



Super SAVERs to the Rescue



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The School Assignment

Sonal raced her sister, Ekta, back home from school. “I’m coming,” shouted their mother, as the two girls rhythmically pounded on the front door of their house.

Mrs. Anand opened the door. Her daughters rushed in, flung their backpacks on the couch, and went straight to the kitchen. They were famished.

Sonal tore up a packet of cheese crackers and shared some with Ekta. Sonal was nine years old, and very responsible. She took good care of her little sister who was in kindergarten.

The girls sat on the couch reading their favorite book while munching on their snack. They were so intent on their reading that even the hair falling over their eyes did not seem to bother them.

“How was your day?” their mom asked as she sipped her coffee.

“Great, Mom,” both of them replied in unison.

“I got a good report today because I was a great listener at class,” Ekta said, showing off her certificate from the teacher.

Sonal rattled off some of things they did in school. When she spoke about Geography, she asked, “Mom, what does endangered mean?” as though she had suddenly remembered something.

“When a plant or animal species is at the risk of dying out, it is said to be endangered. If the species does not exist anymore, it is said to be extinct. Why do you ask?” Mom inquired.

“Our teacher has given us an assignment to research endangered species. I have to write about the Bengal tiger,” Sonal explained.

“Maybe you will find something in your National Geographic Kids magazines,” her mom suggested as she handed mugs of hot chocolate to both her daughters.

Ekta slurped her drink. “Yummmm!” she said, still admiring her precious certificate.

Sonal skimmed through the latest issues of the magazine. She was a quick reader, and could finish a story book in minutes!

Just then, they heard the sound of the garage door opening. Their dad was just back from work. He walked in with a cheerful greeting, “Hi everybody! How was your day?” No matter how hard his day was, he always looked forward to coming home and playing with his daughters.

Sonal was still preoccupied with her search, and did not hear her father’s question. She sighed. “Hi Dad, I’m not able to find anything on Bengal tigers in these magazines.” Dad was puzzled.

“Sonal has an assignment about endangered animals,” Mom explained.

“Well, you can always look it up on the internet. There is a ton of information on the Discovery website,” Mr. Anand suggested.

Sonal ran to her bedroom upstairs. She opened her Apple MacBook and typed *animal.discovery.com* on her browser. Ekta yelled, “Wait for me!” and followed her sister upstairs.

They searched for the Bengal tiger and found pages and pages of information. Sonal took notes on her MacBook and typed down some of the important features.

Ekta looked at the pictures. She was very observant. “Why is the tiger sad, Sonal?” she asked pointing at a picture on the screen.

“Well, because the tiger doesn’t have friends,” Sonal explained. That got her thinking that as the tiger population shrank they would become lonely.

She read on many websites that people

were trying to save the tigers so that they would not become extinct. She wondered why, among all animals, only the tiger was at the risk of becoming extinct.

Sonal always pondered the reasons behind many things. She knew she would be a detective or a scientist inventor someday because she was so inquisitive. At least that is what her teachers thought.

At dinner, Sonal asked her parents, “Why do animals become extinct?”

“One reason is that humans kill them for making medicines or jewelry,” their dad said.

“Even extreme temperatures can make it difficult for them to survive in some places,” their mom added.



“Calamities like the plague can spread among the entire species and cause extinction,” Dad continued.

“OK, I understand all these reasons. In that case, how come only some of the animals are extinct and the others are not?” Sonal loved to ask questions like a detective.

“Tell you what, we will go to the Riddle Library tomorrow and you can do some more research on this. Now finish your dinner and go to bed,” their mom said.