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One quiet Sunday morning in Cape Town, Achmat and his brother, Tariq, were at the beach practising with friends for their life-saving exams. In the exam, some people would pretend to be drowning while the others launched a boat to save them. Tariq swam out and floated, while Achmat stayed nearer the shore, both waiting to be rescued.

That was when Achmat saw a huge, dark shape barrelling towards his brother. He wasn't sure what it was until a black fin broke the water. The shape was a great white shark.

Trying to distract it, Achmat madly splashed and shouted. His tactic worked. The shark turned and headed for him instead, letting the lifeboat pull Tariq to safety.

But there was no time for the boat to reach Achmat. The shark reared up, its jaw locked open, showing rows and rows of bloody jagged teeth. Achmat tried to get away. He couldn't move. Looking down, he realized the shark had his entire leg in its mouth.

At the last moment, his brother's hand appeared from above, dragging him aboard the boat. When he woke up in the hospital, Achmat fell into a depression. His leg was gone. He'd always loved sports and swimming, and now he was worried he wouldn't be able to do either.

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Then he got a visit from an athlete called Natalie du Toit. She'd lost her leg when she was seventeen and become a Paralympic swimmer, winning medals at three different Paralympics. She told him he should try it. He did, and he ended up winning in the Paralympics too.

As he walked out for the final race, the audience chanted, 'Shark boy! Shark boy! Shark boy!'

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Imagine yourself in a blank grey room as big as a cathedral. And imagine that the room contains one hundred million sunflower seeds. Now imagine that, instead of sprouting from sunflowers, each of those seeds had to be handmade and painted by an actual person.

What you've just pictured in your mind is one of Ai Weiwei's most famous pieces of art. To him, it's one piece of art made of one hundred million pieces of art, the same way China is one country made of 1.3 billion citizens, and we're one species of seven billion people.

Ai says that the purpose of art is to fight for freedom. In China, where he's from, people often aren't granted the freedoms people in other countries are used to. For example, when Ai started criticizing the government on his blog, it was shut down, and they started spying on him by listening in to his phone calls and following him through the streets.

Ai spoke out through art when an earthquake killed thousands of children in China. To save money, the government had built the schools so badly that they came crashing down as the ground shook, trapping the children inside.

Then, when police beat him up for letting everyone know, he made art from the scans the hospital had to take of his brain.

Ai wasn't allowed to leave his house, his art studio was burned down, and he was even imprisoned for eighty-one days. To show how furious he was at the government, he filmed himself smashing an 800-year-old Chinese pot worth one million dollars!

'I speak out for people around me who are afraid,' said Ai.

Why?

Because we're all tiny sunflower seeds, but we're all part of something bigger too.

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When he was young, Alan was known as Lucille; his parents named him that because they thought he was a girl. But Alan didn't feel comfortable in his own body. He didn't feel comfortable because he felt as if he was trapped in the body of a girl.

'Can I cut my hair and be a boy?' he'd ask his mum.

She wouldn't listen.

When he had to go to school, Alan was forced to wear girls' clothes. He struggled throughout his years there, and, to cope with his problem, he lost himself in his studies, especially science. That hard work earned him a place at university, where he met and fell in love with a woman. But when Alan wore the boys' clothes he preferred, she left him.

Struggling, Alan went to visit a psychiatrist called Dr Gilbert. After a lot of tests and questions, Dr Gilbert diagnosed Alan as being transgender. It meant that the body he was in didn't match how he felt inside. For Dr Gilbert, Alan had been born a boy in a girl's body. Dr Gilbert firmly believed that the opposite could be true, too, where girls were born in the bodies of boys. Alan just wanted to be accepted for the man he was, and to be allowed to study and practise medicine, so Dr Gilbert performed an operation on him. Alan became one of the first ever transgender people to have their body changed to match how they felt inside.

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As well as studying medicine, Alan channelled all of his experiences into novels that became bestsellers. He fell in love with a woman, married her, and they lived together happily for thirtyseven years. During that time, he conducted groundbreaking work on a disease called tuberculosis, and saved a lot of lives.

Society made life difficult for people like Alan, but that never stopped Alan doing everything he could for society.







During the Second World War, countries would speak to each other using codes, to prevent their enemies from understanding their messages. The most important and difficult code was used by the Germans. It was called 'Enigma'.

Britain desperately needed to crack it. If they could, they'd know all of their enemy's secrets, including their next moves. But it was almost impossible. There was only one person they could think of who might be able to help: Alan Turing.

Alan had loved numbers ever since he was a child. He wasn't encouraged at school, but when he got to university, Alan flourished. He was studying pure mathematics, then his unusual way of thinking led him to look for practical ways of using maths. He wanted to change the way people lived in a useful manner. He published a paper that turned out to signal the beginning of modern computers.

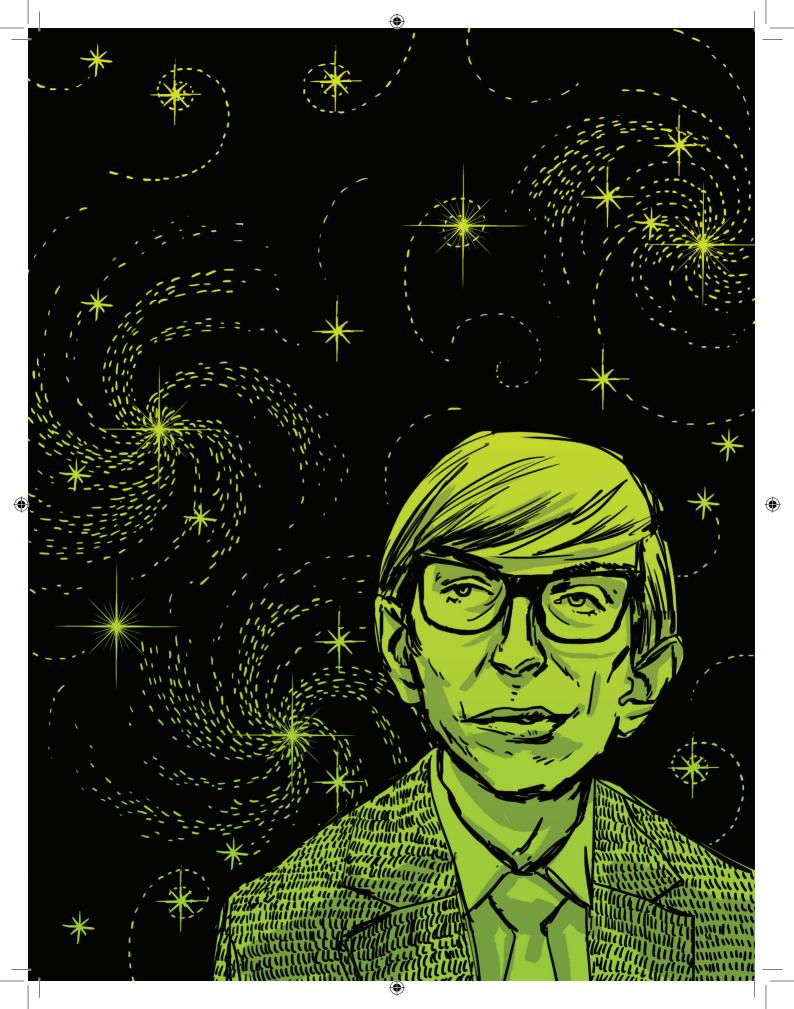
Once they'd brought him in, Alan helped the government break the Enigma code by building a machine called the 'Bombe'. Some people think that, by cracking the code, Alan shortened the war by four years, which would mean he saved millions of lives. In 1952, police heard rumours that he was gay. At the time, being gay was still a crime, and he was arrested.

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Alan was found guilty. Even after what he'd done for the country, he was given the choice of jail or taking drugs that would supposedly change him. He chose the drugs and they made him sick. It hurt so much that he poisoned himself and died.

But he was never forgotten. Sixty-one years later, in 2013, Alan was granted a posthumous royal pardon, and four years after that, in 2017, Turing's Law was passed, pardoning all men who had ever been convicted of anything related to being gay. His great niece, Rachel Barnes, thinks it's tremendous, but wants people to remember that Alan was a lot more than just his sexuality. He was an incredibly intelligent, devoted and forward-thinking person, who helped save the lives of countless others.

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School bored Stephen, so he was thrilled when it finished and he could move to university in Cambridge, to learn about cosmology, the study of everything to do with our universe.

Stephen had a lot of big questions. How did the universe start? And why? What came before it? And what exactly are black holes?

He had a special mind and his work quickly impressed everyone.

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Then, when Stephen was twenty-one, his friends and family started to notice that he would trip over and sometimes lose control of his words. They were worried. They sent him to a doctor, who diagnosed him with a disease called ALS, which meant that Stephen's body was slowly shutting down. The doctors said that he only had two more years to live. Hearing that, Stephen threw himself straight back into his investigation of the cosmos.

More than fifty years later, he's still alive, and he is one of the most important physicists in the world. Even though he's in a wheelchair, can't move and needs a computer to speak, Stephen hasn't stopped searching for a theory of everything: one single idea that could explain the entire universe and everything in it.

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He also found time to write a famous book called *A Brief History of Time*, which, for a lot of people everywhere, was their first glimpse into the grand mysteries of time and space.

As his illness gets worse, Stephen spends time with his children and grandchildren, continues his research, and travels to give lectures on the cosmos.

'However difficult life may seem,' he says, 'there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up.'

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As well as two sisters, Steve grew up surrounded by crocodiles, snakes, lizards, koalas and a whole host of other animals. His parents ran a wildlife park. Luckily, Steve turned out to love animals as deeply as they did. He was given a pet python for his sixth birthday. By the time he was nine, Steve was out catching crocodiles with his dad.

When he grew up, Steve carried on his work trapping crocodiles that had wandered too close to towns, bringing them back to the park, where they could live undisturbed.

He was so keen on them that, instead of flying out to a peaceful beach on his honeymoon, he went with his wife into the wilderness instead. They spent their days searching for animals and filming their adventures. When a TV channel saw their videos, they asked Steve to make an entire series. They called it *The Crocodile Hunter*.

In the show, Steve and his wife introduced the Australian public to all kinds of strange and deadly creatures, from snakes to spiders, and birds to beetles.

'By crikey!' he would shout, staring into the jaws of a giant alligator. 'Look at this beauty!' Every year, he put one million dollars into a charity that bought areas of land in Australia and tried to return them to their natural state. His real passion was conservation. Even though his shows were entertaining, the point of them was to draw people's attention to the animals.

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He didn't want people to think of certain animals as scary or dangerous. He wanted people to know they were beautiful creatures that we have a responsibility to look after, not just for their sake, but for ours too.

Sadly, Steve died in 2006, while he was out shooting a documentary about stingrays.

His father said he wouldn't have had it any other way.

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Unlike the other kids, Stormzy would spend school holidays in the library, reading books. Even though he didn't realize it at the time, those books were teaching him how to use words as powerfully, uniquely and cleverly as possible.

He left school when he was seventeen to start an engineering course, but his heart was always somewhere else.

'Engineering was the safe and sensible choice,' he said. 'But music was what I loved and wanted to do.'

So he dropped out and moved back in with his mum. In her house, he recorded and released an EP called *Dreamers Disease*, without a record label or a manager, and it won a MOBO award. After that, people told him he needed to sign with a label. They said that, if he didn't, he'd never be played on the radio or make it into the charts.

They were wrong.

Stormzy got his friends together and filmed a video in a car park for his song, 'Shut Up'. The song climbed up the charts, sold more than half a million copies and was watched over sixty million times on YouTube.

Stormzy became one of the biggest stars in England. He pushed British rap from the streets and into the charts. Stormzy was different to other rappers. He wasn't talking about cars or money. He was rapping about his mum, how much he loves Adele, and how sometimes he gets so sad he doesn't know what to do.

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More than anything, Stormzy wants to inspire a generation of young black men who feel as though they've been left behind. He calls them his young black kings, and he wants them to know, 'You can do this. You're better than anyone's ever told you that you are. You're just as powerful as me.'

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Taika always loved comic books and superheroes, but he never saw people like himself in them.

His father is Maori, which is the name given to the first people who lived on the islands of New Zealand. The Maori people have their own rich culture, language and beliefs. They practise arts like carving, dancing, singing and facial tattoos, and believe that we are all descended from two original gods, the Sky Father and the Earth Mother.

Despite their culture and history, Taika always felt like they were never properly represented in films and TV. Whenever Maori characters appeared, they had to be tough guys or warriors, and they were never funny, and they never felt real.

'We never embraced the buffoons in our culture,' Taika said. 'Maori nerds or Maori dorks.'

So that's what he set out to do.

Taika wrote and directed a film about a young Maori boy who adores Michael Jackson, misses his dad and spends a lot of time talking to his pet goat. Then he directed another film, *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, about a Maori boy who loves hip hop and ends up on the run from the police, in the forest, with a grumpy old man.

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Both films were hilarious and heartbreaking, and they caught the attention of people all over the world. Because of them, Taika was asked to direct a big Hollywood superhero movie called *Thor*, about the god of thunder and his quest to stop the destruction of civilization. Taika has shown the world another side to Maori people and he's been able to create his own comic-book universe too.

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