



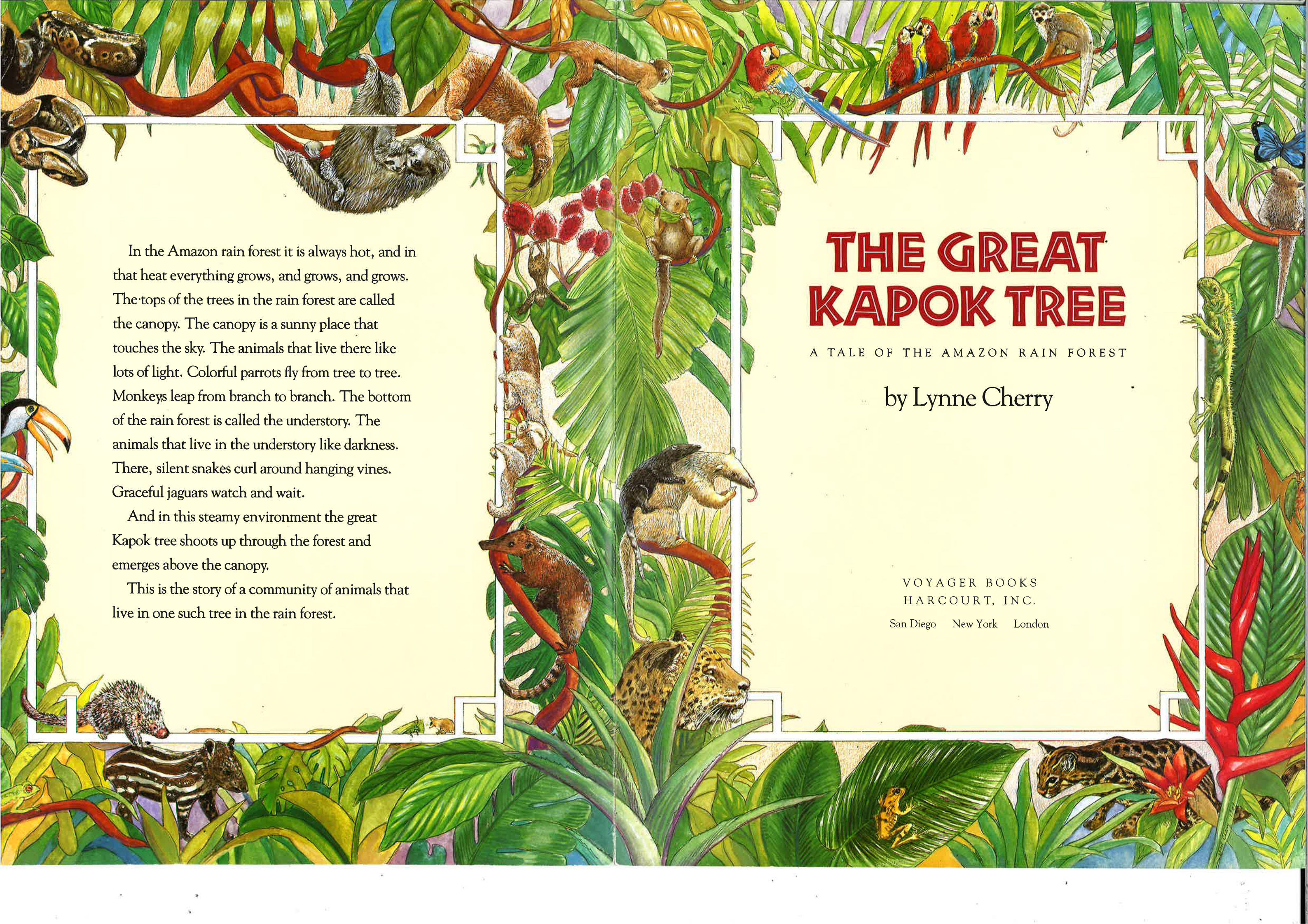
# THE GREAT KAPOK TREE

A TALE OF THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

by Lynne Cherry







In the Amazon rain forest it is always hot, and in that heat everything grows, and grows, and grows. The tops of the trees in the rain forest are called the canopy. The canopy is a sunny place that touches the sky. The animals that live there like lots of light. Colorful parrots fly from tree to tree. Monkeys leap from branch to branch. The bottom of the rain forest is called the understory. The animals that live in the understory like darkness. There, silent snakes curl around hanging vines. Graceful jaguars watch and wait.

And in this steamy environment the great Kapok tree shoots up through the forest and emerges above the canopy.

This is the story of a community of animals that live in one such tree in the rain forest.

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herry.

story is about the Amazon rain forest, the Brazilian spelling *senhor*  
d.

1990 by Lynne Cherry

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he many different animals that live in a great kapok tree in the  
forest try to convince a man with an ax of the importance of not  
their home.

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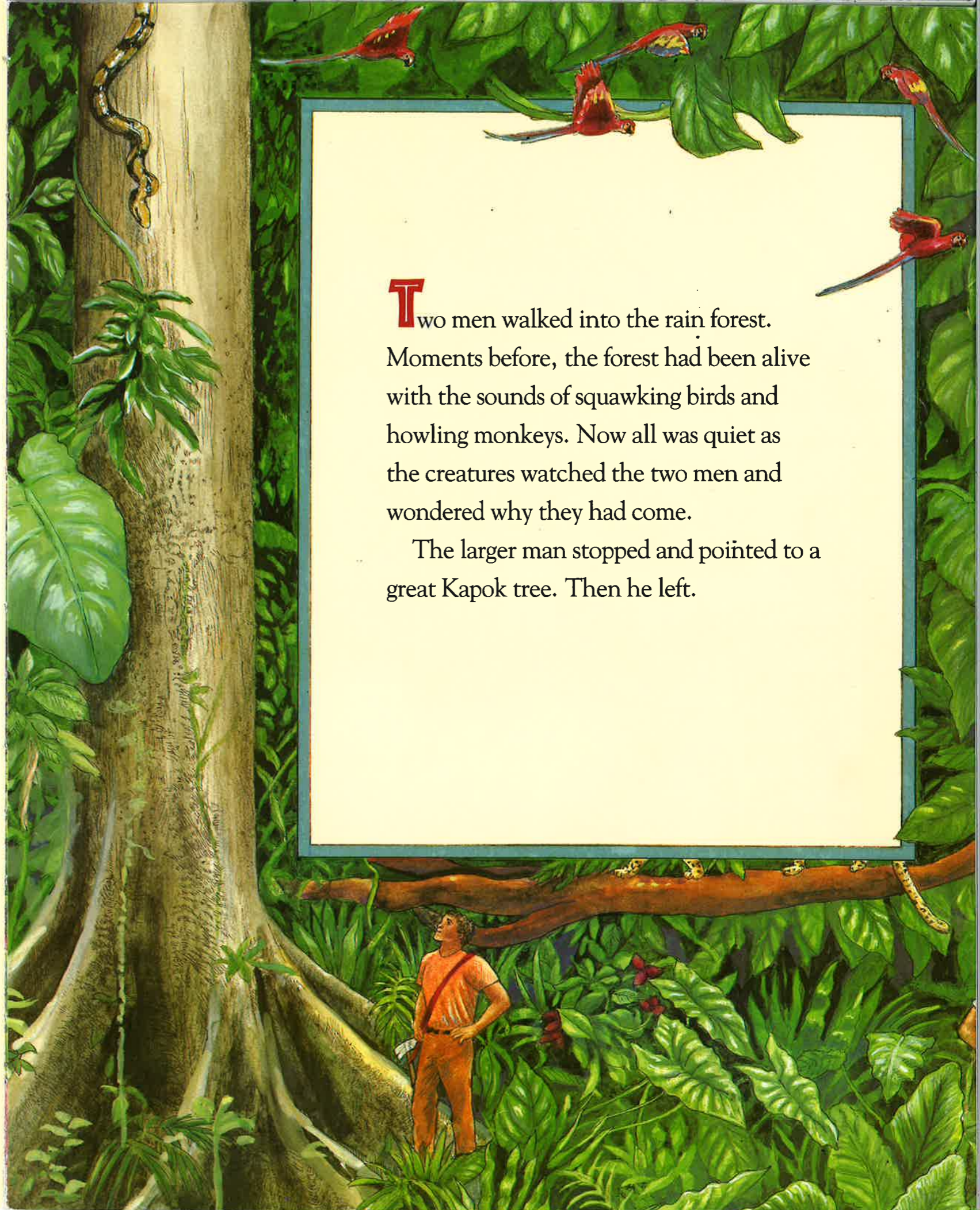
upervision by Stanley Redfern and Ginger Boyer

Michael Farmer

*This book is dedicated to the memory of  
Chico Mendes,  
who gave his life in order to preserve  
a part of the rain forest.*

**T**wo men walked into the rain forest.  
Moments before, the forest had been alive  
with the sounds of squawking birds and  
howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as  
the creatures watched the two men and  
wondered why they had come.

The larger man stopped and pointed to a  
great Kapok tree. Then he left.



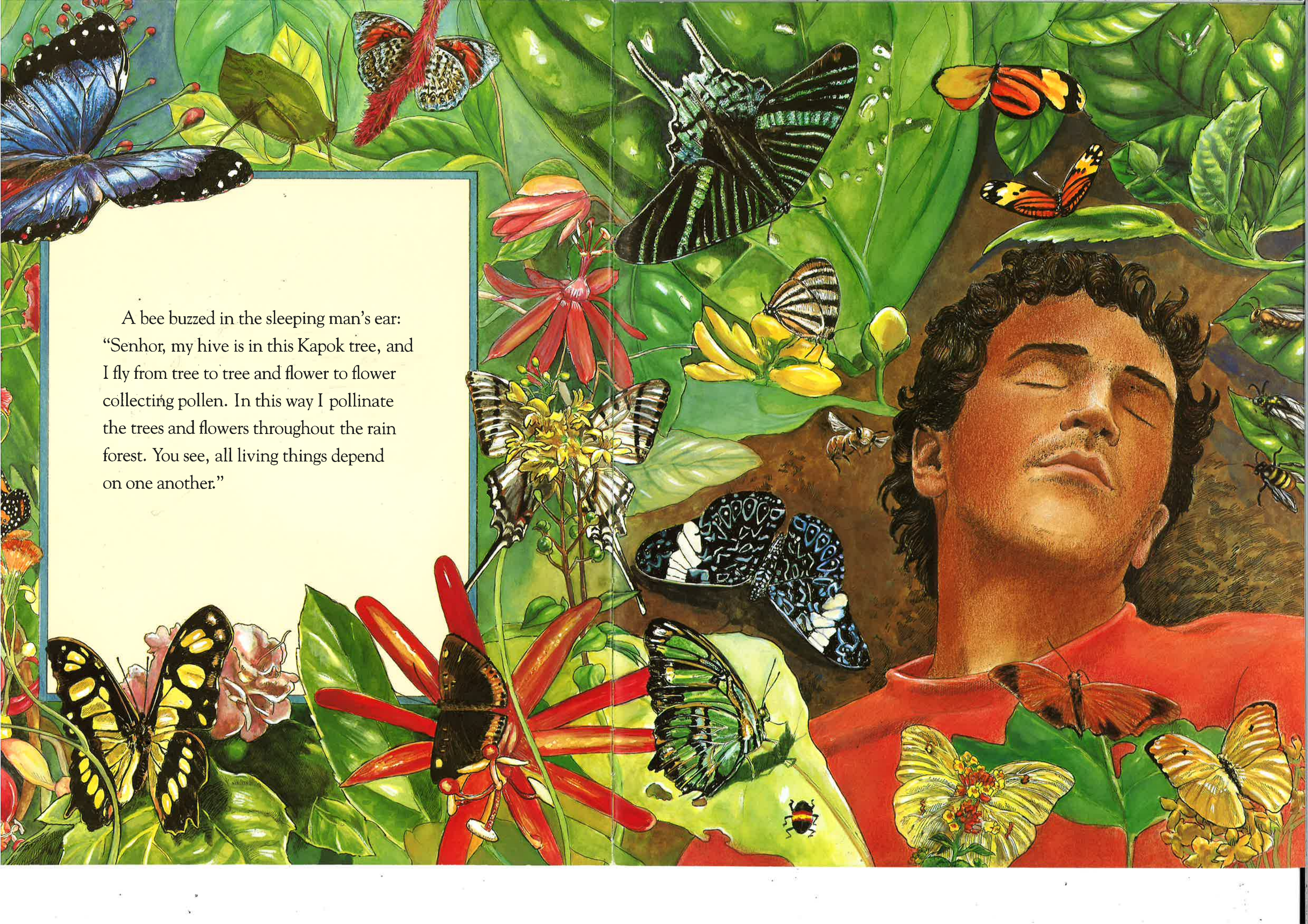


The smaller man took the ax he carried and struck the trunk of the tree. Whack! Whack! Whack! The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard. Chop! Chop! Chop! The man wiped off the sweat that ran down his face and neck. Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop!


Soon the man grew tired. He sat down to rest at the foot of the great Kapok tree. Before he knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled him to sleep.

A boa constrictor lived in the Kapok tree. He slithered down its trunk to where the man was sleeping. He looked at the gash the ax had made in the tree. Then the huge snake slid very close to the man and hissed in his ear: "Senhor, this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down."

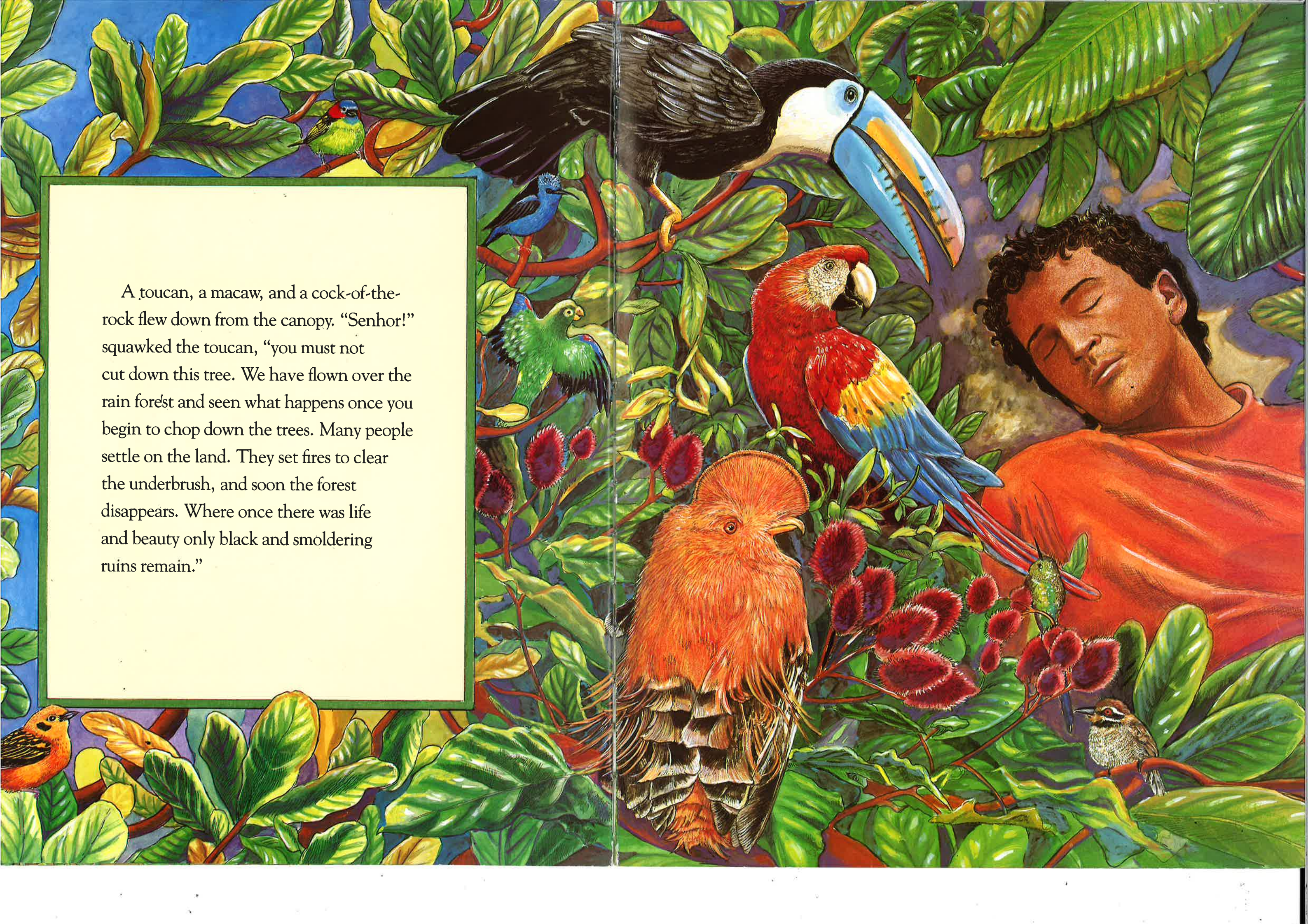




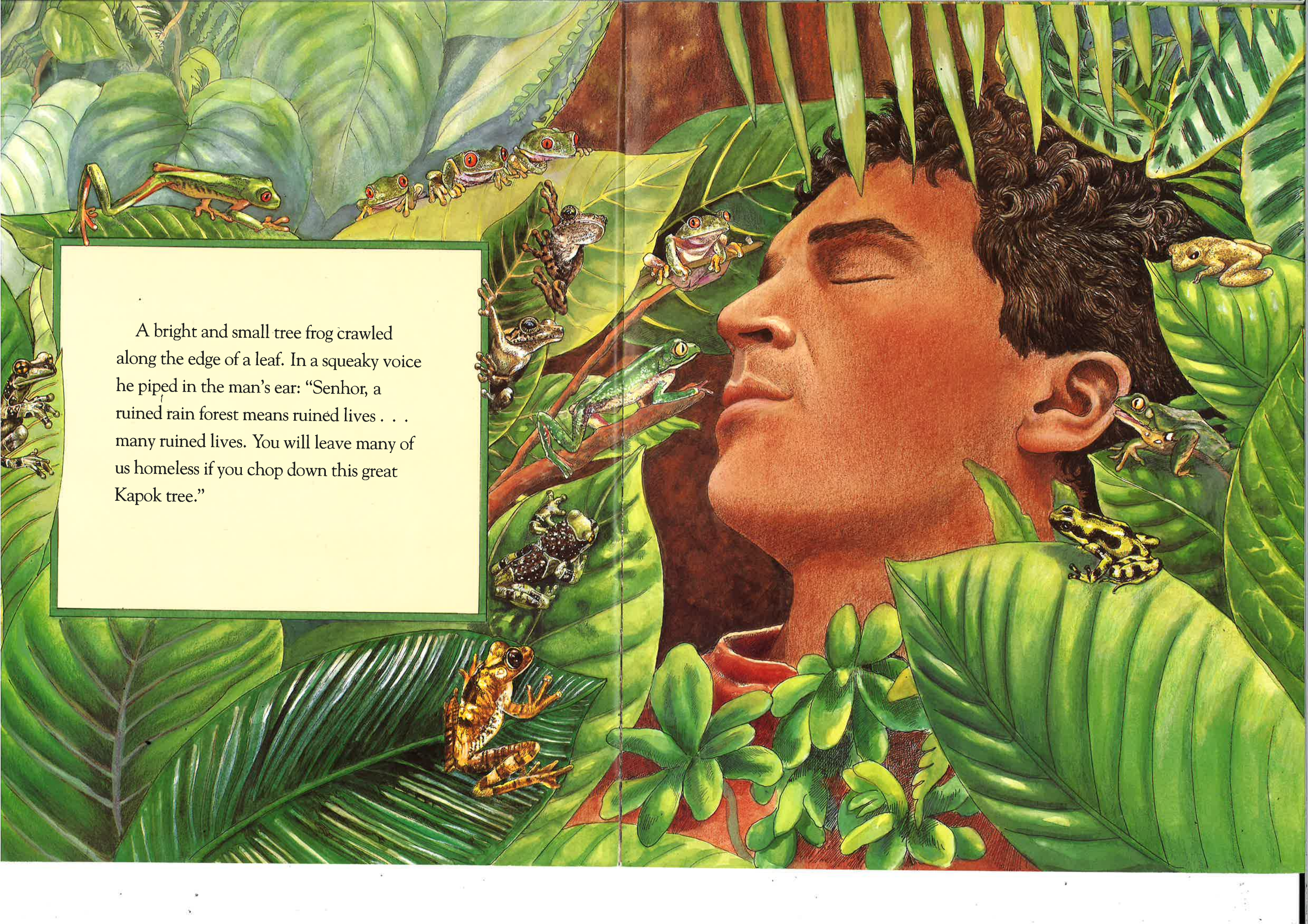
A bee buzzed in the sleeping man's ear:  
"Senhor, my hive is in this Kapok tree, and  
I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower  
collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate  
the trees and flowers throughout the rain  
forest. You see, all living things depend  
on one another."



A troupe of monkeys scampered down from the canopy of the Kapok tree. They chattered to the sleeping man: "Senhor, we have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. When the heavy rains come, the soil will be washed away and the forest will become a desert."



A toucan, a macaw, and a cock-of-the-rock flew down from the canopy. "Senhor!" squawked the toucan, "you must not cut down this tree. We have flown over the rain forest and seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They set fires to clear the underbrush, and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty only black and smoldering ruins remain."

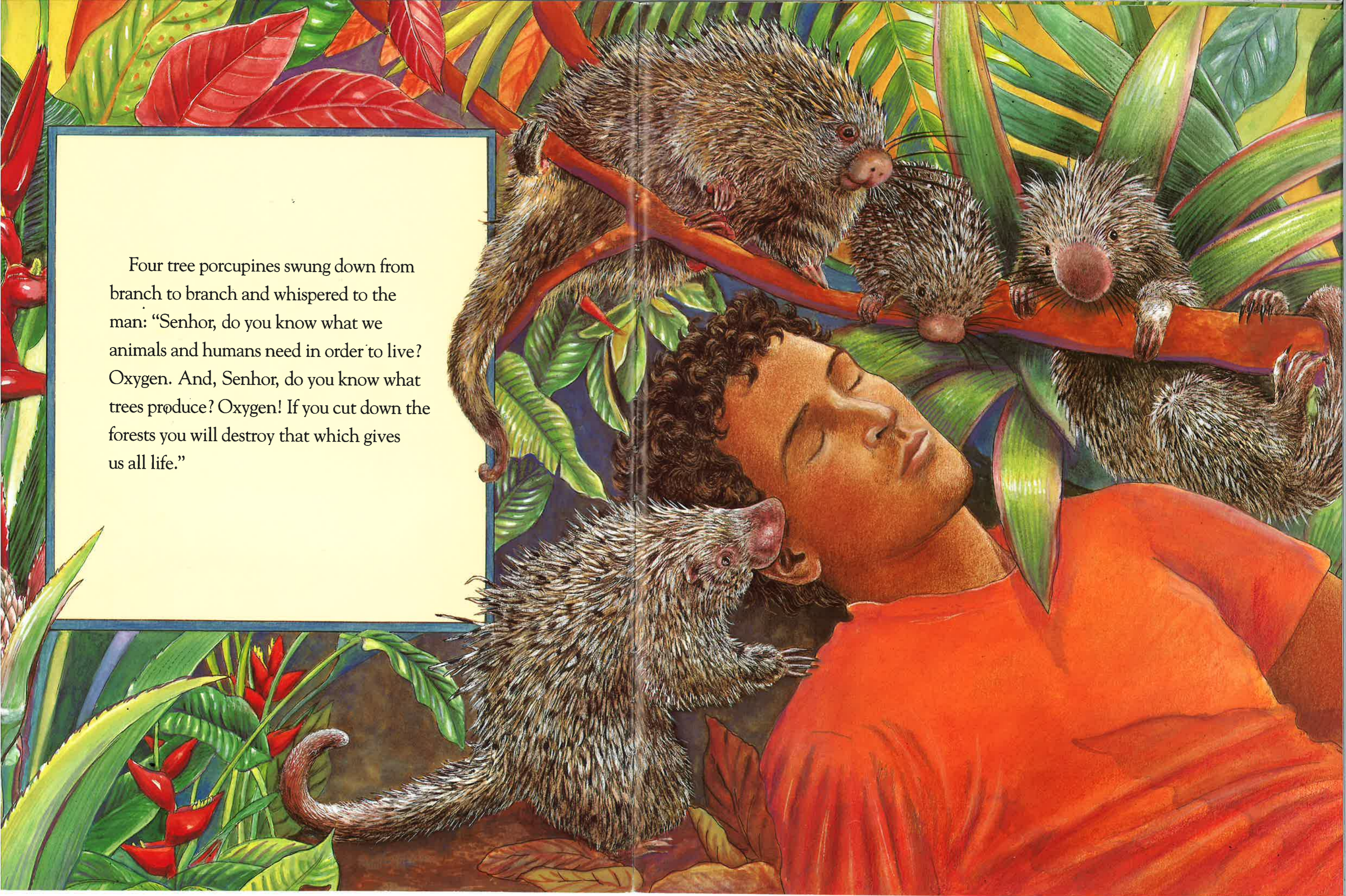


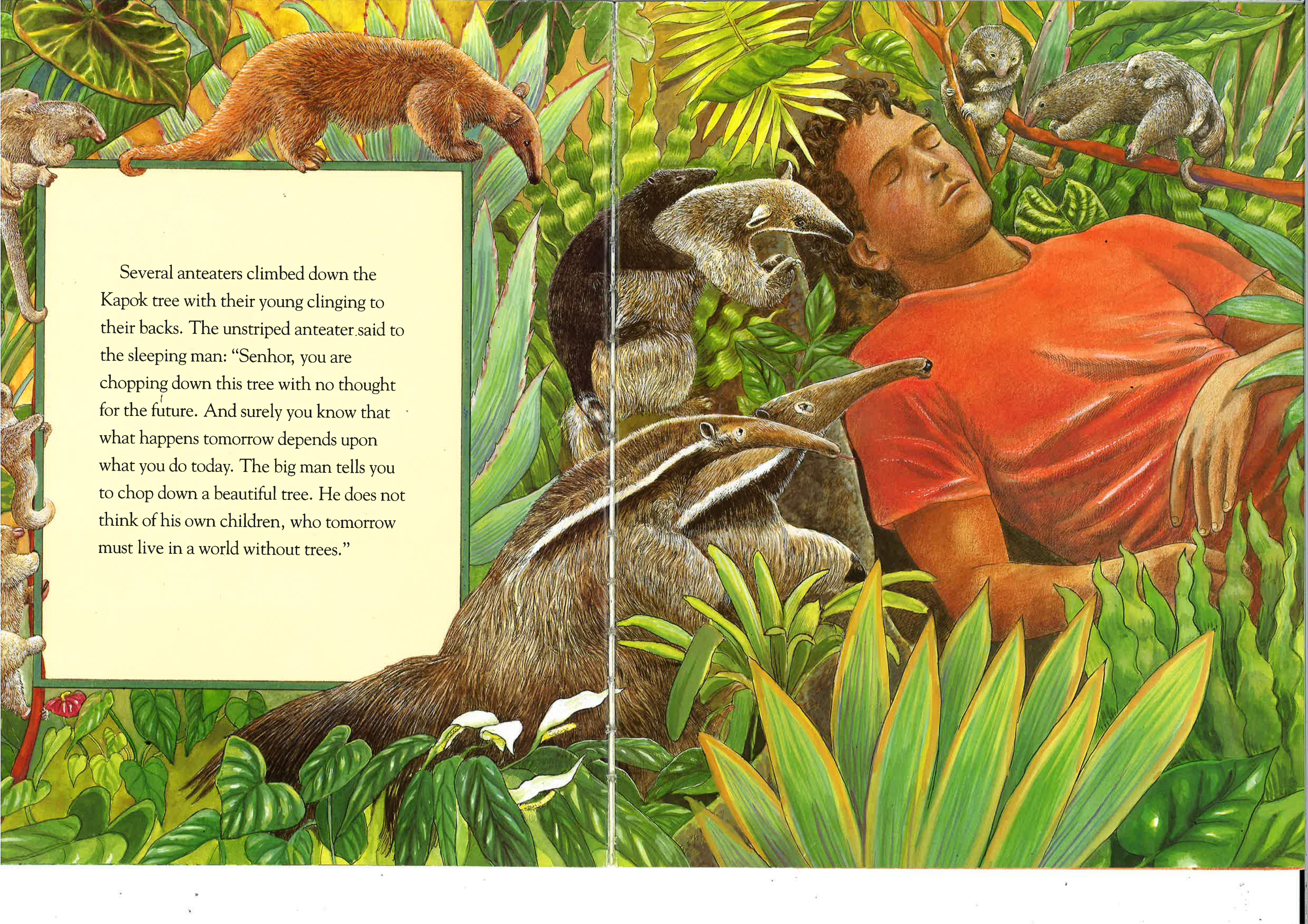
A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the man's ear: "Senhor, a ruined rain forest means ruined lives . . . many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Kapok tree."

A jaguar had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his spotted coat blended into the dappled light and shadows of the understory, no one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping man. He growled in his ear: "Senhor, the Kapok tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down, where will I find my dinner?"

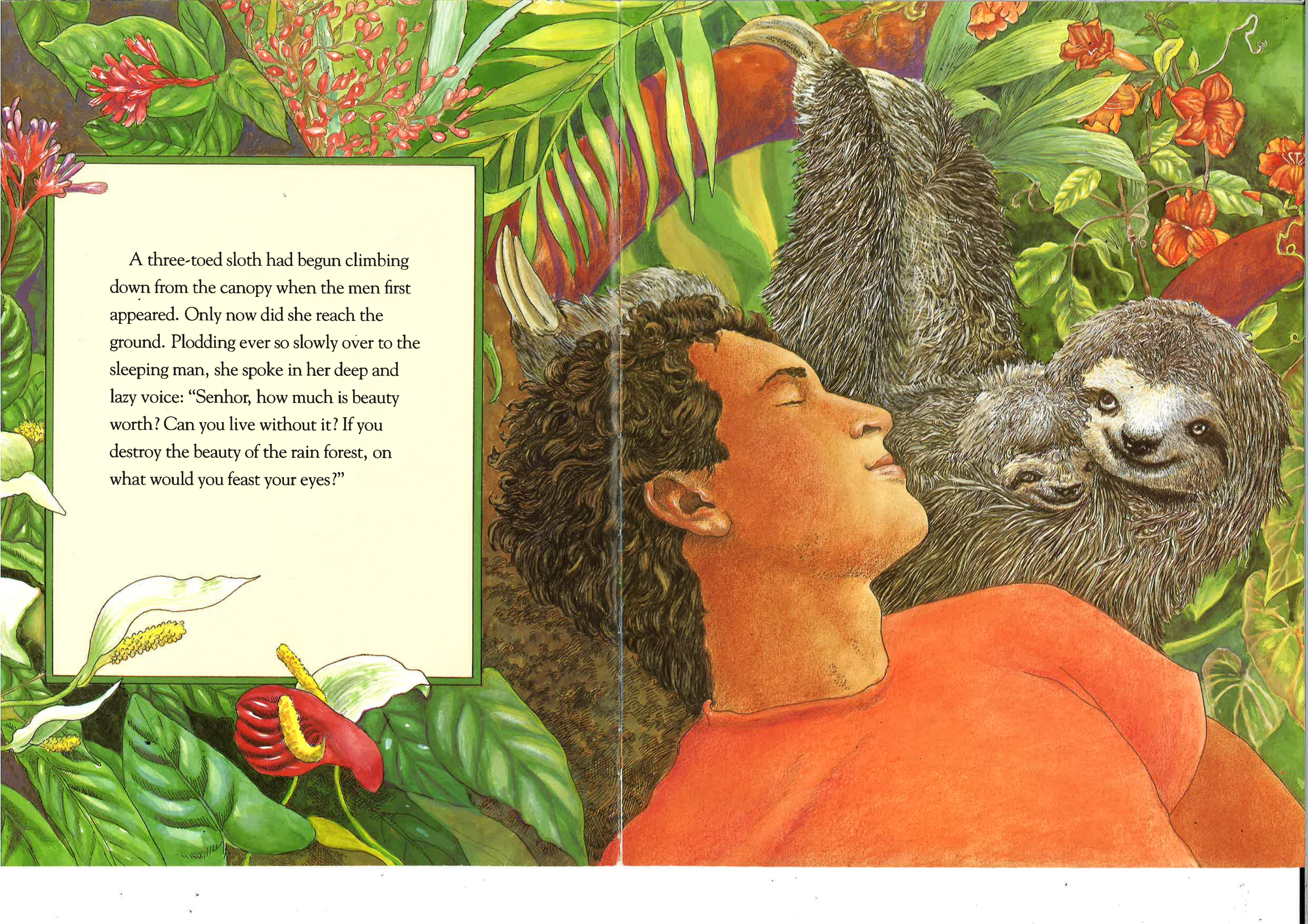


Four tree porcupines swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the man: "Senhor, do you know what we animals and humans need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Senhor, do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forests you will destroy that which gives us all life."

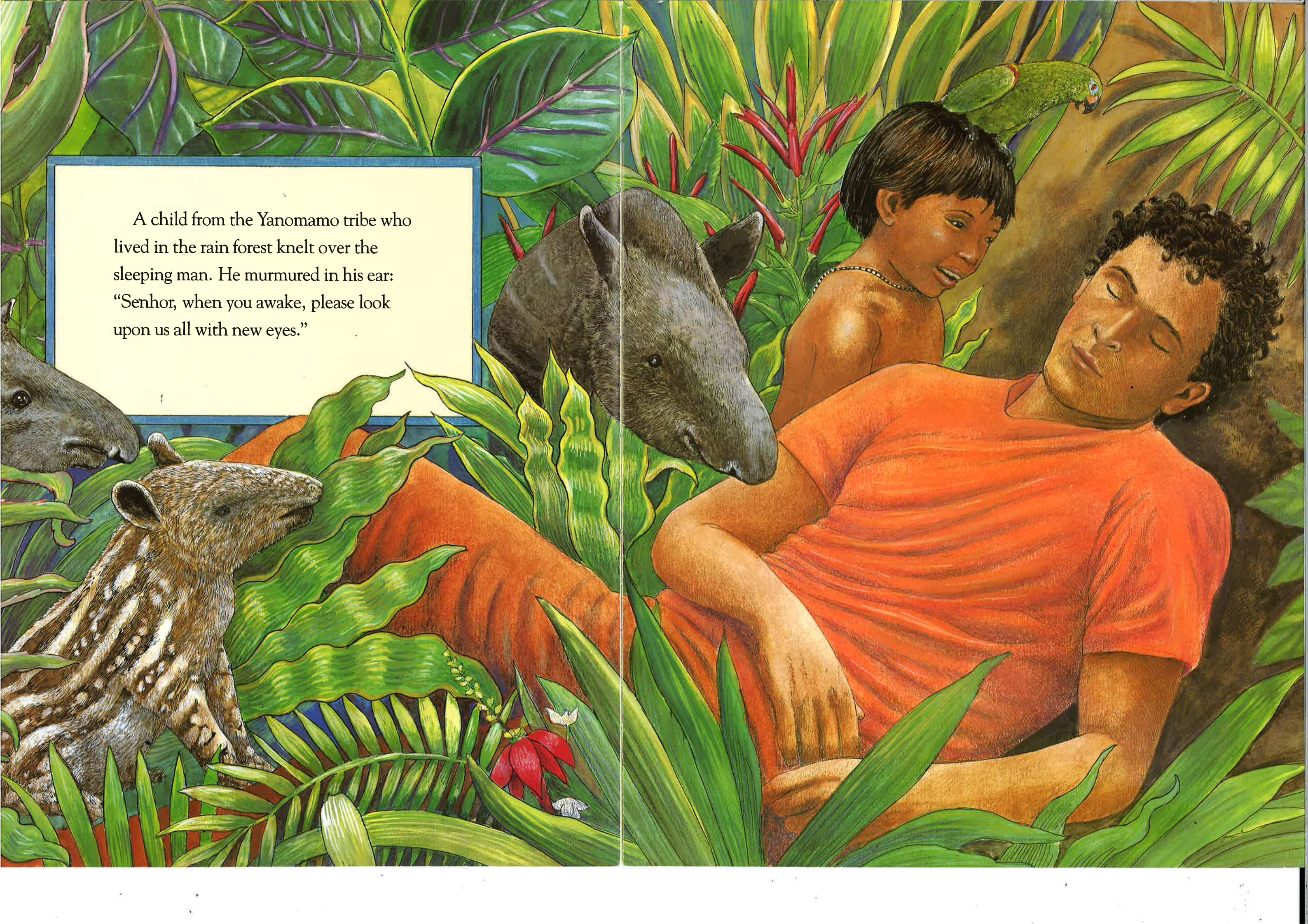




Several anteaters climbed down the Kapok tree with their young clinging to their backs. The unstriped anteater said to the sleeping man: "Senhor, you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. The big man tells you to chop down a beautiful tree. He does not think of his own children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees."

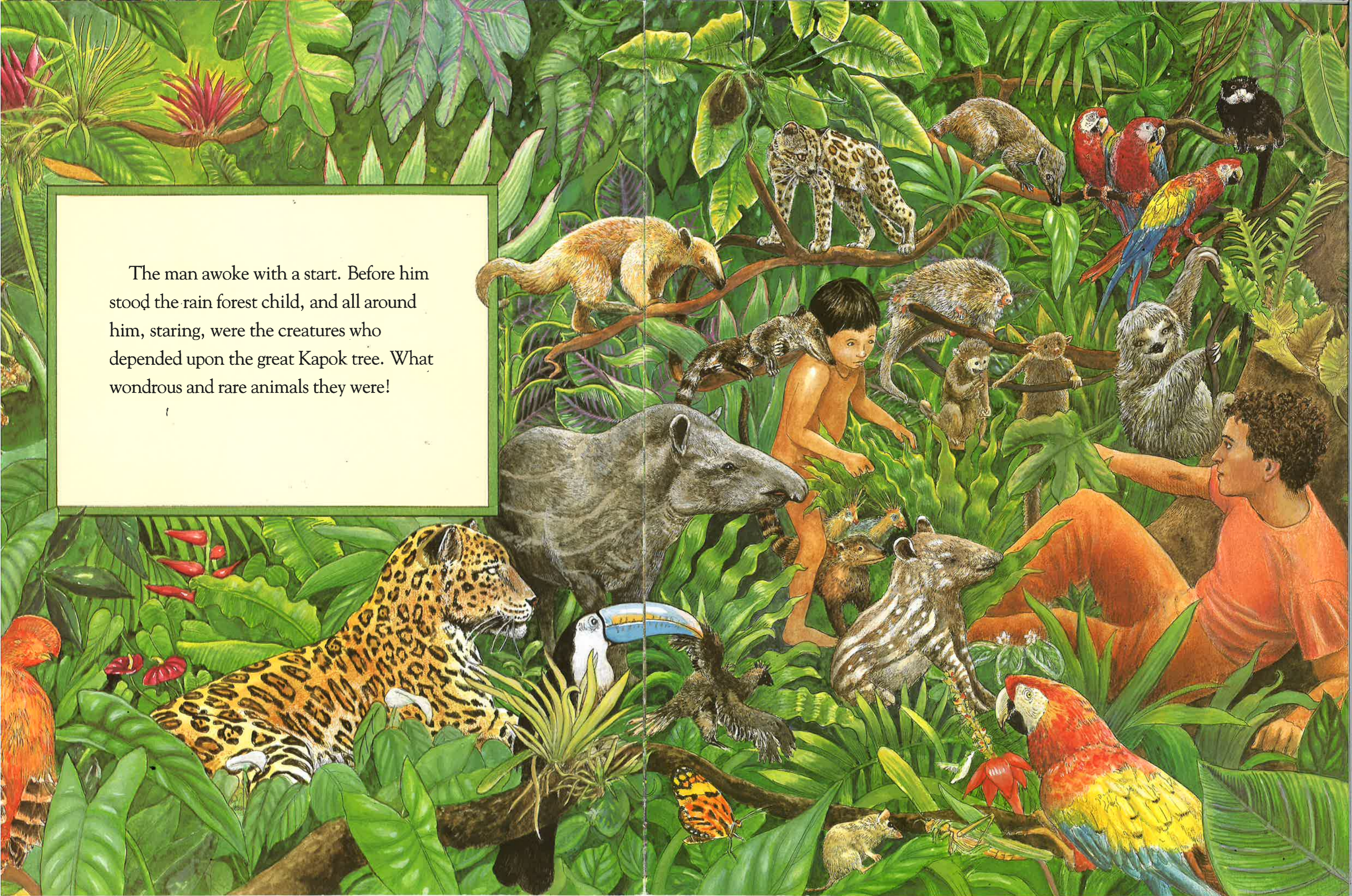


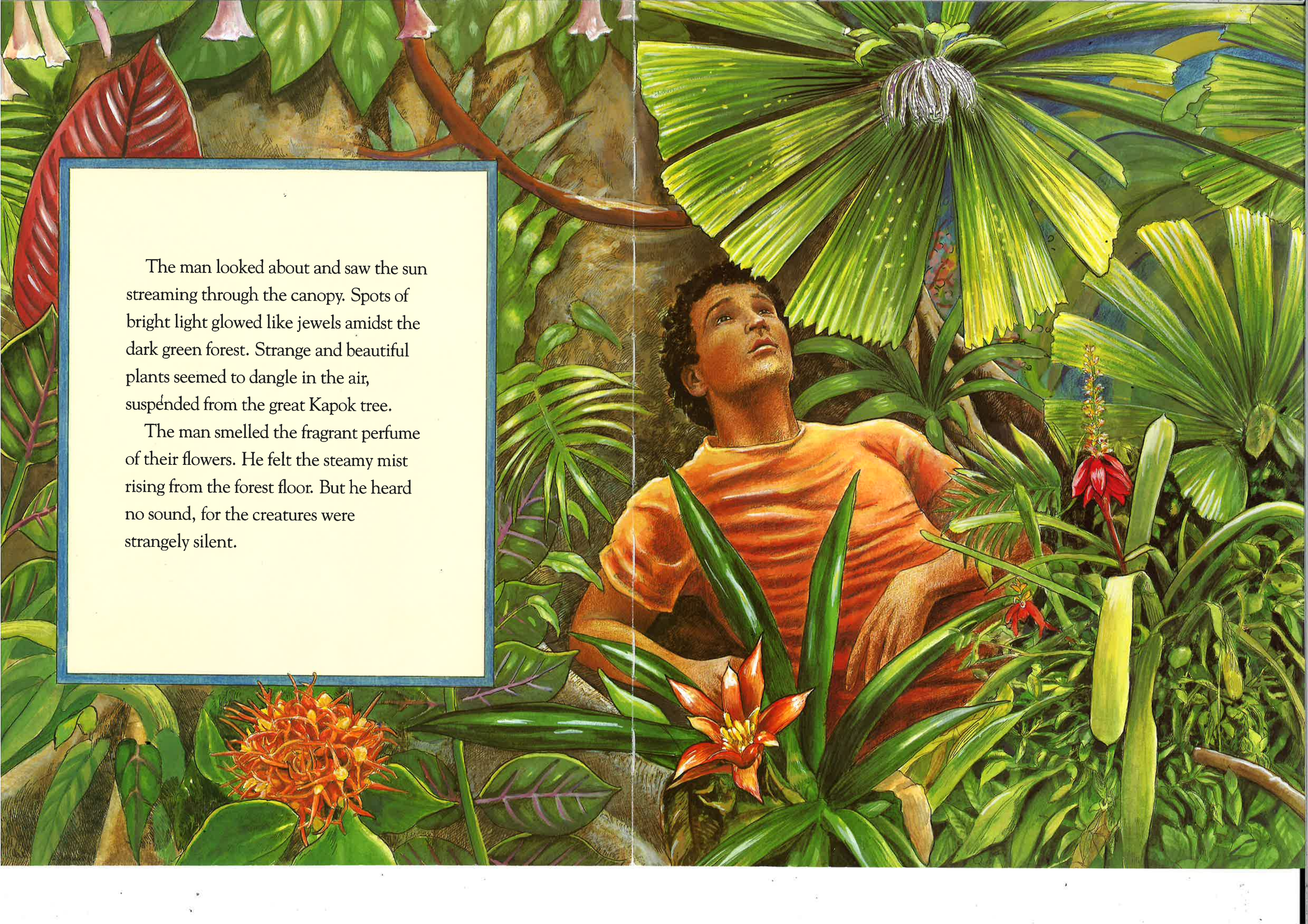
A three-toed sloth had begun climbing down from the canopy when the men first appeared. Only now did she reach the ground. Plodding ever so slowly over to the sleeping man, she spoke in her deep and lazy voice: "Senhor, how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the rain forest, on what would you feast your eyes?"



A child from the Yanomamo tribe who lived in the rain forest knelt over the sleeping man. He murmured in his ear: "Senhor, when you awake, please look upon us all with new eyes."

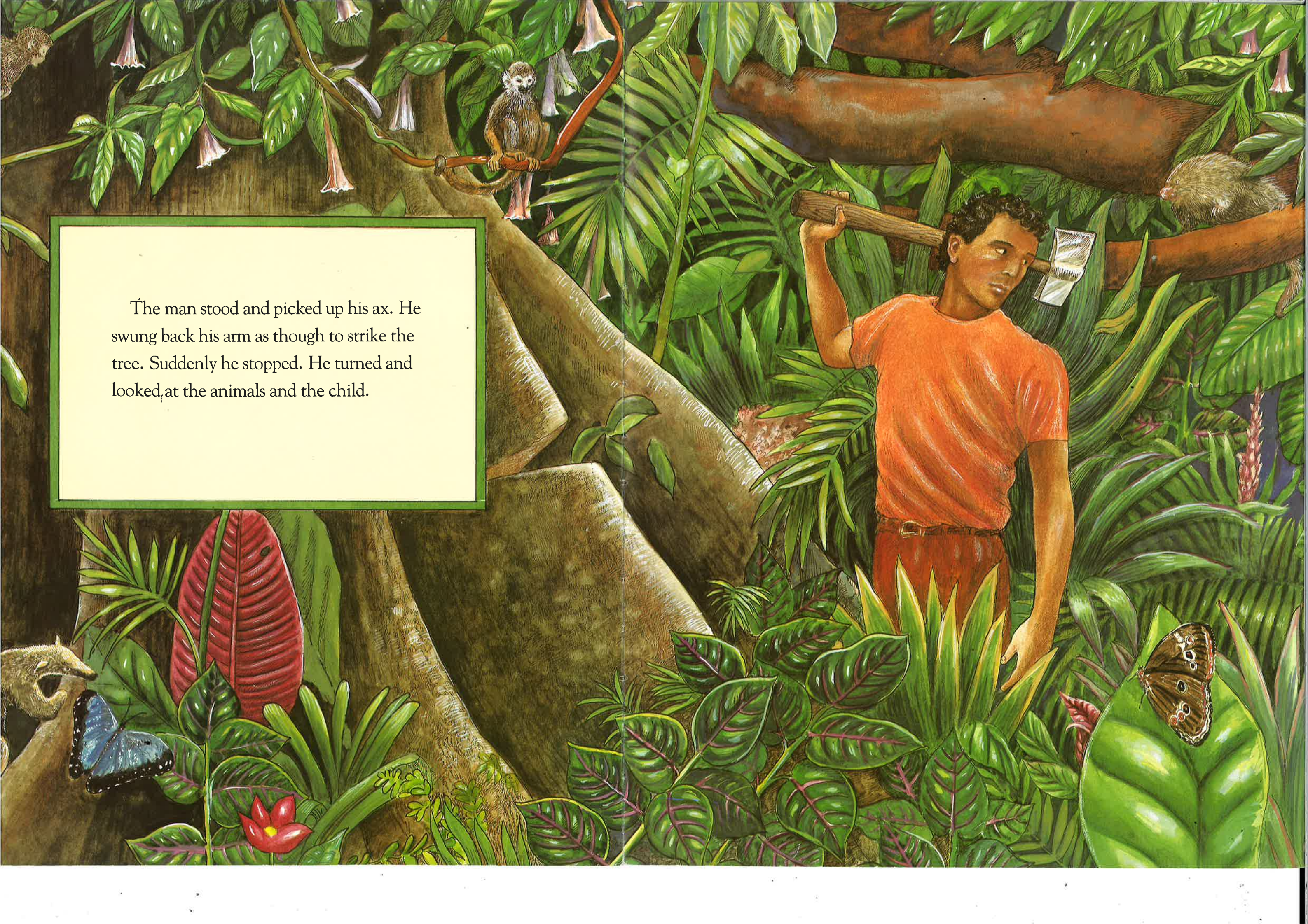
The man awoke with a start. Before him stood the rain forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great Kapok tree. What wondrous and rare animals they were!



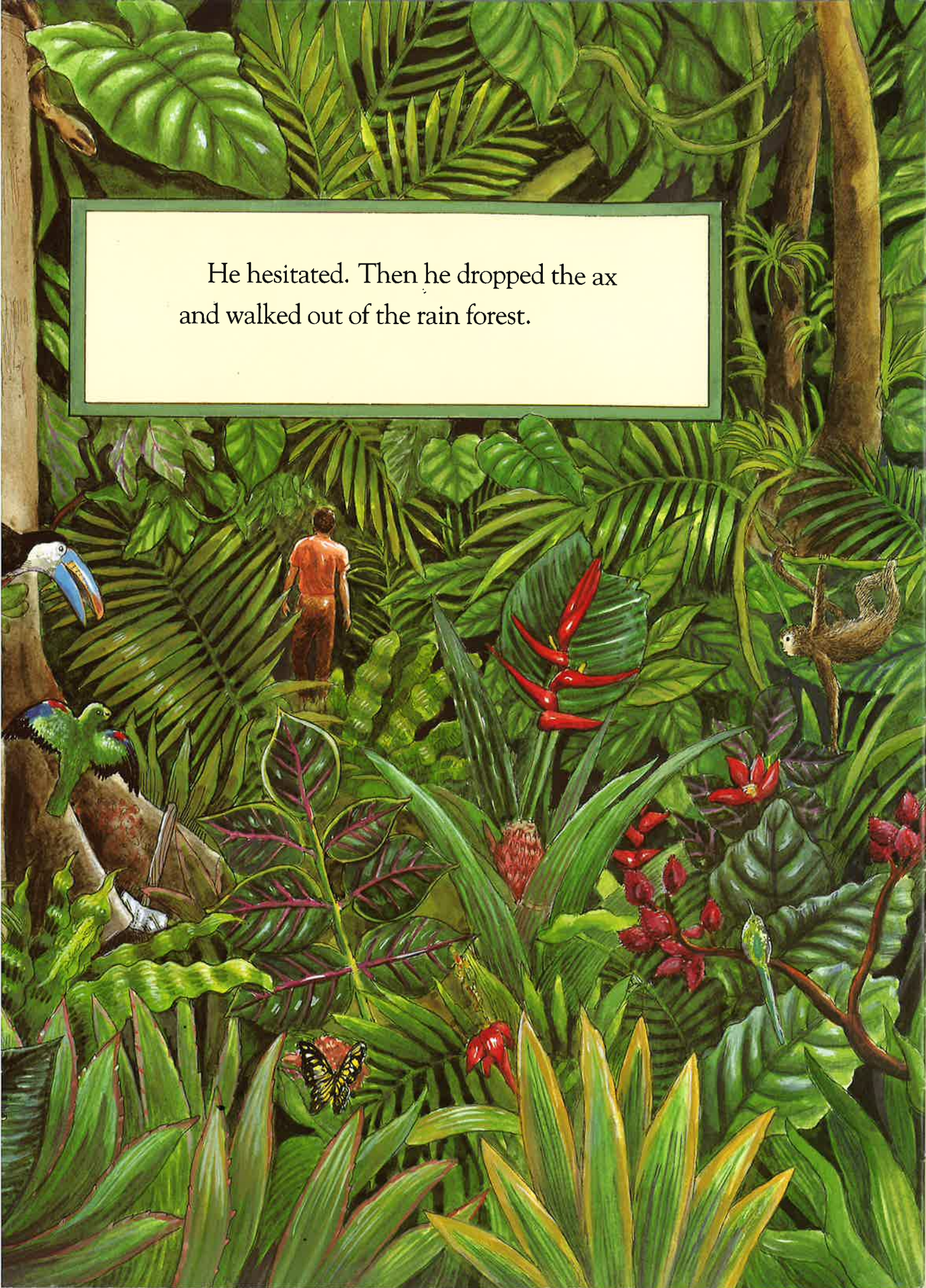
A full-page illustration of a man with dark, curly hair and a bright orange t-shirt, looking upwards with a sense of wonder. He is surrounded by dense, vibrant tropical foliage. Large, fan-shaped palm leaves are prominent above him, and various other plants with broad green leaves and colorful flowers (including a large red flower and a cluster of orange flowers) are visible in the foreground and background. The scene is set in a lush, sun-dappled jungle.

The man looked about and saw the sun streaming through the canopy. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. Strange and beautiful plants seemed to dangle in the air, suspended from the great Kapok tree.

The man smelled the fragrant perfume of their flowers. He felt the steamy mist rising from the forest floor. But he heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent.

A detailed illustration of a man in a red shirt and pants standing in a lush jungle. He is holding an ax over his shoulder and looking back over his shoulder. The jungle is filled with various plants, including large green leaves, pink flowers, and a red flower. A small monkey is perched on a branch above him, and a sloth is visible on a branch to the right. A blue butterfly is on the left, and a brown butterfly is on the right. A text box is on the left side of the image.

The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child.



He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax  
and walked out of the rain forest.

DEAR READERS,

I WROTE THE GREAT KAPOK TREE  
TO LET THE WORLD KNOW WHAT  
HAPPENS TO THE RAIN FOREST  
CREATURES AND TO THE ENTIRE  
PLANET WHEN RAIN FORESTS ARE  
DESTROYED.

I HOPE THAT AFTER READING  
THIS BOOK YOU WILL HELP SAVE  
THE RAIN FORESTS. THE GREAT KAPOK TREE  
IS ABOUT THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST -  
A TROPICAL RAIN FOREST - BUT WE HAVE  
A TEMPERATE RAIN FOREST IN THE  
PACIFIC NORTHWEST OF THE UNITED  
STATES THAT WE MUST PROTECT, TOO.

PLEASE CARE FOR MOTHER EARTH. TOGETHER  
WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

*Lynne Cherry*



ARCTIC OCEAN

GREENLAND

EUROPE

AFRICA

Equator

ASIA

Japan

PACIFIC OCEAN

India

Indochina

Philippines

Malaysia

Indonesia

New Guinea

INDIAN OCEAN

AUSTRALIA

ANTARCTICA

NORTH AMERICA

SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST

Rio Negro  
Manaus  
Amazon River

- today's rain forests
- original extent of rain forests

# Tropical Rain Forests of the World

EMERGENTS

Emergents

Canopy

Middle Layer

Shrub Layer

Herb Layer

UNDERSTORY

silky anteater

mustache tam

wood monkey

iguana

passion-fl butterfly

Siproeta stelenor

kinkajou

violet fly

Papilio and butterfly

Hamadryas arinome

butterfly

red-legged creeper

ocelot

blue morpho butterfly

parakeet

chestnut-capped puffbird

poison arrow frog

Amazonian katydid

baby hoatzin

Vindula arsinoe butterfly

mother & baby giant anteater

In the Amazon rain forest, a man is chopping down a great  
Kapok tree. Exhausted from his labors, he puts down his ax and rests.  
As he sleeps, the animals who live in the tree plead with  
him not to destroy their world.



"Exceptionally colorful, bright and full of life . . . [This] book effectively makes specific the larger story of endangered rain forests by taking the problem one creature at a time."—*People Magazine*

"In full-page, vibrantly colored paintings, Cherry meticulously details the balance of nature within a Brazilian rain forest."—*The Boston Sunday Globe*

"Cherry's rich colored-pencil and watercolor drawings fairly buzz with life. She totally engages readers' attention and senses through vivid detail, dramatic perspective, and lifelike accuracy. The flora and fauna of the lush, steamy Brazilian rain forest seem to grow before readers' eyes. . . . Spectacular."—*School Library Journal*

A Reading Rainbow Review Book

An ABA's Pick of the Lists

An IRA Teachers' Choice

An NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book for Children

A Charlotte Award Winner

A Publishers Weekly Children's Bestseller

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