


THE GIRL WHO STOLE *an* ELEPHANT



Chapter Twenty-One

“Let’s get out of here,” said Chaya.

Neel looked up to get his bearings, but the leaves above them were spread thickly and the gnarled trunks of the trees scuffed with each other for room in the damp, knee-high undergrowth. The smell of decaying leaves filled the air.

“Wouldn’t it be safer to stay here a while?” said Nour, coming up behind them. “Not that I like it here. It gives me the shivers. But until we’re sure they’re gone.”

“No,” said Neel. “We must leave.”

Chaya followed Nour and Neel as they squished past a trunk furred with caterpillars towards sparser forest.

Nour yelped and jerked to a stop, making Chaya bump into her.

From the edge of a brook up ahead a leopard stared at them, disturbed while lapping water.

Chaya clamped her hand over Nour’s mouth. She held on tightly as Nour struggled to run.

Neel held up his hand. “Keep still. Don’t startle it.”

The leopard stared keenly at them, its rusty-yellow spotted body reflected in the water.

Chaya took a deep breath to calm herself. She needn’t be afraid – man-eaters were rare, despite what she’d told Nour.

Neel took gentle steps forward. He waved a finger over his shoulder for them to follow. Chaya let go of Nour and gave her a light prod. Nour moved forward, whimpering under her breath. Neel took a curving path, staying well out of the way of the leopard.

It turned its head, watching their progress.

Chaya took the shallowest of breaths, making herself as quiet as possible. As long as they didn’t make any sudden movements they’d be fine. *Make yourself big, never cower down*, Father had said.



Nour stepped on the hem of her skirt and stumbled to the ground.

The leopard growled and stiffened.

Nour scabbled about and sprang up with a yowl.

The leopard made a sudden leap.

Nour screamed.

From **The Girl Who Stole an Elephant** by Nizrana Farook, pp. 132-134

1. Write three **physical** descriptions the author has used to show the jungle to the reader. One has been done for you.

The leaves above them were spread thickly. _____



2. **Sensory** details are an important part of setting, so that readers get to see what some thing might feel, hear or smell like. Write one sensory description *each* used in the pasage.

Smell : _____

Touch : _____

Sound : _____

Make up your own one for taste. For example, is Chaya so tense she bites her lip, drawing the metallic taste of blood?

3. Which two characters seem calmer on seeing the leopard?

_____ and _____

How do you know this?



4. Write two pieces of advice from Chaya's father on what to do if you were to come across a leopard.

5. What do you think happened at the end? Hint: It was nothing bad. The children and the leopard were quite safe after the encounter.

6. Now go back and read the piece again, this time imagining what the leopard was thinking as this happened. Rewrite this piece from the leopard's point of view, and give it the ending you decided above.
