





Room to Read®

Level 3

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In a big field next to the village, the villagers gather for a meeting. “Rats have become a big nuisance for the whole village,” says one of the villagers. “They are spoiling our wheat and stealing our crops.”



Another villager adds, “These rats are chewing holes in our clothes and leaving garbage in our yards.” “What

can we do? What can we do?” they all murmur.



Two young men push through the crowd. “We need to ask Uncle Owl for his help. Only he can save us!”

they say. "He lives far away in the hills beyond the river, but we can find him if you let us." The villagers quickly talk among themselves. "You must go and bring Uncle Owl to our village right away!"

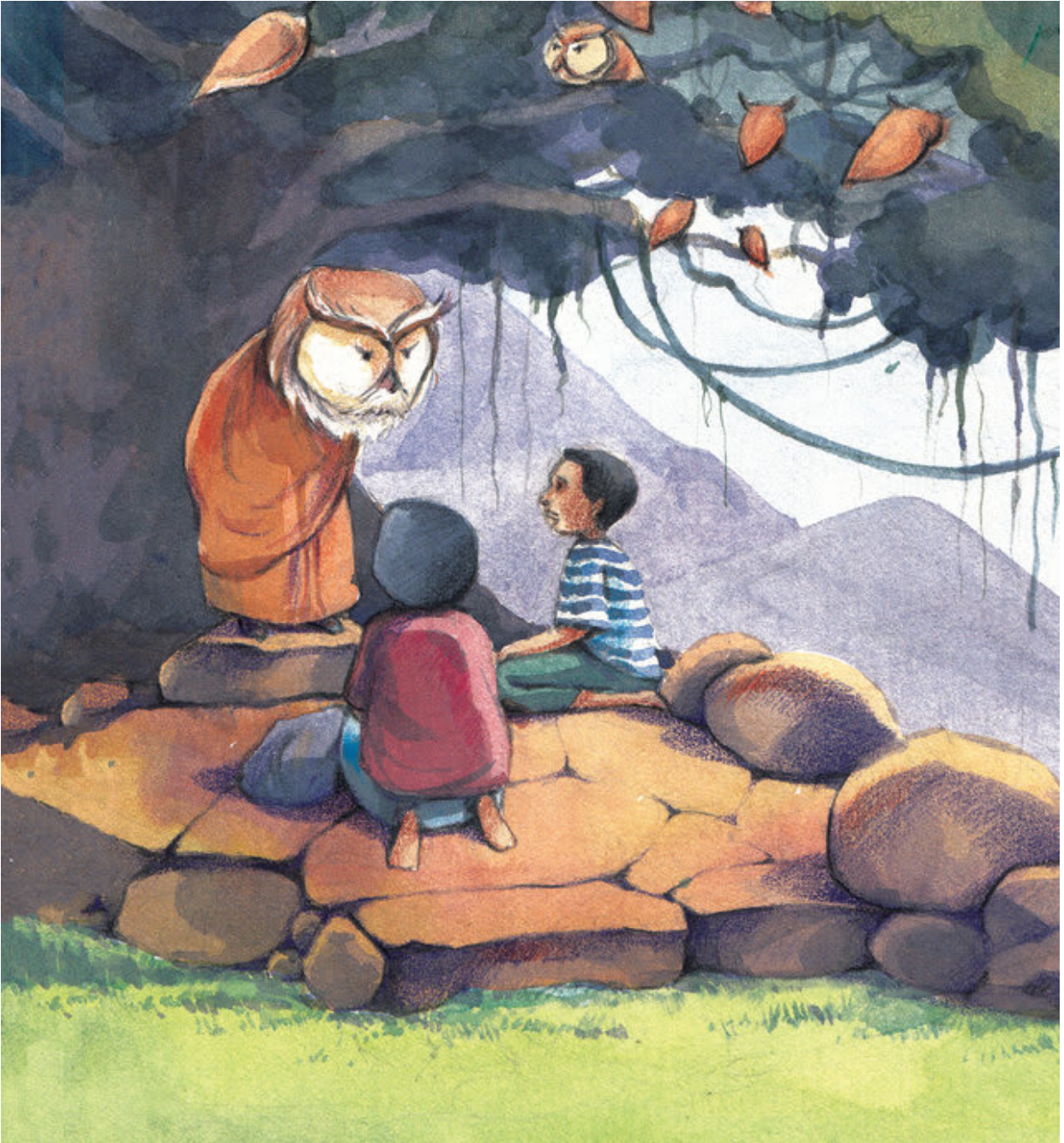


The young men cross the big river
climb up and down many hills.
Finally, they come across a villager.
“Do you know where Uncle Owl
lives?” they ask. The villager tells
them that they must search for a big
banyan tree called the Banyan of
Owls. There, they will find Uncle
Owl.



After many hours, the two men find an old man sitting under a huge banyan tree. There are owls sitting on

the branches all around him. "This must be Uncle Owl," whisper the men.



The men tell Uncle Owl how their village has been besieged by rats. Uncle Owl listens to them carefully.

Once they finish, he asks them a question. “Do you have a banyan tree in your village?” “Yes!” exclaim the men. “We have one right in the middle of our village.” Uncle Owl promises he will come to their village soon. Relieved, the two men begin their journey back.



HOO HOO HOOOOO! What's that noise? The next evening, the banyan

tree in the middle of the village is full of owls.



The villagers find an old man in a yellow shawl standing under the tree. The villagers gather around him as the

owls hoot loudly from the branches.
"This must be Uncle Owl," they
whisper. "When did Uncle Owl come
to the village? Nobody saw him
coming along the village road." Uncle
Owl raises his hand. The owls and
people fall silent.





Uncle Owl addresses the gathering. “Tonight, all the rats will disappear from this village. But remember, everyone must stay inside their homes. If anyone steps out,” he warns the villagers, “they will be in great danger.” As the night spreads itself

across the sky, two young men are too curious to stay at home. They climb up the branches of a mango tree and wait for darkness to come.



In the dead of night, Uncle Owl hoots loudly. Hundreds of owls fly from the banyan tree filling the night sky with the rush of their wings.



At the end of the night, the owls return to the banyan tree, each with a rat clutched between its claws. Uncle Owl's orange shawl has dropped to the ground and Uncle Owl stands beneath the tree. His body is covered with bird's feathers. His legs look like

a bird's, and head like an owl's. He has two big wings instead of hands. 'OO HOO HOOOO,' he calls to the owls.



The owls drop their rats on the orange shawl. As if by magic it folds up and the rats disappear into the soil. Uncle

Owl stretches his wings and flies
silently into the sky.



Suddenly, he dives down at the mango tree where the two young men have been watching him secretly.



The next morning, the villagers are delighted to find that there is not a single rat in the village! But where are

the two young men? The villagers search high and low, but the two men are never to be found again. Some say Uncle Owl turned them into owls and took them with him. What do you think?



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Uncle Owl (English) Rats are everywhere in the village! They are destroying rice paddies, wheat fields and chewing clothes and books to bits. The villagers request Uncle Owl to help them scare off the devilish rats. This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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