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Rising Above and Beyond For New Readers



*Stories for Liberian Youth
by Liberian Authors*

**USAID'S CORE EDUCATION SKILLS
FOR LIBERIAN YOUTH PROJECT**

August 2011

Foreword

The following stories have been developed through the support of USAID's Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY) program. The USAID/CESLY project seeks to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Liberian youth and young adults. USAID/CESLY increases access to education among Liberian youth through alternative basic education, enhances the overall quality of teaching, and collaborates with government and community organizations toward long-term sustainability of education for youth in Liberia. The project helps Liberian young people develop the skills and attitudes necessary to progress in the conventional academic system, transition into skills training or livelihoods, maintain healthy lifestyles and participate in their communities.

One of the key focus areas of the USAID/CESLY project is the promotion of a culture of reading among youth in Liberia. When reading skills are strengthened, performance in all content areas increases.

The following stories have been developed by Liberian authors. The intent of these stories is to produce works that are specifically suited to Liberian youth, with themes that touch areas of interest relevant to their lives, create a passion for reading, and stimulate critical thinking.

The stories are written at a basic level so that emerging and basic readers can access the content.

Those who use these stories in the classroom may choose to use the stories to practice the basic components of reading (such as phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition, vocabulary, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension). The stories can be used with speakers of the Liberian dialect of English to explore, differentiate and learn to correctly employ the different spoken and written registers of English in use in Liberia. The stories are intended to provide content that will allow one to bridge that transition, so that readers can become competent and fluent in

both spoken and written registers and learn how to correctly code-switch.

The stories can also be used to stimulate critical thinking, produce generative themes, and raise issues that make students want to turn the page. After reading a story, a facilitator may want to discuss with learners, “Why did the story end this way? What happened next? What led to this outcome? Could things have turned out another way?” Critical thinking around the themes in the stories can be developed either in oral discussion or in written follow up.

Equally important to the creation of a culture of reading is a culture of writing. Writing cannot be separated from the act of reading. Indeed, writing is what helps new readers practice and internalize new skills. In order to promote a culture of writing, learners may be encouraged to write new conclusions or following chapters to the stories contained in this publication. Facilitators can also develop questions that learners respond to in writing.

USAID/CESLY has striven to encourage Liberians to compose works that are relevant to the Liberian context. The following authors are profiled in this publication, all of whom are members of the Liberian Association of Writers.

Ade Wede Kekuleh

Gii-Hne S. Russell

James V. Dwalu

Llord Aidoo

M. Woryonwon Roberts

Watchen Johnson Babalola

The illustrations were completed by Saye Dahn, a Liberian illustrator. The original stories were adapted for a neo-literate reader by Llord Aidoo and Marilyn Gillespie, with editing from Lorien Frank and Katy Anis.

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Table of Contents

GENDER

The House Girl	11
My Child in Monrovia	21
Juah Does Not Listen	31
The Big Man in the Big Car	39
We Will See	47
Gbessay’s Wedding Day	55
Because He Loves Me	67
The Woman Doctor	77

WORK READINESS

Tugbeh Makes Nets	93
Is It Really Too Hard?	100
Sao Finds a Way	105
When You Are in Bat Town,	117
Hang Like a Bat	117
True Sisters	125
Old Friends	137

COMMUNITY ACTION

The Road	147
Hand Pumps for Nyanfor Town	153
Yakpa Town School	163
The Lost Bag	177

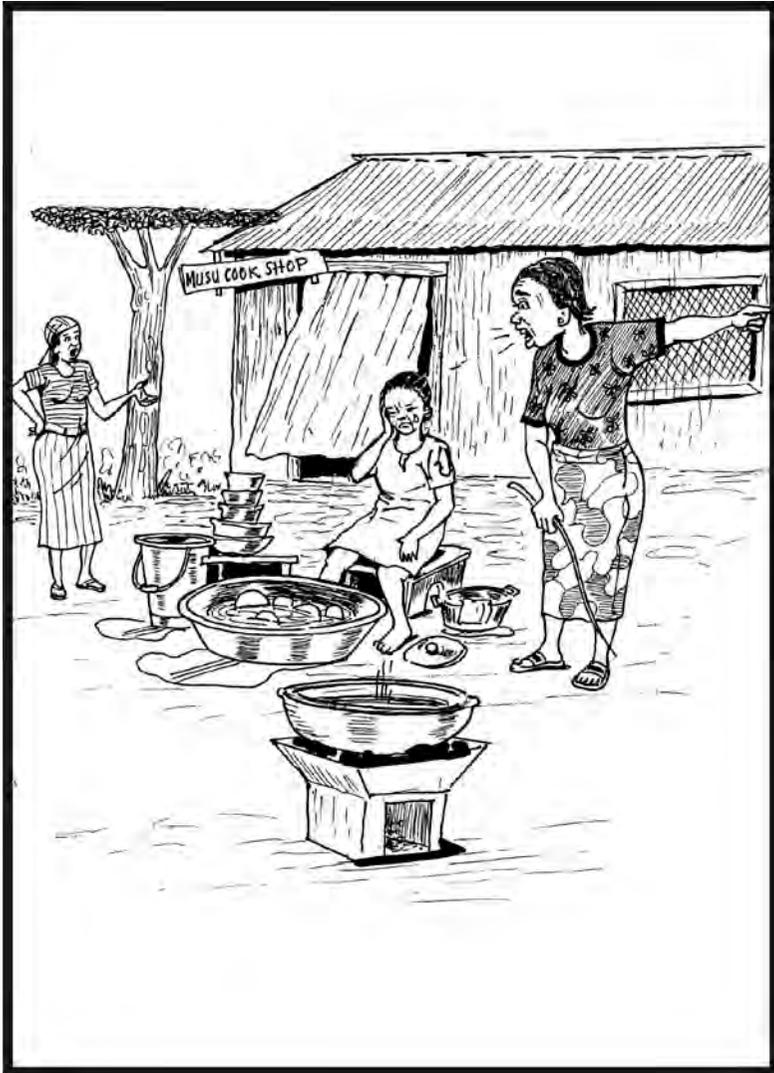
HEALTH

Hinneh Goes to the Hospital	183
A Day at the Hospital	191

His Name Is Dead Body..... 205
At Last- Drug Dealing..... 218

LITERACY

A Story to Tell..... 229
Zinnah and the Old Blind Man..... 241



The House Girl

Llord Aidoo

Every day was hard work for Kona.

“Hurry up, Kona!” Ma Musu would call.

“Hurry up! My children will get late!”

Every day Kona would call from inside the house,

“I’m coming, Ma!” she would say.

“Come put our uniforms on us, Kona!”

The children would all say together.

Kona would bathe the three children for school.

After cleaning up,

Kona would take the children to school.

As soon as she got back
she would sweep the big yard.
She would wash the pots and pans.
She would wash all the children's dirty
clothes.
She would put water in the big drums
for drinking.
Then she would clean the big house.

Every school day,
Kona sold a big box of kala
in a school yard.
But she never went to any school.

Kona's real parents were in Lofa.
Ma Musu sent for her three years ago.

Ma Musu said she'd help Kona go to school.

But for three years Kona only worked all day and most nights.

A third grade teacher lived next door.

Her name was Sister Hawa.

She was always kind to Kona.

And she treated Kona like her own child.

One morning Kona was sick.

She was so tired!

What the teacher said the day before was on her mind.

She had said she'd report

Ma Musu to the police today.

Kona did not know why
the teacher would do that.
She asked herself,
“Why would Sister Hawa
help me?
What does she want with the police?”

As she helped Ma Musu to count
The kala in the kala box,
Kona felt weak.
Ma Musu hissed and told her
not to be lazy.
Kona was so weak
she dropped a few of the kala.
The kala fell on the floor!

Whaaack!! Ma Musu gave Kona
a hard slap.

“You fool!” Ma Musu cried.

“You waste my market?”

“Ma, I, I, I, I, I —” Kona said.

Whaaack!! Whaaack!! Whaaack!!

Kona fell to the ground.

But Ma Musu hit and kicked her still.

Ma Musu also punched Kona.

Soon she saw Sister Hawa

come with the police.

The policemen saw everything.

Sister Hawa let out a loud cry for Kona.

The cry made people rush to see

what was going on.

Two policemen held Ma Musu.

Two others helped Sister Hawa

to wash Kona's face.

There was blood in Kona's eyes and nose.

At the police station

the people were very angry.

"We're witnesses!" they cried.

"Day and night this child does not rest.

Musu is very wicked.

Many days Musu gives her no food.

She makes her sleep outdoors!"

The police looked into this.

They saw that Ma Musu

was abusing Kona's rights.

She got no pay

for her hard work.

Ma Musu did not do

what she told Kona's Ma and Pa

she would do.

They sent Ma Musu to court

The court listened.

They said she was guilty.

After that, for two months

Kona lived with the Police Child Protection
Unit.

They take care of children

who were abused.

Every day Sister Hawa would visit Kona.

She'd always give Kona little gifts.

And she taught her the ABC's
and how to count.

Some weekends Sister Hawa asked
that Kona go home with her.

After the two months the police
found Kona's mother and father.
They came down to see their little girl.
Kona's parents were very glad
for Sister Hawa.

They saw Sister Hawa was a true
"big sister" to Kona.

They saw that being with Sister Hawa
made Kona happy too.

"Don't take Kona away,"

Sister Hawa told them.

“She must live with me to go to school.”

Kona’s mother and father were happy.

They said, “Yes.”

Sister Hawa asked Kona to make

a promise to her people.

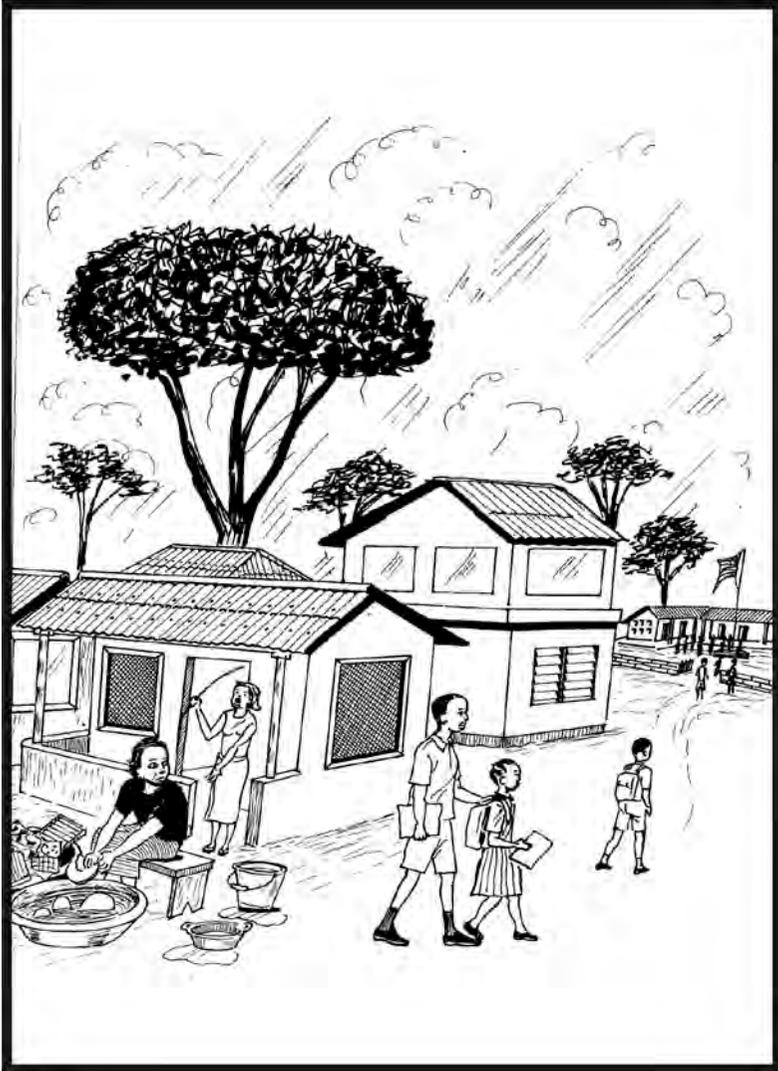
Then she said something in Kona’s ear

THE END

You finish the story...

What did she whisper?

What do you think happened next?



My Child in Monrovia

Watchen Johnson Babalola

Vera was made to work too hard.

She did not go to school.

It made Mrs. Morris angry.

Today, Mrs. Morris was unhappy again.

She looked at little Vera

about to wash dishes.

“Helena,” Mrs. Morris said. “Since morning
this girl has worked!

When will she go to school?”

Helena did not like what her friend said.

“Ma, leave us alone,” she said.

This is my home
and you don't know this girl."

"I know it's your home," Mrs. Morris said.
But my friend, all the other children
have gone to school.
This girl will be very late."

Vera was eight years old
when she came from the village.
That was two years ago.
Helena told Vera's parents
she would send Vera to school.
But the first year Vera did not go to school.

"I do not have money this year,"

Helena told Vera. "You have to help me
find money for your school fees.
You will help me in my cook shop."

So for one year Vera helped Helena
in her cook shop.

Vera washed the dishes.

There were a lot of dishes!

Vera washed the floor.

It was always dirty!

Vera picked the greens.

Big bunches of greens!

Vera beat the pepper and onions.

The onions made her cry!

Vera served the customers.

Some were very rude!

After the second year

Mrs. Morris asked Helena,

“Will Vera go to school this time?”

“My shop did not make money,” Helena said.

“Vera will have to work harder.”

Mrs. Morris gave it a thought.

“Okay,” she said,

“I will pay Vera’s school fees.

I will buy her uniform and books.”

“Oh! Thank you very much,” Helena said.

“My daughter will go to school now!”

But on the first day of school,

Vera was washing dirty dishes again.

That made Mrs. Morris angry again.

“I do not like how you treat Vera,” Mrs. Morris said.

“Her parents are telling people in the village

‘Our child is in Monrovia!

Our child is learning book!’

But she just works all day

and sells plastic bags in the streets.”

“She is wasting her own time,” Mrs. Morris said.

“She is too lazy.

All she wants to do is to eat.”

“My sister, this girl is only ten years old.

She is not as strong as a big woman!” Mrs. Morris said.

“But she eats like a big woman!” Helena said.

“She is a growing child,” Mrs. Morris said.

“Growing children need to eat well to grow well.

See the tight people around?

They will have grown bigger and taller

if they had eaten well

as growing children.”

“Yes, that is true,” Helena said.

“Vera’s family are all tight and small.

But one of Vera's sisters lives
with a woman in Congo Town.
The woman feeds the girl very well.
I once saw the girl
and I could not believe my eyes.
The girl has grown very tall."

Mrs. Morris laughed,
"Helena, it is like that even with seeds.
If you plant a seed in good black dirt
and you water that seed well,
the seed will grow very fine.
But that same seed won't do well in mud.
If it even grows it will not look good.
Children are like seeds in our hands.
The way we treat them will be

the way they will grow.”

“Is that so?” Helena asked.

Mrs Morris laughed again,
This girl will grow like a big tree
that will give fruits and shade
to many people.

Just take care of her well.

Allow her to eat well and go to school.”

“Get up, Vera!” Helena cried.

“Hurry and go to school.

I want you to grow to be
one big cotton tree!”

Vera was very happy.

Soon, she picked up a copy book
and ran out of the yard!

Vera was on her way to school.

THE END



Juah Does Not Listen

M. Woryonwon Roberts

Juah lives with Aunty Gbeh.

They live in Fish Town.

Juah's best friend is Marie.

Juah and Marie go to the same school.

It is night time.

Marie is going out.

She goes out every night.

"I wish you can come with me,"

Marie says.

"But your aunt talks too much."

“That is true,” Juah says.

“She treats me like a small girl.”

“You are not a small girl!”

Marie says.

One day Aunty Gbeh says to Juah,

“I don’t want to see you with Marie.”

“Why are you saying this?” Juah asks.

“Marie is a good friend.”

“Marie does things that are not good,”

Aunty Gbeh says.

“She will spoil her life.”

“I do not like how you talk
about Marie,” Juah says.

“I want you to be a good girl,”
Aunty Gbeh says.

Juah tells Marie what Aunty Gbeh says.

“Don’t mind that old woman,”
Marie tells her.

“She does not want you to
enjoy life.”

Juah begins to go out with Marie.

They go out every night.

Sometimes they come home very late!

Sometimes they come home drunk!

Aunty Gbeh does not know

Juah goes out with Marie.

Today Juah is sleeping very late.

She is feeling sick.

“Why are you still in bed?”

Aunty Gbeh goes to her.

“Are you not going to school?”

“I am not well, Aunty,” Juah says.

“What is wrong with you?”

Aunty Gbeh asks.

“I don’t know. I am weak.”

Juah's voice is low.

Aunty Gbeh sends for Juah's
father and mother.

They take Juah to the clinic.

A nurse checks Juah.

The nurse says to Aunty Gbeh,
"This girl is three months pregnant!"

"At sixteen?" Aunty Gbeh cries.

"How can that be?"

"How did this happen?"

Juah's mother asks.

Juah's father is very angry.

Aunty Gbeh is very angry too.

“Juah did not listen to me,”

Aunty Gbeh says.

“Now, tell me,” Juah’s father asks.

“Who made you pregnant?”

Juah bows her head.

She is ashamed.

Juah begins to cry,

“I don’t know, Papa!

I don’t even know when

I got pregnant.”

THE END



The Big Man in the Big Car

M. Woryonwon Roberts

Wledee is by the road.

The sun is hot.

She is waiting for a car.

A man comes by in a big car.

He slows down.

“Where are you going?” the man asks.

“Home,” Wleedee says.

“I will give you a ride,” the man says.

“Thank you,” Wledee agrees.

She gets in the man’s car.

The man calls his name.

“I am Wledee,” Wledee says.

After talking some more,

Wledee looks round the car.

“This is the first time

I’m riding in this kind of car!” she says.

The man smiles,

“This car is for you now.”

“But how can that be?” Wledee asks.

“You are my good friend now,”

the man says.

“What I have is yours.”

“Thank you very much,” Wledee says.

Then the man asks,

“Are you not hungry?”

“Why do you ask?” Wledee says.

The man says,

“Can we stop at my house

to eat something?”

“You are very nice to me.”

Wleedee says.

“I am very hungry.”

Wleedee and the man go home.

They start to eat.

They talk and talk as they eat.

Then the man leaves his seat.

He sits next to Wleedee.

He puts his hand on Wleedee’s breast.

Wleedee pushes his hand away.

“What are you doing?” Wleedee asks.

“I love you!” the man says.

Now he puts his hand on
Wledee's lap.

Wledee pushes his hand again.

"I am afraid," Wledee says.

"Don't be afraid!" the man says.

"Be a big girl."

"No! My mother will be angry,"

Wledee says.

"Here is some money for you,"

the man says.

"Give some to your mother!"

The man tries to kiss Wledee.

Wledee runs for the door.

The man runs after her.

He shouts,

“You can’t eat my food

and go like that!”

“No! I don’t want your money!” Wledee
cries.

The man grabs Wledee.

He tears her dress.

She pushes and kicks.

She runs out of the house!

People hear her crying.

They run to her.

They call the police.

Wleedee tells the police everything.

“This man is always hurting
little girls,” the people tell the police.

The police take the man to court.

THE END



We Will See

Ade Wede Kekuleh

Wehyee lives in Zleh town,

She goes to school there.

She has ten brothers and sisters

Many men in Zleh town want

to marry Wehyee.

The chief wants to marry Wehyee too.

But Wehyee's father tells them,

"Wehyee will not marry.

She will learn in school

to help our people!"

One day Wehyee tells her father,
“Our people are dying from little things.
I want to go to college
to become a doctor.
I want to help our people.”

Wehyee’s father tells her,
“It will be good for us.
You will go to your aunt in Zwedru
to finish high school first.”

“Thank you father,” Wehyee says.

“But I don’t have any money,” her father
says.

“I will borrow money from the chief
to send you away.”

When Wehyee is about to leave,
Her mother says to her,
“You will make it, Wehyee.
You will make me happy.”
Aunt Bonh is happy for Wehyee
to live with her in Zwedru.

Wehyee helps Aunt Bohn.
She goes to school in Zwedru.
She is very happy.

One day Aunt Bonh says
“Wehyee, there is bad news.
The chief in Zleh town
has put your father in jail!”

“What did father do?” Wehyee asks.

“I have to go to father!”

“But you have to go to school,”

Aunt Bonh says.

“Father is a sick man,” Wehyee says.

“I must free him from jail.”

“You help me a lot,” Aunt Bonh says.

“Don’t be long when you’re gone.”

Wehyee goes to Zleh town.

Her father is very sick.

“I am a poor man,” father says.

“The chief wants our only land.”

“But father,” Wehyee says.

“What did you do?”

“The money I took for you, Wehyee,”

Her father says.

“He wants you or the land
for his money.”

“What do you mean, Father?”

Wehyee asks.

“I told him you are going to school,”

her father says.

“I will get you out of here,”

Wehyee says.

“I will see the chief.”

Wehyee goes to the chief.

The chief is in his hammock.

“Chief,” Wehyee says,

“My father is sick.

Please free him.

Give him some time.

He will pay your money back.”

The chief looks at Wehyee.

“There are two things your
father can give,” the chief says.

“I must get the land.

Or I must marry you!”

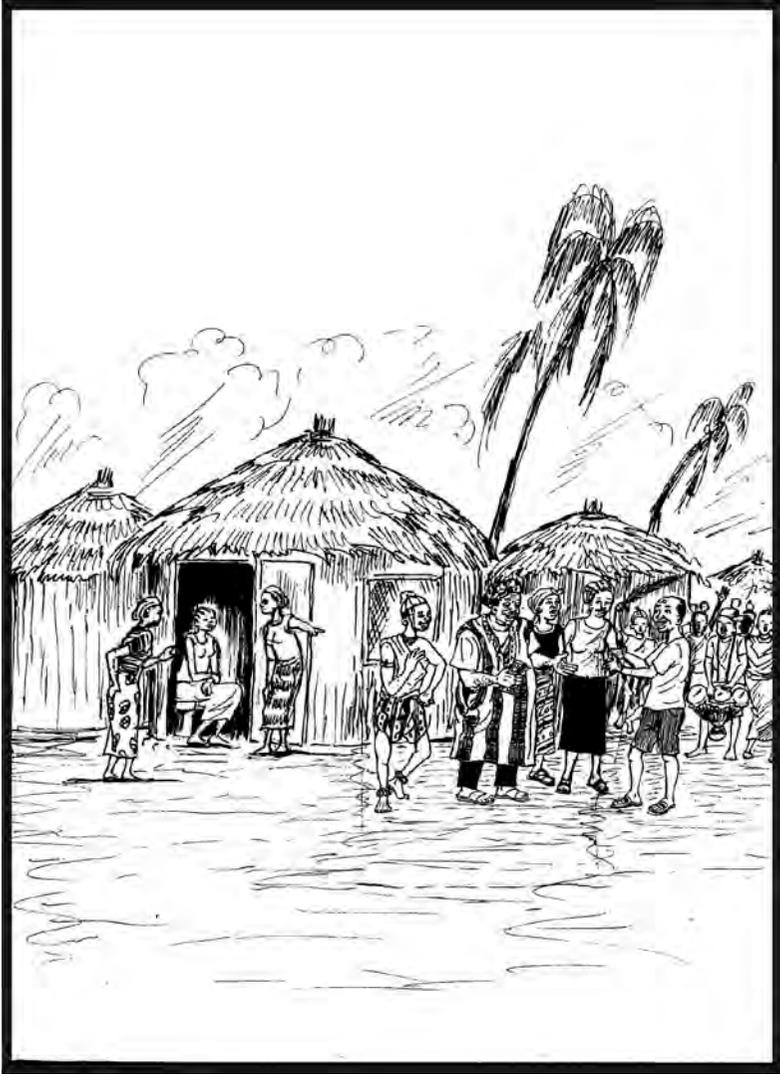
Wehyee looks at the chief.
She thinks about what he says.
Then she says,
“As my father’s friend,
You are my father too.
How can I be your wife?”

The chief smiles,
“I will give you three days
to make up your mind!”

THE END

You finish the story...

What do you think happened next?



Gbessay's Wedding Day

LlordAidoo

It was her wedding day.

Everyone was happy.

But Gbessay was not happy.

Mr. Flomo was in the big yard.

He gave Gbessay's aunties gifts

of lappas and money.

But he kept a gold set

for Gbessay.

Gbessay was his wife-to-be.

The people were enjoying the day.

They ate torborgee with rice.

And they drank palm wine.

Some of them said good things

about Mr. Flomo.

Some of them sang and

put gin on the ground.

A culture troupe played sasas that sang:

chi cha-cha! chi cha-cha!

Gbessay's sisters sang in the hot sun

and danced.

But all morning Gbessay sat on

her bag in her small room.

She held her small money
with her head bowed.
She refused to come out.
She refused to wear the new clothes
her mother gave her.
She also refused to see her sisters
or greet anyone.

Soon, Ma Massa came in and
opened the windows.
Ma Massa was her big aunt.

“What is wrong, Gbessay?”

Ma Massa asked.

“Why are you sitting like this?”

Gbessay shook her head.

She was crying.

Ma Massa sat down and

wiped Gbessay's face.

"What are you up to, Gbessay?"

Ma Massa's soft voice was hard.

"You don't know today is your big day?

Your husband will feel bad

if he sees you like this!"

Gbessay said, "Please, Aunty Massa,

I don't want to get married."

"Why?" Ma Massa asked.

"Why are you talking like this?"

“I don’t want to get married.

Don’t you see I’m still small?”

“What are you saying?”

Ma Massa turned Gbessay around.

“Look at me good,” she said.

“I was twelve when I married
your uncle Yakpawoloo.

But you are a big woman now.

You are fifteen!

Who said you are small?”

“I want to go to SCHOOL!” Gbessay cried.

“What do you call school?”

Ma Massa was very angry.

“You want to spoil your luck?

You don't know Mr. Flomo

is a rich man?

The man has a big car.

He has a big house!

You don't want to enjoy in this town?"

"But I want to finish school, Aunty Massa,"

Gbessay said again.

"Kpooh!" Ma Massa held Gbessay

with her two large hands.

"Better leave this school thing, little girl!

That man Flomo is more than school,

You don't know?

You don't want us to enjoy?"

Gbessay's voice shook,

"But school is best, Aunty Massa!"

A funny smile came on Ma Massa's face.

"Look," she said.

"All your friends are getting married!

Mr. Floma has paid your dowry!

And you can't change the law!

Your father and mother know

Mr. Floma now. Kpooh!"

Gbassay was quiet.

She looked deep into the

old lady's eyes.

Then she said,

"Papa sent for me for this thing?

I'm going now, now, now!"

I'm going back to Uncle Fayiah.

I need to finish school first!

Nobody can force me to get married!"

Gbessay got up.

She looked very brave.

She looked at her money

And took her bag.

She pushed her clothes

inside the bag.

"This little girl wants to spoil her life!"

Ma Massa went through the doorway.

She called to the people outside!

Her voice mixed with the sasas and
singing:

"Somebody Help Me!

Somebody Help Me!”

Gbessay pushed her bag
through the back door and ran!

Gbessay got to the main road
with a slipper on one foot only.
She quickly stopped the first taxi.

The wedding guests began
to chase behind her.
They almost caught the edge
of her dress.

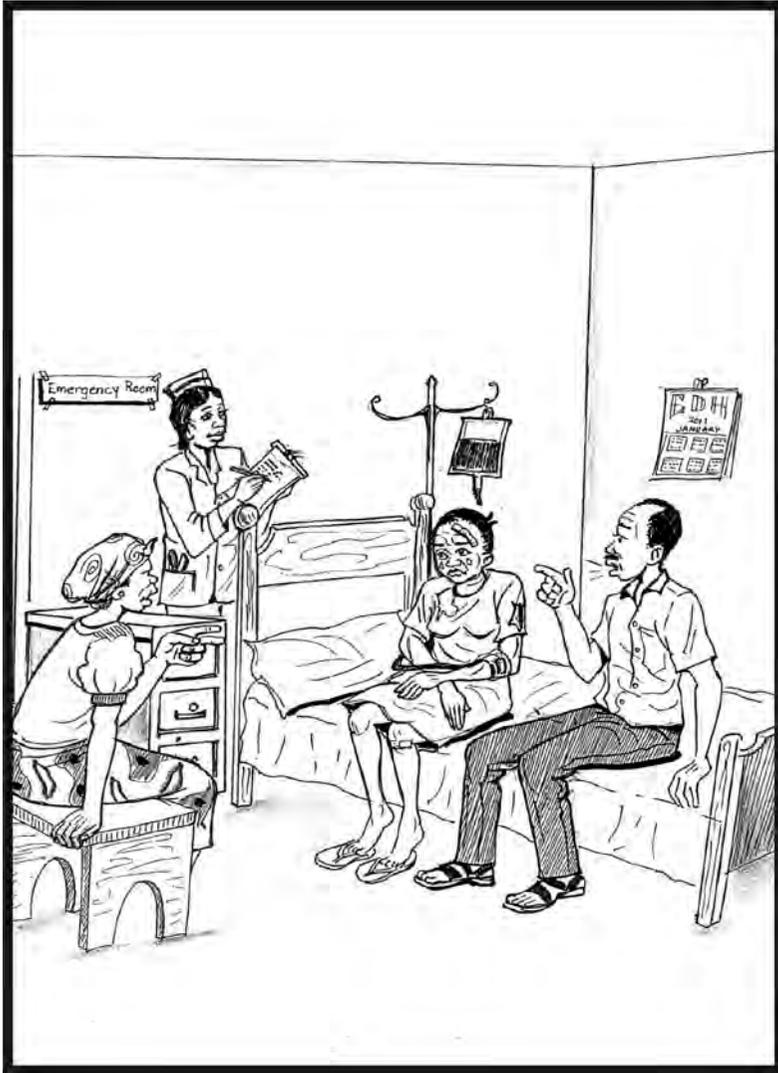
But she jumped in the taxi
just in time.

And she sped away!

She didn't know how she would do it

But she would go to school!

THE END



Because He Loves Me

Watchen Johnson Babalola

Grace is in bed.

She is hurt in one eye.

Mrs. Carr is Grace's mother.

Mrs. Carr sees her eye.

"What hurt your eye?" Mrs. Carr asks.

"I hit a car as I ran," Grace says.

"What car? Didn't you see it?" Mrs. Carr asks.

"My eyes are getting bad, Mama," Grace says.

"I do not see very well."

"You do not see well?" Mrs. Carr asks.

“You need to see a doctor.

Next week we will go”

2 weeks later

Mrs. Carr is at work.

Her phone rings.

The call is from JFK Hospital.

Grace is hurt again.

Mrs. Carr calls Mr. Carr.

They run to JFK.

Grace is in bed.

Her face has many new cuts.

Her hands are cut too.

“Her boyfriend beat her badly,” the doctor says.

“She is hurt badly.

She has to rest.”

“Her boyfriend!” Mr. Carr cries.

“I will go to the police for this!”

Mr. Carr gets mad at Mrs. Carr.

“You are the problem!” he yells.

“You did not teach her good ways!”

“Don’t say that,” Mrs. Carr yells.

“She did not tell me

she had a boyfriend.

I don’t know him.

What kind of man can do this?”

“He is from a bad family,” Mr. Carr says.

Mrs. Carr nods,

“Bad families bring up bad children.”

Grace is up

but she is weak.

“Mama? Papa?” she calls.

“Take it easy,” Mrs. Carr says.

“The doctor says you need rest.”

“My body is very, very hot,” Grace says.

“I am in deep pain.”

“Who did this to you?” Mr. Carr asks.

“The police will put him in jail.”

“No. Don’t jail him Papa,” Grace says.

“Why?” Mrs. Carr says.

“Look what he did!”

“He is not bad, Papa,” she says.

“He loves me.

That is why he beats me.”

Grace goes to sleep.

Mr. Carr looks at his wife,

“Did you hear what she said?”

“Did Grace say that?” Mrs. Carr says.

“A smart girl like Grace?

Where did she get that idea?”

The doctor comes in again.

He has more bad news.

“Grace is at the hospital
all the time,” he says.

“One time her fingers were broken.”

“Listen to that!” Mr. Carr says,
He is very mad.

After a few days

Grace is a little better.

Mr. Carr asks her,

“We still don’t know your boyfriend.

Where is he? Who is he?”

Grace says,

“He is afraid to come here, Papa.

He is afraid of you.

Don’t be upset with him.

He is not bad. He loves me.”

“Stop saying that!”

Mrs. Carr says to Grace.

“How can you say that trash?”

“No,” Grace says. “It is not trash!

If a man loves you

he will always beat you, Mama.

It happens to all my friends.”

“Only stupid women

let men beat them!”

Mr. Carr tells Grace.

“I do not hit your mother ever.

Does that mean I do not

love your mother?”

“No, Papa,” Grace says.

“I know you love Mama.”

“Well then,” Mr. Carr says.

“Never let a man disrespect you
in any way.

Do not let a man beat you.”

Grace bows her head.

Tears roll down her face.

“Yes, Papa,” she says.

“I understand.”

Does Grace understand?

Mr. and Mrs. Carr don’t know.

They talk for a long, long time.

“We must help Grace,” says Mrs. Carr.

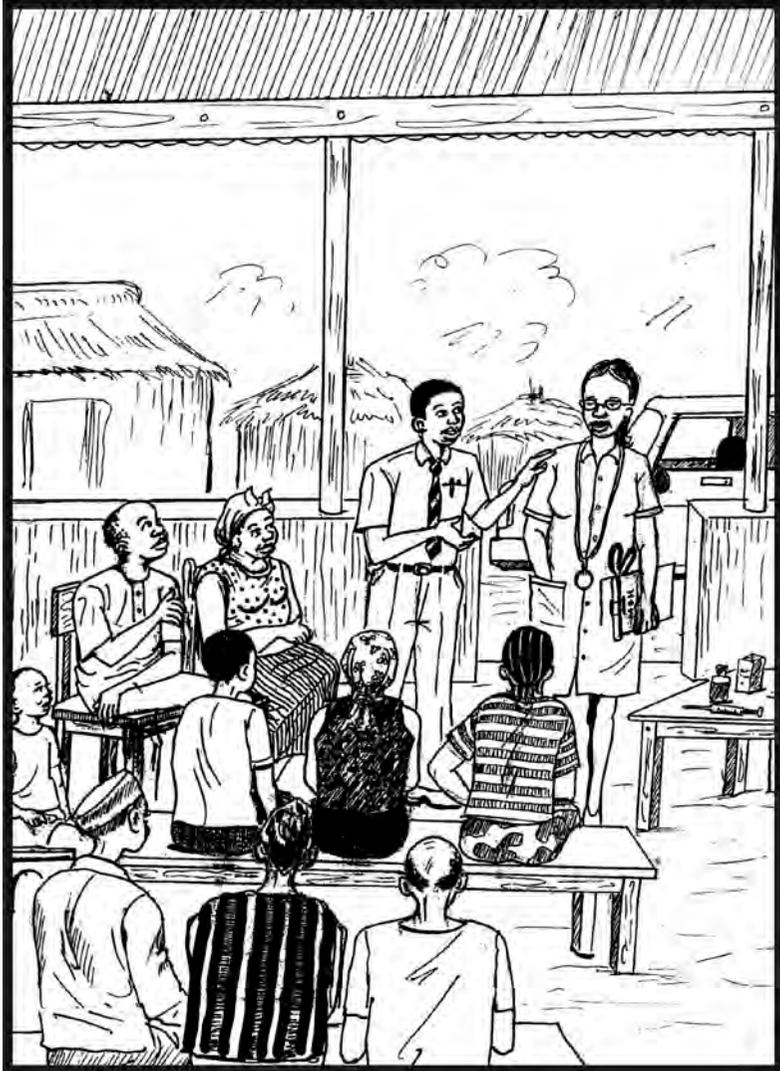
“She is just a teen.
We must talk to her.
We must listen to her.”

“Yes,” says Mr. Carr.
“It was our job to teach her
how a good man acts.
We must help her now –
To meet good friends
and boys that respect her.”

“We are family,” he says.
“Her problem is our problem.
It is not too late.”

THE END

*What happens next?
Does her father meet her boyfriend?
What does Grace decide?*



The Woman Doctor

James V. Dwalu

Toweh town has no clinic.

They have no doctor.

The people suffer.

They ask the government
to send a doctor.

One day the people hear

that someone is coming.

They do not go to their farms.

All day they wait.

They do not understand

why he does not come!
Tanneh tells the women
to just wait!
The chief tells everyone
to just wait!

By late evening
a woman comes with three men.
They come in a white jeep.

When they see the white jeep,
everyone is happy.
The jeep used to come
to Toweh town before!

A woman is driving the jeep.

The woman stops the jeep.

The people can not believe it
when the woman gets down.

“A woman driving a car?”

Tanneh looks around.

All the women look at one another.

“I’m from the government,”

the woman says.

She goes to the chief.

“And where is our doctor?”

the chief asks.

“When is he coming?”

“I am Doctor Jugbeh Koon!”

the woman says.

“Doctor Kortu went away!”

The chief turns to his men.

“How can we have a woman
for our doctor?” he asks.

An old man says,

“This can’t be!

They said a doctor would come.

Not a woman.”

“We can’t have a woman
touch us,” one other man says.

“Other people will call us fools!”

“We all have men sickness here,”
the chief says.

“I sent my son to Monrovia
to see a doctor.

A woman can’t be a doctor for men!”

Doctor Koon says,
“What is this sickness
you speak of?”

One of Dr. Koon’s men
says something in her ear.

Dr. Koon laughs.

“The government sent us here!

If I can't be your doctor,
I will go back!"

"We must do what our government says,"
the chief says.

"But only a man's wife
can see him naked!
Go tell the government
to send us a man doctor."

Dr. Koon speaks with the people
for a long time.

Then she sets up the clinic.

Only women and children
come to Dr. Koon.

All the men do not come.

The women make friends
with Dr. Koon.

“So a woman can be a doctor too,”
Tanneh says.

Dr. Koon says,
“Yes. When a woman learns
she do any job
she wants to do!”

“Can she build bridges and roads?”
a women asks.

“Can a woman do that?”

“Women can do that too
when they go to school,”

Dr. Koon says.

“Women and men can do the same work.
They are equal!”

Tanneh says,

“I wish to become a doctor.
to help our people here.”

“You will have to go to school,”

Dr. Koon says.

“You will have to stay in school
and study hard.”

The men still suffered

from the man sickness.

Many could not
do hard work now.

But they still stayed away
from the clinic.

One day the chief hears
his son was cured of his sickness.

The chief tells his people
there will be a big feast.
He tells the other towns too.

“My son is well now,”
the chief tells Dr. Koon.

“He is coming back home.
We will all be happy today!”

“Yes,” Dr. Koon said.
“My people and I will join you.”

Soon the chief’s son comes.
He is well and strong.
Everyone comes to see him.

“My son,” the chief says.
“I’m happy for you.”

“Father,” the boy says,
“We should not be afraid.
The cure wasn’t long.

The woman who helped me
is very good at her work.”

The chief asked,
“You say a woman put her
hands on you?”

“I didn’t feel any pain
when she worked on me,”
the boy says.

“She knows her work.
The government should send her here!”

The chief and the other old men
become silent.
They just look at each other.

Nobody sees Dr. Koon coming
with her people.

“O my good doctor,”
the boy runs to Dr. Koon.

“Thank you so much!
But why didn’t you tell me
you were coming to my town?”

The boy speaks again about Dr. Koon
and all she did for him.

“We will give you a big cow,”
he says to Dr. Koon.

“You will help our people!”

The chief goes to Dr. Koon.

He shakes her hand over and over.

“Sorry, Dr. Koon,” he says.

“Our ideas are not right.

“Now I know that women too
can go far in life.”

“It is good that you know this now,”

Dr. Koon says.

“Yes,” the chief said.

“I want to be like my son.

I want you to work on me!”

The other sick old men

all say the same thing to Dr. Koon.

“You will be our doctor,”

the chief says.

“We will build a clinic here.”

All the men are happy.

“We will put all our girls

in school too,”

the chief said.

“They will be like you.”

“Yes,” Dr. Koon said.

“A school is the best place

for a girl.”

THE END



Tugbeh Makes Nets

James V. Dwalu

Tugbeh's town is by a river.

The river is small.

The river has many fish.

But Tugbeh does not eat much fish.

His father does not know

how to fish

and fish cost a lot in Tugbeh's town.

Tugbeh has a new idea.

He does not tell anyone.

He just sits and thinks.

"What's the matter with you?" his mother asks.

“Are you not well?” his father asks.

“I want to learn how to fish,” Tugbeh says.

“You are just a little boy,” his father says.

“Then I want to make nets,” Tugbeh says.

“Nets!” his mother says.

“Fishermen here go far for nets.

That is why fish cost a lot here.”

“I will make nets,” Tugbeh says.

“and sell to the fishermen.

That way we will have money

to buy fish”

“Who will teach you to make nets?”

his father asks.

Tugbeh smiles,
“Mr. Toe will teach me.
He is a net maker.”

Tugbeh’s mother says,
“Toe is very old now.
He no longer makes nets.”

“Who will pay him to teach you?”
his father asks.

Tugbeh says,
“I will open a study class for
small children.”

Tugbeh asks Mr. Toe to teach him
to make nets.

“I am old but I can do it,” Mr. Toe says.

“I can teach you now.

But you will need money

to buy what we need

to make the nets.”

Tugbeh does not give up.

In the day he learns to make nets.

After school he runs the study class.

A few children come.

Then more come.

Finally he has the money

to buy what he needs.

He and Mr. Toe work hard.

They make many nets.

Tugbeh takes the nets to the fishermen.

At first they say,

“We do not want these nets.

We want the nets from the city.”

But one day a man buys a net.

He gets many fish.

After that many fishermen buy the nets.

Tugbeh has some money.

Tugbeh’s parents can now buy fish.

Tugbeh likes to make nets.

But he likes to teach his study class even more.

He starts to save the money

he makes from the nets.

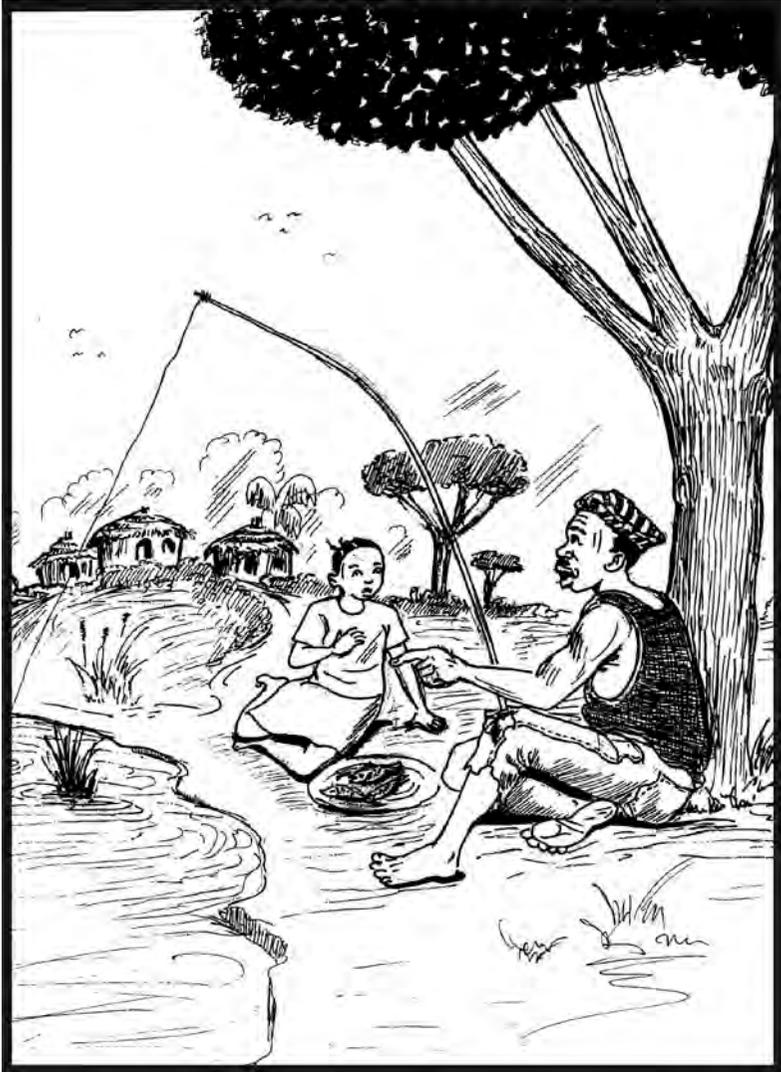
He wants to have money for school fees.

He wants to go to school

to be a teacher.

THE END

What happened next? You finish the story..



Is It Really Too Hard?

Watchen Johnson Babalola

The sun is up.

Zoe and her father sit

on the bench by some trees.

Birds sing up in the trees.

“What will we do today, Papa?” Zoe asks.

“We will go to the river,” her father says.

“I will teach you how to fish.”

“But I know how to fish,” Zoe says.

“I can fish with nets and baskets.”

“Yes, Zoe,” her father says.

“Today you will learn to fish
with a pole.”

“A pole?” Zoe asks.

“I am a girl. Can a girl
fish with a pole?”

“You are my only child,” her father says.

“You will have to learn
all that I know.”

“To fish with a pole is hard,”
Zoe says. “Only boys can do that.”

“Don’t say that,” her father says.

“You are a smart girl.
You do not know
how to use a pole to fish.
That is why you say that.
But if you try your best to learn
you will know many things.
And you will do better
than even boys.”

“Okay Papa,” Zoe smiles.

“I will learn.”

Zoe takes the pole.

Soon, Zoe hooks a big fish!

“Thank you, Papa,” Zoe says.

“What you said is true.

It is not hard to fish
with a pole!”

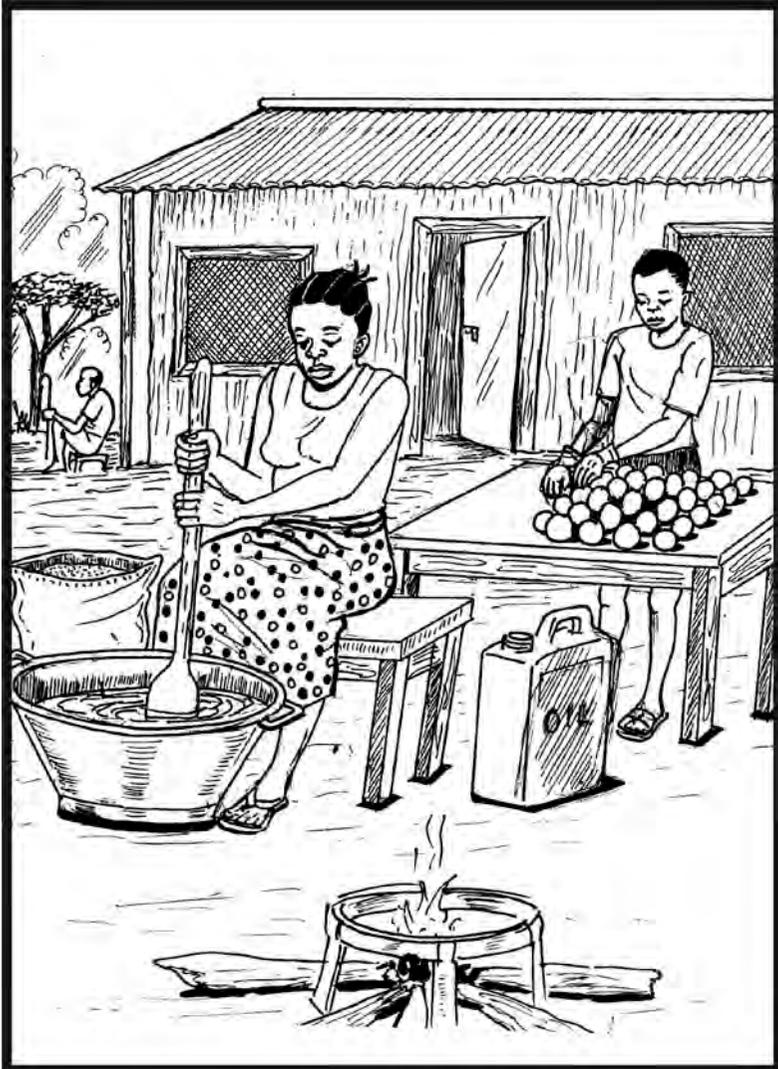
Her father says,

“Just do your best, Zoe.

Things are hard if we
do not know them.

But if we learn,
nothing can be hard again.”

THE END



Sao Finds a Way

James V. Dwalu

Sao does not know
where her husband is.

He left her with two children.
Some say he went to Gbokongedeh.
Some say he went to Monrovia.
No one hears anything from him.

Sao and her girls live with Ma Gbeh.
Ma Gbeh is Sao's mother.
Ma Gbeh takes care of the girls
when Sao is away.

Sao sells little goods at the market.

Sao does not make much money.

She spends all she has

on the children's school.

She goes to night school too.

But this evening

Sao comes home sad.

She is crying.

"Why are you crying?"

Ma Gbeh asks.

"I don't have money

to buy books, Mama," Sao says.

"I can't go to school again."

“That is sad,” Ma Gbeh says.

“I used all my money on the girls,”

Sao says.

“They will not suffer like me.”

“Don’t cry, Sao,” Ma Gbeh says.

“You will find a way tomorrow.”

Sao goes to her room.

Her two girls are sleeping.

She gives each girl a quiet kiss.

“I must find a way,”

Sao tells herself.

Ma Gbeh thinks of something.

“Sao,” she says.

“I will help sell your goods
for one week.”

“There is no soap now,”

Sao says.

“People always ask for soap.

But I have nothing to buy more soap.”

“You will find a way,”

Ma Gbeh says again.

Ma Gbeh always says that
when Sao is sad.

Next day Sao meets Ma Gbeh.

“We will have soap in one week,”

Sao says.

“We will have other things too.”

“But how will you do that?”

Ma Gbeh asks.

Sao says,

“Over the time that you help me

I will help myself too.”

Ma Gbeh says,

“But don’t do anything bad.”

Sao laughs,

“Don’t worry, Mama.

We will all be glad.”

Sao sets out to look for work.

But nobody gives her any work.

All the men want something else,
before they can give Sao work.

Sao goes to Jalloh’s store.

She and Jalloh are old friends.

She tells Jalloh about work.

Jalloh looks at her a long time.

“You are a fine girl,” Jalloh says.

“You need someone to help you.

And to help your children too.”

Sao says,

“That is why I want to work.”

“I can help you,” Jalloh says.

“Just do what I say.

Here, take this money.”

Jalloh tries to hold Sao

in a rude way.

“Come see me tonight,” Jalloh says.

Sao pushes him off.

“Stop that!” Sao says.

“I’m not a foolish woman.

You can have your money back!”

Jalloh says,

“Don’t act like a small girl!

I can help you.”

Sao says,

“I don’t want that kind of help.”

Sao walks away.

Next day, Sao is up early.

She does not wake Ma Gbeh.

She goes to see a lady

who teaches young women.

At the lady’s place

some women learn to dress hair.

Some learn to bake bread.

Some learn how to sew.

Sao tells the lady,

“I want to learn how to make soap.”

“That will take a few days,”

the lady says.

“After that we will help you.”

Sao is happy for the chance.

She goes each morning to learn

how to make soap.

Ma Gbeh does not know

what Sao is up to.

People around do not know too.

They think she is doing bad things.

They think she goes out to beg.

“Where does Sao go every morning?”

her husband’s brothers ask.

“Why does she come home so late?”

Ma Gbeh does not know

what to say.

Sao has told her nothing much.

But Sao is glad today.

She has finished her training.

The lady brings her home in a car.

Sao gets down and calls out.

“Ma Gbeh!” she calls.

“Come and see me now!”

Sao takes down a full bag of soap.

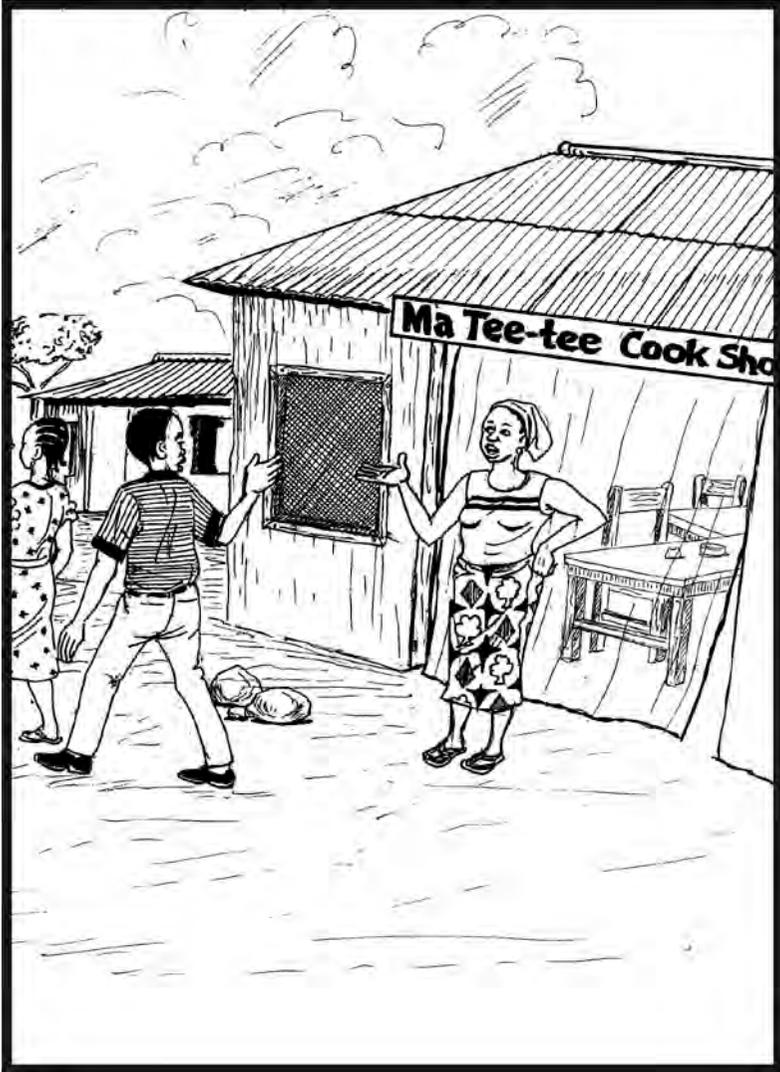
She takes down many things
for making soap too.

Sao then tells Ma Gbeh
why she’s always left early
and come home late at night.

Ma Gbeh is very glad now.

Sao’s training will help them all.

THE END



When You Are in Bat Town, Hang Like a Bat

Watchen Johnson Babalola

Ma Tee-tee is in her cook shop.

The shop is nice and clean.

Ma Tee-tee's food is ready.

The soup smells sweet and nice.

But only two men come in to eat,
one tall man and one short man.

Ma Tee-tee is worried.

She does not smile.

"Why are you sad?" the tall man asks.

"Friend," Ma Tee-tee tells the man.

“This shop will soon close.
I try my best to cook good food.
But nobody comes here to buy.
Every day I feed my children
with the food I cook.
Now all my money is gone.”

The short man asks,
“Other shops round here
are doing well.
Ask them how they do it.
Ask people why they don’t
come here.”

Ma Tee-tee tells the short man,
“I will ask no one.

I am not from this town.
That is why people do not
come here.
Only two of you come here to eat.
Because you are from my own town”

The tall man says,
“Do not say that, Ma Tee-tee!
People here are not like that.
Just go and find out.
Things you hear may help you.”
The two men talk and talk.
Ma Tee-tee agrees to find out.

The next day Ma Tee-tee sees a student.
“Fine boy,” Ma Tee-tee calls.

“Why do you not come to my shop?”

“You cook with too much salt,”

the student says.

“We don’t eat too much salt here.”

“Thank you for telling me,”

Ma Tee-tee says.

“I did not know this!”

Ma Tee-tee sees an old man next,

“Why do you not come to my shop?”

“You cook with too much oil,”

the old man says.

“We don’t eat too much oil here.”

“Thank you for telling me,”

Ma Tee-tee says.

“I did not know this!”

Next a woman tells Ma Tee-tee
what they like to eat
and what they do not like to eat

So Ma Tee-tee goes to her
cook shop.

She cooks a pot of nice potato greens.

She puts in small salt.

She puts in small oil.

She puts in the right meat.

The people come to

Ma Tee-tee’s shop now.

They fill the cook shop.

They buy all her food.

And Ma Tee-tee is very happy.

“From now on,” she says,
“I will always ask people
about how to do things better!”

THE END



True Sisters

Llord Aidoo

Munah and Kwanteh are sisters.

They make *pottor* to sell.

They make *pottor* from clay.

They dig the clay from the swamp.

But Munah does not like

to make *pottor* every day.

One day Munah says to Kwanteh,

“This is not a good life.

Why can’t we learn something better?”

“What is something better?” Kwanteh asks.

“There’s a new sewing school
in town,” Munah says.

“We can learn how to sew.
It will help us.”

“How will we have school fees?”
Kwanteh asks.

“How will we get there?
How will our children live?”

“The school is free!” Munah says.
“It is not far away!
Mama will take the children.
I plan to go soon!”

“This idea is not good,” Kwanteh says.
“You know *pottor* makes money.

I can't leave this swamp

to go anywhere!"

"It's six months only," Munah says.

"It's not even one year?"

"I'm not going," Kwanteh says.

"I don't want to suffer!"

For many days

Munah tells Kwanteh about the school.

But Kwanteh does not listen.

At last Munah goes off alone.

Close to a year on

Munah can sew the best in town.

Many people go to her with work.

Later

It is two days to Christmas.

Munah is busy as ever.

One by one her customers
try on their dresses and bubas.

By late evening Kwanteh comes in.

She comes with a piece of cloth.

“Do sit down, Sister,” Munah says.

“You look very tired.

Here, take a drink of water.”

“I have walked a long way,”

Kwanteh does not smile.

“It has been a hard day.”

“You’re so late for Christmas.

I am very busy!" says Munah.

"Please help me, Sister," Kwanteh says.

"The children have nothing to wear."

"Look over there," Munah points out.

"I must finish all those clothes
by tomorrow evening."

"My children will feel bad,"

Kwanteh goes on.

"They will have a sad Christmas."

Munah keeps on sewing
while she speaks with Kwanteh.
Her customers come and go."

Now they are again alone.

Kwanteh says, "I don't have money
to buy things for the children.

We don't have food for Christmas."

Munah turns from her machine,

"It's so hard with you all?"

"Business is not good," Kwanteh says.

"The rains have filled the river.

The river has filled the swamp!"

Munah asks, "How are you caring

for the children?

School will soon open."

"It's so hard, Sister!" Kwanteh says.

"The children didn't end school last time.

It's been hard since you left us.

Can you give me some small money
to go see about something?"

Munah asks, "What is that, Sister?
What are you trying to say?"

"It's no joke," Kwanteh speaks again.

"I saw two medicine men!"

Kwanteh is crying.

"Witches are sitting on my luck!

One medicine man wants two goats
to move them from my luck."

Munah asks, "You trust those people?"

"I - I don't know, Sister!"

Kwanteh is in tears.

"Why must people witch me?"

Is this how I used to look?"

"Stop that, Sister," Munah says.

"Don't believe those people."

Munah shakes her head.

Kwanteh wipes her face.

She and Munah do not speak.

They are both very sad.

Then Kwanteh says again,

"Yes Sister, sorry I didn't listen to you.

I regret it badly now.

You are doing very fine.

Your children go to good schools!

You even help our old mother!"

Munah says,
“I’m happy you are seeing this now.
I want to help you, Sister.
But you must first stop
this silly idea about witches.”
“Nobody believes
what I’m going through,”
Kwanteh sobs.
“O God, what can I do?”
Kwanteh is crying and shaking.
Munah holds her hands.
“Can we pray, Sister?” Munah says.
Munah prays a long prayer.
Kwanteh joins her slowly.
Together they sing
“My Lord Will Do It Again!”

After the song, Munah says,
“Sister, just learn something good,
and your life will not
be the same again!”

The two sisters talk a long time.
Then Kwanteh goes home.
The next day Kwanteh is back.
This time Kwanteh is not sad.
“Sister, guess what?” she tells Munah.
“I’m going to sewing school!
I will be just like you!”

“Great news!” Munah says.

THE END



Old Friends

Llord Aidoo

It was time for the WAEC test.

Ujay sat by Kanneh.

Ujay wanted to spy

on Kanneh's paper.

But the teachers took Ujay

to the front of the room.

Ujay was afraid.

Ujay loved football.

He was so good at football

the school in Bong Mines

passed him every year.

But Ujay got poor grades always.

He did not like to study.

Ujay broke his knee in his last game.

And the doctors said he would
not play football again.

Kanneh was Ujay's best friend.

Kanneh read his book always.

Kanneh wanted to a doctor.

The only way to be a doctor
was to study hard.

So Kanneh spent all his time reading.

Kanneh passed the WAEC test.

He went to teach to get money

for college.

After a few years

Kanneh came to Monrovia.

Kanneh went to LU.

Ujay did not pass the WAEC.

He could not teach anything.

He went to work on a truck.

Then he tried to be a football coach.

Ujay and Kanneh went on with life
in their different ways.

For a long time they did not
see each other.

Things were hard for Ujay.

His bad knee hurt always.

Kanneh worked very hard.

At last Kanneh became a good doctor.

Ten Years Later

It is after a long day of work.

Dr. Kanneh looks at the clock.

It is time to go home.

Dr. Kanneh leaves the hospital.

He walks to his car.

He opens his door.

A beggar walks to him.

The beggar says, "Excuse me, Sir.

Did you go to high school
in Bong Mines?"

Dr. Kanneh looks at the beggar.
He sounds like a man he knows well.
"Ujay?" Dr. Kanneh asks.

Ujay smile shyly,
"Yes! Long time, Kanneh!"
The two men hug each other.

Dr. Kanneh takes Ujay for a drink.
Dr. Kanneh is glad to see his old friend.
They talk long about their two lives.
The news Ujay tells is very sad.
Dr. Kanneh is sad.

He wants to help Ujay.

But he sees that if he gives Ujay money,
Ujay would just eat it.

Dr. Kanneh thinks about it.

“Tell you what,” he says.

“There is a training at the hospital.
You can make use of it.”

“Kanneh,” Ujay says. “I don’t know book.
You can help me some other way.”

“No!” Kanneh says. “You can make it!
They want tenth graders only.
I will give your name to the people.”

Ujay is worried.

“The training will help you,”

Dr. Kanneh says.

“But you have to work hard.

I don’t want to be let down.

They will accept you if I tell them.”

Ujay does not speak.

Dr. Kanneh says again,

“If you go in and do not

take the training to be anything,

I will be made shame.”

Ujay shakes his head quietly.

He thinks about how he played

in high school.

“I understand, Doc.” he says.

“I think I’ll try my best.”

“That is not enough,” Dr. Kanneh says.

“You must do your best.

Say you will always do your best.

Promise me you will work hard!”

“Yes, yes!” Ujay says. “I will try.

I will do my best.

I have had hard times in life

because I don’t know anything.

I will really try.”

Ujay and Dr. Kanneh spent the rest

of the day together.

They forgot the sad times.

They talked about the happy high school days.

Then they talked about the future.

THE END



The Road

James V. Dwalu

There is no road in Piah town.

The children are not happy.

Their school is far away.

The chief is not happy.

It is hard to get to places.

The farmers are not happy.

The market is far away.

Tokpa has an idea

to make everyone happy.

“We need a road here,”

Topka tells Binda.

“We need a road before school opens.”

“It is true we need a road,”

Gorpu says.

“School is too far away

for my little girls.

And for all of us.”

Next day Topka tells the chief.

and the old people.

Gorpu and Binda are there too.

“How will you build the road?”

the chief asks.

“We will build the road with our hands,”

Topka says.

“We will cut the bush
and clear the stumps,” Binda says.

“That is too much work,” the chief says.
“It will take a long time.”

“Yes,” Tokpa says.
“All of us will work.”

“Yes, we will all work hard,”
Binda says.

“Yes,” Gorpu says.
“If we build the road
I will go back to school.”

“I see,” the chief says.

“You all have good ideas.

We will help to build the road.”

THE END

What happened next?

Do you think everything went as planned?



Hand Pumps for Nyanfor Town

James V. Dwalu

People in Nyanfor town

are getting sick.

They feel pain in their stomachs.

Some are crying.

Noone knows what to do.

All the babies are sick too.

Their mothers run with the babies.

They run to the chief.

“My baby is dying!”

Ma Juah cries.

“Please help me!”

“What is the problem?” the chief asks.

“I gave her a cup of water,”

Ma Juah says.

“That is all. She is dying!”

The other women say the same thing.

“Where did you get this water?”

the chief asks.

A new woman says,

“From the same creek water

where we always drink!”

The chief hears everyone.

“Hurry! Take all the children
to the clinic,” he says.

“But the children are so weak!”
Ma Juah says.

“Let’s call the nurse!”

The chief calls for the nurse.
Then he calls a big meeting.

At the meeting everyone talks
about the health problems!

Why are people always sick
in Nyanfor town?

Why are people dying
in Nyanfor town?

A nurse comes to Nyanfor town.
She comes with two helpers.
They all look at the children.

“There is cholera here,”
the nurse says.

“Take me to where you get water
to drink!”

They take the nurse to the creek.

“But this is where you toilet too!”
the nurse tells the chief.

“This water is not good to drink.

It is not safe.

It is what gives you the cholera!”

“It is not true!”

an old man says.

“We drink this water

all the time.”

“That is why you get

sick all the time too!”

the nurse says.

“No! Witches are making us sick,”

the old man says.

“The water is very clean!”

The chief cuts in.

“Stop saying that, Old Man Nagbe!”

Then the chief turns to the nurse.

“Now, how can we have safe water?”

The nurse says,

“We will help you build hand pumps.

We will help you build toilets too.”

The chief asks,

“Where will we get water to drink
as we build the toilets and pumps?”

“You will boil the water you drink
to kill the germs,”

the nurse says.

“You will not toilet near the creek!”

Ma Juah says,

“This is a big town.

We will need a lot of hand pumps
and a lot of toilets!”

“Everyone will give some money
for the work,” the chief says.

“We will have to work fast.”

The nurse stays one week
in Nyanfor town.

They build the pumps.

They build the toilets.

Now no one gets sick
from running stomach!

THE END



Yakpa Town School

James V. Dwalu

There is no school in Yakpa town.

The children go far away for school.

None of them goes to school today.

They go to talk with the chief.

“Why are you here so early?”

the chief asks them.

“Why are you not in school?”

Wheagar talks first,

“We walk a very long way

for school every day.

We need a school in Yakpa town!”

“How do we get a school here?”

the chief says.

“We do not have money.”

“That is why we have come,”

Wheagar says.

“We can find a way.”

The chief sends for Mr. Zeon.

Mr. Zeon knows about schools.

The next day, Mr. Zeon meets

with all the people of Yakpa town.

“It is good you want a school,”

Mr. Zeon says.

“But what help can everyone give?”

The chief thinks about it.

Then he says,

“Let me ask my people.”

After the chief meets the people

he goes back to Mr. Zeon.

The chief tells Mr. Zeon,

“We will build the school.

But you must bring us teachers.

We will feed the teachers

you will bring.”

“Can some of our people
teach in the school?” Sumo asks.

“Yes,” Mr. Zeon says.

“If you have the training,
some of you can teach in the school.”

The people of Yakpa town
give money for the school.

When they have the money
the chief meets the people again.

“Paul will build our school for us,”
the chief tells them.

“Paul knows how to build schools.”

“We will use things from our town
to build the school,” Paul says.

“That way we will save money.”

“Yes,” a woman says.

“Paul is a good builder.”

Some time goes by.

The school is not yet ready.

But the roof is finished.

Mr. Zeon comes back.

He is happy with the school.

He takes photos of the school.

“Your teachers will come soon,”

Mr. Zeon says.

Soon, the teachers come to Yakpa town.

There are six men and one woman.

“Here are your teachers,”

Mr. Zeon tells the people.

“Ms. Tarr is your principal.”

The people are not happy

with what Mr. Zeon says.

“You all do not look happy!”

Mr. Zeon says.

“How can a woman be our principal?”

the chief says.

“How can a woman lead us here?”

“Yes, a woman can be principal
if she learns,” Mr. Zeon says.

“Even the head of our country
is a woman.”

Ms. Tarr says,

“Your women can come to school also.”

The chief asks,

“But who will do the women’s
work at home?”

A man asks,

“Do you want our wives to sit

on our heads?”

“I do not mean that,” Ms. Tarr says.

“Your wives will help you more
if they come to school.”

Another man asks,

“If that comes to be
other men will take our wives!”

“That is not true,” Ms. Tarr says.

“School will make them helpful.”

Then the chief adds,

“David reads and writes our letters.
We don’t need women to write too.”

“What if David is not here again?”

Ms. Tarr asks.

“Will you all wait for him?”

Mansnoh puts up her hand.

“Looks like a school will be good
for us women,” Manshoh says.

“I will talk with all the women.”

Mansnoh talks with the women,

“You hear what Ms. Tarr says.

What do you all say?”

“But what good will school do us?”

a woman asks.

“We are all old women now.”

“I think it is good for us,” Mansnoh says.

“You are right, Mansnoh,” Dwede says.

“If David goes away,
who will write our letters?”

“It is the same in David’s town,”

Mansnoh says.

“The women do not know how to read.”

“But won’t people laugh at us
if we learn book?” Wleyenoh asks.

“Let people laugh,” Mansnoh says.

“No one will cheat us again.”

“That is right!” Blaydee says.

Mansnoh and the women turn
again to the men.

“So what have you come to?”
the chief asks.

“Chief,” Mansnoh says.

“Ms. Tarr is right!

We want to go to school too.”

Ms. Tarr smiles.

“Yes,” the chief says.

“I think school will be good for us all.

The men will join you too.”

At last they finish the school.

At last everyone is happy.

THE END



The Lost Bag

Llord Aidoo

Tanneh sells food
in a small shop.
The shop is by a big market.
The shop is under some mango trees.
People sit under the trees
to eat Tanneh's food.

One day Tanneh finds a brown bag.
She does not know
who left the bag on her table.
There is a lot of money in the bag.
She does not know what to do.

Tanneh goes to a friend.

She tells the friend about the bag.

The friend says,

“God has sent you this money!

You can buy everything you want.

You can even build your house!”

Tanneh thinks what to do.

For two days no one asks for the bag.

She keeps the bag in her house.

Three days pass.

A man comes to the market.

He is looking for his money.

The man asks a woman selling rice.

He asks a man selling shoes.

No one knows of any money.

Tanneh meets the man.

“How did you lose your money,” she asks.

“And how much was it?”

“Thousands of dollars!” the man says.

The man is in tears.

“It is in a brown bag.

It is people’s susu money.

All my papers are in the bag!”

Tanneh talks with the man.

Then she says, “Come with me.”

Tanneh goes to the police

with the man.

She gives the police the brown bag.

The policemen looks at the papers
in the bag.

They ask the man many questions.

Then they give the bag to the man.

The man is very happy.

Tanneh says,

“I’m glad you have your money.”

The man puts the bag down.

He takes some money from his pockets.

He takes Tanneh’s hand,

“Here’s something for you!

You saved me from a big problem.”

For a long time Tanneh does not speak.

“I don’t want to keep this,” she says.

“But do this small thing for me.

Please help someone

The same way I have helped you.”

The man looks at Tanneh for a long time.

“I will not forget you,” he says.

“People like you

are our best hope for the future.”

THE END



Hinneh Goes to the Hospital

James V. Dwalu

Hinneh is at home today.

He does not eat his food.

His skin is very hot.

He is dripping with sweat.

“What is the matter with you, Hinneh?”

Ma Saybah asks.

“I feel sick, Mama,” Hinneh says.

“I feel very weak too!”

Ma Saybah goes to Hinneh.

She puts him in her lap.

“Your skin is burning!” Ma Saybah yells.

“Something is the matter with my son!”

Ma Saybah begins to cry,

“Someone help me!

My son is dying!

Witches are killing my son!”

Ma Saybah’s friends run to her.

Teacher Mah comes too.

“What is the matter, Ma Saybah?” they ask.

“Witches are killing my son!”

Ma Saybah yells.

“Please help my son!”

One woman takes out some herbs.

“Quick! Let him chew these!” the woman says.

“Don’t give that to Hinneh,”

Teacher Mah says.

“We don’t know what’s the matter with him.”

“Why do you say that?” the woman asks.

“This medicine will drive the witches away!”

“That is not true,”

Teacher Mah tells the woman.

Then he turns to Ma Saybah,

“Come, let’s take Hinneh to the hospital.”

At the hospital

the doctor looks at Hinneh’s eyes.

She takes his temperature

and takes his blood for a test.

When the test is over

the doctor says,

“Hinneh is very sick.

Mosquitoes bit him.

He has malaria!”

“Small things like mosquitoes?” Ma Saybah asks.

“How can they make Hinneh sick?”

“Mosquitoes are bad,” the doctor says.

“They give people malaria.

Mosquitoes live in dirty waters

and dirty places.”

“But how do mosquitoes get malaria?”

Ma Saybah asks.

“Mosquitoes live on blood,”

the doctor says.

“When they bite you,

you get germs in you.

The mosquitoes bite other people

and then give the germs to you.”

“Now I know,” Ma Saybah says.

The doctor adds,

“When our town is clean
mosquitoes will not be around.

Then they will not give us malaria.”

Now the doctor gives Hinneh medicines.

She puts Hinneh in bed to rest.

“Mosquitoes will not bite Hinneh,”
the doctor says.

“If he sleeps under bed nets.”

“Is that so?” Ma Saybah says.

“I thought witches were after my son.

I tried to give him herbs!”

“No,” the doctor says.

“People should first rush to the hospital
when they get sick with malaria!”

In time, Hinnah is ready to go home.

Ma Saybah tells the doctor,

“Thank you, doctor.

Now I know all about malaria.”

THE END



A Day at the Hospital

James V. Dwalu

Chapter 1 Jimmy is Afraid

Ms. Dugbeh is a teacher.

She is talking about AIDS to her class.

“AIDS is a bad sickness,” Ms. Dugbeh says.

“It kills many people every day.”

Jimmy and the other students
are afraid.

Jimmy does not want to touch
anyone with AIDS.

“Today we are going to the hospital,”

Ms. Dugbeh says.

“We will learn how people
can catch AIDS.”

Ms. Dugbeh stands by the bus.

She calls to her students,

“Come on!

We are getting late!”

The children go into the bus

one by one.

Jimmy does not go into the bus.

“Come on, Jimmy,” Ms. Dugbeh calls.

“You are the only one left.”

Jimmy goes slowly to the bus.

“I want to go to the bathroom,” he says.

Ms. Dugbeh does not want

Jimmy to waste time.

She goes with Jimmy

to the bathroom.

Jimmy does not use the bathroom.

“Stop wasting time, Jimmy,” Ms. Dugbeh says.

Chapter 2

At the Hospital

Ms. Dugbeh and the students

reach the hospital.

They meet the doctors and the nurses.

The doctors and nurses are busy
with the patients.

“Welcome,” a doctor says.

“I am Doctor Cooper.

Here is Marie.

Marie takes care of people with AIDS.”

Marie shakes hands with Ms. Dugbeh.

She shakes all the students’ hands.

But Jimmy does not shake Marie’s hand.

Ms. Dugbeh looks at Jimmy.

Jimmy says, “I hear we get AIDS

when we touch people with AIDS.”

“No, that is not true,” Marie says.

“I will show you how people get AIDS.”

Chapter 3

Jimmy Sees the Hospital

Jimmy is still afraid.

He does not shake Dr. Cooper’s hand.

The hospital has many rooms.

There are different rooms

for men and women.

“This is the Emergency Room,”

Doctor Cooper says.

“Why is it called that way?” Munah asks.

“In here we take quick care of patients,”

Dr. Cooper says.

They go to the second room.

The room has babies and children.

“This is the Pediatric Ward,”

Dr. Cooper says.

“We take care of children here.”

“Why is it only for children?” Nimley asks.

“Children need good care,” Dr. Cooper says.

“We don’t want children to catch sickness big people have.”

They move to some other doors.

Chapter 4

The AIDS Rooms

Dr. Cooper points to them,

“These rooms are for people with AIDS.”

Jimmy jumps back.

He tries to run.

“Don’t be afraid, Jimmy,” Ms. Dugbeh says.

“We are here to know

all about AIDS.”

Munah goes to the beds.

She talks with the patients.

Munah meets a girl she knows.

Munah talks with the girl.

Then Munah asks,

“But how did you catch AIDS?”

“My sister,” the girl says.

“I can’t really tell.

I had three boyfriends.”

“What!” Munah says.

“You alone had three boyfriends?”

At your age?"

"I am sixteen," the girl says.

"My parents are not working.

I help my two brothers in school.

I don't know which of my
boyfriends gave me AIDS."

Jimmy moves closer to Munah.

"So how are you doing now?" Munah asks.

"I feel much better than before,"
the girl says.

"I am taking my medicine."

"That is good," Munah says.

“Ms. Dugbeh tells us you can live
a long happy life
by taking your medicines.”

They go into a room by the first one.
This room has men and boys.

Jimmy goes to a boy’s bed.
He talks with the boy.
Then he asks the boy,
“How did you catch AIDS?”

“I was given blood
from someone with AIDS.”

Jimmy thinks about what he hears.

He goes to the doctor.

“Doctor Cooper,” he asks.

“Can a healthy person catch AIDS?”

“Yes,” Doctor Cooper says.

“Anyone can catch AIDS.

But we can stop AIDS

from catching us.”

“How do we do that?” Jimmy asks.

“We must use condoms when having sex.

Or have sex only with

someone who is free from AIDS,”

Doctor Cooper says.

“Even babies not yet born
can get AIDS,”
Doctor Cooper says again.

“But how can that be?” Jimmy asks.

Doctor Cooper tells the students.

Then he adds,

“Well, there is good news.

There are drugs for pregnant mothers.

These drugs can protect babies from
AIDS.”

“That is good,” Munah says.

Soon, it is time to go.

Ms. Dugbeh turns to the doctor,

“Thank you very much, Doctor.”

Then Ms. Dugbeh turns to her students.

“Anything else?” she asks.

Jimmy says, “Now I’m not afraid
of people with AIDS.

People with AIDS need love and care too.”

THE END



His Name Is Dead Body

Watchen Johnson Babalola

Ma Jebbeh ran to the clinic
with the baby.
She was crying.

Ma Mary and another friend
ran along with Ma Jebbeh.
They told her not to cry.

They were telling Ma Jebbeh:
“Hold the baby good!”
“Be careful with him!”
“Be quick! Give him a name!”

“Call him DEAD BODY!”

“Call him THIS THING!”

The baby was Ma Jebbeh’s grandchild.

He was her fourth grandchild.

The first three had died.

Ma Jebbeh did not know

why all the babies died

soon after they were born.

They all ran and ran.

“If you call him DEAD BODY

he will not die this time!

That is the secret.”

“DEAD BODY!” Ma Jebbeh called,

“Don’t die this time!

The doctor will help you.

Please, don't make us cry!"

"No! No, Jebbeh," Ma Mary cried.

"If you say Please

the child will die.

That is the secret!"

"Let's put him in a box

and drag him in the box.

That way he will not die this time.

That is the secret!"

Ma Jebbeh put the sick baby

in an old milk box.

They tied a rope to the box.

Then they dragged the box
all along the way.

They dragged down the hill
till they got to the clinic.

“He will not die this time.
He will be ashamed to die.
He knows we know his secrets.”

The nurse took the baby
out of the milk box .

She ran to the doctor.

Someone said,

“Good of you to drag him.
Then he will not die again!”

The nurse said, “It is not good

to drag a baby in a box.”

The doctor asked Ma Jebbeh,
“Where is the baby’s mother?”

Ma Jebbeh said,
“The baby is my grandchild.
His mother did not come along.
Her babies always die.
She does not want to see
this other one die.”

“The baby is very sick,”
the doctor said.
“But he will be fine.
He will be here for one month.

We will give him special medicine.”

“Thank you, doctor!” the women said.

“But I must see his mother,”
the doctor told Ma Jebbeh.

“It is important I see her.”

“No problem,” Ma Jebbeh said.

“I will bring his mother here.”

The baby’s mother did not
go to the doctor.

She was always afraid
her baby would die again.

One month passed.

The baby was very well.

Ma Jebbeh and her friends came
to take the baby back home.

The baby's mother came along.

She was very happy!

“We don't have the baby's name,”
the doctor said.

“What is his name?”

“DEAD BODY,” Ma Jebbeh said.

The doctor was not happy.

“What name is that?” he asked.

Ma Jebbeh told him the story.

“It is this DEAD BODY name
that saved my baby’s life!
The three other babies
all lived only two hours!”

The doctor shook his head.
He turned to the baby's mother.
“That is a sad story,” he said.
“But listen carefully to me.
You have been killing your own babies.
Do you know that?”

The women shouted together,
“What do you mean, Doctor?”

Ma Jebbeh was very angry,

“Only witches can kill babies!
My daughter is not a witch.”

The doctor turned to Ma Jebbeh.

“Listen to me,” he said.

“Your daughter is on drugs.

Do you know that?”

“What is drugs?” Ma Jebbeh asked.

The doctor told them about drugs.

“It is bad medicine people take
to make them drunk and high.

Your daughter is taking it too.

Your baby will be very sick

when you take drugs

while you're pregnant!"

"The day you brought this baby
we found drugs inside his body.
That is why I wanted
to meet your daughter."

"Ma Jebbeh asked her daughter,
"Is it true? Are you taking drugs?"

The girl said, "But drugs is common .
It is not bad.
Drugs make me feel good."

"Drugs is very bad," the doctor said.
"I told you drugs can kill babies.

Liquor too can kill babies.
And poor nutrition.
And when a man beats
on a pregnant woman.
Some pregnant women
don't go to hospitals.
That too can make babies weak
when they are born."

"I hear you, Doctor," Ma Jebbeh said.

"I will talk to my daughter
not to take drugs again.

I will also tell the other women
everything you have just said."

Ma Mary said,

“Thank you very much, Doctor.

“You told us the real secret!

No need to call this baby

DEAD BODY again!”

THE END



At Last- Drug Dealing

Gii-Hne S. Russell

The people are sleeping
when Zoe gets in the village.

Zoe comes often.
for her business.

No one knows what Zoe's business is.
She just took a little girl.
She gave the girl some "goods"
and sent her to Monrovia!

Then Zoe gave the girls gifts.

After a day or two
Zoe left for Monrovia.
Always, Zoe left at midnight.

Kou did not understand Zoe.
Kou was the village teacher.
She and Zoe were friends.

Kou and Zoe were classmates.
They were s very close
till Zoe met Adama two years back.
Then Zoe ran from the village.

When Zoe came back
she was very rich!
She drove a new jeep

and wore very fine clothes!

Zoe gave the villagers many gifts.

She gave them money too.

Everyone loved Zoe very much.

Everyone called her “Aunty Zoe.”

Sometimes Zoe went to Kou’s school.

The school children were very happy
those days Zoe came.

Zoe gave them biscuits and “koolaid”.

The big girls got small change
and new pairs of shoes.

At Present

Today, Kou sent for Zoe.

The school children see Zoe's car.

They run after the car.

“AUNTY-ZOE COMING!”

the children sing.

“AUNTY-ZOE COMING!”

Zoe stops her car.

She gets down with three friends.

They walk past a man

and go in the school.

Zoe hurries into Kou's office.

When she and Kou are alone,

Kou asks, “Yaa is going with you?”

Zoe looks round.

“Who told you that?” Zoe asks.

Kou smiles.

Yaa is Kou’s best student.

Yaa showed Kou something

Aunty Zoe gave to her.

Zoe said it was a secret!

“Yaa is a bright child,” Kou says.

“You are harming our village, Zoe.”

“What do you mean?” Zoe asks.

Kou says, “You are doing our people
no good at all.”

Zoe is very angry.

“To help my own people?

To stop them from suffering?

Kou is very angry too.

“You can’t help people

by giving them poison and dirt!”

“You say dirt?” Zoe puffs.

“What dirt? What are you saying?”

“You are doing dirty business!

Your money and gifts are dirty!”

Kou’s voice is hard.

“How do you know?” Zoe asks.

The man by the door
comes into the office.

Zoe’s friends have come in too.

“Listen, sister. I’m helping Yaa
and her poor mother!” Zoe sighs.

“Are you helping our people
with your useless school?”

Kou gives Zoe a mean look.

“Drugs hurt good people!” Kou says.

“Drugs turn good homes upside down!

Drugs kill!

Tell me I am not right!”

Zoe looks from face to face.

She is angry.

“Who say I’m in drugs business?” Zoe asks.

Now Kou goes behind her desk.

Yaa sits there with her mother.

Beside them are five bags.

Yaa and her mother are afraid.

Kou takes the big bags.

She opens them one by one.

She takes out five small packets.

She cuts the packets open!

“Look at this,” Kou says.

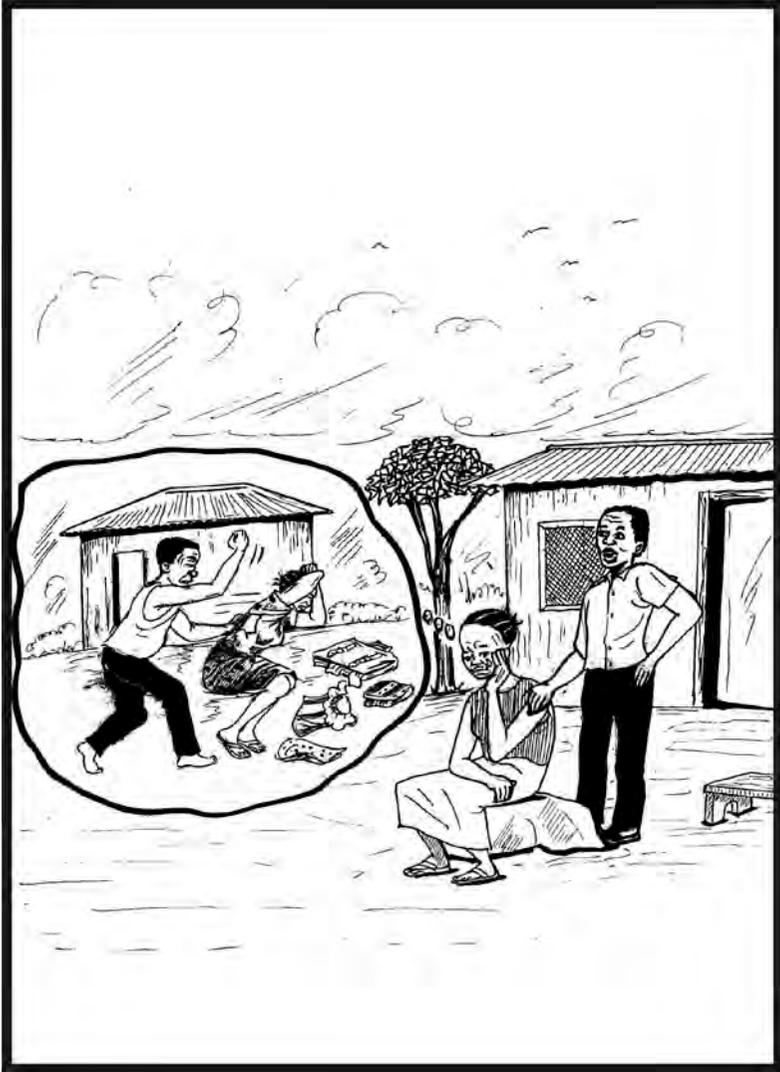
The man comes up..

He goes to Zoe.

“You are going to jail!” the man shouts.

Zoe cries.

THE END



A Story to Tell

James V. Dwalu

Konah is sleeping.

Konah lives with her parents.

It is early in the morning.

Konah hears things falling.

She runs out of her room.

Her parents are fussing.

They are fighting.

Her father hits hard on her mother.

Her mother cries out.

Her father is angry.

He says to her mother,

“Today you will leave my house.”

“No! I will not go” her mother says.

Her mother is crying.

“Yes you will go!” her father shouts.

“No. This is my house too,”

her mother yells.

“You and I built it.

So I will not go” her mother says.

“Shut up! You are just a woman.

You do not talk when I talk.

I am the man in this house!”

“I can’t keep you.

You can’t read and write,” her father says.

He pushes her mother out in the dark.

Konah runs to her mother.

Her father pulls her back in the house.

He slams the door.

Her mother cries and goes.

Konah sits on her bed.

She thinks about her mother.

“How could Father do this?”

Then she goes back to sleep.

It is morning.

Birds are singing

in Konah's window.

Konah wakes up.

Konah looks about.

She runs out.

"Where is my mother?" she asks.

Her mother is not here.

Konah sits in a corner.

She is crying.

"Why are you crying?" her father asks.

"Where is my mother?"

"When will she come back?" Konah asks.

"Stop crying.

"I will tell you later," her father says.

But her father does not tell her.

When Konah goes to school
she thinks about her mother.

People tell Konah
she will not see her mother again.
They tell that her
Mother went far.
Her mother will not be back.

Konah sits and worries every day.

It is morning time.
A big wind blows.
Children run home.

from school.

People run.

Konah is crying under a big tree.

She has no one to run to.

The tree is about to fall.

Konah does not know

the tree is about to fall.

A woman sees the tree.

She pulls Konah and runs fast.

The tree falls.

SWOOSH!

Konah turns.

She sees the roof of her house fly.

Other roofs fly.
They fly like paper.
Everyone runs!

A woman takes Konah
to the big city.
Other people
Go to the city too.
They run from the wind.

Konah lives in the city
a long time.
She finishes school.
People know her in the city.
She helps people in need.
She helps women and children.

She tells parents to send
their children to school.

Konah meets a man called Teah.

“My name is Teah.

I hear about your work.

I like what you do for people with AIDS.”

Konah smiles,

“We need to help people with AIDS.

We must not let them die!”

“I am very happy,” Teah says,

“I want to help people too.”

Konah smiles again.

“Where do you come from?” Teah asks

Konah tells where she comes from.

Then she tells her story.

“My cook comes from your town,” Teah says.

“She may know your mother.

Come with me to see her.”

Konah goes to Teah’s house.

Teah gives Konah food.

“This palm butter is very good,” Konah says.

“It tastes like my mother cooked it.

Oh, how I miss her!”

Teah goes for the cook.

Konah looks up.

She sees a woman.

“Mother!” she yells.

“Konah!” the woman yells too.

Konah hugs the woman.

“I looked for you all over,” Konah says.

“Yes, my child,” the woman says.

“You never forgot your mother.

Look, what you have become?”

“I missed you Mother,” Konah says.

“My child!” the woman says.

“I have good news for you.”

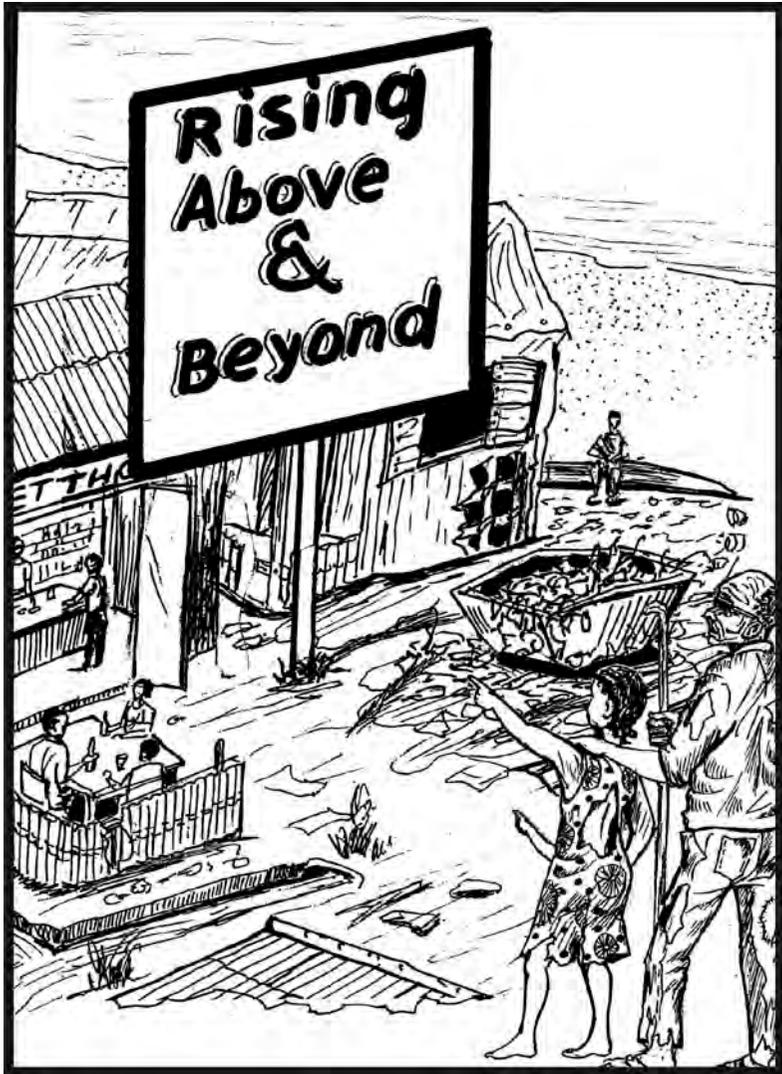
The woman takes a newspaper.

She begins to read.

“I went to an adult literacy school,”

the woman says.

THE END



Zinnah and the Old Blind Man

Lord Aidoo

We Meet Zinnah

It was late.

Zinnah's grandfather

picked up his old cane.

He was blind.

A long day of begging was over.

They made nothing.

"We are going home," Zinnah said.

She was tired.

Today rain was falling on Water Street.

Most of the stores were closed.

The women put their goods in big boxes.

The old man's hands were cold.

Zinnah was cold.

She was cold and hungry.

Zinnah wanted to be at home.

But the old man walked slowly.

And West Point is far away.

There was thunder

behind Ducor.

Zinnah did not like thunder!

"I'm tired, Papa," she said.

"Let's take a little rest."

"No!" the old man said.

"The rains will come!"

“Let’s rest a little!” Zinnah said.

The old man sat before a store.

Zinnah sat by him.

The sky got dark.

The old man took Zinnah’s hand.

Zinna’s Story

Zinnah and the old man

were poor.

They begged every day.

They lived in West Point.

They lived in an old tin shack.

Their house was near a big dump.

It smelled bad.

It had bad insects.

Every day Zinnah would wake up
before the sun.

It was dark.

Zinnah was sad.

“Please Papa,” she would say.

“I hurt.

Can I sleep more?”

“Don’t be lazy!” the old man would say.

“We must be there.

when the stores open.”

Zinna Acts as a Boy

Zinnah began to beg

when she was ten.

One day bad men tried to hurt her.
After that the old man said,
“You must act like a boy!”
She wore boys clothes.
No one knew she was not a boy.
She found old clothes in the dumps.

Zinna’s Mother left
eight years ago.
Bad men with guns
took Zinnah’s mother.
Her name was Bendu.
They took her from the village in Bomi.
The old man took care of Zinnah.

At that time the old man

was not blind.

He made a house in West Point
with old zinc and cartons.

The old man fixed shoes.

His work gave them food and a little
money.

Zinnah went to school.

The old man looked for Bendu
but could not find her.

Bad Times

One day the old man

had an accident.

Shoe glue hit his eye.

It made him blind.

The old man went to the MSF hospital.

He was there for three months.

Nothing was the same
when he came back.

Zinnah had to stop school.
She was hungry all the time.
She did not have shoes.
The nights were long and dark.
They had no money to buy candles.

Finally, they went out to beg.
They went all over in the hot sun.
They got wet in the rain.
Sometimes they got sick for many days.

The Old Man Teaches Zinnah

But the old man could teach Zinnah many things.

He asked her in the streets:

“What letters do you see on this store?”

“What letters do you see on this street sign?”

“What does this say?”

Zinnah would spell out the names.

She said the letters one by one.

The old man would listen.

Then he said the words.

And he told her what the words mean.

That was how Zinnah learned to read!

Little by little, Zinnah could read street signs.

And stores names.

And words on signs.

And words on cars.

She learned to read the Bible.

She would find old books in the dump.

She read the old books.

She loved them.

The books were her pillow.

Sometimes Zinnah could not say
the letters well.

The hunger made her weak.

The old man would say:

“We’re doing this so that you will

not be blind!”

The old man talked a long time

about how he was blind.

It made Zinnah sad.

But the old man said,

“They that don’t learn to read

are blind three times.”

Zinna’s Story on This Day

Zinnah was shaking badly now.

The wind was blowing in the night.

A lot of rain was falling.

The old man was shaking too.

The old man was very sick!

No one was in the streets

as they moved on!

Slowly Zinnah and the old man
got to the shack.

They went in and sat together.

The water got inside the shack.

The dark made Zinnah afraid.

The cold hurt her.

After midnight the old man fell down.

He did not shake again!

A Sad New Day

At last the night went away.

The roosters crowed.

Zinnah got up.

The shack was full of water.

The old man lay in the water.

He was lying with his face down!

Zinnah rushed to help him.

“No, Papa!” she yelled.

She ran outside to get help!

But there was nothing anyone could do.

The old man was gone!

They buried the old man that morning.

They buried him by the West Point dumps.

They would bury people

that way in the war times.

Zinna Goes with the NGO

Some NGO nurses came.

They told Zinnah not to cry.

One of them hugged Zinnah.

She saw Zinnah was not a boy.

The NGO nurses took Zinnah away.

They took her to where they worked.

There were children who had no parents.

Zinnah lived with the children.

Sixteen Months Later

One day, two Red Cross men

drove to the dumps.

They asked for a Mr. Momo.

Mr. Momo was blind.

He had a little boy.

The Red Cross men asked everyone.
But no one knew who Mr. Momo was.
No one knew the old man
was called “Momo.”

Then one young man began to think.
He told the men about how the old man
died.
He told them how the NGO nurses took
Zinnah.

The Red Cross men soon found Zinnah.
They showed Bendu’s photo to the nurses.
Bendu was back home from Freetown.
She was back with Zinnah’s two brothers!

Zinnah took the old photo.

“My maaama?!” Zinnah cried.

“O, my mama!”

The Red Cross men took Zinnah to Bendu.

Bendu hugged her

for a long time.

And warm tears ran down Zinnah’s face.

For days Zinnah and her mother talked.

They talked about the old man.

They told the old man’s funny stories.

Zinnah showed Bendu how she

learned to read.

She wrote down the old man’s songs.

One day Bendu picked up Zinnah's Bible.

And Zinnah's old books.

Then Bendu stopped. . .

"Zinnah," Bendu said.

"I want you

To teach me how to read."

THE END