

The Bearded Toucan

from the Mindo Nambillo stories series

text and illustration by Zayra





It lived in a large reserve in the cloud forest of **Mindo Nambillo** in Ecuador. Here lived more than one hundred and forty species of hummingbirds, many spiders, pumas, spectacled bears, capuchin monkeys, beautiful butterflies, crystalline frogs and as many birds as you can imagine. There, among so many colorful birds, was the bearded toucan.



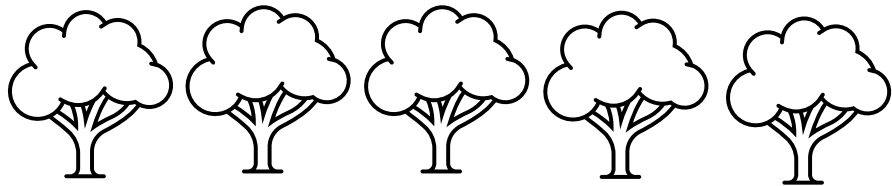
It was a rainy day... that's why we call it "cloud forest"... and our little friend **the bearded toucan** was resting on a big branch of Ficus near a beautiful waterfall that he admired very much. He liked to see how the water fell on the rocks. This waterfall was known among the birds as "**the waterfall of hope**" and some birds used to come here when they needed to rest after a long journey in search of food. Some Toucans were resting with their mates while eating  rose petals until they decided to return to their home in a very tall tree.

But our friend Toucan had no girlfriend and lately he was thinking of moving to another forest where others of the same species lived. He thought of going to the southwest of Colombia where there was another cloud forest smaller than the one in Ecuador but with many water reservoirs. It was said that it was forbidden to hunt toucans there and this caught the attention of our friend the bearded toucan.

The truth is that the cloud forest reserve of Mindo is in danger because some people were hunting toucans to domesticate them or sell them to other people; the bearded toucan didn't understand why this was happening but he didn't like it. No species really liked it when humans invaded their home....

Bearded Toucan rested a little closer to the waterfall of hope and then flew so high... when **he felt something strange inside**.

He flew fast back home and while looking at all those green landscapes, he asked himself if he should really move to another forest.



Bearded Toucan had to decide. His particular species used to live in a tree for one year only and then they moved to a different, better tree to live for another year. So... it wasn't long before that happened. **Bearded Toucan thought it best to talk it over with his family** and flew on but he made a stop before he got there and **ate a tasty caterpillar!** 