



Rainforest Calling

Oh, dear. I guess you're not quite as brave as your friend Pedro the potoo, huh? Did you get scared by the sound of the tree-stealers' chop-chopping, yesterday? Yes, that must be why you froze like a petrified tree stump. There I was, ready to take on the tree-stealers with my own bare wings, and you vanished! I spent so much time waiting for you that, by the time I was ready to face them alone, they had left. Such a pity – I really thought that we were a team, one-eye, but you seem even more frightened than Alice the agouti. Maybe that's why your red light isn't shining brightly at all today, huh? You're embarrassed.

If you **were** here, you could meet little Alice – she's the pretty little thing with the twitchy nose. My agouti friend lives down here on the forest floor. She likes it here. She says that there are always pools of lovely, fresh drinking water that fill up every time it rains.



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Psst! Don't tell anybody, but sometimes, when Pedro is alone down here, your potoo friend checks his reflection in those water pools.

"D-don't get too close, Pedro!" Alice stammers. "What if caiman Camilla is staring back, huh? Snap, *snap!*"

Alice tells me that there are lots of juicy insects and beetles to gobble up down here. "Yum, yum!" she squeaks, licking her paws.

Usually, I love bugs for lunch but I'm not so sure about the beetles that live way down here. Some are so ugly, I'm sure that they'd taste worse than a mouldy mushroom, or Felipe the frog's bright red skin. Eugh! Other bugs here are huge, with claws and wings and really tough shells. They might actually try to eat me!

Cast your one eye around this place. Can you think of living anywhere darker or damper? It's even gloomier than where Winfrey coils up for the night. And the awful smell of rotting leaves and sloppy mud – eugh!

Alice disagrees. "Pedro, this is the place to be! The conditions are j-just right for keeping my fur nice and warm. B-but could you squawk a little quieter, please?"

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She glances anxiously over her shoulder as she speaks.

"Phah! I don't think it is the heat that is keeping you warm, Alice. This place is so full of nasty predators – I think that it must be all the running away that you are doing!"

You need to keep your wits about you down here, one-eye. If you were awake now instead of scared out of your tree, you'd be worried, too, that Jose the jaguar, with his fierce, biting fangs, could be waiting in one of those shadows. Or, just to the side of that green shrub – the one with leaves that look like long, droopy lizard's tongues – snappy caiman Camilla could be lying in wait with her sharp teeth and claws, wanting to make a quick snack of a nice, plump potoo like Pedro.

It's no wonder that poor little agoutis like Alice are always twitching and jumping and running away. Just the other day, I heard Annie the anaconda telling all her friends that she had made Alice jump so high that she bumped her head on a beehive! When I ask her why she doesn't jump up into the trees and live somewhere safer, she just shakes her little head and tells me, "Nasties can't eat what nasties can't see!" She giggles nervously and darts under the nearest leaf.

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Between you and me, one-eye, I think Alice would never live anywhere else – not without her favourite snack! She spends all her time sniffing out Brazil nuts and feasting on as many as she can get. It's all she ever thinks about, one-eye, and I think that she loves those nuts a little bit too much. She's nuts about nuts!

What I haven't told Alice is that these Brazil nut trees are one of the tallest of all the trees, reaching up and up and out the top of the canopy, where Rodrigo and his friends eat the biggest nuts before they fall to the ground. She wouldn't like it if she knew! She thinks that she's the only animal in the rainforest whose teeth can bite through the hard shells – but she hasn't thought about beaks, huh? I'll tell you what, though – I wouldn't like to be standing on the forest floor when those nuts drop from the canopy like little rocks.

Hey, one-eye, I really wish that you'd turn your fancy red light on today and start paying attention to your friend Pedro. We have work to do – we're on a mission, remember? Those nasty chopping tree-stealers could come back at any moment. They took more trees than Rodrigo has tail feathers yesterday and I worry that soon there'll be no trees left at all!

Poor me, poor me! Sometimes, it feels like only Pedro

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seems to C.A.R.E. Oh, and little Alice, of course – she says that she wants to C.A.R.E., too. In fact, I've been thinking that we should make her our next recruit. She keeps saying that if those tree-stealers try to cut down her beloved Brazil nut trees, she'll raise a vast agouti army to drive them away.

I like her determination, one-eye, I really do, but I'm not entirely sure if an agouti army would be quite enough to scare those tree-stealers.

"Pedro?" Alice is saying.

Pedro would much prefer a vast jaguar army, with fierce teeth and claws.

"Pedro..."

Imagine if Jose the jaguar brought all his friends to scare away the tree-stealers. Now, that would definitely – "Pedro!"

Wait!

What is that? The growl of a fearsome predator?

Do you hear it? The grumbling?

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It sounds close. Much louder than anything that I've heard before. Surely, it cannot be...

They're back, one-eye!

Look how the leaves tremble and quake! Look how the great trees thunder to the ground! Those tree-stealers must be really close!

"Nasties," says Alice. "Nasties coming!" She is collecting as many nuts as she can carry in her little paws.

Please, one-eye, turn your red light on. I need you to see this, and then we can figure out how to stop it – together!

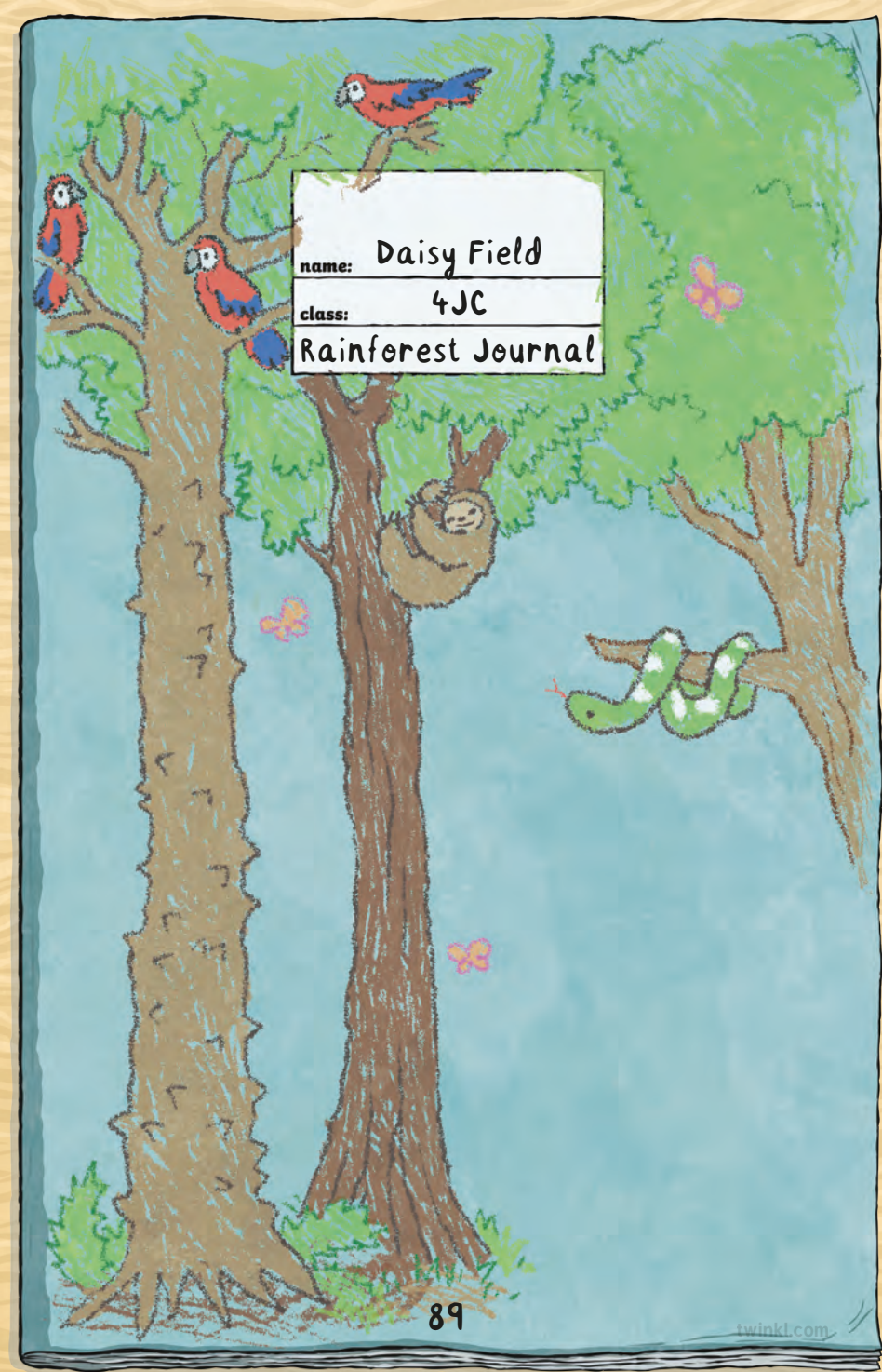
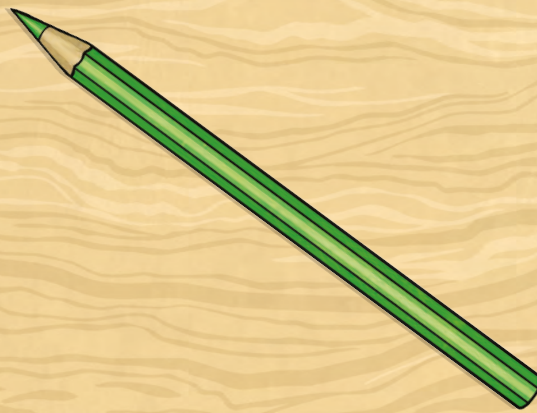
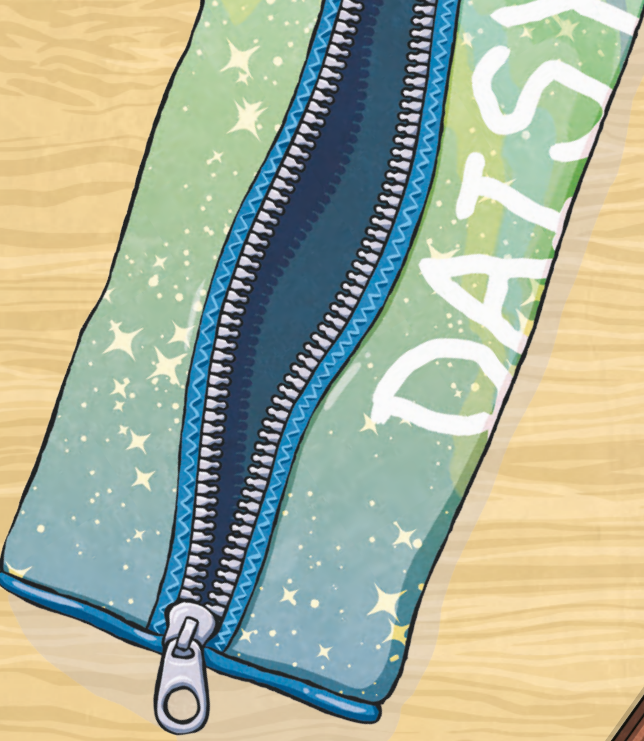
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Alice is leaving. "Hurry, Pedro!" she squeals. "Run!"

I should have known that little Alice doesn't C.A.R.E. about anything but her Brazil nuts. How can we run away now, one-eye? This is what we've been waiting for! This is our chance to save the forest! I don't know what I'm going to do, but I know I have to do **something**!

Come on, one-eye. Do I have to tap you with my beak to make your light turn on? Please, wake up for your friend Pedro...!





name:	Daisy Field
class:	4JC
Rainforest Journal	

Thursday 27th March

8:12 a.m.

I can't believe what has just happened. I didn't mean to scream, but I logged on to the forest floor webcam and guess what? I think that Millie is right! That little potoo does know that we're watching him.

Double guess what? It's actually trying to talk to me! That's why it was going tap-tappy-tap on the lens.

It wasn't alone. There was another little animal. It looked like a cross between a rat and a guinea pig, and it was really skittish, like it was scared of its own shadow!

I didn't have time to study the animal because before I knew it, it had scampered away – and here's the part that you really won't believe. The potoo actually pushed the camera with its claw!

Honestly!

I used my arrow keys to move the camera left, but the potoo pushed it right.

Then, I pointed the lens up but the bird tugged it

down.

All it would let me do was turn it as far to the right as I could. Then, I saw why...

...or at least I would have if Millie hadn't finally decided to turn up (late) and open her big mouth.

"Why's the screen so dark?"

"Shush!" I told her. But you know what she's like – she didn't shush at all.

"I can't see a thing. Hey, why's that bird trying to eat the camera?"

Only, it wasn't trying to eat the camera, was it?

"Wait!" Millie said, finally catching on. "Hey, I think it might be –"

That's when I shouted, "It's communicating!"

Millie muttered something that sounded like "...rude," but I didn't care. I was too busy chasing after the potoo.

We could see it hopping from place to place, away from the camera. It's really crowded with trees and plants on the forest floor so I had to concentrate and zoom the webcam in and out. The camera has a red light on it, which was handy down there because it made it much easier to see as I operated it.

The little bird hopped first to the base of the closest tree, paused for a moment, and then peered around the wide trunk in the direction of a bright light which seemed to be burning through the forest floor. It was as if the sunlight was managing to shine right through the leaves and branches. We hadn't noticed it before because the camera lens had been pointing a different way, but it was so close that we could actually see what was in the clearing, especially when the potoo started to flap its wings like mad and hopped to the right so that I could zoom in on a spot between two smaller saplings.

That's when Millie jabbed her finger at the screen again and asked, "Are those men killing trees?"

The potoo was hovering in the corner of the screen, so agitated that it was practically bouncing.

"Oh... that's awful," Millie stammered. I think that

she might have started to cry. I don't blame her, though, because it really was awful. When I zoomed in as much as I could, we saw seven men with double-handled saws and huge axes and horrible, smoking chainsaws. They were hacking through giant tree trunks, as wide as sheds and cars, as easily as if they were lollipop sticks. Worst of all, each time a big tree fell over, the camera shook like we were in the middle of an earthquake.

That poor potoo must have been terrified. It kept looking right at the camera with those big, round, yellow eyes and shaking its head.

"Why is that bird still hanging around?" Millie asked me. "Does it want to get chopped?!"

"No," I told her, because I'd realised what was going on. It was like a little light had flicked on in my head. "I think it wants us to help."



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Pedro will show you where to look, one-eye. Look at me, not Alice or all those runaway animals! This is it – the tree-stealers are here and it is our time to fight!

We need to get closer, one-eye, to face these nasty creatures and show them that they can't take *our* trees! Follow me!

Closer...

Closer...



What...

What IS it, one-eye?

Look at the size of it! Look how it towers like one of the ancient trees that it so easily topples with one blow! How it chews through them with its fearsome teeth... and that sound! A roar like nothing Pedro has ever heard!

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Quick, one-eye – hide!



How poor Pedro's feathers are trembling! Such strange creatures in our lovely forest, tearing down our precious trees... how can one potoo face all this on his own?

And yet... Pedro is the only one here.

Everyone in this forest can see them chopping and biting and stealing our trees, but nobody stops them.

Well, Pedro has had enough. It's time to put a stop to this. Let's show them how much we C.A.R.E. about our home, huh?

Look at us, though, one-eye: my tiny beak is not made for fighting, and you don't even have wings! What could

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we possibly –

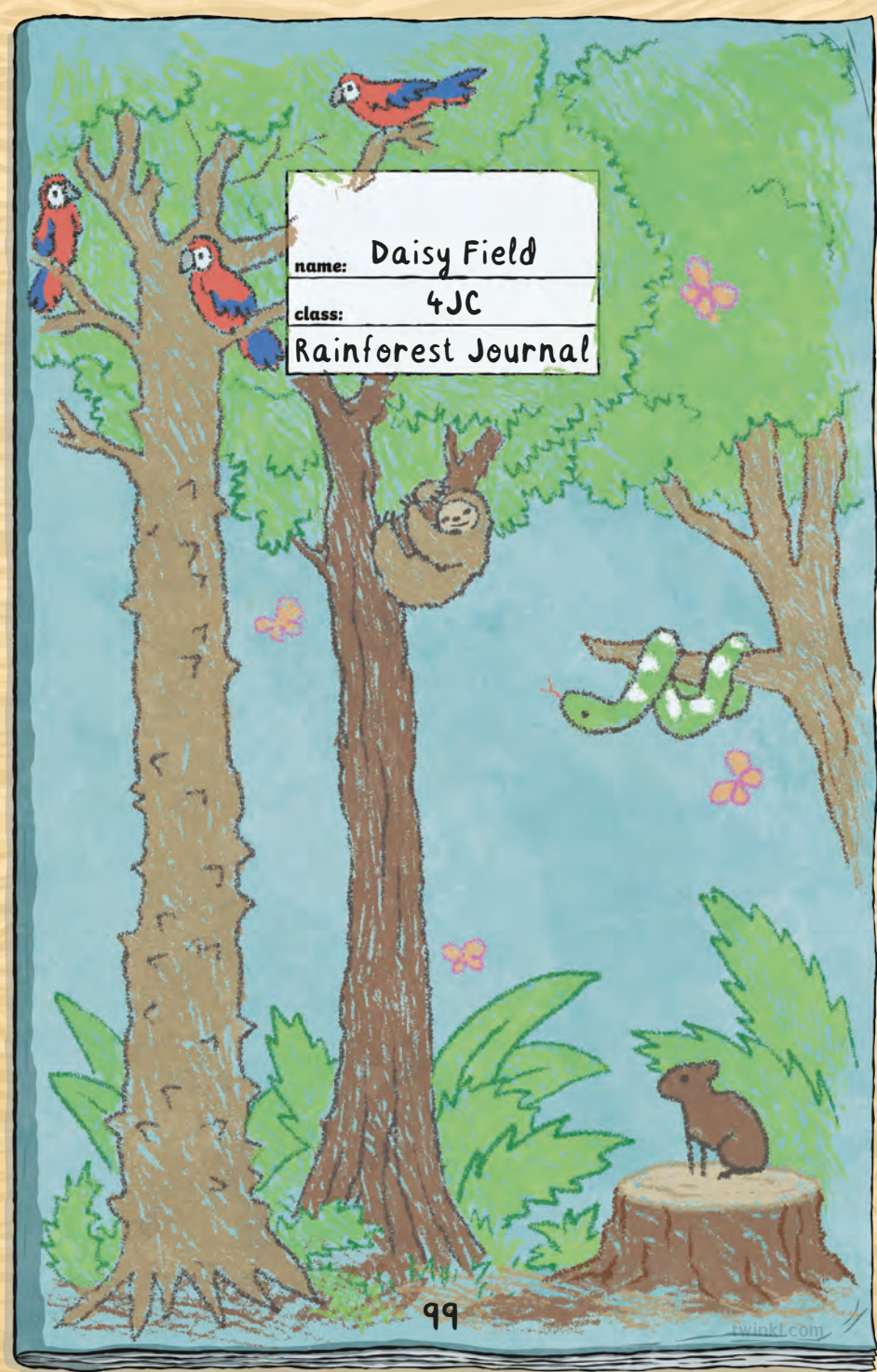
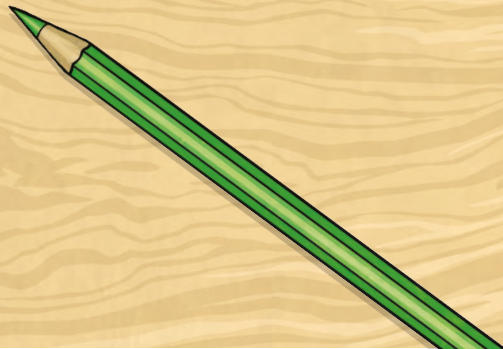
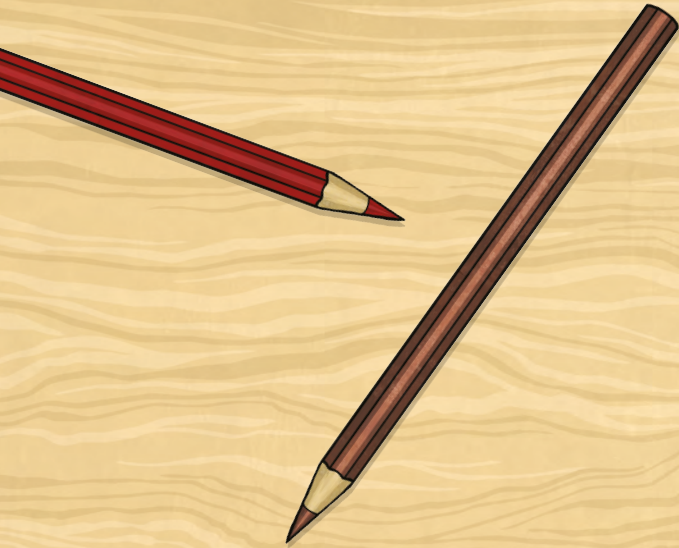


That's it! Alice's Brazil nuts! Those tough little shells are so hard, maybe they can hurt the tree-stealers as much as they hurt Pedro's head when they fall.

OK – I'm ready. Wish me luck, one-eye.



Potoo to the rescuuuuuuuuue!!!



name:	Daisy Field
class:	4JC
Rainforest Journal	

8:55 a.m.

"Stop it! STOP IT!"

We both shouted at the tops of our voices but the loggers didn't stop. They couldn't hear us.

"They're killing the rainforest!" Millie yelled. "Why are they doing that? I thought that this area was supposed to be off-limits!"

I wasn't really listening to her. I was too busy watching that brave little potoo.

I could tell that the little bird wanted to do something to stop the loggers. If it had been a bigger animal, it could have squashed those chainsaws and axes flat – but I guess there's not much you can do when you're only fourteen inches tall.

Still, it was a determined little thing. It used its claws to pick up nuts from the forest floor and throw them towards the loggers. When that didn't work, it flapped above the heads of the men who held chainsaws, dropping nuts from its beak like tiny bombs.



That didn't work, either. How could it? It was just one little bird against all those men and their sharp tools – but at least my potoo was trying. As I watched it getting more and more desperate, my eyes prickled with tears.

"It would take an army of birds to stop those loggers," Millie said.

"We need to do something," I told her. "That bird trusted us enough to show us what was happening. We need to help it."

"How can we help a little bird from thousands of miles away?"

I didn't know the answer to Millie's question. I didn't know how to stop the men and I didn't know how to help. The only thing I knew was that I couldn't just abandon this poor little potoo, now that I could see how much danger its home was in. The rainforest is such an incredible place and these men were tearing it apart as though it were nothing.

Then, something really odd happened. Millie had a great idea.

"I know! Let's send an email to that famous David Battenburger. I bet he'd love to hear about the potoo. He might even make one of his television shows about it and help to stop those loggers before they chop down the entire rainforest."

"Good idea," I nodded. "Can we record this?"

Millie is much better with computers than I am, and found a way to save what we were seeing on the screen.

"This can be our evidence," I told her. "We can send this to David Battenburger."

"Mrs Curtis said that those people chop down twenty thousand square miles of forest each year," Millie continued. "No wonder that potoo is so upset. I think I'd be sad, too, if someone started chopping my home down."

The potoo was bouncing around on the forest floor between the legs of the awful men, making a racket louder than Millie's little brother did when he fell off the monkey bars. It pecked at the men's feet, flapping its wings frantically. The men began to kick out wildly at the hysterical bird with their huge boots and I started to panic that it would soon be stomped on.

Then, it was my turn to have a brilliant idea.

I snatched up the keyboard and began to hit the buttons as quickly as I could – up, down, left, right,

rolling the mouse wheel to zoom in and out at random.

"What on earth are you - ohh!" Millie gasped.

Thousands of miles away, in the depths of the rainforest, the little red light on the top of the charity's camera was flashing brightly as it moved up, down, left and right, and although we couldn't hear the sound of the camera lens zooming in and out, the loggers clearly could. Elbowing one of the other men, the largest logger began to look around until, at last, his eyes landed on our camera. He stopped kicking out at the potoo, looked right down the lens and began to stomp towards us!

Millie gasped and we both froze. I hadn't thought this far ahead.

We ducked beneath the computer table.

We both knew that the loggers couldn't really see us but, somehow, it felt safer on the computer room floor. All I could do was hope that my camera had distracted the men for long enough for the potoo to get away.

We sat there on the carpet for what felt like ages. After a while, Millie whispered that we should call the police and have those men arrested, but I don't think calling 999 reaches the police in Brazil. I had a better idea.

"Let's get Mrs Curtis. She always knows how to stop naughty people misbehaving."

