

## Excerpt of Pages 41–42 of *The Most Beautiful Roof in the World*

**Focusing question:** What does the author’s use of concrete language and sensory detail help you understand about the rainforest?

Meg’s voice spins out into the night. The words **dissolve** into the thick, **humid** air of the rainforest. They become meaningless sounds in the darkness. The palm viper **coiled** in the **buttressed** roots of the acacia tree might hear them, but more meaningful is the **flick** of an anole’s tail on a nearby philodendron leaf. An ocelot on the prowl has passed the empty web of the slingshot spider and moves toward the strange sounds. A chameleon clamps two toes on one side of a stem and three on the other and listens to the soft burr of noise from inside, the place it cannot see. In the understory, above the chameleon, a frog slaps its stickypadded feet on a palm frond and freezes—are these the sounds of its enemy, the coati? And far overhead, in the canopy, a fruit bat cocks its **sonar** toward the dark little cabin one hundred feet below as it swoops through the night dropping a seed here, a seed there. The words, the strange sounds, melt into the night as a tiny bromeliad begins to grow in silence and invisibility high above. The bat flies on.

### Glossary

**dissolve:** to disintegrate or scatter so as to vanish

**humid:** having a high amount of water vapor; damp; moist

**coil:** to wind in a circle

**buttress:** anything that gives support

**buttressed:** to give support to with a buttress

**flick:** a sharp, light snap or blow

**sonar:** a method for locating objects by means of transmitted and reflected sound waves (acronym for “sound navigation and ranging”)

### Rainforest Animals and Plants

**viper:** a poisonous snake with long, hollow fangs

**fruit bat:** any of various tropical fruit-eating bats such as the flying fox

**chameleon:** any of a variety of lizards capable of changing skin color to blend with the environment

**ocelot:** a spotted wild cat of Central and South America, similar to but smaller than a leopard

**coati:** a small tree-dwelling mammal, related to the raccoon, with a flexible snout and long ringed tail, found in Mexico and Central and South America

**acacia tree:** any of several tropical trees of the mimosa family

**anole:** lizard of the iguana family that has a brightly colored dewlap and the ability to change color

Definitions from Wordsmyth online dictionary <https://kids.wordsmyth.net/we/>

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