

A NEW HOME FOR AJIRI

What is it about?

A new home for Ajiri is a delightful story for 8-10-year-olds that is based in Kachchh. A young chinkara fawn named Ajiri gets injured by a pack of dogs and separated from her mother. She is nursed back to health by Shivam, a young boy, and his father, who knows how to treat injured animals. Later, she is cared for by Mitti, a young girl, and her pastoralist family. The story ends with some rather dramatic scenes of reunion between Ajiri and her mother, and Ajiri's response to a poacher who fires on a herd of chinkara.

Two values form the base of this story – caring and trust. The human characters in the story (except for the poacher, of course) display a deep caring for Ajiri through many of their actions and decisions. And this makes Ajiri trust humans... to the extent that it guides her reaction to the poacher!

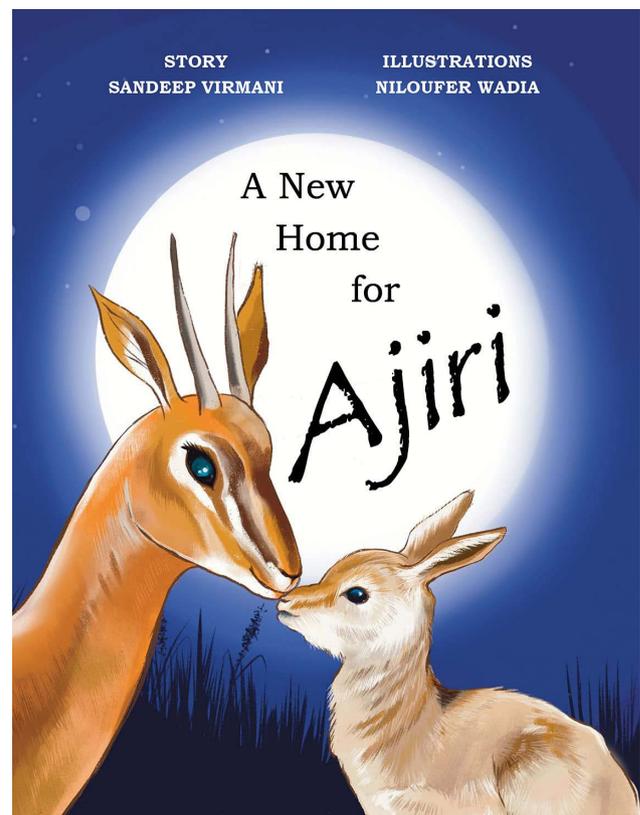
Discuss with children

Each of these values can be the basis of great discussions and thinking points for children. Here are some related to the value of caring:

- When have they felt cared for by family members or friends? What do they feel when someone cares for them?
- When have they cared for others? And what do they feel in such situations?
- Have they had or do they have a pet? How do they care for it?
- What are some different ways of caring for wildlife?
- What about plants? Is caring for plants different from caring for animals?
- Are there different ways and levels of caring for different living beings?

And some for the value of trust:

- Can they describe instances when they felt trusted by the adults around them? How do they feel when they are trusted?

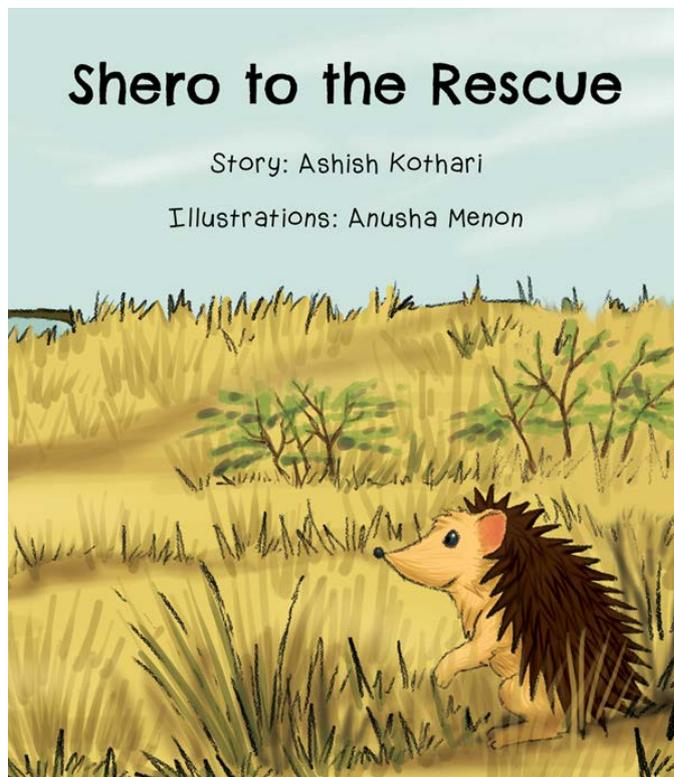
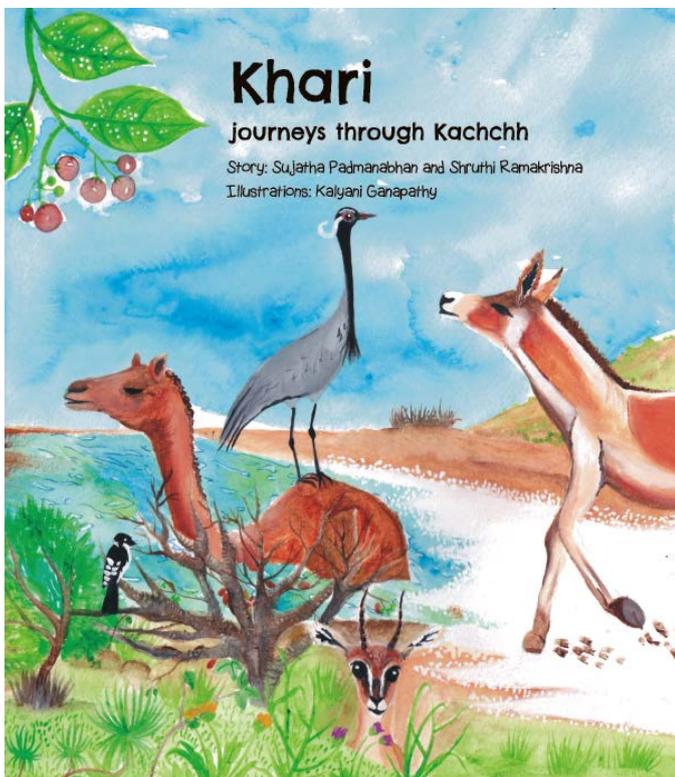


- Do they trust their friends? How have they shown it?
- Have they felt trusted by animals? Were these pets or animals in the wild? How did this trust make them feel?

This story also offers some glimpses of Kachchh and its wildlife as well as nomadic pastoralists and their simple lifestyles. The book ends with a note from the publishers about some provisions under our laws related to wildlife. This could be used to get children to think about what they should do if they come across an injured wild animal.

There's more!

This is the third story from Kachchh that has been published by Kalpavriksh. The first one titled *Khari journeys through Kachchh* introduces children to the different ecosystems of Kachchh through Khari, a demoiselle crane



that is on her first migratory journey through the region. The second, **Shero to the rescue**, introduces children to the many wild animals that inhabit these ecosystems, with a hedgehog (named Shero) as the protagonist. These two books were first published in Gujarati. All three were written as part of a larger programme by local NGOs to develop localized environmental educational material for

government school children. We hope that the three books add special dimensions to children's reading programmes not only in the region, but elsewhere in India as well.

How to order

To order a copy of this 32-page book, visit kalpavriksh.org/ our-store or write to kvbooks@gmail.com.

Sujatha Padmanabhan is a member of Kalpavriksh and coordinates the publication of books for children based on wildlife, nature, and the environment. She has authored several books for children, and has also developed educational material for schools. She can be contacted at sujikalwa@gmail.com.