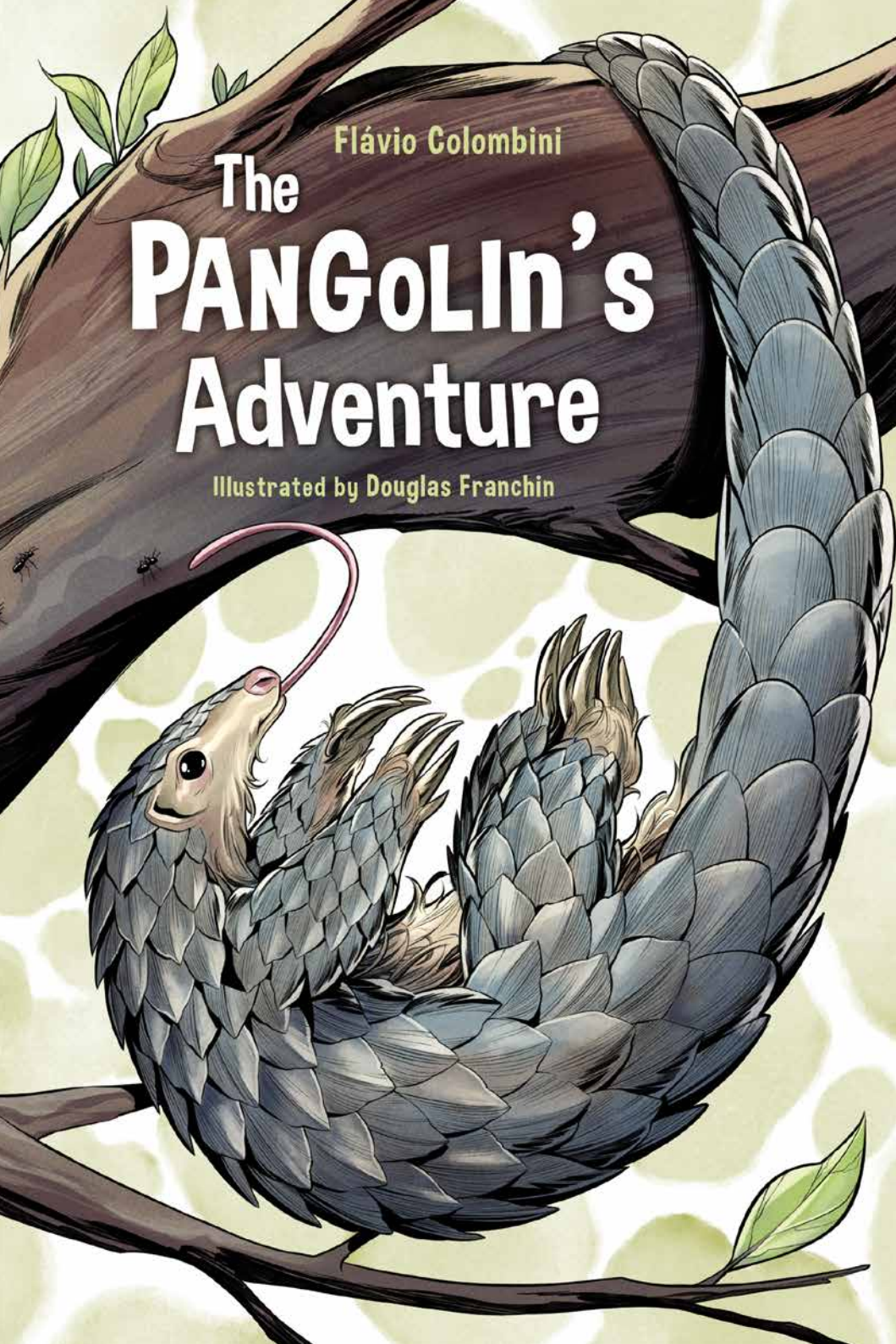


Flávio Colombini

The
PANGOLIN's
Adventure

Illustrated by Douglas Franchin



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I am a baby pangolin.
I like being close to my mother.

I suckle milk from her breast and sleep hugging her.

When she goes out, I hold on to her.

I love discovering the world riding on my mother's back! I feel safe with her.



As time went by, I grew up and stopped breastfeeding. Then mom started teaching me how to eat termites and ants, which are what adult pangolins eat.



She found an anthill, poked it with her front paws and waited for the insects to come out.

Then she taught me how to stick out my tongue to catch the ants and eat them. Hmm, how delicious!



As I grew up, I no longer rode on my mother's back. I ventured to walk out alone and climb trees, while she followed me closely.



Mom told me that in the forest there are big animals, that try to eat us, but I didn't believe her.

Until one day a wild dog attacked me. I was scared, but did what my mother had taught me.

I curled up and stayed still on the floor, like a ball.



The wild dog started to bite me.
But he couldn't hurt me,
because my scales are very hard.

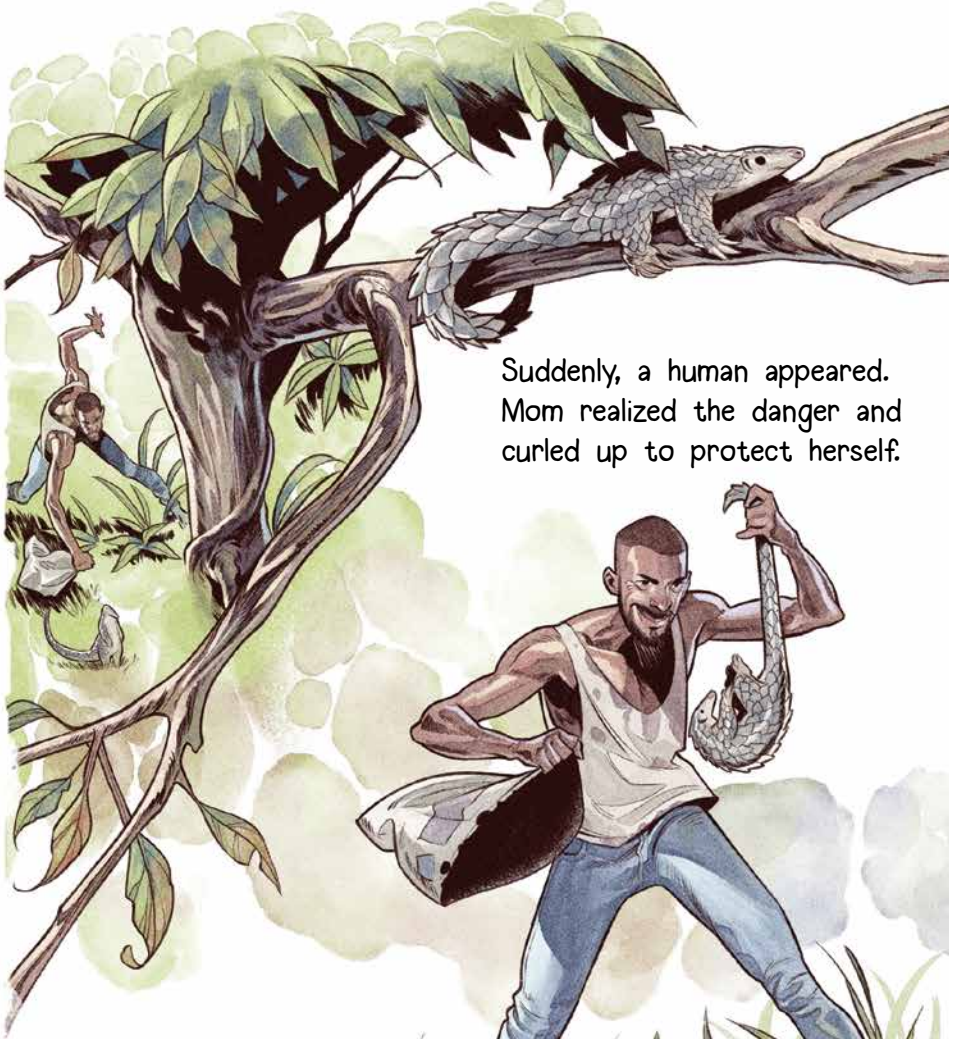


After a while he gave up and left.

Mom was proud of me, because I already knew how to defend myself from predators.



One day I was climbing a tall tree,
while my mother cheered me from the ground.



Suddenly, a human appeared.
Mom realized the danger and
curled up to protect herself.



The man picked her up, put
her in a bag and left.

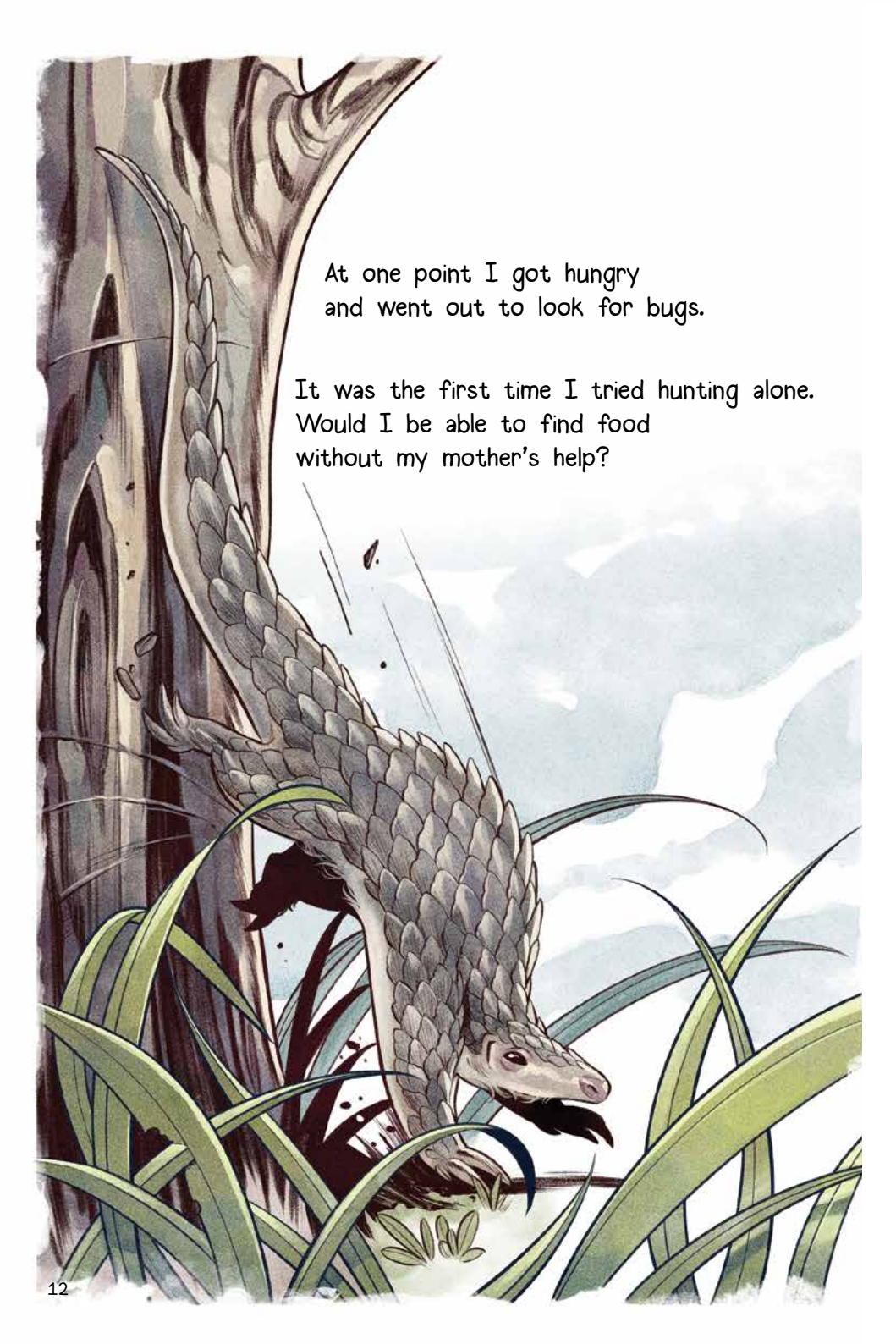
Where did he take her?

My mother always said that if I ever got lost, I should stay in the same place, waiting for her to find me.



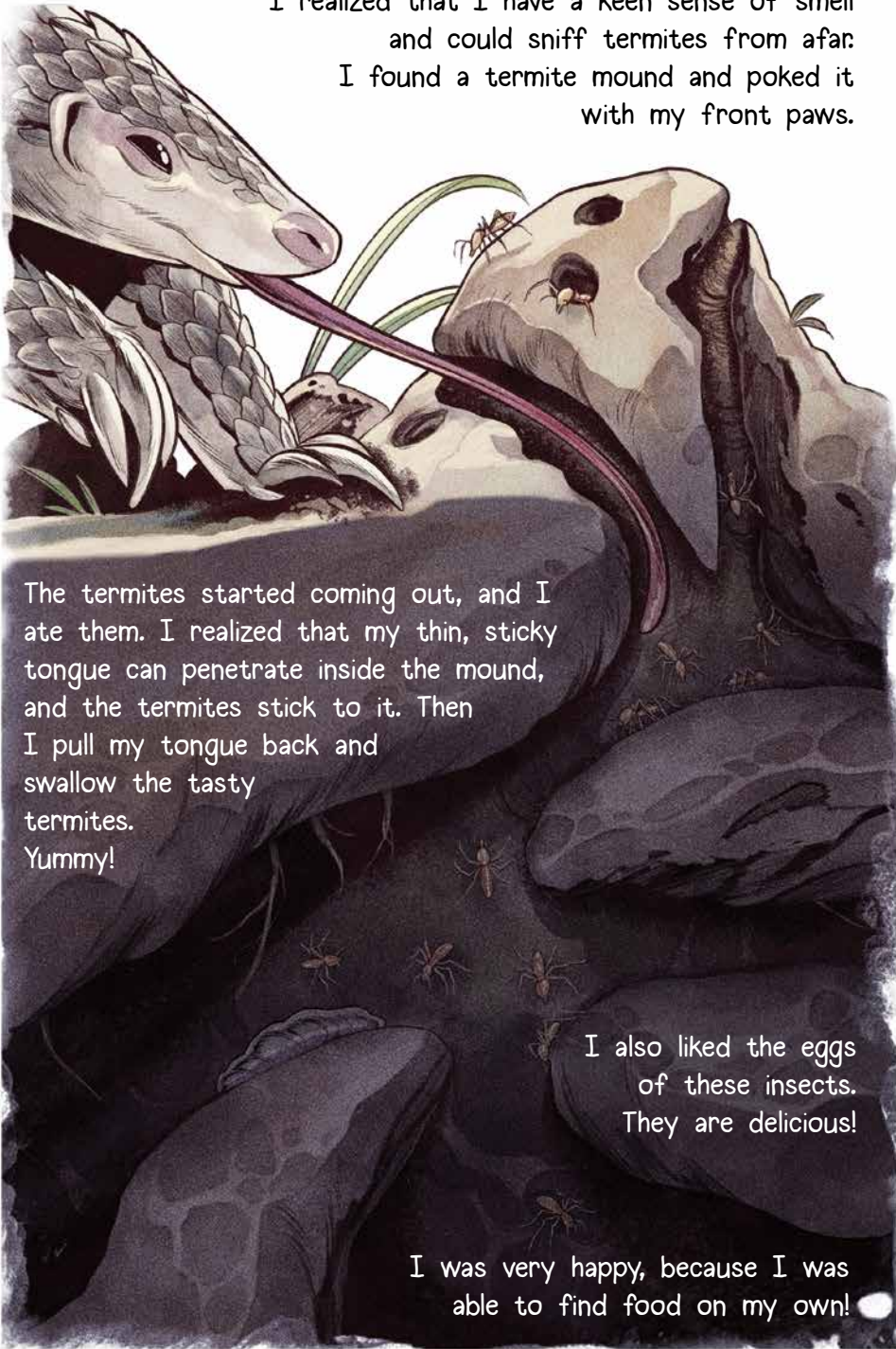
I stayed there for a long time,
waiting for her to come back.

But she didn't come.

A detailed illustration of a pangolin climbing a tree trunk. The pangolin's body is covered in overlapping, greyish-brown scales. It is positioned vertically, with its head at the bottom and its tail at the top. The pangolin's front legs are extended, gripping the tree trunk. The tree trunk is brown and textured, with some small holes or knots. The background shows a soft, hazy landscape with green hills and a light blue sky. In the foreground, there are several long, green blades of grass. The overall style is a soft, painterly illustration.

At one point I got hungry
and went out to look for bugs.

It was the first time I tried hunting alone.
Would I be able to find food
without my mother's help?



I realized that I have a keen sense of smell
and could sniff termites from afar.
I found a termite mound and poked it
with my front paws.

The termites started coming out, and I
ate them. I realized that my thin, sticky
tongue can penetrate inside the mound,
and the termites stick to it. Then
I pull my tongue back and
swallow the tasty
termites.
Yummy!

I also liked the eggs
of these insects.
They are delicious!

I was very happy, because I was
able to find food on my own!

The days passed, and my mother did not return.

I missed her a lot. I couldn't help
but bear the sadness and face life.



I became an expert at finding and eating ants and termites. I filled my belly with them and was satisfied.

Even though I was still young, I was able to fend for myself, like an adult pangolin.



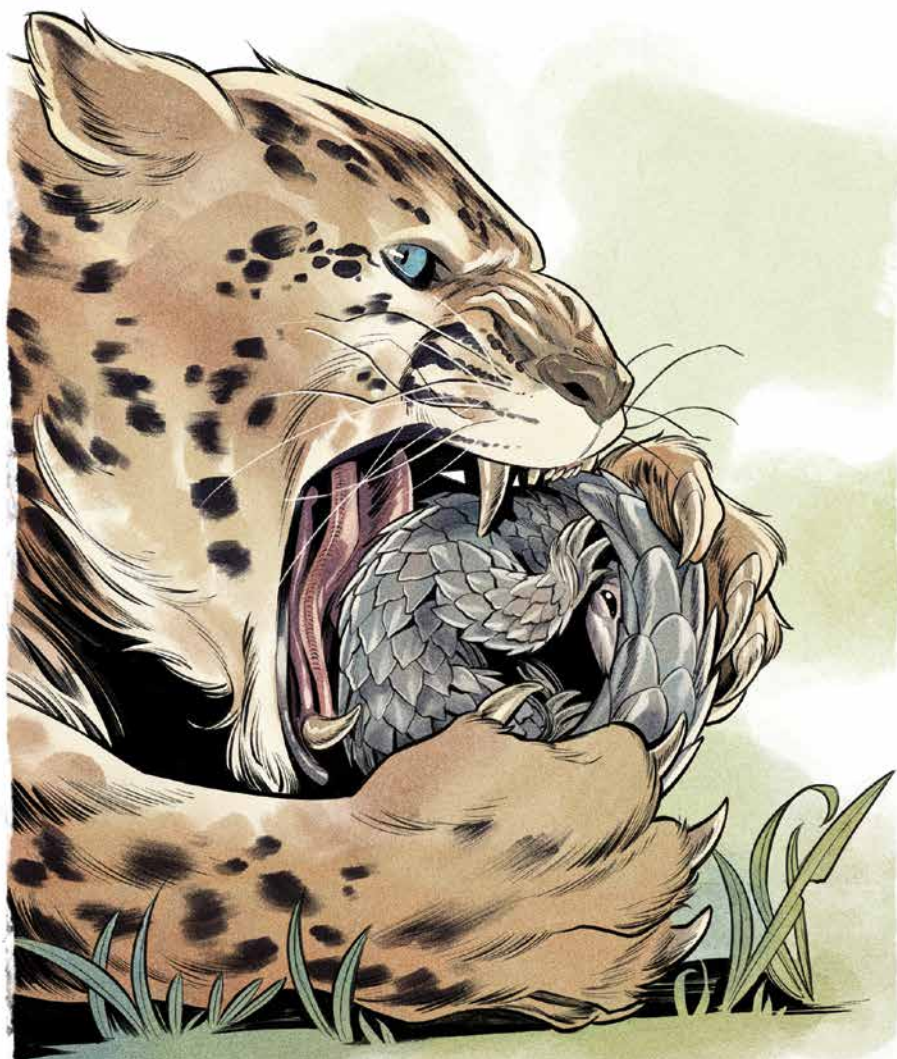
I still missed my mother, but, little by little,
I got used to living without her.

One time, I was sniffing for insects,
when suddenly a big leopard attacked me!



I got scared and curled myself up.
His mouth was huge!

He bit me several times, but his sharp teeth
were no match for my very hard scales.



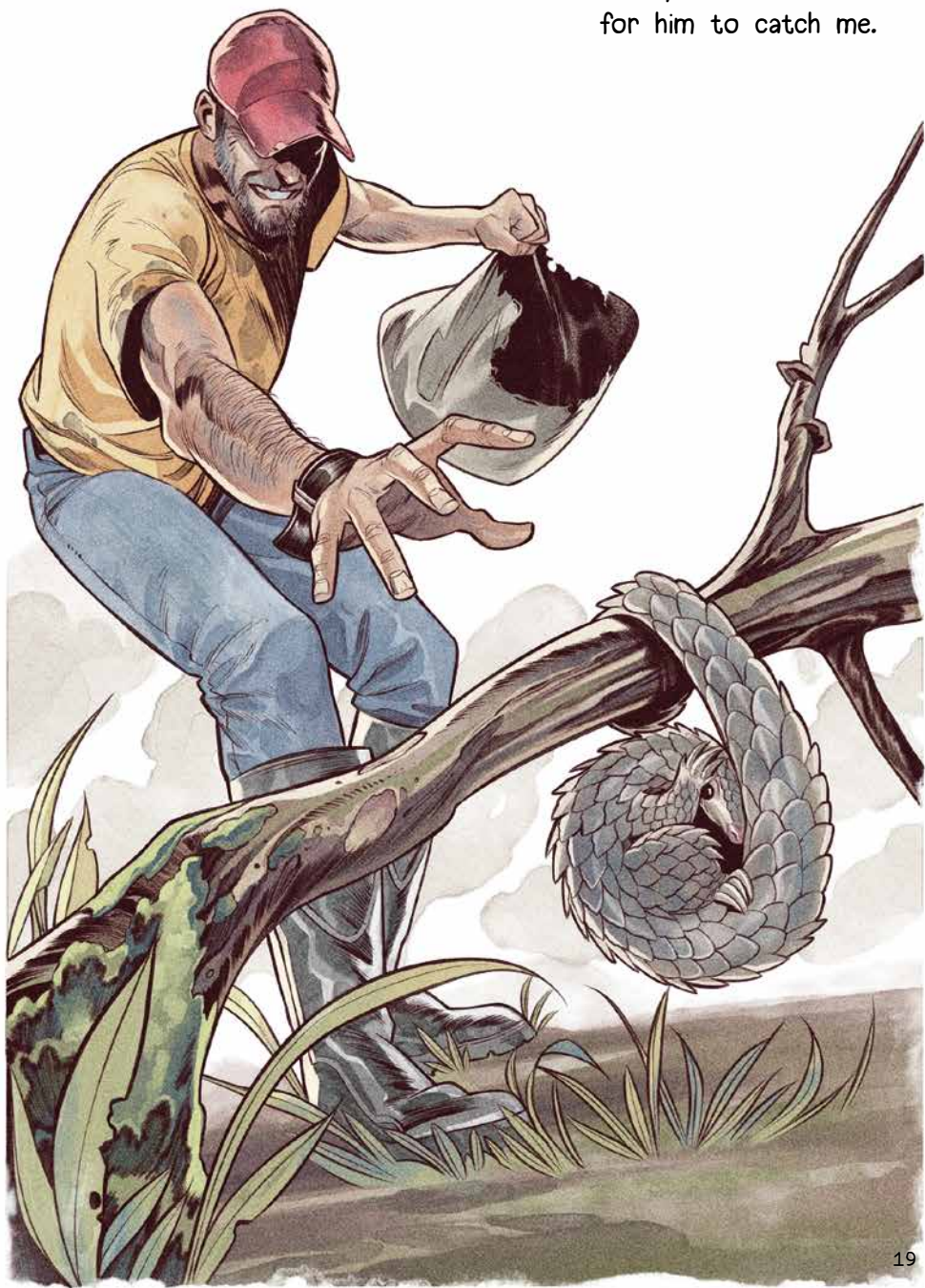
He spent a long time trying
eat me, but he couldn't.

I was relieved and then I felt
an immense joy within me!
I felt invincible.



I was living happily, until
one day everything changed...

A human being appeared. I should have run away,
but I got scared and instinctively curled up.
This only made it easier
for him to catch me.



He picked me up, put me in a bag and took me away.
I couldn't believe the same thing that happened to
my mother happened to me!



Would he take me to the place where
she was? I couldn't see anything inside
the bag, not even breathe properly.

When he took me out of the bag, I saw that I was in an enclosed space that was moving. It was a car:

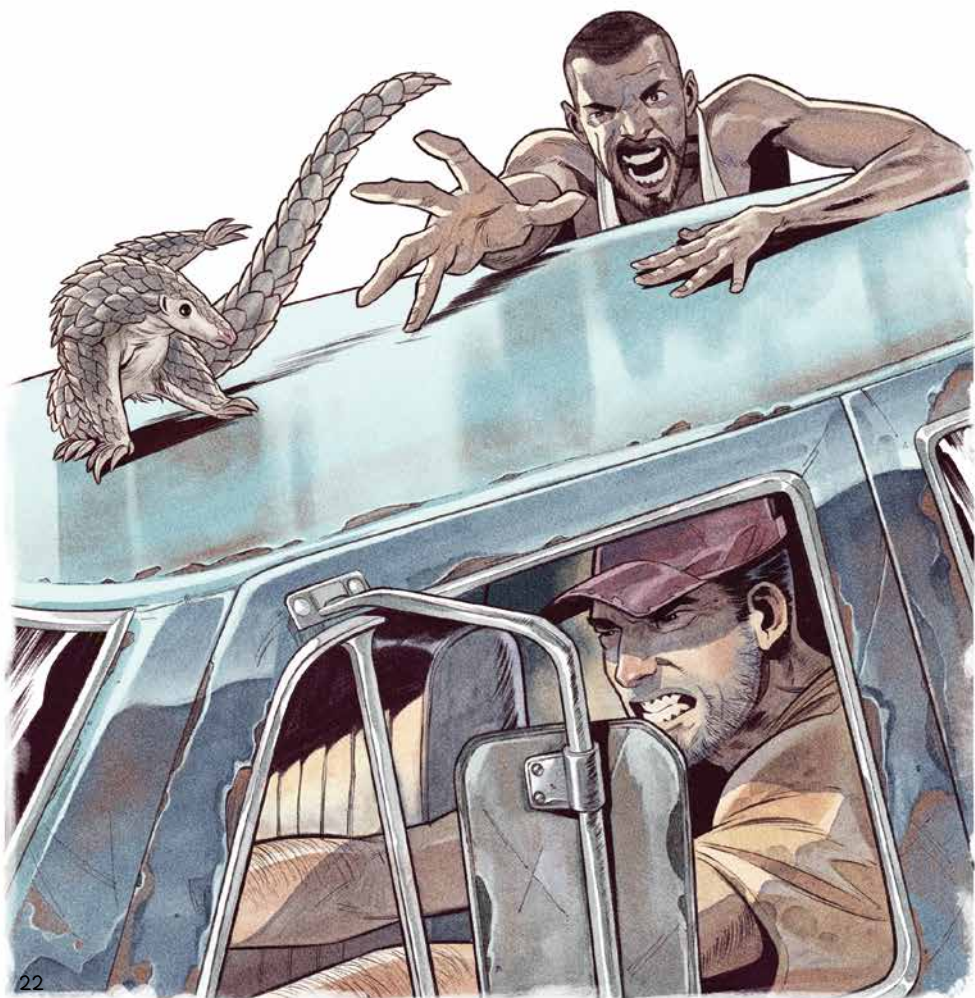
I was scared and tried to look for a way out.
I don't know why, but the men were laughing at me.



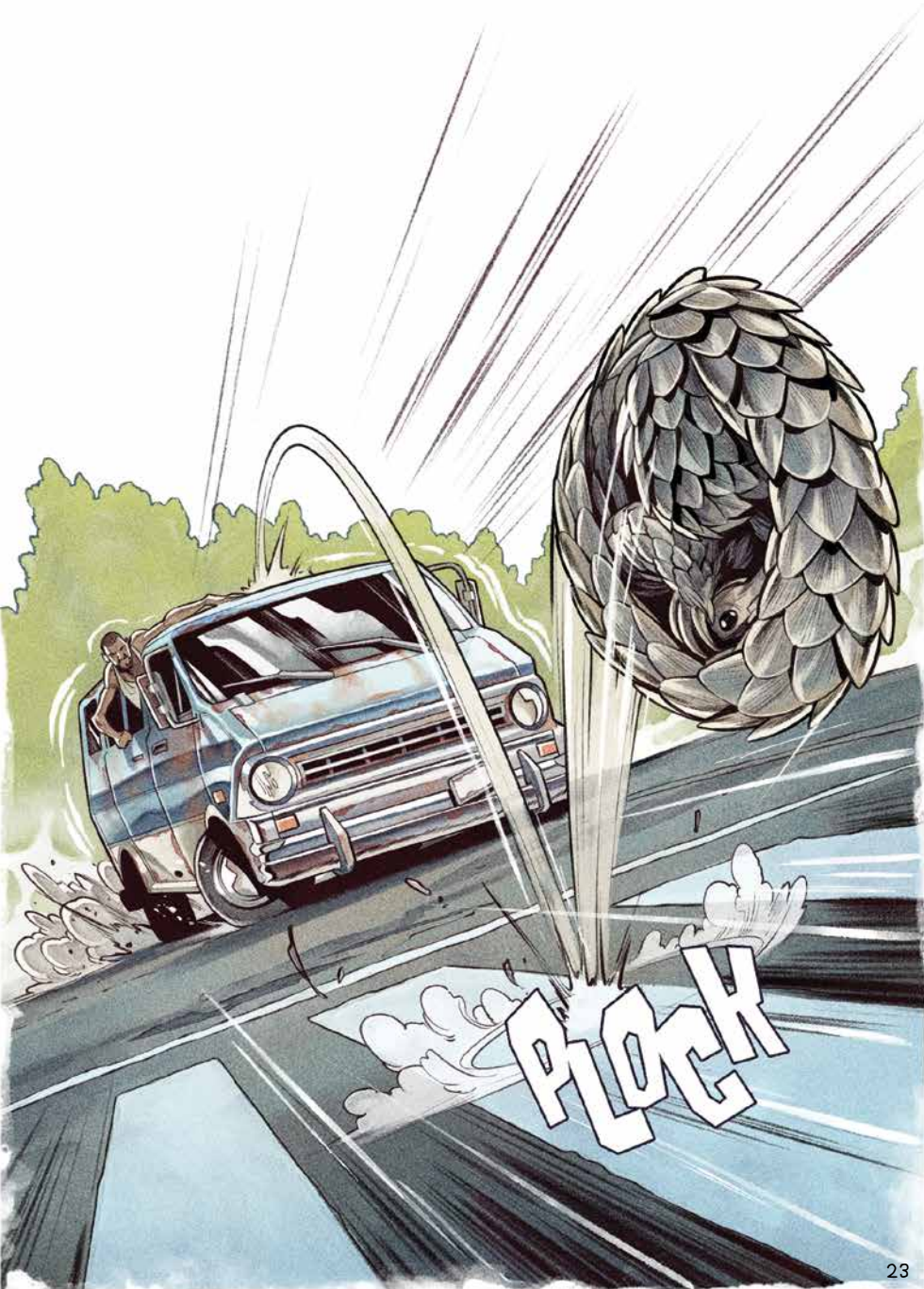
I found a window and got out-

.I climbed onto the roof of the vehicle.

One of the men kept shouting and trying to catch me, but I ran away from him.



Then the van braked, and I was thrown forward.
I cringed and rolled around on the floor:



When I stopped, I was in the middle of an intersection,
with trucks and cars passing by at high speed.

Oh no, I'm going to get run over!



Then one of the men stopped traffic and picked me up.
I felt relief!



But it didn't last long. He put me back in the bag
and took me to the van. At least he made some
holes in the bag so I could breathe better.

They put me in a warehouse.

I spent days there, without water or food,
and I became more and more desperate.

I kept moving in the bag,
poking the holes with my nails.

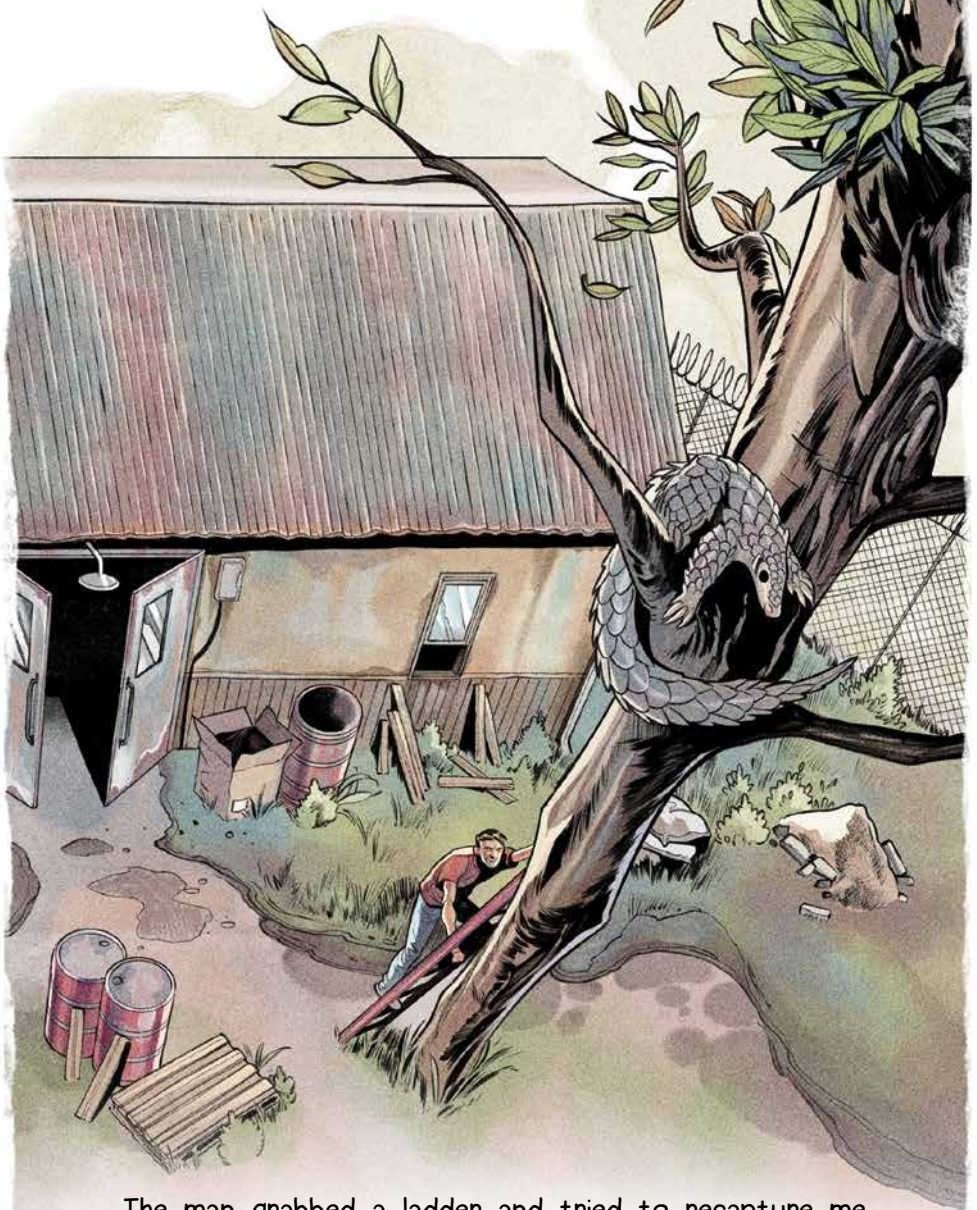


Until I managed to
open a hole and escape.

I was finally free!



I left through the warehouse window, but one of the men saw me. So, I climbed a tree.



The man grabbed a ladder and tried to recapture me. But I didn't let it happen. I went higher and higher so he couldn't reach me.

The man got angry and called his friend, who brought a chainsaw and started cutting down the tree.

It was shaking...



Then it started to fall...

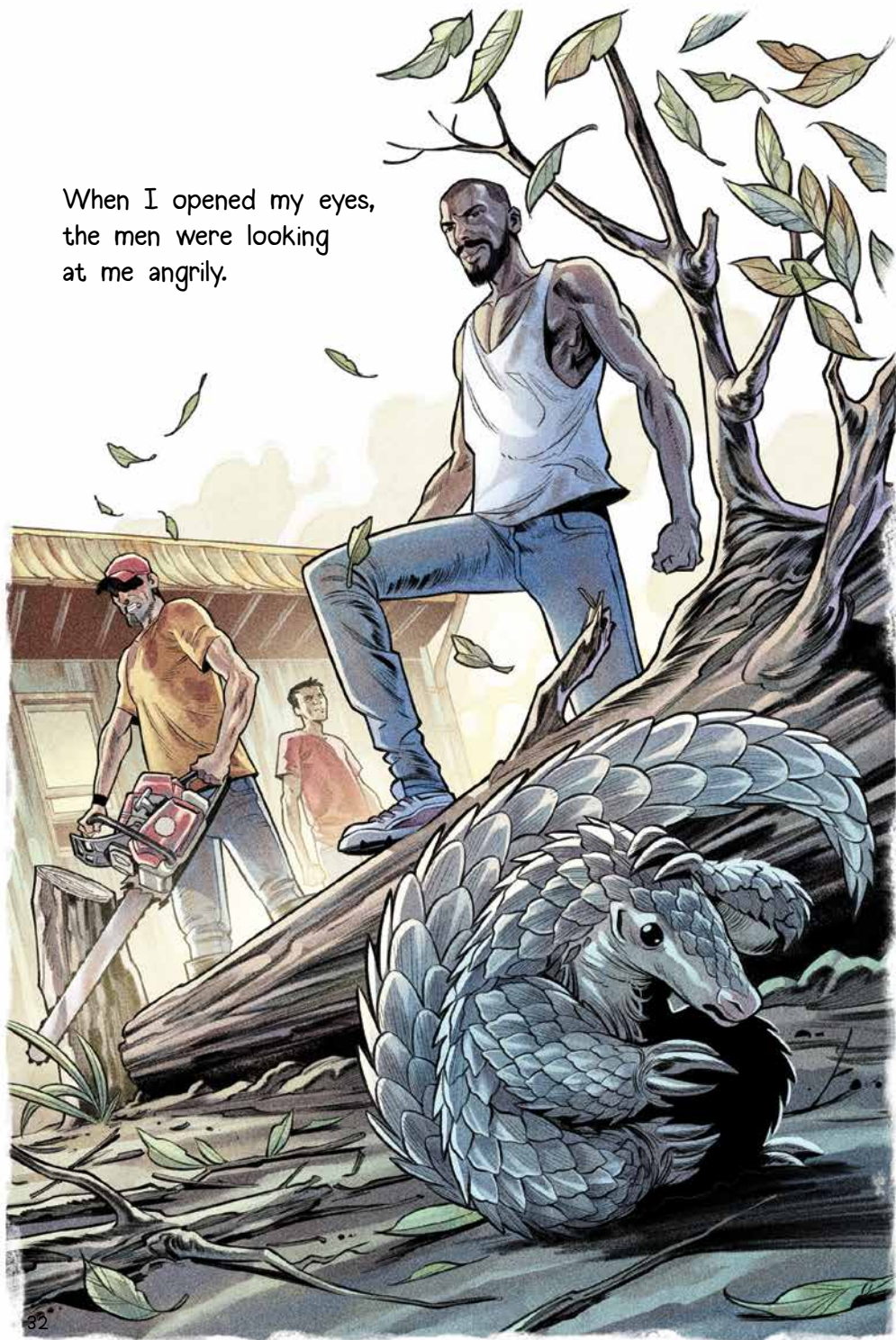
Aaaahhh!



The tree fell hard to the ground,
and I rolled away!



When I opened my eyes,
the men were looking
at me angrily.



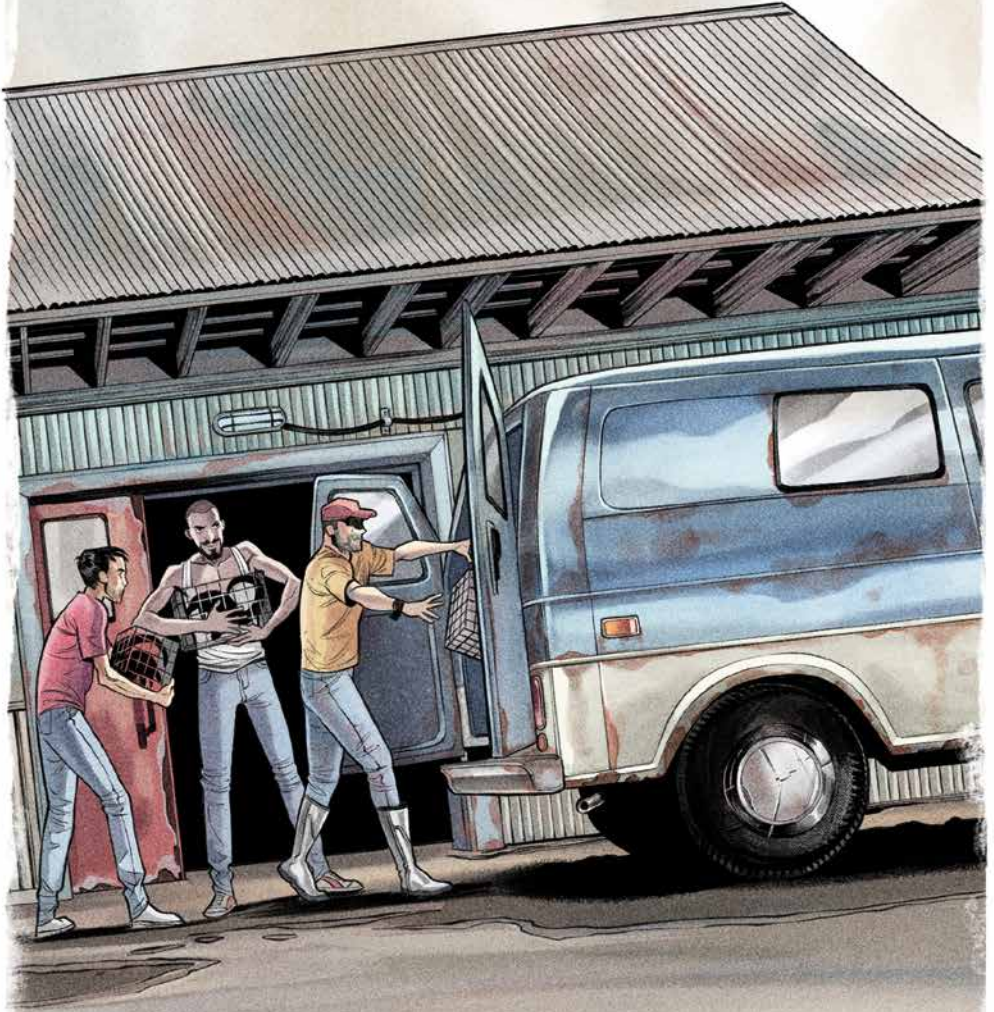
They took me back to the warehouse
and put me in an iron cage.

Next to me there were more cages with
other scared pangolins like me. I looked
for my mother, but she wasn't there.

We stayed in that place for a few more
days, until one of the men said:
"The ship to Asia leaves today.
Let's take them to the port."



They threw our cages into the van,
without any care.



Where will they take us?
What will happen to us?

On the way, suddenly a police siren was heard. The men became agitated, and the driver sped up. We were shaking a lot!

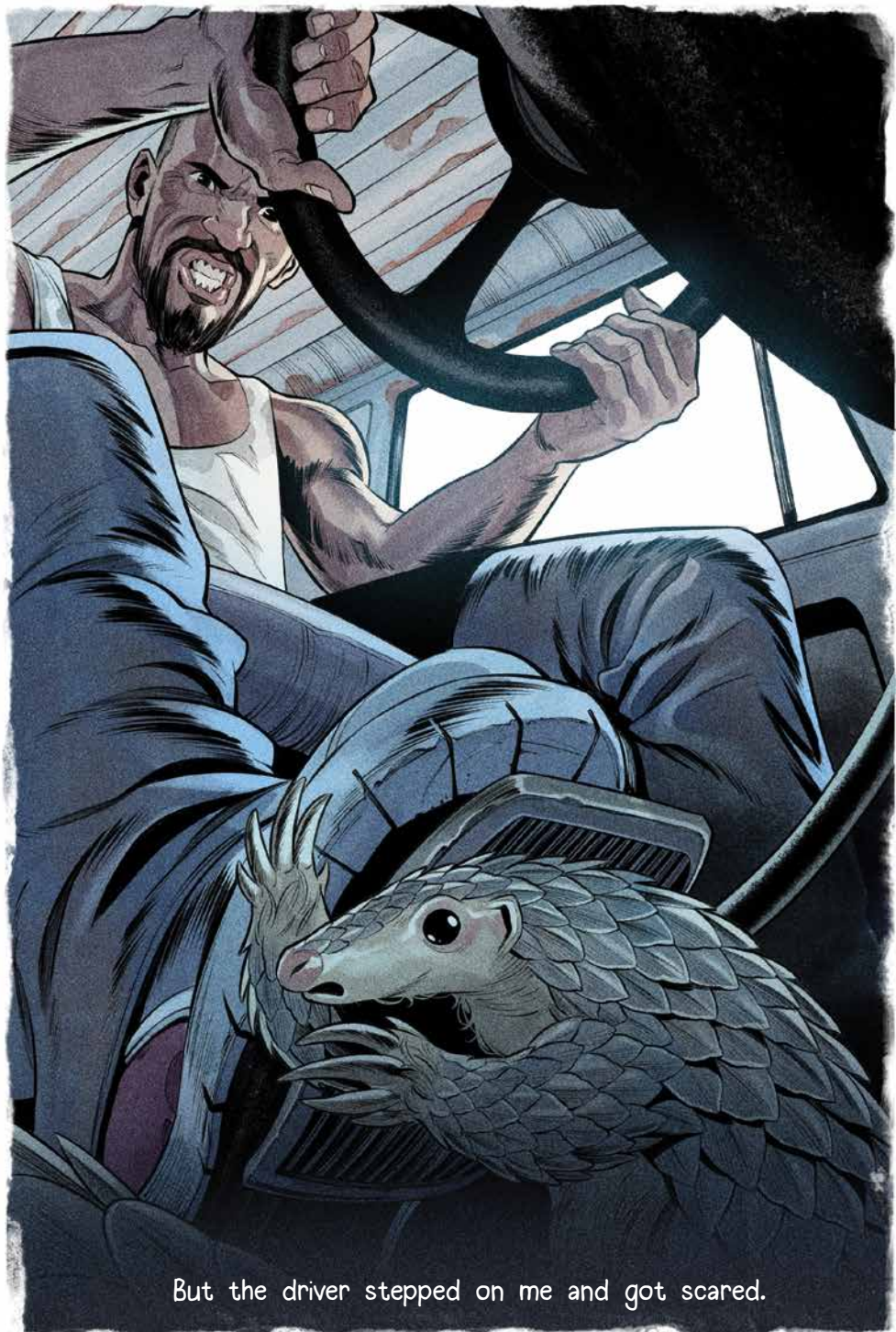


Suddenly, the vehicle came to a sudden stop. My cage fell to the floor and opened.

I moved quickly and started
looking for a way to escape.

Until I found a corner
that seemed safe to me.





But the driver stepped on me and got scared.

I also got scared and
jumped to a higher place.



The other man got angry,
grabbed a revolver and shot.

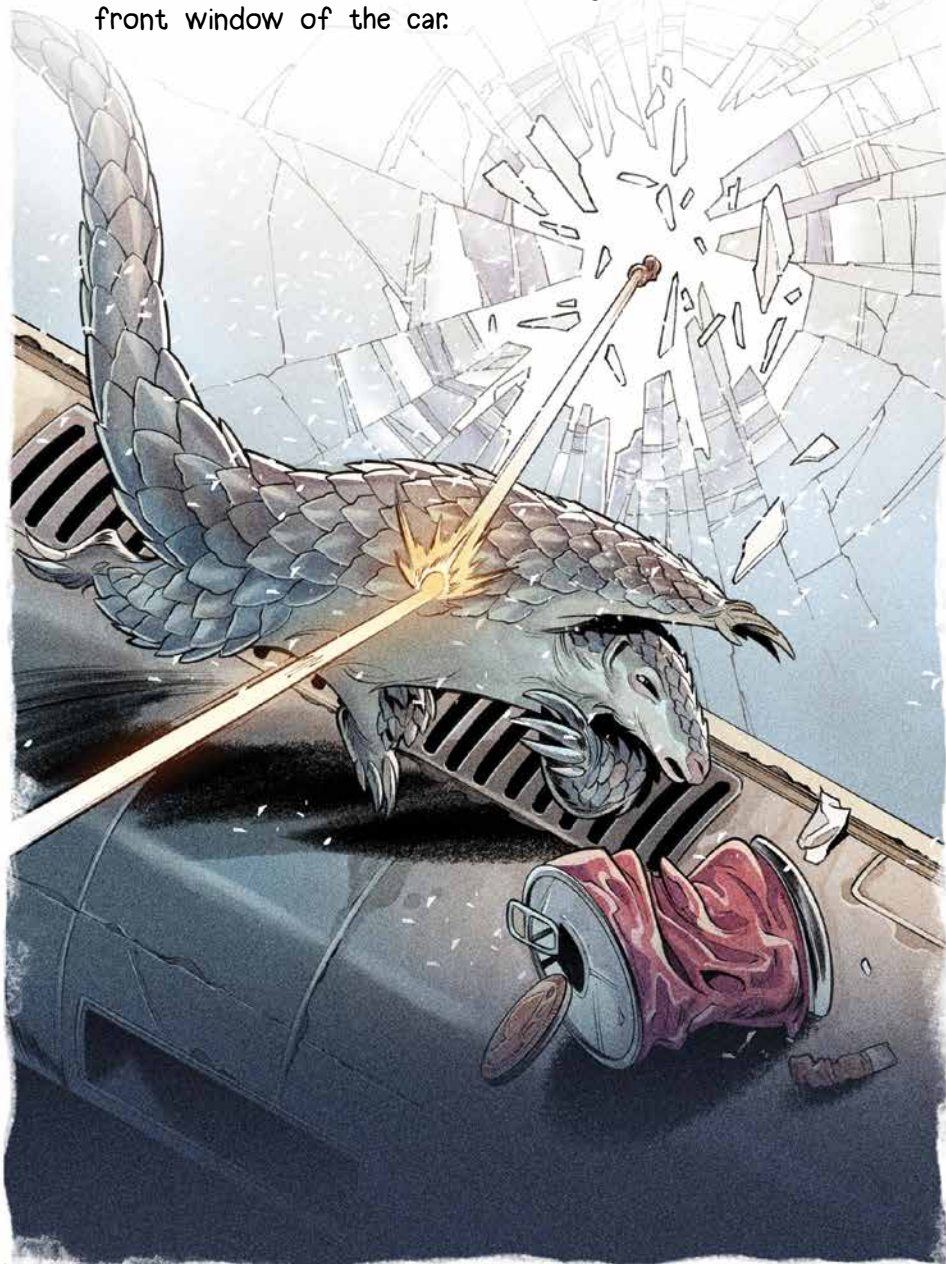
The shot whizzed past my ear,
but didn't hit me.

BLAM



The driver threw me in front of the car.

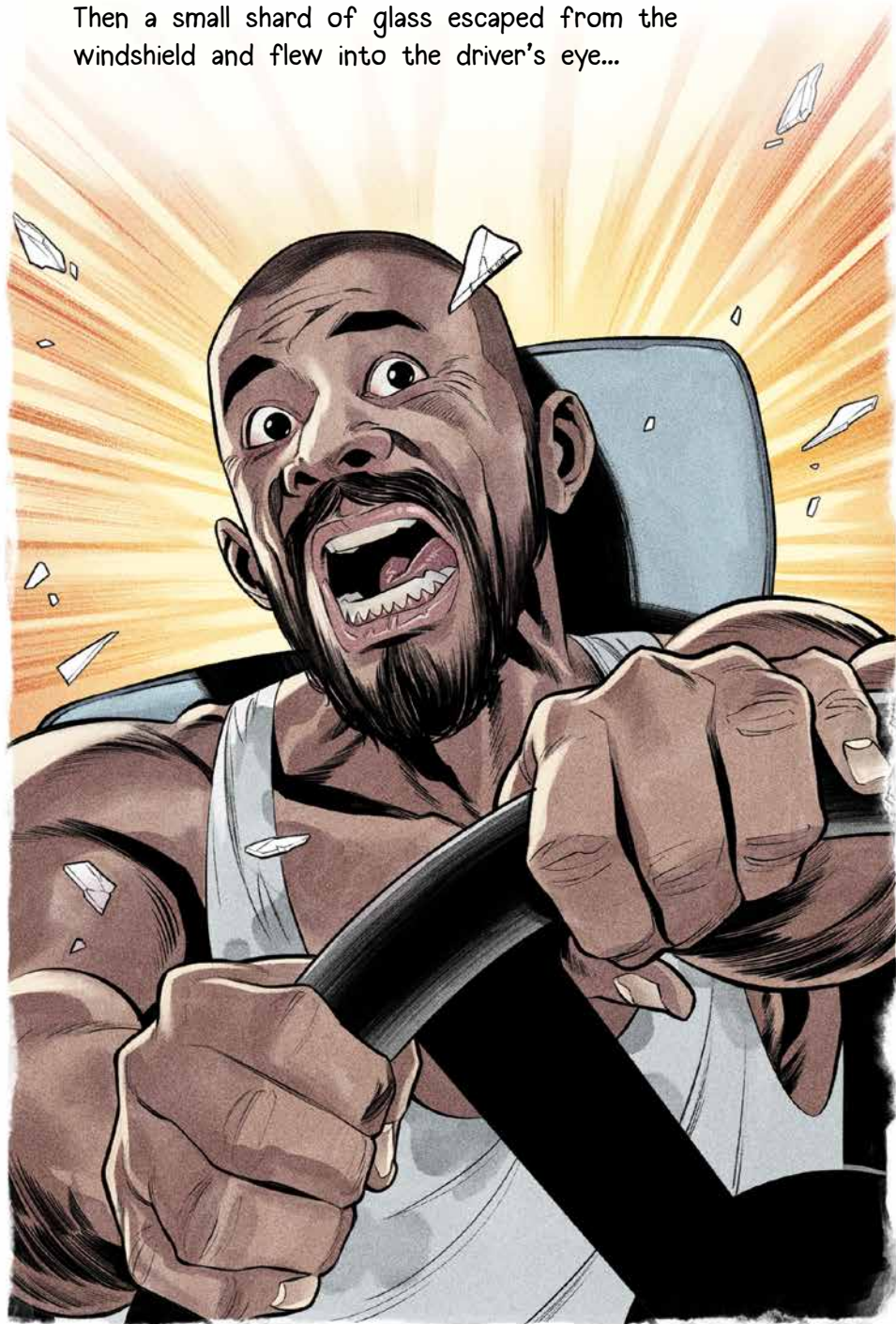
Then came another shot that grazed my hard scales and deflected, shattering the front window of the car.





I fell to the floor and went under the seat.
The driver continued trying to steer with
the wind and dust hitting him in the face.

Then a small shard of glass escaped from the windshield and flew into the driver's eye...

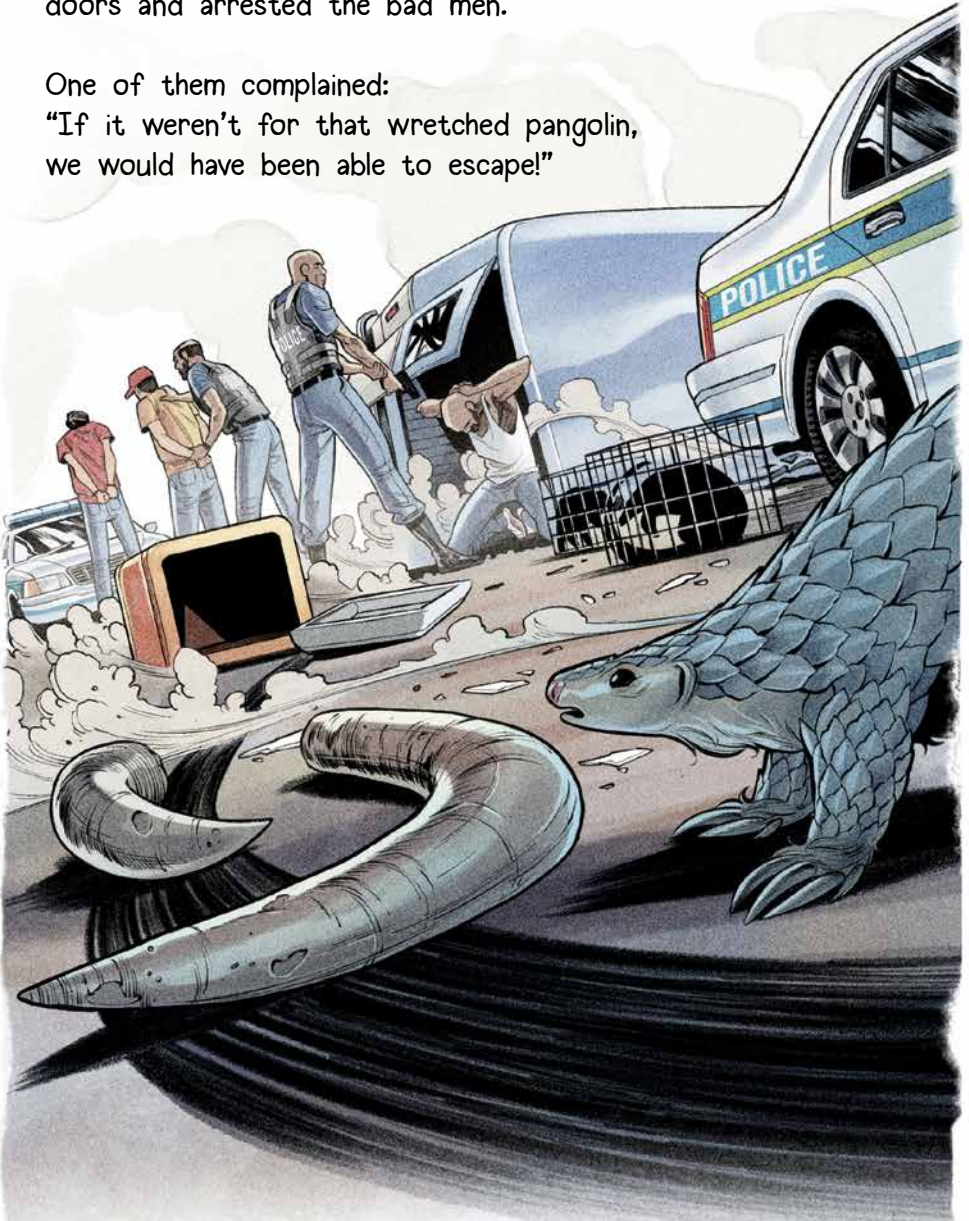


... who suddenly moved the steering wheel, and the vehicle overturned!



The police surrounded the van, opened the doors and arrested the bad men.

One of them complained:
“If it weren’t for that wretched pangolin,
we would have been able to escape!”

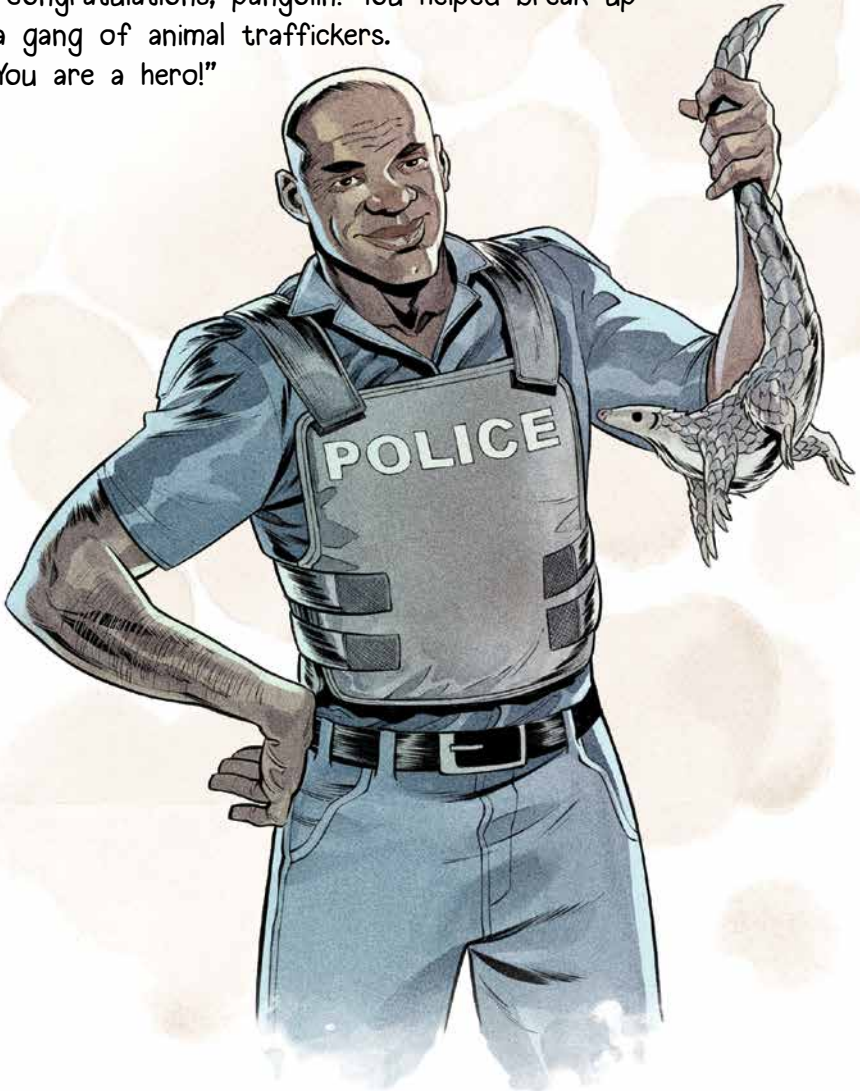


In addition to the other pangolins, the police also found elephant tusks and rhino horns, which were going to be smuggled to Asia.

EI tried to leave but a police officer caught me by the tail and caressed me.

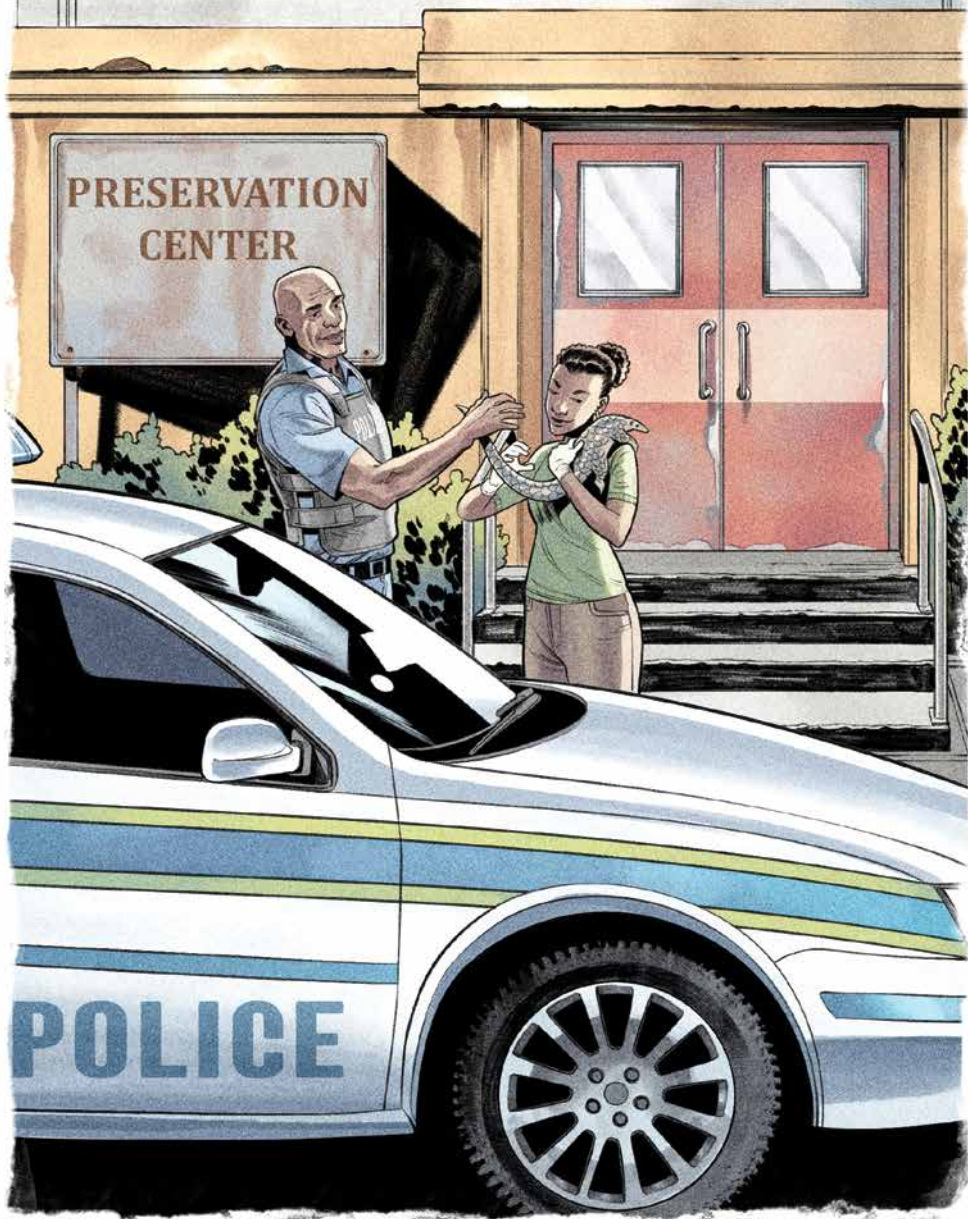
Then he thanked me:

“Congratulations, pangolin! You helped break up a gang of animal traffickers. You are a hero!”



Then he put me back in the cage. The other pangolins and I were hungry, thirsty, weak and dirty. What would happen to us?

The police officer took us to an animal conservation center. The woman who welcomed us said: "Poor things, you were so mistreated! Now this is going to change."



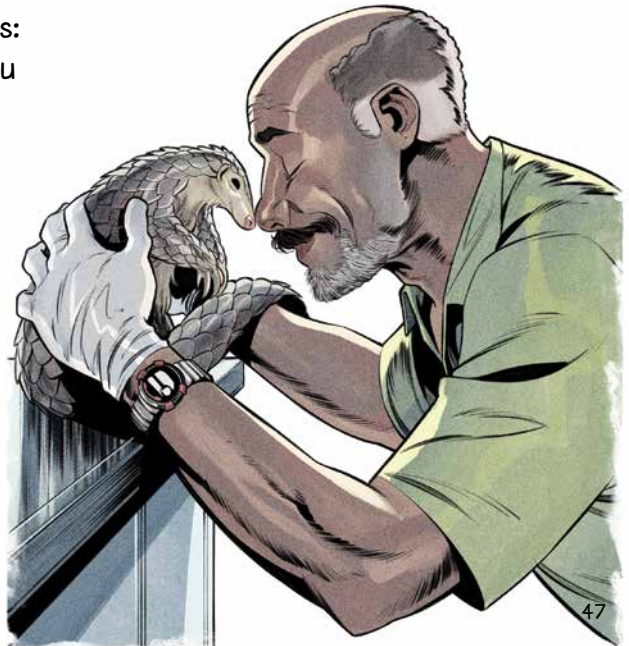
There they cleaned us, gave us water, food and affection.

How nice it was to be treated with love!



After some time, we regained our strength and health.

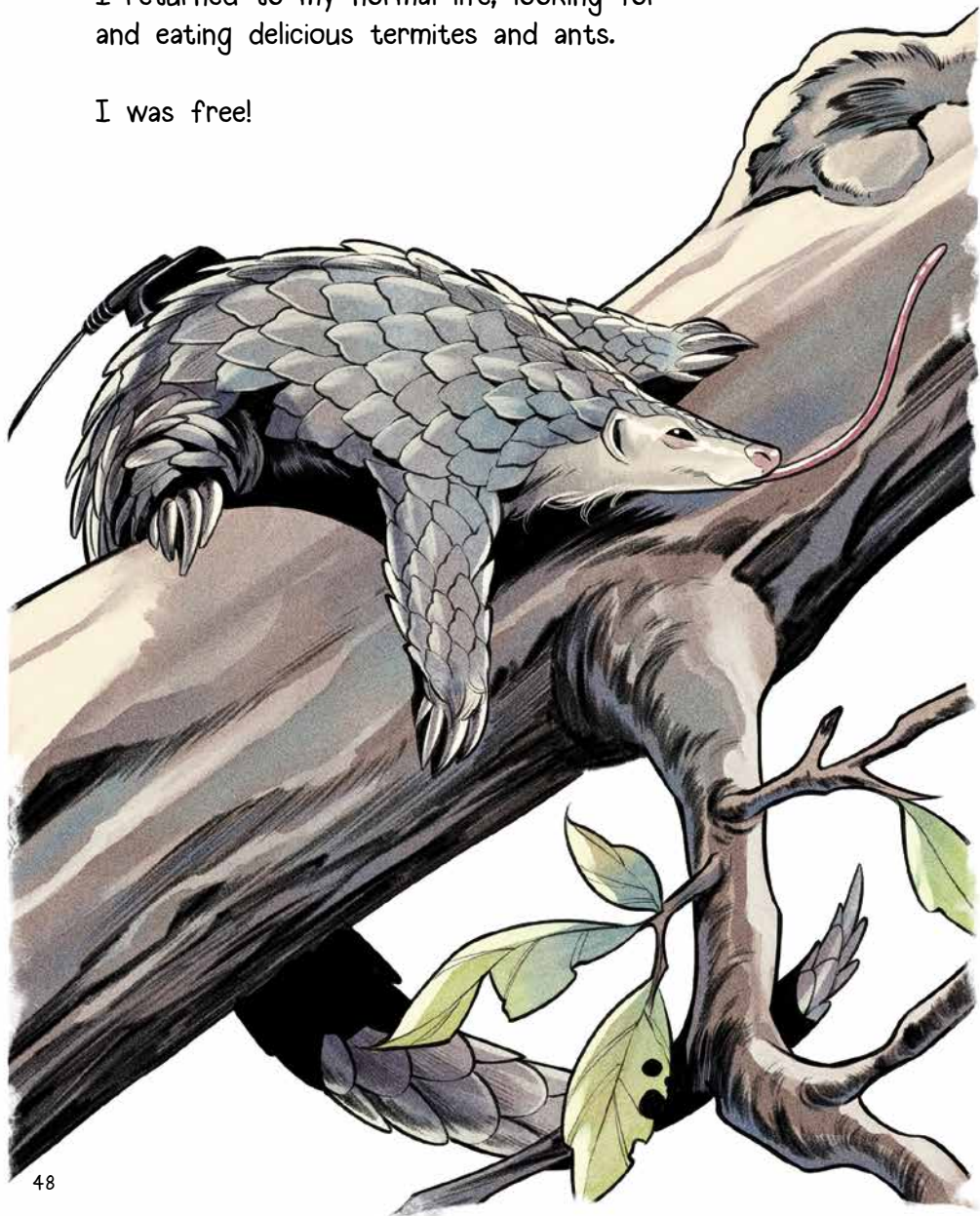
Then a man said to us:
“It’s time to take you
back to nature.”



They attached a tracker to my tail and released me back into my natural habitat.

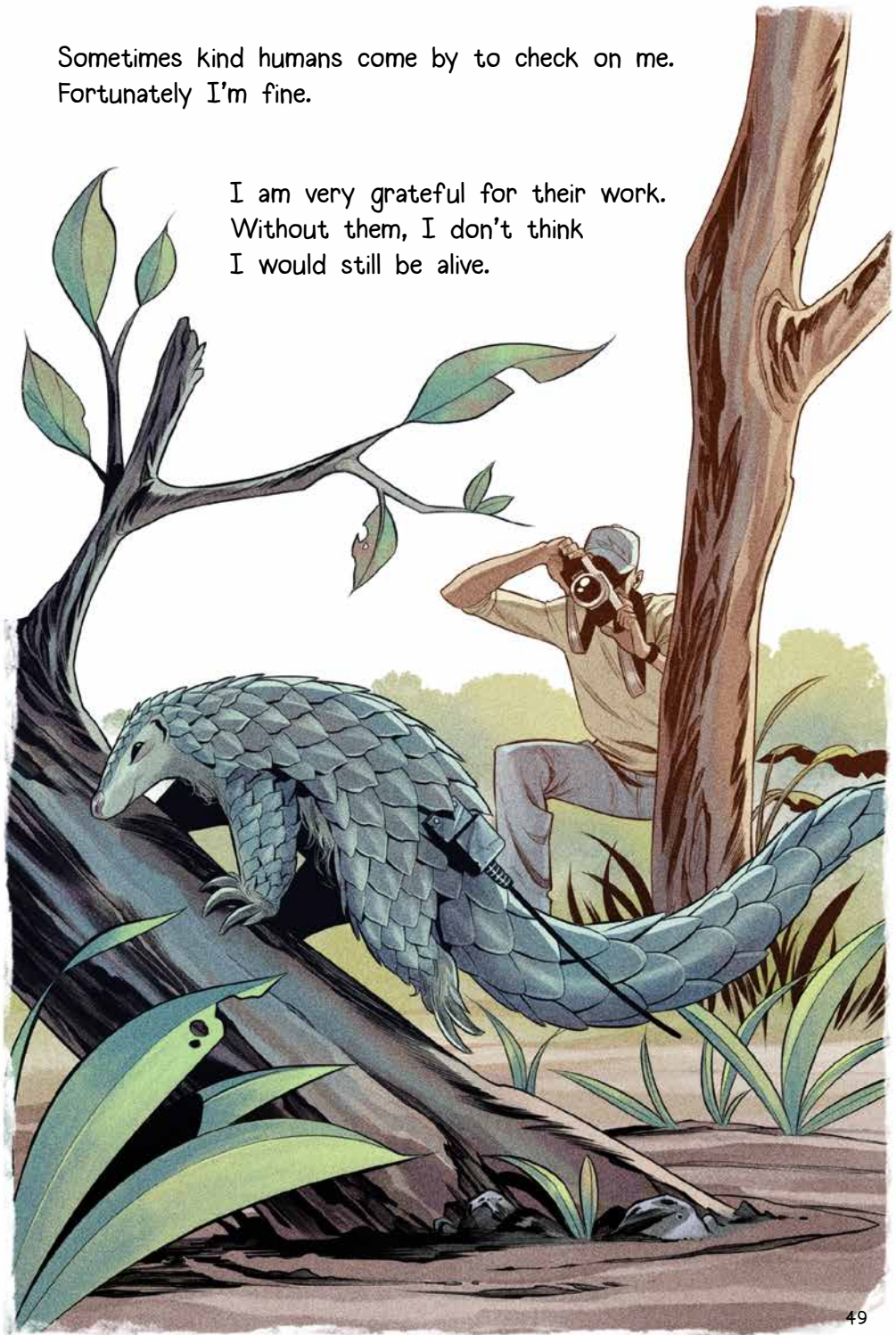
What a joy to be back in nature!
I returned to my normal life, looking for and eating delicious termites and ants.

I was free!



Sometimes kind humans come by to check on me.
Fortunately I'm fine.

I am very grateful for their work.
Without them, I don't think
I would still be alive.



Until then, I didn't know if I was a male or female pangolin.
I only found out when I was attracted to the smell of a
male pangolin and mated with him.

I'm a female!



Months later, I had a beautiful baby.

I will take good care of him,
as well as my mother took care of me.



The End

Learn more about the pangolin

The name pangolin has its origin in Malaysia and means “someone who rolls”. The pangolin is the only mammal that has scales. A single animal can have more than a thousand scales.

They have a long, thin and sticky tongue, with a diameter of just 0.5 cm and a length of up to 40 cm. They don't have good vision, but, on the other hand, they have excellent sense of smell and hearing. Their legs and nails are robust and very strong. They use their powerful claws to break down termite mounds, climb trees, dig in the ground to look for food and build dens.

They are solitary animals, and look for a mate only during the breeding season. Males mark their territories with urine. The females sniff out these signals trying to find a male.

There are eight species of pangolins, four in Africa and four in Asia. The species portrayed in this book is the white-bellied pangolin, also known as the tree pangolin, which lives in the forests of equatorial Africa, in more than 15 different countries, such as Angola, Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, etc.

All pangolin species are threatened with extinction. They are the most

hunted and trafficked mammals in the world. Thousands of pangolins are smuggled annually to China and Vietnam. There, pangolin meat is considered a delicacy and there is a great demand for its scales. They can be found in medicine markets in several cities. Typically dried, ground into powder and put into tablets, pangolin scales are used in a wide variety of traditional Asian medicines.



Darren Bradley

White-bellied pangolin



Ajit K Huilgol

Indian pangolin



Black-bellied pangolin

The scales are mainly composed of keratin, the same substance as human hair and nails, and there is no scientific evidence to support their effectiveness as a medicine.

Why should we care about an animal most people have never heard of?

The extinction of pangolins could cause ecological and economic disaster in certain ecosystems and communities. They eat ants and termites, which can decimate crops or buildings if left unchecked. Pangolins are an integral part of the balance of nature.

Pangolin hunters are part of a global criminal network that also traffics elephant ivory and rhino horns, potentially driving them to extinction.

Some research has suggested that the pangolin may have been the transmitter of the new coronavirus to humans. This means that the COVID-19 pandemic, which shook the entire world, may have started because humans trafficked and consumed this innocent animal. This is a warning that the sale and consumption of wild animals should be strictly prohibited to avoid future pandemics.



Ground pangolin



Chinese pangolin baby

Much work needs to be done to ensure the survival of pangolins. It is important that hunting, trafficking and using these animals as food or medicine be strictly prohibited throughout the world, otherwise these gentle animals could disappear before most people know they exist.

In 2020, pangolin was removed from the list of approved medicines in traditional Chinese medicine. This change came days after China updated the status of pangolins under the country's wild animal protection law. The pangolin is now considered Class 1 (the same status given to the panda, so loved by the nation), which prohibits almost all trade and use of the animal nationwide. These two changes, if really implemented seriously in that country, could save the pangolin from extinction.

How can we help?

You can become acquainted with the projects that aim to save pangolins. Their websites are listed below. Follow them on social media. If possible, you can also make a financial donation to support the important work of these organizations.

www.savepangolins.org
www.pangolincrisisfund.org
www.pangolinconservation.org

www.africanpangolin.org
www.pangolinsg.org
www.svw.vn



Gregg Yan

Philippine pangolin with cub

Authors



Flávio Colombini

I love creating and writing stories! Ideas come in the most unusual ways. When I read a short news story about the pangolin in the American newspaper The Christian Science Monitor, I was surprised because I had never heard of that animal. I decided to research it and was saddened to learn that it is the most hunted and trafficked mammal on the planet. It was then that I decided to write a book about it, to help people get to know this beautiful animal and fight for its preservation.

I have written several other books. If you want to see them, visit my website: www.flaviocolombini.com/english

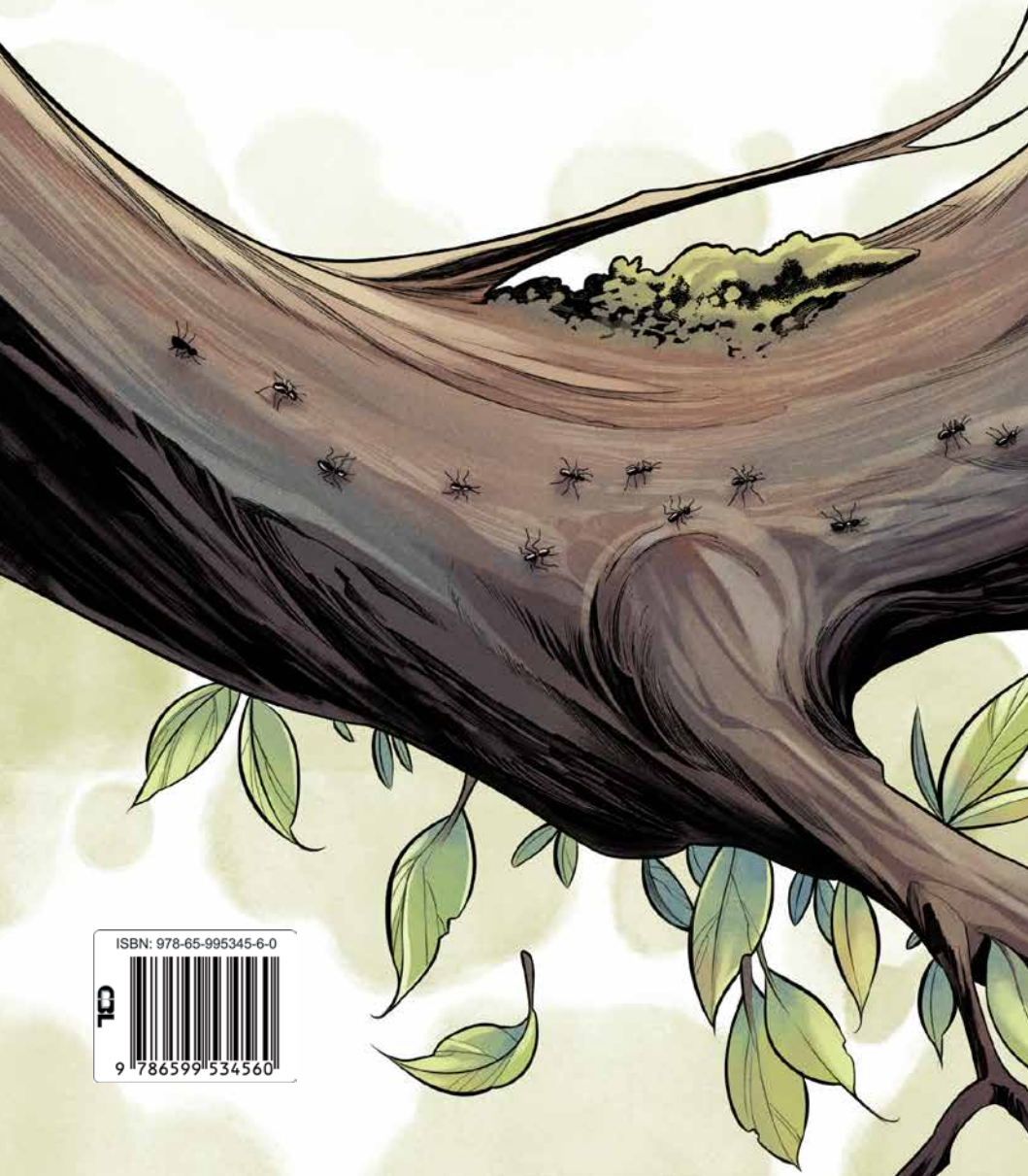
I am a comic book artist, illustrator and teacher. I worked on several titles for international publishers, including Halo Escalation, Savage Sword and Halo Adult Coloring Book, by Dark Horse Comics; X-MEN Blue, by Marvel Comics; Person of Interest, by DC Comics. In the Brazil, where I live, I make illustrations for several publishers. In 2018, I released my first comic book titled, Speechless. To check out my work, visit the website:

www.dgfranchin.com



Douglas Franchin

The young pangolin is growing up and learning to hunt ants in order to eat, when suddenly its mother is captured. Alone, it goes on an exciting adventure to survive among predators and animal traffickers.



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