

THE ELEMENTALS

To Nnamuli, your baby brother wrote a book. You always told me to keep dreaming of a better world. Now I – and these special characters – can't stop. Thank you forever – LS

For Emiliano and Pedro; air creatures blowing torrents of light, magic and mystery into our lives – EM

LITTLE TIGER

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THE ELEMENTALS

WANZU SETS
SAIL



LOVE
SSEGA

ERIKA
MEZA

LITTLE TIGER

LONDON

CHAPTER ONE

WELCOME TO SEALAND



“When will I get my powers?” This question had been buzzing through Wanzu’s brain for as long as he could remember of his whole eight years.

He asked the question again as he bounced along, and Jjajja, his wise and kind grandma, smiled.

“They’re not just any powers, Wanzu. They’re superpowers, linked to our

connections with the elements. And you'll get yours soon, I'm sure," she replied.

"Well, mine might not be super yet ... but my singing and dancing is!" And with that, Wanzu dashed off while making up his latest song.



"I'm super with my harp,



On journeys near and journeys far!"



Jjajja laughed and shook her head.

Dancing around while playing his miniature harp was one of Wanzu's favourite things. Whenever he played, it was full of emotion, and he felt as though he was transported to another world.

"Come back, Wanzu! Don't go too far ahead!" Jjajja shouted.



Despite his independent spirit, Wanzu loved going on adventures with Jjajja. They lived by themselves in the very south of Sealand – the island they called home.

Today was market day, which meant potential for a mini adventure! The market was also a great chance for Wanzu to meet up with his friends, who lived all across Sealand. He didn't see them much because

he was homeschooled by Jjajja.

With Jjajja everything became a classroom – forests were places to learn about the natural wild and insects, while winter evenings in her study were for reading adventure stories and tales of their ancestors over hot cocoa. However, the best lessons involved being out on the sea or in Jjajja's workshop helping build new boats for their fellow islanders.

“Do you remember our lesson, Wanzu? About how the worlds were built to change?” Jjajja called to him as he danced around her. “Once upon a time they were just young rocks floating about the universe until water came and added what?”

“Life!” Wanzu shouted at the top of

his little lungs.

“Yes, that’s right,” Jjajja replied.

“And what do we do? Protect water, let it run, respect the seas...”

“And have fun!” Wanzu interrupted, before rushing on ahead again.

“Respect the seas ... for everything and everyone.” His grandma smiled as he bounced away.

As they entered the market square through the grand wooden arch, a noise caught Wanzu’s attention. It sounded like a high-pitched whistle, something distant but very familiar. A sound that only a small girl spinning the most magical multicoloured umbrella could make...

“Maali!” Wanzu shouted, pushing his way through the crowd.



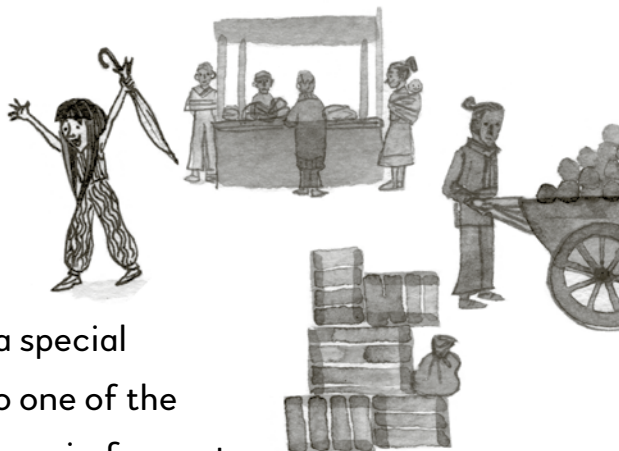
Maali was one of Wanzu's best friends – they were like brother and sister. But since he had moved in with Jjajja, Wanzu barely saw her.

Maali also lived with her grandparents, and Wanzu spotted her grandpa nearby. He had been a champion swimmer, surfer and deep-sea diver. So it was no surprise that his granddaughter Maali was a water baby. From the day she was born, it was obvious that Maali's superpower was going to be her connection to water.



Every person in Sealand had a special connection to one of the four elements – air, fire, water and earth – and was part of a long line of adventurers, known as Land Healers.

This is why Maali and Wanzu and the other children in Sealand lived with their grandparents. Their parents and adults were currently away on a mission. They often travelled to different places to help where they could, but this latest journey would take longer than all their previous missions put together! The children didn't mind too much though, as staying with grandparents was fun and an adventure for themselves.



“Wanzu! How are you?” Maali was as excited to see him as he was to see her!

“I’m good!” Wanzu replied. “Jjajja lets me sail on my raft and sing songs with my harp. She also *tries* to make me tidy my room...”

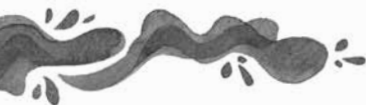
They both laughed. Maali knew how much Wanzu hated tidying!

“How are you?” Wanzu asked his friend.

“Great!” Maali replied. “I have been—”

“Let me guess,” Wanzu interrupted, and then said, “By the water!” at the same time as Maali.

Maali added, “My grandpa has been helping me control the water out on the Near Sea and in the inland streams. He says I need to be at one with my element and powers.”



“I still haven’t figured out what my superpower is... What do you think it could be?” Wanzu asked.

“Well, it’s connected to something you feel strongly about and do every day,” Maali replied, “so it’s definitely *not* cleaning your room!”

This made them laugh again. Maali was good at cheering Wanzu up. “I’m sure it will come soon,” she reassured him.

“How’s the rest of the gang?” Wanzu asked, changing the subject.

“They’re good! I see Elu and Peo at school – those twins are always getting me in trouble with their mischief! And Kikay is as serious as ever.”

Wanzu felt happy to hear their names but also sad to be missing out. He just

lived too far away.

“Wanzu!” Jjajja called to him.

“I’ve almost finished shopping.”

How is she done already? Wanzu thought. Jjajja had a way of doing things in double-quick time – it was like she could be in two places at once!

“I’ve got to go,” Wanzu said sadly as Jjajja approached them.

Maali waved to Jjajja, who waved back before turning to her cheeky grandson.

“Now, Master Wanzu, sorry to take you away from chatting, but shall we carry this shopping home?”

“How did you do it so quickly, Jjajja? I was going to come and help you, *honest*.”

Jjajja laughed. “You’ll learn soon enough. You’ll be as fast as the wind.”



As they made their way home,
Wanzu couldn't stop thinking about
his superpower and which element
he might be connected to. He
thought about his friends...

With her connection to water,
Maali could conjure up a wave, even
if there was no wind, and propel
herself as far as the eye could see.
She could create waves out of a
puddle and sail against the tide.
She was the best swimmer and
sailed her raft as if it was a magic
carpet. Wanzu had always
been in awe of her powers.



Even more impressive to Wanzu was the fact she never took advantage of her powers! If Wanzu had such powers he would turn the Near Sea into a massive water park, with whirlpools and mega waves. He would ask small turtles to play with him, and call to massive whales to join in the water games.

Maali had laughed at Wanzu's big plans and agreed it would be fun! But she also made sure to pass on love and respect for water to her friends, just as her family had taught her.

Their friend Kikay's elemental superpower was fire. His powers meant he could cook his friends

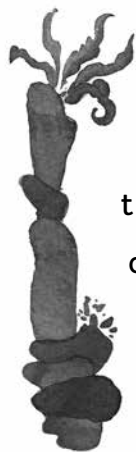


food, illuminate hidden passages on their adventures and start a fire in the dampest of caves. He was also a giver of warm advice.

The twins Peo and Elu were connected to earth, which gave them the ability to mould the soil around them and grow things with the smallest amount of earth and the harshest conditions.

Jjajja caught Wanzu drifting off into his thoughts, as he often did. "Wanzu, what are you dreaming about, dear child?" Jjajja asked. "Perhaps your raft...?"

Wanzu's face lit up. Jjajja had made his raft in her workshop. It wasn't designed to go far and, in Wanzu's opinion, had a sail the size of a handkerchief, but it was



good practise for future adventures.

“I am now.” Wanzu beamed with excitement. “Although, Jjajja, I can’t get my raft to go very fast. What should I do?”

“Going fast is about being at one with nature,” Jjajja replied with her usual wisdom. “When do you feel most relaxed and at peace?”

After some time, Wanzu reached for his harp, which he had slung across his back.

“Ah, I thought so,” Jjajja said with a knowing smile. “Next time you are out on your raft, see what happens when you play a few tunes.”

Wanzu looked up at Jjajja. “Can I go sailing now and try?” he pleaded.

“It’s a bit too late today!” Jjajja laughed. “But you can go first thing in the morning.”

Wanzu cheered. It wasn't quite as good as going now, but at least tomorrow he could have a full day at sea. "Thank you, Jjajja." He leant in for a big hug. He wondered if playing his harp would somehow help him sail faster. There was only one way to find out – and that would be tomorrow's adventure.

