

Ines Schumann

Moises  
and the  
ghost trap

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*For children from eight to twelve years.*

Cooperation with Sulayman Sambau

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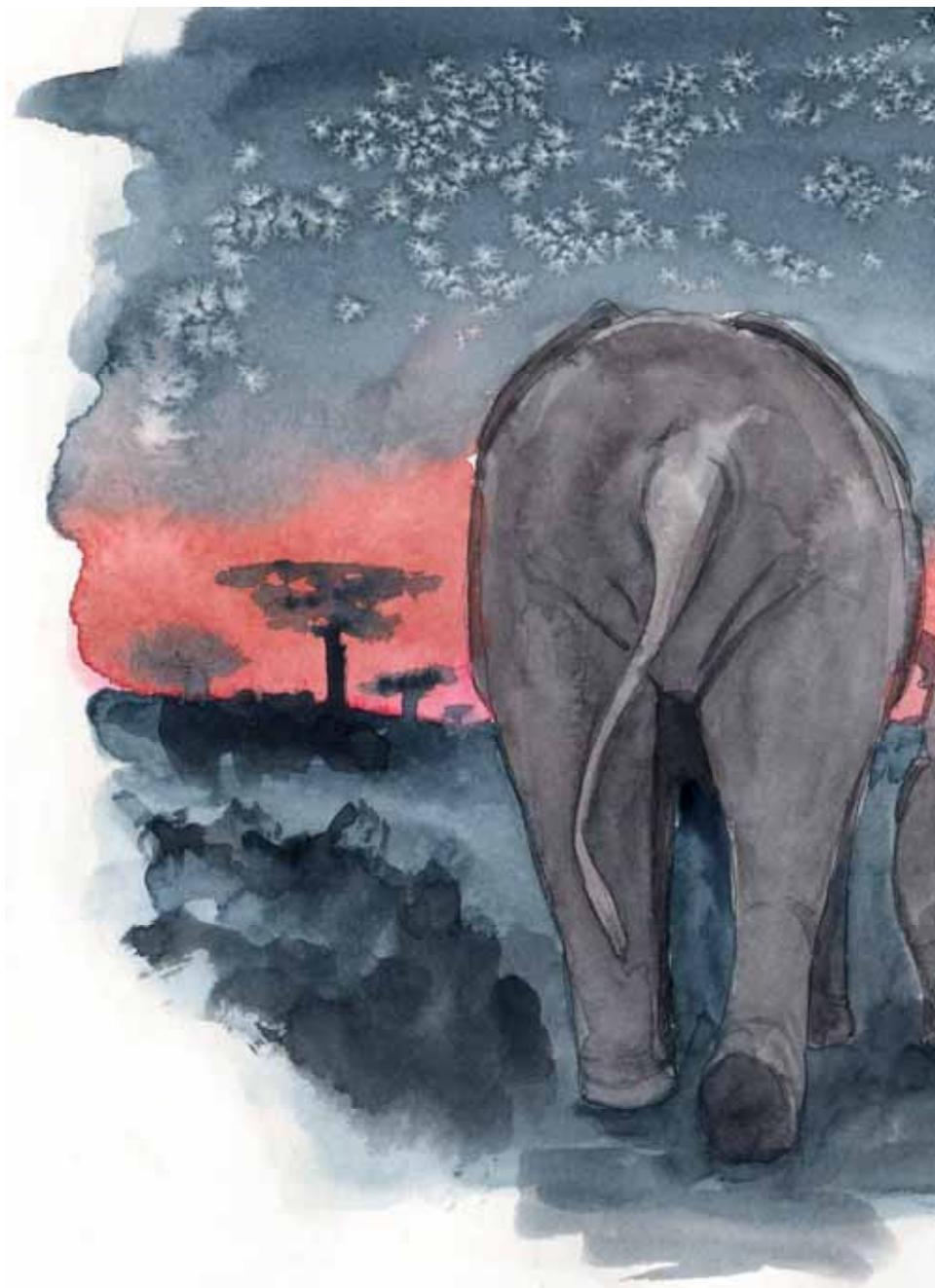
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## Inhalt

Ololoo.....	7
The enchanted mirror .....	17
Mum's stubborn little mule .....	29
The day of the dead birds.....	39
The ghost trap.....	51
The dragon who bathed a mouse with his tongue .....	61
No apples in Malawi .....	67







# Ololoo

The dry season in Tsavo National Park seemed never-ending. Heat was spread throughout Africa by the hot wind. The rainy season simply wouldn't start. In their search for green fodder, the elephants in Kenya walked for miles and miles every day through the bushland. Most of the water holes were now just red mud pits or had completely dried up. The elephants began walking at night time, too, in order to protect their young from the burning rays of the sun. And around midday, they sought shelter beneath old stone pines.

Ololoo, a small bull elephant, wandered helplessly through the Tsavo Valley. He was just two years old when suddenly poachers had driven his herd apart during one such midday break.

Later on, he only remembered how his mother Kithaka, the mighty matriarch of the herd, had collapsed and implored Ololoo through an all-devouring dust cloud: „Run away, my child! Run, Ololoo, run! Save yourself! „And Ololoo had run and run and run. His ears hurt from the shrieks of the herd.

His eyes were blind from his many tears, his feet sore from the thorns on the hard, cracked earth.



Absolutely exhausted, at some point the little elephant had detected the unmistakable smell of water. Water meant life – Ololoo already knew that. And there it was: the Tsavo River. Or at least, what was left of it.

The herd had only crossed the Tsavo a few days ago, further up at the Lugards Falls, where hippos lived. Ololoo remembered it well because he had made friends with Jasiri there. He was a small hippopotamus, who at first had showed off to Ololoo because his parents had named him Jasiri, which in Swahili means ‘brave’. Ololoo had asked him about the brave deeds he had done so far in his life. After some thought, Jasiri had dipped his head underwater, breathed big air bubbles, and finally climbed up to Ololoo on the river bank.

„Well, I’m very brave for example when I come ashore to you by myself“, he had replied. Ololoo could appreciate this because he was already a head taller than Jasiri.

But now Ololoo dragged himself with the last ounce of his strength into the mud of the Tsavo riverbed. The mud would cool his skin and deter biting insects. Exhausted, Ololoo tried to trumpet through his trunk. But only a miserable ‘olooo’ came out before he collapsed and his little trunk remained in the shallow water.

„Mum? Dad?” Oloolo whispered as he felt the warmth of a body. Only it wasn’t the familiar greasy-sweet milk odour of his Mum’s belly. The sounds he heard were different. More like a gurgling, splashing, snorting. Not the familiar rumbling of old elephants.

„Open your eyes, Oloolo. Go on!” a distant voice urged him behind a grey dust cloud that held Oloolo captive.

„Where am I?” whispered the little elephant, trying to lift his head. Water wetted his skin.

„Jasiri!” Tears of joy were visible under Oloolo’s long black eyelashes as he opened his eyes painfully. „You found me!”

„Jasiri the Brave, yes, that’s right”, replied the little hippo with concern. „What happened to you, Oloolo? Where’s your herd?”

While Oloolo told Jasiri all the bad things that had happened to him, Jasiri’s family, a herd of zebras, impalas and giraffes, listened intently on the banks of the Tsavo River. And the wind carried this story across the land, just as all important news is mysteriously transmitted across Africa. The small elephant remained in the care of the hippopotamuses for some time. He often trembled with fear whenever-

ver crocodiles or lions appeared nearby. Then he wished he was guarded by the big elephants.



Ololoo spent nearly all day looking for food. Although he found a few green branches here and there, he really missed his mother's delicious milk. When he saw Jasiri dive into the river with his family in search of edible water plants every evening, Ololoo was overcome by such terrible longing for his herd that he couldn't help crying. He sensed that life on the river wasn't the life an elephant was supposed to lead.

One day, when the two friends were chasing guinea-fowl near the riverbank, they saw in the distance the forbidden buffalo wallow. Jasiri's mother had warned them about the fearsome creatures with their protruding horns. But Oloolo had heard from his father that buffaloes, like elephants, moved from one pasture to the next. And suddenly he had an idea: He would join them! With a little luck, perhaps they would meet an elephant herd which would take in Oloolo.

Jasiri stood sadly on the river bank when he saw Oloolo's excitement. With both hind legs already in the water, he said softly: „I can't go with you, Oloolo. I belong here at the river. This is my home. Look after yourself!“ Behind him, countless bubbles emerged from the water. Large, heavy bodies shared the water's surface.

Oloolo nodded before gently stroking Jasiri's head with his trunk. „Don't worry, Jasiri. I'll stay close to the buffalo. Thanks for everything. I'll come and visit you when I've found the elephants.“

For days, Oloolo observed that in the muddy wallow, the buffalo lived no differently from elephants. But although it was only a small herd of mothers and their young, the warning from Jasiri's mother resonated in his mind. So

Ololoo decided to stay in his shelter until the herd moved on.

In the last night with a full moon before the long rainy season, Ololoo unexpectedly smelt the familiar scent of elephants. Was he dreaming? But the loud sound of branches being smashed in the undergrowth wasn't the same as the quiet cracking of twigs by Kithaka, the leader of the herd. His legs trembling, Ololoo pricked up his large ears. He nervously shook his head left and right.

Poachers! was his first thought. I must warn the hippos and the buffaloes. He screwed up all his courage, lifted his head, and trumpeted with all his might an unmistakable „Ololoooooo“ into the dark night. The little elephant didn't even notice how the ground beneath him shook. Suddenly, the thornbush parted in front of him, revealing the long white tusks of a giant elephant bull.

„My brave little Ololoo. I've found you at last!“ Ololoo's father gently wrapped his trunk around his child and pushed him tenderly beneath his stomach, bringing him safely back into the protection of the elephant herd from Tsavo National Park.









# The enchanted mirror

Leni was really cross. It was the autumn school holidays – but she was supposed to spend the whole two weeks with Grandma Isolde in the Black Forest. What could be more boring than that?! Originally, her Mum had promised to take her to Turkey. But then she'd changed her mind again. Mind you, that was only to be expected. After Leni's Dad had died in an accident two years ago, her Mum had taken charge of the bakery. And nothing had been the same since.

„Leni“, said her mother, two days before autumn half-term, „I'm really sorry, but I simply can't go on holiday with you after all. We're having some building alterations done to the bakery and I have to stay here.“

„But Mum, I can't possibly spend two weeks at home here in the village. All my friends have gone away for the holidays. And you promised me sun, sea and sand! It's not fair!“ she protested. There were tears in Leni's eyes.

„I quite understand. But you must realize that if the bakery doesn't work efficiently, we can't afford things like that“,

said her mother, pointing to Jenny's new smartphone.

„And you don't want to go without it, do you?“

„Well, all right“, said Jenny sulkily. „OK, I'll go to Grandma Isolde's horrible old mud hut. But we hardly even know each other!“

„Jenny“, warned her mother, „your father was Grandma Isolde's only child. She misses him very much. I'm sure she's really looking forward to spending the school holidays with you and that you'll have a nice time together. She often asks after you. So come on – start packing!“

„Hello, Veronika! My goodness, Leni, how you've grown! I'm so glad you've come to see me.“ Grandma Isolde was wearing brown shoes and brown tights to match her brown skirt. Then again, her drab clothes were offset by her very colourful sweater. She had tied her grey hair in a ponytail. But Grandma's large, thick glasses couldn't conceal her beautiful blue eyes. They sparkle like Dad's eyes, Jenny thought. Grandma Isolde stood at the garden gate with her arms open. Her watchful terrier seemed just as pleased to see the visitors. Although a little grey around his muzzle, Aaron bounded up and down the garden path.

„Isolde“, began Leni's mother, „I'm terribly sorry, but I've got to leave right away again. I've got an important mee-

ting this evening. Look after Jenny and have a nice few days together.” Leni wanted to burst into tears. How could her mother desert her so quickly again?

„Come in, Jenny, let me show you to your room. When your father was your age, we converted the attic for him. He loved being up there. I hope you like it, too.“

They climbed up the narrow wooden stairs. With each step, Leni grew more curious about Dad’s room. The door to the attic on the right was closed. The other door stood wide open.

There was a large bed in the room, below the window in the sloping roof. To the right of it stood a desk made from dark wood. On the left was a colourfully painted chest with all kinds of strange carvings. It was gloomy and smelled of floor polish and wood. But opposite the bed, almost in the middle of the room, stood an old mirror. The glass and the edges was a bit clouded. But the frame consisting of copper flowers seemed to exert an almost magical attraction.

„Wow! Was that Dad’s mirror?“ Leni looked at herself from all angles, moved forwards and backwards again, removed her hair clip, and twirled her long hair around her fingers.



„Yes, your father adored this mirror more than anything. I was never allowed to polish or even move it. I can't remember how it came into our possession – but then at my