

FIND YOUR ANIMAL. KNOW YOUR DESTINY.

ANIMAGICALS

MIA'S TIGER



PAULA HARRISON

Illustrated by Erwin Madrid

**nosy
crow**

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First published in the UK in 2026 by Nosy Crow Ltd
Wheat Wharf, 27a Shad Thames,
London, SE1 2XZ, UK

Nosy Crow Eireann Ltd
c/o Fieldfisher Ireland LLP
45 Mespil Road,
Dublin 4, D04 W2F1, Ireland

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ISBN: 978 1 80513 092 5

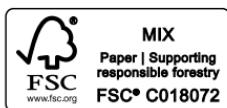
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Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A. following rigorous ethical sourcing standards.

Typeset by Tiger Media.



1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

www.nosycrow.com

*For Emmie,
who loves animals*

P. H.



*To Lena Madrid
E. M.*

ANIMAGIA

Outside
World

Wildberry Woods

Orchards

Hidden
Valley

Frost
Valley

Wild Haven
Evertree Forest

Misty
Meadows

Blue Gum
Woods

Desert

OCEAN

Silverbirn
River

Indigo Mountains

Sinking Marsh

Crystal Caves

Rain Forest
Canyon

Waterfall

Starfall
Lake

Windrush
Plains

Redwood
Grove

Wolf
Glade

White Sands
Bay

Seahorse
Island

Blackwing
Rock



CHAPTER ONE

Mia sprang out of the car as soon as it drew to a stop. Running to the end of the muddy track, she stared at the vast forest stretching into the distance. Excitement fizzed inside her. This must be Evertree Forest in the land of Animagia. She was here at last!

Animal calls echoed from the trees and magic shimmered above the swaying branches. Mia took a deep breath to calm the swirling in her chest. She hadn't even heard of Animagia till a few weeks ago. Then, one cold Monday

morning, she'd discovered that she was an animagical and her life had changed forever.

Animagicals were people who could transform into animals. It was a rare magical power that appeared around the age of ten. Mia had first found out that she was an animagical when she'd changed into a mouse on the way to school. She'd been worried about being late when she found herself scurrying along on four small feet, her whiskers twitching! Luckily she'd changed back before anyone saw her.

Three days later, a letter had landed on the doormat inviting Mia to Wild Haven School in the land of Animagia. Mia had known right away that she wanted to go. Standing in front of the huge forest, Mia wondered what it was like inside. She took the crumpled letter out of her pocket and read it for the millionth time:



*congratulations on discovering
your animagical powers!*

*Please come to Wild Haven School in
the Land of Animagia where you will be
trained by the Guardians. Follow the map
enclosed but do not tell anyone outside
your family where you're going. The
Land of Animagia MUST remain a secret.*

On the back of the letter was a map showing how to get there and a list of things to bring. Mia's stomach turned over. What would Wild Haven be like? Would the lessons be hard? The questions whirled around her head and she swallowed, wishing her heart would stop racing.

Mia's little brother, Kai, jumped out of the car. He ran over, followed by their mum and dad. Mum put an arm around Mia's shoulder.

“Well, we’re here!” she said. “Are you feeling OK?”

“I’m a bit nervous!” Mia confessed. “But I can’t wait to see Wild Haven.”

“It’s good that you’ll be trained by these Guardians,” said her dad. “By the time you come home for the holidays, you’ll be changing into any animal you like!”

“I hope so,” said Mia.

“You’ll be great!” Mum hugged her. “Just remember – we’re really proud of you.”

Another car drew up beside theirs. Then another and another. About twenty children got out of the cars and hurried to the edge of the forest. Mia looked around and a tingling feeling rose inside her. The tingling spread into her arms and legs, and she took a deep breath, trying to push it down. But the feeling grew stronger and the air began to shimmer.

Suddenly she was scampering along the ground on four little feet with her tiny mouse

ears pricked up. A brown tail curled behind her and her nose quivered as she picked up a whirl of sounds and smells. A few kids turned round to stare.



Mia took some deep breaths to stop her little mouse heart beating so fast. After what felt like forever, the tingling feeling returned and she was back in her human body again.

“That was so cool!” said Kai. “Do it again!”
Mia shook her head, nervously tucking her long brown hair behind her ear.

Mum gave her a reassuring smile and Mia tried to smile back, but her cheeks felt hot. Why did she always have to change into a mouse? It had happened five times already that morning!

She glanced at the kids around her. This was the first time she’d met other animanicals, but they looked the same as her – completely ordinary. For a moment, they all stared at the magical forest stretched out in front of them. Behind the trees, a ridge of purple mountains rose into the sky.

“What are we waiting for? Let’s go in!” said a boy with curly hair poking out from under his baseball cap.

“Shouldn’t we wait for a teacher?” asked another boy.

“Nah, let’s just go!” The boy in the baseball cap marched towards the trees, but a moment later

he was thrown backwards,
as if he'd bounced off
something invisible.

“Whoa!” he shouted
as he tumbled to
the ground.

Some of the other
kids giggled. Mia
rushed over.

“Are you OK?” she
asked, helping him up.

“Uh, I think so!” the boy groaned. “I’m Noah,
by the way.”

“I’m Mia,” Mia smiled. “There must be some
kind of magical barrier over here.” Reaching
out, she felt around gingerly and touched a wall
of icy air that pushed back against her fingers.

Just then a tall woman with sharp, golden
eyes emerged from the trees and headed straight
towards them. Stopping in front of Noah and
Mia, she drew a shape in the air with one finger



and the outline of a misty door appeared.

“Good morning! I’m Miss Tempest, one of the Guardians of Animagia,” she announced.

“Come through one at a time. Animagicals only, of course!” She looked at Mia and her golden eyes didn’t seem to blink.

Mia gulped. It was time to go! She rushed back to her family and gave them each a hug. Mum took a necklace out of her pocket and hung it round Mia’s neck.

“This is a locket,” she said. “To remind you of home.”

“Thanks, Mum!” Mia opened it and found a photo of her family inside.

“Don’t forget your rucksack,” Dad said gruffly, handing her the bag.

“How long will you be gone?” sniffed Kai.

“Not long!” Mia hugged him again. “I’ll be back for the holidays.”

“I wish I could come to Wild Haven too!” said Kai with a huge sigh.

“I’ll tell you all about it when I get back,” promised Mia.

Then, with a last hug, she pulled her rucksack on to her shoulders and joined the line of kids trooping through the misty door. She realised she wasn’t the only one feeling nervous. One boy turned into a chicken and ran up and down, flapping his wings, until he changed back again.

The girl ahead of Mia in the line turned round and grinned. Her black hair curled around her friendly-looking face. “Hi, I’m Willow! Isn’t this amazing? I’ve been waiting to come here for weeks! Which animals have you turned into so far? I’ve been a parrot, a grasshopper and a horse.”

Mia’s eyes widened. She’d only ever turned into a mouse! She wanted to ask Willow how she’d been so many different animals already, but they’d almost reached the doorway.

Willow stepped through first. Then, holding

her breath, Mia stepped into the swirling mist. . .
A sudden blast of icy air made her skin tingle.
Then she was through to the other side.

Miss Tempest waited till everyone was through before closing the shimmering doorway with one finger. She looked at them, twisting her head jerkily in a way that reminded Mia of a bird.

“Follow me, everyone!” she said, marching off down the forest track.

Mia walked with Willow and a quiet boy with fair hair called Finn. Noah had rushed off to be at the front of the line. Willow talked non-stop about her home and all the extra things she’d brought in her rucksack, but Mia was too busy looking around to listen properly.

The track narrowed as they went deeper into Evertree Forest and the trees leaned together, forming a roof of branches above them. They climbed hills, crossed streams and trudged through clearings full of brambles. Birds sang

overhead and they glimpsed foxes and deer between the trees.

At last they came to a wide river. Mia saw tall rainforest trees growing along the opposite bank. She caught the scent of tropical flowers on the warm breeze and spotted a troop of silver-grey monkeys in the treetops. She wished she could cross the river to explore!

They followed the forest trail and Mia's feet began to grow tired. After a long while, they passed a valley full of frosty fir trees and Mia glimpsed some reindeer and a snowshoe hare. Her eyes grew rounder and rounder. How could there be a snowy pine forest and a tropical rainforest all in one wood? It seemed as if the land of Animagia had every kind of place you could think of inside its borders.

At last, they came around a bend and found a magnificent tree castle towering above the forest.

Mia caught her breath, excitement swirling in her stomach. This must be Wild Haven!