

A Journey Brimming with Delight and Dread.

LOST



Aseka Weddagala

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-author

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Foreword

Literary development is a yardstick to measure the development of a country. The Kotte and Dambadeniya eras stand out in the history of the world because they were literary enlightening periods. If so, this is the golden period in the history of the *Mahamaya* as well. This is the reason why our daughters have been enchanting through book writing for many years now. It is a special event that our writers have succeeded in building a culture of writing books in the school and spreading it to the entire school system and this time involving the global student community in it.

Beyond this, this time the school community itself has also decided to rebuild the past *Yatiwara* writing tradition in the country in order to pay tribute to the founder of our school, **Karadana Atthadassi Thero**.

The *Pirivena* student monks have also taken up book writing "**The Herana Gatkarani**" project was introduced.

It is a matter of pride for me as the principal to lead the way in bringing about a qualitative change in the education of schools and *Pirivena* education through this academic and religious service, and it is also an achievement for the school.

This book, which is the result of recognizing one's innate talent at an early stage in life and turning to writing, will undoubtedly be a help for future education and future life.

Shashikala Senadheera,

Principal, Mahamaya Girls' Collage, Kandy.

**For my lovely
Amma, Appachchi
and for everyone
who taught me
since preschool...**

Introduction

This is a tale woven with the threads of fate, revolving around three spirited teenagers who stumble into an unexpected adventure, unaware of the wonders that lie ahead. The catalyst for this journey is none other than Kristy's spirited little dog, Frizzy. During a whimsical outing, Frizzy strayed from their side and became lost. In their quest to reunite with their furry friend, these intrepid souls embark on a voyage to a realm brimming with excitement, teetering between delight and dread.

As the trio navigates through challenges and trials, their unwavering teamwork and resolve propel them forward with surprising grace. Along their path, they encounter a dazzling array of magical and enigmatic creatures, each revelation more astonishing than the last. Will they find their way home, or will they lose themselves in this enchanted world? To uncover their fate, immerse yourself in this captivating tale. Enjoy!

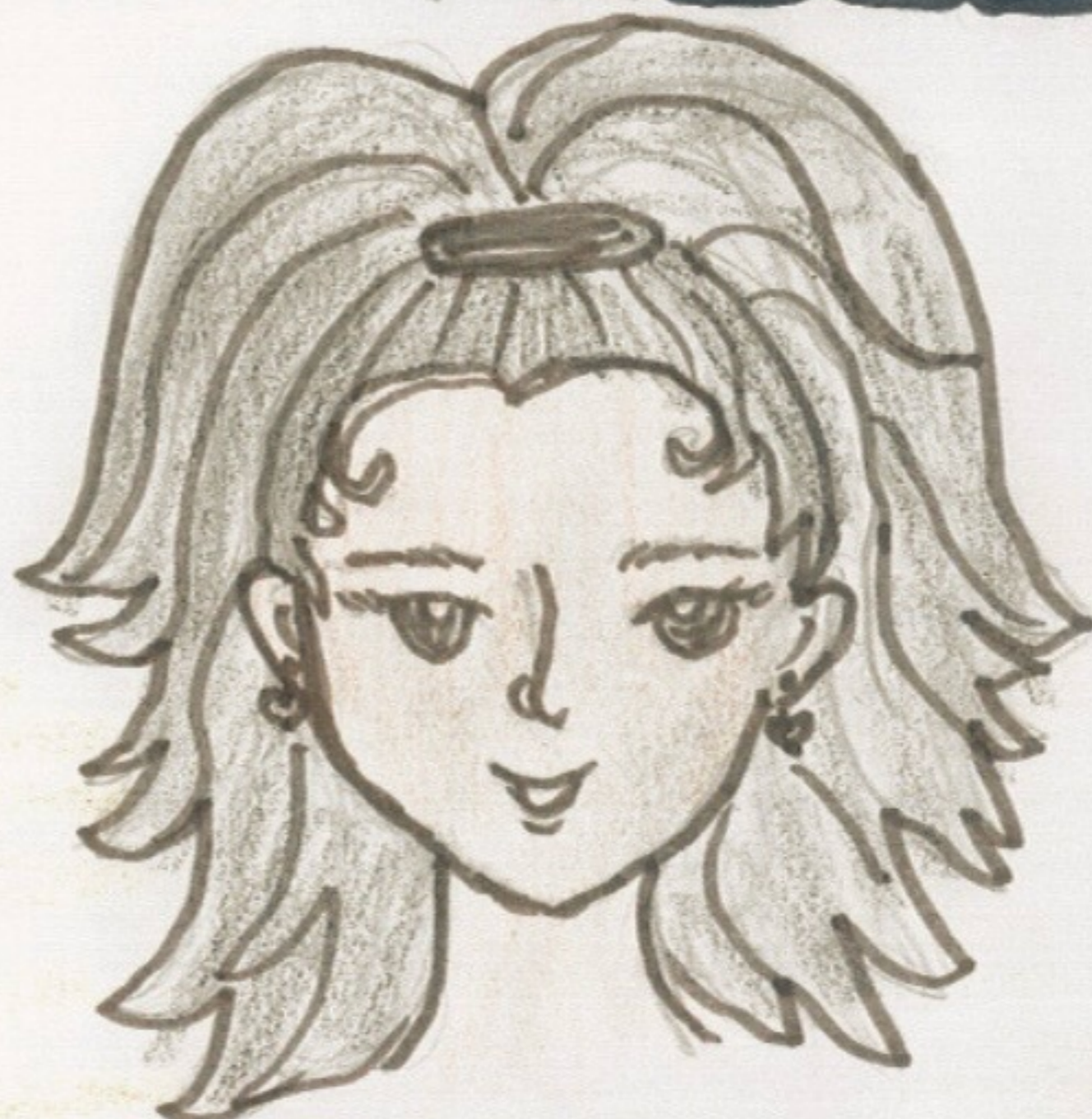
**MEET
THE
EXPLORERS**



FRIZZY



MAX



MAPLE



KRISTY



Chapter 01

“Rise and shine!”

I declared to myself, bursting with joy and accompanied by a grand yawn that unexpectedly morphed into a burp.

“Sorry, Frizzy! Didn’t mean to startle you,”

I chuckled to my dog, who lay serenely on the soft carpet, her eyes widening in surprise at my sudden outburst.

The morning unfolded with little fanfare—just me savoring breakfast alongside my family, engaging in lively chatter about our upcoming holiday adventures.

After we cleared the table and I assisted my mother with the dishes, her phone began to ring. It was Maple’s mom, my dearest friend whom I hadn’t seen in ages.

I called out to my mom, who was busy wielding the vacuum, but she didn’t hear me. So, I decided to answer the phone and ventured outside, with Frizzy trailing closely behind.

“Hello, Janet, it’s Kristy calling! How are you?”

Maple’s mom inquired cheerfully.

“Hello! I’m not Janet; I’m her daughter,”

I replied playfully, and we both shared a giggle.

“How are you and your family, sweetie?”

she continued.

“We’re doing just fine. How about you?”

I asked in return.

“We’re well too! Where’s your mom? Can I speak with her?”

she wondered.

“She’s vacuuming at the moment. I called her, but she didn’t hear me. I’ll try again...”

.....MOOOOOOMMMM.....MMMMMOOOOMMMM....MMMWOOMM....

COMEEEEEEEE, MAPLE’S MOM IS CALLING

YOU.....MOOOOOOMMMMMMM.....”

I shouted as loudly as I could, catching the attention of our neighbor, a sweet grandma tending to her garden, who looked up in surprise and hurried into her house as if she’d seen a ghost. My cheeks turned a shade of crimson, a tad embarrassed by the spectacle.

At long last, Mum emerged and seized the phone, diving into a delightful exchange of gossip. No need for pretense; I was keenly attuned to their whispers. Soon, I caught wind of a hushed discussion.

Mum drifted toward a shadowy nook, prompting me to creep closer. They were weaving tales of an adventurous holiday trip. My heart raced with anticipation! I dashed off to grab my phone to call Maple, but just as I hurried, my own phone chimed.

It was Maple. I answered with bubbling enthusiasm, exclaiming, "Oh my goodness, did you hear what our mums said?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" she replied, mirroring my excitement.

"I couldn't catch where we're headed, but I overheard something!" she exclaimed, her voice brimming with glee.

"Finally, we're going to see each other after ages! I am sooooo excited!" I gushed.

"I'm thrilled too! I can hardly wait!" she echoed.

After chatting about school and other delightful tidbits, we reluctantly concluded our 'secret' exchange.

As dinner loomed, I eagerly anticipated what Mum would reveal. I patiently awaited her words while assisting in the culinary creation.

We conjured a nourishing chicken soup, and feast of roasted chicken accompanied by vibrant steamed vegetables for Frizzy.

Yes, she is quite spoilt.

As my father returned from his daily toil, we gathered around the table to share our evening meal. True to form, Dad regaled us with tales of the stress that cloaked his office life, but my mother interjected with a sparkle in her eye, saying,

“Kristy called me today; we were discussing the, umm... trip.”

A rush of excitement surged through me at the mention of the TRIP, though my attention was momentarily snagged by Frizzy, who devoured her dinner with a fervor that seemed otherworldly.

Mum and Dad exchanged knowing smiles in my direction. I feared they might have sensed my eavesdropping, so I quickly declared, “Yes, I heard about it.”

“What?” Mum inquired, a hint of annoyance creeping into her voice.

“Nothing,” I replied, my tone quivering slightly.

“Alright, so...” Mum continued, her voice regaining its warmth.

“We will be embarking on a journey with Maple and her family. There’s room for one more, so you can invite a friend too... but don’t get too carried away... if you wish to join, you must complete all your homework and tidy your room,” Mum instructed.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already taken care of that,” I proclaimed with pride.

“What! How?” Mum gasped in surprise.

“Every time we have a holiday and prepare for an adventure, you always remind me to finish my homework and clean my room... so I did!” I beamed.

“Wait, so you knew about this all along?” Dad asked, glancing at Mum with raised eyebrows.

In that instant, the realization struck me—I had indeed stepped into murky waters.

Mum turned her gaze to me, her expression curious yet stern. “How did you find out?”

I knew I had to confess, so I spoke the truth.

“I overheard your conversation with Maple’s mum... I’m sorry.”

“Oh my, I didn’t raise you to be this way,” she replied, shaking her head gently. Yet, to my surprise, Dad offered a reassuring pat on my back, saying, “That’s my daughter, but let’s avoid that in the future.” Mum shot him a disapproving glance.

After dinner, I nestled into sleep, only to have Frizzy leap onto my bed, his snores echoing like a thunderstorm. "Frizzy, shh... I'm trying to sleep, please stop snoring," I implored. But Frizzy, undeterred, let out an even louder symphony of snores. "Ugggghhh, I'm done with this, just be quiet." With that, exhaustion took over, and I drifted into slumber...

Morning arrived with the blaring of my alarm, rousing me from my dreams, tricking me into believing it was a school day. I knew it was my own doing, yet I couldn't resist chastising something so devoid of feelings.

Venturing into the garden with Frizzy, I began to water the plants. My friend Max, a companion since preschool, lived right next door and attended the same school as I did.

As I tended to the garden, Max called out from his bedroom window, "What a surprise! You're awake so early!" "You startled me! And WHY are YOU up so early?" I replied, my tone dripping with sarcasm.

Dad emerged from the house, surprised to see I had finished watering the plants before he could. He gave my shoulder a friendly pat and said, "You're doing this for that trip, right?" "No... I accidentally set the alarm, and it went off, so I couldn't drift back to sleep," I admitted. We both chuckled. "Oh! Mum said I could invite a friend, maybe I could ask Max!" I exclaimed, my excitement bubbling over.

In my eyes, Maple, Max, and I were the best of friends, inseparable in our adventures. However, since Maple's family journeyed to France for her father's work, our escapades together had been put on hold.

"Yes, you can," Dad replied with a warm smile. "MAX, MAX, MAX, EXCITING NEWS!" I shouted toward his open window. "Yes, what is it?" he called back. "We're going on a trip; Maple's joining us! I can invite one more person, would you like to come?" I eagerly asked. "Absolutely! Let me check with my mum," he shouted, dashing inside, likely to seek her approval. Moments later, he reappeared at the window, beaming, and proclaimed, "She said yes!"

“Do you have anything planned for today? If not, why not swing by, and we can chat about the trip with Maple?” I called out again.
“I’m free! I’ll come over once you’ve finished watering those plants...” he replied.

“Alright then, see you soon...” I responded.

“Bye for now,” he echoed back.

In that moment, I realized our animated exchange had been broadcast to the entire neighborhood, for we were bellowing in the early morning light.

A blush crept over me, particularly as I caught sight of the elderly neighbor, perched comfortably in her fancy chair on the balcony, engrossed in a book. Surely, she must have found our spirited dialogue rather intrusive!

Once I finished tending to the plants, I slipped inside and found Mum, who was just rising to begin her daily rituals. I excitedly shared that I had invited Max to join us on the trip.

“How delightful! Be sure to tell Maple too,” she replied with a warm smile.

“Yes, I will,” I affirmed as I ascended the stairs to my room.

“And Mum, Max mentioned he’d come over to discuss the trip with me and Maple. Is that alright?” I inquired.

“That’s perfectly fine, darling,” she assured me.

“You’re the best... love you!” I exclaimed, dashing off to my room

I called Maple to share the thrilling news of Max’s invitation.

“YAY, THAT’S AMAZING NEWS.....” she squealed with delight.

“I also asked him to join us for a chat about the trip; he’ll likely spread the word to our friends too,” I added, fueling the excitement.

Later that afternoon, Max arrived...

“Max, it’s so lovely to see you after such a long time,” my mum greeted him with genuine warmth.

“It’s great to see you all too!” Max replied cheerfully.

“Come along, dear, let’s have lunch,” my mum said, preparing a plate for him.

“Oh, thank you,” he said, walking alongside me to the dining table.

chapter 02

After our midday feast and lending a hand to Mum in her kitchen , Max and I ventured into the embrace of the garden, settling on our charming outdoor patio. Amidst the gentle rustle of leaves, we shared tales and laughter, reminiscing about schooldays and the joyful chaos we once conjured with Maple by our side. The bittersweet memories glistened in our eyes, a testament to the bond we cherished.

“Max, I don’t know where we are heading!”

I exclaimed in surprise.

“That’s precisely what was on my mind—where are we going?”

Our laughter danced in the air, lightening the moment. As we savored our camaraderie, Mum emerged from the house, bringing with her a tray laden with fragrant tea and delightful éclairs, crafted with love.

“Mmmmmm... your cooking is as enchanting as ever...”

Thank you for the tea,” Max exclaimed, his mouth delightfully full.

“Mum, before you whisk away, do tell us where we are going ,” I chimed in, equally indulging in the chocolatey treat.

“Oh, my dears, how could I forget to share!” she said, her hand gently patting Max’s shoulder. “We are journeying to a wondrous place called Ashyn.” mom said happily.

"What's Ashyn like?" Max asked, curiosity twinkling in his eyes.

Mum settled into a nearby chair, a warm smile spreading across her face as she began to weave a tale. "Ashyn is a place where time seems to pause, allowing nature and imagination to dance freely. There are vast meadows painted with wildflowers, their colors so vibrant they seem to leap from the earth. The air is crisp and carries the scent of pine and fresh earth, mingling with the whispers of the ancient trees that stand guard over the land."

I leaned forward, captivated by her words. "And what about the people there?"

"They're as welcoming as the sunshine," Mum replied. "Each person has a story to tell, and the community thrives on sharing and creativity. Festivals are held often, celebrating art, music, and the simple joy of being together. There's a magic in their unity, in how they embrace both the old and the new."

Max and I exchanged glances, excitement bubbling within us at the thought of such an adventure. "It sounds like a dream," I mused, imagining the wonders that awaited us.

Mum nodded, her eyes reflecting the dreams of her own youth. "It's a place where dreams can take root and grow, just like the towering oaks that grace Ashyn's landscape. I can't wait for you both to experience it."

With that, we sat in contented silence, sipping our tea and nibbling on éclairs, all the while dreaming of the enchanting journey that lay ahead. Our hearts were light, filled with anticipation and the promise of new memories to be made in the land of Ashyn.

The afternoon sun cast a gentle glow through the kitchen window, wrapping us in a cozy warmth as we lingered in our thoughts. Max was the first to break the silence, a soft smile playing on his lips. "I wonder if we'll meet someone who'll tell us stories about the past, like those old legends you hear about."

Mum chuckled softly, her eyes twinkling with amusement. "Oh, I'm sure you will. Ashyn is full of storytellers, each with tales as rich and varied as the meadows themselves. And who knows, you might even create your own story to share."

The idea sparked a sense of adventure in my heart, and I could see the same feeling mirrored in Max's eyes. We both knew this journey would be more than just a visit; it would be a chance to discover something new about ourselves and the world.

As the day waned and shadows stretched longer, Mum began to gather the tea set. "Remember," she said, her voice gentle but filled with wisdom, "the magic of a place lies not just in its beauty, but in the moments you share and the memories you create."

We helped clear the table, our minds still wandering through fields of wildflowers and stories yet to be told. It was as if Ashyn had already begun to weave its spell around us, drawing us into its embrace. And as we prepared for the journey ahead, there was a comforting certainty that Ashyn would welcome us with open arms, ready to reveal its secrets and wonders.

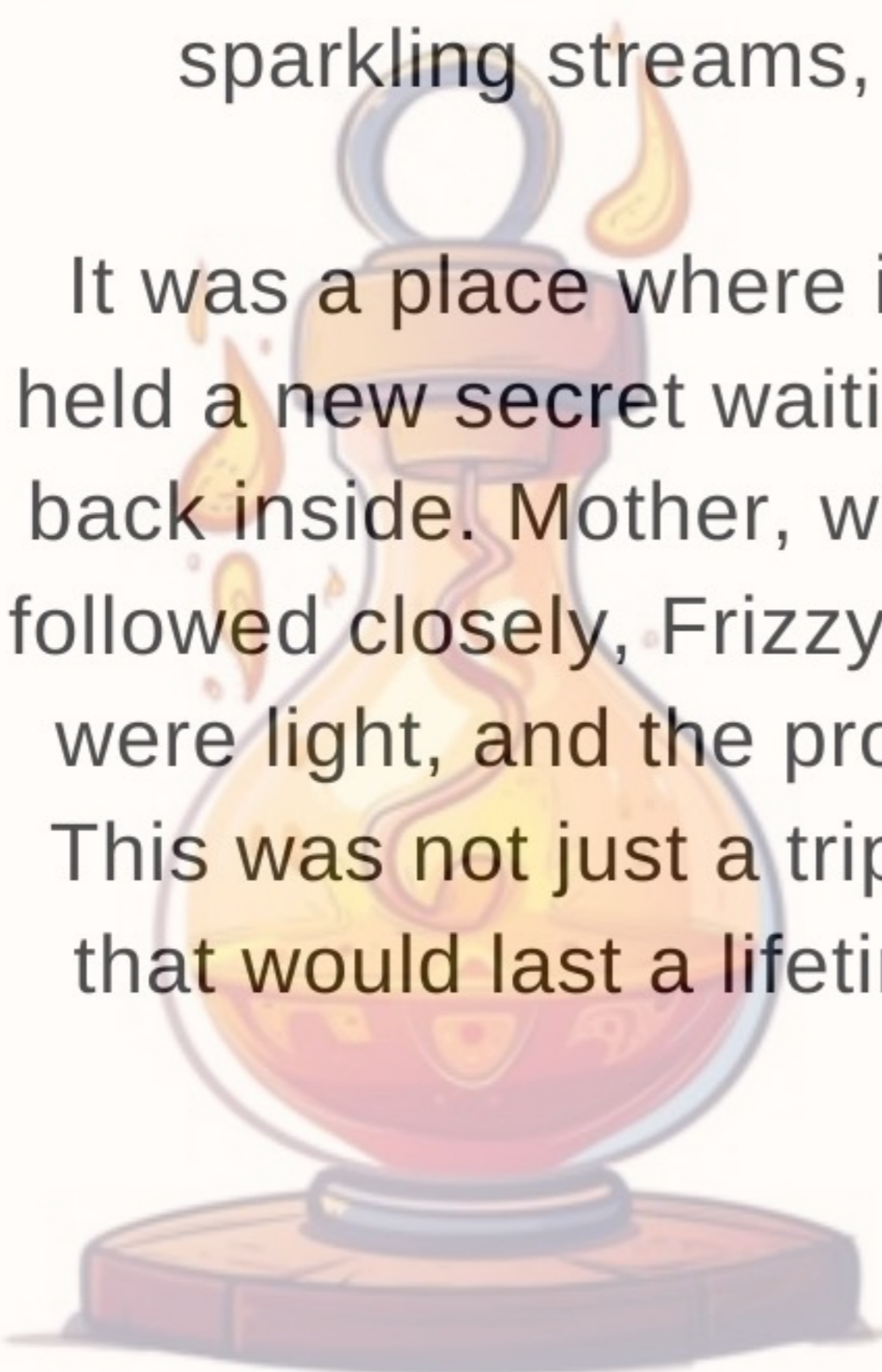
“So, the children converse with Maple, pondering the delightful games and enchanting activities we might embark upon together in Ashyn.” With that, Mother glided towards the house.

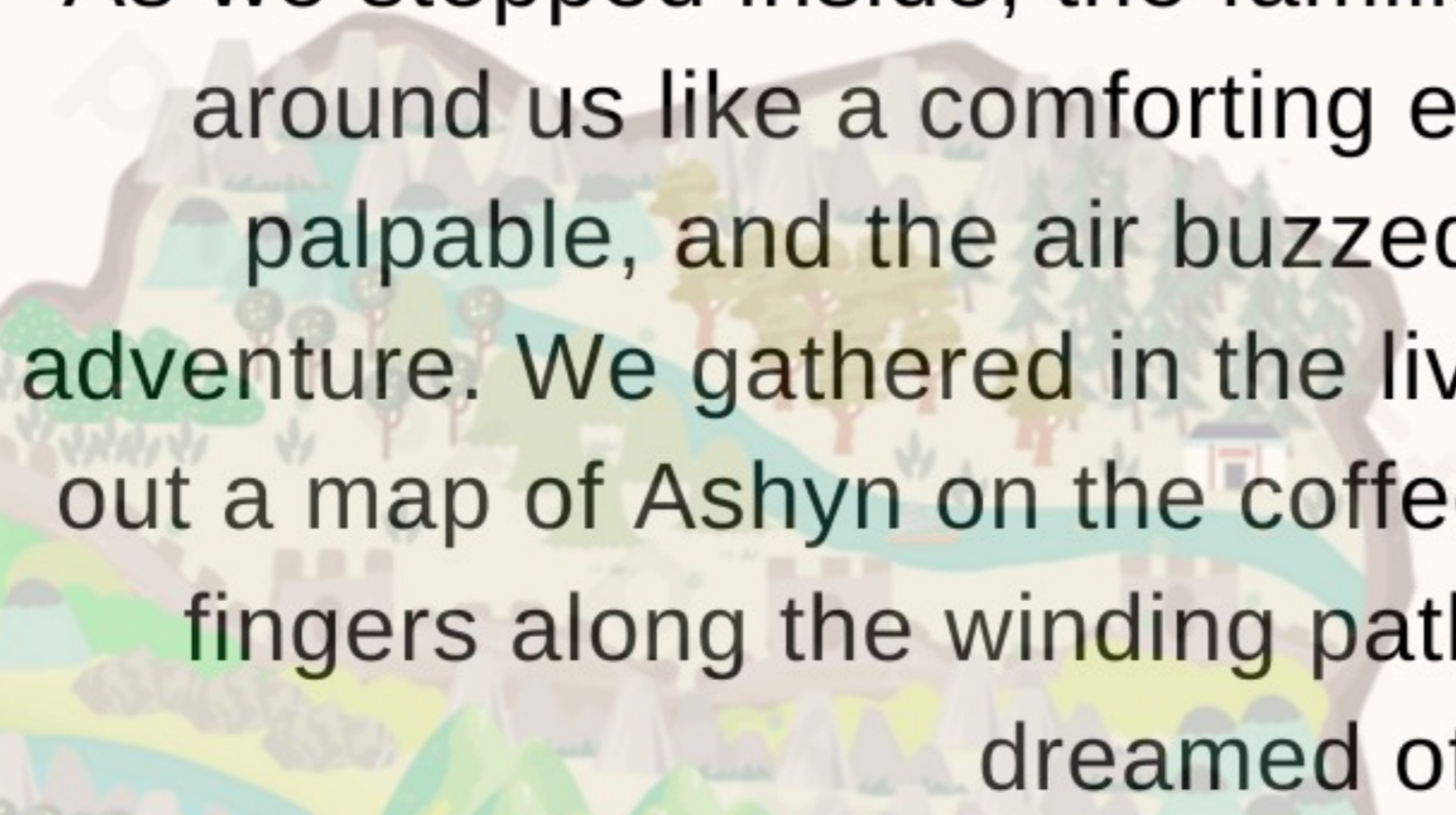
“Is Frizzy joining us, Mom?” I inquired, glancing at Frizzy, who lay peacefully at my feet, his ears perked as if he truly understood our words.

“Absolutely, my dear! We cannot leave him behind; he is a cherished part of our family. And remember to pack his bag, especially his beloved tennis ball,” she replied, her heart brimming with affection for our furry companion.

With a joyful wag of his tail, Frizzy seemed to acknowledge his place in our upcoming adventure. The thought of exploring Ashyn with him filled me with excitement. I could already imagine him bounding through the fields, chasing after his favorite ball, and making new discoveries alongside us. As I gathered his things, I thought about the stories Nana used to tell us about Ashyn—the land of towering trees and sparkling streams, where the air was crisp and full of possibilities.

It was a place where imagination thrived, and every corner held a new secret waiting to be uncovered. Soon, we all went back inside. Mother, with her gentle smile, led the way, and I followed closely, Frizzy trotting happily beside me. Our hearts were light, and the promise of a magical journey lay ahead. This was not just a trip; it was a chance to create memories that would last a lifetime, with Frizzy, our loyal friend, right there with us.





As we stepped inside, the familiar warmth of our home wrapped around us like a comforting embrace. The excitement was palpable, and the air buzzed with the anticipation of our adventure. We gathered in the living room, where Mother had laid out a map of Ashyn on the coffee table. Together, we traced our fingers along the winding paths and marked the places we dreamed of exploring.

"Look here," Mother pointed, her eyes twinkling with the thrill of discovery. "This is the Whispering Woods, where the trees are said to sing softly in the breeze."

"And over here," I added enthusiastically, "is the Crystal Lake. Nana always said the water sparkles like diamonds under the moonlight."

Frizzy barked in agreement, as if urging us to hurry with our preparations. His enthusiasm was infectious, and soon the room was filled with laughter and plans. We packed our bags with essentials—warm clothes, a sketchbook for capturing the beauty of Ashyn, and, of course, plenty of treats for Frizzy.

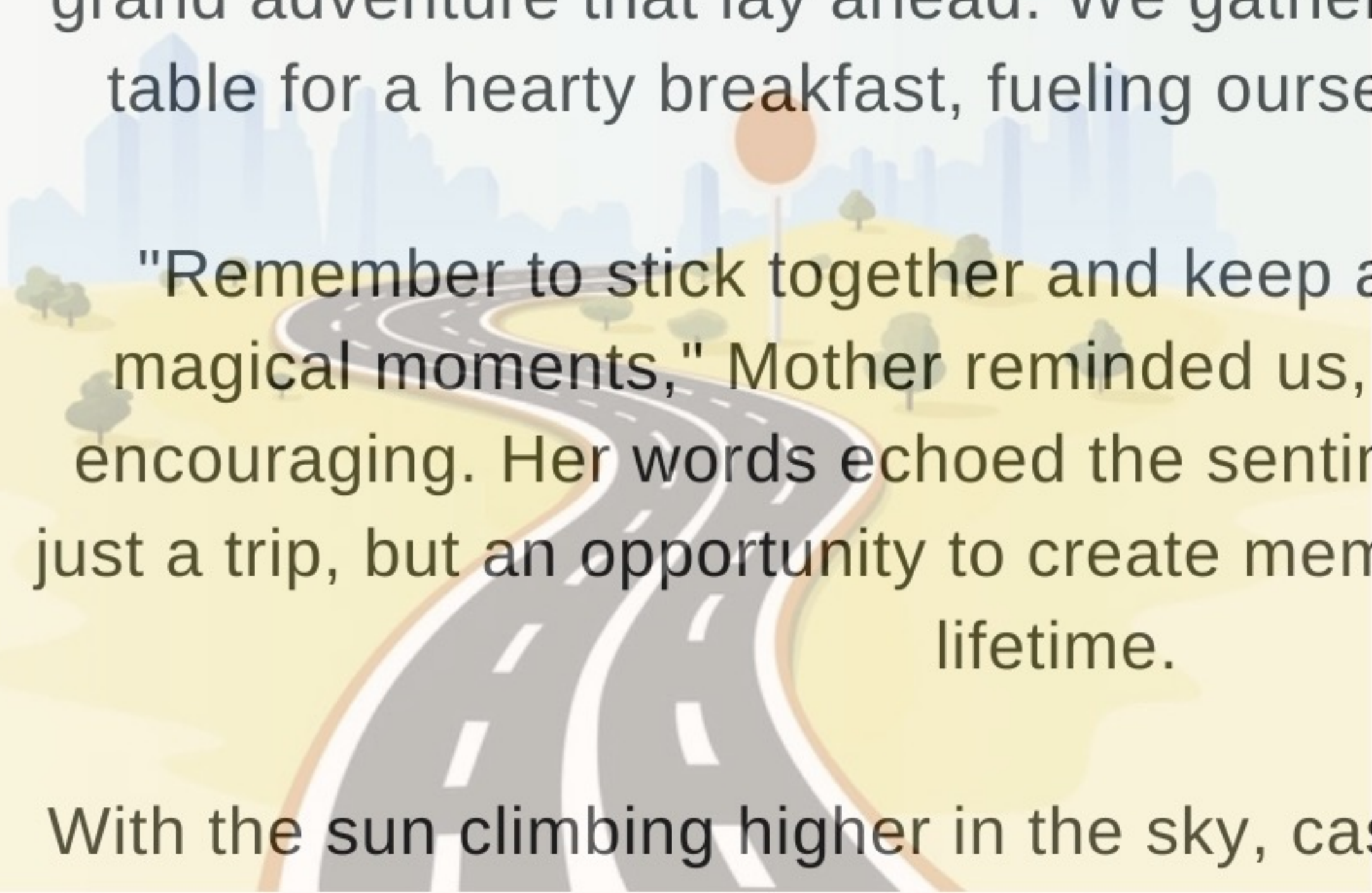
The afternoon passed in a joyful blur, and as the sun began to set, casting a golden glow through the windows, we knew it was time to rest. Tomorrow would bring the start of our journey, and we needed to be ready for whatever wonders awaited us.

As I lay in bed that night, listening to the gentle rhythm of Frizzy's breathing beside me, I felt a deep sense of gratitude. We were about to embark on an adventure that promised not just exploration, but a deepening of the bonds that held our family together. With that comforting thought, I drifted into a peaceful sleep, dreaming of the magical land of Ashyn and all the secrets it held.

Chapter 03

Morning arrived with a gentle light peeking through the curtains, painting our room in soft hues of gold and pink. The house was already stirring with the sounds of our preparations; the clinking of breakfast dishes, the rustle of backpacks being zipped, and the cheerful chatter that filled every corner.

Frizzy, ever eager, bounded around, his tail a blur of excitement. He seemed to sense the significance of the day, as if aware of the grand adventure that lay ahead. We gathered around the kitchen table for a hearty breakfast, fueling ourselves for the journey.



"Remember to stick together and keep an eye out for those magical moments," Mother reminded us, her voice warm and encouraging. Her words echoed the sentiment that this was not just a trip, but an opportunity to create memories that would last a lifetime.

With the sun climbing higher in the sky, casting a vibrant glow on the path outside, we set off with hearts full of hope and wonder. The world felt expansive and inviting, each step taking us closer to the wonders of Ashyn. The Whispering Woods awaited, and beyond it, the shimmering promise of the Crystal Lake.

As we drove the, laughter and stories flowed freely, weaving a tapestry of joy and connection. Frizzy led the way, a furry ambassador of enthusiasm, reminding us to embrace the journey with open hearts and curious spirits. The road ahead was filled with unknowns, but together, we were ready to face whatever came our way, knowing that the true magic lay in the journey itself.

The landscape changed as we ventured further from home, the familiar giving way to the unknown. Fields of wildflowers danced in the breeze, their vibrant colors painting the countryside with splashes of life. The mountains loomed in the distance, their peaks kissing the sky, inviting us to explore their mysteries.

As we approached the Whispering Woods, an air of enchantment seemed to envelop us. The trees stood tall and majestic, their leaves whispering tales of ancient secrets as the wind gently caressed them. We paused at the edge of the forest, taking a deep breath of the fresh, earthy scent that filled the air.

Frizzy, ever the explorer, darted ahead, his nose twitching with curiosity. We followed his lead, stepping into the cool shade of the woods. Sunlight filtered through the canopy above, casting dappled patterns on the forest floor. The path wound its way through the trees, each turn revealing a new wonder—a patch of delicate mushrooms, a babbling brook, or a cluster of vibrant ferns.

The deeper we ventured, the more the forest seemed to come alive with the sounds of nature. Birds sang sweetly from their perches, and the rustling of small creatures in the underbrush hinted at the bustling life hidden from view. We marveled at the beauty around us, each sight and sound a reminder of the magic that exists in the world.

As we emerged from the woods, Crystal Lake greeted us with its shimmering surface, reflecting the sky like a vast mirror. We stood at its edge, mesmerized by the serene beauty of the scene. It was a place where dreams seemed to take flight, where the boundary between reality and fantasy blurred, leaving only the pure joy of the moment.

Together, we spent the day exploring, laughing, and soaking in the tranquility of the lake. As the sun began its descent, painting the sky with hues of orange and pink, we knew that this day, this adventure, would be etched in our hearts forever—a cherished memory to carry with us, wherever life's journey might lead.

Max, my family, and I continued our journey until we stumbled upon a charming hotel where we decided to rest. Soon after, Maple arrived with her family. Max, Maple, and I embraced tightly after such a long time apart, tears of joy glistening on our cheeks, while Frizzy playfully licked the salty drops from our faces, adding his own touch of happiness to the moment.

The reunion was a heartwarming reminder of the bonds that tied us together, no matter the distance or time apart. As evening settled in, we gathered in the cozy lounge of the hotel, a crackling fireplace casting a warm glow over the room. Stories flowed as easily as the laughter, each tale weaving a tapestry of shared history and new adventures.

Dinner was a feast of local delicacies, each dish bursting with flavors that reminded us of the region's rich bounty. As we savored the meal, we made plans for the days to come, eager to explore more of the enchanting surroundings. The promise of new experiences and the comfort of familiar company filled us with a sense of contentment.

Later, as the stars dotted the night sky, we gathered outside for a stroll under the moonlit expanse. The cool night air was refreshing, and the gentle rustle of leaves accompanied our footsteps. We walked in companionable silence, each of us reflecting on the day's adventures and the serendipity of our reunion.

Back at the hotel, as we settled into our rooms for the night, a profound sense of gratitude washed over me. The journey had brought us to unexpected places, both in the world and in our hearts, reminding us of the beauty that life has to offer when we open ourselves to the unknown. With dreams of tomorrow's adventures in our minds, we drifted into a peaceful slumber, cradled by the warmth of friendship and the promise of new beginnings.

Ashyn was the place to be, a wondrous trip shared with a vast gathering of family and friends. The smiles that adorned our faces as Frizzy frolicked with his tennis ball were simply unmatched.

The next morning, sunlight gently filtered through the curtains, waking us with its soft touch. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee wafted through the air, drawing us to the breakfast table where an array of pastries and fruits awaited. The start of a new day was invigorating, filled with the promise of more memories to create.

As we sat together, sipping our coffee and planning the day's adventures, the joy of being surrounded by loved ones was palpable.

We decided to explore the nearby countryside, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and quaint villages. With Frizzy leading the way, his enthusiasm contagious, we set off on our excursion.

The day unfolded like a beautifully painted canvas, each moment vibrant and full of life. We wandered through fields of wildflowers, their colors dancing in the breeze, and discovered hidden paths that led us to enchanting vistas overlooking the valley. The sound of laughter filled the air as we shared stories and paused to capture photographs, preserving each cherished moment.

At lunchtime, we stumbled upon a picturesque picnic spot by a babbling brook, where we spread out a blanket and indulged in a delicious spread of sandwiches, cheeses, and freshly picked berries. The simple pleasure of dining al fresco, surrounded by nature's beauty, was magical.

As the sun began its descent, painting the sky with hues of pink and gold, we made our way back to the hotel. The evening was spent in good company, playing games and sharing more stories by the fireplace. The warmth of the fire mirrored the warmth in our hearts, and we were reminded once again of the strength and joy that comes from being together.

With the moon casting its gentle glow, we finally retired for the night, hearts full and spirits high. The day had been a testament to the wonders of exploration and the joy of connection, and as we drifted into sleep, we dreamed of the adventures that awaited us with the dawn of a new day.

The next morning greeted us with a renewed sense of excitement and anticipation. The sun shone brightly, casting a golden hue over Ashyn, promising another day of unforgettable experiences. Eager to embrace the day, we gathered for breakfast, sharing laughter and plans for our next adventure.

Today, our journey would take us to the nearby lake, a shimmering oasis nestled amidst lush greenery. Frizzy, ever the enthusiastic explorer, was already bounding ahead, his playful barks echoing through the morning air. As we arrived at the lakeside, the tranquil waters mirrored the clear blue sky, creating a serene and picturesque setting.

We decided to rent a few rowboats, eager to glide across the gentle waves and explore the lake's hidden corners. Rowing together, we marveled at the beauty of our surroundings, the water lapping softly against the boats, creating a soothing melody. Frizzy, perched at the bow, watched intently as dragonflies danced above the water, his tail wagging in delight.

After our boating adventure, we enjoyed a leisurely swim, the cool water refreshing against the warmth of the day. Floating on our backs, we gazed up at the clouds, allowing our imaginations to shape them into whimsical forms. It was a moment of pure bliss, a reminder of the simple joys that nature offers.

As afternoon turned to evening, we gathered our things and headed back, feeling grateful for the day's adventures. Dinner was a lively affair, filled with animated conversations and plans for future gatherings. We toasted to friendship and family, to the memories we had made, and to the many more that awaited us.

As the stars began to twinkle in the night sky, we sat together on the terrace, wrapped in blankets, sharing stories and laughter. The camaraderie we felt was a testament to the bonds that tied us together, making Ashyn not just a place, but a cherished memory we would carry in our hearts forever.

And as the night deepened, we knew that this journey was about more than just exploration; it was about the connections we forged and the love that surrounded us. With hearts full of gratitude, we drifted into a peaceful sleep, dreaming of the adventures yet to come.

Chapter 04

The dawn that followed was shrouded in despair; in my heart, it felt like the darkest of days. Frizzy had vanished. While Max, Maple, Mum, and Dad ventured forth into the wilderness to seek her out, I remained ensconced in my room, tears cascading down my cheeks. "How can I ever locate my precious Frizzy in this vast expanse? Oh, my beloved Frizzy, why did you disappear into this dense forest?" I lamented, cradling her cherished tennis ball as if it held the magic to summon her back.

Just as the flicker of hope began to dim, a gentle knock graced my door. It was Mum, her face radiant with empathy and concern. She settled beside me, enveloping me in a warm embrace that felt like a balm for my aching heart.

"We will find Frizzy," she whispered soothingly. "She's clever and resourceful. Remember when she navigated her way home from the park all on her own?"

With a nod, I recalled that day, when Frizzy had astonished us all with her ingenuity and spirit.

"We'll search every corner of that forest if we must," Mum declared, her voice imbued with unwavering determination. "We will bring Frizzy home."

As I wiped my tears and inhaled deeply, a flicker of hope reignited within me.

We gathered our flashlights, snacks, and a map, readying ourselves for an adventurous quest. Stepping into the twilight of the evening, optimism began to weave its way through my heart. Together, as a family, we would surely find

Frizzy.

The forest loomed ahead, a sprawling tapestry of towering trees and tangled underbrush, but our spirits remained unyielding. The crisp air mingled with the symphony of nature, a gentle reminder of life thriving around us. With each step forward, our determination solidified, the bond that tethered us unbreakable against the uncertainty.

Max and Maple forged ahead, their voices ringing out as they called for Frizzy, their enthusiasm a beacon of hope. Mum and Dad scanned the path for any trace of our beloved pup, their vigilance unwavering. I clutched Frizzy's tennis ball tightly, a talisman of familiarity, wishing that its scent could guide her back to us.

The forest seemed to stretch endlessly, each shadowy corner holding the promise of discovery. As we delved deeper, the light of our flashlights danced across the foliage, creating fleeting patterns that mirrored the fluttering hope in my heart.

Suddenly, a rustling sound broke the rhythmic crunch of leaves beneath our feet. We all paused, exchanging hopeful glances, as if daring to believe that this could be the moment we had been yearning for. Max, ever the adventurous one, moved cautiously toward the source, his voice steady and soft as he called out, "Frizzy, is that you?"

To our amazement, a familiar bark echoed back, muffled but unmistakably Frizzy's. My heart leapt as we hurried toward the sound, our pace quickening with every step. The underbrush parted, and there she was—Frizzy, her eyes wide with excitement, her tail wagging furiously as if she had been waiting just for us.

I dropped to my knees, tears of relief mingling with laughter as Frizzy bounded into my arms, covering my face with joyful licks. The world seemed to brighten around us, the shadows lifting as my family gathered in a joyous embrace, all of us reunited at last.

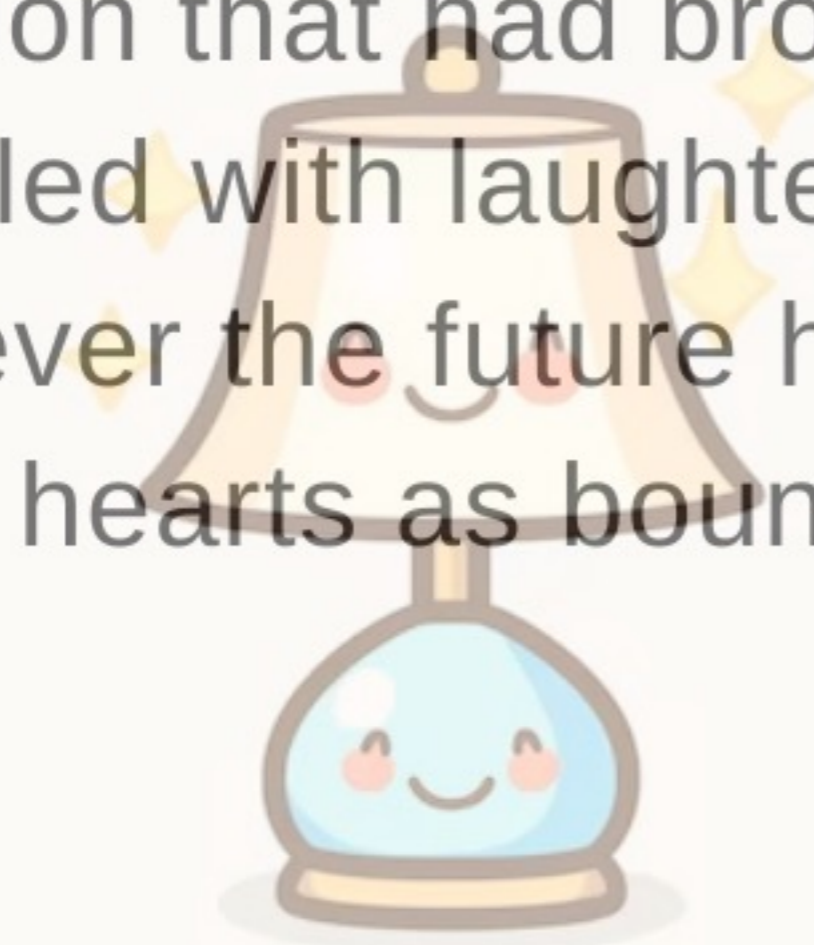
In that moment, surrounded by the love and warmth of my family and the gentle presence of Frizzy, I realized that no matter how vast the wilderness or daunting the journey, the strength of our bonds would always guide us home.

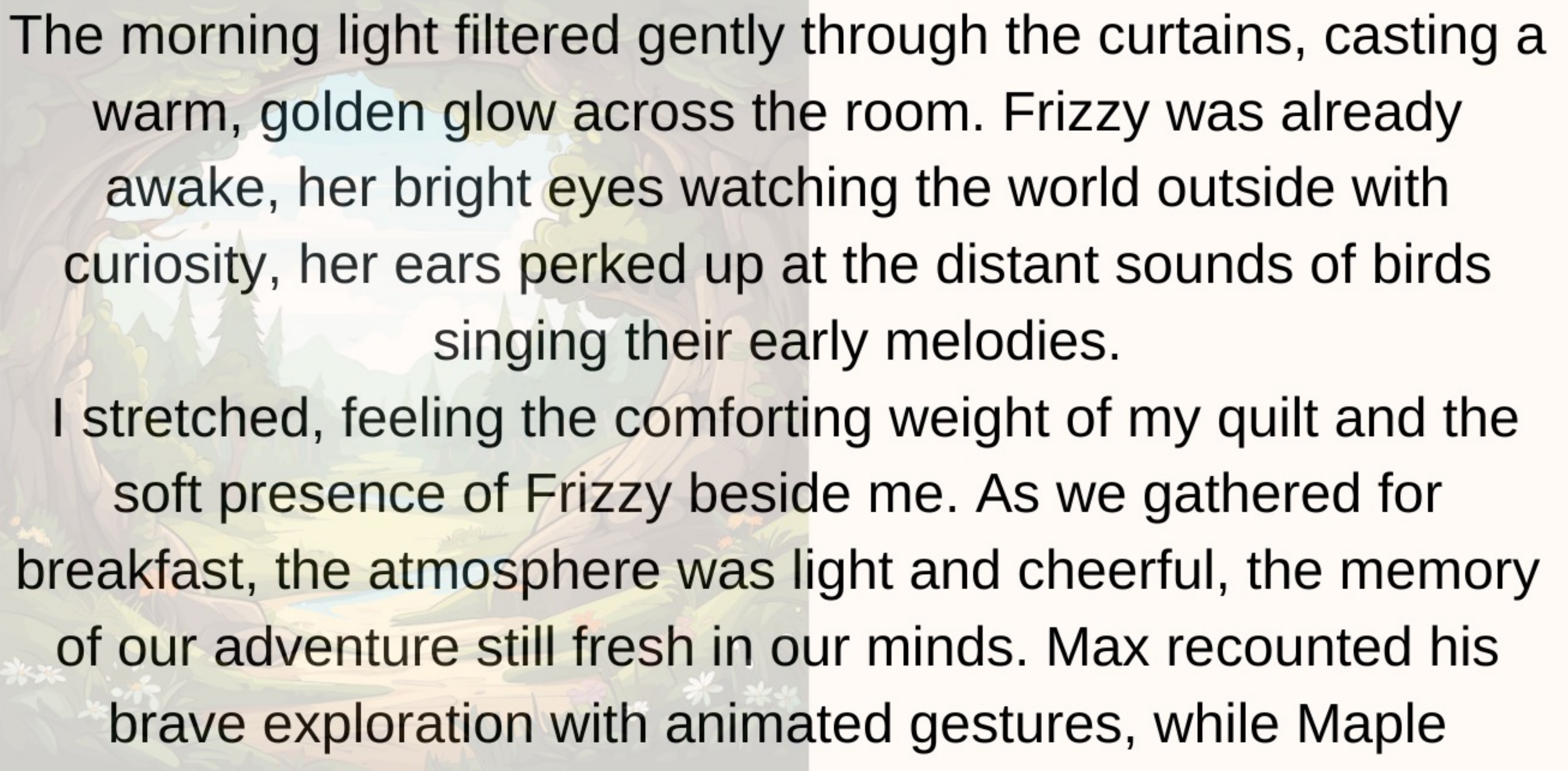
The forest, once an enigmatic maze, now felt like a familiar friend, its secrets shared and its mysteries unveiled. As we made our way back, Frizzy trotting happily by our side, I couldn't help but reflect on the incredible journey we had just experienced. Each tree seemed to nod in approval, their leaves whispering tales of courage and unity.

The path, illuminated by the gentle glow of the moonlight, felt less daunting and more like a well-trodden route of memory and love. We spoke in hushed tones, sharing stories of the moments we thought we would never find her, and the unwavering hope that kept us going.

Arriving back at the edge of the forest, the sight of our cozy cabin welcomed us like a beacon of warmth. The soft glow from the windows promised comfort and rest, wrapping us in the cozy embrace of home. As we stepped inside, the scent of pine and earth lingered, a gentle reminder of the adventure we had conquered.

That night, as Frizzy curled up at the foot of the bed, I lay awake for a while, grateful for the unwavering love and determination that had brought us together again. I drifted into dreams filled with laughter and the rustle of leaves, knowing that whatever the future held, we would face it together, with hearts as boundless as the forest itself.





The morning light filtered gently through the curtains, casting a warm, golden glow across the room. Frizzy was already awake, her bright eyes watching the world outside with curiosity, her ears perked up at the distant sounds of birds singing their early melodies.

I stretched, feeling the comforting weight of my quilt and the soft presence of Frizzy beside me. As we gathered for breakfast, the atmosphere was light and cheerful, the memory of our adventure still fresh in our minds. Max recounted his brave exploration with animated gestures, while Maple animatedly shared her plans for the day, her excitement contagious. Mum and Dad exchanged knowing smiles, their relief echoed in every word and gesture. Over toast and scrambled eggs, we talked about the lessons we had learned, not just about the forest, but about ourselves and each other. It

was a morning filled with gratitude, laughter, and the comforting knowledge that we were stronger together. Outside, the world seemed to have taken on a new vibrancy. The trees whispered their secrets to the wind, and the sun rose higher, casting a brilliant light on the path we had walked the night before. Frizzy, ever the adventurer, was ready for another day of exploration, her tail wagging in eager anticipation. As we prepared to step outside, I felt a renewed sense of wonder for the world around us, and an unshakeable bond with those I held dear. With Frizzy by our side, every day promised new discoveries, and every challenge seemed surmountable.

Together, we would continue our journey, our hearts intertwined with the magic of the forest and the unbreakable spirit of family.

The day unfolded with an air of optimism, a testament to the resilience and love that bound us. Frizzy, our loyal companion, led the way as we ventured into the sun-drenched morning, her enthusiasm infectious and her spirit unyielding. We followed her eager path, the forest now a familiar friend, its mysteries a shared memory etched in our hearts. As we meandered through the trails, the world felt alive with possibilities. The laughter of Maple and Max intertwined with the symphony of nature, creating a harmonious melody that echoed through the trees. Each step was a reminder of the adventures we had already faced together and those yet to come. Our journey took us to a hidden glade, where the sunlight filtered through the canopy, casting playful patterns on the forest floor. It was a place of serenity, where time seemed to pause, allowing us to bask in the beauty of the moment. We settled on the soft grass, sharing stories and dreams, the bonds of friendship and family strengthening with each word. Frizzy, ever the explorer, bounded through the glade, her joyful barks a celebration of freedom and companionship. Watching her, I was reminded of the simplicity of happiness and the joy of being surrounded by those who mattered most. As the afternoon sun dipped lower in the sky, painting the world in shades of amber and gold, we knew it was time to return. Yet, the journey back was not a farewell but a promise—a promise of more adventures, more laughter, and more cherished moments. With hearts full and spirits high, we retraced our steps, the path now a tapestry of shared memories. Each rustle of leaves and whisper of wind was a reminder of the magic we had found in the forest and within ourselves. Back at the cabin, the glow of the setting sun cast a warm embrace over us, a gentle reminder that home was not just a place but a feeling—a feeling of love, unity, and belonging. As night fell and the stars began to twinkle in the vast expanse above, we gathered around the fireplace, sharing stories and dreams for the future. Frizzy curled up beside us, her presence a comforting assurance that we were exactly where we were meant to be. In that moment, surrounded by the warmth of family and the promise of new beginnings, I knew that our journey was far from over. Together, with Frizzy by our side, we would continue to explore the wonders of the world, our hearts open to the magic of each new day.



Thank you for embarking on this
journey with us!

Afterword

According to my concept, under the project that has been running since 2014 to direct school children to writing, we have been fortunate to have planted more than sixty thousand writer seedlings in the local literary field. The objectives of this project are to improve the quality of education, to promote literature that will contribute to the future development of the country, to hone the abilities of the future generation, and to build a platform to showcase the creations of children.

It is our social responsibility to create the fertile soil for those seeds to sprout and grow. This is the only project in recent history that has been implemented continuously for several years at the school level, provincial, national and international levels for the sake of the productivity of education. This time, it is special that the *Pirivena* student monks have also been involved in this. The nation should be grateful for the dedication shown by the Principal, daughters, teachers, parents and alumni of *Mahamaya Balika Vidyalaya*.

The printed book is still the main tool of our education. The enjoyment that a child gets from a book cannot be provided by anything else.

It is experimentally proven that the use of various electronic devices to store human knowledge and the distancing of children from books has been detrimental to the quality of education and has created various problems in society. This project, which is being implemented as a solution to this, has been adapting the smart younger generation of the digital age to modern technology by writing electronic works for the past two years, together with school children in the country.

To take their creations to international readers, Mahamaya girls have built a digital fiction for their own, literary creative abilities.

My congratulations to the young writers who have entered it through their creative abilities.

Project Founder and Coordinator,
Senevirathne Maha Lekam

LOST

Join their
exciting
journey!

A joyful morning begins with Kristy and her dog, Frizzy, as they anticipate a holiday trip. After a lively breakfast and a call from Maple's mom, Kristy learns about the upcoming journey, which excites her. She eavesdrops on her mom's conversation about the trip, leading to some playful embarrassment.

After ensuring her chores are done, Kristy invites her friend Max to join them. As preparations unfold, Kristy imagines the enchanting destination, Ashyn, filled with wildflowers and community spirit.

The family packs and enjoys their time together, including a visit to the garden.

Excitement grows as they dream of the adventures ahead. Upon arrival in Ashyn, they explore its beauty, enjoy local delicacies, and reunite with Maple.

Together, they embrace the magic of the land, sharing laughter and stories.

However, a dark turn occurs when Frizzy goes missing, prompting a family search through the forest. They find her, reinforcing their bonds and reminding them of the importance of unity and love.

The following days are filled with exploration, laughter, and reflection on their adventures. They cherish their time together, knowing that their journey is not just about the destination but the connections forged along the way. The family, along with Frizzy, looks forward to more adventures, embracing the magic of life and the strength of their togetherness.