



FIRST EDITION

Ganesh & The Princess

A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY &
INSPIRED PROBLEM SOLVING

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**Ganesh & The Princess:
A Journey of Self-Discovery & Inspired Problem Solving**

By Matt Andrews



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When I set out to write this book, we had not met our daughter. My wife & I took the steps of faith. I knew the story I wanted to tell her, even though we didn't know when. At the time, I had no idea how the next few years would unfold. As it turned out, had I not retired from the Navy, I wouldn't have started my MBA. Had I not started that program, we would not have went to China. We had no way of knowing that trip to China would accelerate our adoption placement. And, on Mother's Day 2017, everything came together...

We soon discovered, our daughter was born the very week when we submitted our application for adoption!

Keep the Faith. Choose Love & begin your journey.

For Leeloo, Sky & Aunt Nancy





"I believe in intuitions and inspirations. I sometimes feel that I am right. I do not know that I am."

—Albert Einstein

"Every child is born blessed with a vivid imagination. But just as a muscle grows flabby with disuse, so the bright imagination of a child pales in later years if he ceases to exercise it."

—Walt Disney

Chapter 1 A Grand Tree

Our story begins, once upon a time, in a small village far, far away. This particular village was tucked away in a peaceful hillside, deep within a country on the far side of the world.

The villagers were mostly farmers. They tend their farms, raise a few chickens, a few horses, a cow, and...

Wait just a second! What's that peeking out from behind the barn? Is that a horse, a cow, or... what?! A BIG elephant! WOW! Is that really an elephant?! We'll definitely want to investigate that later.

Most of the time, nothing unusual ever happened in the village. The people just worked through the day and slept in peace and quiet each night.

One night, everyone in the village was asleep from a long day in the fields. The village was completely silent, nothing could be heard in the village except the gentle breeze in the trees.

But, wait! What's that? Well, there's a tiny mouse running through the village.

"Ahem, excuse me," said the tiny mouse, clearing his throat as he paused to catch his breath. "I am a little mouse, not a tiny mouse. There is significant different between *little* and *tiny*. I was a *tiny* mouse more than 200 years ago. I am much older now."

“And, I have grown. I am not *tiny* any longer. As you can see, I am a perfectly grown *little mouse*.”

Ok, ok. As you wish, for now, we’ll call you *Little Mouse*.

Then, a voice from behind the barn, “Where are you going *Little Mouse*? What are you up to, on this quiet & peaceful night while the rest of the village is asleep?”

Little Mouse scurried over to the barn to see who it was.

“Oh, hello Ganesh! I can’t wait to tell you all the things I’ve been doing.”

“Good evening, *Little Mouse*. I can’t wait to hear about those things. What are you up to?”

“Oh, I’ve had a very busy day! I ran all over the fields, and helped the farmers plant their seeds. I have so many things to do, each day.”

“I watched you running about, today,” Ganesh replied. “Are you sure you were helping, and not distracting the farmers as they worked?”

“What do you mean?” replied *Little Mouse*.

“Well, as you ran this way and that way, you scattered their seeds all over the place.

Your distractions may have caused the farmers to work twice as long.”

“Oh, I didn’t realize that. I guess you’re right. I’m sorry, Ganesh. I’m just trying to help.”

AUTHOR’S NOTE:

Throughout this book, I’ve added photos, definitions, and other treats to sweeten the story. I hope you enjoy these little diversions along your journey.

On this page, I’m introducing you to another girl who grew up in an anonymous village on the other side of the world.

An 18-year-old Muslim Somali refugee living in Salt Lake City, Utah, Saida Dahir writes incredibly compelling poetry reflective of her experience living in the United States. On her debut [Little Village Foundation](#) album, “[The Walking Stereotype](#)”, Saida reads personally charged verses with a commanding emotional authority.

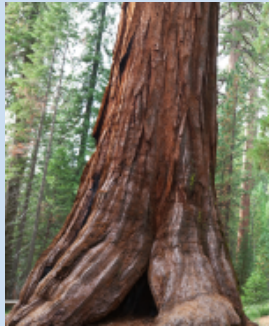
As you wind your way through this story, I challenge you to remove any obstacles to exploration & allow your mind to roam free. [Click the underlined words that are linked, above!](#)

“I understand,” said Ganesh. “Now, what mischief are you up to tonight while everyone else is asleep?”

“I want to tell you, I really, really do. But, I’m afraid you won’t believe me because I was causing trouble today.”

“I forgive you, Little Mouse. I know you didn’t mean to do it. Now tell me what you’re up to.”

“Thank you, THANK YOU, Ganesh! Now, follow me, and I’ll show you.”



The largest trees in the world are giant sequoia in [California's Sequoia National Park](#).

Two types of ancient trees known as Shinboku are celebrated in Japan:

- [Cherry Trees](#)
- [Jōmon Sugi](#)

Ganesh followed Little Mouse to a big tree at the center of the village.

“You know our village’s tree, Ganesh. Isn’t it wonderful? It is the center of our village, and a landmark for travelers from all over. Everyone who sees this tree, finds new hope.”

“Yes, yes, Little Mouse. You’re right, this is a grand tree, and sacred to our village. It is a blessing for us.

But, stay

focused. What does that have to do with what you’re doing now.”

“Yes, yes, but focus on the tree.”



Trees can represent personal development, uniqueness and individual beauty. Just as the branches of a tree strengthen & grow, we grow stronger too, striving for greater knowledge, wisdom as we experience life.

Ganesh focused his vision, and concentrated on the tree. He gave his full attention to every detail of the tree, from its tallest branches with so many beautiful heart-shaped leaves, right down to the strong roots spreading out through the grass. Then, he focused his attention on the hole in the tree. Something appeared to be moving.

“My, whatever could it be?” Ganesh asked Little Mouse. He focused even closer on the details of the hole, and thought aloud, “Maybe it’s that squirrel that plays in the yard.”

But, the hole was too big for a squirrel, but just right for a...

“No, it couldn’t be!” Ganesh exclaimed.



The Bodhi Tree is a very sacred fig tree (Ficus religiosa). At the [Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya](#) (India), Siddhartha Gautama, the spiritual teacher and founder of Buddhism, achieved Bodhi (spiritual enlightenment) while sitting under the tree. The Bodhi tree is easily recognized because of its heart-shaped leaves. Just as the branches of a tree strengthen & grow, we grow stronger too, striving for greater knowledge, wisdom as we experience life.

“Yes, yes it is,” replied Little Mouse.

Ganesh reached into the tree, and discovered what his eyes had already told him.

Inside this hole, hidden within their grand tree was a beautiful baby girl, sleeping quietly in a makeshift bed that Little Mouse had made for her.

Ganesh and Little Mouse both whispered quietly, “This girl is truly a blessing.

We should let her rest, while we figure out what to do next.

Sleep well, and dream big, little one.”



These are the roots of a Banyan tree growing from [Ta Prohm temple in Angkor Wat, Cambodia](#). Angkor Wat is the largest religious monument in the world. Cambodia is a country in SouthEast Asia sandwiched in between Thailand to its West and Vietnam to its East. About [95% of the people in Thailand & Cambodia are Buddhists](#) (that's over 82 million people!).

Chapter 2 *The Journey Ahead*

That night, Ganesh and Little Mouse slept right outside the grand tree, and the next morning they awoke to the child's playful laughter. She was climbing on, over, and under Ganesh's big, floppy ears.

Ganesh gasped as he turned his head and saw the most beautiful little girl he had ever seen. As she looked up at him, her bright smile and sparkling eyes eclipsed the golden morning sun.

"Look, look what I found, Ganesh," said Little Mouse. "It's a note, pinned to her blanket."

He handed the small piece of paper to Ganesh.

Please take care of our beautiful princess.

For the last nine months, we have carried her with us on our journey.

We passed by many other villages before we discovered your wonderful tree.

Your tree has given us hope & courage.

From a distance, we watched your village & we paid close attention to how you treated one another.

We saw how you tended to your fields, and how the older villagers looked after the young children.

We have seen this in other villages that we passed by.

But, your village shows exceptional kindness to animals & this has made all the difference to other.

From the largest elephant to the tiniest mouse, you showed great compassion to each creature.

We know you will care for the princess & guide her safely along her journey.

She will always be one of us, but we can take her no further.

We ask for the help of your guardian, Ganesh.

Please be her new guardian & guide her to the Great Palace.

“WOW!”, exclaimed Little Mouse. “A Princess on a quest for the Great Palace.

Will you do it, Ganesh? Will you be her new guardian, her guide and protector?”

“Yes, of course,” replied Ganesh, “This is part of my duty and now our destinies are intertwined, like the roots of the tree.”

“Hooray!” cried Little Mouse. “I’ll start packing right away. I want to bring my toys, and my soft pillow. What will you bring, Ganesh?”

And, then, with a giggle, they heard the girl speak for the first time, “Ganesh!”

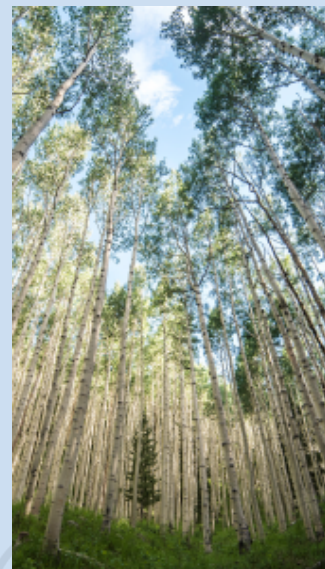
Her voice was so soft, so sweet and innocent, like a song.

Ganesh and Little Mouse gasped in humble disbelief. Her sparkling eyes and happy smile were just like an angel.

“Ganesh,” the little princess asked, “will you guide me on my journey?”

I know you are a mighty protector and teacher. I will need your help to overcome the many obstacles on the path ahead.”

Ganesh listened carefully with his large ears, and gazed lovingly at her with his piercing eyes.



Recent research has demonstrated that trees are social, sophisticated and intelligent. They cooperate with each other and maintain relationships. They do this by sending chemical, hormonal and electrical signals. Not only do they communicate underground, they also send pheromones and other scent signals through the air.

You can find more online:
[CLICK HERE](#)

As you enjoy this story, look for the hyperlinks in the blue text boxes on other pages. They won't always say "Click here", so just look for the underlined words or sentences for links.

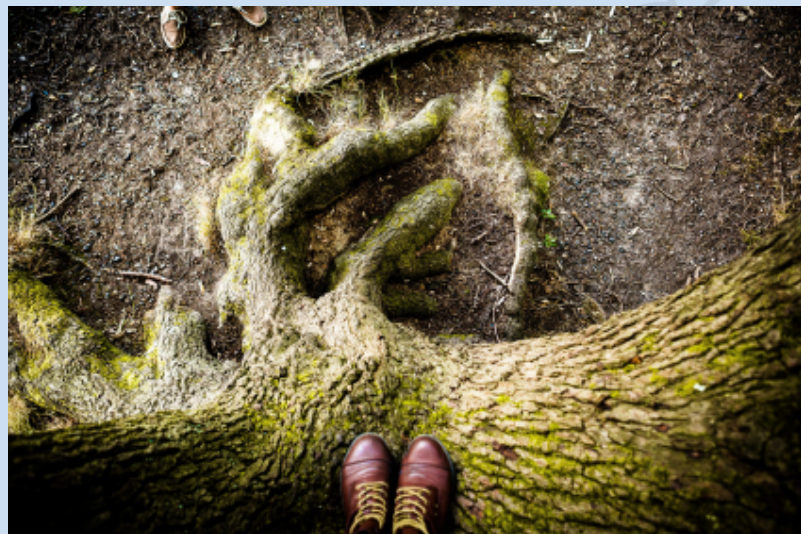
Finally, after a long and thoughtful pause, he replied,

“Of course, my Princess. Together, we will make this journey to the Palace, and I will teach you all that I can.”

And, so, it was decided.

They all began to gather what they needed for the adventure. Little Mouse scurried around the village, gathering all the food he could find. He packed all the provisions into a large box he found in the barn.

Meanwhile, Ganesh went back to the barn where he slept. Beside his bed, he brushed away the dust to uncover a large stone. Ganesh used his tusk to remove the stone.



There are dozens of businesses in Europe and the US that specialize in building tree houses of various designs; including play houses, fully functioning homes & even hotels.

[A famous fictional story, “Swiss Family Robinson” by Johann David Wyss, is the tale of a family who lived in a tree house after being shipwrecked on a deserted island when they were sailing to Australia. The author wrote it for his sons.](#)

Using his powerful trunk, he pulled out a blanket from and laid it on the ground beside his bed.



The little girl watched in wild wonder. She noticed that he used four arms to help him unfold the blanket and reveal amazing treasures wrapped in the blanket.

First, Ganesh removed an large axe, Unafraid, she asked, “Why do you need that huge axe, Ganesh?”

“This is no ordinary axe, my curious little Princess.

[This is Ankusa.](#)

[Ankusa is a tool used to train elephants.](#) Ganesh carries to help clear obstacles & cut away attachments..

Sometimes we need to let go of things we don't need. Have you outgrown things you don't need?

In the other hand, Ganesh carries a [Pasha to guide wanderers](#) & help them avoid giving in to burning distractions.

Your destiny has awakened us to our true purpose. Little Mouse and I have grown too used to our routines here in the village. We were asleep to our true nature and didn't realize that we were creatures of old habits. In a way, we have been tied to this old tree. Now, it's time to wake up. Ankusa will help us break habits and let go of anything holding us back.”



Next, Ganesh removed a long glowing rope.

Princess asked, “Ganesh, why do we need a leash?”

Ganesh patiently replied, “This is not a leash, Princess. [This is Pasha](#). On our journey we will need to be disciplined to preserve our limited supplies, and stay focused on our path.

Pasha is a special tool to help keep us on track, as we travel.”

Then Ganesh removed a beautiful locket from the blanket.

“Ganesh, this is a beautiful locket. But, please tell me, do we really need to take it?”

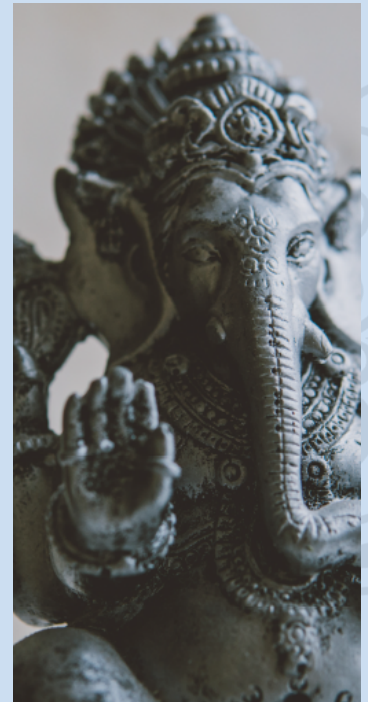
Ganesh looked at Princess lovingly, and said, “This is part of the mala beads I hold in Abhaya Mudra. There are 108 beads and each one is a reminder. The locket is the centerpiece; a way for me to stay focused during my meditation. I will teach you about these and many more things. There is something to learn from each step along our path.”

“Our journey to the palace is full of risk and danger,” and he raised the mala and locket in the gesture of Abhaya Mudra.

Just then, Little Mouse reappeared with his large box, and Ganesh exclaimed, “Well done, Little Mouse! You have collected many offerings from the villagers. Thank you. These supplies will nourish us along the way.”

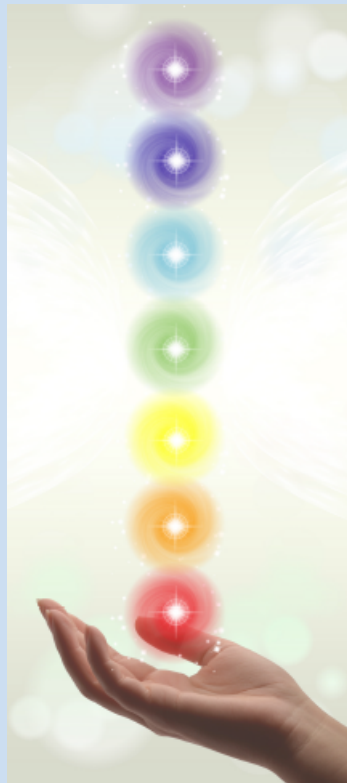
[Abhaya mudrā is the "gesture of fearlessness" This mudrā \(gesture\) means reassurance and safety, and dispels fear with divine protection.](#)

You might recognize this mudra as the international gesture to STOP. Practice protecting others from harm. Raise your hand and tell someone to STOP. Did it work?



Ganesh then pulled a large crown from the blanket. It shown brightly, like a halo of light. As princess looked closely, she noticed that it was made of a thousand lotus pedals woven together. This was a crown fit for a King.

Ganesh noticed her amazement, and said to her, "This is an important journey."



These circles represent your chakras - the intersections of energy in your body. [The crown chakra - Sahasrara](#) - allows access to enlightened wisdom. This chakra connects us to all of creation & gratitude for your life.

"This crown is meant as a reminder to think big. You are meant to be a Princess, and we have a wonderful adventure ahead of us. Surely, even greater blessing are waiting for us in the Palace. One day, you will wear a crown that is even more beautiful than this.

If we focus, our Sahasrara chakra we can open our imagination to see the answers that we need."

Ganesh asked Little Mouse and Princess to come sit next to him as he revealed the last treasure. "It is important for us to give thanks for what we have.

In his lower left hand, Ganesh offered them each a gold coin, and a [sweet biscuit called modaka](#).

"Please, share these gifts & join me for daily [Sadhana practice](#). Part of my meditation practice begins by giving thanks every day for the friendship and the blessings of life."

“Thank you, Ganesh. Thank you, Little Mouse,” said the Princess.

“Thank you, Ganesh, and thank you, Princess,” Little Mouse added.

“Thank you both,” replied Ganesh, “for accepting me, and for allowing me to enjoy your company and serve as your companion and guide on this great journey.”



Sadhana is a daily spiritual practice. It's the foundation for your personal, individual effort to communicate with the divine inside of you and all around you. It is the main tool you use to work on yourself to achieve your purpose in life.

You may have heard the expression, "[breaking bread together](#)." By sharing the food on our table, we share a common connection to what the Earth has provided and to the many paths that brought us together.

In Christianity, bread is one of the most powerful symbols. Bread was a gift from God when Moses led his people in the desert. In the [miracles of Jesus](#), according to the New Testament chapters of the Bible, he multiplied loaves of bread to feed crowds of followers & bread became a sign of sharing.

Bread is also a basic human need. [3.1 million children die from undernutrition each year](#) (UNICEF, 2018a). Hunger & undernutrition contribute to more than half of child deaths, as undernutrition also makes children more vulnerable to disease.

Chapter 3 *Earth*

After enjoying the sweet biscuits, they loaded the supplies, and all three walked up the path leading away from the village... away from their home... away from their soft beds... away from the grand tree... and... away from the lives they had known for so long.

As they left, all the villagers stopped to offer gratitude, and wished them luck. Each villager gave them one golden coin as a gift for their courage, and one piece of fruit to sustain them on their journey.

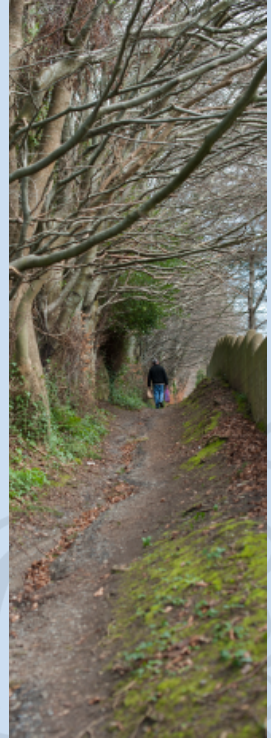
As they walked up the sloping hillside to the North of the village, the three travelers gave one last glance back at the village and the grand tree.

Then, without a word, they turned together and began their great journey to find the palace.

The princess followed closely behind Ganesh, and Little Mouse was soon distracted by the new plants and flowers that could be seen along the trail. All three knew they had chosen a very special path. This path would lead them to new adventures.

None of them could possibly know what lay ahead.

They only knew that they were happy to begin this journey, together.



"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I...

...I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

-Robert Frost

Little Mouse darted back-and-forth and all around the feet of the Princess and Ganesh. So much was he racing about, Ganesh nearly stepped on the poor mouse. Partly to protect him from getting squished, and partly to stop the nuisance Ganesh asked his friend to busy himself gather supplies.

Little Mouse answered sharply, "Roger that!" And off he went, darting to-and-fro, but this time he moved with a noticeable sense of purpose.

After some time, he returned with fruit and nuts that he had gathered from the trees along the trail.



How many fruits do you know that grow in trees?

Do you know any nuts that grow in trees?

Which do you like best?

"I had no idea these were here in the forest," exclaimed Little Mouse.

"Yes," Ganesh agreed, "it is amazing what you find when you are focused."

As they walked, the Princess began quietly humming a beautiful melody.

Her traveling companions both paused to admire her lovely tune.

“What is this wonderful song, Princess?” asked the Little Mouse.

“I don’t know all the words,” she replied, “but I remember the song from my previous guardians.”

“WOW! It’s an amazing song!”

“Thank you, Little Mouse,” she replied. Then, she paused and looked deep into his dark brown eyes.

“Little Mouse doesn’t seem to fit you as a name,” she said to him. “Do you have another name? A name from your parents, perhaps?”

“Oh, that’s so kind of you to ask,” he replied. “No one has ever bothered to ask.”

“Or maybe you never bothered to listen,” Ganesh chuckled under his breath.

“When I was a baby, I had 14 other brothers and sisters. I guess that was a lot for my poor parents to care for, and too many names to remember.

So, they called us numbers, in the order we were born. I was Number 8.



***Henna** is a small flowering shrub that has many uses. The fragrant flowers are used to create perfume, and the leaves are dried and then turned into a fine powder that's used for dyeing clothes, hair and temporarily dyeing the skin -- [henna tattoo](#).*



[Aavaara is a word from the Urdu language.](#)

Written: आवारा

This word means to be separated from one's family; without house and home; wandering, roving; astray; abandoned, lost.

[Urdu is the official language of Pakistan & Punjabi comes from the most populous province of Pakistan, Punjab.](#)

Urdu and Punjabi are languages spoken throughout Pakistan & western India.

That is what they called me until I was old enough to leave my family.”

“When I arrived at the village, I made a friend with a Little Bird who had been living in the village for many years.”

“Oh yes,” said Ganesh, “I remember her, and the sweet song she sang every morning. Your song reminds me of her song, Princess.”

“That’s true,” said Little Mouse. “And, she wrote it for me!” He exclaimed.

“She said it was the song of the homeless wanderer. She said when I would hear her, it would guide me home.”

“She called me Aavaaraa!”

“It’s a wonderful name. Is it ok for me to call you Aavaara?” asked the Princess.

“Yes, I would like that very much,” he replied. “Even though I am apart from my family, we are becoming friends.

Wandering through these strange mountains, further and further away from the village, when I am with you & Ganesh, I don’t feel lost.”

As the afternoon sun rose high over the three travelers, Ganesh heard the same question that has been asked by every traveling group since the beginning of time.

The Jews asked Moses as they wandered the desert. The people asked Gandhi on his famous Salt March. The great fish asked the Old Man in the Sea, and even the three wise men asked as they followed the star to Bethlehem.

And, now... on this epic journey... the Princess and Aavaara both cried out,

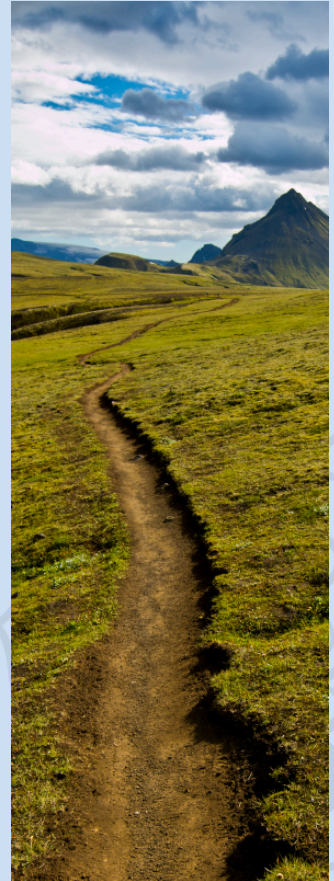
“HOW much further?!”

Ganesh smiled and replied, “Not long before we can stop for the night. I know we’ve been walking a long time.”

“And it’s all UP HILL,” exclaimed Aavaara in his most pathetic voice. “I’m about ready to collapse.”

“Well, that’s partly because you have gone three times further than necessary, zigzagging back and forth across the trail. Maybe try sticking to the path,” the girl offered.

“But,” then the Princess began to ask Ganesh rather sheepishly, “why has this trail been up hill all the way?”



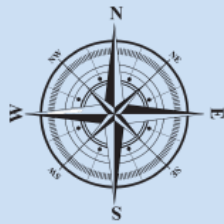
*What's the longest trip
you've ever taken?*

*Can you find your way on
the map?*

*How many miles are there
between here & there?*



*What is the difference
between
North, East,
South & West?*



*A compass points
north because all magnets
have two poles,
a north pole and a south
pole. The north pole of one
magnet is attracted to the
south pole of another
magnet.*



“And, how do you know we’re going the right way?” Aavaara asked Ganesh.

“Ya, how do you know we’re going the right way, and how much further do we need to go UP HILL?” She added.

“These are very excellent questions, my brave traveling companions,” replied Ganesh. “The truth is, I don’t know exactly where the Palace is.”

“We’ve been walking all day and you don’t even know if we’re going the right way?!” they both erupted. “Oh brother!”

“I have heard many tales of a legendary Palace in the North. Travelers passing through our village would share remarkable tales of such a place. So, we began by heading North.”

“Ok,” exclaimed Aavaara, “but North doesn’t mean we have to go UP HILL.”

“Very true,” chuckled Ganesh, “you are absolutely correct.”

“I think I know why,” offered the Princess. “We have to go higher to see further.”

“Are you just guessing? Can you see the castle?” Aavaara asked.

“Well, it’s partly a guess,” she replied.
“Aavaara, when you climb on top of the barn,
could you see the whole village?”

“Yes, that’s true” he answered. “I think the
same thing could be true now. If we get
higher on the land, then we can see further
down the trail.

“So, we have to climb up the hill in order to
see as far as possible.” She explained.

“Is this true, Ganesh?” Aavaara asked
inquisitively.

“Yes,” he replied. “When we are faced with a
problem, and we don’t know exactly how to
solve it, we have to separate what we know
and what we don’t know. We don’t know
exactly where the Palace is, but we have a
guess that it is North of the village. And, we
know that if we are at the top of the hill, then
we have a chance to see further,” he
continued.”

“As with any BIG challenge, like arriving safely at the Palace, we have to
begin with solving the little challenges in the way.”

“Like climbing this hill!” Aavaara exclaimed excitedly.

“Yes, now you get it!” Ganesh said with encouragement.

Just then, the travelers finally arrived at the top of the hill, and they realized





The [largest optical telescope](#) is 34-feet long & located on La Palma of Spain's Canary Islands.

[China spent \\$180 million to build the largest radio telescope](#), which looks like a bowl that is 1,640 feet wide. (That's more than 5 football fields!) Instead of seeing into outer space, it listens to the sounds from space.

just how far they had come on their journey. They could see the tiny village

far below, and far behind them. "I can't believe how far we've come,"

whispered Aavaara.

"And, look!" exclaimed the Princess, "I can see a Palace!"

Far, far off in the distance to the North, a Palace spire topped the mountains, jutting up into the clouds.

"From here we can see the entire kingdom," explained Ganesh.

"Yes, I have a better vision of the challenges before us." said the Princess.

"There are many hills and valleys on this journey. From the top of the mountain we can see the entire kingdom," explained Ganesh.

"Yes, we have a better vision of the hills and valleys," said the Princess.

"I'm too short! Tell me what you see, Princess," Aavaara implored.

"There are many challenges," she explained, "and, I don't see a clear path from where we are to where we want to be. I can see tall mountains, and a wide river that looks very dangerous."

“What else do you see across the land in front of us, Princess?” asked Ganesh. “Is there anything we might use to help us?”

“Hhhmmm” Princess said as she looked out over the landscape thoughtfully. “I see a steep cliff to our left. We don’t want to go that way. That’s way too dangerous.”

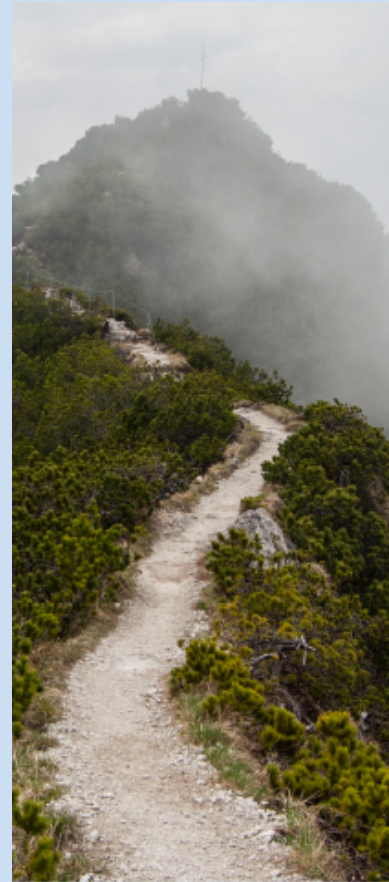
“Very good,” replied Ganesh. “What else do you see?”

“I see many hills directly in front of us. This trail we are on goes down hill, which might give us a break from walking up hill all day. But,” she paused, “If we go down that path,

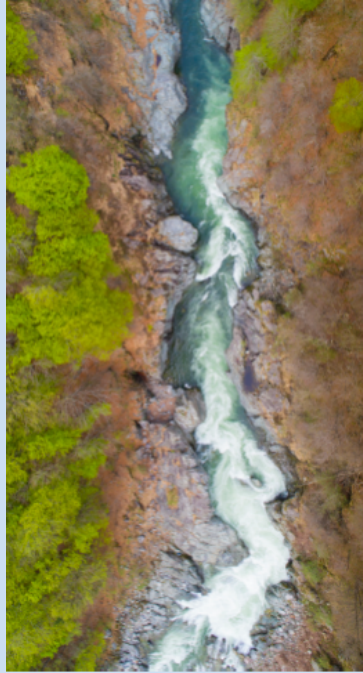
I can see that we will have to go back up and down, and up again many times as we cover the ground to the Palace.”

“Aaahhh. Excellent observation,” Ganesh said with encouragement. That path may be a straight line to the Palace, but it would be extremely difficult to go up and down so many hills on the way. What else does the land offer us, Princess?”

She looked deep into the forest, and wide across the entire kingdom. She studied the terrain carefully, and then her eyes revealed she had made a discovery.



Extending nearly 2,200 miles, the [Appalachian Trail](#) is known as the longest hiking-only footpath in the world. It runs from [Springer Mountain](#) in Georgia to [Mount Katahdin](#) in Maine, passing through some of the most remote country in the United States.



Top 3 [longest rivers in the world:](#)

#1 Nile (Africa): 4132 miles

#2 Amazon (S.America): 4086 miles

#3 Yangtze (Asia): 3917 miles

The Mississippi is 3902 miles long!

The longest rivers in India are the

[Indus \(1976 miles\)](#) and the [Ganges \(1560 miles\)](#). The Indus flows from NorthEast to West, winding through China, India & Pakistan, down to the Arabian Sea. The Ganges flows North West to East into the Bay of Bengal.

“There it is, Ganesh! I see a path to our right. If we stay on top of this hill, curving around the crest, we can keep a better view of the horizon that lies ahead.”

“Not only will that be easier to walk, but it will offer us a prettier view of the kingdom too!”

Aavaara was very excited by this discovery, and he gave the Princess a big hug.

“Thank you, Princess! If we can avoid the dangerous cliff, and minimize the number of hills we need to climb, then I think you have found the best path for us. Way to go!”

“Very good, Princess,” added Ganesh. “You have begun to learn about the earth before us. This is one of four elements that you will need to master on our journey. Today, you learned to examine the situation. You gathered as many facts that you could, and you made a point to prove the things you guessed about - like walking up hill to the North. You have chosen a path from here that uses the terrain of the earth to our advantage.

“It may be a little longer to walk, but we will have a better view of any new opportunities along the way.”

“And, other challenges, too,” she added as she pointed toward the wild river. “I know that we will need to cross that river to reach the palace.”

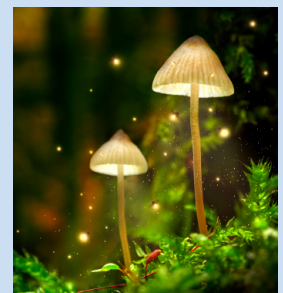
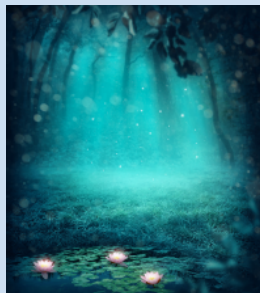
“Yes, this appears to be true, from where we are today. Since we know it is there, we have the advantage of time to prepare.”

“Maybe we can find a bridge!” shouted Aavaara.

“Very good,” replied Ganesh. “That would be a matter of good luck. But, Water is one of the other elements we will need to master on our journey. Along with Earth, Wind, and Fire, we will need to work together on our journey, and learn to recognize the challenges

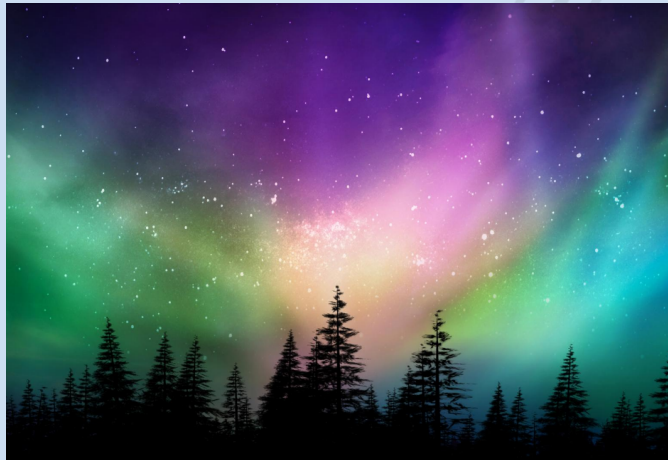
and use the elements to help us make our way. For now, I think we’ve done a lot, and we should rest for the night.”

They all were so exhausted, no one complained. They all agreed, and found the best place to sleep. Our three weary travelers sat down together, laughing about their adventures up the hill, sharing sadhana rewards the trail offered them along the way, and they enjoyed a beautiful view of the golden sunset. As the sun went down on the kingdom, our three travelers closed their eyes and dreamed of far-off lands.



Chapter 4 Fire

For the next several days, the three travelers made their way across the crest of the hill. On the first night, Ganesh had pointed out a star that appeared to shine brightest over the palace, directly to the North. Ganesh arose early enough every morning to use this star to orient their path for the day. And, each evening as they made their camp, he and the Princess would gaze to the star in the North, then reflect on the path they had made that day, and ensure they were still headed in the right direction. One night, the three weary travelers had just completed this task, when Ganesh noticed clouds were beginning to fill the sky. They all took their sleeping places, protected their food and supplies from critters roaming in the night, and went to sleep.



The Northern Lights, are also known as 'Aurora borealis' in the north and 'Aurora australis' in the south. The lights in the sky result when gaseous particles in the Earth's atmosphere collide with charged particles released from the sun's atmosphere. This natural phenomenon is most visible at the North and South magnetic poles of the earth. However, during peak years, the dancing lights can be visible in the sky from further distances. The next peak year is 2024.

Then, suddenly, with a crash, a boom, and a blinding light our three weary travelers awoke from their deep sleep.

“What is the racket?” cried Aavaara.

“Why, it’s a storm,” answered Ganesh, as the wind began to pick up and a few rain drops could be felt.

“We need to find shelter,” said the Princess. “There!” she pointed, “just beyond those trees. It looks like the earth is offering us protection.”

“Yes,” said Ganesh. “You’re right. There’s a cave, and it looks big enough for us to take shelter. We are vulnerable here on the top of the mountain. We’ll be safe from this storm. Let’s go!”

Just then, blinding lightning filled the dark sky, followed quickly by a crash and a thunderous boom.



The longest longest navigable cave in the world is [Mammoth Cave](#), near [Brownsville, Kentucky](#).

Over 415 miles have been mapped!

Can you imagine walking into a cave for over 400 miles?

That's almost the same distance as Indianapolis, Indiana to Atlanta, Georgia.

“Quickly, my friends,” bellowed Ganesh over the howling wind and pouring rain.

“Gather your things, and hurry into the cave.”

Aavaara, Princess, and Ganesh all huddled in the dark cave, as the rain and wind roared violently outside.

“Is everyone ok?” asked Ganesh.

“Yes, I’m ok,” answered the Princess.

Behind his chattering teeth, Aavaara whimpered a little as he said, “I’m here too, and I’m grateful for shelter, but it’s so cold and dark in this cave.”

“Cuddle up with me,” said the Princess.

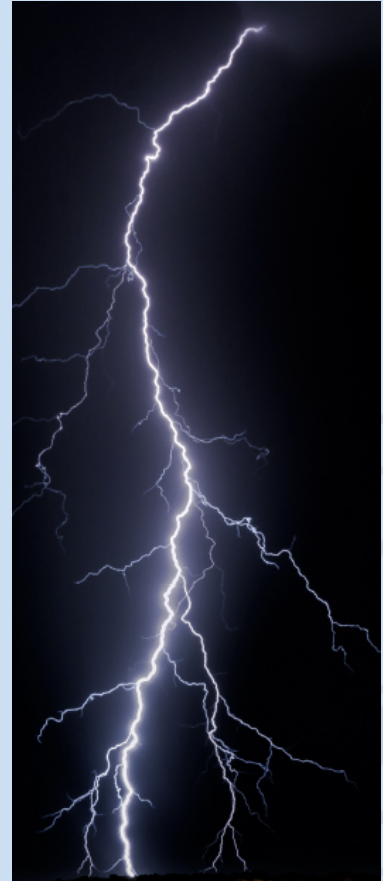
“We can keep each other warm if we stay close together.”

Again, lighting flashed across the sky, and thunder repeated immediately. This time, the storm was right on top of them, and the wind was blowing so hard that it made a howling sound at the mouth of the cave.

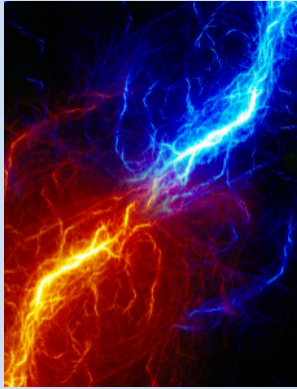
“I’m scared,” cried Aavaara. “The storm is so loud. Can you do something, Ganesh?!”

Lighting struck again, with a crash and a boom that shook the whole cave. A tree at the mouth of the cave had been struck by lightning and blown down by the wind.

Lighting caught the tree on fire!



Lightning is a form of electricity. An [electrostatic discharge \(ESD\)](#) or sudden flow of electric current across an air gap, heating the air so much that it glows. Each bolt can contain up to one billion volts of electricity.



Lightning is really dangerous.

If you see lightning, we should go inside.

Lightning will strike the tallest object.

We don't want to hide under a tree, or stay outside.

Some firefighters receive special training to jump out of airplanes & fight forest fires. [#smokejumpers](#)



It looked like they were trapped inside the cave.

“Stay calm,” said Ganesh in his most reassuring voice. Then, he started to hum, “Gummm, gummm.”

“Ganesh, I have an idea,” the Princess said excitedly. “The branch is on fire. Can you cut away the parts that we don’t need with Ankusa, your special axe? And, then make a lasso with Pasha, and pull a burning branch to start a campfire? I think you can use Ankusa and Pasha so you don’t risk getting burned or trapped by the larger branches, and the campfire would help us stay warm.”

“That’s an AMAZING idea!” exclaimed Aavaara.

Ganesh moved quickly, and clearing the branch with his mighty Ankusa. Then, just as the Princess had suggested, he made a lasso with Pasha, and threw it around the small burning branch. Then, he built a small campfire in the cave.



“Now,” said the Princess, “we have a small fire to keep us warm, and brighten up the cave. Do you feel better Aavaara?”

“Yes,” he replied through his chattering teeth.

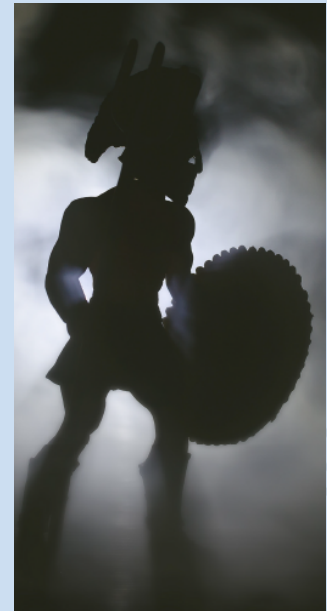
“I’m very proud of you,” Ganesh said to the girl. “You acted quickly, and calmly. And, you learned a little more about how our Mother Earth can offer us shelter in the storm. Your courage in the storm surely protected us from danger, helped me clear the obstacles, and solved many new problems.”

“And, thank you for the warm fire,” added Aavaara. “I thought we might freeze into popsicles.”

Ganesh smiled, and added, “Now, you have learned about the benefits and power of the next element, Fire. We saw how dangerous lighting can be, but you remained calm and brave, and turned the challenge into an opportunity to keep us warm through the night. I’m very, very proud of you.”

“Thank you, Ganesh and Aavaara. I tried to stay calm, and look for solutions. When I opened my mind, I saw the possibilities; the elements offered the answers. Thank you for trusting me.”

And they all drifted off into a peaceful sleep.



“The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it.” [Thucydides](#)



The next morning, the Princess awoke to the smell of sweet biscuits filling the cave. "I thought I was dreaming," the girl said as she blinked her eyes open.

Rubbing the sleepers from her eyes, she saw Aavaara enjoying his task of cooking the biscuits. He smiled and welcomed her to join him by the fire. "I'm so grateful to have you as my friends and traveling companions," said Aavaara.

The girl smiled happily back at him. "Thank you Aavaara, and I am grateful for your friendship and that we are on this adventure together," she said. "I was scared last night, but I'm so relieved that you and Ganesh are here with me. The storm came so suddenly, but we survived together."

"I too am so relieved and grateful to have such wonderful companions," replied Aavaara. The two sat quietly; simply enjoying their breakfast of modaka with some nuts and berries Aavaara gathered.



“By the way, where is Ganesh?” the girl asked Aavaara.

“He is just outside the cave, meditating, and enjoying his daily [Sadhana practice](#),” replied Aavaara.

She stood up and looked outside of the cave, and saw Ganesh sitting peacefully at the top of the hill. She approached him as quietly as she could, because she could see that he was still in deep meditation.

Rather than disturb him, she took a comfortable seat next to him, and tried to meditate quietly by his side.

After what seemed like eternity (but was actually only a few minutes), Ganesh noticed the Princess was fidgeting, so he broke the silence and asked, “What are you focused on, sweet child? Are you allowing your thoughts to distract you. Or, are you practicing like I've taught you? Can you feel the life force in your body?”



[Prana vayus are the movements of prana, or life force](#), in our bodies. Vayu means, literally, “wind.” Each of the five prana vayus governs a different area of the body. The seven primary Chakras are found at the intersections of energy in your body. Meditation is a loving way of taking in, aligning and becoming more aware of the energy within us.

"I'm trying," she replied in frustration, "but I can't stop thinking about that storm last night, and the many miles we've traveled together."

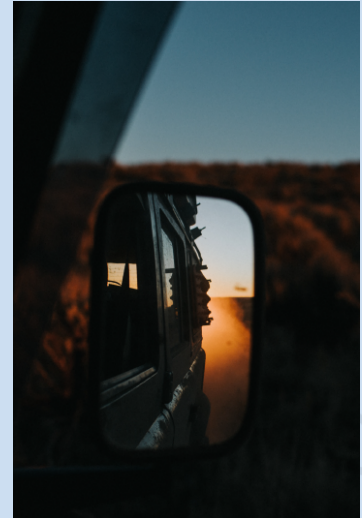
"Ahh, I see," said Ganesh, "we must let go of the past. Now is the present; a time to be grateful for the gift of waking, and focus our minds. We must free ourselves of those obstacles before we can see new opportunities."

"Yes, I remember," she replied sheepishly, "but, can't we reflect just this one time? Last night was such an exciting adventure. Just thinking about it makes my heart race all over again."

"Ahh, I see," again, Ganesh replied in a very calm and patient tone.

"Just for a moment, since there was so much danger and excitement; it's ok to pause and talk about it. That might help you to cope with the excitement. We won't be able to focus on today until you are at peace with the yesterday. Let's talk about our amazing journey."

"What do you think & how do you feel about our accomplishments so far?"



It is possible to dwell too much on the reflection in the rear view mirror & forget to watch the road ahead.

The past is our history.

Our past can help grow new seeds, or harm our roots.

We can avoid allowing the past to take over our lives today. Spend time to reflect & even write a journal about your thoughts & feelings.

This can help us process emotions.

Sometimes we need to learn from our mistakes & celebrate our victories.

What's your favorite memory?

Have you learned from mistakes?

Do you like to talk about your memories?

Would you tell someone your favorite memory from today?



***“Dead Reckoning”** is a method of navigation to determine your location.*

This method is used on land and at sea, the Traveler estimates the direction & distance traveled.

Mountains, rivers, or landmarks can help us find our location.

*If walking, U.S. Army Rangers carry **“pacing beads”** to help them keep track of how far they walk.*

*Maybe Ganesh’s **mala beads** can help keep track of the distance our friends are walking!*

Sometimes people can also guide us along the path. Park rangers, teachers, and our parents might be guiding us along the path.



“Everything has been SO A-MA-ZING!” she exclaimed.

“Can you be more specific?” Ganesh asked.

He seemed to be asking her to go deep within her soul; searching for answers like they were exploring the cave where they slept.

She took a moment and thought about the path they took when they left the village. She remembered the long trail that kept going up, up, up.

“I remember thinking we were never gonna get to the top of that hill,” she told him. “I remember we kept asking, ‘How much farther?!’” she laughed.

Ganesh smiled at her. “And, do you remember why we needed to climb to the top of the hill?” he asked, as he looked deep into her eyes.

“Yes, you told us that we had a better chance of seeing the path, if we could be above the valley. And, when we got to the top, it was true. From the top of the hill, we could see the entire kingdom, and then we knew which way to travel.”

“Yes, very good, my Dear. There were things we knew when we first left the village.”

“And, there were things we didn’t know,” he continued. “The further we have traveled, the more things we learned. We had to gather clues about our understanding of the Earth, just like Aavaara gathered food for us. When we finally arrived at the top of the hill, you began to study the Earth; seeing the path over the hills and where to avoid the cliffs. This was helpful for us to choose a path and know if we were headed in the right direction. We had some ideas of what to expect. And, during the storm, you used this skill to help us find safety.”

“The cave appeared to me, like a gift from the Earth, right when we needed it!” she added.

“Yes, exactly! You are getting very good at identifying the challenge, and developing ways to solve the problems. We have come so far together. I am very proud of you.”

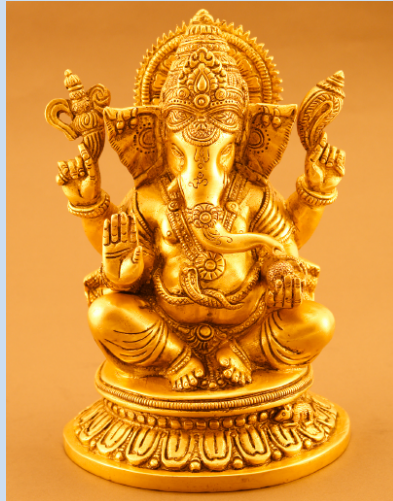
“Thank you, Ganesh!” the girl replied. “I’m so grateful for your wisdom and strength.”



[This traveler has found the famous cave in the ancient city of Petra.](#) Although it looks like a building, it is actually just one room carved into the side of a cliff. It is known as “The Treasury” of Petra.

Petra is an archaeological city in the country of Jordan. Jordan is a Middle Eastern country, bordering the countries of Israel & Iraq, and meets the Red Sea at the port city of Aqaba.

Petra was carved into the pink sandstone hills sometime around 300 years Before Christ (B.C.) Found in Wadi Mūsā (the Valley of Moses) Petra is one of the places where, according to tradition, the Israelite leader Moses struck a rock and water gushed forth nearly 1000 years before this cave was carved into the stone.



Kundalini energy rests like a coiled serpent at the base of the spine. When this dormant energy flows freely through the seven chakras (energy centers) it leads to a powerful state of consciousness. This is known as [kundalini awakening](#).

A snake is often shown on Ganesh's arm or around his waist, like a bracelet or belt.

Can you find the snake in these pictures of Ganesh?



When we were trapped behind the burning tree, I was amazed by your ability to awaken your kundalini energy, and channel that into your trunk. You tossed that branch out of the way like it was a feather, and saved us! We still have a long journey ahead, and I think we will need your help again, to remove other obstacles that might block our path to the Palace.”

“Thank you,” he replied. “I am happy to clear the obstacles within my body and mind, in order to help clear our path through the

countryside. This is why I meditate; to keep my body and mind clear, and awake. I will continue to do whatever I can to protect you and Aavaara.”

“I want you to feel confident in your contribution, as well, and Aavaara too. We have depended on each other to get us this far.”

“I am more and more confident with each step toward the palace. Knowing that I can depend on

you and Aavaara, that I am not alone on this journey, gives me confidence. And, look how well we all work together.” The girl smiled up at Ganesh.

“Now, are you ready to enjoy the present?” Ganesh asked.

“Yes,” replied the Princess, “I am ready. Thank you for helping me reflect on the past.”

“We make a pretty good team,” said Ganesh.

Just then, they heard Aavaara call them from the cave, “Hey you guys, come and look at this.”

As they walked into the cave, they gasped when they discovered Aavaara standing next to writing on the walls.”

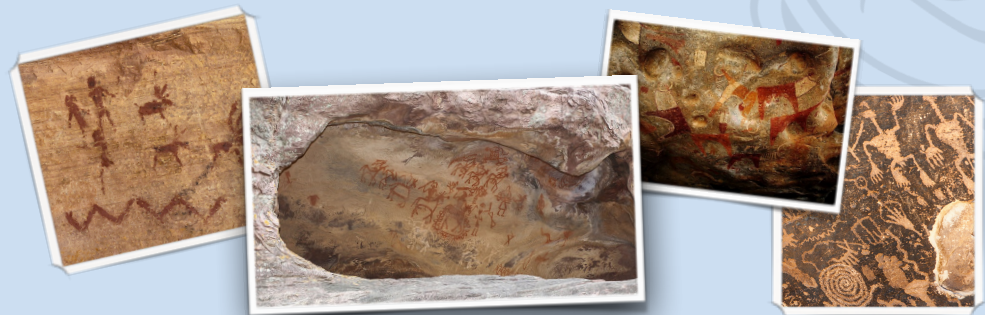
“What on earth have you done?” asked Ganesh.

“It wasn’t me!,” he replied. “Honest, I swear, these were already here.”

The three travelers gazed in amazement at the cave drawings; humbled by the realization that other travelers had taken refuge in this cave.

“So many lifetimes ago,” Ganesh said; even he stood in awe.

Then, the three happy travelers, sat together and enjoyed the remaining sweet modaka biscuits in peaceful silence.



[Ancient cave drawings](#) have been found on every continent except Antarctica.

Take a break, and [flip to the back of this book](#). You can practice drawing Ganesh, a girl, a little mouse, and even more!

Can you draw better than a cave man?! What are your favorite things to draw?

Chapter 5 Water

After their breakfast by the cave, the three travelers set out on their journey again. They traveled for several days on the crest of the hill. Just as the Princess had predicted, there were many trees blown down by the storm. Each time they encountered a branch blocking their path, Ganesh would focus his inner energy to use his trunk and clear the path. And, with every obstacle removed, our three travelers - Ganesh, Aavaara, and the girl - drew closer to the Palace. And, as they drew closer to the Palace, they also grew closer to one other; traveling in friendship and equanimity.

Every day, they worked together to identify the best path. And, while they worked together to overcome many obstacles, they also laughed together and shared stories of their lives. By the time they reached the end of the hills, they finally had clearly sight of the river that separated them from their destination.

“This is the river we could see from the beginning of our journey,” said Aavaara.

“Yes,” agreed Ganesh, and he looked deeply into the Princess’ eyes. “Tell me what you see, Princess.”



*Equanimity
mental calmness,
composure, & evenness of
temper, especially in a
difficult situation.*

She paused for a moment, staring intently at the rushing river below them. Then she began to describe what she saw. "Of course, there is the rushing river. Water is the third element that we have to face. Although we have learned to overcome Earth, so too, has the water overcome the earth. The powerful river has carved a path through these great stone mountains. And, although we learned the danger of Fire, Water can also be dangerous. The cool waters below us can extinguish any flame and even cut through rock. Of these three elements - earth, fire, and water - crossing this river will be the most challenging."

"Very good," replied Ganesh, "And, what don't we know about this river?"

"Well we can see how wide the river is, but we don't know how deep. We should take one of the branches from the tree to test the depth before we go in."



"We know that the river flows very fast and rough, where the rocks are sticking out of the water. We don't know how cold it might be in the water, but we know it is pure and safe to drink."



Over 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, and over 96 percent of all Earth's water is in the ocean.

The girl continued, “We can dip our toes into the water to see if it’s too cold to swim.”

Ganesh noticed that, as the Princess described the river, Aavaara was acting very shy. “What’s the matter, Aavaara?” Ganesh asked him.

“Yes,” added the Princess, “tell us. We’ve traveled many miles together. We can tell when something is bothering you, my friend. Please tell us if there is something your mind.”

“Well,” Aavaara said quietly, “I’m scared, because I can’t swim.”

“Oh, that’s very brave of you to admit to us, Aavaara,” said Ganesh. “Thank you.”

Ganesh explained to them, “This is a new type of challenge. One that can’t always be seen, but something real inside of us. Sometimes fear inside of us can become our greatest obstacle. Can you think of opportunities to help Aavaara overcome this challenge?”

“This is much different from the physical obstacles - earth, wind, fire, and water - because it’s harder to see what’s inside of us,” she replied. She closed her eyes, and her forehead wrinkled in deep thought as she focused her energies the way that Ganesh had taught her. As she sat peacefully, she began to hum a beautiful tune along with the whistle of a bird in the tree.



The OODA Loop is a tool to help us find a solution BEFORE we act.

***OBSERVE:** Take a look around & notice what is happening, what's around you, who is involved?*

***ORIENT:** See how things work (or don't) together.*

***DECIDE:** Sometimes there are many good options & other times you have to do something just so you can learn more.*

***ACT:** Now is the time! Measure the risk & then, go for it.*

Another way to solve a problem is to:

ASK, TRY, & LEARN

Even if it doesn't work the first time, you can always learn & try again.

“Hey, wait a minute! I know that song,” Aavaara exclaimed. “This is my favorite song!”

Just then, a little bird landed on Ganesh’s Sahasrara crown, whistling Aavaara’s song.

“Aha! My old friend! It is so great to see you.”



Napoleon was a famous French general & genius on the battlefield. He lived from 1769-1821. When he was only 35 years old, he became the first emperor of France & one of the world’s greatest military leaders. The French believed he was blessed with a unique gift they called [Coup d’oeil](#).

Many believed he could see how the battle would unfold before the armies ever marched to the field. This term means to glimpse or glance, a “stroke of the eye”.

Napoleon changed the way European & American military forces are organized and trained.

“My friends, my friends. This is my dear friend, Doora Been, the bird who sang to me in the village,” Aavaara announced excitedly.

Ganesh and the Princess both welcomed the pretty bird, Doora Been, and explained to her that they were trying to help Aavaara overcome his fear.

“I see,” she tweeted her melody “coup d’œil, coup d’œil,” and then sat quietly, looking at them for a response.

“I see, I see” she repeated, cooing again, “coup d’œil, coup d’œil”. They looked at her, appearing quite confused, and she said again, “I see.”

What do you mean?” asked Aavaara.

“I fly high above the mountains, and the river,” Doora Been explained. “When I’m soaring high above the earth, I can see further. When I went to the village to visit you, they told me that you had left for a journey. So, I followed your path here. I can see that you are headed to the Palace, but this river is blocking your path. I see.”

“Can you help us find a path to cross the river?
Can you see a bridge or place where the water is shallow?”

“The water is very deep, rushing fast over the rocks,” Doora Been replied. “And, I know that Aavaara doesn’t swim. Maybe he can sit next to me in Ganेश’s Sahasrara crown. This will keep him high above the river.”

“I understand,” the Princess said with a smile.

“If Ganेश approves, we can use them to build a saddle to sit on top. We can gather up the tree branches that fell during the storm and tie them together to sit atop Ganेश.”

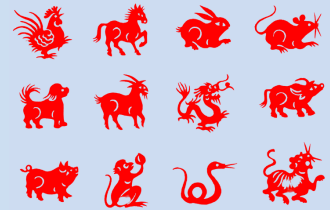
“Then, Ganेश can carry us safely across the river. How do you feel about this plan?”

Aavaara was elated. “Yes! That sounds wonderful. Is it ok with you Ganेश?”

“I think this is a great plan, Aavaara. Thank you, Doora Been, for helping us to see this opportunity.”

They set about gathering the sticks and building the saddle together. Then, they tied it tightly to Ganेश with his Pasha.

“All aboard!” Ganेश encouraged them, as they climbed into the saddle.



The Chinese zodiac tells the tale of a race between 12 animals.

As the legend goes, long ago, there was the Jade Emperor of China wanted to select 12 animals to be his guards. He decided he would have a race to select the order. He spread the message that the first animals to pass through the Heavenly Gate, would become the order of the Chinese Zodiac.

The next day, Rat got up very early & ran as fast as he could until he encountered a great river. He had to stop, because he couldn't swim. Rat noticed Ox about to cross the river, so he jumped into Ox's ear & began to sing.

The diligent Ox did not mind at all & began to swim across the river, Suddenly, Rat jumped out of Ox's ear and dashed to the feet of the Emperor. Rat won first place and Ox was second.

The other 10 animals finished in this order: Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, & Pig.

[What zodiac animal represents the year you were born?](#)

Once they were all safely on board, Doora Been flew above the river, and guided them across to the other side.

The water splashed all around them, but Doora Been and the Princess sang their tune together, and Ganesh swam steadily to the other side.

“That was AWESOME!” exclaimed Aavaara.

“Thank you, Doora Been! I was so scared about crossing the river, but you found the very best place for us. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Ganesh, can we do it again?! That was soooooo cool! Doora Been, will you please join us on our journey?”



A “howdah”, also known as hathi howdah (हाथीहौदा), is a carriage which is positioned on the back of an elephant, or occasionally some other animal such as a camel, used to carry travelers .



Have you ever looked through binoculars?

In the Hindi language, [doorabeen](#) means binoculars or telescope.

Does your name have a meaning?

How was your name chosen?

“Ok, ok, slow down, Aavaara. I’m sure Doora Been has many other things to do,” Ganesh replied.

“Actually...” replied Doora Been. “I would be honored to join you. Thank you for accepting me. I am happy to help my new friends. Thank you for asking me.”

“That’s wonderful,” the Princess said with glee. “It is so nice to have another girl with us, and not just these two stinky boys!”

They all laughed together, and sat beside the river for a moment. Ganesh encouraged them all to meditate together before beginning their journey again. He sat on the ground facing North, with the sun to the West over his left shoulder. His crown shown brightly, and Doora Been was amazed when she noticed the broad axe - Ankusa - in his raised right hand, and Pasha uplifted in his left hand. She had heard of these legendary tools, but she had never seen them. They were beautiful, and appeared so powerful.

As the completed their meditation, Ganesh raised his lower left hand, and revealed some leftover modaka that he shared with Doora Been. The warm sun covered Doora Been, and she knew that she would be safe with Ganesh and her new friends.

They all sat together in peaceful meditation; feeling grateful for each other and feeling more confident about facing the elements - Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water.

By the time they finished their snacks, they were all dry after crossing the river. They started on their new trail, the final leg of their long journey to the Palace.



Maybe time for a break?

Here are some of the benefits of just enjoying the sunshine:

- *Spending time outside helps you appreciate life.*
- *Watching sunset helps you feel more energized.*
- *Watching the sun pass over the horizon (sungazing) helps you feel better.*

If it's rainy, now is a great time to [flip to the back of the book](#), and practice drawing little our team of traveling companions.

Aavaara scurried around, collecting more supplies for their dinner, while he told Doora Been about their adventures so far. He told her how they had found the Princess in the great tree.



Can you remember all of the tools that Ganesh carries?

Do you know what a "symbol" is? [In stories, symbols are used to create a memorable feeling in the reader.](#)

Symbolism allows an author to tell the audience something in a poetic way instead of just saying it.

Symbolism can inspire creativity & get the reader more interested in the story. This method is also sometimes called ["the hook" in a story.](#)

Aavaara explained the letter said the girl was a Princess, and asked them to help the girl find the Palace when she was old enough to make the long journey.

Aavaara also explained how Ganesh was teaching the young Princess how to meditate, become aware of the energy inside of her, and how to understand the elements surrounding them.

Doora Been listened in amazement of how the Princess had learned to interpret the shape of the earth to find a path on the hills that was easier to walk. And, how she found the cave that protected them during the storm.

Doora Been was impressed by the story about finding the cave, and capturing the fire from the sky to build a campfire that kept them warm and cooked their food.

"So, you see, Doora Been, you joined us at the very perfect time." Aavaara said.

"We all needed your help to cross the wild river. Thank you so much!"

“I see,” she whistled, and then flew over and landed lightly on the shoulder of the Princess. “Aavaara told me of your courage on this journey. I am truly impressed by your bravery and intelligence.”

“Thank you, Doora Been.

I am grateful to have great friends. Even the littlest among us, helped clear the greatest obstacle of fear. We are all grateful that you have joined us on this journey. Even if we never find the palace, I am finding joy in each step I take with you by my side.”

Then Doora Been sang quietly, “I noticed the blanket you use as a coat. It’s covered by so many pictures.”

“Yes,” the Princess replied, “each picture describes a part of our journey.”

The two talked about the parts of the journey that matched the stories Aavaara had shared.

“These stories are woven into the fabric of this blanket. This reminds me of who I am, and where we have been. The picture of my family, my new best friends, and all the adventures we’ve shared. I’ve saved this spot to weave in a special place for you, Doora Been. If only I had some blue thread.”

“I’ll be right back,” Doora Been whistled over her shoulder as she flew away.

She returned in a few moments later with a long blue thread in her beak.

“You can use this,” she said as she placed the thread in the girl’s palm. “I saw it beside the trail when I was helping Aavaara collect supplies.”

“Oh, thank you very much,” said the Princess with glee. “This is exactly what I need! Thank you, again, Doora Been.”

“You’re very welcome,” replied Doora Been, her cheeks blushing. “It’s the least I can do for you my Princess.”

Just then, Ganesh turned and said, “It’s starting to get dark, and we will rest here for the night.”

They all gathered around as Ganesh built a small camp fire. They enjoyed sharing stories about their journeys, while the Princess finished stitching the newest picture on her quilt.

As they laid down, counting the stars above, twinkling in the dark sky; they drifted into a peaceful sleep and dreamed of far away magical lands.



Quilting is the term given to the process of stitching a minimum of three layers of fabric together, using a needle and thread. Like anything else that’s handmade, a handcrafted quilt tells a story. Quilts can tell stories about the time period in which they were made and the people who made them.

A story quilt is a special quilt made with pictures & textures, even sounds & scents that help tell a story. You make a story quilt to tell a story of a moment, an event, a feeling that is important to you.

Chapter 6 *Wind*

The travelers walked for several days after they crossed the river together. Each day Ganesh helped the Princess learn to respect the Earth, Fire, and Water. The Princess explored the limits of these elements, making lists of the things she didn't know yet, and seeking new ways to learn.

Aavaara became very productive, helping the Princess in her daily lessons, and collecting supplies that they needed. And, Doora Been helped the team stay on the right path, headed toward the Palace and avoiding the places that were too dangerous.

As they walked along the path, the Princess watched the wind blow the leaves. Occasionally, she would pick a blade of grass or a flower, and let it drift in the wind just to watch how it would dance and twirl to the ground.

Doora Been noticed the Princess playfully tossing and spinning the petals of a flower. The Princess would pick it up, place it in the palm of her hand, then wait for a breeze to lift it up and blow it across the trail. As she did this, Doora Been began to duck and dive through the wind, like she was dancing with the flower.



*Life is a balance of
holding on
&
letting go.*



After playfully dancing with the wind, Doora Been picked up a petal with her beak and carried it back to the happy Princess.

As she gently placed it in her palm, Doora Been said to the Princess, "I see you are studying the wind."

"Yes," the Princess said, "and, I love to see you flying gracefully in the currents of the wind. I think the wind moves like water in the sky, with no boundaries or borders. It's like a dance."

Then the Princess sighed as she whispered, "I wish I could fly like you."

"Ahh, I see. There is much to learn of the wind," Doora Been told the girl. "I have studied the wind my entire life; every time I take flight. And, yet, there is still so much I do not know. The wings of a bird are created just for soaring on the currents of the wind. This is one of the magical mysteries of our great Creator."

"Watch how my wings spread, and bend, and curve to the shape of the wind. These wings are a blessing from the heavens, and they help me fly up to the heavens."

"I wonder if I can shape the leaves and flowers to the shape of a feather," the Princess said aloud as she carefully watched Doora Been gracefully gliding on the currents of the wind.



*Hope is the thing with
feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune
without the words,
And never stops at all.*

*And sweetest in the gale
is heard:
And sore must be the
storm
That could abash the
little bird
That kept so many warm.*

*"Hope is the thing
with feathers"
- Emily Dickinson*



“That would be quite amazing,” said Doora Been. “I would recommend learning to use the wind closer to the ground, first, before you attempt to fly so high in the sky.”



Origami is the Japanese art of folding paper into decorative shapes and figures.

Do you know where Japan is on a map?

Did you know Japan is an island nation in the Pacific Ocean & the United Kingdom is another island nation in the Atlantic Ocean?

Japan is 55% larger than United Kingdom & is home to nearly twice as many people.

Origami is a delicate art form that helps develop eye-hand coordination, sequencing skills, logic reasoning, spatial skills, concentration, memory, as well as patience & attention!

Flip to the back of the book & practice making origami birds!



Ganesh laughed softly as he listened to their conversation.

“These are good questions, my Princess. I am impressed by your curiosity and desire to create. Perhaps you have ideas on how a wing might help us on our journey.”

“If we could fly like Doora Been, then we would already be at the Palace by now. How much further?!” Aavaara joined in as he collapsed on the ground. “I’m exhausted and hungry, and it’s getting dark.”

Doora Been tried to console him, “I have flown up above the trees, and I can see we are very close to the Palace. But, there are tall mountains on both sides of us, and a large lake between us and the Palace. The sun is still up, but we are in the shadow of the tall mountains,” she explained.

“Should we stop here?”

the Princess asked Ganesh.

“It seems like a good idea,” said Ganesh. “This is a good time to rest and collect our thoughts. And, it feels like it might rain soon.”

“There are clouds coming in from the South,” Doora Been told the team. “It looks like a storm is headed our way.”

“Let’s build a small tent with the howdah saddle we used to cross the river,” said the Princess. “If we add some more sticks and leaves for a roof, then we will be protected from the rain. Aavaara can you help collect the branches and leaves?”

“Yes, good idea,” he said.

“And, can we use Pasha to tie them together?” the Princess asked Ganesh.

“Yes, of course,” Ganesh replied.

Doora Been started collecting several small sticks to build a campfire.

“Great!” exclaimed the Princess, and everyone began to work on their tasks.



This is a photo of the 3,544 foot high “Southern Sky Column” in the Zhangjiajie Mountain range in China.

You may recognize these real mountains from the fictional Hallelujah Floating Mountains of Pandora, if you've seen the movie, Avatar.

They real mountains are found in Hunan Province, near the famous Chinese town of Fenghuang.

Can you find them on this map?





Have you ever made a tent with sticks & branches?

If you are ever lost in the wilderness, building a shelter is one of the keys to survival.

Here are the top three survival tips everyone should know:

- 1. Master your attitude.*
- 2. Make a shelter.*
- 3. Find clean water.*

[*Flip to the back of this book to learn how to make a simple A-frame tent with sticks.*](#)



The team felt the first drops of rain as they finished building the tent. Ganesh lit the campfire just in time, as the wind began to blow.

“We did it!” the team said in unison.

“Great job, and just in time,” added Ganesh.

The rain fell steadily all afternoon, and the four travelers huddled together under their tent near the small fire.

Peering out at the dreary rain, “What should we do?” Aavaara asked. “If this rain keeps up, it’s going to wash us straight into that big lake over there.”

“Yes, that is exactly what I was thinking,” said Ganesh.

The young girl was deep in thought, and didn’t respond to Aavaara’s question or Ganesh’s comment. She was staring intently at the saddle they had made to ride on Ganesh across the river.”

“Hello!?” Aavaara said to her in frustration. “Are you listening? I said, what are we going to do about this situation?”

“The mountain cliffs are too high and too slippery for us to climb. Plus, the higher we get, the more likely we will be struck by lightning. That, would not be good. Definitely NOT good,” he said as he shook his head.

Still no response from the Princess. She remained focused on the howdah saddle they had made into a tent.

“Yes,” said Aavaara, “you see this tent is the only thing protecting us from the rain. But, if it continues, we’ll be washed into the lake and it’s way too far for us to swim. The rain is already starting to come in around our feet!” Aavaara was getting very nervous.



“Oh, Aavaara,” said Doora Been. “I’m so sorry. I wish I could fly above the clouds and find a new path, but this storm is so big, and it’s dark outside.”

Ganesh sat peacefully, legs crossed, and his lower right hand raised, palm facing outward in the symbol of protection. “Abhaya mudra,” he whispered quietly. “Let’s quietly focus our energy to help the Princess.”

All three sat near the Princess, sending her all of their positive energy, and they wished she would reveal her plan to save them from the storm. The rain was getting stronger, and a rapid stream of water was now rushing around their feet, flowing out of the tent to the lake. The wind was howling so loud that Aavaara couldn't even hear himself think. He was so scared, and frustrated.

Just then, the Princess shouted over the roar of the storm, "Eureka! I got it! I have a plan to get us out of here!"

"Quickly!" she said, "use the Pasha to tie the tent to the saddle. Doora Been, I need you to spread your wings. Aavaara, help tie my blanket in place to look like Doora Been's wings."

"I see, I see," whistled Doora Been. #buildaboat. "That's it Aavaara. Tie the bottom tightly to the saddle."

Then, the Princess asked Ganesh, "Can you carry that large branch with your trunk?"

"Yes, of course," he replied.

"Great, now quickly everyone, jump on and hold tight!" the Princess directed them with confidence, and they all trusted her plan.

A large rush of water came rushing down the hill and around their feet, pushing the saddle down toward the river."

"Whoa," cried Aavaara, "what's going on?!"

"Just hold on!" the Princess shouted over the loud thunder & rain."

"Ganesh, focus your kundalini energy, and use Ankusa as a rudder."

"Aye, aye, Captain," he replied!

"Doora Been carry this torch in your beak. Fly just in front of us, where Ganesh can still see you. You will light the way ahead. Make sure we steer clear of the rocks, so we don't get ship wrecked!".

"Ok, everyone, here we go!" Ganesh shouted with a great smile.

"WhooHoo!" they all cheered as they splashed into the lake.

"Raise the blanket as a sail," Ganesh told Aavaara. "We will catch the wind, and I will steer toward the Palace."

"Away we go!" exclaimed Aavaara in excitement as their boat picked up speed. "What a great plan! I never knew that I'd be a sailor. Thank you! You saved us again!"

"We're sailors indeed, Aavaara, but we're not there yet. Let's stay focused until we get across this lake," the girl replied.

The wind continued to blow, and Doora Been guided them safely as Ganesh steered cautiously, navigating around large rocks and cliffs.

"I think we're gonna make it," said the Princess, as the stormy seas began to calm. "We've learned to use the wind! This is the fourth element!"

Just then, from over the bow, Doora Been whistled, "I see, I see."

Out on the horizon, the crew could see the castle emerging.



[Flip to the back of this book & try to make your own model boat that really floats!](https://www.inspirationmadesimple.com/popsicle-stick-boat-kids-craft/)



<https://www.inspirationmadesimple.com/popsicle-stick-boat-kids-craft/>

Chapter 7 *Destination or New Beginning?*

The four travelers (now sailors) had been watching the Palace as the wind blew them closer and closer. They could see the bright lights of the village just outside the wall, and candles burning in the tall towers above the wall. Soon, they were close enough to hear voices and music playing. It sounded like a festival.

All four travelers were focused on the Palace rising on the horizon. They were in silent amazement of its grand size and activity; amazed that they had survived the storm; amazed that their journey had finally reached their destination.

“It’s AMAZING,” Aavaara whispered.

“It’s beautiful,” sang Doora Been.

Ganesh sat quietly, still steering their improvised sailboat toward the Palace. Doora Been flew over to the Princess, and landed gently on her shoulder. She could see the Princess had tears starting to fill her eyes.

“Are you ok, Princess?” she asked quietly.

“Yes,” the Princess said quietly.

“Don’t be sad, my friend. We’ve made it to the Palace.”

“Yes, I know,” she said. But, she still sat quietly.

“Do not be afraid, my Princess,” Aavaara said to her. “You have learned to safely use the four elements. I’m proud of you. We’re all very proud of you!”

“Yes, thank you,” the Princess said as she patted Aavaara on the head.

“Thank you all for being my friends.”

“Aahhh,” Ganesh sighed, “but we are more than just friends. Now, we are your family.”

The Princess looked up at Ganesh lovingly, as the tears welled in her eyes. “Thank you, Ganesh. You have taught me so much.”

And, grasping her blanket, she added, “These adventures are now woven into the fabric of who I am, who we are together. I am so lucky to have a family.”

“And...” said Aavaara, expecting the Princess had something more to share.

“Well,” she paused, “I’m a little afraid that the people in the Palace won’t accept me. Maybe they won’t believe I am their Princess. After all, I grew up in a tree house, not a huge castle.”

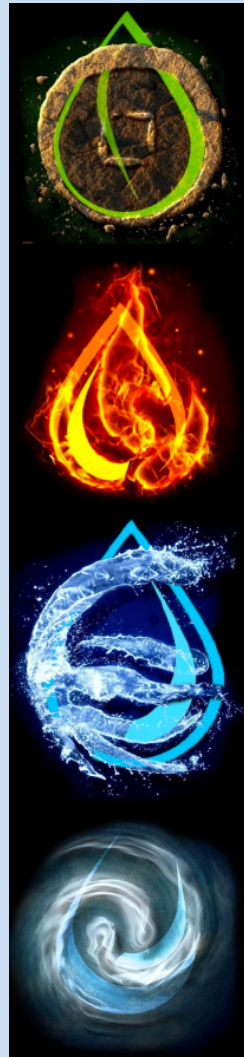
“I understand,” said Ganesh. “Did we ever know what the future would reveal to us? I don’t know what adventures are ahead. I am extremely grateful for this moment, for you, Aavaara, for Doora Been, and for every step we’ve taken together. Each of those moments woven into your quilt, in this moment, and in every moment to come, I know we are stronger together. We will always have this bond.”

“Thank you,” she said, “you are very wise.

“I love you all,” and she hugged them with true love.

Just then, they felt a bump on the sailboat. All four turned to see they had reached the shore. The music from the village stopped, and a crowd of curious villagers started to gather around them.

To Be Continued...



How To...

Draw a girl

Draw an elephant

Draw a mouse

Draw a bird

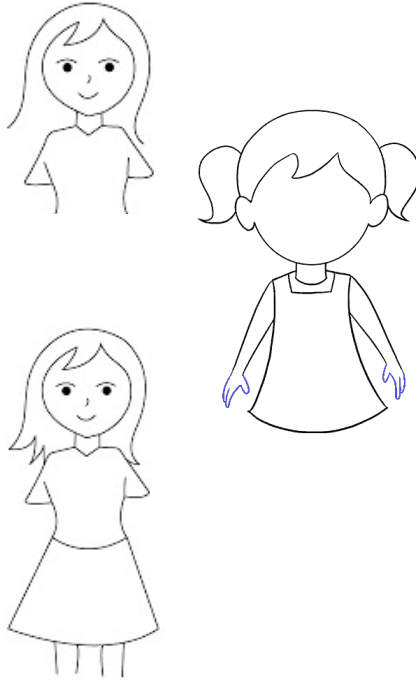
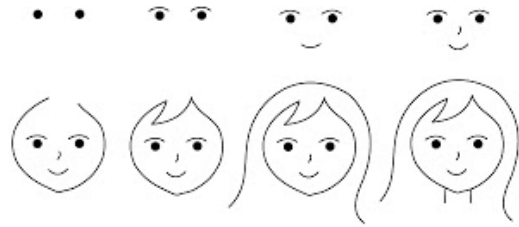
Draw a castle

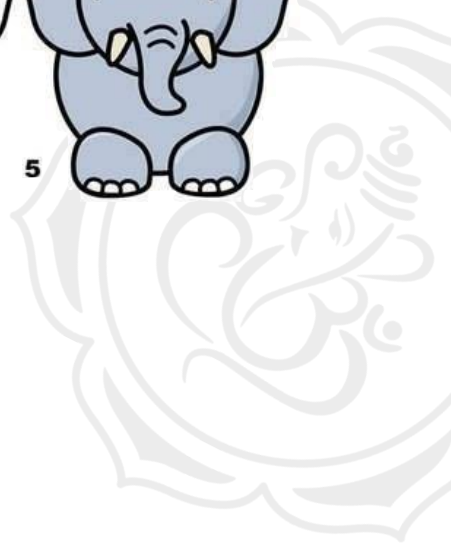
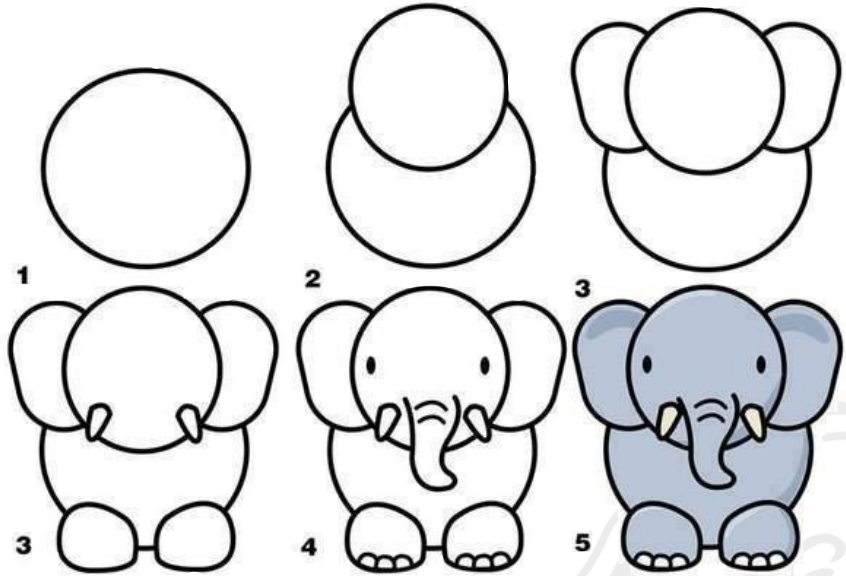
Make an origami bird

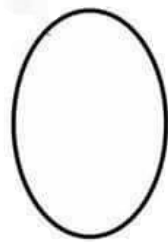
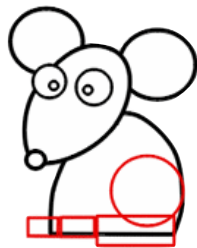
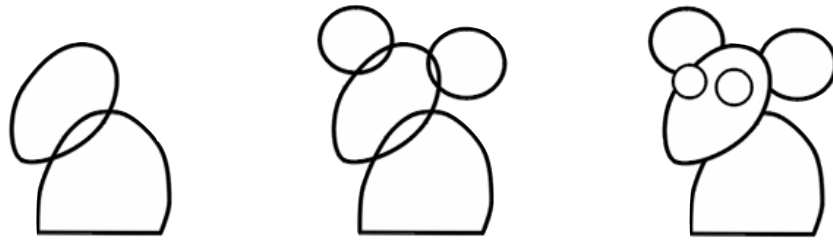
Make a popsicle stick boat

Bonus How To...





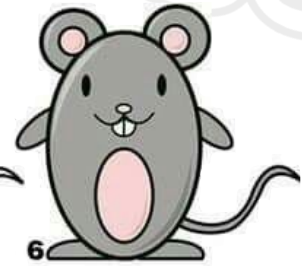
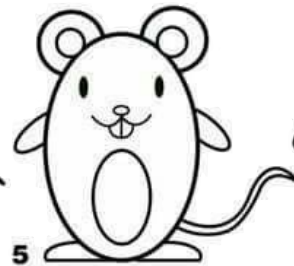
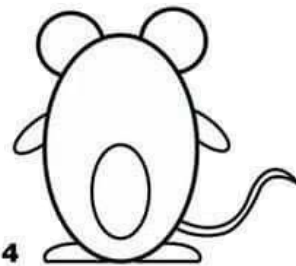




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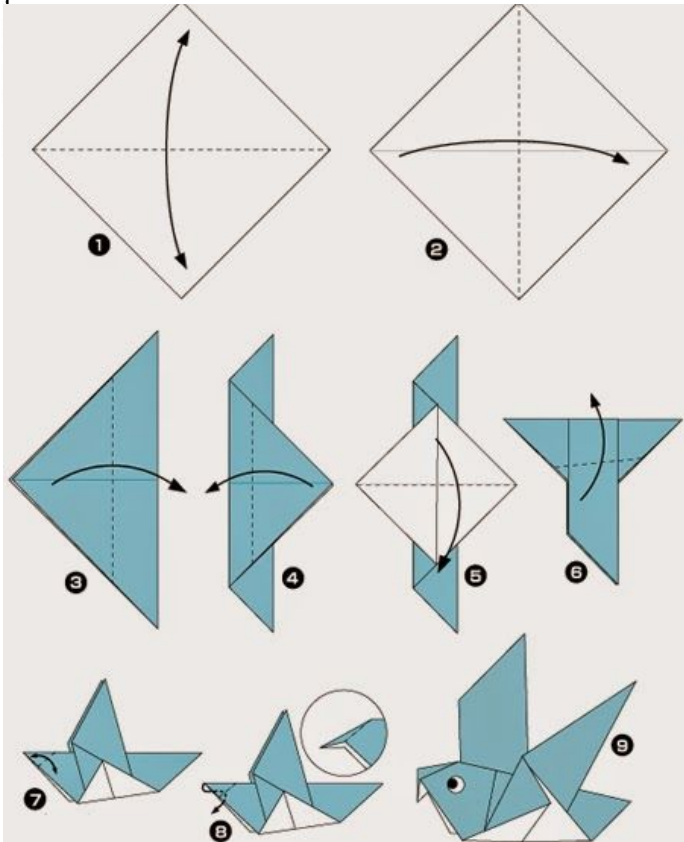
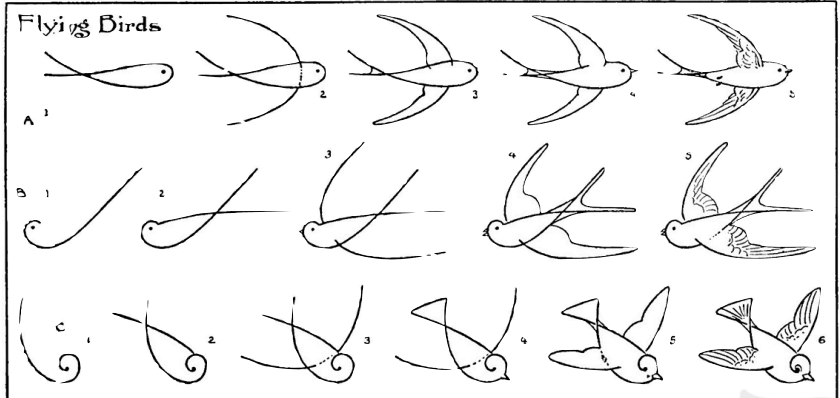
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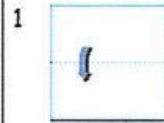
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5

6



HOW TO FOLD A PAPER CRANE



1
Fold a perfectly square piece of paper in half lengthwise along the dotted line.



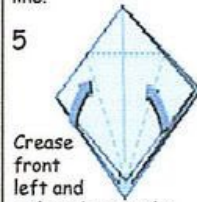
2
Make a crease down the middle to mark the center, then diagonally fold down the right side of the paper toward the front.



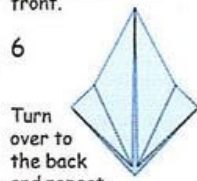
3
Diagonally fold the left side toward the back.



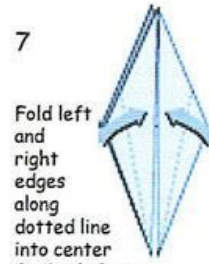
4
Open the bottom by inserting your finger and fold left and right points together spreading the front and back crease.



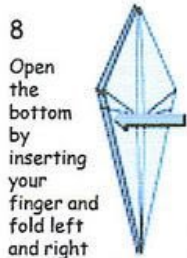
5
Crease front left and right edges to the center, then back out and pull up bottom point to produce shape shown in next panel.



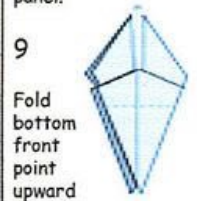
6
Turn over to the back and repeat for the back side.



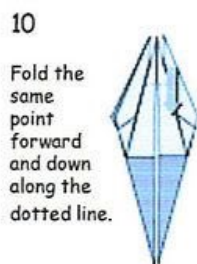
7
Fold left and right edges along dotted line into center for both front and back sides.



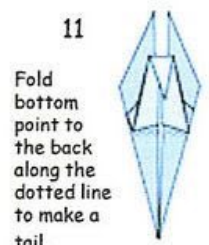
8
Open the bottom by inserting your finger and fold left and right points together spreading the front and back crease.



9
Fold bottom front point upward along the dotted line.



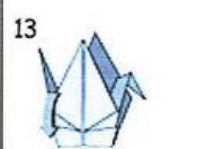
10
Fold the same point forward and down along the dotted line.



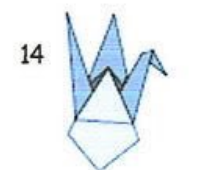
11
Fold bottom point to the back along the dotted line to make a tail.



12
Open left and right sides and crease.



13
Fold down the wings and gently pull on head and tail to expand the body.

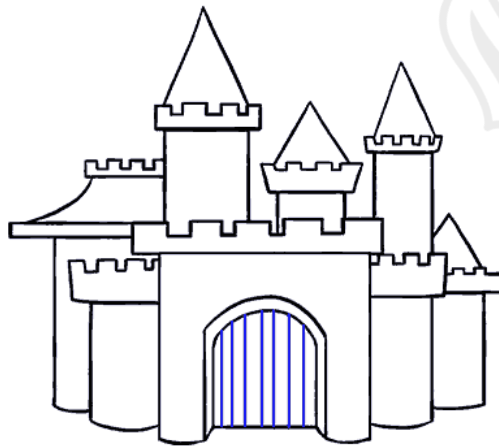
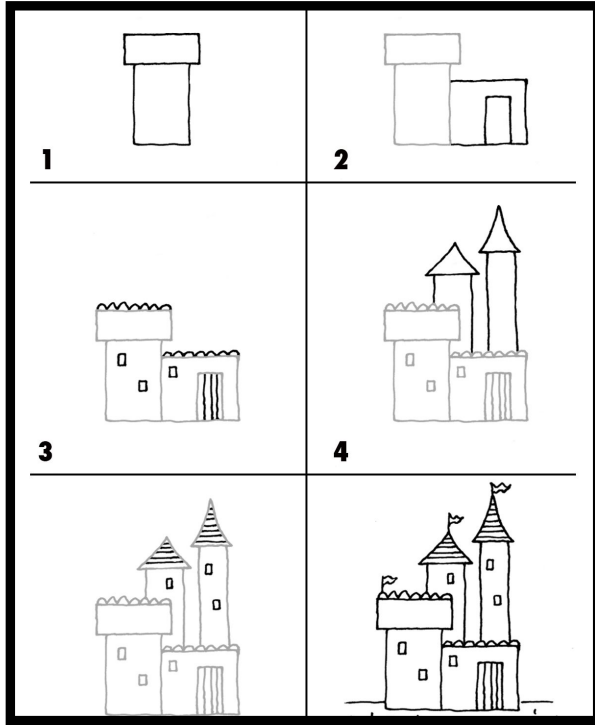


14
To complete your paper crane, blow gently into the bottom to help expand the body.

Cranes for Peace

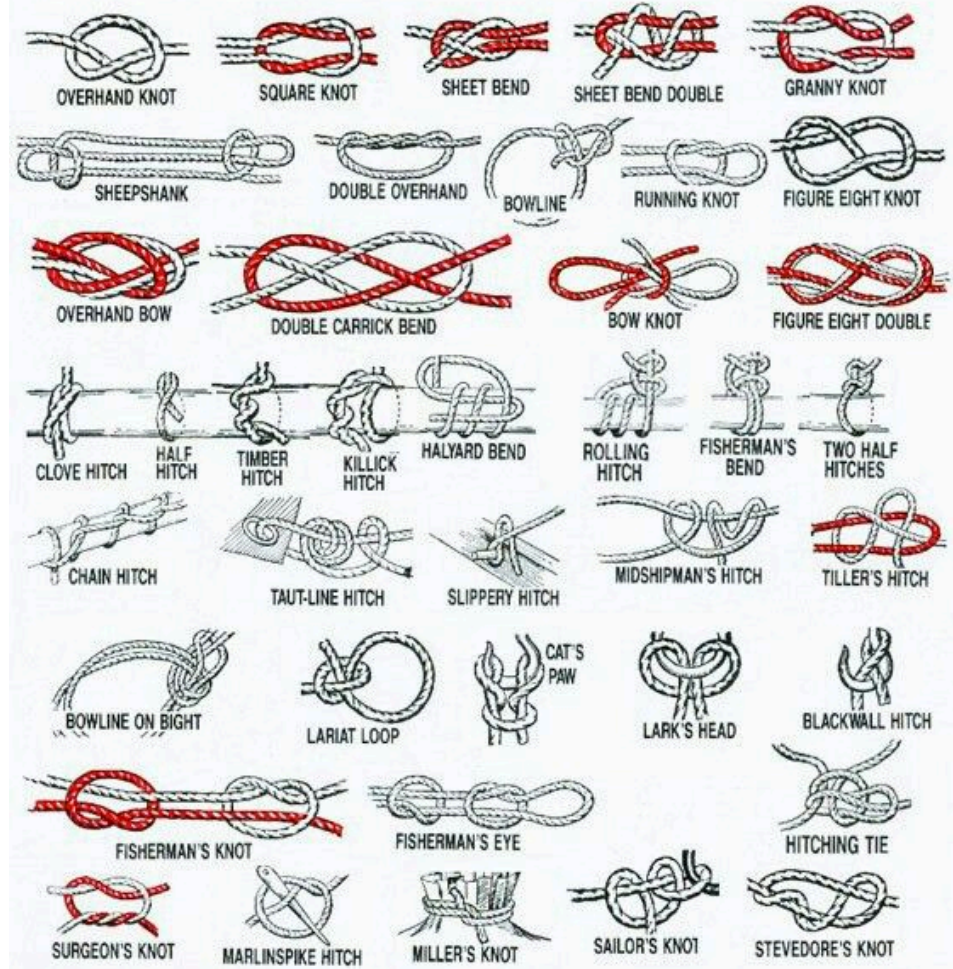
Sadako Sasaki was 2 when Hiroshima was bombed and later died of leukemia. She tried to fold 1000 cranes believing she would get well by doing so. People from around the world now send origami cranes to the Hiroshima Peace Park as a symbol and wish for peace.

It is Japanese legend that folding 1000 cranes (senbazuru) grants the folder a wish. Sadako's story, told in several books, has become an inspiration for people world-wide.

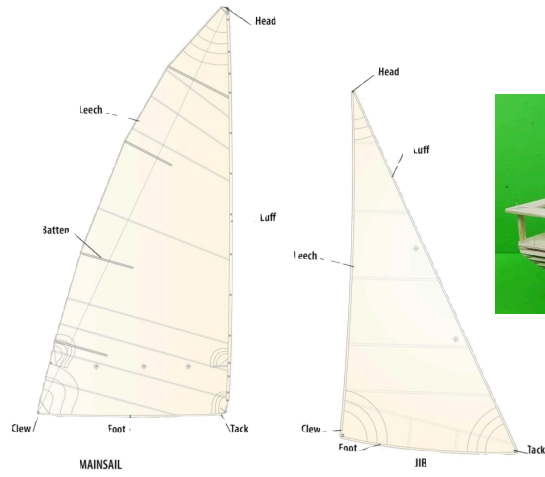


FORTY KNOTS

A VISUAL AID FOR KNOT TYING
OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT—BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
The Scout Seal is Your Guarantee of Quality, Excellence and Performance



Boy Scouts of America





[Watch this short video demonstration to build a tent with sticks & shoestrings.](#)

Instead of a plastic tarp, you can also use smaller sticks, leaves for the tent walls!

Thanks for reading our story about Ganesh & the princess.
I hope you enjoyed it as much as our daughter.

Stay tuned for the next book to find out what new
adventures our travelers discover!

With all of my love, and with all of my gratitude.

Namaste

