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BEFORE READING

1 **The title of the story is *The Kingdom of the Snow Leopard* and there is a legend about a snow leopard in the story. Read and listen to the information about snow leopards.**

The snow leopard

Snow leopards live in Central Asia and the Himalayan Mountains of Bhutan, India, Nepal and Tibet. They are hard to see in the snow, so they are known as the 'ghosts of the mountains'.

Listen to Sarah Williams from the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) talking about snow leopards. Then answer the questions below.

a Where can you find snow leopards?
b How long is an adult male snow leopard?
c Why do they need long tails?
d Why have they got wide noses?
e How do they balance on top of the snow?
f What do they eat?
g How far can a snow leopard jump?
h How much does a baby snow leopard weigh?

2 **WEB** **Tigers are also mentioned in the story. Do some research about tigers and write a short paragraph about them.**

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BEFORE READING

1 Look quickly at the pictures in the book and answer the questions.

a Where do you think the story takes place? Tick (✓) 2 continents.

☐ America ☐ Asia ☐ Africa ☐ Europe ☐ Australia

b What kind of story is it? Tick (✓).

☐ thriller ☐ adventure ☐ detective story ☐ romance

2 Look at the pictures below. Talk about them with a partner.

a Which picture do you prefer? Give reasons.

b Which place would you like to visit? Give reasons.

3 Now write short descriptions of the places. What do you think the two places are and where are they?

1 Friendship

The two boys sat on a bench under a big old oak tree. There was a lawn• in front of them, and in front of that, the huge• iron gates of the school. The two boys often came and sat here after lessons.

Tom was tall with fair hair and blue eyes. His friend, Mahir, had black hair and dark brown eyes.

Tom was excited, and Mahir was smiling. 'Are you sure you want me to come?' asked Tom.

'Yes, of course. I've told you so much about my kingdom. Now I want you to see it for yourself,' replied Mahir.

'Fantastic!' said Tom. 'I'd love to come. I'll have to ask my mum and dad, of course. But I'm sure they'll be fine about it.'

'Tom,' said Mahir. His voice was serious now. 'You've been a really good friend. You stood up for• me when the others picked on• me. They made fun of my accent and appearance. But you didn't. I hated this school in the beginning, and I hated this country and all the people in it. But your friendship changed that. And I'll always appreciate that. Thanks.'

'There's no need to thank me, Mahir. I was on my own, too. And you were fun, and interesting.'

'Thanks, anyway. I'm really happy here now.'

'Good,' said Tom. 'Now, let's talk about more important things!'

'Such as…?'

'My visit to the coolest country in the world!' said Tom. 'Do I need a visa to go there?'

'Yes, you do. All foreigners need a visa. Only 5,000 tourists are allowed to come every year. My father, the King, doesn't want our country to lose its culture. He is afraid that tourists will change the country,' said Mahir.

- **huge:** very big
- **lawn:** area of grass
- **picked on:** were nasty to
- **stood up for:** defended

'So, it's no Coca-Cola and no McDonalds for a month, then,' said Tom.

'Correct,' said Mahir, and he laughed. 'Do you think you can live without them?'

'I think *I* can—but can you?' laughed Tom.

Suddenly, Tom saw a tiny• flash of light. 'Hey, what was that?'

'It looked like a camera flash,' said Mahir.

'I think there's someone down there by the gate!' said Tom, and he stood up quickly. There was another flash. Mahir and Tom ran towards the gate. Tom was sure it was a camera.

'Who are you?' he shouted. 'What are the photographs for?'

The man didn't answer. He turned and ran away. He was tall and thin. He was bald and had brown eyes. His face was not very memorable, except for the long scar• that ran from the corner of his left eye down to the corner of his mouth.

'Why do you think he was taking photographs of you?' asked Tom.

'I don't know,' said Mahir.

'What if he's dangerous? I think we should tell one of the teachers about him,' said Tom.

'No, I don't want to do that,' said Mahir quickly.

'Well, I think you should tell your father then,' said Tom, concerned•.

'No, he'll only worry about me, and then he'll send me more bodyguards•. I don't want that,' said Mahir.

'But aren't you scared? That man might be a murderer! He might try to kill you,' said Tom.

'Oh yeah! I think you've seen too many thrillers,' said Mahir.

- **bodyguards:** people who protect another person
- **concerned:** worried
- **scar:** mark on the skin after one has been hurt
- **tiny:** very small

'I can look after myself. You know that, Tom.' Then Mahir took Tom's arm and with one quick move, he threw him over his back to the ground.

'Okay, okay, I know,' said Tom. 'You can look after yourself. That throw was perfect. It didn't hurt at all.'

'You should never hurt your opponent. You should only block him,' said Mahir. 'Those are the rules of combat• in my country. Now, stand up!'

'You know, I can't,' said Tom. He couldn't move his arms or legs. They felt very heavy. He couldn't even move a finger. It was amazing!

Mahir walked slowly over to Tom. He laid his hand on his shoulder and pressed with his thumb. 'Now, get up!' he said calmly. And Tom got up.

'How do you do it?' asked Tom.

'I practise,' said Mahir. 'Remember, "practice makes perfect". Now, you try.'

Strength

Have you ever done a martial art?

What do you know about the following martial arts?

a Judo
b Karate
c Aikido
d Tai Chi
e Kick Boxing
f Kung Fu

What skills do they develop?

• **combat:** fighting

Tom took Mahir's arm and pressed with his fingers. Then he threw him over his back onto the ground. Mahir stood up immediately. 'The throw was good,' he said. 'But you need to work on your powers of concentration.'

'I'll never be able to do it,' said Tom.

'You will,' said Mahir calmly. 'You're definitely improving. If you believe you can do it, you will do it. And now, I think it's time for dinner. Let's go!'

'Okay, I'm starving•. Race you to the canteen•!' said Tom. Of course, Mahir won. He always won at sports. He was very fit and strong.

Tom thought back to their first week at school together. They were both eleven, and they were both very homesick. Life at the expensive boarding school in the south of England was very difficult. One night, they couldn't sleep. It was a warm night in early September. So they crept• out of the dormitory• together, and went outside into the school grounds•. They walked down the long driveway• and sat under the oak tree on the wooden bench. This was to be the beginning of a long friendship.

That night, Mahir told Tom a story—a story that Tom will never forget. It was the story of the secret to Mahir's strength.

'When I was four, my father, the King, took me to a Buddhist monastery high up in the Himalayan Mountains. There were no roads to the monastery. There were only small paths up the mountains. It was snowing very heavily, and the ground was icy. The journey was very difficult. My father left me at the monastery with an old monk.

- **canteen:** place where one eats in a school or at work
- **crept:** moved quietly and slowly
- **dormitory:** dorm; room where lots of people sleep
- **driveway:** road to a building
- **grounds:** land that belongs to the school
- **starving:** very hungry

When we first walked into the monastery, I was very frightened. The monks were chanting loudly, the air was thick with smoke from the incense•, and there was a strange sweet smell. I held my father's hand tightly, and hid my face in his robe. Then the old monk walked down a long red carpet towards me. He was smiling, and he had kind eyes. When he reached me, he took my hand and held it. It was a freezing cold day, but I felt warm, and I didn't feel frightened anymore. And I have never been frightened since that day. I stayed with the monk for seven years. He taught me many things. He taught me to control my mind. He taught me to conquer fear. He taught me to survive• without food. He taught me to stay warm in freezing cold temperatures. And he taught me to fight and win, but not hurt anybody.'

Independence

When was the first time you stayed away from home?
How long did you stay away for?
Who did you stay with?
If you were sent away to a monastery for a year, what would you miss from home?
Make a list. Share with a partner.

'Will you teach me?' Tom had asked. Mahir looked at him for a long time. Then he said, 'I think we will be friends. And I will teach you.' That was five years ago. Now they were very close friends, and Mahir had taught Tom many things.

• **incense:** strong perfume, especially in a religious place

• **survive:** live

AFTER READING

VOCABULARY

1 Use five of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

dagger	glow	grounds	haunting
mat	shiver	sight	tease

a The ..... in the pouch at Tara's waist was small but very sharp.

b They crept out of the dormitory and went outside into the school ..... .

c Cornelius used to ..... Mahir a lot in their first year at school.

d The music Tom could hear as soon as he landed was strange and ..... .

e At those words, Tom felt a cold chill, and a ..... ran down his spine.

2 Write sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1.

3 Unscramble the words with the help of their meaning.

a	**worsd**	.....	sharp metal weapon like a long sharp knife
b	**liwrs**	.....	move in circles
c	**deborirme**	.....	decorate with coloured threads
d	**kelcifr**	.....	move (of light or flame)
e	**pezgolaoi**	.....	say one is sorry for something bad they have said or done
f	**lionatsl**	.....	male horse
g	**hwprise**	.....	say something in a low voice
h	**polse**	.....	side of a mountain
i	**ecplar**	.....	package; packet

AFTER READING

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH EXAMS

P B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5

1 Read the sentences and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

1 'Aren't you scared? That man ..... be a murderer!' said Tom.
A might B should C can D would

2 Tom couldn't move his arms or legs. They felt ..... heavy.
A much B very C many D a lot

3 The boy and the King disappeared ..... a thick embroidered curtain.
A behind B into C along D beyond

4 'I hear you are going to spend the holidays with Mahir in that weird country .....,' said Cornelius.
A his B of his C with his D of him

5 Actually Tom was really looking forward ..... to Nepal with Mahir.
A at going B to go C and go D to going

6 The King ..... open the curtain, and a little boy walked into the room.
A went B had C held D took

7 Tom flew ..... the summit of the highest mountain in the world.
A up B at C past D on

8 When Tom walked down the red carpet, the monks bowed ..... greeting.
A with B at C to D in

9 Tara didn't think her father ..... let her take part in the competition.
A would B may C will D should

10 Mahir says that ..... the end of the holiday, Tom will have got used to hot food.
A for B to C by D in