



Welcome to the Forest

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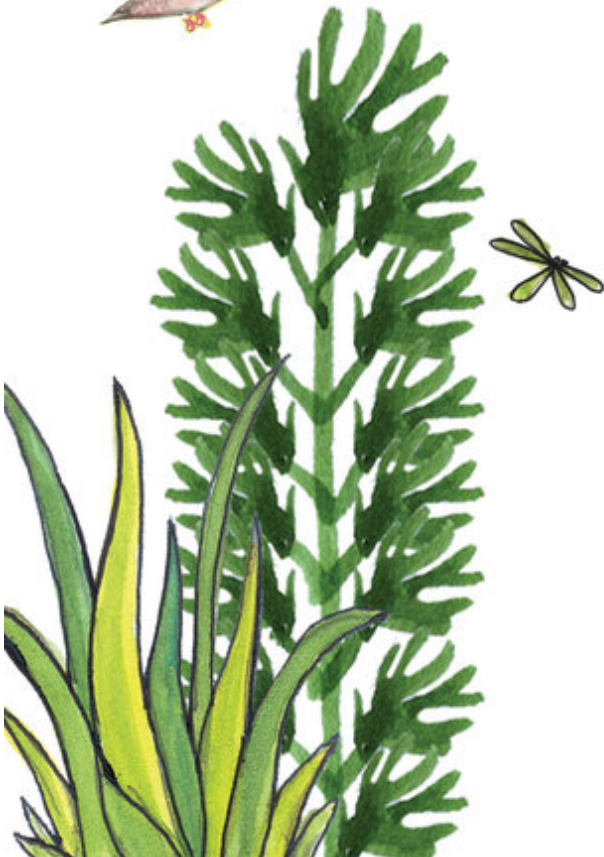
Level 3



Tulsa wishes she could visit a forest. Her teacher reads stories about tigers to the class. She loves to hear about forests and animals.



One day, her wish comes true! Khare Chacha, a senior forest official, invites Tulsa and her friends to visit a forest called Kanha Tiger Reserve. Tulsa and her friends can't stop grinning. They will go to the forest for a whole day and a whole night!





It takes four hours by bus from the school to the forest. As soon as Tulsa gets down from the bus, a strong hand shakes her hand and then ruffles her hair. "Welcome to Kanha!"

It is Khare Chacha.



Tulsa and her friends Rani, Mithu, and Dipti stay close to one another.
“Sniff the air. It smells of trees and leaves!” says Mithu.

“The air is clean like it has been washed with soap!” adds Rani.





It's almost sunset now. Khare Chacha and other forest officials tell them about the forest they will visit tomorrow. They play the sounds of animals and birds for the girls to hear and recognise.



PIAON! PIAON!

“It’s a peacock!”

OOW! OOW!

“I know! It’s a barking deer.”

KEEE! KEE!

“That is the sound of crickets!”

Next day, Tulsa wakes up at five in the morning. Brrr! It’s cold! Everyone bundles up in warm clothes. One by one, they get into the bus. “All around us there is tall grass covered in a thick blanket of fog,” Ranveer Uncle, the forest guide, tells them.

Tulsa can feel the cold and pure air in her mouth. It tastes like mint leaves.





“Shhh!” Ranveer Uncle whispers. “There are two jackals right next to our bus.” Everyone listens carefully. They hear the rustling sound of the tall grass. Dried leaves crush under their feet, as the jackals run lightly into the dense forest.

Ranveer Uncle whispers again. "A big deer called sambar is standing on the left side of the road. The deer is brown and has big stem-like horns called antlers on its head." Everyone focuses to their left.



HAUNNNNK! HAUNNNNK! The sambar runs off. "Sounds like a very big horn!" says Tulsa. All the girls laugh.





Soon, the air becomes even cooler. "We are near a river now," Ranveer Uncle says. Tulsa can hear the gurgling of the water. So many birds are calling from the trees.



FHWEEE! FHWEEE!

“That one is whistling!” says Rashmi.

“Yes Rashmi, that is the call of a thrush,” says Ranveer Uncle.

KEECH! KEECH!

“And that screeching you hear is the call of the jungle babbler.”





Soft leaves fall from above. Baby monkeys are showering them with leaves! Tulsa picks up a leaf that falls on her. It smells fresh and pure, just like the forest.



The bus starts moving uphill.

“Hold this creeper. See how it feels like a strong rope? The leaves are like cotton!” Everyone takes turns to hold the creeper.

“This is the mahul,” says Ranveer Uncle. “The leaves are used to make small bowls.”





PIAONN! PIAONN!

“Peacock to your right!” Ranveer Uncle is excited.



“Is he dancing?” asks Tulsa.

“Yes!” Uncle says. “His feathers are shining in the winter sun and are sparking like gemstones.”

“Beautiful,” says Tulsa.





By now everyone is very hungry. They stop at the forest camp for breakfast. There, KhareChacha announces a surprise. "Some of our camp elephants are here. They won't mind if you touch them gently." Everyone starts squealing in delight. Soon Tulsa is led to the elephant, Tara.

The guide places her hand on Tara's prickly stomach. **Whoomp!** Tulsa hears the sound of Tara's feet moving. Tulsa can feel the powerful muscles under her hand. Trumpeting softly, Tara places her trunk in Tulsa's hand, looking for food. Tulsa can't stop smiling, as she feels the wet trunk.

It's time to go back. On the way, they pass a gaur. "The gaur is chewing grass. The body is black but the bottoms of the legs are white. It looks like the gaur is wearing socks," says Ranveer Uncle. Everyone laughs. Suddenly, the air is split by a call, deep and loud.





AUHN! The call comes again.

“The tiger is very far,” explains Ranveer Uncle. “But he has probably seen you and wants you to know that.”



Sighing with happiness, Tulsa and her friends head out of the park. There are so many ways to experience the forest ! They can't wait to come back to Kanha Tiger Reserve.




This is a real story


In January 2017, the Last Wilderness Foundation in association with the Kanha Forest Department conducted a camp for 23 visually impaired students from the Ananya Manav Sai Samiti, Jabalpur.

The students were taken on a safari and nature trail using their fabulous sensory skills to enjoy the forest.





About Last Wilderness Foundation



The Last Wilderness Foundation is an NGO that works in urban and rural areas with children to spread awareness about wildlife and biodiversity, and sensitise them towards conservation and the environment.

For details, visit www.thelastwilderness.org.



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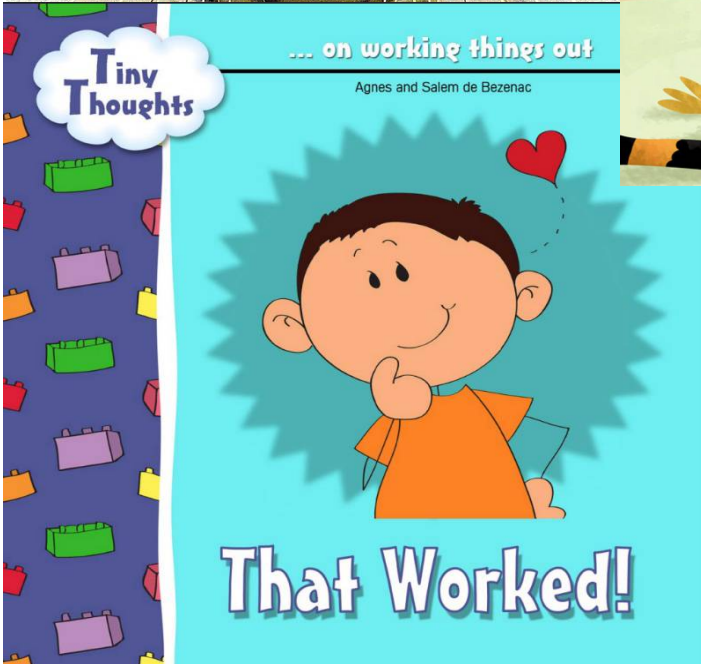
(English)

Tulsa is off to Kanha Tiger Reserve with her school friends. Along with the forest officials, the students experience the jungle in a unique and exciting way.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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