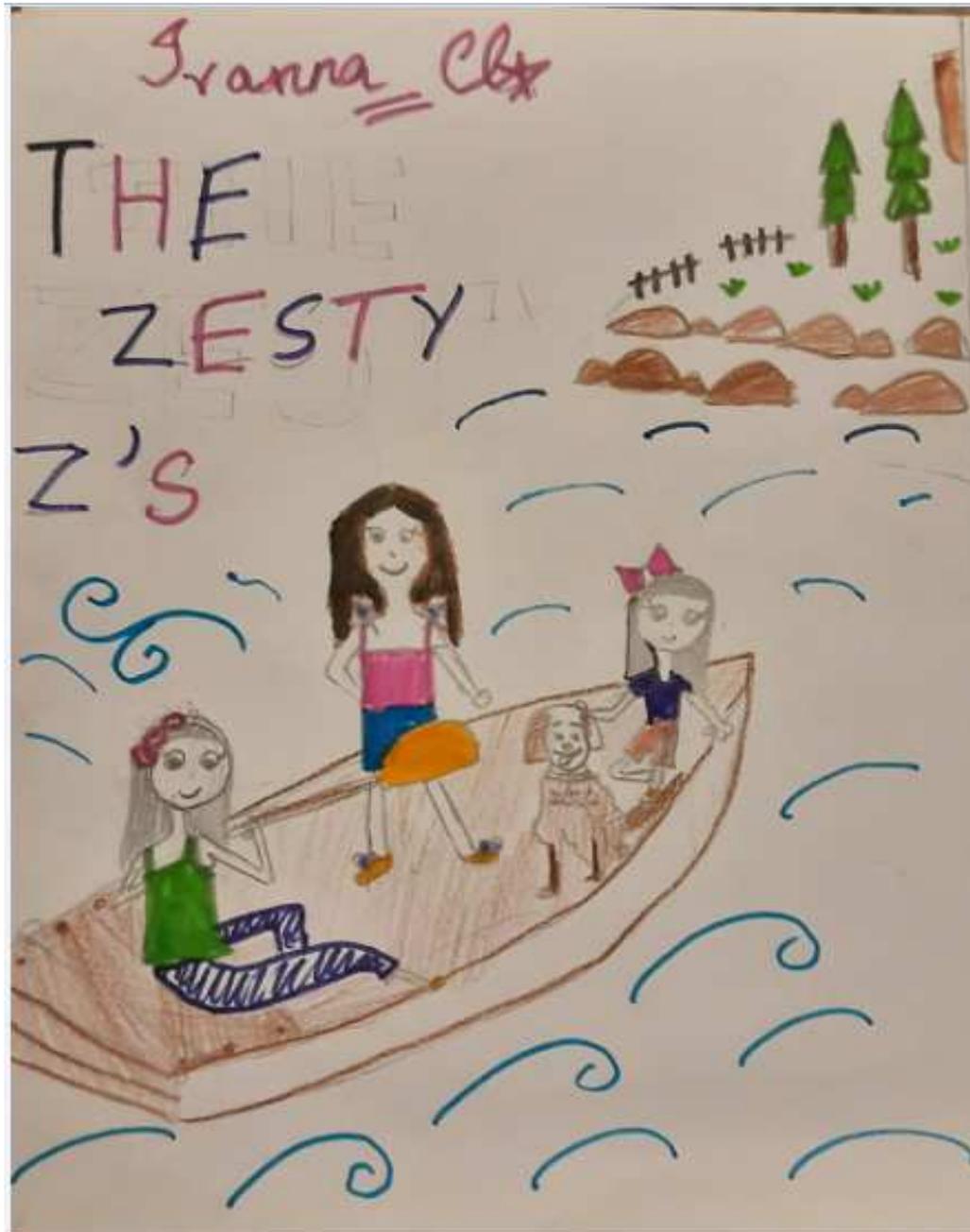


The Zesty Z's



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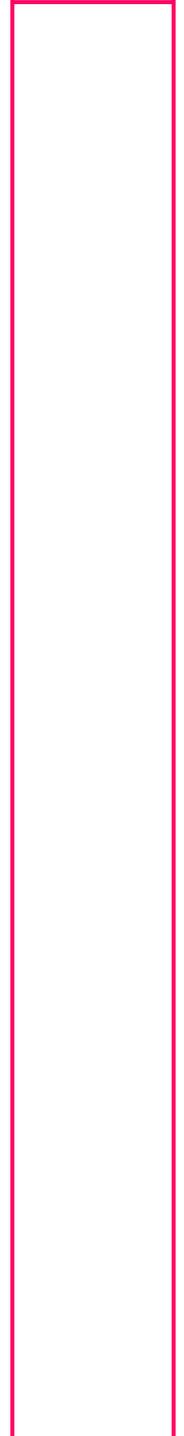
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Summary

About the Author



CHAPTER 1- Where should we go?

“Mother, where will we go these holidays?” asked Zoey.

“Oh please! This is the third time you are asking the same question! Mother will definitely find a suitable place to spend our vacation.” said Zenya in a tired voice.

“I am thinking, darling. I just can’t come up with a safe but fun vacation spot for you both since your father and I will not be accompanying you two. Father has an important seminar and I must go with him.” said Jemima, who was the mother of the children.

Suddenly, Father came out of his room and said, “Why not Daniel’s house? He could show the kids his books that have

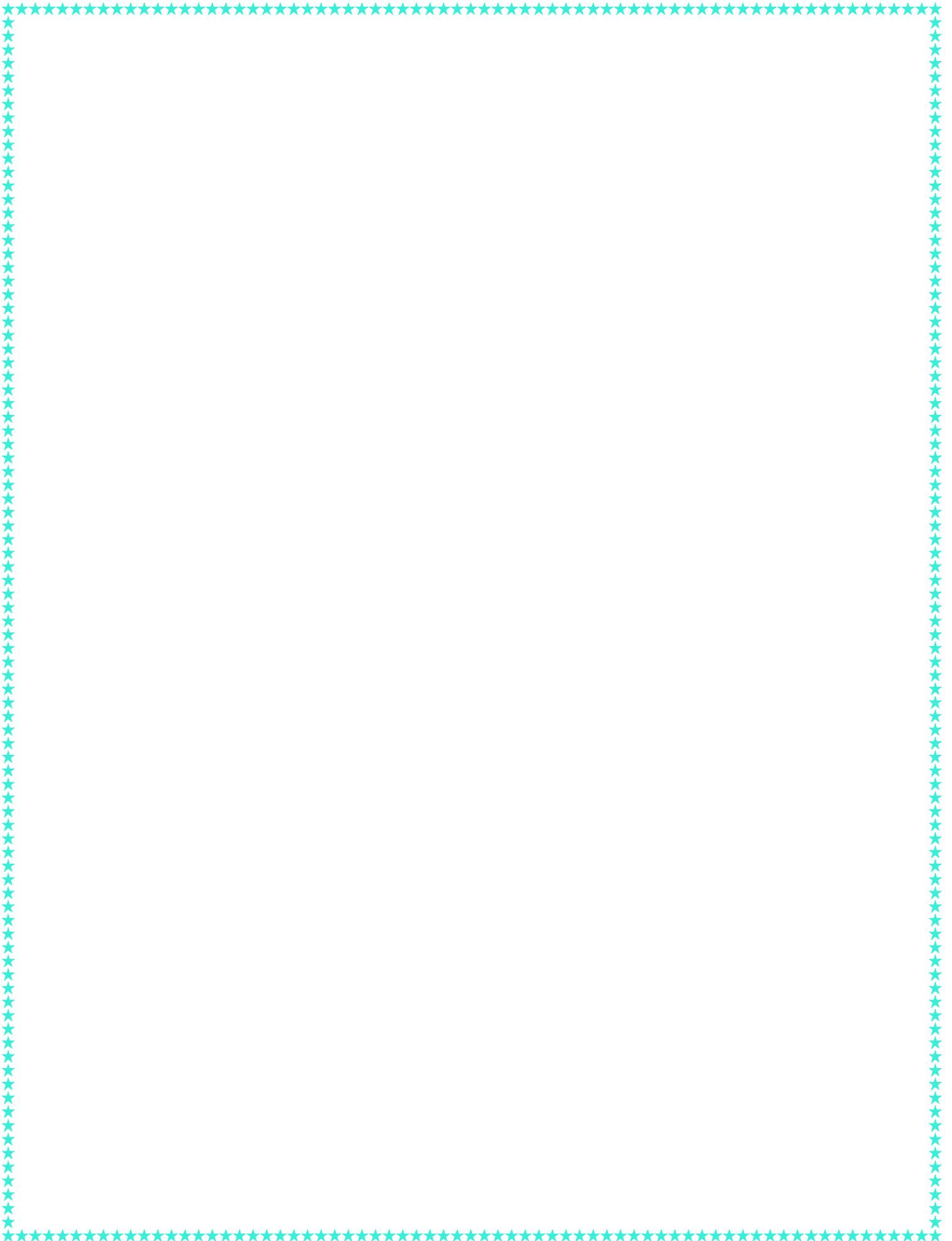
gained so much popularity. I think the children would love to spend their holidays with his family.”

“But Harold, your brother wouldn’t like it if our children go and stay there when he is writing a book! He would need peace.” said mother in a worried voice.

“My dear, I am sure he wouldn’t mind. He has a daughter too, Amaya, which our children haven’t met earlier. It would be lovely for them to become acquainted.

“Then Jemima said in a happy voice, “You are right! If the children are engrossed with their cousin, they will cause no disturbance to Daniel. Even though his wife would not have any issues with the girls and Zozo going over, I must ask Charlotte once. After that you both can begin packing!”

She hugged her two daughters while Zozo barked gleefully. Everybody looked forward to this trip.



CHAPTER 2- Off to Radcliffe Islands

“I will miss you Mother!” said Zoey, hugging Jemima tightly while Zenya clutched onto her hand.

“Oh my dear daughters! I’d love to go, but your father needs me there. You both are old enough to take care of yourselves and you have Zozo to protect you too! She has sharp teeth and growls when there is danger. She is better than 50 policemen! Right?” Said mother with a laugh. The sisters flashed bright smiles and pet their darling dog. All of them quickly finished their breakfast and went up to their rooms to pack their bags.

“We will stay for a night with Daniel and Charlotte and then leave for the seminar. Your father wanted to meet his brother once and I will get to meet Charlotte too. It’s been a very long time since we last got together!

“The days passed by and the children grew more excited. The day the girls were supposed to leave, they woke up extra early. They changed into shorts and

t-shirts, clutched onto their trunks and ran down the stairs. Zenya saw Mother put plum pie, ten bars of chocolate, lots of yummy sandwiches, rice and butter, a bagful of egg wraps and bottles of water.

“So early girls! I am surprised! You both must be so excited”, said mother. “Look at Zozo, she can’t stop running all over the place. I think, she wants to remind us that she’s here! Zenya, give her food, please. And you both too finish up your breakfast. There is milk with cereal and fruits.

Father loaded the trunks and the family left. The journey was long and they took several stops in between. But at last they did reach Radcliffe Bay. Father saw his brother come to the gate of a cottage. “Daniel! My dear brother! Charlotte, we haven’t met in

ages! Here is my wife Jemima and daughters Zenya and Zoey. Not to forget, our dog Zozo!” Bear hugs and cheerful smiles were exchanged when Zenya asked – “Aunt Charlotte, where is Amaya? Both of us are very eager to meet her!”.

“How stupid of me! I didn’t call her yet. But let me just tell you two girls that she is very shy. When she meets new people, she usually hides behind my back. However, if you show her Zozo, she will instantly become friendly. Amaya has always wanted a dog. Also, I must warn you, if you touch her dolls without permission, she can flare up. So, just ask beforehand. But she is very truthful and loyal.

The children thought what an extraordinary cousin!

You three will get along very well.” Said Aunt Charlotte. Then she took them inside the house. Zoey and Zenya couldn’t wait to meet their cousin!

CHAPTER 3- Meeting the extraordinary cousin

After they finished washing their face and changing their clothes, they went down to meet their cousin. When they went down to the stairs, they saw a little girl peeping behind Aunt Charlottes back.

Zoey tried to get a look at the girl hiding behind Aunt's Charlottes back. Zoey had to think fast to meet their cousin. Suddenly she remembered what Aunt Charlotte had said. She quickly left her hand off Zozo. As she left her hand, Zozo immediately went to the girl, and started to sniff her. Immediately their cousin came forward to pet the dog. "She is so beautiful! What is her name?"

"Zozo. I am Zoey and this is my sister Zenya."

"Nice to meet you. I am Amaya." Uncle Daniel said "Amaya, why don't you show your cousins around? They are new here. Show them the farm, the main bay and the park. Don't forget to take them to Radcliffe Island. Take them on your boat, I got it repaired."

"Sure Father, that is an excellent idea! Come on Zenya and Zoey. Don't forget Zozo!"

CHAPTER 4- A strange discovery and a fun afternoon

Aunt Charlotte made crab, gravy, vegetables, and pudding for everybody and gave a few bones, meat and a packet of doggy biscuits for Zozo. After all, they were going to have lots of fun and hence will be very hungry! The children felt the warmth of the sun and the wind of the sea. It was a lovely day.

Then Amaya broke the silence and said, "Let me first show you our farm. Here are the chickens, here the pigs and there the cows." She went on, pointing at various domestic animals while the girls looked on in awe.

"Do you want to know a big secret? My father is a great author. When I was just 5 years old, he had won a prestigious prize for a story he had published. The prize was a book, which was about the treasures of India. Along with that several other books came too, that have a lot of worth. There is a door to the room where these books are kept, which I named as the treasure room. This room that is next to my room, is a treasure room covered with soot and roses to keep it hidden. Inside the treasure room there is a huge trunk, and in that trunk there are the books. Zoey and Zenya were stunned! Even Zozo was quiet. Then Zenya said, "I hope nobody heard us Amaya! It's a big secret." "Nobody is here. I don't think anyone overheard us. Please don't tell this to anybody." The sisters nodded and gave their cousin a tight hug. "Now I will take you to the Island. Here is my boat. Don't worry, I can row very well! The children were astonished but it was true! Amaya rowed the smooth, with force and style. Zozo also barked happily when the waves splashed on her. At last, they reached the Island. It was beautiful! It had seagulls flying across the sky and butterflies on leaves. Zenya exclaimed and said "Amaya, this is so pretty. I feel like I am in a dream!" "I love my island very much. Wait let me show you my castle first!" said

Amaya. Zoey and Zenya were shocked, was she telling the truth? This island and castle couldn't be hers! But Zenya scratched her head and remembered something. Aunt Charlotte had said that Amaya never lied. To clear all doubts, Zoey asked her straightway. "I know it doesn't seem true that I own all of this, but let me explain. Long back ago, before my birth, my parents bought a house on Radcliffe Bay. They loved to explore the place and one day while rowing a boat, they saw this island. It was very dirty and unkempt, but had a strange charm. After that, they used to come often for picnicking and camping. One day they asked Ern, our helper, about the Island's owner. Ern is a fisherman, but is also my father's very close friend. He has taught me rowing and fishing. When my parents enquired, he told them that nobody owned the island. Nobody wanted to buy it since it was so old and dirty. So, my father went to the Radcliffe Office and bought this island. I have grown up here, playing hide and seek and watching sunsets. When I turned 10, my parents gifted this island to me since they saw how much I loved it. I don't allow anybody inside. But I really like both of you and Zozo and wanted to show you my Island." The girls were surprised to hear this story. But they were happy that their cousin loved them so much. After the long talk, the children ate some food and played with rabbits. They then explored the castle. It had roses all along, growing on the walls and bulbuls singing. There were caves, tunnels and dungeons too! The children did go to see what were in the dungeons, but they didn't see anything. They felt very uncomfortable in the dungeons, so they went to the tunnels. The tunnels were pitch dark, so they head to the caves. In the caves, they felt very nice! It was warm and cozy, and the Zozo loved playing with the soft sand.



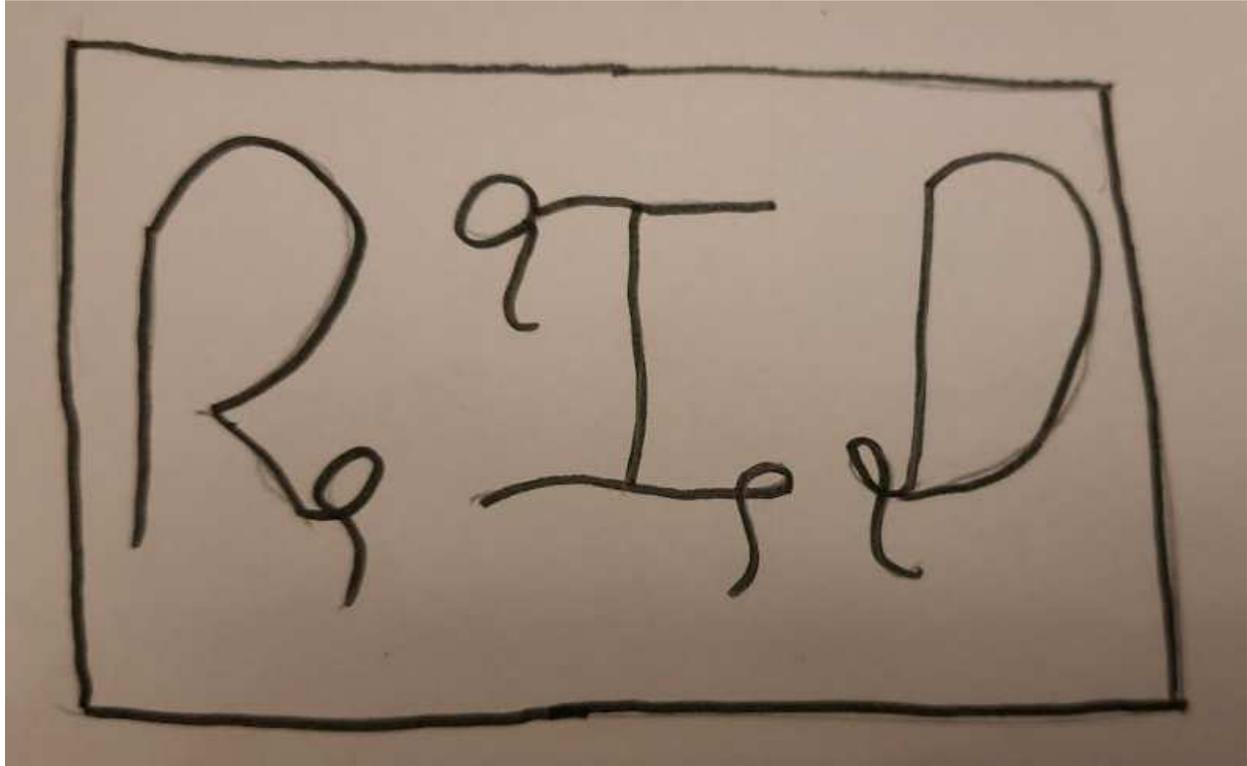
The children didn't want to leave the caves at all. But it was getting dark and it would become hard for Amaya to row without light. The waves had become much calmer and the moon was shining. When Aunt Charlotte saw them, she said, "How was the island?" "It was splendid Aunt Charlotte!" Said Zoey and Zenya at once. "That is wonderful! Now all of you must change and eat your dinner. The food will get cold!"

CHAPTER 5- Where is Amaya?

Zenya and Zoey was thrilled to see the spread on the dining table - salad, spaghetti Bolognese, dumplings and fruit custard. The children had their dinner ravenously. Since the children were tired, they went to bed early. Late in the night, Amaya woke up. She was cold and wanted her jacket. Then she recollected – she had left her jacket in the treasure room! But when she opened the door of the treasure room she saw two people. Amaya became scared – they were burglars and were here to steal her father’s books! She was about to scream, but before that, one of the men threw a sack upon her. She struggled to free herself but the man’s grip was too tight.

The next day everybody came down for breakfast, except Amaya. Zoey asked “Aunt, where is Amaya?” “She must be in her room still asleep, exhausted of yesterday’s fun.” suggested Aunt Charlotte. Zoey went to her room, but strangely nobody was there! She went down stairs to give the information, but Aunt said “She might have gone fishing then. Don’t worry, she will be back soon.” Time passed, but still Amaya did not return. Zenya and Zoey turned anxious and went out to look for her. They went down to the sea to see if any boats were wading; she might have gone rowing. They saw a boat and looked closely, crossing their fingers. Blow! It was only a fisherman! Zozo looked upset to. The girls returned to the house with worried looks. Where could she be? Then Zenya asked “Uncle could I just check the treasure room once?” “Sure.” answered Uncle Daniel. Zenya looked all around the room when she saw Amaya’s jacket lying on the trunk. “Zenya, that is her jacket! I have an idea. We could give the jacket to Zozo and she could smell it, guiding us to her whereabouts. When they gave it to Zozo, she started barking, ran

out of the house, and then began digging the sand. Zenya picked up a folded piece of paper that Zozo had discovered.



Noph RID- that's what was written. " Noph? And RID? What does that mean? "Asked Zoey. "It will be probably the short form of something. We just have to crack it." Answered Zoey. "Let us call up the police, he might be able to help us."

CHAPTER 6- Few more clues to the end! The three think hard.

The children rang up the local police. "Hello! Is this the local police?"

"Yes, who is this?"

"This is Zenya Radcliffe from Radcliffe Islands."

"Hello. What do you need?"

"Our cousin has been kidnapped. She has left some clues, could you please help us with them?"

"As if somebody has been kidnapped! Listen, do not play jokes with me. Kids today! They only know mischief!" and the policeman hung up. "I think let us leave the police option." suggested Zoey in a scared voice. The children again went back to the chit. The children kept guessing for an hour, thinking of this and that. At last Zoey said, "I need a break! Let us have some ice cream. It would help us to think better." The sisters went to an ice cream parlor nearby. A chocolate and strawberry ice cream please?" The shopkeeper handed them the ice creams and gave a bone for Zozo too. The three sat under the sun, relishing the food. Suddenly, they heard a familiar name coming from a conversation.

"Noph has again burgled! When will the police be able to stop that notorious man? I am tired of hearing this every other day."

"Who is Noph, sir?" Asked Zenya.

"Child, Noph is a bad burglar. He is very dangerous! He smuggles a lot of things."

"Like?" Questioned Zoey.

"He smuggles jewelry, precious stones and ancient books. He steals them and then goes to foreign countries where he sells these items for a very high amount of money."

Oh! So this was the Noph they were looking for! While going back, Zoey said “Now we know who Noph is! But we also have to find out the full form of RID.” The children had their lunch and took a short nap, but Zenya couldn’t stop thinking of their dear cousin. For the whole evening, the girls flipped through books for the meaning of RID but they were not successful. It seemed as if the word didn’t exist! When they reached the table for dinner, they looked like they hadn’t slept for years. Aunt Charlotte said, “You both look so tired! Don’t get stressed, the police will surely find her. What is tiring you both out so much?” “We can’t find the full form of RID, aunt. We have tried so hard, but we have no answer.”

“Oh, it surely is Radcliffe Islands! That’s what Amanda had named the islands! She had made a short form of it! But what does D mean?” Asked Aunt Charlotte. Suddenly, everybody went into a thinking mood. But Aunt Charlotte didn’t want to stress the girls again, so she quickly changed the subject.

What had you seen when you went with Amanda to the Island? That suddenly made the children remember their lovely trip to the island.

“When we had gone to the island there were tunnels,” said Zenya.

“Caves,” said Zoey.

And both of them said together “dungeons!” The mystery had become crystal clear for the children! They knew who captured Amaya and where she was held.

CHAPTER 7- To the rescue!

The children quickly ate their dinner and went to their bedroom to discuss. "How do we go to the island tomorrow?" questioned Zoey. "We could request Ern to ferry us to the island." "Yes! that would be a good idea" said Zoey. "Let's go to the sea for some fresh air. It helps me to think." It was late night. They walked around the shore, when questions started filling their mind. They had to speak it out. "When should we go tomorrow?" "At 10, I suppose?" "Sounds good to me. They went back and went to bed. Next morning, they could smell bacon and toast and....plum pie! They must eat well, a big adventure would come up. They left for the beach. Ern ferried them to the island. "Hope you have a nice time!" said Ern. They slowly went on the island when they saw a few dungeons. Excitedly they entered the first one, but nothing was there. Then they went to the second one, it had some flashing lights coming out of it. But alas! It was only the sun! Then they were sure she was in the third one. But it's entry was covered with a big rock. They pushed hard, but it just wouldn't open! "Oh no! This just isn't opening!" Cried Zoey. "Don't worry, push harder!" The children were almost in tears when the rock slowly opened. At last they when they opened the rock, they saw someone crouched on the ground. And it was Amaya! "Amaya, Amaya, wake up! We are here to rescue you. Come get up." But strangely when she woke up, she looked very drowsy and spoke very slowly! "Did they do anything to you?" asked Zenya. "Yes, because they drugged me." said Amaya. "Oh no! But we mustn't waste time. Noph might find us!

CHAPTER 8- Caught!

The children found their way out of the dungeons. But while they were walking back, they heard footsteps.

“Quick! Hide behind this rock!” said Zenya in whispers. They all hid behind the rock, and began to listen.

“Did you pack the cloth bags with the things?” Said one man.

“Yes Noph sir. I’ll just go once and check!” Said another man. He had a big husky voice.

The children immediately got to know who was Noph.

Suddenly Zoey saw a spider and screamed, “aaaahhhhhh!”



“Who is there?” Asked Noph. But before Zoey could do anything, Noph caught hold of her firmly and said “Why are

you spying on us? Tell me? What are you kids doing here?" Only one way was there – pepper spray in Zenya's backpack. The moment she sprayed it on his eyes , he started rubbing his eyes and howling in pain. While he was rubbing his eyes terribly, the three of them tied him up with the rope, tightly behind a rock. "Zoey, you go and call the police quickly!" said Zenya. While Zoey went to call the police, Amaya and Zenya allowed Zozo to nip on Noph's ankles!

Zoey called up the police saying " Come fast to Radcliffe Island! It is urgent!" she noticed a slight pause on the other end. She thought, of course , they don't know what I am talking about!' "I mean that Noph has been caught! Please come quickly!" The Inspector was shocked! Noph was caught! He wasted no time and left for Radcliffe Island. When they reached, they were surprised to see Noph tied up. Finally they had laid there hand on the wicked man!

CHAPTER 9- An exciting finish!

Noph had been arrested and Amaya was back! Zenya and Zoey started to pour out everything.

“But what will happen to the books they stole?” asked Amaya in a worried face.

“Oh not to worry about the books,” said Uncle Daniel, quite cheerful. “They were filled with blank pages!” The children were quite happy to see that their uncle was quite clever!

“What a trick father!” said Amaya hugging her father. You were very clever to do that! They all sat down at the table. They all were ravenous after this splendid adventure! Jessica, the cook was surprised to see so many people for lunch! The policeman had never had such good lunch! For the whole afternoon, they discussed about the mystery. The policemen took notes of everything. It was such a thrilling mystery! Mysteries just fall from the air, so the Zesty Z's will always be ready for the next adventure!

“Zozo, did you have a nice good nip for Noph?”

Woof! said Zozo, saying “a very good one indeed”!

Summary

Zenya and Zoey are sisters and they have a dog called Zozo. Last summer, they went to Radcliffe Islands, where they met their cousin Amaya for the first time. They enjoyed her company, having picnics and relishing Aunt Charlotte's dishes. But when Amaya went missing, the Zesty Z's became frantic. Where was she? Why was she missing? Why had she suddenly disappeared? Or had Amaya been kidnapped? Unravel this thrilling mystery with the Zesty Z's – Zenya, Zoey and Zozo!

About the Author



Ivanna is a budding author with an ardent love for books. She takes inspiration from the legendary Enid Blyton and idolizes her. 'The Famous Five Series' is her favourite book and she loves the character George. She wishes to pursue her passion of writing in the future. She is also an artist and loves painting. All the illustrations have been a result of her wild imagination.

THE END