

Think Slow

by Jessica Ideson

Aged 8

I was scared down here. It looked so different. The trees had no leaves as if they were ghosts. It was so hard to think that I had lived in one for the last three years of my life eating delicious leaves. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye I saw something scuttling across the forest floor. It was the size of my head and it was coming straight at me. I slowly backed away wishing that I was back with my mother and that I could move faster, but sloths are not gifted with speed. The creature had eight legs, a lump for its body and a lump for its head. Now that my eyes had got used to the dark, I realized it was a tarantula! But luckily it just shuffled away. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Being on the rainforest floor was particularly dangerous for a sloth. My main predators were down here and it would be impossible to out run them. But I had the power of camouflage, as I have algae growing on me to keep me hidden.

“Crack!” My heart skipped a beat. Should I move or stay still? It takes so much courage to stay still, but I did just that. When it got closer my worst fears were confirmed. It was a jaguar. Its gleaming hungry red eyes stared down at me from its great height. I could feel his warm breath on me and I squeezed my eye tightly shut. I heard something loud and eerie in the distance. The jaguar must have heard it too and it leaped away. I slowly climbed up the tree, only just in time.

After a few hours of climbing, I was back with the lush leaves. I decided that the jaguar and I must have been mistaken about the noise so I went to sleep. What felt like a few seconds later I awoke with a start. I realized it was the humans my mum had always warned me about. They were all gathered around my tree. Frantic, I climbed to the very top of the tree, but even the tree was trembling. I realized the tree was starting to fall. I clung on with each of my toes. After seconds that seemed like days, the tree thumped on the ground. I

was thrown off, my arms throbbing with panic. My head started spinning. I saw blackness in front of my eyes as I became unconscious.

Sometime later, I felt myself being carried away. At first I wriggled with all my might. I was so terrified, I nearly jumped out of my skin. But after a few minutes he told me not to fear because he was taking me to a safe part of the rainforest. His voice was so reassuring that I believe him and stayed still. Later I was put in the back of a wheeled vehicle and he somehow made it go right into the middle of the rainforest, talking and whistling to me all the time. He told me things like he does this for lots of animals in the rainforest and that sloths are his favourite animal. Also that he does not like chopping down the rainforest and that he only does it for money. I understood every word he said. I loved having him for company so I decided that not all men were bad.

A few hours later the thing we travelled in stopped and he carried me out, put me under a really good tree and left. I slowly climbed up the tree and ate some lovely leaves. When I fell asleep I dreamed of the joyous, calm, and peaceful days living in this perfect tree. Surely the men would never come here.



