

Not sure how old I am, that was one of the many things my mum never got round to tell me. She taught me a lot before she was taken away from me. I remember those days so well, she was such a good mum, I never knew the feeling of hunger in those days, oranges were my favourite treat, all I knew was that everything was good and I was loved. We lived in a tree. But sometimes we moved from one tree to another tree without touching the soil. My mum would spend a lot of the day foraging for our food. We slept on trees and we built a new nest every night. We also used the nest to take rest during the rainy days. When mum took me further, we would spend most of the time on the ground travelling. Sometimes, mum couldn't find food on trees so she would move to the ground but it was made clear to me as soon as I could understand that it is safer in the trees. Life was good in the rain forest, sometimes mum took me to the dry trees, we would travel to be where we could find shelter and manage to get enough food but mostly try to stay on the trees. Very occasionally we would visit the grasslands and swamplands as well. Mum always said we need to stay in the trees for our protection from predators, I wasn't sure what these predators were, but I know now. I was most happy when climbing with my cousins we had so much fun in the trees. If I have trouble falling to sleep, I close my eyes and drift back to the memory of my mum lacing branches together to combine the branches of two

trees to make our nest. She would choose a strong tall tree for building nests. She would put together the branches and other vegetation so it was lovely and warm and comfortable. I had just started to learn to build the nests when I lost my beloved mum. We always stayed away from the rivers mum explained to me we can't swim because we are too heavy so don't ever bother trying, she was a good mum, I miss her so much. My mum looked after me the most but I did spend lots of time with my cousins and aunties I miss them lots too, there was nearly a hundred in our community, I always lost count.

I don't like thinking about that day, we were moving through the forest on the ground to find some food, then all of a sudden I heard loud bangs and then there was blind panic all my family members just started panicking and running, my beloved mum fell to the ground, she was hurt I didn't know what to do? With her last breath she told me to go and hide in the hole in the undergrowth and cover myself with the leaves. I did as I was told and watched as the men came and dragged my mum away! I just stayed hidden mum had told me not to move. Not sure how long I laid there, it had been dark and was light again I was tired, cold and really hungry for the first time in my life. I heard some noises, footsteps were approaching near, I heard voices but couldn't understand what they were saying. Very gently and slowly the leaves moved and I saw a human for the first time in my life. She was looking at me in the only way I could describe as love she was speaking to me, although I couldn't

understand I felt safe and love, she held her arms out to me, I was terrified but the way she was so gentle and loving she made me feel that maybe it might be, ok? So, I let her pick me up and she lifted me into her arms she took an orange from this place and handed it to me, that was my turning point, surely, she wouldn't harm me if she was giving me my favourite food. We travelled in this noisy moving object and arrived at a place I had never seen before. She took me inside and started to make a bed, not quite like my mum had made but it looked comfy, she cuddled me on the bed it felt warm and safe and I had eaten more food so was no longer hungry. I have since found out that the magic place is called a bag! They hold lots of amazing things but especially lots of oranges. It felt like I had a new mum, she spent time with me fed me and kept me safe. Most importantly she is teaching me lots, how to make a bed, how to recognise and eat the right foods, how to create tools out of sticks to find and eat my food. So, life is good and I know that I am one of the lucky ones as most of my family died that day because of the cruelty that some humans are capable of. Most importantly she has taught me this thing called sign language which helps me communicate with my mother, yes, I call her mother I don't think my mum would mind as she did save me and loves me as I do her, she is a very special human, the others call her Jane.