

# Zara and the book in the tower



By Francesca Shangler

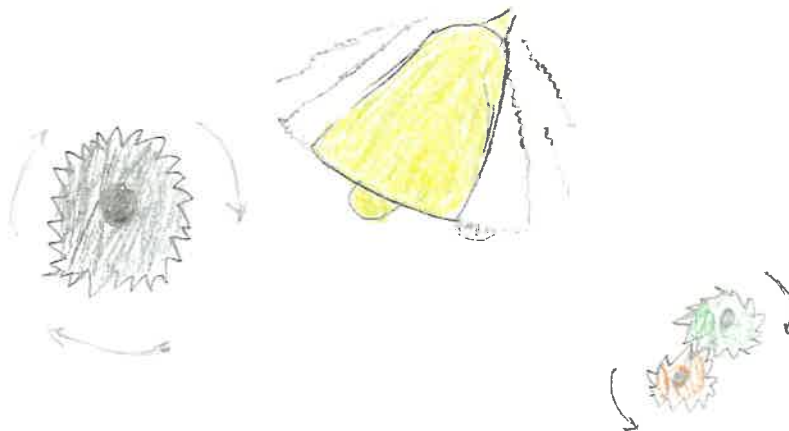
Zara arose from her bed ready to explore. She rushed to her grandfather's old clock tower, for he had sent a cryptic message about leaving a book there for Zara to read.



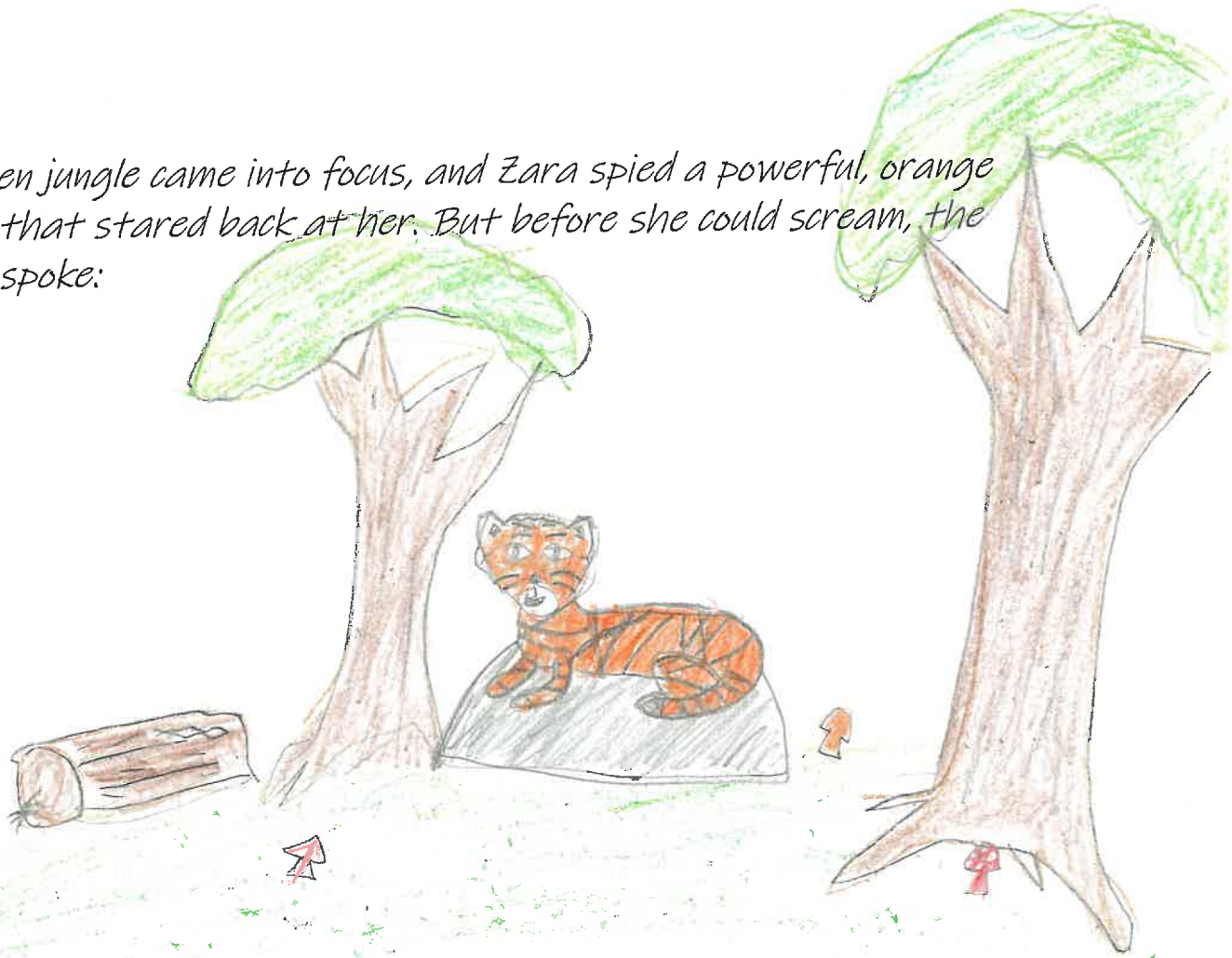
Atop the tower's twisty staircase was a dusty blue book on an old antique desk. Zara raced to see the cover. It read: **The tales of Dr. Coward Wicked.** "What a strange title," she thought to herself.



As Zara started to flip open the book, the bell sounded a loud, echoing chime and the many clocks in the room began to whirl. The world blurred around her, faster and faster until Zara couldn't recognize where she was.



A green jungle came into focus, and Zara spied a powerful, orange tiger that stared back at her. But before she could scream, the tiger spoke:



"Hello Zara. I am Nora, guardian of the hidden jungle, and I need your help to defeat the evil Dr. Coward Wicked. For he has a plan to stop time." Zara wasn't sure, but soon she agreed to help Nora to defeat Dr. Wicked.



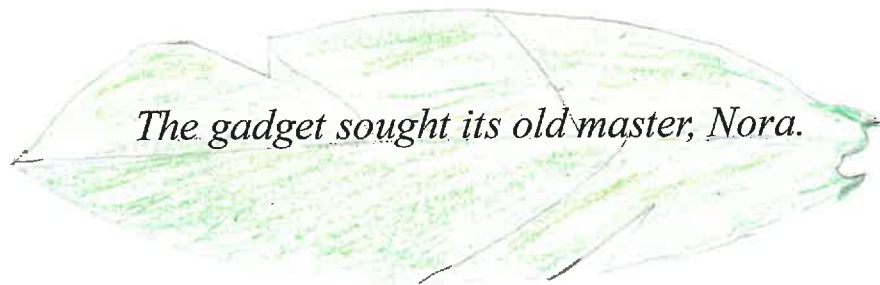
They marched through the maze of a jungle until they came to an inscription on a weary old tree. It read:

*To stop the worst,  
you must end the curse.  
Follow this rhyme,  
to thwart the evil crime.*

Zara was confused, but Nora seemed to know what to do. They almost got lost in the leafy labyrinth but finally came to an old stone ruin. Within sat a gadget, just a few feet away from them. Next to it stood Dr. Coward Wicked!



Nora leapt into action but was losing the battle after Dr. Coward Wicked struck her with a clock-like tool. In the heat of the moment, a pen flew to Zara's hand, seemingly out of nowhere. She understood what to do. She tore off a leaf and began to scribble:



*The gadget sought its old master, Nora.*

With its ghostly magic, the machine obeyed, and Nora passed it to Zara. Dr. Coward Wicked reached in desperate anger, but just in time, Zara zapped the evil doctor, and saved time.



Nora thanked Zara, and time returned to order. Zara waved goodbye as she vanished into the air, knowing the world would spin once again.

Zara awoke and found herself back in her own bed. She heard the clock tower chime and noticed a new tiger stuffie in her grasp. Zara raced back to the clock tower and smiled when she saw the book. The title of the book had changed!



On the cover, it read in bold red lettering: *The tales of Zara and Nera.*

