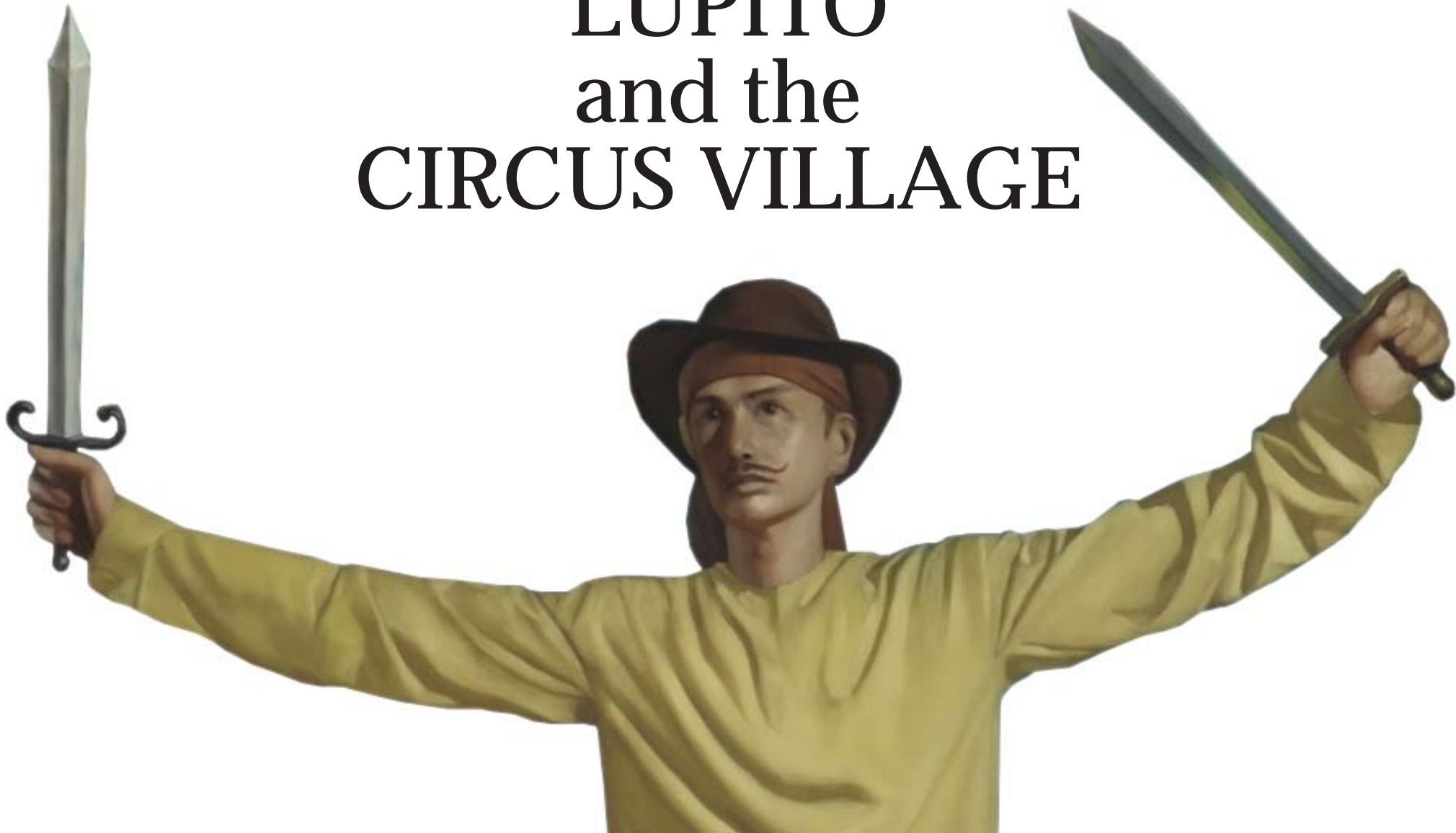


LUPITO
and the
CIRCUS VILLAGE



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LUPITO AND THE CIRCUS VILLAGE is available at www.canvasdownstream.com.

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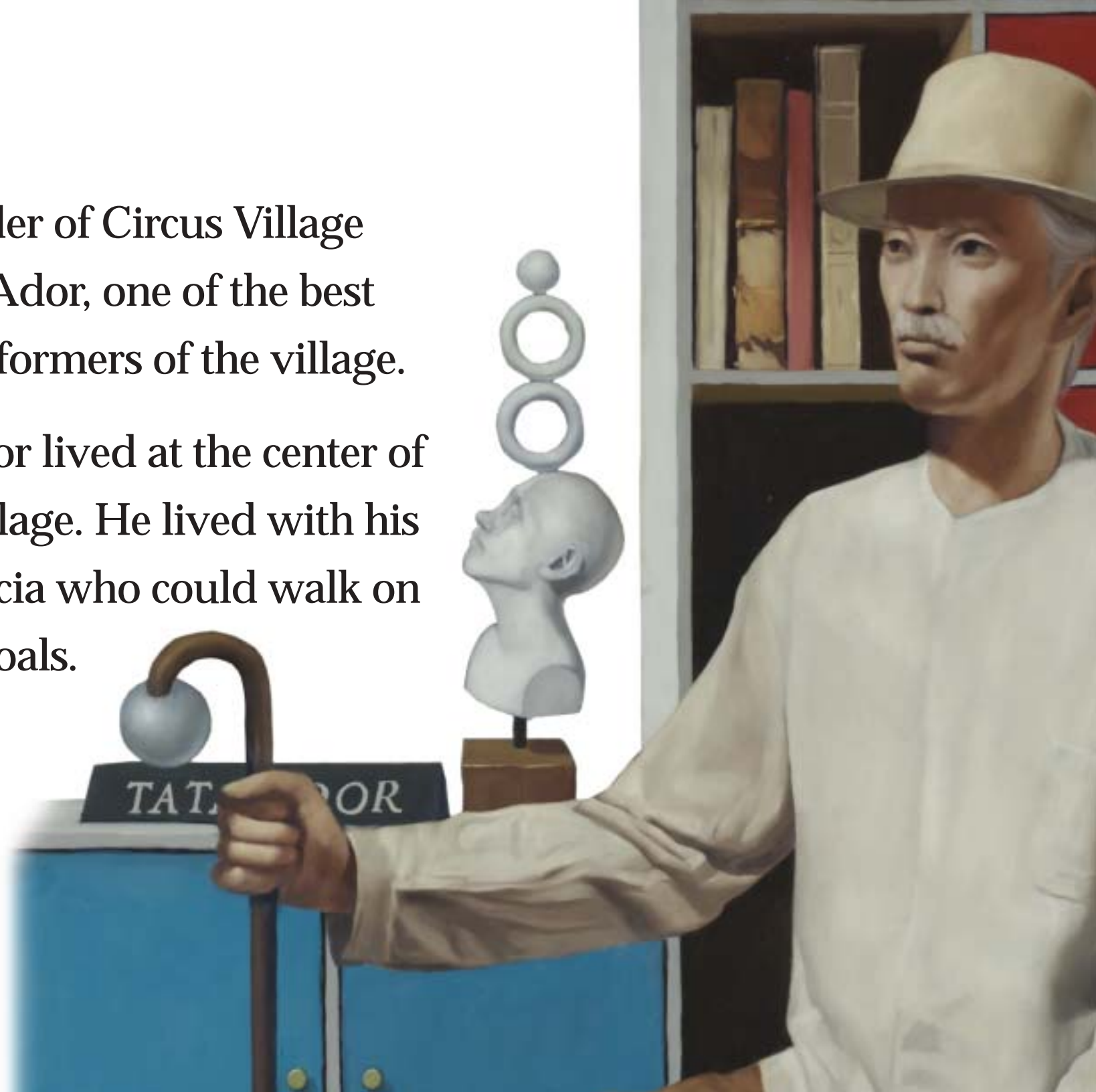
A long time ago, there was a village where everyone had an extraordinary talent. Some sang well. Others danced gracefully.

But it was the circus performers who were most widely acclaimed. Some of them could walk across thin wires. Others could lie on a bed of nails. And then there were those who ate fire, or swords and other metallic objects.



The leader of Circus Village was Tata Ador, one of the best circus performers of the village.

Tata Ador lived at the center of Circus Village. He lived with his wife, Marcia who could walk on burning coals.





They had a daughter, Sela, who could move objects with her mind.

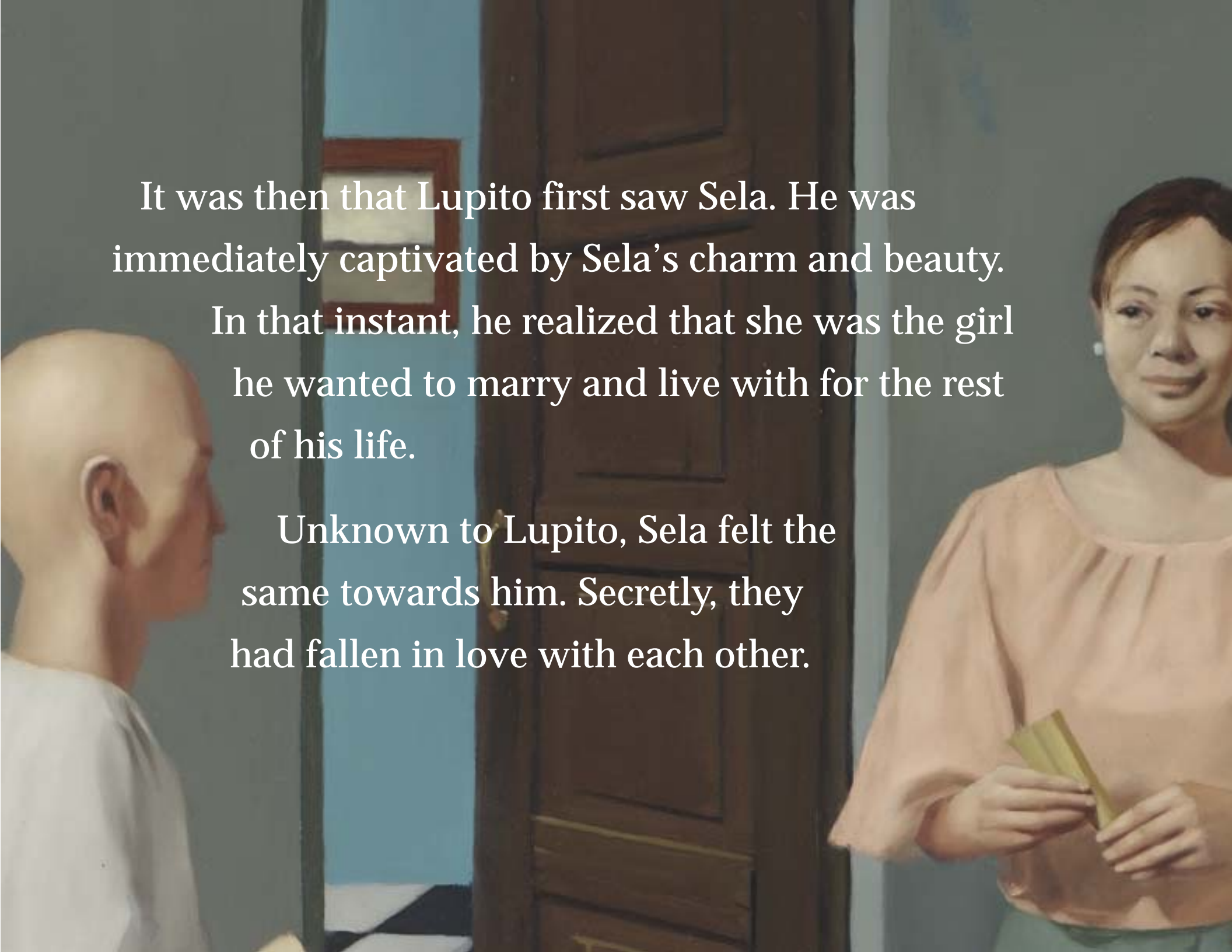
Sela was also very beautiful. Many of the men in the village courted Sela, but they all failed to win her heart.

One day, a traveling merchant came to Circus Village. His name was Lupito and he carried a big box full of things to sell. He carried household cleaning items like brooms, rags and cleaning cloths. He was also selling kitchenware like metallic and wooden spoons, cutlery, clay pots and pans. He also brought clothes, hats, handkerchiefs and canes.

His goods sold briskly, and before Lupito realized it, nighttime had arrived.


And so, Tata Ador invited Lupito to spend the night in their home.



A man with a shaved head, wearing a white shirt, is shown in profile on the left. A woman with dark hair, wearing a peach-colored top, is on the right, holding a small green object. They are in a room with a dark wooden door in the center and a framed picture on the wall to the left.

It was then that Lupito first saw Sela. He was immediately captivated by Sela's charm and beauty. In that instant, he realized that she was the girl he wanted to marry and live with for the rest of his life.

Unknown to Lupito, Sela felt the same towards him. Secretly, they had fallen in love with each other.



The next morning, Lupito spoke with Tata Ador. “I love your daughter, and I am asking for your permission to court her,” Lupito revealed.

Tata Ador called his daughter. “Sela, Lupito wants to court you. I leave it to you to decide if he may do so,” Tata Ador said.

Sela smiled sweetly at Lupito. This was the first time that she had smiled at any of her suitors, and Tata Ador took this to mean her consent.






Tata Ador faced Lupito. “Well, young man, come back here tomorrow before noon. Aside from observing the courtship customs of serving our family for five days, you will face a series of challenges.”

The next day shortly before daybreak, Lupito was already at the house of Sela. He was received warmly by her family and served a breakfast of eggs, bread, and hot chocolate. And, when the sun was up, Lupito began serving Sela’s family.

He chopped firewood. He fetched water from the well for household use, and from a nearby spring for drinking. Lupito fed the chickens, bathed the horses, and milked the cows. He helped Tata Ador tend his fields. He even fixed the roof which had been damaged by a recent typhoon.



An illustration of a man's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. He is wearing a traditional, light-colored, conical hat with a dark band. The background is white.

Lupito did all these for three consecutive days. But, by tradition, he was not allowed to speak with Sela during this period of courtship. All they could do was to smile at each other.

An illustration of a woman's head and shoulders in profile, facing left. She has dark hair pulled back and is wearing a light-colored top. The background is a solid dark red color. Above her head, the numbers '03' are displayed in a stylized, dark font on a light background.

03

The fourth day came. In addition to serving Sela's family, Lupito now had to prove that he was worthy of the hand of the most beloved maiden in Circus Village. He had to prove his talent as a circus performer.

All activities ground to a halt in the village, as everyone came to watch the challenges. His first challenge was to cross a twenty-foot tightrope tied to two acacia trees. Stretching his arms, he began to make his way across, one step at a time.





A few minutes passed, and Lupito reached the other end of the tightrope. A thunderous applause rose from the people who were all amazed to learn that he was not a circus performer.

Lupito was quite surprised too, at what he had done. He searched for Sela in the crowd and when their eyes met, the two exchanged smiles.



Lupito rested briefly before moving to the next tasks. He swung acrobatically on rope that was hung from several trees. He walked on burning coals. He captured a wild horse. He wrestled with the strongest men in the village. He swept all the matches.

The people cheered.

“Magnificent, Lupito! You deserve to be part of Circus Village!”





But Tata Ador was doubtful.
He called for quiet and spoke.

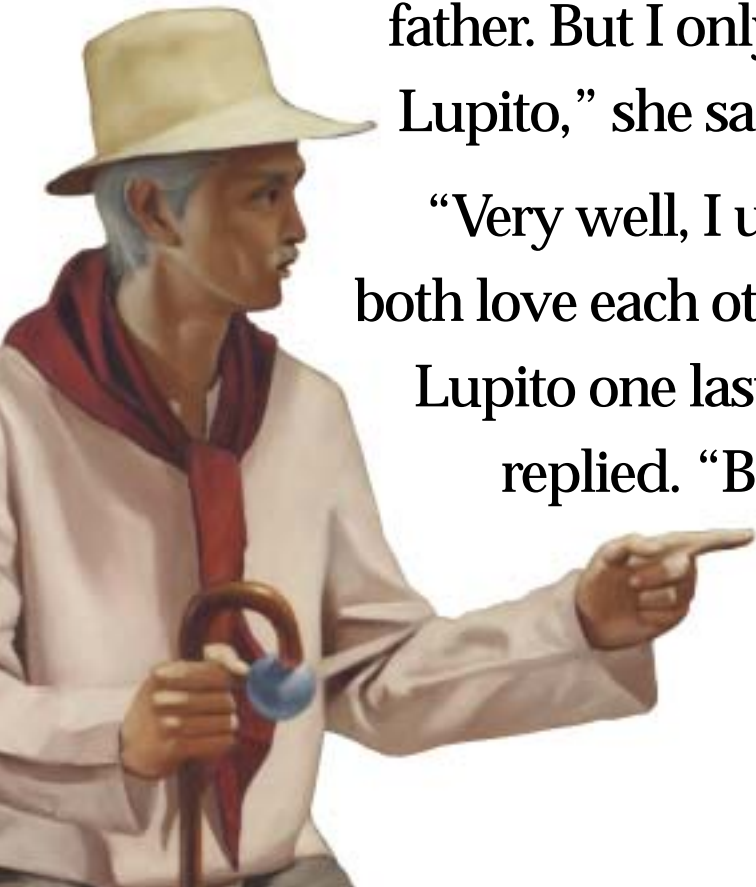
“Excellent, Lupito. You’ve
successfully met the challenges
so far. But it is getting dark,
and we could all use a rest. We
shall have to continue the
challenges tomorrow.”



After dinner, Tata Ador called for Sela outside their house. “Sela, I know you have been using your powers to help Lupito with his challenges.”

Sela bowed her head in shame. “Forgive me, father. But I only did it because I love Lupito,” she said.

“Very well, I understand that you both love each other so I will give Lupito one last chance,” Tata Ador replied. “But promise me that you will not help him again in any way.”





The next day, Marcia, Tata Ador's wife, made an important announcement.

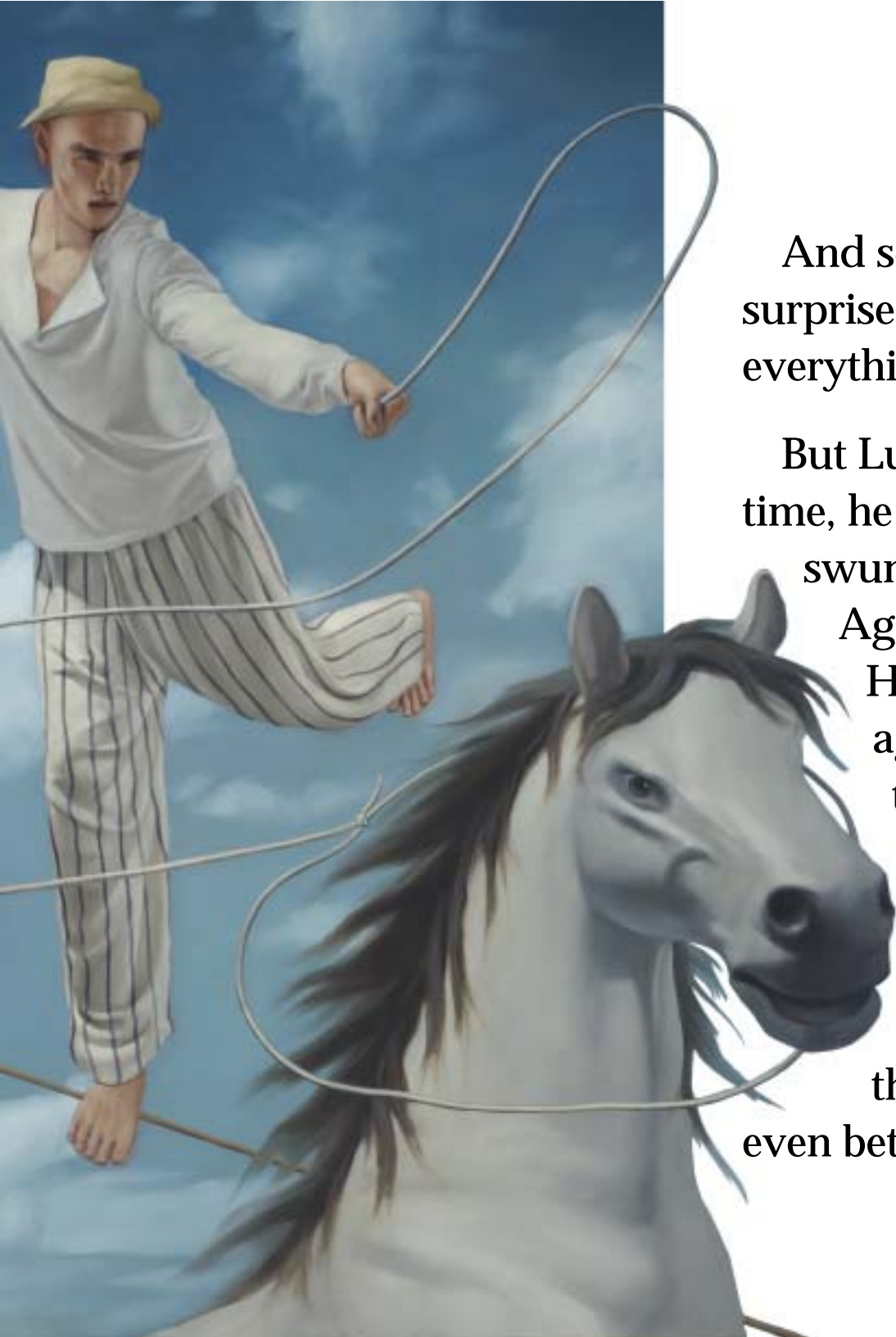
“Fellow villagers, I regret to tell you all that my husband, your Tata Ador is ill. For this reason, we shall postpone Lupito's tests for ten days. Lupito has gone back to his own village. We shall continue with the challenges when he returns.”

Ten days later, Lupito arrived astride on a magnificent horse.

The villagers noticed that there was something markedly different about Lupito. He seemed more courageous, more determined, and much more confident.

“I am ready,” Lupito said.





And so the tests began. Everyone was surprised to learn that Lupito had to do everything all over again.

But Lupito did not waver. For the second time, he crossed a tightrope. Again, he swung from ropes hanging from trees. Again, he walked on red hot coals. He captured a wild horse. And yet again, he wrestled with the men of the village.

And as before, Lupito passed these challenges.

Lupito, it turned out, had used the past ten days to train and become even better at becoming a circus performer.

Tata Ador faced the people and announced, “And now, Lupito must face the ultimate challenge – juggling!”

Lupito moved to the center. He was handed a small ball and he began to repeatedly throw it in the air. Then Tata Ador threw a folded newspaper that Lupito caught as he now began to juggle the two objects in his hands.

A walking stick came next. And this was still followed by other objects: a coconut, a fan, a plate, a wooden spoon, a pineapple, a piggy bank, and many others.

Lupito caught and juggled all of these, but his eyes betrayed his fatigue. His arms also felt numb.





Tata Ador brought out his favorite chair. The chair was the symbol of his leadership and only Tata Ador had the strength to juggle this chair.

Tata Ador threw the chair at Lupito.



Lupito caught the chair and despite its heaviness, he was able to juggle it along with the other things.

The villagers started counting. At the count of ten, five men rushed to Lupito to catch the chair. A few others hurried to help the exhausted Lupito. The challenge was finally over. Lupito had won. And he had won the right to wed Sela.



Following tradition, Lupito and Sela were married that very same night. Circus Village happily celebrated their wedding as on that night too, Lupito was welcomed as a true circus performer.





About ROWALD ALMAZAR

Rowald Almazar was born in Manila and grew up in Novaliches. He earned his degree in Accounting from the National College of Business and Arts, and currently works for a major Philippine newspaper.

He learned to read under the tutelage of his mother using Funny Komiks. From there he found a love for stories, as evidenced by the piles of novels, magazines, comic books and DVDs in their home. His fondness for reading encouraged him to try writing on his own.

Si Lupito at ang Barrio Sirkerero is his first book.

About JOSÉ SANTOS III

José Santos III took formal art studies at the University of the Philippines where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree. He eventually became a faculty member of the UP College of Fine Arts and taught for seven years. In 2000, he was bestowed the Thirteen Artists award by the Cultural Center of the Philippines. He has had numerous exhibits both here and abroad.

Santos comes from a family of visual artists, musicians and ballet dancers. He currently resides in Pasig where he lives with his artist-wife Pamela Yan-Santos and son Juno Santos.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each year, when we conduct our annual Romeo Forbes Children's Storywriting Competition, we in CANVAS are inevitably filled with as much apprehension as anticipation, because we know that our success depends on people and circumstances over whom we have very little control.

We have no idea, for instance, what stories will be submitted. The path that writers' thoughts follow from the contest piece (shown below) can and inevitably veers in all sorts of directions – from the whimsical to the romantic to the humorous to the sentimental. Will we find the story that is not only extremely well written, but also tickles the imagination? Will the story fit the artist's style, or can the artist adjust and step out of his or her comfort zone?

Then too, the journey from words and artwork to actual publication is peppered with tasks and deadlines and other details – some critical, some mundane – but many of which are beyond our own influence and capability to address.

This project, in other words, demands that CANVAS take many leaps of faith – in our partners and supporters, in our selected artist, and in the Filipino writing community – precisely because we cannot do it on our own.

Yet, we continue to leap willingly because each year – despite the challenges and apprehensions – we have never been disappointed. This year has been no exception.

Therefore, we would again like to thank our institutional partners and supporters: The Panta Rhea Foundation, Northlight Studios, UST Publishing House and Artery Manila. We are also obliged to individual friends and supporters: Hans Schoepflin, Diana Cohn, Mike Cheung, Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos, Fernando Gonzalez, Lito Zulueta, Jack Wigley, Wendell Capili, Roselle and Yuri Allado, Ben Chan, Jeff Cheng, Ken Chua, Yorkie Gomez, Wilmer Hontiveros, Jerome Jimenez, Anson Lee, Bong Versoza, Christopher Yatco, Delan Robillos, Daniel Tayona and Ninoy Leyran.

And finally of course, we must recognize Rowald Almazar and Jose Santos III, whose imagination and creative writing, and signature artworks have brought *Si Lupito at ang Barrio Sirkerero* to life. Together, their works comprise the heart and soul of this book.

They, together with all our other partners and supporters, make it possible for us to continue what is now a proud annual tradition – a unique children's book that readers will enjoy and that can serve as a testament to the high level of literary and artistic talent that continues to flourish among Filipinos today.

GIGO ALAMPAY
Executive Director, CANVAS
July 8, 2008

