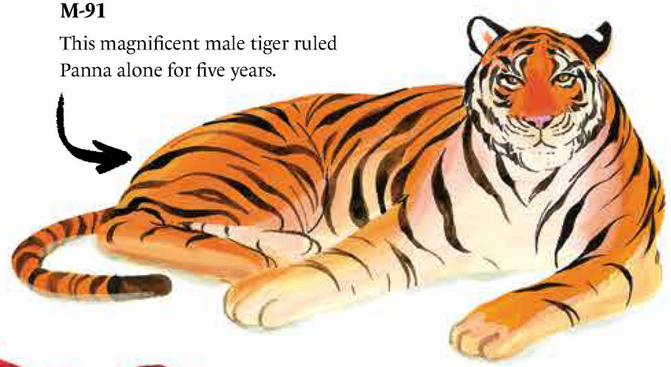
Meet the tigers

Many grand tigers have padded across Panna's plains. But scientists in this story followed the tales of two extraordinary tiger dynasties.

The first dynasty

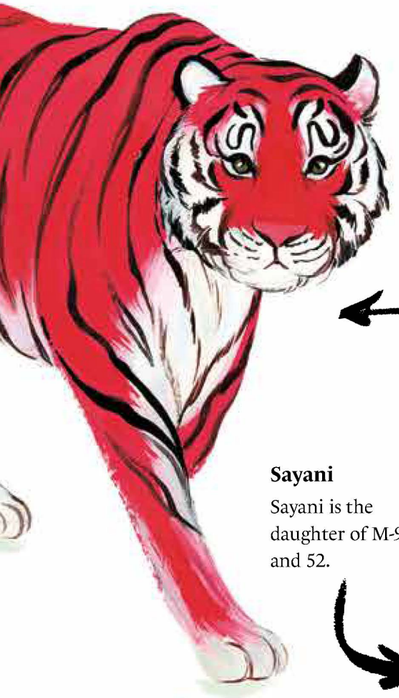
M-91

This magnificent male tiger ruled Panna alone for five years.



52

With distinctive markings on her forehead bearing the numbers 5 and 2, this female tiger became the Queen of Panna for many years.



Sayani

Sayani is the daughter of M-91 and 52.



Hairy Foot

A huge tiger with particularly hairy feet, who is at first mysterious and difficult to find.





Julie

Julie is mother to Madla's first cubs inside Panna Tiger Reserve.

Madla

Madla strolled into Panna in 1996, and went on to rule the east of the reserve.



T3

A lone male with a strong homing instinct.



T1

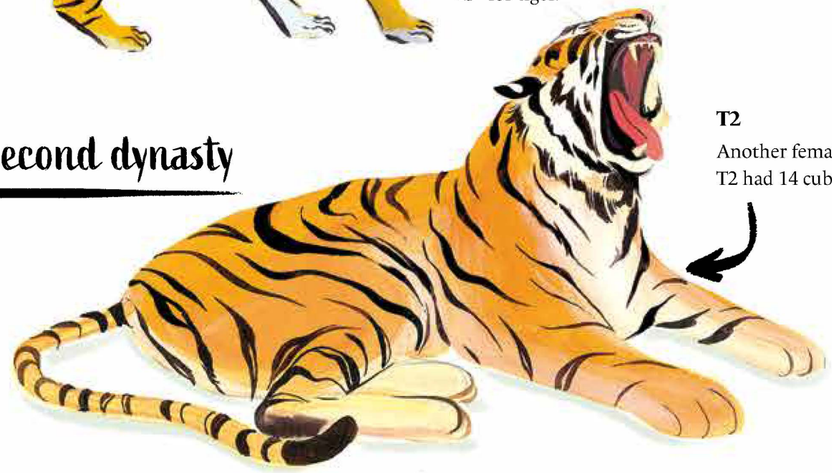
An orphan female tiger born in Bandhavgarn Tiger Reserve. 'T' stands for tiger.



The second dynasty

T2

Another female orphan, T2 had 14 cubs with T3.



T4 and T5

Orphaned when they were just a year and a half, these two female tigers were brought to Panna from Kahna Tiger Reserve.



Vanishing tigers

By 2002, tigers in Panna had began to mysteriously disappear.

As time passed, it became more difficult to catch a tiger on camera and even their radio collars stopped transmitting signals.

It wasn't long before scientists discovered traps hidden in the vegetation near waterholes. This showed that poachers were lurking nearby, putting tigers in serious danger.

Full of fear, the scientists searched for the tigers they knew. And then, one dark day, a soft striped body was discovered by local villagers.

Radio collar

Four elephants on your tail

So began an extraordinary game of hide and seek.

A group of 70 people, including forest guards, scientists, local helpers, and skilled mahouts riding elephants all worked together to bring this homesick big cat back to Panna.

But T3 wasn't easy to catch … even with an army of people and four elephants on his tail. An elusive ripple of black and orange, T3 crept through the scrub and between the trees. He hid in tall grass and lingered in the shadows. Eventually, his radio signal appeared.



However, he slipped into the Ken River and paddled out of Panna. Beyond the reserve T3 was unprotected and more vulnerable to poachers. With less wild prey to eat, he was hungry and dangerous too.

Still, the great cat padded on. He wove around remote villages and across fields of lentils, chickpeas and mustard. Now, so close to people, his anxious followers feared he would be shot, snared or poisoned.

They tried everything they could think of to get him to turn around. They lit walls of fires, but T3 wove around them. They banged drums and made loud noises, but T3 wasn't scared. He was just determined to carry on.

Until one day, his desperate followers reluctantly decided to dart him. Once asleep, he was safely transported back to Panna for the second time.

How could this lone wanderer be encouraged to stay this time?