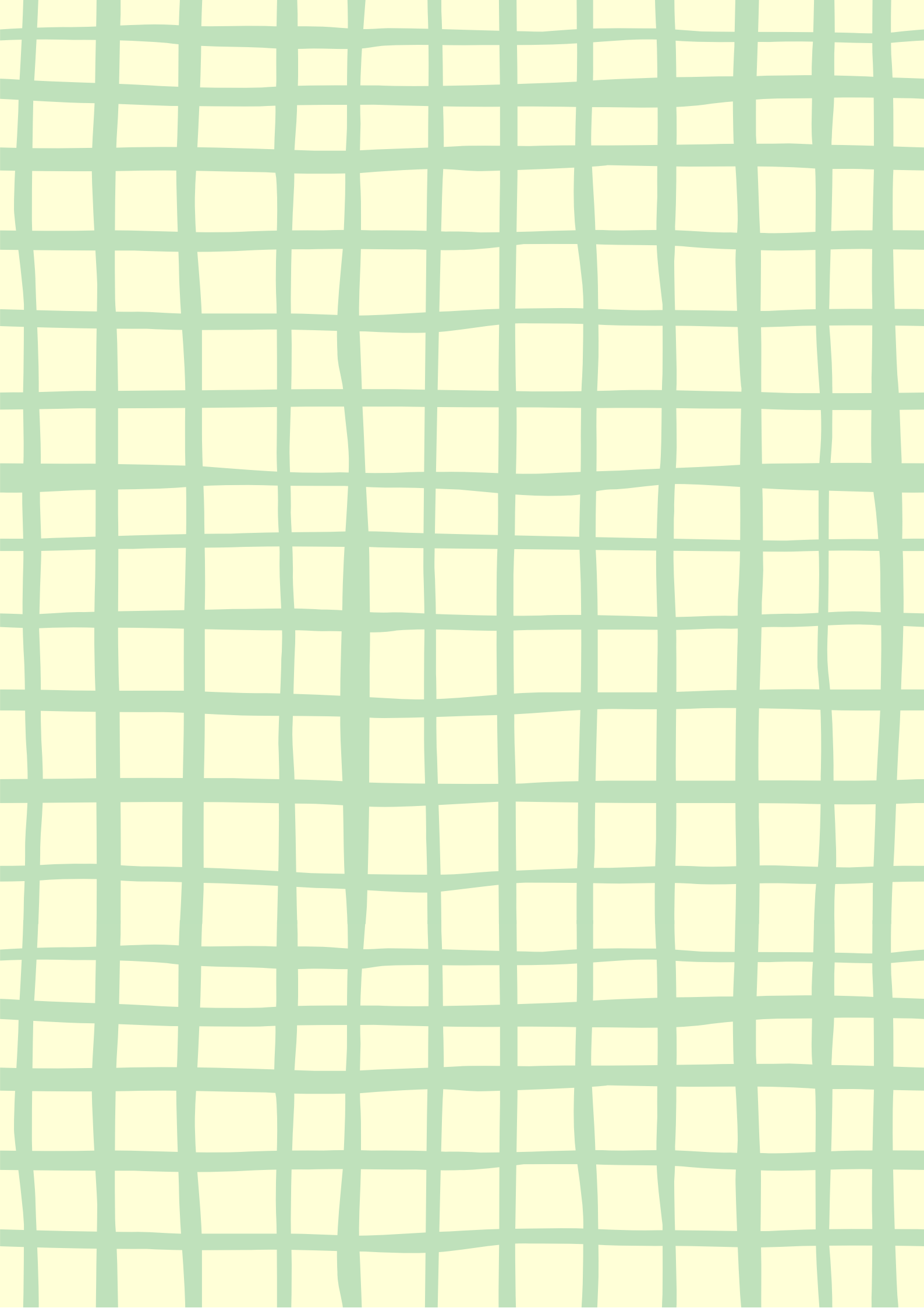


Tanuj Finds a Tiger



Arjun Khullar



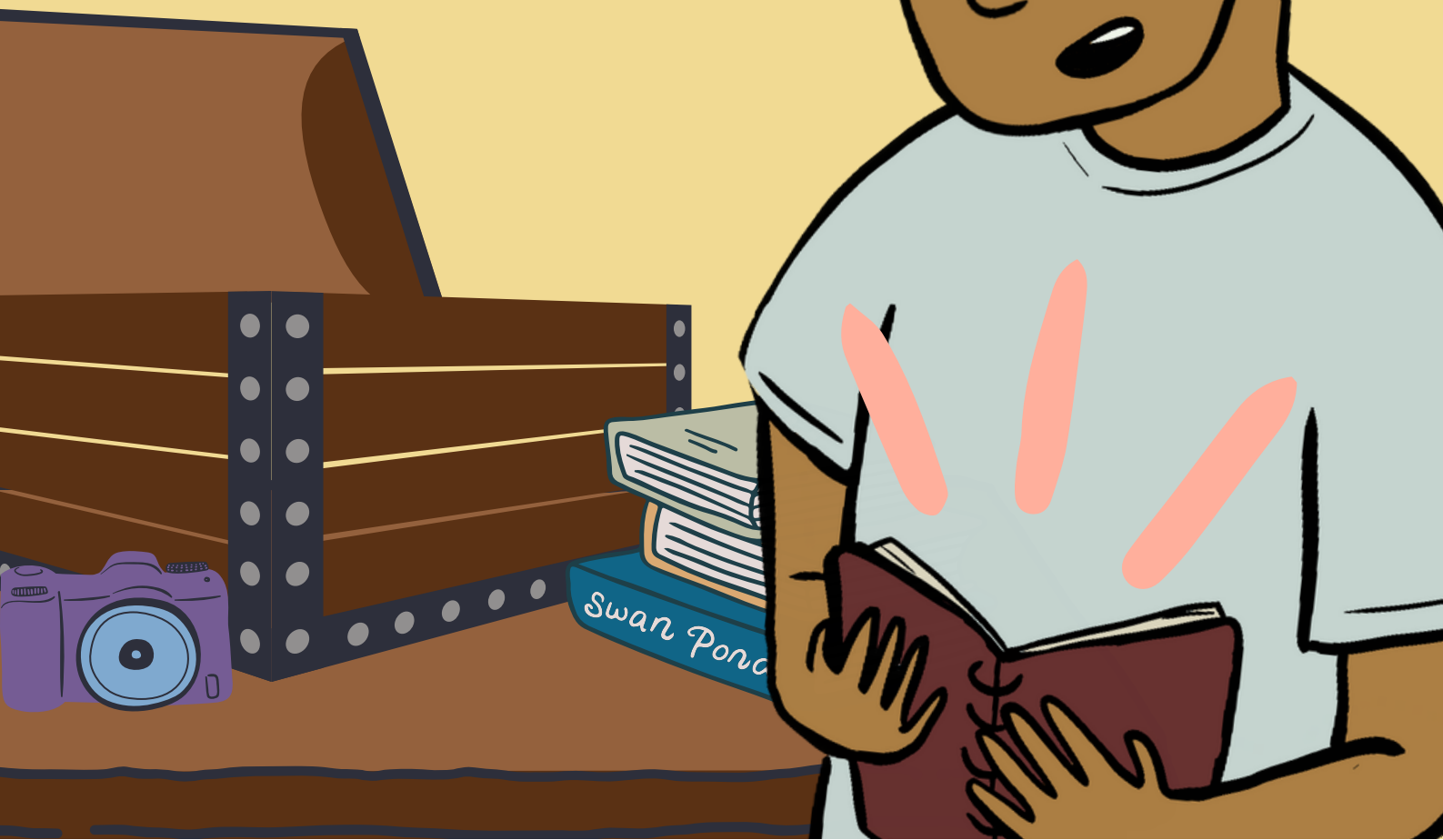
On one sunny afternoon, Tanuj stumbled upon his grandmother's old trunk. On opening the trunk, Tanuj was beyond excited to find a box full of photo albums.


The albums had photos of Tanuj as a baby and even some of his grandmother's young days!

Tanuj ran across the house to find his grandmother. "Grandma, you won't believe what I found, All of your photo albums! Can I please go through these pictures?" exclaimed Tanuj.

"Of course Tanuj! I had saved pictures from all these years so that one day you'd have the chance to look at them."

As Tanuj peered through the countless pictures, he came across a picture of a majestic animal. He was shocked to see how closely this animal resembled a cat, but he knew he had never heard of it or seen it before!





Confused, Tanuj made his way to his grandmother's room. "Grandma, what is this animal? I don't think I've ever seen one before."

"Well Tanuj, that is because Tigers are extinct, and they no longer exist," replied his grandmother.

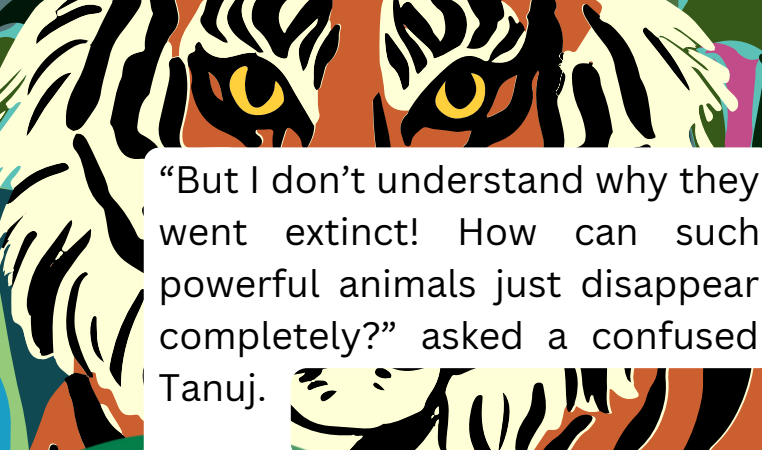
"Extinct?!" Tanuj asked.

"Yes Tanuj, Tigers were known as the kings of the jungle. And they were majestic creatures...They were the largest cats to exist and they survived only on a carnivore diet.

They were found all across the world in regions such as India, Africa, Nepal, Russia, and many other places with tropical, moist, or swampy forests."

"Please tell me more about tigers Grandma, I can't believe that such an animal ever existed!"

"Well, Tigers were also of many different kinds, There were Bengal Tigers, Siberian Tigers, South China Tigers... each of these tigers differed in their size slightly with Siberian tigers being the biggest of them all. They all shared the same coat that was orange in color with black stripes all across."




“But I don’t understand why they went extinct! How can such powerful animals just disappear completely?” asked a confused Tanuj.

“I’m sure you’ve studied about Climate Change in your history classes! It all has to do with the environmental damage that human activities caused all these years. There were many who hunted and poached tigers for commercial gain.

Practices such as rapid urbanization, mining, encroachment, and many unsustainable industries slowly destroyed their natural habitats, causing ecological imbalance so the tigers could no longer sustain themselves. And so, all of these human activities eventually led to the extinction of tigers and many other species of animals,” explained his Grandmother.

“But, how could these activities even reach a scale where they caused an entire species’ extinction? I don’t understand,” mumbled Tanuj, in disbelief.



A tiger is shown from the back, looking towards a forest scene. In the background, there is a large fire with orange and yellow flames. To the right, a basket filled with round, light-brown fruits sits on a wooden stand. The ground is covered with logs and tree stumps, suggesting deforestation. The overall color palette is dominated by oranges, browns, and blues.

Tanuj's Grandmother could notice his profound sadness and disbelief, and decided to share stories of how people have come together since, to work towards protecting other endangered species such as elephants.

"I know this is very upsetting for you Tanuj! It was a big moment in our history as well, and it forced people of all generations to understand the severity of their actions and come together to prevent another extinction."

"How can we ensure this doesn't happen again Grandma?" asked Tanuj.

"People and organizations across the world took many different steps to help endangered species. Many people educated others about the impact of their activities and the consequences of continuing similar actions on our environment and the many species that live in it."

Other people worked directly with these animals to protect them from poaching and ensure they produce healthy offspring. There were also many national parks, reserves, and conservation sites set up to protect existing habitats and the animals that live within them.”

Hearing this, Tanuj felt a sense of hope for the future and sprinted to his laptop to read about these conservation strategies.

Tanuj spent the rest of his afternoon glued to his laptop screen. He read all about tigers, climate change, and the work people are doing to protect the existing endangered species.

Tanuj stumbled upon an Elephant Conservation site just 2 hours away from his hometown. He thought about what it would be like to meet these animals up close and understand the ways in which people are working together to protect them.



Tanuj made his way to his grandmother's room and knocked on the door.

As his grandmother opened the door, Tanuj couldn't wait and blurted "I found an Elephant Conservation site just 2 hours away from here! Can we please go?"

His Grandmother smiled and replied "That's a wonderful idea Tanuj! I don't see a reason why we can't go visit. Why don't you go pack your bags, and we can leave tomorrow early morning."

The next morning, Tanuj woke up before time and waited at the dining table as his Grandmother prepared to leave.



As they made their way into the conservation site, his eye caught a humongous elephant being washed with water pipes in a corner of the park. He looked over at his grandmother and asked “Can we please go see the elephant from closer?”

They walked towards the enclosure, and Tanuj was mesmerized by the sheer size and beauty of the animal. He read all about the elephant, their lifestyles and habitats on a poster placed nearby.



“Why don’t we go talk to some of the members and locals associated with the organization? It will help you understand how these people are working tirelessly to protect the endangered species,” asked his grandmother.

Tanuj nodded with excitement as they walked towards a group of individuals who seemed to be engaged in deep conversation near the office building of the conservation site.

The group consisted of scientists, conservationists, as well as local community members and volunteers, who all collaborated to ensure the conservation of elephants.

Tanuj stood there, listening intently as they explained the many ways in which they work towards protection. They spoke of their awareness and education campaigns, protests against environmentally harmful practices, and their strategies for conserving wildlife and their habitats. They also discussed their rescue and rehabilitation efforts.




As they continued discussing, Tanuj understood how human activities were exhausting limited natural resources, and destroying their habitats. Of all the things he learnt during this conversation, what stood out the most was the importance of educating people.

He thought to himself, without knowledge and awareness, people would never change their practices and adopt sustainable habits.

As they made their way back home in the car, His grandmother asked “How did you feel today Tanuj? I hope you learnt something!”

Tanuj smiled and replied, “I’m so inspired Grandma, I also want to help and make a difference!”





The next morning Tanuj decided to gather his friends and share everything he learnt on his trip.

His friends listened intently as he spoke of the team and their efforts at the Elephant Conservation Site. He also spoke about tigers and their extinction, and how so many other animals are at the risk of extinction.

“Can’t we do something about it?” asked his friend

“That’s why I called you all here. I learnt how important it is to educate others about the impact of our practices and the importance of conservation, so I thought we could all research and design posters to share with our community members so that they can also understand the importance of taking action!” replied Tanuj.


“That’s a great idea,” exclaimed his friends as they began working on different posters.

That evening, Tanuj and his friends went from door to door distributing their posters and talking to people. They covered their local shops, businesses, and service vendors, as well as their neighbors, and other local community members.

Tanuj was elated to see them all respond positively and inquire about the ways in which they could also contribute to his movement. Tanuj created a list of names and numbers which he could provide to local conservation organizations to help them expand their reach and garner support for their efforts.

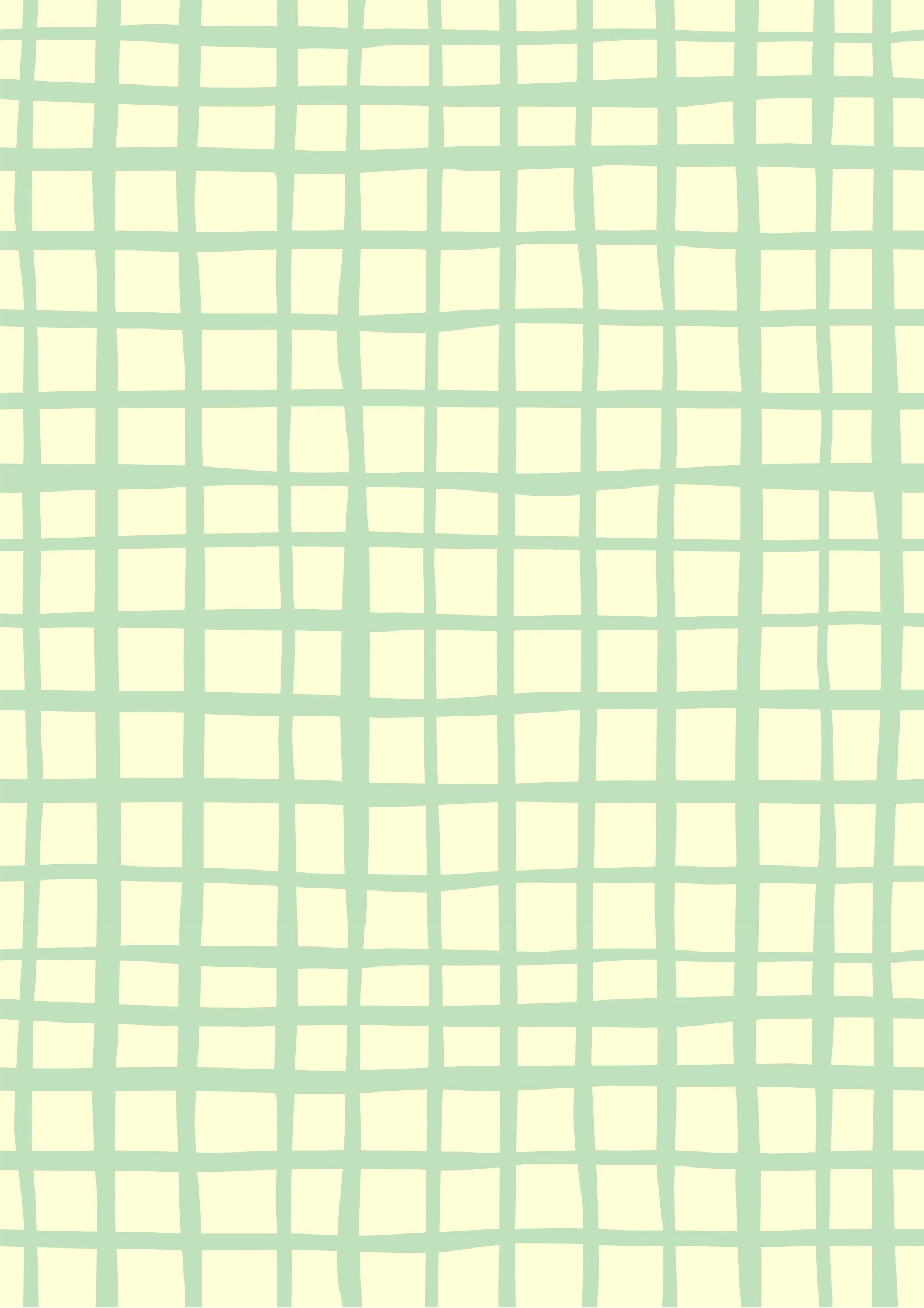


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As he sat down to eat dinner, his grandmother felt proud to have witnessed Tanuj's determination and initiative in working towards a cause.

Tanuj went to bed hopeful that night, for he could envision a future where humans would not only peacefully coexist with animals, but also work collectively to protect the environment and its biodiversity.





Arjun Khullar