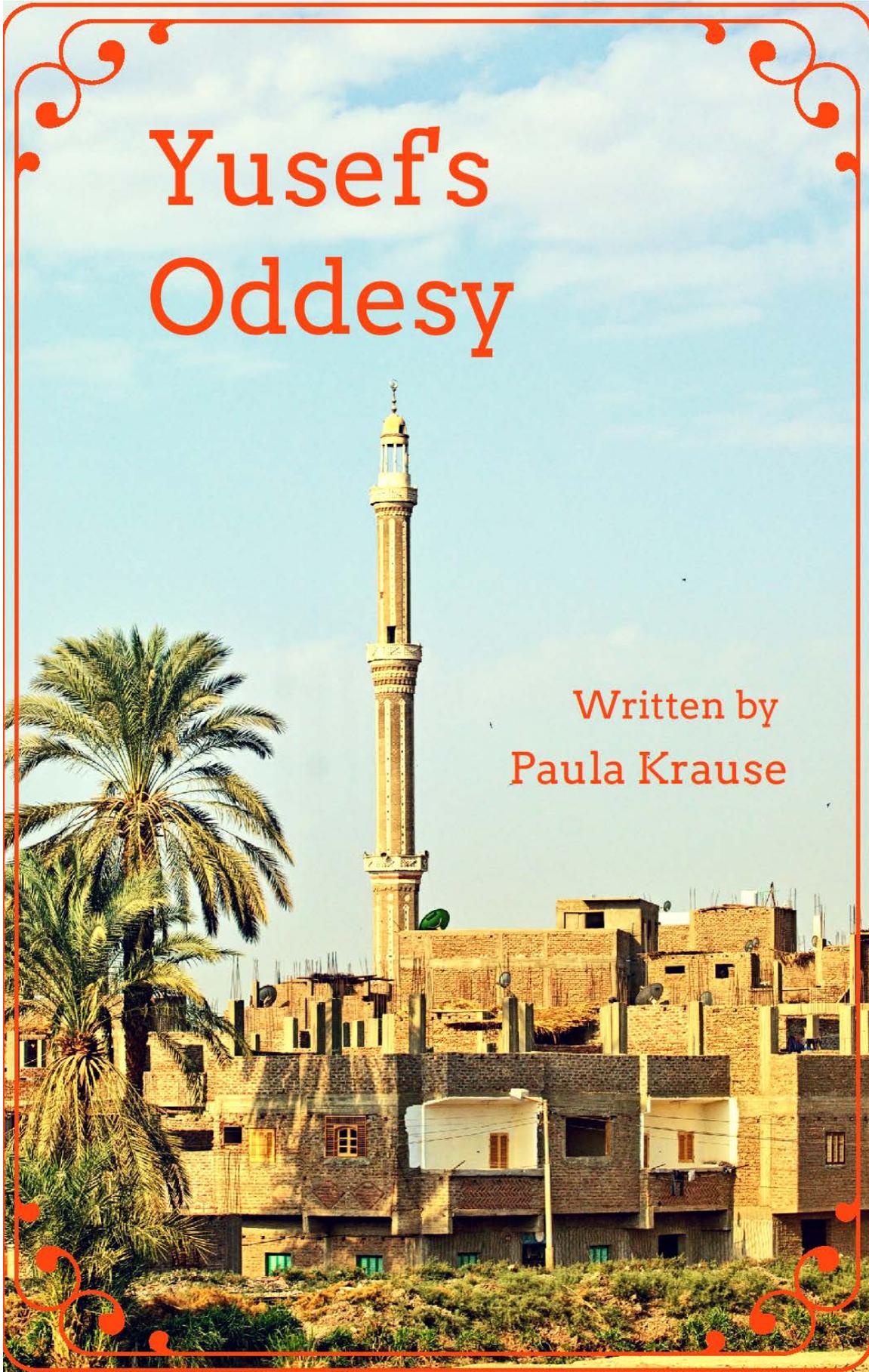


Yusef's Odyssey

Written by
Paula Krause



One day in Egypt, living on Elephantine Island was a poor boy named Yusef. He wore dirty, ripped rags that were dark cream every day. He had a mother and a little sister. His little sister was down with a fever. She was often very ill. His dad was a felucca sailor. A felucca is an Egyptian sail boat. His father went out early every morning to get customers and then he rowed the boat when there was no wind. Yusef is so poor that he can't even go to school. So during the day, he goes out to sell the bracelets and Nubian hats his mother makes to tourists, but there aren't many tourists anymore.

Yusef has a pet donkey and two chickens. He sometimes goes out on his family's donkey to collect alfalfa to deliver to the horse carriages but he sometimes gives some to his donkey. His dream is to own his very own yellow and black taxi. The taxi drivers earn much more money.

One Monday, Yusef had some free time, so went next door to see his 9 year old friend, Ali. They went on an old abandoned surfboard they found to see if they could find any tourists to sing to that were riding a felucca on the River Nile. They sat the rickety surfboard on the Nile and slowly sat on it. They used two pieces of driftwood each as paddles.

They paddled for a very long time because there were hardly any tourists around. Yusef opened his mouth to say "Let's go back," when he heard the splashes of someone rowing a felucca in the distance. It was his dad. He had some tourists.

"Quick Yusef! That way! Tourists!" exclaimed Ali.

They paddled quickly to the tourists, held on to the rail of the felucca and started singing. They sang "Frere Jacques," "Twinkle, twinkle little star" and "Somewhere over the rainbow." When Yusef and Ali finished singing, one of the tourists gave them 20 pounds and they thanked the tourists gratefully.

"Shukran" they said, which means "Thank you."

Yusef and Ali paddled home quickly. They heaved the drenched surfboard out of the water and split the money. Yusef ran home joyously waving the ten pound note in the air. He put the surfboard and the driftwood in the sun to dry and ran into the house.

Mama! Mama! Look what some tourists gave me when Ali and I sang on our surfboard! Isn't it great?" shouted Yusef.

“Quiet! Quiet!” said his mother, but when she saw that it was ten pounds she exclaimed,

“Ten pounds! That’s good Yusef. Masa allah!” she said in Egyptian. “Masa allah” means “God willed it.”

Yusef put the money in the money jar, which was really an old cardboard box.

The next day Yusef went out to collect alfalfa for the horse carriages. He went to the alfalfa field with his donkey who was pulling a trailer which Yusef put the alfalfa in. Then his donkey started eating the alfalfa.

“Le!” exclaimed Yusef and pushed the donkey away. “Le” means “no” in Egyptian. Then Yusef started to collect more alfalfa. When he had finished collecting the alfalfa, he put the alfalfa into the cart and brought it to the horse carriage drivers. He sold each driver some alfalfa and brought a few pounds home to put in the money jar.

Yusef ate an egg from his chickens and slept.

The next day Yusef went to sell his mom’s hats and bracelets. He noticed some tourists across the road. They were pointing at his hats and bracelets. So he ran across the road to them but suddenly, “Bump!” A man on a donkey hit Yusef.

“Aaaahhh!” Yusef shrieks.

Many people came to check on him. Some people were nice and asked him how he was, but some people were scolding him for not looking. The man on the donkey came and yelled at him.

“Hey you! Why did you run across the road without looking? You hurt my donkey!”

His mother, who was just leaving the jetty, heard his shriek and came running to him. She brought him back home. Yusef had some bruises and cuts but he was okay. His mother sat down with him.

“You should look before you cross a road, Yusef, just like how I showed you,” said his mother.

“But I did,” said Yusef.

“Well they you obviously only checked on one side, so you should check on *both* sides next time,” she answered.

“Okay,” nodded Yusef.

On Wednesday, Yusef had free time, but unfortunately there were no eggs for breakfast. So he went out to beg for food. He went to the market, and there was a nice lady there who gave him some old flat bread. “Shukran!” Yusef yelled gratefully after her but she didn’t seem to notice as she was walking away. As he walked home, he divided the bread so he could share it with his mom, father and sister.

After eating his breakfast, he went to sing on the surfboard with Ali again. They found a few tourists and got a few pounds. Then Yusef went home, put the money in the money jar and ate more flat bread for dinner.

On Thursday morning, Yusef went to sell his mom’s Nubian hats and bracelets at the jetty. The sailors scolded all the little boys who were trying to sell things to the tourists and told them to go across the road and not bother the tourists. Yusef looked on both sides for cars and donkeys and crossed the road safely. There were not many tourists on this side of the road. Later in the afternoon, when the other boys had left, Yusef saw some tourists returning to the boats. One of them was pointing at his colourful hats. He forgot his earlier cautions and ran excitedly across to the tourists.

“Bang!” he was bumped by a car and Yusef was thrown to the side of the road. His hats and bracelets were thrown everywhere.

“Ooowww!” cried Yusef. His left leg really hurt.

Many people ran to him, some scolding and some worried. One of the tourists ran to him and picked him up and brought him off the road, and sat him down on the floor. Some other people picked up his hats and bracelets and put them down next to Yusef. His mother was coming to call him to come back since it was getting late and she came quickly to comfort him. The driver of the car was still scolding him. Poor Yusef was crying in agony. Nobody seemed to care besides his mother and one nice tourist lady. The tourist lady asked his mother if his mother wanted her to bring Yusef to the hospital. His mother said she couldn’t afford to bring Yusef to the hospital, but the lady insisted that she would pay for it. They got the taxi and brought Yusef to the hospital.

His mother sat down next to him when Yusef laid down to get an X-ray. He had a broken leg. The doctor put a cast on Yusef and gave him crutches.

They drove back to Yusef's house and Yusef sat down. The tourist lady had bought some food for Yusef's family. Her name was Sabrina. She knocked on the door and gave the food to Yusef's mother. Yusef then went to sleep.

Yusef woke up at midday the next day. At first Yusef's thoughts were bothered thinking *why* his leg felt stiff and hurt, but then he remembered getting hit by the car and the hospital.

When Yusef got out of bed to eat breakfast, which was now more like lunch, he was presented with a very different meal. It was what the Sabrina brought his family. It was crunchy and sweet. "Sabrina brought us this food. It is apparently called cereal," said Yusef's mother.

They heard a knock on the door. Yusef's mother opened the door and outside was Sabrina again.

"When Yusef was hit by the car, I saw he was selling some beautiful hats and bracelets. I was wondering if I could buy some to send to my sister who lives in Australia."

"Yes, of course," said Yusef's mother.

Sabrina says, "My sister in Australia has a shop and we could sell them there. I'd like to send the money we get from the sales back to Yusef here in Egypt." So she bought 40 hats and 100 bracelets. Yusef's mom put the 1000 pounds in the money jar, but she would get more when Sabrina's sister has sold the hats and bracelets.

Yusef limped up to his mother and said, "Since we got so much money, isn't it enough to buy money to help Edubin recover from her fever?" Edubin is the name of Yusef's sister. "Yes, we will do that," said Yusef's mother.

a few months later, Sabrina returned with 5000 pounds from the sales of just half of the hats and bracelets.

"Wow! So much!" said Yusef. "Shukran!"

Sabrina asked if Yusef would like to go to school and learn to read and write. Yusef asked his mother if he could and she said, "Of course, with all this extra money, Yusef doesn't need to work so he can go to school."

So Sabrina helped Yusef to get to the school on Elephantine Island. He made many friends there and learned many things. Most of all, he finally learned to read and write. He even learned how to do math, which he really liked.

In a few days, it was Yusef's birthday. Yusef woke up a bit late that day. His mother told him that it was his birthday and Yusef said, "But it's not that awesome because nothing special happens on my birthday usually besides me turning a year older."

"No, no, it's special today. Sabrina brought you a cake!"

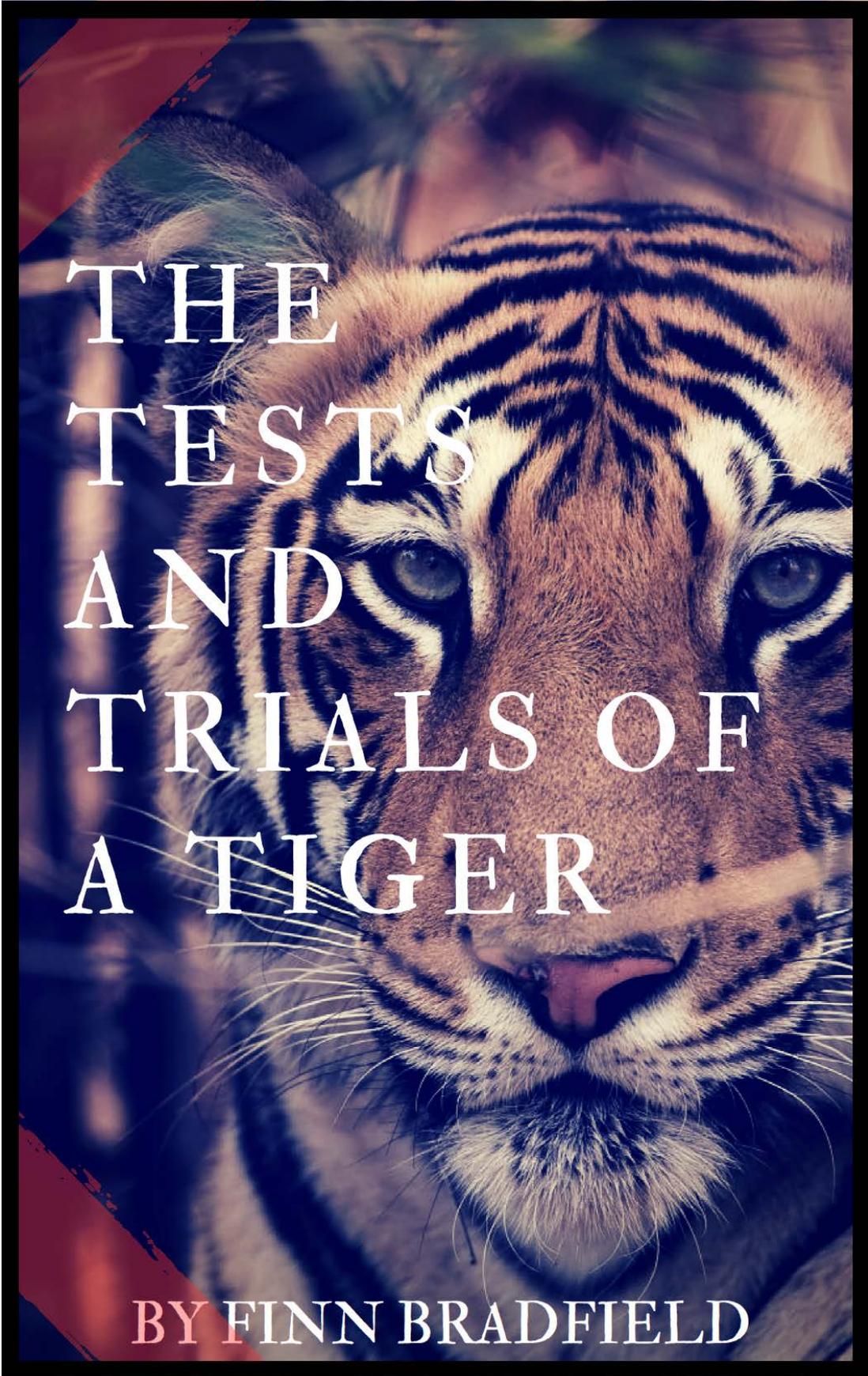
"A what?" said Yusef.

"A cake!" said Yusef's mother, showing it to him.

"This looks strange and interesting," said Yusef. "It's very different." It's the first time they ever saw a cake. It was delicious.

"See what else Sabrina bought you!...Clothes!," Sabrina had bought Yusef a red shirt, stripy white and blue socks, green shoes and a pair of white socks. "Now I don't need to wear my old, ripped clothes anymore!," exclaimed Yusef and put them on strait away.

In a few years, Yusef was finished with school. He had learned a lot of things and could get a real job at the local taxi company. They gave him a job of writing letters and bills. He also went on many rides with his friends the taxi drivers. One of his taxi driver friends even taught him how to drive. When he had learned to drive, he asked the taxi company if he could change jobs to a taxi driver and they said yes. So Yusef finally achieved his dream of becoming a taxi driver. He even saved up and bought is very own yellow and black taxi.



THE
TESTS
AND
TRIALS OF
A TIGER

BY FINN BRADFIELD

It was Friday, the day renowned for bad luck, when Moonsunne, the seventh king of tigers, new his time had come. Growling softly, he padded through the undergrowth until he came to a cliff.

Digging his claws into the harsh stone, he launched himself up the cliff face, and in doing so; cut himself, so red streaks of blood mixed in with his orange and black fur. Still he clambered on, never stopping to catch his breath, his heart pounding, and his growl getting louder until... he halted. Lifting his head to the heavens and roared, and he roared with such strength and power the leaves of trees thousands of miles away raised their branches to the sound. Then a miraculous event occurred. The cliff cracked and opened before him. Only a slight nod from Moonsunne betrayed that he had even noticed. Then, growling louder he stepped forward into nothingness.

No, not quite nothingness. Moonsunne was falling, and falling hard. But, like all cats he landed on his feet. He took his time looking around, and familiarizing himself with his surroundings. He had landed in a hall cut into the cliff. There was a small door at the end, but that was all. Then the cliff slammed shut behind him. Moonsunne shifted uneasily. He didn't mind the darkness. He could see better in the dark anyway. No, it was something else that troubled him...

Suddenly, a huge lion materialized in front of him. The lion only uttered two words: 'three tests.' 'Three tests', Moonsunne murmured. 'I had forgotten.' 'Very well,' I am ready for my first test.' The lion snapped his fingers, and Moonsunne fell through a vortex of time, space, and reality itself. Then, as quickly as it had started, it stopped, and he was in a cave with a huge rock slotted roughly at the mouth of it. He knew, to pass his first test, he had to get out into the open air. Do not ask me how he knew this, for I am only the story-teller. Getting to his feet, he tested the walls, shoving them, and slamming his huge frame against them. They did not give in to his strength, still standing true and tall. The only potential weakness was the rock at the entrance of the cave. Suddenly Moonsunne remembered one of his many teachings. *"Tigers have great power. Unimaginable power in fact..."* there was no time to waste. He pushed his claws into the cracks at the sides of the boulder, and summoned his power. He felt it coursing through his veins, felt it pushing through his blood. He directed it to the

huge sarsen, until *crack!* The rock flew out of the cave and landed heavily in the rubble outside. Moonsunne strode triumphantly outside. He knew that he had passed his first test. Then he was tumbling through the vortex again and he landed in the cave hall. There, in front of him was the lion.

‘You have done well...’ said the lion, a touch of admiration in his voice. ‘...But your next two tests will be much harder. Are you ready to begin?’ ‘Just a moment’ Moonsunne cut in. ‘what is your name?’ ‘*that*, is a secret I would like to remain kept.’ said the lion softly. ‘you can trust me’ said the tiger in return. ‘very well,’ said the lion ‘My name is... *luan.*’ Moonsunne fell through the vortex and landed at the foot of a mountain. But tests were not on his mind. Could that lion really be Luan, ancient god of lions? It seemed too surreal to believe! But then Moonsunne remembered the test, and started the long path up the mountain. Not far had he gone when an eerie howl wafted over the mountain. *Wolves.* Moonsunne picked up his pace, as he didn’t fancy running into a pack of them. But it was too late. With their uncanny green eyes and their threatening snarls, they advanced. Moonsunne braced himself for a fight but no fight came. A wolf spoke up. ‘What is your name, stranger and what is your business intruding upon grey-wolf pack’s territory?’ ‘My name is Moonsunne, grey-wolf pack and I come to complete a test.’ The wolf hesitated for a moment, then called over his shoulder: ‘let him pass.’ the wolves parted, and Moonsunne strode on, until the mountain’s peak came into view. Moonsunne sighed with relief. It had been a long journey. But to his horror, ten men with an all-too-familiar seal on their sleeves. *Poachers.* Moonsunne flattened himself against the snow, fur bristling. Had they seen him? His question was answered when a tranquilizer dart whistled past his ear. Then... it was as if something had clicked in the cogs of Moonsunne’s brain. His survival instincts took over. He started running up the hill, changing direction every few seconds, so the poachers couldn’t get a clear shot. Or so he thought. The poachers had used the ill-gotten money to buy state-of-the-art laser sighted dart guns. So, as it happened, Moonsunne was hit three times in the chest. He was unconscious before he hit the ground. Rough hands grabbed him and slammed into a crate. But little did the poachers know their quarry had disappeared...

Moonsunne woke up face to face with Luan. He was closing his eyes, apparently in deep concentration. Luan touched Moonsunne's chest, and the dart wounds knitted together, and faded. 'You have passed your second test' said Luan. 'But the poachers got me' replied Moonsunne. 'Isn't that counted as a failing?' 'The poachers were... unexpected.' Said Luan uncertainly. 'What do you mean... *unexpected*' said Moonsunne dangerously. 'Well, I was meant to send you to a different rendezvous, but... other forces got involved.' 'Very well' said Moonsunne 'I shall try the final test. 'You aren't angry?' asked Luan, surprised. 'Tigers don't hold grudges,' came the reply. 'In that case...' your third and final test is to rescue every animal the poachers have captured.' 'That's it?' asked Moonsunne, taken aback, at the easiness of the task. There had only been seven animals, at the most, that the poachers had caught 'Including the ones the poachers have killed' answered Luan. Moonsunne swallowed. 'But that's impossible, isn't it?' 'Nothing is impossible...' replied Luan. So Moonsunne found himself on the back of the poacher's truck again, with a slab of raw meat at the far corner. He sniffed the meat once, and cast it aside. It had been laced with poison. Instead of eating it he cast his eyes over his surroundings. He immediately regretted it. There were much more than just seven animals on *this* truck. There were turkeys, rabbits, Snakes, lizards, even lions and tigers. He tried, to no avail, to break the bars of the cage. He also tried to summon his powers, but no powers would come. He would have to wait until the poachers opened it to get out.

After a few hours, he heard footsteps outside the door. Almost a dozen locks clicked, one by one, until the door swung open. Moonsunne sprang. He launched himself at the man. He touched soft skin, and instinctively bit it. The man yelled, and Moonsunne leapt off the truck and took off running. 'After it!' yelled a voice. 'That coat is worth at least 10,000 pounds!' bullets (not darts) sped after the brave tiger. One clanged off the marble floor, one hit a passing seagull (thankfully not fatal) but one hit Moonsunne in the leg. Pain shot up his injured limb. He staggered, but kept on running.

Blood started trickling out. He gasped. This was just too much. He was about to succumb to death, when he remembered the animals. The poor, helpless, caged animals. He stopped, to

turn around. The poachers advanced, but he held his ground. Then suddenly he pounced. He sprang onto one of the big men, and bit into his neck. An instant kill. Then Moonsunne turned to the other poachers. Several of them dropped their guns and ran. But one held his ground. He pulled out a pistol and began firing. Moonsunne dodged this way and that. And suddenly he was there. He sprang again and knocked the weapon out of the brute's hand. The man was no longer sure he could win this fight. And he was right. Moonsunne was in a rage. How *dare* they shoot him like a common beast? He rushed in and swiftly killed the man. He felt no regrets. Then he turned to the animals. They had been watching the whole spectacle. A couple had already been killed, and skinned. Moonsunne, suddenly calm, went over and broke the bars of all the cages. Then he came to the already dead animals. There was a lion and a panda. Putting one paw on each of them, he said some simple words. 'I wish to use my magic to help others. Then sparks flickered on the bodies of the animals. Their coats grew and formed. Their claws grew back, their life forces returned, and they awakened. The panda got up, stretched, then padded out of the truck, but the lion stayed put. 'How can I ever thank you?' he asked. 'It is what we tigers do' answered Moonsunne. And, with that, he turned and began the journey back to the forest.

EPILOGUE

After months of journey, Moonsunne finally made it back to luan. He called out: 'luan!' 'Yes Moonsunne?' was the reply. 'I have one more question' 'you name it!' said luan cheerfully. 'What were the tests for?' asked Moonsunne. Or maybe it wasn't a question. Moonsunne had a way of asking things that didn't sound like questions. Luan's answer was: you have saved the species of *panthera tigris tigris*.' Moonsunne went home content that day.

AUTHORS NOTE

Sometimes, after a story, we ask ourselves: what next? If you asked yourself that question after this story, I have failed you. Did Moonsunne make the right choices? Did he do the wrong thing? In the end, it's up to

you, the reader. You are always accompanying Moonsunne, no matter where he goes, no matter what he does.

You are judge, jury, and executioner. Is Moonsunne a good or bad character? That is your final choice. Are you bold enough to make it?



Star

by

Audrey Pettinicchio

It was a starry night at the farm. I was frantically searching the paddocks for the goats who were about to have their babies any day. I was dodging rocks and trees as I sped through the tall grass on my quadbike. The handle bars felt hard and rubbery. I gripped them as hard as I could and tried not to let go, but my hands were getting sweaty.

I could hear the grass rustling up ahead. My heart was pounding at the thought that it could be foxes hunting for food. As I approached a thicket of trees I heard the cries of the goats. When I got to the group of goats huddled together, I saw seven kids lying next to their mums. The mother goats were nudging their babies to stand up, except for one. Nestled amongst the tall grass I spotted a white silhouette looking back at me.

I crept closer to the baby goat to see why it was alone. I gently stroked her smooth coat. It was as soft as silk. Her ears flopped down covering one of her big brown eyes. I tried to get her to stand up but she was unsteady and wobbly on her feet. Instead I picked her up and carried her to the rest of the goats. She appeared to be a triplet, but the smallest in size. She seemed hungry and lonely.

Her mum wouldn't feed her and the other goats kicked and headbutted her. She flinched and cried in pain. She looked at me and seemed scared, her eyes were full of fear. I tried to coax her to get milk from her mum, but she wouldn't budge. I then tried bringing her mum closer to her, but her mum wasn't interested in her baby. I started to feel sad for the baby goat because she was just born and she was being abandoned. I was afraid that because she was not being protected by the other goats, that the foxes could easily hunt her for food.

I decided to bring her up to the farmhouse to keep her safe. I unzipped my cosy and warm jacket and swaddled her in. I could feel her trembling body and her heart beating fast. She must've felt petrified inside, not knowing what was happening.

I started my quadbike, slowly weaving through the paddock to take her to shelter. When I finally reached the house, I called out to my grandma for help. I cautiously walked up the stairs, cradling her as I went up. My grandma helped me make a bed for her and prepared her a warm bottle of milk, but she only drank a small amount.

Holding her, she looked fragile and frightened. I laid her down in the bed that we made. Her eyelids were getting too heavy and she ended up falling asleep. During the night I kept waking up to check on her. The next day I excitedly jumped out of bed to get her, but I couldn't see her. I started searching for her and found her hiding under my bed. She looked at me with a big cheeky grin. I picked her up and carried her down stairs to the shed. There I finely grated some carrot and fed it to her. She was hungrily eating the carrots, but she was so messy. She was nuzzling at my hand to eat, but most of the carrots were falling all over me. Between mouthfuls she started nibbling my golden hair, thinking it was hay.

When she finished I took her back to the goat pen. Sitting on the hay bales I was keeping a close eye on her while she played with the other baby goats. The adult goats slowly edged closer to the babies so I thought that they were going to feed them, but then they started headbutting and hurting her. She was crying and cowering in fear. Her big brown eyes were searching for me. I quickly jumped off the hay bales and raced in to grab her. She was whimpering and her tiny little body was shaking. I snuggled her into my arms to calm her.

I went to find my grandma to tell her that she didn't get fed any milk by the adult goats. She warmed up some milk and poured it into a baby bottle and told me to feed her. I sat down on a stool and fed her. She was so hungry that she guzzled it down, wriggling and squirming all over me. When she finished we went for a walk to my tree house.

*M*y tree house was a magnificent fig tree. To one side there were the water tanks and on the other side was the chicken pen. The tree was as tall as a giraffe and as wide as the wingspan of a wandering albatross. The main platform was hidden amongst the thick green leaves. To get to the platform you had to grab two branches and pull yourself up like a monkey climbing a tree. To get the baby goat up to the platform I put her in the bucket used the pulley system we had built for our supplies.

When we got to the top I sat her down on a cushion and we watched the other animals from above. The chickens were scratching at the ground

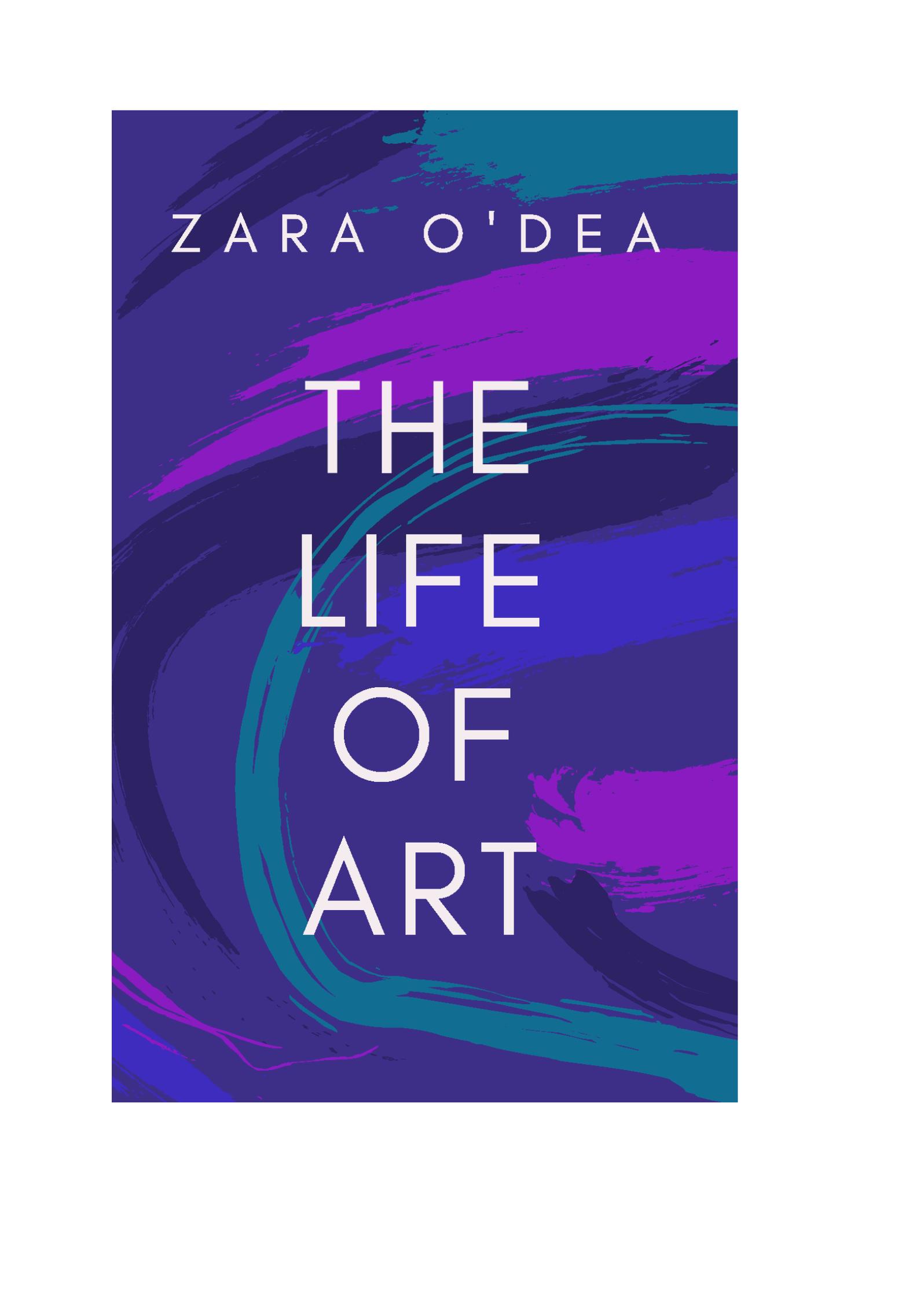
looking for worms and the alpacas were annoying the cows by running in and out of the herd. I had brought up some warm milk and carrots for the goat to eat, while I had some crackers. She stared intently at the other animals while she ate, wondering what they were doing.

I could see my grandparents working hard pruning the roses and flowers, picking some of my favourite fruit and vegetables, feeding the other animals and painting the old wooden ramp. My grandma called me on the walkie-talkie to tell me that lunch was ready. I asked her if she could bring it to the treehouse. After lunch we both had a nap. It was so breezy in my hideout, with the cool wind acting like an air conditioner.

*W*e woke up hearing my grandma calling me to help her rollout a hay bale for the goats. I quickly climbed down the tree with the baby goat and ran over to my grandma. The baby goat was following me at my heels. We used all our strength to haul the hay bale into the goat pen. We then watched the baby goats try to leap to the top of the hay bale, but each time they fell onto their backs and tumbled back down to the grass.

Soon the sun was setting so it was time to go up to the farmhouse for dinner. After we had eaten I fed the baby goat a warm bottle of milk and some more finely grated carrot. When she finished eating she climbed onto my laps and snuggled into me, ready for bed.

When I looked into her eyes, there wasn't fear anymore, but a twinkle and a cheeky grin on her face. This reminded me of the stars in the night sky, so I decided to name my new friend Star.

The background of the cover is an abstract composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes. The color palette is dominated by deep purples, vibrant blues, and teal tones, creating a sense of movement and depth. The strokes vary in thickness and direction, some curving and others more horizontal, giving the overall effect a dynamic and artistic feel.

ZARA O'DEA

THE
LIFE
OF
ART

One crisp morning Moiseur Enzo was very short of ideas so he sat and swirled his paints round and round. Then it struck him like a bolt of lightning. He could make a fantastic piece of art with a new style of his own and a new colour!

He swished his paints one more time then he got to work. His colours pranced across his canvas like professional dancers. Pink, leapt across Enzo's canvas and she melted and swished with her friend white. Aqua slowly drifted over for a chat he talked and talked until.....it started to rain! Suddenly screaming was everywhere, as all the paints were swept off their feet with the water that came from an old paint water dropper. The colours melted, they blended they panicked every colour was MIXED, except for the lucky pink, white and aqua. The three huddled together scared, days whet by and they finally realised they were safe. They were happy together. They told tales about their life and their ancestors.

The following week pink, white and aqua were in the middle of a lovely chat when Enzo realised that they were very individual, you could see every colour perfectly not a drop of them were mixed. This sent Enzo into an uncontrollable rage he swished the paints so hard but no change. Enzo left to go get some new water droppers surely they would mix the paints. While Enzo was gone Shadow his cat was very thirsty so he leapt right onto Enzo's desk and he landed in Enzo's cup of water. Shadow mewed and stepped out of the cup this spilt the water right on top of the paints, this mixed the paints. Shadow didn't care he just started to drink. Enzo arrived home with the water droppers. Here shadow he called "meow" Shadow went to Enzo. Just as Enzo walked into his room he screamed with delight, the colours were mixed they became a beautiful navy blue it was a strong, courageous and most beautiful colour ever.

Enzo then decided to use this beautiful new navy blue to finish his best painting. He was so happy with his work that he entered it into an art gallery and that was when he became famous.