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REFUGEES FROM NULONGWE

Donna Pendrick walked unafraid through the refugees at Kitale Border Crossing. She wore a translator around her neck, but it could not make sense of the babble. It picked up words out of context, sentences from different conversations, one greeting from an old male who recognized her. Mostly the translator just hissed. Donna turned it down.

Elizabeth had asked her to come. As Donna expected, Elizabeth stood next to the flimsy bridge on the Kenyan side of the border-despite the danger of bullets-consoling refugees as they crossed over. Donna walked up to her. "If those people over there knew who you were, they'd shoot you down and damn world opinion," Donna said.

Elizabeth wrapped her trunk around Donna's old shoulders, pulled her close, and hugged her hard. "At least matriarch/old-female-elf/blend in with the refugees," she said through her translator. "If those people knew/guessed/had-any-idea who matriarch/old-female-human/you were, they'd shoot/murder/kill you, too."

Donna realized that was probably true. Her negotiations on behalf of the elephants had, in some quarters, won only enemies. Donna could hear shooting not far off in Uganda. It came in unexpected spurts-first from one place, then quiet for a moment, then from a different part of the horizon, then back at the first spot all at once. Elizabeth held her tightly. Donna felt the tension-the fear, even-in her trunk. It made Donna remember how Elizabeth had needed to hang onto her after she had been orphaned so many years before.

This was more, then, than another refugee crisis.

It was a moment before Elizabeth could speak again. Elephant refugees kept streaming across the border, some on the bridge, some fording the stream, all rushing to what they hoped would be safety.

"Sam ran/musth-like anger/charged over there," Elizabeth said finally. "He's back/returned/here now, but hurt/wounded/down."

Donna turned up her translator to make sure she was hearing right. Sam was Elizabeth's youngest son, tending toward old himself now. "Will he be all right?" Donna asked.

"Shot/hole/bullet in his leg, and shot/hole/bullet in his stomach," Elizabeth said. "That's less than council/us/me-his-mother expected. He ran/musth-like anger/charged over there with tusks worth/esteemed/valued more than their weight in gold and hurt/took/received just two bullets. I call him lucky/blessed/prayers-for-protection-maybe-answered."

The tears in Elizabeth's eyes belied her tough words. Elizabeth and Sam had argued about Sam's tusks for years. Technically it should have been no problem for an elephant to wear its tusks. Technically all trade in ivory was banned. But Donna believed, like Elizabeth, that no practical person, human or elephant, should walk around poor human countries wearing a quarter of a million dollars' worth of jewelry. "Will he be all right?" Donna repeated.

"I don't know," Elizabeth said. "He lost/spurting/poured a lot of blood, and he's hurt/bleeding/flowing internally. I've spent every minute with him I could. He's a brave/courageous/upstart fool, I'll grant him that. He freed three juveniles and brought/freed/protected them out, hurt as he was. He found something interesting recorded/ human-speech/words on their translators. That's why I asked/hoped/needed you to come/rush/be-with-me here."

Shooting broke out upriver. Elizabeth took charge of moving all elephant refugees farther back from the border. She had no time to explain about the recordings. One of the nervous human guards told Donna that she could wait with them in the border post. Instead she went looking for Sam.

She found him, his skin a pale gray, lying in one corner of an enormous Red Cross tent. Another elephant male was standing just outside. Transfusion tubes ran from him under the tent flaps to Sam. Sam was laboring to breathe. Donna stroked Sam's trunk and rubbed his gums, something he found reassuring. "You're in fine shape to be heading off on adventures," she told him. "Why didn't you send the younger bulls?"

Sam just snorted. "Did Mother tell/whisper/explain what I found?"

"Recordings," she said. "She didn't have time to explain what was on them."

Sam struggled to breathe. "Turn our translator ranges down/low/close," Sam said.

Donna turned hers down, then leaned over Sam and pulled the translator around his neck so she could work the controls. Translators pick up the subsonic vocalizations of elephants-sounds humans could never

hear-amplify them into audible sound, and translate them into a growing list of human languages. They work in the opposite direction, too, but they have problems taking human language into subsonic range. The subsonics they transmit travel far and wide, like real elephant subsonics, except harsher. They interrupt elephant conversations in a six-mile radius. Sam evidently did not want anyone else hearing what he was going to tell Donna or her response.

"The three juvenile/terrified/young elephants I went after were equipped/using/wearing translators concealed/ screened/hidden behind ears," Sam said. "They had write programs running/operating/recording during and after the murders/slaughter/hacking-apart of their families."

Sam struggled for breath again. "A few loose-lipped humans said words/secrets/facts in front of them that will interest the International Court of Justice in the Hague."

"You have all these refugees with all their stories-you have satellite images of the massacre sites-and you had to go after recordings?"

"I went after the juvenile/terrified/young. I did not know/surprise/guess about the recordings then. But the humans they recorded were members/in/part of the Ugandan government."

Donna sat for a moment, then reached over to touch Sam.

He did not need to explain any further.

The CDs would be proof of genocide.

This had not been long in coming, Donna thought. The Nairobi Accord was barely six years old. It had been just ten years since Joyce Lake had used amplified elephant subsonics to crack the code of elephant language. How foolish we all were, Donna thought, to imagine the killing would stop when we learned how to say hello to the elephants.

Yet the killing *had* stopped for a time. No one had known what to do at first-except empty the zoos, circuses, temples, and farms of all captive elephants. Kenya and Tanzania had enlarged their national parks and created new ones, and money from around the world had paid for that land. Boatload after boatload of once captive elephants had come "home" to Africa, a place most of them had never seen. The Asian countries had been slower to react, so hundreds of Asian elephants from zoos and circuses in Europe and the Americas had ended up in East Africa-temporarily, everyone had thought.

There had been so many unanswered questions. Were the elephants citizens of the human countries? Should they be allowed to vote? Could they own property?

The advent of cheap translators intensified the debates. Tens of thousands of humans traveled to Africa to talk to the elephants and, with translators around their necks, they could do so easily. All that talk made people realize something more had to be done.

And they enacted the Nairobi Accord.

Donna had helped negotiate it, and the beauty of it still moved her. The elephants were not to be citizens of any human country. They were to have their own, Nulongwe, a territory superimposed over the top of the human countries that signed the accord. The elephant nation and the human nations would coexist in the same territory, use the same resources, manage the land together.

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the elephants (Elizabeth the head of their delegation and the first president of Nulongwe) were the initial signatories. Other human countries in Africa were expected to join later. None did. South Asia was expected to create a similar accord, but it hadn't.

Now the accord was unraveling. Many humans believed that God had created the Earth for people. Elephants had come along too late to claim any of it as their own. Seeing elephants gain water rights, park fees, and valuable agricultural land-when people needed those same resources-only increased their anger. Some people doubted that elephants were sentient at all and thought the whole thing a vast joke or, worse, a conspiracy of Western environmental groups.

Though Donna never said this to Elizabeth, she was afraid there were too few people like her to stop humans from killing elephants. Humans had always killed each other, after all, and they had often been able to say hello before committing murder. Why should anyone have expected humanity to treat elephants differently?

Later in the day, Donna found Elizabeth with the three juveniles Sam had rescued. The juveniles, two females and a little male, were in bad shape. They'd seen their families butchered in front of them. They themselves had been destined for a zoo in Kampala. But unlike Elizabeth in a similar circumstance, they wanted nothing to do with Donna.

"Please hold/take/protect these," Elizabeth said. She carried a small package wrapped in brown paper in her trunk, and held it out to Donna. It was the CDs. "We/council/I have uploaded the information/data/words on these CDs," Elizabeth said. "But such information/data/bytes might not be admissible/ accepted/allowed in court. It could be manufactured/ made-up/lies. We/council/Nulongwe need these originals."

Donna held the package for a moment, then, for want of a better place, tucked it into her sweater pocket.

"Where do you want me to take them?" she asked.

"The Dutch ambassador has agreed/decided/offered to overnight them to the Hague," Elizabeth said. "Will you carry/protect/take them to the embassy?"

Donna agreed.

"I have one more favor/request/need," Elizabeth said. "Will you escort/protect/take these juveniles to your center/home/park in Nairobi? They will be called/ needed/brought as witnesses in the Hague. We/council/I feel they will be guarded/protected/safer with you for now."

Donna was taken aback. It had been years since her Center for Orphaned Animals in Nairobi National Park had cared for elephant orphans. The government of Nulongwe had assumed that responsibility, of course. But there was nothing else to do. "Certainly," Donna said, and she sat down.

Elizabeth turned back to the juveniles. She put her trunk around each one in turn, trying to calm them. Donna listened to her words of comfort through the translator. But the juveniles' would have none of it. Their eyes kept watering.

Donna watched them and waited. Seeing the juveniles cry made Donna remember the day she had first been able to talk to young elephants in her care. It had been years after she had successfully reintroduced Elizabeth into the wild, but Donna still had elephant orphans at her center-eleven of them, all hard work, and a lame rhinoceros two-year-old into the mix, and ten Thompson's gazelles, and three giraffes, and on and on.

It was just after Joyce Lake had cracked the code of elephant language and the news had flashed around the world. Of course she and Joyce had talked and e-mailed each other about it, and one afternoon Joyce had found time to drive to Donna's compound with her Land Rover full of equipment, all flushed and excited and ready for Donna to talk to eleven of her babies.

The press had discovered what they were doing, and nearly a hundred reporters had crowded into the park with their cameras, microphones, and laptops. Joyce had already held eight press conferences in Tsavo National Park, allowing reporters from around the world to interview the elephants there. Elizabeth, by this time matriarch over the herds in that park, was becoming quite a celebrity-she'd proved herself to be loquacious, intelligent, even funny. Her photograph and words had appeared in newspapers, magazines, and netzines all over the world. But this day was different. People knew about Donna's work with orphaned animals, and this would be the first time she would be able to talk to any of them-and them to her. It was a story with a different kind of appeal. There was no point, Donna realized, in trying to keep the reporters away, in trying to keep them out, in trying to keep this moment a private one.

It was in the heat of an early spring afternoon. A slight breeze blew from the east. Joyce arranged her equipment on tables near the verandah, and they set a chair in the shade of the lilacs for Donna, but she could not sit in it. She kept walking around, looking at the reporters, looking at the tables full of equipment, looking down the lane for her elephants.

She heard them before she saw them, and then there they were, with the boys trained to watch over them. They were all nervous, of course. The crowd made them nervous. The elephants knew something was up. You can't imagine what's going to happen, Donna had thought to herself, you can't imagine it. There had been no way to prepare them. They stopped in a bunch down by the gate, maybe eight car lengths from the reporters and Donna. All the reporters grew quiet, listening for whatever they would say. The day was suddenly still. Even the breeze calmed for a time.

Donna had bought a bunch of bananas at the market the day before, and they were still just a little green the way elephants like them. She had picked them off the stem and arranged them in her white mixing bowl. Joyce pinned a microphone to Donna's lapel for Donna to talk into, and after a moment had signaled that the equipment was turned on, properly adjusted, ready. It was their time now. Donna had thought of so many wonderful things to say at first, but looking at her elephants she could not say one of them. None of them fit the moment. She took a breath and held out the bowlful of bananas. "Hello, my dears," she'd said simply. "Hello. Here are some bananas for you."

She'd thought later it was such a stupid thing to say, but how did you start after so long without talking? What could you say, after all? The equipment had translated her words quickly, though none of the humans could hear it-but the elephants heard. They heard and jumped back. They bumped into each other. They turned around and then turned back. "Come here," Donna had said. "We can talk now. We've learned how to talk to you. Come say something to me."

But they would not come. They just stood there, far off-shocked, Donna knew. She started toward them.

"Don't go too far," Joyce had said. "The equipment won't pick up your words."

So Donna had stopped walking. She'd put down the bowl of bananas in the grass. She'd smoothed out the front of her dress. She'd looked up at the elephants again. "We've tried to love you," she'd said, and then she paused before going on. "I love you. I'm so sorry for everything you could not understand here, for everything we could not explain to you."

They walked to her, then, not in a rush but all together. They circled her slowly and they trampled the bananas and they held onto her with their trunks. Tears had streamed down their faces. "You talk like our

mothers talked," one of them had said, Donna never knew which one, and that sentence had made headlines from Cape Town to Tokyo. Donna had just held onto them. None of them could say much, then. Somehow that hadn't surprised anyone.

Later, they talked.

And that night, after the reporters had left, after the boys had all had a chance to talk to their charges, after Joyce had packed her equipment and left them in a temporary silence again, Donna had gone alone into her quiet house. She kept photos of her husband on a bureau in the hallway, and she stopped there. She picked one up, one of the young ones. He'd been just a ranger in the park system then. No one had guessed that he'd go on to become superintendent of the entire colonial park system in British East Africa. He'd have loved this day, she knew. "You've missed so much, Frank," she whispered. He'd been dead fifty years. The longevity medicines were giving her a much longer life than he'd been able to have. She looked up into the mirror and tried to imagine herself pretty like she'd been back then: hair still blonde, not grey; thin and able to fit decently into jeans, not heavy and fit only for dresses; young, like Frank in the photo. How he'd fussed about her sentimentality. "You can't care for all the little animal orphans," he'd said. No one had guessed what kind of life's work that would lead to, either. She'd dusted off the photo with her sleeve and put it back. I wish you had been here today, Frank, she had thought.

Elizabeth touched Donna's shoulder with her trunk. Donna reached up and stroked Elizabeth's leg. It seemed as if, the older Donna got, the more memory seemed to take over her life. She found that now she could sit for hours doing nothing but remember times in the past. Elizabeth, more than any of her human friends, never seemed to mind. She understood. She never forced her to rush back to the present. Elephants, after all, had had ages of experience managing the accurate memories of long lives.

"The juveniles will talk/speak/trust you now," Elizabeth said, gently.

"What did you tell them?"

"How you cared/loved/fed me when I was alone like them. How you've kept nature/Nulongwe/a park in the center/middle/heart of the human capital. How they will be safe/protected/warm with you there."

Safe, Donna thought. She wished she could completely believe that. The city of Nairobi now surrounded tiny Nairobi National Park. It was an island of nature circled by a sea of humanity. Few things were truly safe there, and nothing was isolated. By day you could hear traffic on the highways. At all hours you could hear jets flying in for landings at Nairobi International. At night, if you listened hard enough, you could hear the cacophony of music from all the open windows of all the highrise apartment complexes built mile after mile along the park boundaries. But Elizabeth was right. Nairobi was where they should go. The Dutch embassy would help them with the CDs, and many nations would help her protect the young elephants.

Donna had gotten stiff sitting. Elizabeth wrapped her trunk around Donna's middle and helped her up. Donna stood for a moment looking at the juveniles, and they looked at her. She walked over to them, stiffly, and they let her touch them. She reached down and hugged them and cried with them, not so much for what they were going through as for her memories of all the elephants like them she had cared for. There was nothing else to do then. Not even words to speak.

The Kenyan military offered guards and a driver, and Donna accepted the offer. If the Ugandans had any idea what Sam had brought out, they'd be looking for it. Donna reached into her sweater pocket and touched the wrapped CDs. She was glad for an armed guard. Besides, she was too tired to drive herself back to Nairobi. It was late evening, and it had been a long day.

Sam had been stabilized enough for transport to Nulongwe National Hospital in Nairobi, and they needed to get him there fast. He was bleeding internally and would soon need another transfusion. Donna watched from the back seat of her Land Rover while they loaded Sam onto a truck. The juveniles were traveling in the same truck since being near Sam reassured them. Donna would follow along behind.

While they finished securing Sam, Donna took out her laptop, clicked open a geosat connection, and went online. Her fingers were stiff. While the laptop made the connection, she rubbed her fingers, trying to limber them up so that she could type. The new drugs helped control the arthritis, but there was still no cure. It was wet along that part of the border, and in the evening chill the damp made her hands ache. When she could type, she sent an e-mail to a friend at the Dutch embassy asking him to meet her when they arrived at the hospital.

The driver and guard climbed onto the front seat. The driver said hello, then looked away. The guard was all business, all watchfulness, rifle at the ready.

The sun had set when they started out. They planned to drive through the night and arrive in Nairobi late morning. The few miles of paved road outside Kitale soon ended. It was dirt road after that for sixty miles, Donna knew, but the road was graded and well-maintained. They'd soon connect with the National Highway System.

She started typing again. She sent a note to her twenty-six-year-old great-granddaughter who was flying

down from London in three weeks to spend a month. She'd have no idea of the work that lay ahead! She sent e-mail to her staff advising them of the juvenile elephants. They had so many preparations to make, chief among them the laying up of vast stores of sunscreen. Those young elephant hides hadn't toughened yet, and they no longer had older relatives to stand under for shade.

The road grew rougher. Donna had to stop typing and hang onto her laptop. The red tail-lights of the truck with Sam and the juveniles bounced along ahead of her. The guard glanced back, then looked straight ahead again. The rough road jarred them all back and forth.

She could not type until the road grew smooth again, so she sat there with her thoughts. She thought about Elizabeth. Elizabeth had witnessed the murders of her mother and grandmother and older brothers, and she had stood off in a thicket and watched as the poachers had chainsawed the ivory out of her family's faces. Park rangers had found Elizabeth and brought her to Donna because they had not known what else to do. Donna hadn't known what to do with an elephant baby either, except try and keep trying-one look at her little, terrified, vulnerable self in the back of the ranger's truck had been all it had taken to change both their lives: Donna had loved Elizabeth, and she had done everything she could to help her-some of it wrong. Manuals on the care and feeding of elephant babies hadn't existed in those days. But they'd made it. That had been when Frank had managed the park system, and those had been good days, Donna thought, good days. She and Frank had imagined that if they just worked hard enough they could do so many things to make the world a better place, that they could change so many things that needed to be changed. It had all seemed, if not easy, at least possible.

Elizabeth had needed to hang onto Donna. People had laughed to see Donna try to go about her chores with Elizabeth, trunk wrapped around an arm, right beside her. They would not have laughed had they been the ones to get up in the night to comfort Elizabeth when she woke screaming from her nightmares. Elizabeth had needed physical touch, even if the touch had come from someone of another species: even if the touch had come from someone of the same species that had killed her family.

The juveniles would be like Elizabeth, Donna knew-tough work.

But at least they'd be able to talk to each other. She and Elizabeth had not, not until they had both become old ladies. Donna wished she could have talked to all the orphaned animals she had helped over the years, not just the elephants.

The Land Rover jarred her back and forth again. The road from Kitale to the highway had not been this rough when she'd driven it in the morning-or she had been better at avoiding the potholes. Donna looked out the window. The moon had not risen, and it was dark. She realized she could not really be sure what direction they were traveling. The road jarred her again.

Something was not right.

She clicked open the ge positioning program on her laptop, and found their position.

They were not on the main road. They were not heading east. They were on a road leading north out of Kitale. She looked up at the men sitting in front of her, but said nothing. She clicked on the road to find out where it led.

The program magnified the map of Kitale District. The road they were on forked two miles ahead. One fork led directly west to a little-used crossing into Mt. Elgon National Park in Uganda/Nulongwe, site of the recent massacres. The other led northwest six miles to another crossing into Uganda.

Donna suddenly felt cold and alone and old. At first, she did not know what to do. Obviously the drivers and the guards were not Kenyans-Ugandans had somehow replaced them-unless Kenyans were involved in this, too, and genocide was shortly to begin in Kenya.

She started typing e-mail messages. She expected the guard to make her stop any minute, so she typed faster and faster-damn the spelling. She realized the guard probably hadn't stopped her yet because he hadn't wanted to alarm her until he absolutely had to. She could not let him know that she knew what was happening-if he realized that, he would take away her laptop. Donna forced herself to remain calm. She sent e-mail to Elizabeth and everyone else she could think of asking for help, but she did not know who among the humans she could trust, really, if Kenya were gearing up for mass murder. She sent the messages anyway. People would at least know what had happened to her and Sam and the juveniles.

Even as she sent the e-mail, however, Donna knew that help could not reach them before they crossed the border. Only murder moved quickly in this part of the world. She and Sam, the juveniles-and the CDs-would not survive half an hour in Uganda.

Then she had an idea. She turned up her translator and switched it to Transmit Only mode. "Do you mind if I sing?" she asked the men in the front seat. "I think singing makes time on the road pass more quickly, don't you?"

The guard scowled at her. The driver looked at her in the rear-view mirror, grinning. She started singing.

In French. Her translator was programmed to translate what she said in English, Swahili, or French. French was the only language of the three she thought the two people in the Land Rover with her might not understand. They would not know what her translator was broadcasting far and wide in subsonics.

She set their current position and the story of what had happened to any jaunty tune that came to mind. She asked for help in "Frère Jacques" and repeated their coordinates in "La Marseillaise."

She could only hope there were enough elephants in the area to hear her broadcasts and rush to block the two forks of the road they were on.

And save the CDs, above all.

The translator vibrated against her chest. She felt the subsonics it was broadcasting.

She kept watching out the windows for the enormous forms she hoped to see moving there in the darkness.

The truck and the Land Rover took the first fork in the road. Donna sang about that. They were maybe one mile now from the border. The guard scowled at her more and more. She just smiled and kept singing. She imagined he must think her a foolish old woman to sing like this in her thin, reedy voice-oblivious, apparently, to her own kidnapping.

Suddenly the Land Rover braked, and she was slammed into the back of the front seat. Her laptop went tumbling onto the floor. Both the driver and the guard swore in Luganda, which answered one question: these men weren't Kenyans.

"What happened?" she asked in English, not wanting to let them know she understood their cursing.

Neither answered. The driver and the guard both got out of the Land Rover. Donna opened her door and got out, too. The truck ahead of them had skidded to an abrupt halt two feet short of an enormous acacia tree felled across the road.

"Stay in! Stay in!" the guard shouted at her. "You don't know what could be out here."

"I have to check on Sam and the juveniles," Donna said. She started toward the truck. The guard cocked his rifle, and Donna stopped. She wondered if he were going to shoot her there, while they were still inside Kenya, but he and the other guard set out patrolling the oval perimeters of light cast by the headlights of both vehicles. The drivers stood talking in low voices by the open driver's-side door of the truck. One of them lit a cigarette.

Donna started walking forward again. Her footsteps sounded loud on the gravel road. She could not tell if the tree had been recently pushed over or if it had lain across the road for a long time, but the leaves looked green in the headlights. She stepped onto the fender, climbed up the guardrail, and looked in on Sam and the juveniles.

The sudden stop had shoved Sam against the cab of the truck. The juveniles were huddled around him, terrified. When they saw her, they rushed to one side and banged the guardrail with their feet, trying to get out and away.

She'd panicked them with her subsonic broadcasts. She hadn't thought far enough ahead to realize that they and Sam would hear.

She wanted to get the juveniles out of that truck.

She climbed down in with them. "I'm going to open the back," she whispered in French. "When I do, jump out and run in different directions. Don't stay together. But first take these."

She looked around for the guards and the drivers, and could not see them. She crouched down in shadow, took the CD package out of her pocket, and tore it open. Putting a CD in each of the juveniles' translators was dangerous, but this might be their only chance of saving them. They certainly would not survive in her sweater pocket or hidden somewhere in the truck.

Sam grunted his approval of her plan. "Good/ inventive/necessary action," he rumbled. "Take/ accept/receive them quickly," he told the juveniles. "Outside, find other elephants. You will look/blend/seem like other juvenile/adolescent/young elephants to humans. Be brave/strong/fast."

One by one, they came up to Donna. She inserted the CDs into the drives in the sides of their translators, and listened to the gentle whirs as the translators read and accepted them. She locked each drive shut. "Good luck," she whispered to the juveniles after she'd finished the last one. She stood up slowly and looked around. One of the guards was walking toward them, his body and rifle a silhouette in the headlights. "Get back inside the Land Rover," he told Donna. "We're scouting routes through the brush to drive around this tree. We'll be moving soon."

"I must see to Sam's bandages," Donna lied.

The guard shrugged and walked off. Donna watched him go, then she started for the back of the truck. She had to open it, and the juveniles had to run for it now. After that, she'd sit down with Sam. He was too sick, and she was too old to run.

But before she could open the back of the truck, they heard an enormous cracking-and screams. Another acacia slammed down onto the road ahead of them. From the screams, and the moans that followed, she guessed it had pinned one of the guards. The other guard shot off into the darkness.

There was more crashing, from all sides now. Dark forms taller than the truck rushed past them. There were three shots, and a few screams. Something was bashed against the hood of the truck again and again.

Blood spattered across them all.

It was over quickly. Suddenly trunk after trunk lifted in toward them, smelling them, asking how they were.

Donna cried with relief. "We've got to get out of here," she told them, wiping her eyes once. "Ugandan troops aren't far away. They surely heard the shooting."

Donna climbed onto the bloodied driver's seat and managed to back up the truck, then drive it around the Land Rover and onto the road again. She set out for Kitale. Maybe thirty elephants-she could not count them all-ran along beside them, a mighty escort.

Donna was never so glad to see the lights of any city as she was to see the lights of Kitale coming back into view.

Elephants by the hundreds rushed out to meet them, Elizabeth in the front.

Again she hugged Donna tightly. Again Donna hugged her back.

But Sam was not doing well. Another bull elephant volunteered to give blood, and Red Cross nurses began transfusing Sam right there in the truck.

"Call the Americans or the British," Donna said. "Ask them to come for us."

Both came, and the Danes with them. The Americans sent a military transport helicopter from the U.S.S. *Delaware*, in port in Mombassa. They loaded Sam and seven other critically injured elephants inside and flew off. Donna and the CDs flew away inside a British embassy helicopter. The juveniles would come later in a truck from the Isak Dinesen Foundation. Donna would be waiting for them.

As they flew along, Donna's spirits lifted. They weren't flying just over Kenya, not yet anyway. They were flying over Kenya *and* Nulongwe. If the CDs and testimony and satellite photos led to trials and intervention, Nulongwe might yet persist. If humanity moved its great armies to protect the elephants, who could harm them?

It might happen, Donna thought. It might yet happen.

The sky brightened with the dawn. The greening plains below them emerged out of darkness. She watched Kenya/Nulongwe pass by below her. The names of those countries were so beautiful, she thought, like the land. Both countries had mottoes. Some thought it quaint for a country to have a national motto, but Donna liked them: in Kenya, *harambee*, "pulling together"; in Nulongwe, *darumbyla*, "looking forward."

Far off, Donna saw sunlight sparkling on waters. The Indian Ocean was catching first light. Donna reached into her pocket and held onto the CDs. She realized she was a part of humanity pulling together with the elephants.

She dared look forward with hope.

Author's Note

The character of Donna Pendrick is based on Daphne Sheldrick, director of the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Orphanage in Nairobi National Park, Kenya. Sheldrick has dedicated much of her life to saving orphaned animals of all species, but especially elephant orphans. Her compassionate work is celebrated around the world. To learn more about her work and the orphanage, go to www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org. The site contains pictures and information about the elephant orphans Sheldrick is currently raising, daily journal entries by their keepers, updates on elephants reintroduced into the wild, and information on East African conservation efforts.