

Lauren's Tigers

Lauren stepped off the airplane. There she was in the faraway country of India, home of things like elephants, monkeys, cobras, and even tigers. She was staying at the home of her friend Zoe in a small village at the edge of a deep, dark, thick jungle. All around the house you could smell the jungle flowers and hear the sounds of birds and monkeys. When she woke up her first morning, her friend served her interesting Indian foods and naan, a kind of bread with honey. Zoe showed Lauren around the village and introduced her to some friends. After lunch while the day was very hot the girls took a nap. Toward evening as it got cooler they sat on the veranda and sipped lemonade while they talked. "I think tomorrow we should take a walk to the next village," said Zoe. "We'll do it in the morning before it gets too hot."

That night as Lauren lay under her mosquito net trying to ignore the buzz of mosquitos trying to get in to her bed and bite her, she heard the night birds and some monkey chatter. Suddenly she sat straight up in bed. "What was that!?" she said to herself. It sounded deep and low like a rumble in the jungle. After that she could hardly sleep all night. In the morning she was quite sleepy, but still wanted to take the jungle walk to the next village. As they walked along the jungle trail only a little sunlight could make it to the jungle floor where they walked. The flowers smelled wonderful and the birds sounded quite cheerful and the monkeys in the trees sounded rather mischievous. "What do you think I heard last night?" asked Lauren. "Probably nothing" Zoe remarked. "But it almost sounded like a growl." "Well anything is possible I guess." Lauren shivered as she remembered the sound. As they walked they both began to notice how quiet the jungle got all of a sudden. The birds became silent and the monkeys chatter quieted. As Lauren looked to her left into the jungle she thought saw a pair of glittering yellow eyes staring back at her. She tapped Zoe and pointed at the glowing eyes. Zoe looked to the right

side of the trail and saw another pair of eyes staring at her. Suddenly, they both heard a faint but clear low rumble. The girls held hands and began to walk a little faster but not daring to run. They thought about turning around but realized they had come too far. In a few minutes they came to a clearing just outside the village. As they watched, the pairs of eyes began surrounding them. Not one, not two, not three, but six pairs of eyes stared at them from the edge of the clearing. The tigers popped first their heads and then their bodies into the clearing. The tigers moved slowly but steadily towards the frightened girls as they stood very still. The large, lean, striped cats came so close they could smell their breath. The tigers moved closer opening their large mouths full of long sharp teeth and roared loudly. They began to lick the girls with long, pink, tongues as rough as sandpaper. The frightened Lauren screamed as loud as she could.

Her eyes popped open big as buttons. Strangely she was at home in her own bed, surrounded by six meowing kittens vigorously licking her face. “Whew” she said. She realized now it had all been a dream, but what a dream!