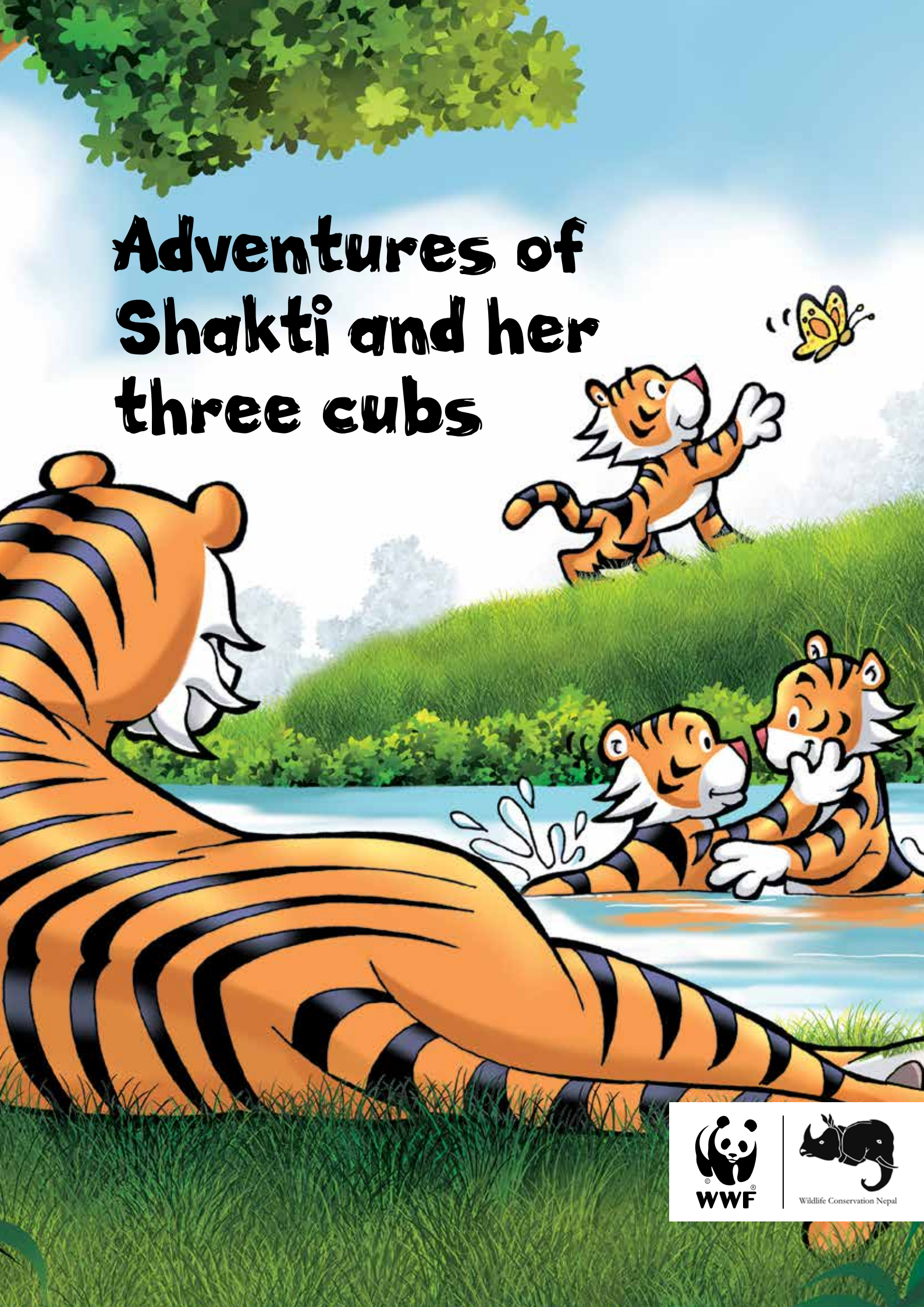


# Adventures of Shakti and her three cubs





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## Preface

Inspired by true events, “The Adventures of Shakti and Her Three Cubs” is a fictional story, about a day in the life of a tigress. This story book has been developed for children (6-10 years), using vibrant illustrations and simple storytelling.

The Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) is one of the six extant sub-species found in Nepal, India, Bhutan and Bangladesh. With large dietary needs and long-range dispersing behavior, these territorial tigers are apex predators in the eco system.

According to the 2018 Tiger Census, Nepal is home to 235 wild tigers, which is an upward trajectory for the conservation of the species. However, tigers are still threatened by illegal activities such as poaching, infrastructure development and habitat decline.

This book aims to highlight the plight of the tiger and increase awareness about the need to conserve the species.

If you love tigers as much as we do, write to us at [info@wwfnepal.org.np](mailto:info@wwfnepal.org.np) or [mail@wcn.org.np](mailto:mail@wcn.org.np) with your ideas on how we can conserve tigers in our forests.

Happy Reading!



# OUR CHARACTERS



Shakti

Shakti means 'Strength'



Surya

Surya means 'Sun'



Maya

Maya means 'Love'



Harkey

Harkey means 'Joy'



Sani

Sani means the 'Small One'



Bahadur

Bahadur means 'Brave'



Jhilke

Jhilke means 'Flashy'



# Content

|                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Shakti: The Fierce Tigress                   | 6  |
| Shakti Meets Surya                           | 12 |
| The Arrival of the Cubs                      | 16 |
| Bahadur, Maya and Sani's Day Out with Jhilke | 24 |
| A Smoky Morning                              | 32 |
| Sani Finds Her Inner Tigress                 | 38 |
| Maya's adventure with Harkey                 | 42 |



# SHAKTI, THE FIERCE TIGRESS



Once upon a time in the green and luscious forests of Nepal, there lived a young tigress named Shakti. She was the strongest, and fastest tigress in the entire jungle.

Her home was a big forest with huge grasslands.



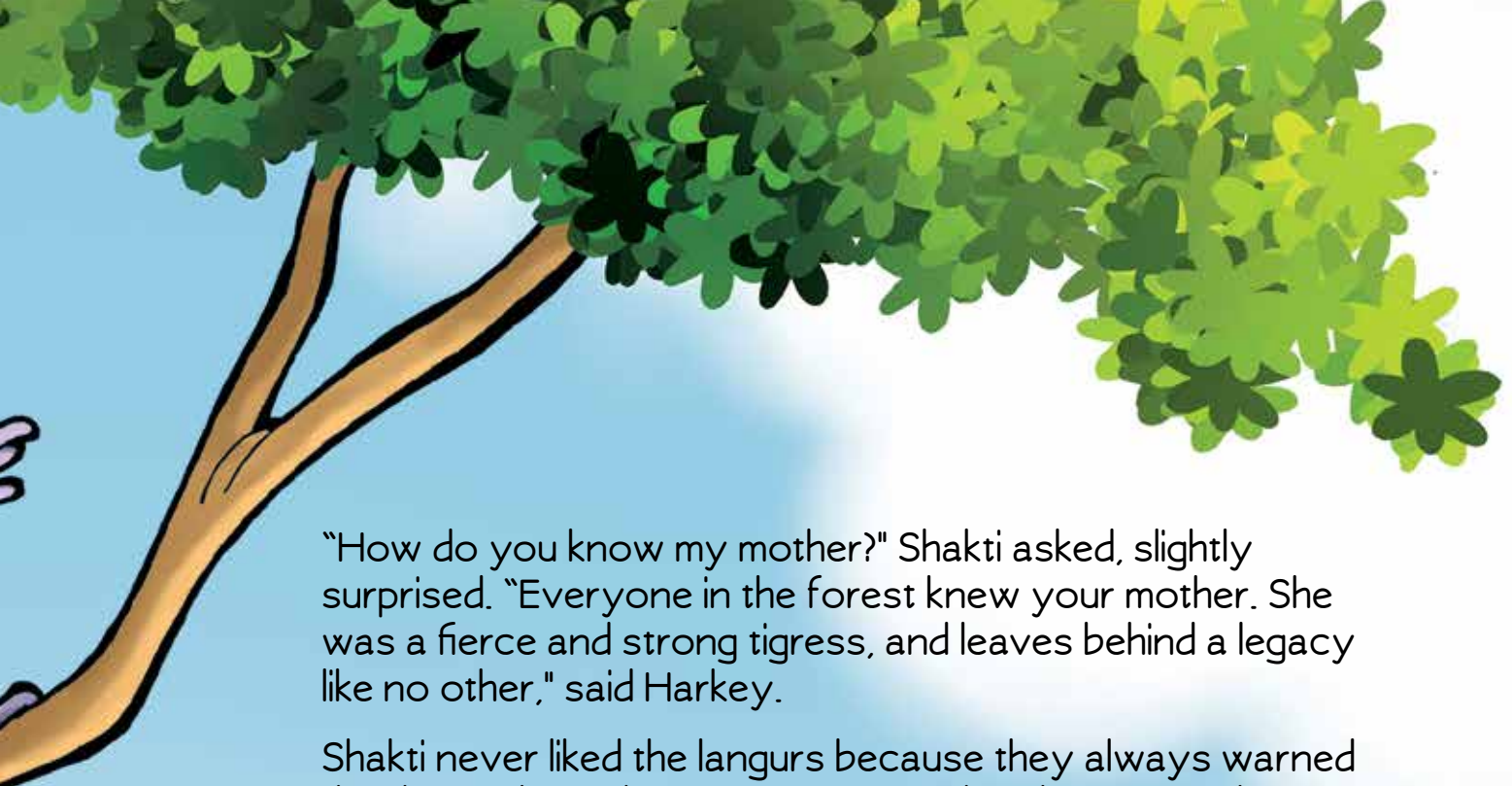


One day, Shakti was strolling around her forest territory, when suddenly she heard someone calling out her name, "Shakti!".

It was Harkey, the langur. "Shakti! You are all grown up, and you look just like your mother," he said excitedly.







"How do you know my mother?" Shakti asked, slightly surprised. "Everyone in the forest knew your mother. She was a fierce and strong tigress, and leaves behind a legacy like no other," said Harkey.

Shakti never liked the langurs because they always warned the deers about the tiger's presence by shouting and jumping on the trees, making it difficult to hunt deer. But it was nice of him to say such kind things about her mother.

"Nice to meet you, Harkey. See you soon!" Shakti said casually, and walked away.







Shakti had heard the story of her mother's untimely demise.

Her mother was on a hunt one day and had reached a road near the forest, where species of all kinds treaded carefully. As she was crossing the road, a passing vehicle hit her with such force that she was badly wounded.

Hurt from the accident, she lost her way and reached a nearby village. The villagers got scared of her and tried to drive her away by lighting flames and making loud noises. All the noise



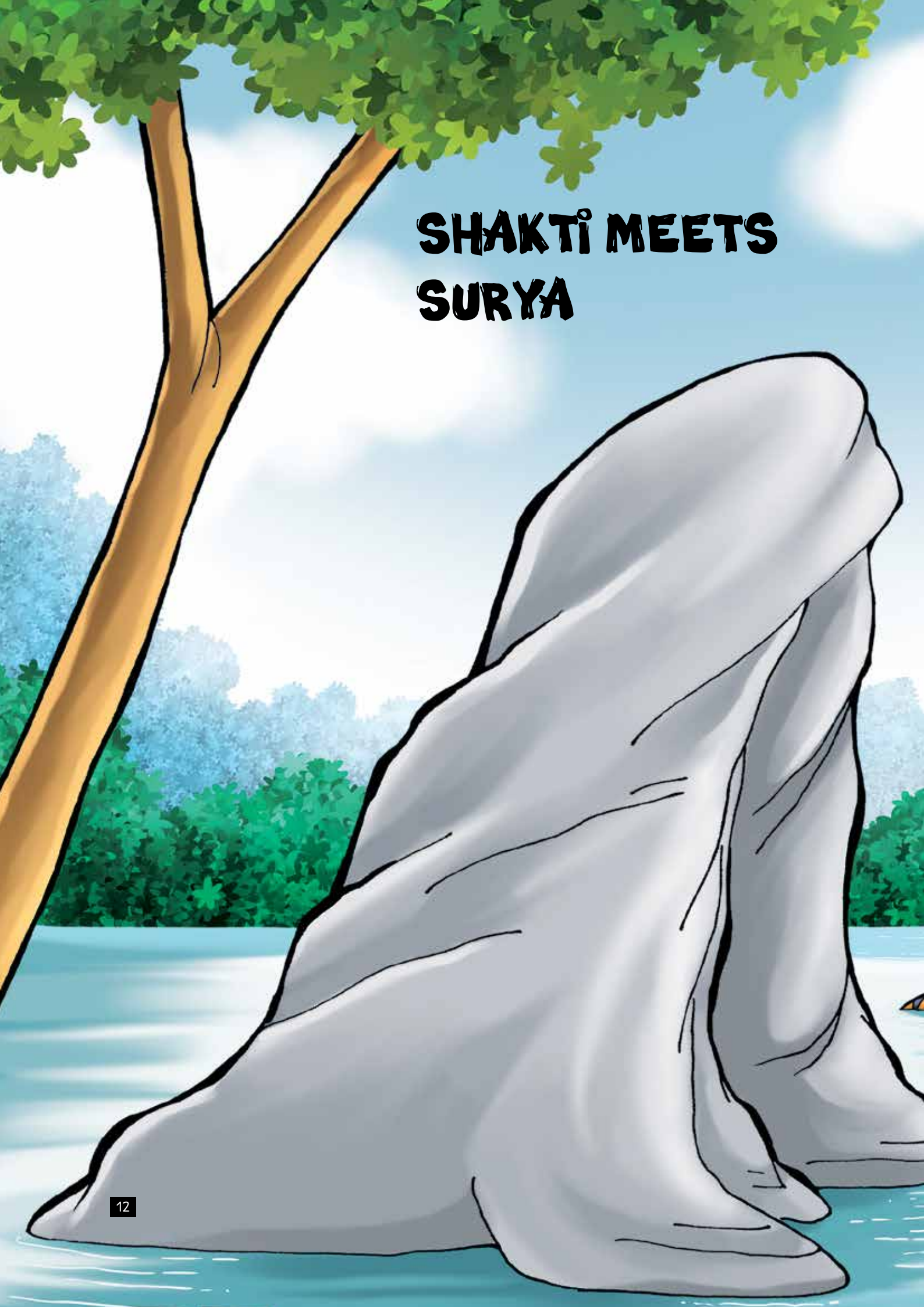




scared and confused her. She limped deep into the forest with her bleeding wound. The bleeding continued for a long time.

Without treatment, she soon died. Shakti had already left her home by then, so she found out about her mother's death much later through her friends in the forest. Shakti missed her mother every day.





# SHAKTI MEETS SURYA



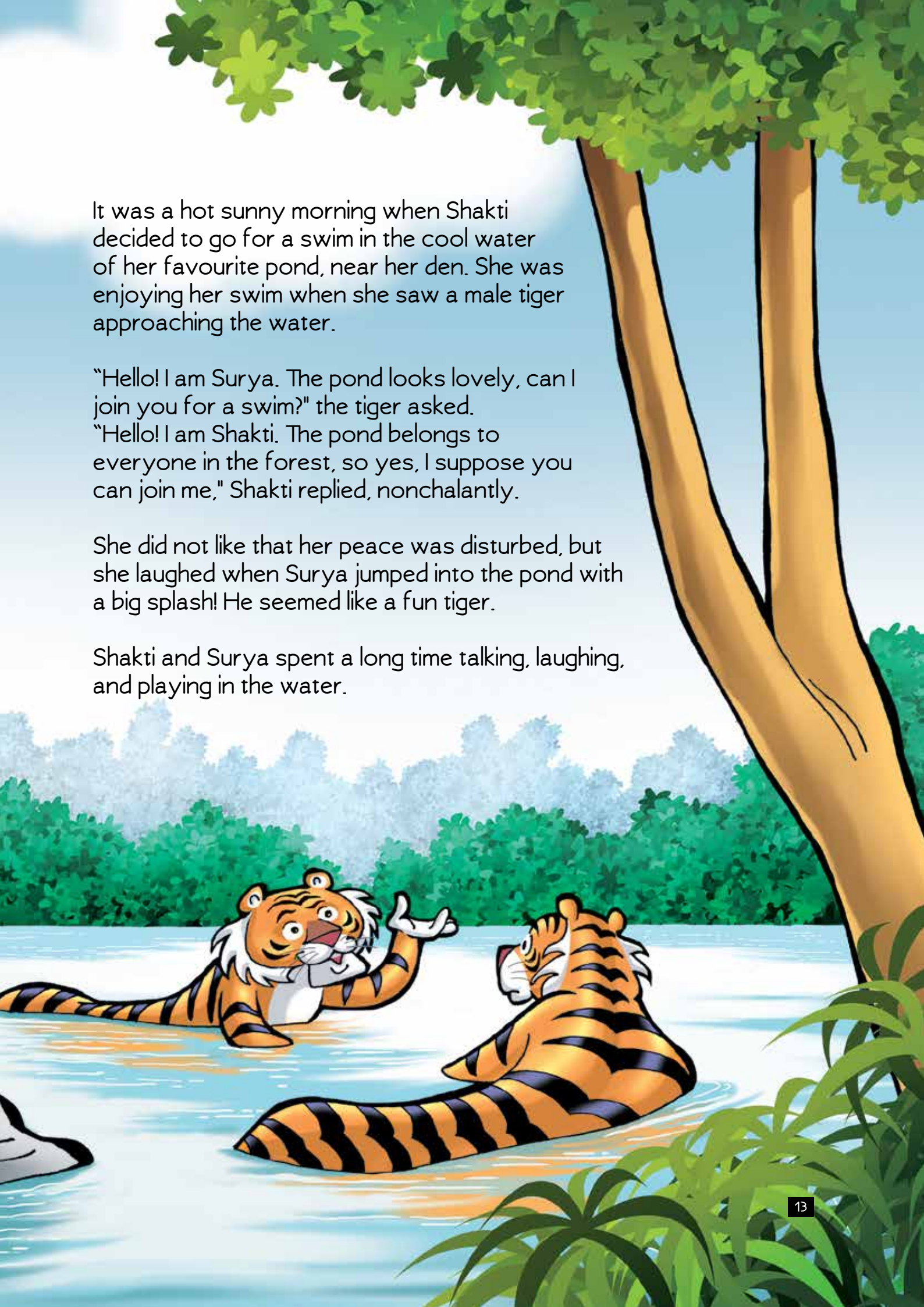
It was a hot sunny morning when Shakti decided to go for a swim in the cool water of her favourite pond, near her den. She was enjoying her swim when she saw a male tiger approaching the water.

"Hello! I am Surya. The pond looks lovely, can I join you for a swim?" the tiger asked.

"Hello! I am Shakti. The pond belongs to everyone in the forest, so yes, I suppose you can join me," Shakti replied, nonchalantly.

She did not like that her peace was disturbed, but she laughed when Surya jumped into the pond with a big splash! He seemed like a fun tiger.

Shakti and Surya spent a long time talking, laughing, and playing in the water.









Soon, they became close friends. They enjoyed each other's company and went on long walks in the forest. In a few months time, Shakti was pregnant.

"Surya, no matter how much I love you, my cubs will always come first. You know that once i become a mother, I will spend all my time looking after my cubs. I will not even want you to disturb me," Shakti told Surya. "Yes I know, Shakti," Surya said sadly. "I know the laws of nature, I promise I will not come in our children's way.

Please make sure they grow up to be fierce and brave like you. And yes, we will certainly meet again," Surya said and bade farewell.



It was a sad moment for both Shakti and Surya, but they also knew that it was natural for them to part before the cubs arrive.



# ARRIVAL OF THE CUBS

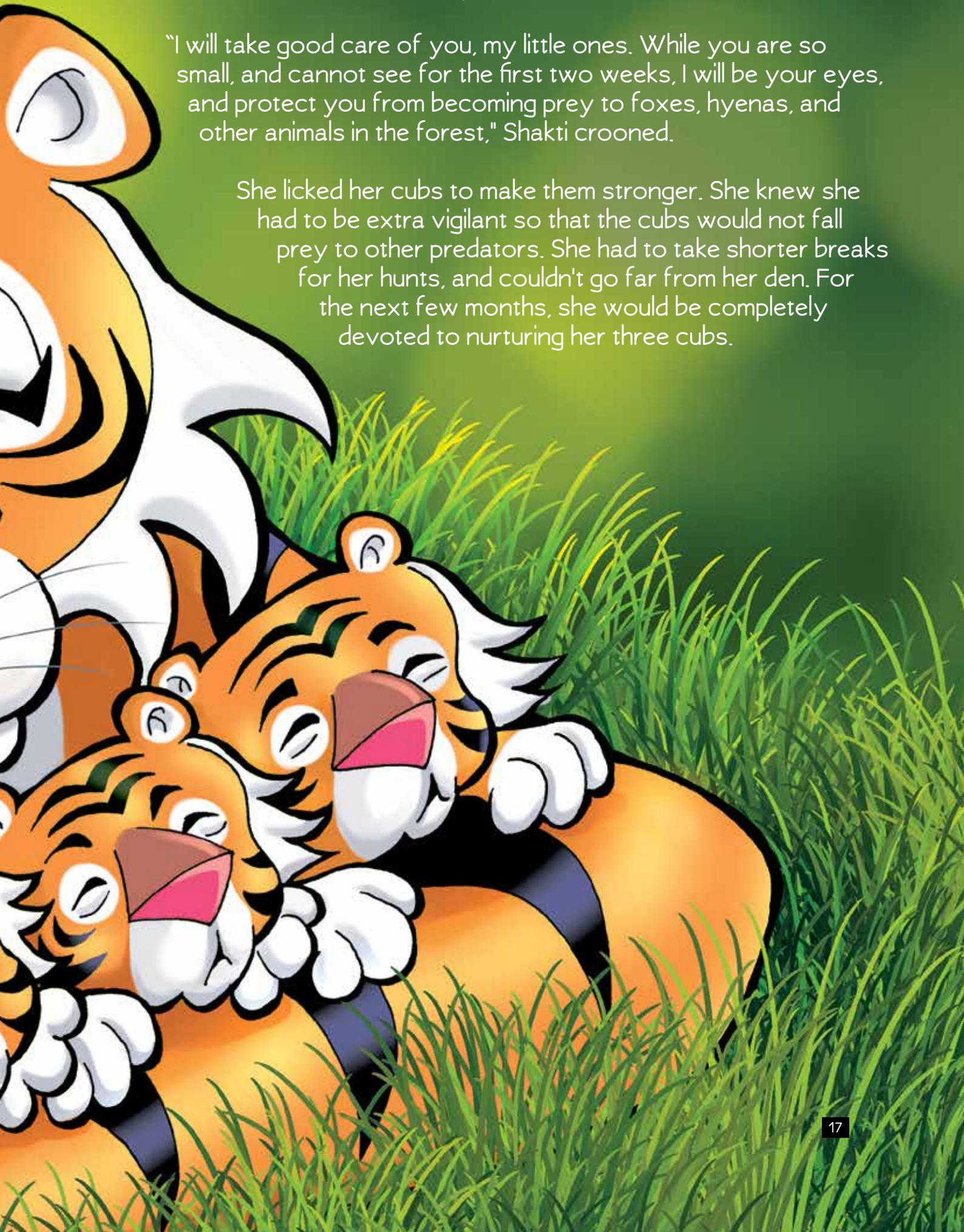




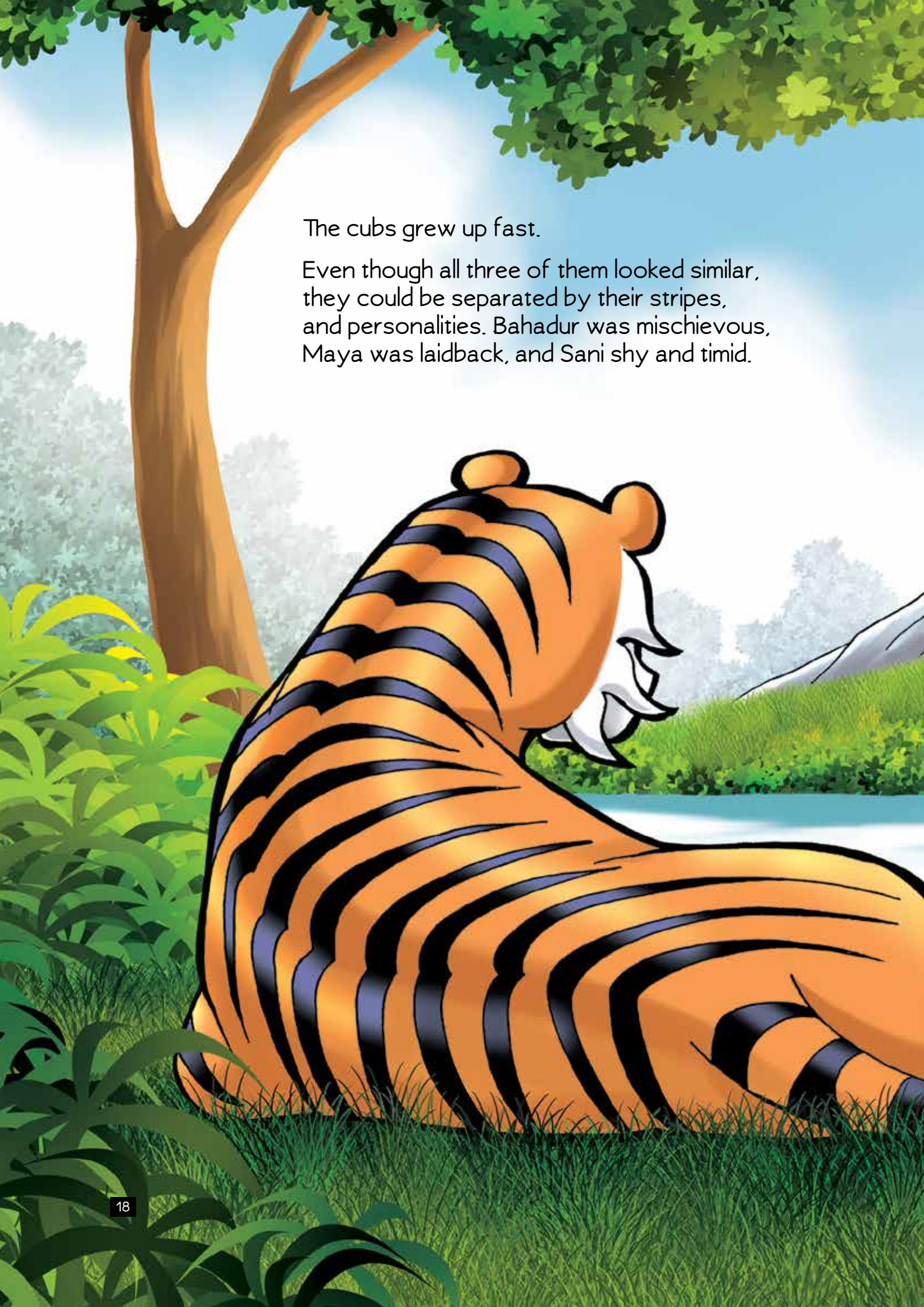
In three months, Shakti gave birth to a son and two daughters. She named her cubs Bahadur, Maya and Sani.

"I will take good care of you, my little ones. While you are so small, and cannot see for the first two weeks, I will be your eyes, and protect you from becoming prey to foxes, hyenas, and other animals in the forest," Shakti crooned.

She licked her cubs to make them stronger. She knew she had to be extra vigilant so that the cubs would not fall prey to other predators. She had to take shorter breaks for her hunts, and couldn't go far from her den. For the next few months, she would be completely devoted to nurturing her three cubs.







The cubs grew up fast.

Even though all three of them looked similar, they could be separated by their stripes, and personalities. Bahadur was mischievous, Maya was laidback, and Sani shy and timid.



While Bahadur and Maya often spent their time playing in the water and fighting playfully in the mud; Sani spent her time chasing butterflies, grasshoppers, and frogs.

But Shakti knew that there would soon come a time when she would have to teach the cubs the art of hunting.



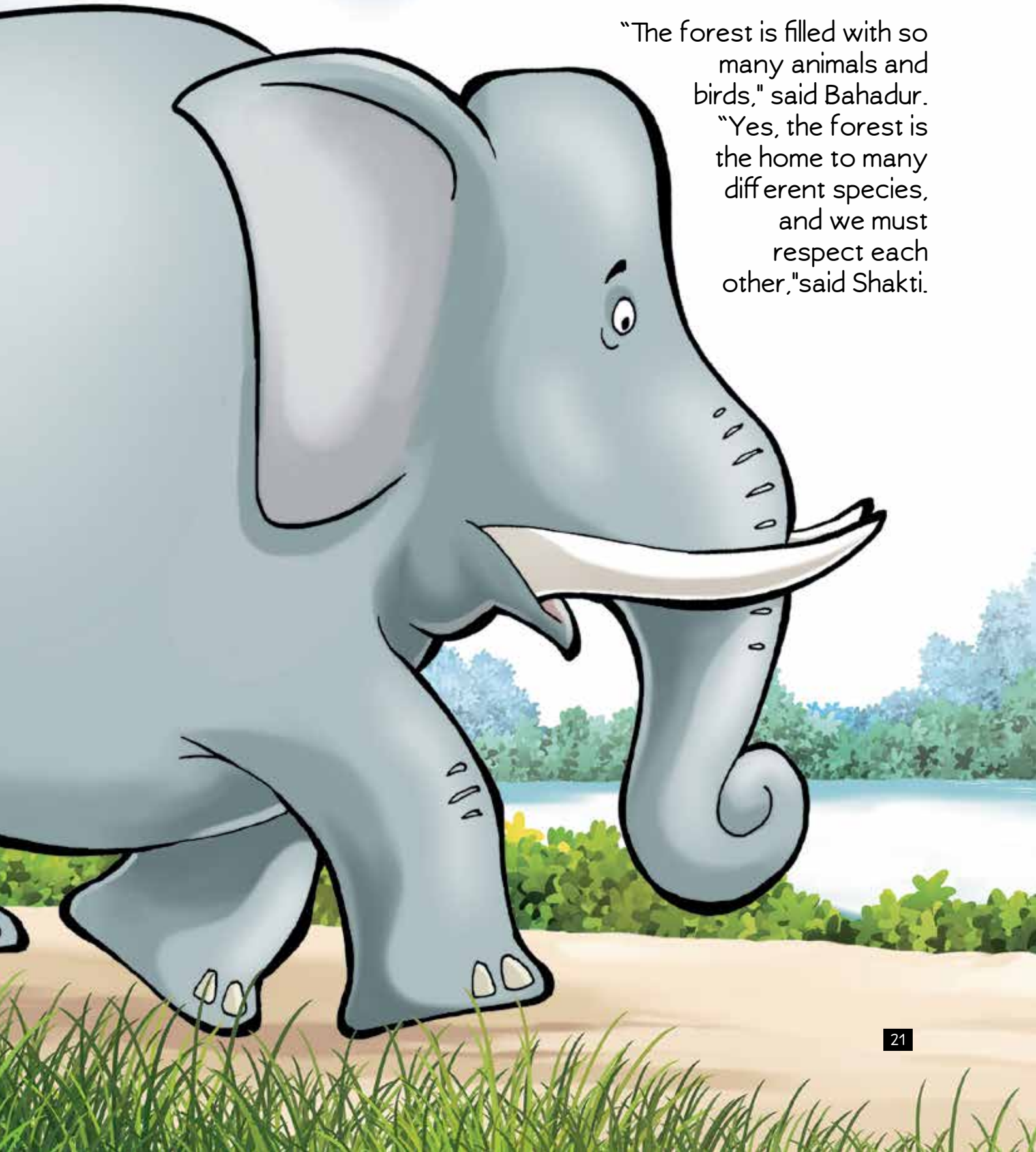






Bahadur, Maya, and Sani enjoyed spending time with their mother. For the cubs, their mother was the biggest animal in the forest. Rabbits, boars, deer and other animals ran away in fright every time Shakti approached. Until one day, they saw the elephant. The three cubs looked at the elephants with their eyes wide open. "They are huge!" the three cubs said in unison.

"The forest is filled with so many animals and birds," said Bahadur.  
"Yes, the forest is the home to many different species, and we must respect each other," said Shakti.









She further explained, "In nature, everyone is dependent on each other. When tigers hunt, they keep the population of animals balanced in the forest. In fact, tigers have a huge responsibility in nature. Therefore, a tiger must be able to hunt well. It is high time that the three of you start learning the art of hunting that my mother taught me," Shakti said to her cubs.



"Cubs, watch me hunt and learn well. Always remember to be calm and purposeful when you're hunting. No matter how strong we are, we should never attack another animal without reason. Hunting is only for our food and survival. It is never for fun," Shakti added. For the next two years, Shakti would be dedicated to teaching her cubs everything a young tiger would need to know before they left their mother's den to become independent adults.



# **BAHADUR, MAYA, AND SANI'S DAY OUT WITH JHILKE**





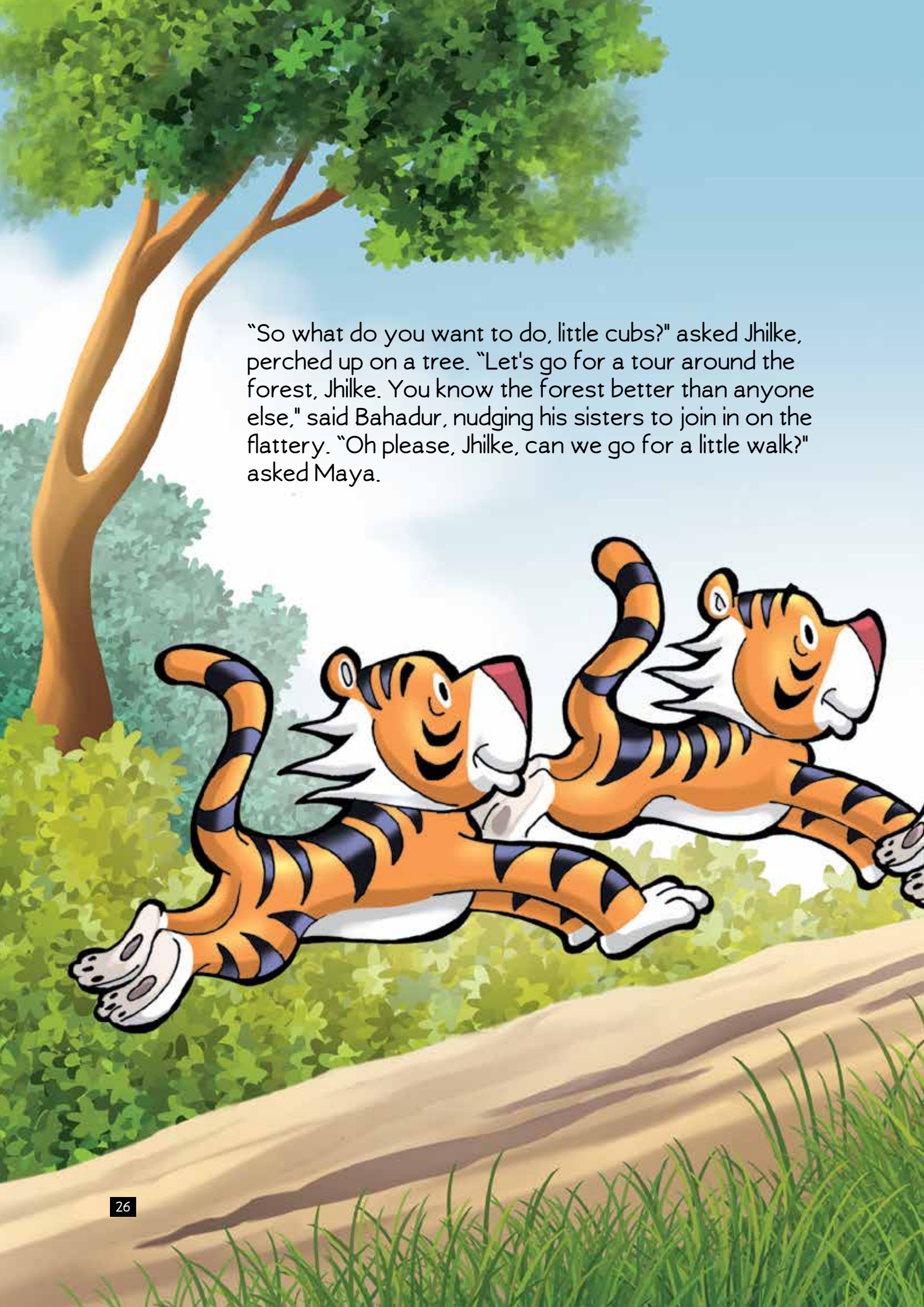
As time passed by, the cubs made friends with other animals in the forest. They enjoyed being with Jhilke, the Kingfisher, the most. One day, they were all enjoying their time by the river. Shakti was teaching her cubs life skills such as crouching and pouncing.

"Hahaha!" laughed Jhilke looking at the antics of the young cubs, who were all muddy. "You seem to be enjoying the show, Jhilke. You know it's hard work teaching these cubs," said Shakti. "From here, it only looks fun," replied Jhilke, laughing loudly.

"Can you please keep an eye on my cubs while I go hunting?" Shakti asked Jhilke. "Of course! I enjoy spending time with these cubs, and anyways i dare not disobey the strongest tigress of the forest," Jhilke replied, smiling. "Now do not trouble Jhilke, OK? I will be back soon," Shakti told her cubs before she left.







"So what do you want to do, little cubs?" asked Jhilke, perched up on a tree. "Let's go for a tour around the forest, Jhilke. You know the forest better than anyone else," said Bahadur, nudging his sisters to join in on the flattery. "Oh please, Jhilke, can we go for a little walk?" asked Maya.

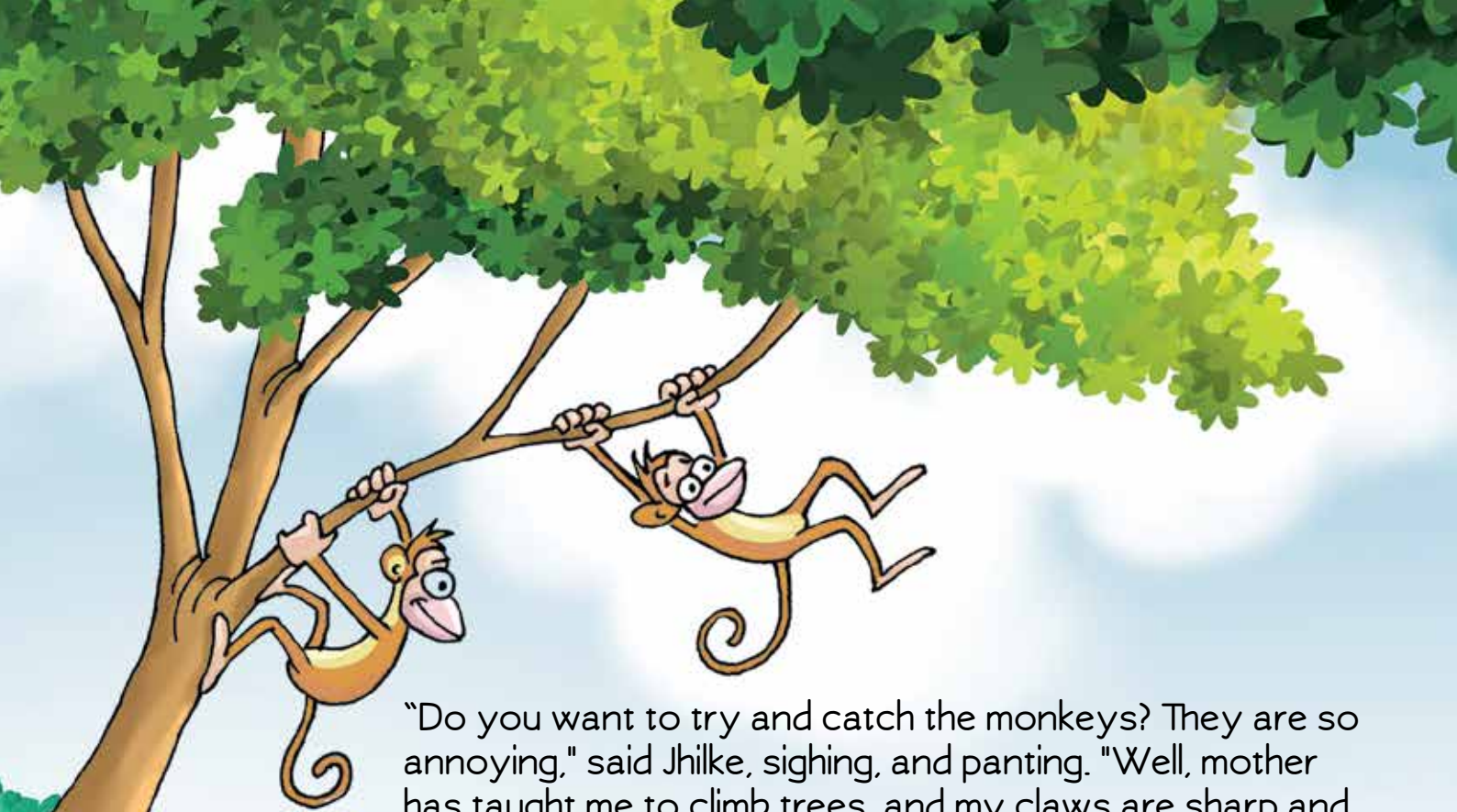


"You know how to flatter me and get your way, don't you? If you really want to go for a walk then you will have to do what I tell you. Stick close together and follow my instructions carefully," said Jhilke as he flew off the branch.

Bahadur, Maya, and Sani were all excited for their day out in the forest with Jhilke. But soon after, the cubs started to get hungry and asked Jhilke for food. "Well, let's catch some food for you in the forest then," Jhilke told them. There was mischief in his eyes.







"Do you want to try and catch the monkeys? They are so annoying," said Jhilke, sighing, and panting. "Well, mother has taught me to climb trees, and my claws are sharp and retractable, so I can easily climb them, but it's so tiresome to hunt monkeys, and I don't feel like chasing them around. Why don't you suggest catching something more fun?" asked Maya. "What about porcupines?" asked Jhilke. "There is one next to that big tree." "I'd rather not get pricked by them like I did the last time," replied Sani timidly.

"How about those sambars then, all you have to do is roar and they will get so frightened that they won't be able to move," said Jhilke. The cubs loved this idea and





roared loudly. Startled by the roar, the sambar ran away. "You fooled us," Bahadur said annoyed. "Well, you should have remembered what your mother taught you. I am sure you will not forget it next time. I will make it up to you. Come, follow me," Jhilke said laughing.







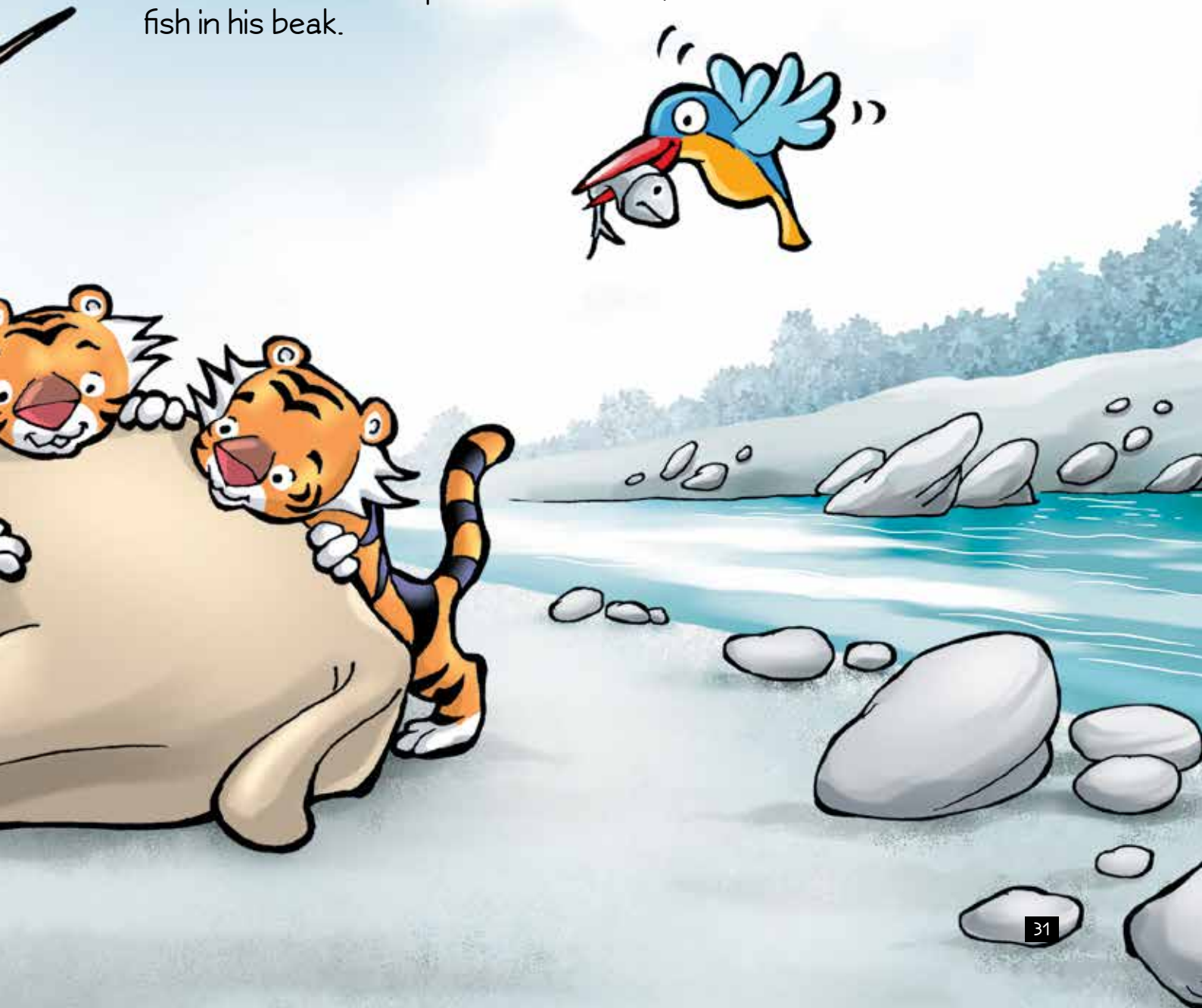


The cubs followed Jhilke to the riverbank, where Shakti was waiting for them. A sambar deer lay dead on the ground. "We are so hungry from our walk around the forest," cried Maya.

"I think it will be a while before we can hunt a sambar on our own," added Bahadur, wistfully, thinking of the earlier incident with the sambar. "Eat your fill, my cubs, and don't worry, you will get plenty of opportunities to hunt down sambar in your lifetime," said Shakti, lovingly.

The three cubs cried, "Thank you, mother!" unanimously after their hunger was satisfied. It was indeed a good day out in the forest. The cubs had learnt some valuable lessons too.

"I think, I will now get a fish for myself too," announced Jhilke, as he dived into the deep end of the river, and came back with a fish in his beak.







# A SMOKY MORNING





The next morning, the cubs woke up to an unpleasant smell. They started coughing, and their throat and nostrils were hurting. When they tried to move about, they found it was difficult to do so because there was something bad mixed in with the normal fog.

"Do not panic, cubs. I think some people have made a fire in the forest. Don't be afraid, and don't run, just follow me. We have to get out of here. In case we get separated, just remember we should all find our way to the pond by the big rock," Shakti gave clear instructions to her cubs. The frightened cubs nodded their heads, and they all left their den.

As they went deeper into the forest, the smoke got thicker. Shakti turned around and saw that none of her cubs were with her.

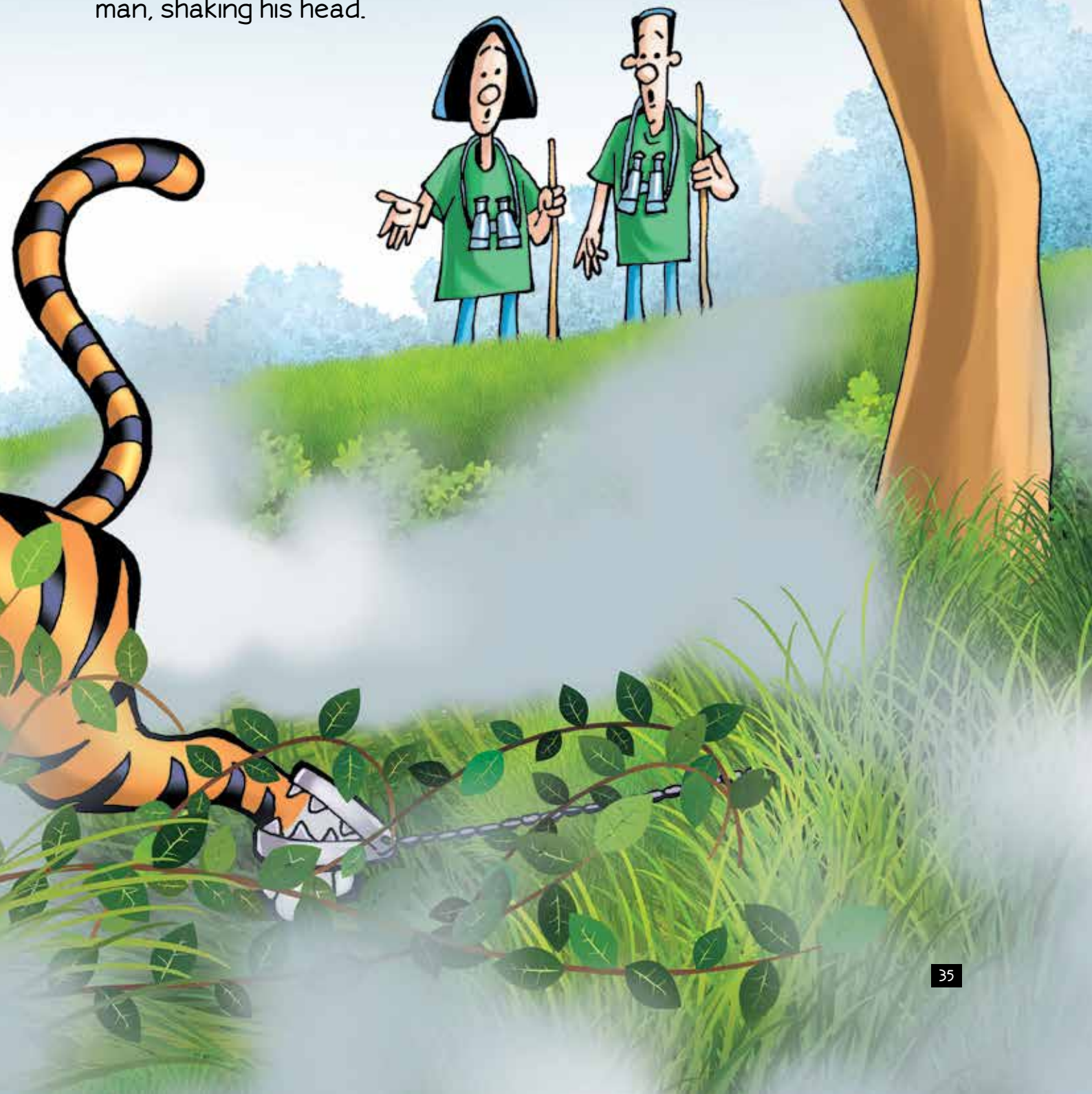


Shakti was scared and started to cry out for her cubs, running around frantically, but they were nowhere to be found. Suddenly, her paw got caught on something sharp and she roared in pain. Her left leg was trapped in a snare! Shakti had heard of terrible stories about tigers being captured for their skin and bones. In pain and desperation, Shakti tried to pull free but she fell back and got further entangled in the vines! Just then, she heard the rustling of leaves nearby, and two figures appeared at a distance. "Humans!" Shakti gasped. "These humans will surely kill me now. What will become of my cubs?" Shakti thought, anguished with pain.





The two figures came closer to where Shakti was and she growled. "Oh my God, I can't believe it. Is that a tiger on my first day in the Anti Poaching Unit?" exclaimed the young man. "Calm down! We have been trained for this, it looks like a tigress is caught in a snare! She looks like she is in distress," added the young woman. "This smoke has made it worse. Our carelessness could destroy the entire forest," said the man, shaking his head.





"Why can't people leave tigers alone? I'm so disappointed by people who kill animals for their selfish greed. I am glad we found this tigress. It would have been a pity if poachers had found her instead," said the young woman. "Many don't understand that tigresses are crucial for tiger conservation. A tigress keeps the entire population alive. In her lifetime, a tigress can give birth to numerous cubs. She must be protected," said the man. "Let's call the national park authorities, I am sure they will be here in no time," said the young woman. Soon enough, help arrived. The rescue team told them that the park was on high alert that day and thanked them for being vigilant. They freed Shakti from the snare and tended to her wounds while she was tranquilised.

"I must find my cubs. They must be scared. I hope they have found their way to the pond," Shakti thought, as she gained consciousness and ran towards the forest.









# SANI FINDS HER INNER TIGRESS

Sani and Bahadur reached a clearing in the forest. "Crackle, crackle!" They heard a noise. Suddenly, two men stepped into the clearing. They were two poachers! "Humans!" whispered Bahadur.



"Wow! This is our lucky day, two tiger cubs! Let's capture them before their mother comes," said one of the poachers. "Run!" Bahadur started to say, but before his words could escape his mouth, the men covered Bahadur with a sack. "Leave him alone," Sani growled.





"Oh! This one looks feisty," said one of the poachers. The poachers tried to cover Sani with a sack as well, but Sani was agile and quick. They missed her. "This one is really clever," said the poacher furiously. Another poacher swiftly tried to hook her neck with a noose, but missed again.

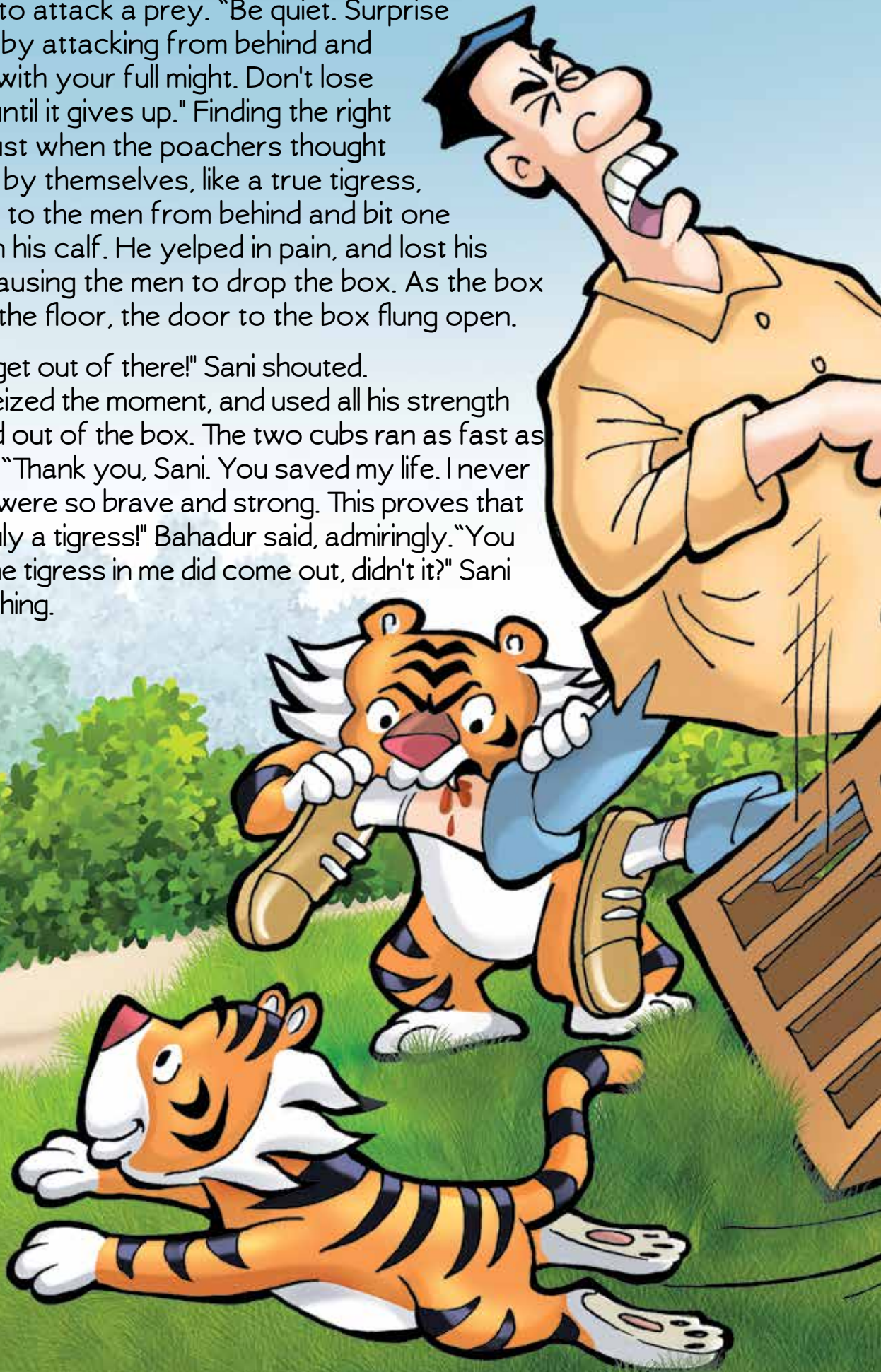


Sani ran off from the clearing behind the bushes. "One cub is enough. Let's forget about that one and be on our way," said the poacher. The two men started to put Bahadur inside a large wooden box. "I must save my brother," thought Sani.



Sani followed the men. All the while, she was thinking about what her mother had said while teaching them how to attack a prey. "Be quiet. Surprise your prey by attacking from behind and weaken it with your full might. Don't lose your grip until it gives up." Finding the right moment, just when the poachers thought they were by themselves, like a true tigress, Sani raced to the men from behind and bit one of them on his calf. He yelped in pain, and lost his balance, causing the men to drop the box. As the box landed on the floor, the door to the box flung open.

"Bahadur, get out of there!" Sani shouted. Bahadur seized the moment, and used all his strength and jumped out of the box. The two cubs ran as fast as they could. "Thank you, Sani. You saved my life. I never knew you were so brave and strong. This proves that you are truly a tigress!" Bahadur said, admiringly. "You are right. The tigress in me did come out, didn't it?" Sani replied laughing.





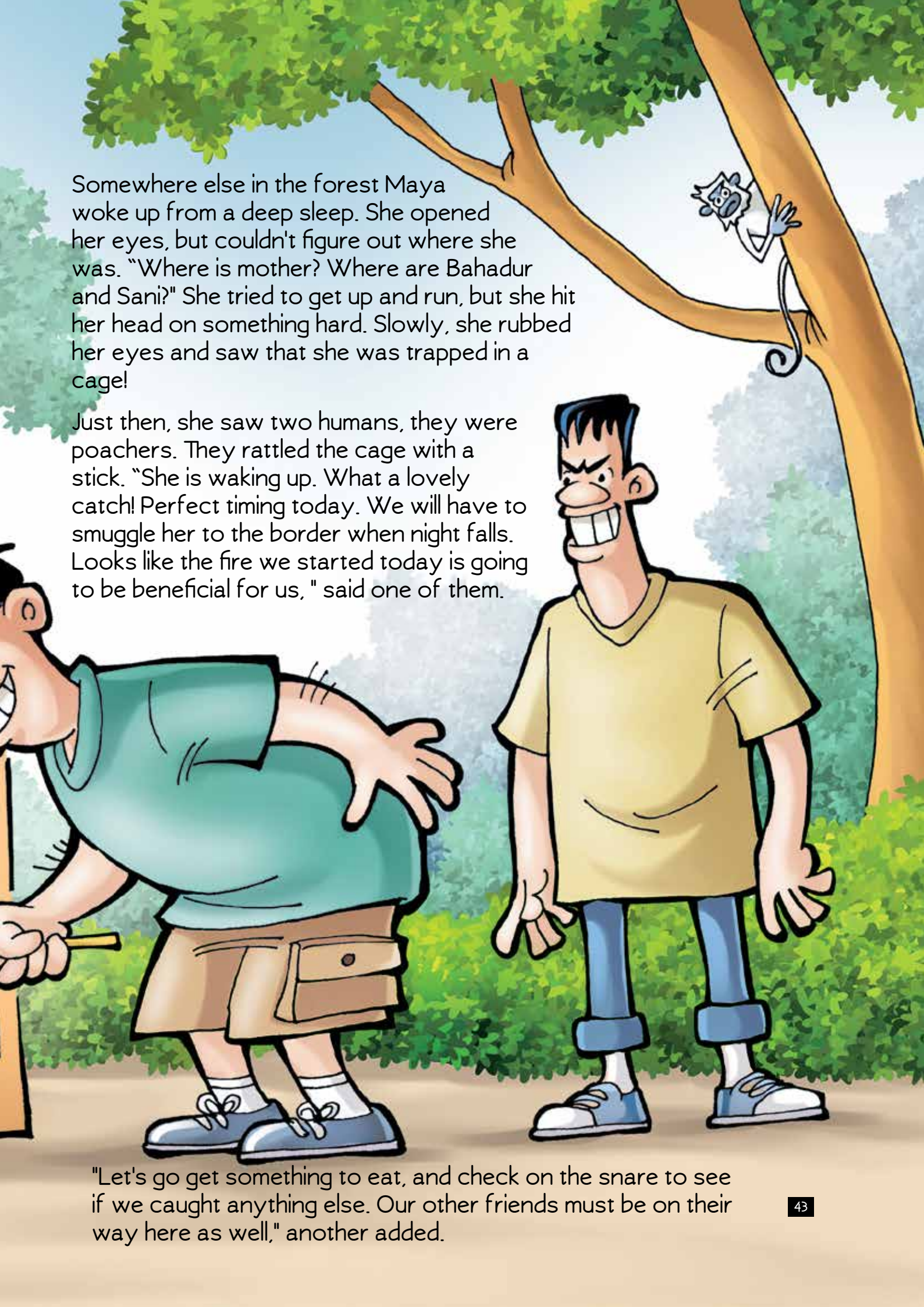




# MAYA'S ADVENTURE WITH HARKE





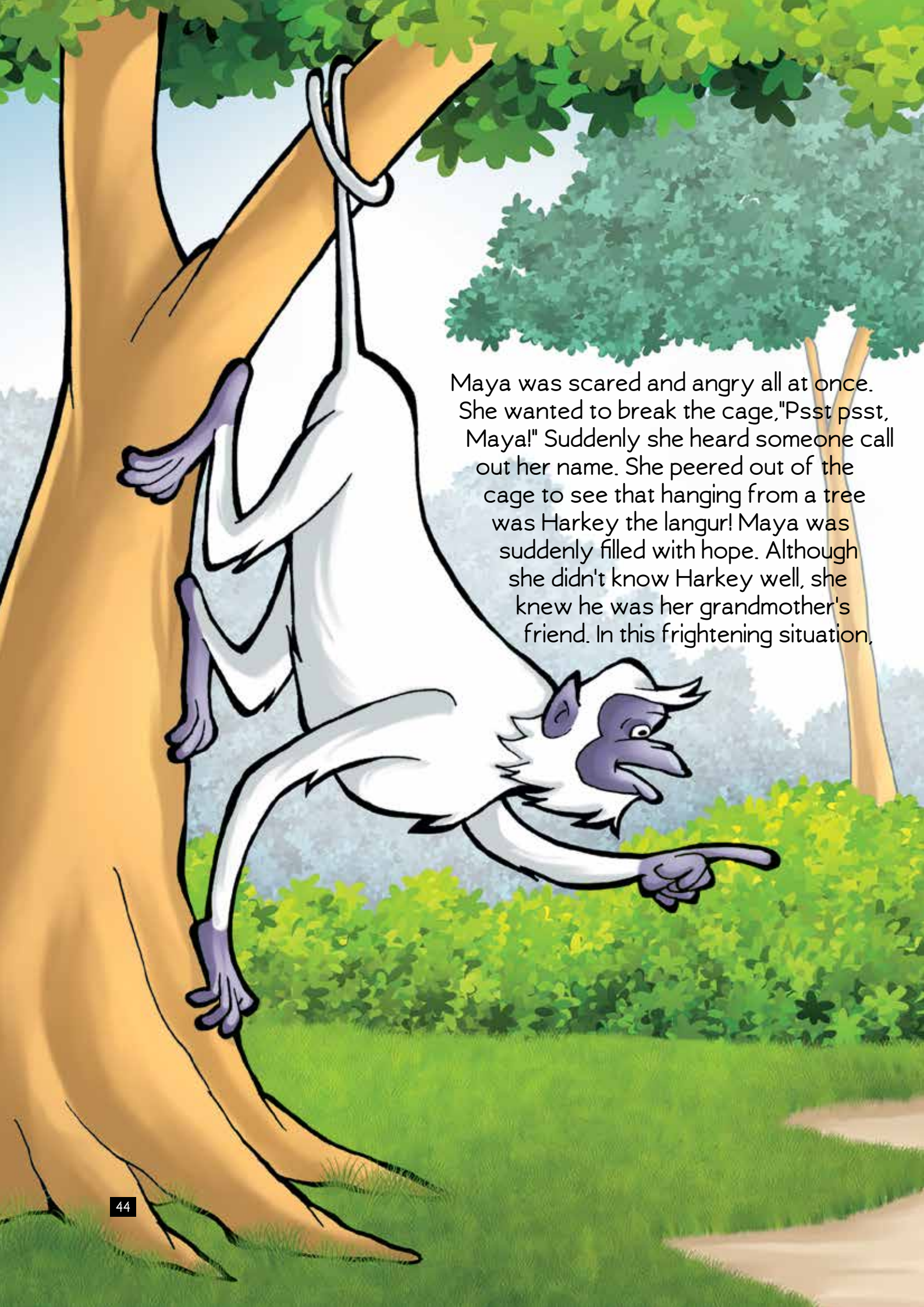


Somewhere else in the forest Maya woke up from a deep sleep. She opened her eyes, but couldn't figure out where she was. "Where is mother? Where are Bahadur and Sani?" She tried to get up and run, but she hit her head on something hard. Slowly, she rubbed her eyes and saw that she was trapped in a cage!

Just then, she saw two humans, they were poachers. They rattled the cage with a stick. "She is waking up. What a lovely catch! Perfect timing today. We will have to smuggle her to the border when night falls. Looks like the fire we started today is going to be beneficial for us," said one of them.

"Let's go get something to eat, and check on the snare to see if we caught anything else. Our other friends must be on their way here as well," another added.



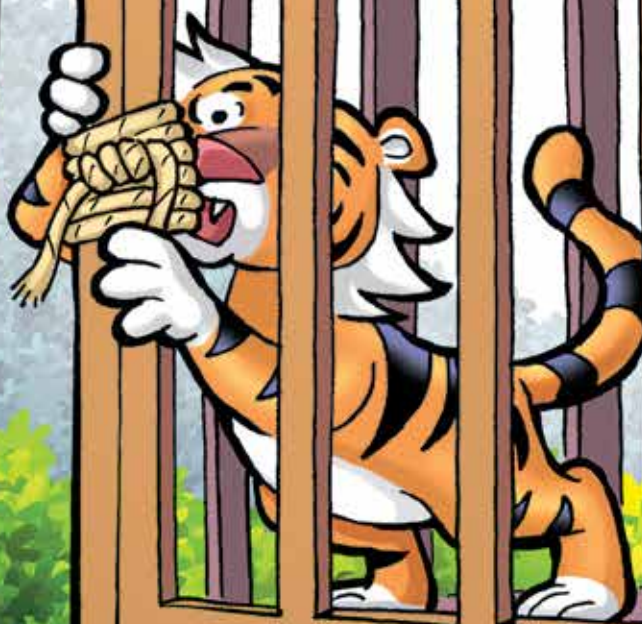


Maya was scared and angry all at once. She wanted to break the cage, "Psst psst, Maya!" Suddenly she heard someone call out her name. She peered out of the cage to see that hanging from a tree was Harkey the langur! Maya was suddenly filled with hope. Although she didn't know Harkey well, she knew he was her grandmother's friend. In this frightening situation,



seeing Harkey was a big relief for Maya. "Harkey! Can you help me get out of here?" Maya cried.

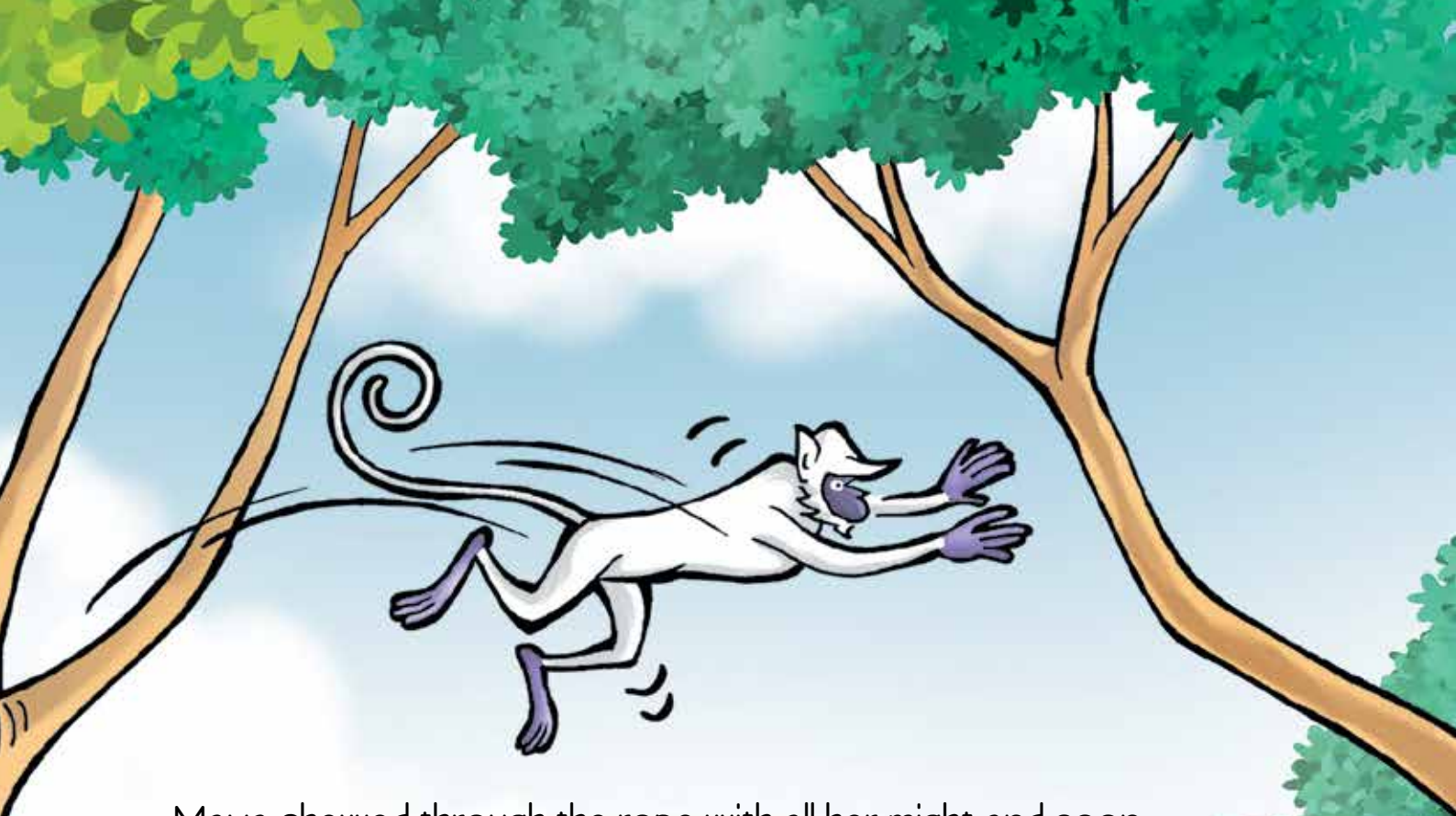
"Of course! I saw you being taken away by these poachers, and followed you here. I wanted to make sure you were alone first," said Harkey. "We have to work fast. The door to the cage is shut tight with ropes. You already have a good set of teeth growing. Start chewing on them, and once the rope is cut, the door will swing open and you can be free. I can then guide you back to where your family is," he added.











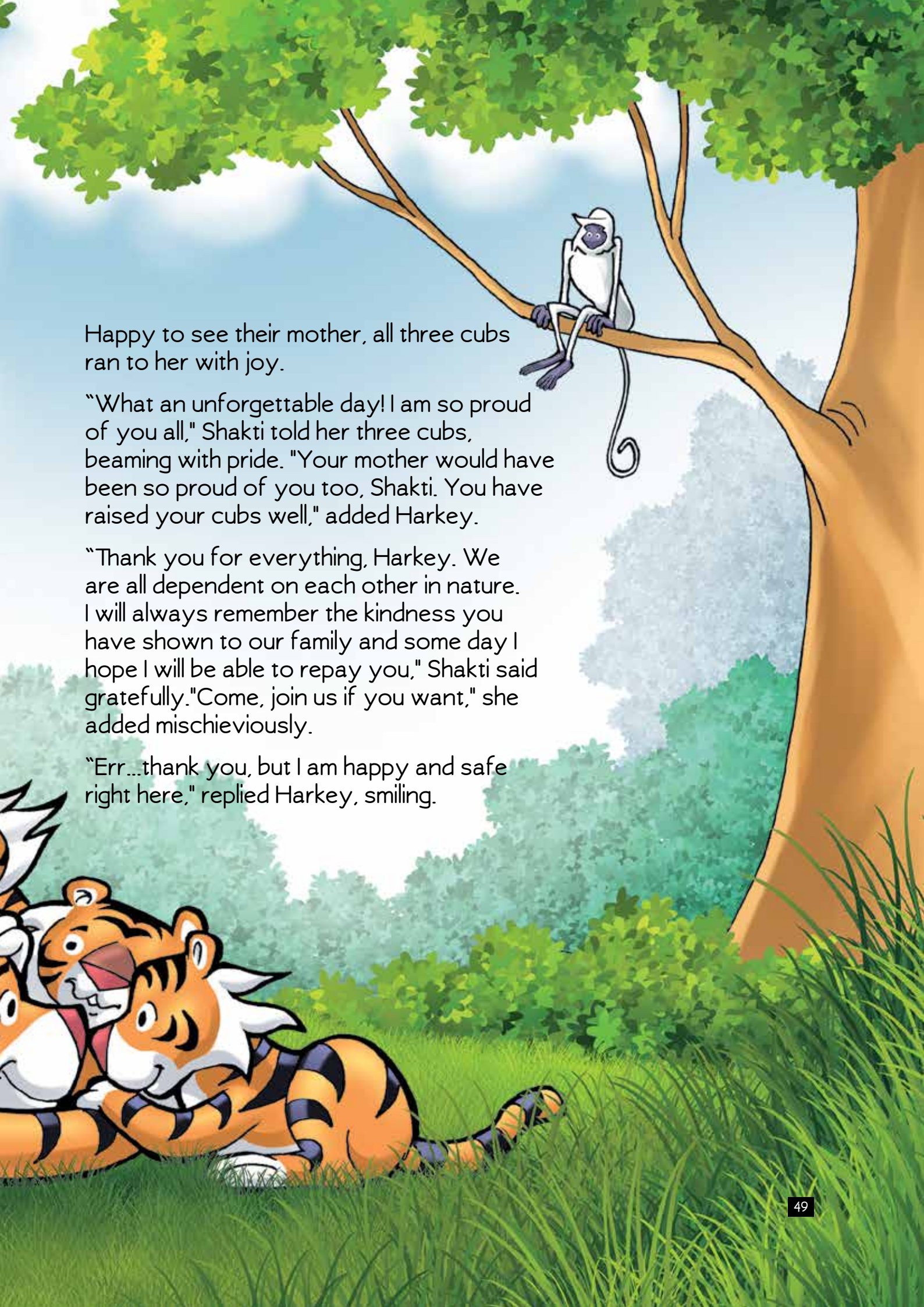
Maya chewed through the rope with all her might and soon enough, the door to the cage opened. "Thank you for helping me, Harkey," said Maya. "We don't have any time to waste. Let's get out of this place as soon as possible," said Harkey. "Come, Maya, let's get out of here," he shouted, as he jumped from one tree to the other.

Maya followed him, running as fast as her legs could carry her, and by the time she reached the jungle, she was completely out of breath. Suddenly, the air was fragrant and heavy from the familiar smells of the forest. Maya knew she was home. With Harkey guiding her, Maya soon reached the pond. Sani and Bahadur saw her and jumped with joy.









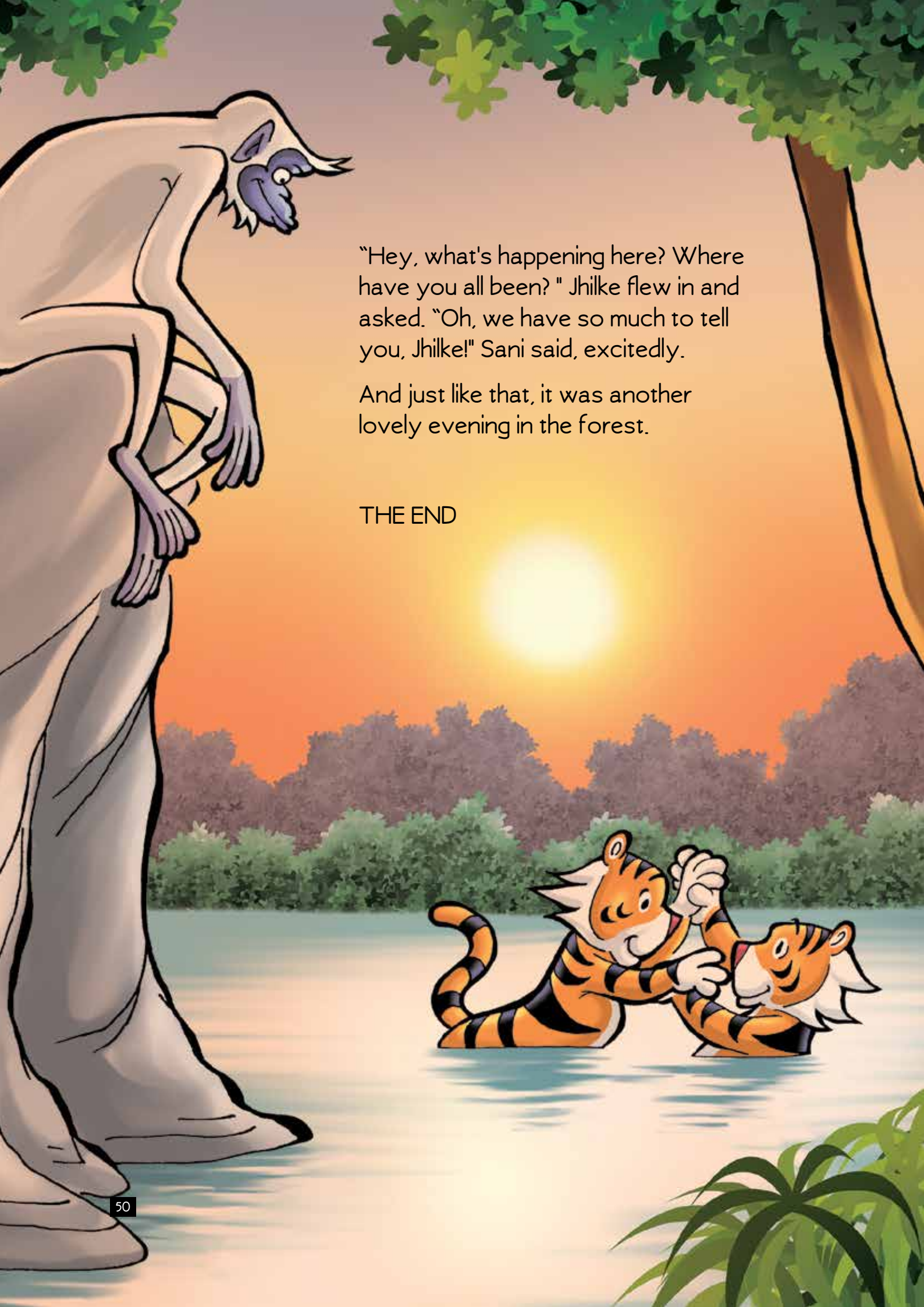
Happy to see their mother, all three cubs ran to her with joy.

"What an unforgettable day! I am so proud of you all," Shakti told her three cubs, beaming with pride. "Your mother would have been so proud of you too, Shakti. You have raised your cubs well," added Harkey.

"Thank you for everything, Harkey. We are all dependent on each other in nature. I will always remember the kindness you have shown to our family and some day I hope I will be able to repay you," Shakti said gratefully. "Come, join us if you want," she added mischievously.

"Err...thank you, but I am happy and safe right here," replied Harkey, smiling.





"Hey, what's happening here? Where have you all been? " Jhilke flew in and asked. "Oh, we have so much to tell you, Jhilke!" Sani said, excitedly.

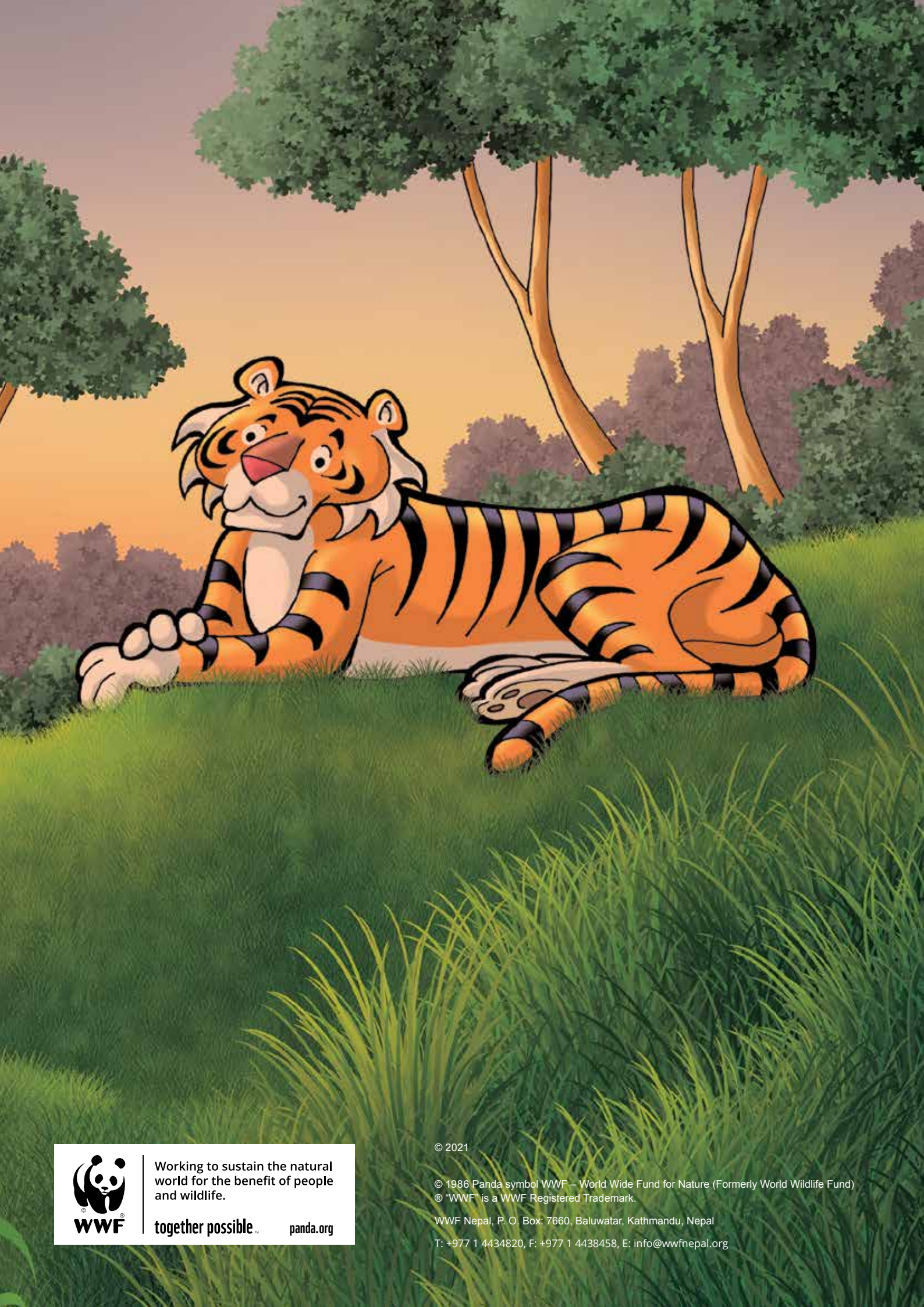
And just like that, it was another lovely evening in the forest.

THE END









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