Has your child ever wondered about the different animals all over the world?

If your child loves adventure and learning about animals, this is the perfect book for you. It contains a collection of adventurous stories and heartwarming characters that your child will surely fall in love with.

These stories follow the lives of KJ and Cole, two koalas who lose their home as the result of a bushfire. Instead of losing hope, they bravely volunteer to explore the world in search of a new home for themselves and for the rest of the animals in the forest. Apart from adventures, your child will also learn about the different continents and the animals that live there.

Watch your child's eyes light up each time you share these tales before they go to bed. After each chapter, you will be sending your little one off to dreamland with happiness, excitement, and valuable lessons.

Make your child's bedtime more enjoyable with this collection of feel-good stories. Your child will surely thank you for it!
Children’s Meditation Bedtime Stories: Around the World With KJ the Koala

The Ultimate Feel-Good Bumper Short Story Collection About Friendship, Happiness, Gratitude, and Mindfulness

Codi Allan
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Introduction: Animals Around the World

For parents...

Welcome to the wonderful and interesting world of KJ the Koala. This collection of short stories is sure to enchant your child as they learn all about the different continents of the world. In each continent, your child will discover new animals who will help KJ find what she is looking for.

What is she looking for, exactly?

You have to read on to find out. Each story has a heartwarming plot that will entertain your child and send them off to bed with thoughts of adventure and happiness. Make your child's bedtime routine more enjoyable by sharing these stories with them every night. You'll surely love these stories too as they will awaken your child's imagination and love of learning.
Chapter 1: The Brave Animals of Australia

KJ The Koala and her brother Cole are rescued from a bushfire by Karla the Alligator and Codi the Kangaroo. Once Cole is safe, KJ helps Codi and Karla rescue other animals.

KJ and Cole

KJ is a koala who lives in Australia. She is a cheerful and friendly koala who spends most of her time in the branches of eucalyptus trees with the other koalas in the forest. She loves making friends with all the animals she meets.

Most koalas spend their time eating and sleeping. Unlike other koalas, KJ explores the forest often. This is why she gets to meet other animals like kangaroos, frogs, wallabies, and parrots. One time, she even reached the swamp where she met a very friendly alligator.

Even though KJ has plenty of friends, her favorite animal in the world is her brother, Cole. When Cole was young, a group of humans took their parents away. The other koalas told KJ that humans sometimes took animals from the forest and brought them to a place called a zoo. KJ still hopes that her parents are happy in the zoo.

Whenever Cole asks about them, KJ tells him that they are off on great adventures, and one day, they might meet their mom and dad again. Even though KJ raised Cole on her own, he grew up to be a kind and cheerful koala too. He gets along well with all the other koalas in the forest and sometimes, he joins KJ when she goes exploring.

“You're getting heavy, Cole,” KJ said as her brother climbed off her back and onto a tree branch.

“One day, I might grow bigger than you!” Cole said proudly.

“Then you will be the one to carry me when we go to different places,” KJ said with a smile. This made Cole giggle.

The two koalas just came back from a trip to the fruit bushes. That morning, Cole asked KJ to go there because he wanted to try some blueberries.
When they travel, KJ allows Cole to move from one branch of a tree to another on his own. But when they need to climb down to the ground, KJ carries her little brother on her back. She’s afraid that he might slip and fall.

When Cole was small, it was very easy for KJ to carry him on her back. But now, he was almost half her size and he was really heavy! KJ wondered if it was time for her to teach him how to climb down safely.

As if reading her mind, Cole asked, “Will you teach me how to climb down the trees now?”

“How did you know I was thinking about that?” KJ asked in surprise.

“You look really tired, sis,” said the little koala.

“I can still carry you,” said KJ.

Cole hugged his big sister. “I know. But I’m growing up and I want to learn how to climb down the trees. Maybe one day, I can even explore the forest by myself.”


The sun was going down and it was starting to get dark. At night, the eucalyptus grove where all of the koalas lived was very quiet. The two koala siblings went to their tree branches and prepared to sleep.

They heard the other koalas moving around in the trees too. Sometimes, KJ would stay up late and listen to the other koalas sleep. It makes her feel safe. But tonight, she was too tired. She fell asleep as soon as she hugged the trunk of their tree.

KJ woke up a few hours later to the smell of something very strange and it made her sneeze. When she opened her eyes, KJ saw an orange light coming from the other end of the forest. The young koala wondered what was happening.

**A Bushfire!**

When KJ looked around, she could see the other koalas sleeping in the trees. Usually, it was too dark in the forest to see anything. Tonight, the orange-colored light allowed KJ to see the whole eucalyptus grove.

KJ heard someone ask what was going on.
“What's that smell?” asked another koala.

“I think something is wrong,” KJ warned. She reached over to her brother, grabbed his paw, and shook him gently.

“KJ? Is that you? What's going on?” Cole asked as he slowly opened his eyes.

“Something is happening in the forest,” KJ said as she heard the other koalas waking up too.

Suddenly, KJ and the other koalas saw flocks of birds flying above them. They came from the place where there was a shining light. When KJ saw one of her parrot friends flying past, she shouted, “What's going on?”

The parrot looked down at KJ and replied, “There's a bushfire in the forest! You should all run away!”

KJ's eyes grew wide. She didn't know what to do! Koalas were slow-moving animals. They didn't run. KJ didn't even know if she could run.

“We should start moving, Cole. Bushfires spread fast. It looks like the bushfire is still far from us but we shouldn't wait for it to come to our part of the forest. Come on,” KJ said.

But when she looked at her brother, she saw that the little koala was too scared to move. He was hugging the trunk of their tree. His eyes were closed and he was shaking.

“Come on, KJ!” cried one of the koalas. She saw that they had already started moving through the trees. KJ moved to the branch where her brother was sitting.

She hugged him and said, “Come on, Cole. We have to move.”

The little koala shook his head, “No. I can't do it. I don't even know how to climb down trees.”

“I will carry you on my back. But we have to go now,” KJ begged.

Her brother shook his head and hugged the trunk of the tree tighter. KJ noticed that the smell of smoke was getting stronger and the orange light was getting brighter. The young koala knew that this meant that the bushfire was coming closer.

She tried to calm her brother down while explaining to him why they had to escape. While talking to her brother, KJ watched as the other koalas moved deeper into the forest. One by one, they disappeared into the darkness.
KJ wondered what would happen if she and Cole got caught in the bushfire. The young koala was just about to cry when she heard someone calling her name.

“KJ! What are you still doing up there?” called a voice from the ground.

KJ looked down and saw Karla, her alligator friend from the swamp.

**Helping Hands**

“Karla!” cried KJ.

“You two have to start moving. The fire is still a bit far but it's spreading fast,” Karla called out.

“I know! I'm trying to get Cole to climb on my back so that we can escape together,” KJ explained.

“I'm scared. And you just said a while ago that I was getting too heavy for you. How will you carry me while escaping?” Cole asked with tears in his eyes.

“Come down,” said Karla from the ground. “I am big enough and strong enough to carry you.”

Cole looked up at his sister for reassurance. He was a bit afraid of Karla since she was an alligator. KJ always told her brother how nice her forest friends were. He even met them a few times. Even so, Cole couldn't believe that an alligator would be friends with a tiny koala.

The smell of smoke was getting stronger. KJ hugged her little brother and said gently, “It's going to be okay, Cole. Karla is a very close friend of mine. She will take care of you. And I will follow you from the trees.”

Cole hugged his sister tightly and nodded. Then he climbed on KJ's back so that she could carry him to the ground. The young koala carefully climbed down the tree. Even though she was feeling scared of the fire, she knew that she had to be brave for her little brother.

When they reached the ground, KJ asked Cole to climb off her back and onto Karla's bumpy back.
“Hold on to my tail. Hug it tightly as if you were hugging the trunk of a tree,” Karla said gently.

Cole looked at his sister with pleading eyes. She gave him a reassuring smile and said, “Let's get moving. You can watch me from the trees.”

Together, the three animals fled to the darker part of the forest. All around them, they could hear sounds of other critters fleeing too. Although Karla could run fast, she had to wait for KJ to move from tree to tree so that her brother wouldn't get too scared.

After a while, they heard a loud thumping sound coming from their left. They turned their heads and saw Codi, a kangaroo who is also friends with KJ and Karla.

“There you are! I just came from the eucalyptus grove looking for you, I'm glad Karla got there first. All of the animals are gathering at the clearing. There's water there, which means it's safer.”

“We're glad to see you, Codi,” KJ said. “Are there any more animals trapped in the forest?”

“No. Most of the forest is empty. All of the animals are fleeing in the darkness,” the kangaroo explained. Then he looked up at KJ and said, “You must be tired already. Come on down, I will carry you the rest of the way so it will be a lot faster.”

“Okay,” said KJ. She climbed down the tree and hopped onto Codi’s back. She hugged his neck and Codi started hopping away. Since Karla didn't have to wait for KJ anymore, she ran as fast as she could.

Moments later, they reached the clearing. KJ climbed down from Codi’s back while Cole climbed off Karla’s tail. The young koala looked around and saw that all the animals in the forest were there. They looked scared and worried. Some of the baby animals were still sleeping but all of the grown-ups were wide awake.

“Now, what do we do?” KJ whispered.

**Safe Haven**

Karla sighed, “This is terrible. What will happen to us now?”

“There's nothing else we can do tonight,” Codi said. “We should just rest here and watch out for each other.”
“You’re right,” KJ said.

She took her little brother's paws and asked, “Do you want to climb up one of these trees to rest?”

Cole nodded. The young koala carried her little brother on her back and started climbing. She asked Cole to climb off her back and onto one of the branches and the little koala hugged the tree trunk. KJ scratched her little brother's back and sang a lullaby until he fell asleep.

When all of the animals in the clearing were quiet, KJ almost fell asleep too. Suddenly, an emu burst out of the trees.

“Help! I need help!” she yelled.

“What's wrong?” Codi asked.

“There is a family of platypuses trapped in the river. They can't escape because one of them is wounded, they have babies, and they have a few eggs too,” the emu explained.

“Let's go help them,” Codi said.

“I'll come with you,” said Karla.

“Me too!” KJ called out. Since her brother was sleeping soundly, KJ decided to leave him for a while. She kissed her sleeping brother on the forehead and climbed down the tree. Then she hopped onto Karla's back and they followed the emu to the river.

When they were almost at the river, they heard the sound of baby platypuses crying.

After a while, they heard the dad say, “Let's go, my babies. You have to start walking.”

Instead of answering, the babies cried louder.

“We're here!” said the emu. The two platypus parents smiled at them with relief.

“Thank you!” said the dad.

Moving quickly, Codi scooped the baby platypuses in his arms. “Climb on my back.” Karla said to the mom and dad platypuses.

KJ gently took the eggs from the nest before climbing on the emu's back. “Hold on to my neck,” said the emu, and KJ nodded.

“Is that everyone?” Codi asked.
The dad platypus counted his babies and the eggs that KJ carried. “Yes, we're all here.”

“Then let's go,” said Karla.

The group of animals went back into the clearing. When they were halfway there, it started to rain.

KJ looked up. “I hope that will put the fires out.”

“I hope so too,” said the emu.

“Help me!” came a voice out in the forest.

Everyone stopped. “Did you hear that?” asked Karla.

“Yeah,” KJ said.

“Who's there?” Codi called out.

“My name is Julius and I'm a wallaby. I was running to the clearing when I got stuck!” said the voice.

KJ wanted to help out.

She turned to Codi and asked, “Can you hold on to these eggs too, Codi?”

The kangaroo moved the baby platypuses to his right paw and held out his left arm. He said, “I won't be able to hop as fast but I can do it.”

KJ gently passed the eggs on to her friend and said, “Take care. We'll see you back in the clearing.”

Codi nodded and they left. Meanwhile, KJ and the emu ran toward the sound of Julius' voice. They found the little wallaby in a hole formed by the roots of a tree.

“Oh, thank goodness you found me! So many animals were fleeing a while ago. I was afraid of getting trampled so I passed through this hole. I didn't think that I would get stuck!” he explained.

KJ climbed off the emu and grabbed the wallaby's paws. The emu went behind the wallaby and placed her head on his back. KJ pulled while the emu pushed. A few moments later, the wallaby was free!

“Thank you!” he cried out. The little wallaby hugged his new friends. Then he climbed onto the emu along with KJ and together, they headed to the clearing.
A Brave Journey Around the World

While KJ rode on the emu's back, the rain stopped. It was just a short shower. KJ worried that it wasn't strong enough to put the fire out. She sighed. The young koala wondered what they would do if the bushfire burned down their whole home.

KJ and Julius hopped off the emu once they reached the clearing, thanking her for the ride.

The little wallaby searched for his family while KJ went to the tree where her little brother was still sleeping. As she looked toward the ground, she saw Karla, but not Codi.

“Where's Codi?” KJ asked.

“He went off to check if the bushfire is still out there. We were hoping that the rain put it out but it didn't last long,” Karla explained.

KJ waited with Karla. They shared stories about everything they had seen while escaping the fire and rescuing other animals. About an hour later, they heard Codi hopping back into the clearing.

The kangaroo hopped toward his friends. Codi was out of breath so he took a moment to rest first before talking. “It's still out there. The bushfire is still burning and it's spreading everywhere.”

“Oh no,” said KJ.

“What are we going to do now? We can't all live here in the clearing. There's just too many of us!” said Karla.

The three friends stayed quiet for a moment while thinking of what to do or where to go. Just then, KJ had an idea.

“I remember when I was young, my mom told me about the different continents in the world. She said that there were six other continents out there. Maybe one of those continents can be our new home.”

“But which one? We have to decide which continent to move to before we ask all of these animals to travel,” Codi said.

“He's right. There are eggs, babies, and young animals here,” Karla said.
“Why don't I visit the different continents first? I already have an idea about them from my mom’s stories,” KJ offered.

“We’ll come with you,” said Codi and Karla.

She looked at Codi, “You have to stay here. You’re the leader of your troop.”

She turned to Karla and said, “You can’t leave too. You have your young ones to take care of. My brother is old enough to travel with me. I will bring him along while I look for our new home.”

“Are you sure about this, KJ?” Codi asked. He was worried that the young koala and her brother might be too tired. But he also knew how brave his friend was.

“Yes, I’m sure. I will go around the world and when I come back, I will have found a new home for us. While we’re gone, please watch out for each other. Stay here, near the water. I'll go and rest now. Tomorrow morning, Cole and I will start our journey.”

Karla and Codi hugged KJ. Since they met the young koala, they were very impressed at how courageous and headstrong she was. As they watched her climb the tree where her brother was sleeping, Karla and Codi made a wish that their young friend would come back safely.

KJ woke her little brother up before the sun rose the next morning. She told him about their plan to find a new home. Cole was excited to explore the different continents but he was also a bit scared. Still, he agreed to go with his sister.

And so, the two brave koalas started their journey around the world.
Chapter 2: The Adventurous Animals of Africa

KJ and Cole go to Africa to find a new home. Once there, they meet different animals including an elephant and her baby, a hippo, and a vulture. On this continent, KJ and Cole discover the importance of family.

A Drink at the Watering Hole

After saying goodbye to Karla, Codi, and all of their friends and neighbors, KJ and Cole set off on their journey. KJ decided that their first stop would be Africa. Their mom told her a lot about how the animals in Africa loved going on adventures. Since KJ loved going on adventures too, she wondered if they would find a good home in Africa.

After a long journey, they finally arrived. It was hot, humid, and they didn't see any animals anywhere. KJ wondered if something bad happened here too. Then she felt sad as she remembered the bushfire that destroyed their beautiful home.

“Where is everyone?” Cole asked.

“I don't know,” said KJ. “But look over there, I think it's a watering hole. I don't know about you, but I'm very thirsty. Let's take a drink of water. Then we can start looking for animals to talk to.”

Cole nodded and together, the two koalas walked toward the watering hole. When they arrived, they scooped some water with their paws and drank noisily.

“Wow! The water here tastes different! And it's so refreshing too,” Cole observed.

“Maybe that's because you're very thirsty,” said KJ with a giggle.

Cole smiled at his sister. It was nice to hear her giggle. Ever since the bushfire, KJ was sad and worried. While traveling, Cole tried to make her laugh but he couldn't even get one smile from her.

“Now, I wonder where the animals are,” KJ said while looking around.

Cole looked around too. After a while, he noticed two tiny things moving in the water. He tapped his sister's shoulder and pointed.
“Look, Sis,” he said.

“What is that?” asked the young koala.

Just then, the two tiny things started moving toward them. When they got close enough, KJ and Cole realized that the two tiny things were ears! As the two ears came out of the water, the two koalas saw the smiling face of a huge hippopotamus.

“Whoa!” said Cole.

“Hello!” said the hippo in a loud, booming voice.

“Hello to you too!” KJ exclaimed. She didn't mean to talk so loudly but she was just so surprised.

The hippo stepped out of the water. He stood next to KJ and Cole and said, “Are you... koalas?”

KJ and Cole nodded. The hippo laughed loudly, “Goodness! I have never seen koalas in Africa before! This must be a very special day!”

“Well, we're not from here, Sir,” said Cole softly.

“Oh, my name is not Sir, little koala. My name is Harris and it's nice to meet you,” said the large animal.

“It's nice to meet you too. My name is KJ and this is my brother, Cole.”

“What are two little koalas like you doing here in Africa? Don't koalas live in Australia? That's very far from here!” said Harris.

“You're right, we are from Australia. But my brother and I are on a mission,” KJ said.

Together, the two koalas told Harris what happened to their forest and why they needed to find a new home. After their story, Harris shook his head sadly.

“Such a shame,” he said. “I heard that forests are beautiful places to live in. There are many trees, lakes, plants, and it's not hot all the time!”

“You heard right,” said Cole with a smile.

“So... the two of you are thinking about moving here?” Harris asked.

“Not just us. We came here to find a home for all of the animals in our forest,” KJ explained.
“Oh my. That's a lot of animals!” Harris exclaimed.

Land and Water

KJ and Cole smiled at Harris. The young koala said, “You're right. That is a lot of animals. But the bushfire burned down most of our forest. When we left, all of the animals were gathered in the clearing and the bushfire was still raging.”

“That is so sad,” Harris said sincerely.

“Do you think we can live here with you?” Cole asked softly.

The huge hippo gave the little koala a big smile and said, “I would love that!”

“Really?” KJ asked.

“Of course! Living in this watering hole is a lot of fun. When the days get too hot, I go into the water to cool myself down. But when the afternoon comes and the desert cools down, I come out of the water. All the desert animals come to this watering hole too, and I am friends with all of them,” Harris said proudly.

“Oh,” said KJ, “are there plenty of animals here? I would love to make new friends.”

“Well, of course!” said Harris. “There are wild dogs, antelopes, onyxes, snakes, and elephants too. Sometimes, the animals from the savanna come to visit this watering hole also.

I’ve even seen zebras, giraffes, cheetahs, ostriches, and aardvarks. Sometimes, lions come and drink too. But I don't talk to lions often. Even though I'm bigger than them, they scare me!” admitted the hippo.

KJ didn't realize that so many animals lived in Africa. She looked around the desert and wondered if this would be a good place for her friends to live. She got so lost in her own thoughts that she didn't notice her brother walking away with the big hippo. They were already on the other side of the watering hole.

“Hey! Wait up!” KJ called out.

When she caught up with the two animals, she asked, “Why did you leave me behind?”
“Leave you? Harris said that he wanted to take us exploring so we can meet other animals. I asked you if you wanted to come with us, but you didn’t answer,” Cole explained.

KJ didn't realize that she had been quiet for so long. “Oh. I'm sorry. I was just thinking about our friends back home in Australia. I was wondering if they would like to live here. It's so hot,” KJ observed.

“Yes, that's one thing Africa is known for. All the animals here are used to the heat. Do you think that your friends will be able to survive in this weather?” asked Harris.

“I... don't know,” said KJ.

“We can think about that later, Sis. For now, let’s explore with Harris. We might meet some new animals and see the different parts of this desert. Maybe we will find great homes for our friends!” Cole said.

KJ saw that her brother was excited. She hadn't seen him smile like this since they left their forest. The young koala smiled warmly at her brother. “You're right. We won't know if we can live here unless we explore and meet the animals who live here.”

“Thank you for being so friendly. And thank you for offering to explore the desert with us.” KJ said to Harris.

Harris chuckled softly, “Well, I have nothing better to do anyway. Plus, you are the first koalas I have ever met! While we explore, can you please tell me more about life in Australia?”

“Yes!” said the two koalas.

Together, they walked around the desert while sharing stories with each other.

**Scavenger on the Hunt**

KJ, Cole, and Harris walked all over the desert. Since the hippo lived in Africa, he was already used to the hot, humid weather. But as the minutes passed, the two koalas started walking slower and breathing harder.

“Are you two okay?” Harris asked, with a worried look on his face.
KJ and Cole stopped walking. Cole breathed deeply while KJ explained, “We're not used to this heat.”

“Oh, dear,” said Harris. “Why don't you two climb on my back? I can bring you to the cluster of trees over there.”

“That would be wonderful, Harris!” KJ said.

Harris knelt down so that the two koalas could climb on his back. They were so relieved that they could rest while the huge hippo carried them the rest of the way. Harris shared more stories with them while the koala siblings listened attentively.

When they reached the cluster of trees, KJ and Cole thanked their new friend. Cole climbed onto his sister's back so KJ could carry him up the tree. They picked some of the leaves and started eating. In the meantime, Harris sat on the ground and rested.

“I don't like these leaves, Sis. They're very dry and they taste funny,” Cole said.

“Me neither. I miss the eucalyptus leaves back home,” KJ agreed.

“If we live here in Africa, do we have to eat these leaves for the rest of our lives?” the little koala asked.

“I guess so,” KJ said as she munched on the dry leaves.

Just then, a big bird landed on Harris' back. When she saw the two koalas, she said, “Oh. You're still alive.”

“What?” KJ asked in surprise.

“Oh, don't tease them, Dahlia,” said Harris with a smile.

“Strange guests you have, Harris. What kind of animals are these? I have never seen them before,” Dahlia said.

“They're koalas from Australia,” Harris answered.

“My name is KJ and this is my brother, Cole. May I ask what kind of animal you are too?”

“It's nice to meet you, KJ and Cole, the koalas from Australia. I am a vulture,” said Dahlia. "So, what are you two koalas doing so far from your home?”

“We are looking for a new home,” KJ said. She explained to the vulture what happened to their beautiful forest. When she got to the part where they were looking for a new home for all of the animals in the forest, Dahlia giggled in delight.
“Do you mean that there will be a lot of new animals here in this dry desert?” she asked excitedly.

“We don’t know yet,” said KJ. "We’re still deciding if this could be our home. How about you? What are you doing here?"

“Looking for food, as always,” said Harris with a chuckle.

“Of course! I am a mother and I have five babies to feed,” Dahlia said.

“Where are your babies?” KJ asked.

“They are in our nest, which is high up in the rocks. I travel very far just to find food for them. It's not easy living in the desert. It's difficult to find food,” said Dahlia. “And by the way you're eating those leaves, it looks like you're not enjoying it either.”

The two koalas didn't say anything. They just looked at her sheepishly. After a while, the vulture wished them luck. She gave Harris an affectionate peck on the cheek before flying off to continue looking for food.

“She likes to make jokes and scare other animals, but she is a very nice vulture,” Harris said.

Cole tugged at his sister's arm and whispered, “I think she's scary.”

**The Majestic Elephant**

“Why do you think she's scary?” KJ asked her little brother.

“I don't know. She just scares me. Maybe it's the way she talks?” Cole said.

“A lot of animals find vultures scary and Dahlia knows that. Sometimes, she even uses their fear to get what she wants,” Harris said.

“Are you scared of her too?” Cole asked.

“No. She's my friend. I met her at the watering hole, just like you. We were the only ones there and we started sharing stories. We have been friends ever since,” said the hippo.

“Speaking of the watering hole, I need a drink of water. These leaves are too dry,” KJ said.
“Me too. I'm thirsty too,” said Cole.

“Alright,” said Harris as he stood up. “Climb on and let's go back to the watering hole. I need to cool down a bit too.”

The two koalas climbed down from the tree and onto Harris' back. When they got to the watering hole, they saw an elephant drinking water.

“Erin? Is that you?” Harris called out.

The elephant looked up and smiled at the hippo.

“Hello, Harris! We were looking for you.”

“We?” asked KJ.

Just then, a tiny elephant splashed out of the water. “Mommy! Did you see me? I was swimming!” she said

“Yes, my dear. And look over there, Harris is back,” said the mother elephant.

The baby elephant stepped out of the water and turned to the hippo. “Hello, Harris!” she exclaimed.

“Hello, Feechi,” said Harris as the koalas hopped off to drink some water.

“Oh,” said Erin, “who are these two fuzzy little creatures?”

“Hello,” said KJ after taking a drink. “My name is KJ and this is Cole. We are koalas.”

“Koalas?” asked Feechi. She tugged at her mother's trunk and said, “Don't koalas live in Australia?”

“You're right, Feechi,” said Erin. “What are two koalas doing out here in Africa?”

Once again, KJ told them about the fire in their forest home. While she was talking, Cole invited Feechi to play. By the time KJ finished her story, her little brother had become friends with the baby elephant. They were now playing together.

“How dreadful,” Erin said sadly. “But I am glad that none of you were hurt.”

“They're very lucky,” said Harris. “Do you remember the time when the watering hole dried up?”
“Oh, yes,” said Erin. “That was a terrible time for all of us. Many of the animals didn't survive. Who knows what could have happened if it didn't rain after a week?”

“The watering hole dried up?” KJ asked. She couldn't imagine what would happen if they didn't have water. In the forest where they live, there were lakes, ponds, and even a river. And it rained a lot too.

“Yes,” Harris said. “I almost left this desert that time. I was very hot and very thirsty. Thank goodness it rained just in time.”

“Wow,” said KJ. After hearing this story, she realized that Africa might not be the best place for her brother and her friends back home. This made her sad.

“But that wasn't the only difficult thing you had to deal with. Right, Erin?” Harris asked.

“What do you mean?” asked KJ.

“Well, my daughter and I aren't from here. Just like you, we lost our home. Feechi was very young when it happened so she doesn't remember,” Erin said.

“You should hear her story. It's incredible!” said Harris.

The young koala looked at the elephant and said, “I'm all ears.”

“Well, we didn't travel as far as you did, that's for sure,” said Erin with a smile.

**Moving On**

Before Erin started with her story, KJ called her brother over. She wanted him to hear the elephant's story too. Cole and Feechi sat next to KJ, excited to listen to a story.

“Feechi was born in a beautiful forest not far from here. We used to be part of a herd and it was wonderful. We marched around the forest, ate together, and kept each other safe. The day Feechi was born was the happiest day of my life. Two more elephant calves were born in our herd and we knew that the three young elephants would grow up to be best friends. But one night, poachers came to the village.”

“Oh no!” said KJ. She knew that poachers were dangerous humans who hunted animals and took them away.
“Yes,” said Erin, “they came at night when we were all asleep. We woke up when we heard one of the baby elephants crying. The little one was being taken away. Her mother was so sad! She tried to run after the poachers but they were in a big box that moved very fast. We were all so shocked when it happened.

The next night, the poachers came back. We tried to scare them away but they were carrying sticks that made loud noises. They pointed the stick at one of the elephants in our herd. We all heard a loud noise and saw the elephant drop down to the ground. That’s when we all started running. I scooped Feechi up with my trunk and ran to safety. I kept running until I reached this desert. When Feechi saw the watering hole, she told me that she was thirsty. We came here and met Harris, who helped us find a new home.”

“How sad,” KJ said. “You lost your home too.”

“Yes,” Erin said with a smile. “But even if I had to learn how to get used to our new home, I was happy. Do you know why?”

“Why?” asked Cole.

“Because I was with my baby, Feechi. I believe that family is the most important thing in the world. Many things might change and you might have to deal with difficult situations. But as long as you have your family with you, everything will be alright,” said the kind elephant.

She reached her trunk out and little Feechi ran to her mommy. They hugged each other tight as Erin said, “I might have lost my home but I am thankful for the life my baby and I have made here.”

“You know what? You're right!” said KJ. “We lost our home too. And just like you, we're lucky to still have each other.”

KJ turned to her little brother and said, “No matter what happens, we will get through this.”

“I know we will,” said Cole.

The young koala turned to her new friends. “This is a beautiful place to live. My brother and I are happy and thankful that we met you. But as I see and learn more about this place, I realize that my friends from Australia won’t be able to live here.”

“We understand,” Harris said. “Of course, it would have been wonderful to meet your friends too.”
“Maybe one day,” KJ said with a smile. “But for now, my brother and I will continue to explore. When we find our new home, we will come back to tell you all about it.”

“Is that a promise?” asked Feechi.

“Yes!” said the two koalas.

KJ and Cole gave each of their new friends a hug and said goodbye.
Chapter 3: The Kind Animals of Europe

KJ and Cole meet a hedgehog named Hannah whose best friend is a fox named Finley. The two animals take the koalas on a tour of the city at night and bring them to a zoo to meet a lynx named Zane.

Midnight Travels

KJ and Cole traveled far and wide to find a new home. They had just left Africa where they met some new friends. Harris the hippo, Erin and Feechi the elephants, and even a vulture named Dahlia. Africa was a beautiful place, but KJ didn't think that her friends back in Australia would be happy there.

The next continent they visited was Europe. When they arrived, it was already nighttime. While KJ and Cole are used to nature, they were surprised to see a new kind of environment. Instead of soil and grass, the ground was hard and cold. Instead of trees, there were big things that looked like caves and lights everywhere.

“What kinds of animals live there, KJ?” asked Cole.

“I don't know. I have never seen caves like these before,” said the young koala.

“I don't see any trees. What are we going to eat?” Cole asked.

KJ looked around. Cole was right, there were no trees here. There were tall things that looked like tree branches with glowing lights at the ends, but it didn't look like they had any leaves.

“Is this a forest?” Cole asked. The little koala had a lot of questions for his sister.

“I don't know that either,” KJ said. “Maybe we should explore some more. There must be trees somewhere here. Just... stay close to me, okay?”

Cole nodded and the two koalas started to explore. This place was very strange to them, but they wanted to learn more about it. While exploring, they heard a noise coming from one of the caves.

“Quick! Hide!” KJ said urgently.
The two koalas hid behind a big, hard thing that smelled bad.

“KJ! It stinks here!” Cole whispered.

“Shhh,” said KJ. “I know it smells bad but look!”

Cole peeked at what KJ was pointing to. They saw a human come out of one of the caves. The noise came from the entrance of the big thing that looked like a cave. After coming out, the human closed the door and walked away.

“It's a human cave!” Cole exclaimed.

“Oh. These are all human caves,” said KJ. “There are so many of them!”

“I'm scared,” Cole said, “let's go find a forest.”

When the human was far enough away from them, KJ said, “Okay, let's go.”

KJ and Cole continued exploring. After about an hour, KJ saw some trees.

“There! I can see trees!” KJ exclaimed.

“Yes!” Cole said happily.

The two koalas moved toward the forest. They were happy to see a place that they were familiar with. The human world was interesting, but they didn't want any humans to see them. They remembered the stories about humans taking animals from the forest and how those animals never came back.

When the two koalas arrived, they hugged the ground happily. They were both so hungry that they pulled out blades of grass and munched on them. Most koalas only eat eucalyptus leaves but since they left Australia, they had to eat different kinds of food to survive.

“Come on, let's explore the forest now,” said KJ.

Before they took one step, they heard a voice behind them say with surprise, “Koalas!”

KJ and Cole turned around and saw a curious little creature looking at them with wide eyes.

**Unlikely Friends**
The animal behind them was tiny and its body was covered in spikes. Just then, another animal came up behind the tiny one. KJ knew that the animal was a fox. He was orange all over except for his tail, which had a white tip, and his paws, which were black.

“Did you say, koalas?” the fox asked his friend.

“Yes! Over there!” said the tiny animal.

The young koala said, “Hello. My name is KJ and this is my brother, Cole.”

“My name is Hannah. I am a hedgehog. And this is Finley, he is a fox.”

“What are two koalas doing here in the city?” asked Finley.

“The city?” asked Cole.

“Yes. This is a city in Europe. What are you doing here? Don't koalas live in Australia?” Hannah asked.

“You're right! How did you know where we are from?” KJ replied.

“We watch a lot of television,” said Finley.

“Television?” KJ asked.

“Finley! They're not from the city!” Hannah said with a giggle.

“Oh, right,” said Finley with a smile. “A television is like a box where you can see different things. You can also hear different voices in it. We don't know how it works but it allows us to see and learn about different animals from all over the world!”

“That's how we learned about Australia and koalas,” Hannah said proudly.

“Wow,” they said.

“Anyway, why are you here?” Hannah asked again.

KJ told them about their situation. Hannah and Finley listened attentively while KJ shared what happened to their home. By the end of their story, Hannah had tears in her eyes.

“How dreadful,” said the little hedgehog.

“And you don't know if the bushfire has gone out already?” Finley asked.
KJ shook her head, “But I hope it's gone. Everyone back home is waiting for us.”

“Do you think this city could be our home?” Cole asked.

Hannah and Finley looked at each other. They didn't think that all of the animals in the forest would fit in the city, especially since there were so many people around. But they didn't want to tell the koalas that the city wasn't the right home for them. Hannah and Finley didn't want to make the koalas feel bad.

Instead, Hannah said, “Why don't we help you explore the city?”

“That's a great idea!” said Finley. “Then you can see if Europe could be your new home.”

KJ felt a bit worried, “But what if humans see us?” she asked.

“Oh, don't worry about that. Finley and I have lived here most of our lives. We know how to explore while hiding from humans,” Hannah said.

KJ looked at her little brother and asked, “What do you think? Do you want to explore the city of Europe?”

“I guess so,” Cole answered shyly.

“Cool!” said Finley. “But before we start, let's have some rules. Hannah and I are used to these streets so you have to listen to us. When we tell you to hide, find a place to hide right away. And when we tell you to run, go as fast as you can, okay?”

“Don't scare them, Finley!” Hannah exclaimed.

She turned to the two koalas and said, “You'll be fine. It's nighttime anyway. Most of the humans are inside their houses. But if we do run into one, we just have to hide.”

“Alright,” said KJ. She asked her brother if he wanted to climb on her back, but he said that he could walk.

And so, the two koalas and their two unlikely friends started their journey.

**City Explorers**

“How did you get here?” KJ asked while they walked.
“I was born here,” said Hannah. “My parents were pets of humans. Pets are animals who live in cages. Humans take care of them. I was a pet too, but one day, I escaped and I have been living on the streets ever since.”

“I used to live in the forest. But I got bored of it. I tried exploring the city one night and I met Hannah. She had been living in the city since she was young. I decided to stay with her,” Finley explained.

“You two must be very close,” KJ observed.

“Yeah. Finley takes very good care of me,” Hannah said.

“And Hannah is great at finding food for both of us,” Finley said.

KJ smiled as she saw how close these two animals were. They took care of each other, which reminded her of how she took care of her brother. She noticed that Cole wasn't saying anything while they were exploring. KJ watched as he looked all around with amazement.

The young koala wondered what their lives would be like if they decided to stay with Hannah and Finley. But as they explored the city, the young koala noticed that there were too many human caves here. There were many animals in their forest back home. If they came here, they wouldn't be able to hide from all the humans.

Even though she had already decided that this city in Europe wouldn't be their next home, she still wanted to explore with her brother and her new friends. Once in a while, Finley or Hannah would tell them to hide because they heard human footsteps. As soon as the humans were gone, they went back to the streets.

“It's so bright here! Did the humans catch the stars and tie them to those sticks?” Cole asked.

“No,” Hannah said with a giggle. “Those are called street lamps. When it's dark, the humans turn those lights on so that they can see. They also have lights in their houses.”

“How do humans hunt for food?” asked KJ.

“They don't hunt for food as animals do,” said Finley. “Instead, they get their food from boxes in their caves. Sometimes, they go to the other caves to get more food and place the food they get in their own boxes.”

“Wow,” said the two koalas together.

Just then, KJ said, “Wait a minute. I smell something familiar. Something I have smelled
in the forest before.”

“Oh! You must be smelling the scents of the animals in the zoo,” said Finley.

“What’s a zoo?” asked Cole.

“A zoo is a place where humans keep animals in cages,” said Hannah who suddenly looked quite sad.

“Like pets?” asked KJ.

“Not exactly,” said Finn. “Pets are small animals that humans keep in their homes. The biggest animals I have seen them keep are dogs, but they don’t usually keep their pet dogs in cages. But in zoos, the animals are big! There are elephants, zebras, lions, tigers, monkeys, and other animals who used to live in forests, jungles, and other habitats.”

“Humans go around the world to find animals. They take animals from their homes and place them in zoos so that other humans can look at them,” Hannah explained.

“But why?” asked KJ. The young koala already knew what a zoo was even before their new friends explained it. She remembered her own parents who were taken by humans and she wondered if the humans brought them to the zoo here in Europe.

“We don’t know why. But every morning, many people go to the zoo to look at the animals there. They even feed the animals sometimes because animals in zoos have forgotten how to hunt and forage,” said Finley.

“That’s so sad,” said Cole.

**Trapped**

“Can we please go to the zoo to see the animals there?” asked KJ.

“Oh,” said Finley. He looked at Hannah and asked, “Only if it's okay with you.”

“Why?” asked KJ. “Are you scared of going to the zoo?”

“No,” Hannah said with a sigh. “But I have a friend there. He was caught by humans a few years ago and they placed him in the zoo.”

“I’m so sorry to hear that,” KJ said. “We don't have to go if it will make you feel sad.”
“But... don't you think it's time for you to finally visit Zane?” Finley asked his friend gently. “You always tell me how much you miss him.”

“Maybe you're right,” said Hannah.

Hannah agreed to go to the zoo. On their way there, Hannah told them about a lynx named Zane who was her friend. Before she met Finley, Hannah used to explore the city with Zane. He was still a little cub back then so it was easy for him to hide. They were very close. Zane used to protect Hannah too.

But then, Zane grew into a big lynx. The bigger he grew, the more difficult it was for him to hide. Until one day, a human saw Zane. The human screamed so Zane and Hannah ran away. Moments later, many humans started chasing them. One of the humans caught Zane with a stick that had a rope attached to the end of it.

Zane told Hannah to run away. Instead, she found a place to hide. She followed the humans all the way to the zoo where they threw her friend in a cage. She tried to open the cage but she couldn't.

“I still remember the last thing he said to me. He told me to run away and never look back. He wanted me to live freely,” said Hannah.

They had reached the zoo and they stopped at the entrance. The metal gate was locked but they were all small enough to slip through the posts. While walking through the zoo, KJ and Cole saw different kinds of animals. They were all sleeping soundly in cages.

“There it is. Zane's cage,” said Hannah.

When they reached the cage, they saw a beautiful spotted cat sitting on a tree branch. Unlike the other animals in the zoo, he was wide awake. Zane was surprised to see them.

“Hannah?”

“Zane!” Hannah squealed.

The lynx jumped down from the branch he was sitting on and walked toward them. He had a big smile on his face.

“I haven't seen you in such a long time! You look happy,” he said.

“Well... I'm still free thanks to you,” Hannah said.

The lynx looked at Hannah's friends and smiled, “I see you have made new friends too. Such a curious collection of animals.”
“These are KJ and Cole. They are koalas from Australia. And this is Finley, he is my friend who lives in the city with me,” Hannah explained.

“It's nice to meet you all,” said Zane.

KJ couldn't stop staring at the big cat. He was so big. She had met other big cats before, back in their forest. She knew how much they wanted to run around and climb different trees.

“Are you okay, young koala?” Zane asked KJ.

She didn't realize it, but tears had formed in her eyes. She wiped away her tears and said, “Oh, yes. I'm fine. I just feel so bad that you are trapped here.”

“You don't have to feel bad for me,” said Zane. He had a genuine smile on his face.

Choosing Happiness

“You're not sad that you're trapped here?” KJ asked.

“No, I'm not. I used to be sad. When the humans captured me and placed me here, I was very sad. I missed walking around the streets and I missed Hannah terribly. Even though the humans were nice to me and they fed me delicious food, I just sat on a branch and did nothing. The humans even brought me to a vet. I think they were worried about me,” Zane explained.

“What happened? How did you become happy?” Finley asked. Since he had never lived in a cage before, Finley couldn't imagine what could have convinced this lynx to stop being sad.

“One night, while I was the only animal awake in the zoo, I looked around. I saw that this zoo had many animals in it. The animals looked healthy and happy. Even though they were in cages, they didn't seem to be bothered by it.

The next day, I talked to Harry over there. Harry is the lion. I asked him if he wanted to go back home. But Harry said that the humans saved him from his home when poachers came to his jungle and took his parents away. He was still a cub then, and hurt his paw trying to escape. He didn't think he would survive on his own until some humans brought him here.
As it turns out, the animals who took Harry weren't poachers. They were... wildlife rehabilitators I think. They took care of him. It took a long time for his paw to heal. But instead of bringing him back home to his jungle, they placed him here in the zoo. Harry was sad too. He wanted to go home. But one day, he just... chose to be happy,” Zane said.

“He chose to be happy?” Hannah asked.

“Yes. Instead of feeling sad or angry every day of his life, the young cub chose to be happy. He played around in his cage, enjoyed the food the zookeepers gave him and made friends with the other animals too. Now, he's the most popular animal in the zoo, both with humans and with all the other animals here. I chose to be happy, just like him,” said the lynx.

“I didn't know you could do that,” KJ said. Ever since she discovered the bushfire in their home, she had been feeling sad and angry. She was only trying to keep her spirits up for her brother. Back in Africa, she learned how to be thankful from Erin. Now, she learned from this beautiful animal that she could choose to be happy!

“Are you really happy, Zane?” Hannah asked.

The lynx knelt down in front of his little friend and said, “Yes. So please, don't worry about me anymore, okay? I am not trapped here. Now, I see this as my home.”

Hannah started crying. She felt happy for her friend. “Can I come to visit you from now on?” she asked him.

“Oh, yes! I will share a lot of stories with you each time you visit. Then you and Finley can tell me about the streets of Europe too,” Zane said cheerfully.

“Sounds like a great plan,” said Finley. “But the sun will rise soon. We have to go.”

The lynx said goodbye to the animals. As Cole, Hannah, and Finley walked away, KJ stayed behind.

She went back to the cage and whispered, “Are there any koalas here?”

“I'm sorry, but I haven't seen any. Why do you ask?” said Zane.

“Our parents were taken away when my brother and I were still young. The other animals said that they might have been brought to a zoo,” KJ explained.

“I see. If they were brought to a zoo, you don't have to worry about them anymore. I'm sure they are okay,” said Zane warmly.
"Thank you," said KJ. As she walked away from the lynx, she was feeling a lot happier than she had been in a long time.
Chapter 4: The Cool Animals of Antarctica

KJ and Cole travel to Antarctica. But when they get there, the two koalas get caught in a blizzard! Fortunately, they are saved by a caring polar bear named Paula. When the blizzard is over, Paula brings them near the water to meet Andrei and Sofia, her best friends.

Blizzard!

After saying goodbye to Finley and Hannah, KJ and Cole left Europe. They continued traveling until they reached a very cold continent filled with ice and glaciers. It looked so clean and white.

“KJ, it's s-so c-c-c-old,” Cole said to his sister.

“I know,” KJ said, “we need to find a place to sleep for the night.”

While walking on the ice, KJ noticed that snow had started falling. The wind was getting stronger too. Soon, KJ realized that they were stuck in a blizzard. She told her brother to climb on her back so that they could both keep warm. Then the young koala looked around hoping to see a cave or even a pile of rocks to hide behind.

KJ felt bad when she couldn't see anything but white snow and ice. She looked all around and felt her brother hugging her tighter as the wind blew harder. The young koala was about to cry when she heard someone walking up to her from behind. When KJ turned around, she saw two black eyes and a black nose right in front of her face.

“Goodness!” said the polar bear.

She stood up and gently grabbed KJ and Cole. The polar bear placed them on her back and said, “Hang on tightly!”

The polar bear ran through the blizzard quickly and gracefully. In a few minutes, they had reached a warm den. The polar bear knelt down so that KJ and Cole could climb off her.

“Whew! What a rush! What in the world were you two doing out in a blizzard like that?” asked the polar bear after she shook the snow off her fur.
“Th-thank you,” was all Cole could say.

“Yes, thank you,” KJ agreed.

“Oh, it’s no problem at all, little ones. But... who, and... what are you?” she asked.

“My name is KJ and this is my brother Cole. We are koalas from Australia.”

“Australia! Goodness! Isn't that a different continent? How did you get here?” asked the polar bear.

Before KJ could answer, the polar bear said, “Oh, and my name is Paula. So sorry, I'm just too excited. You’re the first koalas I have ever met.”

“It's alright,” KJ said with a smile. “It's nice to meet you, Paula. We're used to surprising other animals.”

Paula saw that Cole was still shivering.

“Come here, little one. I am warm enough to shoo away all that cold you're feeling.” She took the little koala and hugged him.

Paula looked at KJ and said, “It's very surprising to see animals outside, especially during a blizzard. Now that I know that you're not even from these parts, I'm even more surprised. How did you get here?”

“It's a very long story,” KJ said.

“Well, the blizzard won't end for awhile and it's only us here. I would love to hear your story,” Paula told them.

While the blizzard raged outside, KJ told Paula their story. She talked about how beautiful their life was in the forest and how it was all gone because of the bushfire. As she talked, Cole fell asleep in Paula's warm fur.

When KJ was finished with her story, Paula said, “Goodness. You two have been through so much! But... why would you travel all the way to Antarctica?”

“My brother and I are looking for a new home for all of the animals in Australia,” KJ said.

“Oh,” said Paula, “and you think you will be happy here?”

A Cold Life
KJ thought about Paula's question for a long time. She remembered how she got stuck in a blizzard with her brother outside. She also remembered how scared she felt when she thought that she wouldn't be able to save her brother from the cold.

“Antarctica is my home,” Paula said gently. “I love it here. I am a polar bear and I have enough fur to keep me warm. While I would really enjoy having new friends down here in the South Pole, I don't know if you and the other animals from your home would survive here.”


“Well, as I have told you, I have a lot of fur! I have two whole layers of fur plus a lot of fat to keep me warm. That's also why I can keep your little brother warm and comfy,” Paula said.

KJ smiled at her new friend. She was right. Cole was sleeping soundly while the polar bear hugged him. This was the first time that her little brother had slept soundly since they left Australia.

“What do you eat here?” KJ asked.

“I eat different things. Usually, I have to swim in the water to hunt for my meals,” Paula explained.

“In the water? But it's already so cold here on the land. I mean, on the ice. The water must be freezing!” KJ exclaimed.

“It is! But if I don't swim to look for my food, I won't have anything to eat,” said the big polar bear.

“Oh. You're right,” said KJ.

The young koala sighed. When she left her home, she didn't think that it would be this difficult to find a new one. She was quiet for a long time. She tried to think of any animal from the forest who could swim in the icy water. The young koala couldn't think of anyone.

“Are there trees here?” KJ asked.

“Goodness, no! It's too cold in this part of the world,” Paula said.

When KJ realized that living here meant that they won't have any trees to climb on, she knew that Antarctica couldn't be their new home. She felt quite bad because Paula was very friendly but she lived in this den all by herself.
“What are you thinking about?” Paula asked.

“I'm beginning to realize that this continent might not be the best place for us,” KJ said shyly.

Paula smiled and whispered, “Do you want to know a secret?”

“Yes!” said the young koala.

“I'm not actually from Antarctica,” said Paula with a wink.

“What do you mean?” KJ asked.

“I'm from the Arctic. It's cold there too and I loved it. But when I was young, I wanted to travel. So I did! When I came here, I met two wonderful animals who became my best friends. That's when I decided to make Antarctica my home,” explained Paula.

“I didn’t know that other animals look for new homes too,” KJ said.

“Yes. Sometimes, animals like me choose to find a new home to live in. But when we do, we have to look for a place that's similar to the home we left. In the Arctic, there is a lot of ice too. Since this part of Antarctica has the icy glaciers and the icy water I'm used to, I thrive here!” said the polar bear happily.

“Oh, you're right. If we want to find a home, we should look for a place that's a lot like our forest in Australia,” KJ said.

“Exactly,” said Paula with a smile.

“But before we go, can we meet your friends?” KJ asked.

Paula agreed to bring KJ and Cole to meet her friends the next day. For now, they needed to rest and wait for the blizzard to end.

**Spending the Night**

Paula placed Cole on the ground gently. “You should cuddle up next to him so your brother won't feel cold. I'll sleep in front of you to cover the entrance to the den.” she said to KJ.

“Thank you,” KJ replied.
The young koala laid next to her little brother and closed her eyes. She was still feeling a bit cold until Paula laid down in front of them. She covered the entrance of the den with her big body, blocking the wind and warmed the whole den up. Soon, KJ drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, when KJ woke up, she saw Cole climbing the pile of rocks in the den. The young koala rubbed the sleep from her eyes.

“Good morning. Where is Paula?”

“Oh, hi! She went outside. She said she will look for food,” Cole answered.

“I see. Have you been awake for a long time?” KJ asked.

“Yeah. You were snoring loudly so I woke up,” said Cole with a giggle.

“I was not!” KJ said as a smile formed on her face. She missed making jokes with her little brother. The full night's sleep must have given him the rest he needed. KJ hoped that her little brother would continue being cheerful like this.

“Good morning, KJ!” said Paula as she came back into the den. She was carrying fish and a few branches.

“I hope these leaves are okay,” said the polar bear. “There are only two types of plants that grow here and I took branches from both of them. Come on, let's eat before we go visit my friends.”

KJ and Cole thanked Paula for breakfast. They enjoyed the meal together. The two koalas were surprised at how moist and tasty the leaves were. They finished all the leaves on the branches while Paula finished her pile of fish.

“That was delicious!” KJ exclaimed.

“Yeah, thank you, Paula!” said Cole happily.

“You're welcome, my dears. Now, are you ready to go?” Paula asked.

“Yes!” answered the furry pair.

Paula told KJ and Cole to climb on her back again. Even though there was no blizzard outside, Paula said that the sea was too far. If KJ and Cole walked all the way, it would take too much time.
While Paula carried the koalas to the sea, KJ talked about their travels to Africa and Europe. The polar bear was delighted to hear about their adventures.

“I wish I could travel too. But I'm too big and I have too much fur. Anywhere but Antarctica is too hot for me.” she told them.

“That's too bad. The world is a beautiful place! We even promised some of our friends that we would go back to visit them after finding our new home,” KJ said.

“Can we visit you too?” Cole asked.

“Of course!” said Paula. “You can visit us any time!”

“I can't wait to find our new home,” said the little koala. “Then we can go back to the different continents to visit our other friends too.”

“And we might even meet more new friends when we visit the other continents. We haven't found a new home yet, remember?” KJ said.

“Oh, right,” said Cole.

Just then, Paula jumped up happily. “There's the sea! I can't wait for you to meet Sofia and Andrei. Sofia is a seal and Andrei is a whale. We might see Sofia first because Andrei only comes to the shore after lunch.”

As they came closer to the shore, KJ and Cole saw a seal rolling around on the ice. When she saw Paula, the seal smiled and waved at them with her flipper.

Playing Around

“Paula!” said the seal as she approached them.

“Hello, Sofia!” Paula said.

The seal stopped when she saw KJ and Cole on Paula's back. With wide eyes, she said, “Um... Did you know that there are two fuzzy... animals on your back?”

Paula giggled, “Of course! These are my new friends. They're from Australia.”

KJ and Cole climbed down carefully. “Hello. My name is KJ and this is my brother, Cole. It's nice to meet you.”
“It's wonderful to meet you, KJ and Cole! You are the first-ever koalas I have met. This is so exciting! I have a little brother too!” said the seal excitedly.

KJ had never met another animal with a little brother before. Even in Australia, all of the koala families only had one young joey each.

“Where is he?” KJ asked.

“Oh, he's at home. Mom asked him to stay home today since his friends are coming over,” Sofia explained.

“Do you take care of him often?” asked the young koala.

“Yes! And he's a real handful because he never gets tired of swimming. One time, Andrei carried my brother on his back. They swam to the middle of the sea. Hours later, Andrei came back and said that my brother had too much energy even for him!” Sofia said while laughing.

“Wow. He does sound like a handful!” KJ exclaimed.

“Oh, but he is the sweetest little dear,” Paula said affectionately.

“Definitely! I miss him already,” said Sofia.

“So what do you do all day?” Cole asked.

“Play, of course!” Sofia said. "Come on!"

All morning, KJ and Cole played with Sofia. They slid on the ice, played hide-and-seek, and the two koalas watched as Sofia dove into the sea. KJ and Cole even tried to dip their paws in the icy water.

“Aaaaah!” screamed Cole.

“It's so cold!” KJ exclaimed.

“That's because you don't have enough fur,” Paula said with a chuckle.

“Or tough skin,” said Sofia as she floated in the water.

Paula stood up, "It's almost lunchtime. I need to gather some leaves for these two.”

“Okay! I'll catch some fish for us,” Sofia said.
KJ went with the polar bear to look for plants while Cole stayed behind to watch the seal go fishing.

“Stay here, okay? Don't wander away,” KJ reminded her brother.

Paula and KJ walked to the other side of the shoreline. After about half an hour, KJ saw a cluster of plants in the snow. They walked toward it and started gathering branches. When they had enough, they walked back to where Sofia and Cole were.

When they reached the shore, the four animals shared an enjoyable lunch together. They talked about their lives, their families, and their homes. When it was KJ's turn to share, she became teary-eyed as she talked about her home. She missed Australia so much!

Sofia lifted their spirits by telling a lot of jokes and sharing stories about her playful little brother. Then she told them about the time when humans came to Antarctica to watch them all day and all night.

“They didn't do anything. They just stood around us all day. After a few days, they left,” Sofia said.

“They didn't take anyone away?” asked Cole.

“No. And we never saw them again either,” explained Sofia.

Just when Paula was about to say something, they heard a low sound coming from the water.

**Protecting Each Other**

“What was that?” Cole cried out. He stood up and climbed on his sister's back.

“Goodness! I'm sorry. I should have warned you. That's how Andrei says hello,” Paula said.

Moments later, they saw a huge head come up to the surface. It was bigger than all of them and it had a huge smile!

“Hello, friends!” said Andrei the whale.

“Andrei!” said Sofia loudly.
“It's nice to see you!” yelled Paula.

“You have to talk loudly because Andrei is so big and we're so small. If your voice is too soft, he won't be able to hear you,” Sofia explained.

KJ and Cole nodded while Paula introduced them, “We have new friends today. These are KJ and Cole. They are koalas from Australia.”

Andrei swam closer to the shore to get a better look at the two little animals.

“It's very nice to meet you,” said Andrei in a low voice. “You're both so tiny! You're even smaller than Sofia’s little brother.”

“And you're huge!” said Cole.

“How in the world did you become friends?” KJ asked Sofia and Paula.

“Oh! I love this story!” Sofia said excitedly.

“Oh, hearing about it makes me feel so shy,” said Andrei.

“Goodness! You shouldn't be shy!” said Paula.

Sofia started, “Once, while Paula and I were exploring, we decided to take a little swim. We were having so much fun that we ended up swimming the whole morning! When we came back on the ice, we were both so tired. We fell asleep on the edge of the glacier.”

Paula continued, “When we woke up, we realized that the glacier we had fallen asleep on broke away and floated into the sea. Of course, we could have swum back to the shore, but we didn't know where we were! We looked around but all we could see was water.”

Sofia jumped in and added, “I almost cried but Paula was really brave. She suggested that we start shouting together. So we shouted and shouted until our throats were itchy. That's when Andrei came and saved us!”

Paula finished the story, “Being such a strong and helpful whale, he pushed the glacier we were on. He pushed and pushed until we reached the shore! It was amazing!”


The young koala turned to Andrei and said, “You're very brave!”

“It was nothing,” said the whale shyly.

“It sounded amazing!” Cole exclaimed.
Andrei smiled at the little koala. “I did that because it was the right thing. Whenever you see someone in trouble and you can help, you should. And when you share a habitat with other animals, you should protect each other.”

“I know someone who is just as brave as you,” Cole said proudly.

“Really? Who?” asked Andrei.

“My sister! When the bushfire burned down our forest in Australia, she bravely volunteered to look for a new home for everyone. Even though she still has to take care of me, she wanted to take care of everyone else too,” the little koala explained.

“Oh, Cole,” KJ said softly.

“He's right,” Paula said with a smile. Then the polar bear shared KJ and Cole's story since the young koala felt like she was about to cry. Andrei listened carefully and by the end of the tale, the big whale had tears in his eyes too.

“Sadly, I don't think Antarctica is the place for us,” KJ said. “It's such a shame because you're all so wonderful!”

“But you did promise all your other friends that you would visit them, right?” Paula asked.

“You should make that promise to us too!” said Sofia.

“We promise!” Cole exclaimed.

Since it was already getting dark, KJ and Cole decided to continue with their journey. Before they left, they said tearful goodbyes to their new friends. Even though Antarctica is a plain, white continent, the two koalas had a very colorful adventure there.
Chapter 5: The Fierce Animals of North America

KJ and Cole meet a group of animals who are fighting with each other—an eagle, an alligator, and a rattlesnake. KJ tells Cole to hide while she tries her best to stop the animals from fighting. Then, KJ helps them get along.

A Noise in the Woods

After coming from a cold and icy continent, the two koalas were happy to find a forest. Cole hung onto his sister's back as she climbed up one of the trees. When they were safely at the top, Cole sat onto one of the tree's branches.

“Where are we now, Sis?” asked the little koala.

“We are in one of the forests in North America,” KJ replied.

While traveling, KJ heard that both North and South America had many forests. Since she, her brother, and all the other animals back home came from a forest, KJ thought that one of the forests here would be good enough for them.

“It's beautiful here,” Cole said.

KJ smiled in agreement. This was the first time that she felt like she found a place that could be their home. “But something is strange,” she said.

“What?” asked her brother.

“It's just kind of strange that we haven't met any animals yet,” KJ said.

“Oh. You're right. Maybe all the animals here are nocturnal?” Cole suggested.

“I don't know. For now, let's eat!” said the young koala.

This immediately cheered her brother up. Both koalas already missed eating eucalyptus leaves but they were also having fun trying different leaves out. Since the forest was full of trees, KJ ate comfortably. She didn't worry about humans finding them and she didn't worry about dangerous animals either because they couldn't hear anyone else in the forest. Maybe her brother was right. Maybe all of the animals in North America only came
out at night.

After eating, the two koalas prepared to sleep. Just as they did back home, they hugged the trunk of the tree and slept soundly. Right before KJ fell asleep, she heard her brother snoring soundly on the branch above hers.

The two koalas woke up a few hours later when they heard a very loud sound.

“KJ?” Cole called out.

“I’m here, Cole.”

“Wh-what was that?” asked the little koala.

“I don’t know,” answered KJ.

She looked around but didn't see anyone or anything moving in the forest. She was about to go back to sleep when she heard a loud rattling sound from the ground.

“Th-there it is again,” Cole said.

“I heard it too. Do you think it's some kind of animal?” KJ wondered.

“But... if it is an animal, won't we hear their voice? What kind of sound is that?” Cole asked. He looked very worried.

“Let me check it out,” KJ said.

“I want to come, please,” Cole begged.

“No. You stay here. I have to climb down. I think the sound came from down there,” the young koala whispered.

Even though KJ felt a little bit afraid, she wanted to show her brother that there was nothing to worry about. She didn't want to take Cole though, because if there was something dangerous out there, she wouldn't be able to move fast enough if he was on her back.

“I want to go with you,” Cole insisted.

KJ smiled at her brother, “You're very brave. But it's probably nothing. I will check it out and when I find what or who is making the sound, I will come back for you. Who knows? We might meet a new friend soon.”

When Cole finally agreed to stay behind, KJ climbed down the tree carefully. From the
ground, she looked up and saw her brother staring at her from the branch he was sitting on. The young koala gave her brother a big smile. She waved at him and he waved back.

**Fighting Animals**

KJ waited until Cole hid behind the tree trunk before she started looking for whatever made the sound. The young koala wondered why the forest was so quiet. Except; of course, for the loud sound that woke them up.

She wondered if her brother was right and all the animals here were nocturnal. KJ thought about a lot of things while she listened. She waited for the sound to come again, but it didn't. Now, she wondered if she and her brother only imagined the sound in the forest.

KJ was about to go back to her brother when she heard a rattling sound followed by a loud snapping sound. The young koala felt a bit scared. What if the sound came from something dangerous? What if the sound came from humans?

The young koala tried to be as quiet as she could be. She followed the sound until she heard voices.

“I told you! There's nothing out there to hunt!” said one voice.

“We made a deal. I saved you from drowning in the swamp and you promised to bring me food for one month,” said another voice.

“If you two keep fighting, someone will hear you,” said a third voice. Strangely, the third voice sounded like it came from the top of one of the trees.

KJ looked up. She tried to see who or what was talking in the tree. But it was getting dark and she couldn't see. KJ walked closer to the sound of the voices until she reached a clearing.

The young koala hid behind one of the trees. She peeked into the clearing and saw two animals on the ground.

One of them looked like Karla, her alligator friend back home. The other one looked like a snake with a strange-looking tale. When the snake moved, it shook its tail and made a rattling noise.

“So that's what we heard,” KJ whispered to herself.
The alligator looked up at the bird, “You had better be quiet. Just because you're up there, doesn't mean you can say anything.”

Now that she was closer to the arguing animals, KJ looked up again in the direction the alligator was speaking. This time, she saw some kind of bird perched on one of the branches. The bird looked upset.

The alligator turned to the snake again and asked, “Why are you so quiet all of a sudden?”

“I... smell something,” said the snake.

“What?” asked the alligator and the bird together.

“I don't know. It's something I have never smelled before,” the snake said.

“Where?” asked the alligator.

The snake flicked its tongue out while looking around the clearing. Then she pointed toward the tree where KJ was hiding and said, “I think something is hiding behind that tree.”

KJ's eyes grew wide as she realized that they were about to find her. The young koala turned around slowly. She was about to run away when she saw the bird behind her! She was shocked to see that the bird was so big!

“Gotcha,” said the bird with a smile. “Don't you know that it's rude to listen to other animals while they're talking?”

“I-I'm sorry. I didn't mean to listen. I'm new here. I heard a strange sound in the forest and I was looking for what made it,” KJ said.

“Well, you found us,” said the bird. Before KJ could do anything else, the bird grabbed the young koala by the arm. She screeched and flew into the clearing.

“Aaaaah!” KJ screamed.

The bird flew back to the alligator and the snake. Then she dropped KJ right between them.

The bird screeched again and said, “Look what I found!”

Stop Fighting!
“Dinner!” the alligator exclaimed.

“No! Please!” cried KJ.

“Whoa. It can talk,” said the snake. “What... are you?”

“I-I'm a koala from Australia,” KJ said shakily. She was so scared. She was also worried about her brother whom she left behind. At the same time, she was relieved that she didn't take Cole along with her.

“Australia? That's really far,” said the bird.

“Yeah,” said the alligator as she snapped her jaws.

KJ was shaking. The snake slithered closer, “What's your name, koala?”

“K-KJ,” she answered.

“Don't be afraid,” said the alligator. This time, she gave a big, toothy smile.

“Do you think smiling like that will make her feel less afraid, especially after you called her 'dinner' as soon as you saw her?” asked the bird.

“I was just kidding,” said the alligator. “I'm just so hungry. But I wouldn't want to eat a koala.”

The snake shook her tail loudly, which made the other two animals stop talking. She turned to KJ and flicked her tongue out a few times.

“You're the little animal I smelled. You were hiding in the trees,” she said.

“Y-yes. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to listen to you while you were arguing. But you're the first animals I have seen in this forest,” KJ explained.

“It feels like we're the only animals left in this forest,” sighed the alligator. "It's a wonder we haven't eaten one another yet.”

The bird flew down and landed on a big rock. “My name is Eve and I'm an eagle. This is Amy, she's an alligator. And this is Rhea, she's a rattlesnake. It might be surprising to you, but we are friends.”

“Friends?” KJ asked.

Amy laughed out loud and said, “Yes. We're friends. These two just keep picking fights with me.”
“Us? You're the one who always starts fights!” Rhea exclaimed.

“She's right,” Eve agreed.

“Fine. But it's only because I'm so hungry,” said Amy.

“Why are you always hungry?” asked KJ.

“I'm a predator. We all are. And as you said, there are hardly any animals left in this forest. If we're the only animals you have seen, it must be worse than I thought,” Amy said.

“Where are the other animals?” KJ asked.

“Gone,” said Rhea.

“It's all because of those humans,” said Eve. “This forest used to be filled with animals. But they started chopping down trees and laying different kinds of traps. Soon, everyone decided to leave.”

“That's so sad,” said KJ. “No wonder this forest is quiet.”

“We're the only ones left and we keep fighting, especially about food,” Rhea said.

“I'm sorry,” KJ said. “Maybe you should try speaking calmly to each other?”

“What do you mean?” Amy asked.

“Well, when my brother and I— KJ began.

“You have a brother?” Rhea interrupted excitedly.

“Yes. I left him somewhere in the forest. I can introduce him to you but first, you have to learn how to speak calmly. My brother is still young and if he hears the three of you fight, you will scare him off,” the young koala explained.

“Oh,” said the three animals together.

“I would like to meet your little brother. It's always nice to meet new animals,” said Amy.

The other two agreed. KJ quickly explained why they were so far from home. Her story touched the hearts of the three animals. They wanted to learn how to be calmer too. Since KJ was a very calm animal, she was the perfect teacher for them.
The three animals stood around KJ with smiles on their faces. When she didn’t say anything, Rhea asked, “So... how do we learn how to speak calmly?”

“I think,” began the koala, “we need to fix your problem first.”

“What problem?” asked Amy.

“Well, when I first came here, you three were fighting with each other,” KJ said.

“Oh, right,” said Eve sheepishly.

“Why were you fighting anyway?” asked KJ.

Amy explained that a few weeks ago, she saved Rhea when she fell into the swamp. Unlike other snakes, Rhea was afraid of water so she just froze. If Amy hadn’t helped her, Rhea would have drowned. Since then, Rhea promised Amy that she would always bring her yummy food to eat.

Rhea and Eve were best friends. After hearing how Amy helped Rhea, Eve made the same promise. But it had been two weeks already. Neither Rhea nor Eve had brought any food for Amy. There were very few animals in the forest and it was difficult to hunt. Still, Amy expected them to keep their promise.

“Oh,” said KJ after the story.

“Anyway, we're fine now. We always argue like that,” Amy said with a laugh.

“But... it's not nice to fight with your friends, especially when there are very few of you left here in the forest. You should be nicer to each other,” KJ said.

“She's right. My mom used to say that to my siblings and me when we were still young,” Rhea said.

“Okay, okay,” said Amy.

“What should we do then?” asked Eve.

“Before I teach you how to be calmer, why don't you apologize to each other first?” suggested the young koala.
The three animals looked at each other. One by one, they apologized. Amy went first followed by Eve, then Rhea. They all felt better afterward and thanked KJ for encouraging them to apologize. They also promised to try not to fight anymore.

“After learning how to be more mindful, I don’t think you will be fighting anymore,” said KJ.

“What does being mindful mean?” asked Rhea.

“It means that you are more aware of the things happening around you. If you can do that, you will also learn how to become calmer, more patient, and more understanding. When that happens, you will get along better. Not just with each other, but with other animals in the forest too,” the young koala explained.

“How do we become more mindful?” asked Amy.

“One very simple thing you can do is to breathe deeply. It's easy! Just breathe in, hold your breath for a few seconds, and breathe out. Let's try it,” KJ said.

The young koala showed them how to do it first. She breathed in deeply and held her breath for about five seconds before breathing out. She did that three more times. Then she asked the three animals to breathe deeply with her.

“Wow! I feel even better!” said Eve. “I already felt happier after apologizing to you. Now, I feel... super calm!”

“Me too!” said Rhea.

“And me!” Amy added.

“Whenever you feel angry, sad, or upset, you should try breathing deeply before doing or saying anything. Sometimes, when we are feeling bad, we do and say things that hurt others. Things that we can't take back. But by doing that simple exercise, you can avoid being hurtful,” KJ said.

“We'll try to remember that,” said Rhea with a smile.

“Now that we're calmer, can we meet your little brother?” asked Eve.

“Okay. Let me just pick him up,” said KJ.

The young koala left the three animals in the clearing. As she walked away, she heard them speaking with each other. This time, they were having a pleasant conversation.
The Value of Friendship

KJ felt a lot happier as she headed back to where she left her brother. When she reached the tree where Cole was waiting for her, she called out to him from the ground, “Cole! Are you awake?”

A few seconds later, her brother's tiny head popped out from behind the trunk of the tree. He smiled down at her and said, “KJ! I’m so glad you’re back! Are you okay? You were gone for a long time.”

“I’m fine. I met some new animals. Why don’t you try to climb down so we can go see them? KJ said.

“Climb down? O-on my own?” asked the little koala.

“Yes,” said KJ proudly. “I know you can do it. And if you fall, which I don't think you will, I will be here to catch you.”

“Okay,” Cole said. Even though he felt a bit scared, knowing that KJ believed in him made the little koala feel warm and fuzzy inside. He held on tight to the trunk of the tree and climbed down very slowly.

“Am I almost there?” he called out halfway down the tree trunk.

“Yes! And you’re doing great!” said KJ. She sounded very happy.

Minutes later, Cole's paw touched the ground. He let go of the tree trunk with a surprised look on his face, “I did it.”

“You did!” KJ exclaimed as she hugged her brother tightly.

“I can't believe it! I climbed down a tree by myself!” said the little koala.

“That’s another story you can share with everyone back home,” said KJ.

“Yes! Wait until I tell the other koalas,” said Cole excitedly. “Now that I’m here, can we go see your new friends?”

Together, the two koalas went to the clearing where the three animals waited. When Cole saw Amy, he ran and hugged her.

“Oh!” said Amy. “It's nice to meet you too, little one.”
KJ laughed. “Cole, that’s not Karla! That’s Amy. She’s an alligator too.”

“Oh,” said Cole as he backed away from Amy looking embarrassed, “I’m sorry.”

“No trouble at all. I liked your hug,” said the alligator with a toothy smile.

“Now I’ll introduce you to Rhea and Eve,” KJ said while pointing to the other two animals.

“Hello. It’s nice to meet you,” said Cole.

“Now that you’re back, what else would you like to know?” Eve asked.

KJ said, “Since there are very few animals in this forest, it looks like a good place for us to stay, right?”

“Sorry to burst your bubble,” said Amy. “The truth is, all the other animals left because the humans are about to take over this forest.”

“What do you mean?” asked Cole.

“As we have told you, the humans are cutting down trees everywhere. We think they want to build homes here. But I don't think they like trees. The other animals have been telling us to move away but the three of us don't want to,” said Eve.

Rhea sighed, “But it's only a matter of time before we have to leave too. Otherwise, we might end up being caught by those humans.”

KJ and Cole looked at each other. They both remembered the stories of humans catching animals and bringing them to zoos.

“Much as we want you and the other animals in Australia to live here, I’m afraid we have to tell you to find another place to live,” Amy said.

“Why don't you try going to one of the forests in South America? That continent is right next to this one,” suggested Rhea.

“I guess we have no choice,” KJ said.

KJ and Cole thanked their new friends. They also wished the three animals luck in finding a new home. There were two more continents to go so the two koalas kept moving.
Chapter 6: The Exotic Animals of South America

KJ and Cole travel to South America. While they munch on berries, the two koalas see a beautiful toucan named Elyse land on a tree. Elyse introduces the koalas to Manny and Bella who also live in the rainforest.

A Colorful Forest

The forest they arrived at was such a beautiful place. There were tall trees with leaves of different sizes and shapes. There were flowers of different colors and the forest itself was alive with roars, caws, screeches, and other animal sounds.

“This place is beautiful!” said Cole.

“I know. I wonder what kinds of animals we will meet here,” said KJ.

“Before we look for other animals to meet, can we please try the leaves here first?” Cole begged.

KJ felt very hungry too. She nodded and asked, “Which one should we try?”

Cole pointed to one of the trees, which had long leaves. He wanted to try those leaves. They both climbed the tree and started eating.

The leaves tasted sweet and earthy. Of course, the two koalas still missed their favorite leaves. While eating, they talked about how great it would be to live in South America. This forest was amazing and they couldn't think of any reason not to move here. After meeting the animals of this forest, they would go home and tell their friends.

The two koalas ate a lot of leaves from the tree. With the abundance of trees in this forest, they wondered if there were eucalyptus trees here too. If the forest had their favorite type of tree, this place would be perfect.

While they enjoyed their lunch, they heard a rustling sound behind them. The two koalas turned around and saw a beautiful bird. She had shiny black feathers all over her body and a huge, colorful beak. Cole said that she was the most beautiful bird he had ever seen before.
“Why thank you!” said the bird. She looked at the two koalas. Cole hid behind his sister because he felt embarrassed.

“Why are you hiding little one?” asked the bird.

KJ chuckled softly, “He's a bit shy. He didn't think you could hear him.”

“I see. I have lived in this forest my whole life but I think this is the first time I have seen animals such as you,” said the bird.

“We're koalas. My name is KJ and this Cole, my brother.”

“Koalas. I didn't know that there were koalas in our forest. You really do learn new things every day,” said the beautiful bird.

She bowed her head as she said, “My name is Elyse. I am a toucan.”

“You really are beautiful,” KJ said admiringly.

“All creatures are beautiful, my dear,” said Elyse.

The toucan noticed that Cole was still hiding so she said, “Come out from behind your sister. You don't have to be shy, little one.”

Cole slowly stepped out from behind his sister and smiled at the toucan. “We're not really from here.”

“Oh?” asked Elyse.

“We're from Australia,” said Cole.

“The land down under?”

“Yes. We have traveled a long way to find a new home for ourselves and the other animals in our forest,” KJ explained.

“You... left your home? I could never imagine leaving my home to live anywhere else. I love this forest!” Elyse exclaimed.

“We love our forest too!” Cole said defensively.

“Then why on earth would you travel so far just to find a new forest?” Elyse asked.
The young koala sighed. For the fifth time, she told the story of their home. The toucan listened carefully as KJ shared all the details of her tale. By the end of it, Elyse had tears in her eyes.

“I have never heard a sadder story in my life,” she said

**Sleeping On a Branch**

“I am so sorry for you and your friends,” Elyse said sadly.

“Thank you. We have been traveling to different continents but we haven't found a place to call our own yet. I feel like we have been rushing through these last few days to find what we’re looking for,” KJ said.

“You must be so tired!” exclaimed Elyse.

KJ and Cole nodded. The little koala continued, “It wasn't that bad though. At least we were able to make a lot of friends on the way.”

“Do you think that rushing through the different continents will make it easier for you to find a home?” asked the toucan.

“We don't have a choice,” said KJ sadly. “We don't even know if the bushfire is still burning or not.”

The toucan was quiet for a while. Then she shook her head and said, “I have someone to introduce you to. He is the wisest animal in this forest. Come, follow me.”

Elyse hopped from one branch to another. KJ and Cole could keep up with her easily because she didn't just rush off. Instead, she waited for them as they moved slowly.

After a few minutes, Elyse hopped onto a tree branch and said, “Here he is.”

KJ and Cole looked around but they couldn't see any animals. KJ wondered if Elyse was talking about a small insect who was hidden in the leaves. KJ was about to ask Elyse where the animal was. Then the plant hanging on the branch where Elyse was perched moved very slowly.

“Whoa,” said Cole.
They heard the animal yawn as he turned his little brown head toward them. The animal smiled and said, “Hello... Who... are... you?”

“Manny! I am here too,” said Elyse.

The animal slowly looked up and smiled. “Elyse! It's... nice... to... see... you... again.”

“Why is he talking like that?” Cole whispered to his sister.

KJ shrugged but Elyse answered his question, “This is Manny and he is a sloth. Like all other sloths in the world, Manny likes to take things slow.”

Elyse turned back to Manny and said, “These are koalas. The big one is named KJ and the little one is named Cole.”

Slowly, the sloth turned to them and said, “It's... wonderful... to... meet... you... two.”

“It's wonderful to meet you too, Manny,” KJ replied.

While the two koalas watched the sloth in amazement, Elyse told him KJ and Cole's story. When she was done with the story, the smile had disappeared from the sloth's face.

“How... terrible!” he said. “And... you... two... have... traveled... so... far... What... do... you... plan... to... do... now?”

“Well, we love it here and we wanted to make this forest our new home,” said KJ.

“Wow! You... made... that... decision... so... quickly,” said Manny.

“Yes, well. After rushing through four other continents in just a few days, a quick decision was easy,” KJ said.

“This place is perfect for us,” said Cole.

“Why... do... you... think... it's... perfect?” Manny asked.

“It has different kinds of trees and the animals here are nice,” KJ said.

“But... there... are... plenty... of... predators... too,” said Manny.

“Predators?” asked Cole.

“Yes. In this forest, there are jaguars, cougars, snakes, and other dangerous predators. We are all used to them. We know how to protect ourselves. Do you think you can protect yourselves from the predators here too?” Elyse explained.
“I didn't think about that,” said KJ.

Manny said, “It's... much... easier... to... make... quick... decisions... but... those... decisions... aren't... always... the... best... ones.”

**Slow but Sure**

KJ thought about what the sloth said while her brother looked closely at the sloth. “Do you have... moss on your fur?”

“Yes,” said Manny with a smile.

“Why? And how does moss grow all over you?” Cole asked.

“I... stay... still... for... long... periods... of... time... That... allows... the... moss... to... grow...” said Manny. Then he took a deep breath and continued, “As... for... why... I... let... moss... grow... on... my... fur... it... keeps... me... hidden... in... the... trees.”

“That's one of the ways sloths keep themselves safe from the predators I told you about,” Elyse said.

“Oh,” said KJ and Cole together.

“Being all gray like that, you really stand out in the forest,” said Elyse.

“Sometimes,” said Manny, “mommy... sloths... who... have... cubs... on... their... backs... allow... their... cubs... to... eat... the... moss... too.”

“Yuck! What does moss taste like?” Cole asked with wide eyes.

“Cole!” KJ exclaimed. “It's not polite to say such things. If sloths eat moss, that's okay. Some animals don't like eucalyptus leaves even though we love them.”

“You're right,” said the little koala. He turned to Manny and apologized.

“That's... okay... little... koala,” said Manny.

KJ couldn't stop staring at Manny. He seemed so relaxed. Ever since KJ and Cole left Australia, she had been feeling very bad about everything. Now, she just wanted to be like Manny—a sloth hanging from a tree branch.
“Are... you... okay?” the sloth asked when he saw KJ staring at him.

“Oh, yes. I'm sorry for staring. It's just that... you seem so happy and relaxed,” said KJ warmly.

“These two have been through a lot, Manny,” Elyse said.

“Well... then... you... deserve... to... take... a... break,” Manny replied.

“What do you mean?” asked KJ.

“Come... and... hang... on... this... branch... with... me,” he said.

KJ did as she was told. Cole watched as his sister carefully climbed onto the branch Manny was hanging from and hung next to him.

“This is kind of comfortable,” she said.

“Now... close... your... eyes... and... try... not... to... think... of... anything,” said Manny.

Again, KJ did as she was told. There were many thoughts to get rid of but she tried her best. Soon, KJ felt so relaxed that she fell asleep.

“Sis?” asked Cole.

“I think she's sleeping already,” said Elyse.

“Oh. What should I do now?” asked the little koala.

“Do you want to explore the forest with me?” the toucan asked.

“Of course,” Cole agreed. Now that he knew that they weren't going to live in South America, he wanted to see more of the forest. When they went to Africa, Europe, Antarctica, and North America, they weren't able to explore as much as they would have liked.

Cole was always worried about his sister. She was determined to find a new place to call their home. He loved that about her. But he was also glad that she could rest while he explored with his new friend.

Cole followed Elyse from one branch to the next. He listened while she talked about the different animals who lived in the forest, and how much she loved this home of hers. Elyse was so thankful to be born on this continent.
When she was young, she wondered what it would be like to live somewhere else. But now, there was no place she would rather be.

By the time Elyse finished sharing stories of her life, they were back in the tree where Manny and KJ were sleeping.

“Isn't that strange,” said a voice from one of the branches. “There's a koala hanging on the branch next to Manny.”

**The Exotic Iguana**

Cole and Elyse were surprised to see a little iguana on the trunk of the tree. She was bright green in color and she had huge eyes. The iguana looked at Elyse then at Cole.

“And there's another one!”

“Hello,” said Cole with a smile.

“Hi. You're a koala, aren't you? I didn't know that there were koalas in this forest,” said the iguana.

“He's from Australia. And that koala next to Manny is his sister,” said Elyse.

“My name is Cole and my sister's name is KJ. That's Elyse. She's a toucan and she lives here too,” said the little koala.

“My name is Bella,” said the iguana.

She looked at Elyse and said, “I have seen you plenty of times before but this is the first time I've spoken to you.”

“But you know Manny?” asked Elyse.

“Yes. He's my friend. We have been friends for a long time now. Whenever I have problems, I come and talk to Manny. He's always so relaxed and he's good at slowing things down,” Bella explained.

“That's true. He was able to convince my sister to sleep,” said Cole.

“I don't understand that,” said Bella.
Together, the toucan and the little koala shared the tale with Bella. When they were done, Elyse asked, “Do you have any advice for Cole and his sister?”

Bella thought for a moment before saying, “How will I give advice to both of them when his sister is still sleeping? Then she won’t be able to hear me.”

“Oh, right,” said Elyse, looking embarrassed. “Let's just wait for them to wake up then.”

“Why are you here?” asked Cole.

“I just wanted to talk to Manny. Unlike all the other animals in this forest, he doesn't just rush through things. He takes his time and I enjoy listening to him,” said Bella.

While waiting for the koala and the sloth to wake up, Bella, Elyse, and Cole shared more stories with each other. Elyse talked about her siblings, Bella talked about her adventures in the forest, and Cole talked about his home.

They were having so much fun talking with each other that they forgot about their friends on the branch. When the sun started to set, Cole saw his sister moving. She yawned, opened her eyes, and smiled at Cole.

“You look relaxed,” Cole said with a chuckle.

KJ climbed back up the branch and said, “That was the best nap I have ever had since we left our home!”

“I'm glad you were able to rest. You're even smiling now. I mean, really smiling,” said Cole.

KJ smiled even wider. She grabbed her little brother and gave him a big hug. That's when KJ noticed the iguana on the tree trunk. She was staring at the young koala with huge, yellow eyes.

“Oh! Hello,” said KJ.

“Hello, KJ. It's nice to see you awake,” said Bella.

“You... know my name?” KJ asked.

“Yes. I told her your name. We have been talking to each other while you were sleeping,” Cole explained.

“Now that KJ is awake, can you give your advice?” Elyse asked the iguana.

Bella looked at KJ and asked, “Will you listen to my advice?”
Being Grateful

The young koala was surprised by the iguana's question. KJ had always listened to the advice given to her by the animals who cared about her. She thought about all of the advice given to her by the other animals she met on the other continents. She remembered her friends back home who always told her to be careful because they knew how adventurous she was.

She remembered how Erin the elephant reminded her of the importance of family. She also remembered how Zane the lynx gave her advice about choosing happiness. Then she thought about Andrei's message of protecting each other no matter what.

Even the three animals who were arguing in North America gave her advice. They told her to look for a new home because it wasn't safe in their forest anymore.

Confidently, the young koala said, “Yes. I will listen to your advice. I would appreciate it very much.”

“Okay,” said Bella. “My advice to you is to go home.”

“What?” Elyse said with surprise.

KJ and Cole were surprised too. They didn't expect Bella to tell them to go home. Cole felt bad as he thought that Bella liked him. Now, she just wanted them to go back home. KJ felt bad too since she finally found a place that was a lot like their home. But now, this little iguana wanted them to leave.

“Why would you say such a thing when you know that their home burned down?” Elyse asked angrily.

“Did it burn down? All of it? The whole forest?” Bella asked.

“Well... I don't know,” said KJ.

“I listened carefully to Cole's story. He said that when you left, the bushfire was still burning. But he didn't say anything about the whole forest burning down,” Bella continued.

“That's true,” said KJ. “We aren't really sure if everything was burned or if the bushfire stopped burning when we left.”
“If that's the case, why should you find a new home? Don't you love the home you grew up in?” Bella asked.

For the first time in a long time, KJ and Cole were very quiet. Cole thought about all of the trees there and all of his friends too. KJ thought about the forest, the animals, and all of the wonderful memories she had while growing up.

“Are you okay?” Elyse asked.

She was staring at them with a worried look on her face. She turned to Bella and snapped her beak. “You're very mean. These two koalas have been through so much and that's how you talk to them?”

“It's okay,” KJ said. “She's right. We left in such a rush that we don't even know if our home is still there. Now that I think about it, I don't think we even asked the other animals if they want to move to a different home.”

“Bella... isn't... mean,” said Manny.

Everyone was surprised. They didn't hear him wake up.

“She... just... knows... how... to... take... things... slow... and... that... helps... her... see... everything... clearly,” Manny said.

With a smile, Bella said, “I learned from the best.”

KJ and Cole thanked their new friends. They realized that they needed to go back home and see their forest first. But they had only one more continent to visit so they decided to go there before going home to Australia.
Chapter 7: The Wise Animals of Asia

KJ and Cole travel to Asia, the last continent on their list. Here, they meet a panda, a tortoise, and a tarsier. The animals help KJ and Cole realize that Australia will always be their home.

The Bamboo Forest

While KJ and Cole traveled to Asia, they talked about all of the places they had visited. With each new friend they met, the two furry animals learned new things. In South America, they met a very honest iguana named Bella who advised them to go back home to Australia instead of looking for a new home for all of their animal friends.

“Bella was a very smart little iguana,” KJ said.

“Yeah,” said Cole. “But when she first told us to go home, I thought she just didn't want us there.”

“Me too,” said KJ with a soft laugh.

The young koala was about to say something else when Cole pointed toward something amazing in front of them. “Look at that, Sis!”

KJ turned in the direction where her brother was pointing. She saw a beautiful forest. But instead of trees, the forest had plenty of plants with tall, thin stems, and long leaves. It was such a beautiful and quiet place that the koala siblings started whispering to each other.

“I wonder what kind of plants these are,” KJ said.

“They're so tall. And there are so many of them!” Cole replied softly.

As they explored the forest, they saw a big animal sitting on the ground. The animal was facing away from the little koalas and it sounded like she was eating something. Quietly, KJ and Cole walked closer.
They walked up to the animal and smiled. Instead of greeting them, the animal continued eating. Her eyes were closed and she was humming happily as she munched on the leaves of the plants around her.

KJ cleared her throat and said, “Um... Hello there.”

“Oh my!” said the animal. She opened her eyes in surprise. KJ and Cole saw that the animal was black and white. She was really huge!

“We're sorry for startling you,” said KJ sheepishly.

The animal giggled and said, “Don't worry about it. My friends say that I get startled too easily.” She brushed off some leaves from her fur; stood up, and gave them a big bow.

“Hello. My name is Lily and I am a panda.”

“It's lovely to meet you, Lily. My name is KJ.”

“And my name is Cole.”

“You two are such cute... rats?” Lily asked.

“We're not rats! We're koalas!” Cole exclaimed.

“Oh my! I am so sorry. I have never met koalas before. Are you from another forest? Or are you from the desert?” asked the panda.

“We're from Australia,” KJ said with a smile.

“Australia? Isn't that a different continent?” Lily wondered.

“Yes. We have traveled far to find... well, I guess we have traveled far just to see different places and learn new things,” said KJ.

As the panda sat back down, KJ and Cole told her their story. When they were done, tears were falling down Lily's cheeks. She felt so bad for them that she took handfuls of leaves from the plants around her and offered them to the koala siblings. They were both very hungry so they happily took the leaves.

A Tiny New Friend
“These are delicious!” Cole exclaimed as he ate handfuls of leaves.

“What do you call these plants?” KJ asked.

“These are bamboo plants. There are so many of them here that this place is named the Bamboo Forest,” Lily explained.

“I only eat bamboo leaves, and because of my size, I need to eat a lot! So there is no other place for me to live but here. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have my bamboo.”

“We were the same way. When Cole and I lived in our forest, we always stayed in our eucalyptus grove. We seldom ate anything besides eucalyptus leaves. But since we left, we have had to eat different kinds of plants,” said KJ.

“These bamboo leaves are definitely my favorite,” Cole said happily.

“I'm glad you like them. Eat some more. There is plenty more where those came from,” said the panda warmly.

While the three animals talked and ate, they heard a tiny voice coming from the top of one of the bamboo stalks.

“Will you never stop eating?”

The three animals looked up and saw a tiny animal hugging one of the bamboo stalks. She was brown, fuzzy, and had huge eyes.

“A tarsier!” said Lily excitedly. “I have always wanted to meet a tarsier before. Hello, my name is Lily.”

“Hello, Lily. Actually, I already know you. I often watch you munch endlessly on bamboo leaves but I was always afraid to talk to you,” said the tiny animal.

“Why?” asked the panda.

“You're just so... huge! And I'm so tiny. I thought you would eat me. But then, I saw you make friends with these two koalas. Now I know that you're very nice,” the little animal explained.

Instead of getting upset, Lily giggled. She said, “Well, I'm glad you finally decided to talk to me.”
“My name is Indri,” said the tarsier. “I heard what you said about your home. I'm very sorry. I hope that when you go back to Australia, you discover that the bushfire didn't burn everything down.”

“Thank you, Indri. And we hope so too,” said KJ warmly.

“Did you really go to all of the continents around the world?” Indri asked.

“Yes!” said Cole. “It was a lot of fun but it was very tiring too. My sister and I were very lucky to have met such amazing animals along the way.”

“You are very lucky indeed,” said Lily after swallowing a mouthful of bamboo leaves.

“And so brave!” said Indri. “I would never have the courage to leave this forest.”

“I would,” said Lily, “but humans would notice me right away because of my size!”

“That's true,” said KJ, “That's also one of the reasons why my friends Karla and Codi couldn't come along. Karla is an alligator and Codi is a kangaroo. They're too big to travel and they have important things to do back home.”

“Do you miss your home?” Indri asked.

**The Wise Tortoise**

KJ and Cole looked at each other. The young koala sighed, “Yes. We miss our home very much.”

“Oh, dear,” said Lily. She stood up and gave each of them a tight hug. The panda was surprisingly gentle and Cole loved her hug.

“Thank you,” said Cole.

“You're welcome, little darling,” said Lily. “I remember when my little baby was still as small as you. Her name is Mimi and she was adorable.”

“Where is she now?” KJ asked.

“Oh, the humans took her to a zoo. They bring me to the zoo to see her once in a while. She's doing well but she misses this forest,” Lily said with a smile.
“And... you’re okay with that?” Cole asked.

“I can't do anything about it. I am thankful that they didn't take my baby away forever. I am also thankful that the humans still take me to the zoo to see her,” said the panda with a sad smile.

“Now I feel bad for you,” Indri said.

“You don't have to feel bad for me, little tarsier. I am happy. I am loved. I am free. There are many things to be thankful for,” Lily said.

“I have never met such a wise animal before,” KJ observed.

The panda giggled. For such a big animal, her giggle was very soft and high-pitched. It made everyone smile.

“Can you please help me down?” Indri asked suddenly. “I'm getting tired from hanging here and there's a big rock next to you. Can you please place me on that rock?”

“Of course!” said Lily. She took the little tarsier from the bamboo stalk and placed her on the rock gently.

Then the panda touched the rock and said, “What a strange texture. Come and see. This rock has a pattern on it.”

Indri watched while KJ and Cole walked toward the rock. They were all surprised when it started moving! Out of one end of the rock, a head came out and on the back, a tail popped out. On the sides of the rock, four legs came out slowly. The head turned to them. They saw a smiling face of a tortoise.

“Hello, everyone. My name is Charli.”

“Wow! This time, we were all startled!” Cole exclaimed.

Lily giggled while Indri jumped on Lily's fur in surprise. The tortoise laughed softly. He apologized for startling them and told Indri that it was okay for her to sit on his shell. He looked at the animals one by one. When he saw KJ, his smile disappeared. The young koala's eyes were wet with tears.

“Are you okay? I didn't mean to startle you. I was sleeping. I woke up from the sound of your voices. I tried to come out of my shell as gently as possible so I wouldn't scare anyone. I'm very sorry,” said Charli.
“I'm not sad because you startled me, Charli,” KJ assured the tortoise. She wiped the tears from her eyes and sighed again. The young koala told the other animals that she was reminded of someone who was very close to her.

**Sweet Memories**

Cole hugged his sister and asked, “Do I know the animal you remember?”

KJ smiled at her little brother while shaking her head, “You were still a little joey when I met my friend. His name was Charli too, and he was a wallaby. They had just come from a different part of our forest, which was too noisy for them. So they decided to move to our grove. Mom, Dad, and all the other koalas welcomed them to our eucalyptus grove.

Charli was a very shy wallaby, but when I introduced myself to him, we became friends right away. We played together, shared our food, and we even slept in the same branch sometimes. Of course, I had to help him climb up since his parents slept on the ground.” Charli’s parents were very nice too. They always allowed KJ and Charli to play together.

“It sounds like you and Charlie were very close,” Lily said.

“Yes, we became best friends,” KJ remembered. “I even asked him if he was part koala. That was a fun day. When I asked him that, he pretended to be a koala for the rest of the day. All the other koalas found him funny, even Mom and Dad.”

“What happened to Charli?” Cole asked.

Tears came to KJ's eyes again. She wiped them away and said, “His whole family moved away. One morning, Charli told me that his parents heard of a place called Papua New Guinea where there were other wallabies too. So, they decided to take my best friend and move there. They left that day and I never saw him again.”

“That's so sad,” Indri said. Her big eyes were wet with tears too.

“Well,” said Charli, “there is a bright side you can look at.”

“What's the bright side?” KJ asked.

“You now have two friends named Charli to remember when you go back to Australia,” said the tortoise with a big grin.
KJ smiled, “You’re right. I also have a ton of new friends in my heart. And I will tell everyone else back home how Cole and I met amazing animals all over the world!”

“Don’t forget our promise, Sis!” Cole said.

“Right,” said KJ. “We promised our friends from the other continents that we would visit them after finding our new home.”

“Will you make the same promise to us?” Lily asked hopefully.

“Yes!” answered the two koalas.

Lily giggled in delight while Indri jumped on Charli’s back. They were truly happy with the two koalas’ promise. After all, they had never met koalas before. And the two koalas told such interesting stories.

“So... what are you going to do now?” Charli asked.

“I don’t know,” said KJ. “We promised some of our friends back home that we would find a home for them. But now, we realize that we might not be able to bring all of the animals in our forest to a new place. We have searched everywhere but it looks like Australia is the only home for us.”

Just then, Lily smiled. She had a wonderful idea to share.

**Wise Advice**

While Charli, Indri, Cole, and KJ had sad looks on their faces, the little koala saw that their new panda friend was smiling broadly.

“Why... are you smiling like that?” Cole asked.

“Because I have a wonderful idea!” Lily said.

“What is it?” asked KJ.

“While it’s terrible that the bushfire burned your home, you don’t have to leave. I’m sure that all the other animals in Australia would miss your forest terribly just as you miss your home now. Instead of leaving, why don’t you just rebuild what has been lost?” Lily suggested.
“What do you mean?” asked Cole.

“There was a time when this Bamboo Forest was destroyed too. A very strong hurricane passed through here and it pulled out most of the bamboo stalks. I thought that I was going to go hungry forever! But then, when the sun came out, all the other pandas and I worked together to plant more bamboo,” Lily explained.

“I remember that time,” said Charli. “I remember working with the pandas to get rid of the broken bamboo stalks and plant new ones. I also remember that I wasn't the only animal who helped the pandas.”

“That's true!” Lily said. “All the other animals in the Bamboo Forest helped us. In fact, even some humans came to plant bamboo and other kinds of plants.”

“I think my parents helped out too. They did tell me a story about a terrible hurricane before,” Indri said shyly.

“We all thought that the forest was ruined. But look at it now! It's as beautiful as ever,” said Lily.

“You're right. This is a beautiful forest,” said KJ. “Thank you for your idea. You're right, it's wonderful.”

Now that they had a plan, KJ and Cole were ready to go back home. Before leaving, they shared one last meal with their new friends in Asia. Together, they thought of more ideas for how to rebuild their forest in Australia.

KJ realized that the new friends they met were very wise. Lily, Charli, and Indri had some cool ideas to share. KJ tried to remember all of their ideas along with all of the advice given to her by the other animals they met.

When it was time for them to go, KJ thanked their new friends.

Lily didn't giggle. This time, she started crying. She picked up the two koalas and hugged them tightly. The big panda said, “I will never forget you. And the next time I see my Mimi in the zoo, I will tell her all about you.”

Indri gave them tiny hugs while Charli went back inside his shell after saying goodbye. He didn't want to start crying too. KJ and Cole waved as they walked away from the beautiful Bamboo Forest.

“I'm going to miss them,” said Cole.
“Me too,” said KJ. “But look on the bright side. We have seen all the continents and made friends along the way. Now, we can go home. We will share our brilliant plan with them and soon, we will be able to call the forest our home again.”

When the two koalas arrived, they were welcomed warmly by their friends. After sharing their plan, everyone worked together to rebuild their beloved home. The bushfire may have ruined their forest, but it didn't ruin the hope that lived inside KJ, Cole, and all the other animals in Australia.