

Franziska Höhle & Tom Semmelroth

# Selam New Flower!

Leon the lion travels  
to Addis Ababa



Behindertenverband Leipzig e.V.

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Thank you for the imaginative children's drawings  
and the wonderful time we had together:

Franziska Höhle & Tom Semmelroth

# Selam New Flower!

## Leon the lion travels to Addis Ababa

Annalena

Charlotte

Edda

Jane

Lea

Lilli

Milena

Sara

&

Willi





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# Foreword

There have been close ties between Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, and Leipzig for many years, which were crowned by a city partnership in 2004. It was therefore logical that both municipalities worked closely together on the “Inclusive Municipalities” project to improve the situation of people with disabilities. Visits took place on site and we exchanged experiences. Addis Ababa has an extensive guidance system for the blind that is many kilometers long, but just like in Leipzig, it is often misaligned. Whereas bicycles or advertising stands are common obstacles in Leipzig in Addis Ababa they become replaced by motorcycles, at least that’s how we had to perceive it. There are also construction errors along the route. Despite the different cultures, one thing quickly became clear: on both sides there was a lack of awareness of the problem and knowledge about creating and maintaining accessibility. Structural barriers have to be removed and mental barriers overcome. The latter can be supported by awareness campaigns and training. Both sides have this goal and it is important to start with the children. This is how the idea of the now available book in three languages came about. Working together and the cooperation and involvement of children was very important to us. We are concerned with the skills that can be developed when the social framework conditions enable skills. Everyone can and must do their part. We want to convey this message and understanding for each other. We would like to thank everyone involved for their participation in

Leipzig and Addis Ababa, especially the children. We were financially supported by Aktion Mensch and the other sponsors listed. A very big thank you. Thanks to Franziska Höhle, who initially managed the project. She wrote the text and translated it into English. The many drawings were created together with the children. Tom Semmelroth completed the project with his graphic and drawing talent. Many thanks for that.



**An inclusive society can succeed if we only want it and create the conditions for it. Let's tackle it.**

yours

Gunter Jähnig  
Chairman / Managing Director

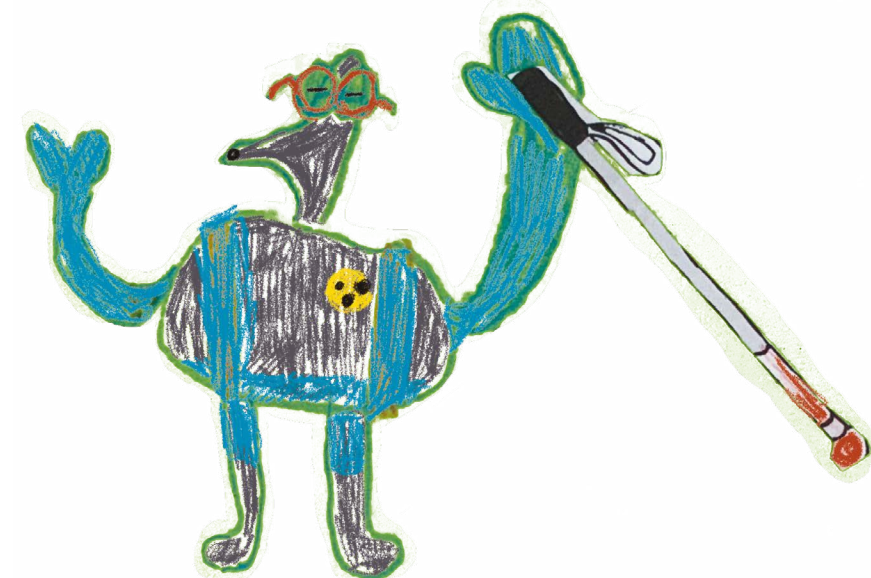
on behalf of the Leipzig Association  
of Disabled Persons (BVL)

## The Leipzig Friends Introduce Themselves

I am Leon the lion! You surely still know me. I'm in a wheelchair, but that doesn't bother me much. My wheelchair belongs to me and without it I wouldn't be who I am today. I love going on adventures with my friends. Of course I love chocolate, play time with my friends and the summer. Because in winter everything is a little bit more difficult for me. If there is snow outside, it is sometimes hard for me to move forward with my wheelchair, so in winter I often have to stay at home. And this is much less fun as spending time outside together with my friends.



Brailli is a mole and my very best friend. He is blind, which means he can't see anything. He can only distinguish between light and dark. But that's no problem for Brailli. He has been using a smartphone for a few years and this device connects him to everything and everyone.



Sometimes he jokes that the smartphone replaces his eyes. Braili has got other things that help him in his everyday life. That's why they are also called aids. For example, he uses a white cane. That's a long stick with a tip at the end. He lets this tip slide across the floor. So he can feel where he can walk along safely. Braili's great passion is technology. You rarely see him without his smartphone. If so, he is mostly sitting at his computer.

Another good friend is Liesa. She is a rabbit. Liesa's handicap is that she can't hear anything. You can also say that she is deaf. She lives in a completely silent world, without music or construction site noise, for example. Can you imagine that? For communication she uses sign language. That means she forms signs with her paws. I've known Liesa for many years and that's why I can perform and understand many of these signs myself. It's great to be able to speak a language with your paws. This is a real superpower.



Liesa's friend Tobi is a rabbit too and helps a lot during our conversations with Liesa. He is hearing impaired which means he is able to hear a little bit. That's why he wears a hearing aid in his ear. Sign language isn't a problem for him so he is often translating for us when we talk to Liesa.



Then there is the turtle Eddy. He is bright and very funny. His distinguishing mark is his learning disability. That means sometimes he doesn't understand things as quick as others. So we try to speak slowly and use simple words. This is called 'easy language'.

The hedgehog called Borstel is also part of our group. Very freshly born, he had an illness and therefore he isn't able to speak. He always has a small computer with him that speaks for him. This device is called talker.





## Makeda and an Exciting Email

Vrom! Vrom! The car rattles across the street. The holes in the floor are tough. Dust swirls up and the driver behind the steering wheel mumbles something. I don't understand him because he speaks a language that is foreign to me. I am shocked when we turn a corner and a huge mob of goats appears in front of us. The driver honks and seems to be cursing. There is a hitch and the car stops. I look out of the window but I can't see much around me. The goats and the dry sandy soil shroud everything in a huge cloud of dust. Where are we? And what are we going to do now? My heart is beating wildly and I feel how the heat is bothering me. My mouth is very dry and I am terribly thirsty. Suddenly I feel a paw on my arm. 'Don't be afraid. Abi the driver had to stop because the goats are blocking the road. They walk from field to field every day to eat the best grass. In a few minutes they will have moved on and we can continue our journey.' I look into Makeda's friendly face. Her smile is so warm and just contagious. Suddenly I become very calm. Together we watch the goats and the shepherd who tries hard to keep everyone together. Not easy. Oh, you're probably wondering what this all means. Who is Makeda? What language does the driver of the car speak? And where do we want to go?



It's best to start at the very beginning. About four weeks ago. Then I was still in my beautiful hometown called Leipzig. It is a severe winter as I am awakened by the sun falling through a narrow crack in the curtains. The rays of the sun tickle my whiskers and I feel the cozy warmth on my face. It almost feels like spring. But this must be a dream because it's only January and a really cold one. For me as a lion that's really not the best climate. I love the sun, the heat and the summer. I've had many great summers in Leipzig. Together with my friends Braili, Eddy, Borstel, Liesa and Tobi I visited the Leipzig Zoo and discovered a wheelchair-accessible Ferris wheel in the Sonnenland Park in Lichtenau. It is barrier-free which means it is easy accessible to everyone. For example, if a house has not just a staircase but an elevator or a ramp, then the access is barrier-free.



So I can get into the building in a wheelchair without any problems. Although the world of the ancient Romans was not barrier-free, my friends and I went there on a mysterious journey through time and met a real Roman emperor. What an adventure!

You see, we've already experienced some great things together. You have to remember that this is nothing to be taken for granted, because as you know, each of us has special needs. I was really happy when I received an exciting email from my friend Makeda some time ago. Makeda is a lion girl from Addis Ababa. Have you heard of Addis Ababa before? It is the capital of Ethiopia. This is a country in the east of Africa, so it is pretty far away. Addis Ababa is a very big city with a lot of inhabitants. A few years ago I got to know Makeda during the inclusive project 'city within the city' in Leipzig. For a week everyone builds a city together according to their wishes and ideas.

Everybody can participate, whether small or large, with or without a disability, no matter where you come from. Leipzig has a close connection with the city of Addis Ababa, because they are twin cities. That's why participants from Ethiopia were also present at this project in Leipzig. I met Makeda on a sunny afternoon. She has no handicap and is great at embroidering. While having lemonade she embroidered an Ethiopian lion on a cloth and taught me how to embroider a lion, too. The lion is the symbol of both cities - Leipzig and Addis Ababa. We have been friends ever since that day. We've been writing each other emails since Makeda was back in Ethiopia and talking about our lives in Leipzig and Addis Ababa. Letters just take too long.





*Dear Leon!*

*I hope you are well and safe and sound. I am fine. The rainy season in Ethiopia is just over and the whole country is starting to bloom. I go to university every day. It's a special kind of place where you can go to when you have finished school to continue learning. I am studying hard and I am happy to meet my friends there. A few days ago a friend came up to me and told me about his little brother, his name is Caven. Caven had an illness when he was younger and has not been able to walk since then. His mother always carried him, but now he is too big and too heavy. So he's just sitting at home now and isn't able to meet friends. That makes him very sad. He should also go to school soon. He needs a wheelchair! Unfortunately, such things are very difficult to get here in Ethiopia and Caven and his family don't know what to do. So it came to my mind: Before you got your e-wheelchair you had a folding wheelchair, right? This one would be perfect for Caven. I have a suggestion: you could come and visit me in Addis Ababa? Addis Ababa is Amharic and it means 'new flower'. It's a wonderful city and I would love to show it to you! Maybe on this occasion you could bring the wheelchair for little Caven with you? Contact me and tell me what you think.*

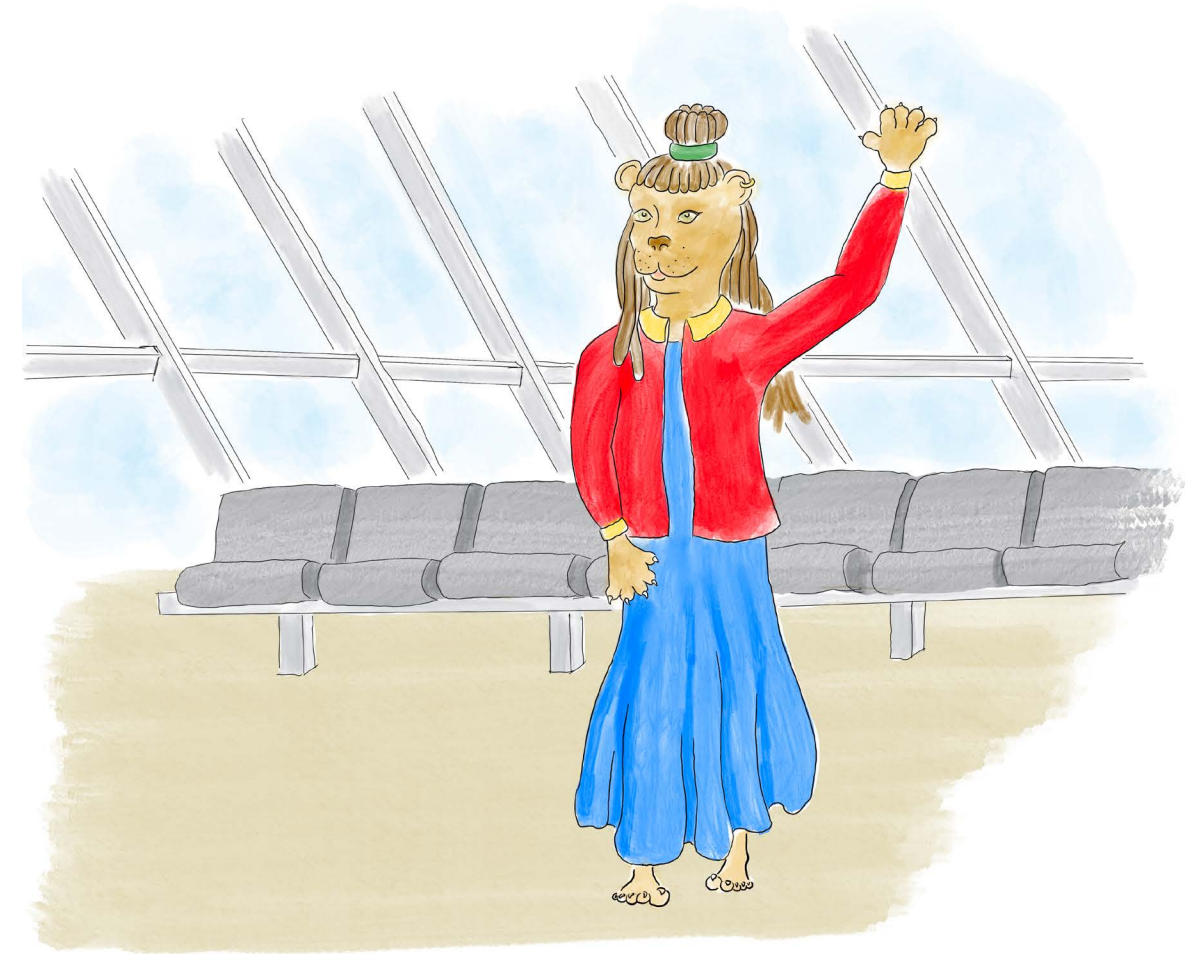
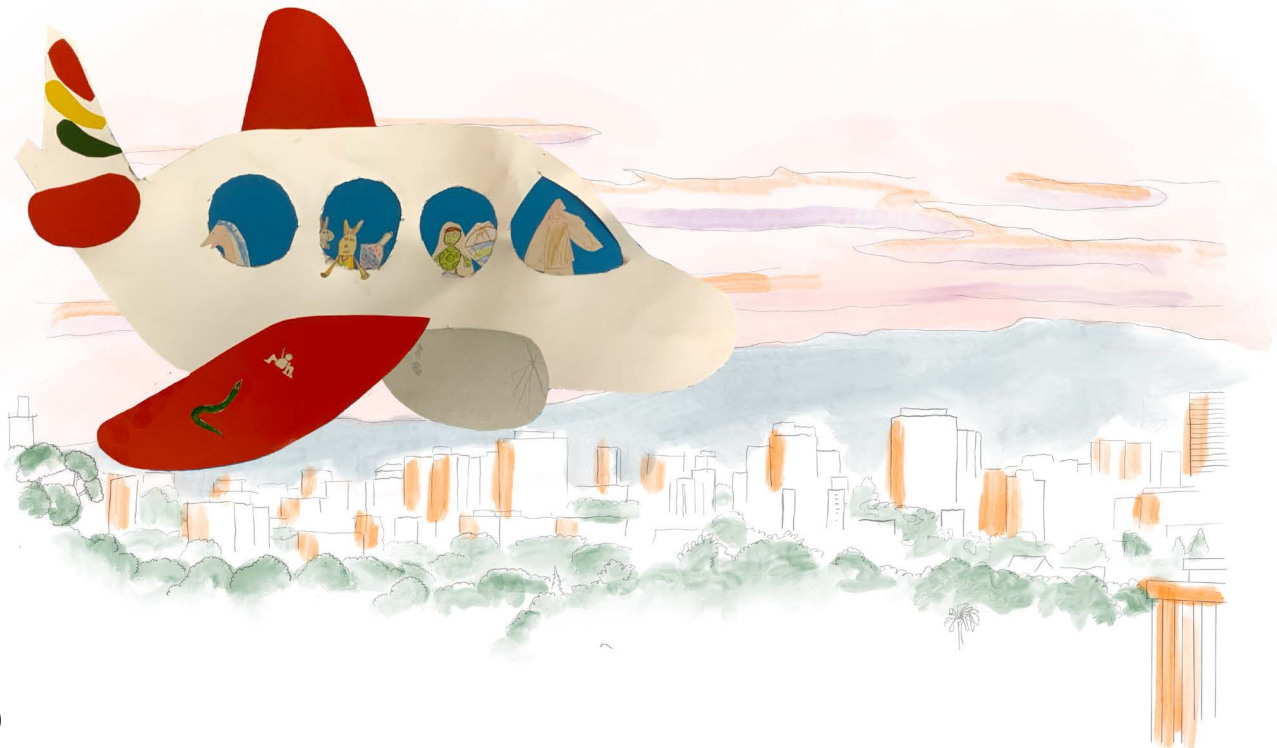
*Kind regards! Makeda*

That's a surprise. Of course, I love to travel the world! But I never thought of traveling to a country so far away. Pretty exciting. A real adventure. But first of all I want to help little Caven. Makeda is right. I really don't need the folding wheelchair anymore since I got my e-wheelchair. So why not make someone happy with it? Yes! It's a done deal. I'm going to Addis Ababa!



# Selam Means 'Hello!'

'Oooooohhhh! Leon, take a look at that!' I'm not quite awake when Eddy shakes my shoulder. After a few hours on the plane, we land in Addis Ababa very early in the morning. While Eddy and Braili were happily chattering and practicing the first words in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, I found it very difficult to stay awake. Being out and about in a wheelchair is great, but often very exhausting. So I spent most of the trip asleep. But now I'm awake. The flight attendants and airport staff help me to get out of the plane and into my wheelchair. All passengers must walk across the tarmac to a bus that drives everybody to the airport building. And there it is: the Entoto. The sun rises majestically behind it. Its bright rays make it shine in a golden light.



The Entoto is the highest peak of the Entoto Mountains which towers over the city. Braili is a little disappointed because he can't see the mountain in the light of the sunrise. But Eddy and I try to describe the scenery to him as best as we can. 'Yes! The Entoto! Isn't it wonderful? There isn't only a large eucalyptus forest on its summit. Many years ago, Emperor Menelik II lived there with his wife. They founded the city of Addis Ababa and named it 'New Flower'.' I turn around and look into Makeda's big eyes. She smiles at me and throws her arms around me. I didn't realize how much I missed her. 'Well hello! Where are the others? Liesa and Tobi? And Borstel is also missing! Are they still on the plane?' Makeda looks around the tarmac. 'Hmm, no', I answer, 'unfortunately the others couldn't come with us.'

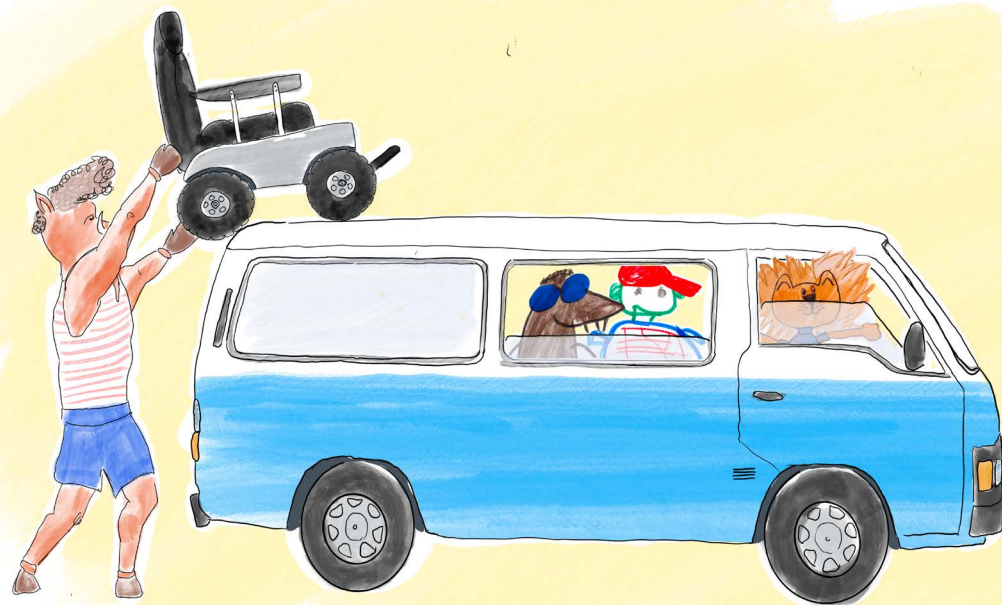
Liesa is now dancing hip hop and has a dance competition with her friends the Choreo-Coons in Munich. This is a dance group whose members are all deaf. Tobi accompanies them. And because Liesa is very nervous, Borstel also comes along as a support. If you remember our motto: One for all, all for one! 'Ah', Makeda nods understandingly. 'Choero-Coons! Sounds exciting. The next time I'm with you in Germany, I absolutely have to get to know the dance group. Maybe we can dance together!' says Makeda and laughs mischievously. 'Then I'll keep my fingers crossed for Liesa. But now we have to go. The sun has risen and I invite you to join me at my house on the Entoto.' We leave the airport with all our luggage and stand a little bit confused on the street. Makeda smiles calmly: 'Don't worry, somebody will pick us up. But here in Addis the clocks tick a little differently. Sometimes you have to wait a bit, sometimes a bit longer.' I hope it won't be too long before we finally get to Makeda, I think. I'm pretty exhausted from the long journey and I'm also a little dazed. 'Leon', Eddy shouts. 'What's happening? You are very pale around the nose. Aren't you okay?' 'I'm just tired and a little dizzy', I reply. 'Dizzy? Really?' Eddy gives me a worried look. 'That's normal', Braili intervenes. 'That's altitude sickness. Addis Ababa is almost 3,000 meters above sea level, making it the third highest capital in the world and the highest in Africa. If you are not used to this altitude, you can get dizzy or get a headache. Most of the time these complaints disappear after a short time.' I am amazed again that Braili really seems to know everything.

Well, then I don't have to be too worried anymore. 'There he is', shouts Makeda, pointing her paw in the direction of an old-fashioned, blue and white minibus. 'This is our bus as long as you are here. And that's Abi, he's the brother of little Caven who needs the wheelchair. Abi is our driver. He takes us everywhere. 'Selam, selam!' Someone shouts from the window of the minibus: 'Selam means "hello" in Amharic, hey hey. I'm Abi and the best driver in town, hey hey!' I am shocked for a moment because Abi is a huge wart hog and has an extremely loud and rough voice. But his laughter is so friendly and infectious that the little shock goes by quickly. But the minibus really worries me. I don't see a ramp or a lift. Has Makeda forgotten that I'm in the wheelchair? Abi stows our luggage and the small wheelchair for Caven in the trunk when he sees me staring uncertainly at the bus and then at my wheelchair.





'My friend! Don't worry, hey hey! Here in Ethiopia we don't have as many aids as you do have in Germany. But for us there are no problems, only solutions. Watch out!' Makeda and Abi help me into the vehicle. Abi grabs my wheelchair, puts it on the roof of the minibus and secures it with ropes. 'Hey hey, you are amazed, my friend, right?' Laughing Abi squeezes his head through the small window of the bus and we give high five. With a throaty laugh and a song on his lips, Abi sits down behind the wheel of the car. He's right, I'm really amazed. I have never seen such a loud and strong animal. Abi starts the engine and our journey begins. Selam Addis Ababa - Hello New Flower!



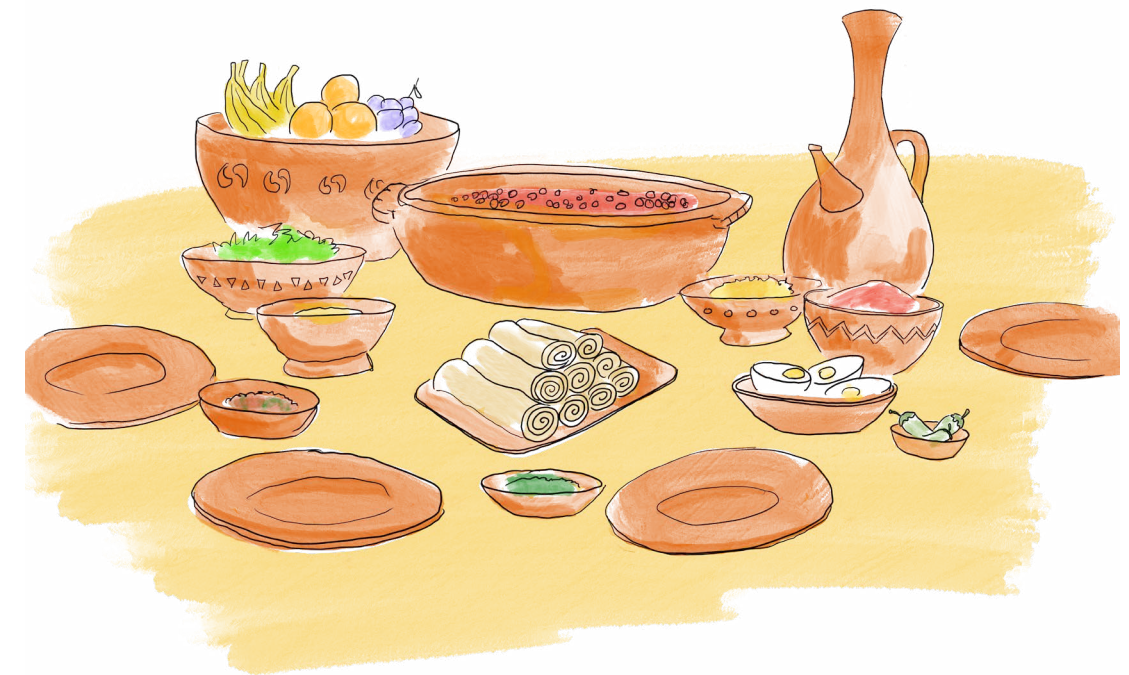
## Beware of the Evil Ghosts of the Eucalyptus Forest

Potholes, potholes, potholes. Some streets of Addis Ababa are really tough. The minibus rattles through the city. It's loud and wild. Our minibus rumbles past newly built skyscrapers and small huts with tin roofs, a happy song is playing on the radio and Abi whistles and sings alternately. There is a lot of activity in the streets and alleys. Motorbikes ride past horse-drawn carts and carriages. Goats cross paths. We briefly stop next to a stand and it smells delicious. I notice that because of the excitement we haven't eaten for a long time. It was almost 24 hours ago that we had our last meal. Suddenly my stomach growls so loud that Makeda turns around, looks at me and seems to be very surprised 'Leon, are you okay? Why are you growling?' Eddy has to laugh. 'Don't worry, Makeda. Leon doesn't growl. That was just his stomach.' 'Yes, I'm hungry as a horse', I reply. 'Hey hey, horse-? More like a lion I guess!' Abi shouts from his driver's seat. We all have to laugh. 'Just resist for a moment, Leon', says Makeda. 'We just have to drive up the mountain street, two or three more curves and we're there.' She is right, shortly afterwards our bus stops, roaring loudly and with a strong jolt.

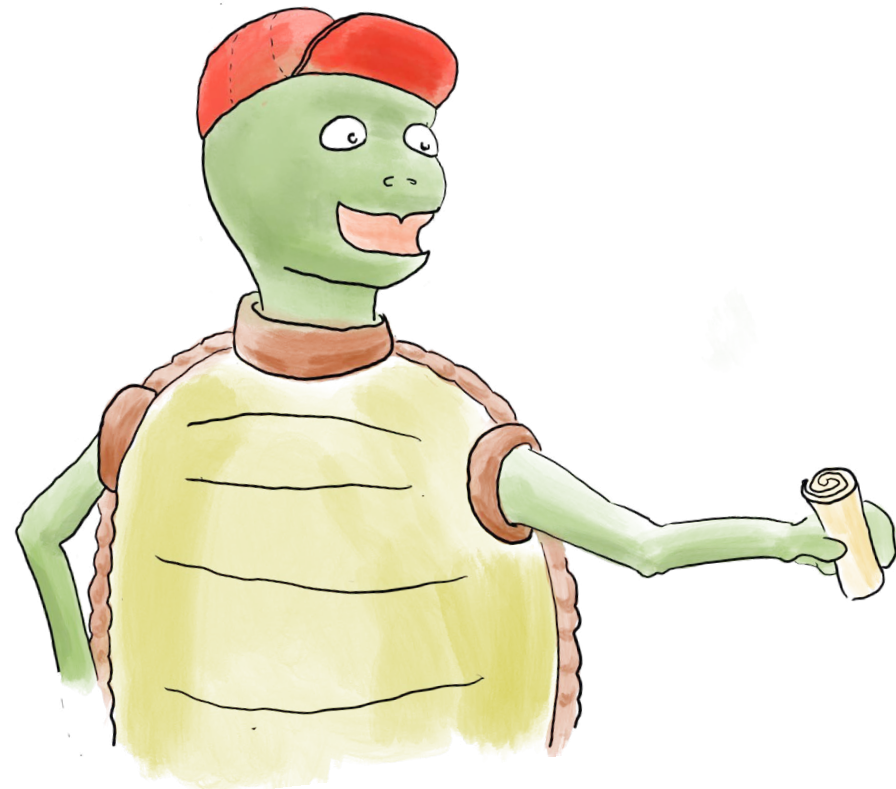




Eddy and Braili get out of the car and Makeda and Abi start to unbuckle my wheelchair from the roof. Just one second later I'm sitting in my wheelchair. I am happy to finally be mobile again. And I think it's great that nobody minds that I need a little extra help. As we pass the gate to Makeda's property, I am surprised. Suddenly we are surrounded by huge green plants and colorful flowers like in a paradise. The bustling noise of the city is nowhere to be heard. Braili hooked up with Abi. Although he is holding his white cane in his paw, it isn't useful on the unpaved paths of the property. At first he still moves uncertainly, but quickly realizes that Abi is a reliable companion. He explains to Braili exactly where the two of them are going now, so Braili can roughly assess the paths and gain confidence. Eddy, on the other hand, immediately starts jumping through the bushes, sniffing flowers and exploring Makeda's property. Fortunately, everything is accessible without steps or stairs, so we can all move into our rooms in the house and unpack.



'Hey, friends', Abi shouts. 'Lunch is ready. Come out into the garden!' We sit down together at a large table that is well set. In the middle is a huge pot with a red sauce. 'Hmm, yummy', Eddy says, 'spaghetti with tomato sauce.' Makeda and Abi laugh out loud. 'Hey hey, no, my little turtle friend, this is injera.' 'It is the traditional Ethiopian food', explains Braili. With his smartphone in his paw he wants to tell us everything about traditional Ethiopian cuisine when Makeda puts a kind of flatbread on every plate. 'Looks like a pancake', says Eddy. He examines his plate with his paw. 'Hi hi, pretty wobbly.' 'Eddy!' I tell him off. 'You can't just mess around with your paw in the food!' Makeda smiles. 'Yes, yes, Eddy is doing right.' Eddy gives me a thoughtful look and was about to start sticking his tongue out, which was prevented by Abi clearing his throat loudly.



Makeda explains, 'Brailli is right. We traditionally eat injera, a sour flatbread. It is also used as cutlery. You have to get used to it quickly because in Ethiopia you eat with your paws. There are also pastes, sauces, vegetables or meat which we eat together with injera. You tear off a piece of flatbread with your right paw and use it to grab the pastes or vegetables.' 'That sounds great', shouts Eddy. Eating with your paws - when are you allowed to do that? In the beginning it is difficult for me to eat like this. I'm afraid of making a mess and don't want to be laughed at. I'm a little ashamed. Makeda shows me again how to do it. 'Here, this is my favorite sauce, it is called Wot, it was already cooked by my grandma', she says while she puts a large bite of injera into her mouth. A little sauce drips onto her chin. I have to grin and wipe it away with a cloth. Makeda has to laugh, too now. After a little nap, we set out to explore the Entoto.

I'm looking forward to the view over the city, but I'm also a little scared. Will my wheelchair make it to the summit? I don't want to be a scaredy-cat and buckle the belt of my wheelchair tightly around my belly. After all, my friends and I have already overcome other obstacles. Plus, my friend Brailli doesn't seem to be worried at all. He can't see anything and there will certainly not be a guidance system for the blind on the hiking trails. If I were in his place, I would be concerned. But Brailli packs a water bottle into his backpack and puts on his sunglasses. He seems to be happy when he links arms with Abi. The two have become a team which works well together.

All of a sudden I feel a little sad. My best friend only spends time with Abi, they laugh and joke together. Brailli shows him new functions on his smartphone and Abi supports Brailli with things that impede him on our journey.

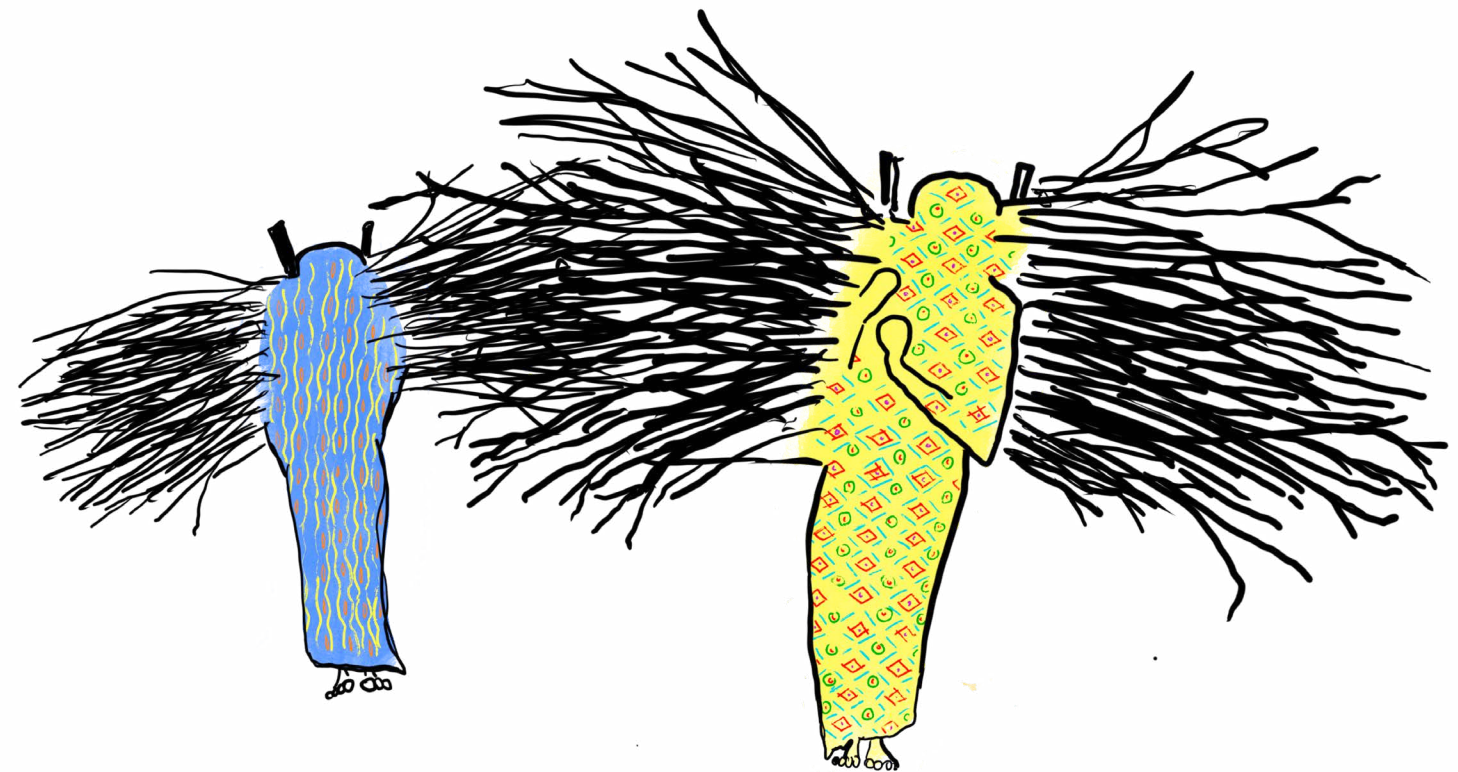




Makeda sits down next to me: 'It's great that the two get along so well, isn't it?' she asks. 'Yes', I say, 'but isn't Abi much too loud and too wild for Brailli? I can't imagine that they will become good friends.' 'Oh Leon!', Makeda looks deep in my eyes as she speaks to me, 'don't be unfair. It's great when you make new friends. In addition, there is now not only the Leipzig group, but also the Addis group. That's great I think. There is nothing wrong with letting new friends into your life every now and then. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses and so you can support each other.' Makeda is right somehow. 'But I would like it more if Brailli and I continued to support each other', I admit. 'Their new friendship makes me feel expelled.' 'I understand', says Makeda. 'However, I'm here too and I'm always there for you.' My lion heart beats very quickly and I'm happy about Makeda's statement. Maybe it won't be so bad after all if we grow our bonds.

Shortly afterwards we start our hike. I can still roll a little bit with my wheelchair on the paved road. But when we arrive at a hiking trail it stumbles and jerks. Anyway Makeda walks very close to me and makes me feel good. 'The Entoto isn't only the historical place where Emperor Menelik II lived, it is also considered a holy mountain with some famous churches and monasteries', she begins to tell. 'Look, there are deep eucalyptus forests, which are known as the lungs of Addis Ababa.' 'Eucalyptus?!', Eddy asks. 'Yes! It is often used as firewood', continues Makeda.

At this moment two suspicious figures come out of the deep forest. They look messy and scary. Huge tufts of matted hair stick up wildly in all directions from brightly colored cloths. I stand rooted to the spot. Brailli immediately notices that something is wrong and also freezes. Only Eddy jumps around looking for a place to hide. 'Oh dear, oh dear, the evil spirits of the eucalyptic forest are coming to get us! Run for your liiiiife!' he shouts while trying to hide behind the narrow eucalyptus trees. The fuzzy figures also stop. What now? What do these forest ghosts want from us? I feel uneasy and my lion heart is beating quickly.





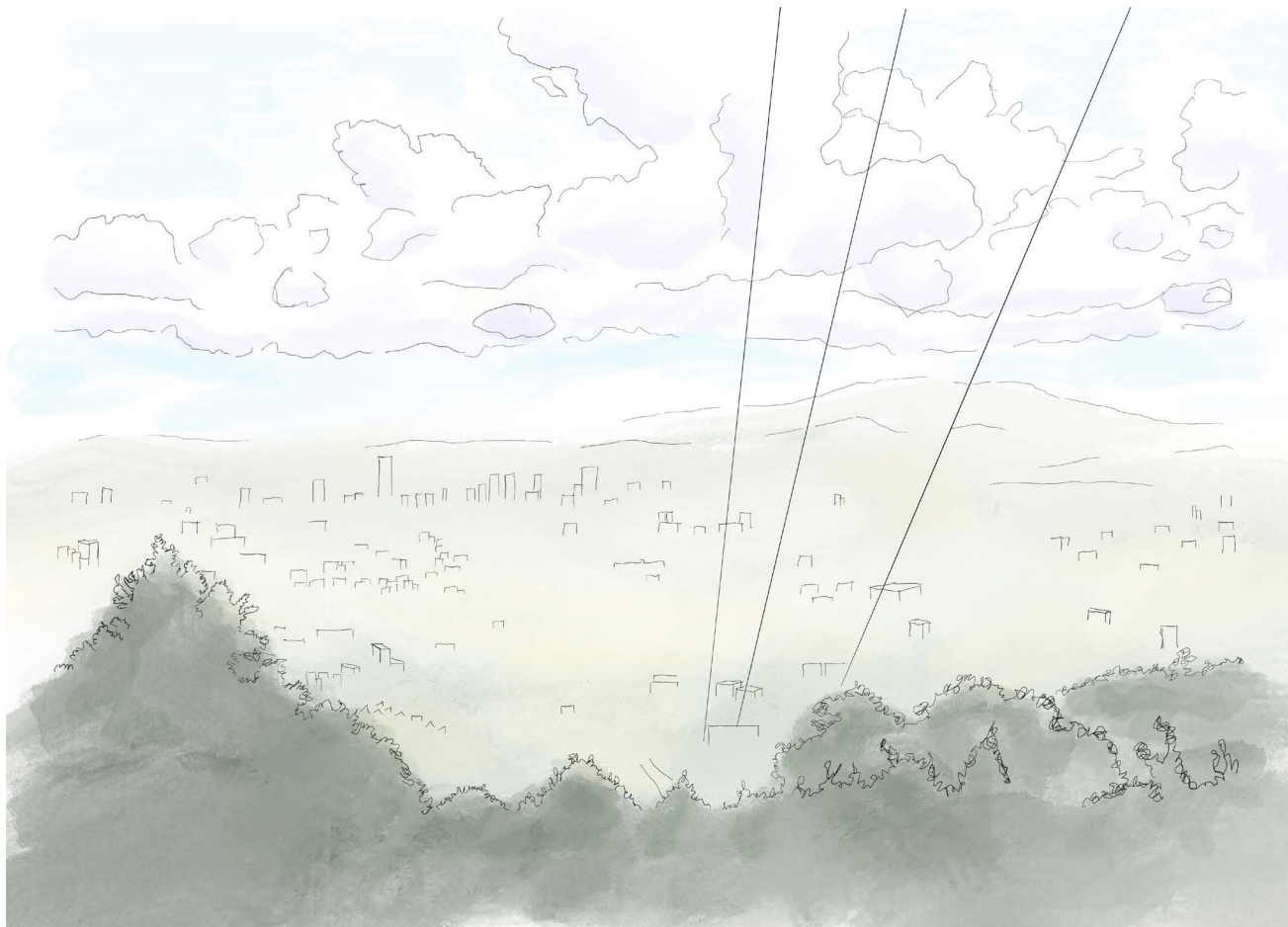


A loud, throaty laugh tears us from the moment of silence. 'Hahahaha, that's great! Evil ghosts of the eucalyptic forest! Hahahahaha! 'Abi doubles up with laughter. 'Hahahaha! Friends, these are no evil ghosts or anything like that! As Makeda said, there is a lot of firewood here in the forest. Your evil forest ghosts are wood pickers. They carry all the wood on their back. I admit it looks a bit strange. The wood can be sold in the market or used as firewood at home. Because our delicious injera tastes best when it is prepared upon a fire.' Phew, let off the shock! Abi is right, if I look carefully, I recognize it. The shaggy hair of the forest ghosts is just the sticks and twigs of the eucalyptus woods.

I am ashamed that I was so wrong. But one of the wood pickers comes up to me with a friendly smile. She takes some twigs with leaves from her bundle and puts them on my wheelchair. The eucalyptus smells wonderful. I'm happy about the pretty decoration, but before I can say anything, the pickers have moved on. The climb up to the summit isn't easy. Often the roots of the forest and the branches that lie on the ground are obstacles for me. If it's not working and I can't get any further on my own, Makeda grabs my wheelchair and supports me by pushing it over the bumpy forest ground.



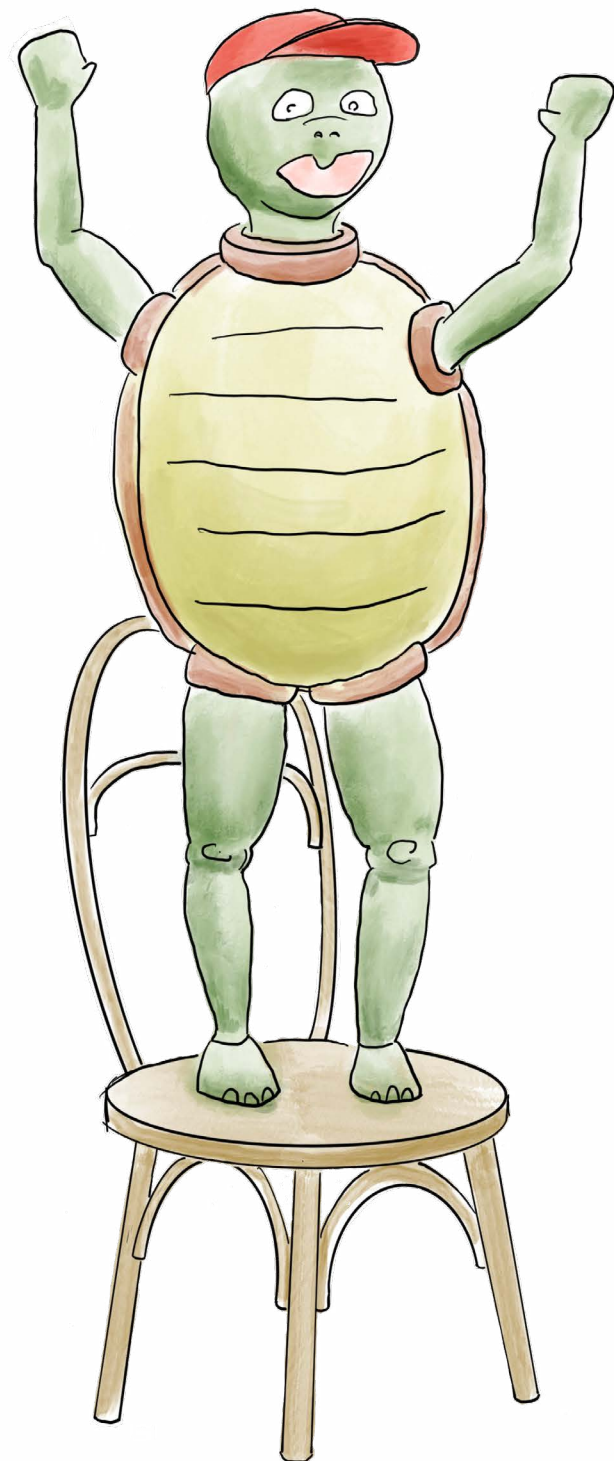
Shortly afterwards we arrive at the summit of the Entoto. The view is sensational. The city shines in the glaring light of the sun, but due to the altitude at which we are, the air is pleasantly fresh. It smells of eucalyptus and suddenly it seems to me as if this noisy, never-tiring city is becoming very quiet. Makeda puts her paw on my shoulder. 'That's it, the new flower', she says with a smile. 'New flower?' Eddy looks around, 'Why flower?' I don't see a flower. I see the forest, I see the sandy, red soil, friendly forest ghosts ... But I don't see a flower!' 'Come on then', shouts Makeda, 'I'll show you. Come with me!' We set off. The descent will not be easy, but I'm looking forward to the adventures that lie ahead.



## Tangerines, Jam and a Hot Breakfast

The next morning we get up early. The air is fresh and a cool breeze is blowing through my mane. For breakfast we enjoy a portion of injera. Makeda puts various sauces and boiled eggs on the table. She warns, 'Please be careful with the sauces. I cooked most of them very mildly. But the light red sauce is very very hot. We call her Wot and I love her.' Glad Makeda mentioned it I think. I don't like spicy food that much and I also know from Eddy that he has a big sweet tooth and can't tolerate spicy food that well. 'My friends! Did you all sleep well, hey?' asks Abi. I totally did. After the long journey and the adventurous hike I slept like a baby lion. 'I had a crazy dream!' Eddy shouted, smacking his lips. With the injera still in his paw, he jumps on his chair and begins to tell: 'We all got up in the middle of the night to climb the Entoto again. Leon had a huge wheelchair and we could all get in and roll up to the summit together. But the eucalyptus forest looked very different. All around us there were trees hung full of tangerines. The sky was red, as red as cherries and looked like jam. I was just about to climb up one of the trees to try what the jam tastes like when I slipped and tumbled to the bank of a large river with a lot of tangerines. There was a boat in which I got into and it brought me to a bridge on which were rocking horses and the forest ghost from yesterday's hike. They all nibbled on the jam.'





Suddenly I saw something sparkling between the trees. It got brighter and brighter and suddenly someone was standing there, a little monkey girl, I think. She was very pretty and her eyes sparkled like diamonds. She waved and called for me - Eddy, Eeeeeedyyyyyy! ' Eddy is now on the table and shouts his head off. Abi is grunting with laughter and Braili is laughing, too. 'I got out of the boat and wanted to run to her', Eddy continues, 'but tangerines were hanging on my legs, they were as heavy as rocks and I wasn't able to walk anymore. Then I woke up. ' Totally disappointed, Eddy sinks into his chair. 'I wanted to talk to her'. Deep wrinkles of concern form on the forehead of the little turtle boy.





'Oh Eddy, don't be sad!', Makeda gives Eddy a big hug. 'She saw you too. I'm sure you'll meet her again soon. 'She winks at him with a smile, but Eddy just shrugs his shoulders and grabs another piece of injera. Due to his exciting dream story, he completely forgot about his breakfast. Lost in thought, he dips his injera flatbread into one of the red sauces on the table. 'Watch out Eddy, that's the ho ----', but before Abi can continue to speak, Eddy puts the injera with the hot sauce into his mouth. 'That's Wot - the hot sauce, my turtle friend!' Abi looks with big eyes at Eddy. Eddy shrugs his shoulders again.

Suddenly he freezes, his face turns into a dark red color and tears well up in his eyes. 'Hhhhhhooooootttt', he shouts out so loudly that the Entoto trembles. He rolls through the garden on his turtle shell until Makeda brings him a glass of milk. 'Drink this!' Eddy drinks the milk very fast. 'Phew, that was close. It helped a lot, thank you Makeda', he says and slowly straightens himself up. 'He he he', Abi's throaty laugh roars over the Entoto, 'but remember, little turtle friend: Wot hurts twice - when it enters the body and when it leaves it, hey hey.'



## Dinkinesh - a Friend for Eddy

After we calmed down a bit we pack up our things to meet with Caven, Abi's little brother. After all we should not forget that we have an important job to do here in Addis Ababa. Caven and his mother live a bit out of town and Makeda was told that they have already made their way to our meeting point. 'However you can't say exactly when the two will arrive', explains Abi. 'They have to wait for the bus and never know when it's coming, hey hey. We'll meet them sometime in the afternoon.' Because we still have time until we can give the much-needed wheelchair to Caven we decide to take a closer look at Addis Ababa. We crawl into our white and blue minibus and Abi cheerfully cranks it down the mountain road. 'And another curve and another!' he warbels. The bus stops in the Amist Kilo district, right in front of the Ethiopian National Museum.

We enter the area of the museum through a large gate. Everything on the compound is beautifully green, the roar of the city lies behind us. I'm looking forward to the museum. Braili is of course already thoroughly informed about it and begins to tell: 'In the museum you can find Ethiopia's artistic treasures. There are many valuable things to see there, such as objects from the Middle Ages or memorabilia from former rulers', reports Braili. 'Yes, that's all true, Braili', interrupts Makeda. 'But you mustn't forget one of the most important pieces in the museum.



Something all Ethiopians are very proud of.' 'You see it's our Lucy, hey hey!' says Abi proud as a peacock. 'She is one of our oldest ancestors and her remains can be found in the basement.' I had actually heard of Lucy. 'Many years ago', continues Braili, 'it was found during excavations in Ethiopia. She is around 3.2 million years old and was able to walk upright even then.' 'Hey, exactly', Abi says happily, and therefore, my friends, the cradle of mankind is here in Ethiopia!' Eddy looks astonished. 'What kind of cradle? Our ancestor lives with you in the basement? And how old should this Lucy be? Three twasillion years? I don't understand anything.' Oh dear. The thoughts tumble through Eddy's head like little table tennis balls and he would like to hide in his cozy turtle shell until he has sorted everything out.





'My turtle friend, come on', Abi puts his paw around Eddy. 'We'll walk through the museum together and I'll explain everything to you.'

'Okay', Eddy says, still in a huff, 'but really slowly please.' Abi smiles at him, 'by the way, here in Ethiopia we say "ishi ishi" when we mean "okay"'. 'Ishi ishi?' Eddy likes that. 'Ishi ishi', he calls out and runs, laughing, in the direction of the museum building. We laugh too and follow him. When we get to the entrance, everyone stops in shock. Oh no! Nobody had thought of that. But to get into the building you have to go up a huge staircase. Eddy hops up step by step, 'one, two, three', he counts.

'Seven, eight, nine ... fifteen, sixteen. There are sixteen steps!' he shouts when he has reached the front door on the top. Sixteen steps, oh dear. This is a barrier that I can't overcome. Even if I could make it up somehow, my wheelchair is far too heavy to be transported up. And unfortunately I can't go without a wheelchair. Now we are all in a bad mood. Eddy is still standing on the stairs. 'That's not possible. I'll count again', he shouts from above and starts to count. 'One, two... ' Makeda and Abi have sat on the bottom step of the stairs. Makeda looks at me sadly: 'Leon, I'm so sorry. I really wanted to show you the exciting history of Ethiopia and completely forgot that the house isn't barrier-free. Accessibility is something new for us in Ethiopia. Unlike in Germany, many houses here in Addis Ababa are not built barrier-free. Often there are small steps or the doors are not wide enough to allow a wheelchair to pass through without any problems.'

'Oh really, and what do you do if someone is sitting in a wheelchair?' asks Eddy who has just reached the bottom of the stairs and sits down next to the others. 'My turtle friend', Abi replies, 'that's a very good question.' Eddy smiles all over his face, proud of having asked this good question. 'We Ethiopians don't have the same conditions when we live with a disability as you do in Germany. But we don't get discouraged. And very important: we always stick together. If someone needs help, he gets it. Everyone stands up for one another. If there is a problem, we will find a solution. 'Together' is our magic word, hey hey!' 'One for all - all for one', shouts Braili and Eddy jumps into the air.



'I have an idea says Brailli, 'if you can't go into the museum, the museum will come to you.' I beg your pardon? I think Brailli got sunstroke or something. The museum should come to me? How is that supposed to work? Then Brailli begins to explain: 'Makeda, you have your smartphone with you, don't you?' Makeda nods, confused, because she doesn't know what Brailli is up to either. 'Well then everything is clear. You and Leon are looking for a nice spot out here in the area of the museum. Eddy, Abi and I go through the exhibition and film with our smartphone camera. So you can also take part in it via your smartphone.'



'Brailli, you are a hero, hey hey', calls Abi. I think about Brailli's idea for a moment. Yes, indeed, it could work that way. All of a sudden, the bad mood is blown away. I would never have thought that Brailli's smartphone could now also become an aid for me. I'm looking forward to visit the museum. Meanwhile Abi, Brailli and Eddy go inside admiring Ethiopian art, traditional music instruments and the throne of Emperor Haile Selassie. There are many interesting exhibits in the museum, but Eddy can't wait to go down to the basement. He still has the stories of Abi in his head and is curious about the ancient ancestor he will get to know. Brailli has hooked up with Abi and carefully feels with his white cane down the steps to the area of the exhibition that deals with prehistoric excavations. But Eddy can't stand it anymore. He storms past the two of them and runs through the exhibition rooms. But he can't find what he's looking for. There are just display cases and blackboards everywhere. There are stones in the display cases and a few bones. But there is no trace of the famous ancestor. Eddy is sad. Disappointed, he asks Abi, 'Where is she? Is she hiding somewhere?' 'Hey hey, my turtle friend, who do you mean?' Abi replies. Eddy answers almost indignantly: 'Well your Susi or what her name is?' 'Hey hey hey, you mean Lucy! Come with me, she's up there. I'll show you.'



The three walk through the exhibition and stop at a showcase in which some bone parts are put together in such a way that it suggests a skeleton. 'Here she is - our Lucy', says Abi proudly, almost a little solemnly. There are only question marks on Eddy's face. Braili explains: 'These are the remains of Lucy. She was found here in Ethiopia in 1974 and is considered our oldest found ancestor. That's why she is very famous. It's suspected that she was about three feet tall and could already walk upright.' Although Eddy is a bit disappointed, he is fascinated by the story of Lucy.

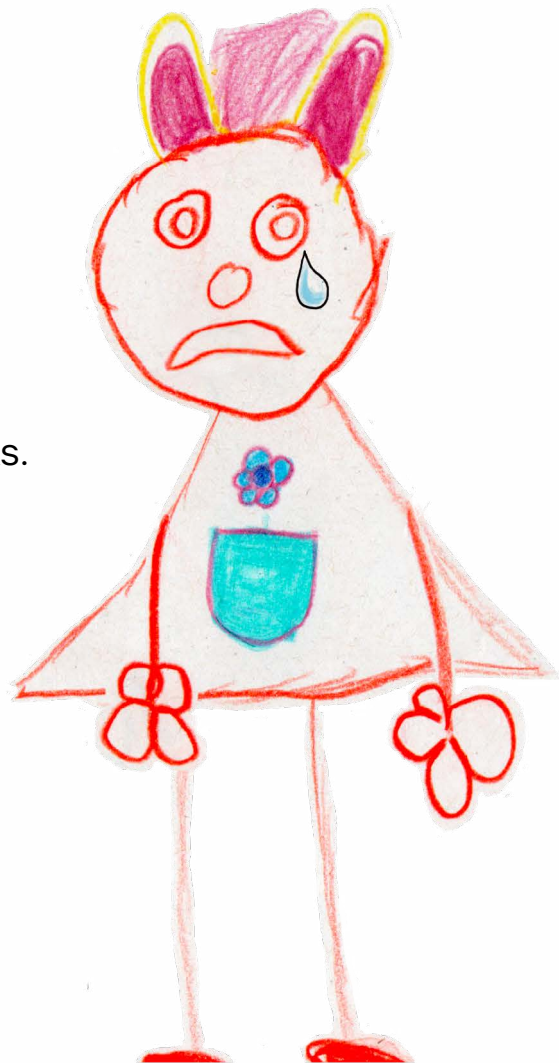
He walks excitedly through the exhibition, looking at every display case and reading all the information. His eyes light up when he sees a replica of Lucy. A monkey girl roaming the arid landscape of Ethiopia. When Abi taps on his shoulder, Eddy got a fright. 'Little pal, we want to go on. We still have a lot to do today.' 'Yes, yes, I'll be right there. Five more minutes, please!' begs Eddy. Abi nods and Eddy continues to look at the monkey in the display case. When Abi and Braili leave the museum, Eddy is left alone. In a good mood, he runs up the stairs and starts counting again: 'One, two, three ...' 'Eddy!' Eddy stops. Did someone call his name?





That's not possible because he's alone in the basement. 'Eeeeddy!' There it was again! Someone called his name, it could be heard very clearly. He turns around and jumps off the stairs. One of the showcases is open and there it is in the middle of the room. Her eyes are sparkling brightly and her smile is magical. 'You're the one' says Eddy, 'you are the monkey from my dream.' 'They call me Lucy', says the little monkey girl, 'but actually my name is Dinkinesh, that's Amharic and means ,you are marvelous'. 'Dinkinesh, that sounds nice' Eddy replies. 'My friends are waiting outside. Do you want to come along and get to know them?' 'Ishi ishi', answers the monkey girl and leads the way up the stairs.

Eddy recognizes that she rocks back and forth when she walks. 'Hey Dinkinesh, what about your leg? It looks funny when you walk', he asks. Suddenly Dinkinesh turns around and looks at him: 'Do you think I look weird? A long, long time ago I had an accident with a wild animal and since then I can't walk properly without rocking back and forth in this strange kind of way.' She looks at Eddy sadly, tears run down her round face.



'In a strange kind of way?' he asks in astonishment. 'That's rubbish. I love the way you walk. You have a pretty hip swing when you walk and I think that's beautiful.' Dinkinesh has to giggle. 'Sometimes I find it very difficult to walk and it can also be really exhausting', she says, and her face darkens again. Eddy thinks intensely and suddenly has an idea: 'Well, I have an idea: you need a walking stick!' 'A what?', Dinkinesh gives him a questioning look. Eddy explains, 'This is an aid that you can use to support yourself when walking. It helps that you don't lose your balance and you aren't exhausted so easily. And the best thing is, my friend Leon is waiting outside. He's got a walking stick like that with him. And I think he'll be happy to lend it to you. How does that sound? Shall we ask him?' 'Dinkinesh's eyes sparkle like diamonds again. 'Ishi ishi', she calls and rocks up the stairs with a happy swing of her hips.



## With Kolo to the Great Thinkers

'Hmmm, that tastes good. Crunchy and aromatic. 'Delicious, isn't it? Leon, do you want some more?' asks Makeda. 'Yes, please', I answer with my mouth full. While we're waiting for Eddy, Makeda offered us a delicious snack mix. 'It tastes really good', says Brailli. 'These are cereal grains', explains Makeda, 'which are roasted in a large pan until they are golden brown. You can enjoy them sweet or salty and they are a delicious snack in between.' That's right. I can't get enough of this mix of grains. 'What are you nibbling on? I didn't get anything!' complains Eddy, who suddenly stands next to us. 'This is Kolo', a friendly, but unfamiliar voice says. I don't have that much freedom of movement in my wheelchair so I have to stretch and straighten my neck to turn around and see who is talking. However, I see Makeda and Abi's surprised faces. With big eyes they look at Eddy's company. Abi stutters: 'ttthhiiiiss iiisss...' I would never have thought it is possible that I would experience Abi speechless for once. And Makeda doesn't get a word out either. Brailli, who doesn't notice the surprised faces of the others, asks friendly: 'Eddy, who did you bring with you? Introduce your girlfriend to us!' 'Ishi ishi', he says, 'that's Dinkinesh and she's a monkey girl.



We met in my dream and met again today at the museum. She wants to accompany us. It's not a problem, isn't it? 'Eddy and Dinkinesh are both grinning all over their faces. 'Uh, no, no problem. Selam and welcome to us, Dinkinesh', Makeda stammered and held out the bag with the Kolo to the friendly monkey girl. 'Ishi ishi, you can also say 'Dinki' to me', she giggles and stuffs a portion of the crispy grains into her mouth. 'Leon' says Eddy to me, 'you have your walking stick with you, right? Do you think Dinki can borrow it? She had an accident a while ago and is therefore quickly exhausted when walking.' I think about it for a moment: I really only need the walking stick in a case of emergency, but this didn't happen since I got my e-wheelchair. 'Yes, of course', I answer. Dinki smiles as Abi gives her my walking stick and she takes a few steps with it. I am happy because it gives me a good feeling that I can help her.





'Come on then, what else did you want to show us, Makeda?' asks Braili, who is pleased that we have one more new friend. We start moving. After a short walk we get to a large gate which is adorned with magnificent figurines. 'Oh, what kind of palace is that?', Eddy wants to know and Dinki also looks impressed at the magnificent stone lions on the archway. 'This, my dear friends, is the University of Addis Ababa. I come here to study almost every day', Makeda tells proudly. 'But you are not entirely wrong, Eddy', interjects Braili, who is already holding his smartphone in his paws, 'The main building was the palace for Emperor Haile Selassie I many years ago.'

'However, I would like to draw your attention to something else that is very important to me', Makeda says, pointing to a large poster right next to the entrance gate. It says in huge letters that are easy to read for everyone: 'Great thinkers focus on the abilities someone has, not on the disabilities.' 'That's a long sentence', says Eddy and I notice that the words in his head are starting to tumble again. 'My little turtle friend' Abi begins to explain, 'it means that the most important thing isn't the disability of someone, but the things that you can do well, hey hey'. Eddy shrugs his shoulders: 'Well, that's quite logical. You don't have to use so many words for this simple message.' I am very impressed.

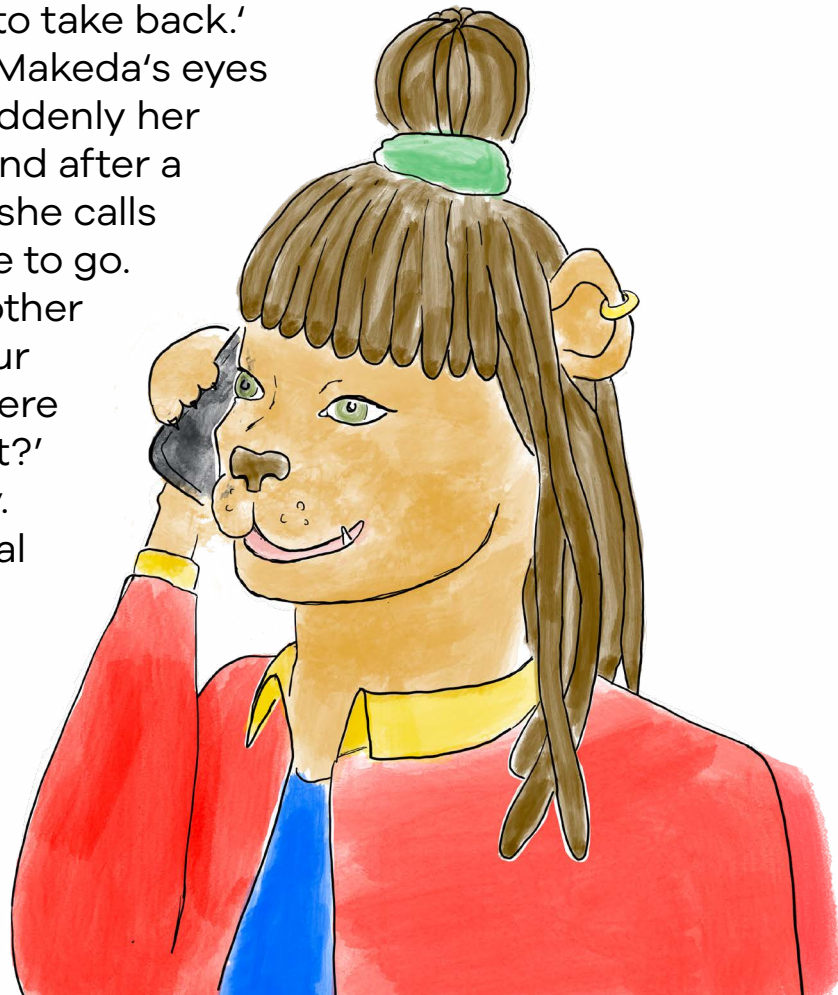




On the one hand, because our Eddy seems to take it for granted that it doesn't matter whether I'm sitting in a wheelchair or Braili needs a white cane. On the other hand, I think it's great that this poster is hanging right in front of the university so everyone can see this important message.

Makeda says: 'Yes, here in Ethiopia it's still new to us to deal with the topic disability. For a long time we just talked a little about it. If you had a disability, there were no aids and no help, but there were many barriers and, above all, no understanding of the many different needs. In the past you were even hidden if you had a disability and weren't allowed to participate in life', she says sadly. 'But a lot has changed in the last few years. We want to live and learn in an inclusive way and fortunately that is possible at this university most times. I am very proud of that. Because small steps forward are better than big steps that you then have to take back.'

I see the sparkle in Makeda's eyes and smile at her. Suddenly her smartphone rings and after a short conversation she calls us: 'Friends, we have to go. Caven and Abi's mother will soon arrive at our meeting point.' 'Where is our meeting point?' asks Dinki curiously. 'This is a very special place', replies Makeda, while she and Abi smile at each other.



## Buddies for life

We climb out of our minibus. It's noon when we enter the courtyard of a large house. From afar we can hear the babble of voices, in between loud laughter and the melody of a happy song.

'Where are we?' asks Braili, and I'm curious to see where Makeda and Abi will take us.

We go into a large building, through a long hallway, and suddenly we are in a schoolyard. 'Friends', Abi shouts with a loud voice, to make himself heard between all the students buzzing around us, 'this is a really great place: The German Church School, hey hey.' 'School is boring', says Eddy and rolls his eyes. 'Not this one', replies Makeda. 'This is an inclusive school. Here students learn together, regardless of whether they have a disability or not.'







When I look around, I understand what Makeda means: There are students who sit in wheelchairs and are pushed by others. A blind student linked arms with a friend. They walk across the school yard, chatter and laugh. The mood here is cheerful and lively. 'If you want to study at this school, you either have to be very poor or have a disability', explains Makeda. 'Often families who don't have that much money can't afford to send their children to school. And if you have a disability, it's harder anyway, because you have to rely on a lot of aids that are not available in other schools. Here it is different.' Now it's time for lunch. Everyone gets a roll, a banana and a glass of milk. We sit down on a bench and enjoy the meal. Students are approaching with a ball. 'Do we want to play soccer?' they ask. Eddy and Dinki are thrilled. They don't have to think twice about it. Eddy plays in the soccer goal and Dinki is about to shoot. She doesn't seem to care that she needs a walking stick. I'm a little annoyed with myself because I don't dare to play along. Sometimes I am a scaredy-cat and I'm afraid that I can't take part everywhere because I am in a wheelchair. Makeda noticed how yearning I watch the soccer game.

'Well', she asks, 'do you want to score a goal?' I have to smile and nod as she pushes my wheelchair to join the others on the field. Braili links arms with Abi, because there seems to be no limit in their ambition, too. A furious game of soccer is played together with the students of the German Church School. After the game Abi's mother and little brother Caven arrive at the German Church School. He wants to visit the school next year, too. He's really looking forward to finally learn to read and write. Abi leads us into one of the break rooms and we sit down with a portion of Kolo. Makeda gets the folding wheelchair that I brought with me from Germany from the minibus and brings it to us. His mother helps Caven to sit in it: it fits!



Caven's eyes light up. Abi and his mother are happy. 'Oh great.' Everyone is enthusiastic. 'This wheelchair helps us a lot', says Caven's mother. I am pleased that my folding wheelchair causes so much joy. We walk through the school building together. Abi, who used to visit this school when he was younger, shows the rooms to us. Every area on the ground floor is barrier-free so that the students who need wheelchairs or other aids can easily enter the rooms. You will not only find a lot of books in Braille, there are also learning boards in every room showing information in Braille. Braili is enthusiastic and touches every Braille-board with his paws. 'Here in this school there are a lot of students with visual impairments, like in whole Ethiopia', Makeda tells us. 'That's why there are special offers here for the special needs of the blind and visually impaired students, for example a library with books in Braille.' 'But I also see wheelchair users and students with walking aids', I say. 'Yes, that's right Leon', Abi replies. 'This school is inclusive. Anyone who needs support is welcome. We live with each other here as a matter of course and we want to understand each other's problems. 'Understand each other to live with each other! That sounds great I think and decide to make this my life motto. 'I think it's really great that it's worked in teams here. On the first day of school everyone gets a buddy - that's a friend who supports you.' Makeda smiles and looks at Abi with a mischievous look. 'That's how we got to know each other, right Abi?' Abi nods and begins to tell: 'Yes, exactly. You work always in teams of two here. A student with a disability is the buddy of a student without a disability.

You support each other. Makeda and I were buddies for eight years.' 'And still are today', she laughs and takes Abi's hand. 'Wait a minute', asks Eddy suspiciously. 'Who has a disability on your team?' Eddy is right. I've known Makeda for a long time, and I know for

sure that she has no disabilities.

She would have already told me.

Abi looks bashful at the floor.

'Yes, friends, I haven't told you yet. I also have a disability. I can't hear that well. So actually I'm deaf in one ear.'

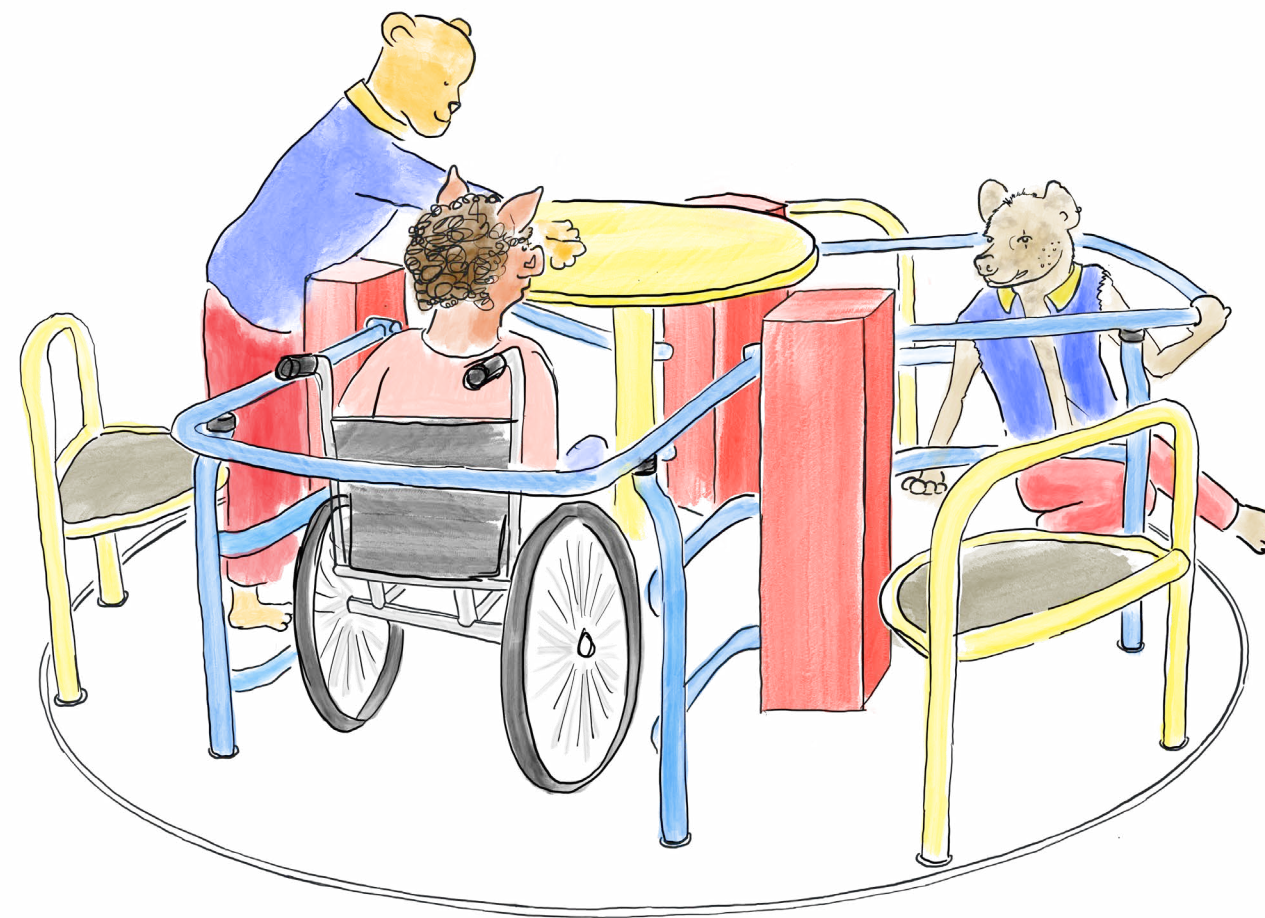




'No way! ', Eddy shoots out and I'm really surprised too. 'You've carried it off well.' 'That's right', Abi replies. 'Unfortunately, that's also a big problem with this type of disability: you can't see it. Therefore, others can't respond to it so well. Mostly I'm excluded without even realizing it.' Suddenly the otherwise wild and loud Abi becomes very calm and thoughtful. Then I realize a lot. That's why Abi is often so loud and boisterous, almost rumbling. 'Since I am almost deaf, I naturally speak louder to hear myself and move more strongly to clarify what I want to say', Abi explains, almost apologetically. 'I can imagine that other people think that's weird.' 'Oh nonsense', says Eddy. 'That's alright. You are the funniest one of our group, you are always in a good mood and very strong. We're buddies now, too. Buddies for life!' Eddy makes his highest jump and everyone laughs. Even Abi who looks relieved after he told us his secret. And we are also happy that he trusts us.

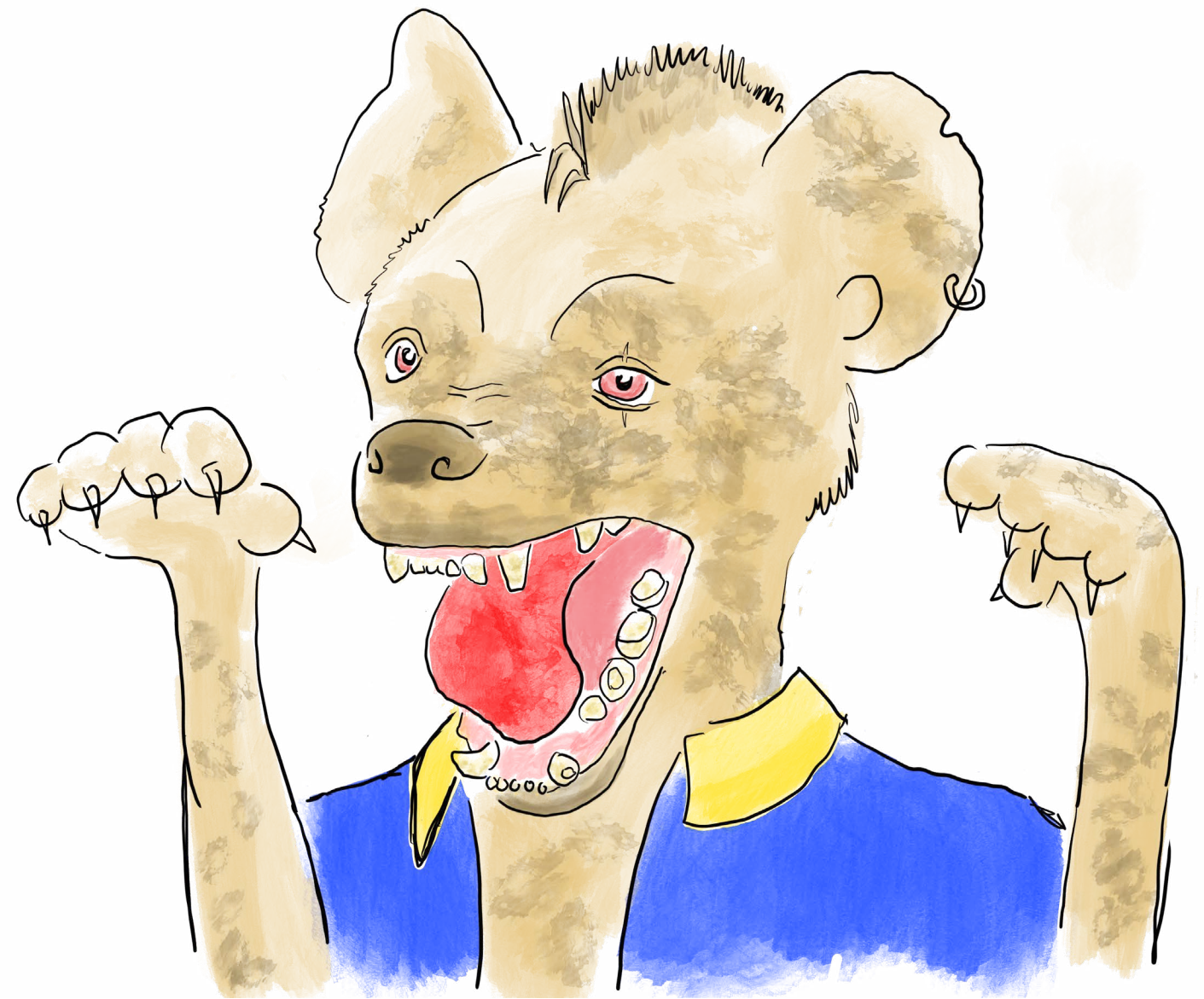
## An Eerie Encounter

While we are talking, little Caven rolls away with his new wheelchair. Happy to finally be mobile, he explores the school building, where he will study next school year. It rolls across the school yard, past the school garden to the inclusive playground, which the students can use during breaks and after class, too. He is very interested in the small carousel on which wheelchair users and walking students can ride together.



Just as he is about to roll carefully onto the carousel, someone takes a seat next to him. 'Who are you, my dear? I've never seen you here before', hisses a voice next to him. He looks up and into the glowing red eyes of a hyena who sits in the seat next to him. Caven is terrified and answers with a shaky voice: 'I'm Caven and I'm new here.' 'New here, aha aha. My name is Aster. You have a nice wheelchair. It looks great. Are you all alone here?' The hyena nags while she looks at the wheelchair very carefully. 'Hello Aster. Yes, the wheelchair is new. I got it today. Now I have to go back to the school building, my mom and my brother are already waiting for me.'

Caven is scared and wants to get quickly off the carousel and back to the others. But the wheelchair is still too new for him and he has difficulties reversing. 'What? Stay. Come on, I'll help you', purrs the hyena.

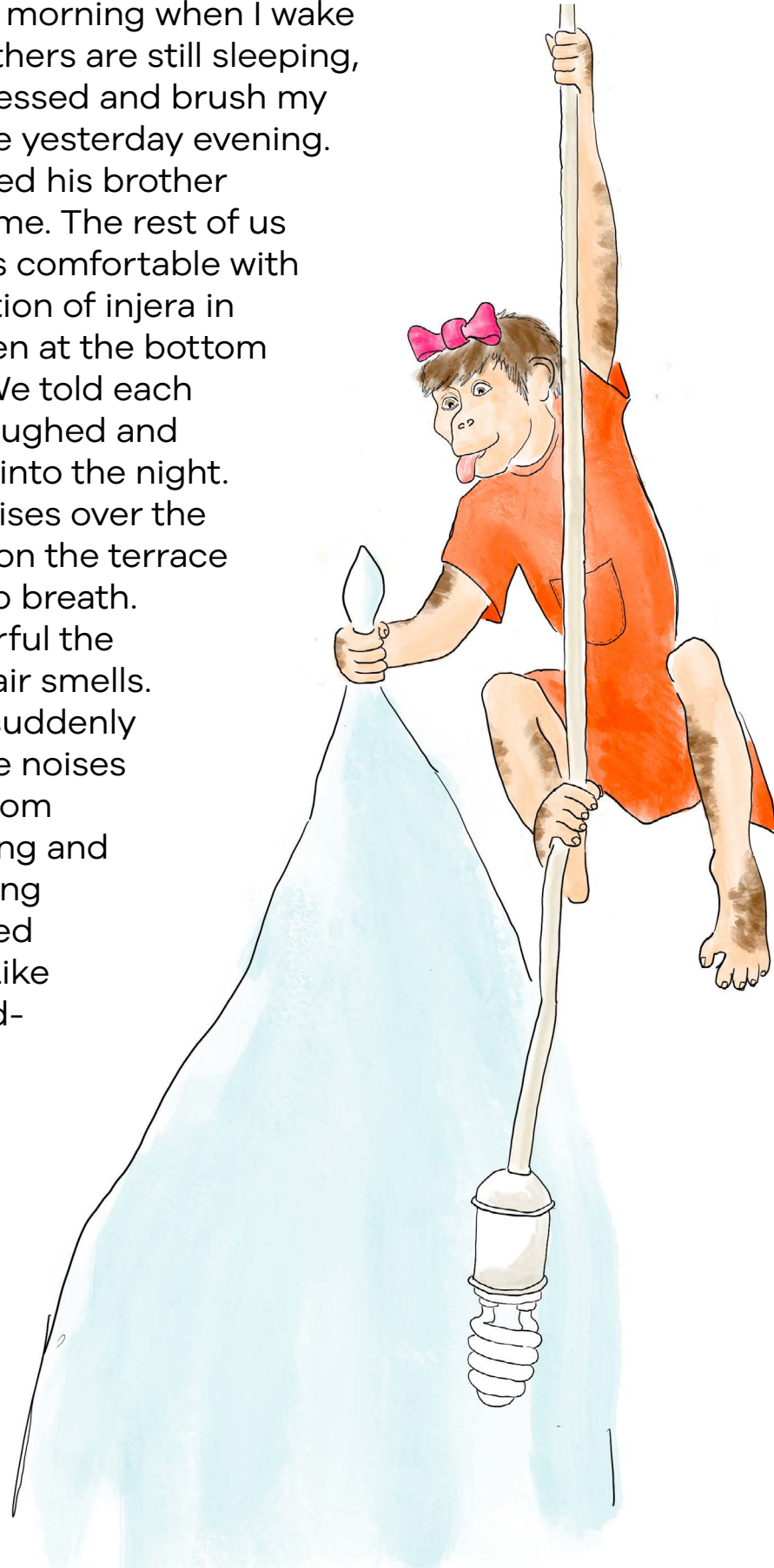


Just as she is about to try to block Caven's way back, Abi's loud voice roars: 'Caven, Caaaven, where are you?' Aster hops off the playground device and hides behind a tree that stands next the playground. Caven is happy when he spots his brother Abi, who helps him to get off the carousel. On the way to the school building Caven turns around and discovers Aster's sparkling red eyes peeking out from behind the tree. A shiver runs down his spine. 'Saved by the bell', he thinks to himself.



# Wake up Eddy!

It is early in the morning when I wake up. While the others are still sleeping, I quickly get dressed and brush my mane. It got late yesterday evening. Abi accompanied his brother and mother home. The rest of us made ourselves comfortable with a delicious portion of injera in Makeda's garden at the bottom of the Entoto. We told each other stories, laughed and joked until late into the night. When the sun rises over the Entoto, I stand on the terrace and take a deep breath. Oh how wonderful the fresh morning air smells. This silence is suddenly broken. Strange noises can be heard from inside. Squeaking and muffled knocking are accompanied by loud roars 'Like I've already said- get out of bed!'



I hear Dinki singing. When I look around the corner into the house, I see her bouncing wildly on Eddy's bed. 'Go, get up, little slowcoach!' The little turtle head comes out from under the covers. Eddy yawns and blinks. 'What time is it?' he asks sleepily. 'It doesn't matter!' Shouts Dinki, 'the big, wide world is waiting outside!' 'Nooo, I'm tired. I still want to sleep.', Eddy complains and wraps himself in his blanket again. 'Eddy - croquetty, Eddy - croquetty ', Dinki rhymes as she climbs up the lampshade and now hangs upside down over the bed and reaches for Eddy's blanket. 'Hey, stop it!' Eddy grumbles. She tries several times to pull the blanket off him, but she fails every time. Eddy has to laugh, he just can't be angry with Dinki. 'Well, let's go then', he says and pulls himself together. He swings out of bed and puts on his red cap. Makeda, who follows the spectacle with a laugh, prepares breakfast. In the morning sun we eat delicious bananas, with a large glass of milk. Suddenly wide awake and with a splendid milk beard on his face, Eddy asks: 'So, what are we going to do today?' 'Well, Eddy!', Brailli replies in astonishment. 'Don't you remember? Yesterday Makeda was told by a friend in the German Church School that a big community festival is taking place in the Ethiopian National Association for the Blind today. Abi and Caven want to come with us.' I can see exactly how the table tennis balls tumble through Eddy's head. 'Right!' He bursts out.



At this very moment we hear Abi's minibus rattle up the mountain road to Makeda's house. With a loud honk and a strong jolt, it comes to a stop in a huge cloud of dust. It is February and the rainy season is approaching in Ethiopia. The soils are dry and dusty. When the sandy cloud settles, we see Abi, who is standing by the car and waving. He wears a fancy shirt. Little Caven leans out of the window and smiles all over his face. His wheelchair is strapped to the roof of the minibus. Both of them seem to be very excited about the day in the Ethiopian Association for the Blind and I also have a great desire to meet other friends of Makeda and to spend a lively day.

Our journey to Ethiopia is slowly coming to an end and the community festival is a wonderful way to end our time in Addis Ababa.

We all get on the bus in a good mood. Braili is sitting next to Abi, who drives the minibus. Together they hum to a song on the radio. Behind them sit Dinki, Caven and Eddy. Dinki has picked up a portion of Kolo, which is now secretly shared among the three. Makeda and I are in the back of the bus. She wears a traditional dress and a light white scarf with a beautiful ornate border around her head. 'That's called Natala', she explains to me. She looks very pretty, I think, and I'm a little sad that we'll have to part again soon. At that moment the minibus rumbles through a huge pothole. We all do a big hop and I'm glad everyone has their seat belts tightly around their bellies. The bus groans and rattles even louder than usual. The engine stutters and the brightly colored display on Abi's steering wheel flickers, becomes weaker and finally stops to light completely. Abi tries a couple of times to turn the ignition key. But in vain. The minibus has stopped. 'And now?' asks Braili a little worried. 'Now', Abi grumbles, gets out and slams the driver's door, 'now we're walking, hey hey!' With a happy little song on his lips, he begins to unbuckle the wheelchairs from the roof. 'Come on, friends, get out of the bus', he calls out to us through the open window. 'It's not far to the Association for the Blind, we can do the rest on foot. I'll take care of the bus later. You know: there are no problems, only solutions', he says and winks at us. Abi's way of dealing with unforeseen situations impresses me.



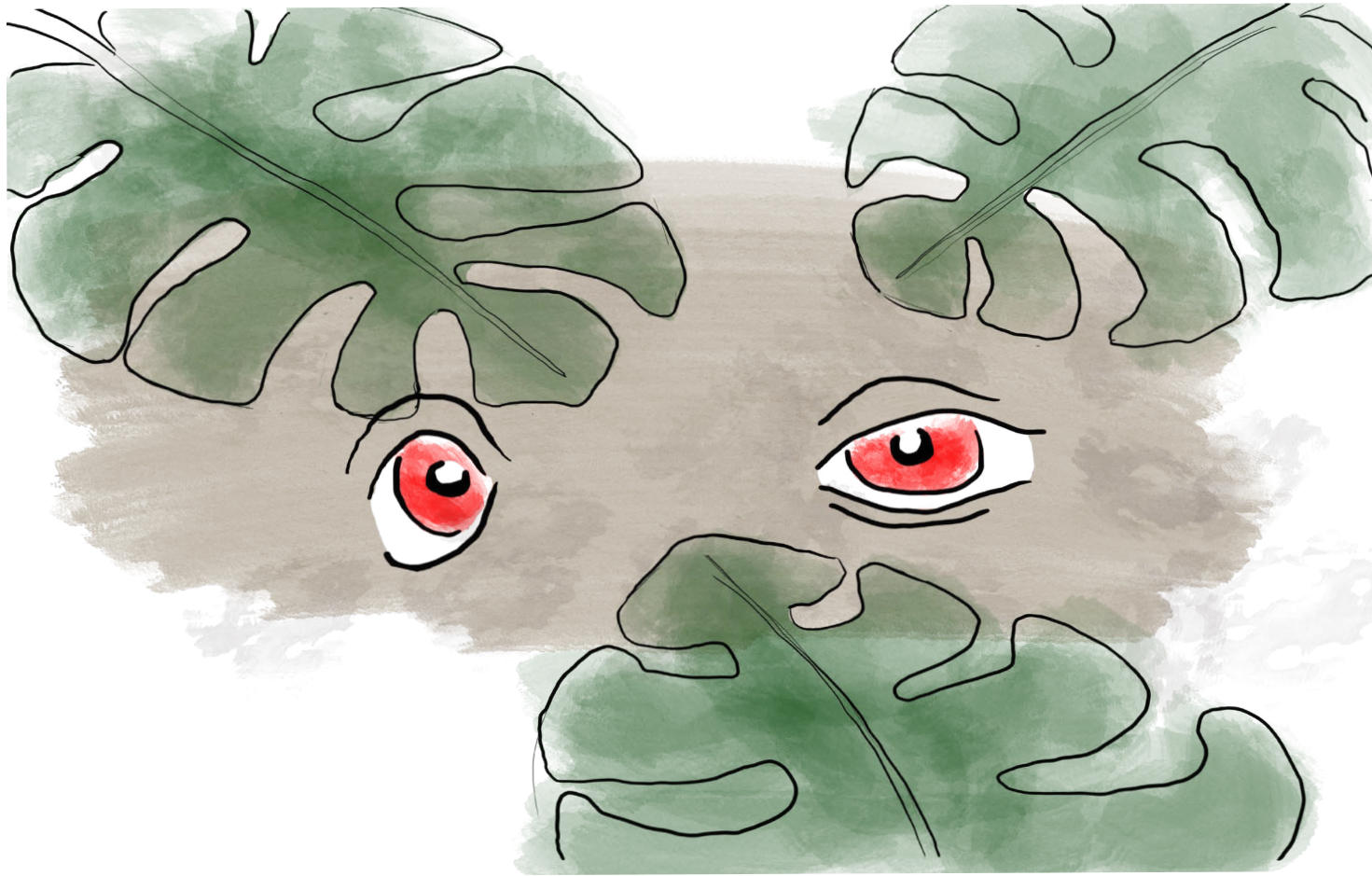
So we get out and continue our journey on foot. The traffic in Addis Ababa is wild and loud. There are hardly any traffic lights and no pedestrian crossings. Everything is very confusing. I am glad that there is a clearly visible guidance system for the blind on the big streets of the city, so Brailli can move more safely. We are walking down a busy street. To the right and left there are colorful little shops with lots of fresh fruit, such as bananas, watermelons and apples, next to small stalls selling Kolo, water and lemonade. Since we have already walked a bit, we are thirsty and go to one of the shops. Abi and I buy water, Dinki and Caven look for lemonade and of course Kolo, which they can't get enough of. Eddy is very interested in a Natala scarf and is already digging some change out of his backpack.



Suddenly Makeda calls out: 'Brailli! Watch out!' But too late. It buzzes loudly and Brailli screams 'Ouch!' Oh no, what happened, I ask myself worried. Because I sit in a wheelchair, I often don't have the same overview as those who are standing. Then I see what happened. While we were looking for lemonade and water, Brailli slowly walked along the grooved panels of the guidance system for the blind. Shortly behind the shop there is a driveway in which a car has been parked - exactly on the guidance system for the blind! Since Brailli obviously can't see it, he ran into it with full force. Ouch! Brailli hit his knee. It bleeds a little. I resent so much indifference. Obviously the guidance system for the blind has a different color from the rest of the floor. This way it is more visible. In Leipzig we have often seen that the guidance system is obstructed with stands or bicycles, too and thus poses a danger to the blind. Makeda can tell that I'm very angry: 'Oh Leon, don't get angry. Most of the time the guidance system for the blind isn't adjusted on purpose.' At that moment the driver of the car arrives. He recognizes immediately what has happened and apologizes profusely. I now understand what Makeda means. He didn't intend to cause problems with Brailli and he regrets not paying more attention. Brailli and the driver shake hands and hug. Brailli gets a nice, colorful plaster on the wound on his knee.





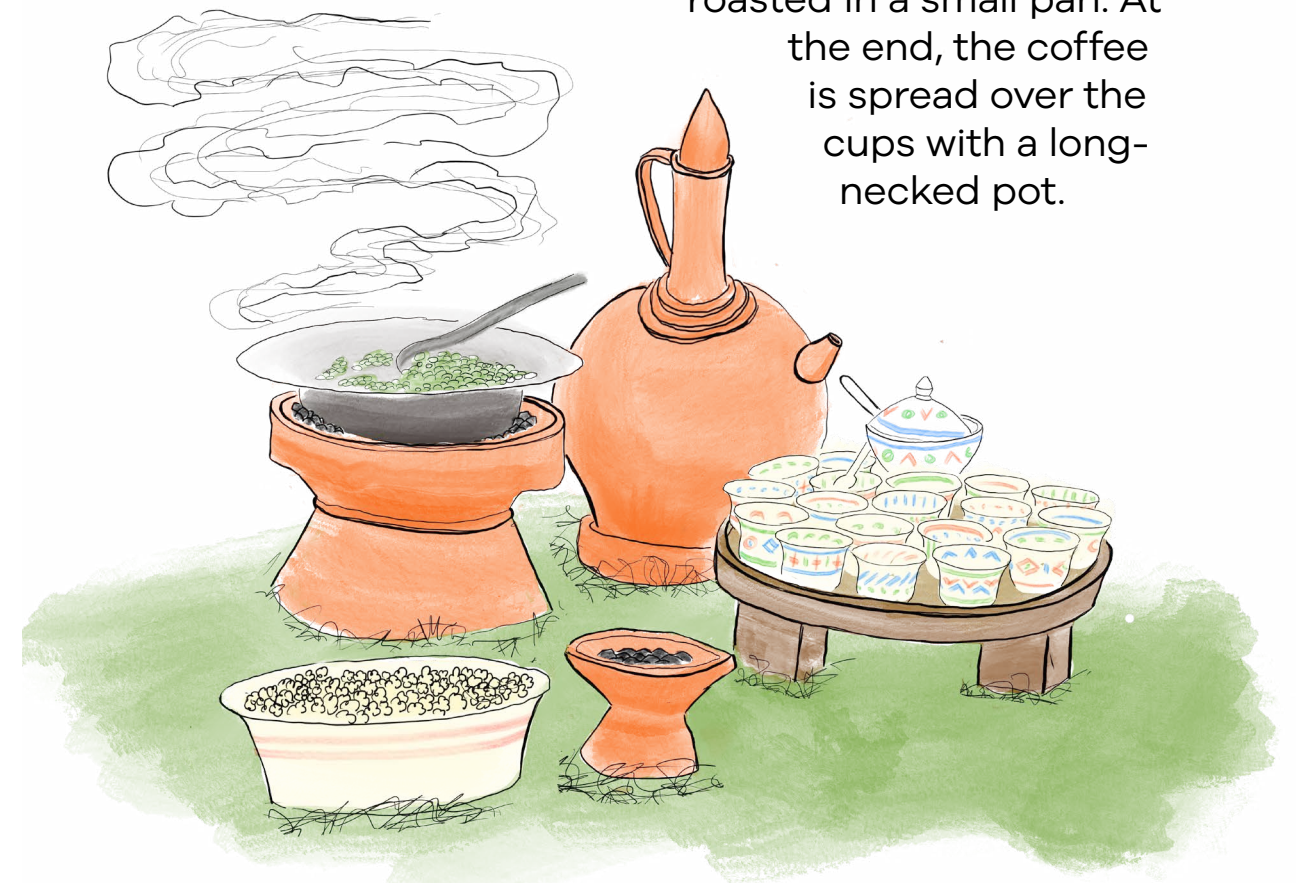


While we chatter with the driver of the car, Eddy, Dinki and Caven sit on a bench next to the shop. They're drinking soda and nibbling on Kolo when Caven spots something around a corner. He rolls a bit closer and there he sees them - the bright red eyes. 'These are Aster's eyes', he thinks and a horrible shiver runs down his spine when he thinks about the encounter with the eerie hyena. He quickly turns around and rolls back to his friends. Has she been chasing him? What does she want? A queasy feeling spreads in his stomach. 'My friends!' shouts Abi loudly. 'The break is over, we're going on!' Caven is happy that the friends are moving. Just get away from the scary red eyes quickly.

## A Sad Beast

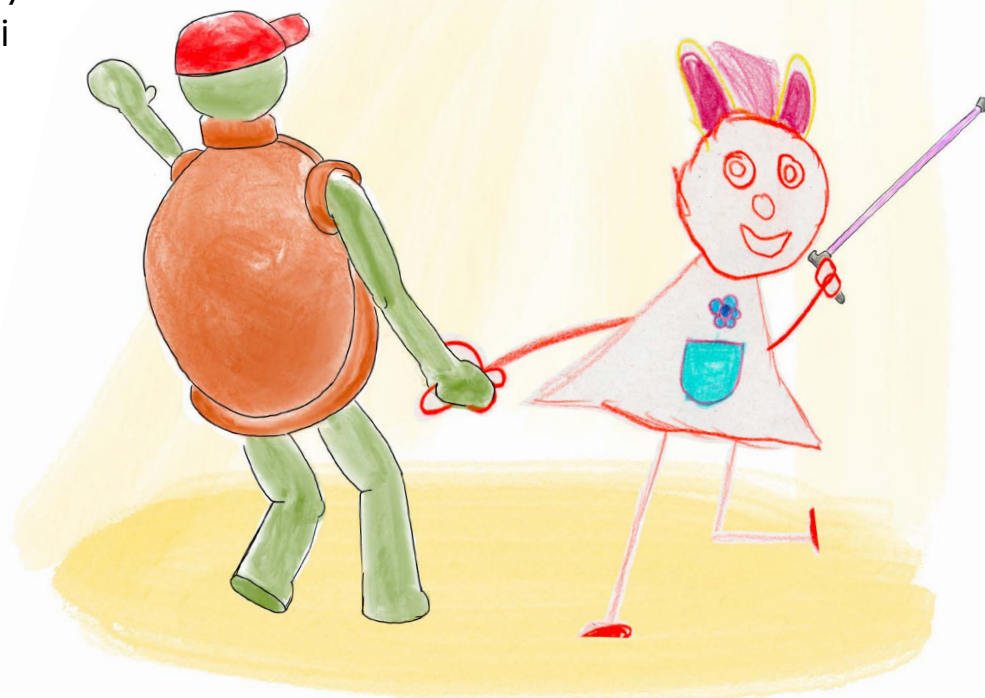
Abi whistles happily through his teeth. His upper body moves to the beat of the music. It looks funny when such a massive animal moves rhythmically. After a short walk we arrived at the Ethiopian National Association for the Blind. The entrance gate, which leads to the large property, is beautifully decorated with flowers and brightly colored cloths. We are standing in front of a stage in the courtyard of the association. There are many stalls behind us and it smells delicious of roasted Kolo. Next to us there is a stall where you can drink the traditionally cooked coffee. It is called Buna and it is served in small, colorfully decorated cups. During the coffee ceremony, dried grass lies on the floor and the coffee beans are

roasted in a small pan. At the end, the coffee is spread over the cups with a long-necked pot.





'You eat popcorn with it' explains Makeda and stirs a large spoonful of sugar into her coffee. 'Can I just eat the popcorn?' asks Eddy. 'I don't like coffee that much.' He takes two paws full of popcorn and giggles away with Dinki. A keyboard and drums are set up on the stage. Four musicians go on stage. They are all blind. Each of them wears a plaid shirt and a small bow tie around their necks. In addition to the keyboard and drums, there is also an electric guitar and a bass. The musicians pick up their instruments. One of them picks up the microphone and speaks a few words in Amharic. Makeda translates for us: 'He says that they are the band of the National Blind Association ENAB and that they call themselves ,The Blind Fish'. Braili laughs. 'They practice their songs here at the club twice a week. They are all completely blind, but that doesn't stop them from following their hearts and making music.' I see. In the end, the music counts, the rest doesn't matter. Then they start. And I am impressed. Braili claps happily and further ahead I see Eddy and Dinki dancing.



While the others are listening to the music of ,The Blind Fish', little Caven makes his way to the toilets in his wheelchair. They are in a small shed behind the main building. He turns the corner onto a dark path lined with tall trees and a thick hedge. The music gets quieter the further he goes away and suddenly he is all alone on the little path that leads to the shed. Then it cracks and he hears a deep purr. A black shadow jerks out from behind a tree, grabs him from behind and pulls him around. Caven looks into the glowing red eyes of Aster, the hyena he met at the playground. 'You are all alone here, Caven?' She hisses and sneaks around him. 'No', replies Caven in a shaky voice. 'I'm here with my friends!' 'Your friends, ha ha. Well, they're busy with the music now, I think. So you are here all alone. With me! Ahahahaharrrrr.'



Aster's creepy laughter shocks Caven to his marrow. His heart is beating wildly and he is frightened. He yells, 'What do you want from me, you monster?' Aster laughs even louder and grunts: 'Your wheelchair! I want that! And if you don't give it to me willingly, I'll get it. And I'll get you too.' She walks slowly towards Caven and her mouth seems to get bigger and bigger. Caven's heart leapt into his throat. He presses his hands over his face for fear of being eaten.

'Certainly not!' Someone shouts from behind the terrible hyena. Caven opens his eyes. Eddy and Dinki! While Dinki hits Aster on the nose with her walking stick, Eddy pulls her tail with full power. 'Leave our friend alone!' he calls out loud and the hyena goes to the ground. 'Ouch!' she says meekly and rubs her muzzle. 'My nose is sensitive!' 'Then you mustn't attack our Caven, you ugly beast!' replies Dinki indignantly. Aster looks confused and sad into the faces of the three friends. Her eyes fill with tears and she begins to sob.

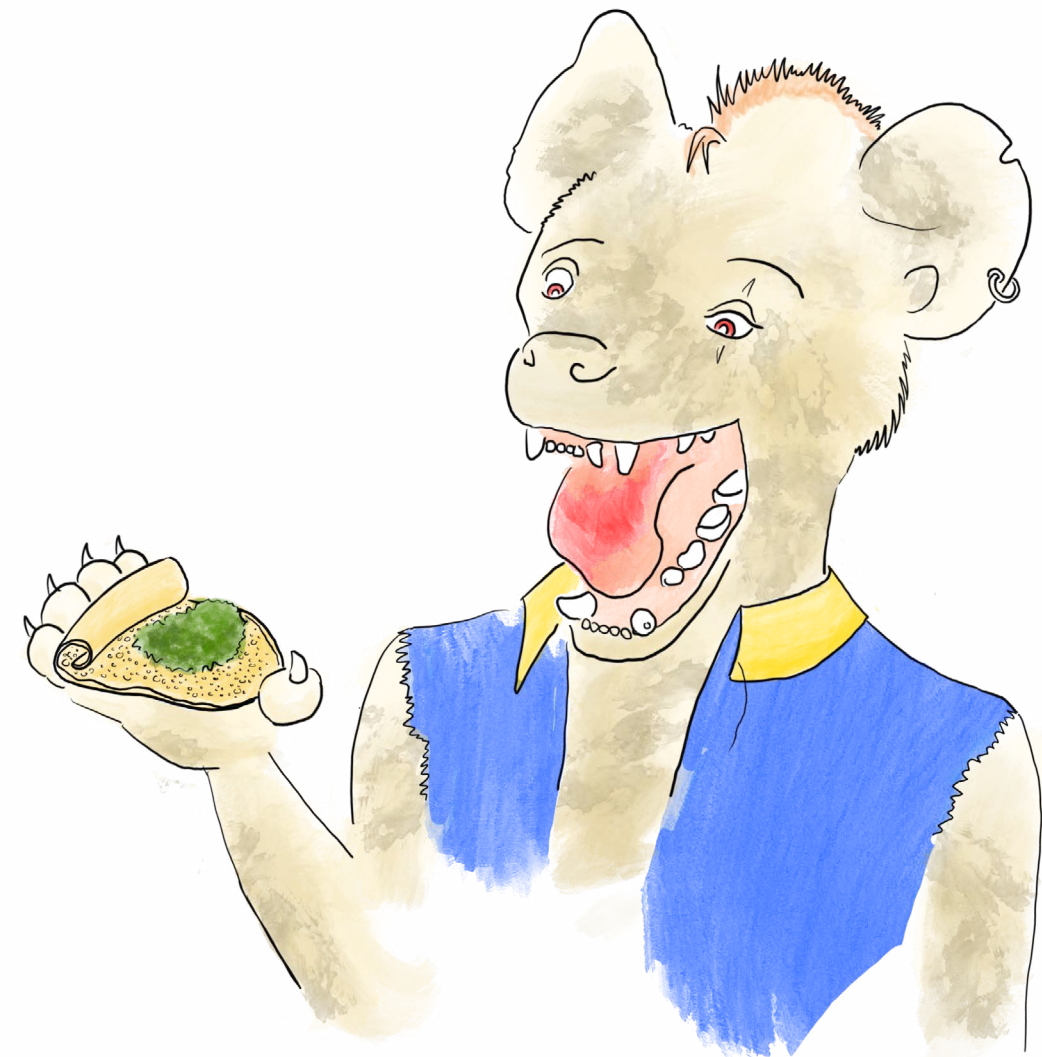




'I'm sorry', she bursts out. 'But why do you want to steal the wheelchair? You don't even need a wheelchair', asks Eddy surprised. 'It's a long story', explains Aster tearfully. 'You can't tell by looking at me, but unfortunately I am blind in one eye due to an accident. That's why I was always very bad in hunting with our group. Actually, I don't even want to hunt, I hate it. I prefer to eat a good portion of injera with a delicious sauce. In any case, we have very clear rules in our family and whoever can't adhere to them will be abandoned. For many months now I've been living alone on the street, without my family and without a home. ' Oh dear, Eddy, Dinki and Caven look sad, too. 'Since my grandmother is very old and can't walk very well anymore', she continues, 'I thought I would bring her the wheelchair. Maybe she'll be happy and take me back into the family. 'Aster is crying. Nobody knows what to say. Aster was so mean to Caven. But we are also sorry for her.



'Understand each other, live together', I say. 'Leon!' calls Eddy. 'I was wondering where you all went and went looking for you', I reply. 'I heard what Aster did. I think we should understand her. She is all alone and didn't know what else to do.' 'Right', says Eddy. 'Being alone is always tragic. You can be our friend, too. If you want?' Aster looks at us in surprise. We all nod. She smiles all over her face. 'Sorry for calling you an ugly beast', Dinki apologizes. 'You're not ugly at all and if you don't steal wheelchairs, you're not a beast either.' Aster smiles. We all go back to the stage and to the others. Aster gets a portion of injera at first. Vegetarian, of course.



## Two Hearts and a New Home

The bright rays of the sun tickle my whiskers as the alarm clock goes off. It is spring and I enjoy the twittering of birds and the cozy warmth of the first days of March. I recently came back to my hometown Leipzig from my exciting trip to Ethiopia. The 'new flower' of Addis Ababa held many adventures and surprises in store for us. The best thing I think, however, is that I have made new friends far beyond the borders of Europe. Our group has now grown even bigger and it feels like there's a piece of home for me in Addis Ababa as well. Two hearts are now beating in my chest - one for Leipzig and one for Addis Ababa. Suddenly there is a sound in the other room and I know exactly what it is: I got an email. I quickly roll to the computer. Makeda has promised to stay in touch. Lo and behold, the email is actually from her.

*Dear Leon,*

*I hope you are well. I am happy that you arrived safely in Leipzig. How are the others? I should send you warm greetings from your Ethiopian friends. Caven is busy preparing for school. Thanks to your wheelchair, he can now roll to preschool every day with his friend. Abi was able to repair the minibus quite quickly. It rattles through Addis again and you don't know what is louder:*

*the bus or Abi's singing. Dinki has returned to the museum. She missed the others with whom she had lived there for years. We can visit her there anytime. Aster and I get along very well. That's why she lives with me now. We cook injera together and I taught her how to embroider. We have a lot of fun together. You're right: 'together' is the magic word. And we should hold on to that. Maybe when visiting Leipzig? Let's think about it!*

*Best wishes! Yours Makeda*

Ishi ishi, I think, nibbling some delicious Kolo grains!





# Glossary:

**Amist Kilo** is a district of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia

**Buna** is the Amharic word for coffee. In Ethiopia, coffee is often made in the traditional way. First the green coffee beans are washed and then roasted over hot coals. These black beans are ground with a mortar and mixed with water in a clay jug (jebena). This is placed over hot coals until steam comes out of the jug. The coffee is bitter and is sweetened with several spoons of sugar. Popcorn is often served with it.

**Entoto** is the highest peak of the Entoto Mountains in the northeast of Addis Ababa. It is 3200m high and covered by a eucalyptus forest. The mountain is considered a holy place with several monasteries and churches, as well as the former palace of Emperor Menelik II and his wife, Empress Taytu.

**Haile Selassie I** (born July 23, 1892 near Harer, Ethiopia; died August 27, 1975 in Addis Ababa)  
His original name was Tafari Makonnen and he was the last Emperor of Abyssinia. This was a monarchy in East Africa on what is now Ethiopia and Eritrea. Haile Selassie called himself the 225th successor to King Solomon. In the Rastafarian religion Haile Selassie is worshiped as the returned Messiah.

**Injera** is a soft flatbread traditionally eaten in Ethiopia. It consists of teff flour mixed with water. You eat it with the right hand, whereby Injera is plate, cutlery and side dish all at the same time. Meat and vegetables, pastes and sauces are served on a large plate covered with injera. This is eaten together by tearing off a small piece of the flatbread and grabbing meat and vegetables with it.

**Ishi ishi** or 'eshi' is a very useful Amharic expression for 'okay', 'sure', 'alright' or 'of course'.

**Kolo** is a traditional Ethiopian snack made from barley, which is often served with coffee or eaten between meals. Carefully roasted over the fire, the grains unfold their nutty and delicious taste.

**Lucy** is the oldest, largely preserved skeleton of a hominid. More than 3 million years old, it was found in Ethiopia and can be seen today in the National Museum of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. In 1974, Lucy was discovered during excavations in an area in Hadar, Ethiopia. The researchers were so happy that when they heard the Beatles song 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' they named the find 'Lucy'. It is also called Dinkinesh, which is Amharic for 'you are marvellous'.

**Emperor Menelik II** (born August 17, 1844 in Ankober; died December 12, 1913 in Addis Ababa)  
He was Emperor of Ethiopia from 1889 to 1913. With his wife, Empress Taytu, he founded the city of Addis Ababa at the foot of the Entoto Mountains.

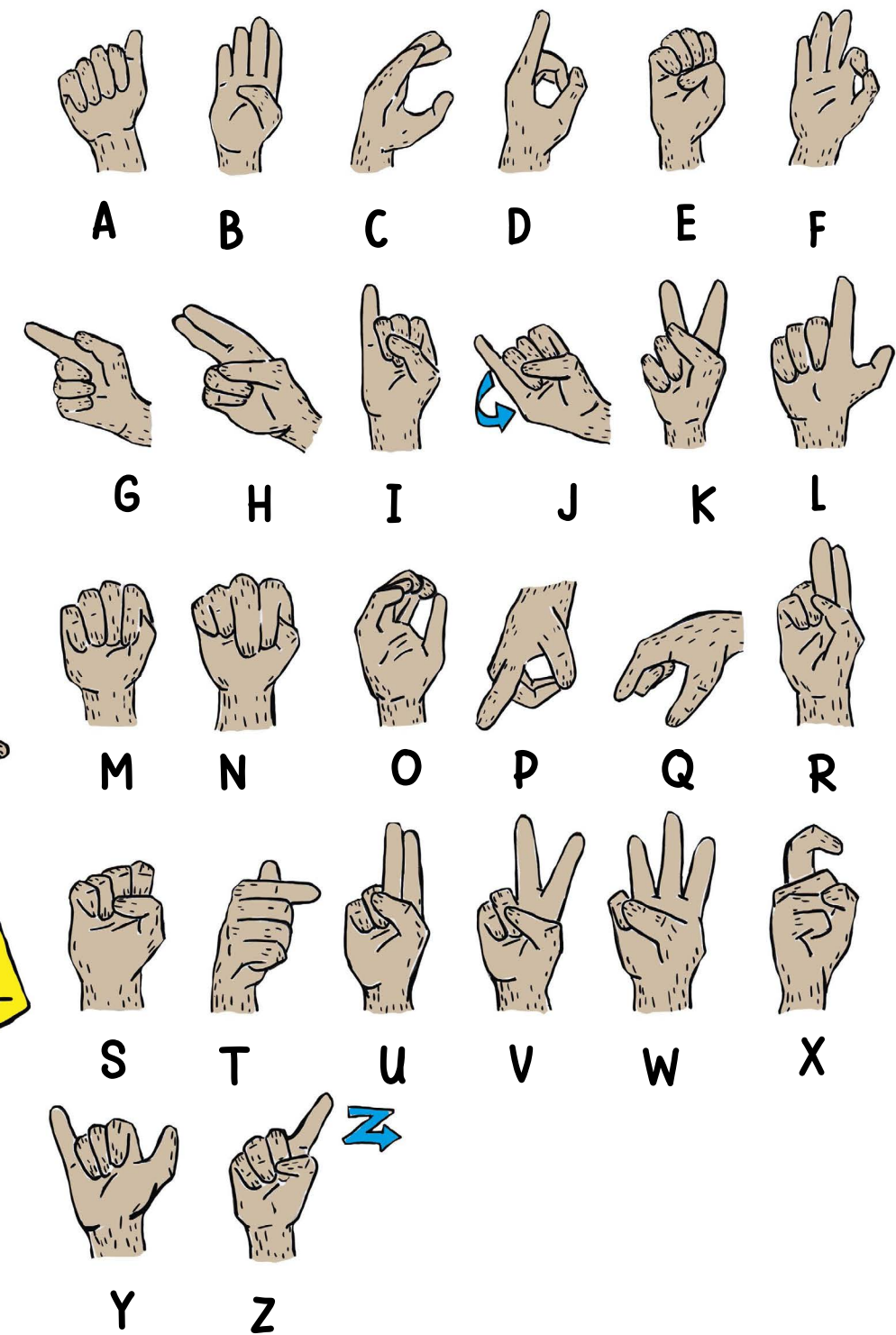
**Selam** is the word for 'hello' in Amharic.

**City within the city** is a holiday game under the direction of Haus Steinstraße e.V in Leipzig for children and adults, in which people with disabilities can also take part. The participants build a city according to their wishes and ideas, just as they want it. This inclusive game was further developed with the help of Ethiopian project partners and had even been transferred to Addis Ababa. More at: [www.haus-steinstrasse.de/projekte/stadt-in-der-stadt/](http://www.haus-steinstrasse.de/projekte/stadt-in-der-stadt/)

**Wot** is a term used in Ethiopian cuisine and describes various sauces that are traditionally eaten with injera. It is a kind of ragout or stew that can be prepared vegetarian as well as with beef or poultry.

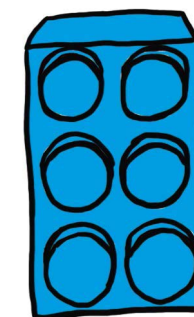
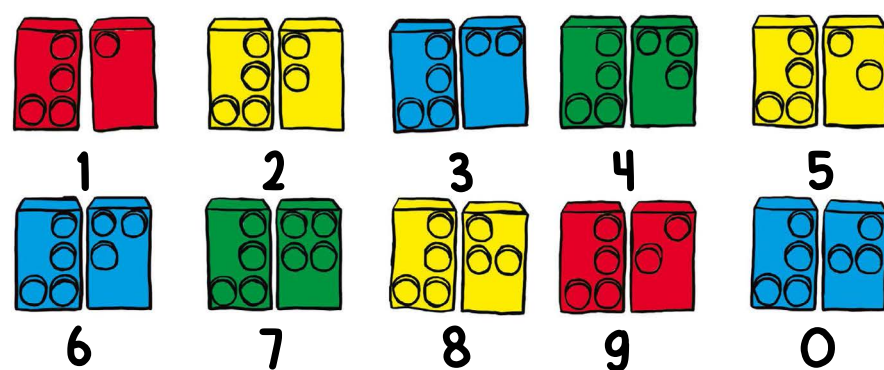
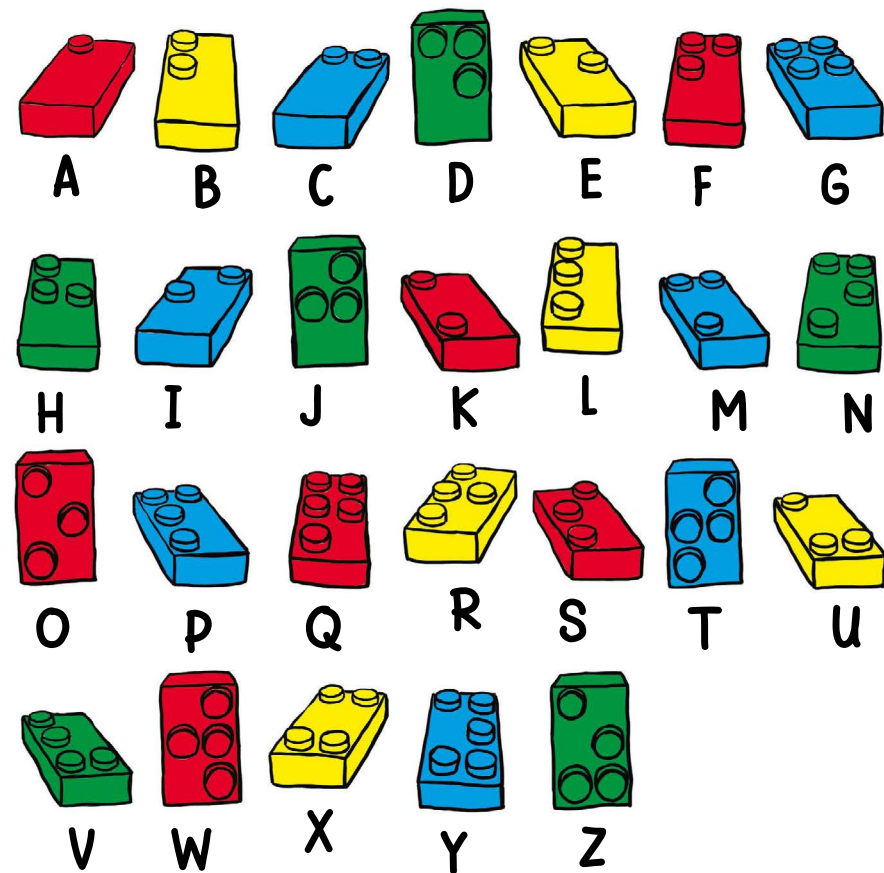


## Finger Alphabet





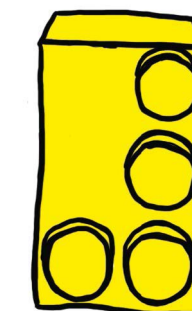
# Braille Alphabet



Basic Form  
(consists of 6 points)



Numeral Form  
(has to stand in front of each number)



# Pictograms



Building accessible for wheelchair users



Building for wheelchair users with limited access



Disabled parking space



Elevator accessible for wheelchair users



Elevator with limited access for wheelchair users



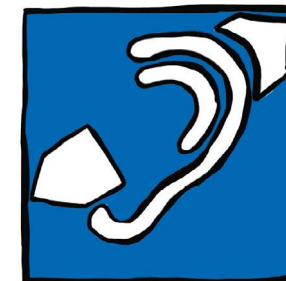
Toilet accessible for wheelchair users



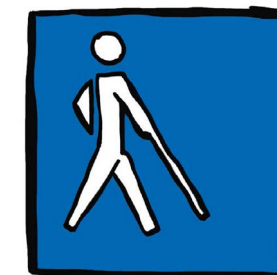
Toilet with limited use for wheelchair users



Special and personal assistance



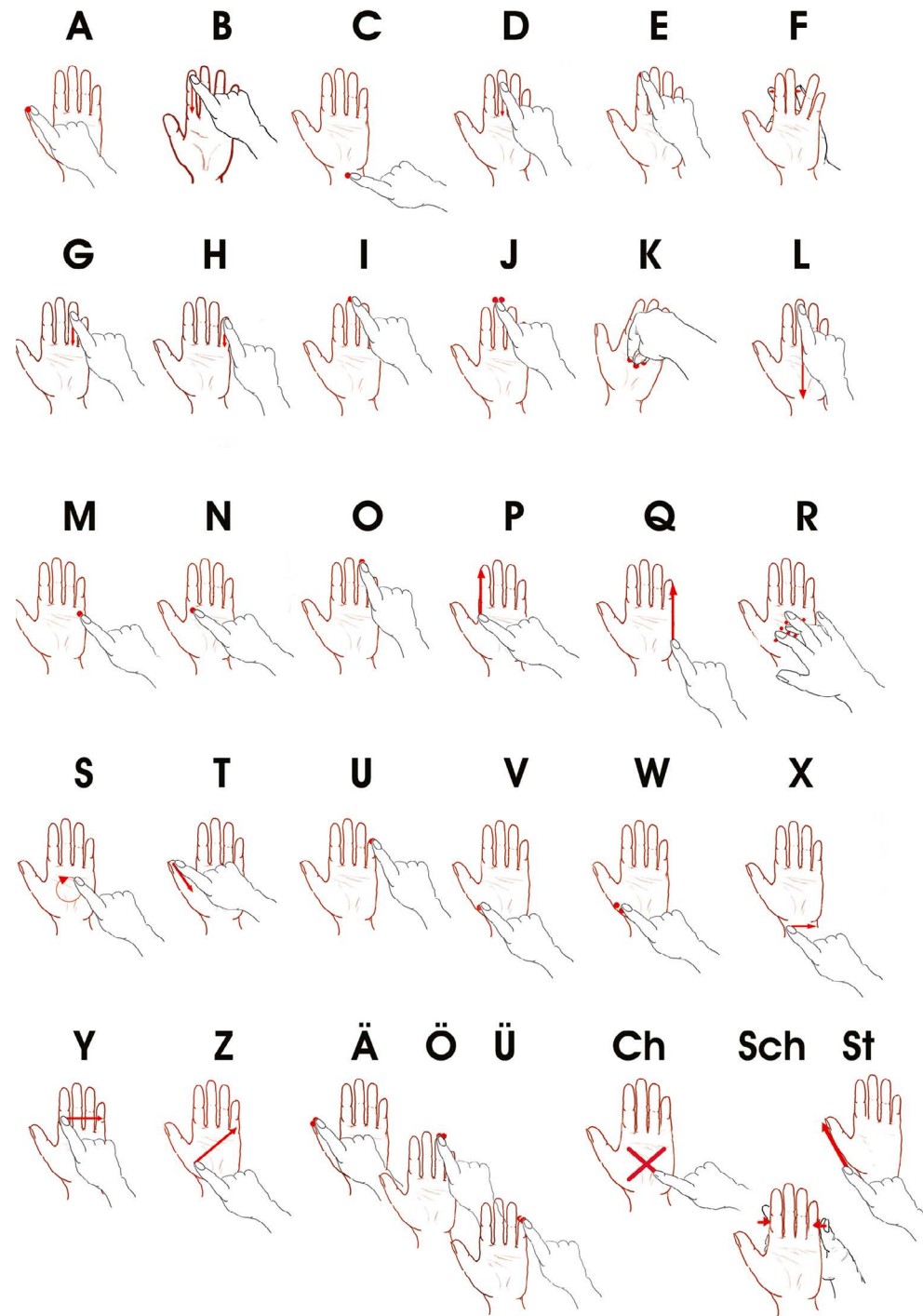
Help for the hearing impaired



Help for visually impaired and blind people



# Lorm Alphabet



## "Learning accessibility through play"

The learning suitcase project of the  
Leipzig Disabled Association e.V.



The learning case was developed by the Leipzig Association of Disabled Persons. It contains books, radio plays, hand puppets, games and tools to try out. These materials serve to playfully sensitize pre-school and primary school children to the issues of accessibility and inclusion. The learning case can be borrowed at 50 stations throughout Saxony.

**More information at:**  
**[www.behindertenverband-leipzig.de](http://www.behindertenverband-leipzig.de)**

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