

Prologue

The Emerald Forest

This tale unfolds in Panna, Central India, a dusty landscape that transforms into an Emerald Forest.

For much of the year, Panna's rolling hills of dry forest, high grasslands and hidden gorges bake in relentless sun. But with the arrival of monsoon rains Panna comes to life, dripping in shiny shades of green. The swollen waters of the Ken River crash over towering waterfalls as the river snakes through the reserve.

From the ground to the sky, Panna bursts with life. Antelopes, gazelles and deer graze on the high plains. Porcupines shuffle through deep bushes. Leopards and sloth bears lounge amongst shady trees and tiny rusty-spotted cats slink through the dark forest at night. Snakes ripple across the forest floor and crocodiles slink along the banks of the river and surrounding marshes.

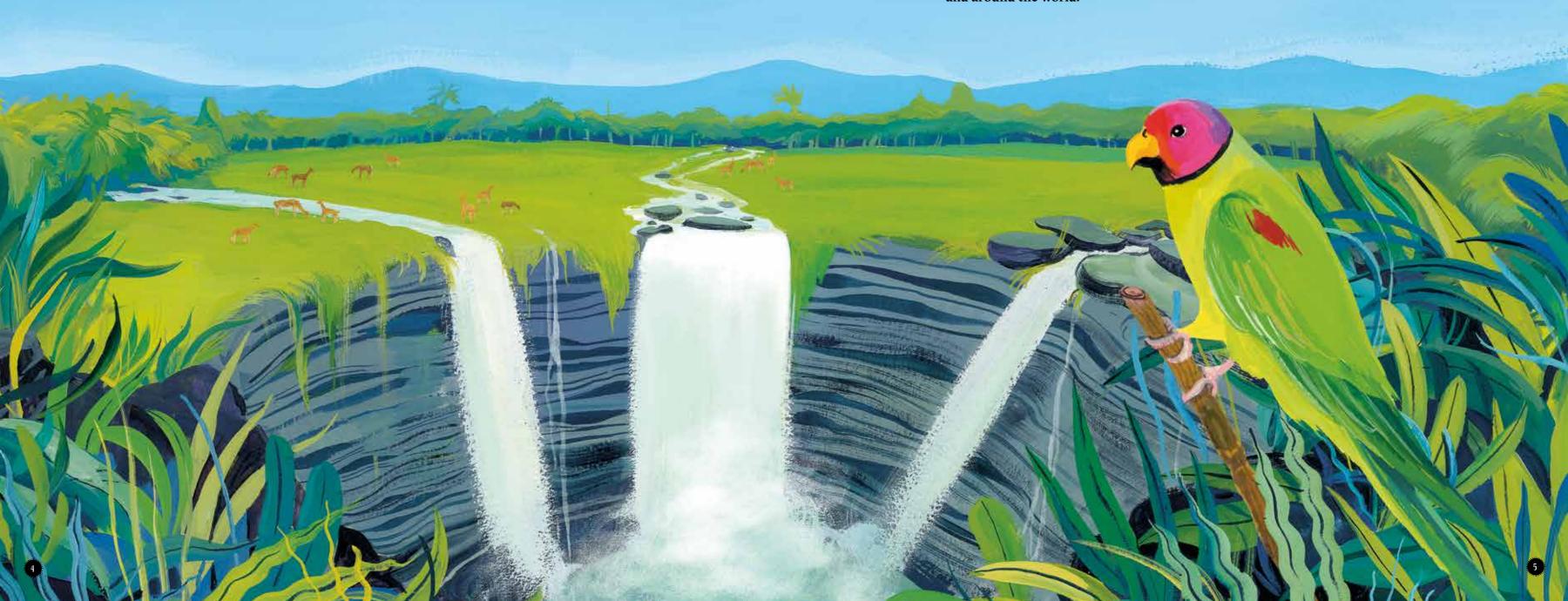
More than 300 species of birds circle the hazy skies. Graceful woolly-necked storks, scavenging vultures, colourful plum-headed parakeets and paradise flycatchers all make the Emerald Forest of Panna their home.

It's not only wildlife that thrives in this wild, beautiful place. People and cattle also live close to the reserve boundaries, relying on the forest for food and fuel.

But of all these spectacular species, it is the tiger who rules the land.

Panna became a National Park in 1981. Later in 1994, it became India's 22nd tiger reserve – a protected area created for the conservation of tigers. It became illegal to kill wildlife and destroy precious tiger habitats. Yet, for many years, there were very few tigers in the reserve and little was known about them. So, in 1996, a team of scientists came to Panna to study its tigers.

They set out to gather information that could help protect tigers in India and around the world.







A lone male with a strong

Sayani Sayani is the daughter of M-91 and 52. markings on her forehead bearing the numbers 5 and 2, this

female tiger became

the Queen of Panna for many years.

Julie

Julie is mother to Madla's first cubs inside Panna
Tiger Reserve.