

Voyagers of the circle



VOYAGERS OF THE CIRCLE

The story begins here and now. A day so similar to all the others that we have lost track of time.

Suddenly the doorbell rings, but we continue as we were, because we know that they cannot be our friends, or our grandparents at the door. And because overall, nothing ever happens lately.

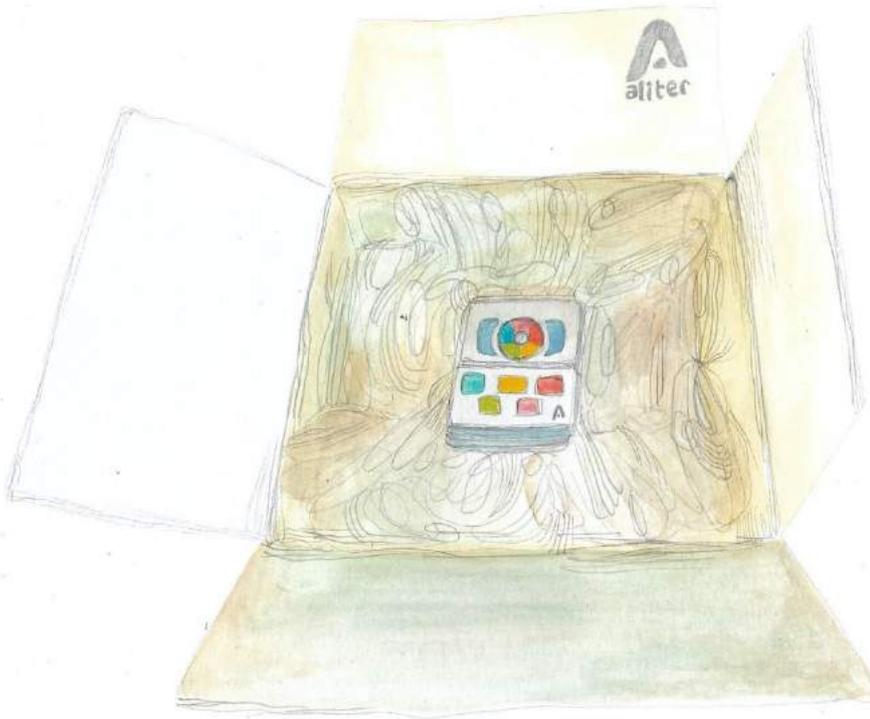


But this time something does happen! We are excited to discover that a box has arrived from the Netherlands.

We quickly open it and see that inside there is a strange machine that seems new, but in reality, it isn't. There is also an envelope that we tear open very carefully, which contains what appears to be instructions.

We immediately begin to read...





“You have a machine that you can connect whenever you want, but before doing so, you need to make a circle on the floor the size you want.

On its perimeter you can put some things that you find around your house – like stones, shells, or your favorite toys.

Once you have done that, it will be essential to close the circle and fill it with soil that you can take from any plant you have. And here is the most important thing – you all have to be touching the circle when you connect the machine.”

We follow the instructions to the letter and, when we have to connect the machine, we see that it has no cables. But there is a button that says "start" so we press it.



The machine turns on and projects a drawing of a boat with stars onto the ceiling. The image is so beautiful! We are speechless and unable to react, until one of us realizes that we are now touching the arena of the circle we have made, and in doing so ... the magic begins.

First trip: New Zealand

After going around and around in a kind of cosmic tunnel, we fall on our bottoms on the smooth, soft sand of a beautiful beach, and we see that a man with a big mustache is approaching. When he reaches us, he is so big he covers the sun, and says to us in a deep voice:

“Welcome! I am Sam Poutou, chief of Waitangi, Bay of Islands. You have traveled to New Zealand.”



We are puzzled by what Sam tells us, so much so that we have to pinch ourselves to know that we are awake.

“Then we are in the antipode of our house!” I say in awe.

“Yes, you have come very far, and it was not by chance. I am going to tell you a story about our people, the Maori, who were the first inhabitants of these lands – also known as Aotearoa or Land of the Great White Cloud,” says Sam.

“Legend has it that its discoverer, a man named Kupe, had left his home, Hawaiki, and sailed his canoe to this place. On his journey, he had the help of the ocean and the beings that populate it, like whales, sharks and all kinds of fish. He was also guided by the waves, the wind, the rain, the moon and the stars.”

Sam pauses and takes a deep breath as he calmly looks at everything around him.

We are eager to hear more about Kupe’s story. And soon...

"Kupe," he continues, "was not sailing alone, and that was the secret that allowed him to win the help of the ocean. For he was a man, known in his time, for understanding how to live in harmony, with deep respect for everything around him. That's why the crew of his canoe said that he had 'Mana' – a special power that the earth grants you to possess. If you have Mana, you represent the prestige of an entire tribe, an entire culture.

And Kupe, like you, carried on board his canoe the nature of its people, its customs, its philosophy and its laws. And the further the journey progressed, the more the Mana grew, which fed on the love and admiration that Kupe and his crew aroused in all those who heard of their adventure. And that spread beyond their island, driven by the strength of the forests where the canoe was built, by the beauty of its plants and flowers, its land, its stones, and, above all, by the ocean. The legend was beginning to forge ...

And in this journey that you are beginning now, in this unprecedented space, in the land of the possible, you can become a legend if you observe the nature that surrounds you and learn to respect it. Because even from the window of your room, if you pay attention, you will see that there is a wind that moves the clouds and you will understand its strength, its speed, and you will feel its temperature and

humidity. Then you will understand that the wind moves everything with the same harmony that the ocean moves a canoe. *Vaka Moana.*”

“The Mana that I offer you now is the wind of my land, on the other side of your world, which you have reached by navigating on your machine.

And in the stones of this beach you can see the footprint of the wind, that's why they are called stones of the winds. I will give you one for you to place, on your return, within the circle that you have made at home. Because that circle symbolizes the sun that we all share, and by placing a stone of the winds inside it, your world and this world will be connected forever, and your room and New Zealand will then be the same land,” said Sam.

We can barely thank Sam as he hands us the stone, because just a moment later we are back in our room. And although we are very excited by everything that has happened, tiredness beats us, and we fall asleep.

Second trip: Norway

The next morning, I wake up with the feeling that everything has been a dream, but looking at the foot of the bed, there is the circle with the stone of the winds in the center, and all my sisters and brother sitting around it.

"Your sheets must be have given you a very deep sleep!" They say impatiently. Aren't you looking forward to trying again? "Well of course! I can't wait to go travelling again!"

My sister connects the machine and this time a whale is projected on the ceiling of the room, and while we are mesmerized by it, we touch the circle and ...

I fall back on my bottom! This time at sunset on a beach of black, gray and white stones that shine like stars as they reflect the twilight sun. And as we watch the fiery star take refuge on the horizon, a huge animal emerges from the sea in front of us...it's a whale!



We come running, and as we put our feet in the water, we feel that it is freezing! But when we touch the whale the cold does not bother us anymore, and with each touch we can feel its magic. So, we started to tell her how beautiful and big she looks to us. We were stunned when she suddenly began to speak.

“Hello, my name is Cousteau. It is the name my parents gave me in memory of someone who knew how to take care of our seas.”

She tells us that she is very happy to once again feel the embrace of a human being after so long and invites us to climb on her back to share with her a wonderful journey through the seas, flowing through the ocean currents as if they were high-speed highways.

During the journey we meet other whales that greet Cousteau and accompany us for a time while showing us the way, as their ancestors did with Kupe. They are joined by turtles, dolphins, orcas, and countless large and small fish, such as sharks, stingrays, squid and octopuses that show us the incredible beauty of the underwater landscape.

But they also show us the dark side that makes them scared and deeply concerned, what they call the virus – people who do not respect the nature of their beautiful world and fill it with plastic and all kinds of garbage.

Luckily, Cousteau's eagerness to explore reveals the amazing underwater remains of ancient civilizations that did not feel disconnected from the ocean, but saw a fantastic world to explore. We see Tartessian, Phoenician or Spartan boats, and many others that rest in places which science can't explain, such as Rapa Nui. When they were exploring, these vessels all had in common needing to learn to read the stars and interpret the ocean's currents to be able to sail the seas along our immense planet.

Cousteau takes us back to the beach and explains that it is time to reflect on what we have seen and felt, that it is time to learn from all this and to remember that with each tide, the ocean always brings new things. He tells us that we can pick up a stone from the ground, and upon looking we discover that many of them are transparent and have a polygonal shape, similar to that of diamonds. We take one with a rectangular shape and we show it to the whale, who looks at it and says:

“You have found a ‘Solarsteinn’ or solar stone, a type of stone that was used by other great navigators, the Vikings, to orient themselves in their travels around the World. If you learn to use it like them, you will never get lost and you will always know how to find your destiny or the way back home.”

After these words the hour of farewell arrives, and Cousteau encourages us to not be sad, because this is only ‘until next time’. Then she says, “when you place the stone in your circle, we will be connected forever.”

And just like that, we arrived at home again.

We put the solar stone inside the circle and felt great happiness about our trip, remembering that Cousteau is already part of all of us.

Where would the machine take us on our next trip?

Third Trip: America

I woke up scared. What seemed like a nightmare to me was my mother's screams of despair. When I looked at the clock I understood. I slept until one in the afternoon!

The others had been waiting for me. My brother was eager to press the button on the machine and start a new trip. However, my sisters, fed up with waiting, had gotten hooked on a series on TV and it seemed that they were skipping this time. Now I understood why my brother was angry.

"But what nonsense!" he said, frustrated. And taking advantage of the fact that we were all there, he pressed the button and the machine activated.

This time we appeared on top of a colossal mountain. The sun colored the clouds and reflected on the snowy peaks. Everything was peace and harmonious, when suddenly ...

"Aaahhhh!" shouted my sister, who, by the way, is very loud.

"WHAT !!!! But what is ...?" the others started saying.

"What a huge bird, man!" said my brother.

Ahead of us, was the largest bird that flies over the earth. This was, of course, something my sister knew already. Whenever possible, she explains to us everything she knows about animals.

"He is a Condor", I said, beating her to it to annoy her a little bit. Mission accomplished, I thought, smiling, because she looked at me with a bitter expression.

The great bird landed on the rock, very close to us. It was astonishing. We had never seen anything like it.

As this bird speaks, I can't function, and my older sister is stunned. Suddenly...up and down the alleys, a little mouse passes, followed by twenty more.

"Some with long tails, others with broad ears. Some with short legs, but marvelous ideas," sang the Condor.



"But" I tried to say.

"Eh ... eh ... eh. How dare you interrupt art in person?" said the bird.

"What was missing, besides talking over a poet?" I protested quietly.

"Ehhhhhhh! How dare you interrupt art in person?" said the huge bird again, this time a little agitated. He ignored me and continued with his speech.

"To be or not to be, that is the question. I am what I am, a Condor, and they call me in different ways."

"What is that about?" my sister whispers in my ear.

"It's not polite to whisper to someone in front of a group! Don't be afraid to speak aloud. It does not matter that you, who has a mouth, is wrong!" he said angrily.

"You're so funny and cheeky, silly billy!" said my middle sister as she gave him a hug.

"You can call me Thor. And I would like to invite you to fly with me," said the Condor.

Since Thor told us his name, he became much happier. And when we started to fly ... it was incredible. He explained that the mountain we were on was Aconcagua and that we were going to cross the Andes.

He took us to Machupicchu and we flew over Lake Titicaca, with the reed boats, built by Aymara women.



You will wonder how I could remember all those names. Well, it is easy if your two teenage brothers spend the whole trip freaking out and repeating them...well, they stay forever engraved in your head.

The Condor continued telling us,

“From the heights I have seen how the whales indicated the way to the most adventurous sailors. I saw you on the back of Cousteau and then I remembered the stories my grandparents told me. They spoke of great transoceanic navigations, which are now legends, such as the Egyptians, Tartessians or Phoenicians. Also, of those that are part of history, such as that of Christopher Columbus or Juan Sebastián el Cano.”

As Thor spoke, we could see how the precious valleys cut through the land. We learned about the birth of rivers and their journey to the seas and oceans. Following these rivers, we realized how water shapes and gives wealth to everything it touches – majestic waterfalls, lakes and deltas. We also met many, many species of birds. Some even more talkative than Thor. Some, like penguins, told us that they no longer needed to fly because they had found a place to stay and others told us that they preferred to decide where to spend the different seasons of the year.

Thor explained to us how important it is to them that we are able to keep the air and atmosphere clean. We landed on Thor's nest that was on top of a volcano. We start to feel an incredible wind. Thor noticed and proudly sang the Condor hymn.

“When you feel the wind, both soft and strong, you want to move. In my case, this feeling encourages me to travel and explore ... And there is nobody capable of flying as high as we do.”

“Thor, you’re super cool. You are a true friend,” I said enthusiastically.

Then he asked us to choose a stone from the volcano. We picked up a rather large one, but not too heavy, because it was full of holes. Thor told us that the volcanic stone was special because despite its size, it did not sink into the water and would always help us stay afloat.

We already knew what came next. It was time to say goodbye. Just as we had gotten so fond of Thor we had to return home. But by now, we also knew that by placing the stone in the circle of our room, Thor would forever be a part of our lives.

Fourth Journey: Africa

This time I couldn't fall asleep. I tried and tried but failed. I still had the feeling of flying through the clouds, or perhaps it was that Thor's poetry continued to hammer at my head.

I went to the living room. Fortunately, I was not the only one who was awake. The others were gathered there. The only thing missing was my little sister, who appeared very happy after a moment. Our dogs followed behind. And she said "this time we are taking them!"

"You know that we cannot do that, although I would like it too. Because we do not know what we will encounter wherever we go," my older brother explained and with a smile.

"Shall we travel?"

We get closer to the machine, and this time we link our hands to touch the button together. And ... Woof, woof, woof ... we could hear the barking of the dogs in the distance as we traveled through the void.

Inexplicably, once again I landed on my bottom, without any grace ... but what hurt more was that everyone else laughed when they saw me! We were in a great meadow of long yellowish grass, with trees of leaves like thorns. It was undoubtedly the Savanna, because in front of our noses a giraffe was eating while sticking out her blue tongue. She totally ignored us, as though we didn't exist. Then we hear a rather nice voice behind us, which says,

"Hello kids. Stop staring at the eating Giraffe... WOW! A giraffe eating, super special ..."

The one who was laughing at us was no less than a young African elephant, the greatest mammal that walks the earth. The rest of his command came soon after. The truth is that we couldn't stop laughing while the little elephant, as if it were a comedian on TV, continued with his monologue of jokes about giraffes.

The Giraffe, already tired of so many jokes, very calmly replied, "chubby, move your little ass!"

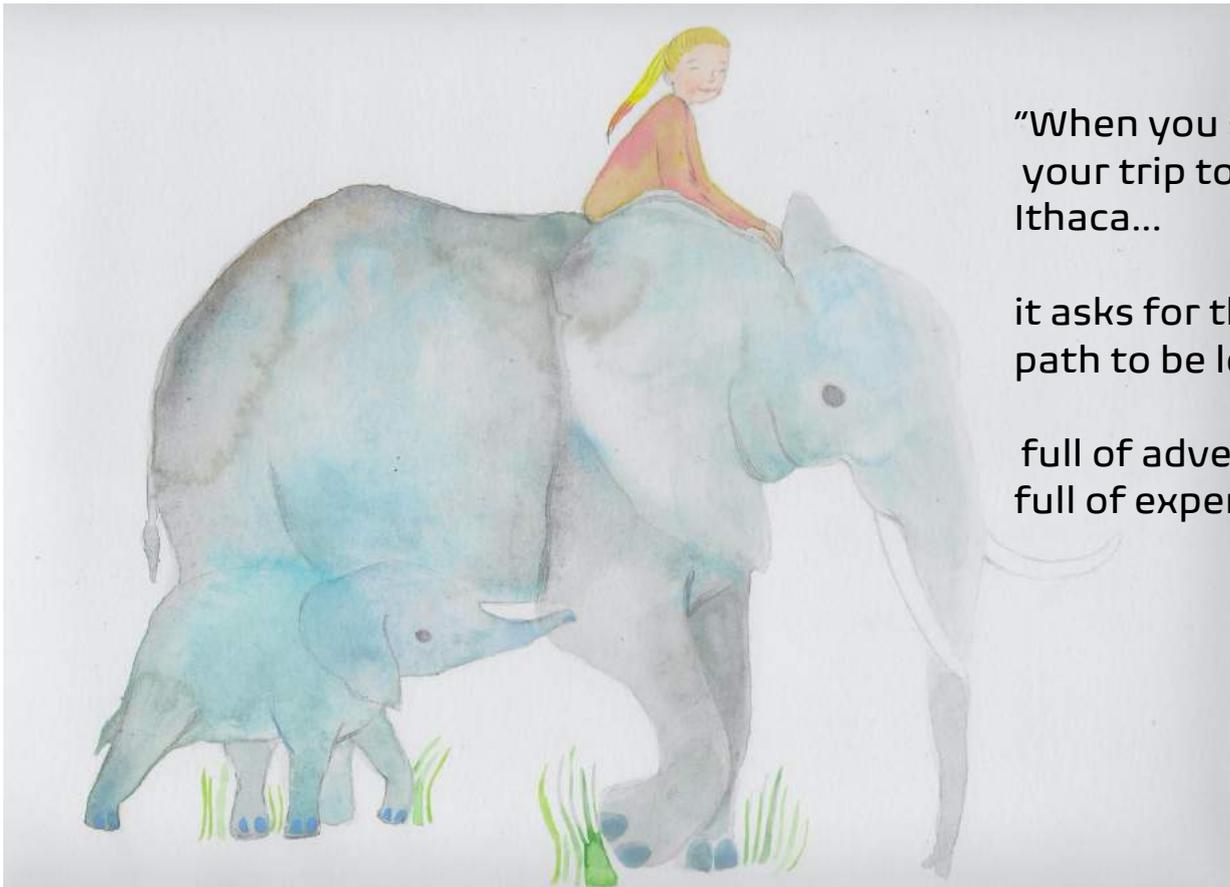
"Buahaha!" The elephant disengaged by the giraffe's response, looking at us with a rogue face, said "chubby? No, strong ... hahaha. Small are the giraffes. I LOVE IT. If you come with us, the elephants, we are the kings, the real kings ... not as the handsome lions say ... we could show you our land."

An elephant that looks like the leader of the herd named Varma nudges him gently with his trunk.

"You are always messing with her, you won't stop," he said in a powerful voice.

"This is serious ...as you can see, Africa is a land that seems thirsty. But appearances can be deceiving. There are moons of drought and others of great rains and both are necessary and beautiful. We must adapt to their cycles and learn from the good things that they bring us, such as the sun or water. Thanks to the seasons, nature unfolds before our eyes in all its colors. Making Africa a magical place."

Then, the proud elephant clan bowed before us to invite us to ride on their backs. As they advanced, they all sang the ancient words of a wise man together:



“When you start
your trip to
Ithaca...

it asks for the
path to be long,

full of adventure,
full of experiences.

Do not fear the Laestrygonians, nor the Cyclops, nor to the wrathful Poseidon.”

We got to see the big puddles where they drank, and coated and rubbed sand on their backs. Some animals came to greet us – hippos, crocodiles, lions, zebras, monkeys or cheetahs and many of the birds that we had already met.

It seemed to me that they respected Varma's family and that they all respected each other. We understood that for balance to exist on Earth, we must interact and respect each other in the same way.

Then they took us through the great Sahara Desert. We followed the Tuareg, who still ride their camels today. They know how to find water in the desert and orient themselves following the sun and the stars, as if they were sailing on the sand dunes. They were undoubtedly great observers of the movement of nature.

We follow the course of the Nile until its birth. We saw the pyramids and temples sealed with hieroglyphic writing, reed boats like the ones the Aymara made on Lake Titicaca. Really, as Sam Poutou said, "men are all under the same sun".

Upon reaching Victoria Falls, the elephants, with their especially good memories, told us many stories. And then, "I invite you to look for a stone in this place, the heart of Africa where water with all its force is transformed into energy. Giving away his wealth to a mistreated continent," Varma explained very slowly.

We put our feet in a small lagoon that fed on the water of the waterfall. While playing with the elephants we found a yellowish stone at the bottom that looked like gold. "We have found gold!" we shouted.

Running, we went to show Varma.

"This is better than gold because it will set you free," he told us. "Its value is not material.

This stone is called Orthosa. Looking at it carefully like any object in nature, its peculiar shape will help you see reality from different angles, awakening your tolerance, creativity and energy to take action and transform your worries."

"Incredible! Thank you very much Varma," we said from the hearts.

Once again, we knew that by touching the stone we would return home. So, it was...

Going back home

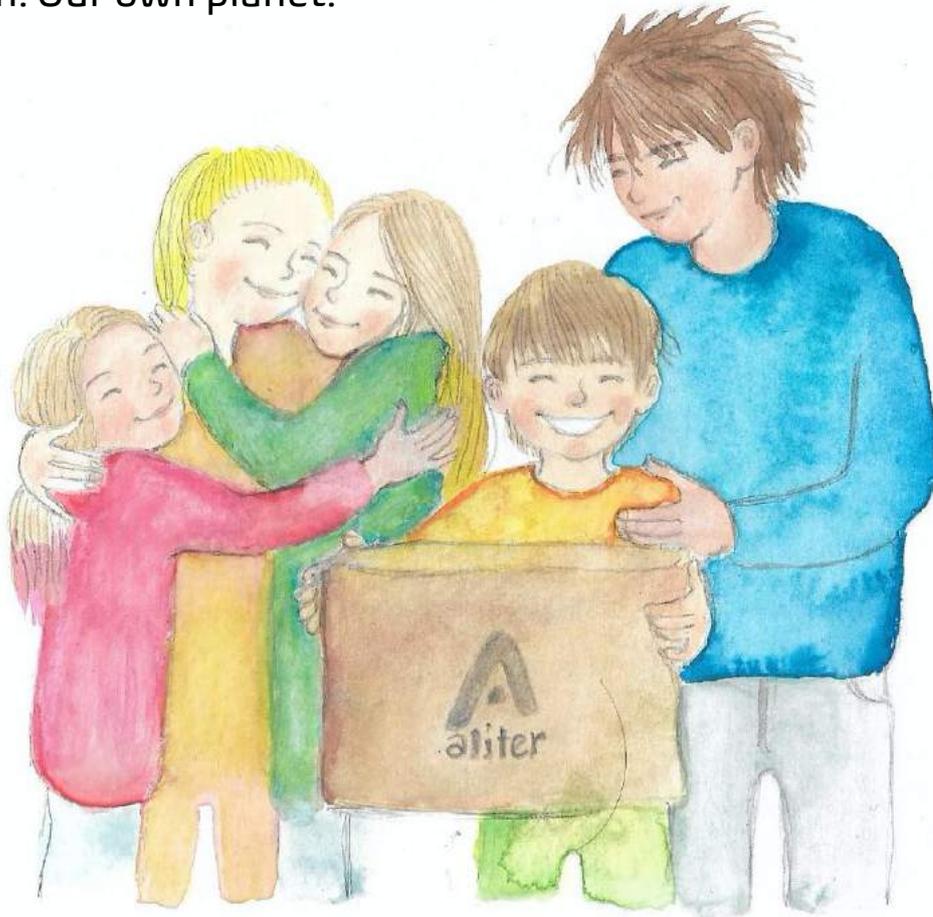
Upon arrival we sit around the circle. we put the last stone in the circle, suddenly and magically, some letters appeared engraved in the sand: "tohatoha te ra".

We did not understand them, so we used "Google Translate" on the internet. In a few seconds it gave us the key. "Tohatoha te ra" is a Maori saying that means "share the sun".

We understood that this journey was over, but that our circle would always grow with each new adventure we embarked on. We look forward to going back to our favorite places near home to play and tell our friends about the experience of discovering new places.

NOW everything feels possible! We have no limits, we are eager to observe the nature that surrounds us, with attention, in silence. To feel the movement of our planet at the same time as watch how the sun sets. To listen to the wind tell us stories and push ourselves to go out and discover what is behind the horizon.

We are all navigators of the same circle, where each stone that we put inside, will unite the different places forming a single earth. Our own planet.



We decided to send the machine to other children. Maybe that child is you? Your experiences will be different from ours, but surely, most definitely... as a navigator of the circle, we will share the same sun.

"Tohatoha te ra"