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"I CHANCED UPON THE EIGHTH CONTINENT IN THE WESTERN GHATS..."



ISN'T IT FASCINATING THAT WE CAME TO THIS FOREST THINKING WE'LL FIND CREATURES ON THE GROUND, BUT ALL THE ACTIVITY SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING UP THERE?

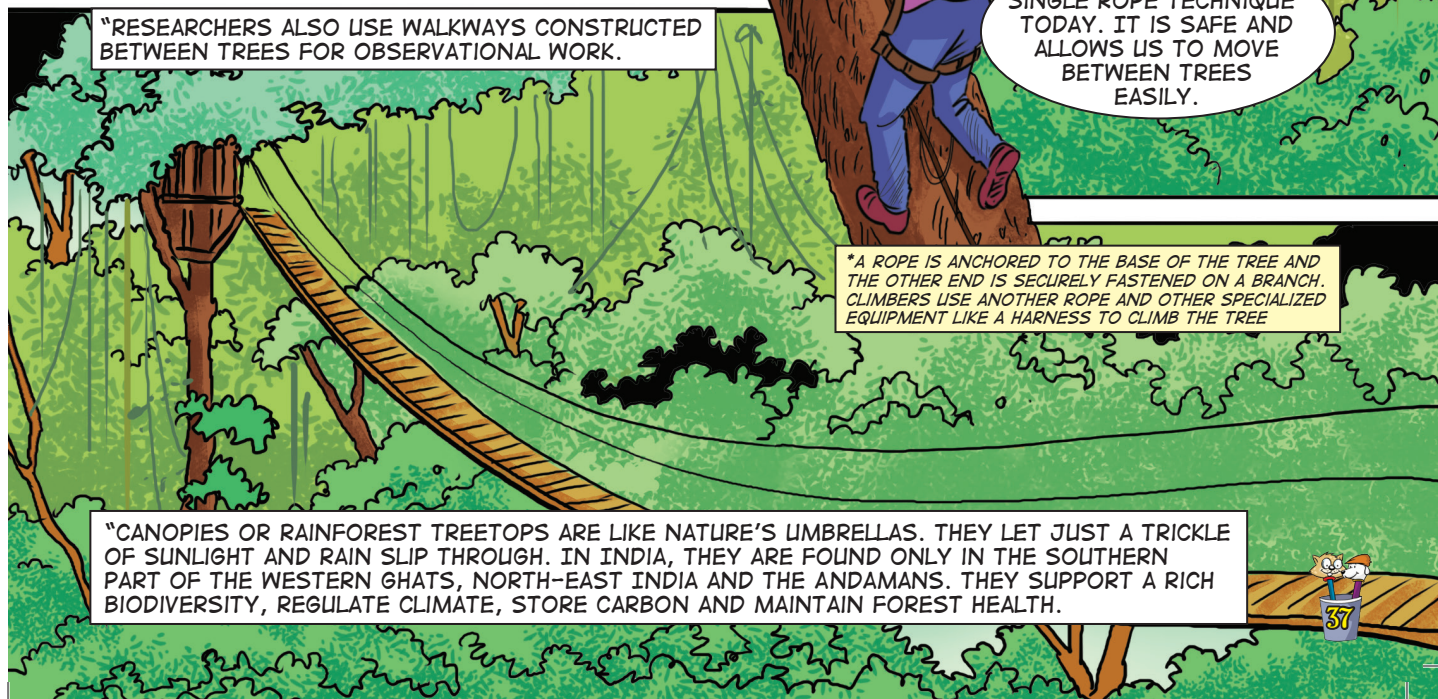
YOU'RE RIGHT, SOUBADRA. LET'S EXPLORE THE CANOPY!

I'M SURE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. BEFORE I TAKE YOU TO THE CANOPY, I WANT TO SHOW YOU HOW WE CLIMB UP ALMOST 30 METRES TO REACH THE TOP OF THE TREES!

"THE EARLIEST METHOD OF CLIMBING A TREE WAS USING A LADDER. MAKING THE LADDER AND CLIMBING IT WEREN'T SAFE OR EASY."

WE USE THE SINGLE ROPE TECHNIQUE* TODAY. IT IS SAFE AND ALLOWS US TO MOVE BETWEEN TREES EASILY.

"RESEARCHERS ALSO USE WALKWAYS CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN TREES FOR OBSERVATIONAL WORK."



*A ROPE IS ANCHORED TO THE BASE OF THE TREE AND THE OTHER END IS SECURELY FASTENED ON A BRANCH. CLIMBERS USE ANOTHER ROPE AND OTHER SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT LIKE A HARNESS TO CLIMB THE TREE

"CANOPIES OR RAINFOREST TREETOPS ARE LIKE NATURE'S UMBRELLAS. THEY LET JUST A TRICKLE OF SUNLIGHT AND RAIN SLIP THROUGH. IN INDIA, THEY ARE FOUND ONLY IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE WESTERN GHATS, NORTH-EAST INDIA AND THE ANDAMANS. THEY SUPPORT A RICH BIODIVERSITY, REGULATE CLIMATE, STORE CARBON AND MAINTAIN FOREST HEALTH."



"ANIMALS LIVE IN THE CANOPIES TO ESCAPE PREDATORS, ACCESS FOOD, MAKE SAFE HOMES AND MORE. LET'S SEE SOME OF THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS THAT RESIDE IN THIS CANOPY!"



EPIPHYTES ARE PLANTS THAT GROW ON TREES WITHOUT ANY ROOTS IN THE GROUND. THEY RELY ON MOISTURE AND NUTRIENTS FROM RAIN, AND ON AIR AND DEBRIS FROM TREES AND ANIMALS TO THRIVE.



FLYING LIZARDS USE THEIR WINGLIKE SKIN FLAPS TO GLIDE FROM TREE TO TREE AND HUNT INSECTS.



BROWN PALM CIVETS ARE NOCTURNAL MAMMALS THAT HELP DISPERSE SEEDS AND REGENERATE THE FOREST.



FLYING SQUIRRELS NEST IN TREE HOLES AND GLIDE FROM ONE TREE TO ANOTHER AT NIGHT IN SEARCH OF FRUITS AND LEAVES.



THE WILD NUTMEG'S AROMATIC SEEDS ATTRACT MANY CANOPY ANIMALS.



MALABAR PIT VIPERS ARE VENOMOUS, NOCTURNAL SNAKES THAT ARE OFTEN COILED IN THE CANOPY AND USE HEAT-SENSING ORGANS TO FIND PREY.



CULLENIA EXARILLATA IS CALLED A KEYSTONE SPECIES BECAUSE THIS TREE HOLDS THE ECOSYSTEM TOGETHER. ITS FLOWERS FEED FRUIT-EATING ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY WHEN FRUITS ARE SCARCE.

LION-TAILED MACAQUES FORAGE FOR INSECTS, BIRD EGGS, FLOWERS, FRUITS AND LEAVES, AND SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME IN THE CANOPY.



"THE TREES AND ANIMALS SHARE A VERY CLOSE BOND IN THE CANOPIES. DUE TO A LACK OF WIND, THE TREES HIDE THEIR SEEDS IN FLESHY FRUITS.

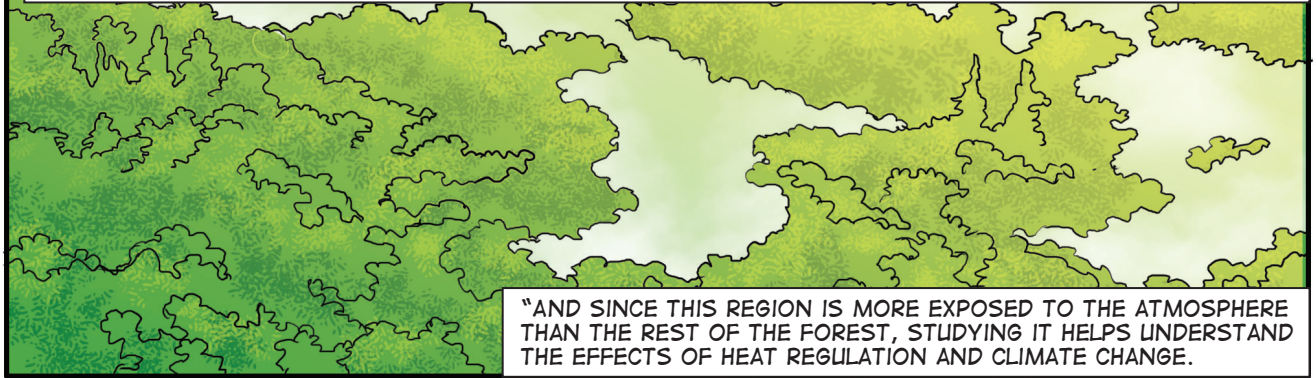
"ANIMALS OFTEN ENJOY THESE FRUITS, DISPERSE THE SEED AND HELP THE TREES GROW.

"DID YOU KNOW THAT 40 PER CENT OF THE SPECIES ON EARTH ARE FOUND IN CANOPIES?"



"EXPERTS DISCOVERED OVER 950 SPECIES OF BEETLE ON ONE TREE IN PANAMA! IMAGINE THE NUMBER OF CREATURES LIVING IN THE CANOPIES.

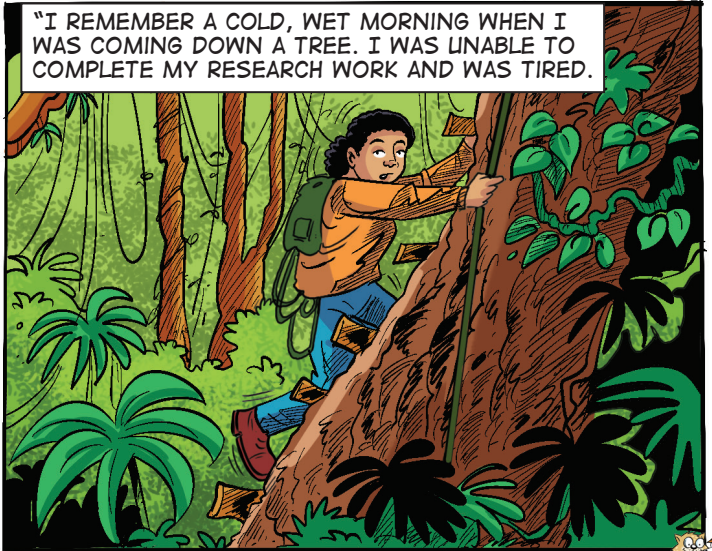
"CANOPIES ALSO ACT AS BATTERIES. THE LEAVES ARE LIKE SMALL SOLAR PANELS THAT TAKE IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT AND GENERATE NUTRIENTS FOR THE ENTIRE FOREST! TWIGS AND LEAVES IN THE CANOPIES ALSO ACT AS A SIEVE; THEY TRAP NUTRIENTS FROM THE ATMOSPHERE ON FOGGY DAYS.



"AND SINCE THIS REGION IS MORE EXPOSED TO THE ATMOSPHERE THAN THE REST OF THE FOREST, STUDYING IT HELPS UNDERSTAND THE EFFECTS OF HEAT REGULATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE.



EXPLORING THE CANOPIES IS ADVENTUROUS AND DANGEROUS.



"I REMEMBER A COLD, WET MORNING WHEN I WAS COMING DOWN A TREE. I WAS UNABLE TO COMPLETE MY RESEARCH WORK AND WAS TIRED.

"AS I DESCENDED, I STEPPED ON SOMETHING SOFT. IT WAS A MALABAR GREEN PIT VIPER! THANKFULLY I MOVED MY FOOT AND WASN'T BITTEN."



"ON ANOTHER RESEARCH MISSION, MY FELLOW RESEARCHERS AND I WANTED TO VIDEO RECORD ROCK BEES."



OKAY, GANESAN. MAKE SURE YOU GET A CLEAR SHOT.

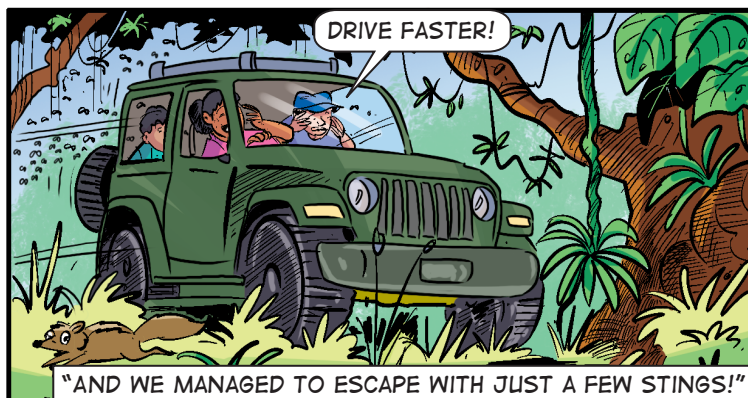


"BUT MOMENTS LATER..."

RUN! THE INFRARED LIGHT FROM THE VIDEO CAMERA HAS DISTURBED THE BEES!



DRIVE FASTER!



"AND WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE WITH JUST A FEW STINGS!"

CANOPIES HOUSE THE MAJORITY OF A RAINFOREST'S BIODIVERSITY. ALTHOUGH CHALLENGING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO STUDY AND PROTECT THEM.

