



Looking for the Shine

A Full English translation is available.

自信要去哪裡找

Author: Nora Hu **Illustrator:** Gayo Lin **Publisher:** China Times Publishing

Date: 03/2025

Rights contact: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

32 pages | 23 x 13 cm **Volume:** 1 (Three-book series; each stands alone.)

BFT2.0 Translator: Anne Lee

A group of happy, sparkling alpacas lives on the vast grassland. They sing loudly and run freely... all except for Mary.

Mary is the most unremarkable alpaca of them all. She runs the slowest, and she can't sing. Compared with her friends, she seems to lack any particular gifts or skills. They tell her she just needs to find "confidence."

So Mary sets off on an adventure to find her confidence. Could it be hidden in the most mysterious place, or maybe in the highest, hardest-to-reach spot? Will Mary ever discover her confidence? This book empowers kids to break free from comparison and embrace their inner strength, courage, and uniqueness.



Author **Nora Hu**

Nora Hu graduated from Tamkang University with a degree in Chinese. She worked as an editor at a publishing house for many years. Now a freelancer, she edits and writes children's books.



Illustrator **Gayo Lin**

Gayo Lin is a Taiwanese illustrator and picturebook creator. Her work is known for its playful touch and vibrant colors, exploring philosophical themes, connections between people, and memories of place. Her recent work can be found on her website gayodoodle.com.

True Self-Confidence Grows When You Follow Your Own Path, Not by Comparing or Trying to Be Perfect

by Shan-Chung Yang

On a wide grassland lives an alpaca named Mary. She's unlike the others: small in size, with a hairstyle less fluffy and eye-catching than that of her friends. She's slow at running and unable to sing. No matter what the other alpacas do, Mary always seems to fall behind. Deep down, she thinks she's an ordinary alpaca who is not good at anything.

Her friends tell her, "You just need to find confidence." But Mary doesn't know where to look for it, so she sets off on a long and adventurous journey. She flips through countless books, wanders deep into dense forests, climbs the tallest mountains, dives into the deepest oceans, and even travels alone to the far side of the Earth. She explores every corner of the

map, yet despite all her efforts, she still wonders: where can confidence truly be found?

In a society that often rewards outgoing personalities, introverted children can frequently feel frustrated. They may hesitate to raise their hands in class, feel nervous speaking in front of an audience, or quietly remain in the background during group activities. Over time, these experiences can lead introverted children to feel discouraged, lose self-confidence, or even develop a sense of inferiority, believing they are not capable of achieving anything.

But why must one "excel at everything"? And who decides what is considered "good" or "bad"? The book

shifts the perspective beyond the herd, taking Mary through forests, mountains, seas, and deserts far beyond her grassland home. She experiences a world much bigger than her pasture and tries things other alpacas cannot. Having fluffy hair, running fast, or singing beautifully is certainly wonderful—but by letting go of these standards, Mary discovers her own unique qualities.

Through this story, the author encourages every shy child like Mary: each person has their own strengths. Confidence is not something to demand from the outside world, nor does one need to achieve the same accomplishments as others. In courageously trying within one's comfort and ability, avoiding comparisons, practicing self-belief, and enjoying the process, confidence gradually grows from within.

The story also serves as a gentle reminder for educators and parents. Children who fall behind may appear to challenge conventional measures of success, but every child has their own shining qualities. There is no need to mold every child into the same image. By allowing children to be themselves, even

the "ordinary" can become something truly extraordinary, showing that being ordinary can, in fact, be a unique and beautiful form of brilliance.

In the end, Mary's journey teaches us that self-confidence does not come from perfection or comparison. It grows when one embraces who they are, explores the world in their own way, and discovers the little things that make them shine. By accepting themselves as they are, children can see that even ordinary traits can become remarkable—and that uniqueness does not always mean being the fastest, the loudest, or the most talented. It is simply being authentically oneself.

Shan-Chung Yang graduated from the Department of History at National Taiwan University and has worked as a teacher and a literary event planner. Born in the subtropical winter of a humid island, she loves the trees and climate of the temperate zone. She is a devoted bear enthusiast, and her life idol is the Adélie penguin.

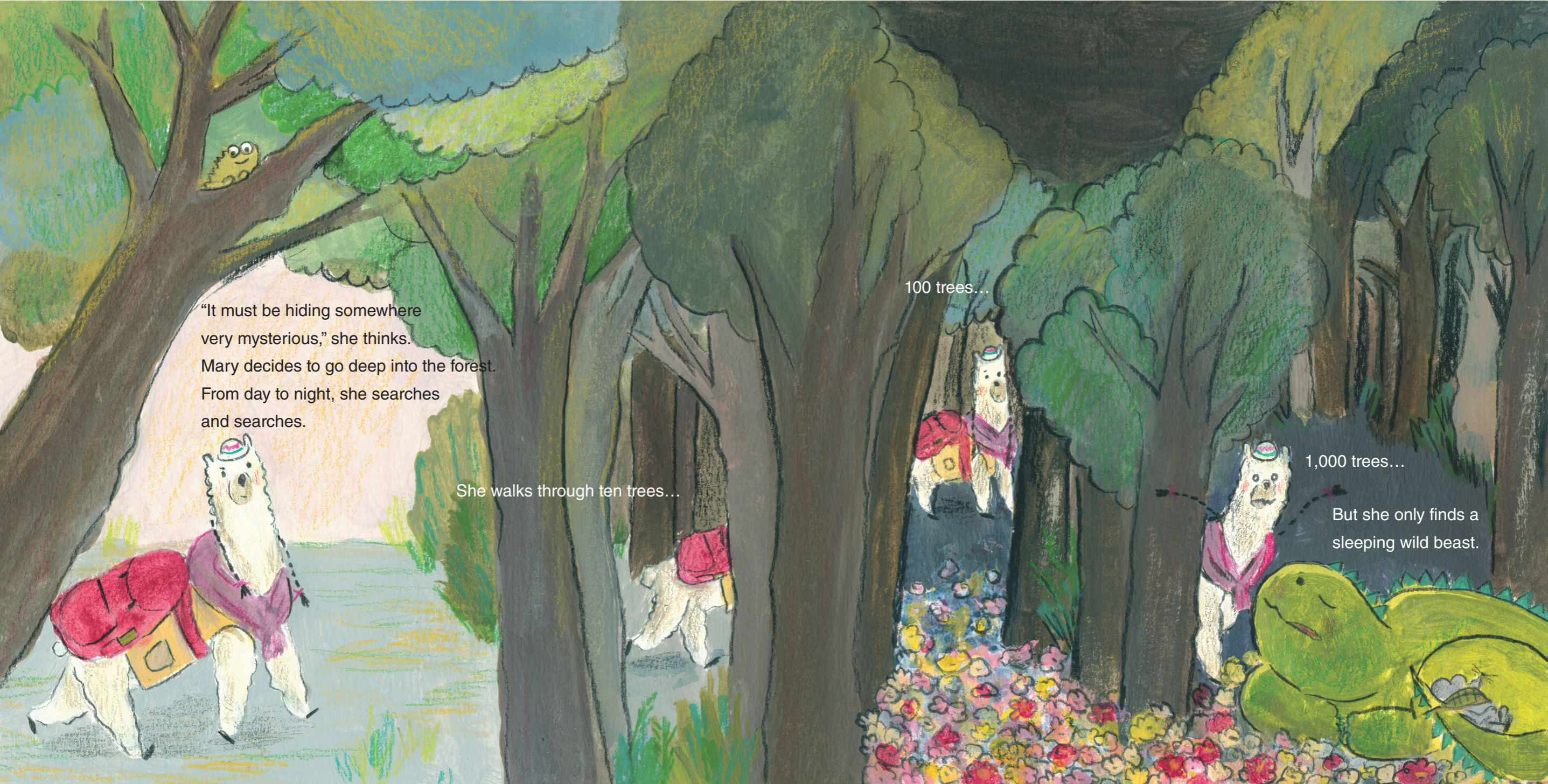
“It must be hiding somewhere very mysterious,” she thinks. Mary decides to go deep into the forest. From day to night, she searches and searches.

She walks through ten trees...

100 trees...

1,000 trees...

But she only finds a sleeping wild beast.



"It must be hiding way up high, at the very top of the world," she thinks.
Mary departs for the tallest mountain.



5,000 meters...

3,000 meters...

She climbs up 1,000 meters...

After great difficulty, Mary finally reaches the peak of the mountain. But she only sees the brilliant sunrise.

“Is confidence hiding in the most difficult place to reach?” she wonders.

Mary practices for a long time.
She’s finally ready!
She straps the oxygen tank on her back.
Then she dives into the deep ocean.

She swims into one shipwreck...

Two shipwrecks...

Three shipwrecks...

But she only sees trunks of gold coins.

