A Magical Forest
A Magical Forest

Produced by: FONCET AC, IUCN CEC, Comics Uniting Nations

Executive Producer: Sean Southey
Coordination: Ana Valérie Mandri
Art direction: Héctor Moguel

Story: Carolina Guzmán,
& Luis Antonio Rincón
Script: Luis Antonio Rincón
Art: Martín Vazquez
Color: Cinthya Liliana Pérez

Special thanks to:
Guzmán Pérez Family
Wilfrido Guzmán
Carlos Estrada
Walter López Baez
A Magical Forest

The misty forest of El Triunfo is a magical forest. As soon as you start walking along the trails that take you up the mountain, you already find small gifts from nature, like colorful mushrooms growing among the leaves, the traces of a jaguar, green landscapes sheltered by fog and, if you’re lucky, the fantastic flight of a quetzal. In addition, as you progress, you are able to see again with the eyes of the soul, your heart makes contact with the spirit of the forest, and you feel the energy that emanates from the trees and the streams of transparent water. That is when you can experience the deeper magic that is hidden in the forest. It is a magic so powerful, that it enchants your memory so that you may never forget these landscapes, that gifts you bird songs capable of making you smile in difficult times, and that allows you to discover the wonderful beings that live there, like the forest elves, who watch over to make sure life continues to flourish in this fantastic territory.
A strange force causes David’s mat to fly over the bushes.

Huh? What’s going on?

Before David could jump off the mat, a major force threw him into the air.

Hey... This isn’t normal!

...and what’s this?

I know what happened!

David got a brilliant idea and went looking for his fellow stonemasons.
David feared that his colleagues may not have been as lucky.

It wasn’t long before everyone was free.

Do you know who did this?

I didn’t see anything, but I’m thinking that maybe...

What are you thinking? Tell us!

Only David dared to speak what was on his mind.

I don’t want to work here anymore; this hill is full of elves!

Let’s go!

I think it was the forest elves... and nobody will convince me otherwise.

We have to explain what’s going on to people in the community. I’m sure they will understand!
Nobody believed them, and even though Don Gonzalo—the most respected man in town—tried to reassure them, everyone was screaming in anger.

David, we need that tank so that the water can reach more houses with more power.

We know all of that, Don Gonzalo.

So why do you come here with stories about elves living on the Venado Hill?!

Because they are there! They keep bothering us! They never let us work!

They would hide our tools, and drop them on the floor, but the worst thing happened early today!

We want the tank!!

Just because I know you, I won’t say that you’re crazy...even though that’s what I’m thinking.
Well, since David and his colleagues were of no use in this, let’s choose other people.

Yes! Let’s vote for other people!

Liars!

You are all crazy!

Don’t even pay them!
David had no choice but to return home. Jade, his only daughter, was waiting for him there.

Hi, daughter. I’m back; will you give me a hug?

I already heard that you lost your job! That means you won’t be able to buy me a bicycle!

Well, I will find another job and buy it for you.

Nobody will want to hire you now!

That may be what people are saying, but you? What do you think?

I believe you. I do believe there are elves on the mountain.
Jade was so angry that she had a bad night and woke up at dawn.

I really wanted a bicycle. Too bad my dad lost his job because of the elves.

Now everyone is saying he is crazy. If I could see the elves, I would scold them for being so mean. It’s not OK that they keep being naughty!

I know what I’m going to do... those elves will hear what I have to say! Nobody messes with my dad!

Before sunrise, and without telling her parents, Jade went looking for the elves on the Venado hill.
Jade arrived to the campsite at sunrise.

Elves!... Elves...! Where are you?

What’s going on? Aren’t these birds supposed to be shy?

The quetzals are our friends and they always come say hello at dawn!

And who are you?

... I am Túum, the oldest elf in this forest.

Are you really the forest elves?

You keep calling out for us, yet you don’t know who we are?

Well, we’re not desert giants! Anyway, what do you want?

I came to ask you to please let my dad work! Why are you being so mean?
We are protecting them!
We are not mean!

In addition, with their roots they protect the soil from the powerful rain. Otherwise, it would drag the soil into the seas and the hills would be bare... if there were no trees, the water would form giant mudslides, which would bury your town!

Without trees there is no water!

I don't believe a word you are saying. There will always be water.

Every time humans build something, they cut down trees in the forest. And it is thanks to trees that there is water, because they are like a sponge that captures it and then filters it to the springs...

It has happened before. The Cayado hill in front of your town was left completely bare in order to build a tank. And then they were surprised because it didn't catch any water!

I remember that tank dried up and... I got it!... It dried up because the hill didn't have any trees left on it!

That's right! Now no animal or plant can live there. If you do the same to this mountain, all of us who inhabit it will die!

You guys weren't bothering my dad. You were protecting the forest!

Exactly! Go and tell your people!

I'll do it!...

I don't want a bicycle anymore... I'd rather have a forest and water!
Jade’s parents soon noticed their daughter’s absence.

She took her shoes.

She left a while ago. Her bed is cold.

They immediately went out looking for their daughter accompanied by Don Gonzalo.

I saw a light go towards the hill. I thought it was a ghost.

If Jade went into the forest at night, she surely got lost. We have to go look for her.

I will call more people to help us look.

Soon dozens of volunteers were ready to look for the little girl.

Let’s split into groups to cover more territory!
Luckily, the townspeople did not have to walk very far to find her.

There’s Jade!

My daughter... where were you?

I went to the mountain and spoke with the elves! They already explained to me why they do not want us to build the water tank. They are afraid that we will end up destroying everything: the forest, the water, and even our town.

And here I was worried about the little girl

He already passed on his craziness to his daughter

They are liars

Don’t listen to them. Let’s go home.
The population hired a new crew of workers, but they couldn’t climb up the mountain because that same afternoon, heavy rainfall began and didn’t stop...

Windows have to be closed to prevent water from coming in.

At least I’m not scared of lightning anymore.

Hurricane Tiburcio is hitting the shores of Chiapas, a big storm is expected tonight, and it is suggested to take precautions.

The whole village is sound asleep, not knowing they are in extreme danger...

Jade is the first to awaken from her dreams.

Jade, wake up!

What’s going on?

The rain loosened the earth from the Cayado hill. Soon there will be a mudslide. Let people know so they can be saved!
And why don't you let them know?

I just did... Goodbye!

Dad, dad! The Túum elf came to warn me that we are in danger.

... Jade, it must have been a dream.

When you told me there were elves I believed you... now you must believe me!

My daughter, remember everything they said to us this morning because of your elf story...

Túum was right! The Cayado hill is collapsing!
What was that noise?... Get out of your houses!

A mudslide is coming!

Let's go to the Venado hill!

Everyone listened to the warning signs of nature and fled to the Venado hill, to escape the huge mudslide that was coming down from the Cayado hill.
The mud took several things with it.

But we're alive. That's what matters. Thank you for warning us!

Don Chilo's house got buried under the mud!

... thank you to the elves.
As soon as the rain stopped, people were ready to rebuild their village. The elves were right; if we had cut down the trees on Venado hill, the mud would have come from both sides.

I lost my home. Do not worry, my friends and I will help you rebuild your homes. Me too! We will never have that water tank, right? Maybe we will, but we shouldn’t cut trees down. We should never forget that trees capture water, not tanks.

Taking care of the forest will always be a good idea. The reconstruction of the village took some time, but with effort and patience, together they rebuilt a more beautiful place where everyone could live together in harmony.
Ensure access to water and sanitation for all

Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss