

name:	Daisy Field
class:	4JC
Rainforest Journal	

## Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March

8:19 a.m.

I know it's really early but Mrs Curtis has given me and Millie permission to use the computer during our breakfast club. Mr Paterson had to open the computer room for us and he seemed a bit grumpy, but Millie said not to worry because he's always like that before his nine o'clock cappachino.

I asked her what a cuppachino was and she said it was some kind of yucky coffee drink, but Mr Paterson drinks his from a mug, not a cup. Maybe it should be called a muggachino. Neither of us knows why grown-ups like coffee – we both think that grown-ups can be a bit weird sometimes.

Guess what! I was right – Mrs Curtis did think I was silly to believe that the potoo knew that I was watching it. She reminded me that we're thousands of miles away and that those rainforest creatures don't even know what a webcam is, so there's no way that a bird like that would know that I could see it.

Even so, I told Millie about that potoo with the heart-shaped pattern, and how I'm starting to think that it might be watching me.

"You know, you could be like one of those attention-seekers that my mum sees at her salsa-dancing classes," Millie said. "They always think that people are looking at them, too."

"I'm not an attention-seeker. I'm sure that it was trying to show me something," I said.

Millie flicked her hair and said that I was probably imagining things again. Then, Jack Walters stuck his nose in and said that I'm always imagining things, such as imagining that I'll get a higher score than him in our next maths test. So I told him that at least I didn't think that a square root was some kind of horrible tree disease. Millie got quite cross with him and told him that it was rude to stick his tongue out like that.

I have to study the understorey today. Millie asked me if that meant we'd be looking for storybooks under the ground. When I'd finished giggling, I reminded her that the understorey is what we call the rainforest layer just beneath the canopy. Her cheeks went red and she said that she'd only been testing me, but I think that she'd forgotten what Mrs Curtis had taught us.

"Why is it so dark?" she asked when I had logged on to the webcam.

At first, I thought that the lens might be dirty, but then I remembered that Mrs Curtis had also told us that only a small percentage of the light from the emergent layer reaches this far down. That probably explains why looking through the lens was like looking through sunglasses.

We were supposed to be searching for that potoo but Millie was way too interested in all the plants. She said that she recognised lots of them from her Auntie Clare's orangery (Mum says that's just a posh name for a conservatory).

"Don't be silly, Millie," I said to her. "Why would plants from the rainforest be growing in your Auntie Clare's house?"

But Millie said that she was sure and even logged on to one of the other computers to prove it.

Well, it turns out that Millie wasn't being silly at all. I checked on the Internet again and she was right! Lots of those nice plants that we can buy at garden centres, like palms and ferns and bamboos and lots

more, originally come from the rainforest. Wow – how amazing is that?! We've all probably got a piece of the rainforest in our homes. Double wow!

Mrs Curtis always says that time flies when you're having fun, and I think that we both must have been having a great time because the school morning bell sounded just as we had begun to count all the different butterflies that were fluttering past. We couldn't believe how many different types there were, or how beautiful they looked. We saw red ones, green ones, yellow ones, even multicoloured and patterned ones. A swarm of blue wings raced past the camera and the colour was so bright, it was like watching pieces of summer sky tumbling past.

Millie wants to come back at lunchtime to help me look for my dad's Bigfoot. She says that there's bound to be one there because the rainforest has been on earth for millions of years and if those Bigfeet live anywhere, it'll be there!

I didn't get to show Millie the potoo, but I'm not surprised. I mean, what are the chances of seeing the same bird for a third time? It's probably off eating berries or catching moths or whatever potoos do. I doubt that I'll see it again.

## Rainforest Calling



UNDERSTOREY\_CAM\_03  
WED\_26/3\_12:17PM

Hey – why are you so quiet, one-eye? Can you see me? Perhaps it's too dark for you, down here. Sorry about that – the leaves and branches above us are so thick that the sunshine can't squeeze through. Maybe you're feeling like a sleepy sloth, huh? It always feels like night time to me in these parts, too, but don't worry that curious brain of yours – your one eye will still work fine down here, I promise. You know me, one-eye. I like the dark and my big eyes help me to see just fine – but there are lots of nasty predators lower down so keep your one eye peeled, OK?

Oh, how rude of me! I forgot to introduce you to my friend. This is Winfrey: an emerald tree boa. Can you see her beautiful, bright green scales? Isn't she lovely? When Tolle met Winfrey, she thought that my slithering friend was being rude and sticking her tongue out, but Winfrey uses that tongue of hers to taste the air; she doesn't know that it looks impolite.

This morning, Winfrey gave me some terrible news: she says that lots more trees were chopped down yesterday. That's right, more! Those nasty tree-stealers are getting closer and closer to Winfrey's home. This really worries me, one-eye. Think about it: what will happen to Winfrey and the rest of Pedro's forest friends when everyone's

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## Rainforest Calling

favourite trees are gone? What about Sonia the salamander, who loves living down here because all the humid air keeps her skin moist and soft? What are they supposed to do then – live in a hole in the ground like a burrowing worm? No, no, no!

You're *still* not talking to me. Is it something I've said?

Winfrey says that one of her big hugs might help to wake you up but I wouldn't recommend it, one-eye. I've told her to go easy, but Winfrey is a tree boa and she says that it's not her fault – she simply doesn't know her own strength! I'm sure that silly Winfrey thinks that a hug can solve almost any problem. She's such a softie. Do you know, last week, she even told me that she was thinking of becoming a vegetarian. I think that there's a better chance of a jaguar changing its spots – what about you? You should hear what she said to me yesterday!

"Pedro, we're worried about you. We think that you're getting way too ssssstressed by this tree-chopping issssue." Winfrey curled that thick tail of hers around the trunk of her tree and flicked her forked tongue. "Your featherssssss are losing their shine and your beak looksssss like it might need an urgent tree-sssssap treatment."

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Winfrey says that when she rubs against tree sap, it works wonders on her scales, making them glisten like river water in the sunlight. But I am a potoo on a mission; I don't need my beak to glisten. How would I be able to hide then, eh? Not to mention that the other potoos would laugh their feathers off at a shiny beak! No, thank you!

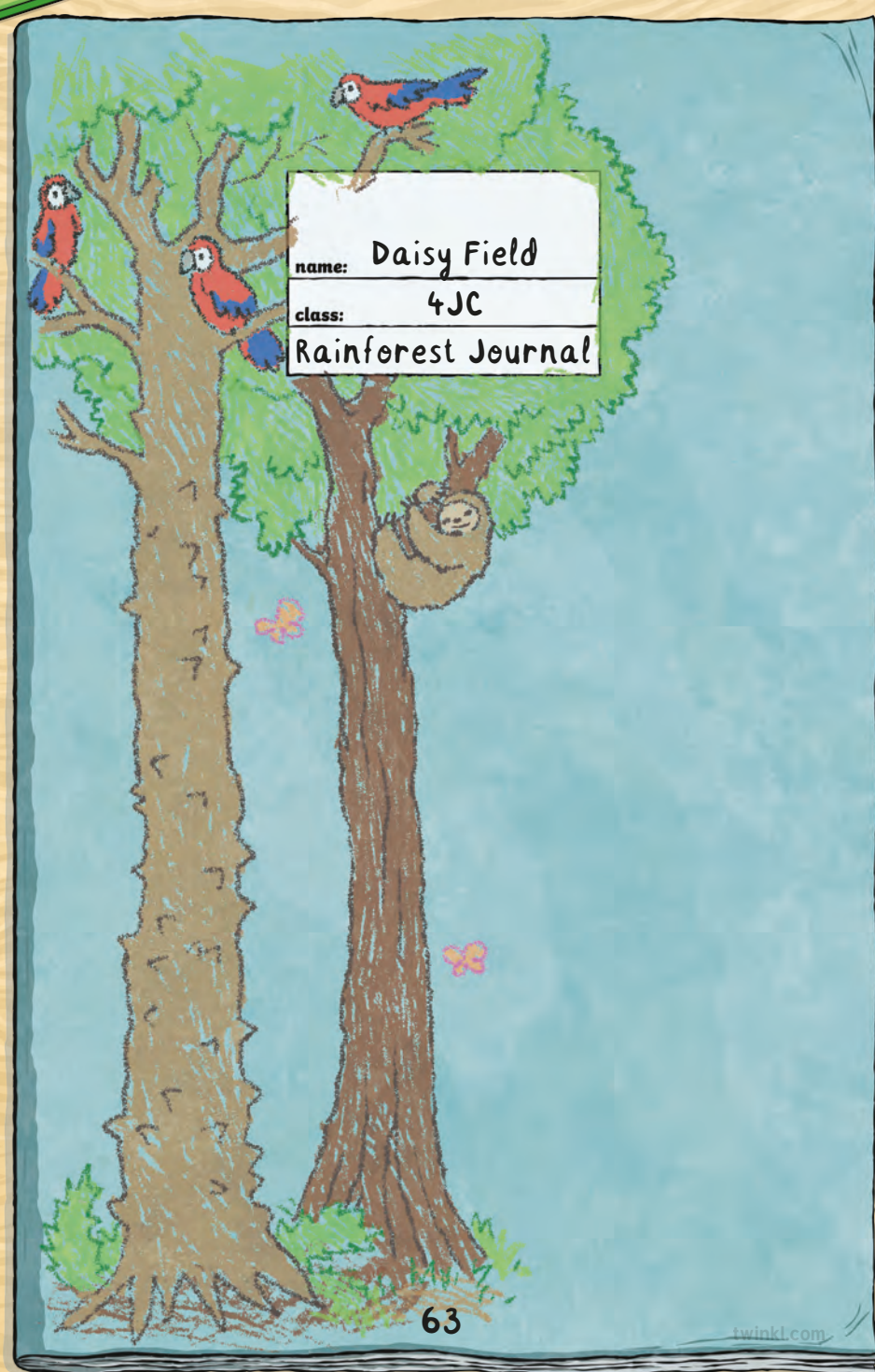
That's when Winfrey made her silliest suggestion. "You really should think about coming with ussssss, Pedro," she hissed as she wound her long body around a branch and squeezed it tightly. "The treessssss aren't ssssafe for ussssss any more – let'ssssss find a new home, now."

Can you believe this, one-eye? That scaredy-snake thinks that I should actually consider joining the other animals who are leaving the forest. Phah! This potoo belongs in the rainforest. I'm the only one who seems to really C.A.R.E., one-eye! You remember C.A.R.E., right? 'Creatures Against Rainforest Evacuation'.

"Instead of leaving," I told Winfrey, "we should be working together to find a way to save the forest. We've got to dare to C.A.R.E., right?"

What do you think, one-eye?

One-eye?



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12:31 p.m. (still Wednesday)

I'm sure that Jack Walters got most of his spellings wrong on purpose, just so that Mrs Curtis would make us do this week's test again. He knew that I wanted to spend the whole of my lunch break looking at the understorey webcam - I don't care that he remembered how to spell embarrassing and I didn't.

Guess what, though! We actually saw that potoo again - the one with the patterned chest! That's got to be one of those cow-incident things that Mum's always talking about. Like when you're thinking about buying a new pair of red shoes for dancing and then you see them in your favourite charity shop window.

"Maybe all potoos have hearts on them," Millie said to me. "It could be a different one each time."

I showed Millie some pictures of other potoos on the Internet and she soon changed her mind.

"Wait!" she said, putting her hand to her mouth. "If we're seeing it every time we log on, that means it's actually waiting around for us."

"That's what I've been trying to tell you! Why does nobody listen to me?"

"And that means..."

"...it knows that we're watching it." I finished the sentence for her.

"We should tell Mrs Curtis," Millie insisted, jumping out of her seat. "This could be really important."

"We're not telling her yet." I tugged her back down onto the chair. "When I mentioned this yesterday, Mrs Curtis said that I was just being silly. We need more evidence."

For once, Millie agreed with me. After that, she couldn't take her eyes off the potoo. She said that she likes it, too, and that it looks like a startled owl chewing on an upside-down coat hook.

Could this bird really know that we are watching it? If only it could talk! Grandma Wilkins once had a friend who kept a cockatoo as a pet, and she says that it could talk the hind legs off a donkey. Millie says that her grandad once knew a dog in the army that could do Morse code with its tail. Millie's grandad says that the moon is made of cheese, though, so we don't always believe what he says.



## Rainforest Calling

Whoa! You moved! Great! I guess my flapping wings really caught your attention, huh? Or was it my dashing potoo good looks?

Speaking of good looks, I've got to say how much I like that sparkling red spot of yours, and the way that it lights things up down here. It makes me think that I should ask a few fireflies to flash their bottoms to brighten up this part of the forest. Those clever bugs still won't tell me how they do that. I'd need a lightning strike to make my bottom glow like theirs.

Are you ready to see what those tree-stealers have done to the trees near poor Winfrey's home? Let's not waste another moment. Come quickly – follow your potoo friend.

That's right, turn your eye the same way that I flap my wing. See?

Hey, you're good at this. Now, look down!

Look... there... where Winfrey is showing you... can you see the light?

Instead of tall, elegant trees or a lush canopy, the floor is covered with jagged wooden splinters and there is



## Rainforest Calling

nothing but ripped, scorched, ugly stumps. Think of all the poor animals and creatures who have lost their homes, one-eye.



What's the point? Where's the sense in it all? Ah, Pedro just can't work it out.

Winfrey said that those horrible stealers dragged her trees away as if they were little twigs. Those trees had been in the forest for many seasons. Winfrey's mama and papa coiled around those very branches when they were just snakelets. But then, **chop!** All gone in just a flap of a wing.

## Rainforest Calling

Winfrey is really worried now. She is so scared that the tip of her tail is twitching and tapping against the crumbly bark on our branch. She thinks that those tree-stealers might return here at any moment.

I try my best to reassure her.

"Look, Winfrey. You know what they say: lightning doesn't strike the same leaf twi-"

**THUMP.**

"Hey, Pedro..." Winfrey whimpers.

**CRASH.**

"...what'sssss that sssssound?"

Did you hear that, one-eye? The dreadful sound below us of more trees falling – right now, in our forest! It's so loud, it sounds like the world is ending. What do we do?

"Let'sssss get out of here, Pedro!" Winfrey slithers as fast as her scales can carry her, towards the branch of the next tree. "It isn't ssssafe!"

Maybe I should fly away before I get chopped, too.

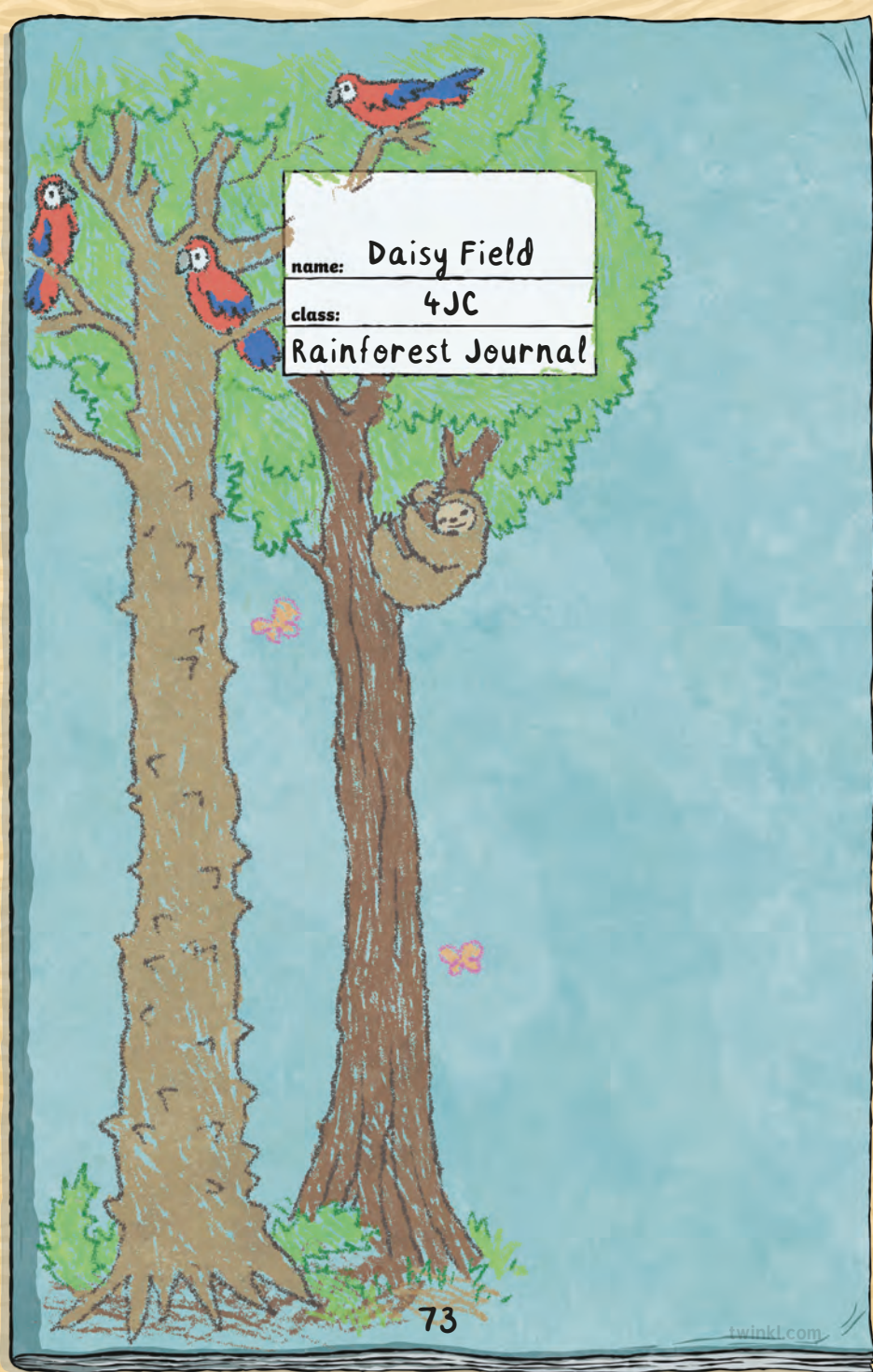
Wait! What am I *thinking*? This is my home!

“No, Winfrey! It’s time to make a stand. It’s time to show that we C.A.R.E.!”

“Sssssorry, Pedro. Thissssss is too big for a ssssnake and a potoo. Sssssee you later.” With a hiss, she disappears into a mass of green leaves.

Follow me, one-eye! Down to the forest floor! This could be your chance to see the tree-stealers with your own eyes – sorry, your own **eye**. Maybe you can think of a way to help Pedro stop it, huh?

Quick! Hurry, hurry – I really need your help!



12:40 p.m. (still Wednesday)

At first, I thought that the potoo was having some trouble with mosquitoes. Why else would it flap its wings so much? That was when Millie pointed out that it was only flapping one wing. It kept hopping away from the webcam and back again, until I used the keyboard to move the lens towards it.

"Do you think that he might be trying to communicate with us?" Millie asked.

I was going to mention that the bird would be wasting its time because neither of us can understand French yet, so there's no way that we'd be able to speak potoo. Then, Millie got distracted - again!

"Look, there's a snake with it. Right there! Perhaps they're friends, like us!"

I really don't like snakes, especially ones that look as though they could wrap themselves all the way around my bicycle! The potoo's friend was pretty, though, and the lovely green and white patterns covering its body helped it to blend in with the leaves and branches. I think that the snake must be a predator.

**Camouflage** allows animals to blend in with their **habitat** and hide from other animals. **Predators** sometimes use camouflage to avoid being detected by their **prey**.



I hope that it doesn't eat the potoo - that would be awful!

We looked at different snakes using the Internet search engine and it turns out that this snake is something called an emerald tree boa - 'emerald' tells us that it's mostly green, and 'tree' tells us... well, it lives in the trees, I guess. They don't have a poisonous bite like cobras and rattlesnakes, so they wrap themselves around other animals and squeeze them really hard.

These non-venomous snakes kill their prey by constriction. The emerald tree boa holds its prey in its jaws and wraps its body around them, squeezing tightly.



Grandma Wilkins' hugs are really tight, especially when she hasn't seen me for a few weeks. I bet that the tree boa's hugs are even stronger than hers.

Millie said that it looked like its skin had been freshly oiled – but since when did animals get beauty treatments in the rainforest? Millie does say some silly things...

12:46 p.m.

This is another journal entry because I had to wait for Millie to fetch her inhaler from the classroom. She only took a few minutes and when she got back, we both used the cursor keys to follow the potoo when it hopped out of sight and then back again, until the webcam had turned as far as it could. I had to tell Millie not to touch the computer screen with her finger – Mr Paterson says that little fingers leave big smudges and he has to clean them with a special spray that's really expensive.

"What's that, Daisy?" She hadn't listened to a word that I'd said, and jabbed a grubby finger towards the top corner of the webcam image.

The potoo seemed to be bouncing up and down, flapping one of its wings towards a gap in the trees

that we could just about see in the distance. Where trees had once been, there were now only freshly cut stumps and the sunlight was pouring into the understorey.

We squinted at the pixelated image and saw something moving around on the edge of the sunlit area.

"What is it?" Millie squealed, before taking a few puffs on her inhaler.

"I think..." I replied, "...it might be the trees!"

You might not believe this, but some of the trees were actually moving! I don't mean that they were walking – trees don't have legs – but they were shaking, as if some kind of huge creature was wrestling with the bottom of the trunk. High above, the leaves rattled and shook and some even fluttered down to the ground. Millie snatched the mouse and turned up the volume as loud as it would go, and we leaned in close to the computer to listen.

An awful noise filled the computer suite and we both jumped in our chairs. It sounded like a monster was crunching on scrap metal somewhere very close by.

As the webcam wobbled, a loud THUMP filled our ears and another tree trunk disappeared.

Something or someone was chopping the trees down. Sounds of sawing and hacking rattled through the speakers, and I reached over to turn the volume back down.

Millie looked horrified. "Is it your dad's Bigfoot creature?" she whispered.

Then, I explained to Millie all about the loggers that Mr Paterson had told me about.

"Daisy, I've just had the oddest thought." Millie grabbed my arm as if she was scared that I might run away. "What if that little potoo is trying to show us what those loggers are doing to the forest?"

I told you that Millie sometimes says the silliest things. I mean, Mrs Curtis is right – why would a potoo living thousands of miles away in the rainforest want to communicate with two schoolgirls in England?

Then again, it has been acting very strangely...

"What if it needs our help, Daisy?" Millie asked. "What

if it's desperate?"

We both wanted to follow the bird. It kept flapping towards the forest floor and waving its wing again, and there's a webcam down there which might have shown us what was really happening. But right then, Mrs Curtis stuck her head round the door and told us that we'd spent too much time on the computer already.

Neither of us had heard the bell ring for afternoon lessons, so I told her that we were sorry, then started to explain about the potoo and the loggers. But Mrs Curtis used her loud voice to say, "That's all very well and good, but learning about the Romans is a more productive way to spend a Wednesday afternoon!"

Millie whispered that it might be better if we left the webcams alone until tomorrow morning. She gets nervous when Mrs Curtis uses her loud voice.

I just hope that the potoo doesn't think that we were ignoring it, or that we don't care about the rainforest.