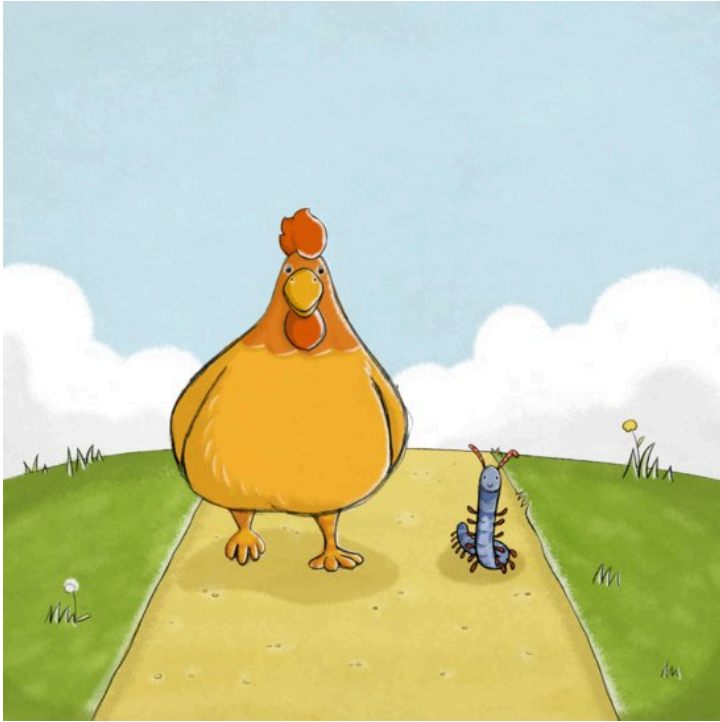


Chicken and Millipede

Winy Asara

Magriet Brink



Chicken and Millipede were friends. But they were always competing with each other.

One day they decided to play football to see who was the best player.



They went to the football field and started their game. Chicken was fast, but Millipede was faster.

Chicken kicked far, but Millipede kicked further. Chicken started to feel angry.



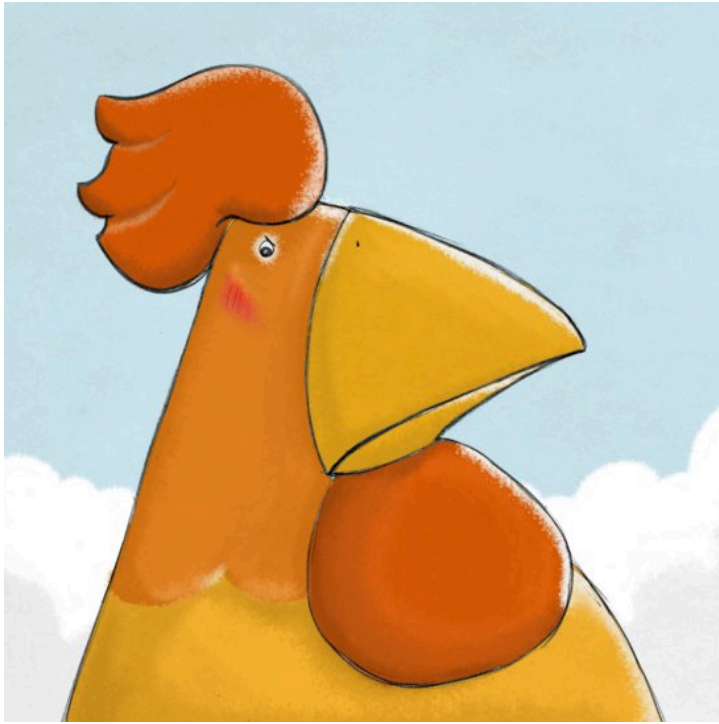
They decided to play a penalty shoot-out. First Millipede was goal keeper. Chicken scored only one goal.

Then it was Chicken's turn to defend the goal.



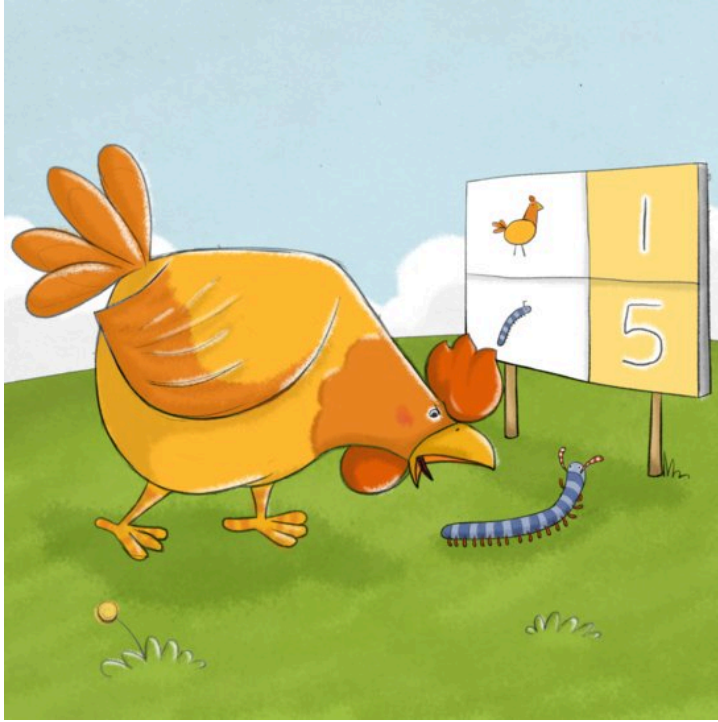
Millipede kicked the ball and scored. Millipede dribbled the ball and scored. Millipede headed the ball and scored.

Millipede scored five goals

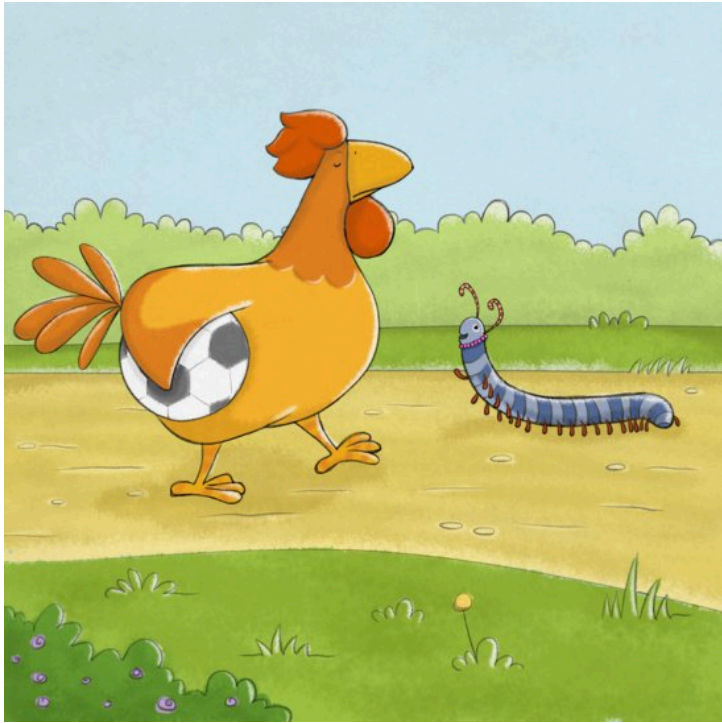


Chicken was furious that she lost.
She was a very bad loser.

Millipede started laughing
because his friend was making
such a fuss.

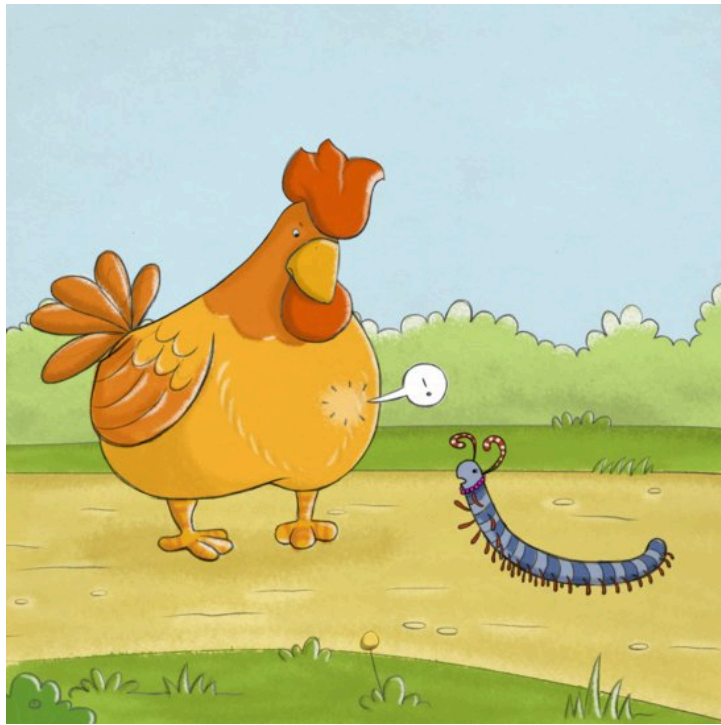


Chicken was so angry that she opened her beak wide and swallowed Millipede.



As Chicken was walking home,
she met Mother Millipede.
Mother Millipede asked, "Have
you seen my child?"

Chicken didn't say anything.
Mother Millipede was worried.



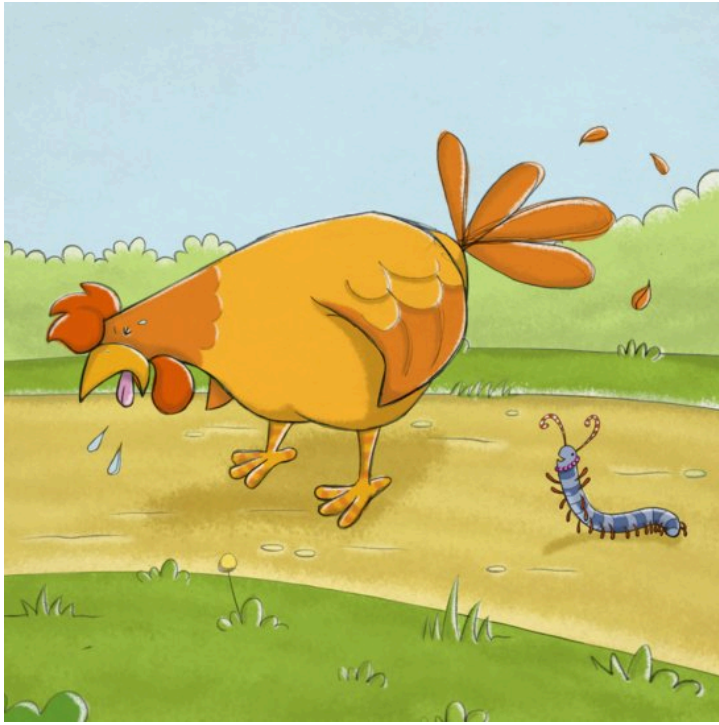
Then Mother Millipede heard a tiny voice. "Help me mom!" cried the voice.

Mother Millipede looked around and listened carefully. The voice came from inside the chicken.



Mother Millipede shouted, "Use your special power my child!"

Millipedes can make a bad smell and a terrible taste. Chicken began to feel ill.



Chicken burped. Then she
swallowed and spat. Then she
sneezed and coughed. And
coughed.

Millipede tasted disgusting!



Chicken coughed until she
coughed out Millipede.

Mother Millipede and her child
crawled up a tree to hide.



From that time, all chickens and millipedes were enemies.

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Chicken and Millipede

Author - Winny Asara

Translation - Winny Asara

Illustration - Magriet Brink

Language - English

Level - First paragraphs

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A Tiny Seed: The Story of Wangari Maathai

Nicola Rijdsdijk

Maya Marshak





In a village on the slopes of Mount Kenya in East Africa, a little girl worked in the fields with her mother.

The girl's name was Wangari.



Wangari loved being outside.

In her family's food garden, she broke up the soil with her machete.

She pressed tiny seeds into the warm earth.





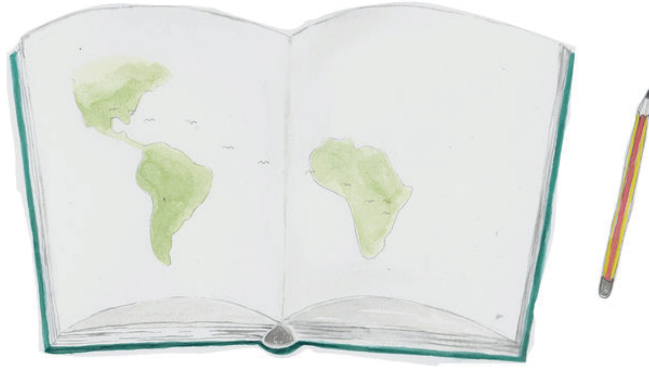
Her favourite time of day was just after sunset. When it got too dark to see the plants, Wangari knew it was time to go home.

She would follow the narrow paths through the fields, crossing rivers as she went.



Wangari was a clever child and couldn't wait to go to school. But her parents wanted her to help them at home.

When Wangari was seven years old, her elder brother persuaded her parents to let her start school.

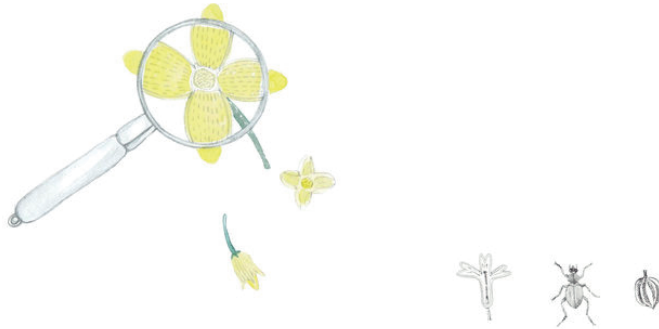


Wangari liked to learn. She learnt more and more with every book she read.

She did very well at school, and was invited to study in America.

Wangari was excited! She wanted to know more about the world.





At the American university Wangari learnt many new things. She studied plants and how they grow.

And she remembered how she grew: playing games with her brothers in the shade of the beautiful Kenyan forests.



The more she learnt, the more she realised that she loved the people of Kenya. She wanted them to be happy and free.

The more she learnt, the more she remembered her African home.



When she had finished her studies, she returned to Kenya.

Huge farms stretched across the land. Women had no wood to make cooking fires.

People were poor and hungry.





Wangari taught the women how to plant trees from seeds, and how to look after the seedlings.

The women sold the trees and used the money for their families.

The women felt powerful and strong.
And many trees grew.





As time passed, the trees grew into forests, and this helped the rivers to start flowing again.

Wangari's message spread across Africa. Today, millions of trees have grown from Wangari's seeds.



Because of her work for the environment and people, Wangari won a famous international prize, called the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 2004, Wangari Maathai was the first black African woman ever to receive the Nobel Prize, and also the first environmentalist.





Wangari died in 2011, but we can think of her every time we see a healthy tree.

We can continue her work by planting and looking after our forests.

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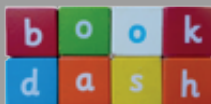
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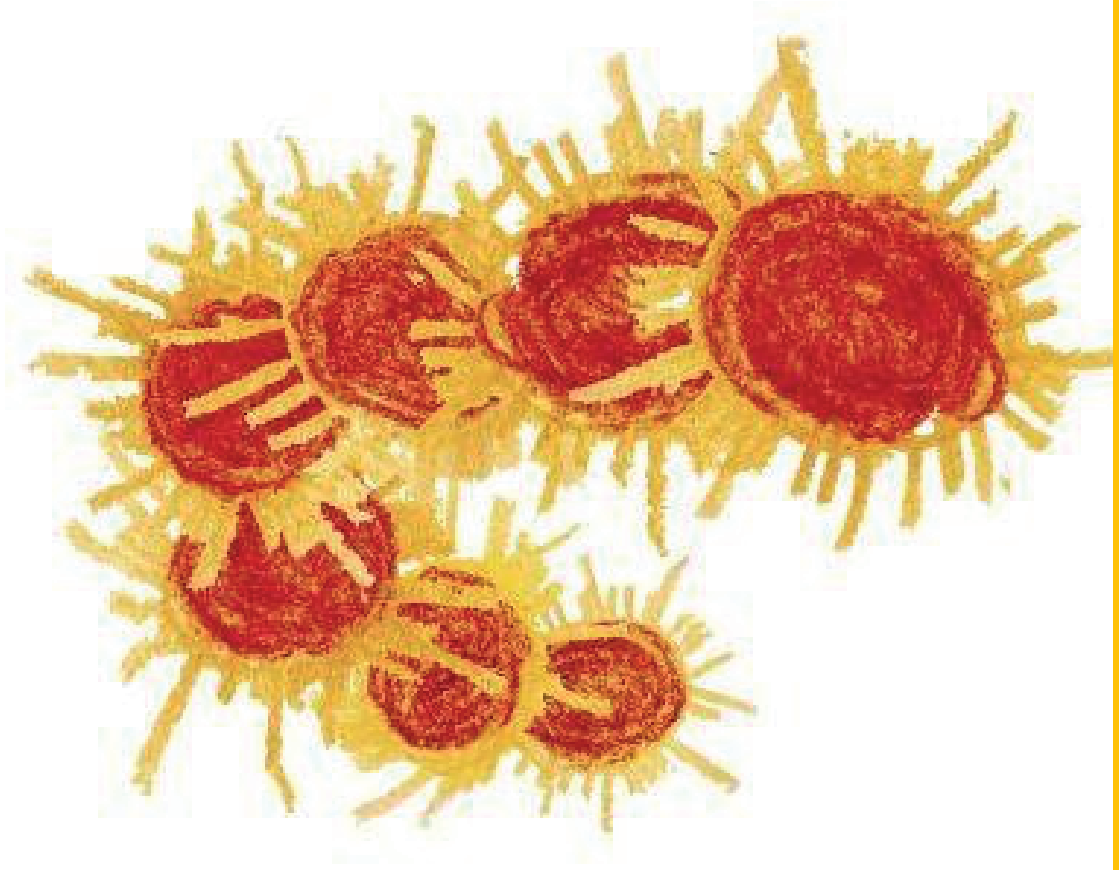
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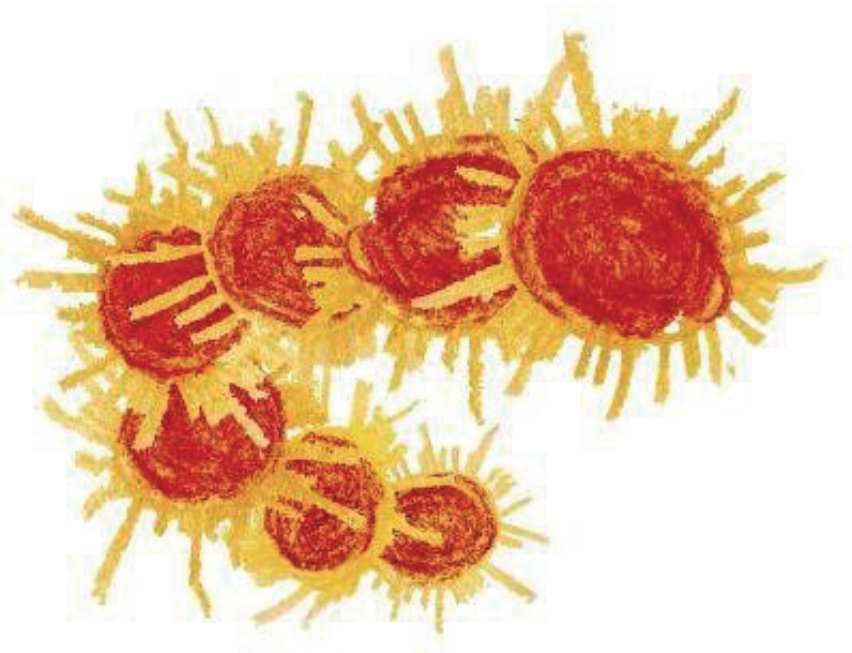


The Seventh Sun: A Tribal Tale From Odisha, India

Indian Folktale

Pratham Books





Long, long ago there were seven
suns in the sky. Their rays made
the earth so hot that human
beings could not bear it.



So, the seven brothers belonging to a tribe called the Munda decided to kill the suns. They shot arrows at them and were able to kill six of the suns.





The seventh sun hid behind a hill.





Now, with the suns gone, there was darkness everywhere. The deer could not see the tigers. The elephants bumped into trees. The rabbits walked over the lions and there was confusion all around.





To find a solution, the animals decided to have a meeting. Rabbit told them about one of the seven suns that was still alive and hiding behind a hill. But who would be the best one to call back the sun?



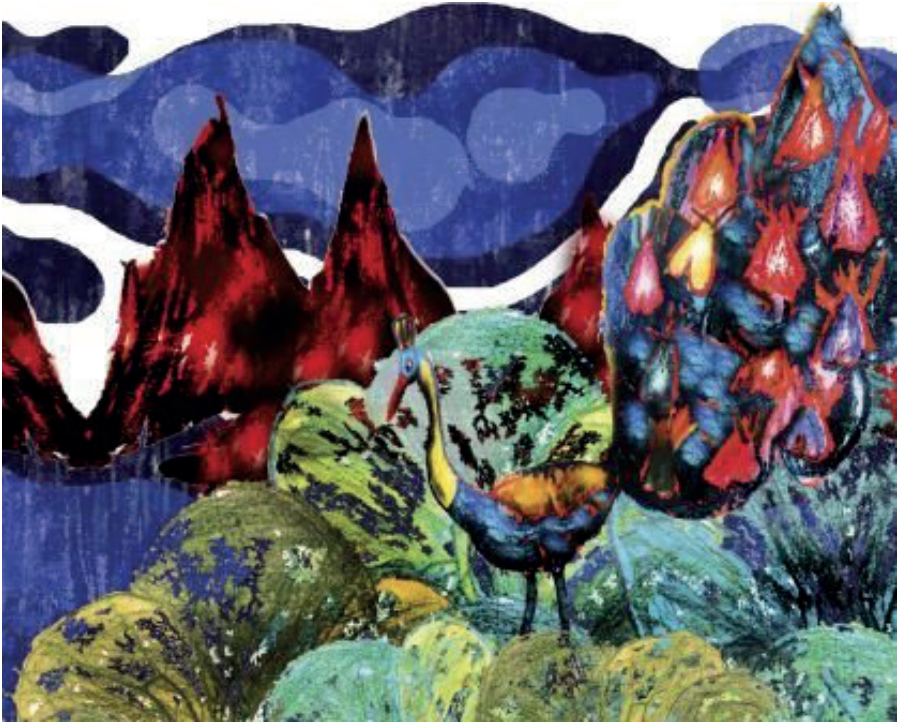


"I will call out to the sun," said the lion, for he was the king of the forest. "Sun, sun, please do not run away. Come back and shine on us," roared the lion. But the sun did not listen to him.





The elephant called out next. He raised his trunk and trumpeted, "Sun, sun, please come back." But the sun did not listen to him.



The peacock danced and pleaded, "Sun, sun, please come back." But the sun refused to come out. One after the other, all the animals called out to the sun. But he did not listen to any of them. Finally, a rooster offered to call the sun. Everybody laughed.





The lion said, "The cock should be allowed to try." Cock stepped forward and gently crowed, "Kookoodokoo, koo." To everyone's surprise, the sun peeped out a little from behind the hill.



The rooster crowed again, this time more boldly, "KookoodoKOO-KOO." The sun came up a little higher. The rooster crowed a third time, even louder and bolder, "KOOKOODOKOO-KOO." The sun rose high and bright. There was light everywhere. The animals were delighted and the humans felt relieved.





Ever since that day, when the rooster crows in the morning, the sun rises and shines in the sky.

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Grandma's Bananas

Ursula Nafula

Catherine Groenewald



Grandma's garden was wonderful. It was full of sorghum, millet, and cassava. But best of all were the bananas. Although Grandma had many grandchildren, I secretly knew that I was her favourite. She invited me often to her house. She also told me little secrets. But there was one secret she did not share with me. Where she ripened bananas.



One day I saw a big straw basket placed in the sun outside Grandma's house. When I asked what it was for, the only answer I got was, "It's my magic basket." Next to the basket, there were several banana leaves that Grandma turned from time to time. I was curious. "What are the leaves for, Grandma?" I asked. The only answer I got was, "They are my magic leaves."





It was so interesting watching Grandma, the bananas, the banana leaves and the big straw basket. But Grandma sent me off to my mother on an errand. "Grandma, please, let me watch as you prepare." "Don't be stubborn, child, do as you are told," she insisted. I took off running to my mother's compound.





When I returned, Grandma was still sitting outside; but, there was neither the basket nor the bananas.

"Grandma, where is the basket, where are all the bananas, and where..." But the only answer I got was, "They are in my magic place." It was so disappointing!



Two days later, Grandma sent me to fetch her walking stick from her bedroom. As soon as I opened the door, I was welcomed by the strong smell of ripening bananas. In the inner room was grandma's big magic straw basket. It was well hidden by an old blanket. I lifted it and sniffed that pleasant smell.



Grandma's voice startled me when she called, "What are you doing? Hurry up and bring me the stick." I hurried out with her walking stick. "What are you smiling about?" Grandma asked. Her question made me realise that I was still smiling at the discovery of her magic place.



The following day when Grandma came to visit my mother, I rushed to her house to check the bananas once more. There was a bunch of very ripe ones. I picked one and hid it in my dress. After covering the basket again, I went behind the house and quickly ate the banana. It was the sweetest banana I had ever tasted.



The following day, when Grandma was in the garden picking vegetables, I sneaked in and peered at the bananas. Nearly all were ripe. I couldn't help taking a cluster of four. As I tiptoed towards the door, I heard Grandma coughing outside. I just managed to hide the bananas under my dress and walked past her.



The following day was market day. Grandma woke up early. She always took ripe bananas and cassava to sell at the market. I did not hurry to visit her that day. But I could not avoid her for long.





Later that evening I was called by my mother and father, and Grandma. I knew why. That night as I lay down to sleep, I knew I could never steal again. Not from grandma, not from my parents, and certainly not from anyone else.

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Grandma's Bananas

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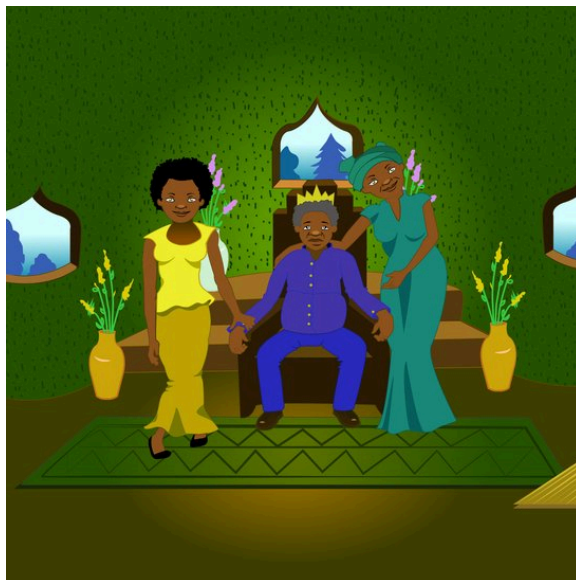




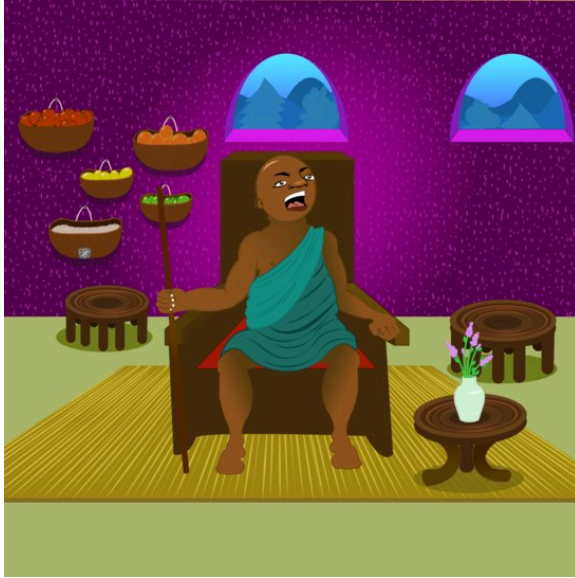
King Kayanja and his Daughter

Amana Yunus

Natalie Propa



Long, long ago there was a king called Kayanja. He lived in a palace with his queen and their daughter, Princess Amina. Princess Amina was such a beautiful young woman that every man wanted to marry her. But king Kayanja demanded a very high bride price for the princess.



Near king Kayanja 's palace lived a chief called Nyah the Great. He was called "the Great" because everybody in the neighbourhood obeyed him, and he was very violent to anyone who disobeyed him! Chief Nyah's wife had recently died of malaria, and he wanted another wife.





So the fat old chief went to king Kayanja to offer bride price for the young princess. While the two men were discussing the price, the maid Kakembo overheard their conversation. Maid Kakembo was very close to princess Amina.



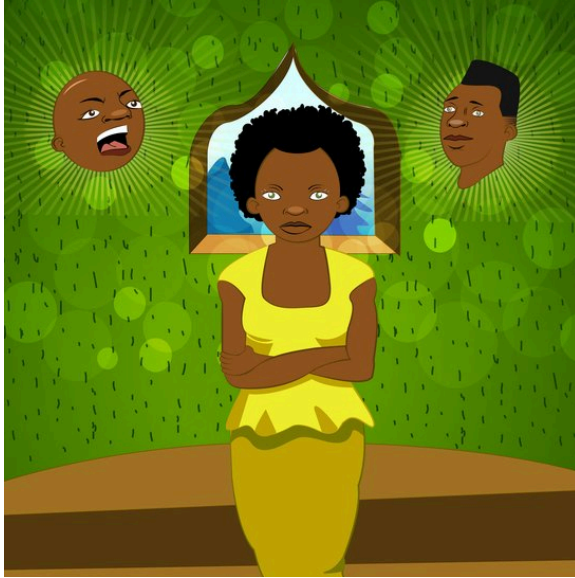
Chief Nyah agreed to give half of his wealth to king Kayanja, including a needle, which was also part of the bride price. Preparations were made in secret for the wedding between chief Nyah and princess Amina. The king knew that his daughter would not be happy with this decision.





One week before the royal wedding day, maid Kakembo approached Amina. "My dear Princess, your father has organised your wedding with chief Nyah, and it will take place in one week."

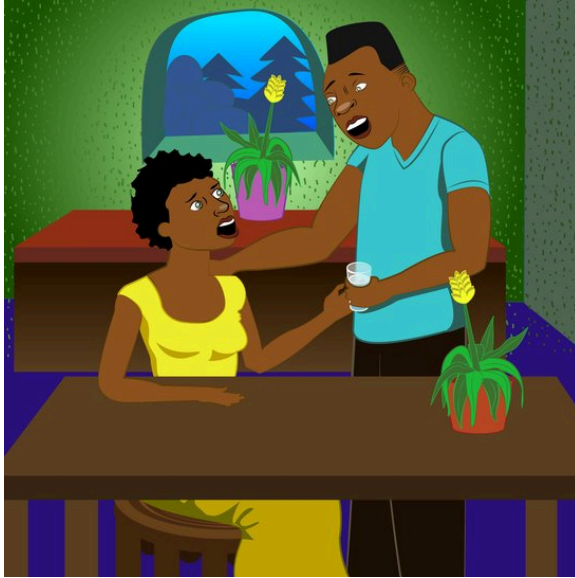




Princess Amina was shocked and at first didn't know what to do. Then she thought, "I will never marry chief Nyah, that fat old man. Never! I must hurry to Trevor and see what he can do before it's too late." Trevor was princess Amina's boyfriend.

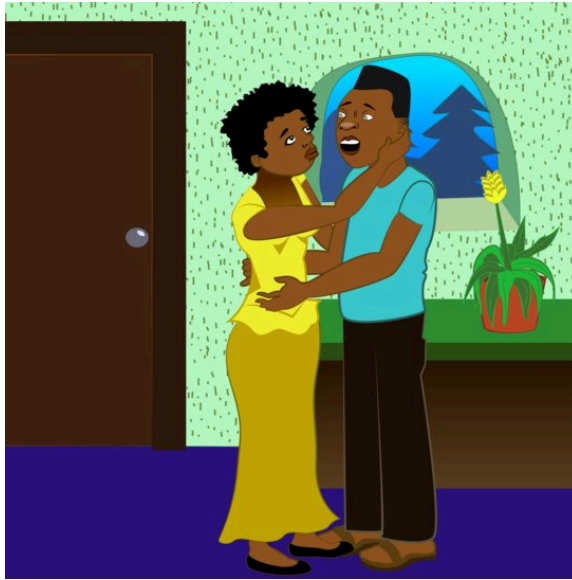


That night Amina crept out of the palace. If her father discovered where she was going he would be very angry. She ran through the thick, dark forest over rocks and shrubs. When finally she arrived at Trevor's house she was tired and thirsty.



"My love, why have you run all this long distance alone and at such a time of night?" asked Trevor. He fetched water for her and allowed her to rest. Trevor could not settle down while he waited for Amina to talk.





"My dear princess, what is the problem?" asked Trevor. Amina breathed heavily and said sadly, "My father wants to marry me off to chief Nyah the Great. But I can't marry that horrible man. Trevor, I want to marry you even if you are poor. I am ready to suffer. I love you."



"But princess, I have nothing to pay as your bride price, you know I'm a poor boy," cried Trevor. Amina replied, "I know, but it's only you I can get married to." She thought for a while and said, "Let's go to Kategga the boatman and ask him to take us across the river. That way we can escape and my father will never find us."





Back at the palace, king Kayanja had discovered princess Amina's disappearance. He ordered his subjects to search for her everywhere. The king's guards, soldiers, and everyone else searched, but they couldn't find the princess. They went back to the king and told him that Amina was nowhere to be seen. "Then go back and search again," King Kayanja ordered. He was very annoyed.





As Princess Amina and Trevor hurried to the riverbank, dark clouds began gathering in the sky. A heavy storm was coming.





Kategga the boatman was mooring his boat when the young couple approached him. Trevor asked Kategga to row them across the river. Kategga refused to accept, explaining that a heavy storm was fast approaching, and it would be too dangerous.

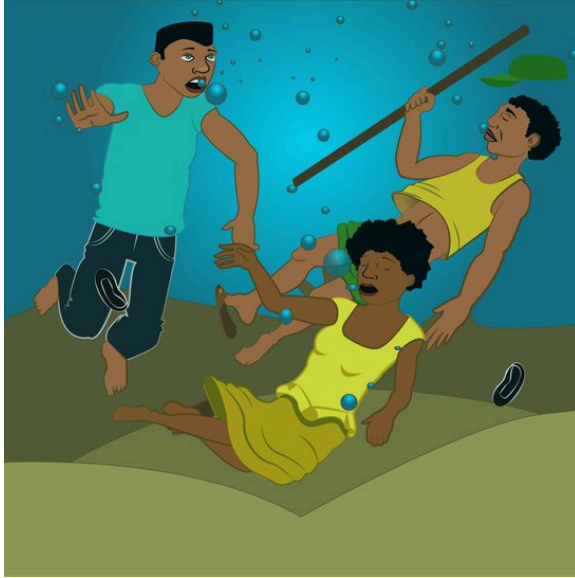


Trevor insisted and explained to Kategga why they must cross. He then put his hand deep in his pocket and took out a cowrie shell to give to Kategga. When Kategga heard their story and saw the beautiful shell, he felt sorry for them. He agreed to row them across the river in spite of the weather.





When King Kayanja and chief Nyah reached the bank, they saw the three people in the boat. They realised that the young lovers had escaped. Heavy winds rocked the boat and Kategga could no longer control it. King Kayanja shouted, "Amina, please come back! I forgive you. I will never punish you or Trevor."



But, it was too late. The boat tipped over and the three people were thrown into the wild water. They all drowned.

After that day, everyone in king Kayanja's kingdom could marry anyone they wanted, rich or poor.



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King Kayanja and his Daughter

Author - Amana Yunus

Illustration - Natalie Propa

Language - English

Level - Longer paragraphs

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Sizwe's Smile

Vianne Venter

Genevieve Terblanche



It had been raining for days, and everyone was grumpy. Everyone except Sizwe, who woke up with a smile every morning. "Yoh! Sizwe! That smile is magic!" said Gogo. "Is it for me?" Sizwe clapped his hand over his mouth. "But it's MY smile, Gogo," he whispered.





His mother laughed. "Sizwe! A smile is something you can give away without losing it. Look!" She lifted him up to the mirror. There was his smile, just as bright as before.





It was time to go out. Mama buttoned up Sizwe's raincoat, and off they went, through the rain, to the library. Down the street, Sizwe's best friend Zanele stood at the window of her house, looking sadly at the rain. Sizwe felt his smile creeping, creeping up. Before he knew it, his smile LEAPT out, and flew across the garden to Zanele.



Zanele held on tightly to the smile – it was far too precious to let it get away. As Sizwe walked away to the library, Zanele's doorbell rang. It was the postman, with a letter from her favourite cousin. Zanele was so happy, that the smile bounced up, and beamed out at the postman. "Thank you, Mister Postman!" she said.





Zanele's smile was the brightest thing the postman had seen all morning. It kept him warm as he trudged off through the rain. He came to a big house. Inside the gate, a dog was spinning around in circles, barking, barking, barking. He was so silly, that the postman couldn't help smiling. The smile bounced through the gate with a glitter of glee.



The dog stopped barking. He pricked up his ears and wagged his tail. Then he turned and ran back to the house with the precious, warm smile. A bent old man opened the door. "Oh, no! You can't come inside. You're all wet!" he told the dog. But right away, the smile beamed up at the old man.



The old man stood a little straighter. "Eish," he said, "Who cares if it's raining? Let's go for a walk, boy!" And off they went, splashing in the puddles. There, at the zebra crossing, stood grumpy Mrs Makabela, the traffic cop. She looked cold, and wet, and miserable. The old man knew just what to do. "Morning, Mrs Makabela!" he called, and smiled his biggest, brightest smile. But Mrs Makabela did not smile back.



Standing in the rain for days can make a face sad, sad, sad. But a smile is a magical thing and, by now, the smile was so strong, and so bright, that it was very hard to keep inside. It didn't work right away, but bit by tiny bit, it began to creep out until, at last!



A great, big smile lit up Mrs Makabela's face! The school bell rang, and children ran to cross the road. Mrs Makabela put up her sign, and smiled, and smiled, at each and every child.



The children smiled at their moms and dads, and their gogos and tatas and brothers and sisters. They smiled at the bus driver and the greengrocer, and Mme Makau, who went off to smile at her husband, who smiled at the mayor. The smiles leapt and rolled and beamed and gleamed until EVERYONE was smiling and giggling and laughing out loud in the rain.



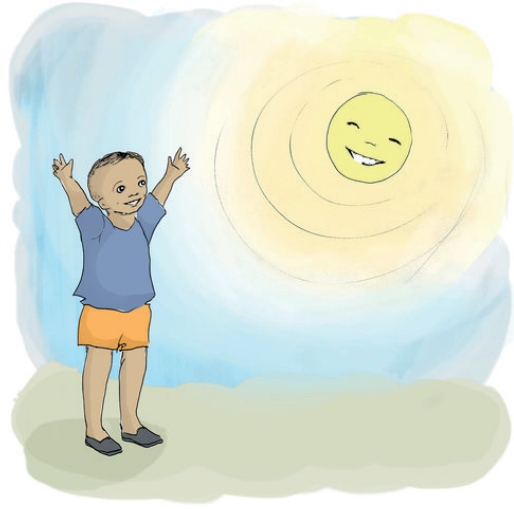


In the library, everything was quiet except for the sound of the rain. "It's time to go," said Sizwe's mother, closing her book. "Aw, mom!" said Sizwe, who had run out of smiles.





But as they stepped out into the street
WHAT A SIGHT! Everyone in town was
there! Everyone! And they were ALL
smiling!



The smiles bounced around and beamed at Sizwe. They warmed him, and tickled him, and crept up, up, up from his toes to the TOP of his head. He was so full of happiness that the smile burst out, brilliant and beaming bright. And something changed. The dark, gloomy, rainy afternoon didn't seem so dark anymore. Could it be? YES! The clouds parted, and the warm sun shone down on them, with the biggest, brightest, most brilliant smile of all.

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Sizwe's Smile

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Illustration - Genevieve Terblanche

Language - English

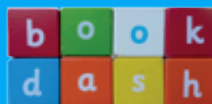
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Lion and Warthog

Judith Baker

Wiehan de Jager



Once upon a time, Lion was the strongest and most feared of all the animals. He would catch other animals and eat them. But one morning while he was looking for his breakfast, he got caught in a hunter's trap.



Lion gave his loudest roar. He pulled and pulled to free himself from the trap. The trap got tighter and tighter around his leg every time he pulled. Lion grew tired and he felt more pain in his leg. Finally, he gave up.



Days went past as Lion lay baking in the sun. He was hungry and thirsty and there was nobody to save him. He became weaker and weaker. "I am going to die of hunger and thirst in this trap," he thought to himself.





One morning, Lion heard a sound coming from the nearby bushes. He listened and looked closer. He saw Warthog walking with his family, talking and laughing. The warthogs were going to the river to drink water and play in the mud before the sun got too hot.



"Warthog! Please help me! Warthog!" cried Lion. "Please set me free from this trap," he pleaded. "Never," said Warthog. "You are a cruel animal. You will eat me and my family for breakfast if I set you free." Lion replied, "I promise I would never do such a bad thing. We will be friends if you can set me free."





Warthog felt sorry for Lion. "I do not like seeing you in such pain, thirsty and dying from hunger," he said. So he pulled off the trap with his long strong tusks and released Lion. Warthog saved his new friend.



"Thank you for saving my life," said Lion. "I must go to my family now, good bye." Warthog replied, "Go well my friend." He was happy that Lion was his friend. "My family will never have to run from Lion again," he thought.



Lion walked away limping and weak. He was also very hungry. Then he saw Warthog's children playing in the mud. "Today is my lucky day," said Lion with his mouth watering.



"Warthog, my new friend," called Lion. "I have been caught in the trap for days without food. I am too weak to hunt. Please would you give one of your children to me for breakfast?" Warthog was shocked. "I saved you from the trap and now you want to eat my children?"





"I am very sorry my friend," said Lion, "but I am starving. I might be weak right now, but I am still stronger than you." Lion opened his mouth and showed his strong teeth. "If you do not give me one of your children, I will take one for myself," he roared.



Warthog knew that he did not have the speed or the strength of Lion. He would never be able to protect his children in a fight. All right," agreed Warthog. "I will give you one of my children. But first I want you to show me how you were caught in the trap. In case I have to save another lion from such a trap."





Lion imagined the wonderful taste of young warthog in his mouth. He could hardly wait. He went back to the trap and put his foot inside, to show his friend how he was trapped.



"Ouch!" Lion roared. Warthog had closed the trap on Lion's foot. "Aha! I got you," said Warthog. "You will stay in that trap hungry and thirsty again. See if your strong teeth and sharp claws can help you now."





"Run! Run! Run away!" Warthog's wife shouted to the children at the top of her voice. "Raise your tails when you are running so that your father can see you," she called. The babies ran as fast as they could through the bushes.



"Warthog please help me!" begged Lion again. He was in pain from the trap. "I will do anything for you if you save me," he cried. "No way, liar! I will never believe you again," shouted Warthog. "I will also warn other animals not to save you because you are very sly."





Warthog saw his children running in a row with their mother. Their tails were lifted up for him to see them. He rushed to his family and they all escaped safely. To this day, warthogs always run with their tails lifted up to see that everyone is safe.



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Lion and Warthog

Author - South African Folktale

Adaptation - Judith Baker

Illustration - Wiehan de Jager

Language - English

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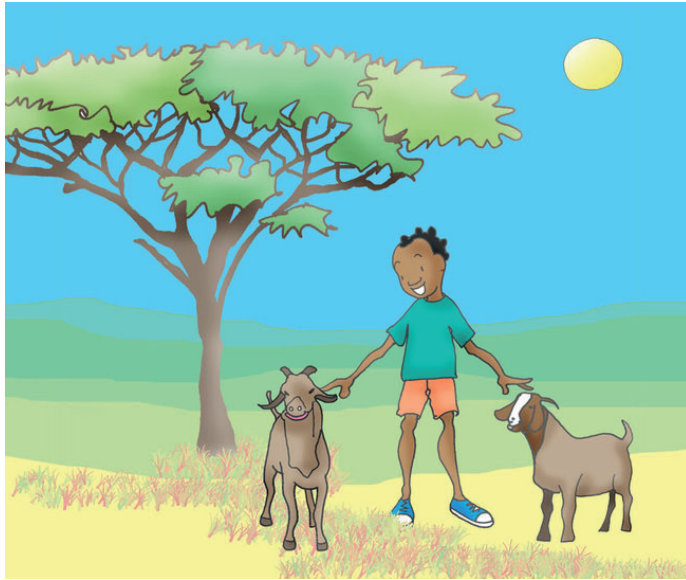


My First Day at the Market

Timothy Kabare

Catherine Groenewald





I live in Kakuma village, a very hot dry place, full of thorny trees, and more goats than people. Even the market place is quiet, with only a few small shops. Most people use bicycles for transport.



One morning my mother called me and said, "Etabo, today you turned six years old. We have a present for you." "What is it, Mother?" I asked eagerly. "Tomorrow we're going by bus to the market in Kumba," she replied, "And we're taking you with us!" My first visit to the city! I was so excited that I could hardly sleep that night.





The next day at the bus stop,
I stood between my mother and my
aunt. I wore my new pair of blue jeans
and a red T-shirt. I felt very small
between my tall slender mother and
my big round aunt.



The bus was very full, so I had to sit on my mother's lap. Tired from the heat and excitement, I slept the whole way throughout the journey and saw nothing.

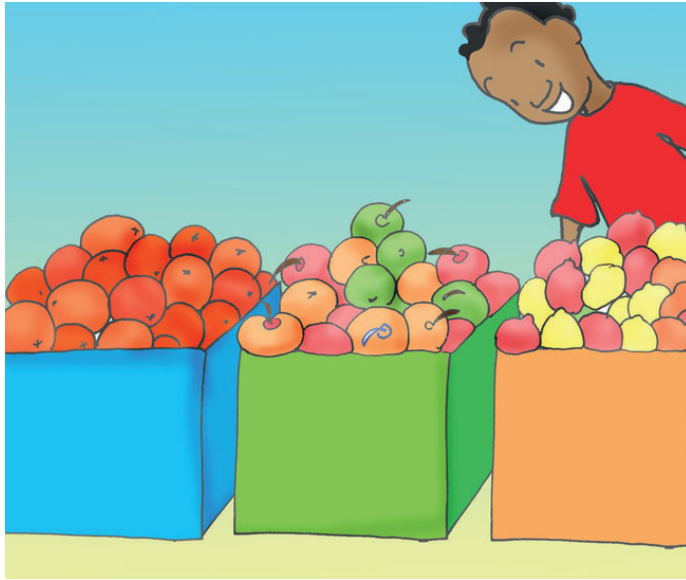




The sun was just rising when we reached Eldoret market. At the entrance was a woman selling grains. Over in one corner there were two men getting ready to lay out their sweet potatoes. Over in another corner was a woman holding a shiny blue helicopter. "Mother, mother, look at that helicopter!" But mother pulled me away.



In the middle of the market, there was a large stall that sold different types of fruit. Some of them I had never seen before. "What are the names of these fruits?" I asked my mother. She pointed, "These are oranges, and these are guavas." I turned around and said, "And these?"



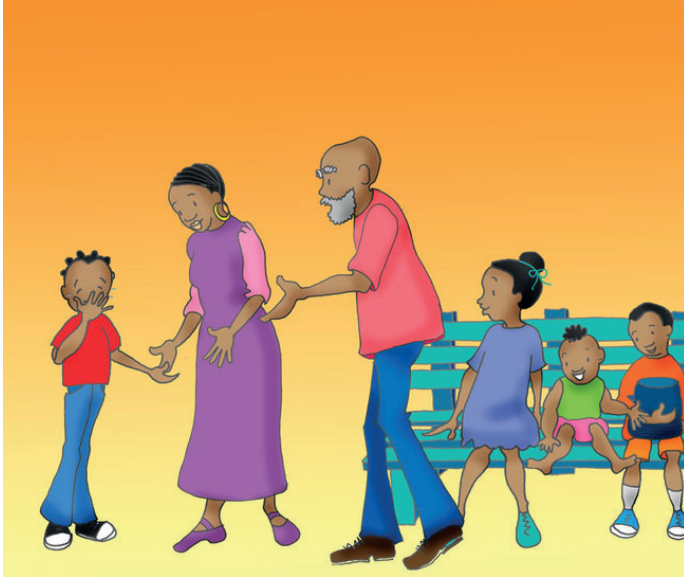
Of all the fruits at the stall, I liked the apples most. I liked their shape and colour. I wondered how they tasted. I turned to mother and said, "Could you buy one for me?"



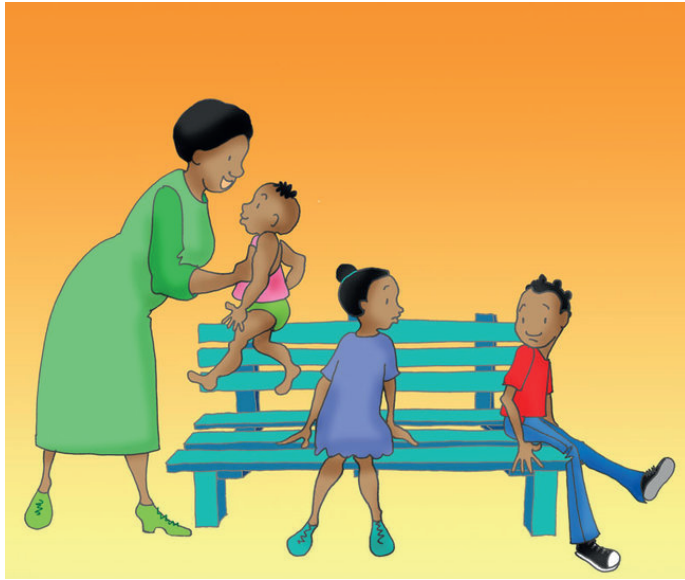
As soon as she gave me the apple, I let go of my mother's hand, took the fruit with both hands, and bit into the juicy flesh. I had never enjoyed a fruit the way I enjoyed that apple. All I cared about was my apple.



When I finished the apple, I looked up to talk to my mother. But she was not there! My mother and aunt had gone. I looked to the right, then to the left. But they were nowhere to be seen. "Have you seen my mother?" I asked the women selling potatoes nearby. They took no notice. I started to cry.



A while later, a woman took me by the hand and led me to a place where there were other children. A big man with a thick beard asked, "What's your name, boy?" "E-ta-bo," I replied through my tears.



I wondered if children were also sold at the market. I stopped crying and looked around to see if anyone would buy the children in the room. Soon a woman came in and picked up one of the children. "I will be the next one to be taken away," I thought. "And then I'll never see home again!" I started crying once more.



When I heard the big man with the thick beard saying, "Where is Etabo?" I cried even harder. "I do not want to go with you!" I sobbed. I hid away from him.



When my mother and aunt heard my name, they rushed to the room.
"Etabo, Etabo!" a familiar voice called.
It was my mother.



As I got up to hug my mother, my aunt said, "Etabo, we were looking for you to give you your birthday present." And from a big bag, my aunt pulled out a shiny blue helicopter. "It's yours!" she said.

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My First Day at the Market

Author - Timothy Kabare and Ursula Nafula

Illustration - Catherine Groenewald

Language - English

Level - Longer paragraphs

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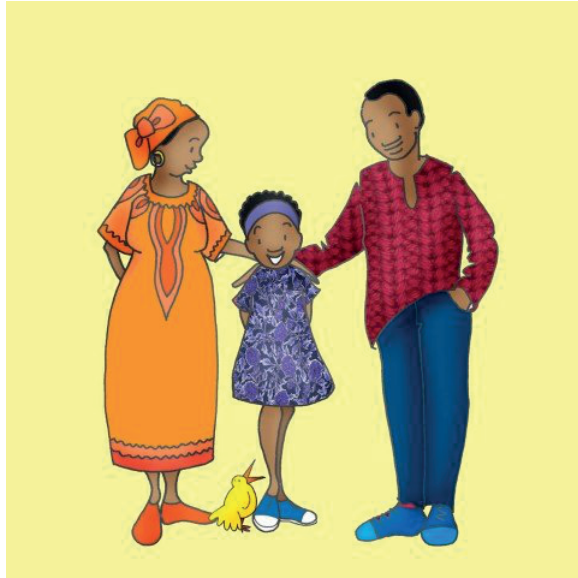


Khayanga and her Gourd

Ursula Nafula

Catherine Groenewald





Khayanga lived with her parents happily until they died when she was ten years old.



Khayanga was taken in by Rosa, a distant relative. Rosa was kind to Khayanga, but she was old, frail and poor.



Khayanga often visited her parents' graves to tell them of her misery.



One day when she visited, she received a gift. It was a very special Gourd which appeared from her parents' graves.



The Gourd sang a beautiful and soothing song. Khayanga recognised the voice as that of her late mother. It went like this.



Khayanga, ee, Khayanga! Our child the loved one!
You're not alone, loved one! Have this gourd, loved
one! Carry it everywhere you go, loved one! Let it
console you loved one!





Khayanga carried her special Gourd everywhere. With her Gourd, Khayanga felt her parents' presence and protection.



One day, something bad happened to her special Gourd. It broke when she was fetching water in the river. Khayanga 's heart broke as well.



Khayanga held the pieces of the broken Gourd in her small hands and sang:



Father and Mother, see the gourd is broken. The gourd
you gave me. What do I do, Mother and Father? Be
kind and show me a sign that you are still with me.





Khayanga heard her mother's voice saying to her: "Our child, pick up the pieces that are left. Fetch water with them and wash your feet. When you finish washing, close your eyes." Khayanga obeyed and suddenly, the broken Gourd became whole once again.



Khayanga continued to carry her Gourd everywhere she went. Wherever she passed, people whispered to each other, "What type of gourd is this?" With her special Gourd, Khayanga received everything she needed.



With the special Gourd, Khayanga knew that her parents were watching over her. Nothing bad could happen to her.

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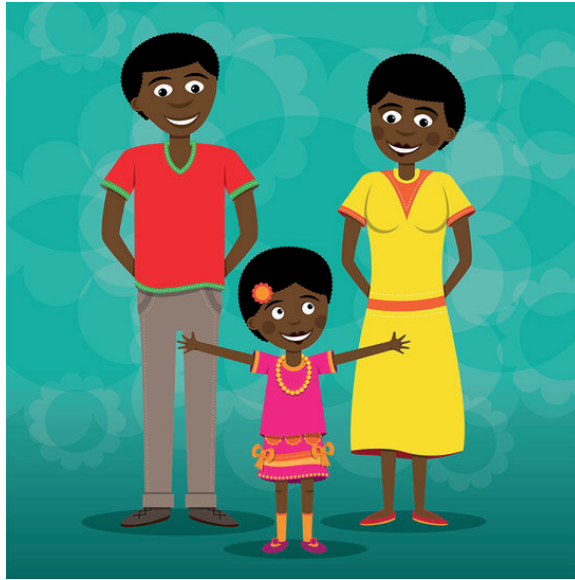




Nonkungu and the Imbulu

Alan Kenyon

Wiehan de Jager



Once upon a time, there was a poor couple who only had one child, called Nonkungu. They loved her very much.

When she was old enough, her parents decided to send Nonkungu to stay with her rich Uncle Obama.

Nonkungu's mother made special clothes with ribbon, buttons and beads. Then Nonkungu set off for her uncle's village.





On her journey, Nonkungu came to a stream. She crossed the stream and met a girl wearing rags. The girl asked, "Where are you going?" Nonkungu replied, "I'm going to visit my Uncle Obama."

"Well, Obama is my uncle, too! I am also on my way to visit him," said the girl. They set off together. After a while, the girl said to Nonkungu, "Your clothes are lovely. Please let me try them on."





Nonkungu took off her clothes and gave them to the girl. When the girl took off her rags, Nonkungu saw that she had a tail! Nonkungu was afraid.

She realised that the girl was really an imbulu.

They walked a little further, and then Nonkungu asked, "Please give me back my clothes and beads."





The imbulu answered, "Let me wear them until we get to the next tree." She pointed to a tree on a hill nearby.

When they reached the tree, Nonkungu asked, "Please give me back my clothes and beads."

The imbulu replied, "Just let me wear them until we get to that field." She pointed to a field on the next hill.





At last they reached the field. Again Nonkungu asked the imbulu, "Please give me back my clothes and my beads."

The imbulu replied, "Just let me wear them until we get to that hut where the women are sitting." She pointed to a hut in the distance.

But when they finally got near to the hut, the imbulu pushed Nonkungu back and ran ahead.





The imbulu said to the women at the hut, "Look at this girl wearing rags. She has been following me all day. I wish she would go away."

The women turned to look at Nonkungu. She was so frightened that she ran and hid in the kraal. The imbulu went to Uncle Obama's hut.



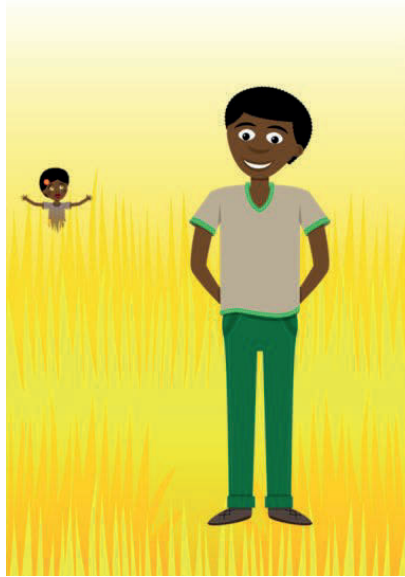


Obama and his family welcomed the imbulu, who said she was their niece.

Poor Nonkungu continued to hide away. She sang this song:

"Oh misery me, misery me. I was sent to stay with my Uncle Obama. On the way I met an imbulu. She took my skirt and my beads. Oh misery me, misery me."





One day, Obama's eldest son was walking in the field and heard the sad song. He didn't know who was singing, but when he got home, he told his father the words.

Obama went into the fields. He heard the song, and looked until he found Nonkungu.





Nonkungu told her uncle everything that had happened. Obama took her back to the village and hid her in a hut. He knew what he was going to do to catch the imbulu.

Obama had heard that an imbulu's tail loves milk and that it can't go past milk without drinking some. So he told his men to dig a hole and fill it with sour milk.



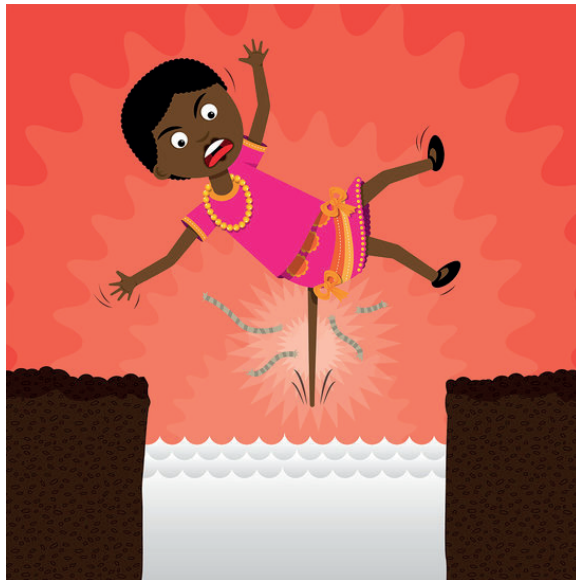


Then Obama called all the girls of the village to take part in a jumping competition.

The imbulu was worried. She did not want to jump over the hole, she knew that her tail would be thirsty for the sour milk. So she went into a hut and tied her tail to her body as tightly as she could.

Then she took her place with the other girls.





One girl after another jumped over the hole with the sour milk. At last it was the imbulu's turn.

She tried to jump high over the hole, but her tail broke loose. The imbulu's tail pulled her down, down, down into the sour milk.





As the imbulu struggled in the milk, they quickly filled the hole with sand and buried her.

That was the end of the imbulu. Nonkungu stayed happily with her uncle for a long, long time.



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Nonkungu and the Imbulu

Author - Alan Kenyon and Viv Kenyon

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How Stories Came to People

Ghanaian folktale

Wiehan de Jager



Long, long ago, the sky god, Nyame, kept all stories locked in a wooden box, up in the sky.

People down on earth had no stories to tell and they were very sad. They asked Anansi the Spider to help them.





Anansi spun a long thread, and climbed up his sticky thread all the way to heaven. "Can I have the stories, please?" he asked the sky god.

But Nyame laughed at Anansi and said, "Oh, these are very expensive stories. You wouldn't be able to pay for them, little spider."





"How much do the stories cost?" asked Anansi. "You'll have to bring me three rare and fierce animals," Nyame answered.

"Bring a leopard with sharp teeth like spears, a hornet that stings people, and a snake that swallows people whole," said Nyame, laughing. He thought his stories were quite safe.





So Anansi climbed slowly back down his sticky thread to the earth. He thought and he thought, and he came up with a plan.

He dug a deep hole, covered it with branches and dirt so it was hidden. He went home for supper.

In the morning, sure enough, a leopard had fallen into his pit. He was furiously scratching at the side of the pit, but he couldn't get out.





"Oh, let me help you, my dear friend!" said Anansi to the leopard. "Just lie down on these sticks and I'll pull you out."

Anansi wound his sticky web round the leopard and the sticks, and pulled him up to heaven to show the sky god.

But Nyame just laughed and said, "Where are the other two?"





Anansi went back to earth to get the second creature. He thought and he thought and he came up with a plan.

He filled a gourd with water and picked a banana leaf, and then went to the tree where the hornets lived.

He held the banana leaf over his head and poured half of the water over himself.





Anansi poured the rest of the water over the hornets' nest. He shouted, "Hey hornets! It is raining! Quick, get inside my gourd and it will keep you dry."

Hornets don't like to get wet, so they all flew into Anansi's gourd.



Anansi quickly spun a web across the opening of the gourd. The hornets couldn't get out, no matter how much they buzzed.

He carried the gourd up to heaven and showed the sky god. But Nyame just said, "Where's the last one?" (He wasn't laughing so much anymore.)





Anansi went down to earth again. He thought and thought and he thought, but he couldn't come up with a plan.

So he asked his wife, who had a very good idea. They found a long thick branch and some strong vines.

Then, they went to the stream where the snake lived, and began to argue. "The branch is longer!"

"No, it isn't!"

"Yes it is!"





Soon the snake came out and asked what the argument was all about.

"I was arguing with my wife," said Anansi. "She says this stick is longer than you are. But I don't agree."

The snake exclaimed, "Of course I'm longer than that stick! I'm very long! I'm a huge snake! Just put your stick next to me and measure!"





Anansi did that.

And to keep the snake straight, Anansi tied him to the stick with the strong vine.

After tying up the snake, Anansi took him to the sky god.





Nyame had to admit that Anansi had paid his price. He went to his wooden box, opened the lid, and gave all the stories to Anansi.

Anansi carried the stories triumphantly down to earth. He shared them with his wife, and with all the other animals and people.

We tell stories to entertain and draw lessons, they are not meant to be kept in boxes.





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