

# MEGAN'S SCHOOL TRIP

A SPIRIT GUIDE, A GHOST TIGER, AND ONE  
SCARY MOTHER!



VOLUME THREE  
OWEN JONES



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SCHOOL TRIP

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DEDICATION

The Megan Series

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# **MEGAN'S SCHOOL TRIP**

by

**OWEN JONES**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

To my wife, Neem for all of her help and advice with the covers in this series and to Rachel Maduro, who has sketched all of them so accurately, capturing just the right mood each time, yet with so little information to go on. I don't know how she does it.

### **1 THE SCHOOL TRIP**

Towards the end of April, it was announced to each class by the form teacher, that there would be a school outing in a fortnight's time for those who qualified and whose parents would allow them to go. This did not happen every year, because such a trip was not funded by the authorities. The money had to be raised by the pupils, their parents and the school staff. They usually managed to go somewhere two years in three though, even if it was not very far away. For some of the children, it was the only holiday they ever got.

Mrs. Henshaw, Megan's form's head of class made an announcement after assembly and morning registration:

“As Mr. Hughes, the headmaster, said earlier on this morning, the Parent and Teachers Association has raised enough money to allow us to take you, those of you have not had detention in the last twelve months, away for the day again this year.

“Mr. Hughes has made three suggested destinations for the trip and has asked me to reveal them to you now. Therefore, will you get out your rough book and write them down now, please:

Number 1: the site of an ancient battle.



Number 2: an ancient religious site.

Number 3: a site of prehistoric interest.

“Mr. Hughes would like you to think about which site you would like to visit and perhaps discuss it with your parents. You will have until next Monday morning to do so, when there will be a short discussion after morning assembly and you will be able to cast your vote.

“While the exact destination of these three options is not being disclosed, in order to maintain a little mystique around the school trip, you may assure your parents that we will be staying in the country – in fact within the county. We didn’t collect that much money, but whichever you pick, I am certain that we will have a very enjoyable day and, yes, if you are wondering why I keep saying ‘we’, I am going on the trip with you.

“The destination with the most votes will be selected for us to visit the following week. All right class, that is all for now, please attend your first lesson as quietly and as swiftly as you can without running in the corridors, because you are now a little behind schedule due to that announcement. Thank you class”.

Everyone liked Mrs. Henshaw, who was a thin, grey-haired woman in her early fifties. She had a sense of humour, but she rationed it strictly like a millionaire trying not to spoil his children with too much pocket money. Mrs. Henshaw believed in propriety, but she was not against having a little fun.

The class split up to attend their first period of the day. Some remained where they were while others had to go to other form rooms to join other teachers.

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Megan, and, it was fair to say, everyone in the school was excited about the forthcoming school trip. It was the buzz of the day and people discussed it at every opportunity. She couldn’t wait to get home to discuss it with her parents, because she was completely undecided where she wanted to go. At the moment, Megan could only think how nice it would be to have a day off school and a bus ride somewhere; a day out with her friends.

When she got home, Megan carried out the routine of hanging up her jacket and her satchel in the hall and changing her shoes for her slippers, before skipping to the kitchen to look for her mother.

“Mam? Mam! Guess what!”

“You sneaked out of school early?” she joked.

“No! I ran all the way home. We’re going on a school outing next week or the week after. Won’t that be great? We didn’t go last year, did we? Remember? We didn’t have the money, but this year we have...”

“That’s lovely, Megan, where are they taking you, darling?”

“Well, that’s it, we don’t know yet. Mr. Hughes has given us three choices and we can vote on them next week, but even then we won’t know exactly where we’re going until we get there. Mrs. Henshaw said that they want to keep some mystery or something, misty something, about the exact destination”.

“Mystique?”

“Yes, that was it! ‘Mystique’... Does that mean mystery? It is such a lovely word, isn’t it... mystique... mystique... mystique”.

“Yes, but more an ‘air of mystery’ or an ‘air of magic’ – a ‘touch of mystery’ or a ‘touch of magic’. It is a lovely word, probably French originally.

“So, what are your choices for this mystery trip then?”

Megan told Suzanne the three choices.

“Which one do you think I should vote for, Mam?”

“Oh, no! This is your choice. I don’t want you to blame me for suggesting somewhere, if it turns out to be boring. Anyway, when you are given a vote on something, you should think about it seriously and then cast your own vote... like in an election. You can’t go asking people who you should vote for in an election, can you? No, that would never do, so you make up your own mind, it will be good practice for you”.

“OK, Mam. I’m going up to my room to do my homework before tea”.

Megan clattered up the stairs and Suzanne wished she would be more ladylike and walk noiselessly around the house as she had told her to a thousand times before.

Megan expected to see Grrr, her Spirit tiger friend, lying on her bed and was rather disappointed to see that she wasn’t, because Megan had not seen her all day after getting up that morning. At times like these, she often wondered what Grrr did when she wasn’t with her.

Megan would imagine Grrr playing with other tigers in the snow or just wandering alone through the Russian steppes reliving ancient memories or even gaining new ones. She had no idea, although she knew that if she

thought-called Grrr, she would stop whatever she was doing and be there at her side in the twinkling of an eye.

Sometimes, Megan found it hard not to do just that, because she did not want to interrupt her friend for no good reason, so she got on with her homework to take her mind of it.

She thought that she might ask her Spirit Guide, Wacinhinsha, later, if she saw him, but for the moment, she had some French irregular verbs to learn and an essay on 'The Effect of the Internet on Education' to write, and that was being made harder by the constant intrusion of thoughts about the school outing.

Megan was glad when she heard her father come in an hour later. She finished the paragraph she was writing, took a shower, put on a T-shirt and shorts and went down to tea.

"Megan has some news, Robert, don't you Megan?"

"Yes, Dad, how are you? We are going on a school excursion soon and we can vote for going to a battle site, a religious site or a prehistoric site, but I don't know which one to vote for".

"Mmm, a tough one. What are you most interested in? Battles, religion or society, although it is not really that cleanly cut. Throughout history people have fought battles over religion and society always pays the price for war. Even nowadays, look at the conflicts on TV everyday.

"Still, it might help to try to compartmentalise the three options like that. I know which one I would go for though. I like the prehistoric stuff. Imagine the world with no TV, no electric even! Go back even further and they didn't even have fire, so no cooking! I bet you would love that, wouldn't you Mam?"

"No cooking and no washing up, because there were no pots and pans or plates. No offices, because there was no electric and no paper and no writing. You just used to have to go out picking berries and nuts all day and maybe trap a rabbit... or spear one... Unless the lions, tigers and wolves got you first, that is..."

"What, Dad? They had lions, tigers and wolves in this country in those days? Lions and tigers? I thought they only lived in hot countries..." and then she realised that Grrr came from the frozen Russian steppes. "Of course, there are tigers in northern Russia and China even now, aren't there? Siberian tigers..."

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