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We know
books

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Climate Kids

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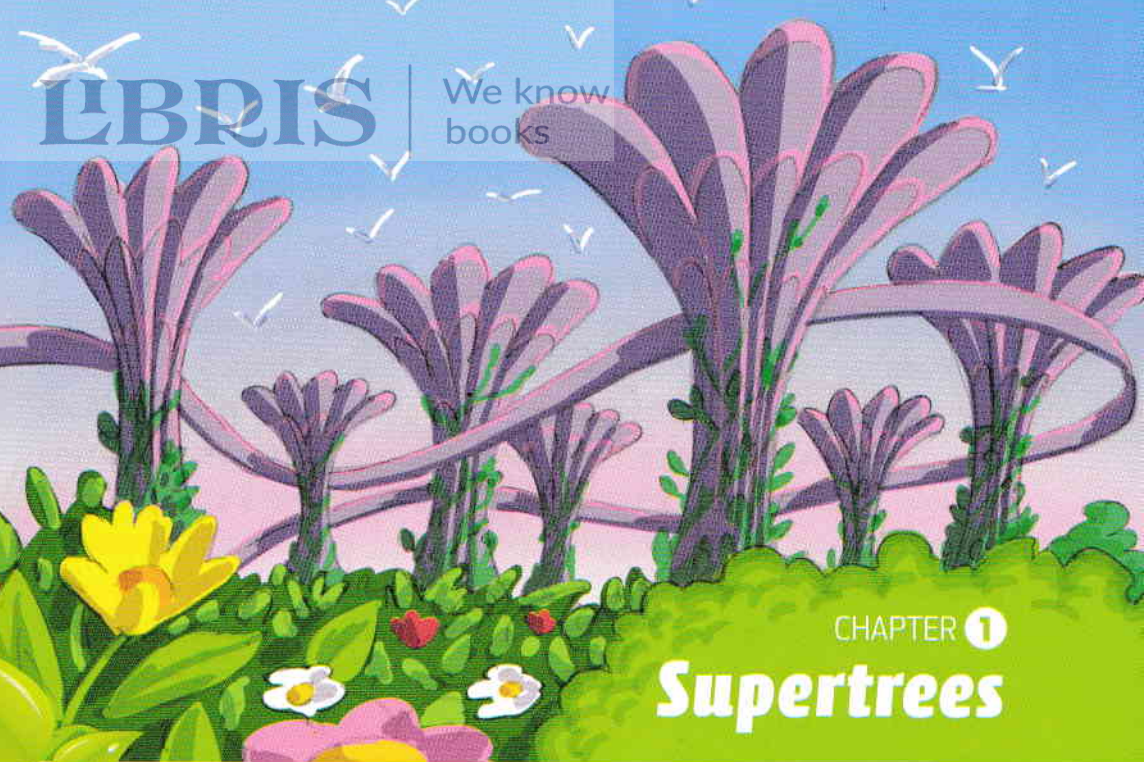
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CHAPTER 1

Supertrees



Deep in the leaf-green¹ countryside is a small town called Kirby. Nothing unusual ever happens there, so the residents² are surprised when they wake up one morning and find solar-powered Supertrees in the middle of the park. These giant trees stand fifty metres high and breathe life into the residents



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of Kirby. Flowers and plants grow around the steel trees and along the branches. Even the birds build nests amongst the metal leaves. The Supertrees collect rainwater, change sunlight into energy and produce fresh clean air for the town. Families and friends like to walk on the narrow bridges which connect the trees. They enjoy the view of the sky and the beautiful gardens below.

After a few days everything changes.

'The air tastes sweeter,' says Bill, the policeman.

'We can become the first *green* town in our country,' says Jed from the music shop.

'Kirby can be an example to everyone,' says Kate, the primary school

1. **leaf-green** : a bright green colour.

2. **residents** : a group of people who live in a place.



teacher. 'Our giant trees are important. Other towns can become green like us.'

The beautiful Supertrees sparkle in the middle of the park, and suddenly the houses and flats and shops look old and black and smoky. The members of the town council³ have a meeting.

'Our Supertrees are helping to save the planet. They take in carbon dioxide⁴ and produce oxygen, but we need to do more,' says the Mayor, the leader of the council. 'We must change our buildings. They should be eco-friendly, so they are good for the environment. Solar power can provide energy for our homes.'

'Let's make our houses and flats more eco-friendly,' says one man.

'If we drive electric cars,' says another, 'we can eliminate petrol vehicles from our town.'

'We can build safe cycle paths⁵ and have water taxis on the river,' says a woman.

3. **town council** : local government.

4. **carbon dioxide (CO₂)** : this is produced when carbon is burned or people and animals breath out.

5. **cycle path** : a path that is only for bicycles.



The leader of the council bangs her hand on the desk. 'Approved.'

'An excellent decision,' says everyone.

And so work begins.

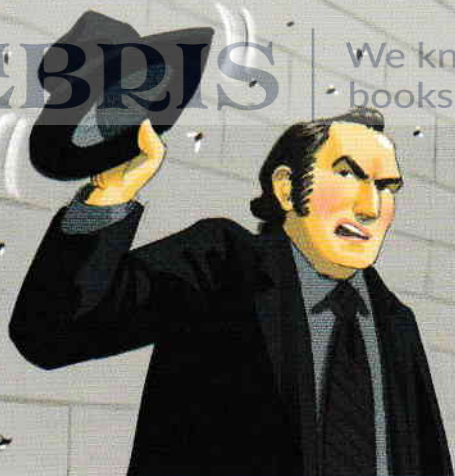
The architects design houses made from thousands of recycled glass bottles. The coloured glass sparkles in the sunshine. Other houses have *living walls* with plants and flowers growing between the bricks. There are trees on every terrace and balcony. The houses have solar roofs and small windmills in the gardens which produce energy.

The residents of Kirby like their new self-sufficient lives. Many families keep chickens in the gardens and grow their own vegetables. Supporting local business and jobs is important. Residents buy food from farm shops and clothes from boutiques in town. They don't order things on the Internet anymore. The people in Kirby are happy with their new eco-friendly town.

It takes time, but finally the energy efficient houses and the cycle paths are ready. The gardens are full of lettuces, tomatoes and strawberries. Everything looks wonderful, but there is still one problem.

The town of Lew stands on the other side of the river Ravenbeck. Many years ago Kirby-Lew was one place, but today Kirby and Lew are two





separate towns with very different problems. The residents of Lew are not interested in solar power or saving the planet. The air in their town is full of smog⁶ and bad smells drift⁷ across the river to the town of Kirby.

‘Global warming,’ one of them says. ‘What nonsense.⁸ Money is the only thing that matters.’⁹

‘Scientists say that the planet is getting warmer, but we still have snow and ice in winter,’ says another.

Lew has only one small park and not many trees. There are no cycle paths or streets full of flowers, and grey smog hangs in a cloud over the town. A bridge crosses the river Ravenbeck linking Kirby to the town of Lew. Children who go to school in Kirby sigh¹⁰ when they are walking home. Local people call it the ‘Bridge of Sighs’.

It is spring and a dancing wind from the west arrives. It brings trouble. A large truck stops at a factory¹¹ on the edge of the river in the town of Lew and a man gets out. He has an angry red face and dark eyes, and his name is Tobias Devell. His father Rufus Devell died six months ago and the factory is now his son’s. Rufus Devell was an artist and wasn’t interested in business. The factory was closed for years. Now that his

6. **smog** : air full of pollution.

7. **drift** : move slowly with no control.

8. **nonsense** : a silly or stupid idea.

9. **matters** : is important.

10. **sigh** : make a sad sound with your breath.

11. **factory** : a place where machines make things.