

# The Glorious World of Grasslands



**Researcher**  
Abi T. Vanak

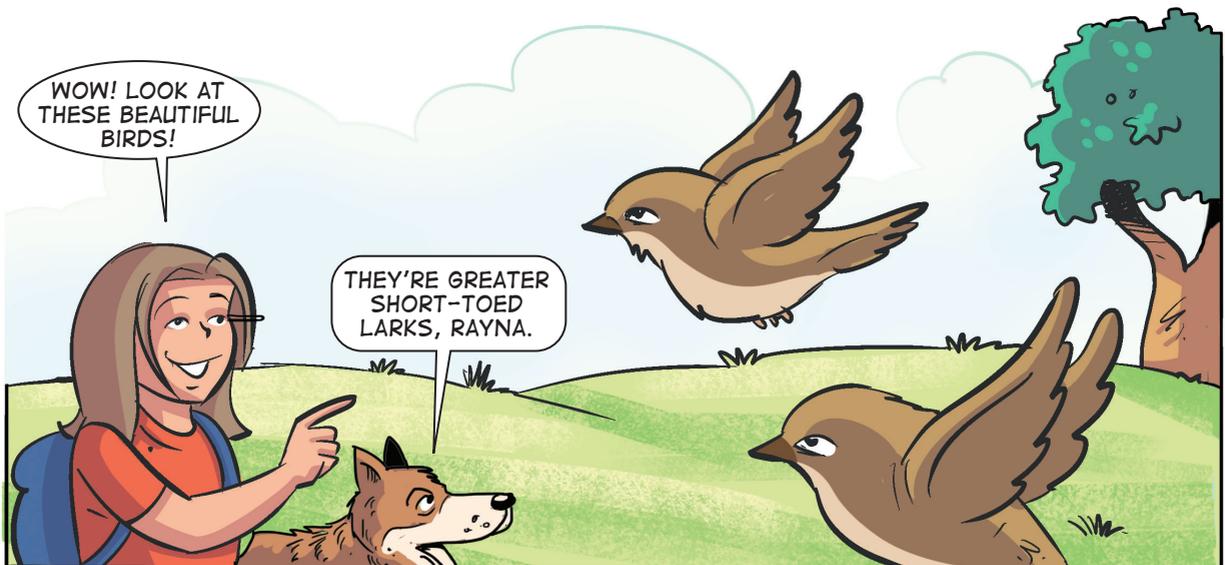
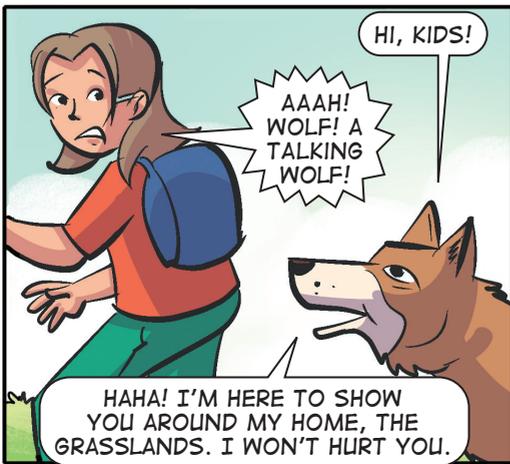
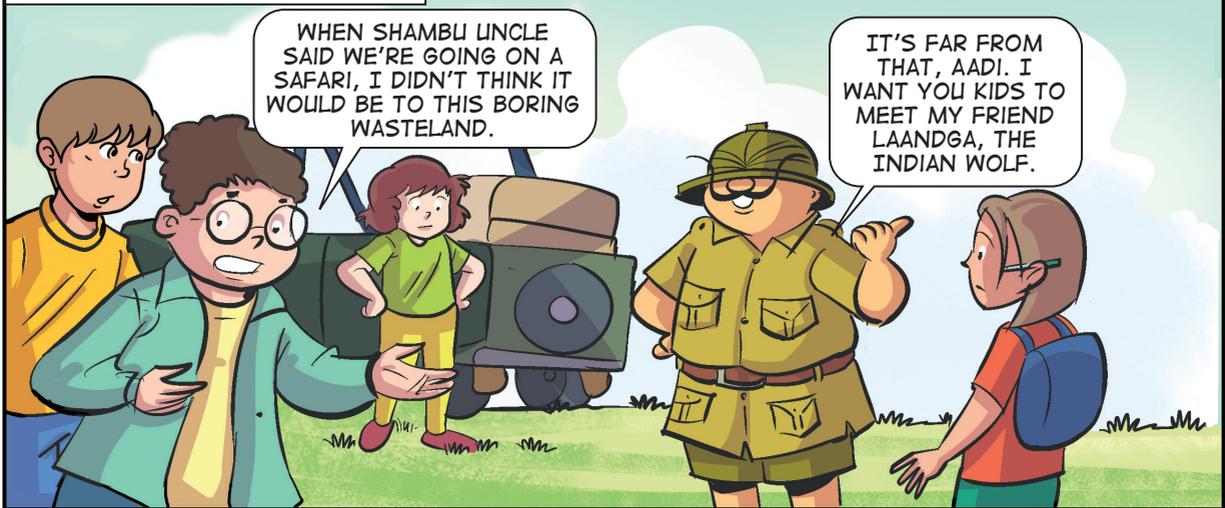
**Story & Script**  
Rebekah S.J.

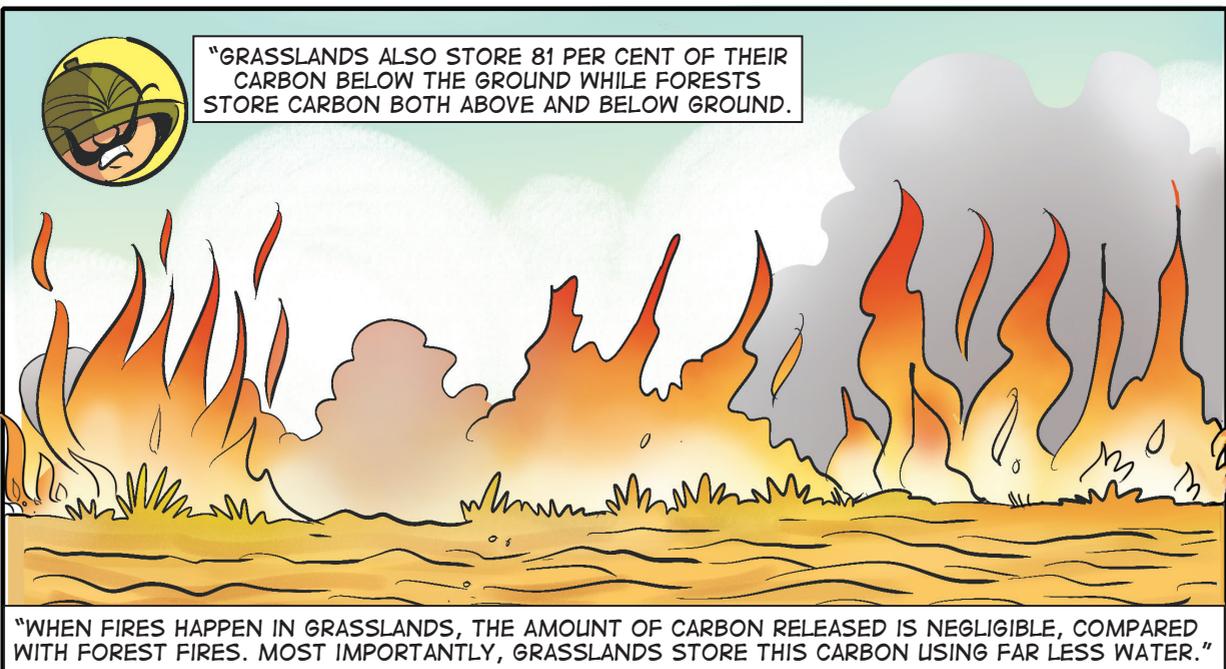
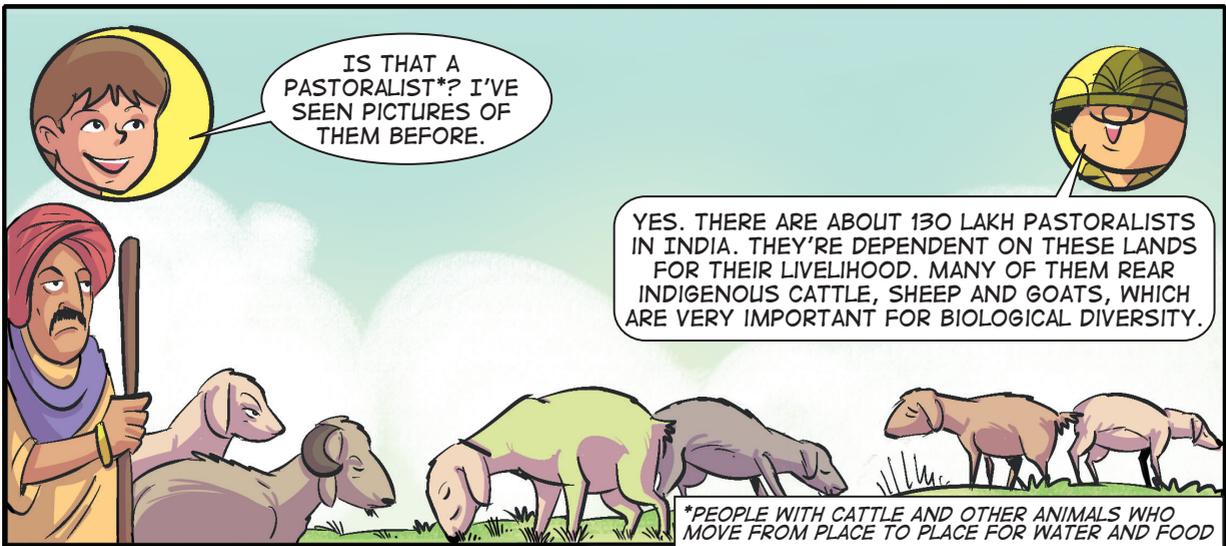
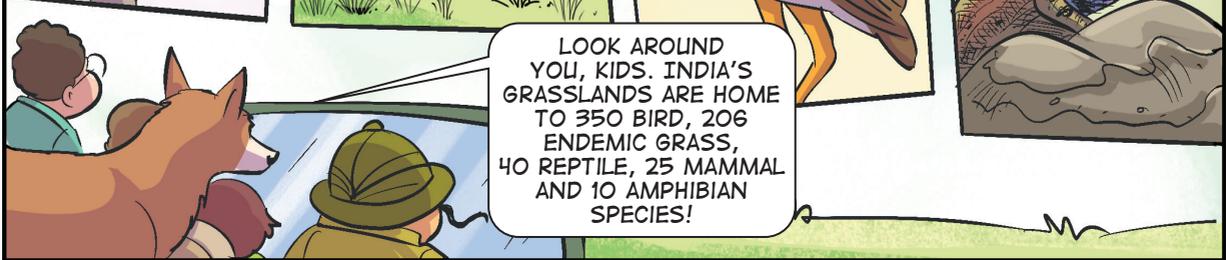
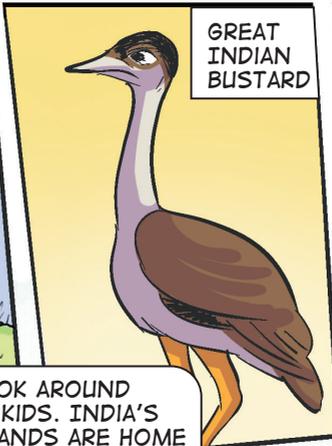
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**Letters**  
Prasad Sawant

ONE MORNING IN MAHARASHTRA—







WOW! THESE LANDS ARE SO IMPORTANT! DOES THAT MEAN AFFORESTING OR PLANTING TREES IN THEM IS A BAD IDEA?

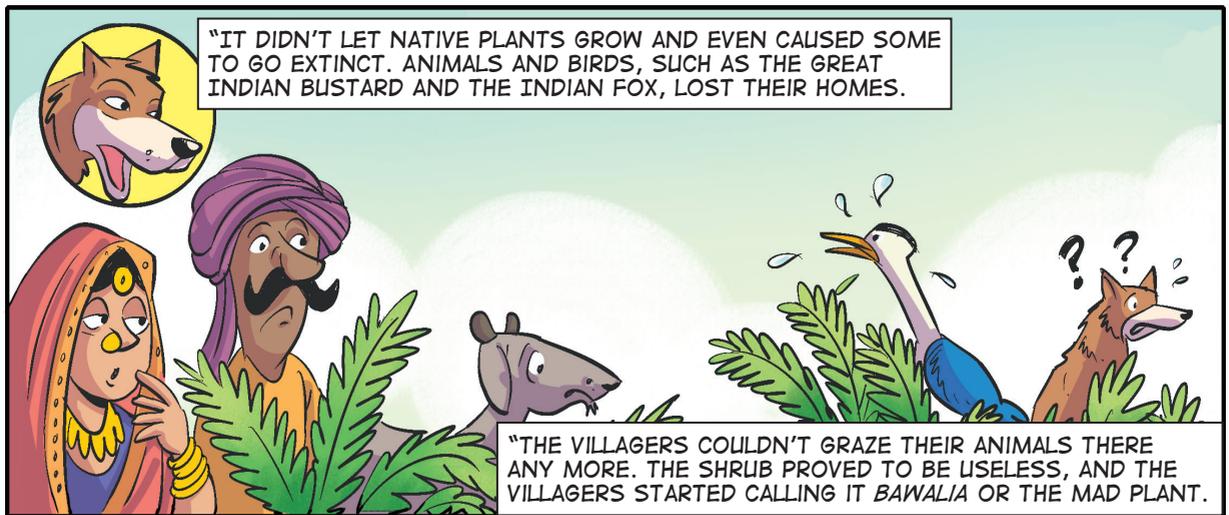
YES. YOU KNOW, A LONG TIME AGO, THE BRITISH IMPORTED *PROSOPIS JULIFLORA*\* TO AFFOREST THE DESERT LANDS IN WESTERN INDIA FOR FUEL.

\*A MEXICAN SHRUB



"SEPARATELY, THE THEN MAHARAJA OF JODHPUR WANTED TO MAKE HIS DESERT GREEN.

"SO HE DROPPED *PROSOPIS JULIFLORA* SEEDS BY AIR. THE SHRUB FLOURISHED, BUT AS IT WAS AN INVASIVE SPECIES, IT GREW AND GREW FOR HALF A MILLION HECTARES!



"IT DIDN'T LET NATIVE PLANTS GROW AND EVEN CAUSED SOME TO GO EXTINCT. ANIMALS AND BIRDS, SUCH AS THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD AND THE INDIAN FOX, LOST THEIR HOMES.

"THE VILLAGERS COULDN'T GRAZE THEIR ANIMALS THERE ANY MORE. THE SHRUB PROVED TO BE USELESS, AND THE VILLAGERS STARTED CALLING IT *BAWALIA* OR THE MAD PLANT.



OH, THAT'S TERRIBLE, LAANDGA!

LOOK, DOGS!

THEY ARE FREE-RANGING DOGS. THEIR POPULATION IS EXPLODING IN THESE LANDS AND WE HAVE TO COMPETE WITH THEM FOR FOOD.

THAT'S HOW SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO MY FRIENDS. THEIR PACK CAUGHT THE CANINE DISTEMPER VIRUS, A FATAL VIRUS, POSSIBLY BY SHARING FOOD WITH FREE-RANGING DOGS. ONLY THE FEMALE PACK LEADER SURVIVED.





DON'T OTHER WOLF PACKS CLAIM THE TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY THE PACK THAT HAS BEEN WIPED OUT?

YES, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE HUMANS BUILT CONCRETE ROADS HERE. ROADS DIVIDE OUR LANDS AND PREVENT US FROM MOVING FREELY. THUS, A SMALL VIRUS CAN WIPE OFF AN ENTIRE PACK.



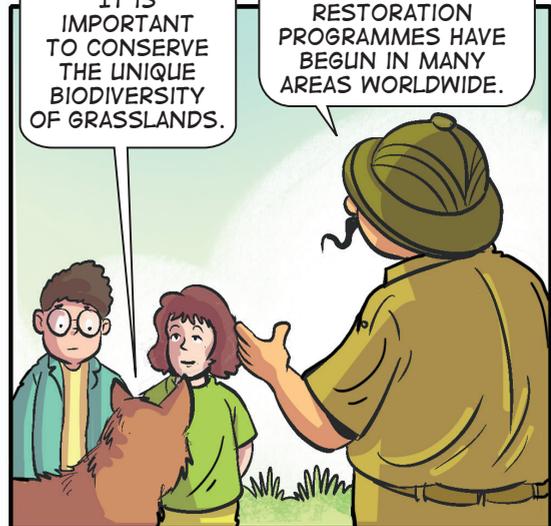
THERE ARE FEWER THAN 150 GREAT INDIAN BUSTARDS AND ABOUT 3,000 OF MY KIND LEFT IN INDIA.

WHEN CITIES GROW VERY FAST, THEY DESTROY OTHER ECOSYSTEMS INCLUDING GRASSLANDS.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

WE MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSLANDS. THEY'RE VALUABLE ECOSYSTEMS.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSERVE THE UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY OF GRASSLANDS.

GRASSLAND RESTORATION PROGRAMMES HAVE BEGUN IN MANY AREAS WORLDWIDE.



WE MUST RECOGNIZE PASTORALIST RIGHTS AND PREVENT FURTHER DEGRADATION OF THESE ECOSYSTEMS.

I MUST RETURN TO MY PACK NOW, KIDS. DON'T FORGET ALL THAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

BYE!



I NOW UNDERSTAND THAT BOTH FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS MUST COEXIST. WE MUST ALSO PLANT THE RIGHT TREES IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

TRUE. I HOPE LAANDGA WILL BE OKAY.

HE WILL. IF WE DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR HIS KIND AND FOR THEIR HOME.

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