

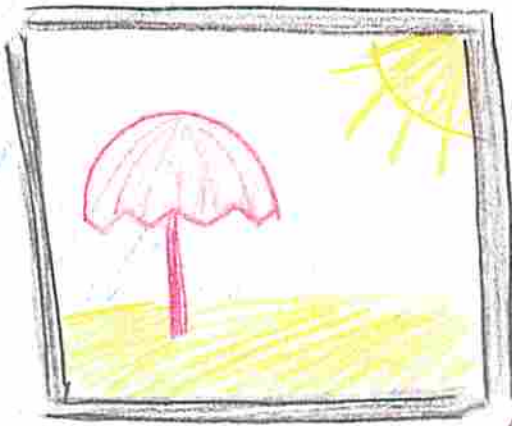
KATIE

AND THE

CAT HAVEN

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

MONIKA HAQUI



It was a sunny day in the middle of May. Katie woke up early. "We're about to go on our first ever road trip!" she told her teddy bear excitedly. She dressed herself quickly, brushed her long brown hair and ran to her parents' bedroom.

"I'm ready to go!" she said skipping around their bedroom. Her mother looked at Katie and laughed.

"Honey, you're wearing your shirt backwards. And your shoes on the wrong feet," Her mother said.

"Ooops," Katie said embarrassed.

"Go fix your clothes and then we'll leave," her father said.



"We're here," Katie's mom said, waking Katie up. Excited, Katie opened her door and jumped out of the car. In front of her was a brown lodge with a big sign on it.

"What does that sign say?" Katie asked her mother.

"It says Cat Haven, that's what this place is called," Her mother said.

"Cat What?" Katie asked

"Cat Haven. It's where the big cats live so people can come learn about them," her mother said, opening the front door.

Inside Katie saw many pictures of lions and tigers. Standing next to the biggest picture was a tall woman. "Mary," she gasped and ran towards Katie's mother.



In the car Katie stared out the window. They drove by big fields. There were many trees and cows. After a while everything started looking the same.

"Are we there yet?" Katie asked her parents.

"Not yet," her father said.

"Where are we going anyway?" Katie asked.

"We're going to visit a good friend of mine. She owns a place that's even cooler than the zoo," her mother said. *Cooler than the zoo?* Katie thought to herself.

"Nothing is cooler than the zoo," she whispered to her bear and began to dream.



"Susan," Katie's mom said hugging the woman. Susan was wearing a red shirt and shorts and had whiskers drawn on her face. She knelt down to Katie.

"So you must be Katie," she said smiling. "Is there anything I can get you?" Katie pointed at the woman's face.

"I want whiskers too," Katie said.



Susan lifted Katie up onto the counter, pulled out her black pen and drew whiskers on Katie too, so she looked like a cat.

"Would you like ears to go with that?" Susan asked, holding out a headband with ears on it. Katie nodded and put the headband on.



"Look mommy, I'm a cat." Katie said, pleased. Her parents laughed.  
"You ready to go look at some real cats?" Susan asked.  
"Yeah!" Katie's family said in unison.



Katie followed Susan through lodge and out the back door. In front of her she saw a path that led to a big enclosure. Inside the enclosure she saw a tiger.

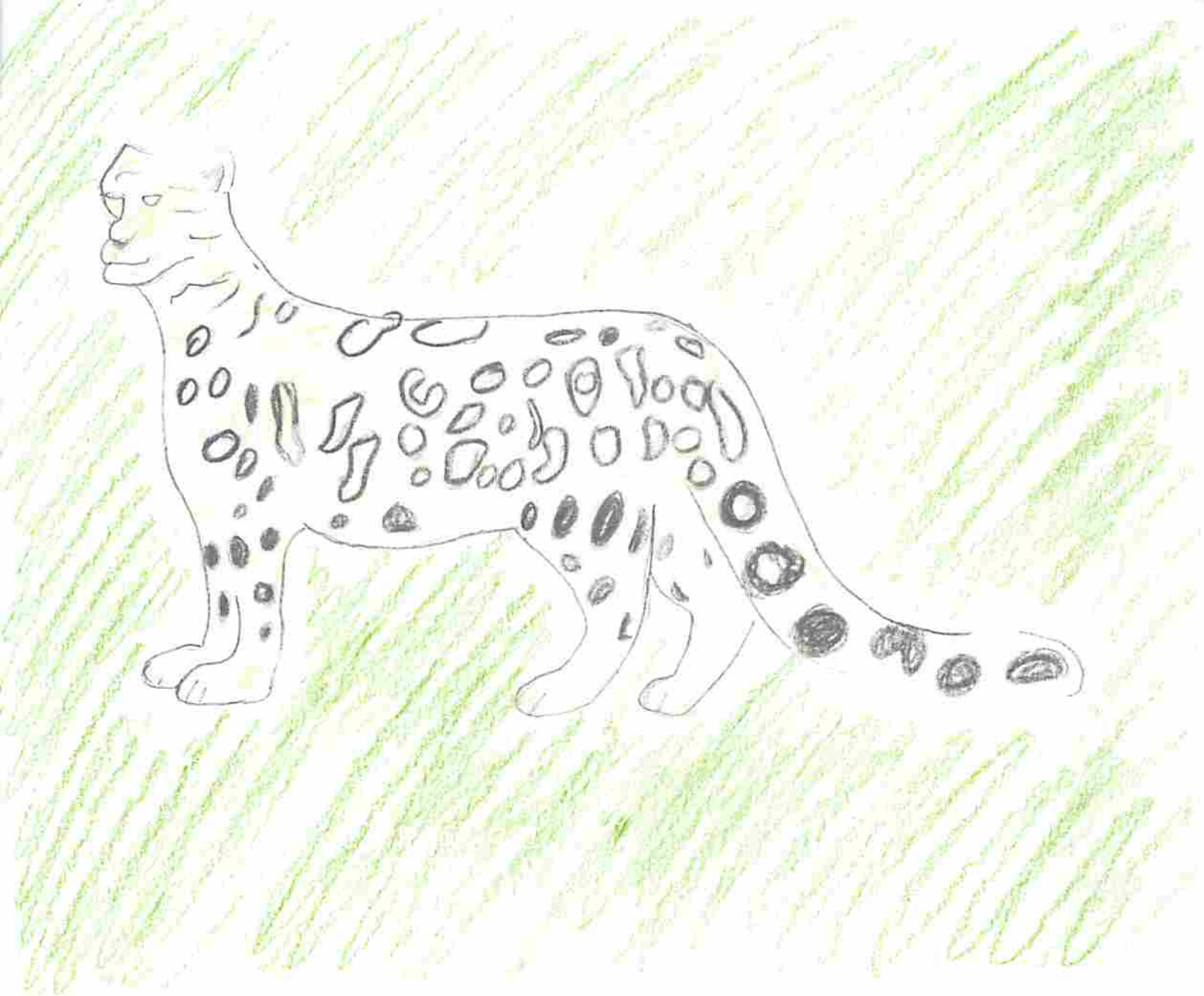
"Mommy," she said tugging her mom's arm. "It's a tiger!"

"How cool is that?" her mom asked as they walked up to the enclosure.

"This is Texas the Tiger," Susan said. "The average size of a male Bengal tiger is 450-500 lbs. That's almost three times the size of your father. The females are a little smaller than that. But sadly, there are not as many tigers as there used to be because they are being hunted."

"Hi Texas," Katie said to the tiger. "You're safe from the hunters here."

"Yes he is," Susan said laughing. "Shall we go see the next cat?" Katie nodded.



Katie followed Susan down the path until they came across another cage.

"This is Lizzy, our snow leopard." Susan said pointing to the cat.

"Is he called a snow leopard because he's white?" Katie asked, watching the cat run around the cage.

"That's one reason," Susan said. "Snow leopards live in the snow, so their fur is white so they can blend in with their surroundings. These cats are much smaller than the tigers and their fur is a lot thicker so they can stay warm in the snow."

"Lizzy is very pretty," Katie said, smiling.

"Yes she is," Susan said, also smiling. "I bet you didn't know this, but unlike most big cats, snow leopards can't roar."

"That's weird," Katie said. "What's next?"



“Next we have the Leonard and Leila, our lions. Lions are the second biggest cat after tigers,” Susan explained.

“If they’re both lions, why do they look different?” Katie asked.

“The male lion is a lot bigger and has a mane of fur around his neck and down his stomach. The female lions are smaller and don’t have manes.”

“So is that one Leonard?” Katie asked, pointing at the cat with the mane.

“Yes that is,” Susan said. “Lions are the only cats that live as a big family together in packs called prides. All other cats leave their parents when they are around one to two years old.”

“Mommy, I want to be a lion,” Katie said. “Roarr!”



"The next cat I want to show you guys before you leave is Cheeto the Cheetah," Susan said.

"Where is he?" Katie asked.

"He's back behind the lodge. If you guys stand in front of the lodge and I can bring him so you can pet him. He's our only trained cat," Susan said.

"Really?" Katie asked, excited. "Come on, Mommy, let's go to the front of the lodge." Holding her mom's hand they made their way back to the lodge. Susan met up with them, walking Cheeto on a leash. Katie laughed.

"I thought only dogs walked on leashes," Katie said.

"Normally that is the case, but we do things a bit differently here," Susan said guiding Cheeto to the big rock. "Do you want to come pet him?"

"Yes," Katie said walking towards the cat.

"Pet his back and he'll be happy," Susan said. "This cat can run up to 75 miles per hour. That's faster than your daddy drives on the freeway. But cheetahs can only run that fast over short distances otherwise they get too hot."

"Wow. Mommy, I want to stay here forever," Katie said, still petting the cheetah.

"I know you do," her mother said, "but it's actually time to go. Say thank you to Susan."



“Thank you, Susan. Bye, Cheeto. I’ll come back to see you soon,” Katie said.  
“Bye, you guys,” Susan said. Katie followed her parents to the car.  
“Can we come back next weekend? And the weekend after that? And then again after that?” Katie asked as she got in the car.  
“We’ll see,” her parents said.  
“You’re right. That was so much cooler than the zoo,” Katie said, happily.

THE END