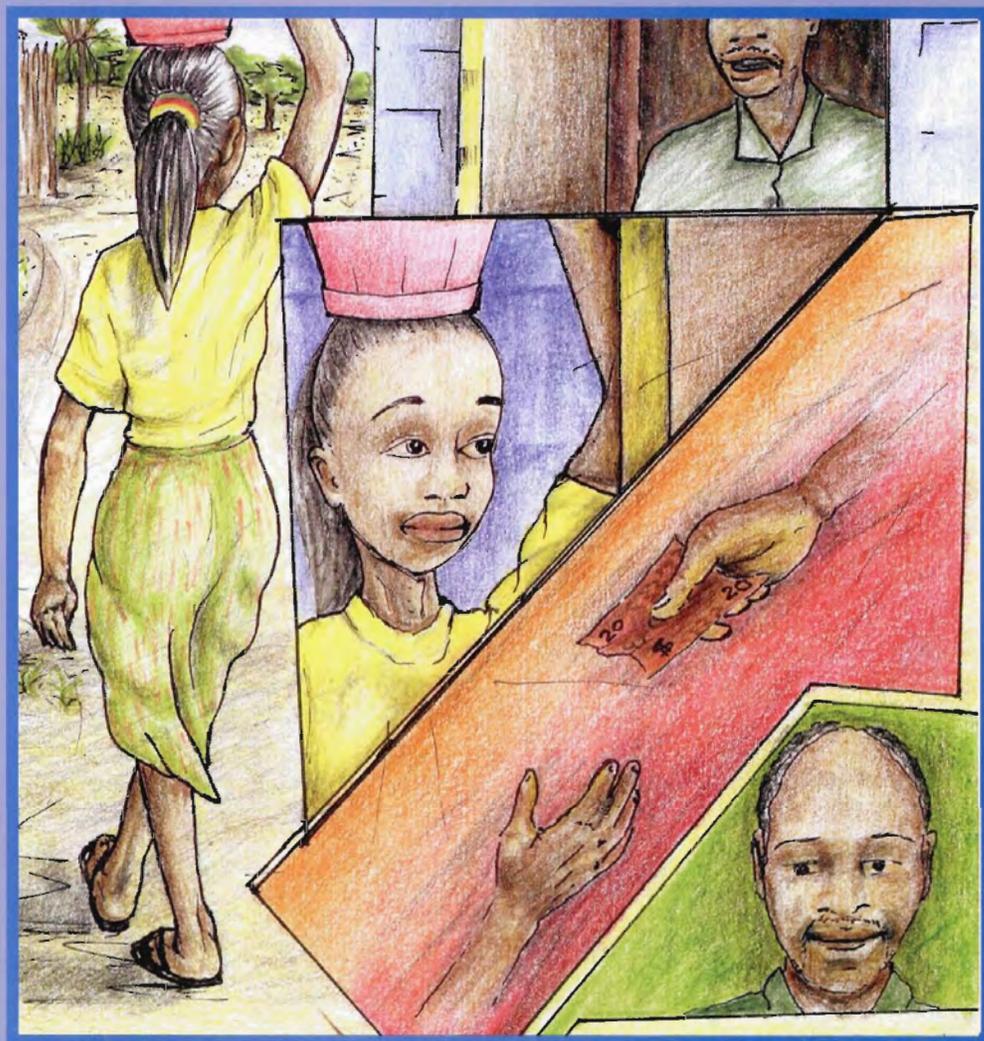


Kaushiwetu's decision



Authors

Lydia Aipinge, Anastasia Shalumbu and Rachel Nandjembo

Illustrator

Kleopas Jambeinge

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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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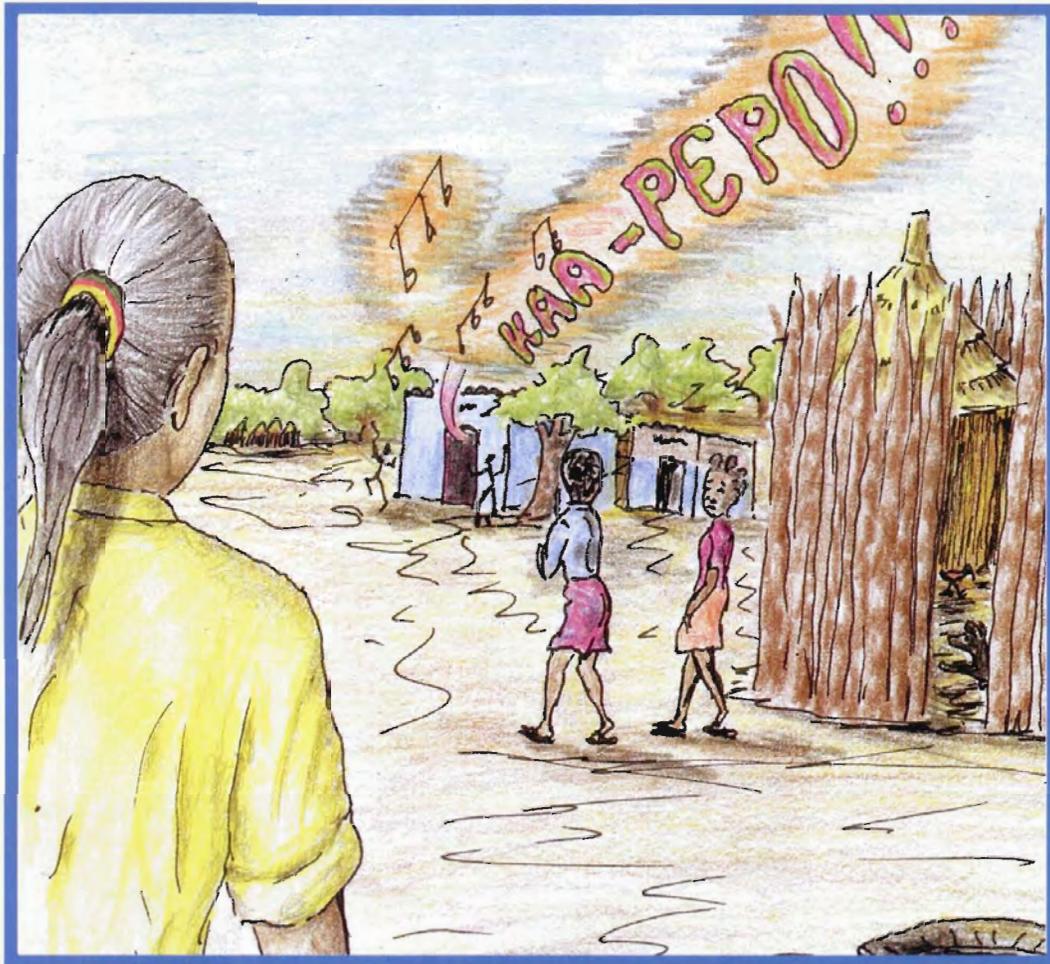
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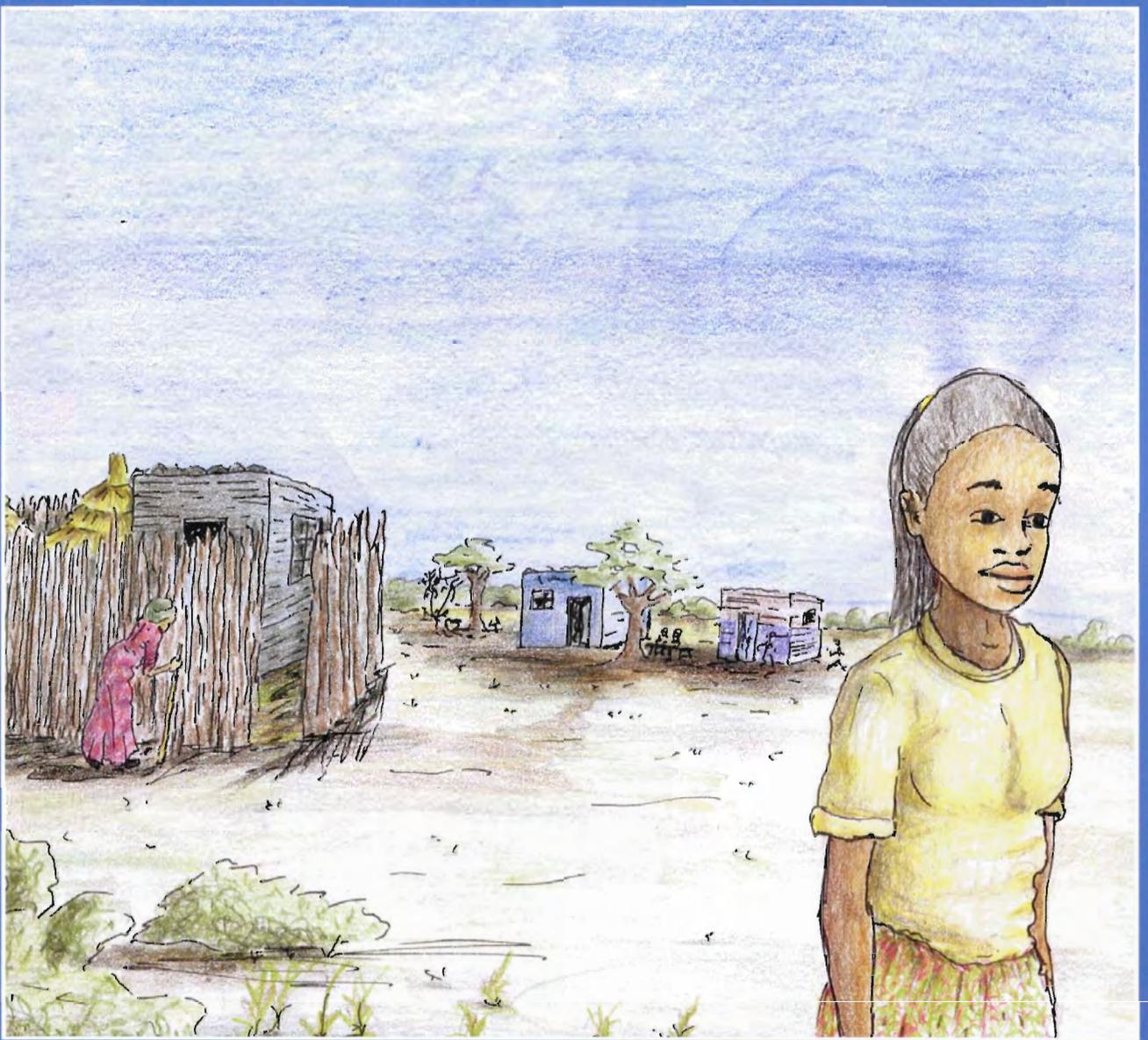
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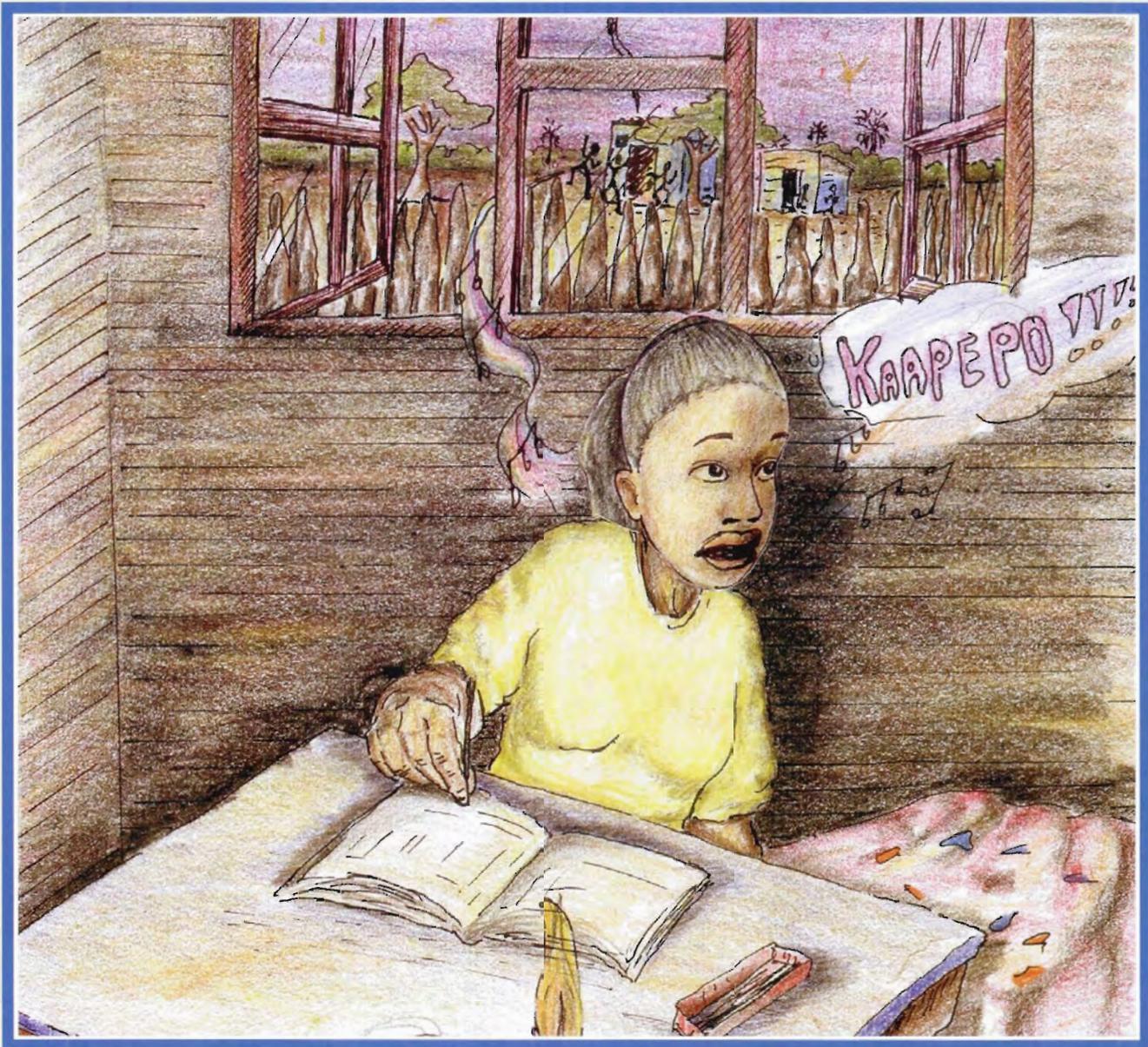


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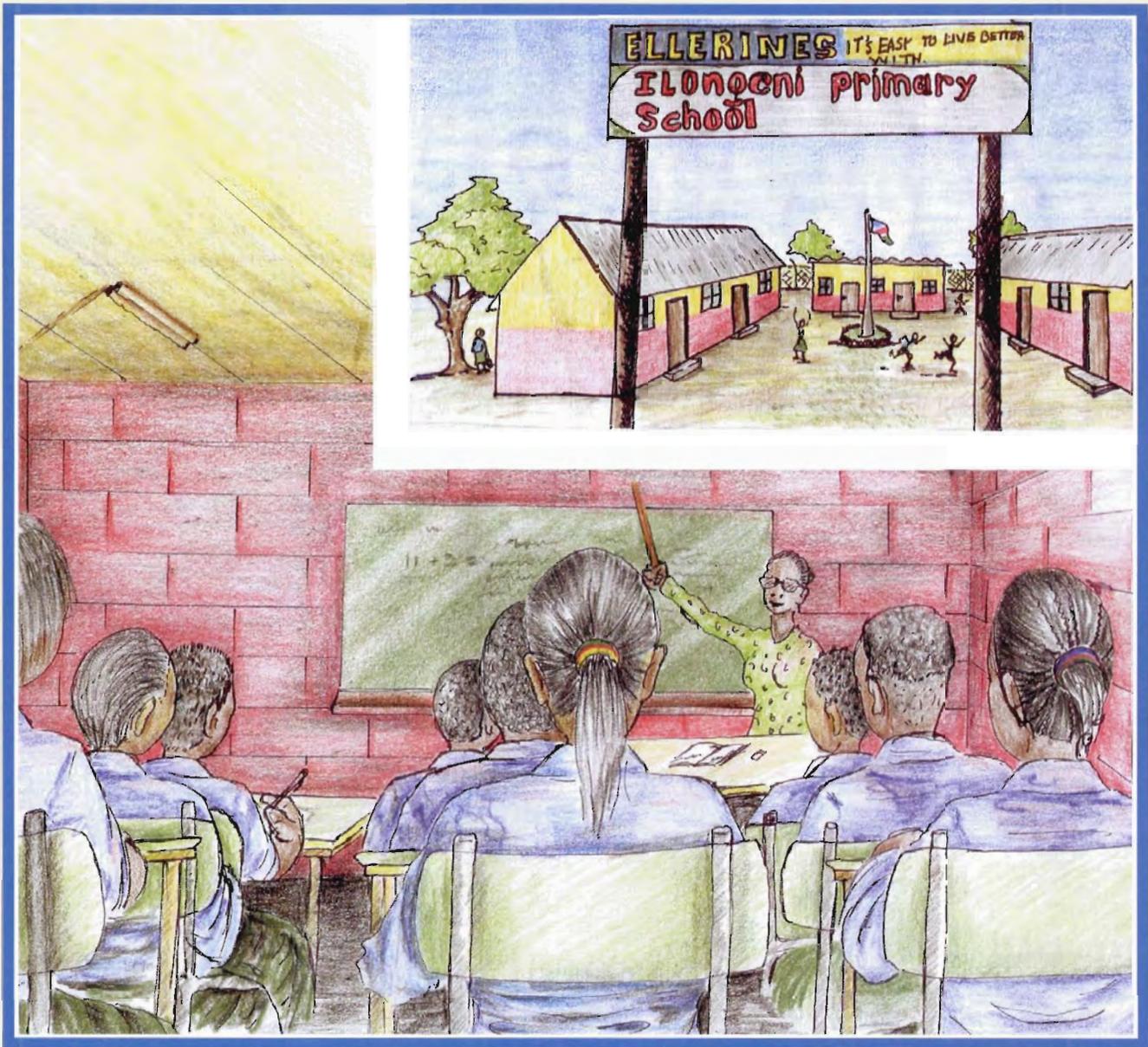




Kaushiwetu was fourteen years old and lived with her granny in Onameya village near Etaka. Their small house was near the *cuca** shops. Her mother abandoned her when she was only a five-month-old baby. Social Services left Kaushiwetu with her grandmother, *Kuku** Gwandengu. Her granny loved and cared for her.



She was in her room one evening writing an English essay about 'A Favorite Person in My Life.' Suddenly she heard the popular song 'Kapepo' coming from the jukebox in the nearby Ehangano Bar. She loved the song and sang along, "Vandu vouye wa nam-bano, ...ororomba kapepo...! Ororomba..." When the music stopped she realized she had not finished her essay, but now she was too tired to continue. She fell asleep.



The next morning at Ilongeni Primary School, Kaushiwetu was enjoying the first double period of mathematics. It was her favourite subject at school. She had totally forgotten about the unfinished English essay.

The bell rang and Ms Angolo stood at the door. Kaushiwetu thought, "Oh, oh, here comes trouble. Poor me, what can I do now?"

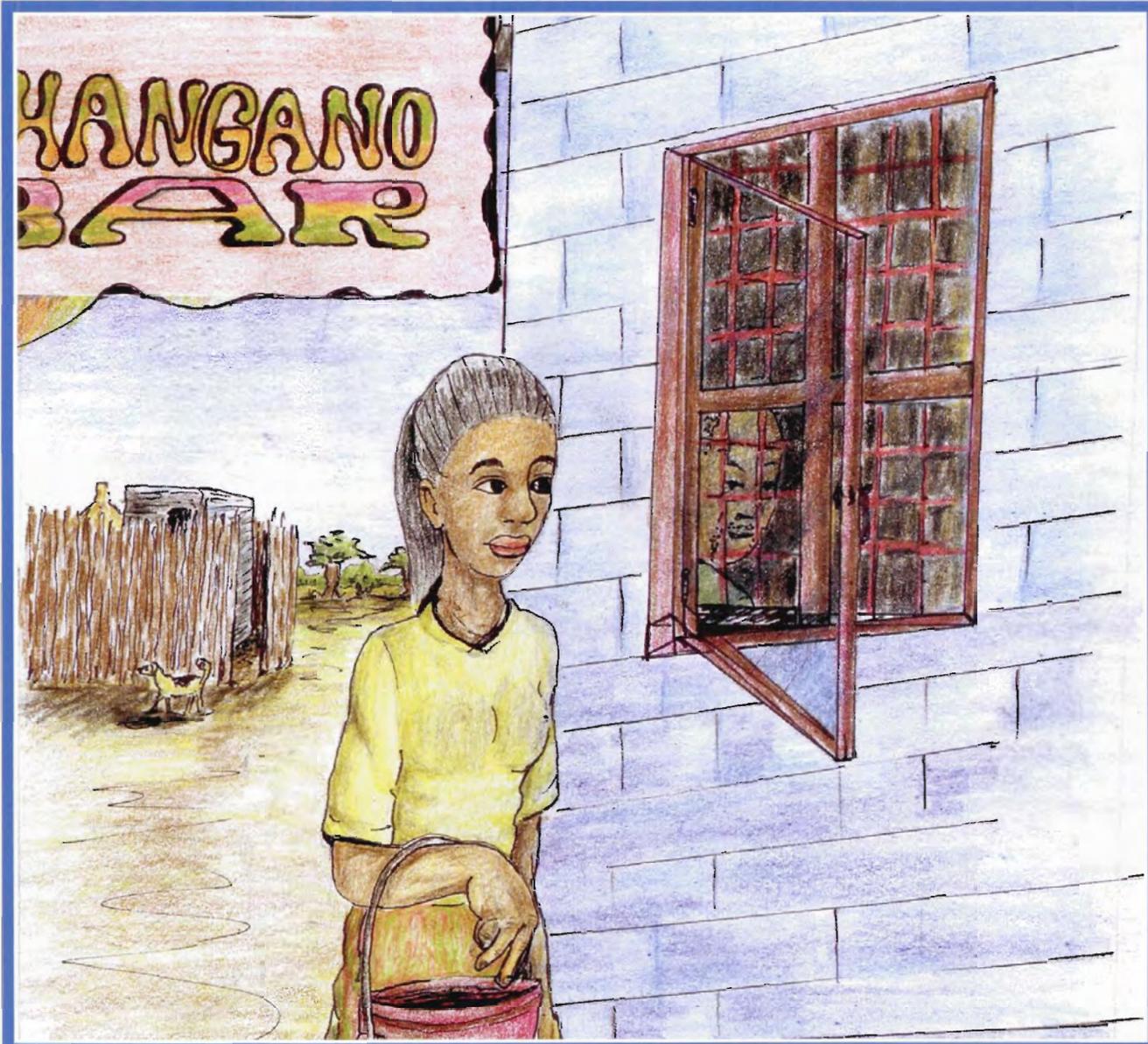


“Have you all put your composition books on the table?” asked Ms Angolo. The whole class shouted, “Yes, Miss, we have.”

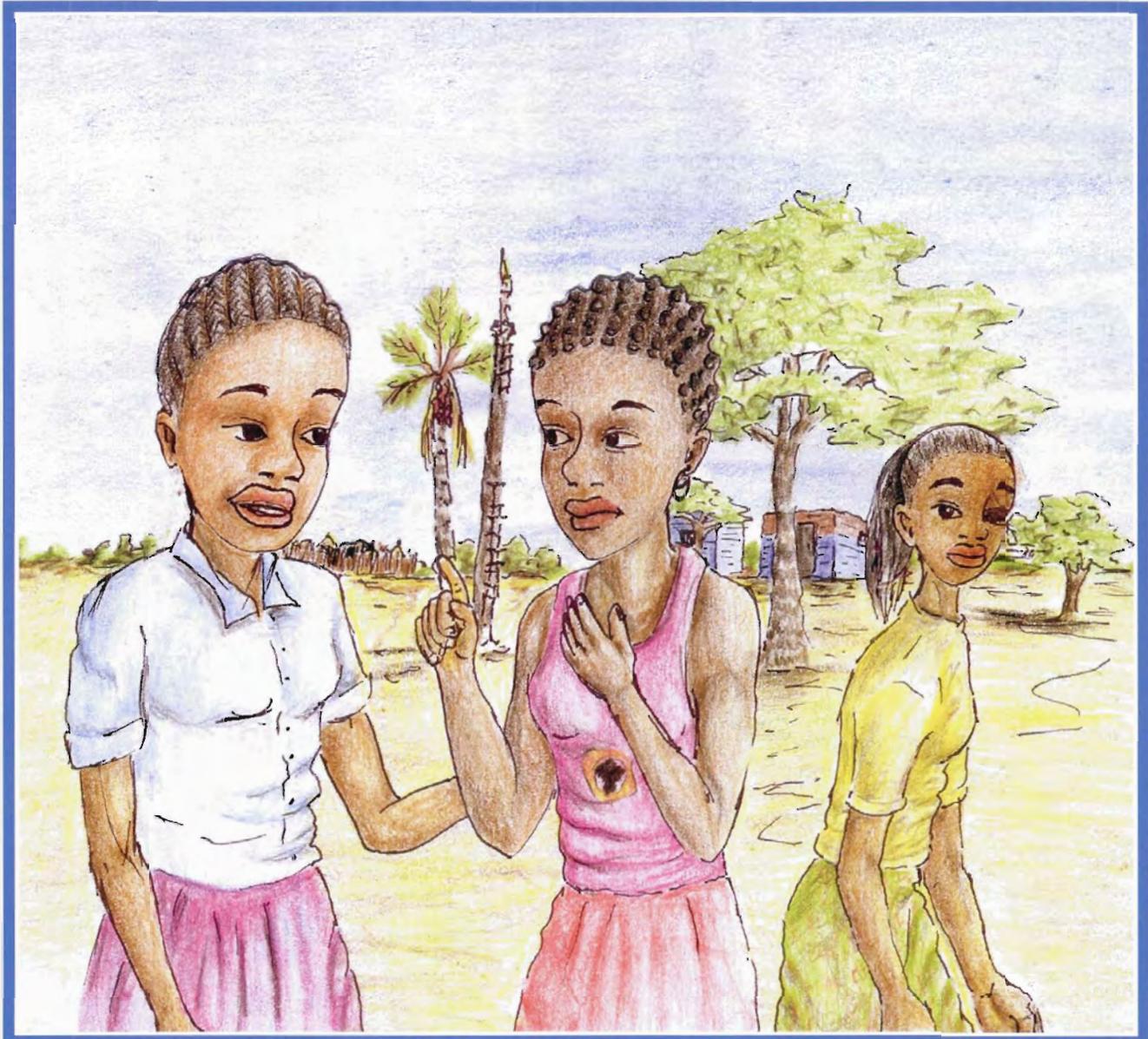
Kaushiwetu slowly moved her head from side to side. She was too shy to say “No” out loud.

“Okay Kaushiwetu, you will be able to finish your essay after school. Bring your composition book to my office before you go home,” said Ms Angolo.

“Yes, Miss,” replied Kaushiwetu.



After school, Kaushiwetu went to fetch water at Omuthima* on the path that passed through the cuca shops where Mr Shoombe, the owner of Ehangano Bar, was looking through the window of his bar. He thought to himself, “What a pretty young girl. Her swinging body melts my heart.”



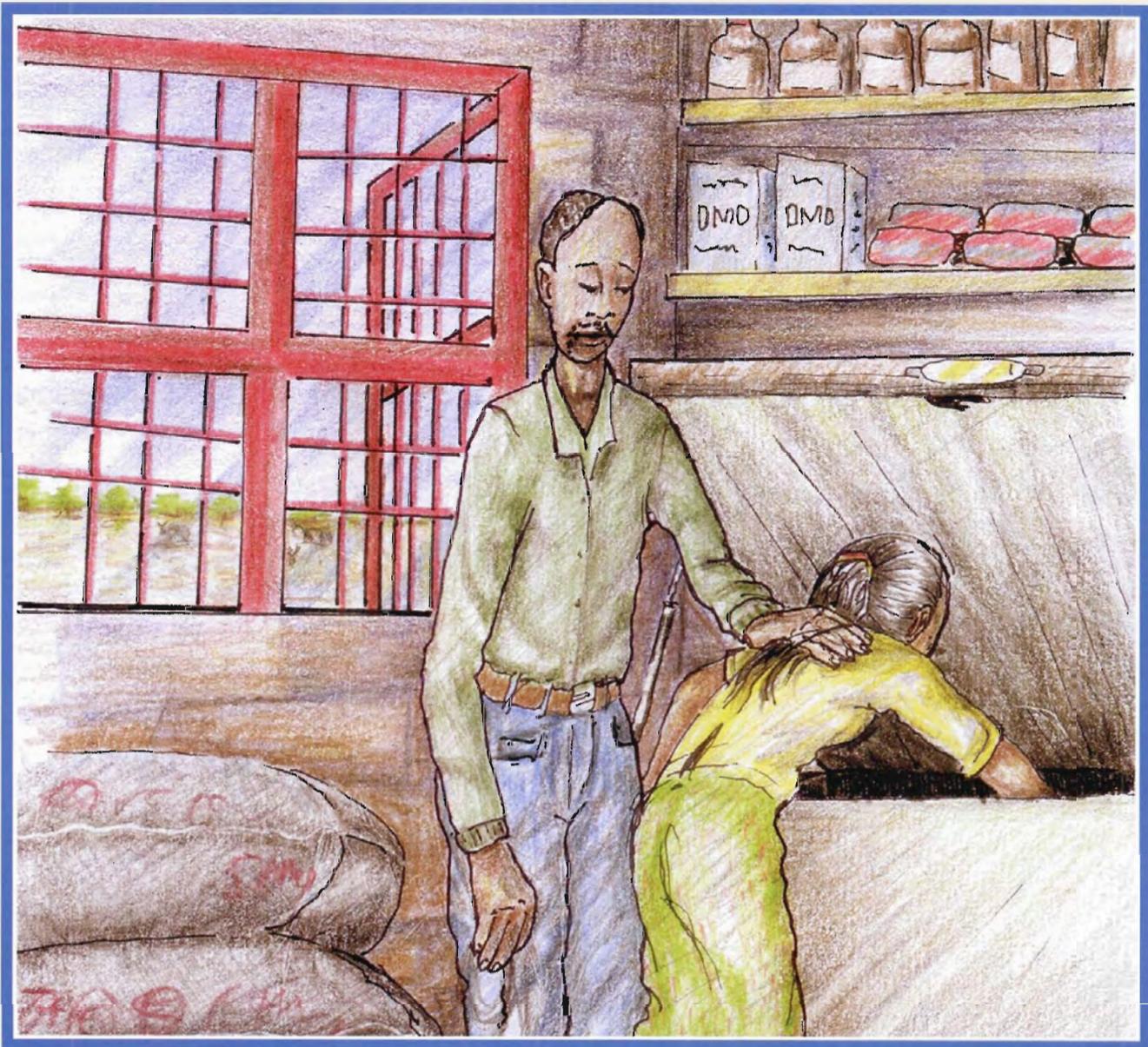
Kaushiwetu was dark in complexion. The other village girls of her age all wished that they could have long black hair like Kaushi*. Kaushiwetu once heard a girl talking about her to another girl, saying, “With a slender body like hers, I could be the next Miss Ongwediva Trade Fair.”



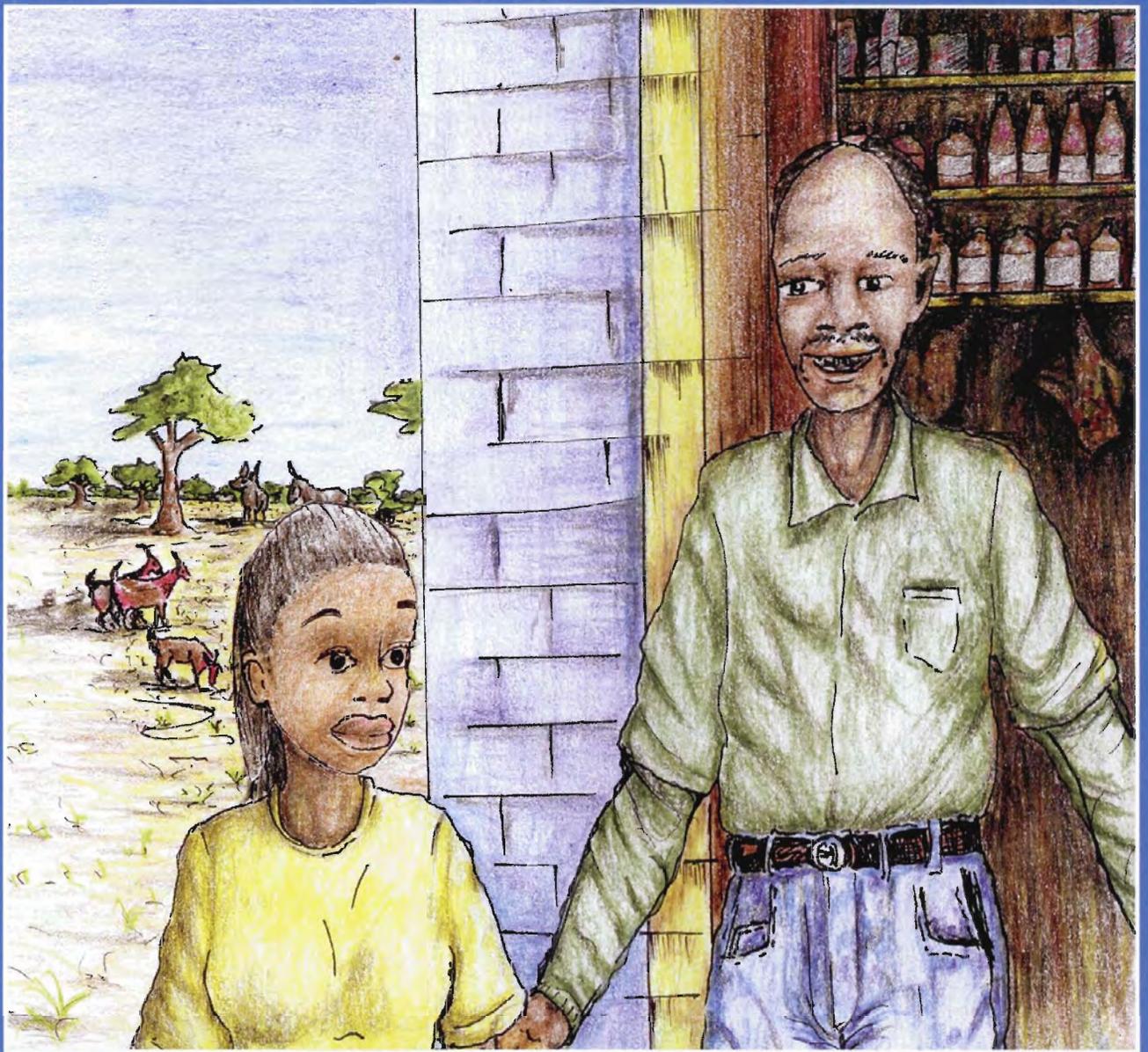
On her way back from Omuthima, with a water jar balanced perfectly on her head, she heard Mr Shoombe ask, “Is there still ombike* at home?”

With smiling eyes, she answered, “Yes, Sir.”

Mr Shoombe gave her twenty Namibian dollars for her granny’s ombike and ordered her to bring it to him immediately.

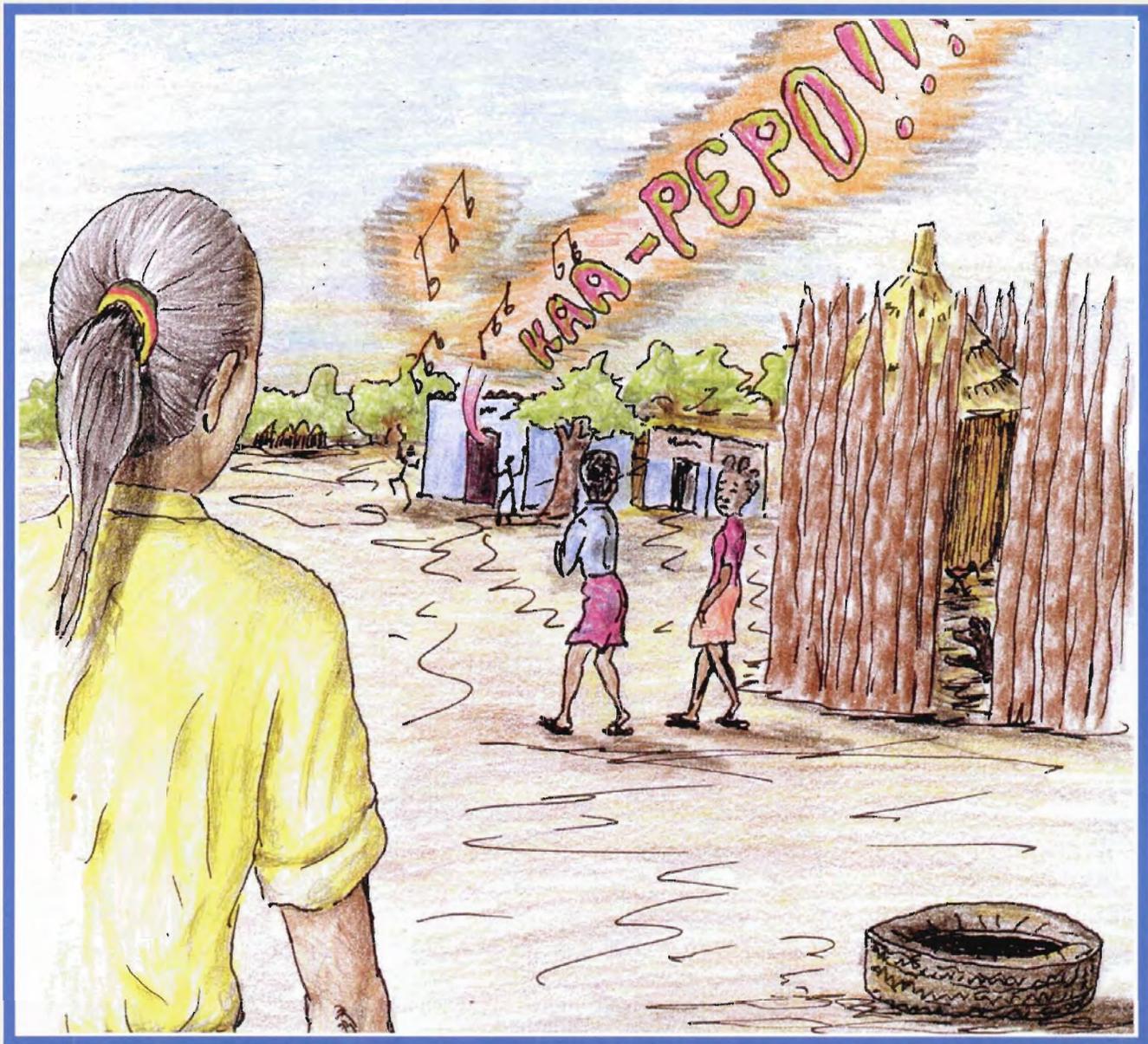


Later, as Mr Shoombé happily accepted the bottles of ombike from Kaushiwetú, he invited her to take a ‘niknak’* and a cold drink from behind the counter. When Kaushiwetú bent to take the cold drink from the refrigerator, he stood near her, stroked her hair, and whispered softly, “Kaushiwetú, my girl, you are as sweet as a ripe pawpaw, as clever as a dove. I am sure you can keep secrets. From now on, you are free to come and take anything you like from the bar. Eh?”



Kaushiwetu thought, “Secrets, what secrets? I don’t understand....” Unable to think of what to say, she left the bar and walked home quietly. She was puzzled but she wasn’t sure why.

Kaushiwetu’s schoolwork began to worsen. Even her mathematics work was incomplete. It was as if her mind could no longer stay in one place. Her thoughts wandered from place to place like sugarbirds searching for flowers. Mr Shoombe kept on calling to her and pestering her as she walked by the Ehangano Bar.



The jukebox kept on playing loud music. She watched her older friends sneaking out of their houses to go to the Ehangano Bar.



Gwandengu, her grandmother, began to notice the changes in Kaushiwetu's behaviour. She thought to herself, "Hmmm ... my Kaushi, she is studying less and singing more and more of those silly songs that come from the bar. I see that she is becoming a woman now. I must warn her about some men."



Later that same evening when Granny and Kaushi were alone together, Gwandengu asked her, “How many chicks do we have now?”

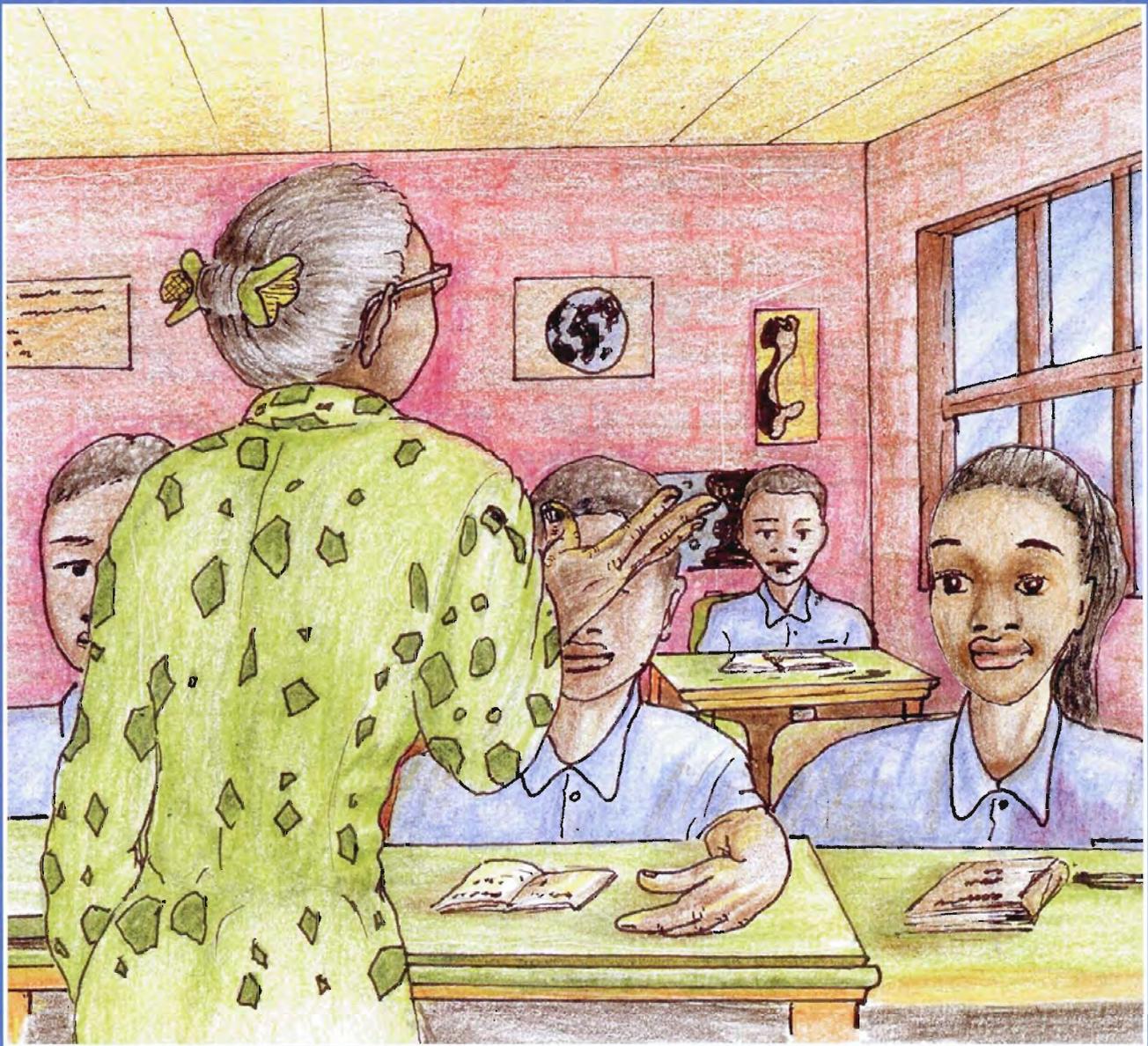
“Granny,” Kaushi replied, “why are you asking me this? You know that only three are left. You told me that one was eaten by a hawk this afternoon.”

“Hmmm,” murmured Gwandengu, “these hawks of nowadays. Next time, one will take my Kaushiwetu,” she said with a worried face.



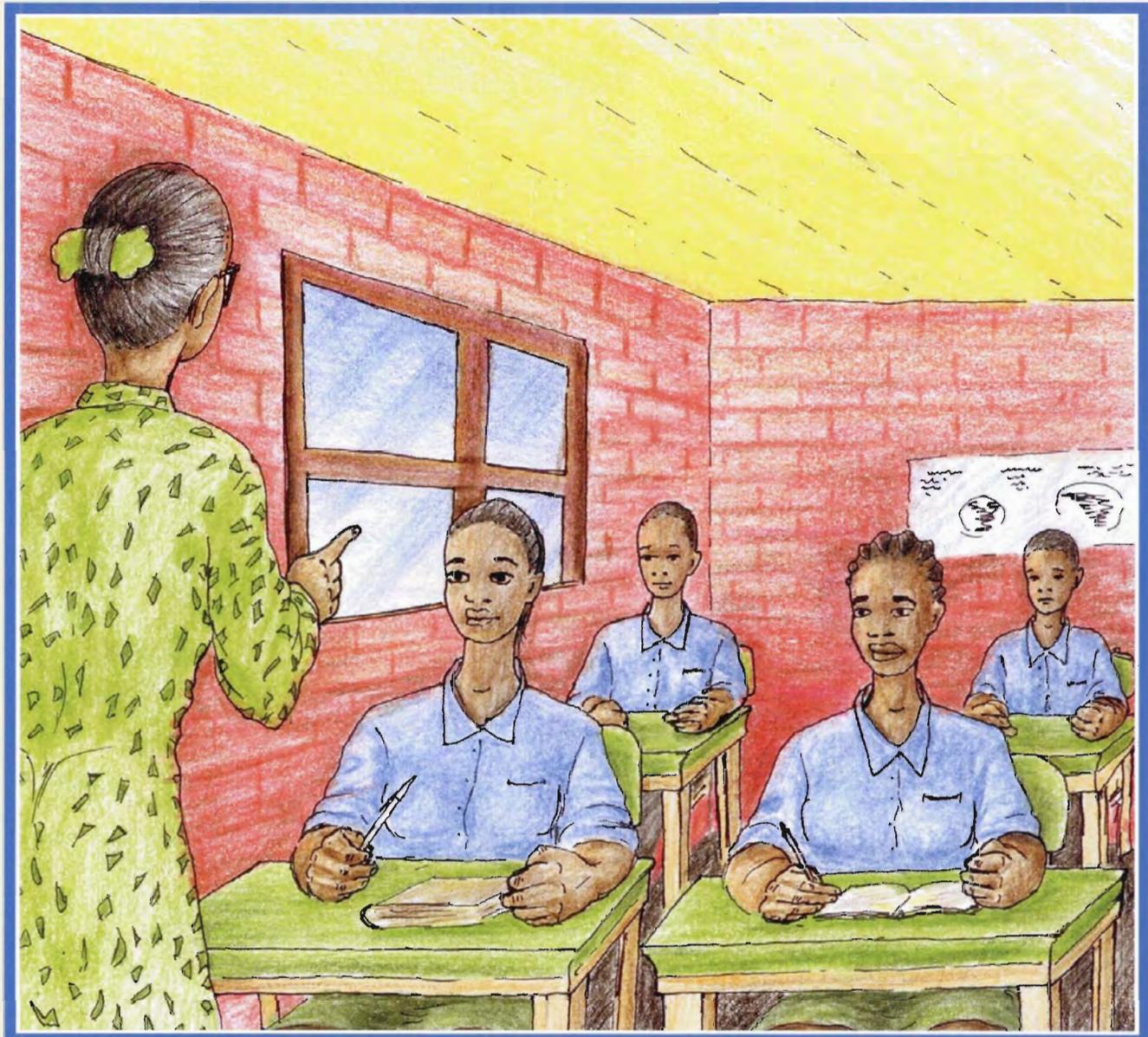
“Ha-ha! Not me, Granny. I’m old enough to take care of myself, let alone be picked up by a hawk like a baby chick,” laughed Kaushiwetu.

Gwandengu looked at her, “My granddaughter, in this world there are many types of hawks. Some men are hawks too. You are now at the age where you need to be careful of them.” She sighed. She wanted to say more, but Kaushiwetu smiled at her and wished her good night.



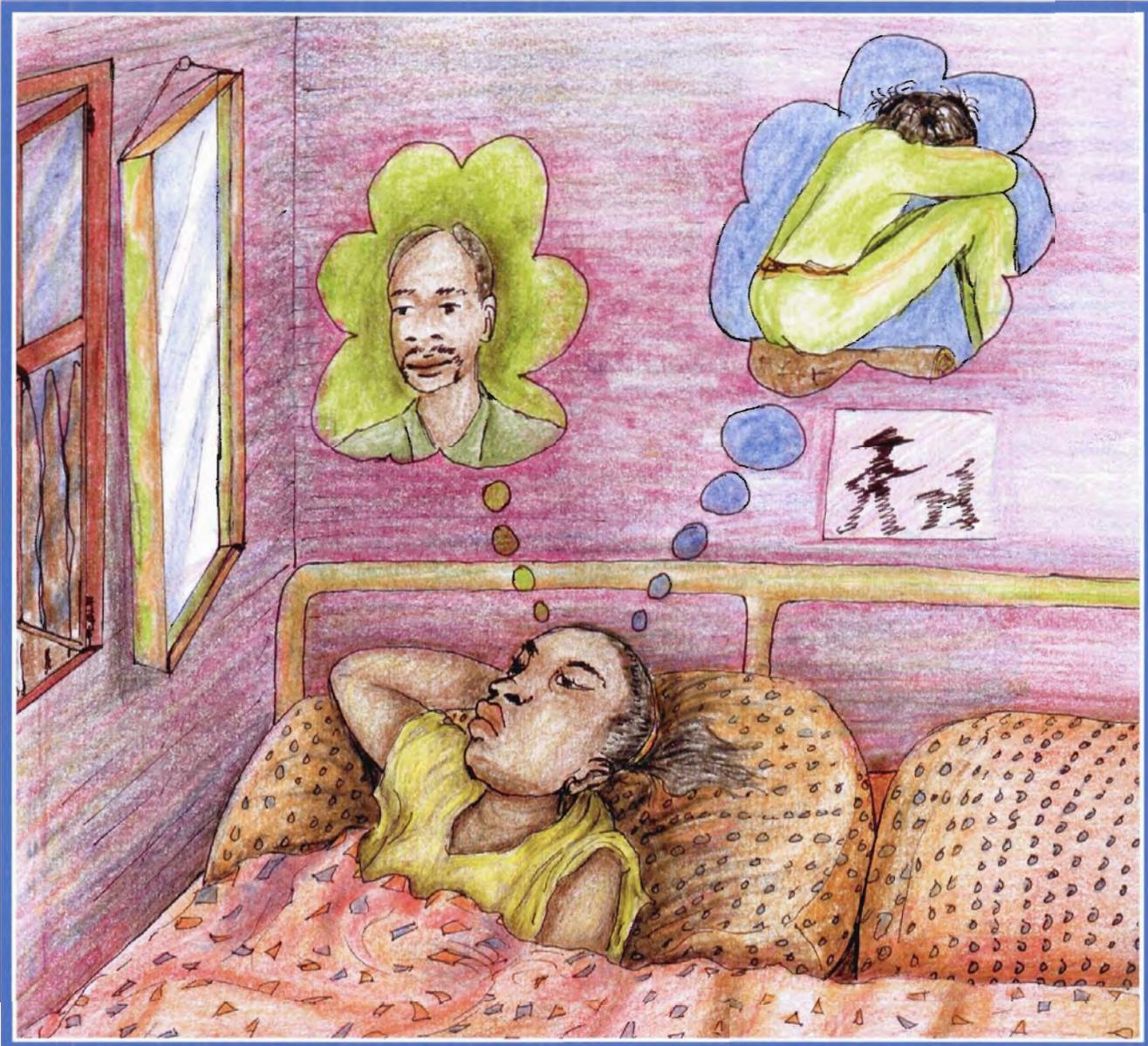
The next day at school, Ms Angolo explained the meaning of the word ‘decision’ during English class.

“It is important to make the right decision in life at the right time,” she said. “Decisions help us to fulfill our dreams in life.” In a clear sweet voice, she reminded the learners of the role-play assignment involving HIV and AIDS that the class had been working on for the past few weeks. In the role-play, a young girl named Maria finds out that she is pregnant and has to leave school to look after her baby. She also finds out that she is HIV positive. She had acquired the virus by having sex with her much older boyfriend.

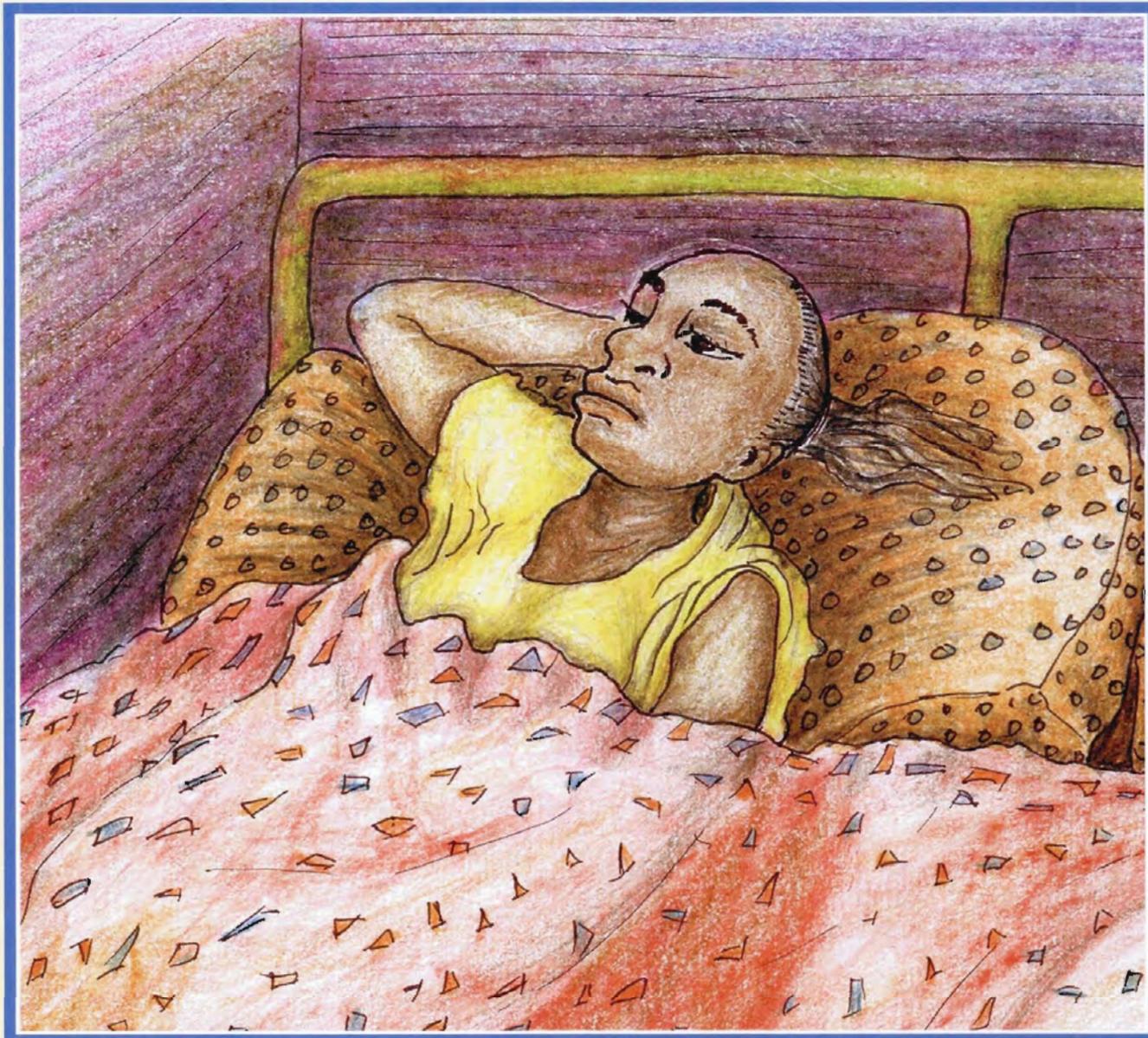


Maria, the role-play character, had made the difficult but wise decision to tell her neighbours, friends, and people from her school that she was HIV positive.

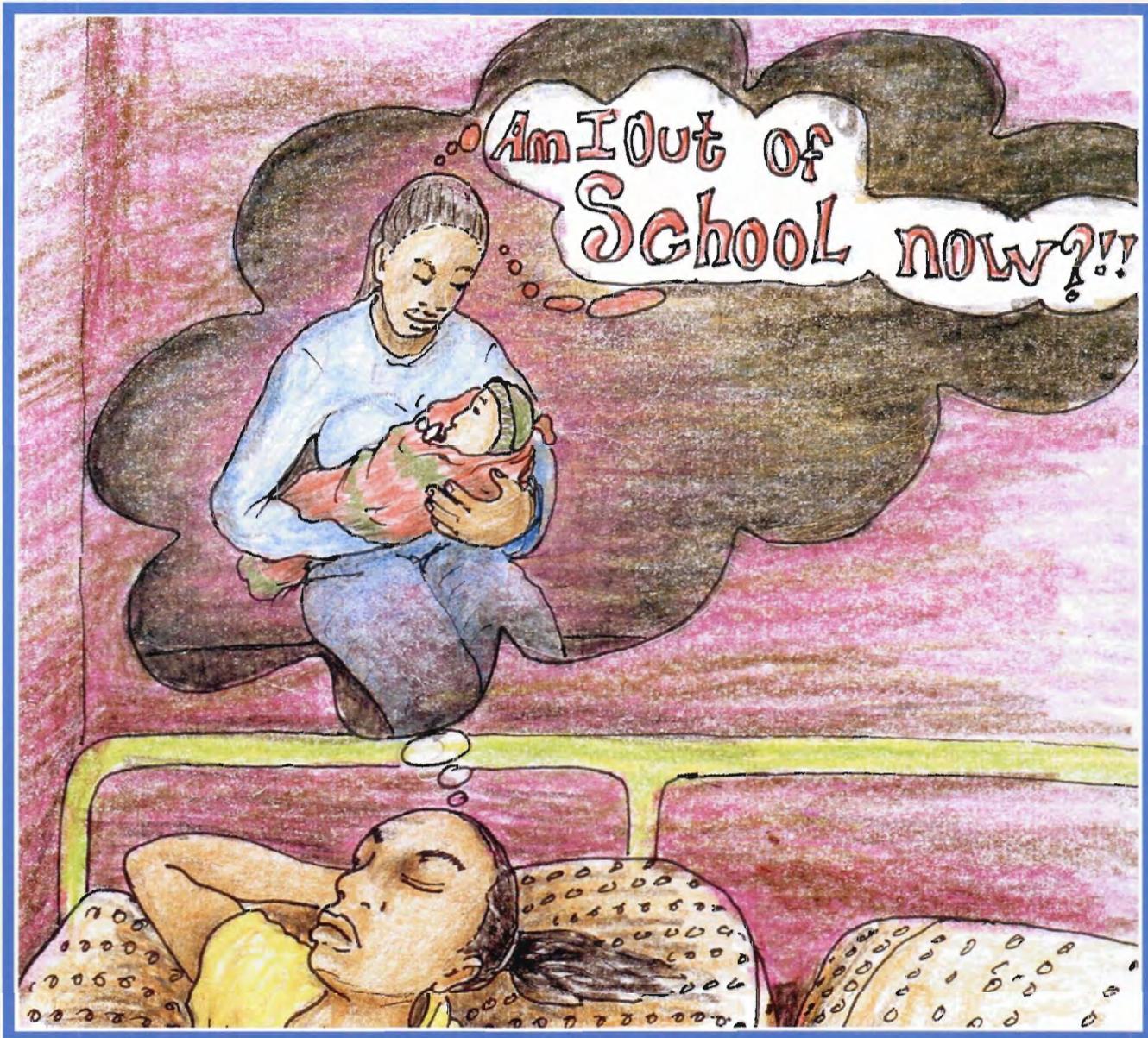
The teacher said, “Maria’s situation was a very serious one. All of you agreed with Maria’s decision to inform everyone of her condition. You also expressed a number of ideas to show your support for Maria if she were in your community. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to make the right decision at the right time and how others will respect that decision.”



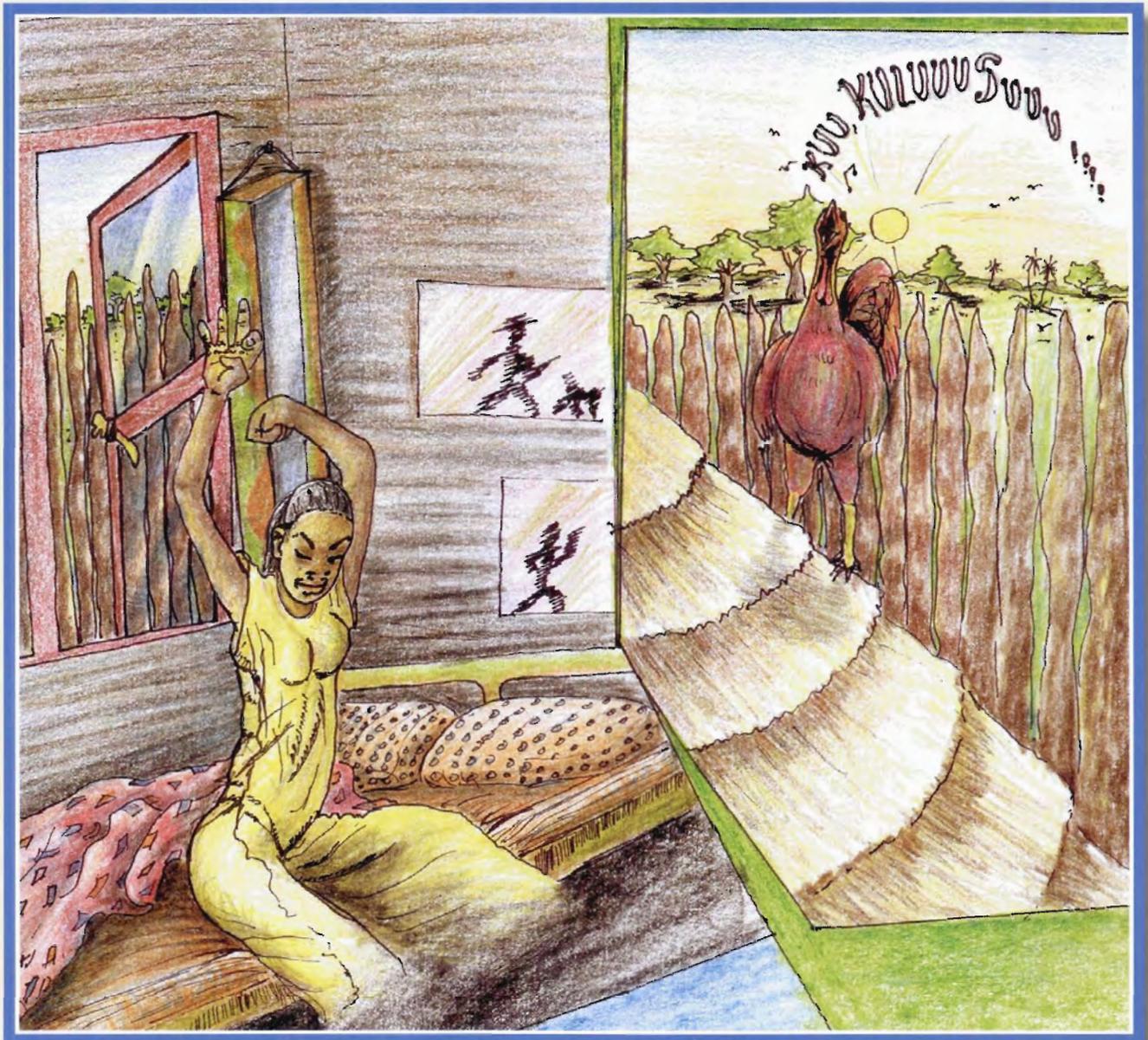
That night Kaushiwetu could not sleep. She thought about the teacher's lesson at school that day. Could the teacher have been talking directly to Kaushiwetu? She knew she was pretty and she liked the attention from Mr Shoombé. Her schoolwork had not been good for a while now. Her granny had complained about her singing the songs from the jukebox at the cuca shop. Mr Shoombé had offered her money and promised her many nice things if she would stay longer at his shop. And then there was the night that her granny had talked to her about the way some men can be hawks.



She wondered, “Do I have to make a decision? Will things get out of hand? Pregnant, me? Me, HIV positive? HIV and AIDS? I would never let myself become pregnant like Maria, the young girl in the role-play. If Mr Shoombé gives me money and a cell phone, do I have to give something to him in return? Is Mr Shoombé a hawk? Is he misleading me?”



At last she fell asleep. She dreamed that she gave birth to a fatherless child, dropped out of school and could not enjoy her freedom like her friends. She felt scared and ashamed.



Early the next morning Kaushiwetú woke up to the crowing of roosters. She felt so relieved when she realized that she had only dreamt of having a fatherless child. She went to her granny in the kitchen. Kaushiwetú ate her porridge. “Granny,” she said, “I have been thinking about the chicks and the hawk. Mr Shoombé has been offering me snacks, cool drinks and money. He even promised me a cell phone and more money. I am afraid to end up like Maria.”



“Which Maria?” asked Granny Gwangdengu.

Kaushiwetu explained, “Maria was a girl we learned about in a role-play at school. She had a relationship with a sugar daddy who gave her money and many nice things. Later she discovered that not only was she pregnant, but she was also HIV positive!” She went on, “Granny, this is what I am going to do. I will visit Mr Shoombe at the Ehangano Bar no more. I will never accept anything from him again. From today on, I will try to concentrate on my studies. Granny, will you help me stick to my decision? Will you protect me from Mr Shoombe?”



Kuku Gwandengu, Kaushiwetu's granny, listened, smiled, and thought to herself, "My granddaughter is growing up. Perhaps she will not make the mistakes that her mother and father made. She will think about the consequences of all her important decisions. My Kaushiwetu has a bright future ahead of her."

GLOSSARY

- *Kuku* - grandmother/granny
- *cuca shop* - local bar
- *Kaushi* - short for Kaushiwetu
- *Niknaks* - snacks
- *Ombike* - home-brewed dry gin
- *Omuthima* - a well

WRITING FOR KIDS



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