

Sky Island

Sky Island is a fantasy novel written by L. Frank Baum. It follows the adventures of two children, Trot and Button-Bright, and their friend Cap'n Bill. In this extract, the three friends use Button-Bright's flying umbrella to set out for a picnic together on a small island.

Larger and larger grew the island. They had not journeyed ten minutes before they came directly over it, and looking down they could see the forests and meadows far below them. But the umbrella kept up its rapid flight.

"What's wrong, Button-Bright?" exclaimed Trot. "Why aren't we stopping?"

5 Button-Bright stared at her, open mouthed. He seemed astonished, too.

"Perhaps I didn't say it right," he replied after a moment's thought. Then, looking up at the umbrella, he repeated clearly, "I said I wanted to go to Sky Island! Sky Island, don't you understand?"

The umbrella swept steadily along, getting farther and farther out to sea.

10 "P'raps," said Trot, "P'raps 'Sky Island' isn't the name of that island at all."

"Why, we know very well it ain't the name of it," yelled Cap'n Bill from below.

"We jus' called it that 'cause its right name is too hard to say."

"That's the whole trouble, then," returned Button-Bright. "Somewhere in the world there's a real Sky Island, and the Magic Umbrella's taking us there instead."

15 It grew suddenly dark, for they were rushing through a thick cloud that rolled around them. The umbrella never hesitated a moment. It made a path through the length of the heavy, black cloud and carried its passengers into a misty bank of white.

Here, the clouds formed strange shapes. Some were like huge ships, some like forest trees, and others piled themselves into towering castles and wonderful palaces.

20 Trot turned towards the others. "Seems to me we're goin' down," she called anxiously.

They were certainly dropping very quickly, and the rush of air made their eyes fill with water so that they could not see much below them. Suddenly, Cap'n Bill thudded flat upon the ground, landing with such a force that his teeth clicked together. Somewhere there was a great yell of anger. Trot and Button-Bright fell straight on top of him, so that for a moment they were all tangled up.

25 "Get off from me! Get off from my feet, I say!" cried an excited voice. "What in the Sky do you mean by sitting on my feet? Get off! Get off at once!"

An adapted extract from *Sky Island* by L. Frank Baum.

1 Why doesn't the umbrella stop where the friends want it to?

1 mark

2 Why do you think the author wrote "P'raps" instead of "Perhaps" on line 10?

1 mark

3 What's unusual about the clouds described in lines 18 and 19?

1 mark

4 a. What do you think "anxiously" (line 20) means? Use a dictionary to help you.

1 mark

b. Why do you think Trot feels anxious?

2 marks

5 Explain why the "great yell of anger" (line 24) is described as coming from "Somewhere" (line 23).

2 marks

6 Would you like to fly using the Magic Umbrella? Explain your answer.

2 marks

Total
out of 10