

# A PANGOLIN'S STORY



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**A ROCHA**  
GHANA




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In a lush tropical forest, amidst the chirps of exotic birds and the rustle of leaves, Mekplu scampered through the undergrowth. She was returning from a stroll with her mother. Mekplu was a curious baby pangolin.



Mekplu saw her wise grandfather from a distance. Quickly, she leaped off her mother's back and bounded into a burrow. She was excited to share a moment with him.


"Grandpa, Grandpa!" exclaimed Mekplu, rushing towards him.

"Oh, Mekplu. You are back," replied Grandpa with a gentle smile at the pangopup.


"Grandpa, Mama told me a scary story about you being stolen by some men. I got so scared. Can you tell me everything? What are men? Why did they steal you? How did you escape? Did they feed you? How did you come back home? I want to know everything, Grandpa," pleaded Mekplu. Her eyes were wide with curiosity and concern.

"Let's go into my burrow, I'll tell you the story."

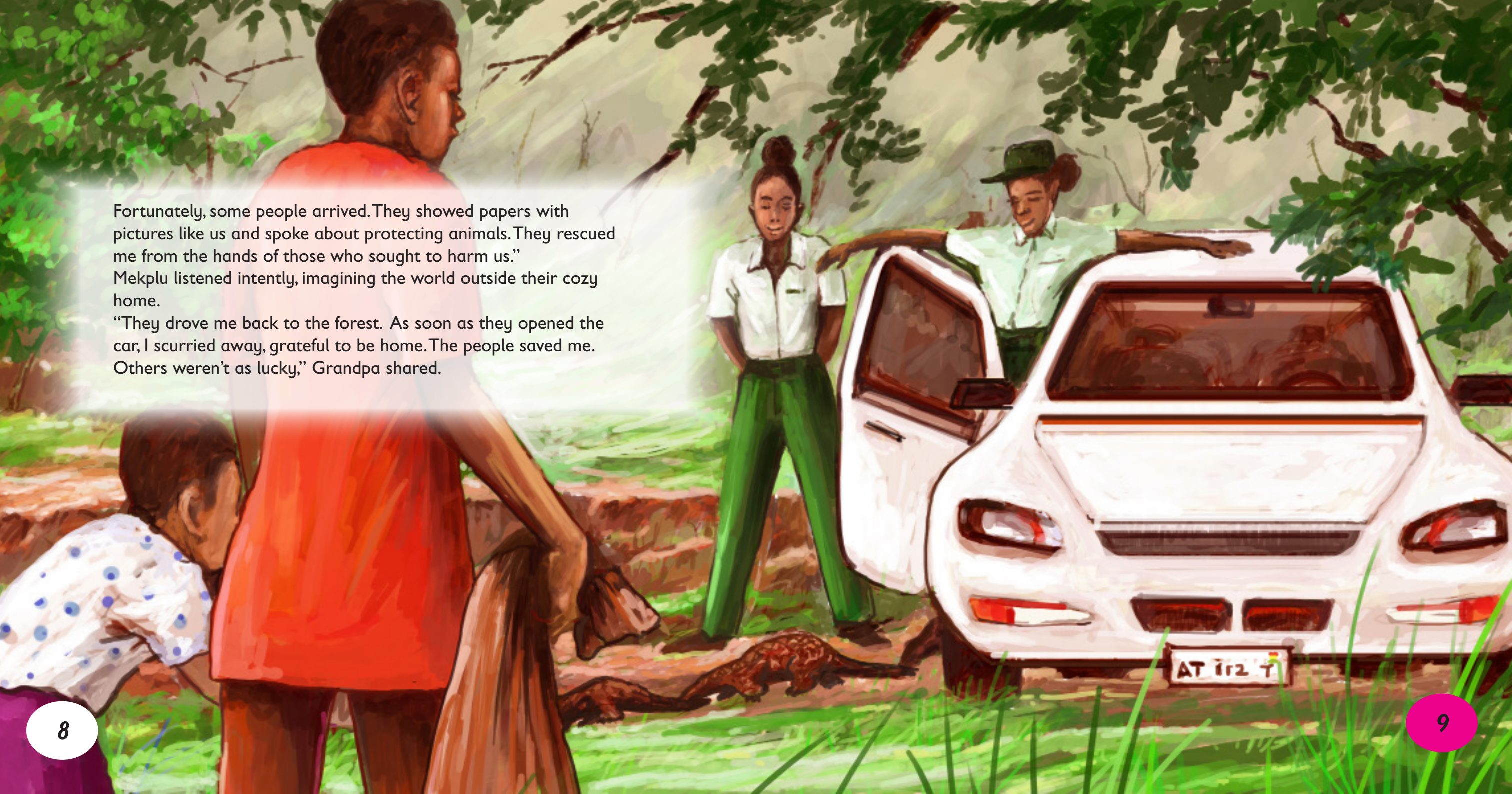
Mekplu nestled close to her grandfather, eager to hear the tale.

An illustration of a lizard with brown and tan scales, shown in a defensive posture with its mouth wide open and its body curled. The background is a textured, reddish-brown surface.


Grandpa began: “One evening, as I was looking for termites to eat, I suddenly heard strange voices. Frightened, I curled up into a tight ball.”  
Mekplu’s eyes widened with alarm. “Like this, Grandpa?” she asked, mimicking the defensive posture.  
“Yes, exactly like that!” Grandpa affirmed with a nod. “The voices drew nearer, and before I knew it, men approached.”



I was scooped up and placed into a bag. They carried me away from our forest home.  
“Grandpa, that’s so scary!” interrupted Mekplu. She curled up.  
Grandpa chuckled, “It’s a good trick to protect ourselves. Just like that! Strong scales make it hard for big animals to harm us.”  
Mekplu was encouraged. She uncurled herself and said, “I’ll remember that, Grandpa!”  
Grandpa continued, “I stayed in that bag for a long time. I was scared and hungry. Then, they took me to the roadside.



Fortunately, some people arrived. They showed papers with pictures like us and spoke about protecting animals. They rescued me from the hands of those who sought to harm us.” Mekplu listened intently, imagining the world outside their cozy home. “They drove me back to the forest. As soon as they opened the car, I scurried away, grateful to be home. The people saved me. Others weren’t as lucky,” Grandpa shared.



“Are we bad animals, Grandpa?”

“No, we are not, my child,” said Grandpa.

“Then why did those men take you?” Mekplu asked with a confused frown on her face.

“Follow me, let me show you something.”

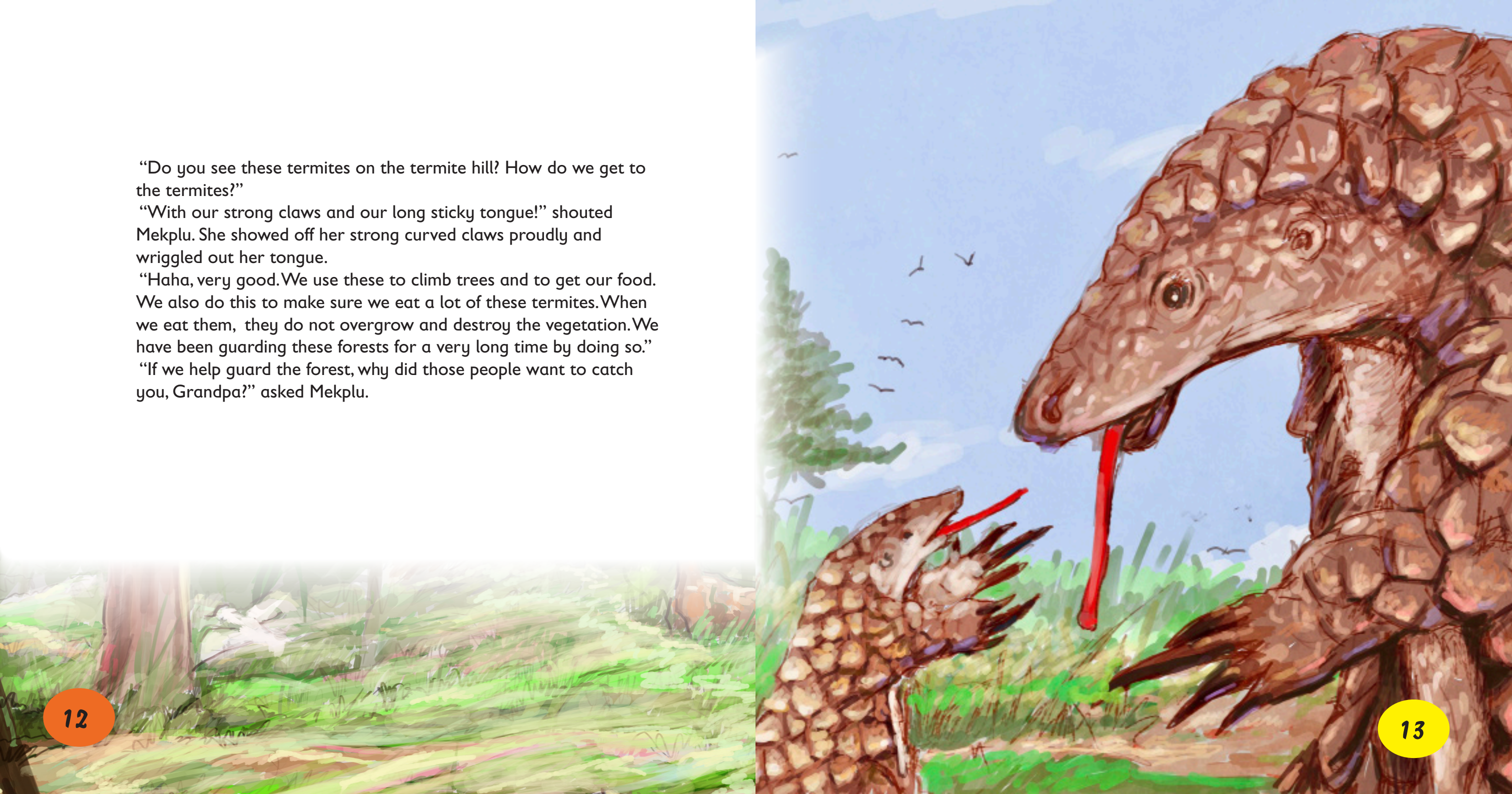
Mekplu followed her grandpa out of the burrow. She was led towards a patch in the forest. There stood a giant termite hill that had termites all over.

“Do you see these termites on the termite hill? How do we get to the termites?”


“With our strong claws and our long sticky tongue!” shouted Mekplu. She showed off her strong curved claws proudly and wriggled out her tongue.

“Haha, very good. We use these to climb trees and to get our food. We also do this to make sure we eat a lot of these termites. When we eat them, they do not overgrow and destroy the vegetation. We have been guarding these forests for a very long time by doing so.”

“If we help guard the forest, why did those people want to catch you, Grandpa?” asked Mekplu.







“It’s been said that some humans believe our scales have magical powers and can be used for strange things. Some even see our body as food and eat us.”

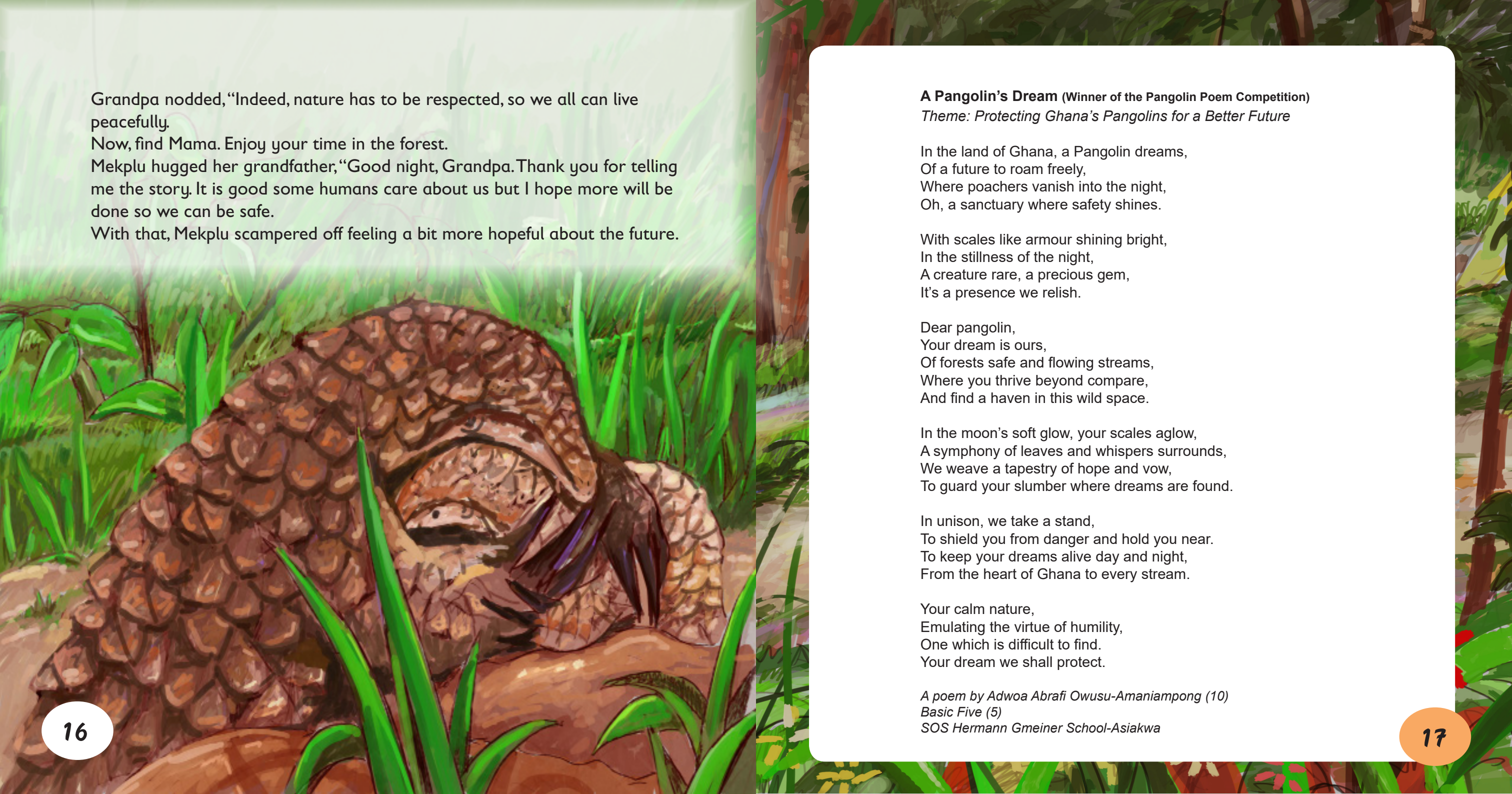
“Oh, that’s silly Grandpa, our scales don’t have magic and we aren’t food!” cried Mekplu, looking back at her brown scales and body.

“Yes, people have strange ideas about us. We are not magic or food. However, there are those who know this is not true and work hard to protect our kind - just like those who rescued me. Because of that, we are protected much better.”

“That means they need to continue teaching others that we are not magic or food for humans. They should tell them we are guardians of the forests. Then, they will continue to see how important we are, right, Grandpa?”

“That’s right Mekplu. There is still much work to be done to protect our kind. We can then feel a lot safer and continue to guard our wonderful forests.”

Mekplu sighed in relief. “I’m so glad that this is happening, Grandpa. I don’t need to be scared now!”

A detailed illustration of a pangolin in its natural habitat. The pangolin is curled up on the ground, its body covered in brown, overlapping scales. It is surrounded by lush green grass and foliage. The background shows a dense forest with tall trees and dappled sunlight filtering through the canopy.

Grandpa nodded, “Indeed, nature has to be respected, so we all can live peacefully.

Now, find Mama. Enjoy your time in the forest.

Mekplu hugged her grandfather, “Good night, Grandpa. Thank you for telling me the story. It is good some humans care about us but I hope more will be done so we can be safe.

With that, Mekplu scampered off feeling a bit more hopeful about the future.

**A Pangolin’s Dream** (Winner of the Pangolin Poem Competition)

*Theme: Protecting Ghana’s Pangolins for a Better Future*

In the land of Ghana, a Pangolin dreams,  
Of a future to roam freely,  
Where poachers vanish into the night,  
Oh, a sanctuary where safety shines.

With scales like armour shining bright,  
In the stillness of the night,  
A creature rare, a precious gem,  
It’s a presence we relish.

Dear pangolin,  
Your dream is ours,  
Of forests safe and flowing streams,  
Where you thrive beyond compare,  
And find a haven in this wild space.

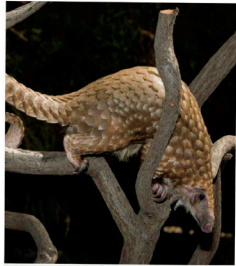
In the moon’s soft glow, your scales aglow,  
A symphony of leaves and whispers surrounds,  
We weave a tapestry of hope and vow,  
To guard your slumber where dreams are found.

In unison, we take a stand,  
To shield you from danger and hold you near.  
To keep your dreams alive day and night,  
From the heart of Ghana to every stream.

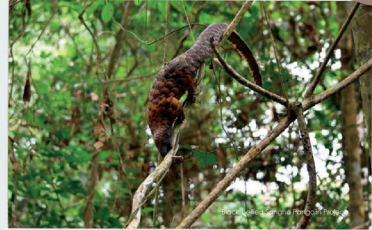
Your calm nature,  
Emulating the virtue of humility,  
One which is difficult to find.  
Your dream we shall protect.

*A poem by Adwoa Abrafi Owusu-Amaniampong (10)  
Basic Five (5)  
SOS Hermann Gmeiner School-Asiakwa*

## FUN FACTS ABOUT PANGOLINS



White-bellied Pangolin



Black-Bellied Pangolin



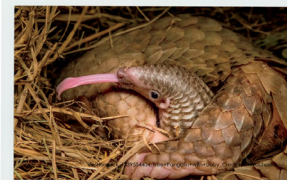
Pangolins rolled up



Pangolin scales



Giant ground Pangolin



Pangopup

- There are eight different types of Pangolins. 3 types can be found in Ghana (White-bellied, Black-bellied, and the Giant ground Pangolin).
- Pangolins are commonly called "Aprawa" or "Apraa" in Ghana.
- Pangolins are the only mammals with scales over its body.
- Pangolins can eat over 73 million ants and termites a year!
- Pangolins mostly give birth to one offspring a year, making them vulnerable.
- When Pangolins are scared, they curl up into a tight ball.
- Pangolins are protected by law. It is illegal to hunt, trade, kill or eat them.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Should Pangolins be protected by humans?

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Are Pangolins bad animals?

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Should pangolins be eaten by people?

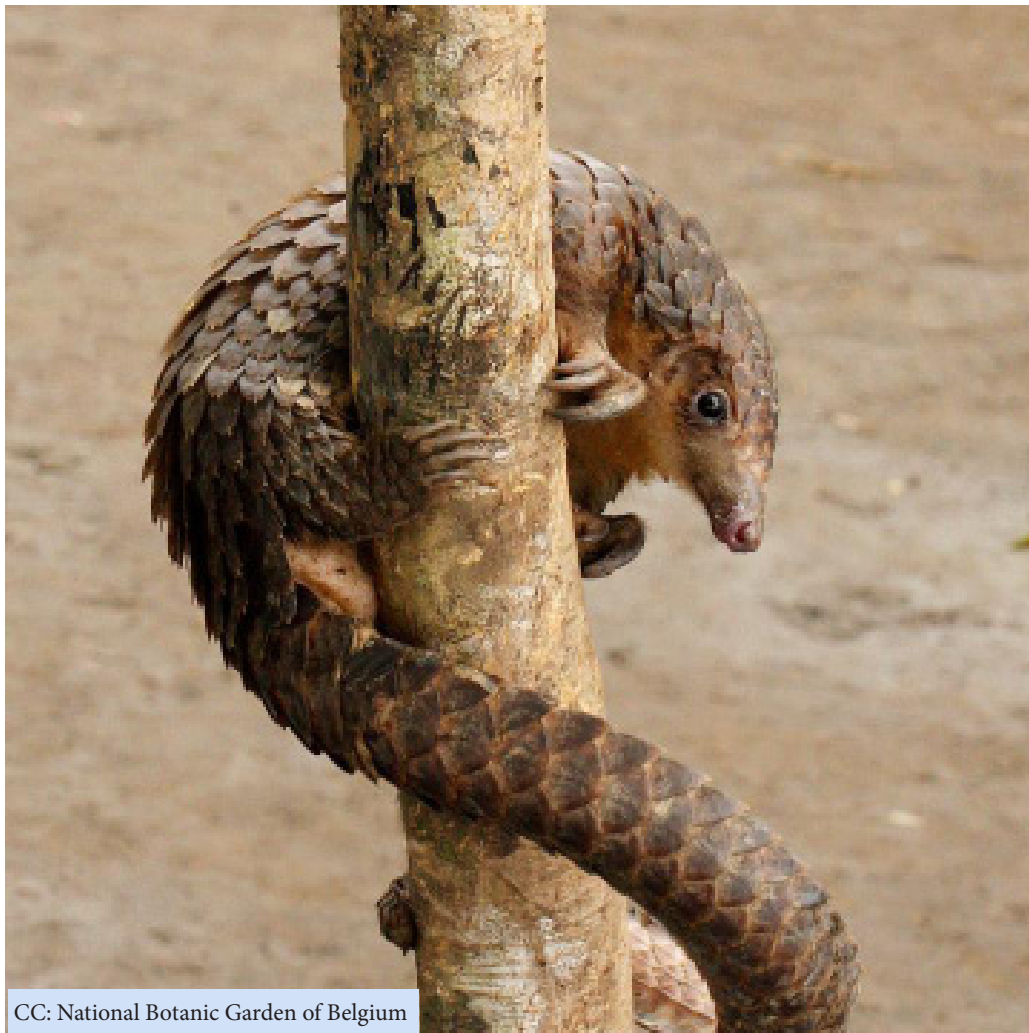
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What will happen to our world if all pangolins die?

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.....

## DRAW MEKPLU

Look closely at the picture of the pangolin below. Think about details such as size, shape and color. Then draw the pangolin inside the frame. Make sure you copy all the details carefully.



CC: National Botanic Garden of Belgium

## PUZZLE

Find these words:

PANGOLIN, PANGOPUP, SCURRY, BURROW, RESCUED, TERMITE,  
TROPICAL, SCAMPERED, UNCURL, EXOTIC, CLAWS, SAFE

B	N	K	R	E	S	C	U	E	D	Z
P	S	C	A	M	P	E	R	E	D	U
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