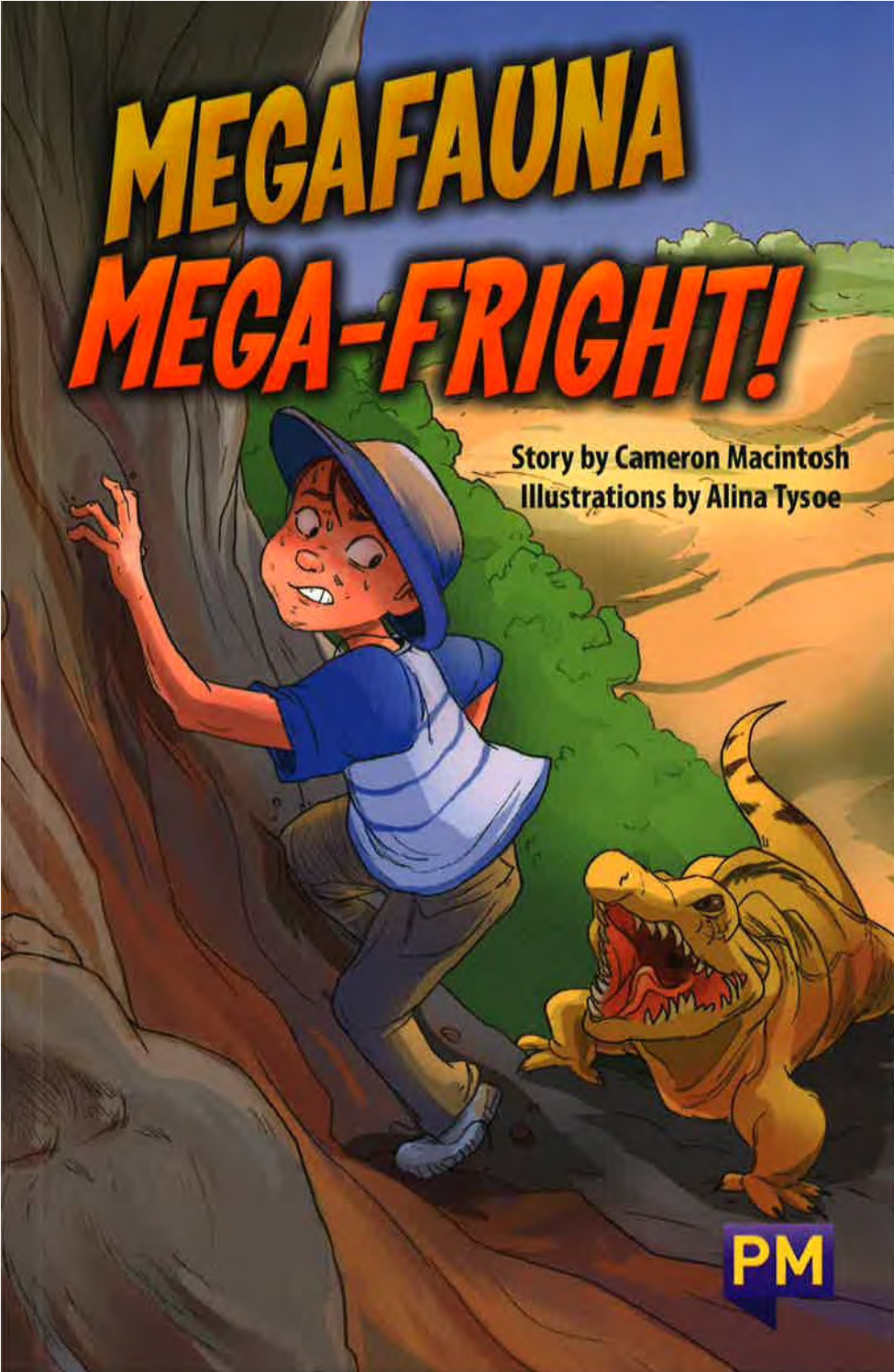

MEGAFAUNA
MEGA-FRIGHT!
Story by Cameron Macintosh
Illustrations by Alina Tysoe
PM

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Megafauna Mega-Fright!

Level 27

Running Words 3609 **Text Type** Narrative (Imaginative)

Curriculum Areas Literacy; Humanities – History

Retelling to encourage critical thinking about the content

Ask each student to retell the story in his or her own words.

Record the retelling for further discussion and reflection.

Questions to reinforce meaning and stimulate discussion

Literal

1 What did the time machine look like?

2 How did Tim initially escape from the Megalania?

3 Why couldn't the Megalania use its powerful claws to climb the rocky wall?

Inferential

4 Why did Mum think the stone was just a piece of rubbish?

5 When Tim scratched the screen on the stone, why did Raff think they were in a bit of trouble?

6 Why did the boys climb the tree when they saw the footprint in the mud?

7 Why were the boys desperate to get the time machine out of the ravine?

8 Why were the boys terrified of the Megalania?

9 What could have happened if the Diprotodon had trampled the time machine?

Applied Knowledge

10 How can palaeontologists tell what animals ate by studying fossil remains?

11 Why are palaeontologists careful when they work with fossils?

12 Why does the saltwater crocodile still exist 40 000 years after other Megafauna have died out?

Vocabulary

Replace the adjective 'irresponsible' in this sentence: *"I'm sure it's just rubbish left by some irresponsible campers"*

Links with other PM Guided Reading Books and Cards

Level 27 Book Narrative *Thea and the Think-it-arium*

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Chapter 1

My Holidays



"Watch out, Tim!" Raff yelled. "There's a Pterosaur swooping at your head!"

For a moment I almost believed him. Out there in the outback of northern New South Wales, it sometimes felt like time had stood still.

It was a Monday, in the second week of the school holidays. I was helping my mum and her team with their latest fossil dig. This dig was a lot more fun than usual – my friend Raff was with us, too. If there's a way to find a laugh in any situation, Raff will always be the first to do it.

As for Mum, she's a palaeontologist – a type of scientist who studies fossils. She works for the museum, studying Australian megafauna. These were huge animals that lived all around Australia, thousands of years ago.

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A few types of megafauna, such as the saltwater crocodile, still exist today, but most of them became extinct about 40 000 years ago. Some of the megafauna looked like giant echidnas or wombats.

Mum and her team had been sent to investigate a Diprotodon fossil that a farmer had uncovered on his property. It was a very exciting discovery! The Diprotodon was a huge wombat-like marsupial. It grew to about 3 metres long and to the height of a human.

Mum and her team were carefully removing the fossil from the ground, so they could take it back to the museum and study it. They learn a lot from fossils. Often, the palaeontologists can work out what the animal looked like, what it ate, how it lived and how it died.

According to my friend Raff, this animal probably died of boredom. Raff seemed to be regretting his decision to spend his holiday in a farm paddock, instead of back home with his computer games.



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When we go on a dig, Mum and I sleep in our caravan. This trip, Raff was squeezed in there with us, too. I let Raff use my fold-out bed, while I slept on a mattress on the floor. Raff said it was very kind of me to give up my bed, and a great way for me to feel closer to the fossils.



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Mum wasn't expecting us to help much with the dig. Still, we did what we could, taking care of her equipment and handing her the tools she needed, like nurses in an operating theatre. It was just as well she didn't expect too much. When Raff's around, I can hardly stop laughing long enough to do anything useful!



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Chapter 2

A Rock Clock



It was 1.30 in the afternoon. We had just had lunch and were slowly getting back to work. Mum didn't need her noisy "nurses", so Raff and I were looking through a pile of stones, dirt and other rubble on the edge of the main dig site.

I do this a lot – sometimes I find things that Mum and her team have missed, such as little bones, small stones or interesting rocks. I have a whole collection of found objects back at home.

The first thing I picked up was a stone that resembled a piece of slate. The top of it was flat and grey – nothing out of the ordinary – but when I turned it over, there seemed to be a digital clock screen on the other side. I was so surprised, I nearly dropped it.

"Wow," said Raff. "I think it's time you got a new clock, Tim!"

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I wiped some of the dirt from the front of the screen and yelled out to Mum. "Mum! I think you'd better have a look at this."

"Can you wait a few minutes?" called Mum. "I'm really busy at the moment."

"I don't think you want to wait to see this, Mum," I said. "Trust me!"

Mum stood up and turned around. She carefully stepped towards me, to the edge of the main dig pit. I gripped the rock tightly and held it up to Mum's eye level.



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Tim and his friend Raff are spending their holidays helping Tim's mum on a fossil dig. Raff thinks it's really boring, until Tim finds a strange device at the edge of the dig site. It looks like a rock, but it has numbers on it.

All of a sudden, Tim and Raff find themselves in an unfamiliar land full of creatures that look a lot like dinosaurs! Will the boys be able to escape the megafauna and find their way back?



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Narrative (Imaginative)

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