

Maya Rose and the Ticklish Map

SAMPLE EXAMPLE



Starring
Maya Rose

Magic Story Code · Personalized Stories

DEDICATION

For the incredible

Maya Rose

*May your imagination always be
bigger than any obstacle ahead,
and your heart more generous
than any treasure ever found.*



Maya Rose loved rainy afternoons more than almost anything. She would pull on her sunshine-yellow raincoat, button every big round button, and stomp her purple star boots in every puddle she could find. One rainy Tuesday, she was splashing near the old oak tree when she noticed something very strange.

There was a swirly, glowing ring floating just above the muddy ground. It spun slowly, like a golden hula hoop made of light. **Maya Rose** tilted her head left. She tilted it right. Then she leaned in very, very close.

"Oh WOW," she whispered. And then — WHOOOOSH — the swirly ring pulled her right in, canvas satchel and all, spinning her head over boots over pigtails until everything went sparkly and warm. **Maya Rose** was tumbling through time, and she did not stop tumbling until she landed with a very soft, very leafy FWUMP in the most enormous forest she had ever seen in her whole entire life.



Maya Rose sat up and blinked. The trees around her were taller than ten houses stacked on top of each other. The leaves were enormous — bigger than her whole raincoat spread out flat. The ground was soft and spongy with thick green ferns, and the air smelled like wet dirt and something sweet she could not name.

"This," said **Maya Rose** slowly, "is not my backyard." She stood up straight, which made her feel a little braver. Her satchel was still strapped across her chest, which was a relief. She looked up through the giant fern leaves at a sky that was a deep, dreamy violet-blue.

And then she heard it. A sound like the world's biggest tuba mixed with a very silly sneeze. HONK-HONK-HAAAA! A long, bumpy neck poked through the ferns above her, belonging to a dinosaur the size of a school bus. The dinosaur blinked one enormous eye at **Maya Rose**, opened its mouth wide, and let out another honking laugh. **Maya Rose** burst out laughing too, even before she understood why, which made her snort, which made the dinosaur honk even louder.



Maya Rose wiped the giggle-tears from her cheeks and looked around carefully. She was definitely, absolutely, one hundred percent in the Dinosaur Age. She could tell because of the giant dinosaurs, the enormous ferns, and the way the sky above the treetops was filling up with something very unusual indeed.

Floating high above the prehistoric forest were clouds — but not ordinary clouds. These clouds were pink and orange and bright lime green, and they were arranged in a perfect circle, like a big fluffy ring in the sky. Tiny flags hung between them, and **Maya Rose** could hear the faintest sound of cheerful music drifting down.

"That," said **Maya Rose**, pointing straight up, "is a Circus of Colorful Clouds." She had no idea how she knew that, but she knew it the way you know your own name. The clouds drifted lazily, puffing little bursts of color as they moved. **Maya Rose** grinned so wide her cheeks hurt. This place was strange and enormous and a little bit scary — but it was also the most wonderful thing she had ever seen, and she wanted to see every single bit of it.



Maya Rose took a big breath and thought very hard. She was in the Dinosaur Age. She needed to get home. And the only way home was to find the time portal again — which meant she needed a map. She unclipped her canvas satchel and rummaged inside. There were three round crackers, a purple crayon stub, and something she had absolutely not put there herself.

It was a large, rolled-up scroll, tied with a fern-green ribbon. **Maya Rose** pulled it out carefully. The paper was soft and warm and faintly glowing around its edges, covered in squiggly lines and little ink drawings of clouds and footprints. But when she tried to read the lines, they wriggled away from her eyes like shy little worms.

"Hmm," said **Maya Rose**. "That is very wiggly." She tried flattening the map with her palm. The lines slid sideways. She tried blowing on it. The lines curled up. She peered at it from the left, from the right, and even from upside down. Nothing worked. The Ticklish Map just kept squiggling away, as if it was waiting for **Maya Rose** to figure out its secret — and she had not figured it out yet.



Maya Rose was still staring at the squiggly map when she heard a loud THUMP behind her, followed by the sound of something waddling through ferns in a very determined way. She spun around and came face to face with the roundest, fluffiest owl she had ever seen — about the size of a big pumpkin, with creamy feathers and enormous thick-lensed glasses.

One lens had a crack held together with a piece of fern. The owl walked with a side-to-side wobble, carrying a tiny leather satchel, and he bumped directly into **Maya Rose's** knee before stopping.

"Ah yes," said the owl, adjusting his glasses. "I have arrived exactly where I intended. I am Pip. I am an excellent reader and a superb navigator." **Maya Rose** looked at the fern stuck in his glasses. She looked at the large rock he had apparently walked into three times, judging by the dents in his satchel. She decided not to mention any of this. Instead she smiled her widest smile and said, "Hello, Pip. I am **Maya Rose**, and I have a map I cannot read. Could you possibly help?" Pip puffed up his chest feathers proudly. "Quite clearly, yes," he said.



Pip took the Ticklish Map from **Maya Rose** and held it very close to his glasses. His enormous golden eyes behind the thick lenses went this way and that. "Ah yes," he announced. "Quite clearly this map shows a path going north by northwest, past the Blue Mushroom Mountain, and straight to the — hmm." He turned the map upside down. "Ah. I may have been slightly upside down just now."

Maya Rose watched as the lines on the map wriggled cheerfully away from Pip's reading too. "They keep moving," she told him. "Every time I try to look at them directly, they slide away." Pip nodded very seriously. "According to my excellent knowledge of wriggly maps," he said, "this is a Ticklish Map. You must tickle it first. Along the left edge. Just below the third swirly line."

Maya Rose blinked. "How do you know that?" Pip adjusted his glasses. "I read it. Just now. Upside down, but still." **Maya Rose** decided this was good enough. She looked at the map's left edge, found what she thought might be the third swirly line, and reached out one finger to tickle. The map gave a sudden, high, delighted giggle — and all the lines stood perfectly, beautifully still.



The Ticklish Map showed a clear path, drawn in bright purple ink, winding through the fern forest toward a tall hill where a glowing golden ring hovered just above the ground — the time portal home. **Maya Rose** traced the path with her finger carefully. "We go through the ferns, past the big red rock, and up the hill," she said. "That is where the portal is!"

But just then, something happened to the sky. The Circus of Colorful Clouds had been drifting gently overhead all this time — but now they began to rumble. Big, round, colorful raindrops started falling. Not grey raindrops. Pink ones. Orange ones. Bright green ones. They splattered on the ferns and on **Maya Rose**'s yellow raincoat, leaving big cheerful blotches of color everywhere.

Maya Rose laughed and spun in a circle, her arms out wide. "Color rain!" she shouted. The colorful splatters painted patterns on the prehistoric leaves and on Pip's fluffy feathers, turning him into a polka-dotted owl of pink and green. Pip looked down at himself. "According to my reading of the situation," he said solemnly, "I appear to be quite artistic now." **Maya Rose** snorted so hard she had to hold her nose, which made Pip nod approvingly.



The colorful rain made the ferns slippery and bright. **Maya Rose** held the Ticklish Map carefully under her raincoat to keep it dry, because a soggy map — even a ticklish one — was probably no good to anyone. Pip waddled beside her, occasionally bumping into ferns with great dignity and announcing each bump as "exactly as planned."

They followed the purple path on the map through the enormous forest. Everywhere **Maya Rose** looked, dinosaurs were reacting to the colorful rain in the funniest ways. A small round dinosaur was using a giant leaf as an umbrella. A trio of long-necked dinosaurs were snapping at the colored raindrops with their mouths open, honking with glee every time one landed on their tongues.

Maya Rose made an important decision. Because dinosaurs in this world clearly honked when they laughed, she decided she should be as funny as possible to make friends quickly — just in case she needed help. So when a plump little dinosaur trotted over and stared at her curiously, **Maya Rose** put her purple crayon stub on her nose like a fake beak, crossed her eyes, and said "HONK." The dinosaur went absolutely wild with honking laughter and began following them down the path.



The plump little dinosaur — **Maya Rose** named it Honkle on the spot — bounced happily beside them as they followed the map's purple path. The colorful rain had stopped, leaving rainbow splatters on every leaf and rock. The path curved around an enormous red boulder exactly as the map showed, and **Maya Rose** felt a rush of excitement. They were going the right way!

But then Pip stopped walking and held up one wing very seriously. "According to my reading of this map," he announced, holding it upside down again, "there is a shortcut. We should go left here, through the tall purple ferns, and we will arrive twice as fast." **Maya Rose** looked at the map right-side up. The purple path clearly curved right. She chewed her lip.

This was the moment **Maya Rose** had to make a very important decision. In this world, maps giggled and lines wriggled — so maybe going left led somewhere good too? But the map had been right so far, every time she tickled it first. She chose to trust the Ticklish Map over Pip's upside-down reading. She tickled the map's left edge below the third swirly line to double-check. It giggled and glowed right. "We go right," said **Maya Rose** firmly. Pip



Maya Rose, Pip, and Honkle followed the right-curving path up through the rainbow-splattered forest. The hill was getting closer — **Maya Rose** could see its rounded top above the fern canopy, glowing faintly gold where the portal waited. Her heart did a little happy jump.

Then everything changed. They rounded a bend and stopped completely. The hill was there — but between them and it was the widest, deepest, muddiest puddle **Maya Rose** had ever seen. It was not a normal puddle. It was more like a puddle that had decided to become a small lake and was feeling very proud of itself. And floating in the middle of it were three flat rocks — much too far apart to jump easily.

Pip marched forward immediately. "I will read the situation," he said, and promptly stepped directly into the edge of the puddle with a magnificent SPLURP. He stood in the mud, feathers puffed, glasses muddy. "Ah yes," he said. "This is wetter than I calculated." **Maya Rose** tried not to snort. This was the plot twist she had not expected at all — the path home was blocked. She looked at the map again. The lines were wriggling worriedly. **Maya Rose** took a big breath and looked around very carefully for another answer.



Maya Rose looked at the puddle. She looked at the three flat rocks floating in it, spaced far too wide for her short legs. She looked at Honkle, the plump little dinosaur bouncing beside her. And then she had the most wonderful idea.

She reached into her canvas satchel and took out the Ticklish Map. She held it along its left edge, found the third swirly line, and tickled. The map giggled brightly — and this time, when the lines settled, they showed something new. A dotted line leading not across the puddle, but around its right side, following the base of a bumpy orange rock formation. The map had updated itself! **Maya Rose** gasped. "Oh WOW. You showed me a whole new path!"

But they still needed to get around the puddle, and the orange rocks were slippery from the colorful rain. **Maya Rose** made another decision based on this world's funny rules — since dinosaurs here loved to laugh and help, she asked Honkle for help by doing her best HONK impression. Honkle immediately understood, trotted to the orange rocks, and pressed its round body against them like a bumpy step-stool. **Maya Rose** climbed carefully, Pip waddled with great dignity, and together they all made it around the puddle. The glowing



The golden hill was steeper than it looked in the map's drawings, and the grass on its sides was springy and bouncy, like walking on a trampoline. **Maya Rose** went up three steps and bounced back one, giggling every time. Pip walked directly into the hill's side twice before finding the path. Honkle, it turned out, was an excellent hill-climber and bounced straight to the top, honking encouragingly.

Above the hill, the Circus of Colorful Clouds had gathered into a full ring again, puffing cheerful bursts of pink and orange into the violet-blue sky. More colorful raindrops had begun to fall — softer this time, like warm confetti. They tickled **Maya Rose's** cheeks and made her laugh as she climbed.

Halfway up, **Maya Rose** looked back at the prehistoric forest spreading out below her, enormous and green and full of honking dinosaurs and rainbow puddles and glittering ferns. She felt a strange mix of happy and a tiny bit sad. This world was so wonderfully silly and beautiful. She took a big breath and kept climbing, because she knew someone at home was missing her, and that mattered more than anything — even a Circus of Colorful Clouds floating above the most amazing jungle in all of time.



Maya Rose reached the top of the hill and there it was — the glowing golden ring, spinning slowly just above the ground, exactly like the one she had fallen through back home. It hummed softly and smelled like warm rain and something that reminded her of her kitchen.

Pip waddled up beside her and examined the portal through his thick glasses. "Ah yes," he said. "According to my excellent reading, this is clearly a door. Or possibly a large coin. But most likely a door." **Maya Rose** laughed and put her hand on his wing gently. "Thank you, Pip," she said. "You were wrong about almost everything, but somehow it always helped." Pip puffed up importantly. "That is my method," he said.

Honkle nudged **Maya Rose**'s hand with a warm, bumpy snout. **Maya Rose** hugged the round little dinosaur carefully. "You were the best honkadoodle I ever met," she whispered. Honkle let out one soft, happy honk. **Maya Rose** tucked the Ticklish Map safely back into her satchel — it gave one last tiny giggle as she rolled it up. Then she stood very straight, took the biggest breath she had taken all day, and stepped toward the golden ring. The Circus of Colorful Clouds puffed one brilliant burst of rainbow color across the sky above her, as if it was saying goodbye.



Maya Rose stepped through the golden ring and — WHOOOOSH — she was spinning again, head over boots over pigtails, and everything went sparkly and warm. Then there was a soft, leafy FWUMP, and she was sitting back under the old oak tree in her own garden, mud on her boots and a rainbow splatter of orange on her yellow raincoat sleeve.

The rain was still falling. It was grey rain now, ordinary and gentle, which somehow seemed both boring and perfectly wonderful at the same time. **Maya Rose** sat very still for a moment and listened to it patter on the big oak leaves above her. Then she reached into her satchel. The Ticklish Map was still there, rolled neatly with its fern-green ribbon. As **Maya Rose** touched it, it gave one tiny, sleepy giggle and went quiet.

Maya Rose stood up, straightened her lopsided pigtails as best she could — which was not very well — and walked back toward her house with the biggest, silliest grin on her face. She had traveled through time, crossed a giant muddy puddle, made a polka-dotted owl friend and a bouncy dinosaur friend, and found her way home using a map that laughed. Tomorrow she would check the puddle by the oak tree again. Just in case Pip had found his way through too. She really did hope so.

MORAL OF THE STORY

Maya Rose wants you to know that being curious and kind — even when things get wiggly and wrong — always leads you somewhere wonderful. And the best friends are the ones who try their very hardest, even if they read the map upside down.



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Congratulations, Maya Rose!

You lived an incredible adventure, full of
courage, imagination and special moments
that only you could experience!

You are incredible!

SPECIAL MESSAGE

*Maya, you are our dearest adventurer! Kisses from
Grandpa and Grandma!!!*



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