

LUPA AND THE YUMI TREE

LUPA AND THE YUMI TREE is *another Vision book* from the Vision Company Inc. of Cochrane, Alberta.

Other Vision books by Ravinn O. West:

FOUR REASONS WHY I LOVE MYSELF: a self-esteem primer. This full color book is a collection of poems and animal portraits; at once humorous, provocative, irreverent and sometimes poignant, this collection will mercilessly taunt you with the enigma that is self-esteem.

Being in touch with our soul-selves is a process of peeling away current life strategies and beliefs that do not work for us, which in turn raises our self-esteem.

This book will be a catalyst to the magical quest for the authentic self.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ravinn O. West (1944–) has a B.A. degree in English and History from the University of Western Ontario and has lived most of her life at her ranch in the foothills of Southern Alberta. She has been a television host (CBC "This Land"); an editor and writer (Canadian Rodeo News); and a college professor (Fanshawe Colledge, London; Seneca College, Toronto). Since 1990 she has been owner and kennelmaster at the Ravendale Ranche Canine Boarding Kennel and Training Center on the shore of the Ghost River in the foothills of Alberta. She is a self-described mystic and a devotee of Chinese landscape painting.

Her life-mates are her husband, George, Silky Terriers, Norwich, English Mastiffs, a collection of exotic South American parrots and her wolfdog, China.

ILLUSTRATOR PROFILE

Baldo Yaga was born on a farm on the Zeya River, Russia, in 1925. Coming into the world unexpectedly and much younger than his seven siblings, his childhood was mostly solitary except for a dog and a huge tract of forest of which he claimed to be King. As a young adult, he traveled to France where he apprenticed as an evaluator and seller of antique furniture and collectables.

His twinkly eyes express his ability to retain a childlike *fraiche* and still be aged and wise. Perhaps that is why we have such a love and respect for each other. I met Baldo in Italy in 1968, and we have kept up a friendship over all these years.

Some of the pictures were drawn on Café D'Oro napkins and others on the finest Italian cold press art paper.

That's what happens when your creative life *is* your life.

Thanks Baldo.

R.W.

Lupa and the Yumi Tree

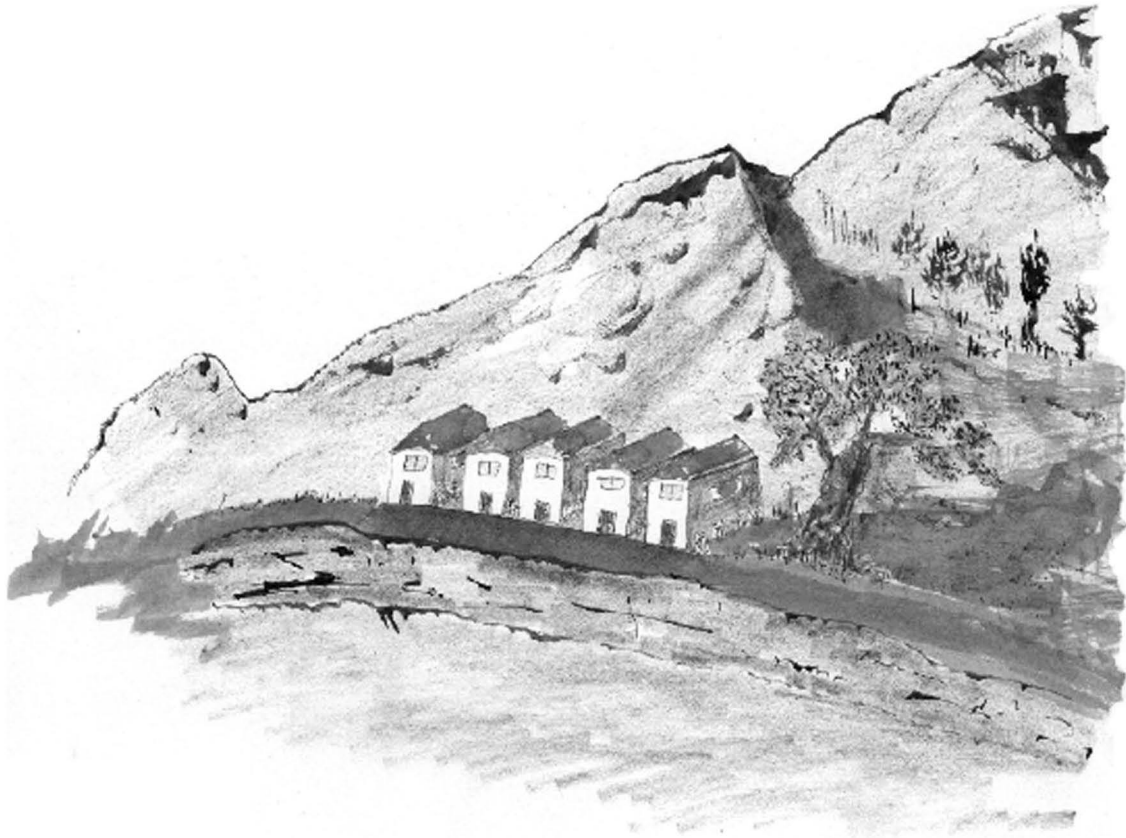
Table of contents

Chapter 1	Lupa and the Likkins	1
Chapter 2	The Baseball Game	15
Chapter 3	The Magick of Mayo Mountain	23
Chapter 4	Trouble at Cogs' Farm	35
Chapter 5	Spring Comes to Cogs' Farm	47
Chapter 6	Beware the Blarsh!	59
Chapter 7	The Song of the Yumi Tree	77
Chapter 8	The Secret Waterfall	93

This book is dedicated to children everywhere.

Chapter: the first

Lupa and the Likkins



Deep in the Kingdom of Sama-lama-lim-lam-bo
In the town of Frika-Frika
(It's such a nice town we say the name twice!)
Lived a people called the Little Likkins.

The Likkins were all boys.
The Likkins were all short.
The Likkins looked identical.
The Likkins all had warts.

"Little Likkins" they were called.
Each one had that name.
The Little Likkins claim to fame?
"We're all the same!!"

If someone shouted, "Little!"
All their heads would turn.
They thought each other handsome
Although their looks were stern...
Every Little Likkin looked like every other one.

"Isn't it fun!
Our clothes and shoes and garden tools,
Our books, our lawns and swimming pools
Are all the same!
Equal in every way – Happy Day!
Our Frika-Frika is such a nice town,
We say the name twice."

But on dark nights in Frika-Frika
Inside the Likkin's houses
All in their rows,
Every Likkin cleaned his teeth
And bathed
And combed each hair so neat.

Every Likkin went down the hall
And turned smartly left
To a room that was small
Where they got into short wooden beds just for them.

Even their sheets and their blans
Were the same!

Now here's the thing that you need to know.
This is the truth, as the story goes.
ALL THE LIKKINS WERE AFRAID OF THE DARK.

When they got in their beds and blew out the light,
They were overcome by a sense of fright.
All of the Likkins hid under their blankets
And shivered and shook and knocked their knee caplets.

Whenever a creak or a tap was heard
The Likkins never shouted
Or even whispered the words,
"Help me, please...I'm being invaded.
There's a thing in my bedroom that wasn't invited!"

And so all of the heads of the Likkins
Were hidden
Under piles of blankets and pillows
To help them
To sleep all night
With their eyes scrunched up tight.

They hid from the creaks
And what's under the bed.
Bedtime for Likkins was a time of dread.

But in the morning when each one arose
And they all put on their identical clothes,

Oh, such pride there was as they beamed at each other!
Oh, what purse-lipped smirks marked this
Small band of brothers!

Now in the midst of all this
"Happy to be the same",
Came someone different.

Lupa was her name.

No one knew how she came to Frika,
But every Likkin wished she would leave.

"A Lupa is not a Little Likkin,"
They murmured with a pout,



"So why don't you just go away?
We want you out!"
Then all the Little Likkins pointed to the road out of town.

Lupa, however, remained in her house
At the end of Fudgepotty Lane...
The house with the purple shutters and doors...
The house that wasn't the same.

But she longed for someone to talk to,
A friend for late night talks,
Someone to laugh at her funny jokes,
Someone to share her walks.

One of her walks to the southern part
Of Sama-lama-lim-lam-bo
Was the path to the forest of Tickle Trees
On the round grassy bank of the NO.



Lupa was familiar with that river called NO.

It flowed across her path when she wanted to go.
It bubbled right past her when she tried to go slow.

"Wouldn't you know!
All the things I want are on the other side!" shouted Lupa.

She looked around for a boat – a slip – a raft – a ship –
A skiff – a dingy – a thing-a-ma-jimmy!
But there she sat on the bank of the NO
With her grassy straw hat pulled down to her ears
For what seemed to be one hundred and twenty-two years!

"I want to get to the other side
Where all of the good things are stacked up high:
Toys and games and model cars; story books and ice cream bars;
Art supplies and puppy dogs and ginger cats with 6-toed paws.
I'll hitch a ride on a tortoise's shell.
If I see one float by, I'll jump up and yell!"

Tick-tock, time goes by...
Waiting for turtles – watching the sky –
Counting clouds as they pass by...
"Why am I on this 'ole side?"

Finally Lupa got up and walked on
Toward the Forest of Tickle Trees.
"I've heard of that forest – it's a nice place to be!
I'll be so happy there – it's the place for me!"

So all along the bank of the River called NO,
She followed the road as it wound all around

And up and down and over and by,
Till the forest of Tickle Trees shouted out,
"Hi!
Welcome, Lupa!" the trees shouted all together.
"You want to be happy?
We heard about that – well, you come a bit closer,
But take off that hat!
It will catch in our branches that do not have leaves.
Step closer, step closer – come over here please!"

All of a timple, those trees reached out
With their rickety arms and tickled Lupa in the ribs.
She laughed and laughed and giggled and burbled,
Till she lost all of her breath and her face turned bright purple!

"STOP!" she managed to shout,
But the trees kept on tickling,
And the tee-heeing kept on heeing,
Until poor Lupa's sides felt pinched and sore,
And she made the decision not to laugh anymore.

Back on the road, Lupa muttered (in a pout),
"I need a good reason to laugh that strong!"
Rubbing her ribs and knitting a frown,
She kicked up two stones as she shuffled along.
"I'm tired and lonely," she said with a shrug.
"I wish I had something to love and give hugs."

And just at that moment, she looked up –
Just ahead in a field of green grass,

As green as a caterpillar's squeezey-boxy body,
Lupa saw spotted Spotty-Dotty!

There she stood in the sunshine
Knee deep in daisies
As she whinnied, "Hello",
For Spotty-Dotty was a big brown-eyed Appaloosa.
She neighed – and neighed – and neighed
'Cause that's how she talks.

(It sure takes getting used to
When you've always talked in sentences and stuff!)

"My name is Spotty-Dotty. Take a load off, why don't you?"

"Was it you who said that?"
Lupa asked as she knelt down and looked up
At the biggest pair of grass-stained lips she'd ever seen.

"I neigh and I talk – I'm a talented horse!
But I'm a voice in your head – I'm not speaking, of course!
Be quiet and listen – I've got lots to say.
I talk different, that's all – not the usual way!"
Lupa stood up in amazement.

"You're talking – you're talking –
But you never move your lips!
Do I really hear you in my mind?
Who's 'Baloney Hips'?"

"There's the proof!!" said a tight-lipped Dot.
"No one knows that name but me.
That's the other name they gave my Mother!
Her real name is Rosilee.

Can I come with you
And live in your house?
Can I Lupa? Can I please?
I don't have to sleep on your bed – the floor's fine
For my well-padded haunches and knees!"

Lupa did have a few qualifying questions.

"Do you wash your face and clean your teeth
Before you go to bed?
Do you eat some fruit or cereal?
Do you like a story read?
Are you in bed by nine o'clock?
Do you snore loud when you sleep?
Have you ever lain awake all night?
Does it help if you count sheep?"

"Yes – no – yes – no – yes – oh yes – no,"
Dotty lazily replied,
"But I seem to have misplaced my toothbrush..."
"You can use my spare!!" Lupa cried.

"This will work out fine – we'll be a team!
Horses really make good friends.
We'll love and trust and look out for each other.

I hope it never ends!!”

And with that Lupa reached up
And put both of her arms around Dotty's neck
And kissed her.



"O Spotty-Dotty,
You are so warm and your coat is such a splendid thing...
It's soft – and huggable and it smells so sweet and clean."

"If you want I'll come with you wherever you go,"
Said Dot the kind horse with the palest pink nose.
Nose to nose and chest to chest,
Lupa closed her eyes and smelled the hay on Dot's breath.

"Petals of roses feel just like some noses," whispered Lupa.
"And my dear Dotty has the smoothest...and the softest
And the pinkest
One of all."

Now Lupa would never be alone again,
And who would have ever thought
That a big 'ole hip-bony Appaloosa
Would be the love of her life and the source of all of her joy!
But she was!

As they walked toward Frika
And the sun began to sink behind the pointy mountain,
Big tears welled up in Lupa's eyes and
Squirted out like a fountain.
"O, Dotty, these tears do not mean that your Lupa is sad!
I finally found you! I'm happy! I'm glad! I'm..."

What she was, was a little embarrassed
At the depth of emotion she felt
In the presence of a friend she knew she could trust
But still didn't know very well.

As the thin slice of moon floated up on the clouds
And the two new friends headed toward home,
Spotty-Dotty lowered her great head and whispered,

"If and when the skies look stormy,
And the thought on your mind for the day is, 'O poor me!'
Remember the smell of the hay on the breath
From the pinkest of noses
And smile – or laugh – just do it for me..."

Lupa breathed in deeply as Dotty talked.
"Mmmmmmm, I love that smell..." she said quietly.

After a time, the rows of the houses of Frika came into view.
"These houses are all the same!
How do you know which one is yours?" asked Spotty-Dotty.
"Oh, you'll see," smiled Lupa.

Finally at the end of a narrow winding lane, they stopped.
Lupa and Spotty-Dotty stood absolutely still.

After a long silence, Dotty spoke.
"The purple shutters are a nice touch," she said. "Are we home?"

"Oh, yes, Dotty," Lupa whispered
As she reached up and placed her hand
Just under the wavy white mane.
"We're home!!"