

Proud to be me



ILLUSTRATED AND WRITTEN BY
JULIAN AKINSANYA



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He was a mix of two beautiful cultures, that merged in ways and conflicted in others.



Michael was born of two names, an American name and the Nigerian name of Kayode.



He was surrounded with his african american heritage day and night, but sometimes he questioned his Nigerian side. "It was all the way across the world," he thought to ask. Was that enough to get intouch with his other half?



Michael went to school and was questioned about his last name, the feeling made him feel alone. But he stood strong and said "I am half nigerian" I come from a strong Yoruba tribe.



Some kids questioned, pondered and wondered. Oh you're african they said, are there huts and safari's? Do they have electricity, or running water?



That day he went home sad, questioning, “why do I have to be Nigerian?” He went to his mom and dad, with nothing but shame.



They told him to remember who you are, remember your name. Dad said Africa is a continent of many countries, cultures, and places. It’s filled with riches and not so rich places, just like America. One day we will travel to Nigeria, and you will see the beauty, the people, and meet your family.

The summer after first grade they traveled to Nigeria. Meeting his dad's side of the family for the first time.



They were filled with nothing but welcoming arms, they called him kayode, his yoruba name.

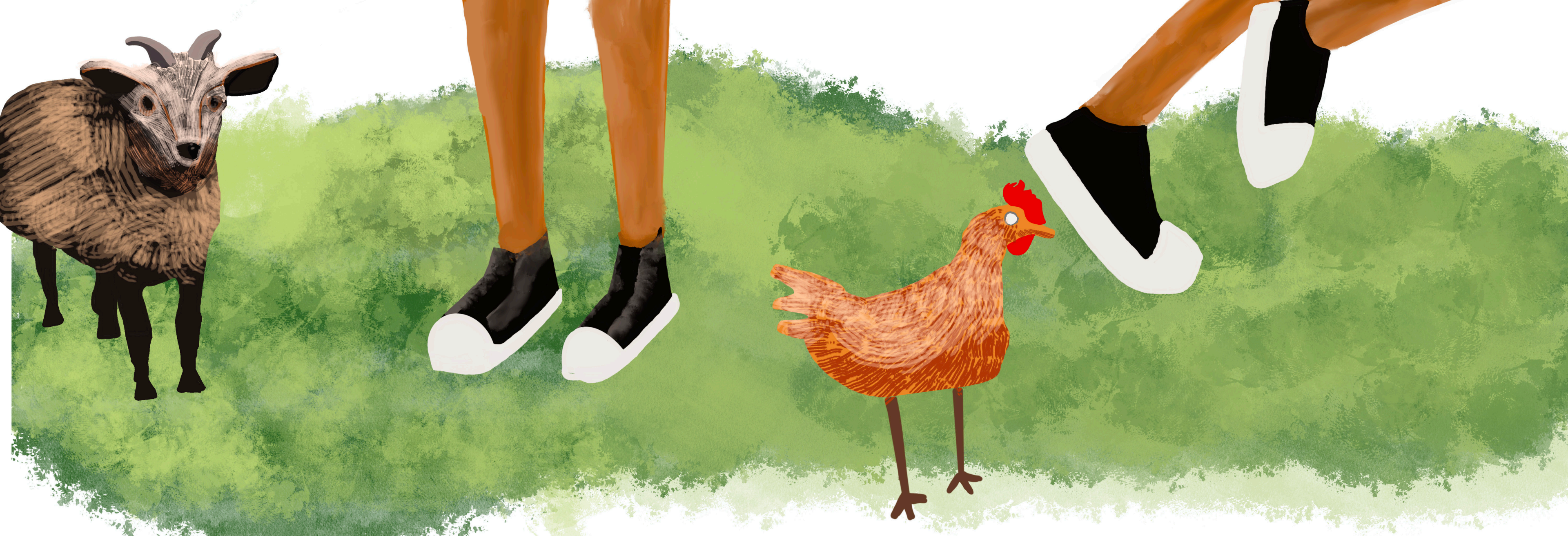




The heat radiated from his melanated skin, he felt warm, at peace and even met new kin.

Welcomed by his family they sang, danced, and carried him around. His grandmother made food like stews, rice, and pounded yam. It filled his tummy, as it danced around.





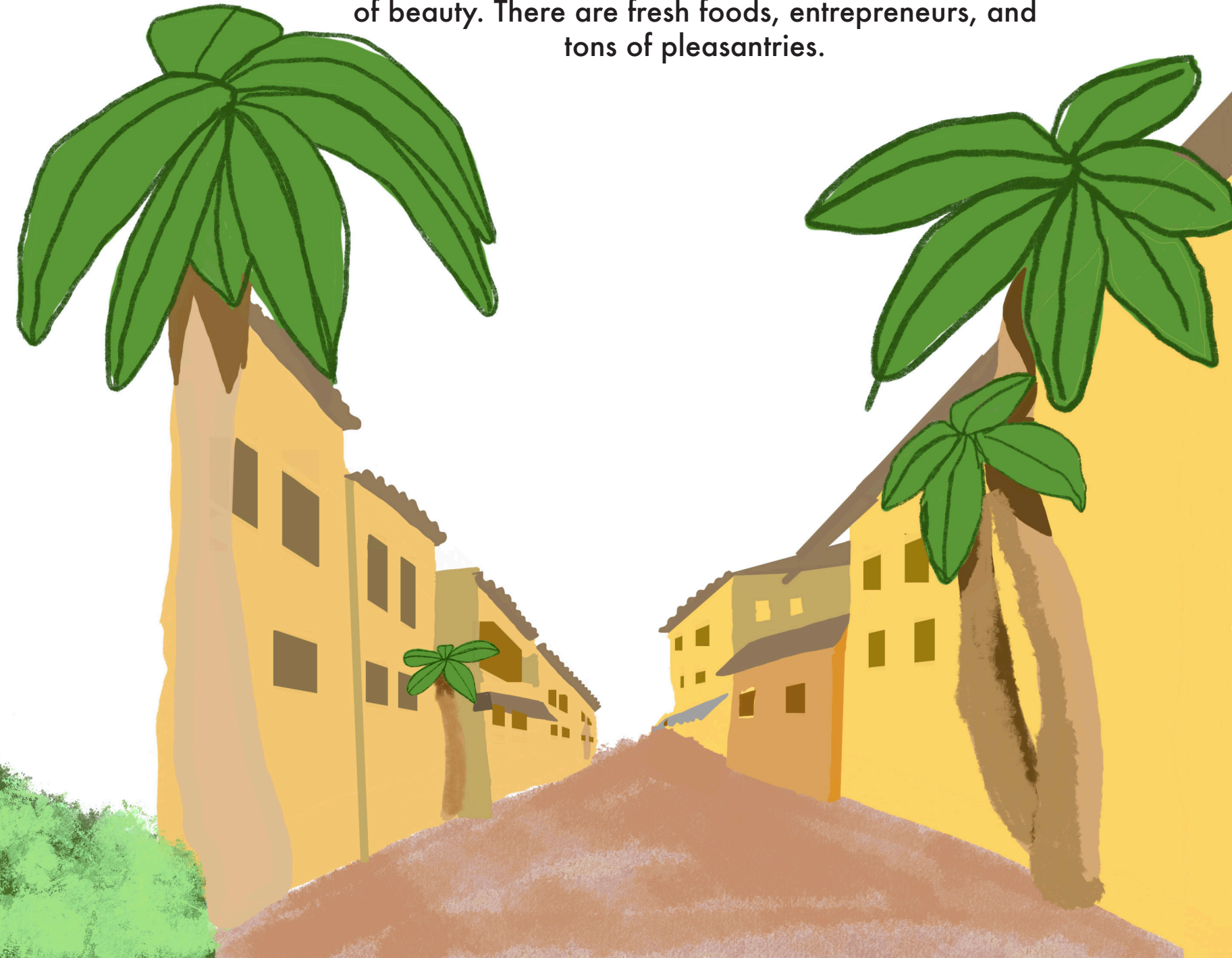
In Nigeria he was shocked by chickens roaming free, the goats, and livestock right at his feet. Soon he chased them, and laughed as they fled.

He saw the beauty of Lagos

His grandmother owned a little store, petite and cute. It was filled with snacks, sweets, and all types of the sort.



Mom said to him, see Nigeria is filled with all kinds of beauty. There are fresh foods, entrepreneurs, and tons of pleasantries.



Dad said to him, "embrace your culture as much as you can, and recognize you are a blessed young man. A mix of two beautiful cultures, that is as resilient as thee, be who you are and love your history."



So you lift your head on high you wear your buba strong, with strength, and confidence recognize you got it going on.





When you return to school, tell them about the beauty. He smiled at his momma and said "you're right, I am proud of who I am, strong, smart, and a proud Nigerian American."



He returned home to the United States. His friends asked how Nigeria was, and he said it was a great place.



He boasted about the warmth, the food, and the livestock that was in his face. He told them about the country, the cities, and the beauty of it all. His friends were shocked and they viewed the country wrong.



Nigeria is an amazing country, he said, and I'm proud of my family tree. African American, Nigerian, I am proud to be me!

