

The Journey to Ahimsa



YSE Writers Group

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Our Team

Ava Kalbali	Artist
Benjamin Forman	Writer
Lisa Askins	Writer & Artist
Lukas Forman	Videographer
Mariah Casas	Editor
Marissa Casas	Artist
Reese Ramsey	Writer
Riley Ramsey	Artist
Sahana Dorothy Daniel	Writer & Artist
Sahar Maru-Jauhari	Artist
Sawyer Papier	Writer
Skylar Chacon	Writer & Editor & Artist

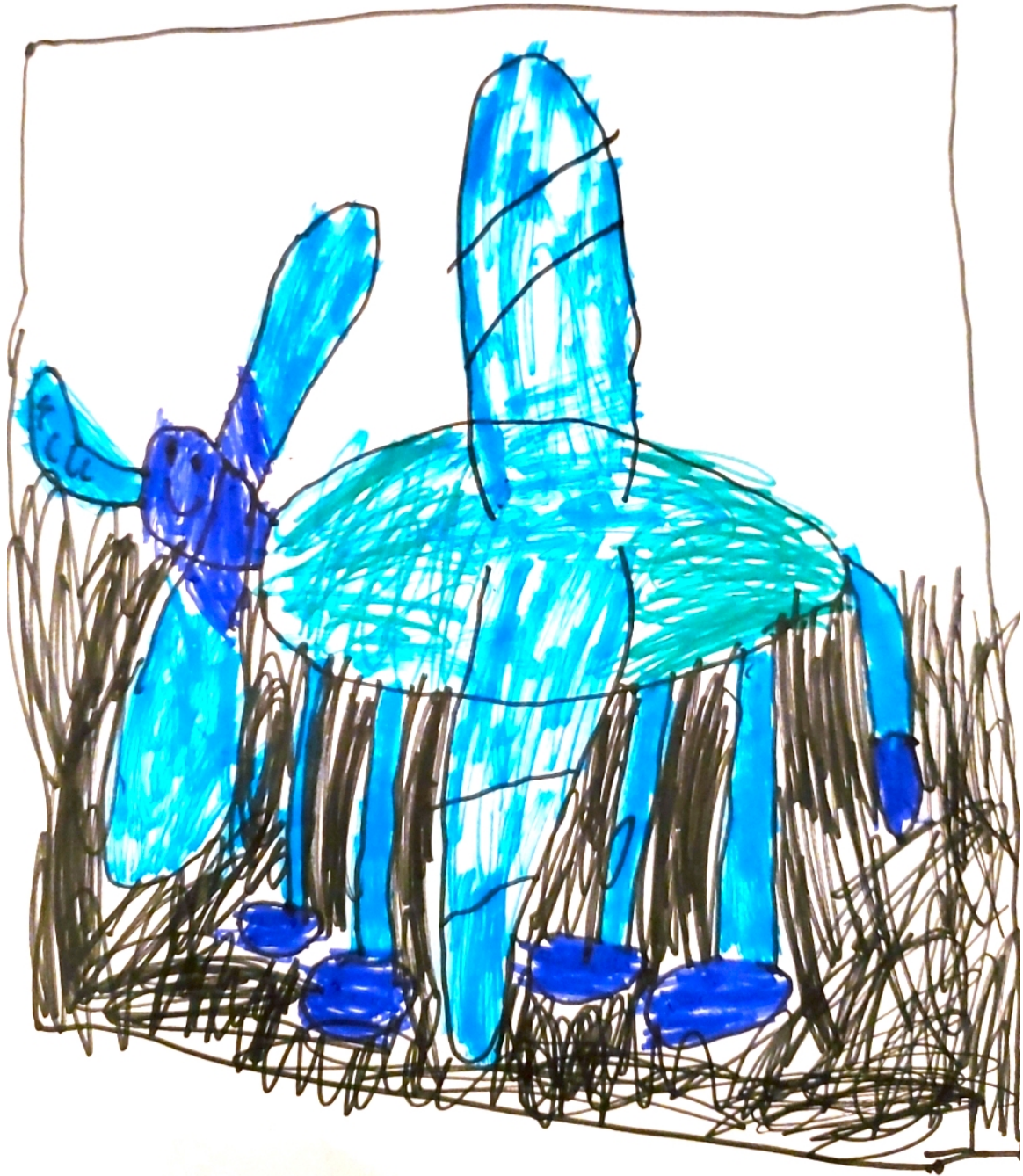


Illustration by Riley Ramsey

Darwin Meets Blue

One day, Darwin walked to the post office to get lots of rice paper for his wedding cake decorations. He was getting married to the love of his life in 1 month, named Bob.

"I would like the package 12345678910, please", said Darwin to the postal office man.

"Are you sure?" said the post office man. "What are you getting?"

"None of your business, sir!" Darwin said. "What I get is private, and not your concern. If you must know, it is rice paper for my wedding cake decoration." Darwin was quite annoyed now.

"Okay. If you say so. Here's the package." the postman said.

"Thank you!" an exasperated Darwin screamed.

"Uff! The package is really heavy for rice paper." Darwin thought. In fact, it wasn't a package. It was a huge cage! Darwin pushed it out of the post office with all his might! He went to a corner near the post office to open it and see what all the fuss was about. "This is all silly." he thought. "I'm going to open this package, and I will see a bunch of rice paper. Nothing else, right?" Darwin carefully opened the cage (which had many locks) and finally was able to open it. To his surprise, he saw a humongous blue elephant with rice paper wings! She was bathed in soft golden light, and she had a sweet soft voice.

"Who are you!? Where is my rice paper!?" said Darwin.

"I'm the archangel of animals. I'm the messenger of God. I'm literally Ahimsa. My name is sdfduudmihgfvb!,,!," said sdfduudmihgfvb!,,!,,. "I need help getting home to the pyramids of Giza. Will you take me?"

Darwin had to collect himself. "Umm, okay. I'm going to have to call you something different. How about..... Blue?" he asked.

"Blue. I like it. And don't worry, I can fit in." she said.

He couldn't believe what he was seeing! Blue turned from an enormous blue elephant with wings to a little girl with almost black but dark dark blue hair, a little blue dress, leggings, socks, sneakers, and a backpack with little white wings attached.

"First things first, I need to take you to my home to sort things out. I'm not promising anything but that." Darwin said.

"Sounds good to me!" said Blue cheerfully. So, they set off to Darwin's house.



Illustration by Riley Ramsey

Meeting the Family

Darwin shuffled around in his pocket, looking for his keys as he led the young girl up to the front door of his house. He found them and unlocked the door, letting Blue in first.

“Honey, I’m home,” Darwin called into the house as he shut the door behind him.

“Hey, did you get the paper?” a man’s voice called from the back.

“That’s my fiancé Bob,” Darwin told Blue. “Nope, an elephant ate it.”

“A whAT?” he yelled, coming around the corner, wiping his hands, he stopped in the doorway. “Oh, hi, I didn’t know he brought back a friend,” Bob smiled at Blue. “I’m Bob, what’s your name?”

“I don’t have one that you can pronounce, so he calls me Blue,” Blue told him, gesturing to Darwin behind her, who just came back from taking off his shoes and jacket.

“It is very nice to meet you, Blue,” Bob greeted her, then shot a confused look at Darwin. He mouthed, “*Elephant?*”

Darwin grinned and pointed to Blue. “*Elephant.*”

Bob’s expression got more confused, then Blue popped in, and her elephant form filled the front hall.

“Elephant, got it,” Bob stammered.

Blue then reverted to her human form, and Bob stared at her for a minute.

“Sorry I ate your rice paper,” she apologized after a pause.

“Not a problem,” Bob answered as if coming out of a daze. “I’d imagine that you’re thirsty at least. Why don’t you come back to the kitchen?”

“Okay,” Blue agreed and bounced as she followed Bob into the kitchen.

“Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad,” a little girl called as she raced into the kitchen from the backyard. “There’s a squirrel in my treehouse that is hurt, and can you come and... oh. Hi,” she trailed off, noticing Blue.

“Amber, this is Blue,” Darwin announced. “Blue, this is our daughter Amber.”

“Blue’s a shapeshifting blue elephant that ate all of our rice paper,” Bob added.

Amber narrowed her eyes a bit and glanced at Blue. “You’re a shapeshifting blue elephant?” she asked skeptically.

Blue grinned, then turned her nose into her elephant trunk, and Amber gasped. Darwin was a little worried about what she might say, but he need not have worried.

“Oh, my god, that’s awesome!” Amber exclaimed in excitement. “Is it just an illusion or-”

“My nose is indeed a trunk right now,” Blue answered. “You can touch it if you want.”

Darwin let out a breath, glancing at Bob, who was smiling at the new little girl’s antics.

“Did you seriously-” Bob started, and Darwin finished the sentence.

“Find her in the box of rice paper? Yeah. She ate it all,” Darwin confirmed.

“Oh, okay,” Bob said, still rather stunned. “I guess we can order more later?”

“Yeah, probably.” Darwin walked over to his fiancé and kissed him on the cheek. “Sorry about not telling you I was bringing a friend.”

“It’s all good,” Bob assured him, returning the kiss, and moving back to the kitchen.

“It’s a good thing I made a little extra dinner tonight, so we should be able to give her some dinner, at least.”

“You really are the best, Bob,” Darwin marveled, smiling at his partner, who smirked in reply.

“So, how did my dad find you?” Darwin heard Amber ask Blue, the two of them sitting at the table now.

“It’s a long story, but I was put in the box of rice paper that was going to your dads, kinda ate it all on the way here, then your dad got the box and found me,” Blue told her matter-of-factly.

“Then, where are you from? Do you need help getting home or something?” Amber asked, sounding worried. “Do you know your home, your parents?”

“Yes, I know my home, and I need help getting there,” Blue faltered a bit. “It’s just to Giza and the pyramids.”

“Oh, my dads can help you with that,” Amber exclaimed. “Can’t you?” she called to the kitchen.

Bob looked at Darwin, who shrugged. “I’m off work for the next couple of days, so I could take her,” he suggested. “The car broke, though, so we’d have to take a bus or something.”

“Actually, I’m pretty sure that walking to Giza is faster than the bus,” Bob pointed out. “And more reliable for us in the desert.”

Darwin looked a little crestfallen but shrugged again in agreement. “I’ll start out in the morning if that’s alright with you, Blue,” Darwin decided, looking at the girls at his table.

“Yay!” Amber exclaimed, clapping her hands. “A sleepover!”

“Not really, honey, because they have to leave rather early,” Bob reminded her from the stove.

“It’ll still be fun,” Amber said, shrugging at Blue, who was bouncing.

“Alright, that’s settled,” Bob announced. “Now, who’s ready for dinner?”



Illustration by Sahar Maru-Jauhari



The Caravan of Camels

It was about halfway through the next day, and Darwin and Blue were on their way to Giza along the Nile when the two of them saw a line of camels coming out of the desert, and Darwin realized that it was a caravan. One of the camel riders got off the camel.

“We’re lost, we don’t know which way to go, can you help?” the man asked.

Darwin pointed back towards the Delta. “That’s the Delta so that you can get your bearing,” he told them.

“Many thanks, friend!” the man exclaimed in delight, but Darwin was already walking off, with Blue trailing behind him.

As they walked, Blue just stared at him.

Finally, he asked, “What?”

“You could have at least asked them where they were trying to go, and give them clearer instructions, or accepted his thanks,” Blue said, looking a little disappointed. “You didn’t even try.”

“I would like to get to Giza at a reasonable time,” Darwin pointed out. “And they were fine.”

“There is always time enough to help another person selflessly,” Blue hmped, crossing her arms as she walked.

Darwin didn’t answer, and they walked on in silence.



Illustration by Riley Ramsey

The Leaky Boat

It was a couple of hours later when they spotted the boat. They had been walking along the Nile next to the reeds for a while, and in that time, they had seen many boats. Darwin and Blue now see a man whose boat is leaking and doesn't have the tools to fix it. The man needs to ferry his passengers to a nearby village.

"Darwin..." says Blue, glancing toward the man with a leaking boat.

"Yes?" says Darwin, squinting ahead.

"DARWIN!!!!"

"Fine," says Darwin, "I'll help him, but remember, I still have to get married here, so we're on a time frame."

Darwin helps the man fix his boat so he and the passengers can get to the nearby village.

Blue and Darwin continue their journey through the desert. The sun beats down on them, and Darwin wipes away a bead of sweat on his forehead. Distracted, Darwin trips on a plant.

"You deserve that," says Blue, walking slightly behind him.

"OH MY GOD," says Darwin. "I'm sorry I don't want to be late for my WEDDING. Humph," Darwin sighs as he brushes off sand from his pants.

"Blue?" says Darwin, a bit annoyed.

"Yeess?"

"If you have wings can't you just fly to this location?", Darwin asks.

"I guess," Blue says, "but where's the fun in that? When I get to take you on a long, tortuous journey instead?"

"WHAT?" exclaimed Darwin.

"I'm joking. I can't just fly back home, I was sent here from God to teach you
A H I M S A", Blue says as they continue their journey to the pyramids.

(P.S. Blue is not impressed)

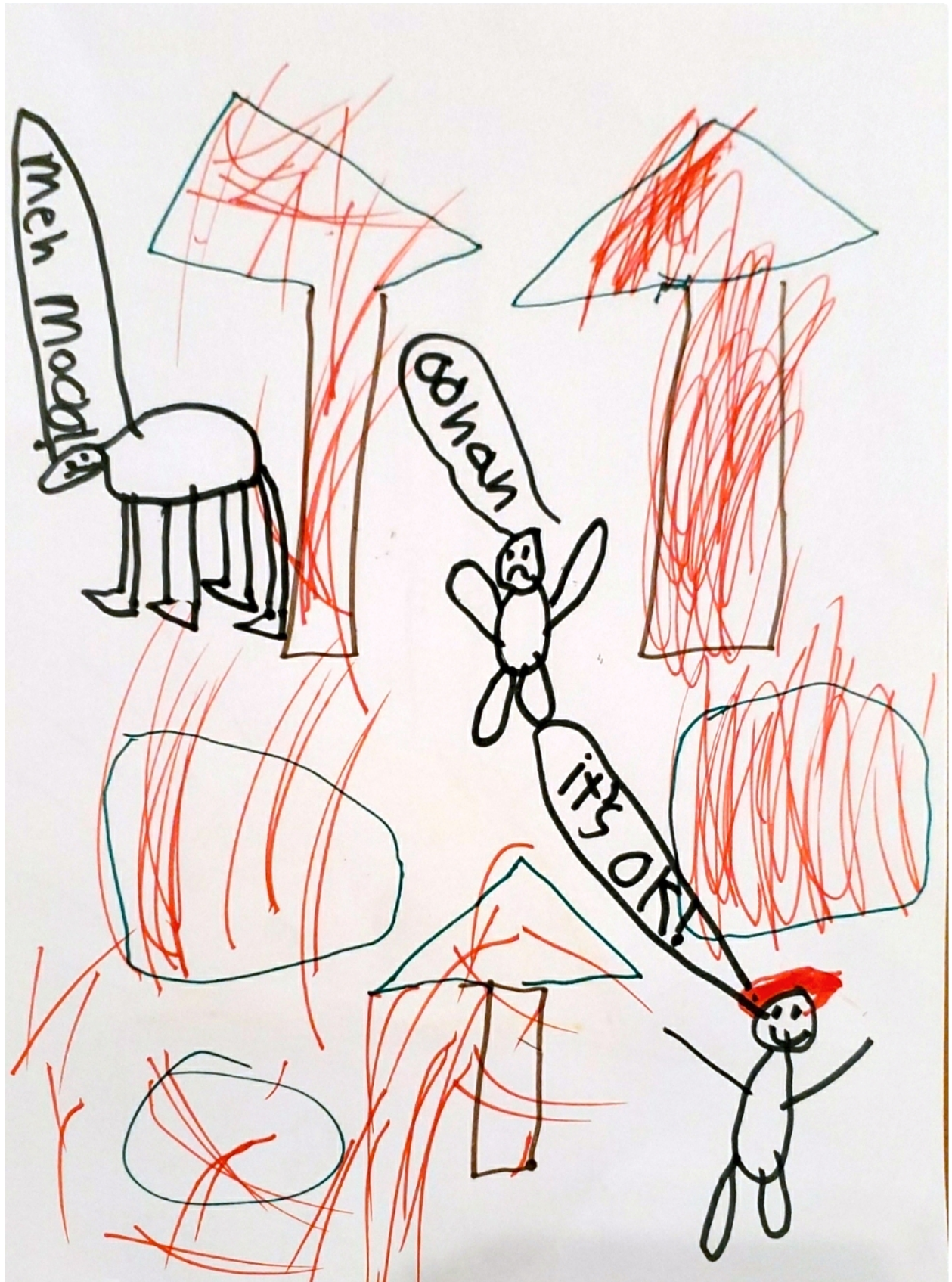


Illustration by Ava Kalbali

The Oasis Fire

Darwin had been sulking all the time since they had helped the man with his boat, even as the sun was high in the sky and beating down like all the rage in the world at once. But he made sure that Blue was doing alright as they walked.

As he was looking out at the desert, he noticed a column of smoke rising from a ways away.

"Hey, Blue, do you see that?" Darwin asked, pointing it out to her.

She floated up higher to see. "It looks like an oasis fire," she reported. "I hope nobody is going to get hurt."

"Well, let's go make sure," Darwin encouraged her. "Better safe than sorry, right?"

Blue nodded, and they headed toward the column of smoke. As they got closer, Darwin was able to make out some people standing by the side of it, watching in desperation.

Darwin dropped what he was carrying and ran over. "Excuse me, are you all alright?" he asked.

"Yes, we are, but our camels are in there, and we have children to hold on to," one of the women of the group told him. "The men left for town earlier."

So, Darwin spun around, looking at the fire burning up the grass, bushes, and trees of the oasis. The camels weren't too far away, but it might have been a problem for the women with children to get to them, so Darwin put his head down and headed into the fire.

It was like the fire had a mind of its own. Everywhere he tried to go, the fire moved to block him, but he kept going. When he got to the frantic animals, still tied to the trees, he grabbed their reins and pulled them down, undoing the knots and herding them back the way he had come. Once they saw the way through the trees, they nearly bolted for it, and Darwin had to move almost into a burning bush to keep out of their way.

Holy man, they're going to just bolt, Darwin thought, equal parts disappointed and mad, but he kept it under control. He still had to get himself out.

That didn't take him too long, and soon he emerged from the fire, batting at some cinders threatening to burn his pants. There he found Blue, who had all the camels gathered around her, while the women with children brushed them down and made sure they were alright. A couple of them rushed to him to see if he was doing alright, and all of them thanked him profusely, wringing his hand gratefully and tumbling over their words. Darwin just thanked them, made sure that the camels were alright, and that the women had someplace to go, then turned to Blue, who was beaming.

"Ready to go?" he asked, and she nodded, bouncing on her toes, and grabbing his hand.

"Ready," she told him.

After a couple of paces, she bounced in front of him a little and turned to look at him.

"That was a very brave and selfless thing to do, Darwin! I'm very proud of you," she told him, still beaming so wide that he thought that her face might break.

"Hey, I just did what needed to be done," he reasoned.

"Still, you did it instead of waiting for someone else to come and help," Blue argued, bouncing backward so that she could still talk to him.

Darwin chuckled. "Yeah, I guess I did," he mused. "I wonder what I'll do next?"

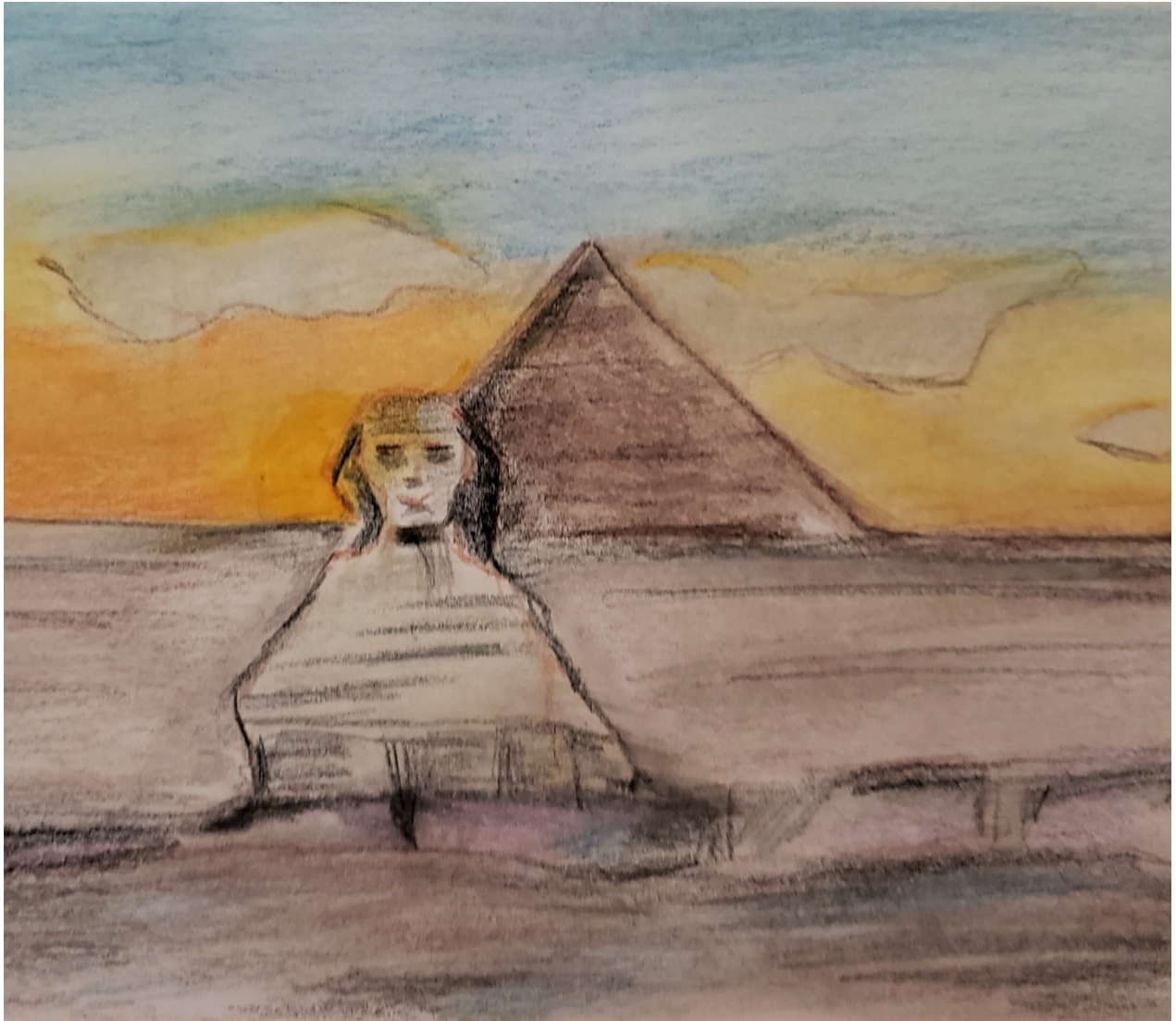


Illustration by Lisa Askins

Darwin and Blue Go to Giza

His pace had slowed down, and Blue could see that Darwin was tired. "Why don't we sit on this rock for a bit?"

Darwin sighed gratefully and sat down on the rock. "I guess I didn't realize how tired I was."

Blue wiped a smudge of soot from Darwin's cheek. "You were selfless when saving those camels. Now is a good time to be kind to yourself."

Darwin smiled and brushed the dust off his pants. Blue gently flapped her wings and hovered just above the ground. "I can see the curve of the Nile from here. Do you think we're close to Giza?"

"We must be," Darwin said. "It's been a while since I've been to Giza, but I remember a curve in the Nile. Do you see any houses or buildings?"

Blue hovered a little higher. "Yes! I can see houses and buildings just behind that hill."

Darwin slapped his hands against his thighs and stood up. "We are very, very close!" he said with a smile.

Blue floated back to the ground and put her hand into his.

"The Pyramids are just west of the city. If we walk towards the setting sun, we'll reach the Great Pyramid before sundown. Come on, Blue, let's get you home."

Blue smiled this time, a great big smile that made her shimmer in the afternoon light. Hand in hand, slowly they walked down the path towards the houses and buildings of Giza.

Darwin and Blue had reached the curve of the Nile and began to walk west through Giza.

Many people had gathered in the street and were walking in the same direction.

"Why are there so many people?" Blue asked Darwin.

"I'm not sure," said Darwin, looking over the people in front of him. "I think there's a festival. Wait...I know! It's the Summer Solstice."

Blue looked up and asked, "What's that?"

"It's the longest day of daylight, and the people of Giza go to the Pyramids to celebrate the beginning of summer. I went once when I was a boy." Darwin stood on his tippy toes to see over the long line of people in front of him. "We're going to make it just in time. Blue, get on my shoulders, I'll carry you." Darwin held onto Blue and worked his way through the crowd towards the setting sun.

Darwin could see the top of the Sphinx as he inched his way through the crowd with Blue on his shoulders. "We're almost there! Can you see the statue of the lion with the face of a man? That's the Sphinx."

"I see it!" said Blue, "It's amazing!" The sky was turning a golden amber as the sun slowly descended. From where Blue was sitting, she could see it all. The Sphinx, the Pyramids, and the setting sun. Blue took in a deep Ahimsa breath feeling connected to everyone and everything.

"Darwin? It's so beautiful!"

Darwin spotted an open space right near the Sphinx. "The sun will set between the two Pyramids over there, said Darwin pointing to the right. "The farthest one is the Great Pyramid and is the oldest. I don't know how to get you home, but I do know I'm supposed to bring you here." Darwin gently squeezed Blue's legs. "Let's close our eyes and meditate together."

Blue closed her eyes and could feel her breath moving in and out and she imagined breathing a perfect circle. Soon, the crowd's noise faded away, and all Blue noticed was the rhythm of her own breath. Darwin began to chat "Ommm," and Blue could feel the vibration all the way to the tips of her wings. Darwin again chanted, "Ommmmmm." This time, Blue felt the warmth of the setting sun on her face. With her next deep breath, she felt her wings lift her from Darwin's shoulders. Slowly, Blue began to rise above the crowd and into the sky.

"Darwin," Blue called out as she floated even higher, "remember Ahimsa!"

Blue was faraway in the sky as the large solstice sun dipped between the pyramids. Darwin opened his eyes just long enough to see Blue disappear into the pink hues of twilight.

"Goodbye, my friend," Darwin said as he held his hand over his heart, "may your journey be safe." Putting his hands together, Darwin bowed his head, "Namaste."



Illustration by Marissa Casas

EPILOGUE

Darwin was FREAKING out! He was getting married in approximately 10 minutes!

"Just calm down, Daddy," said Amber. She was wearing a small little white dress with flowers in her hair and basket. "There is no way Papa is going to say I don't." she said defiantly. "You love him, he loves you, and I love you both. Everything will be just fine."

"But what if Bob says no!!" worried Darwin.

"Will you calm down! People are staring! You're a yoga teacher, master of Ahimsa! Take some Ahimsa breaths." chastised Amber.

Darwin breathed in and breathed out. He did that about 20 Ahimsa breaths. His mother came in.

"It's time," she said.

Darwin walked slowly down the aisle happily. This was the best day of his life!

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here to celebrate these two men in holy guacamole." began the priest. "I mean holy mattress money. I mean, holy matrimony."

"Where did you find this guy?" Darwin muttered to Bob, who shrugged.

"Do you, Bob Your League take Darwin Dolphin Ahimsa as your lawfully wedded husband?" asked the priest.

"I do!" Bob said gleefully.

"And do you Darwin Dolphin Ahimsa take Bob Your League as your husband?" asked the priest.

"I do!" answered Darwin.

"Then, by the power invested in me by someone with poor decision-making skills, I now pronounce you bonded for life. You may kiss your new spouse!" exclaimed the priest, throwing his Bible in the air. And when Darwin looked up, he could've sworn that he saw a blue elephant winking and smiling at him in the clouds.



Illustration by Sahana Dorothy Daniel

THE END