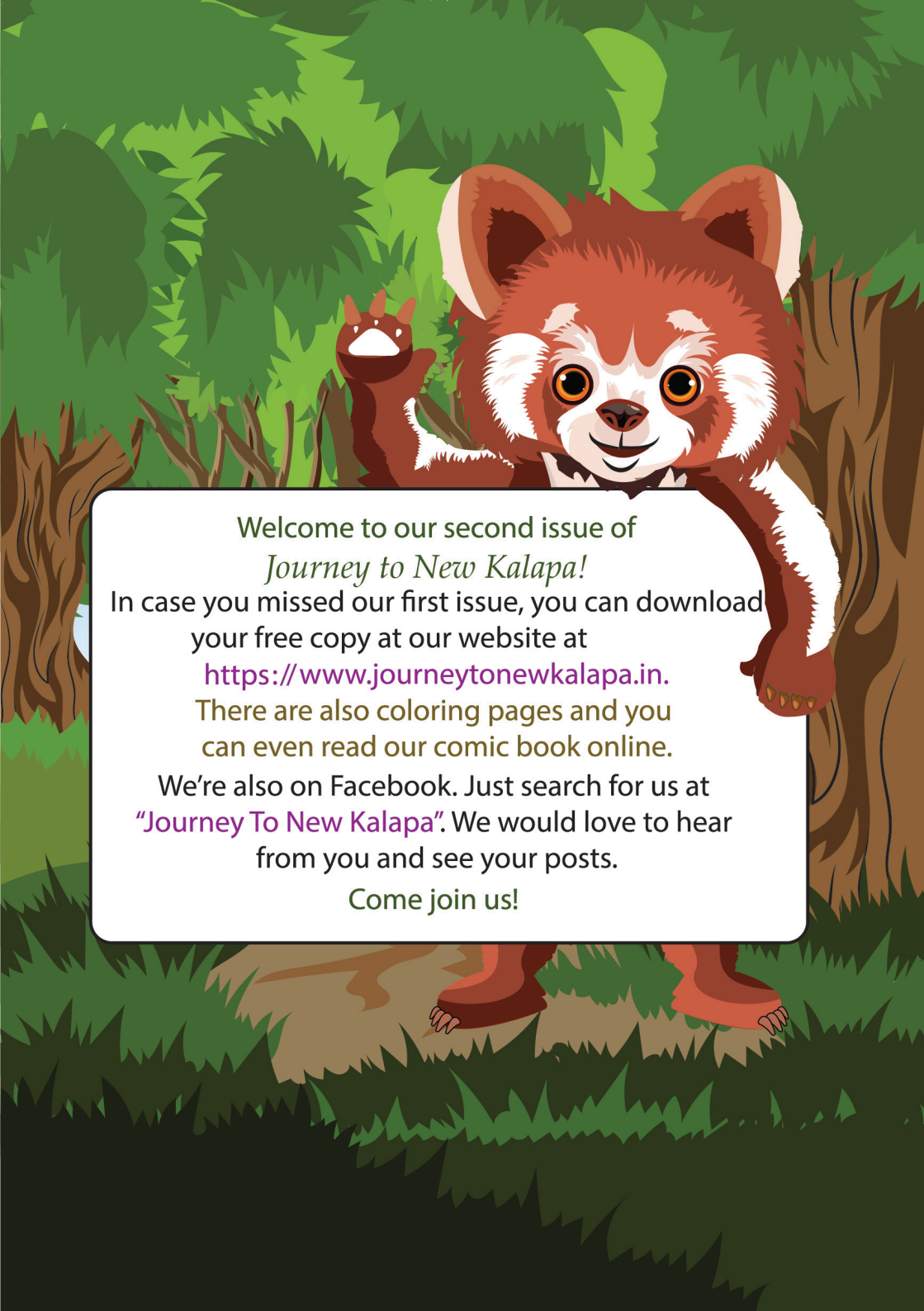


JOURNEY TO

NEW KALAPA

Vol 1, Issue 2





Welcome to our second issue of
Journey to New Kalapa!

In case you missed our first issue, you can download
your free copy at our website at

<https://www.journeytonewkalapa.in>.

There are also coloring pages and you
can even read our comic book online.

We're also on Facebook. Just search for us at
"Journey To New Kalapa". We would love to hear
from you and see your posts.

Come join us!

JOURNEY TO NEW KALAPA

A person with brown hair, wearing an orange t-shirt and blue pants, is seen from behind, walking on a paved path. They are carrying a purple backpack with a white 'K' on it and a water bottle. A dog with orange and white fur is walking alongside them. The background features a large, illuminated pagoda-like structure, silhouettes of people on benches, and a cityscape with lit-up buildings under a dark blue night sky.

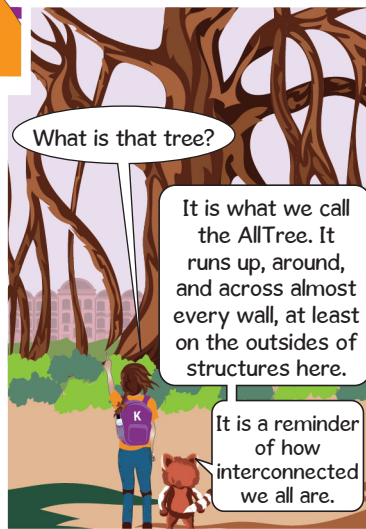
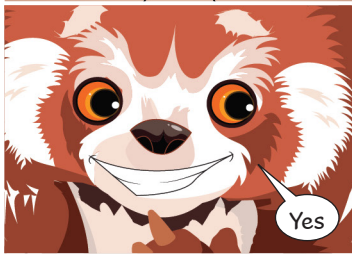
Story by: Brad Reddersen

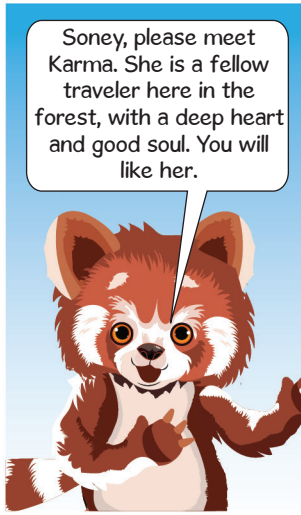
Characters and Illustrations: Ugen Lepcha

Lots of help from: Junu P. Lepcha, Tim Loncarich, Alessandra Nadudvari, and the rest of the Sustainable Sikkim team

Comic book layout by: Shobhna Gupta

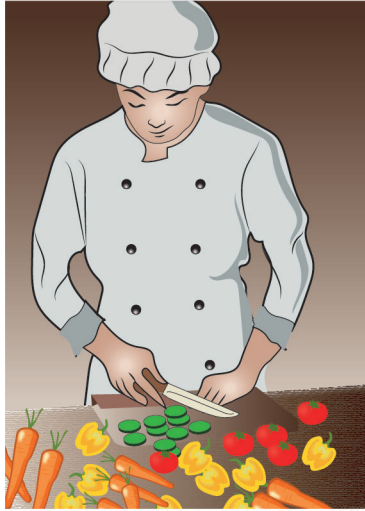
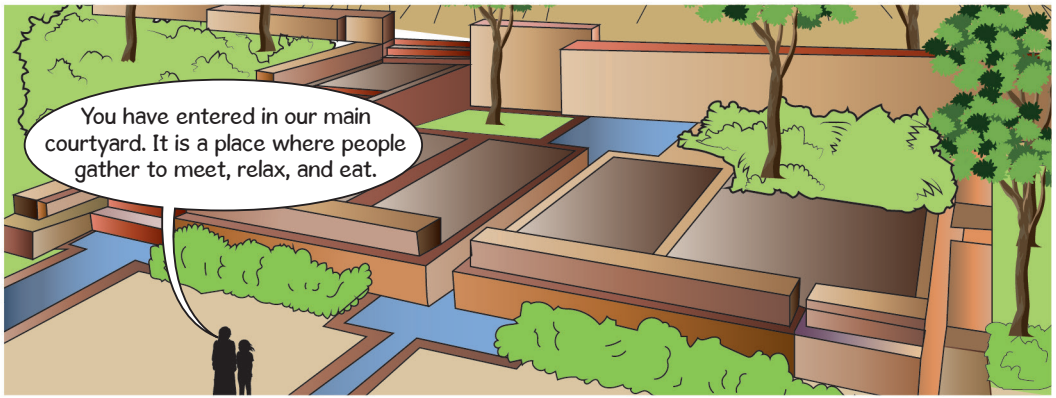
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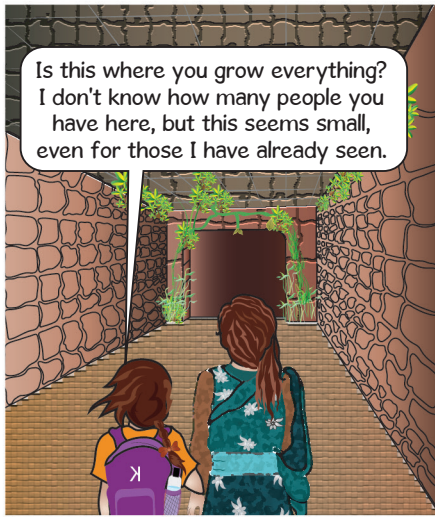




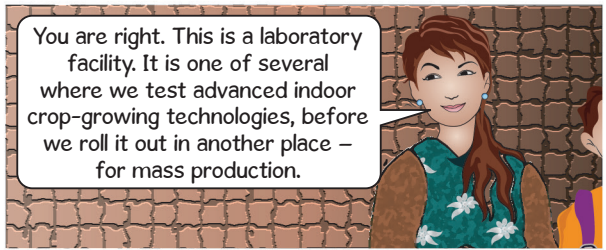








Is this where you grow everything? I don't know how many people you have here, but this seems small, even for those I have already seen.



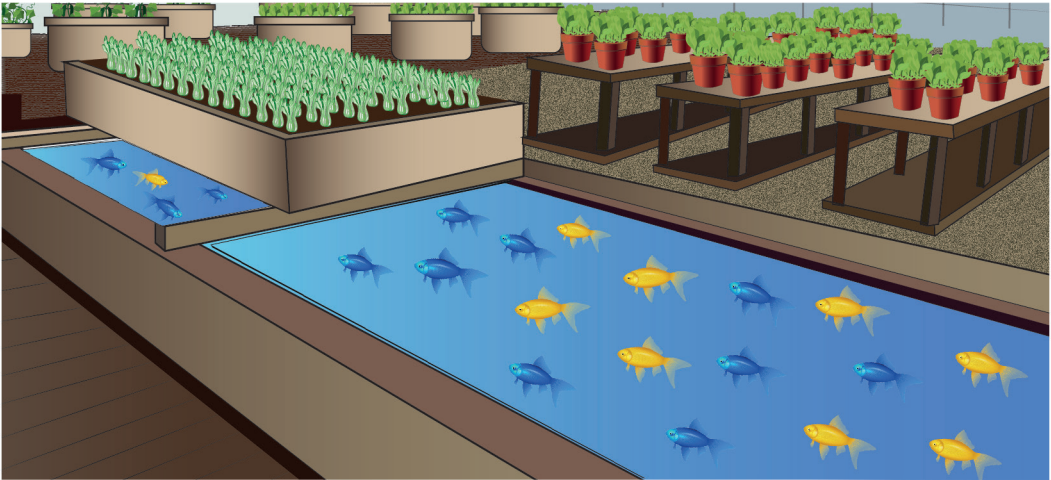
You are right. This is a laboratory facility. It is one of several where we test advanced indoor crop-growing technologies, before we roll it out in another place – for mass production.



Can we go in?



Yes. But just for a quick visit this time. You have had a long day.



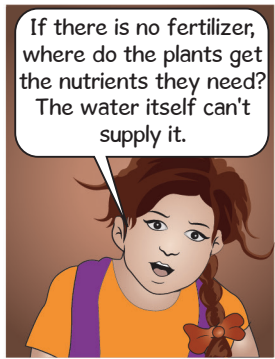
I have never seen anything like this. What is it?

It is an aquaponics prototype we are evaluating.



Aquaponics? I have heard of that but don't really know much about it.

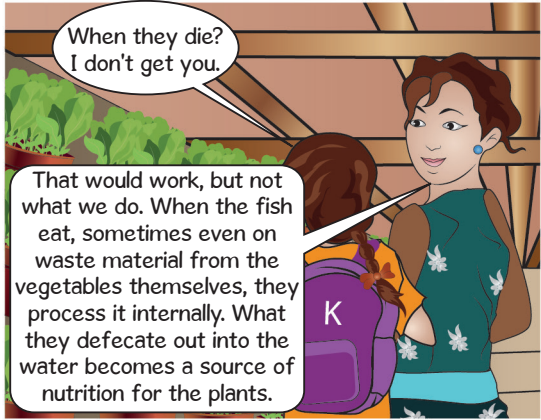
It is a technique which allows for high-volume plant production with minimal water use and little need for external fertilizer.



If there is no fertilizer, where do the plants get the nutrients they need? The water itself can't supply it.

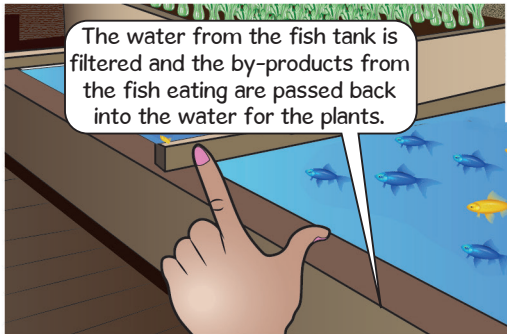


The fish provide the fertilizer.



When they die? I don't get you.

That would work, but not what we do. When the fish eat, sometimes even on waste material even on vegetables themselves, they process it internally. What they defecate out into the water becomes a source of nutrition for the plants.



The water from the fish tank is filtered and the by-products from the fish eating are passed back into the water for the plants.



That is amazing.

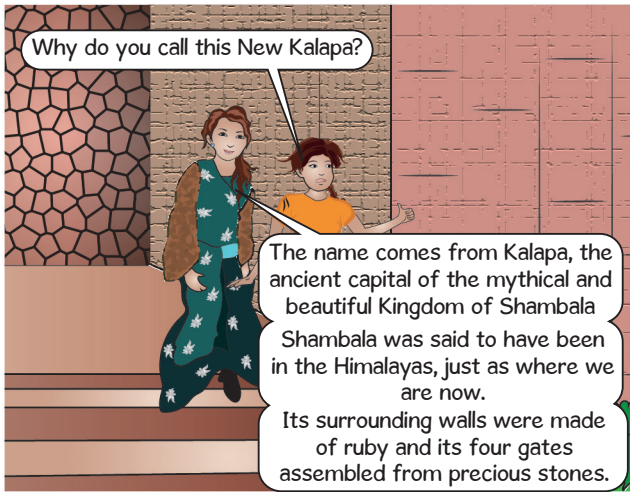


Just science, dear

Can I ask - ?

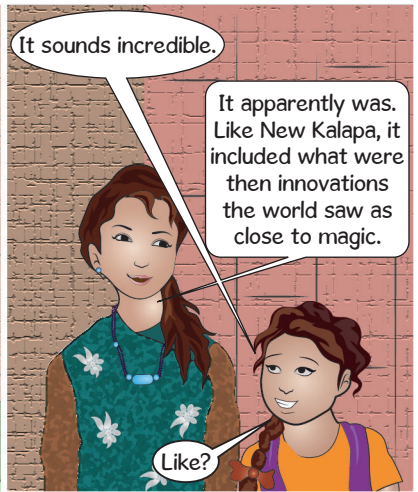


You can ask anything. But let us move on, for now. You have had a long day and I want to show you a few more things.



Why do you call this New Kalapa?

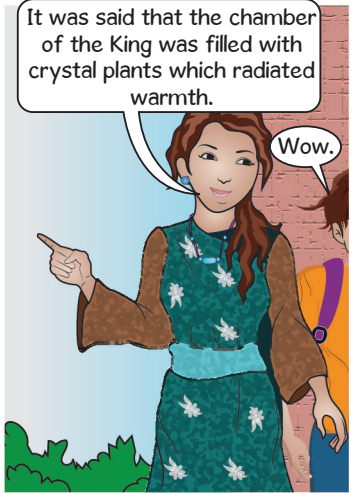
The name comes from Kalapa, the ancient capital of the mythical and beautiful Kingdom of Shambala. Shambala was said to have been in the Himalayas, just as where we are now. Its surrounding walls were made of ruby and its four gates assembled from precious stones.



It sounds incredible.

It apparently was. Like New Kalapa, it included what were then innovations the world saw as close to magic.

Like?



It was said that the chamber of the King was filled with crystal plants which radiated warmth.

Wow.

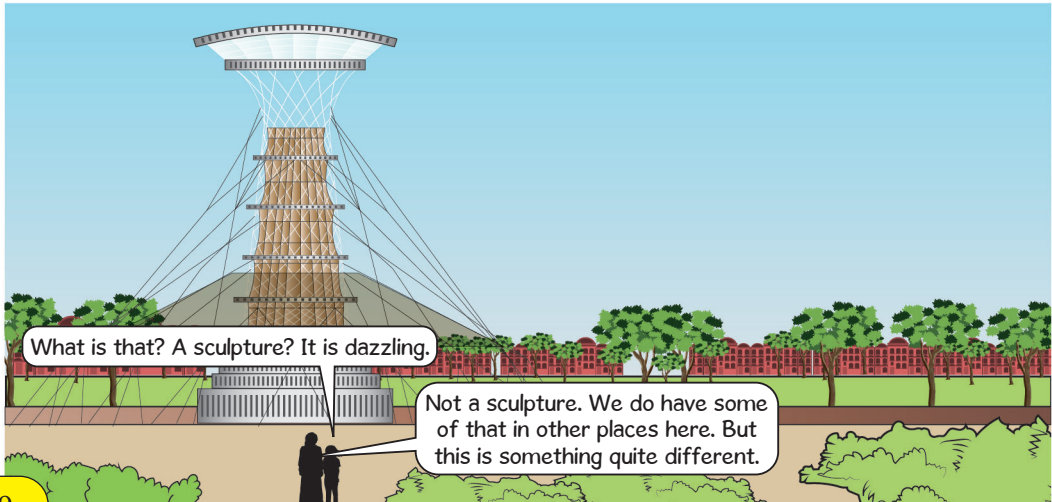


We have innovations like that too. Ones much of the world might think was magic.

I don't see any ruby walls enclosing the place.



Jewels are just rocks, dear child. A beautiful gift of nature, but just that. It is no more magical than the blue eyes some of the foreigners here have. I was thinking instead of things like this.

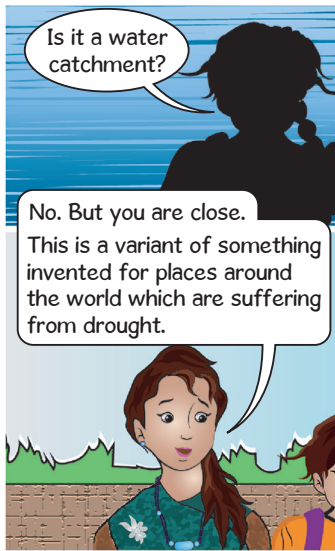


What is that? A sculpture? It is dazzling.

Not a sculpture. We do have some of that in other places here. But this is something quite different.

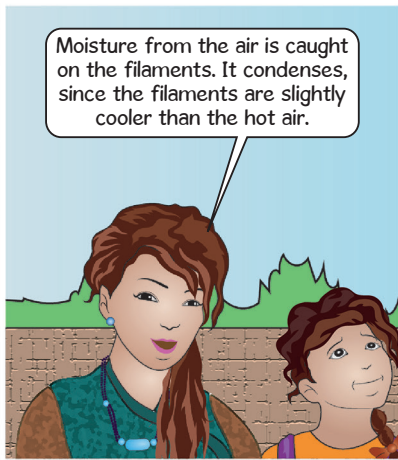


I see it. There are water drops.



Is it a water catchment?

No. But you are close. This is a variant of something invented for places around the world which are suffering from drought.



Moisture from the air is caught on the filaments. It condenses, since the filaments are slightly cooler than the hot air.



The drops roll down the long curves of the filaments. They eventually end up at the bottom.



And they produce enough water to drink, for all of you?

Not enough on its own, not yet. We are still perfecting the technology.



Also, in our part of the world there is still much rain, for now. So water catchments are used throughout along with greywater recycling.

Greywater?




That is the water we use, to wash our clothes, our dishes, and our bodies, that is still clean enough to use in other ways. We can use it to water our plants. That's just one example.




Why the sad look?



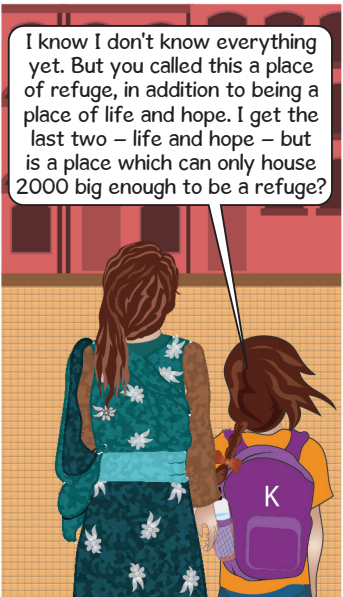
I was thinking, how we have to do this now, with water soon to become scarce.



Of all the things we do, this is one we should have been doing for all time. Water is a gift from nature, and people have been reckless in its use for most of our species' existence.



It is not something to be sad about. At least now we are doing a good thing.

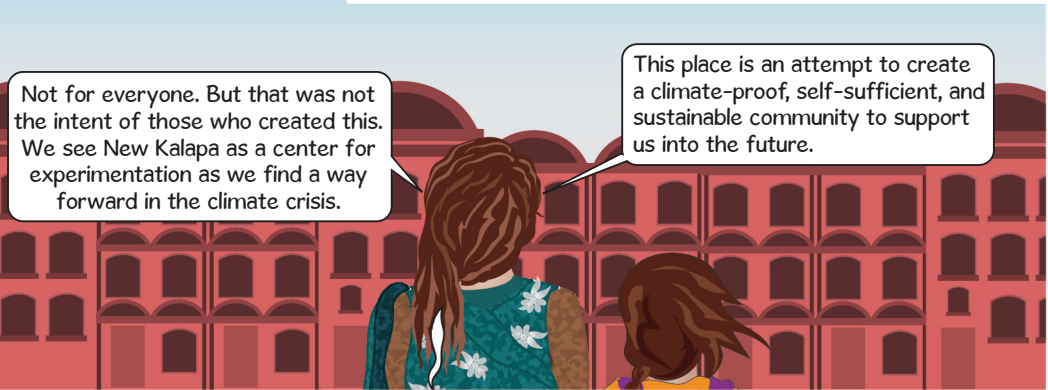


I know I don't know everything yet. But you called this a place of refuge, in addition to being a place of life and hope. I get the last two – life and hope – but is a place which can only house 2000 big enough to be a refuge?




How many people are there here?

Maybe 1000 now. We built it with 2000 in mind.




Not for everyone. But that was not the intent of those who created this. We see New Kalapa as a center for experimentation as we find a way forward in the climate crisis.


This place is an attempt to create a climate-proof, self-sufficient, and sustainable community to support us into the future.



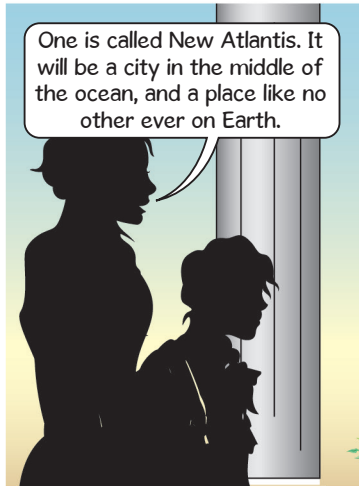
Will New Kalapa grow, then?



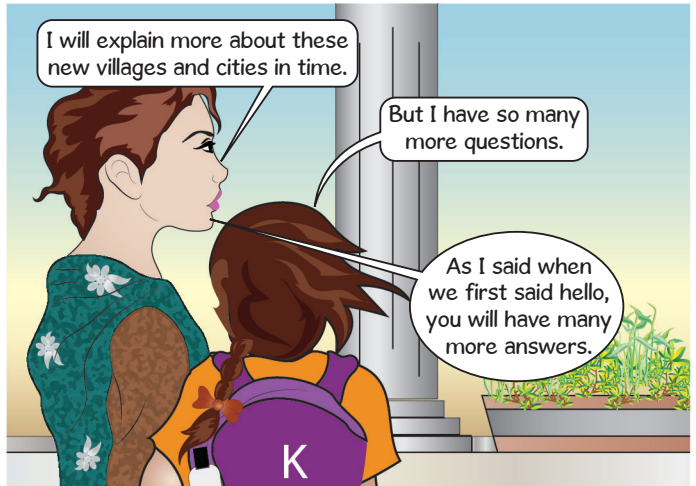
Yes, it will grow, but mostly to the 2000 people it was designed for.



There will be other New Kalapas. There actually are others being created, even now.



One is called New Atlantis. It will be a city in the middle of the ocean, and a place like no other ever on Earth.



I will explain more about these new villages and cities in time.

But I have so many more questions.

As I said when we first said hello, you will have many more answers.



For now, you are tired and must rest. Tomorrow will be busy for you.

I understand. By then the flash flood will have passed. We can also better find our way out over the landslide, when the sun is up.



I miss my parents.

I know, dear Karma. Rest easy, for you will see them tomorrow.



This is your room, dear child.

My room?



WOW!



A W E S O M E !

It is beautiful. And it has light blue walls, just like the ones I have at home. Woven fabrics on the chair and bed, and small green plants, too, just like...



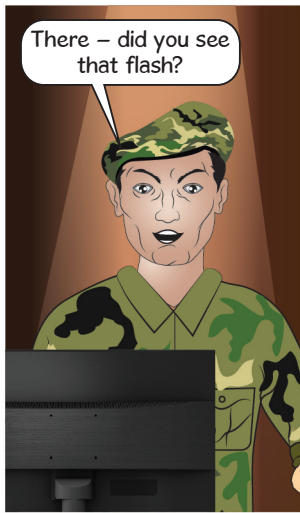
Act II



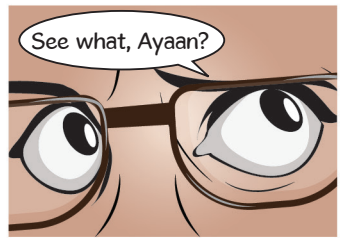


I told you, Rahul. We almost had them!

We did. This was the closest ever. If only we had them on video for more than four seconds.



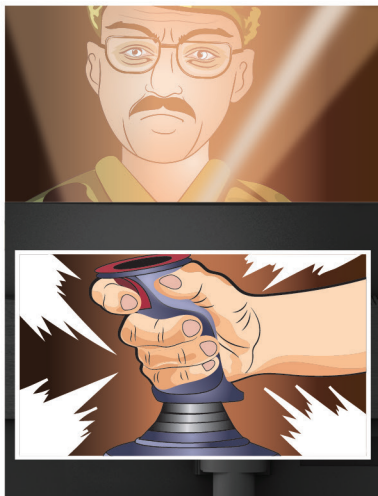
There – did you see that flash?



See what, Ayaan?



The rocks. I think those are the rocks we heard about.

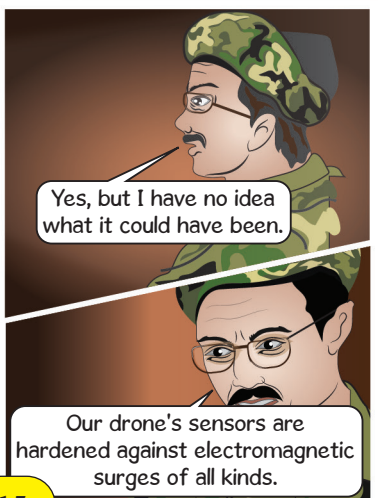


I think so now. It is still not that clear.



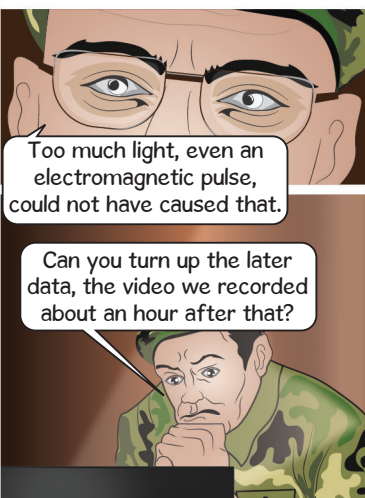
Please click ahead, frame-by-frame. May we will see something more.

Did you see that?



Yes, but I have no idea what it could have been.

Our drone's sensors are hardened against electromagnetic surges of all kinds.

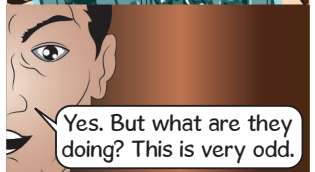


Too much light, even an electromagnetic pulse, could not have caused that.

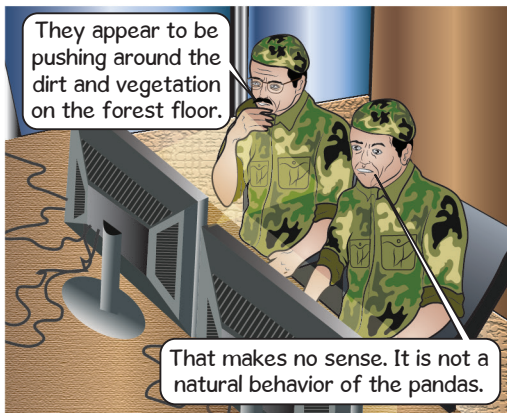
Can you turn up the later data, the video we recorded about an hour after that?



Is this what you meant?



Yes. But what are they doing? This is very odd.



They appear to be pushing around the dirt and vegetation on the forest floor.

That makes no sense. It is not a natural behavior of the pandas.

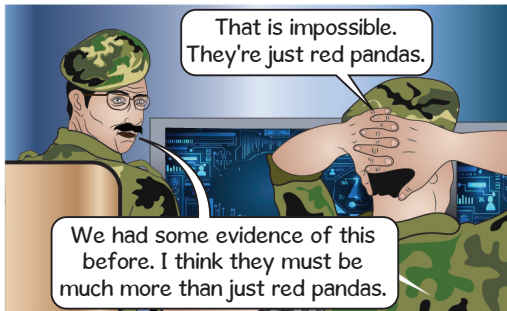


I think I understand it now.



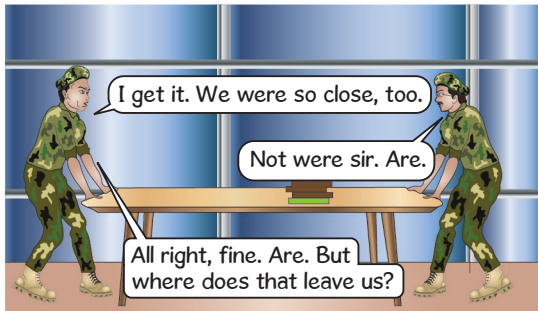
What? If you think you know...

They're covering the tracks the girl and other red panda made.



That is impossible. They're just red pandas.

We had some evidence of this before. I think they must be much more than just red pandas.



I get it. We were so close, too.

Not were sir. Are.

All right, fine. Are. But where does that leave us?



It means two things.



We need to get our demonstration projects going fast. And we need to track that little girl and the panda the next time they reappear.

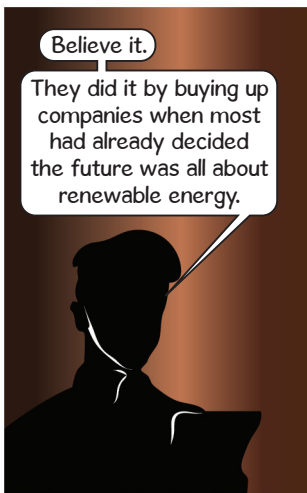


The projects are in good shape. The big one is, anyway, the ones our employers want to happen.



They have a lot riding on this.

It's their very future at stake. Together our group alone is responsible for about one-third of the world's fossil fuel production.



Believe it.

They did it by buying up companies when most had already decided the future was all about renewable energy.



Everybody thought the governments would step in and tighten up on emissions controls, so hard that no one could make money any longer.



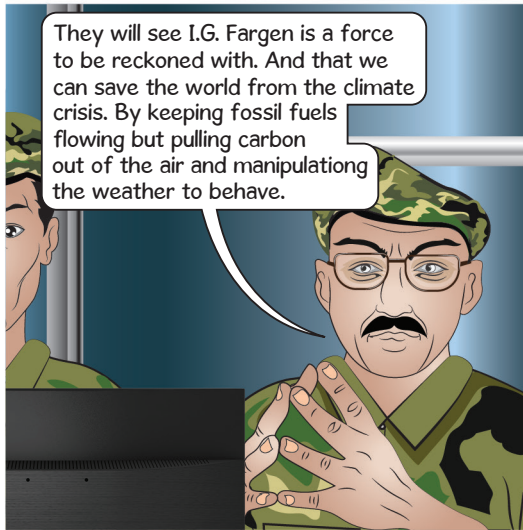
That's still hard for me to believe.



And when this switches on.



The carbon capture experiment, built just outside of Delhi.

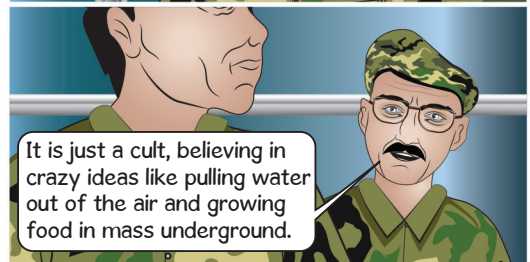


They will see I.G. Fargen is a force to be reckoned with. And that we can save the world from the climate crisis. By keeping fossil fuels flowing but pulling carbon out of the air and manipulating the weather to behave.

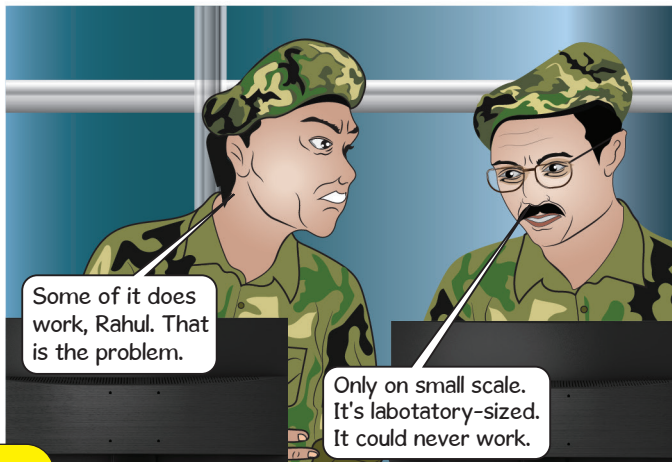


We are fortunate most do not know there is an alternate path to the future. This New Kalapa thing.

It is not real though, sir.

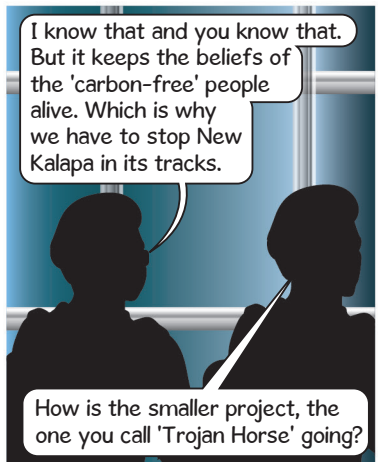


It is just a cult, believing in crazy ideas like pulling water out of the air and growing food in mass underground.



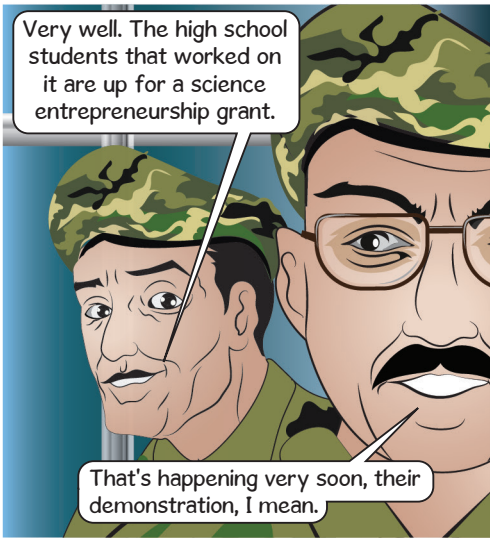
Some of it does work, Rahul. That is the problem.

Only on small scale. It's laboratory-sized. It could never work.



I know that and you know that. But it keeps the beliefs of the 'carbon-free' people alive. Which is why we have to stop New Kalapa in its tracks.

How is the smaller project, the one you call 'Trojan Horse' going?



Very well. The high school students that worked on it are up for a science entrepreneurship grant.

That's happening very soon, their demonstration, I mean.



It is. A small scale version of our own patented carbon capture technology, though no one but a small group here knows it.



Even the student who thinks he discovered the idea does not realize how much we manipulated him, feeding him access to articles we wrote, to 'inspire' his discovery.

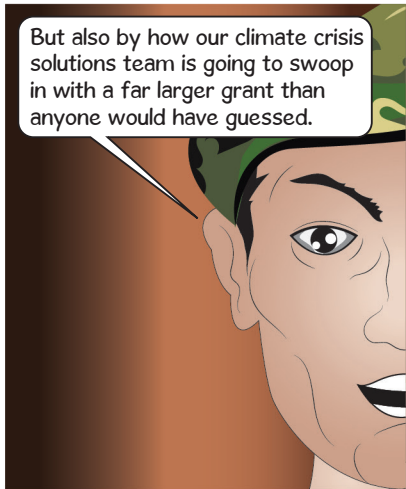


And when his group wins that entrepreneurship award –

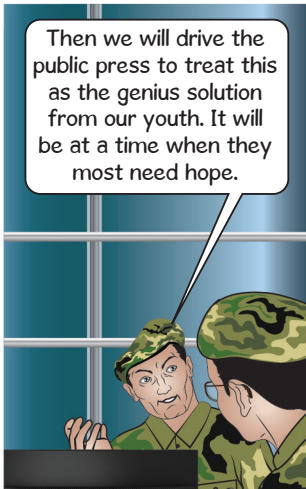


Which is a sure thing because we control the judging –

Is going to surprise everyone, not just by how well it is going to work –



But also by how our climate crisis solutions team is going to swoop in with a far larger grant than anyone would have guessed.



Then we will drive the public press to treat this as the genius solution from our youth. It will be at a time when they most need hope.



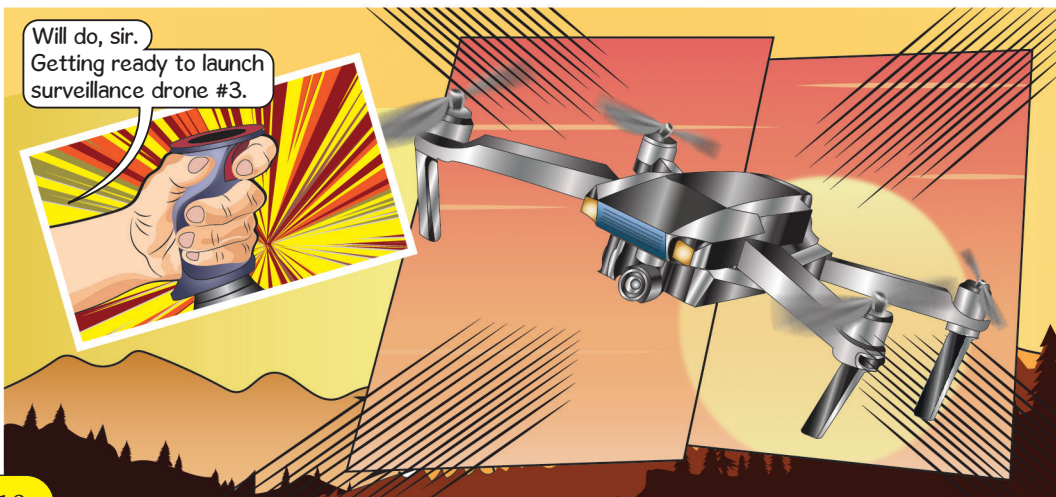
Because without it, they see our country and the world about to be engulfed in chaos as carbon emissions increase.



This is why when that little girl and red panda make their way out again, we have to trap them.



Make it happen, Rahul. The fate of the planet – and our company – is in your hands.



Will do, sir. Getting ready to launch surveillance drone #3.

Act III

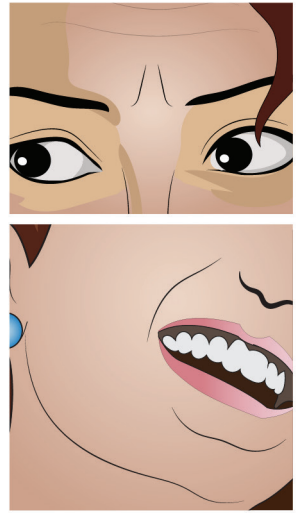




Pandero?



Good morning to you too, Karma.



Is something happening? You both have the strangest expressions on your face.

Yes. You have a drone to catch.



A drone? You mean one of those little radio-controlled aircraft, like the ones my little brother plays with?



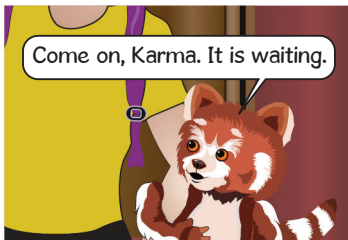
I think I'm being taken somewhere.

I think so too.



Will I see you before I go?

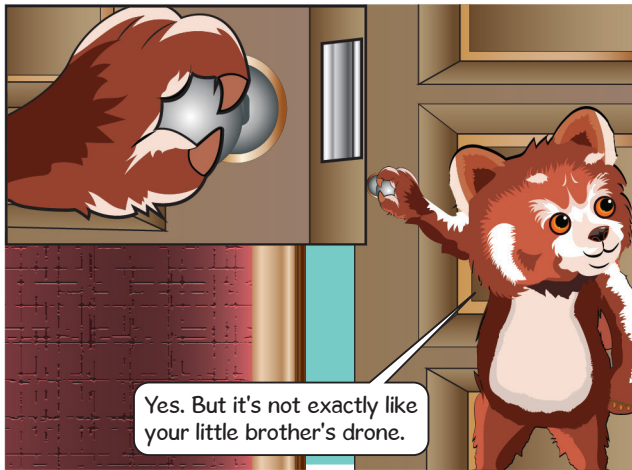
You will see me. Not to worry.



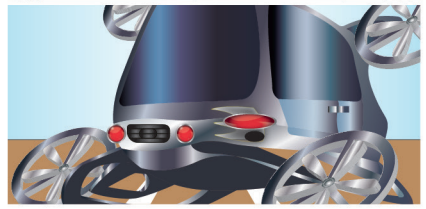
Come on, Karma. It is waiting.



The drone?



Yes. But it's not exactly like your little brother's drone.



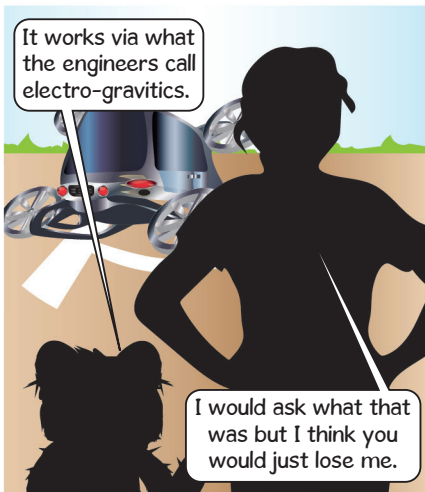
Are we getting in that?



I don't see any other drone around here, so it must be.



But – it looks like – a flying saucer. And it's floating over the ground.



It works via what the engineers call electro-gravitics.

I would ask what that was but I think you would just lose me.



Not so. But we should be on our way. Later, please?



I guess.



Where exactly are we going this time?



Though I seem to remember, every time I asked you that yesterday, you never answered me.



What can I say? I am a panda of mystery.



Just tighten your seat belt and relax. It's a short ride and I know you'll like where you are heading.



This is New Kalapa? That whole mountain?



Not just the mountain. New Kalapa also extends multiple stories underground. That's where most of the crop growing is.



You may want to brace yourself.

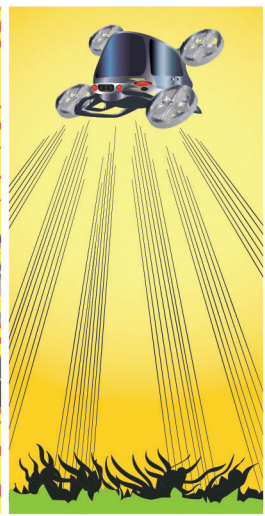
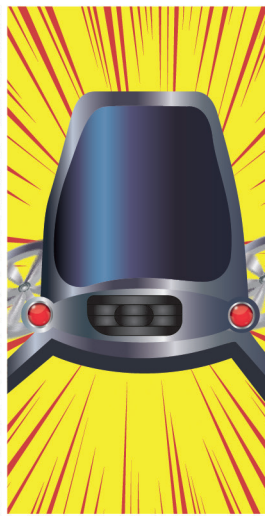
Why?



It is only for a few moments. Hang on.



Oh - okay.



That - was amazing too.

I'm glad you liked the ride.

Liked is probably too strong a way to say it. But it looks like I am where I can now get home.



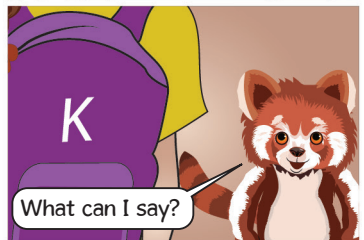
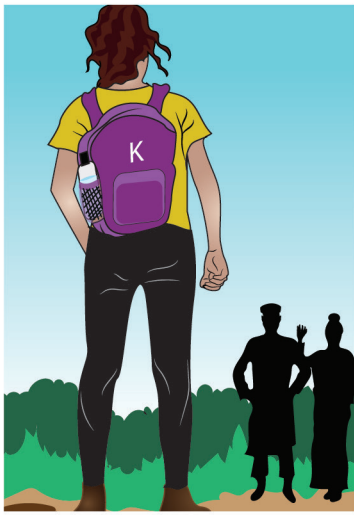
Thank you Pandero. For everything.

You're welcome, Karma, but -

It's okay. You don't need to come any further. I can make it from here on my own.



My parents will be waiting for me. I will see you very soon.



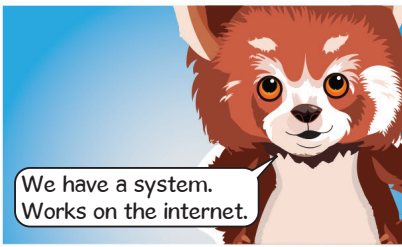


I don't get you.

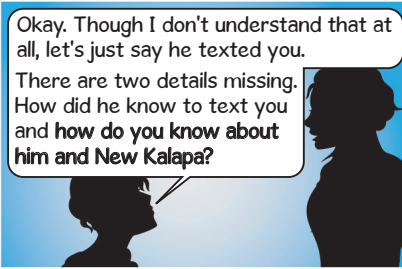


He can text from inside New Kalapa.

But there's no signal. I tried everywhere.

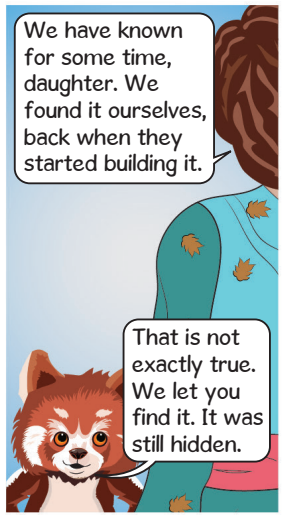


We have a system. Works on the internet.



Okay. Though I don't understand that at all, let's just say he texted you.

There are two details missing. How did he know to text you and **how do you know about him and New Kalapa?**



We have known for some time, daughter. We found it ourselves, back when they started building it.

That is not exactly true. We let you find it. It was still hidden.



That is correct. But we have been there, many times. Sometimes, when we told you we were visiting family...

You visited New Kalapa?



Yes. We also talked about you and your grandfather. And about how maybe you needed to be introduced much sooner.

Introduced? Why?



Because we needed someone with your... connection with nature... like that of your grandfather... who also knows the ways of the humans.



I have so much to understand. But... this part is also confusing. You already have 1000 who live there. Why am I so important?



It is because you are the bridge. To the spirits of nature and the human spirit.

Your heart and powers could be what helps New Kalapa become more than just a haven.

I cannot do that. I am just a little girl.



You are little, that is true. Just as a seedling turns into a big tree, so will you grow and become stronger. I will help you.



Trust in your power, daughter. It is what your grandfather would have told you.

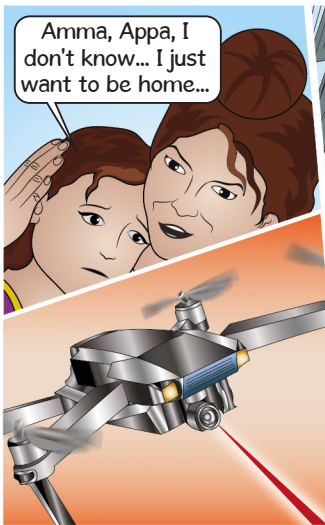
So what do I do now? Don't you want me to come home?



We do. But for now they need you.

New Kalapa is facing a crisis they have not told you about.

It is also part of why you almost did not make it there last night.



Amma, Appa, I don't know... I just want to be home...



We are going to have to continue this conversation a little later.

But why? What was that flash of light?

That was IG Fargen's surveillance and attack drone. They have found us.

How Does Global Warming Work?

Hi – Many of you asked to understand more about how burning too much oil and gas caused the Climate Crisis.

Life on the planet we all share depends on energy from the sun reaching the surface. That energy warms the planet, supporting all living things.

For most of Earth's history, water vapor (H_2O) has shared the atmosphere with naturally occurring gases such as the oxygen we breathe and other components such as nitrogen. Carbon dioxide (CO_2), emitted through fires of organic material on the ground and even by the breathing of mammals such as you and I, also has been part of the atmosphere for as long as life itself has been around.

When the sun's energy passes through the atmosphere, it is partially absorbed on the planet and some is reflected into the sky. The water vapor and CO_2 tend to block some of that energy from escaping back into space. That blocking is also known as the "Greenhouse Gas Effect", because it is similar to how a greenhouse's glass ceilings and walls keep heat inside.

The effect is important for all life because it makes the world considerably warmer than it would have been if there had been no "Greenhouse Gas Effect". In fact, some years ago a NASA scientist calculated the planet would have been on average $33^\circ C$ colder than it is now, without this kind of warming.

The problem that caused the Climate Crisis is that, beginning around the mid-1800s, the Industrial Revolution and its factories began dumping much larger amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than ever before. That was made worse in the 1900s, when automobile, truck, aircraft and other forms of transportation began burning gasoline and oil in large quantities. That burning dumped a major amount of carbon into the atmosphere. It is so much that far more heat is now being trapped close to the planet than at any time in history, with temperatures in many regions now 3° to $5^\circ C$ hotter than they were few decades ago.

I will be answering more questions from all of you in future issues of "The Journey to New Kalapa". Have something you want to ask me? Write me at

AskPandero@SustainableSikkim.org



DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE OF "JOURNEY TO NEW KALAPA"

