

AN AMAZON EXPEDITION

The River in the Trees



A book for Maya

An invitation to explore, a photograph to unravel, and a place to make your own.

FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER

For your next adventure

From Aunt Jo

For all the things you will notice next. With love, Jo.

This copy belongs to Maya. The blank spaces are waiting for your ideas, your drawing and the things you notice.

OPEN FIRST

A letter from Lia

Dear Maya,

I have a photograph of my grandfather in a canoe, reading his favourite book. Nothing strange about that. He has read that book on boats, on steps, and once while waiting for a very late engine to start.

But in this picture his canoe is tied to a branch. Today, that branch would be above our heads. The picture gives us two trees, some water, and one of his unhelpful captions. No place name.

I am making him a new cover for the book. I want to draw the same place as it looks now, with your picture beside mine. Aunt Rosa has checked three possible places. We need someone who can put the records together.

Will you be my expedition partner? Your map and cards are in the packet. Bring a pencil. I have left a proper space for your work.

Lia



BEFORE THE STORY

Make a little room for a big river

Set out this book, the folded map and cards 01 to 08. You need a pencil and a table. Keep the cards in number order; both sides may be read. The map's expedition side is your working surface.

Read at your own pace. When the story says to pause, use the book, map and cards together. Say your idea aloud or write it down before turning to the check. There is no clock and no penalty for changing your mind.

You can explore alone or share the reading. If someone helps, ask them to read a clue or ask a question before giving you an answer. You remain the person making the finding.

Hints begin on page 43. They give a small nudge first, then a stronger one, then the answer. The optional phone guide holds the same instructions and hints. The whole expedition works with these papers.

The people and measured study landscape are invented within a researched Amazon setting. Use the labelled records for the mystery; other scenery is illustration. Our canoe needs at least 0.6 metre of water over every floor along its route. The model belongs on this table, not on a real journey.



1 · THE PHOTOGRAPH

The day the forest read

The canoe in the photograph was tied halfway up a tree.

Lia held the photograph against the window. Outside, a chicken scratched in the dust beneath the house. In the picture, water shone between the trunks. Grandfather Bento sat in his canoe with a book open on his knees, his silver moustache bent toward the page.

Behind him stood two trees. One divided like a pair of raised arms. The other leaned into the frame.

On the back, in his square handwriting, were five words.

The day the forest read.

“That,” Lia said, “is exactly the sort of thing he writes instead of where he was.”



AT LIA'S HOUSE

Three places and one surprise

Aunt Rosa set a basket on the table. “He sent that just after his high-water visit this year. I recognise the book.”

“Do you recognise the trees?”

Rosa leaned closer. “I know three pairs like those. But I have only seen this picture today.”

Bento lived in Tefé now. For his birthday, Lia was making a cover for the battered book he had left in her care. She wanted to draw the photograph's place as it looked today. Asking him would ruin the surprise.

Lia opened the old book. Beside the curled page corner swam a tiny pencil fish with far too many fins. She had drawn it in Bento's canoe years ago, while he read to her. She remembered the page better than the place. He had never rubbed it out.

“Arum Bend, Heron Reach, Palm Channel.” Rosa counted the places on her fingers. “I've checked the trees and channels since his visit. We can compare them.”

Lia slid an envelope across the table. Your name was written on it.

“Maya, I have his notes. Rosa has the map. We could use another pair of eyes.”



THE RIVER IS PART OF HOME

A house with long legs

From the veranda, Lia pointed down at the wooden posts beneath the floor. A pale water mark crossed one of them.

“During the flood season, our steps end in water. Now they end on the ground. The floor stays in the same place.”

Across a small inlet stood a different sort of building. Its base floated. Rosa showed you how its height changed with the water while its moorings kept it near the bank.

“Two answers to a changing river,” she said. “Neither makes the river stop changing.”

Lia looked from the posts to the photograph. “So water could have reached that branch. But that still doesn't tell us which branch.”

She tucked her pencil behind her ear. It fell out immediately. You picked it up before it rolled through the boards.



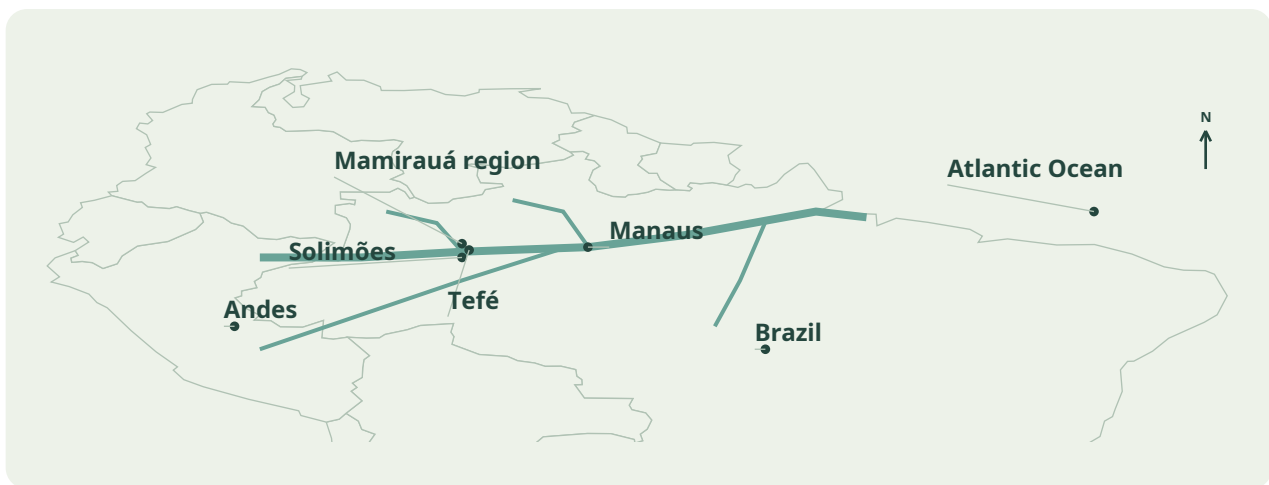
OPEN THE WORLD SIDE OF YOUR MAP

The Amazon is bigger than one river

An enormous network of rivers gathers water across northern South America and carries it toward the Atlantic. Some of that water comes from the Andes. The main river is only part of the network: tributaries are rivers that flow into other rivers.

A basin is the land whose water drains into a river system. A rainforest is a kind of forest. The Amazon basin and the Amazon rainforest overlap, but the words do not mean the same thing.

Our expedition stays in one small part of this vast world: the Mamirauá floodplain in Amazonas, Brazil, near the regional city of Tefé. The wide locator on the map is real geography. The little landscape where Lia's mystery happens is a made-up study place.



TEFÉ

The city at the other end of the letter



Bento's last letter had arrived inside the old book. He had underlined the part about returning it for his birthday, then added: No cake crumbs between the pages this time.

“One crumb,” Lia said. “He means one crumb.”

On the map's world side, Rosa showed you Tefé. River routes connect the city with surrounding communities. People travel for work, supplies, study, family and all the ordinary reasons people visit a town.

Lia had drawn a little square for Bento's book beside the city name. “The cover will go there. But first it has to go out into the forest with us.”

She opened his river notebook. A photograph had slipped between two pages. Beside it was a water reading.

2 · FOLLOW THE WATER

The second landscape



Rosa led the way down the house steps. At the landing, Lia stopped beside a root that twisted out of the dry earth. She held up Rosa's high-water picture.

In the picture, the forest had a shining floor. A canoe passed between trunks that now stood on dry ground. Leaves touched the water. Farther in, the passage disappeared around a bend.

"The ground is still underneath," Rosa said. "We just cannot see it in that picture."

Lia pointed to a narrow opening between the roots. "And this bit?"

"A low opening through higher ground. Water connects the places when it rises far enough over the opening. When it falls, the connection can close."

Lia crouched to draw the root. The same place could hold a canoe in one season and a footprint in another. You unfolded the expedition map beside her.

A SMALL MODEL OF A BIG CHANGE

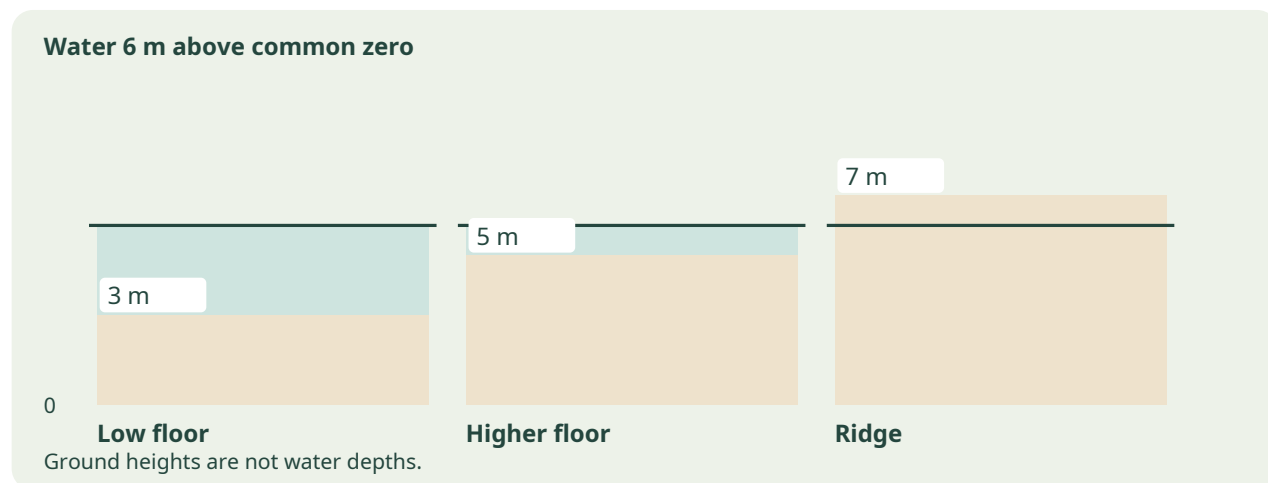
What a water level measures

Rosa drew one imaginary zero line beneath the landscape. Every height in her study uses that same line. A water level tells you how high the surface is above zero. It does not tell you the depth everywhere.

Try this example, separate from Bento's records: water at 6 metres, a channel floor at 3. The water above that floor is 3 metres deep. But a 7-metre ridge rises above the same surface and blocks that connection.

The shallowest part matters. A low pool on the far side does not make a continuous water route through higher ground.

“Subtract the floor from the water,” Lia said, drawing two lines. “Then check the whole way.”



YOUR FIRST IDEA

Bento's careful number

At the bank, Rosa showed you the study gauge. Its tall numbered marks stood above the afternoon water. “Today’s reading will matter later. First, find Bento’s old one.”

Bento was vague about place names. About water readings, he was precise. Lia slid his notebook card out of the packet.

The old book lay open beside the card. The curled corner lifted in the breeze.

“That corner never stays down,” Lia said, resting the pencil across the edge.

Rosa opened her channel record beside it. It covered all three approaches on the map. Lia weighed a corner down with her pencil.

“Which place would you try first, Maya?” Lia asked. “Give us an idea to test. I’ll keep the records from blowing into the river.”

Open the expedition map and cards 01–04. Choose a first candidate for the photograph. It can be a hunch. Look for a record that supports it—and one that might make you change your mind.

PAUSE BEFORE THE EXPLANATION

A place to begin

Point to the place you would try first. Write or say its name and what made you choose it. You do not need to be certain.

Now test your idea with the map and the records. Does anything refuse to fit? A useful finding can begin with a crossed-out guess.

Keep Bento's notebook, Rosa's channel record and the photograph close together. All their heights use the same imaginary zero. The tabletop canoe needs at least 0.6 metre of water along its whole approach.

You can turn the cards, trace a route or try another camera point. Choose how to investigate. When you have an idea worth keeping—or a question you cannot settle—continue.

Help is waiting on page 43 if you want it. Keep your first idea visible even if you change it later.

CARD 01

The trees refuse to be identical

At the landing, Lia set the photograph beside the map. “Forked tree. Leaning tree. All three places have them. Very inconsiderate trees.”

“Trees do not arrange themselves for our convenience,” Rosa said.

“They could try.”

Turn card 01 over. The view record gives the camera direction and keeps the two identifying trunks clear of leaves and reflections.

Lia put a fingertip on one camera dot. “So we stand here in our heads. Then look the way the camera looked.”

You tried the other dots. The three places stopped looking quite so similar.

Try the recorded camera view at your candidate. Keep your idea if the evidence supports it, or try another place. The photograph and the other records all belong to the same journey.



AT THE LANDING

People passing, water moving

A boat came alongside with sacks beneath a blue cover. Rosa stepped aside to let a neighbour carry a bag up from the landing. They exchanged news of a cousin in Tefé.

Lia watched the boat settle differently when its cargo came ashore.
“Everything keeps moving while we stare at two trees.”

“People have places to be,” Rosa said. “Our map is only a small piece of their day.”

A map looks down; a photograph looks out. Put a fingertip on a camera dot, then use the direction on card 01 to imagine the view. Check card 04 before assuming the older photograph and the map can be compared.

The neighbour called goodbye. Lia held the photograph more tightly as the wake reached the bank.



YOUR CANDIDATE, YOUR REASONS

An idea worth testing

Rosa slid her pencil toward you. “What is the strongest reason for your place?”

Lia listened without moving your mark on the map.

“And what would make you change your mind?” Rosa asked.

In the shade above the landing, the three of you bent over the photograph. A boat engine started, coughed, then settled into a steady sound. Lia covered the page until the breeze passed.

She opened the old book at the little pencil fish. “I never drew what was around the canoe. Only the bit I was looking at.”

Lia set the photograph beside it. “This time, I want to notice the place too.”

Test the candidate you chose. Show the record that best supports it and check anything that seems to disagree. When you can explain your choice, make your finding on the next page.



STOP BEFORE TURNING

Maya's photograph finding

The place I would take Lia is:

The detail that convinced me was:

The other places do not fit because:

My first idea changed—or stayed—because:

Make your finding before the next page. If you are exploring together, let each person explain a reason. A changed idea is welcome; draw one line through your first choice instead of erasing it.

When you are ready to compare your explanation with Lia's, turn to page 18. Need a nudge first? Page 43.



THE PHOTOGRAPH CHECK

Arum Bend

“Arum,” Lia said softly. “Let’s see how every record fits.”

You may have tested one candidate at a time. Lia tried another way: two small lists. The water admits Arum and Heron. The north-facing view admits Arum and Palm. Only Arum belongs to both. The table checks the reasoning; page 45 gives the complete arithmetic.

“His canoe was where the map shows ground today,” Lia said. “There wasn't a second river hiding somewhere. The water covered part of the forest.”

Lia tucked the old photograph inside her sketchbook. The blank page beside it no longer felt like an empty space. It felt like somewhere to go.

Place	Water at 7 m	North view	Both
Arum	2 m: yes	yes	YES
Heron	3 m: yes	no	no
Palm	blocked	yes	no

3 · GET THERE TODAY

A place is not a route

Lia picked up the sketchbook. “Then we’ll take his shortcut.”

Rosa held the map down with one finger.

“At his water level.”

Lia looked at the photograph again, then at the dry earth beside the landing.

“Oh.”

“The place is right,” Rosa said. “The route needs a new check.”

The water at today's study gauge was 3.8 metres. The place where Bento's camera had been was on ground 5 metres above the same zero line. It was dry now. However you approached, you would finish on foot.

Rosa had checked two paths that morning. One began at Fern Landing, reached by the longer outside channel. The other began at Cedar Landing, a shorter boat ride but a longer walk.

“You can choose the kind of journey,” she said. “First, make sure the boat can get to its landing.”



CARD 05 AND THE EXPEDITION MAP

Look under the shortcut

Put card 05 beside the map. The card holds today's water reading and the floor records for three boat routes. The map shows where those routes go.

Compare the water with the highest ground along the whole route, using the same 0.6-metre clearance rule. A blue line shows a channel's location; a number tells you whether the boat can pass today.

"I like the short line," Lia said, tracing the forest channel. "But liking it won't put water over the ground."

The dotted lines are Rosa's checked footpaths. Follow them with your finger from each landing. Whichever journey you choose, the last part will feel different from Grandfather's.

PAUSE WITH CARD 05

Plan the approach

Rule out the route that cannot carry the boat today. Record the water depth on each of the other two boat approaches.

Now choose your journey. Longer boat ride to Fern Landing, then a short walk? Or shorter boat ride to Cedar Landing, then a longer forest walk? Both reach the same pair of trees.

Put a pencil dot beside your chosen landing. Trace the boat part with a finger and the walking part with a pencil line. Stop the boat at the landing, not at the old camera dot.

Write your reason for choosing this approach. There is no fastest-person prize. Your route choice decides which encounter you read first.

Compare your boat checks on page 24 when you have made a plan. A small hint is on page 43.

BEFORE DEPARTURE · CARD 06

Something falls into the water



A fruit dropped from a branch with a small, definite plop.

A dark shape turned beneath it.

Lia leaned on the railing. “Did you see that?”

“A fish feeding,” Rosa said. “Some fish eat fruit. Some of the seeds they swallow can travel with them and later reach another place.”

“So the river carries more than boats.”

“Much more.”

Lia opened her sketchbook and drew a fruit above a fish. Then she added a seed.

On card 06 you can follow that connection. A tree can feed a fish during high water. A fish can help carry a tree's seeds. Neither has to know the other's whole story.

Rosa put on her life jacket and checked the boat. Lia fastened hers, then held out another for you. The map, the records and the old book were ready to travel.

KEEP THE SURPRISE DRY

The book comes too

The old book fitted into Rosa's covered bag. Lia checked twice that the photograph was still inside the notebook.

“If we lose it,” she said, “we’ll have to draw Grandfather looking for us.”

Rosa laughed and steadied the boat while you climbed in. Lia sat down, the map open across her knees.

From the water, the house looked taller. A neighbour waved from a doorway. Farther along, another boat carried covered baskets and a rolled sleeping mat. This was not an empty wilderness waiting for visitors. It was also people's home and the way between homes.

Your route mark lay beside the landing you had chosen. Lia tapped it.

“Your way, Maya.”



BEFORE YOU TAKE YOUR ROUTE

Today's water check

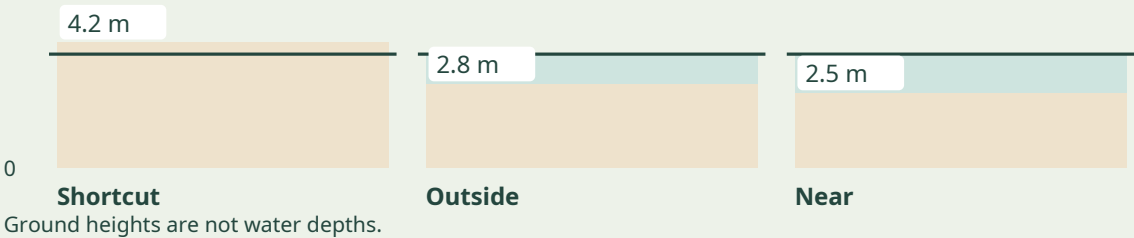
The forest shortcut is dry at its highest floor: 4.2 metres is above today's 3.8-metre water surface. It cannot take the canoe through.

The outside channel has 1 metre of depth over its highest floor: 3.8 minus 2.8. The near channel has 1.3 metres: 3.8 minus 2.5. Both meet the model's 0.6-metre rule.

The old camera place is dry: its ground is at 5 metres. Every complete plan must include one of Rosa's checked footpaths.

If you chose Fern Landing, read page 25 first. If you chose Cedar Landing, read page 26 first. Then continue at page 27. Later you can read the other encounter too; it is another view of the same expedition.

Water 3.8 m above common zero



FERN LANDING · LONGER BOAT, SHORTER WALK

A breath beside the boat

The outside channel curved past a quiet patch of floating plants. Rosa eased the paddle out of the water.

A broad fish rose near the edge. Its head broke the surface; you heard a brief, surprising breath. Then it slid beneath the brown water.

Lia's pencil hovered over the page.

“Pirarucu,” Rosa said. “They have to come up for air.”

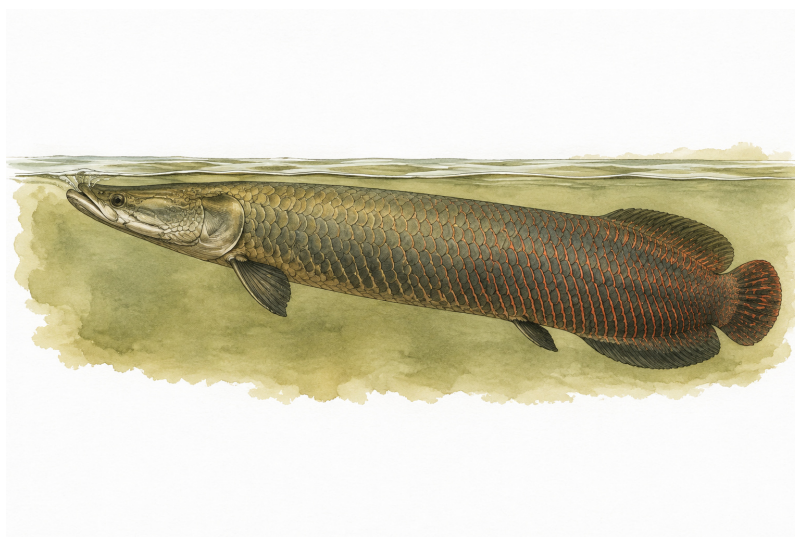
It was gone before Lia finished the first line.

“Then I have drawn a very accurate empty patch,” she said.

Rosa pointed to card 07. Experienced fishers learn to observe these fish carefully, using knowledge built through practice. Your glimpse showed one fish at that moment. It did not tell you how many lived in the channel.

At Fern Landing, Rosa moored the boat. The short checked path led up from the wet bank toward the trees.

Continue at page 27.



CEDAR LANDING · SHORTER BOAT, LONGER WALK

The line on the trunk

Rosa moored at Cedar Landing and led the way onto the checked path. The air smelled of damp leaves.

A faint band crossed a trunk above Lia's head. She stopped beneath it and lifted a hand as if reaching for a shelf.

“Water was up there.”

“During the higher water,” Rosa said. “This part of the forest changes from a place beside the river to a place inside its reach.”

On the ground, a seedling had pushed two leaves out into a small opening of light. Lia crouched to draw it.

“Do you think a fish brought its seed?”

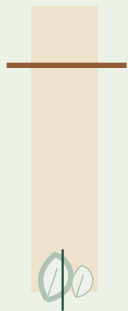
“Perhaps. We cannot tell just by looking at this one.”

Lia wrote a tiny question mark beside the seedling. She left it there.

The path bent around a root. Ahead, the light changed. Rosa stepped aside.

Continue at page 27.

Lia's two observations



A mark from higher water

A seedling — arrival unknown

4 · THE SAME PLACE, A DIFFERENT VIEW

Where the canoe had been



The forked tree stood on your left. The leaning tree stood on your right.

Between them was a stretch of dry forest floor.

Lia held up the photograph. The canoe had floated where you were standing. Its rope had reached the low branch above you. In the picture, that branch had been close to the water. Here, you had to tilt your head to see it.

For a moment nobody said anything.

Rosa set the old book on a dry place. Lia opened it at the curled corner. The little pencil fish was still there.

“I remember the boat rocking when I drew that,” Lia said. “I never drew the trees.”

A breeze moved the leaves. The forest did not look like the photograph at all. And now you could see exactly why it was the same place.

YOUR PICTURE

The part the photograph could not keep

Lia found a place to sit. Her first line was the leaning trunk. The second was the fork.

Then she looked at your page. “Don't copy mine, Maya. You might have noticed something I missed.”

If you came by Fern Landing, your page could keep the ring of water left by the fish that would not wait to be drawn. If you came by Cedar, it could keep the seedling and the question mark beside it. Or choose another detail you noticed.

The old photograph cannot hold every part of today's journey. You can show the branch from below, the dry ground, a root or the little piece of sky between the trees. Your finding brought you here; what you keep is yours.

Use card 08 to plan, then draw on page 30 or on another sheet and keep it here. If you prefer, describe the view or the sound in words. Leave room for a detail from your chosen journey.

Lia left a space beside her picture for your name and the explanation that brought you here.

BACK IN TEFÉ

Bento opens the book



A few days later, Lia set the wrapped book in front of her grandfather. “No crumbs,” she said.

Bento opened it. The trees on the new cover stood over dry ground. Inside lay his photograph and the new expedition page. His thumb found the curled corner.

“Seven fins,” he said, looking at the little pencil fish.

“I didn’t count fins then.”

“I wasn’t counting either. I liked knowing what you were watching while I read.” He looked at the photograph. “I went back to Arum that morning to read the same page there. Nobody asked me to start it over.”

“I wouldn’t ask now,” Lia said. “Perhaps twice.”

She pointed to the space for your contribution. “Maya helped us find it. We brought you what the photograph couldn’t keep.”

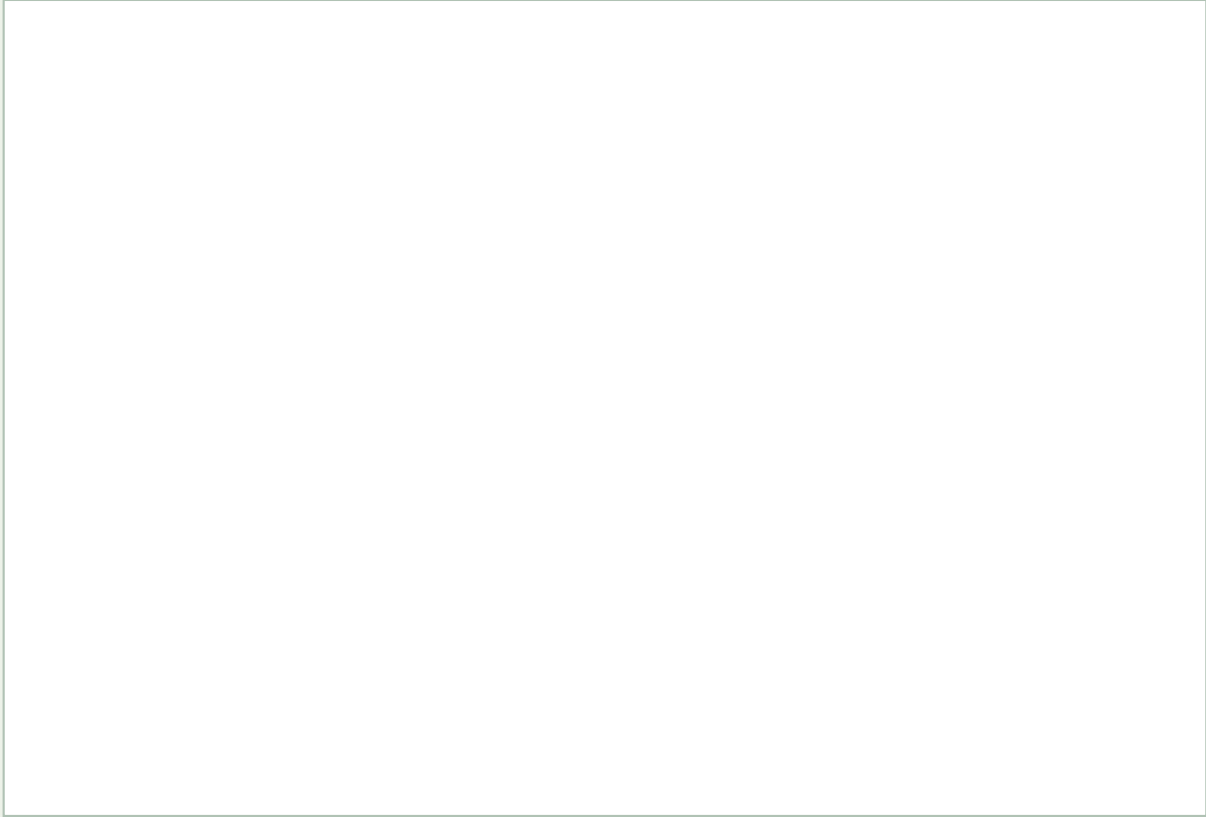
Bento laid the new expedition page beside the old one. “Leave this loose. When I read that page, I want to look at yours too.”

He began to read. Lia sat beside him. This time, she left the cake on a plate.

Maya's expedition page

The view I want to keep

Draw or describe the place today. Include a detail from the journey you chose—or another thing you noticed. Make it your own view, not a test of drawing skill.



A RECORD ONLY YOU CAN MAKE

How I found a river in the trees

At first I thought...

The observation that changed or confirmed my idea was...

I chose the route through... because...

A detail from my journey I would show Bento is...

Something I still wonder about the Amazon is...

My name: Maya

You can read the other route encounter, browse the river atlas on the next pages, or put the map away with your new drawing. The mystery keeps its answer. Your book keeps what you noticed.

THE RIVER ATLAS

Keep exploring the Amazon



The story takes place in a small invented landscape. The world behind it is much larger, and it is real.

Open the world side of the map. Find the Andes, the Atlantic, Brazil, the Solimões reach, Tefé and Mamirauá. Follow the river network with a finger. Each small river connects to a bigger story upstream and downstream.

These pages are for returning to: a forest's changing water, homes adapted to a river, fish that carry seeds, animals that rise for air, and the difference between a beautiful picture and a useful map.

You do not have to complete them like tasks. Begin with the page you want to look at again.

WATER OPENS AND CLOSES CONNECTIONS

The forest's changing year

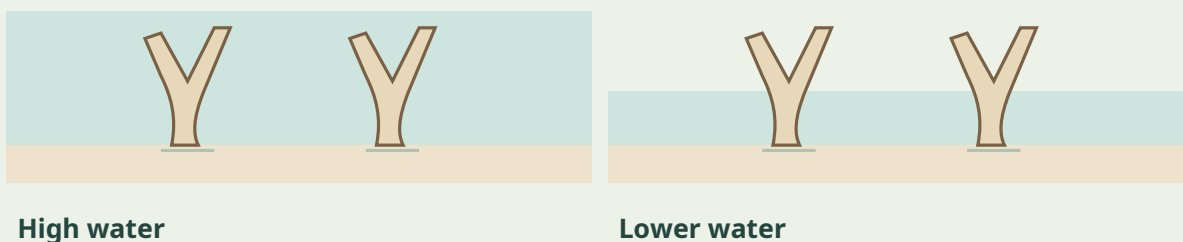
In the Mamirauá floodplain, an annual pulse of rising and falling river water helps shape the lives of plants, animals and people. Lakes, channels and areas of forest connect differently as water rises and recedes.

A channel can be a route in one part of the year and too shallow in another. Trees that stand over dry ground at lower water may stand in water during the flood season. The heights and timing vary; this is not a daily tide timetable.

The story's 7-metre and 3.8-metre readings are invented model numbers measured from an imaginary zero. They are not historical gauge readings or a forecast for the Amazon.

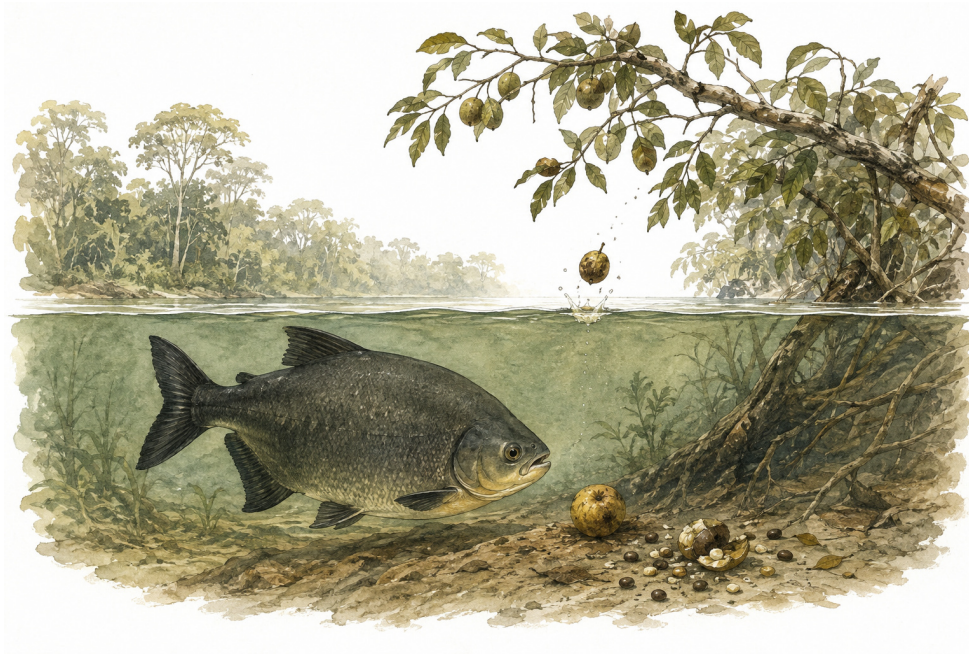
Riverbanks also erode and gain sediment. The real landscape can change as well as its water. That is why Rosa's recent check is part of the story evidence, and why a beautiful old picture cannot replace a current map.

Simplified relationships; not to scale



FRUIT · FISH · SEED

A fish can carry part of a forest



During high water, fruit can fall straight from a tree into the water below. Some fish eat it. Some swallowed seeds can survive and be carried elsewhere before they leave the fish.

Tambaqui are among the fruit-eating fish that can help spread seeds. Many várzea trees fruit during high water. Food and the movement of seeds connect life above and below the water's surface.

This does not mean every fish eats fruit, every swallowed seed survives, or a fish is deliberately planting a tree. A seedling beside a river does not tell us exactly how its seed arrived.

Follow the scene on card 06. Use a finger to trace the connection from fruit to fish to seed, then imagine what changes if the water cannot reach the fruiting tree.

PIRARUCU

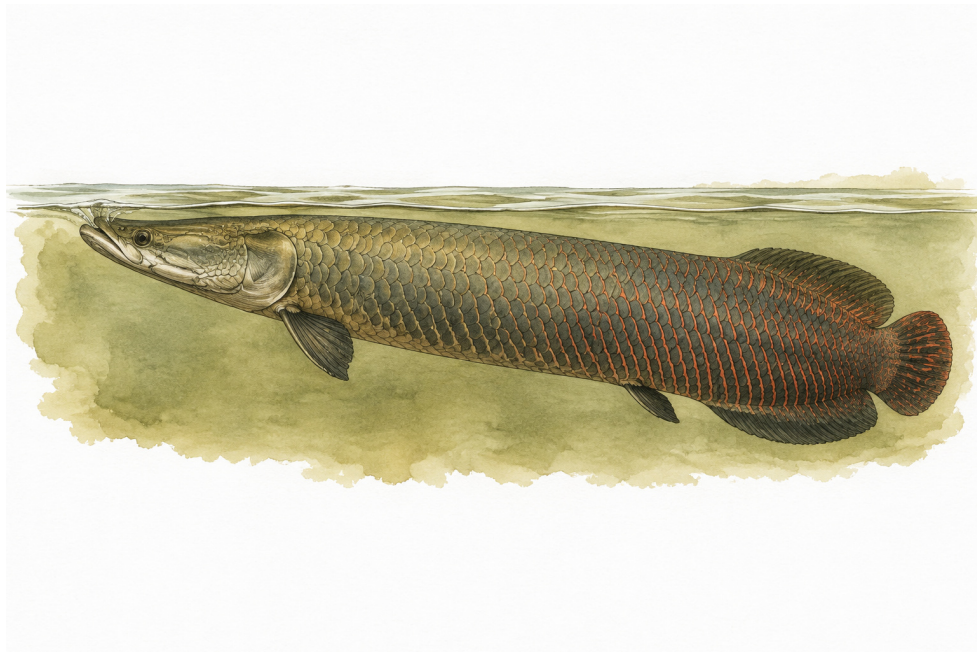
A breath does not always mean a mammal

Pirarucu are fish, yet they must come to the surface for air. That makes a quiet patch of water worth watching in a different way.

Experienced fishers have learned to recognise and observe their surfacing. In vegetation that makes sight difficult, hearing can be part of skilled observation. Fishers and researchers have developed methods together, with Jarauá fishers helping develop and teach the work.

A surfacing sound is a useful observation. Interpreting it takes practice: the people who count pirarucu bring knowledge of the animals and the places where they live. One glimpse on our journey is the beginning of a question.

Card 07 pairs a pirarucu with a river dolphin. Both come up for air. One is a fish and the other is a mammal. Similar actions do not make them the same kind of animal.



FIXED POSTS · FLOATING BASE

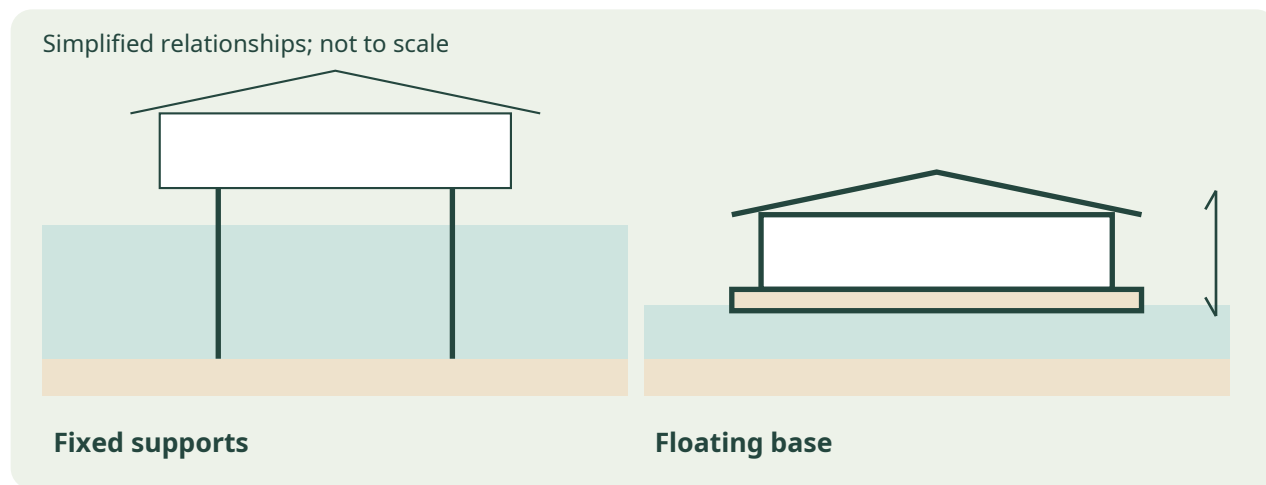
Two ways to live beside changing water

A stilt house stands on fixed supports. Its floor does not rise when the river rises. The changing water can reach farther up its posts; the height and location of a real house matter.

A floating building rests on a buoyant base and moves vertically with the water. Moorings help keep it near its place. Floating homes are documented in this region; the nearby Uakari Lodge also uses floating structures.

Families use different materials and layouts, and their homes and needs change over time. A house is a place to live, work, visit and keep things dry while the water changes around it.

Compare the drawings. Which floor moves with the water? In which house would a rising waterline climb farther up the same fixed posts?



VÁRZEA · IGAPÓ · TERRA FIRME

Not every Amazon forest floods

Várzea is floodplain forest associated with the sediment-carrying whitewater rivers. “Whitewater” here is a river-water category; it does not mean white rapids. Mamirauá’s várzea is the setting behind our journey.

Igapó is another kind of seasonally flooded forest, associated with different river waters, often blackwater. These names help describe different environments inside the enormous Amazon region.

Terra firme means upland forest beyond ordinary river flooding. A patch of várzea that is dry today has not become terra firme simply because the water went down.

Our little story map contains seasonally changing floodplain. It does not insert a new upland forest just to make an easy walking route. Rosa's checked footpaths are dry parts of that floodplain during the fictional visit.

Simplified relationships; not to scale



CONTEMPORARY AMAZON LIFE

A river is a way between people



The river scenes in this story include homes, boats, work, letters and visits. They belong to a living region, not a world outside the present.

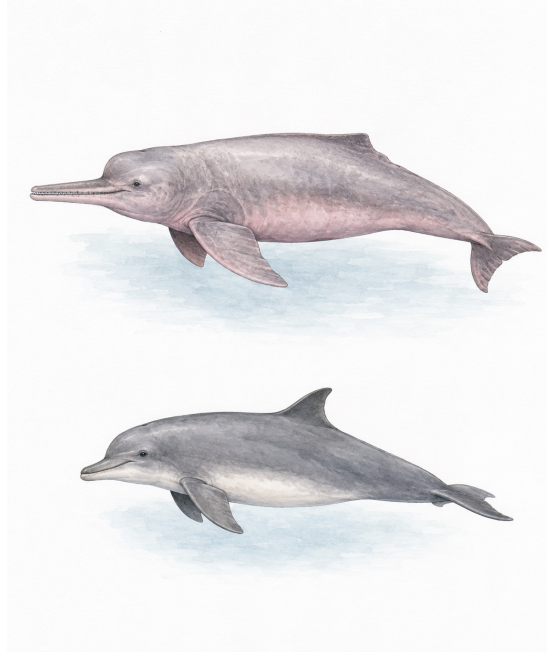
Tefé is connected with surrounding communities through river travel, services and commerce. People in towns and rural communities exchange goods, knowledge and news. No single house, job or family stands for everyone who lives here.

Lia's book travels between a river home and Tefé. Trace that idea on the regional locator: a book, a bag of goods, a message or a visit can connect people across water. What would you want to bring to a relative on the other shore?

On the map, find the regional city before returning to the little expedition landscape. The two scales belong together: a close view gives detail, and a wide view shows what the detail is part of.

BOTO AND TUCUXI

Two dolphins in the river world



Above: boto · Below: tucuxi

Researchers have recorded both the boto-vermelho and the tucuxi in the Mamirauá and Amanã region. They are freshwater dolphins. Like other mammals, they breathe air at the surface.

A boto does not have to be a brilliant storybook pink. Colour varies. The upper illustration is a boto; the lower one is a tucuxi. Both are interpretations of real animals, not records of sightings.

The scientific names are *Inia geoffrensis* for the boto and *Sotalia fluviatilis* for the freshwater tucuxi. Names let people say more precisely which animal they mean.

Take a second look at the two bodies in the illustrations. Find each beak, each back and each pair of flippers. Then compare a dolphin with the pirarucu on page 35: a similar surfacing action can belong to very different animals.

AND WHAT IT LEAVES OUT

What your map knows

The expedition map keeps the relationships needed for the story: channel connections, the highest floors, camera directions, trees and checked walking paths. Its symbols make those things readable.

It leaves out countless roots, branches, currents and changes a real guide would need to know. Its numbered heights and small place names are invented. A neat line is not a real-world promise.

The world map does a different job. It locates the broad Amazon region and the real places named in the book. It is a schematic locator, not a detailed travel map.

You can test a map by asking what decision it helps you make. You can test a photograph by asking where the camera was and which way it looked. Neither shows everything.

Blue line	A channel's location. Check the highest floor and water level before using a model boat.
Copper dotted line	A footpath Rosa checked for this fictional day. Not an outdoor route.
Camera dot + north arrow	Compare a north-facing photograph from this position.
Fork / lean tree	The two recorded trunk shapes. Other scenery is decorative.

A SMALL MODEL GAME AFTER THE MYSTERY

Change the water, change the possibilities

Keep cards 02 and 03 and the expedition map. Set the original photograph aside. This is a new water-model exercise, not a new mystery with a hidden culprit.

For each round, choose a water level below. Which candidate entrances could the tabletop canoe pass without carrying it? Use at least 0.6 metre over every highest floor. A partner can predict first, then you can compare reasons.

Round 1: 4.5 metres. Round 2: 4.6 metres. Round 3: 5.6 metres. Round 4: 8.6 metres.

Use card 08 as your prediction record or write on spare paper. Keep a question mark beside anything you have not checked. Answers are on the next page, so stop here until you are ready.

Changing a water level changes the model's routes. It does not make a real boat trip safe or change what happened in Bento's photograph.

COMPARE AFTER YOUR PREDICTIONS

The model-game answers

At 4.5 metres, none of the entrances meet the 0.6-metre rule. Heron's depth is only 0.5 metre. Arum and Palm have ground above the water.

At 4.6 metres, Heron meets the rule exactly: 0.6 metre over its 4-metre floor. Arum and Palm do not.

At 5.6 metres, Arum has 0.6 metre and Heron has 1.6 metres. Both work. Palm's entrance is still above the water.

At 8.6 metres, all three work in the bounded model. Palm now has exactly 0.6 metre over its 8-metre entrance. Arum has 3.6 metres and Heron has 4.6 metres.

A place can become possible without becoming the place in the photograph. You still need viewpoint evidence to answer that older question.

If you invent another round, keep its water level below 9 metres so the surrounding ridges stay above water. Check all three entrance depths before asking someone else to solve it.

Water	Arum (5)	Heron (4)	Palm (8)
4.5 m	no	no	no
4.6 m	no	yes	no
5.6 m	yes	yes	no
8.6 m	yes	yes	yes

HINT LEVEL 1 · NO NEED TO TURN YET

A small nudge

Testing your idea: the water. Look at his water level on card 02. Compare it with the highest floor of each entrance on card 03. Water drawn at the far end does not remove a higher entrance.

Testing your idea: the photograph. Put the map's north arrow away from you. Look north from each camera dot. Which tree is on your left? Try the view at your candidate, then check the water record too.

Finding 3: Which route works today? Use today's reading on card 05, not the old photograph's reading. Every route must reach a landing by boat, then use one of Rosa's checked paths.

Need more help? The next page has stronger nudges. The full answers are on page 45. You can stop here and try again.



HINT LEVEL 2

A stronger nudge

The water test: Subtract each highest floor from 7. A depth below 0.6 metre cannot take the model canoe. One entrance is higher than the water itself. Bento did not carry the boat.

Bringing the records together: The photo's forked tree is left of the leaning tree in a north-facing view. Two places match that. Two places have a possible old water approach. Which single name appears on both lists?

Finding 3: Subtract 4.2, 2.8 and 2.5 from 3.8. One is dry, and two meet the model rule. The old camera ground is at 5, so today's boat cannot end at the camera dot.

You can choose either checked landing after the depth test. Your choice decides which encounter to read, not whether you have found the right photograph place.

The next page gives the full answers.



HINT LEVEL 3 · ANSWERS

The complete findings

Old routes: Arum has 2 metres of depth over its entrance. Heron has 3 metres. Palm's 8-metre entry is above the 7-metre water. Only Arum and Heron meet the continuous-afloat journey record.

Photograph: Arum and Palm have fork-left, lean-right in the north-facing view. Heron reverses the order. Arum is the only candidate with both the possible water route and the matching view.

Today: the 4.2-metre shortcut floor is above the 3.8-metre water, so that route is closed. Outside to Fern has 1 metre of depth. Near to Cedar has 1.3 metres. Both meet the 0.6-metre model rule.

Both present approaches finish on foot, because the old camera ground is 5 metres above the shared zero and is dry today. Longer boat/shorter walk reads page 25; shorter boat/longer walk reads page 26. Both continue at page 27.

Your drawing and explanation have no single correct style. Page 30 is yours to fill.

Place	Water at 7 m	North view	Both
Arum	2 m: yes	yes	YES
Heron	3 m: yes	no	no
Palm	blocked	yes	no

PAPER AND OPTIONAL PHONE

Pause, return, or share the expedition

To pause on paper, leave card 08 at your page and write your chosen landing on spare paper. Your pencil marks on the map and finding pages preserve your progress. No code, account or phone is needed.

The optional phone guide follows the same four stages: try a first idea; test your candidate; choose today's approach; make your record and read the ending. Its hints and checks come from pages 43–45.

Open the optional guide at tinyshef.app/dispatches/river/guide. No name or account is required. The book holds every instruction and answer if you prefer to leave the phone aside.

The guide saves the stage, hints opened and chosen approach in that browser when storage is available. Reset clears its progress. Reset does not erase your paper drawing or make the known mystery a new surprise.

To share the mystery with another reader, use fresh paper for their findings. Keep your completed pages covered until they want to compare. You can read for them and ask what an observation means while they make the choices.

To put the kit away, stack cards 01-08 in the wrap, fold the map, and keep them with your book. Your new page belongs in the collection.



ABOUT THE WORLD IN THIS BOOK

A real region, an invented adventure

The Amazon, Tefé and Mamirauá are real. The seasonal floodplain, documented housing adaptations and animal relationships helped shape this book. Lia, Rosa, Bento, their family story, photograph, notebook and study map are inventions.

The local measurements and stable terrain are a deliberately simplified story model. They are not surveyed locations, historical observations or outdoor instructions. The broad regional map is a locator. The drawings and findings you add are your own.

Sources for regional geography, Tefé and flood dynamics: Mamirauá Institute, “Project areas” and “Tefé”; NASA Earth Observatory, “Introduction to the Large-Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia”; Zumak and colleagues, “Riverine communities in the Central Amazon are largely subject to erosion and sedimentation risk,” *Communications Earth & Environment* (2025).

Sources for fruit, fish and local knowledge: Mamirauá Institute, *Frutas da Floresta* (2024), page 11; reporting on pirarucu counting (2018) and the community-based management course (2019).

The Institute and the researchers did not create, test or endorse this product. Full source titles, dates and links: tinyshef.app/dispatches/river/sources. Regional outline: Natural Earth, public-domain 1:110m geography; river lines are schematic.



TINYSELF DISPATCHES

Keep the question open

Sources for homes and forest types: Mamirauá Institute's housing research account (2016); Uakari Lodge's description of its floating structures (2019); Haugaasen and Peres, “Floristic, edaphic and structural characteristics of flooded and unflooded forests in the lower Rio Purús region of central Amazonia.” The Purús study supports habitat definitions; it is not a survey of Lia's fictional lake.

Source for river dolphins: Mamirauá Institute's field reporting on boto-vermelho and tucuxi in the Mamirauá/Amanã region (2017). Dated population or conservation-status figures have not been carried into the story.

Original fictional illustrations were made with image-generation tools and edited into controlled layouts. Text, map geometry, labels and model diagrams are separately authored. Scenic art is not a record of a real field visit.

The River in the Trees · RIVER-1.0 · An Amazon expedition for Maya.

Your next question can begin anywhere on this map.



Print reference: SYNTH-A-BOOK-001

