything in **unison**, don’t you worry about something throwing that off?”



“You bet your giant tortoise we do!” Galápagos Gil replied. “That’s why we inspect everything.”

Galápagos Gil led them to the airport terminal building, where travelers were arriving by plane.



“You mean like luggage, coats, hats—everything?!” Keesha asked in surprise.

“Everything,” Galápagos Gil replied, nodding and pointing to some workers who were inspecting and brushing the soles of travelers’ shoes as they passed through the airport. “We don’t want any new plants or animals to get here. Accidents happen, you know.”

“Accidents?” Tim asked. “So you have to look at everything *really* close up.”

Ms. Frizzle gasped in delight.

“Tim, what a great idea!” she exclaimed, and she pulled out the remote control again.



“Oh no,” Arnold groaned.

With the click of a button, Ms. Frizzle had shrunk down herself and the entire class—including Galápagos Gil—so they were smaller than ants!

“Wahoo!” she cried. “I love getting **microscopic.**”



“That was so magical!” Jyoti cried. She could hardly contain her excitement. “Majorly magical!”



“Sure,” Arnold agreed, pointing to an ant looming over them. “Until you get eaten!”

But the ant had other things on its mind.

Ms. Frizzle led her students to a pair of hiking boots in the grass. They looked enormous compared to the microscopic class.



“Let’s suit up to boot up!” she called, and with one click of the remote, the class was outfitted from head to toe in rock-climbing gear. They raced toward the boot that was lying on its side and began to climb up the sole.

“I’m rock climbing . . . on a boot!” Jyoti said.

“Okay, look closely, everyone,” Ms. Frizzle reminded them. “Anything could be an **invasive** species that throws off the island’s delicate balance.”



Dorothy Ann looked up from the enormous speck of soil she was studying. “Is an invasive species a plant or an animal the island’s not ready for?” she asked.

“Yes to the guess from D.A.!” Ms. Frizzle replied enthusiastically. “If things that already live here have no defense, the new species can take over and change everything!”

“And change everything,” Arnold mumbled grumpily. “I know what *that’s* like.”

“There’s a lot of dirt on these boots,” Keesha pointed out. “Looks like he’s been hiking in the woods back in his home country.”

“Well, let’s hope there were no invasive hitchhikers!” Ms. Frizzle replied.



Arnold took a step forward, but his foot got stuck in the muck.

“Ahhh!” he cried as he fell facedown in some dirt, and then a bug crawled out.



“We have insects!” Carlos announced.

Arnold got to his feet but stumbled a second time. This time, he landed in a glob of mud that was covered in tiny white dots.

“And those look like insect eggs,” Jyoti pointed out.

“Jyoti, you’re right!” Ms. Frizzle exclaimed. “These insect eggs could mean the unwelcome arrival of a whole family of gypsy moths.”

“And we don’t want that!” Dorothy Ann gasped, pulling up some images on her tablet. “Here’s what they can do.”

She showed her friends a photo of a healthy, green forest. Then she showed them a photo of the same forest after gypsy moths had been there. The leaves on the trees had completely disappeared! They had been eaten by the gypsy moths.



“That poor ecosystem,” Wanda said, shaking her head. “It was totally defenseless against the invasive species. What do we do now? We can’t let those moth eggs enter the ecosystem!”