

A rainforest home

Welcome to the rainforest. It's huge, hot and very wet. It rains nearly every day so clouds hang over it like steam over a hot bath.

The forest is deep, dense and very dark. You could get lost – unless you lived here . . .

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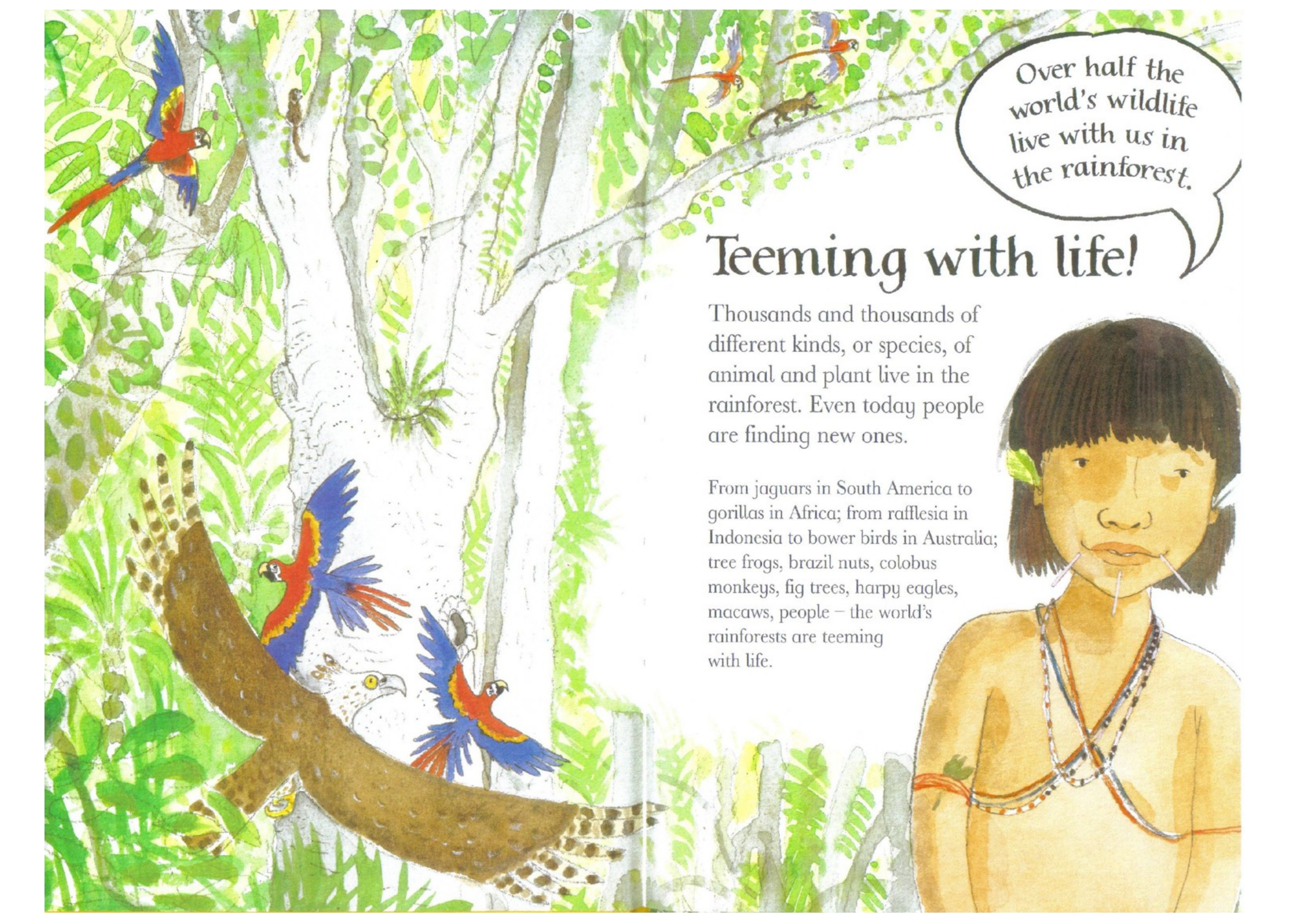


Come with us
and explore the
rainforest.

We'll show you
our home.

Rainforests grow around the tropics – the area on Earth either side of the Equator. The South American rainforest is the size of Europe, and the rainforest in Africa isn't much smaller. Look at the map to see where else in the world you find rainforests.



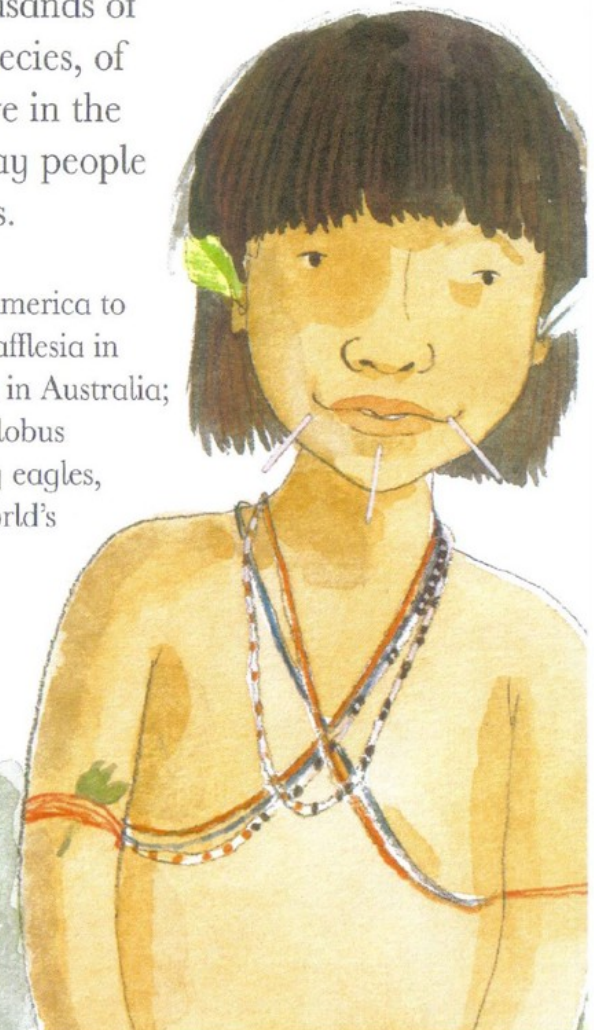


Over half the
world's wildlife
live with us in
the rainforest.

Teeming with life!

Thousands and thousands of different kinds, or species, of animal and plant live in the rainforest. Even today people are finding new ones.

From jaguars in South America to gorillas in Africa; from rafflesia in Indonesia to bower birds in Australia; tree frogs, brazil nuts, colobus monkeys, fig trees, harpy eagles, macaws, people – the world's rainforests are teeming with life.



We live among giants - trees that stretch up to the sky!

Giant trees

The kings of the rainforest are its giant trees. Some can grow over 60 metres tall. Their branches and leaves form a roof over the forest. We call this roof the canopy.

Butterflies feed in the canopy by day.

Leaves are a plant's food factory. The green stuff in them traps energy from sunlight and uses it to make food from water and carbon dioxide in the air.

The canopy gets 90 per cent of the sunlight. It creates a deep shade in the forest below.



When plants make their food, they give out the oxygen that we need to breathe.



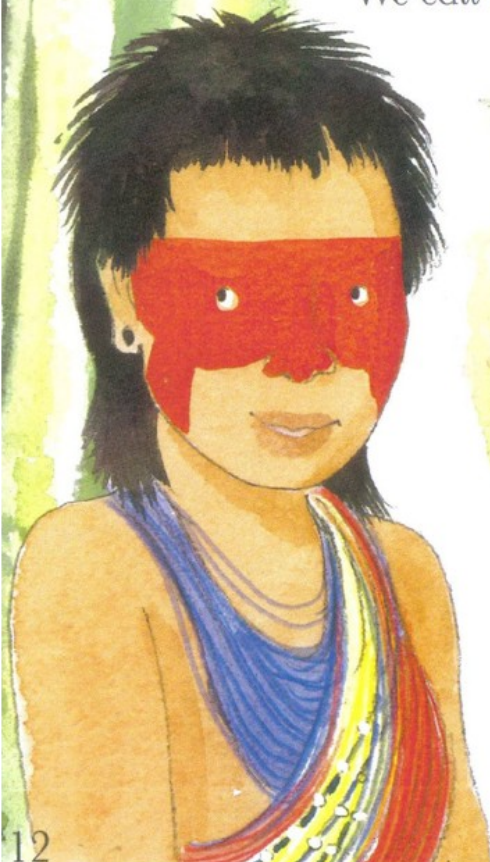
Rainforest giants grow so tall and heavy they need to have huge buttress roots to hold them up.

Our giants give us a gift - the oxygen we breathe!

Moths feed at night.



There may be 600,000 flowers on a big tree with over 150 litres of nectar in them. This sugary liquid is food for millions of insects, birds and bats.



Canopy world

Tree-top animals
climb, jump, glide
and swing!

Hundreds of different animals live in the tree-top world of the canopy: from butterflies, lizards and tree frogs to parrots, sloths and monkeys. Many of them never touch the ground.

This frog has huge webbed feet that act like parachutes when it jumps.



South-east Asian tarsiers are only as big as a rat but they can leap over 2 metres.



Some lizards in South-east Asia have flaps of skin to help them glide from tree to tree.

Squirrel monkeys, like many tree dwellers, have 'prehensile tails' that they use like an extra hand.



African Colobus monkeys are experts at leaping from branch to branch.



Gibbons are from South-east Asia. They can judge distance perfectly with their sharp eyes as they swing through the trees.



Sloths spend a lot of time upside down - and so their fur grows upside down too, allowing rain to run off easily!



The understorey

Beneath the canopy is the dark understorey. It is wet and steamy! Palms, ferns

and small trees grow here, with vines twining around them. Look out for frogs, jaguars, and thousands of insects, snakes and lizards.

Liana vines make good ladders. You can swing on them, too!

Lianas twist and climb among the trees - path ways for small animals and insects like these leaf-cutter ants.

Jaguars hide on low branches to sleep - or to jump down on any tasty-looking creatures feeding on the forest floor.

Plants like bromeliads can have rainwater pools of up to 54 litres of water between their leaves! Coatiundi and other tree-dwellers visit them to drink and bathe. Some frogs and crabs even rear their young in these tree-based ponds.

The brightly coloured stripes on a poison arrow frog say: 'Danger - don't eat me!'

We move silently through the forest without snapping a twig.

Forest floor

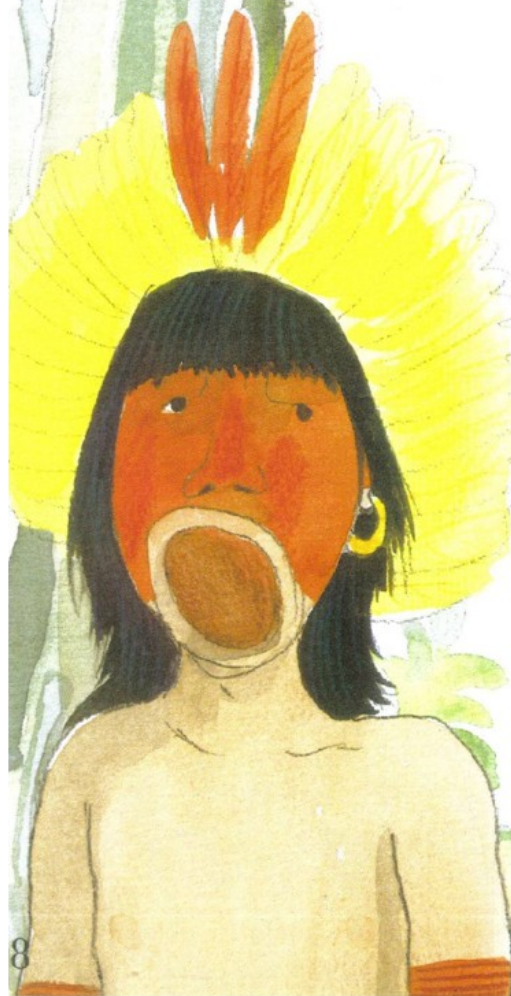
Hardly any sunlight reaches the forest floor and very few plants grow. It's covered in rotting leaves and wood. This leaf litter is crawling with insects, snakes and spiders.



The rafflesia of South-east Asia has the largest flower in the world. It smells like rotten meat to attract flies.



Tiny poison-dart frogs hop through the leaf litter.



Lowland gorillas forage in the African rainforest.



Pitcher plants grow in South-east Asia and Australia. They can't get all goodness they need to grow properly from the poor soil. Instead, the plants trap and digest insects. Frogs often hide in them for a free meal!



Tarantulas and fierce ants hunt the insects scurrying across the floor.

Tapirs forage for food on the forest floor with their stripy babies.

