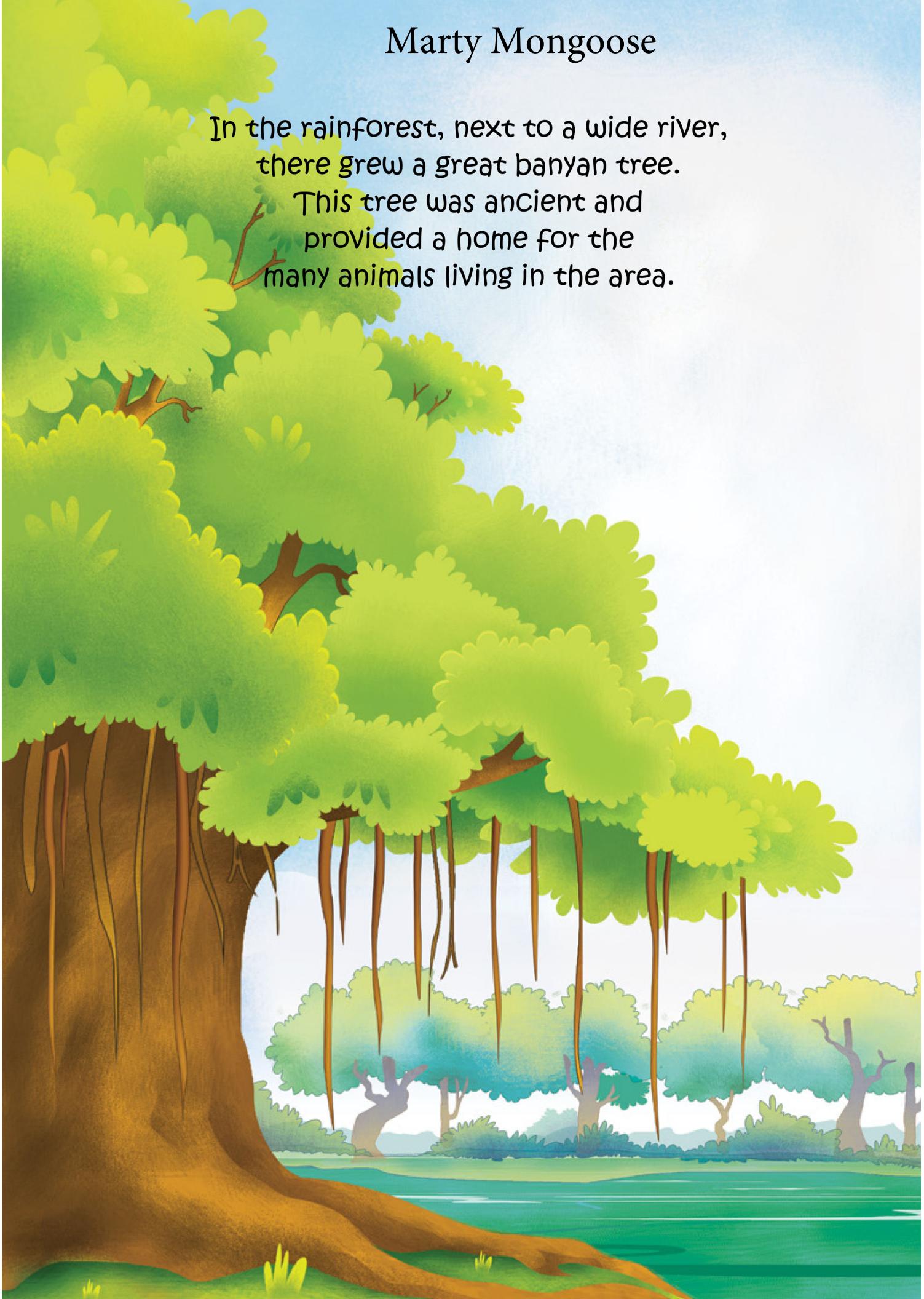


Marty Mongoose

In the rainforest, next to a wide river,
there grew a great banyan tree.

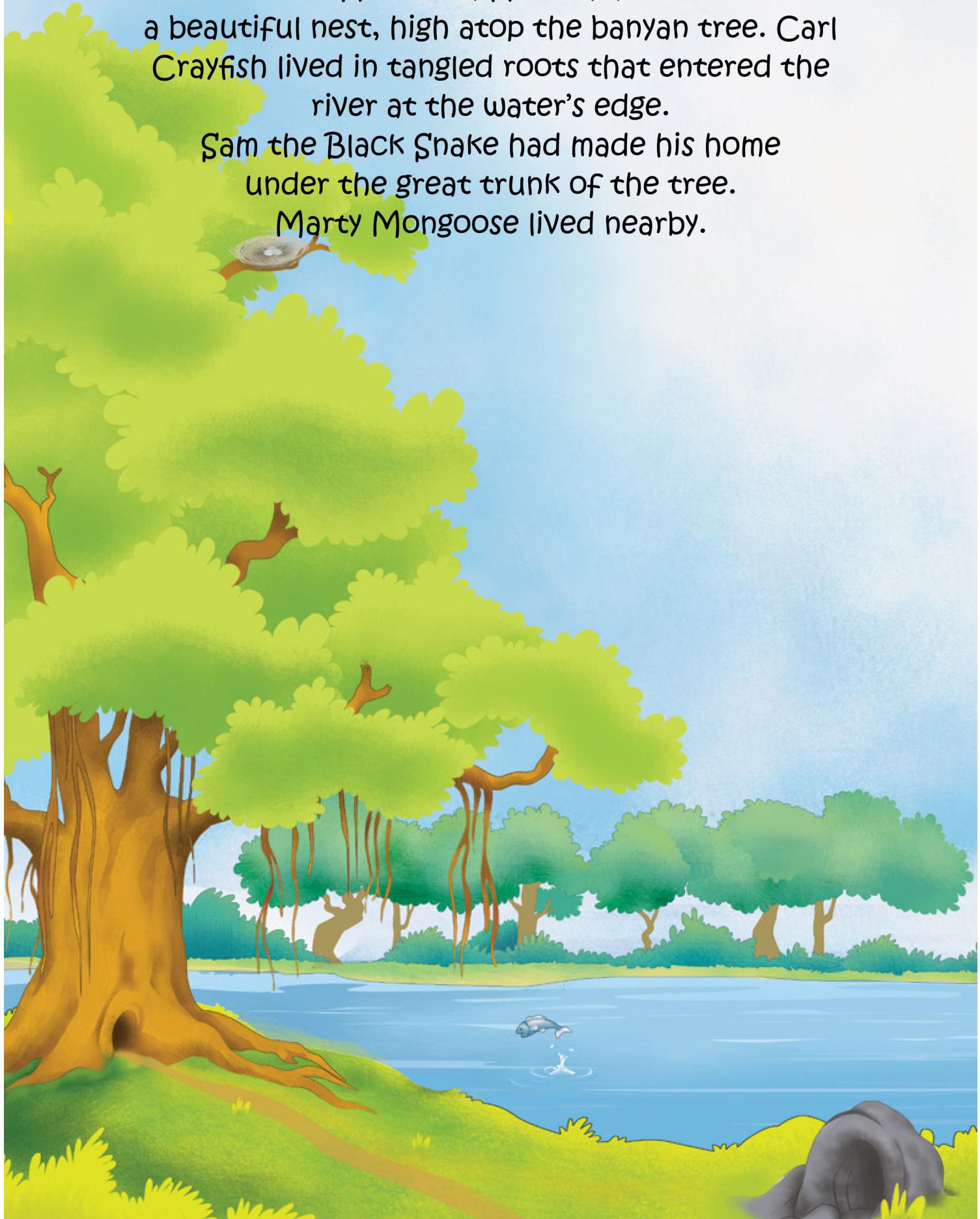
This tree was ancient and
provided a home for the
many animals living in the area.



Henrietta Heron had
a beautiful nest, high atop the banyan tree. Carl
Crayfish lived in tangled roots that entered the
river at the water's edge.

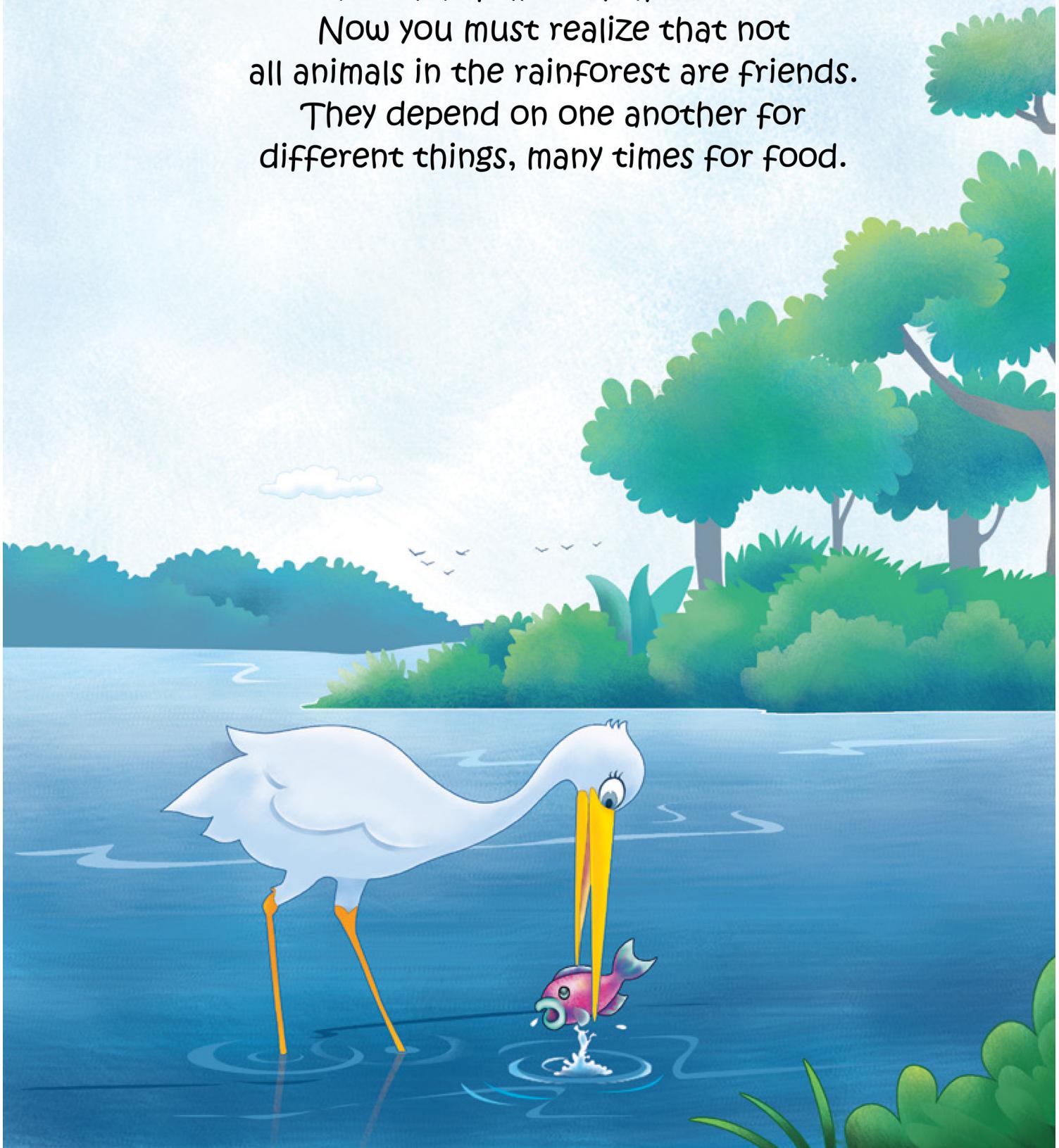
Sam the Black Snake had made his home
under the great trunk of the tree.

Marty Mongoose lived nearby.



His home wasn't actually in the banyan tree but close enough. The tree offered a cooling shade during the hot days and protection from the heavy rains that fell every afternoon.

Now you must realize that not all animals in the rainforest are friends. They depend on one another for different things, many times for food.

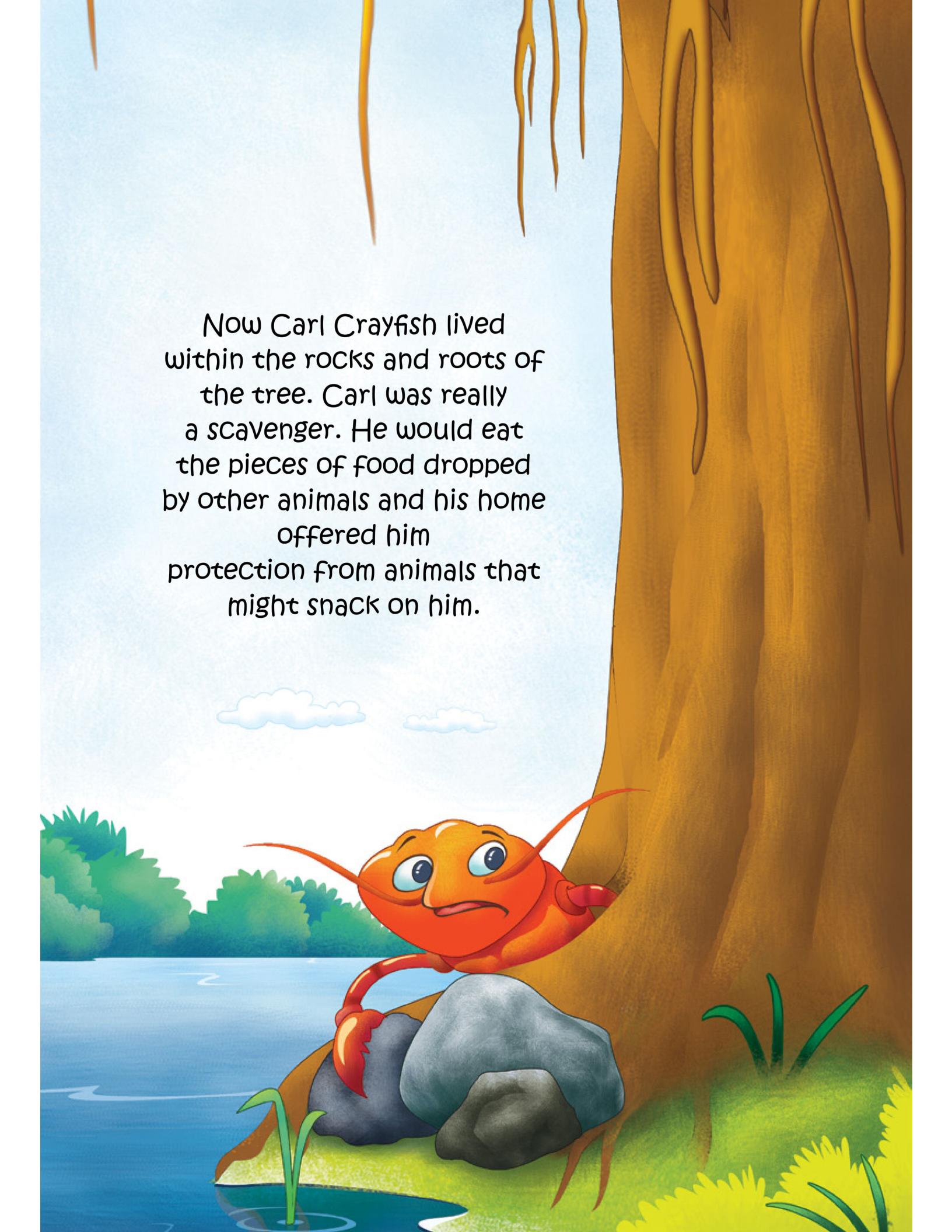


To better understand this, let me explain how Henrietta, Carl, Sam, and Marty live within the great banyan tree.



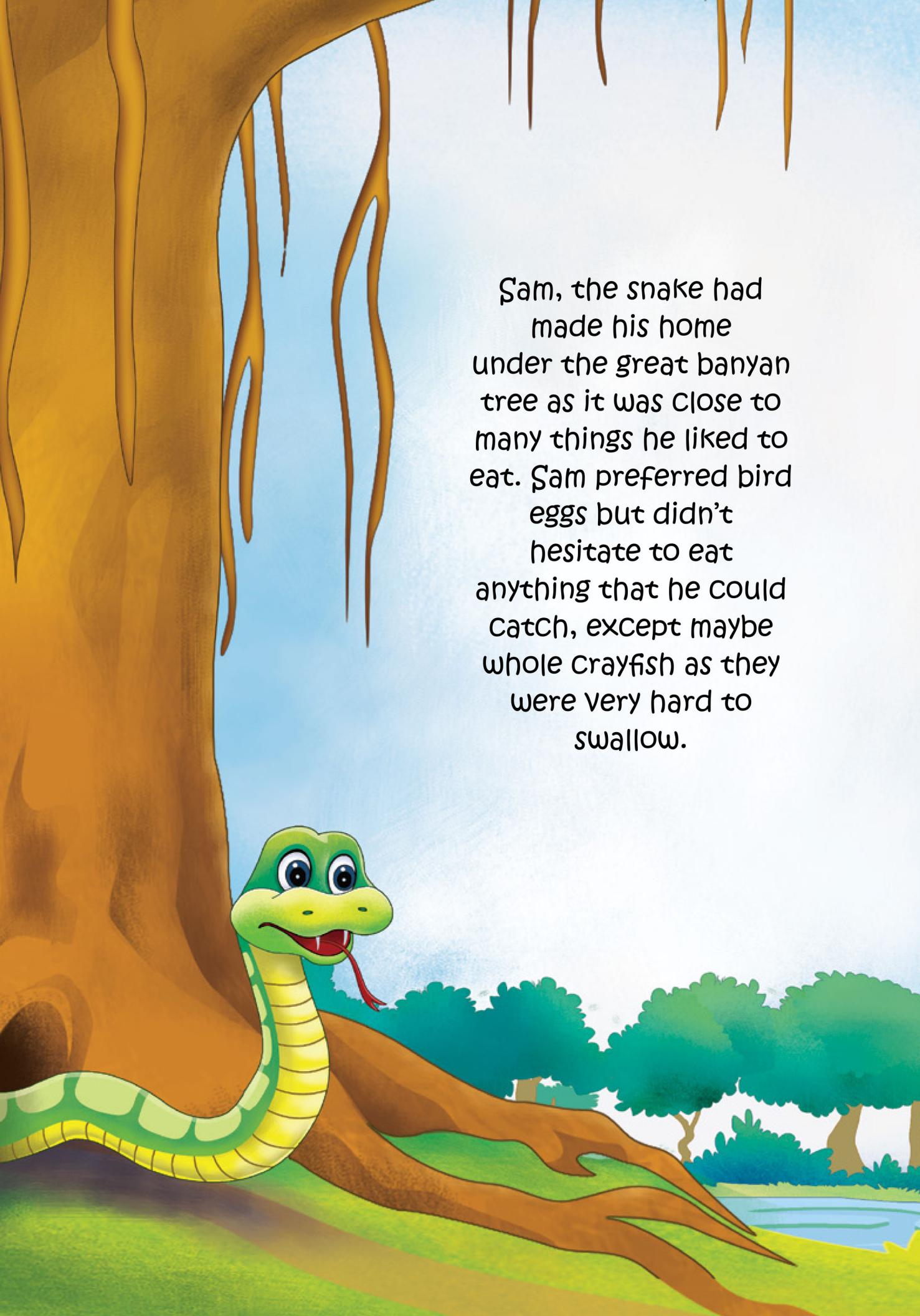
Henrietta Heron had built her nest by the river so she that would be close to the food she usually ate. Her diet consisted of fish, frogs, crayfish, and even snails. She had a great home.





Now Carl Crayfish lived within the rocks and roots of the tree. Carl was really a scavenger. He would eat the pieces of food dropped by other animals and his home offered him protection from animals that might snack on him.





Sam, the snake had made his home under the great banyan tree as it was close to many things he liked to eat. Sam preferred bird eggs but didn't hesitate to eat anything that he could catch, except maybe whole crayfish as they were very hard to swallow.

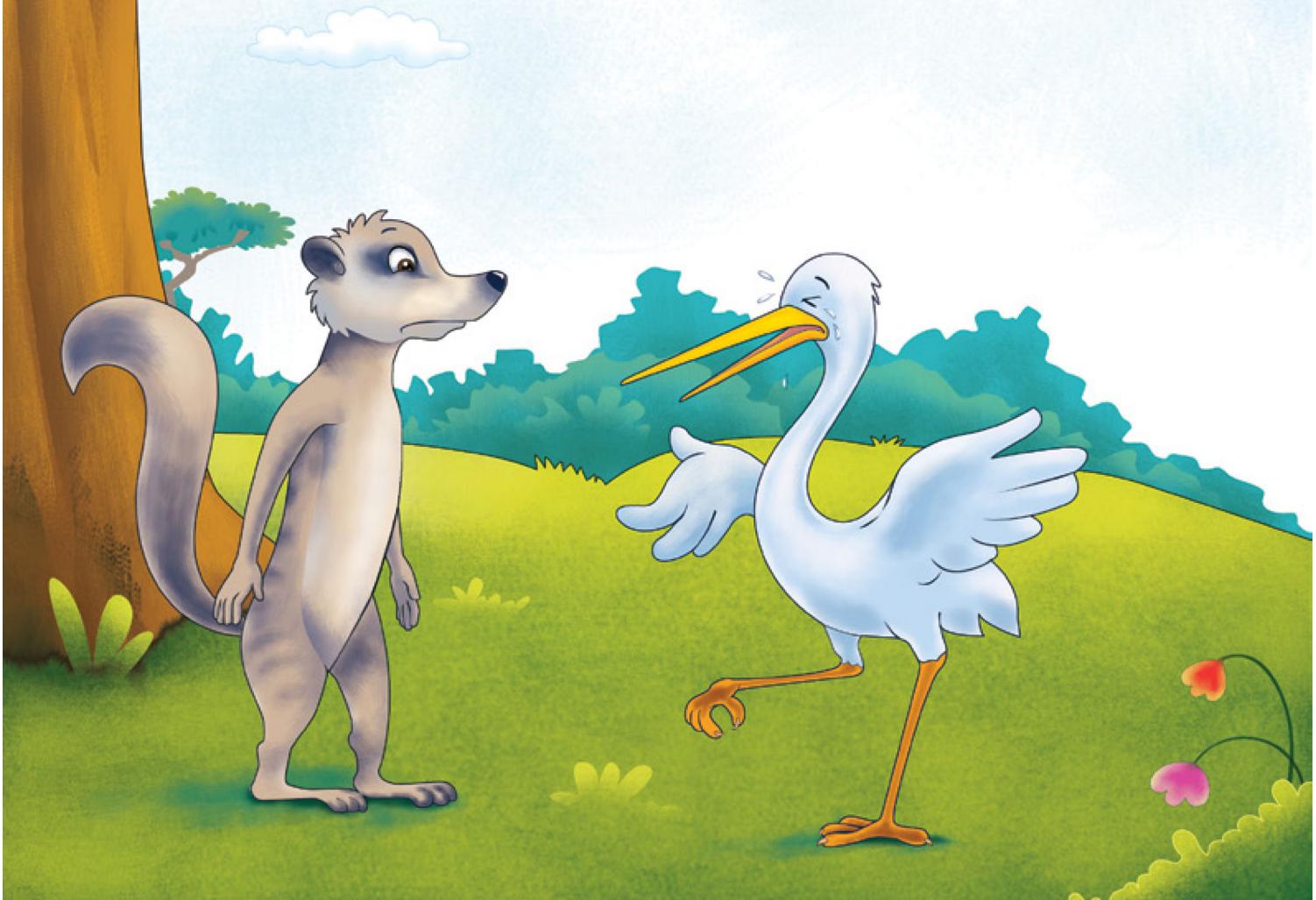
Can you guess what
Marty Mongoose liked to eat?
Well if you said snakes, then
you are absolutely correct.
Marty liked to eat snakes
of all types and sizes.





One day, Henrietta was
out looking for food. When
she returned to her nest,
she found that two of her eggs
were gone. Oh, how sad she was!
Something had gotten into her nest
and eaten two of her precious eggs.

She flew back down to the river so no other birds would see her crying. Then she saw Marty and said to him, "Sam must have slithered into my nest and eaten two of my eggs." "That is a shame," Marty replied in a sad voice. "Oh, what can I do?" Henrietta asked.



Now Marty knew that Henrietta, and the other herons, liked to eat crayfish and, if there were an easy meal to be had, he was very interested. "So, you would like to get rid of that bothersome snake?" he asked Henrietta. "Oh, yes!" Henrietta sighed. "I wish something would eat him."



"Henrietta, I can help you," Marty said excitedly. "You and your heron friends need to catch all the fish and crayfish in the area. Break them into pieces and leave a trail of food from Sam's den to my home. He will be busy eating the food and he will not realize that he is close to me. He will be an easy meal for me and you will be rid of his egg stealing ways."



Henrietta thought for a minute, smiled, and then flew off to talk with the other herons.

Soon the herons had captured all the fish, crayfish (even poor Carl) and made the trail of food between the snake's den and the home of the mongoose. Then they returned to their nests to watch.





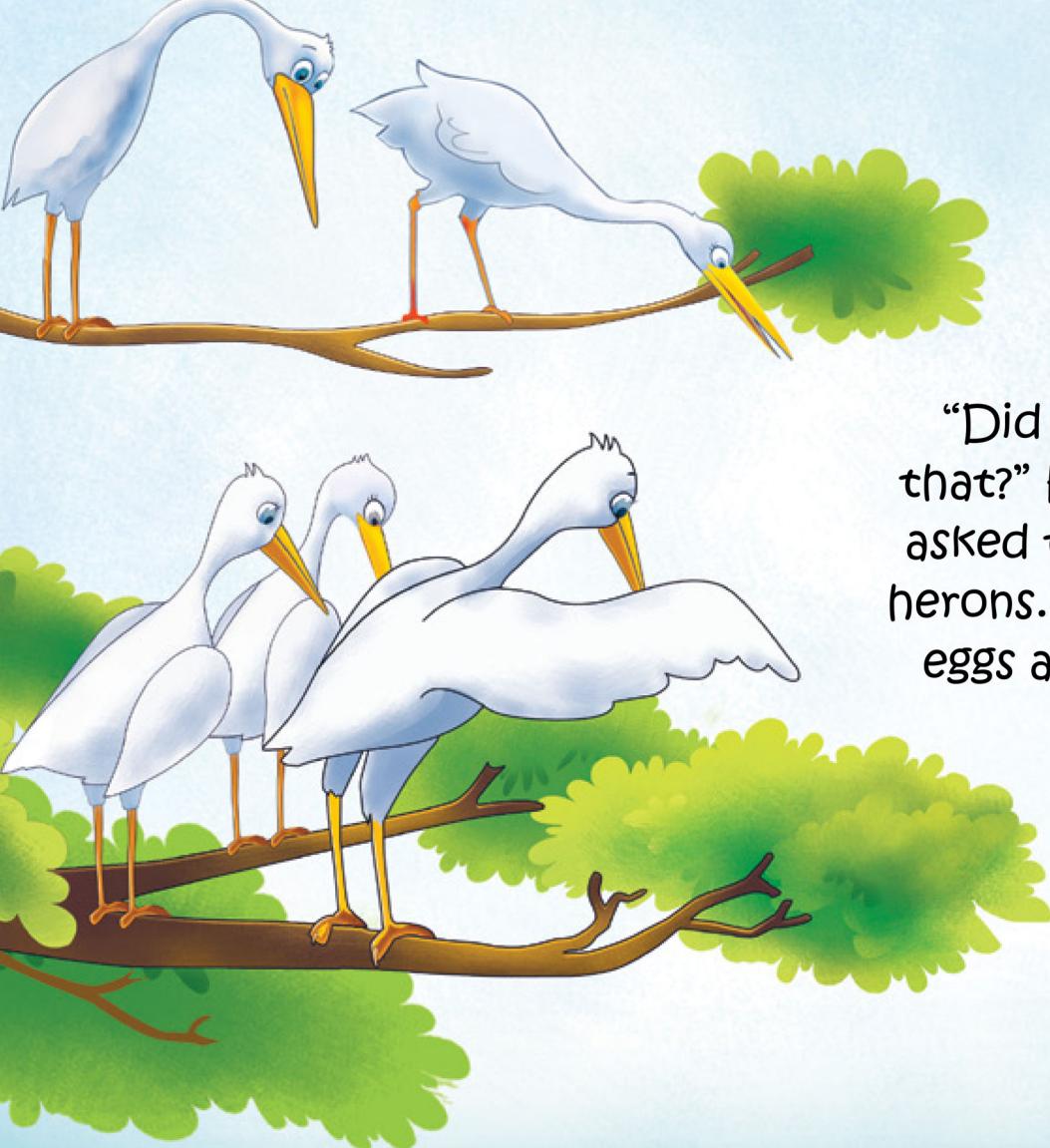
As Sam slithered out of
his den, he was
surprised to see all the
fresh snacks just lying on
the ground.

“Yummy! Yummy!” he
thought to himself as he
began eating.

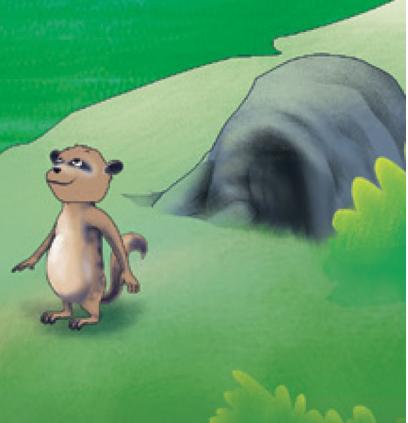


It wasn't long before Sam had eaten his way to Marty's home. As Sam opened his mouth to eat the last snack, Marty jumped out of from the bushes. Well, I don't have to tell you what happened because you already know. But in case you don't, there was a big B-U-R-P and Marty returned home.





"Did you see
that?" Henrietta
asked the other
herons. "Now our
eggs are safe."





Several days passed. Marty was hungry but there were no snakes in the area. The other snakes saw how Sam had been tricked, so they left to find a safer home. Marty looked into the river and realized that the herons had taken everything from it to set the trap. Then, he looked into the great banyan tree and saw Henrietta.



The other herons saw Marty climbing
the tree but it was too late
to warn Henrietta.

All they could do was leave their nests
and, like the snakes, find a safer home.





Now Marty was alone. There was no food in the area, and no reason for him to stay in his nice home, protected by the great banyan tree.

The great banyan tree is now empty
of all life. But there is a circle-of-
life in the rainforest and it won't be
long before new animals arrive at
the banyan tree, and
call it "home".

