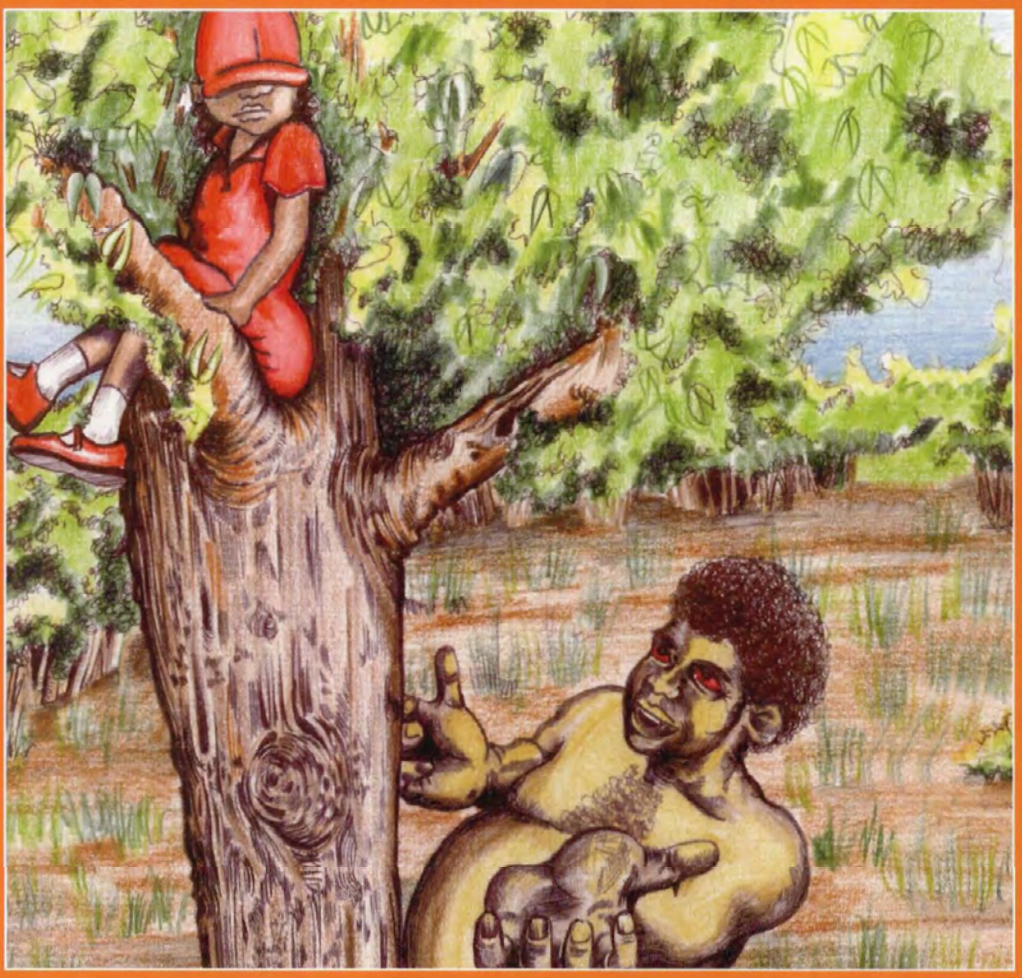
Mbaita and the giant



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Illustrator
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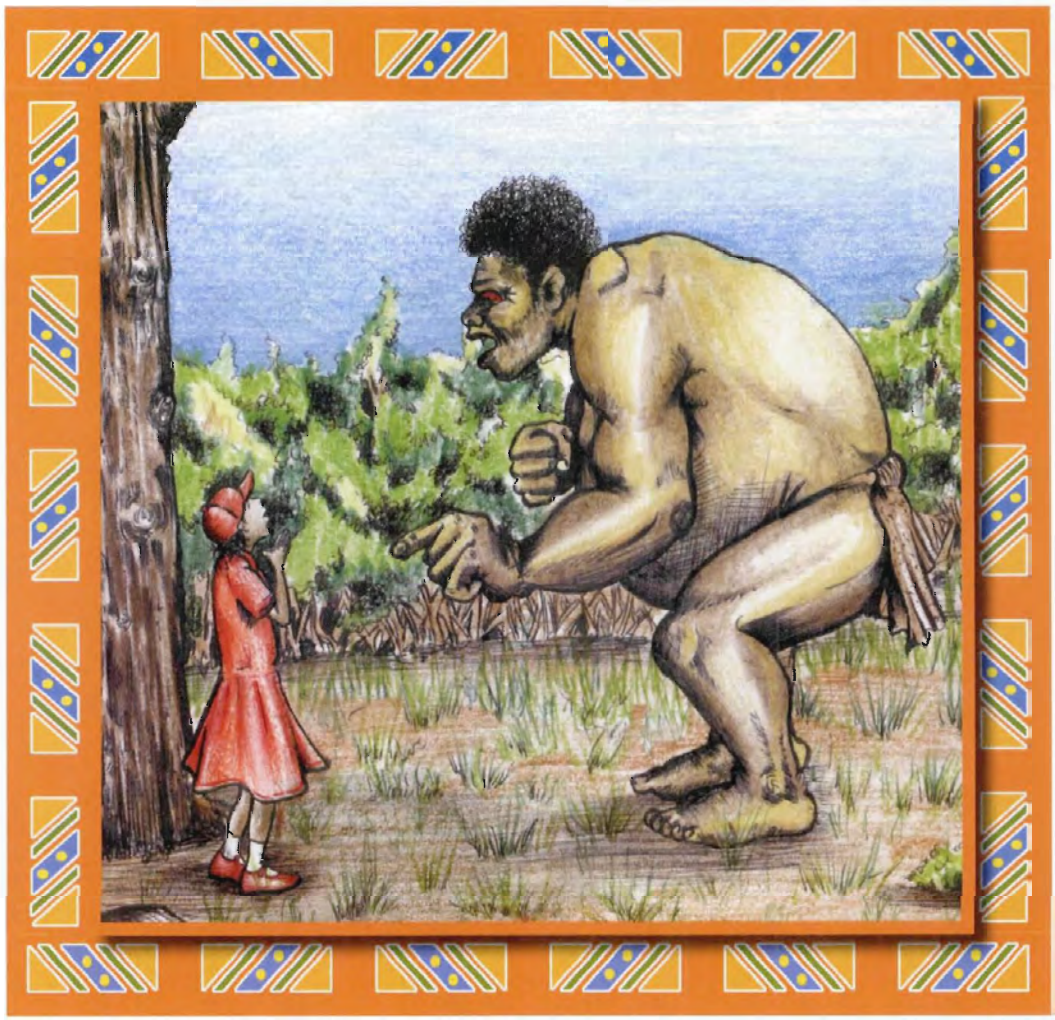

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Writing for Kids

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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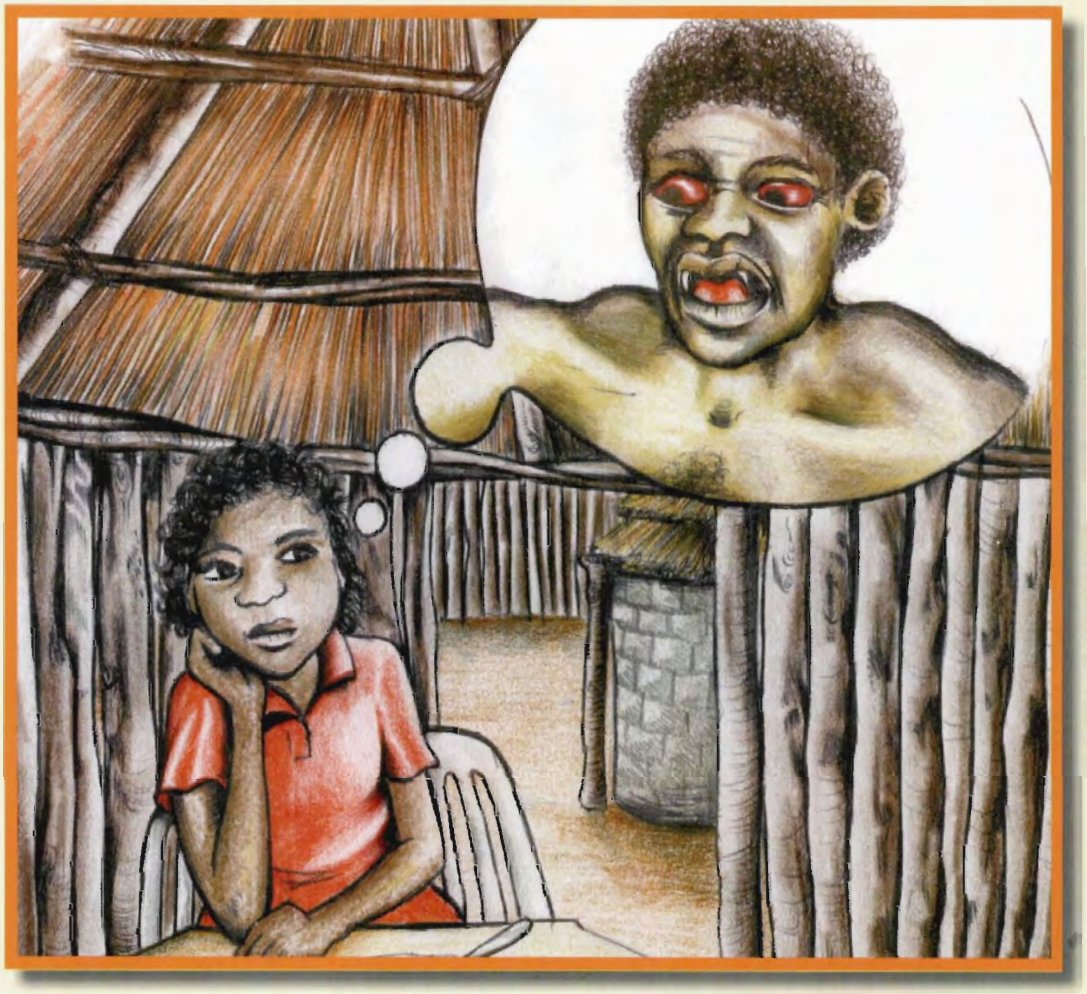
Mbaita and the giant



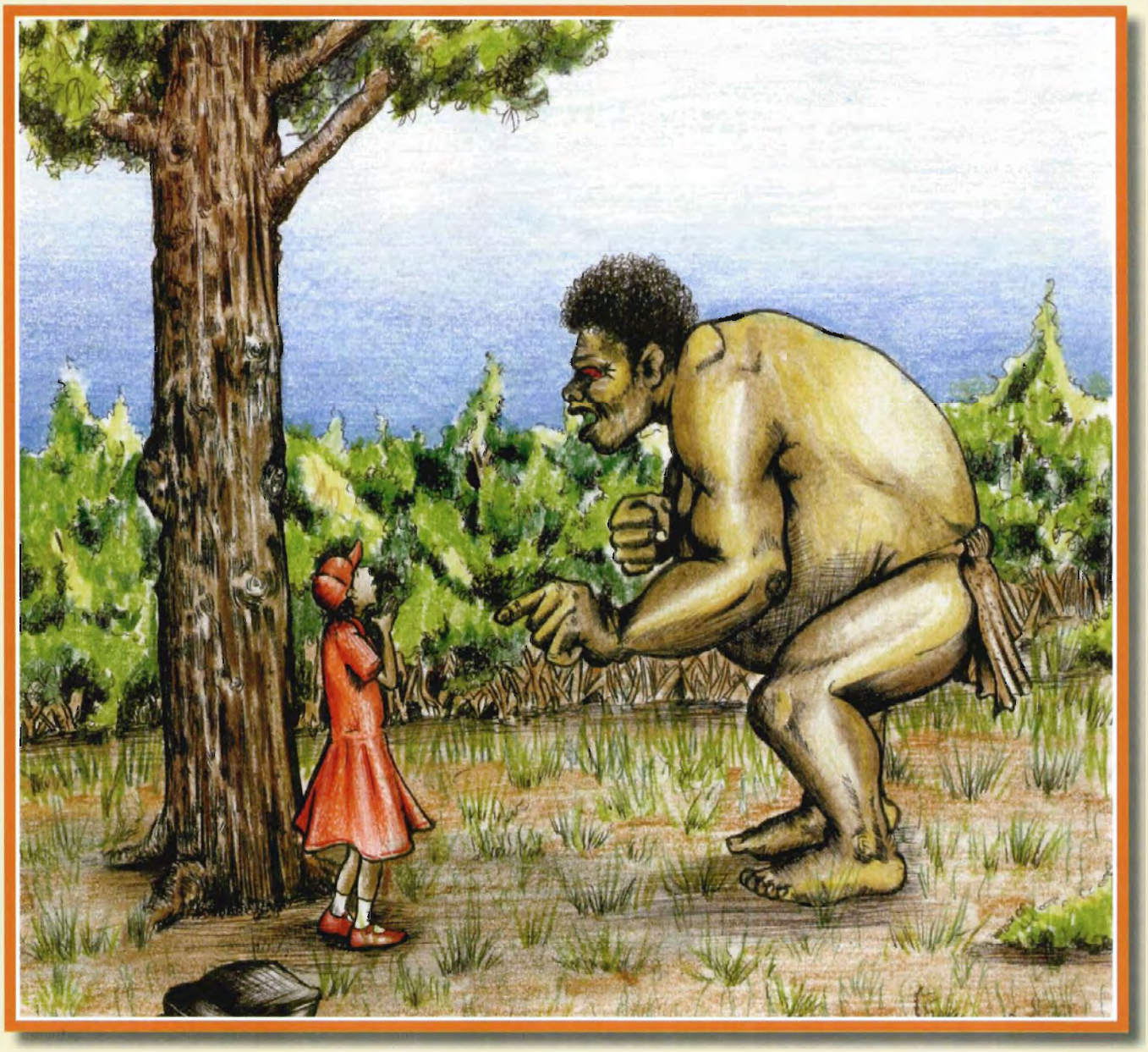
On a Saturday morning at seven o'clock in Lusu village the sun was just beginning to shine. Birds were singing, "cwii...cwii..cwii...", dogs were barking, "buu...buu...buu", and babies were crying, "ñeee...ñeee...ñeee...". A little girl named Mbaita woke up.

Mbaita had decided to visit her uncle, Mr Simataa, at Kandiana village that day. Her uncle loved her very much and was always kind to her. His village was ten kilometers away from Lusu but Mbaita, only nine years old, knew she was a clever girl and would have no trouble finding the way. Her mother was busy making breakfast. Her brother was at the well getting water. Her father was planting mahangu. Her grandmother was sweeping at the far end of the compound. No one noticed the short, curly-haired girl in a red dress, shoes and hat setting out on a journey.

After she walked five kilometers and could no longer see her village behind her, nor her uncle's village in front of her, she felt tired and decided to sit in the shade of a marula tree to rest. She did not have anything to eat or drink. It was hot. She fell asleep. All of a sudden there was a big sound.

"WUU—WUU—WUUU—UUUU!" She woke up.

When Mbaita opened her eyes she saw an amazing thing! In front of her was a huge creature with red eyes, big feet, wide hands and a big stomach - a giant!

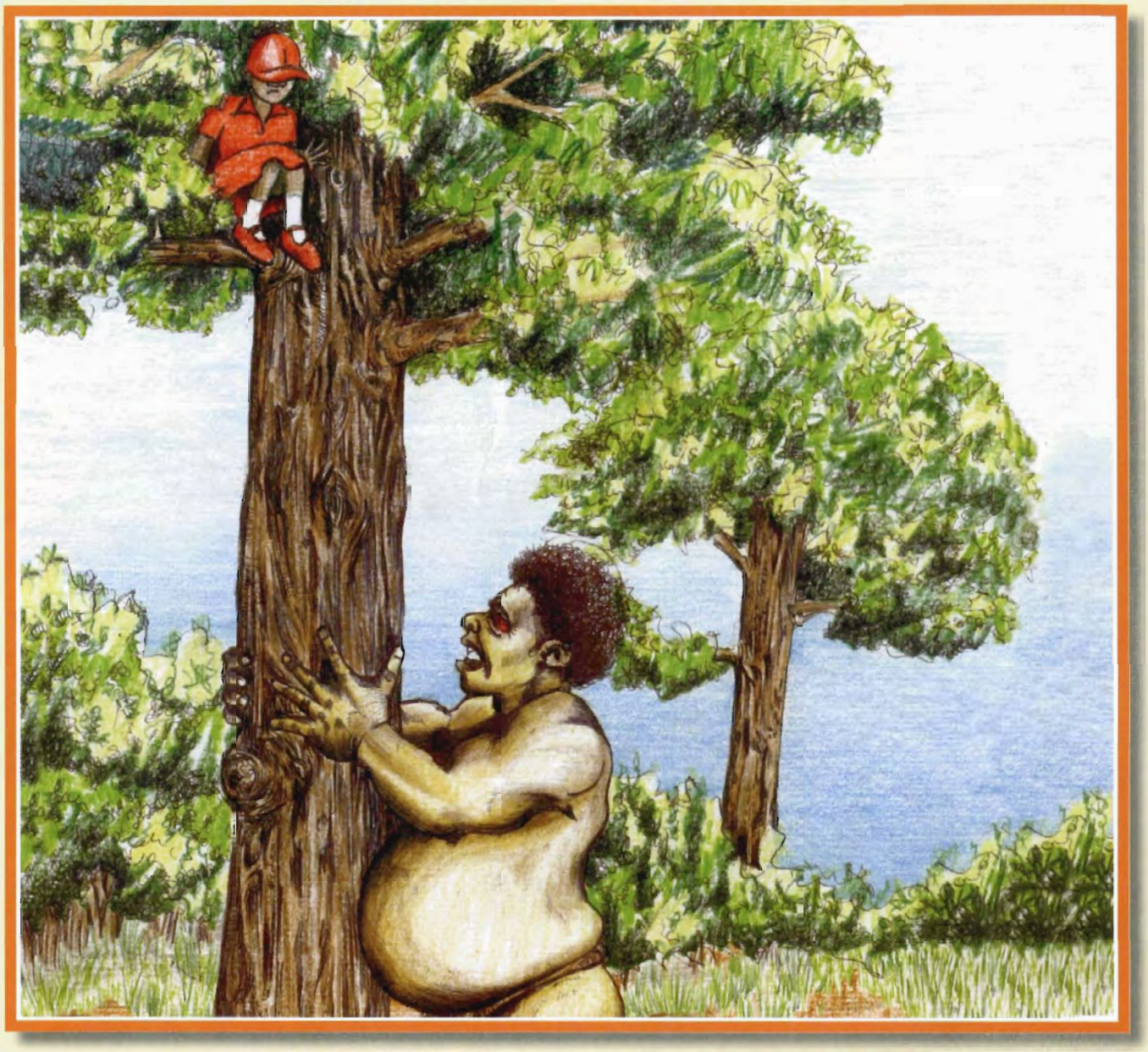


"LOOK AT ME, LITTLE GIRL! IF YOU RUN AWAY, I WILL CATCH YOU AND SWALLOW YOU LIKE A WATERMELON!" bellowed the giant.

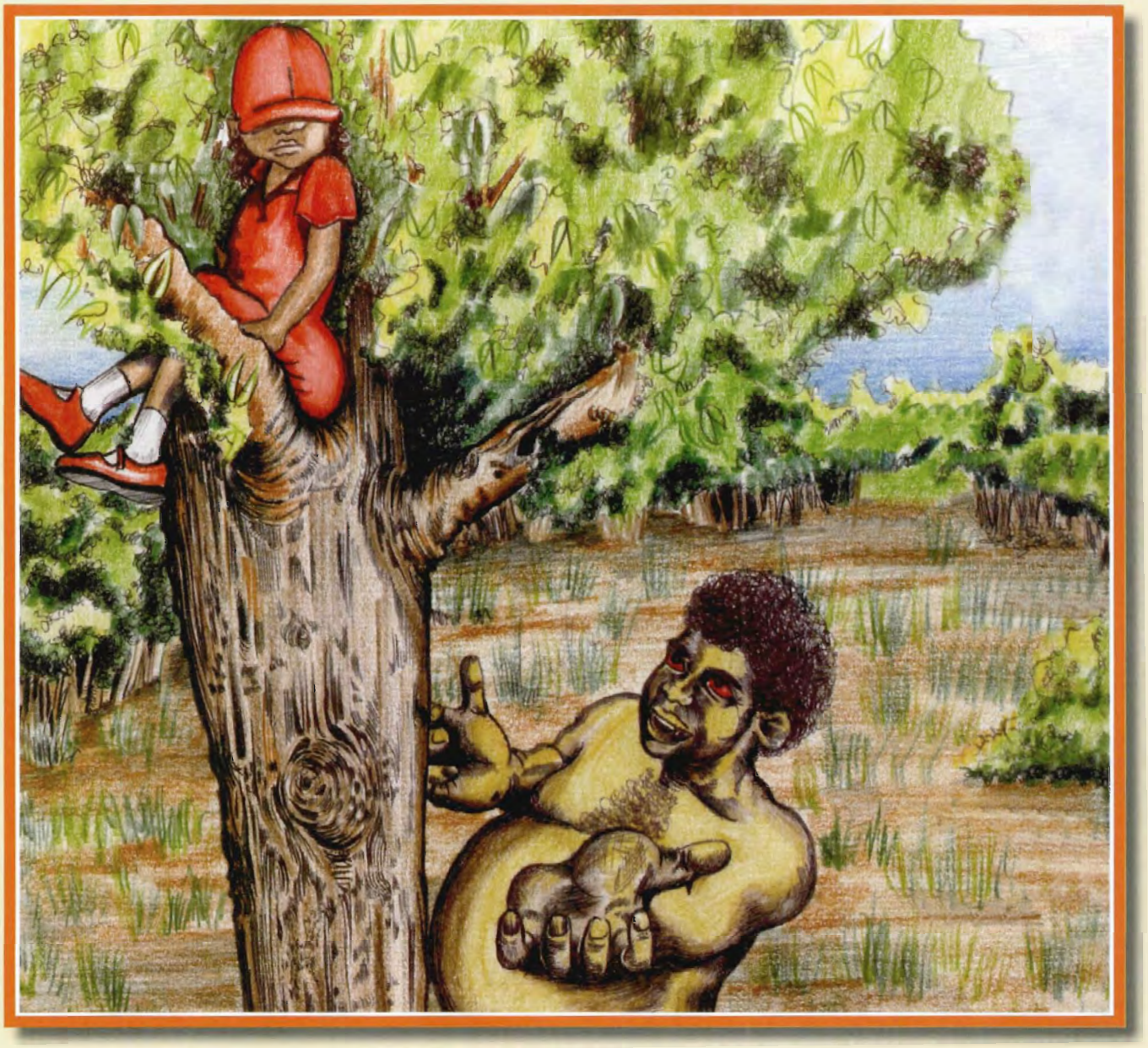
"Oh big creature! If you swallow me, you will not be satisfied because I am too little. Allow me to go and bring you someone big and fat to eat!" said Mbaita.

Just as the giant was about to catch the girl, a strange sound filled the air. The giant turned around and looked up. A monkey, swinging from a tree branch above the giant, laughed, "nkeeee...nkeeee...nkeeee-ee!" at the giant.

Mbaita jumped up, ran behind the tree and climbed up as quickly as a lizard before the giant could catch her.



When the monkey jumped to the ground and ran away, the giant turned and saw that the little girl was not there. Mbaita was up high on a branch. The angry giant took a deep breath and pushed against the tree with its huge body, but the strong marula tree would not budge.



"Hey, little girl, come down. I will take you back to your parents," said the giant in a soft, sweet voice.

"I will not come down, big giant. You cannot fool me," replied Mbaita.

The giant turned and ran off to get an axe to chop down the tree. As soon as he disappeared, Mbaita jumped down from the tree and ran away as fast as her legs could carry her.

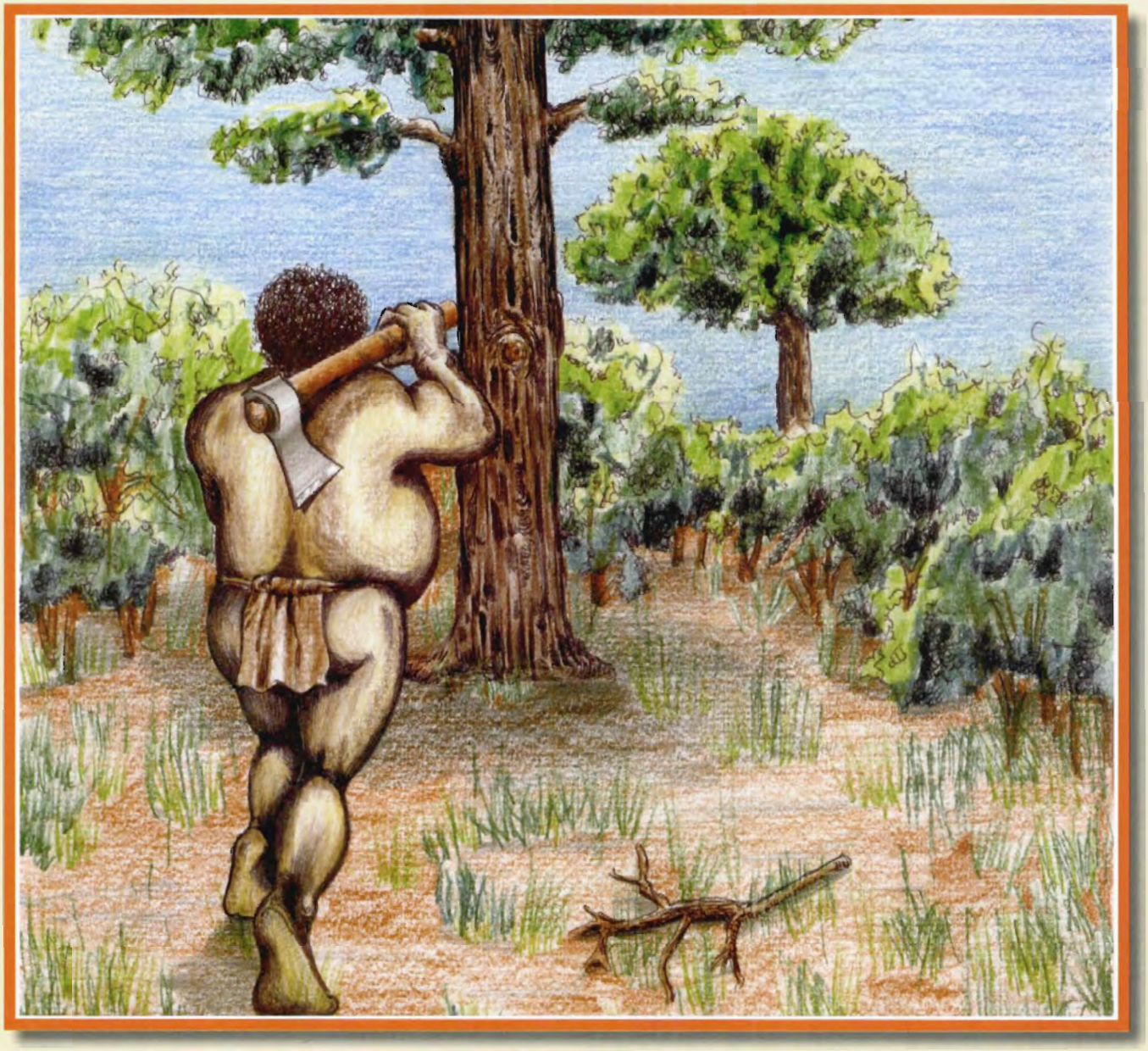
At home, Mbaita's mother was looking for her.

"Mbaita, Mbaita, where are you? Are you hiding? Come and have your porridge."

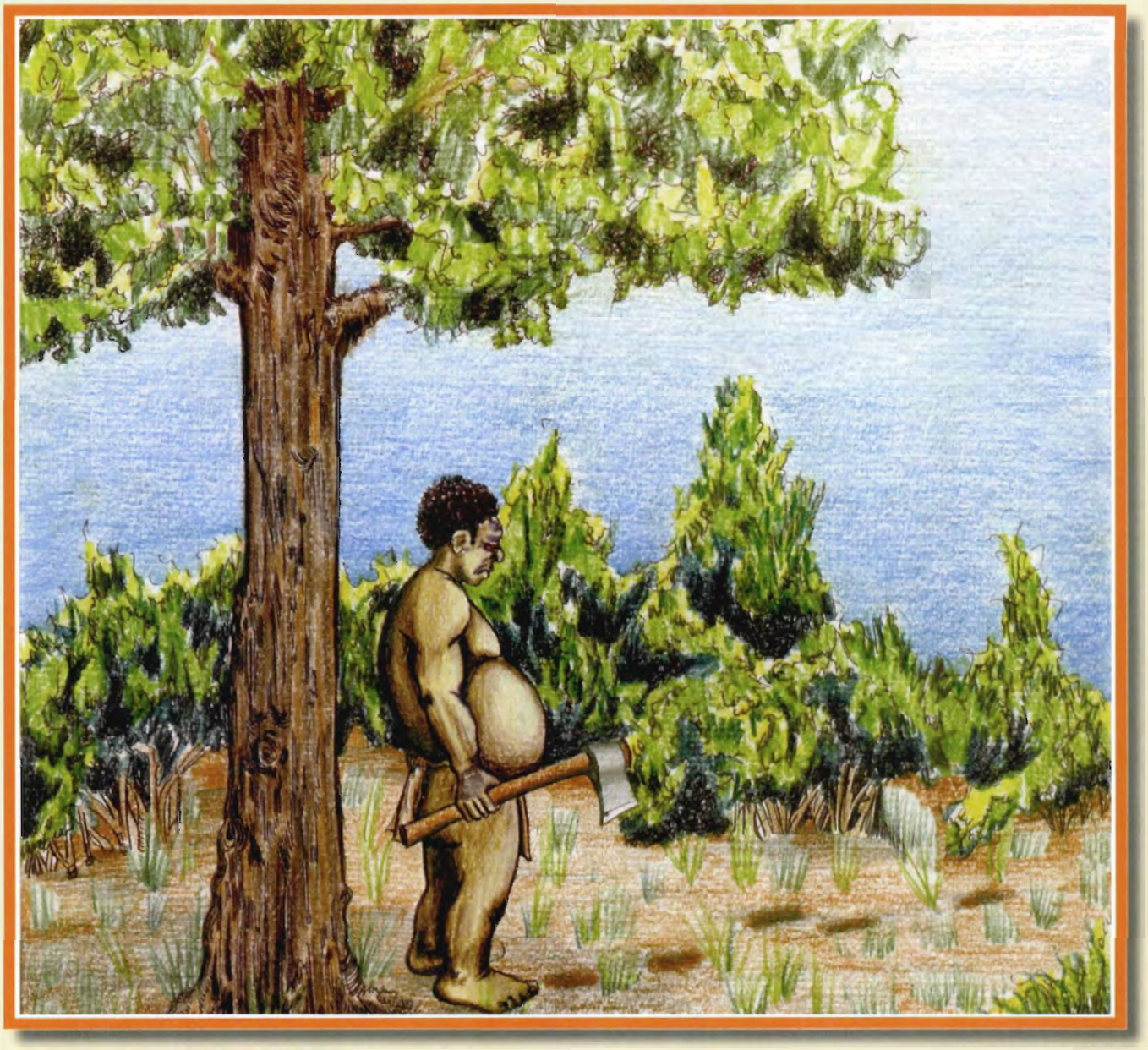
But there was no reply.

Mbaita's mother asked her son, "Where is your sister?"

"Since morning I have not seen her," he replied.

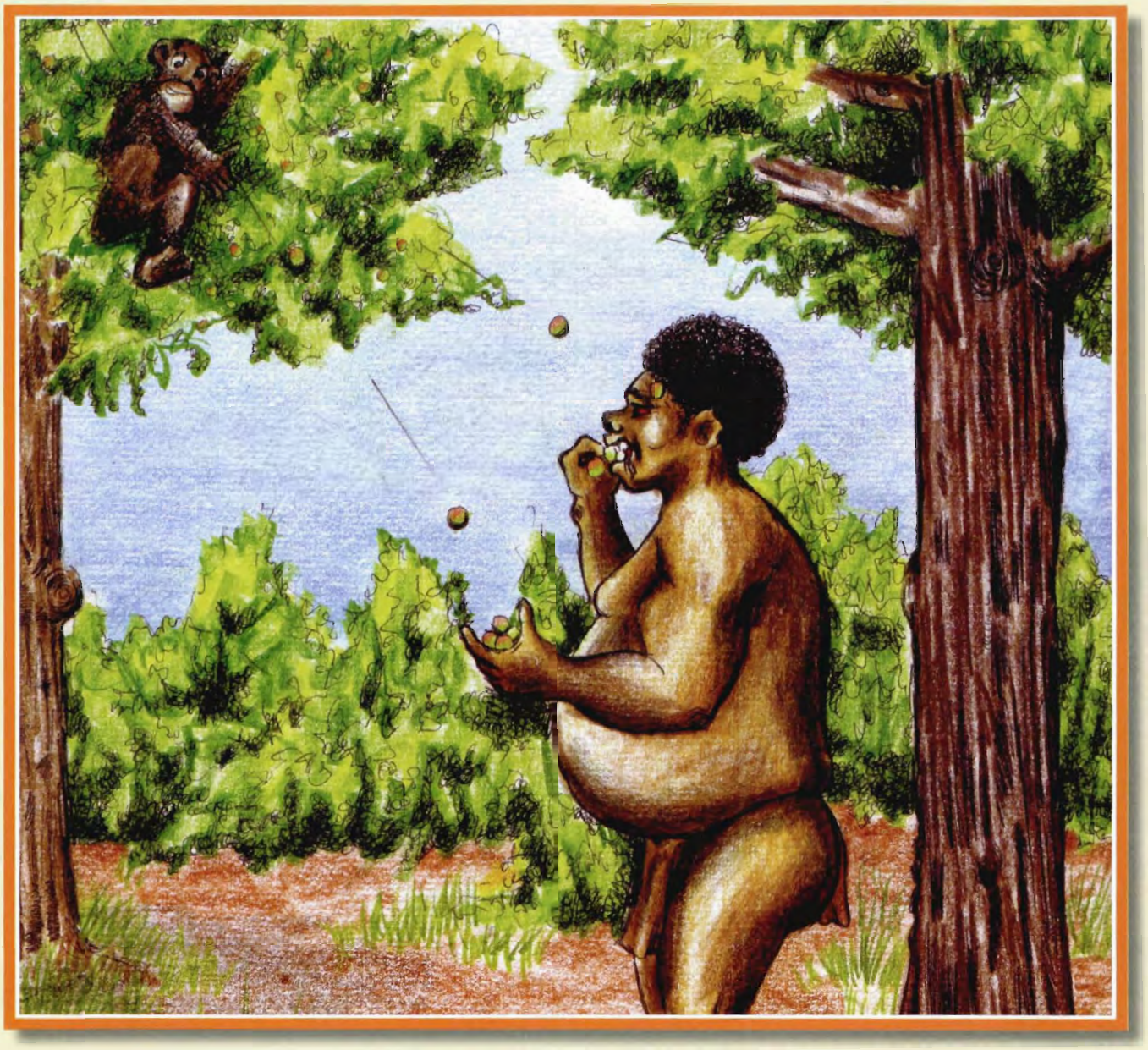


Meanwhile, the giant returned to the tree with an axe. "The girl may still be in the tree. I am going to chop it down," he said to himself.



Then the giant looked down at the ground and saw the girl's footprints in the sand.

"I AM STILL HUNGRY. THAT GIRL WILL TASTE GOOD," said the giant. Just as he began to follow Mbaita's footprints, the monkey reappeared.



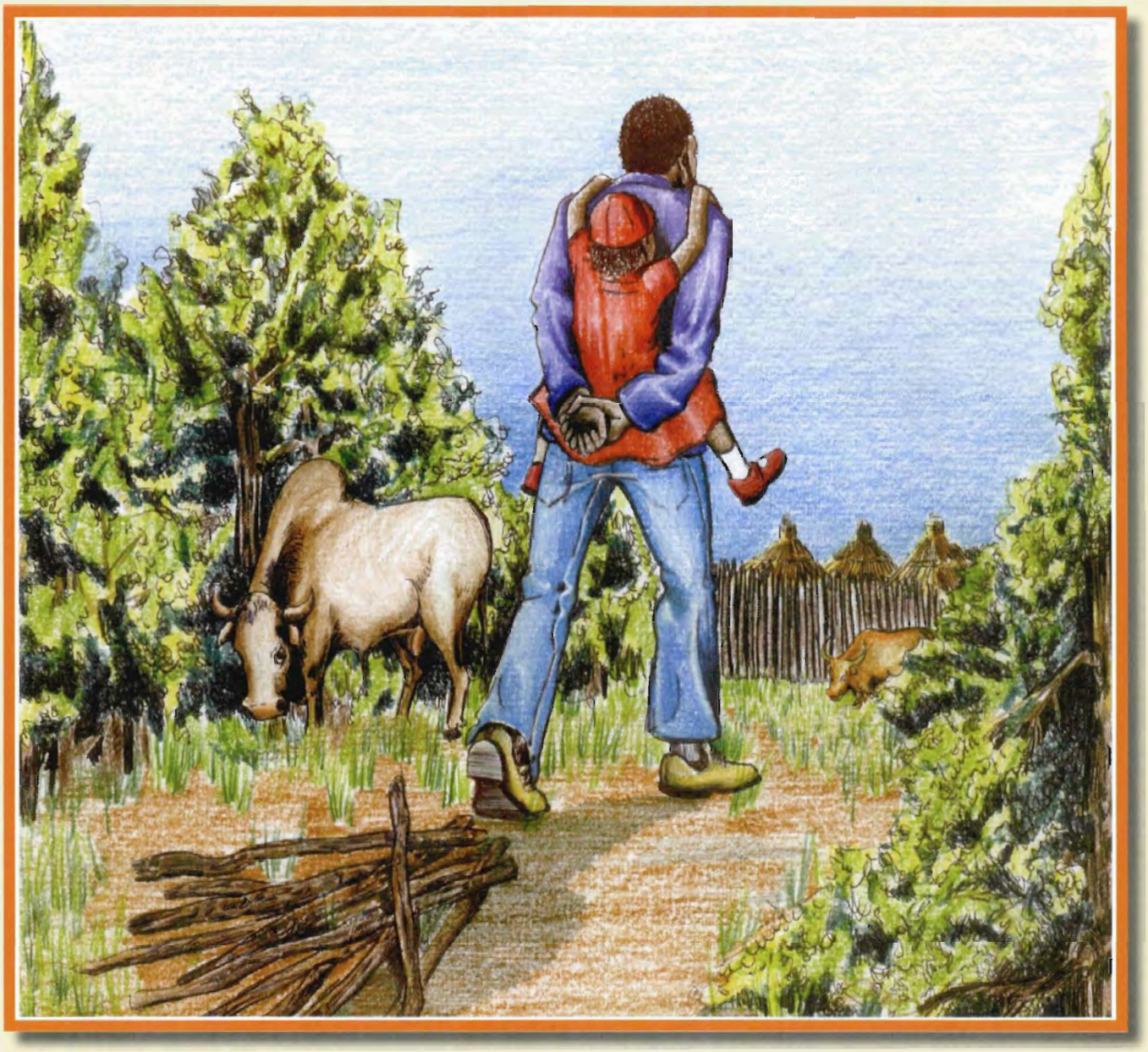
He began to throw marula fruit at the giant. As fast as he threw the fruit, the giant swallowed them.

The giant swallowed and swallowed until he could not eat one more marula fruit. He patted his large stomach and said, "I am so full. I am so sleepy. I must rest before I go after that little girl."

In the meantime, Mbaita ran and ran from the giant in the direction of her uncle's village. She was tired and thirsty and afraid that the giant would follow her. Finally she met a man who was collecting firewood.

"Help me, help me," she cried.

"Who are you and where do you come from?" asked the man. Mbaita was too tired to speak.



"Let me take you to the village for some water and food," said the man.

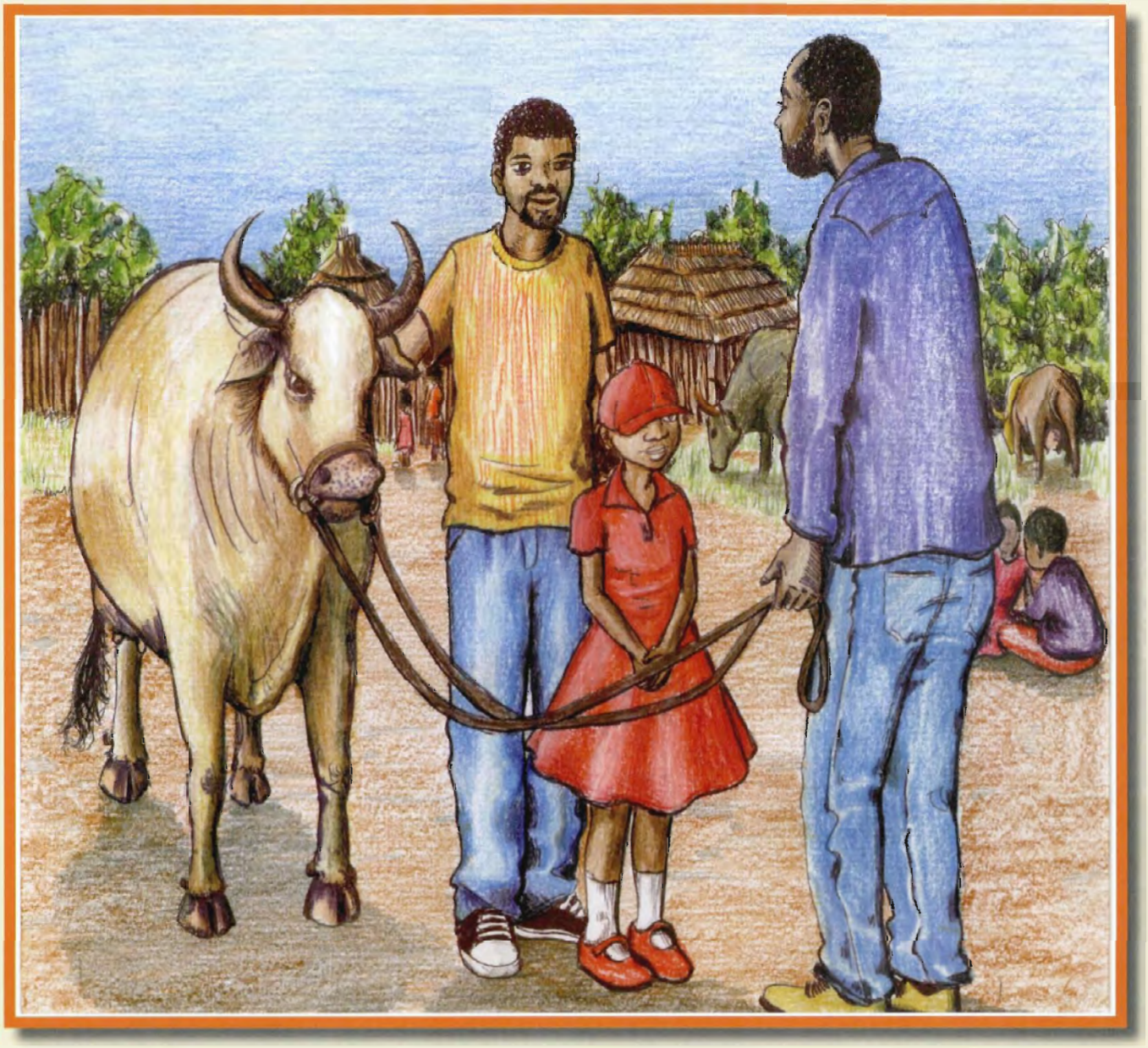
He dropped his firewood and carried Mbaita to the nearby village.

After drinking water, the villagers gathered around Mbaita as she told them how she was almost killed by a giant on the road to her uncle's village. Just as she finished her story, a man approached her.

"Uncle!" she cried.

"What are you doing here, Mbaita? You are far from your village and far from mine. Just by chance I am visiting a friend in this village. Where is your mother, my sister? Where is your brother? Why are you all alone? Who is this stranger with you?"

"Uncle, Uncle, it's a long story and I am very tired. Please take me home. I will tell you about my adventure as we walk."

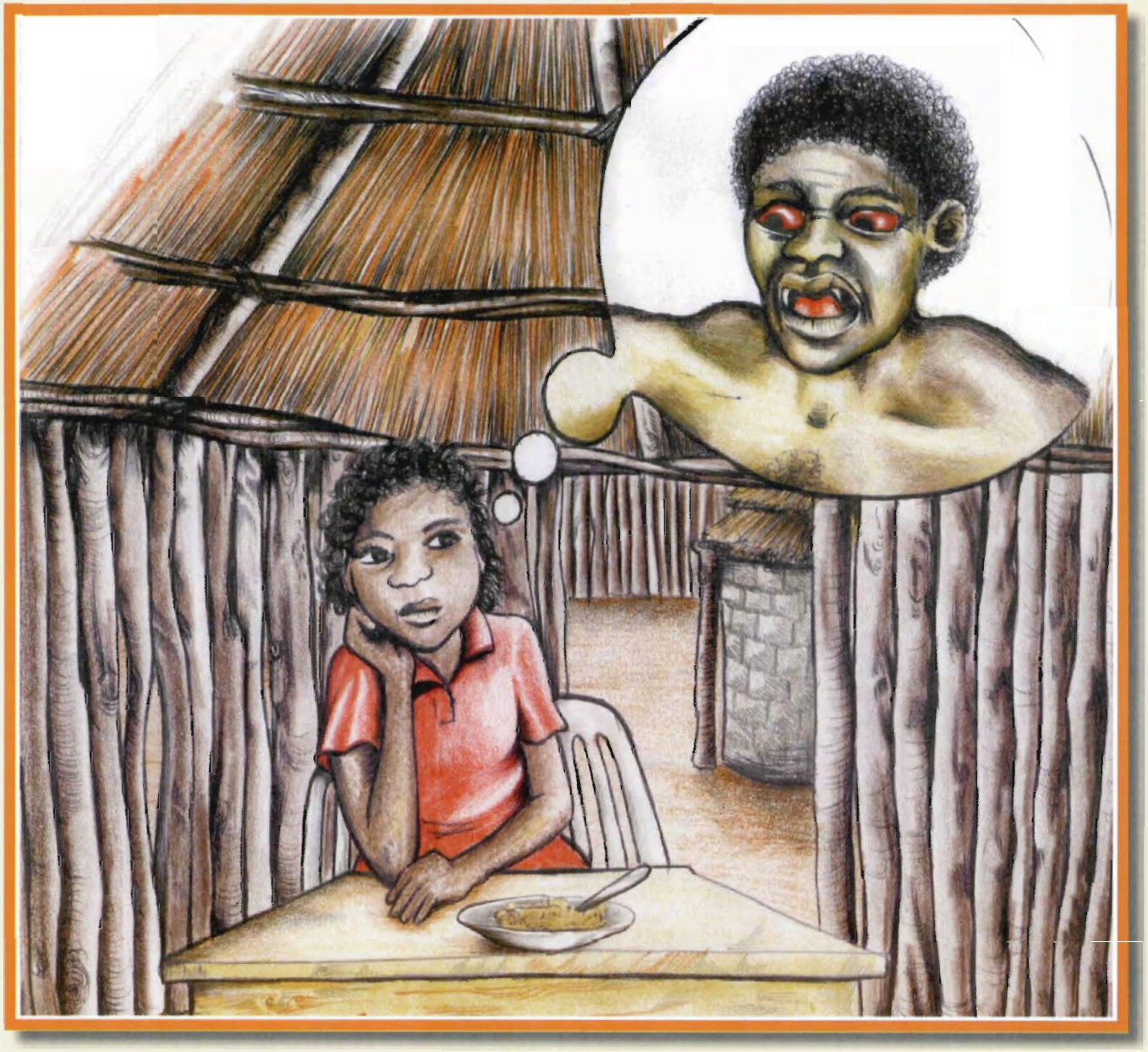


Mr Simataa, Mbaita's uncle, gave a cow to the man with the firewood for helping Mbaita. Mbaita also thanked him.

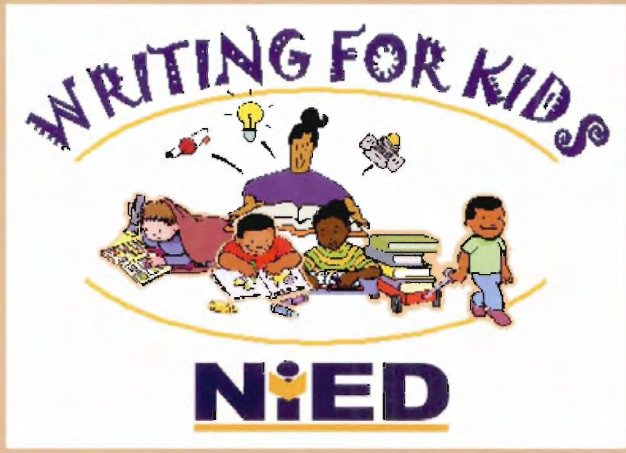
Mbaita climbed onto her uncle's shoulders for a ride back to her village. She told him the story while they were on their way.

When they arrived at the village, she told her story to all who came to greet her. As the story of Mbaita's adventure spread through the village, everyone came to welcome her home. The birds sang, the dogs barked, and babies cried.

In the early evening as the red sun sank into the horizon, Mbaita's father spoke in a serious tone to her, "Mbaita, even though you are a clever and strong girl, you must never make decisions without consulting me or your mother. You are still a young girl and you must never walk long distances alone. You must wait until you are older and wiser."



Mbaita remembered the giant. She nodded her head and although she promised that she would never leave the village on her own again, she could barely wait for the adventures that "older and wiser" would bring.



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