

1001

Our storytelling program, 1001 Stories, brings meaningful learning to some of the hardest to reach populations around the world. We aim to facilitate the creation, development, and gathering of 1001 empowering stories from every participating local community.

Children love to tell stories. However, in many places in the world, their creative voices are rarely heard or cultivated. The 1001 Stories Program conducts storytelling workshops that build on children's natural potential to become original storytellers. Through the 1001 Stories Program, children are empowered while their literacy skills are developed.

When integrated with technologies, these stories become an effective tool for literacy by growing reading and writing skills grounded in local languages and local themes in underserved areas worldwide.



A map of Africa showing country boundaries. Tanzania is highlighted with a green fill. The word "Tanzania" is written in green text to the right of the country. The map is set against a light blue background.

Tanzania

Our Author



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Currently a junior at Stanford University,
2014.

She plans to pursue a doctoral degree and
return to Tanzania to become a professor
and teach advanced topics in science.



1001 Stories Presents

A GIRL GOES TO STANFORD

Written By:
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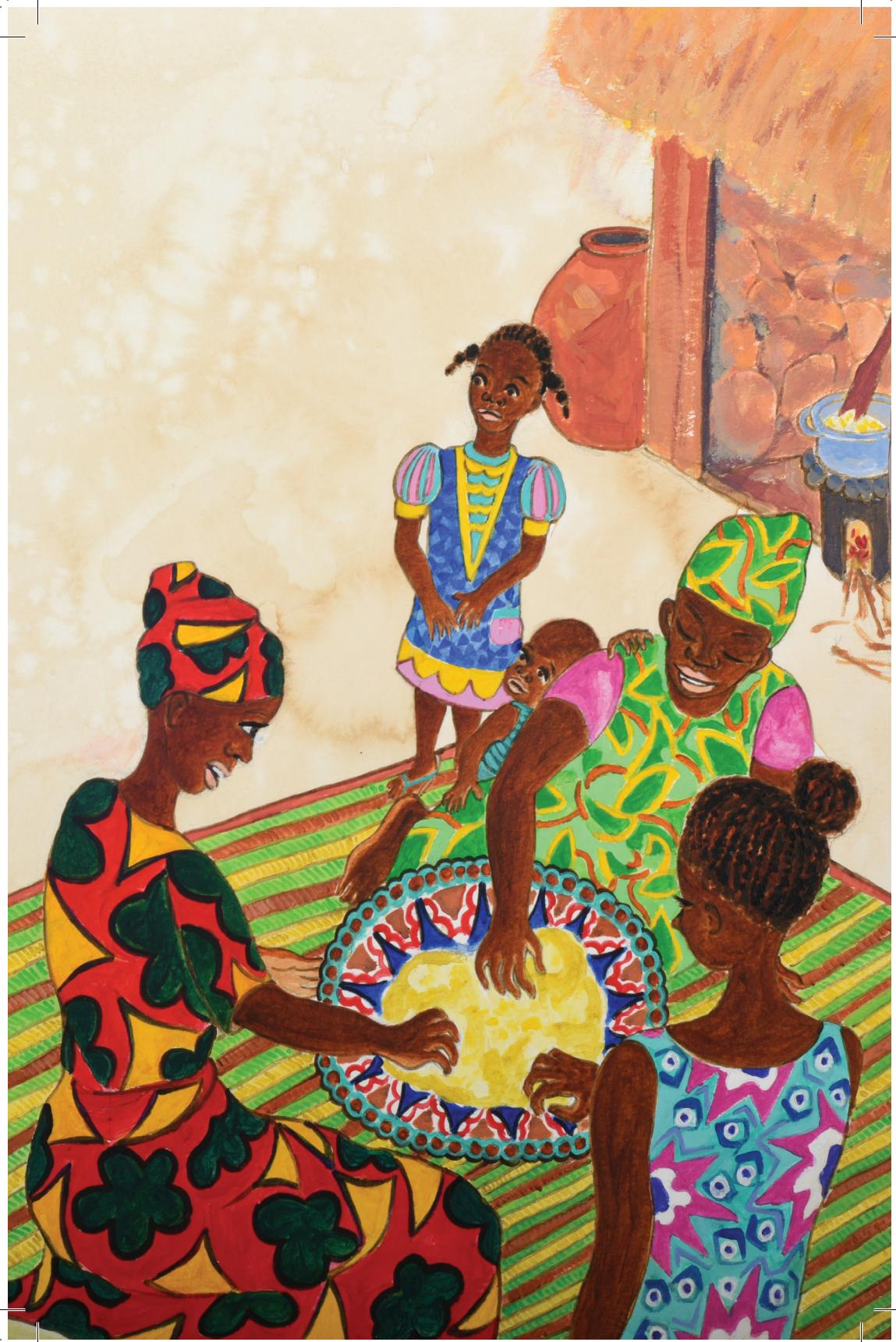
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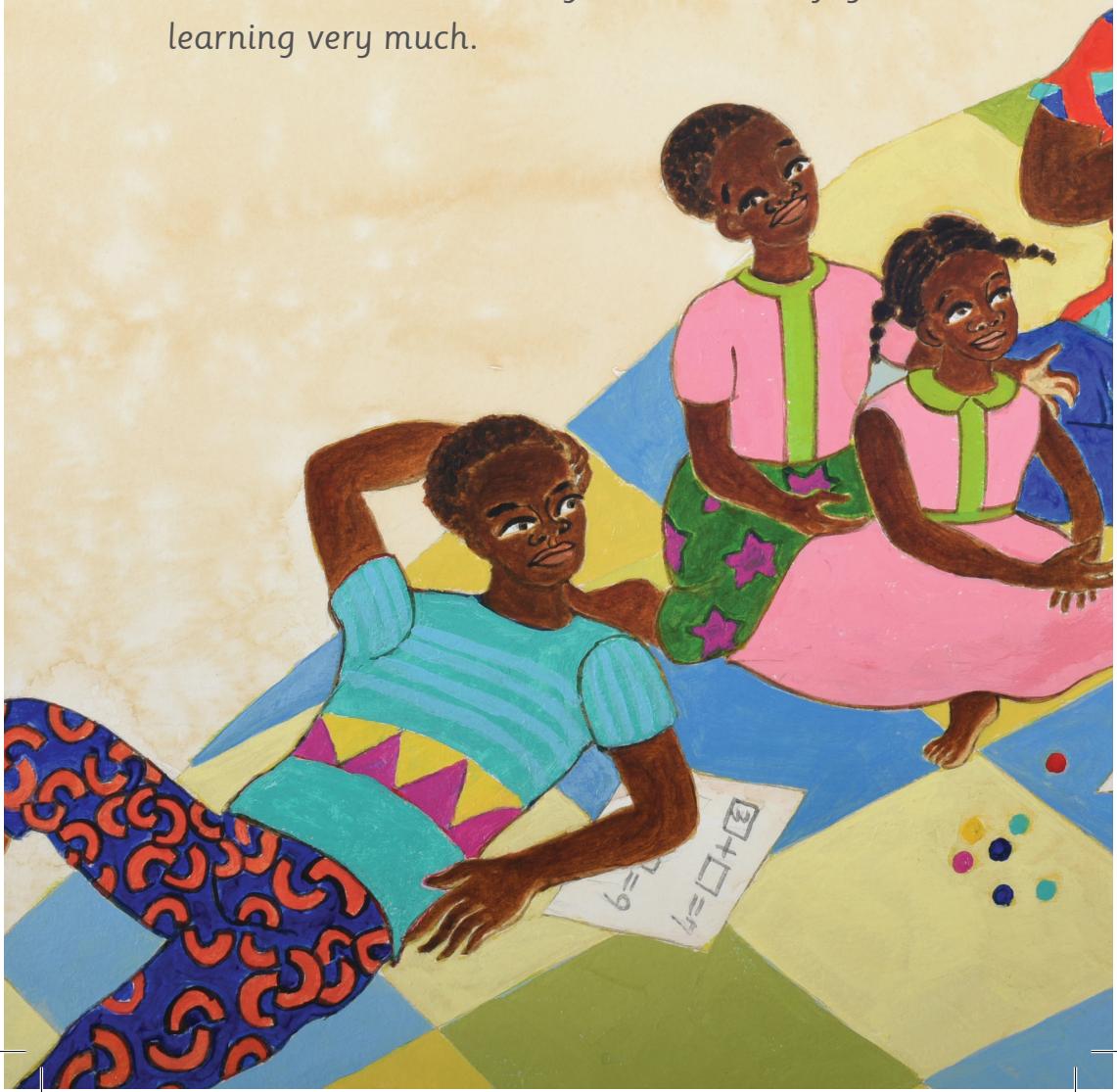


Most people in Tanzania have not heard of Ifakara. It was its own hidden, isolated world and it was also my home. Most of the people who are born in Ifakara never leave, but I was one of the exceptions.





I have four siblings: an older sister, and older brother, and two younger sisters. As a child, I longed to go to school and I finally persuaded my parents to let me go. And so, I started school when I was six years old. The minimum school starting age in Tanzania at the time was seven for standard one, but my teachers let me in anyway because I was such an eager student. I enjoyed learning very much.





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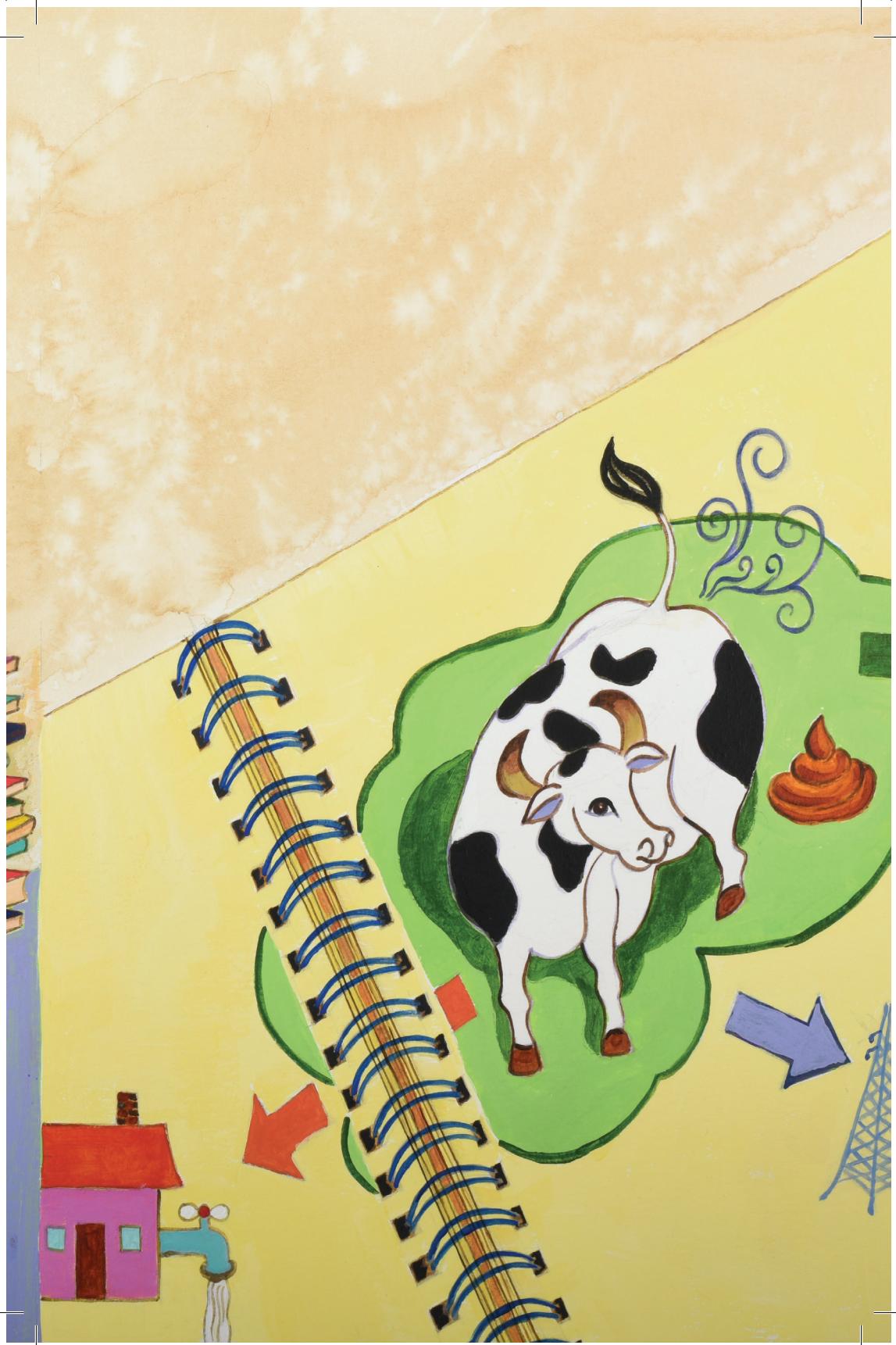
I knew that if I wanted to go as far with my education as possible, I would need to learn about the world beyond Ifakara. Luckily, I had a

special window to the outside world. There was a television mounted in a street café near my house where I met countless new characters. I especially loved a character named Dexter from a show called Dexter's Laboratory. He was interested in nature, science, and design, and he was the smallest in his class. He was also not the most popular kid in school, so I could relate to him. Dexter taught me about how science can be used to solve problems and I knew I wanted to be like him when I grew up.



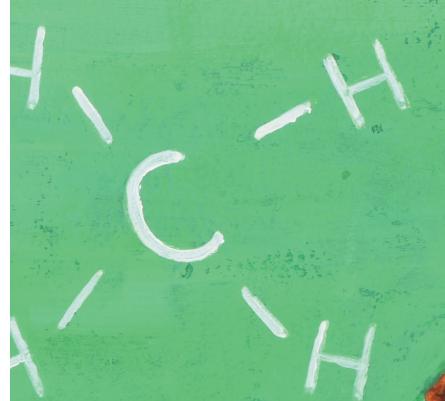
Because of my outstanding performance in school and unanimous recommendations from all of my teachers, after standard four I was selected to attend a boarding school with a full scholarship. My new school was much more interesting and challenging than my old school. I was finally able to take science classes in secondary school, just like Dexter.





I had fallen in love with science. I started reading books and any materials I could find related to science. I read about topics such as quantum physics and astrophysics that even my teachers could not explain to me. My final year of secondary school, I pursued my first science and engineering project on sustainable alternative energy sources. I had learned about global warming in a science magazine and came up with a biogas project.





In Ifakara, most households use firewood and charcoal as primary fuel, but these sources are very cumbersome and far from ecologically sustainable. However, many people in Ifakara are animal herders and I had the idea to use the manure from the cows as a biogas energy source because there was so much of it and it would never run out. I then spent my last quarter of secondary school learning about how to break down the manure to harness the methane gas for energy. Since I didn't have access to the Internet, I spent most of my time reading in the library to find everything I could on the subject.





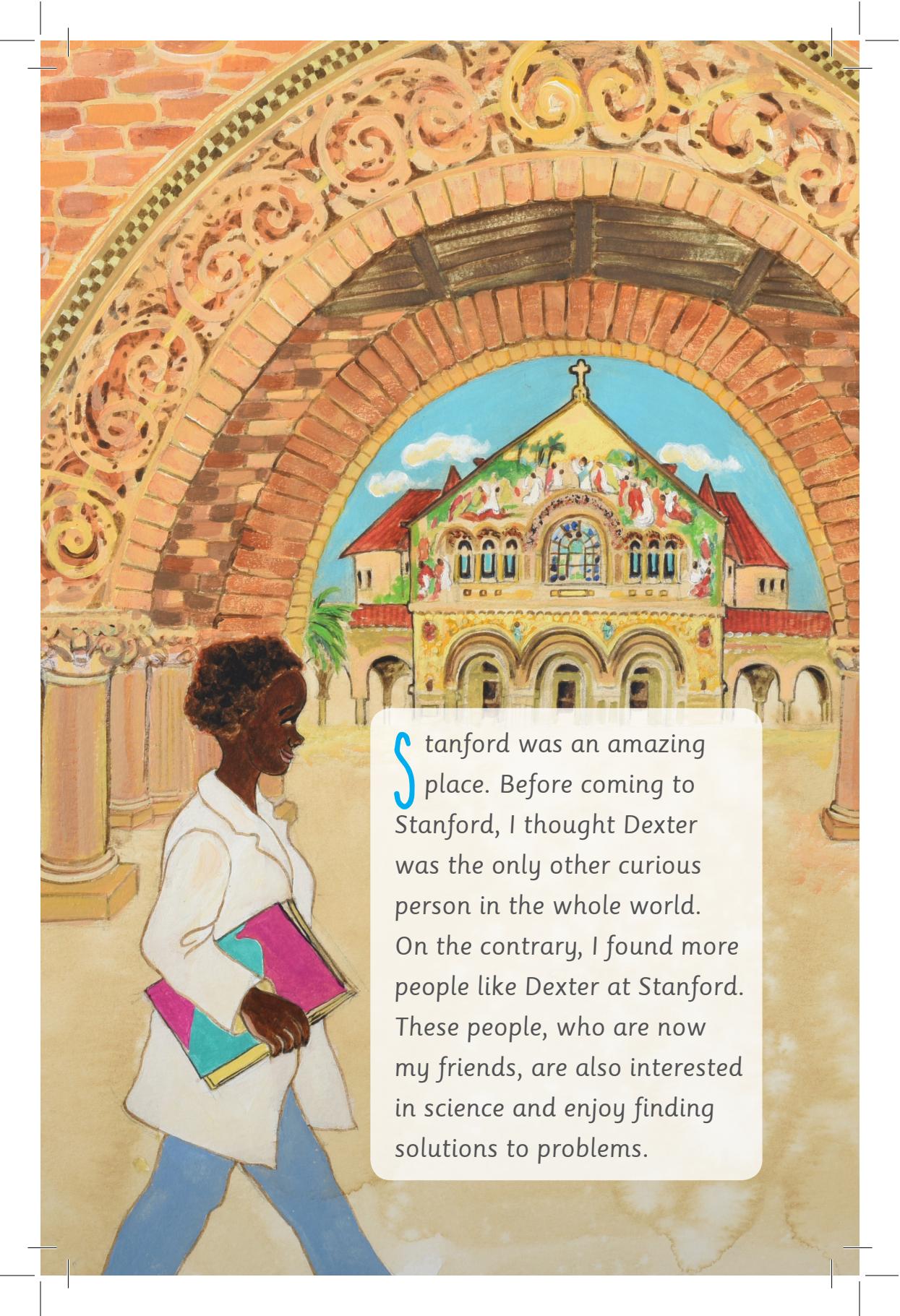
When I graduated secondary school, I spent all of my time working on my project. I performed many experiments and finally came up with a final idea for a model. My only problem was that I didn't have the money to make it happen and I couldn't get more money from my sponsors.



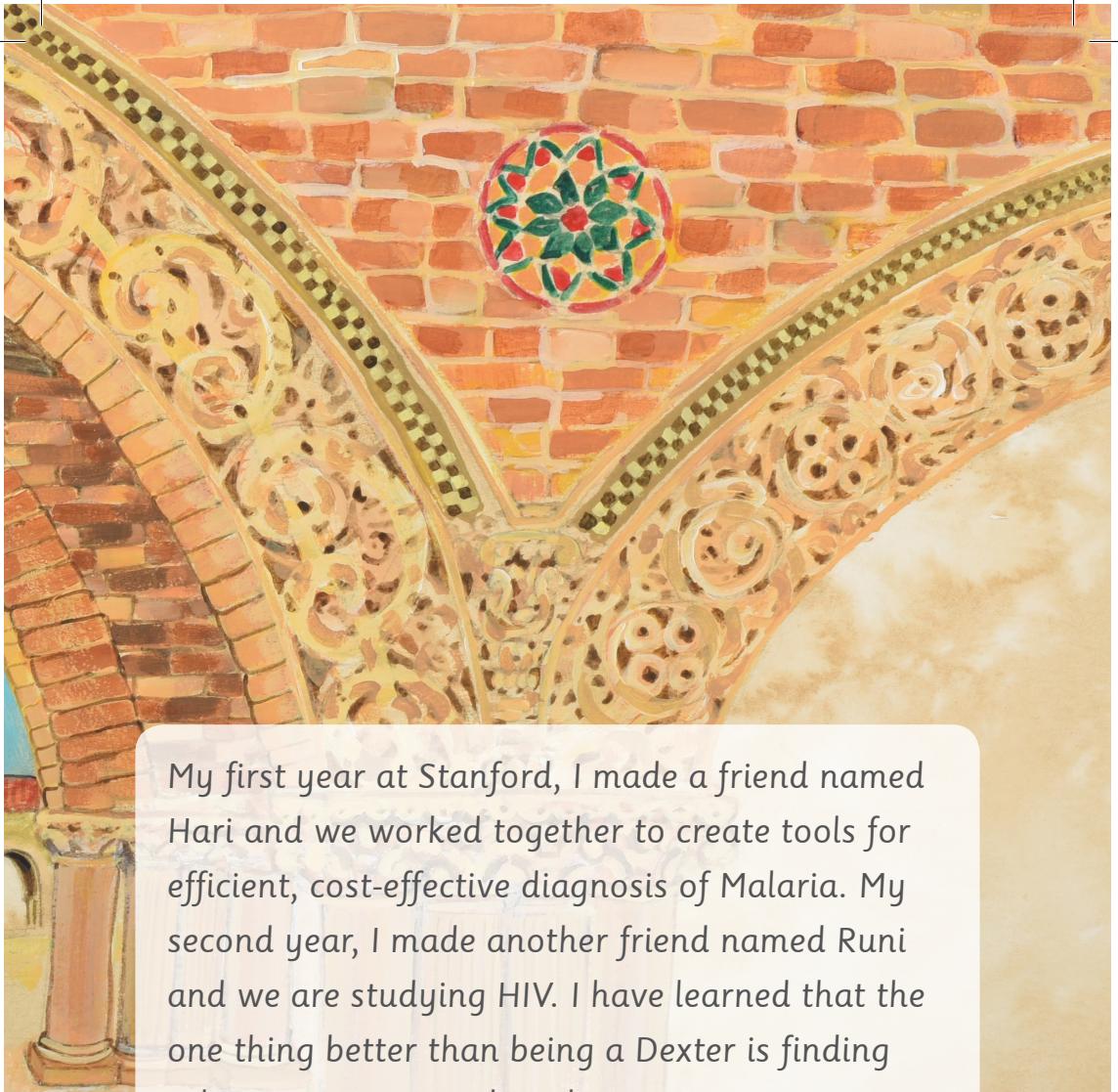
I started writing letters to people to help me pay for my project. I even dared to apply to universities abroad to further my education.

Finally, after two years of hard work, I received a response from Stanford University, one of the best universities in the United States.





Stanford was an amazing place. Before coming to Stanford, I thought Dexter was the only other curious person in the whole world. On the contrary, I found more people like Dexter at Stanford. These people, who are now my friends, are also interested in science and enjoy finding solutions to problems.



My first year at Stanford, I made a friend named Hari and we worked together to create tools for efficient, cost-effective diagnosis of Malaria. My second year, I made another friend named Runi and we are studying HIV. I have learned that the one thing better than being a Dexter is finding other Dexters to work with.

I still have a long way to go before I discover or invent something new, but I know that one day, with hard work, I can create something that will be useful to my country. However, I know one thing: I have become the Dexter that I have always wanted to be. And as long as I don't give up, I know that I can help change the world.

