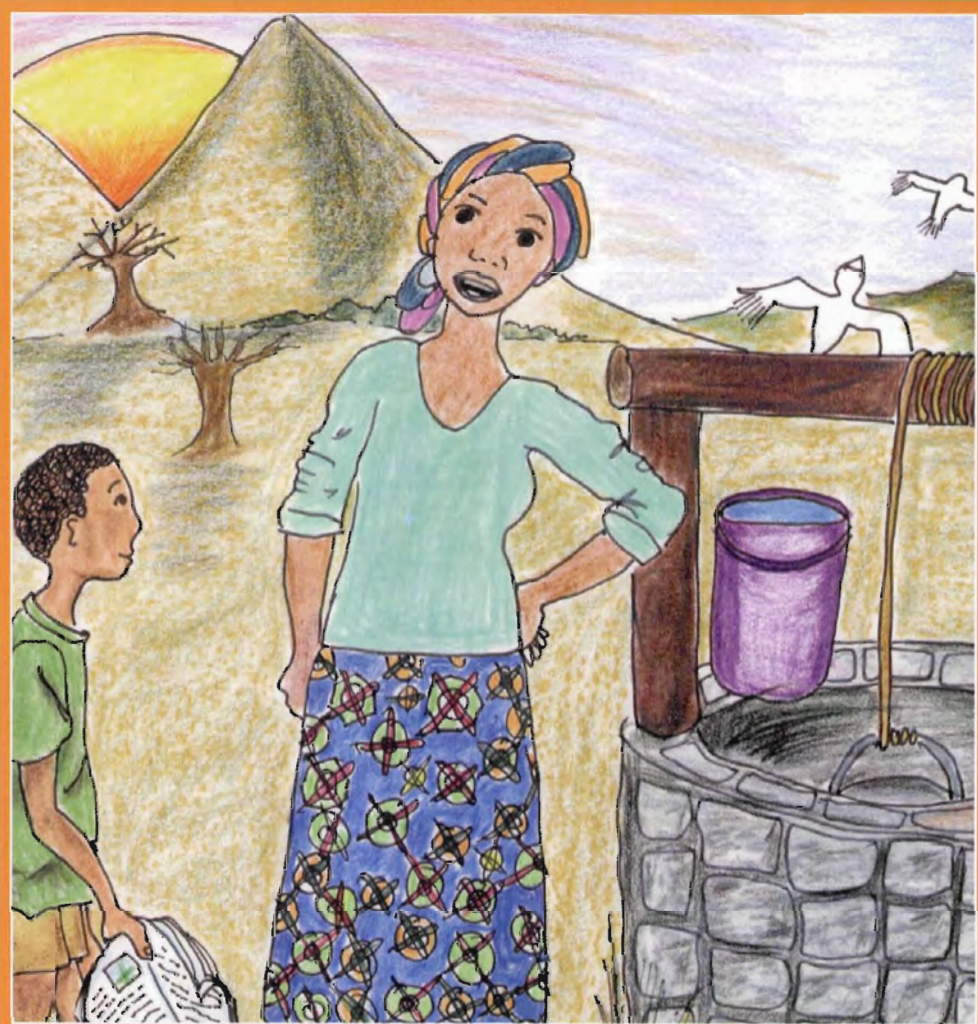


Saving Ndavulwa



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Rauha Amwele, Simeon Amutenya and Adolf Amutenya

Illustrator

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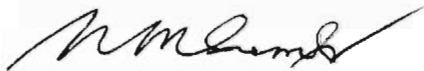
Writing for Kids

Dedication by the Honourable Minister of Education

It is a great pleasure for me to dedicate the second set of titles in the **Writing for Kids**-series to all Namibian learners. These are supplementary reading books for Namibia's primary school learners. Learning to read and write in primary school is a key objective of the Ministry of Education. In order to become readers, children need interesting and informative books to read. These books will be an important addition to every classroom. The stories explore vital issues which will help the readers to develop essential life skills. Some of these skills are needed to mitigate the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic on our children's lives.

The **Writing for Kids** books were written by Namibian teachers and illustrated by Namibian artists. We can all take pride in the fact that **Writing for Kids** is a Namibian project. It has resulted in a truly Namibian product to be used in our classrooms. The project is a joint venture of the Ministry's National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Basic Education Support Project, Phase III (BES 3).

Reading is for both children and adults. Parents, help your children to read. Children, help your parents to read.



Nangolo Mbumba, MP
Minister of Education

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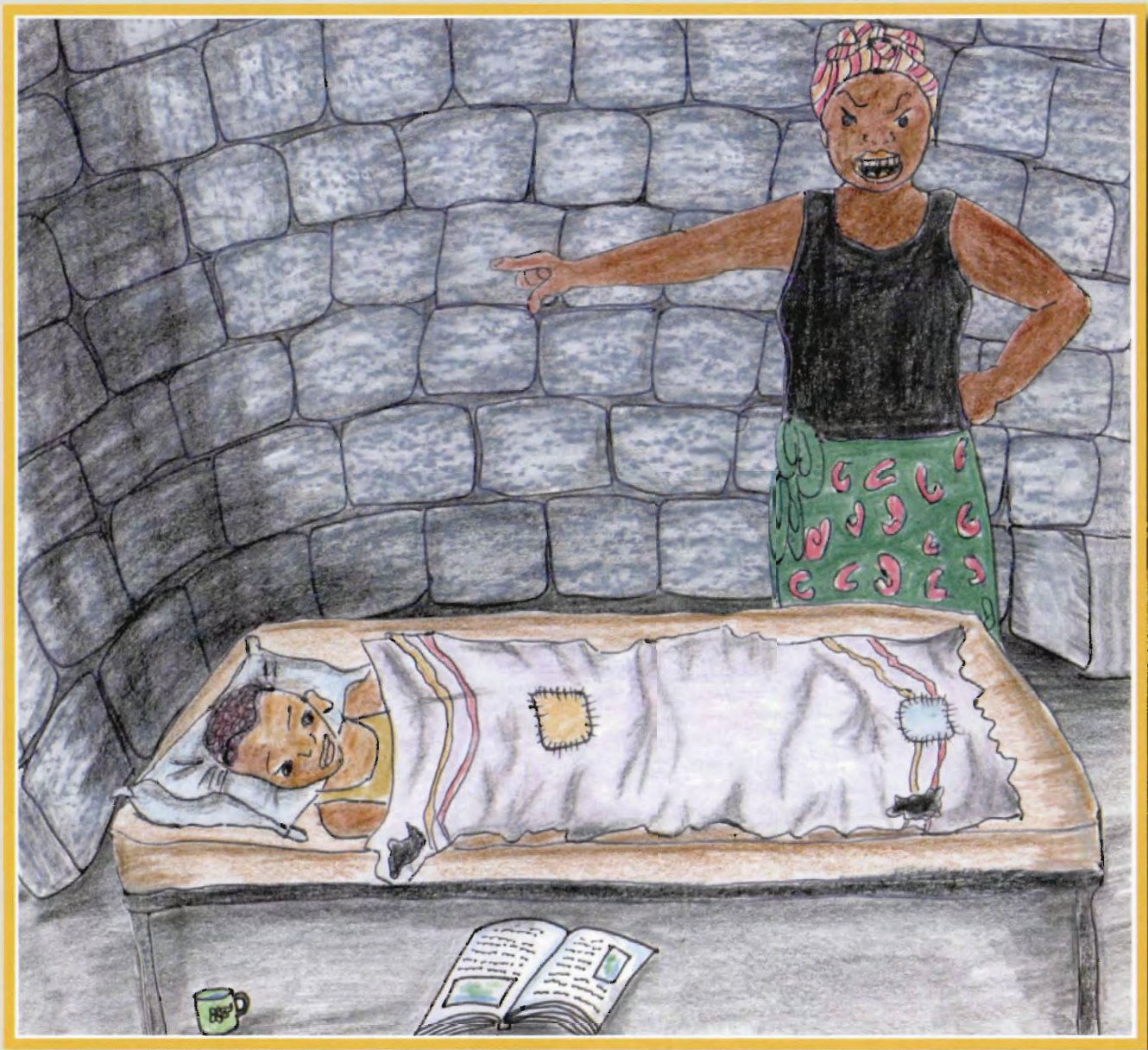


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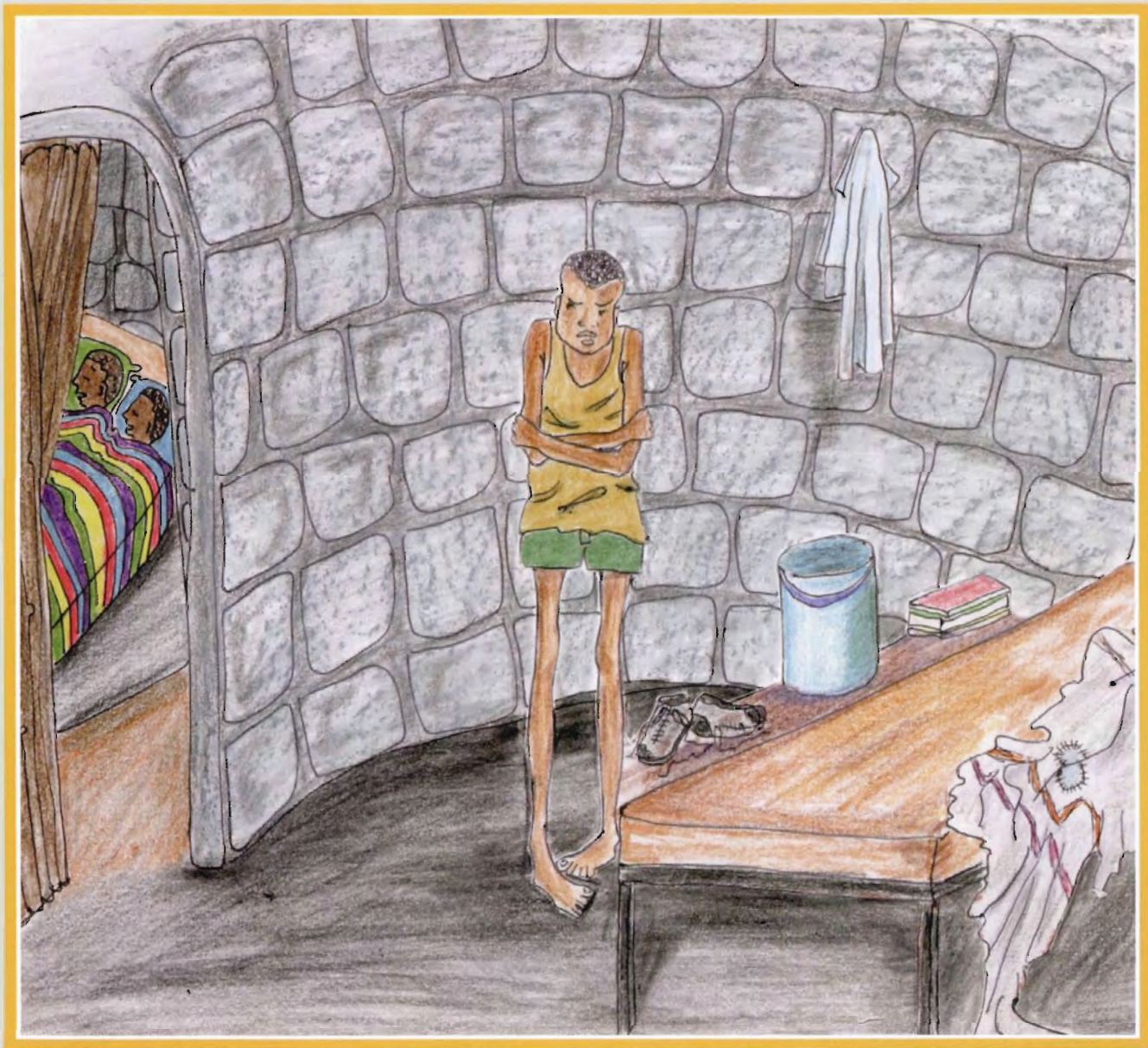
Early one morning in Okandongwena village, birds sang, a winter wind blew and tree branches swayed. “Squeeeak, squeeeak, squeeeak,” they said. The large village, filled with homesteads, small herds of donkeys, cattle and goats, camel thorns, mopane trees, palm trees and Manila Jackal Berry bushes, began to wake up. It was the dry season and water was scarce. The villagers had to fetch water from the wells on the edge of the village.



Ndavulwa, a 10 year old boy, lay awake in the early morning darkness.

“Ndavulwa, get up! You must fetch water from the well, warm the water, make tea, and polish my children’s shoes before school.”

Every morning Ndavulwa woke to the shouting of his Aunt Ndamona, his mother’s sister. Now that both his mother and father were dead, she provided him with food and shelter.



Ndavulwa kicked his torn blanket to the side of his bed. He put on his worn-out shirt. He picked up a big bucket. In a nearby room he could hear his two age-mate cousins snoring, still enjoying sweet dreams in the warmth of their colourful blankets.

“It is too early for them to get up,” he said to himself, shivering from the cold.



“Where are you, Ndavulwa? Hurry up! Hurry up!” shouted Aunt Ndamona.

“I am on my way,” replied Ndavulwa, hiding his anger.

Ndavulwa loved to read. Wherever he went, he took along a book. Walking to and from the well gave him a bit of time to read. He did this every day.



At the well, he met Meme Ndakumwa, a neighbour.

“My boy! What are you doing here at this time of day? Are you not supposed to be in bed?” she asked.

“I came to fetch water. I have a lot to do before I go to school.” He struggled to put the bucket on his head.

“Oh my!” she said to herself, noticing the boy’s cracked feet in the morning light. “Oh, this life is not fair. Why are orphans treated like this? What if he were my child?”



Meme Ndakumwa helped him balance his full bucket of water and handed him his reading book. She watched him walk away and felt pity for the boy. "I must go and speak to his aunt. I must tell her to stop treating her nephew like that," she said to herself.



Ndavulwa quickly walked back to the homestead.

“You took so long! Where have you been?” Aunt Ndamona yelled before he could even put the bucket down. “You must make tea for my children, warm the water, and polish their shoes before you go to school.” She spoke with a voice loud enough to wake a sleeping crocodile.



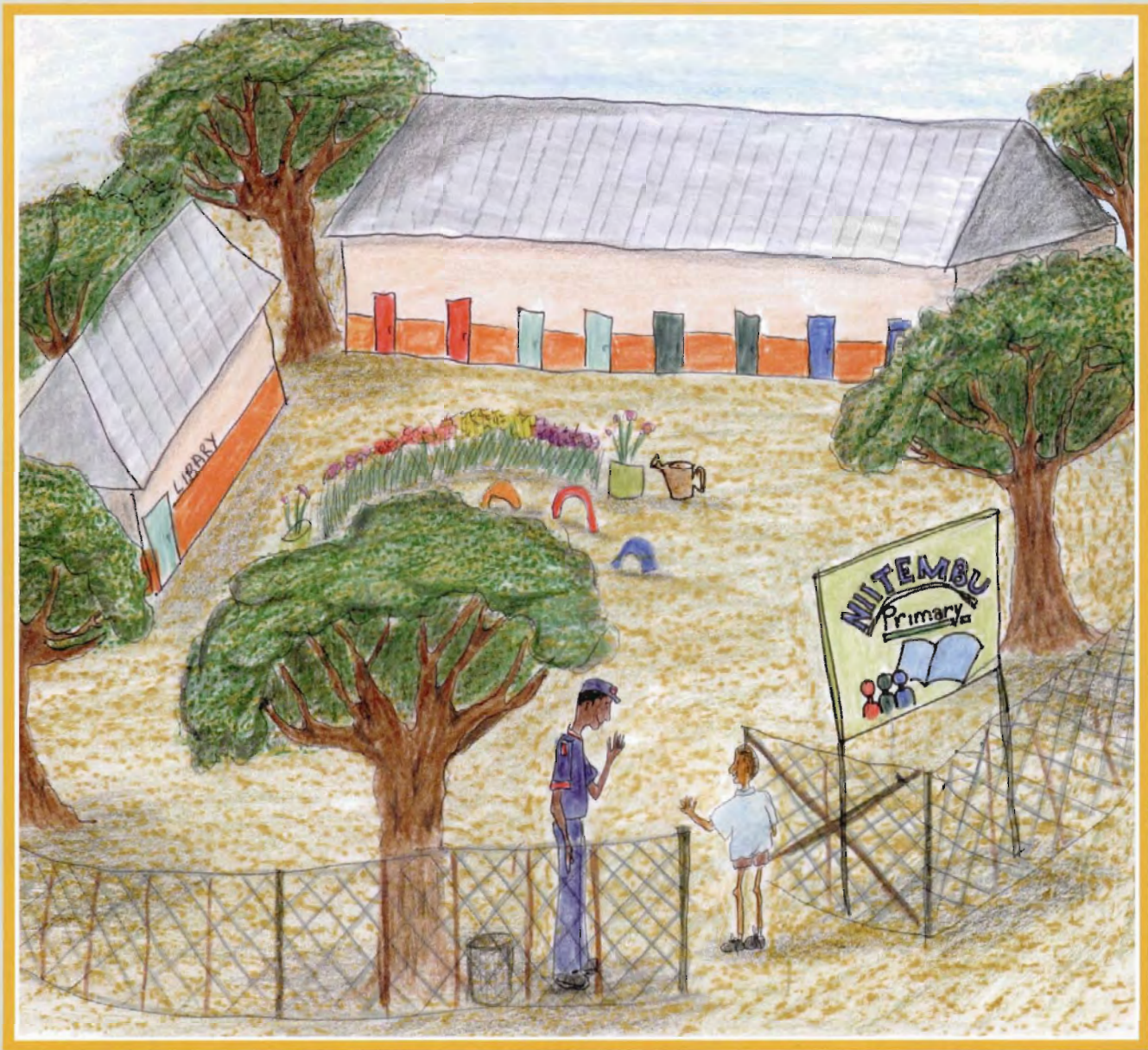
Ndavulwa muttered to himself, “I know, I know. Why can’t you be quiet?” Then, quite suddenly, he shouted back at his aunt.

“First I must warm the water, then polish their shoes, then wash the children, then make tea for them. When do I ever have time for myself?”

His aunt raised her hand as if to strike him but the fiery look in his eyes made her stop. She lowered her hand and shouted, “Get away from me. Go to school.”



Ndavulwa dressed for school. He put on his school uniform - brown shorts, an oversized blue shirt, and his old black shoes. His toes stuck out. These were the same shoes his father had bought for him three years ago before he left for the hospital and never returned...

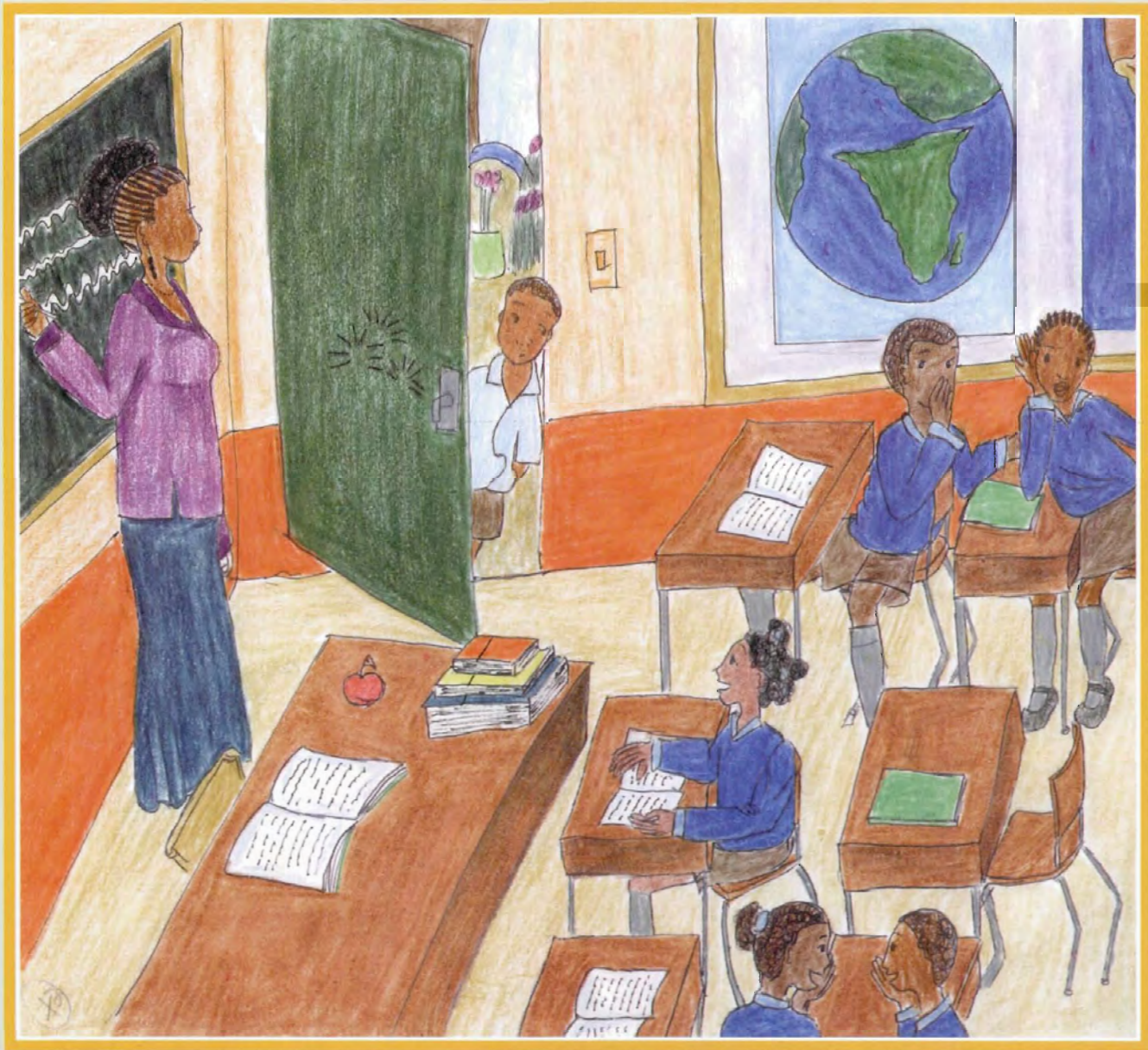


Ndavulwa knew he was late for school. He would have to run. But no matter how late he was, he would never miss a day at Niitembu Primary. Niitembu Primary had eight classrooms, a library, trees, a garden, and a wired fence to protect the school from wandering goats and cattle. Every day, even though Ndavulwa arrived late, the security guard greeted him at the gate.



Ndavulwa knocked gently at the Grade 4 door because he didn't want to disturb his teacher, Mrs Tuyakula. She knew who was knocking.

“It has to be Ndavulwa,” she thought. “He always knocks like that. It is a knock that asks for forgiveness.”



“Sor..., sorry, sorry teacher. I...I am late again,” his voice trembled. “I had to fetch water, make tea and wash my cousins.”

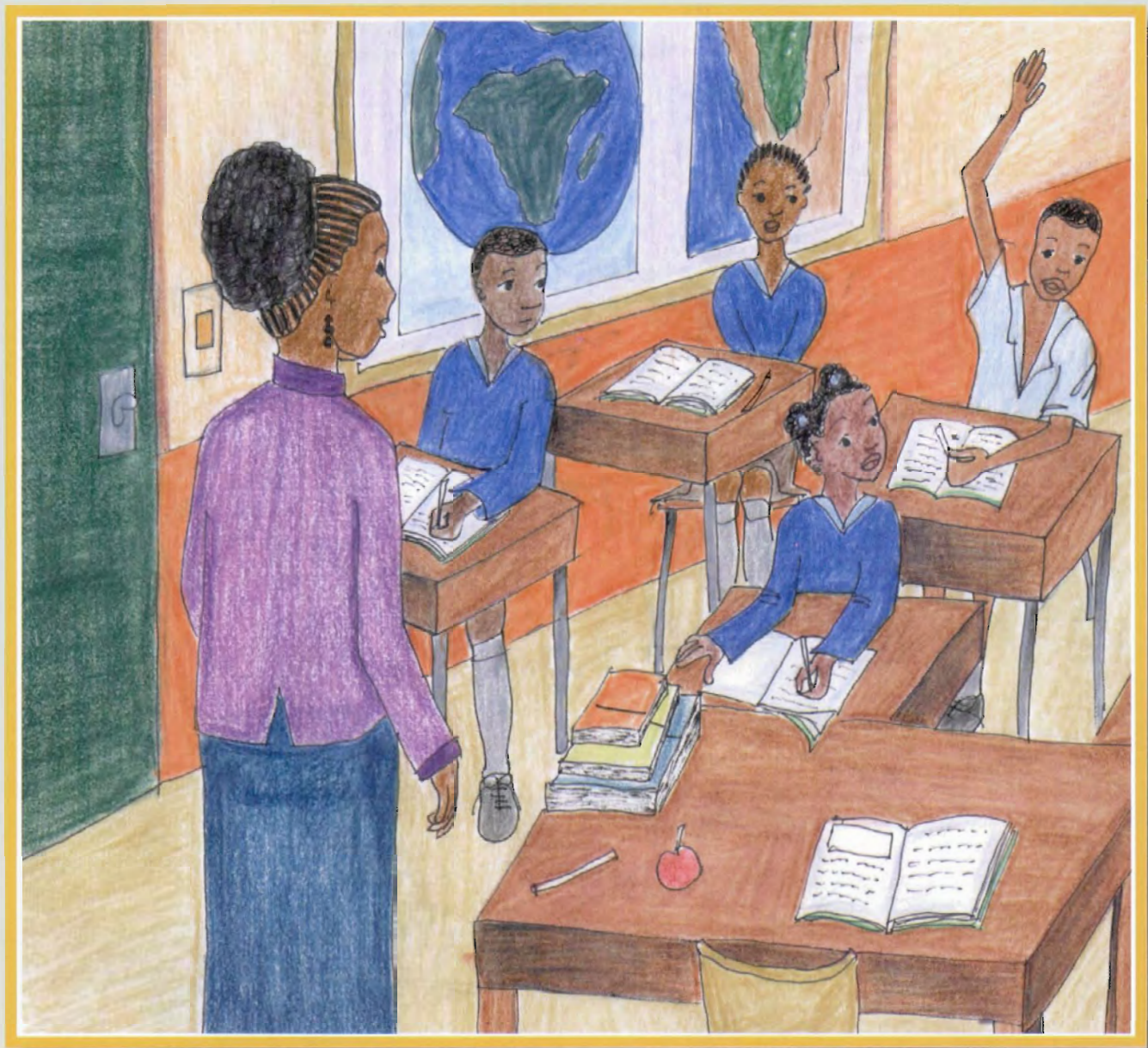
The whole class stared at him.

“Sssssssssss, wu-u, wu-u, ooooo, ooooo, you are always late,” they whispered and laughed.

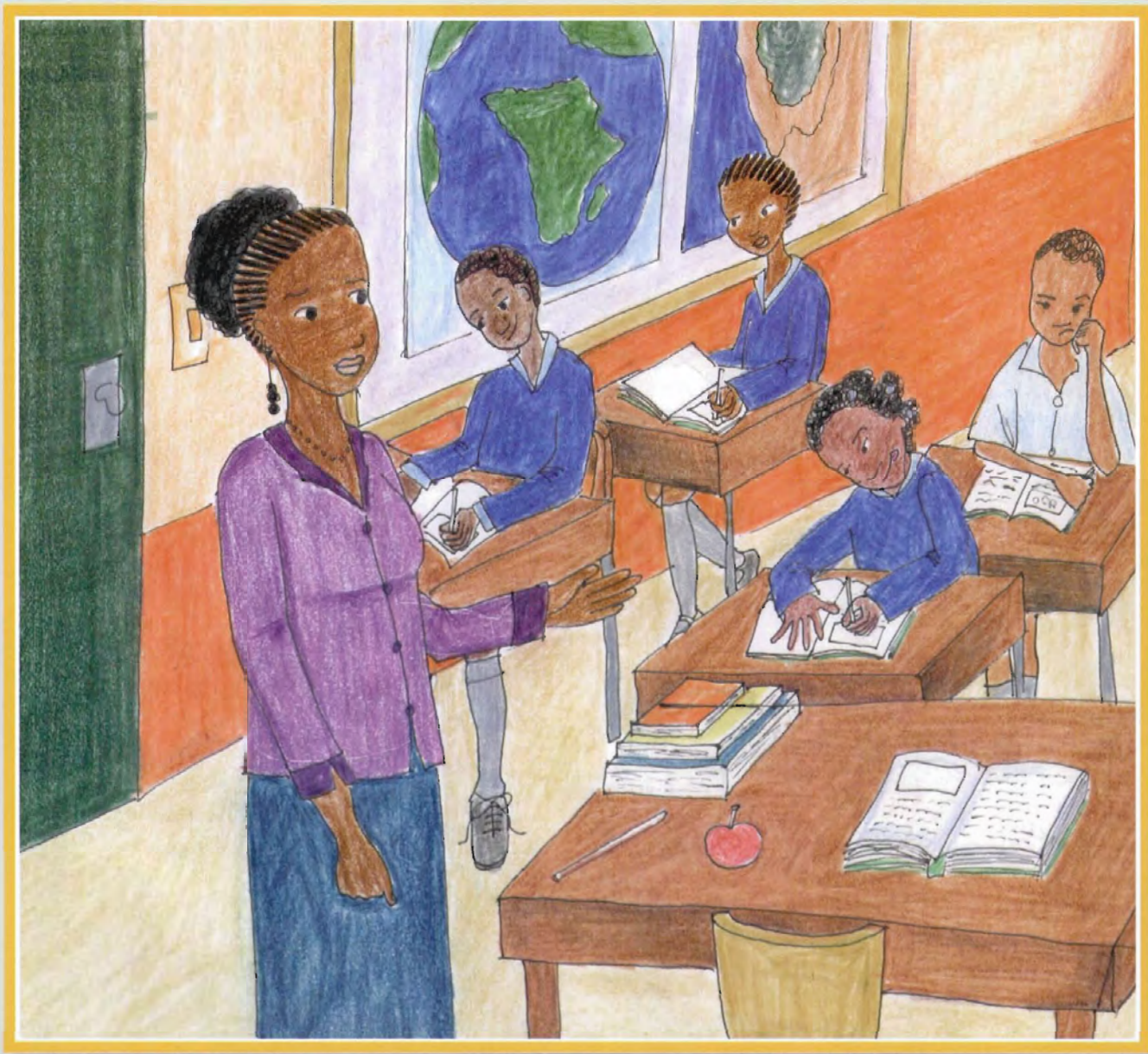
Mrs Tuyakula looked at him. “Come in, my boy. Sit at your place. I know it is not your fault, but please try to come to school on time,” she said in a soft voice.



Ndavulwa ignored everyone and sat quietly at his place. He realized that the second lesson had already begun. He wondered, “When will my teacher get tired of giving me help for what I’ve missed?”

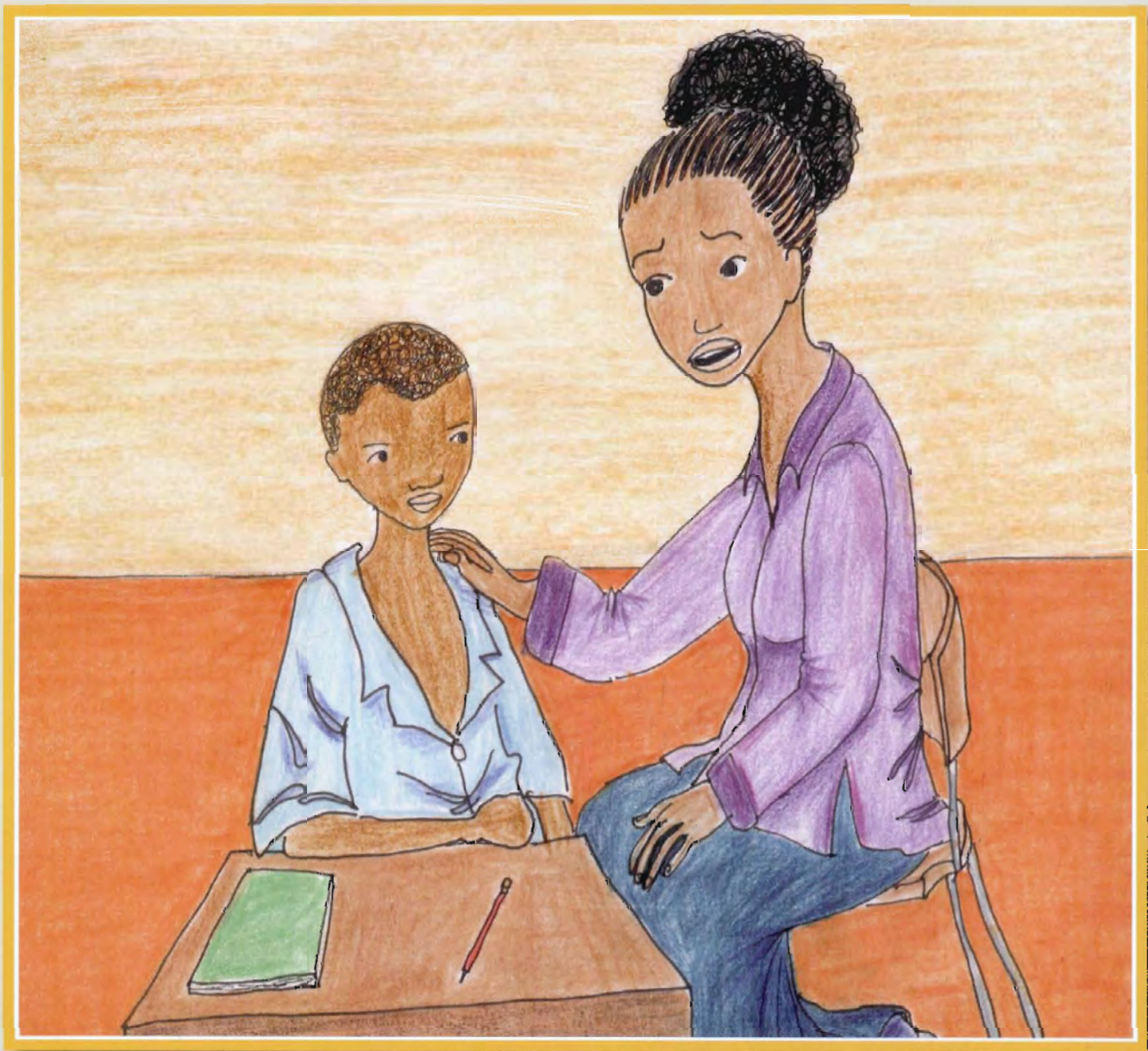


Ndavulwa admired his teacher. He paid attention to her in class by listening, observing and asking questions when he didn't understand. He knew that this was what helped him to be a good learner. When Mrs Tuyakula asked questions, Ndavulwa was not afraid to answer. He discovered that his early morning reading on the way to fetch water often helped him answer her questions.

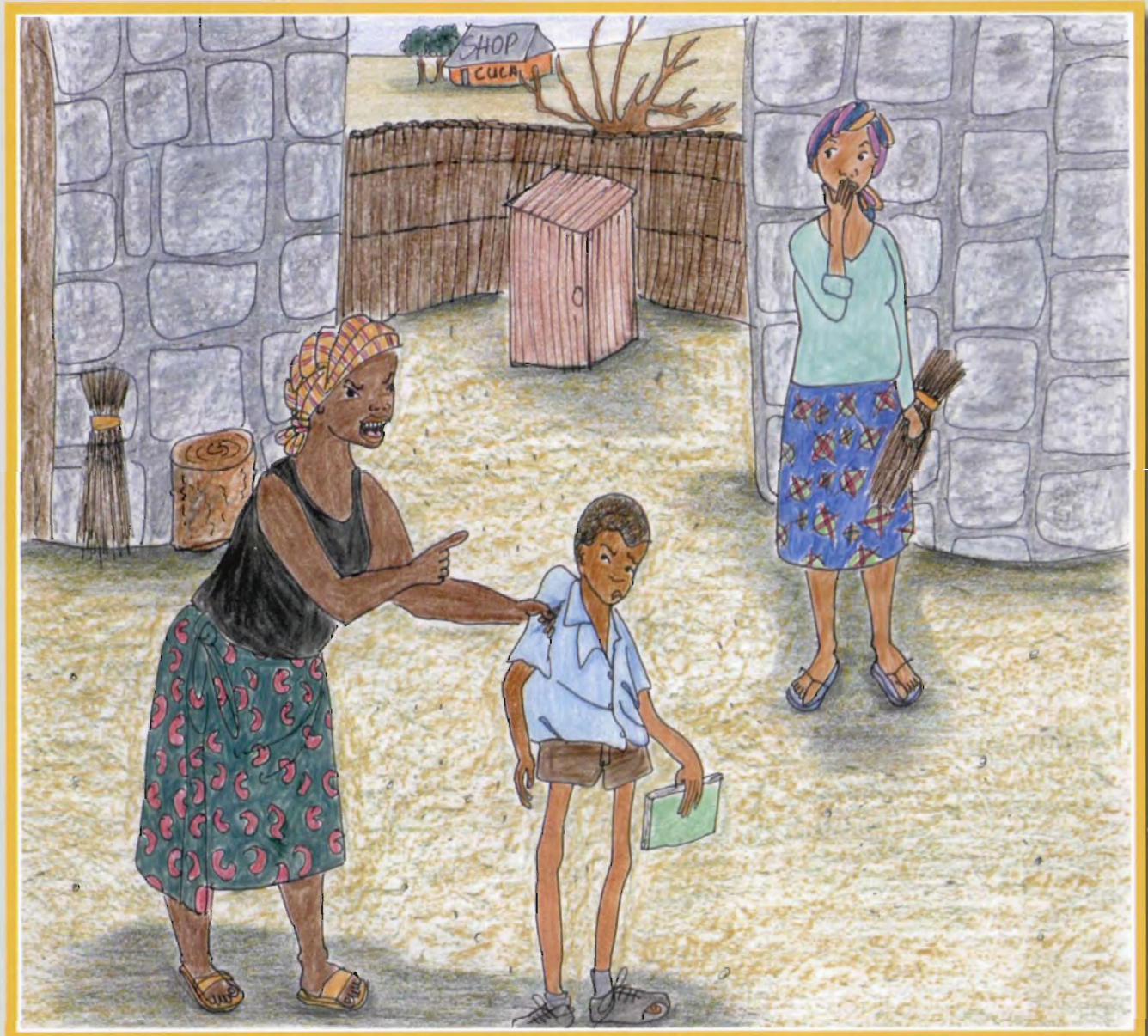


Mrs Tuyakula saw Ndavulwa's frowning face and thought to herself, "It is not Ndavulwa's fault that he misses the first lesson day after day. He is going to have to learn how to take care of himself, though, and be strong."

She told Ndavulwa to stay behind after classes. Ndavulwa did not complain. He was happy to stay. It gave him time to rest. He knew that there was always more hard work waiting for him at home.



After school that day, at the end of the lesson, his teacher sat near him and said, “Ndavulwa, you need to know that you are one of the best learners in the school. I know that your life is not easy, but you must realize that it may not change until you are old enough to leave home. I will try to talk to your aunt to tell her that she should not give you so many household chores. But it may not work. All I can do is help you to become an even better learner. Hurry home now, I am sure your aunt is wondering where you are.”



Aunt Ndamona and her neighbour Meme Ndakumwa watched the children passing by on their way home from school. She knew that they were Ndavulwa's classmates.

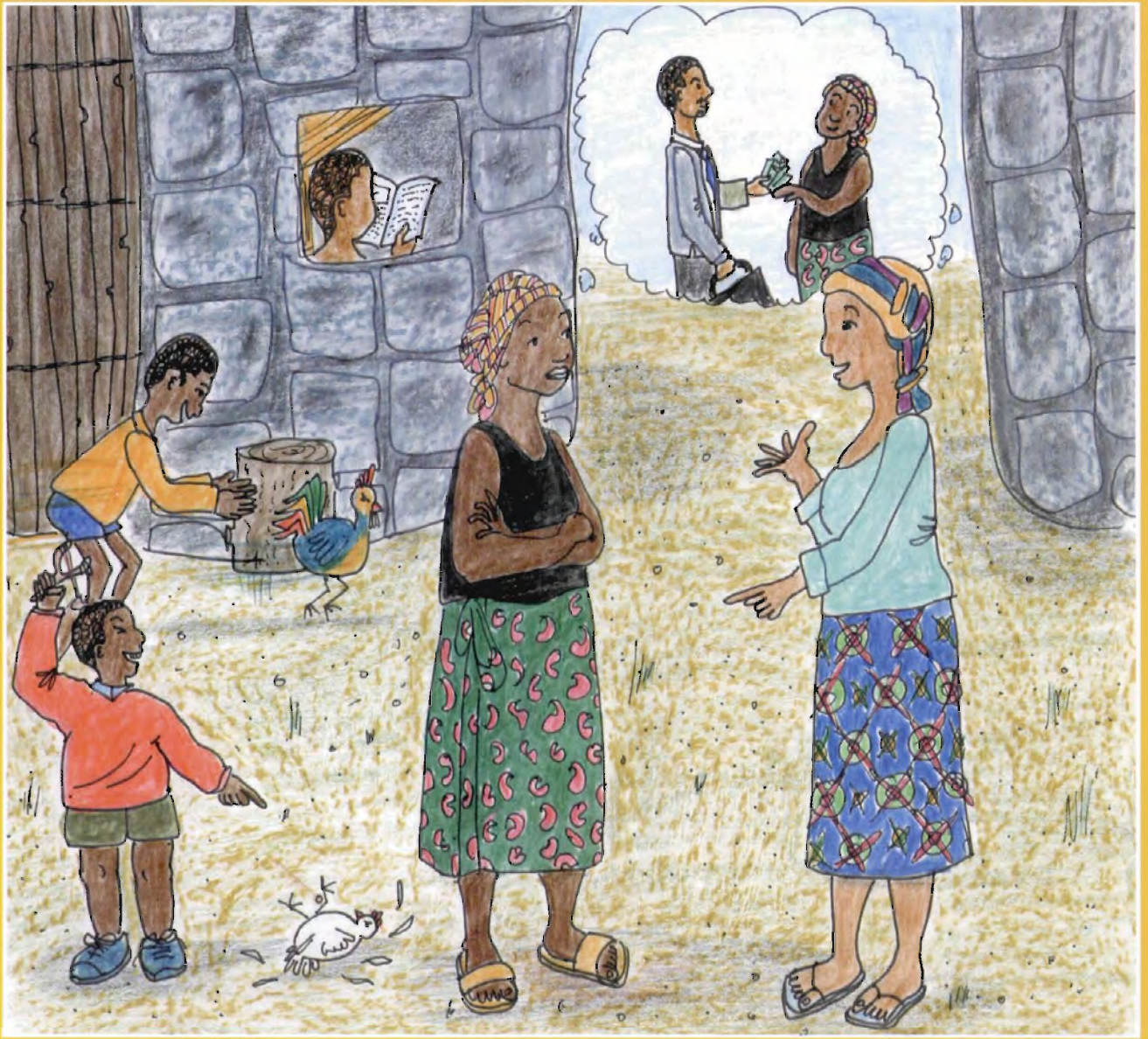
"Where is that bad boy? I know he is just playing around. Where is he? No water, no firewood, animals still wandering around the field and the house is dirty," she complained.

Then she saw Ndavulwa. She grabbed him as if she were a cheetah snatching a helpless springbok. "I am sick and tired of your bad manners. You are always coming home late, walking just like a tortoise," she screamed.



“My...my teacher was helping me with my schoolwork,” Ndavulwa replied.

“That is enough, Aunt Ndamona. Let him go,” shouted Ndakumwa, the neighbour, as she watched from her doorway. Ndavulwa slipped away from his aunt’s grasp. He was crying. He remembered the advice his teacher had given him that afternoon. In silence, he walked away to do his housework. He must let his aunt’s complaints fall over him like rain.



“He is your child now, why treat him badly? If you treat him well, he will help you when he is a man,” said Ndakumwa as she and Aunt Ndamona talked about Ndavulwa. She advised Aunt Ndamona that she should also teach her two sons how to do housework and take care of themselves for the future.

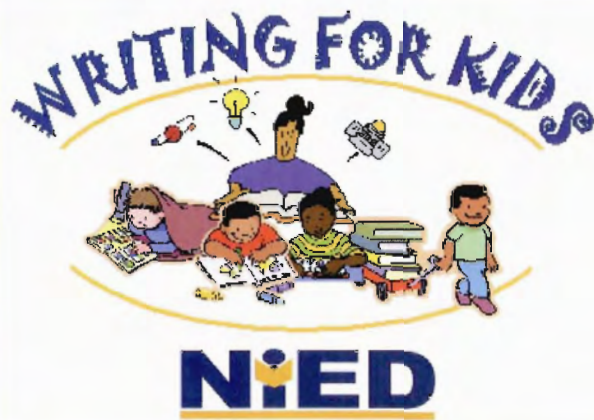


A few days later, Ndavulwa's teacher, Miss Tuyakula, also came to see Aunt Ndamona. She told her that Ndavulwa was a good learner. They discussed his lateness to class and how it affected his performance. She explained that she was happy to give him extra help but that she could not do that every day.

Aunt Ndamona took a deep breath and was quiet for a minute. "I think you may be right. Even my neighbour was telling me the same thing. Perhaps I should change my attitude towards my nephew. I will try but it may take some time. I will have to explain to my sons."



At the end of the school year, Ndavulwa performed well. He had the best Grade 4 results at the school. Perhaps his aunt would be more kind to him now. But did it matter? It was his teacher, Mrs Tuyakula, who had shown him what was most important in his life. As long as he had a place to sleep and some food to eat, he would do his best to learn.



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