

# The Koala Story

foxana  
oforian





## About the story, and beyond

Today, on our planet, more than 35,500 species are threatened with extinction. That is both fauna and flora. And it is close to a third of all known species. Out of all the threatened species, almost 8,000 are critically endangered. Eighty are already extinct in the wild. And more than 900 are extinct on the whole planet – which means that those species will never exist again.\*

These are just some raw facts that stand behind the story. Specific information about the protagonists resides on the last pages of this book. Above and beyond that, the plot captures peculiar moments in a koala's adventure of reaching a new home and in her search for food. That food is... bamboo. Welcome to the otherwordly adventures of Pindu and Puki, from Papaduki.

\*Sources: [iucnredlist.org](https://www.iucnredlist.org/), [worldwildlife.org](https://www.worldwildlife.org/). Consulted: January 2021

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a children's story on intuition, meaning, and looking beyond appearances



# Papaduki

Once upon a time, on Papaduki island,  
there was a koala bear named Pindu  
that had one joey - that's what  
a baby koala is called.

Pindu called her joey "Puki".  
And she just loved being Puki's koala mum.





Pindu and Puki both got used to constantly being followed by a platypus - so they ended up naming him as well.

Papu swam around Papaduki twice a day - after breakfast and before dinner.

He was a special platypus, as he enjoyed the saltwater of the ocean just as much as the fresh waters of the springs. And just as much as Pindu and Puki's koala smiles.





Papaduki was a tiny piece of land,  
rich in eucalyptus and poor in bamboo.  
The thing is – Pindu loved eating bamboo too,  
not only eucalyptus. She was a special koala.  
So, one day, she decided to go travelling.  
She just felt that calling with all her heart.

And so she packed just a little yellow backpack  
for herself and Puki.

They both dressed up in black, white,  
and grey striped sweatshirts.  
And off they went, towards the immense  
land of Tchi-long, the place to find enough bamboo  
for one koala's lifetime – and beyond.



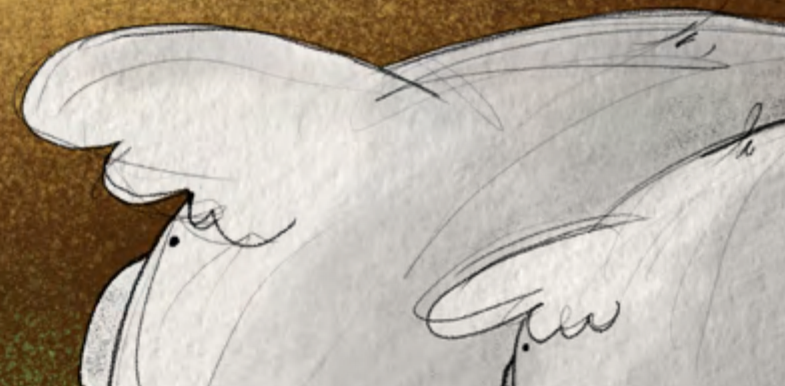




Just as they were heading  
to the train station and  
about to leave Papaduki,  
a baby orangutan  
dangled down right in front  
of them, asking Puki:

"What are you doing?  
Are you sure about this?"

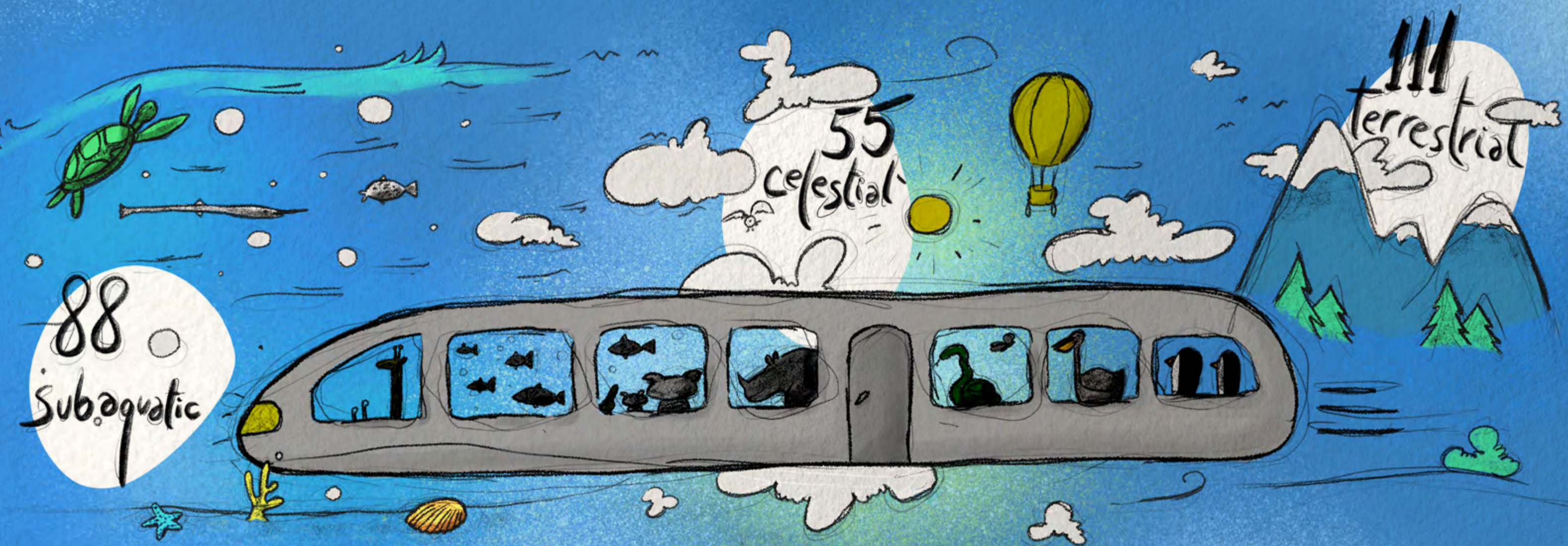
Puki jumped on his mama's back,  
firmly nodding his furry head and smiling.  
He sure was sure about his mama's gut.  
Just as she was sure about herself.





They travelled by train, witnessing 88  
subaquatic stops, 55 celestial stops

and 111 terrestrial stops. The whole trip  
from Papaduki to Tchi-Long lasted 11 days.





Quite a long ride for Pindu,  
her little joey and their small,  
yellow backpack, which included just  
44 eucalyptus sprouts  
and some chia pudding.

Puki simply loved eating chia pudding,  
not only eucalyptus and bamboo.  
He was a special joey.

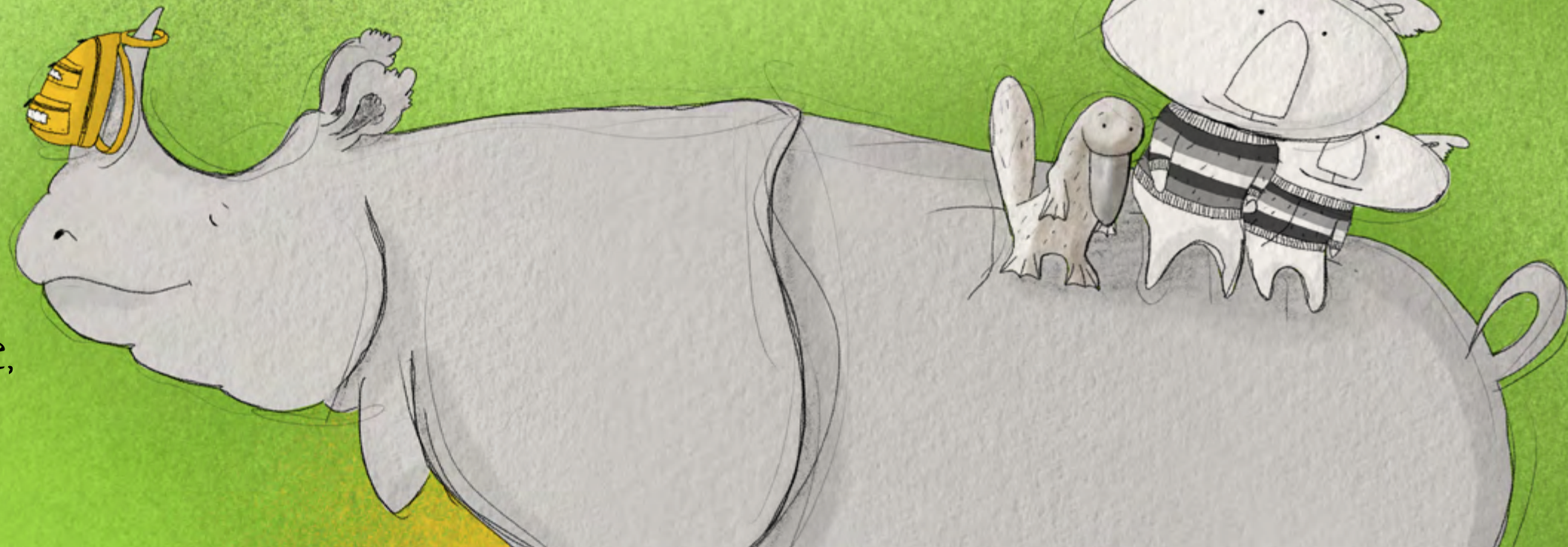




On the seat right next to them, there was this huge rhinoceros gentleman. Puki was a little bit concerned about the space, but his mama was confident that their spot was sufficiently cozy.

The gentleman was sleepy most of the time, so he invited Pindu and Puki to rest on top of his soft side,

while even considerately offering his horn as a place to hang the yellow backpack. It was quite the view from up there!

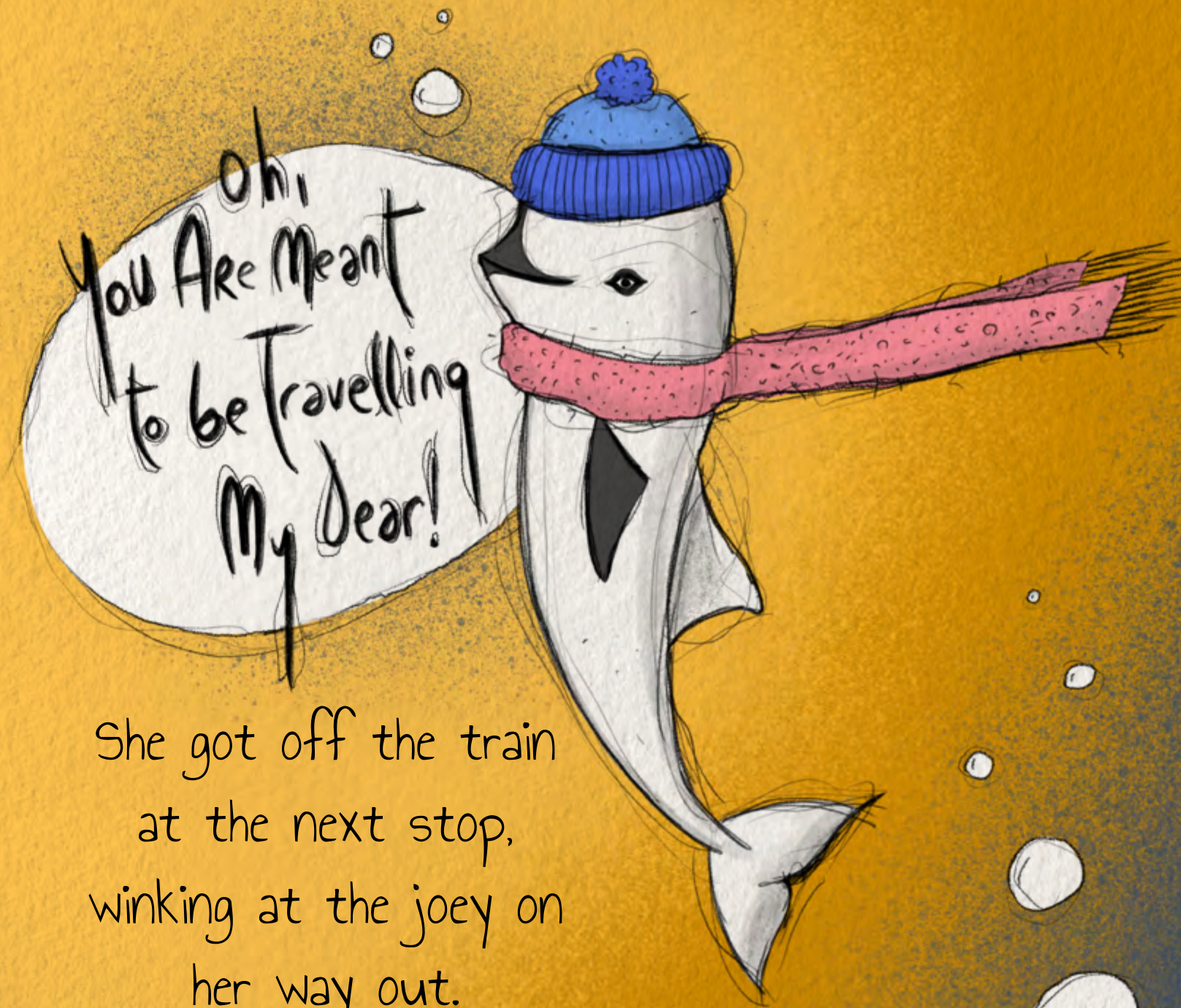




At the 37<sup>th</sup> subaquatic stop,  
a weird fishy creature, which looked like  
a dolphin of some sorts,  
entered the train.

It had a blue winter hat and a woolly scarf,  
even though it was quite hot there,  
inside the train, under the sea.

When she got closer, she told Pindu:  
"Oh, you are meant to be travelling, my dear!"



She got off the train  
at the next stop,  
winking at the joey on  
her way out.



At the 23<sup>rd</sup> celestial stop,  
a funny sir, who seemed to be  
some kind of a bird, entered the train.  
He had just gotten down from a hot air  
balloon. Then, he looked at Pindu and said:

"Oh, I can't fly!

I'm just shaped as a bird.

Just as you are shaped as a koala."

a hot air  
balloon



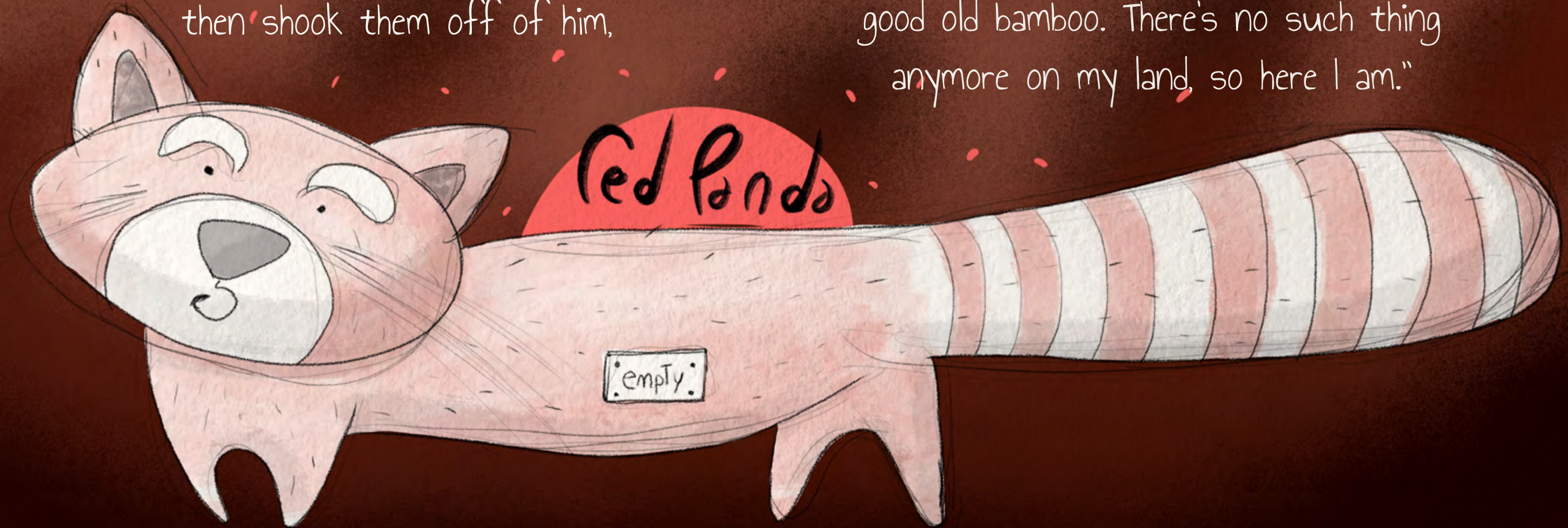
And he added:

"You are meant to be travelling, my dear!"



Right after the second terrestrial stop,  
the rhinoceros gentleman whispered  
in his thick voice from underneath  
the two koalas: "It was my pleasure",  
then shook them off of him,

and slowly headed off the train.  
The spot got taken in no-time.  
A hurried red panda smiled at Pindu, saying:  
"Tchi-long, right? Oh, I miss some  
good old bamboo. There's no such thing  
anymore on my land, so here I am."







So then, on her journey's  
very last stop,  
Pindu and her little joey  
got off the train, right after  
an extremely fluffy,  
furry bee buzzed in her ear  
that "yes, she was meant to be  
travelling there".



And there, on the land of Tchi-long,  
just near the station, right after passing by  
a colourful cactus garden the likes of which  
she'd never seen before, she spotted  
this beautiful bamboo forest,  
where she wanted to rest and to taste some  
deliciousness, along with her little joey.

No chia pudding was left  
and only a dozen eucalyptus sprouts remained  
in the small yellow backpack,  
after all those  
11 days of travel.





And then, Pindu heard a calm voice,  
coming from behind the leaves.  
It said "Oh, you were meant to be travelling here,  
my dear!" And a big, round, black and white  
bear appeared in front of her, smiling and saying:

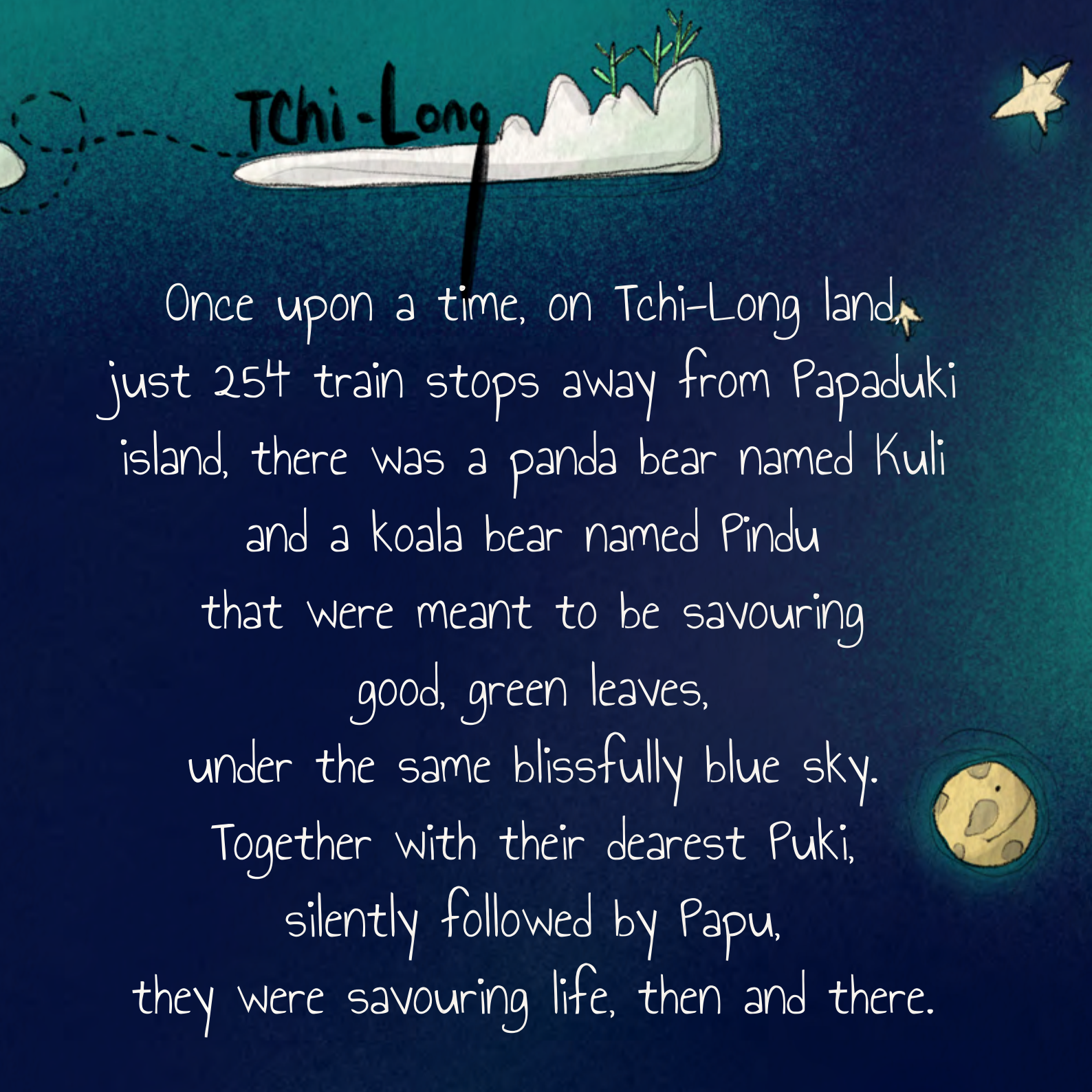
"I'm Kuli, and I could use some eucalyptus  
sprouts here and there, I see you've got some  
- must be from another land. I love eating  
eucalyptus, not only bamboo.

I'm a special panda.

And I sure know a lot of stuff  
about Tchi-long  
and its bamboo forests."







Tchi-Long

Once upon a time, on Tchi-Long land,  
just 254 train stops away from Papaduki  
island, there was a panda bear named Kuli  
and a koala bear named Pindu  
that were meant to be savouring  
good, green leaves,  
under the same blissfully blue sky.  
Together with their dearest Puki,  
silently followed by Papu,  
they were savouring life, then and there.

And all of the living creatures  
were doing just the same.  
And the planet smiled.

for  
ever  
after





In the upcoming pages, you will find some real-life facts about the protagonists. But first, let's exercise your memory a bit and see what you remember:

1. What was the name of the little island Pindu and Puki come from?
2. What was the name of their platypus friend?
3. What was the name of the land they were travelling to?
4. What colours were the koalas' travel sweatshirts?
5. How many subaquatic stops did the train have?
6. How many terrestrial stops did the train have?
7. How many celestial stops did the train have?
8. What was the colour of Pindu's backpack?
9. What did Pindu carry in her backpack?
10. What animal sat next to Pindu after the rhinoceros gentleman?
11. What was there right before the bamboo forest? (clue: it was something that Pindu had never seen before)

Now, you have a sharp mind and are very attentive to details. So probably it is time for me to raise some more questions - that I will answer this time. Are You Ready?



Do you know what the "fishy creature" entering the train was?

It was a "vaquita". Vaquita is the world's rarest marine mammal. At this moment, there are only about 15 vaquitas left on our planet. They live in a Gulf in Mexico. Illegal fishing operations are the biggest danger to Vaquitas.



Is the Platypus also in danger of becoming extinct?

The platypus lives in Australia and Tasmania. It is a peculiar animal - being one of the two remaining egg-laying mammal species on our planet. Platypuses are a protected species. Scientists estimate that, due to climate change, only a quarter of their population might survive in the next 50 years.



How about the Koala? Is this marsupial in danger?

During 2019-2020, there were severe bushfires in Australia that burned down whole habitats. The koala population suffered a lot. Without any action, koalas may become extinct by 2050 in the New South Wales region.



The funny sir, shaped as a bird, the one that said he couldn't fly. Who is that in reality?

That is a kakapo - and it really can't fly. It lives in New Zealand. Sadly, only 142 kakapos are left in the wild. Fortunately, in 2019, 34 baby kakapos made it to adulthood. But this species is still critically endangered.





Remember the baby orangutan? Is he also in danger?

Unfortunately, yes. That was a baby Bornean orangutan. In the past 60 years, his species declined by more than half. And in the last 20 years, their habitat has been reduced by more than half. Hunting, having the trees of their habitat cut down, and climate change are putting them in severe danger.



Is the rhinoceros gentleman safe and sound as a species?

No, he isn't safe either. That rhino on the train was a Javan rhino. Once, the Javan rhinos lived all over Northeast India and Southeast Asia. But not anymore. They are now the most threatened of the five remaining rhino species on our planet. There are only around 60 ladies and gentlemen rhinos left.



And then the red panda, is he related to the big panda? And is he safe?

Oh, no, the red panda is not a bear. This animal is more related to the raccoon or the weasel. Sadly, the red pandas are not doing that well. Their habitat is slowly disappearing due to human intervention. Climate change doesn't help either. So there are around 10,000 red pandas left in the wilderness right now.



Does the buzzing fluffy, furry bee have anything to do with all of this?

Yes, that bee is also in danger. It is a "rusty patched bumblebee". In real life, her species is critically endangered. In the USA, more than 90% of its population has disappeared. The major causes of this happening are habitat loss, intensive farming, and increased use of pesticides. Global climate change is also a danger.



I hope at least the Panda is doing better out of all these animals?


You are right this time. The panda is safe for now. The giant pandas first became endangered in 1990 - because of excessive poaching and deforestation. But, after years and years of decline, the number of wild pandas is finally growing. In September 2016, scientists announced that the pandas' status has changed to vulnerable species. All this was thanks to the tireless efforts and campaigns of people that cared about the pandas. They spoke to the world about this, working to protect the pandas and their habitat.



Can I help the other animals that are still endangered?

Yes, you can. Talk about this to the adults around you (family or teachers, for example). Ask about any local organizations that might help with nature conservation and with protecting endangered species. Find about those organizations' activities. Get involved. Make a drawing, a poster, and send it to them. Talk to all your friends about an endangered animal of your choice. Or an endangered plant. Keep track of that species' status by setting a reminder every year. These are just some ideas. Remember: creativity keeps your mind open and your spirit free.





I wish you the best of luck,  
my dear reader – if you feel inspired  
to take action and to become  
a part of the story.

This is a children's story on intuition, meaning, travel, nuances, and looking beyond appearances. Go a bit further, and you'll find there's one more story behind it all, one about all the dangers the protagonists confront in their real life.