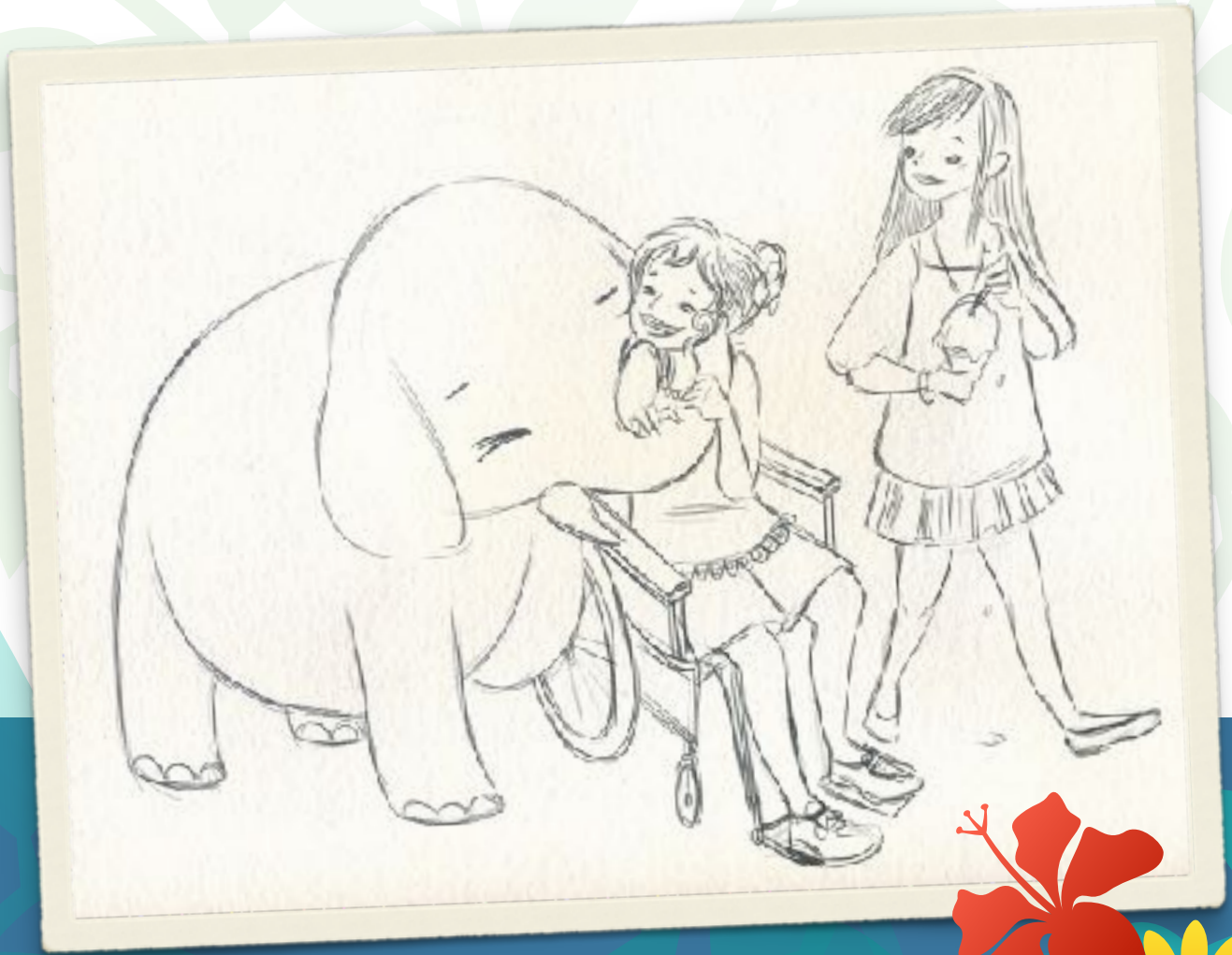


# Marshmallow & Jordan



Story and Illustration by Alina Chau  
Edited by Maria Ludwig

Middle Grade, Fiction  
Page counts - 150 - 200 pages  
Full color



# Synopsis

Two years before entering Middle School, Jordan Winarta was in a serious car accident and was paralyzed from the waist down. Jordan's now confined to a wheelchair, which is a difficult adjustment for a previously sporty girl whose dream had been to be on the winning team of the Balinese Middle School Basketball Championships. Jordan meets and befriends a magical white elephant, Marshmallow, with whose help Jordan confronts her insecurity and discovers a new path that changes how she thinks of her disability and helps her to find and achieve a new dream.

“Marshmallow and Jordan” is a heart-warming story about acceptance, forgiveness, and friendship, with subtext about the human connection to and relationship with nature, which is enhanced and informed by the verdant Indonesian location on the tropical island of Bali, in the fictional town Ketut.

## Story Outline

### **Ch 1 - Monsoon**

We meet Jordan during the monsoon, on a regular school day at Kahawai International School. Jordan's comrades on the school basketball team, of which she was captain of her age group prior to her accident, still see her in that role. That afternoon Jordan stands in for Coach Markis Prayogo during basketball team practice. Although Jordan can no longer compete, she is proud of her contributions, but still frustrated at being sidelined permanently. After practice, Jordan and two of her best friends, Lynn, and Lynn's big brother Hans, leave school together.

### **Ch 2 - Lost and Found**

On the way home from school, after parting ways with Lynn and Hans, Jordan hears a soft whimpering sound. Curious, she follows the sound to a playground and is surprised to find a baby white elephant with a broken leg. She ingeniously finds a way to help the elephant move despite his broken leg, and she takes the elephant home to her mother, who's a veterinarian and will know what to do.

### **Ch 3 - Marshmallow**

Jordan feels a sense of kinship with the injured white elephant and persuades her mom to let her keep him. She names him, "Marshmallow." Jordan tenderly nurses the elephant back to health. Marshmallow and Jordan develop a special bond and become inseparable friends.

### **Ch 4 - Team Mascot**

Jordan introduces Marshmallow to her friends at school and everyone adores him. Marshmallow's sweet nature makes him the missing puzzle piece of the team: a mascot, which they didn't have before. Jordan confides in Lynn that she wants to find a way to still play basketball. Lynn, Jordan, and Marshmallow often play a modified game after the rest of the team goes home. Due to the limitations of being in a wheelchair, Jordan's frustrations increase and she doesn't know how to find a way to belong like she used to. Marshmallow empathizes with Jordan and he realizes he may be able to do something special to help her.

### **Ch 5 - Gift**

Marshmallow thinks the large backyard of Jordan's house would be the perfect place for a swimming pool, so he digs out a swimming pool for Jordan. Elephants love to swim and Marshmallow's antics in the water convinces Jordan that despite her paralysis she could learn to swim because her arms are already so strong. Jordan delights at the freedom she finds in the water. Overjoyed, Marshmallow also puts up a basketball hoop at the end of the pool, so they can play basketball at home together.

### **Ch 6 - Birthday**

Marshmallow throws a surprise birthday pool party for Jordan. All of Jordan's friends are invited. Jordan's mom makes her favorite treats, some of which are Winarta family recipes that have been passed down from generation to generation. The pool party is a smashing success, with all the kids gleefully swimming and playing basketball in the water. While they're playing, Jordan realizes that this is the first time since her accident that she has lost herself in the moment instead of thinking of her physical limitations. She relishes this newfound feeling of being independent and whole. To Jordan, this is the best birthday gift. Unbeknownst to Jordan, Coach Prayogo is very impressed by Jordan's performance in the water.

## **Ch 7 - Water Polo**

At school that week, Coach Prayogo talks to water polo Coach Shirin Ahmed and recommends that Jordan join the school water polo team. Jordan hadn't thought that would be possible, but she loves swimming and Marshmallow's support gives her the courage to try. On Jordan's first day of water polo training, most team members doubt her competence due to her disability. Jordan can't swim as fast as the others and most of the kids feel she will be a liability to the team. But Jordan finds a new friend in Paola, who's kind to her. Paola spends extra time training with Jordan and the two girls become fast friends. Jordan's intense water polo training often overlaps with the basketball team's games. Jordan misses Lynn's first game as the new basketball team captain; Lynn's hurt and disappointed that Jordan didn't keep her promise to be there. Lynn wonders if Jordan's jealous of her new role as the basketball team captain or if it's because Jordan's spending more time with Paola.

## **Ch 8 - Lonely**

Jordan's intense water polo training schedule overlaps with basketball practice, and she's often absent; her old team mates are disappointed with her broken promises to be there. Some ignore her in the hallway at school and “unfriend” her on social media. Jordan's lonely without her long-time friends. Lynn's hurt that Jordan's spending time with her new “cool” friends on the water polo team. Marshmallow and Hans regularly wait for Jordan and Lynn after school, but the practices end at different times. Marshmallow and Hans sense the distance that's grown between the two girls. Hans helps Lynn see that Jordan wasn't intentionally ignoring her. Lynn realizes Jordan's dedication to water polo is about Jordan regaining her self-confidence and overcoming her insecurity and feeling whole again. Lynn learns that Jordan's struggling and being picked on during water polo practice and realizes Jordan needs the support of her old friends more than ever. Lynn mends their friendship and rallies the basketball team to support Jordan.

## **Ch 9 - First Water Polo Competition**

Jordan's first water polo competition is more difficult than she anticipated. She's nervous and makes a lot of technical mistakes, but she taps reserves of inner strength to keep going, despite her teammates being frustrated with her. At the very last moment, Jordan makes a seemingly impossible tie-breaking goal, using the shooting skills she learned on the basketball court. Jordan's triumph catapults her from misfit to team star. The team celebrates and everyone, including her friends on the basketball team, are proud of her.

### **Ch 10 - Regional**

Boosted by their unexpected win, the water polo team makes it to the regional competition, and against all odds, they win the Gold Cup. All of Kahawai International School gathers to celebrate their champions. Jordan glows with the knowledge that she doesn't have to feel trapped by her wheelchair anymore.

### **Ch 11 - Unexpected Tragedy**

At the end of year assembly, the principal makes an unexpected announcement: because it hasn't rained since last year, all water sports must be canceled for the upcoming school year. This tragedy hits the water polo team, and Jordan, especially hard. In addition to this, a couple of Jordan's friends sadly tell everyone that they have to move away because of family financial hardships due to the drought. The announcements tarnish the end of the school year. Not even the prospect of the long summer holidays cheers the kids up.

### **Ch 12 - Marshmallow's Confession**

Marshmallow sees the pervasive disappointment and sadness. Guilt spurs Marshmallow to reveal his true identity to Jordan: he is the region's rain cloud and the drought is his fault. Marshmallow tells Jordan that he was teased by the other clouds for being a rain cloud. None of the other clouds wanted to be friends with a rain cloud. He was lonely, so he ran away from home because he didn't want to be a rain cloud anymore. When he fell to earth, he hurt his leg. That was the day that Jordan found him. Marshmallow tells Jordan that though he doesn't want to go back to the sky because he loves her and all their friends, he sees how the drought affects them all. He tearfully says that to protect her and their friends he has to become a rain cloud again.

### **Ch 13 - Best Friends Forever**

Jordan and Marshmallow's friends love Marshmallow and tell him that they aren't angry with him. They all have experienced loneliness and sympathize with him. They promise that even though they won't be able to hang out in the same way, they'll still love him. Jordan and the kids throw a farewell party for Marshmallow in Jordan's back yard. Through their tears, and after many hugs, the kids say goodbye to Marshmallow. They watch in awe as Marshmallow evaporates back to his home in the sky. It starts to rain....





### **Epilogue**

At the end of the next school year, Jordan and the water polo team, in their new white elephant logo uniforms, go on to win the National Junior League Water Polo Championship. Jordan sits proudly in her wheelchair on the podium. As the gold medal is placed around Jordan's neck, it starts to rain. Everyone cheers for the champions – and for the warm beautiful rain.

**The End**



## Ketut

While Ketut is a fictional town, Jordan and Marshmallow's adventures are set in Bali, Indonesia. Sumatran elephants, which are smaller than Asian and African elephants, are native to Bali. Hinduism strongly influences that region of Indonesia; elephants are sacred animals to the Hindu population particularly, but are revered by most Balinese people as well. This is similar to how elephants are respected in India and Thailand. It is not uncommon to find elephant residents in temples or occasionally roaming freely on the street.

To Hindus, elephants are the living incarnation of the god Ganesh. To Buddhists, a pure white elephant is the divine symbol of Buddha.

The everyday living habits of our main characters in the story are drawn from my own upbringing, growing up in Hong Kong in an environment that's a fusion of Chinese, American, and Indonesian cultures. My parents and grandparents were born in Indonesia. According to our family lore, my great grandparents emigrated to Indonesia to escape the war in China. My family speaks both an Indonesian dialect and Chinese at home. As a child, I could understand the adult's Indonesian dialect, even though I can't speak it. As a little kid who loved art, my family always brought me beautiful Indonesian sculptures whenever they came back from Indonesia.



At home our dining habits were and still are more Indonesian than Chinese. I didn't properly learn how to use chop sticks until high school, when my desire to go out to dinner with friends forced me to learn to use them, so I could dine with my classmates without embarrassment. This story will include foods my grandmother made for me, like Ayam Goreng and Rawon, and favorite childhood snacks like krupuk (shrimp chips) and lempur.



Growing up surrounded by all the extraordinary art, food, and language, and hearing family stories, Indonesia is always a land of myth and magic to me, even today. The stories of the Indonesian archipelago is my One Thousand and One Nights: a source of infinite wonder.

Both Jordan and Marshmallow are characters inspired by my own childhood. Jordan represents the part of my childhood when I learned how to adapt and grow in a world where being different was difficult; Marshmallow represents my Indonesia cultural roots and the mythology I loved learning about.

Terima Kasih! (Thank you!)