



Carmen



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The forest stands quietly. Suddenly Carmen comes rappelling down through the canopy dangling from a tree by one foot, one hand on another tree, and picking leaves with the second hand. Entwined roots and overhanging branches are her favourite places to be in the forest. Here she can climb, sit or swing around to her heart's content. Carmen's caregivers have observed that she seems to enjoy foraging for leaves more than fruit. They've noted that Carmen tries as many different varieties of leaves as she can get her hands on. Carmen is a forest connoisseur and leaves are a good source of carbohydrates. Carmen still can't build her own nest but with time and encouragement we hope she will develop her skill set for nesting soon.

Carmen keeps to herself and doesn't badger caregivers as they make their way for forest school releases. She occasionally interacts with her peers but quickly wearies of wrestling and rolling around on the forest floor. She will head to the boardwalk and sit contemplatively for a moment. A thousand-yard stare comes over her dark eyes as she disappears into her own world. Carmen glides off the boardwalk walking slowly and deliberately into the muddy swamp. Carmen isn't one for splashing around in the mud though and will quickly lumber through it to drier ground. As she continues into the forest she looks back over her shoulder. It would be easy to feel that the offspring of bigfoot/sasquatch is walking off into the distance.

Carmen remains an orangutan of strong character who is sensitive to breaks in routine. Carmen once did not want to go back to the sleeping cage until late in the evening, staying in a tree because the sound of long-tailed monkeys fighting nearby perturbed her. Carmen can be impatient or a little frustrated inside her sleeping enclosure, but as soon as she is free to roam in the forest she expresses her best self. This is in no small part thanks to her wonderful foster parents and surrogate caregivers on the ground (literally) helping Carmen continue her journey back to the great forest where she belongs.

Orangutan Foundation International Australia Foster Program

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