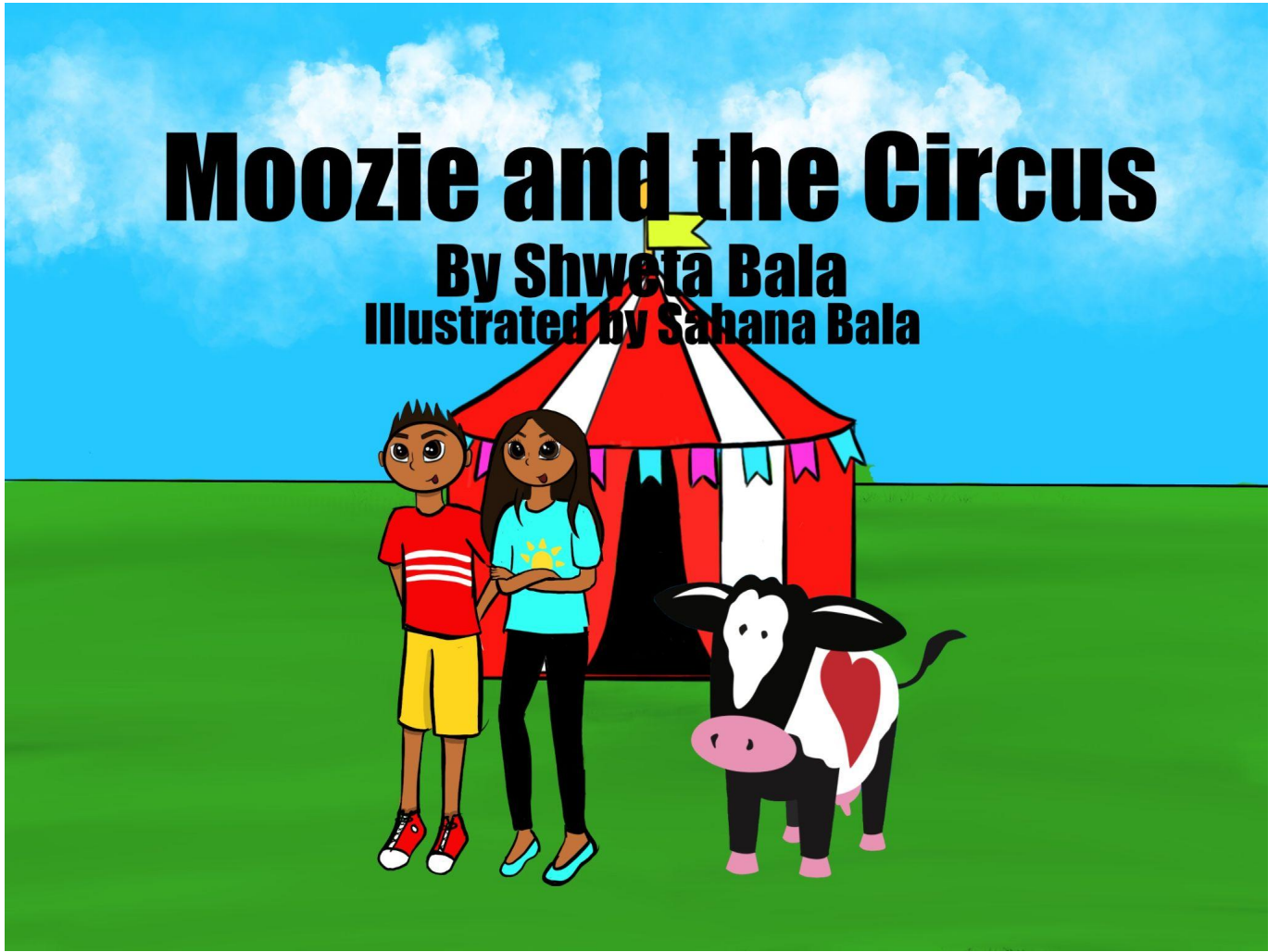


# Moozie and the Circus

By Shweta Bala  
Illustrated by Sahana Bala





"It's finally here! Wake up Azaan!" shouted Ayana as she threw her covers on the floor.

It was a warm summer morning and Ayana was excited because today was a very special day. Ayana and Azaan were twins. Ayana always followed her instincts, while Azaan was more of a logical thinker. They loved to do everything together... everything but wake up in the mornings.

Azaan slowly took off his blankets and stretched. "What is here? Can I go back to bed?" "

"Are you kidding!" Ayana yelled excitedly. "Today is our birthday!" Azaan suddenly started grinning very wide.

"Oh! I have been waiting so long for this day! Let's go down and eat breakfast and then have lots of fun!" Azaan exclaimed.

Ayana and Azaan started walking together, thinking of all the fun that they were going to have.



Every year, on their birthday, their parents took them to go watch their favorite circus: The Circus of Fun.

"This birthday show is going to be the best one yet!" Ayana exclaimed while gobbling her pancakes. "I heard they were doing a special show with elephants!"

Their dad replied, grinning, "There is also one more thing that will make this trip the best one for you both. We are allowed to go backstage and meet the circus trainers!"

Ayana almost knocked her plate off the table hearing this. They both were so eager to go. The duo quickly ate their breakfast and headed to the car.



When they arrived there, they had an hour before the show started, so they decided to tour the place. While they were walking around, Azaan saw a tired squirrel on the ground that couldn't move. Ayana and Azaan immediately ran to help the poor animal. They gently picked up the squirrel and placed it on a soft bed of grass in the shade. Ayana got a bottle of water and some acorns on the ground, and placed them in front of the squirrel. The squirrel soon started stretching and sipping the water. Then it got some energy and started to move. A caring cow named Moozie saw these actions from the bush she was hiding in nearby and knew that Ayana and Azaan were the people that were going to save the abused animals in the circus. Moozie decided to wait for the show to end and then talk to them.



When the curtains opened, Ayana and Azaan were amazed to see the elephants roll on the balls, the animals hop into hoops, and the acrobats do many handstands. After a spectacular performance, Ayana and Azaan told their parents that they will be back in a few minutes and went backstage, where they saw Moozie. Azaan was about to scream, but Moozie stopped him and introduced herself.

Moozie said calmly, "Hello Ayana and Azaan. Please don't be afraid. I am Moozie. While the circus is fun to watch, it's not fun for the animals doing it. You both seem to be very kind and intelligent kids. Come with me and I will explain."

Azaan was confused as to why the circus was hurting animals and why he should go with Moozie but after Ayana persuaded him, he finally agreed to go.





As they walked farther backstage, they hid behind a curtain and saw the animals getting whipped and hurt in order to perform the tricks. The elephants were moaning and the monkeys were screaming. Ayana, Azaan, and Moozie stayed longer and they saw that the animals weren't being fed until they did their acts. They noticed that the animals were not happy doing the tricks either. It was very difficult watching the elephants getting hit for not balancing on the slippery balls and the monkeys not jumping through the small hoops.

Ayana was about to burst into tears, but then Moozie remarked, "These animals are getting treated like they are not a living being. You both can help. These animals go through a lot to entertain humans who come for their entertainment."



Ayana and Azaan decided to take control.

Ayana called out, "Wait! Don't hurt the animals!"

The trainer said, perplexed, "What are you doing here? You aren't supposed to be here. You should be in the actor's backstage area!"

Azaan exclaimed, "Just hear us out! You shouldn't hurt the animals."

The trainer responded, "These animals won't listen at all!" Azaan replied, "That is because you are not treating them like animals. You are hurting them and not even rewarding them for their efforts. Animals have emotions like us. Can you work without food or breaks in a place, that is not your natural habitat? And, in addition, do something that you are not really happy about?"



The trainer sighed and thought about it. In the end he decided they were right.

Ayana and Azaan both said together, "Remember to be kind to animals!"

The trainer smiled and stated, "Thank you for reminding me. I used to be so kind to animals and now look at me! I am whipping them and hitting them. I will surely treat them better. Since you kids reminded me what a real animal trainer should be like, would you like to pet the animals?"

Ayana and Azaan quickly agreed and they got to pet all the animals one by one. They were very happy to see that the animals wouldn't be getting bad treatment anymore.





On the car ride back, they told their parents everything that happened.

Ayana added, "Next time, how about we go to a safari where the animals are let free in their habitat?"

Their mom gave a proud smile at them. She replied, "Sure. I think that is a wonderful option. By the way, what made you choose safari over circus?"

"Oh, it was just from our backstage experience." Azaan replied, thinking of Moozie.

About the creators of Moozie and the Circus:

Shweta Bala was 10 years old in 2020 when she wrote "Moozie and the Circus" and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at an online school - Laurel Springs School.

Sahana Bala, Shweta's sister, illustrated the story while 15 years old and a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California.

Their kindness works for Moozie and Children's Kindness Network are:

Stories:

- Mia and Moozie
- Moozie's Magic of Kindness
- Moozie's Positive Words
- Moozie and the Circus

Poem:

- Moozie Poem

Puzzles:

- Moozie Word Search
- Unscramble the words

Posters (created early during the Covid pandemic):

- Moozie Says Wear a Mask
- Moozie Washes Hands