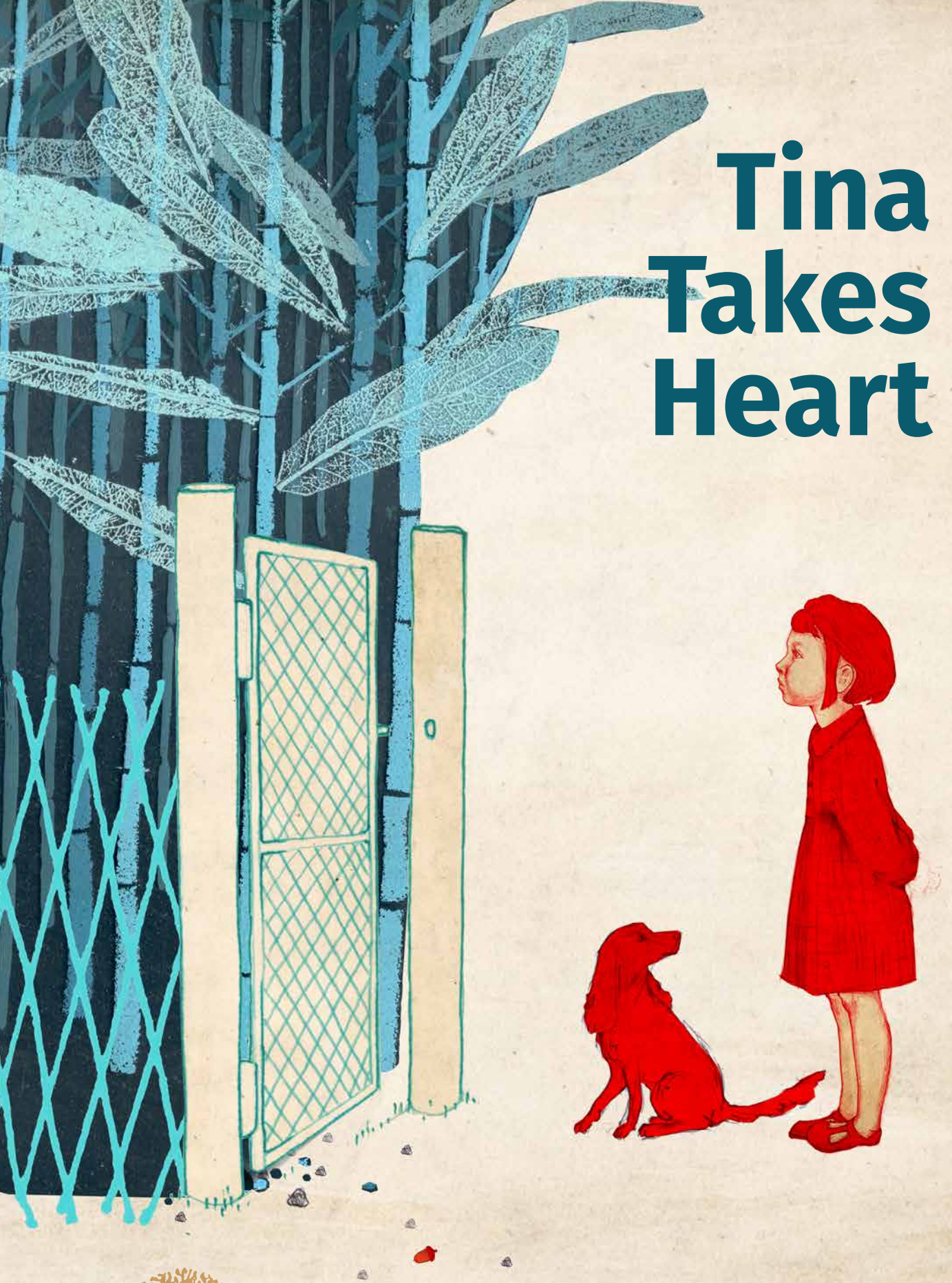


# Tina Takes Heart





*Special thanks to Sonja, for being with me  
in this journey.*



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Tatia Nadareishvili

# Tina Takes Heart



A picture book from Georgia

Translated into English by Barbara Brennwald

**Tina hat Mut**

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Layout: Tatia Nadareishvili / Schön & Berger  
ISBN 978-3-907277-04-1

**BAOBAB BOOKS**

Tina lived in a wooden house in the countryside, together with her mum and dad. Her name was Tinatin, but everyone called her Tina. She also had a dog, Poppy.



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Tina loved nothing more than spending time with her father. The two of them would roam around the big garden in front of the house. There were so many things to discover ...



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But Tina had never ventured into the bamboo grove behind the house. It seemed dark and dangerous.

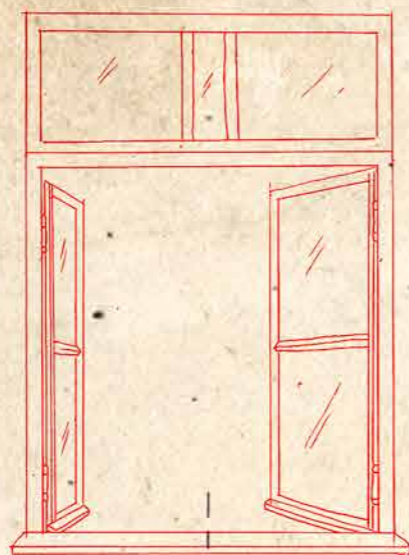


One day, Tina's dad had to go on a journey to another country. Before he left, he gave Tina a spinning top.

"A little something to pass the time until I am back," he said. "All you have to do is spin it and then walk into the direction the top tells you to. You will find something interesting there."



Her father had been gone a while already,  
when Tina felt bored one afternoon.  
She remembered the top and spun it.  
Tina watched it spinning round and round.  
When it finally stopped, the top pointed  
towards the window ... towards the bamboo  
grove behind the house.




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Tina went outside and stood in front of the gate leading to the grove. She had never opened this gate before. Now, she stood, looking at the rustling thicket. With Poppy at her side, she summoned up all her courage and slid open the bolt.

A young girl with short red hair, wearing a red dress and red shoes, walks through a bamboo grove. The bamboo stalks are dark green and vertical, with large, detailed leaves hanging from them. A dog, also in red, is walking ahead of her. The scene is lit with a soft, greenish light, creating a mysterious atmosphere. A watermark '© BAOBAB BOOKS' is visible across the middle of the image.

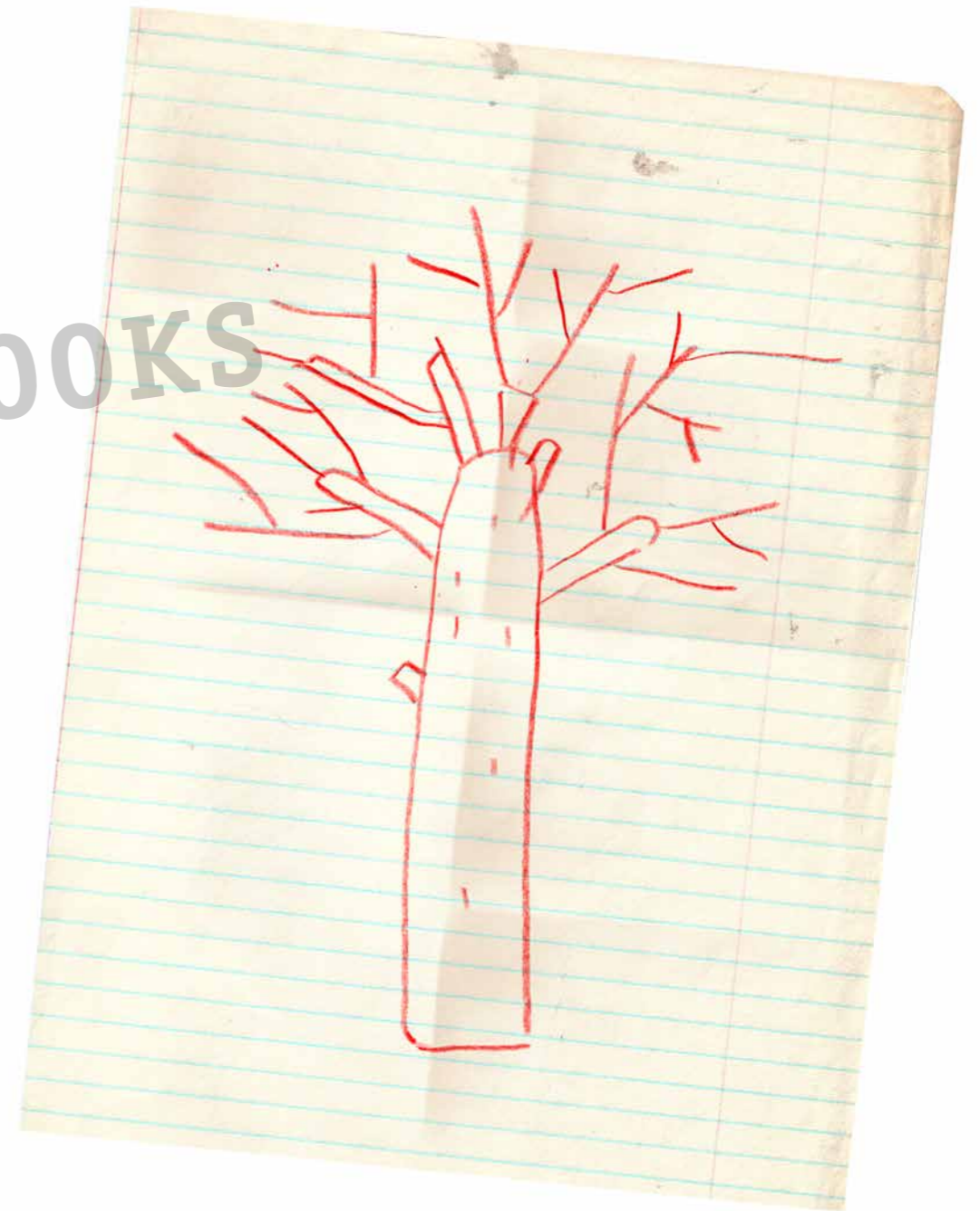
Tina moved cautiously at first, then, her steps became more confident. But all of sudden, a whistle tone sounded out of the depth of the grove. What could that be? She wanted to hurry back to the gate. But Poppy continued on, sniffing here and there. Tina took heart and followed her dog.



Suddenly, Poppy stopped in her tracks and sniffed at something on the ground.



Tina went to take a closer look. It was a folded piece of paper. What could this be about?



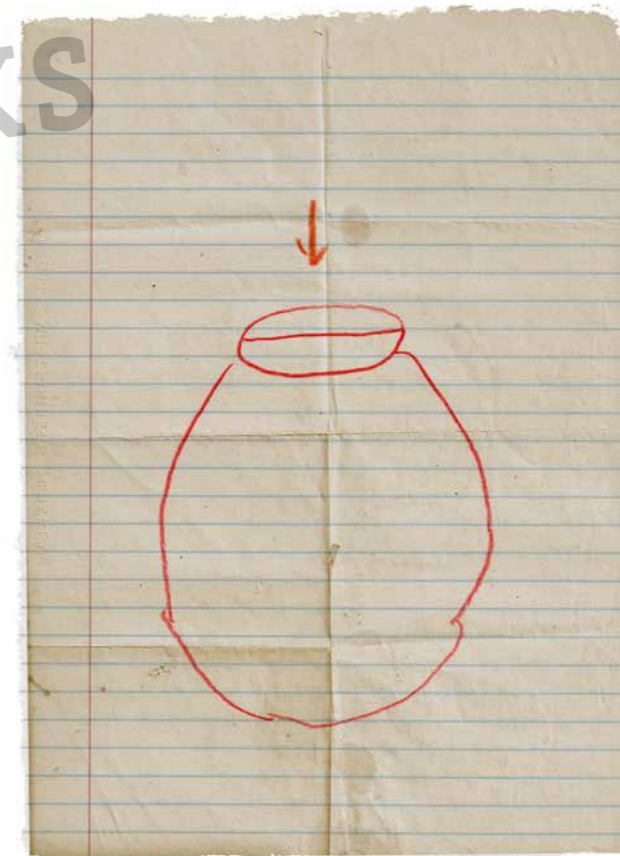


When Tina looked around, there was the whistle tone again. She tucked the paper into her skirt pocket and walked towards the sound.

After a while, Poppy stopped in front of a tree. A real tree in the middle of a bamboo grove? Tina produced the drawing from her pocket. It was not precisely the same tree, but it did look similar.



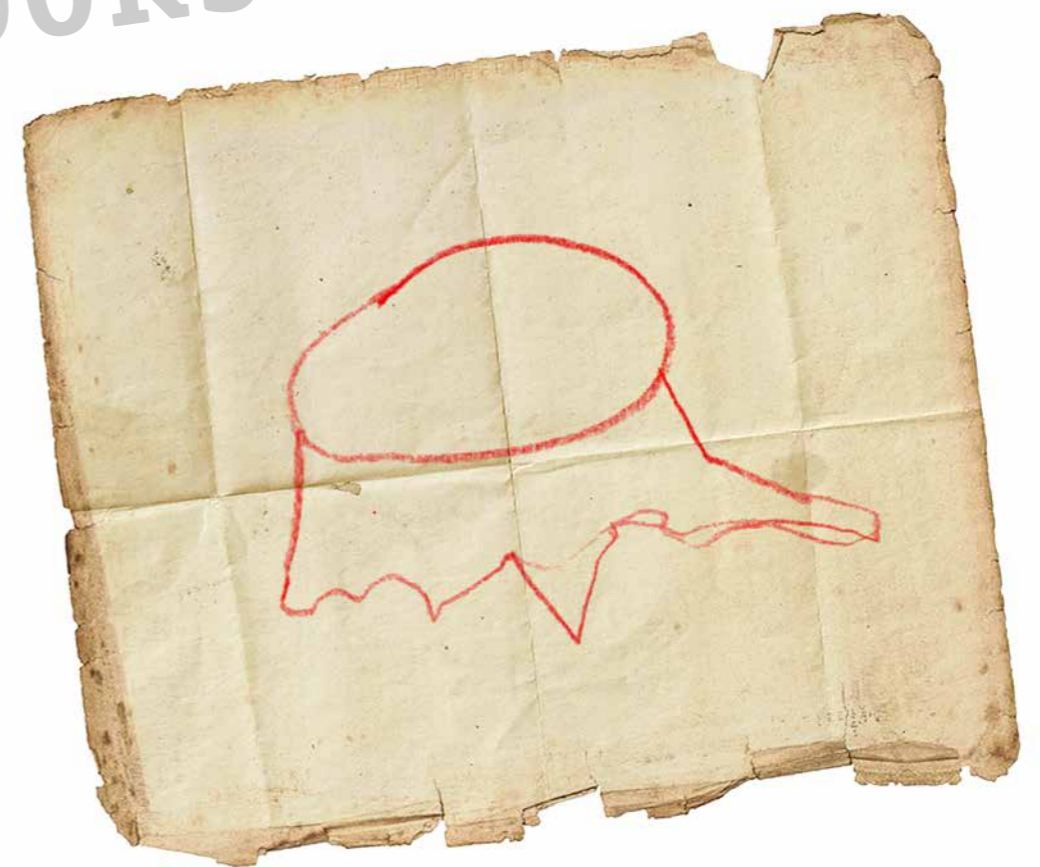
She walked around the tree and discovered another piece of paper in a fork of a branch. And sure enough, there was the whistle tone again. The sound seemed to come out of the middle of the grove.





Tina and Poppy walked further into the thicket. There was less and less light, but Poppy stopped again and began scraping the leaves on the ground.

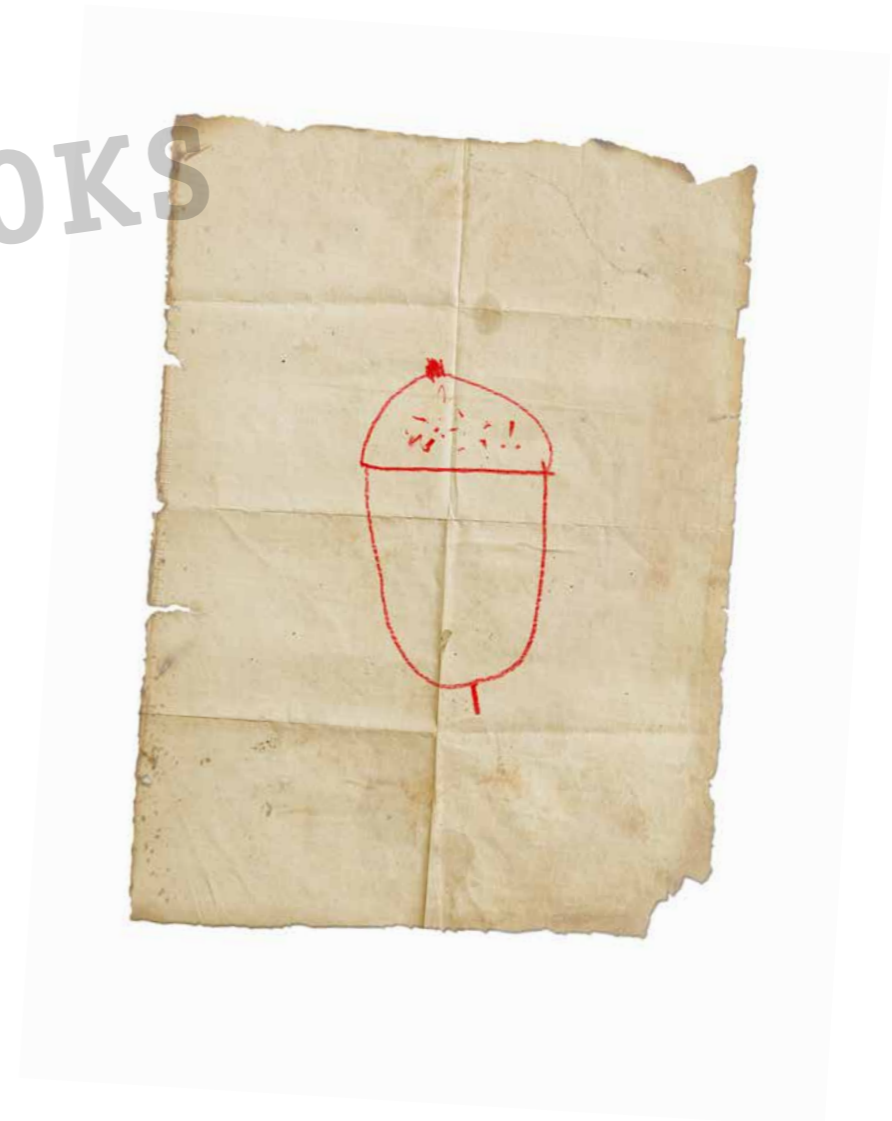
A clay lid appeared. And Tina realised what the painting had shown: one of these clay pots that are buried into the ground. Tina pushed the lid aside. The pot was very old and filled with soil. She put out her hand and grabbed ... another folded piece of paper.





Tina and Poppy waited for the whistle tone. When it sounded again, they walked towards it. They found the next drawing between the roots of a tree stub, but still, Tina could not see anyone. There was just another whistle tone. Apparently, the game was not finished yet.

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The two hurried through the thicket until they reached a stream. But they did not find anything there. Tina was starting to get tired. She felt like sitting down. But she would not give up now!

Then, she remembered the spinning top.  
She took it out of her pocket, spun it and went  
into the direction it indicated.  
Ah! A trace of acorns on the ground ... Poppy  
took the lead, and all of a sudden, they were  
standing underneath a mighty oak. The whistle  
tone was very close now.  
Tina looked up and discovered a treehouse in  
the oak's branches. Quickly, she climbed  
the tree. Poppy had to stay behind and wait.



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A boy with a flute sat in the treehouse.  
“My spinning top showed me the way,” Tina said.  
“Wasn’t it my flute that showed you the way?”  
the boy asked.  
They both laughed.



“My name is Kosta. Welcome to my treehouse.”

“I am Tina. I live on the other end of the grove.”

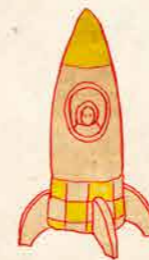
“I know.” The boy smiled and played a tune on his bamboo flute. “Would you like to play the flute?” he asked.

They swapped their toys, and Kosta spun the Tina’s top. It pointed towards the other end of the bamboo grove.

“I think it is time to go home,” Tina said.

“I have to go too. Take the flute with you. You can bring it with you tomorrow, okay? You will come back, won’t you?”

“I will,” Tina said.





She quickly climbed back down where Poppy was waiting for her. They ran home together. The light of the evening sun fell through the bamboo trees, and the grove did not seem quite as dark now. Tina was happy. She would be coming back tomorrow and play with her new friend.

## Postscript

I was born in the city of Tbilisi, but my family soon moved to the countryside. We lived in the western part of Georgia in a small wooden house much like Tina's. The climate of the region is very humid. Therefore, houses are built on stilts to allow the air to circulate.

Just like Tina, I spent a lot of time in our garden. My favourite spot was the bamboo thicket behind our house. I loved wandering through the thicket, and most of the time, I brought my dog. It was called Defi, a red Irish setter. On our walks, I would make stories, and imagine that one day, I would find something very special in this thicket.

Unfortunately, that never happened. I left the area a long time ago. But I have not forgotten the bamboo thicket. Today, I am an illustrator and I write books for children. The idea of creating a story set in the bamboo thicket of my childhood came to me years ago. Something special would happen in that thicket after all.

I came up with many possible plots, but all of a sudden, there were Tina and her dog Poppy. It still took a while before all details seemed right. I searched for the right name for Tina's dog for a long time, for instance. Poppy, maybe? Like the flower? Irish setters and poppies are both red. And then, Poppy was also the name of Defi's mother. She was a very clever dog who lived some distance from our house. Still, she came and visited us, whenever she wanted to go hunting with my father. One day, my father brought home one of Poppy's puppies. That was Defi, the dog I loved more than anything. I am so happy that his mum gets to be in the book.

There are several other things in this story that are quite real. My son's name is Kosta, for instance, and he draws a lot. You can always find some of his drawings in his tree house. Or the clay pot Tina discovers: These pots are called kvevri. They are buried into the ground to store wine in them.

But this is Tina's story, she is the main character. Tina has the courage to venture into the big, dark bamboo grove. Sometimes it takes courage to explore something unknown. Something that might seem impossibly big or infinitely dark. But if we overcome our fears, if we follow our curiosity, we can discover the most beautiful things. Just like Tina. She found a new friend.

Tatia Nadareishvili, Tbilissi, April 2020





