

THE GREAT SINGAPORE SALE

POO

and Other Beastly Business

WRITTEN BY
**MAUREEN
YEO**

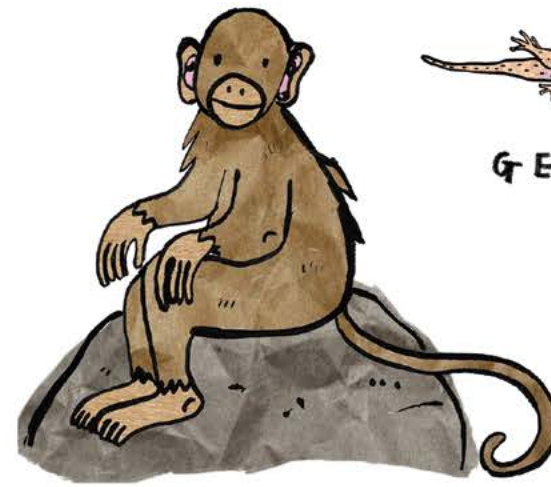
ILLUSTRATED BY
**GRACIE
CHAI**



FLYING FOX



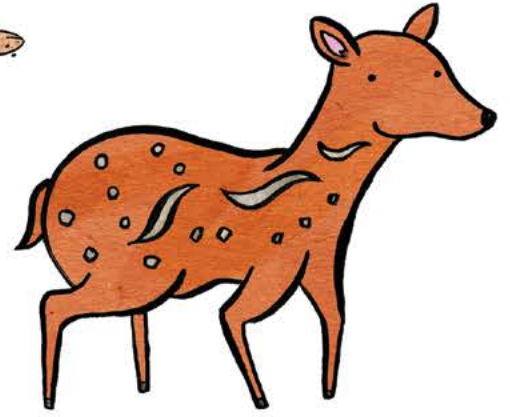
CROW



MACAQUE



GECKO



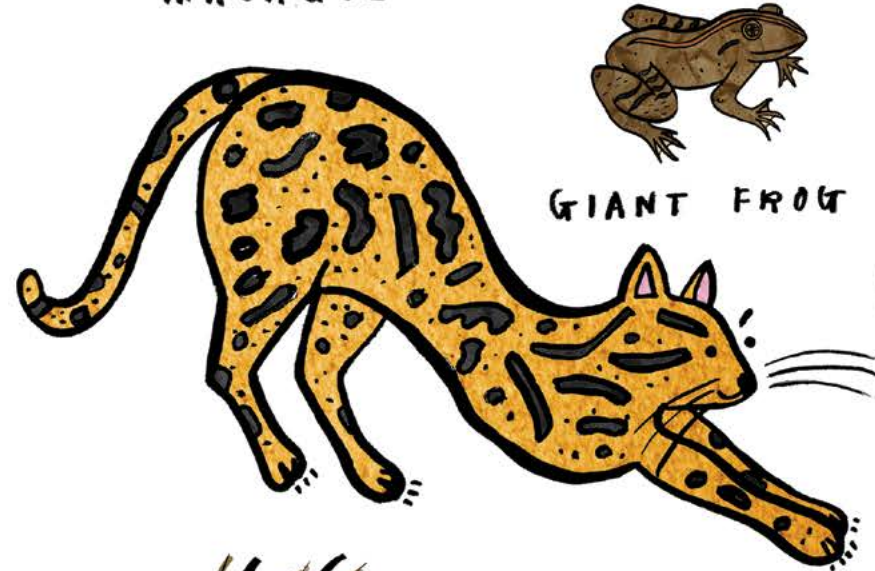
MOUSE DEER



CRICKET



WOODPECKER



GIANT FROG



HORNBILL



FLYING ANT



MYNAH



PORCUPINE

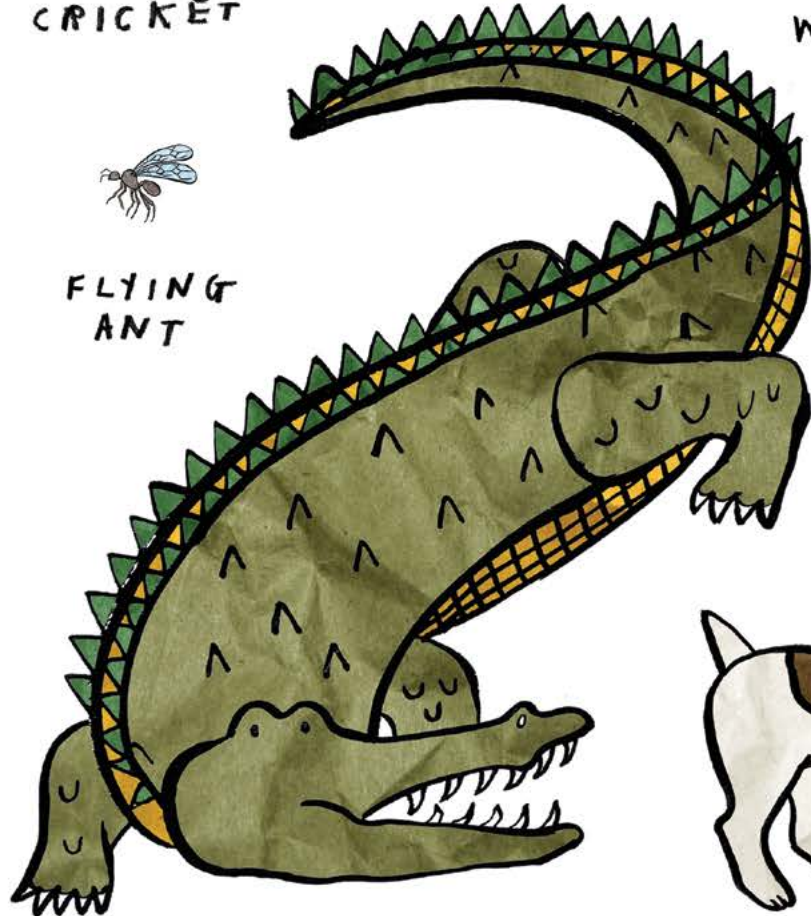
LEOPARD CAT



SWIFTLET



BULBUL



CROCODILE



DOG

To the Lion and the Lamb, the humble bee, the koalas and all who made this book possible.

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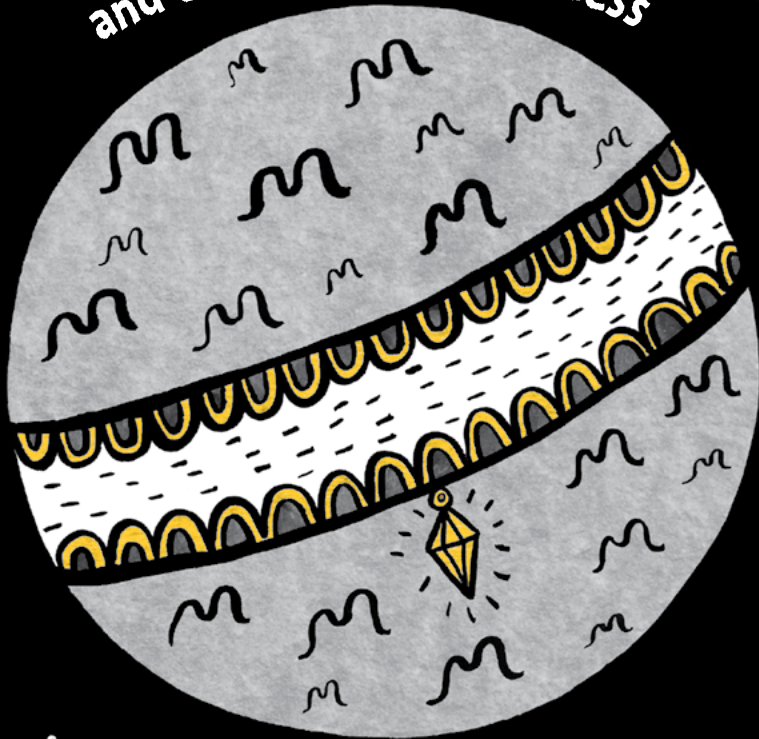
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EPIGRAM
SINGAPORE · LONDON



CHAPTER ONE

When the world was new, the Father of Creation dressed her in a robe of blue waters and girded her with a green belt, right around her middle. She was beautiful, and so he created animals to live in her lands.

One of these lands was a small jewel on the green belt—it was called the Emerald Eye. This was its old name, for it was shaped like a diamond, and the folds of the robe of waters converged upon that place.

Soon, people came to the Emerald Eye, carried over the deep blue velvet folds of the robe of waters. There, they found a rich land: sea eagles circled the hot, life-giving sun; the briny waters teemed with fish of a million colours; crocodiles with eyes of fire and amber lived in the generously mucky swamps; and the jungles were thick with sweet fruits and fragrant flowers. Where the animals saw food and shelter, the people saw opportunity. So they came, and kept coming.



The people did not know about the old name, so they gave the land a new one. They levelled the mountains and filled the swamps. They cut down the forest and threw filth into the ocean. They had guns and used them.

The animals fought back, but soon, General Tiger was vanquished, and his stripes were seen no more in Singapore. For many years, the animals had no leader. They survived as best they could. And still, the people kept coming.

One day, Tortoise called a **Council of the Animals**. He went this way and that, on land and in the water, slowly but surely inviting everyone. He was not the fastest, strongest, bravest, wisest, oldest or most beautiful, but the animals came because Tortoise was known for doing all things well. They had seen his marvellous effort, and they knew he had spent countless hours on his rock in the sun, thinking so hard that his mouth hung open with the exertion. So they all came to hear what he had to say, even the ones who were natural enemies. An official truce was called so Rat had nothing to fear from Python, and everyone managed to smile back when the crocodiles grinned.

“Thank you all very much for coming,”

Tortoise announced from a puddle. His voice wavered, as it took a lot for him to come out of his shell.

“I have called this Council to see what we can do about the people,” he said simply. “There are just too many of them and they keep taking more land. I would like to hear your good ideas, because I have none.”

“Modest reptile,” Mother Wild Boar said approvingly. “It was a good idea to bring us together. Together is how we shall solve our problems.” As she said this, her piglets stopped squabbling for her teats and obediently gathered under her warm, bristly belly. Upon witnessing the good behaviour of these little children, even the most contrary of creatures felt compelled to cooperate.

“We must go to war again!” snarled Leopard Cat, who was still sore over Tiger’s crushing defeat.

“Again?” asked the pigeons, suddenly cooing and flapping frenziedly. “We didn’t know the war had ended! We’ve still been dropping bombs!”

“Let’s complain to our Member of Parliament!” cried Cricket, who liked to make a lot of noise.

“They meet the **people**, sssilly,” hissed Spitting Cobra.

“Everyone be quiet and listen to our genius master plan!” screeched the macaques.

Everyone settled down immediately. The macaques were fiendishly cunning, and since they most closely resembled the humans, all the animals were curious to hear what they would suggest.

Alpha Macaque eyed everyone shrewdly. “After years of snatching children’s bags at MacRitchie Reservoir and poring over the contents, we macaques...have taught ourselves how to read and write!” At this, the macaques whooped and screamed riotously for impact.

“We have also successfully broken into some of the human dwellings that border our hill territories,” Alpha Macaque bragged, to more wild whoops from the troop. “All this training was in service of a daring scheme: we believe we are now ready to break into the Istana and rewrite the Constitution of Singapore!”

The manic monkeys went absolutely bananas at this, swinging everywhere enthusiastically, flinging leaves and making a tremendous ruckus.

The excitement was too much for timid Mouse Deer, who promptly fainted. A traumatised Pangolin curled tightly into a scaly ball and refused to be consoled. As for the other animals, most of what Alpha Macaque suggested had gone right over their heads.

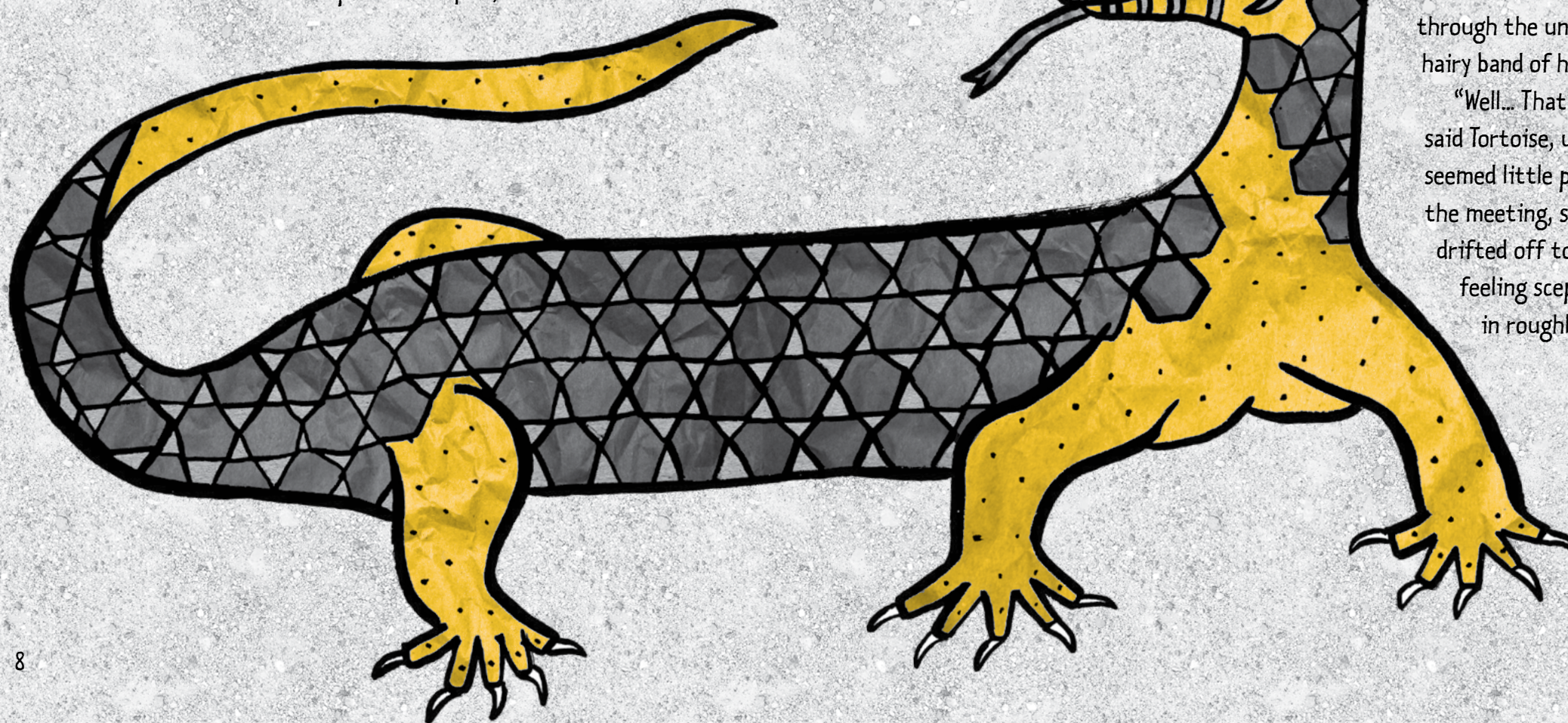


“What’s a constitution?” asked Mouse Deer nervously when he came to.

“What is the Istana?” Pangolin’s muffled voice could only just be heard from the depths of the ball.

Monitor Lizard stepped forward grandly. His huge tail swished from side to side. **“The Istana is where the Alpha Human lives, and the Constitution is a leaf that sets down the code the humans live by,”** Monitor Lizard intoned in his deep baritone. He flicked out his long, forked tongue and tasted the uncertainty in the air.

“I have been monitoring a crack surveillance team and gathering data on the Istana to help the macaques,”



Monitor Lizard offered by way of explanation. “The geckos have been our eyes and ears in this delicate operation.”

The geckos chirped in agreement, startling everyone. Mouse Deer fainted again. The mottled geckos had been so well camouflaged against the underside of a branch that no one had even noticed they were at the meeting.

“We will execute our plan this very night, and you shall witness the dawning of an epic new era!” Alpha

Macaque proclaimed. With that, the whole macaque troop swept noisily out of the Council, crashing through the undergrowth like a hairy band of hooligans.

“Well... That’s that, then?” said Tortoise, uncertainly. There seemed little point in continuing the meeting, so the animals drifted off to their homes, feeling sceptical and hopeful in roughly equal measure.

CHAPTER TWO

The next morning, the President's Chief of Security was called in to watch some truly extraordinary closed-circuit television footage. A sergeant gave him a running commentary.

"Here we see the intruders gathering on the balcony. There are approximately twelve individuals. One jimmys the window open, and they follow him in."

"**Monkeys!**" the Chief of Security exclaimed. "Those things give me the creeps!"

The Chief watched, goggle-eyed, as the macaques split up, each walking assuredly on all fours down the red-carpeted corridors. Some slid down the staircase banisters like ninjas. They reared up on their hind legs and used their clever hands to turn doorknobs. In a room displaying gifts and trinkets from foreign leaders and dignitaries, the monkeys smeared muddy handprints all over the pristine walls.



Alpha Macaque looked fetching with a string of pearls from the United Arab Emirates draped around his waist.

“Why didn’t any alarms go off?!” The Chief was red in the face. The sergeant held up the alarm control box. It bore impressions of vicious teeth marks. Mangled wires stuck out of it crazily.



“What were they after?”

“We found these in several rooms, sir.”

The sergeant handed the Chief crumpled papers covered with grimy handprints. In childish scrawls, they read: **SAV THE FORST, MOREEE TREEE** and **NANANANANAB.**

“Why didn’t any of the guards shoot them? This is embarrassing!” the Chief shouted.

“Sir, monkeys are a common sight around the Istana grounds. Nobody was suspicious,” said the sergeant. Then, lowering his voice conspiratorially, he added, “I believe they have been casing the place, sir.”

“Casing?”

“Yes, sir. Loitering nearby. Observing our weaknesses. Waiting for the right moment to strike,” the sergeant said darkly.

The Chief of Security stared at the sergeant. A realisation dawned on him. “Sergeant. What date is it today?”

“It’s...the first of April, sir. But—”

The Chief burst into laughter. “Sergeant, you have outdone yourself!” He slapped the sergeant on the back so hard the poor man was winded. **“Trained monkeys! You really had me going! Just wait till the President hears about this! Monkeys! Haw haw haw haw!”**

The Chief bellowed so heartily that there was nothing else the sergeant could say. Later, when the sergeant told his wife about the episode, she told him to take a week off because he was clearly ill. That was the end of the Great Macaque Caper, and the animals were no better off than they were before.



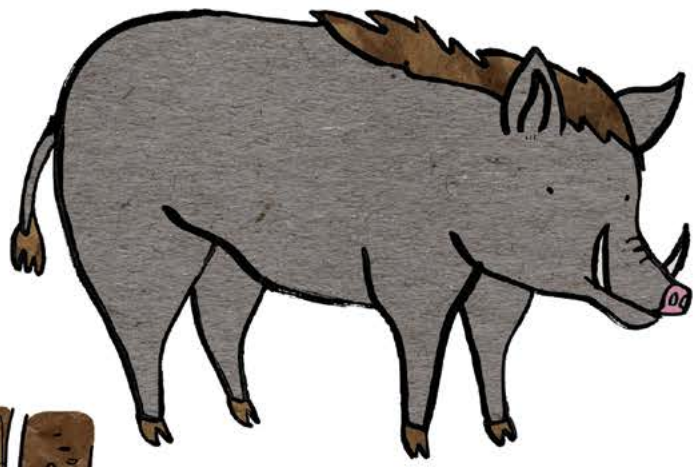
About the Author

Maureen Yeo teaches English, Literature and life skills by introducing her young students to Roald Dahl's great principle: "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men". When not working, she seeks out adventures at home and abroad, especially wildlife encounters. Some of these adventures have been documented as travel articles for *Today* newspaper.

About the Illustrator

Gracie Chai is a self-taught illustrator and artist who has dabbled in textile fabrication and clothes making. She has sold her handmade dresses and accessories in various parts of the world and has had her works featured in international and local publications. Her attention has now returned to illustrating—her first artistic passion.

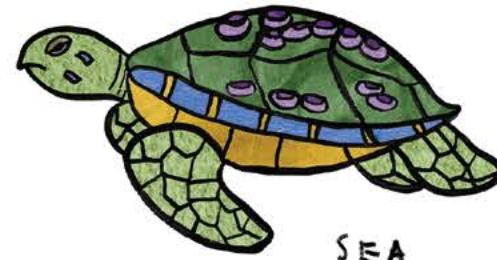




WILD BOAR



TORTOISE



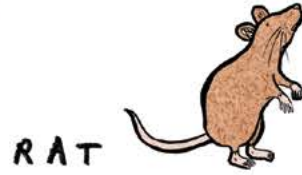
SEA TURTLE



SLOW LORIS



SUNBIRD



RAT



SPIDER



DUNG BEETLE



SEA EAGLE



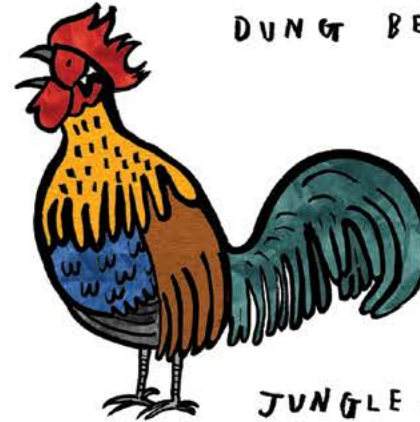
COLUGO



SPITTING COBRA



OTTER



JUNGLE FOWL



PINK DOLPHIN



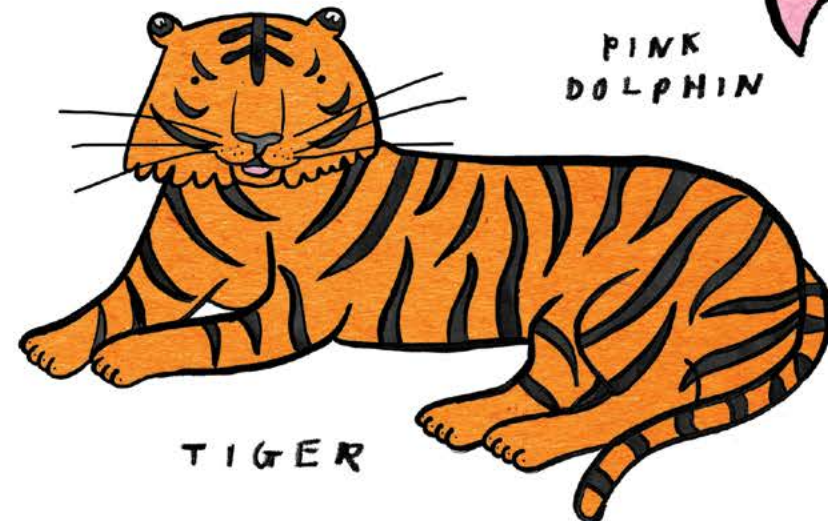
MONITOR LIZARD



PIGEON



PANGOLIN



TIGER

The animals of Singapore are under threat!

Humans are invading their homes. So they're fighting back.
Alpha Macque leads his troops into the Istana to change the Constitution.
"Let's sell manure to raise money for our cause," says Dung Beetle.
But Pink Dolphin has other ideas...

**"Sure to keep children
and adults educated on
conservation!"** —Daryl Yeo,
Nature Photographic Society, Singapore

"Fascinating and endearing."
—Jayaprakash Bojan, National Geographic
Nature Photographer of 2017



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