

# Finding Home

By Hafsah Khan

*Featuring art  
made by women  
seeking asylum in  
the U.S.*





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To everyone still  
looking for a home

Maria the mouse has the best home! She built it herself out of dirt and sticks and mud. It's a little small, but she fits in it perfectly.



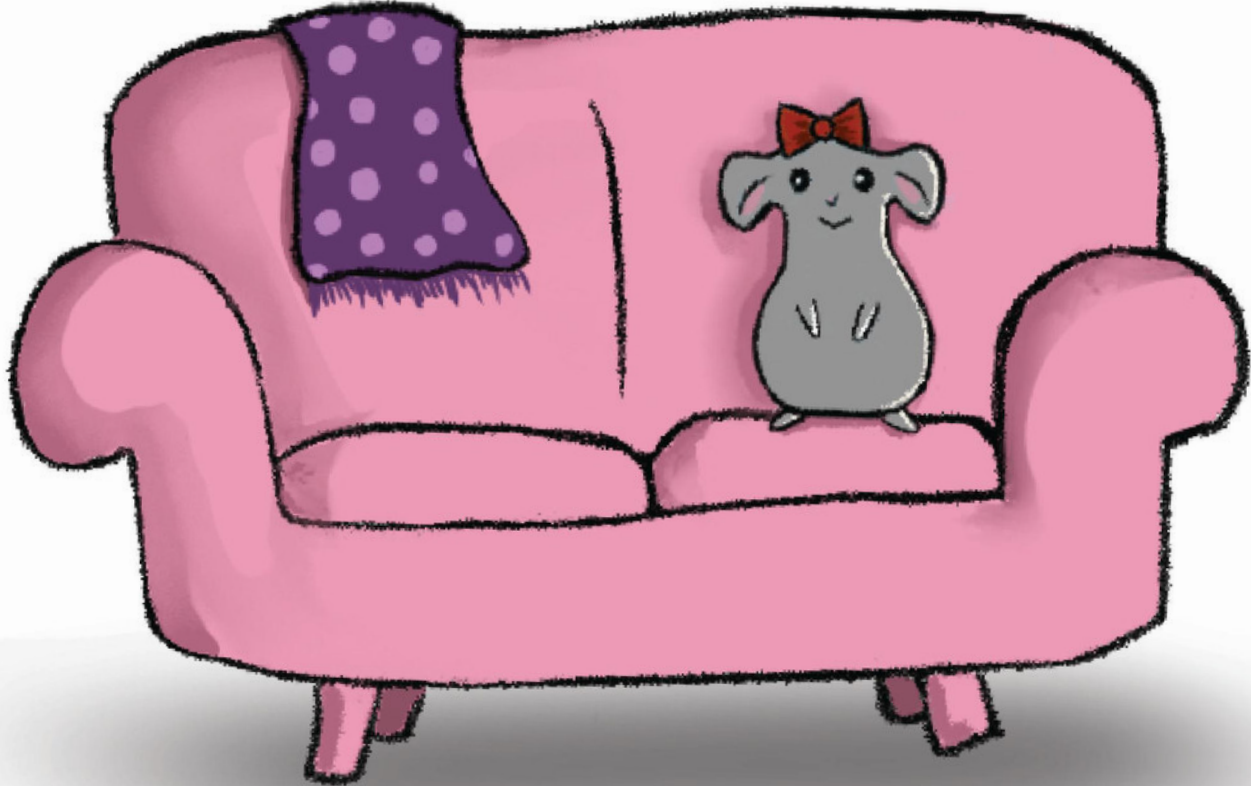


Her kitchen  
is perfect for  
baking pies...

...and her  
house has all  
her favorite  
snacks!




Her home also has the  
most comfortable couch!  
She always rests on it  
after a long day.



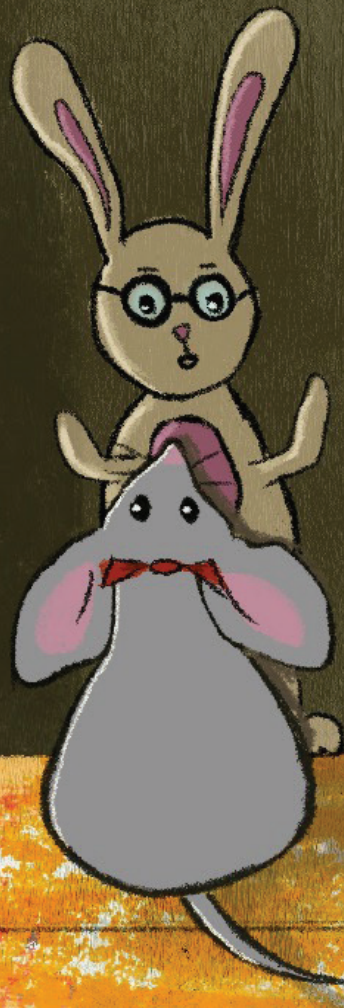




A scenic view of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there are lush green trees and bushes. A river flows through the middle ground, surrounded by more greenery. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow or light-colored rock. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

One day, Maria comes  
back from playing with  
her friends and her home  
is **gone!** She only sees  
grass and a patch of dirt.

She asks her neighbor, Roger the rabbit, where it went.






“There was a strong gust of wind!” he says. Your house is the only house made of dirt and sticks and mud, **so the wind blew it away.**”

**“Oh no!”**

Maria says. “Where will I live now?”



“Well, the wind couldn’t have taken it too far yet,” Roger says. “If you hurry, you might be able to find it!”



So, Maria packs a bag and sets out to find her home.





Yosle

First, she walks for a very long time until she gets to the beach. She digs a huge hole in the sand to look for her home...

....but all she finds are a bunch of

seashells!

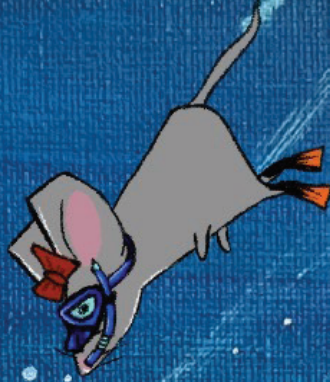


“Maybe my home  
is hiding in the  
water!” Maria thinks.





21 She dives into the ocean to look for it, but finds nothing...



except for  
**fish...**



...and seaweed.





ZWE

After she leaves the beach,  
she walks all the way up a  
mountain to look for her  
home. She's never seen so  
many twinkling stars in the  
sky before!

Still, she doesn't find her  
home on the mountain.

Maria walks some more  
and stumbles upon a  
desert!



She's careful to stay away from prickly cactuses!

It's **hot** and Maria  
is very **thirsty** but  
she doesn't give up!



She **walks...**

and **walks...**

and **walks...**

...until she reaches the end of a cliff!



But she still doesn't  
see her home.





Maria realizes she spent a whole day in the desert! The moon is already high in the sky when she jumps into a lake to search for her home.

But her home is still nowhere to be found, not even in the lake.

Maria is walking through the forest when it starts snowing.

This is her first time seeing snow!



She thinks it  
looks like

f  
a  
l  
l  
i  
n  
g  
stars.



But even the snow can't distract her from her mission. She walks until she reaches a field of

huge dandelions!



She searches for a  
very long time, but her  
home isn't there.



The dandelions  
lead Maria to a  
flower field.



She wants to continue searching, but her legs hurt and she's tired, so she sits down.





“I’m never going to find my home!” she cries.

“I searched everywhere! I traveled through  
beaches...

and mountains...

and oceans...

and deserts...

and snow...

and dandelion fields...

but it was all for **nothing!**”

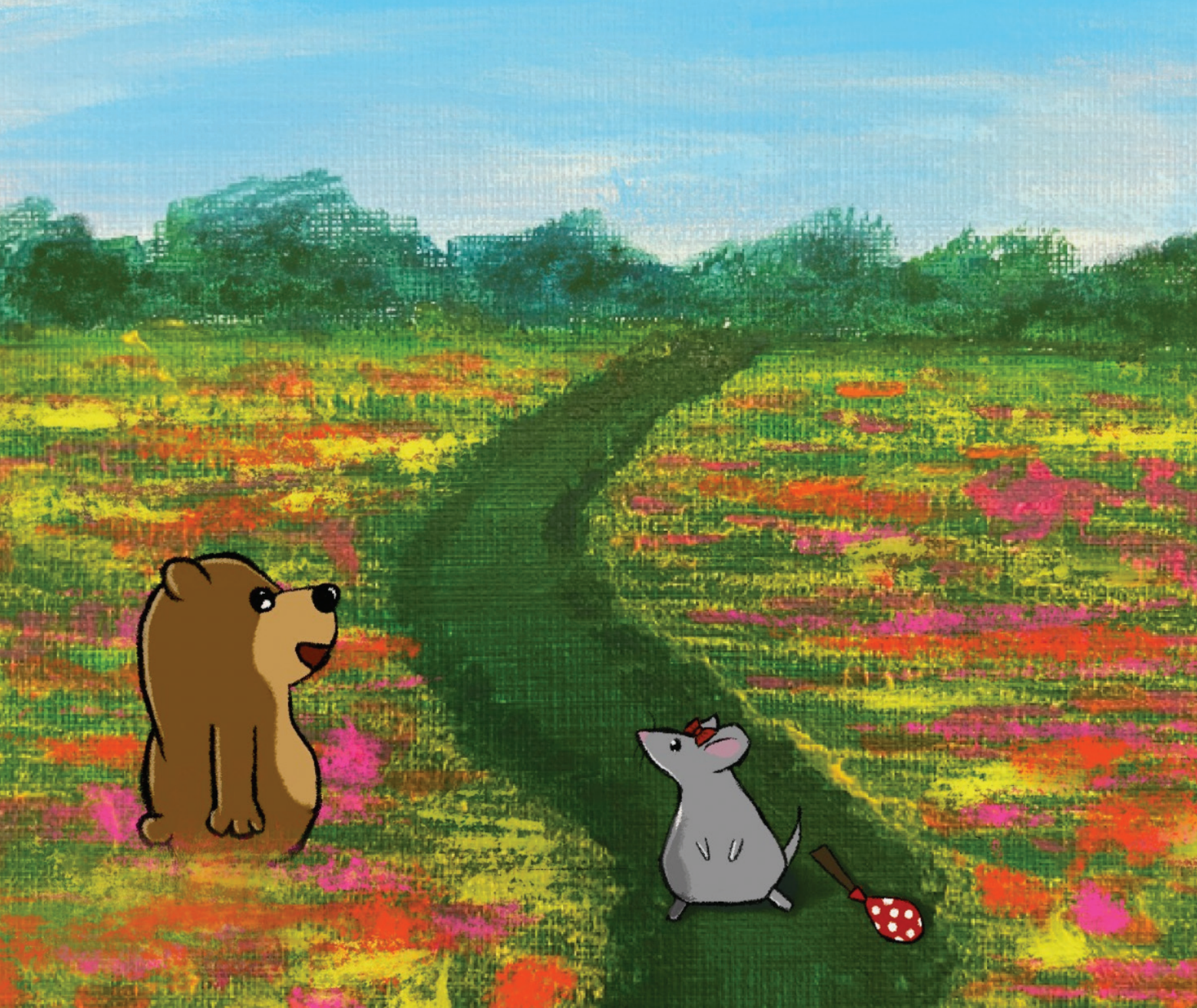


Maria hears  
a noise in  
the field.

She looks up and sees  
a bear standing in the  
flowers.

“I’m Bruce the bear!” the bear says. “I live  
here!”

“Have you seen my home?” Maria asks. “It’s  
made of dirt and sticks and mud and it’s  
small. I’ve been looking for it everywhere!”



“I saw a pile of dirt and sticks  
around here somewhere,”  
Bruce says.

“That must have  
been your home.”



“A pile?” Maria asks. “That means my home is broken!”




**Oh no!**

Where will I  
live now?”

“Well, there are lots of homes in lots of places!” Bruce responds.



“This is my home,  
and it’s **lovely**.  
Everyday I get to  
see the prettiest  
flowers for miles  
and miles.”

The background is an abstract, textured composition of various colors including shades of blue, green, red, and orange. A prominent horizontal black line runs across the lower portion of the image, with some irregular, scribbled marks above and below it. The overall effect is that of a hand-painted or mixed-media artwork.

“Just because you lost  
your old home doesn’t  
mean you can’t find a  
new home that’s just  
as good!”

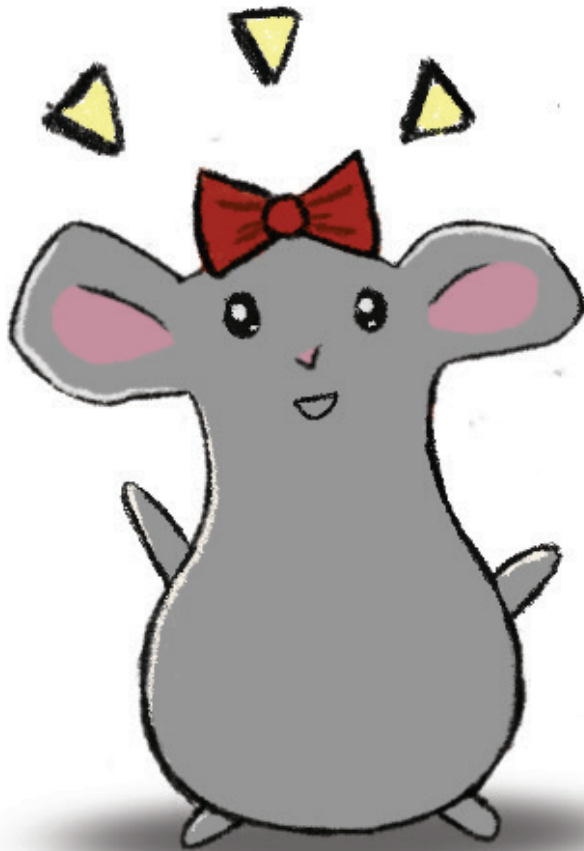
“Could this be my home, too?” Maria asks. “Even though it’s so far away from where my old home used to be?”

“Yes!” Bruce says. “Look at the birds! They have two homes. Every summer, their home is here but every winter, they fly away to a second home far away in the north. Sometimes you have to find a new home when your old home isn’t right for you anymore.”





Maria smiles big and wide. She wants a home here. She'll miss her old home a lot, but she has to live somewhere else.



“I want this to be my home!”

Maria exclaims.

“Welcome home,”  
Bruce says.



# A little more about Finding Home

Hi! I'm Hafsah, a highschool student (at the time of writing) with a passion for art. I've been teaching art classes to the women and children at Bethany House since July 2022 through my nonprofit, All for Art. **Bethany House offers housing and support services to women who are seeking asylum, often those who arrived in the U.S. as unaccompanied children and have since aged out of children detention centers.** Since its opening in October 2017, Bethany House has welcomed 74 women with 23 small children. They come from 19 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and South and Central America. Like Maria the mouse, they too are searching for their home. **I provide art classes at Bethany House in hopes that the women can use our painting sessions as a way to express themselves and find moments of peace in the serenity of art.** Since I've started teaching there, the women who paint with me in my classes have gone from never having picked up a paintbrush in their lives before to creating a wide variety of beautiful, creative works. They've enjoyed the art classes so much that when I bring extra supplies to the center, the women excitedly come up to me the following week to show me pictures of the many wonderful paintings they made while I was gone.

**Many of the illustrations in this book feature paintings made by the women at Bethany House.** For example, the cover art, the flower field, the beach landscape, the mountain scene, the lake with the starry sky, and many more were painted by them. I simply added the characters and other props/details on top of these backgrounds to create a cohesive storyline. In many ways, this book is theirs.

I put together this book to showcase the amazing work of these women. I've taught art classes at senior living homes, mental health centers, and so many other places. **Still, nowhere else have I seen the same degree of passion and enjoyment of art that the Bethany House women exhibit.** There's never a canvas that stays blank in the house for long or an art class where the women aren't eagerly espousing ideas for what we should paint next as soon as we finish the current painting project. And their love for art shows—every single painting any one of them makes turns out beautiful everytime without fail.

**All proceeds made from the sale of this book will be given back to Bethany House and the women there.** If you're interested in supporting Bethany House further, you can find more information on their website, [bethanyhouseofhospitality.com](http://bethanyhouseofhospitality.com). More information on my nonprofit and the work that I do can be found at [allforartchicago.org](http://allforartchicago.org).

*Thank you for reading and supporting these women's journeys!*

**-Hafsah**

# Some pictures from the Bethany House art classes...



Bethany House of Hospitality

**Faces are blurred for privacy purposes.**





**All proceeds made from the sale of this book will go to Bethany House, which offers housing and support services to asylum seekers from various countries, especially those in Africa and South America.**

