A DISCUSSION GUIDE TO

A NOVEL THAT SHOWS READERS TO USE THEIR VOICE TO **ROAR** FOR WHAT'S RIGHT!

"A HEARTFELT MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILY STORY ABOUT TIGER CONSERVATION."
—*SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL*

★"A HEARTFELT, **PAGE-TURNING** CALL TO STEWARDSHIP."
—*PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*, STARRED REVIEW

★"**COMPELLING. . . .** A ROUSING CALL FOR CONSERVATION EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD THE MAJESTIC TIGER."
—*KIRKUS REVIEWS*, STARRED REVIEW

"SUCCINCT CHAPTERS AND DUAL PERSPECTIVES BETWEEN RO AND ARYA MAKE BAJAJ'S LATEST **A PERFECT CLASS READ-ALOUD.**"
—*BOOKLIST*

ABOUT THE BOOK

Through multiple POVs that include both human and animal characters, *Roar* is the gripping story of a boy whose eye-opening trip to a tiger sanctuary ignites his desire to join those who are roaring to protect the animals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Varsha Bajaj (VarshaBajaj.com) is the author of the middle grade novels *Thirst* (a *New York Times* bestseller and Global Read Aloud selection) and *Count Me In*. She also wrote the picture books *Family of Friends*, *A Garland of Henna*, *The Home Builders* (an Imagination Library selection), and *This Is Our Baby, Born Today* (a Bank Street Best Book). She grew up in Mumbai, India, and when she came to the United States to obtain her master's degree, her adjustment to the country was aided by books, which helped her learn about the culture. She lives in Houston, Texas.

This guide was written by Nawal Qarooni, a teacher educator and consultant for school districts across the country in literacy and family engagement. She and her team of coaches at NQC Literacy provide professional learning for teachers in foundational skills, culturally sustaining pedagogies, and literacy curricular work. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan, holds two masters degrees from Syracuse University and Brooklyn College, and is a member of the Library of Congress Literacy Advisory Board. She is the author of *Nourishing Caregiver Collaborations: Exalting Home Experiences and Classroom Practices for Collective Care*.

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CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

- What are the settings of this story, and how do you know (pp. 1, 4, 18)? Compare and contrast Texas and India using a Venn diagram. What do we learn about each throughout the text?
- Whose perspectives are the chapters written in? What is the connection between Rohan and the Good Human?
- Why do you think the animals call the man Good Human? Provide evidence from the text to back up your ideas.
- How do we know that Arya is pregnant? Where will she deliver her cubs? What do we learn about cub survival rates in the wild?
- How does Good Human show respect for Arya? Provide several examples from the text (pp. 8, 12).
- What is the conflict on page 25 in the text? Why do you think G-ma hides the newspaper from Rohan and Mira, the cousins? We learn of yet another conflict on page 29. What happened to Arya's first set of cubs? What words does Bajaj use to describe how she felt?
- What are some of the "rules" and learning that happen in the wildlife sanctuary? What do we learn about the animals as G-pa takes the cousins to visit?
- Pages 36 and 37 include descriptions of foods and drinks that Rohan experiences in India at his grandparents' house (chai, cauliflower pakora, flatbread, cumin; later, guava with dried ginger and mild chile powder; chickpea curry with spinach; guava fudge; papadums; cardamom; cheese dosas and chutney). Teachers, you can have students track the foods and spices mentioned, asking them to look up one recipe they might be interested in trying. What are some foods and drinks that are routinely eaten in your home?
- On page 53, G-pa reveals to his grandchildren why protesters are marching outside the sanctuary. What are the complications of this conflict in the text? Why is G-pa upset? What details do the children learn?
- How does Anita know that there are intruders on sanctuary grounds (p. 75)?
- How does poop tell stories (pp. 78–80)?
- What is G-pa's argument against the mining development (p. 92)?
- What do the kids do to make a difference and proclaim what they believe in (p. 101)?
- Why do they name Arya's cubs Heera and Veera (p. 106)?
- What does the author mean when she writes, "The peepals, the palms, the banyans, the neems, and the flame trees of the forest witnessed nature's way yet again. Predator and prey. A story as ancient as civilization. A story relived again and again" on page 119?
- On page 168, we learn what really happened to Arya. What was Kiran's potential motive and who is Manu?

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- We learn a lot about characters pretty quickly in the story. Make a web with circles to list characteristics you learn about each as they're introduced. Be sure to include physical traits (external) and any personality traits (internal) that you learn as well. You might include: Arya, Crow, G-ma, G-pa, Rohan, Thing 1 and Thing 2, Jake, Mira, Seema, Billi, Kiran, Samir, Heera and Veera, Lakshmi, Shiva, and Anita. Be sure to add to these bubbles as you learn more information. What other names do the characters have? With various colored pencils, draw lines between the characters who have relationships. For example, how are Arya and Crow connected? On page 76, we learn even more about this duo.
- Rohan experiences many emotions throughout the text. Create a chart to show how he feels across the story, connecting the dots between words that describe how he feels. For example, on page 23, he feels exhausted, excited, and a little homesick. Write those words down. When you know he's feeling something else on another page, record those feelings on your chart too.
- On page 42, the cousins meet students from the school. Create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast what you learn about the students in India versus the children and their environments back home. What is similar or different?
- What does Rohan mean when he thinks, "I'm both an insider and an outsider" on page 42?
- How does Rohan describe meeting Arya for the first time? What words does he use and why (p. 47)?
- Arya has incredible animal instincts and learns how to protect her cubs. She knows which humans are safe and which are not. How does she know that dangerous humans are near on page 57?
- What do we learn happened to Arya on pages 127 and 135?
- What do the crows do to protect Arya and her cubs (pp. 127–128)? (Teachers: you might want to share with students that a murder of crows means a group of crows. What other words do we have for various groups of animals?)
- Why is Kiran's eye bloody? What can we infer from what we know about Arya and Crow's chapter?
- Why does G-pa guess that Arya was poisoned (p. 137)?
- How does the community honor Arya's passing (pp. 150–152)?
- How does Crow lead Arya's cubs to safety (pp. 155–156)?

ATTENTION TO CRAFT

The author, Varsha Bajaj, uses many literary devices throughout the text, especially to describe characters. Keep track of similes (comparing two things using *like* or *as*) and metaphors (direct comparisons of two things) on the chart below. Add more if you find them!

SPOT THE SIMILES	EXAMPLE
SIMILE	Her soft paws treaded silently, like a ghost, in the North Indian jungle she called home (p. 1).
SIMILE	His silver hair shone like a lion's mane (p. 2).
SIMILE	…and everyone clapped like he had run a marathon (p. 37).
SIMILE	Page 55:
SIMILE	Page 84:
SIMILE	Page 96:

CONTENT-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY

These content-specific vocabulary terms are low-frequency, specialized words that provide context for the story. Be sure students know what they mean.

WORD	DEFINITION
SANCTUARY	
POACHER	
CONSERVATIONIST	
PROTESTER	
TIGRESS	
PAW PADS	
SCAT	
NATURALIST	
SNARE	

BEYOND THE TEXT: APPLICATION

- Rohan cares so much about tigers and wildlife that he considers starting a club. What do you care that much about, and how might you make change for that cause?
- Rohan takes a trip across the world from Texas to India to visit his grandparents for three weeks, leaving his twin baby siblings behind so he can meet two animal babies. Have you ever traveled alone? Where to? How did the experience feel?
- There is so much rich description of the setting in this story, like on pages 19–20. Draw how you visualize Rohan's grandparents' house based on the description that Bajaj writes. As we learn more details while reading, add to your visual depiction. You might even record page numbers where you learn of those details as evidence from the text!
- Mira is obsessed with all the different birds that she sees in India. Use the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** website to research the birds that she identifies in her grandparents' backyard. Choose one to read about thoroughly. Teachers, you might ask students to draw one, using colored pencils if possible, and label its parts, recording characteristics and nonfiction facts as they read. Options: woodpecker, myna, egret, gray hornbill, emerald dove, blue-throated barbet, bulbuls, kingfisher, babbler, velvet-fronted nuthatch, or peacock. Are there any other birds mentioned in the text? Try not to be too didactic about how these bird drawings and labels "must" look, as we want to glorify multiple ways of depicting, creating, and learning.
- On page 44, Rohan observes that the children combine English and Hindi as they speak. This mixing of languages, using full repertoires of word combinations, is called translanguaging. Write a sentence or two describing your neighborhood using your full repertoire of language—with whatever words you have in your experience. Teachers, please encourage your students to write and identify instances in books where translanguaging is used.
- There is a beautiful reverence for animals throughout the text, a sentiment that the land is theirs. Collect sentences and scenes from the text that elucidate this unapologetic adoration for animals and their rightful place as part of a larger ecosystem. For examples, see page 55 or 63.
- On page 165, what does Mira mean when she says, "Nature is beautiful and brutal all at the same time"?
- At the end of the text, Rohan processes his grief over losing Arya and makes a list of everything he will miss about India. Teachers, you might invite students to think of a special place they've visited and, using Rohan's list as an example, have them generate a list of what memories they too have missed.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

- Throughout the text, list nonfiction facts you learn about tigers. To get started, turn to page 66.
- There is a very important author's note at the end of this book that details tiger facts—including their decline around the world. Teachers, please use this opportunity to teach a lesson about nonfiction versus fiction—with the characteristics of each genre under each category. What nonfiction facts does Bajaj give readers in the author's note about tigers? Have students discuss the facts in table groups, and then record them in a bulleted list.