

# THE GREAT KAPOK TREE BY LYNNE CHERRY

## Important Information

### Plot

In the dense, green Amazon rainforest, a man has come to chop down a great kapok tree. When he lies down to rest, the creatures that inhabit the tree and the surrounding forest come to whisper in his ear, each in its own fashion, begging him to spare their home.

### Themes

Ecology, Conservation, Kindness, Respect and Harmony.

### Setting

The Great Kapok Tree takes place in the Amazon rainforest. It opens with a map of the world showing all of the places where rain forests once existed and all of the rainforests that are actually left. The story starts with two men who enter the rainforest with the intent to cut down this enormous tree.

## Characters

The man	Wants to cut down the Kapok tree but falls asleep.
Boa constrictor	Snake talks about the miracles of the tree.
Bee	Pollinate the plants.
Troup of monkeys	Talk about the damage when the roots die.
Toucan	Talk about the wider damage they have seen.
Tree frog	Worries about being homeless.
Jaguar	Talks about the impact on the food chain.
Porcupines	Talks about trees producing oxygen.
Anteaters	Looks to future generations.
Three-toed sloth	Concerned with the loss of beautiful sights.
The child	Child from the Yanomamo tribe wakes the man.

Context - Lynne Cherry visited the Amazon rainforest in 1989 where she spent several weeks sketching and photographing the animals she observed. The Great Kapok Tree book is set here and gives an insight into the impact of deforestation and on the wildlife that depend on it to survive. Currently, the Amazon Rainforest is being destroyed at an alarming rate to make way for palm oil plantations and cattle ranches. Upon the book's release, Lynne Cherry told a reporter, "When kids grow up, in another 20 years, they'll be the people making the decisions. If they're raised with these ideas ingrained in them, it will affect national policy. We will have raised a whole generation of environmentalists."

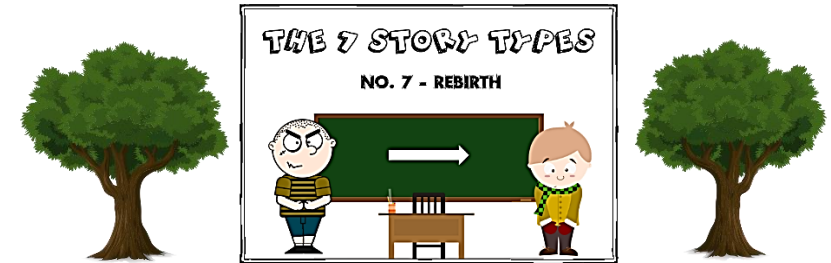


### What Can the Book Teach Us?

We can learn how important the rainforests are and about their biodiversity, including how the actions of humans have serious implications.

### Quotes

*"The man looked about and saw the sun streaming through the canopy. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest."*



Name of Book: The Great Kapok Tree

Date Published: 1990

Author and Illustrator: Lynne Cherry

Reading Reconsidered Spine: Year 3/4 Appropriate Text

Genre: Environmental / Fantasy Fiction

## Key Vocabulary

lulled	calm or send to sleep, typically with soothing sounds or movements
miracles	a remarkable event or development that brings very welcome consequences
generations	a set of members of a family regarded as a single step or stage in descent
ancestors	the generations that came many years before
pollinate	to take pollen to a plant in order to fertilise it
troupe	a group of monkeys
wither	to dry or shrivel up
underbrush	the plants on the floor of the rainforest
smouldering	the beginnings or end of a fire, no flames
ruins	what is left after something is destroyed
dappled	mark with spots or rounded patches
understory	the trees and shrubs between the forest canopy and the ground cover
canopy	the upper layer or habitat zone, formed by mature tree crowns
wonderous	inspiring a feeling of wonder or delight; marvellous
amidst	in the middle of