

Sara

DAUGHTER OF A LIONESS



Daughter of a Lioness

This is the third of a series of comic books produced by UNICEF in Eastern and Southern Africa on the adventures of Sara, an adolescent girl who is gradually emerging as the heroine and a role model for girls' as well as boys' empowerment in Africa. The story addresses the issues of harmful traditional practices, focusing on female circumcision or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Sara is targeted to be circumcised but manages to get out of the situation by using her assertiveness and critical thinking Life Skills. At the end, she also mobilizes the community against FGM. **Daughter of a Lioness** is full of action and suspense. The story can be widely used by development workers to create awareness and initiate behaviour change against FGM, and other harmful practices, and to educate people on children's and human rights.

The comic book is part of a package of communication materials, including a users' guide (see back), an animated film/video and a poster. The package also includes a detailed facilitators' resource book (available separately).

Daughter of a Lioness is the product of a large team of artists, writers and researchers from Eastern and Southern Africa who have worked together since October 1994, evolving the characters, setting and stories of the Sara series through active reflection with hundreds of villagers and peri-urban dwellers in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. (See credits inside back cover.)

Daughter of a Lioness was produced by the Communication Section, UNICEF-ESARO, with financial support from the Government of Norway and UNICEF Committees in USA, Netherlands, UK, Canada and Germany and in collaboration with UNICEF country offices in Eastern and Southern Africa.

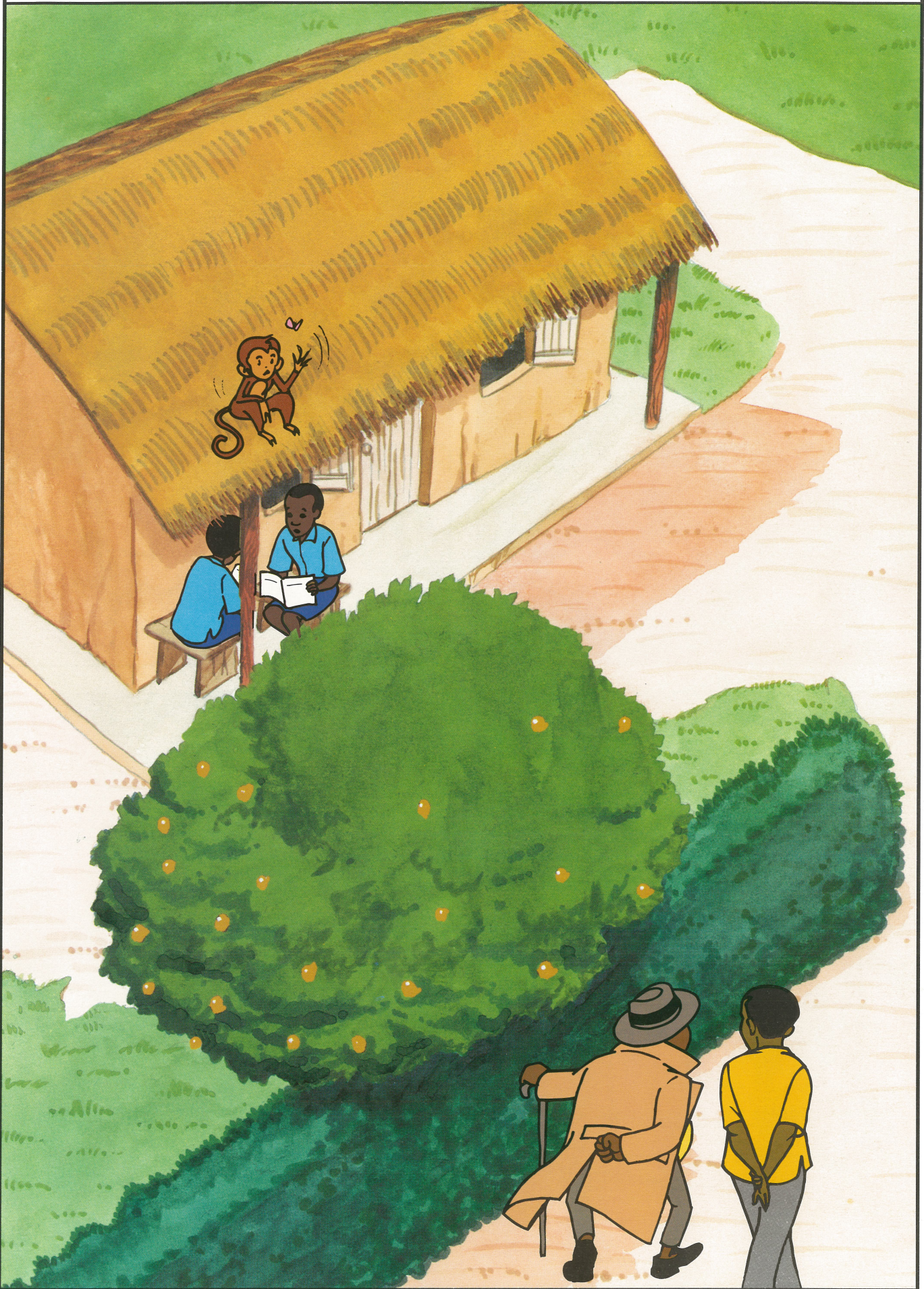
Other communication packages on different themes are under development.

For further information contact:
Communication Section
UNICEF-ESARO
P.O. Box 44145
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254-2-622220/622140
Fax: 254-2-622008/521913
E-mail: sara.esaro@unicef.unon.org

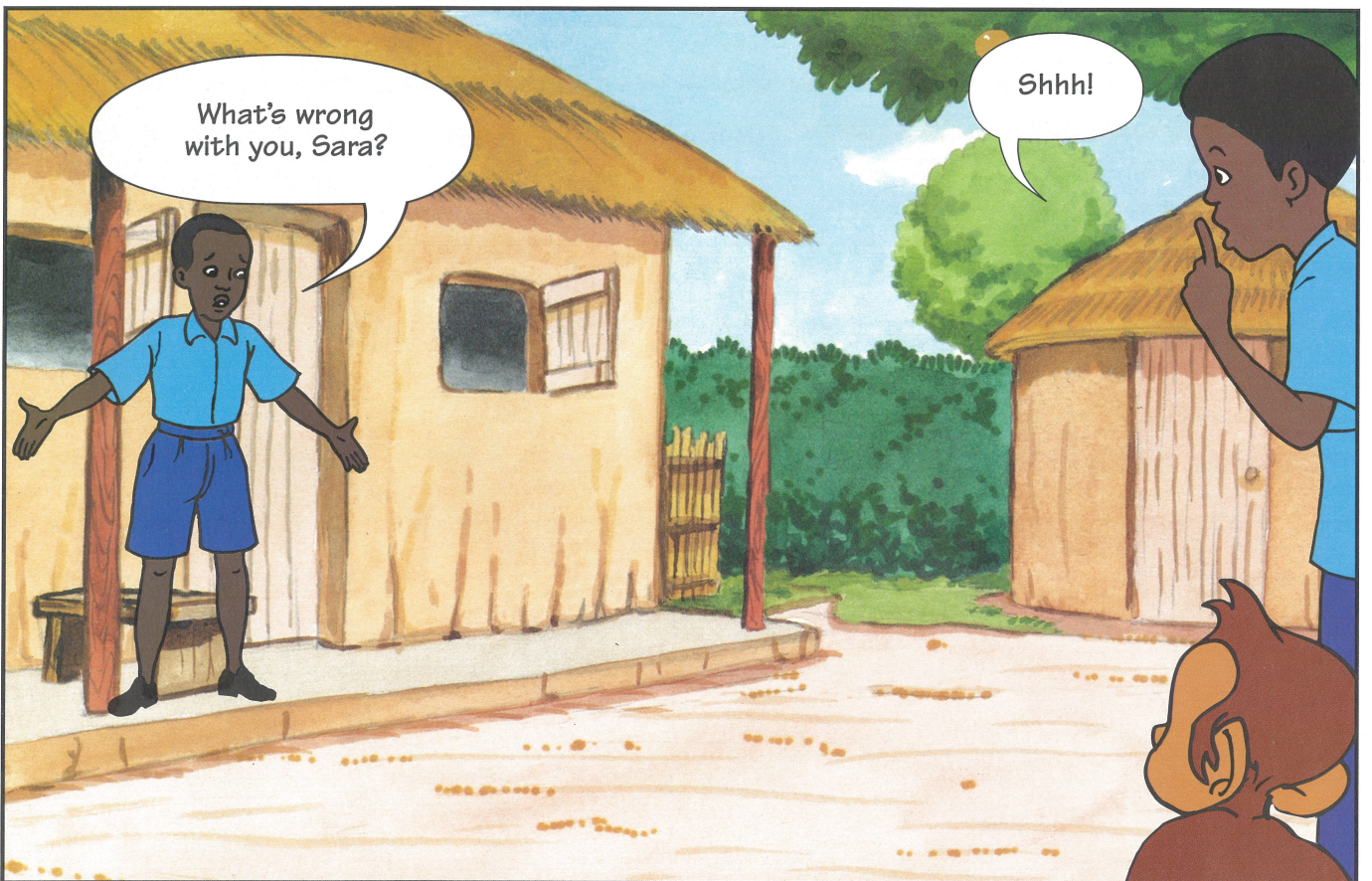
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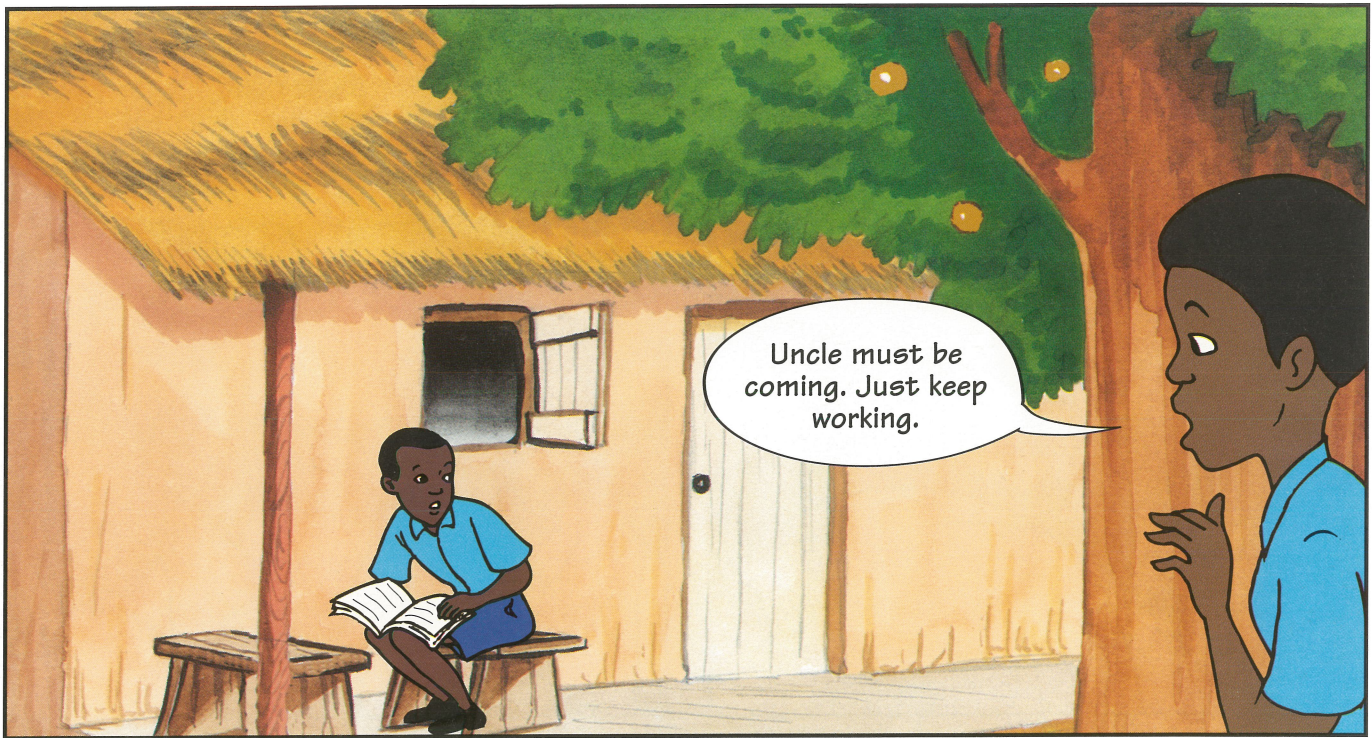
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Juma and Sara are doing their homework at Juma's house. Zingo, Sara's pet monkey is playing nearby.



Suddenly Zingo jumps down from the roof and begins screeching...





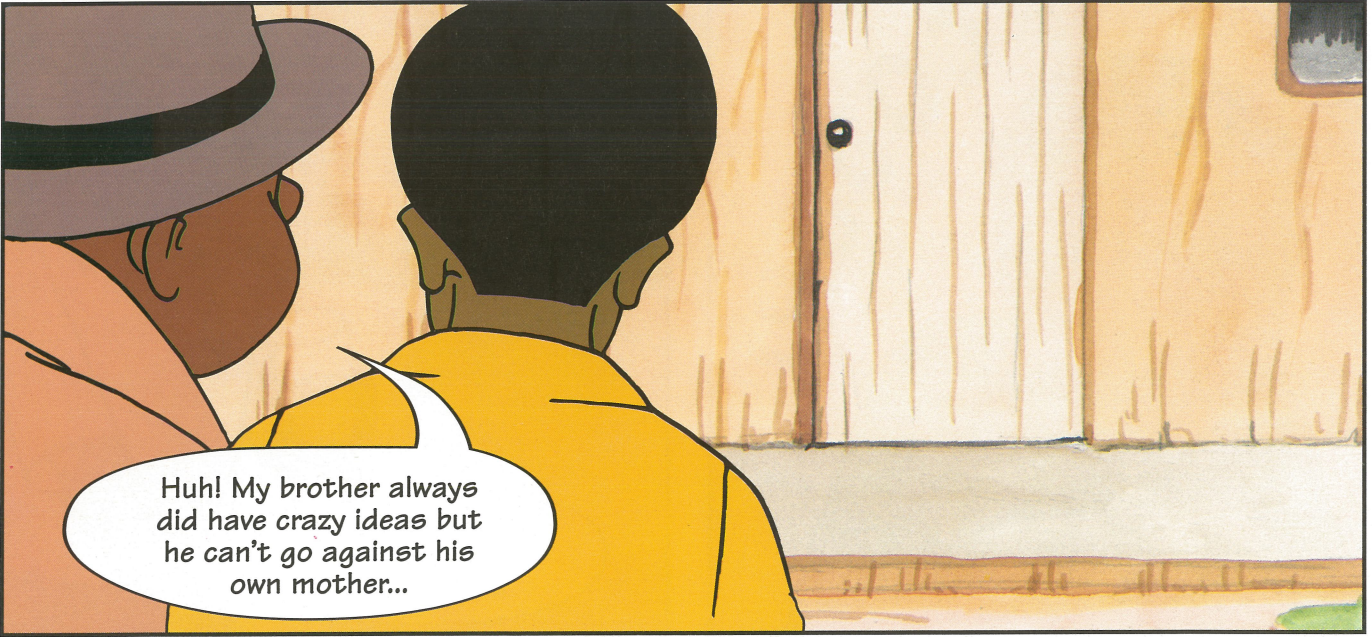
Uncle must be coming. Just keep working.

The men had a little to drink earlier and so are talking in loud voices.

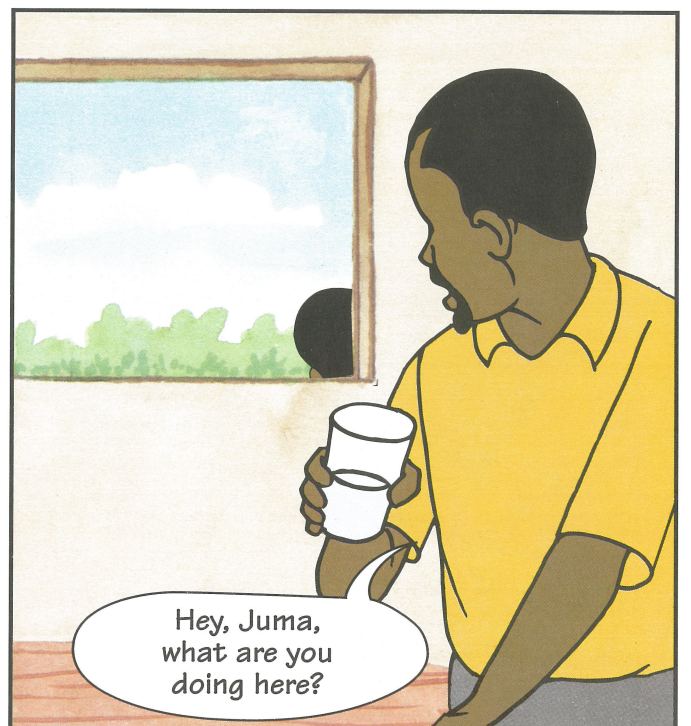
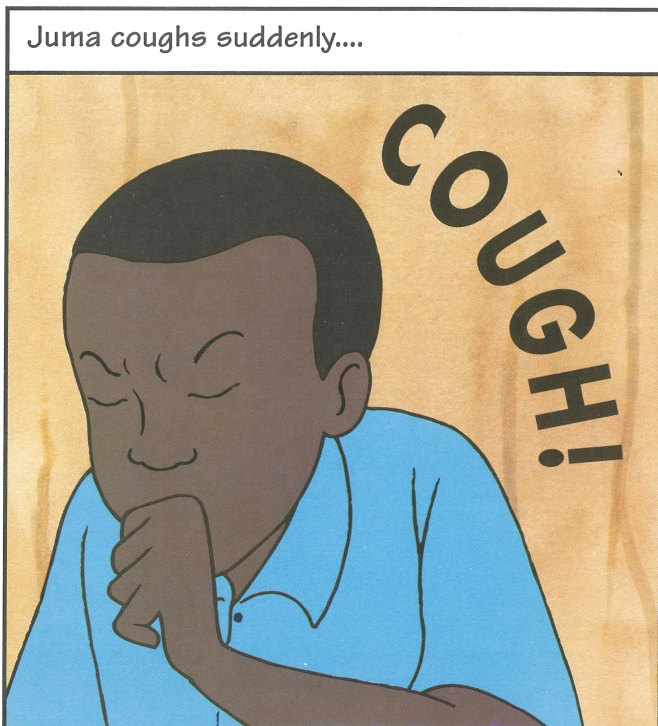
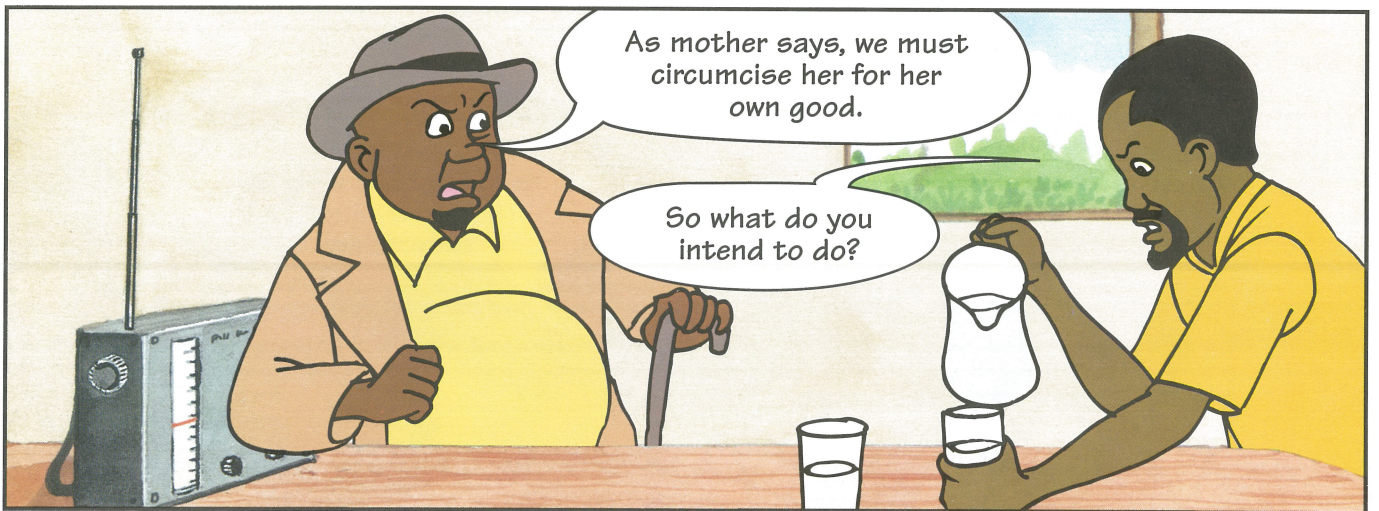
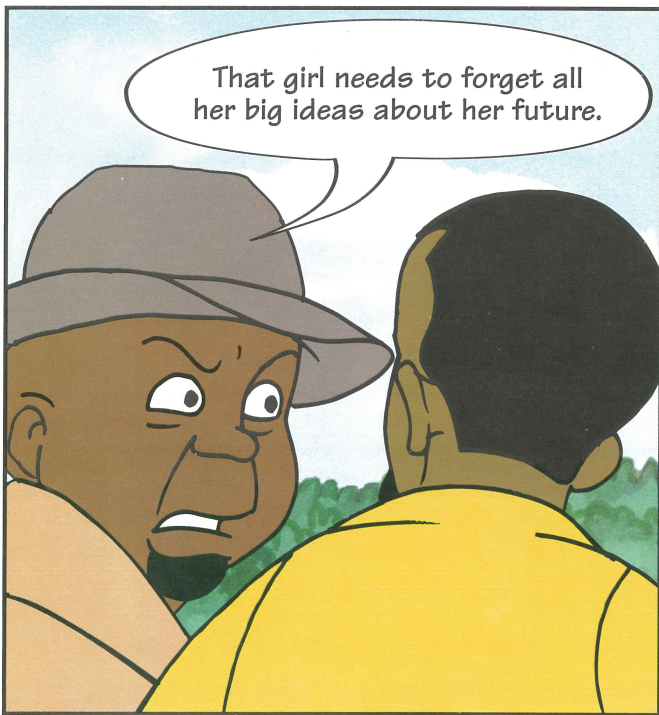


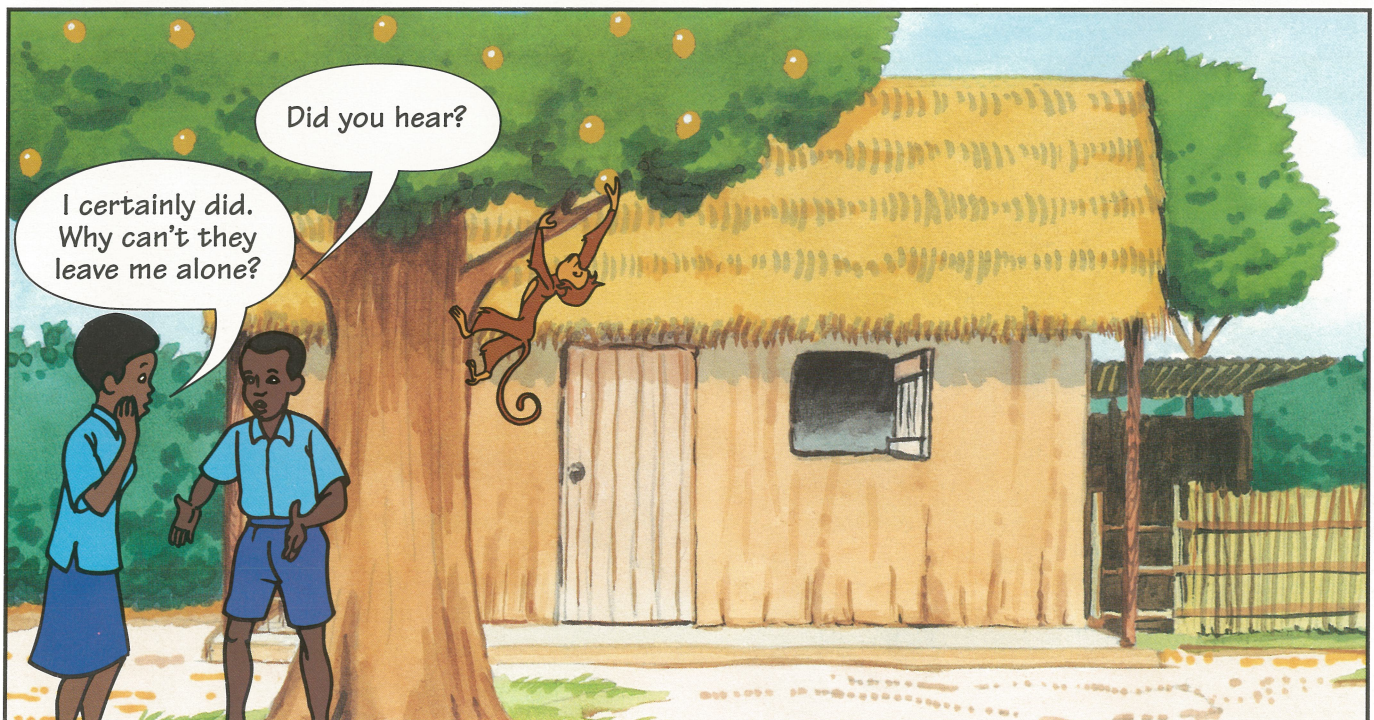
Mother came back this morning. She insists that Sara must be circumcised.

But you must be careful. Her father will be very angry.



Huh! My brother always did have crazy ideas but he can't go against his own mother...



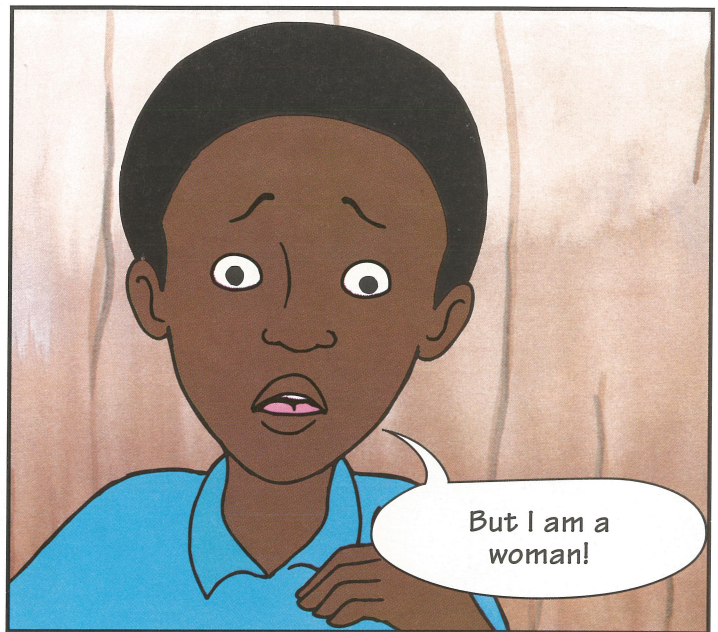


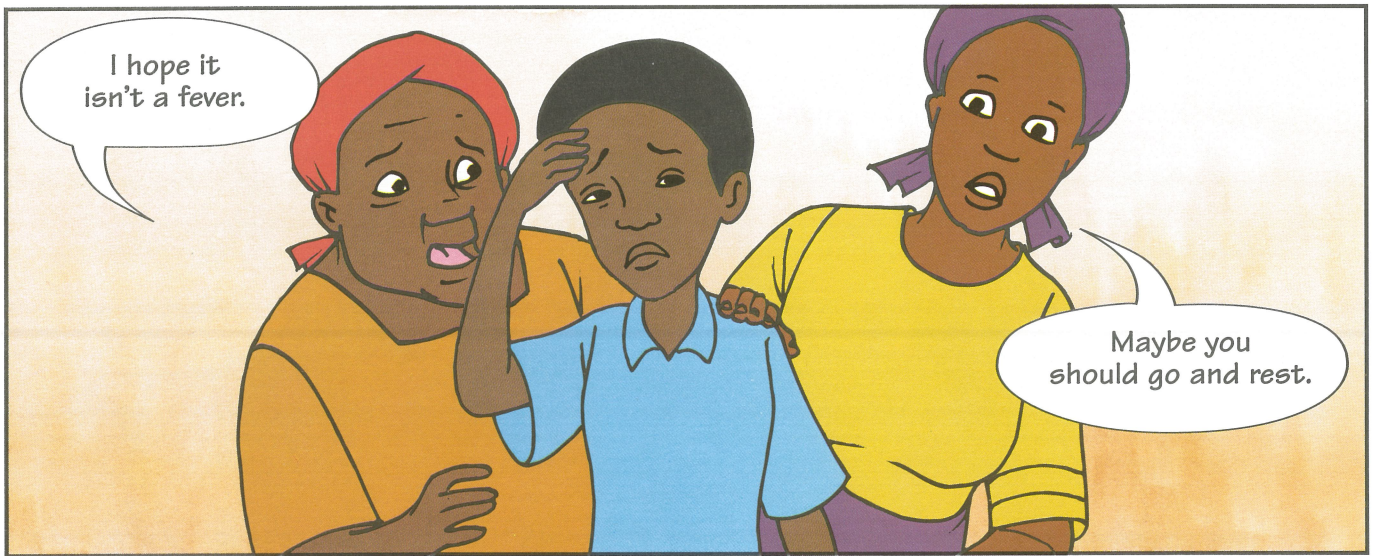
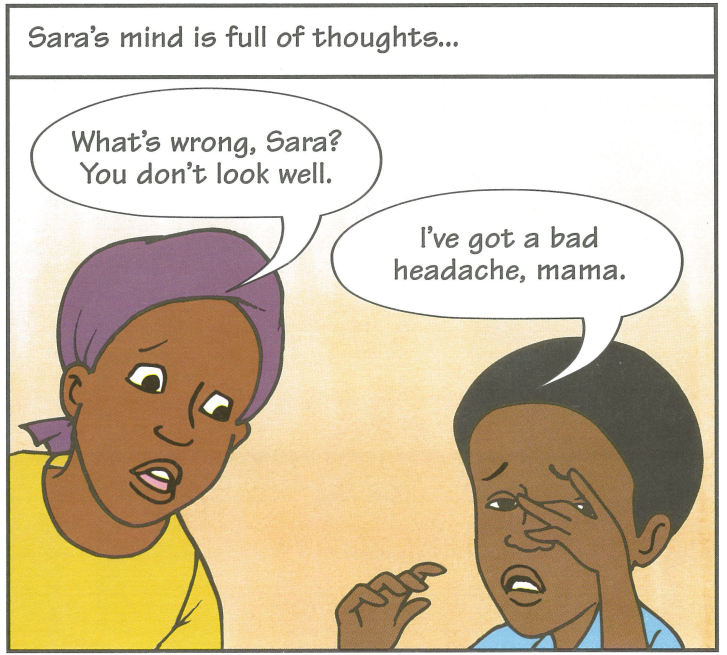


Sara reaches her home.









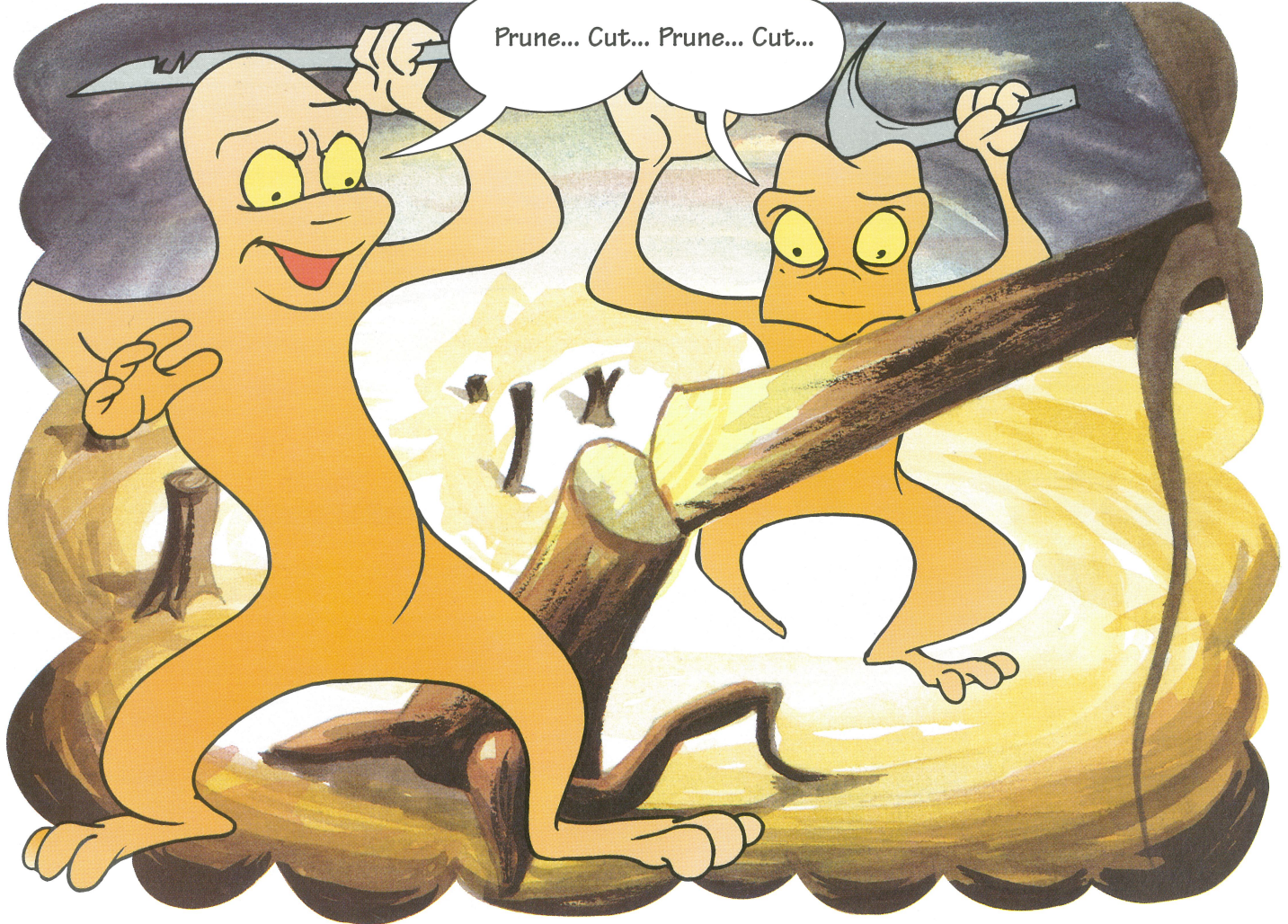
Sara falls asleep and...



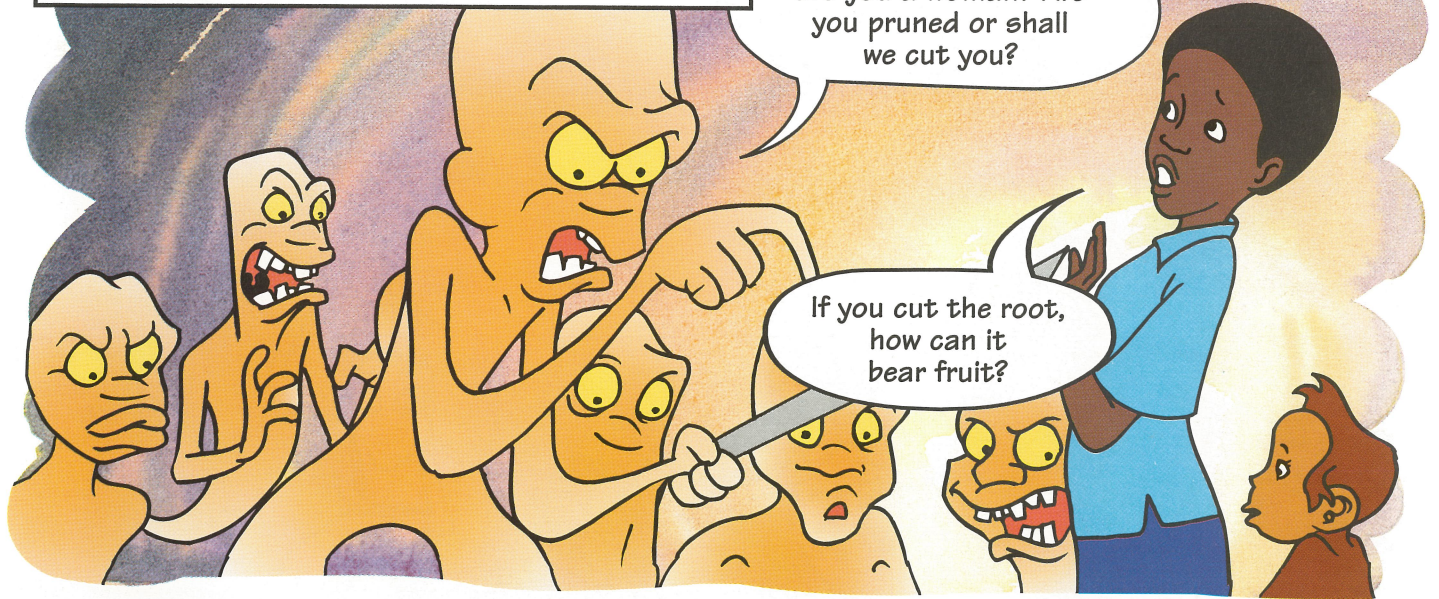
Prune the trees... Prune the trees... Cut the roots... That bear the fruits.
Prune... Cut... Prune... Cut...



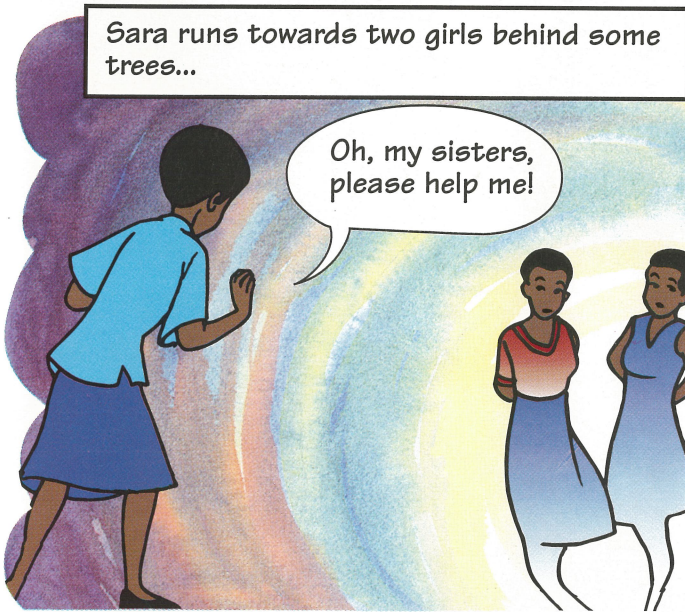
Prune... Cut... Prune... Cut...



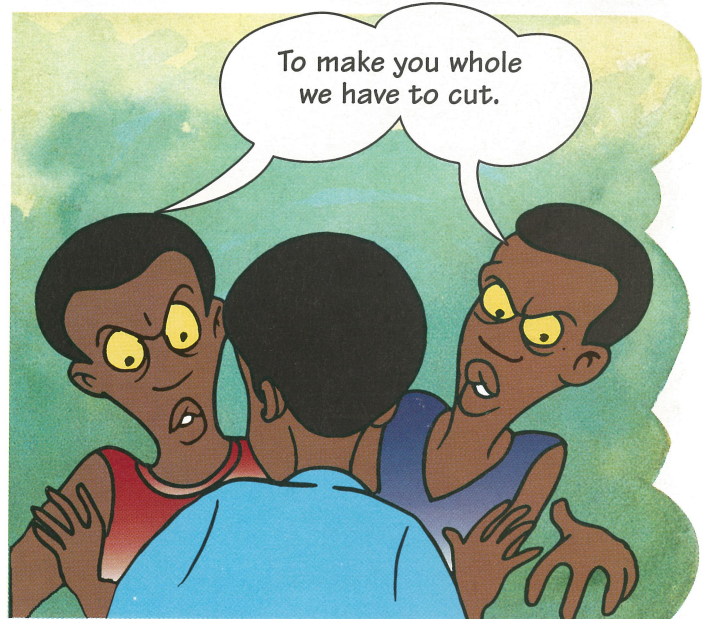
The leader of the group comes towards Sara.



Sara runs towards two girls behind some trees...



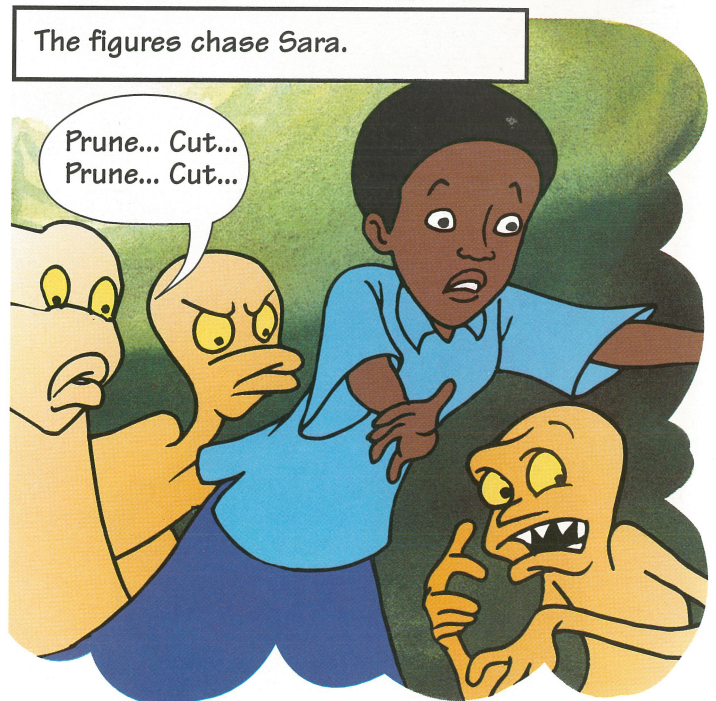
To make you whole we have to cut.



But how can you make someone whole by cutting something off?

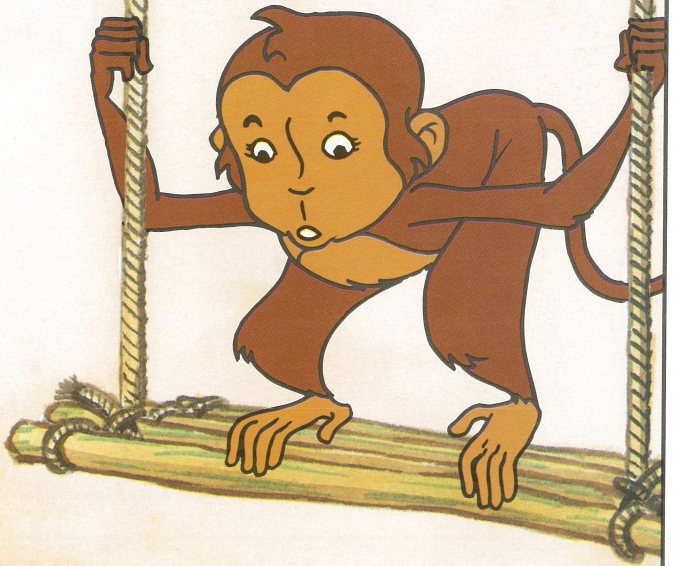


The figures chase Sara.



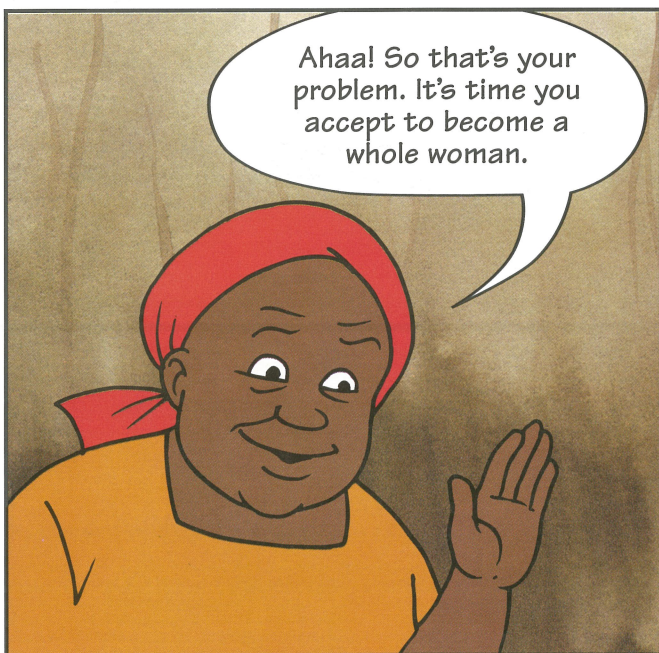


Sara wakes up shivering with fear.



Mama!





As Sara cooks, Zingo tries to help her.





Oh Sara, now you've made your grandmother angry and she will blame me. What shall I do now?



I'm sorry mama, but I don't want to be circumcised.

But I am circumcised. Do you think it makes me bad?

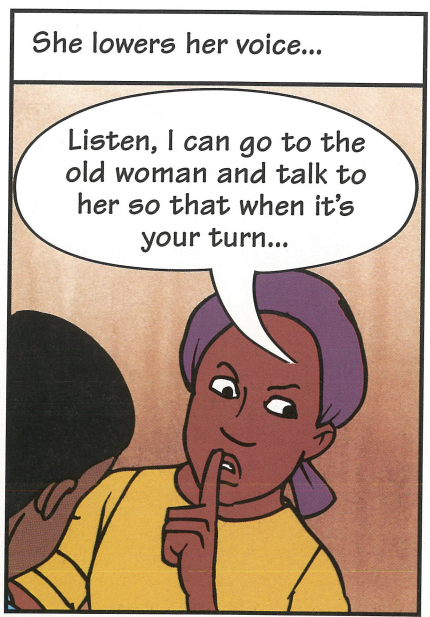


Of course not, mama. You're the best of mothers.



But they don't circumcise girls where our teacher comes from.

Sara, it's our custom.



The next morning, after doing the chores, Amina comes to Sara's home. They are ready to go to school.



Sara, are you coming?

Bye mama.

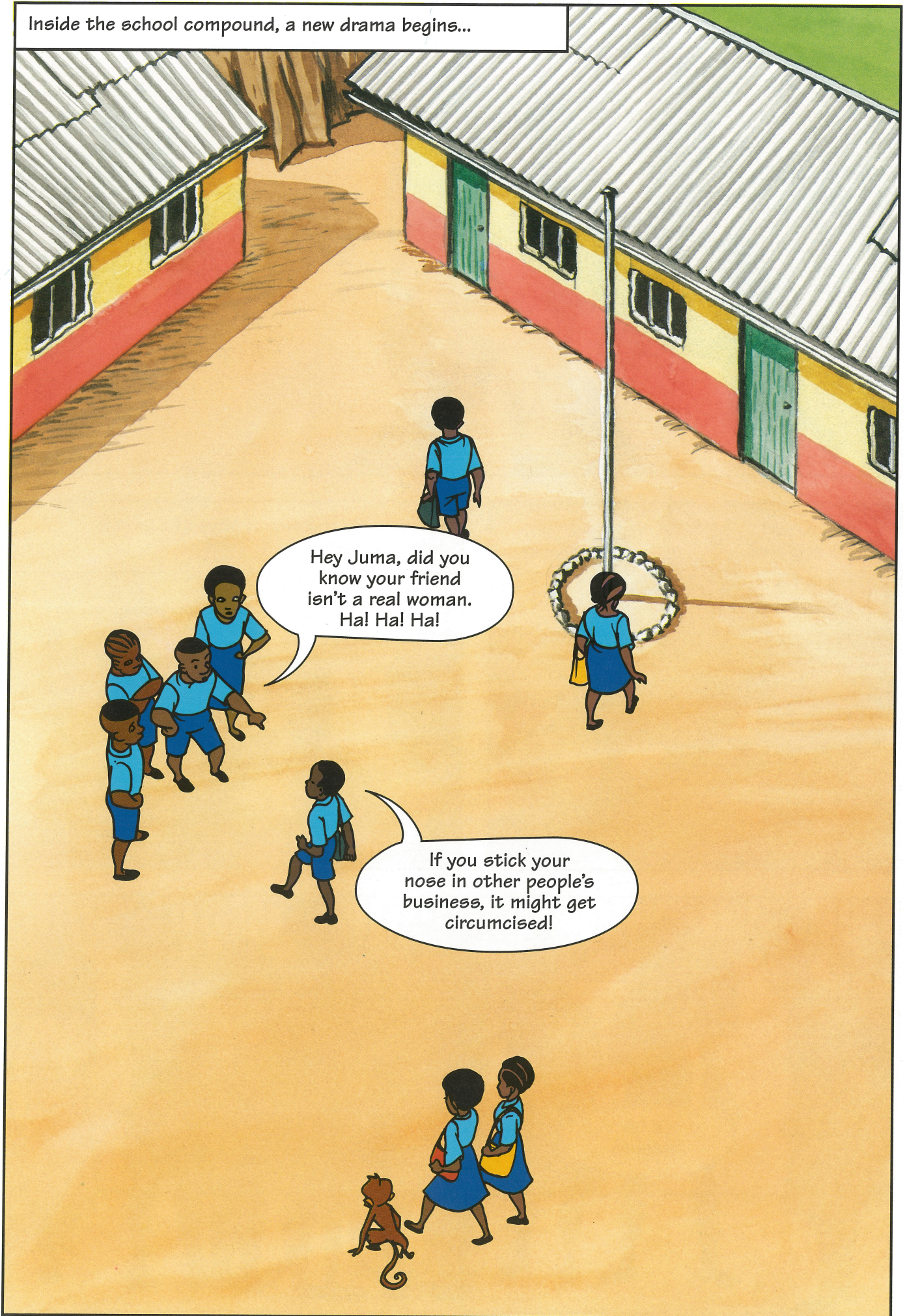
Bye.

Zingo is up in the tree...





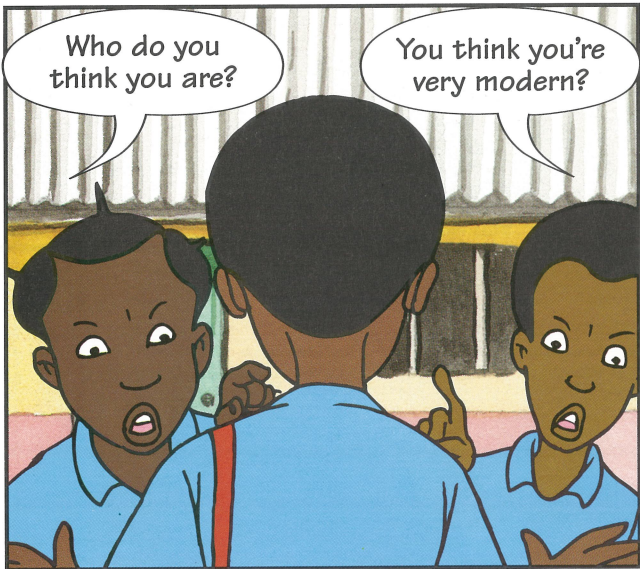
Inside the school compound, a new drama begins...



Hey Juma, did you know your friend isn't a real woman. Ha! Ha! Ha!

If you stick your nose in other people's business, it might get circumcised!

The girls tease Sara.



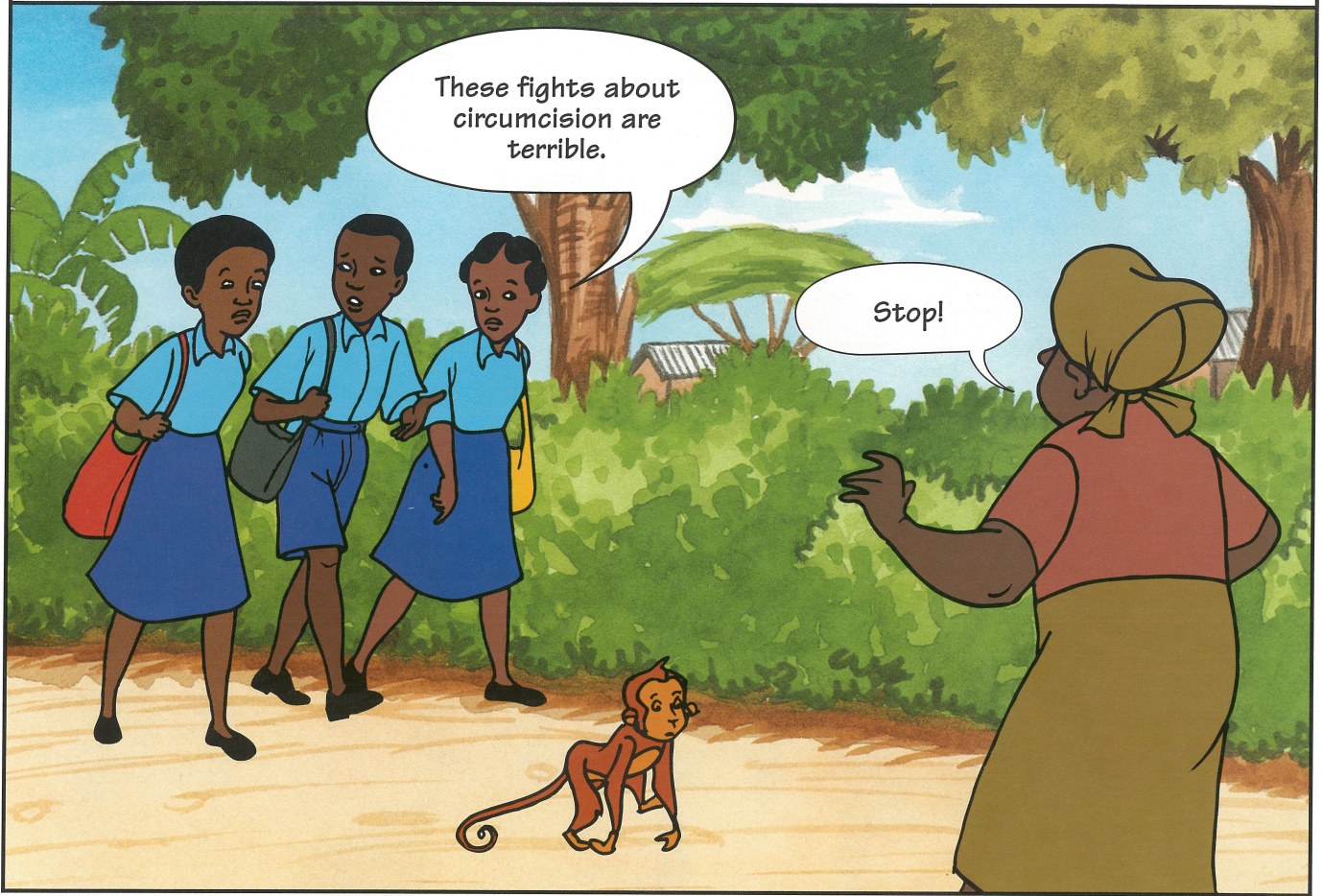


Ms Matata, Sara's school teacher, comes to her rescue.





After school, Sara is walking home with Juma, Amina, and a few others.



Suddenly a group of women jump out into the path.

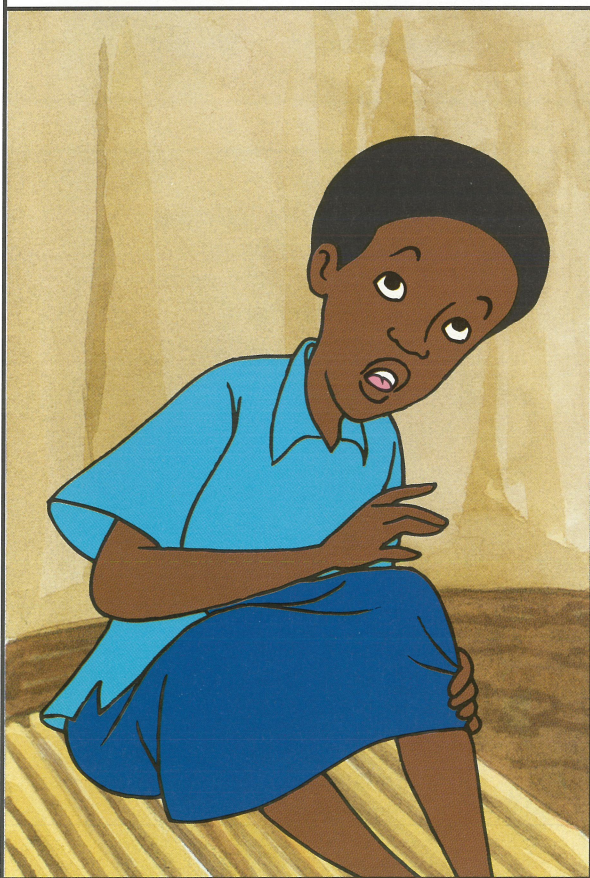


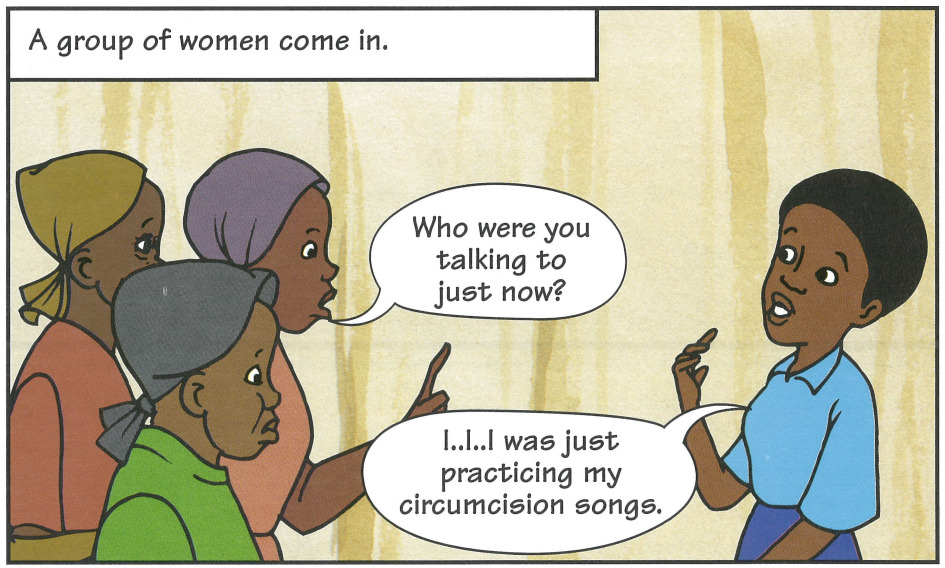
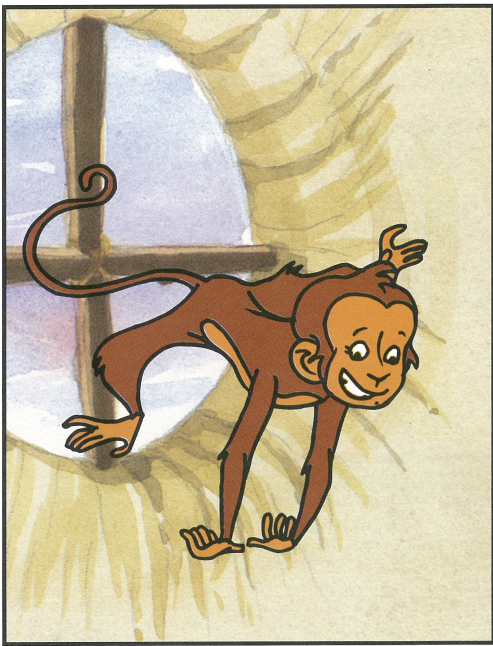


Sara is alone in the house of an old woman who lives outside the village.



There is a quiet tapping noise...







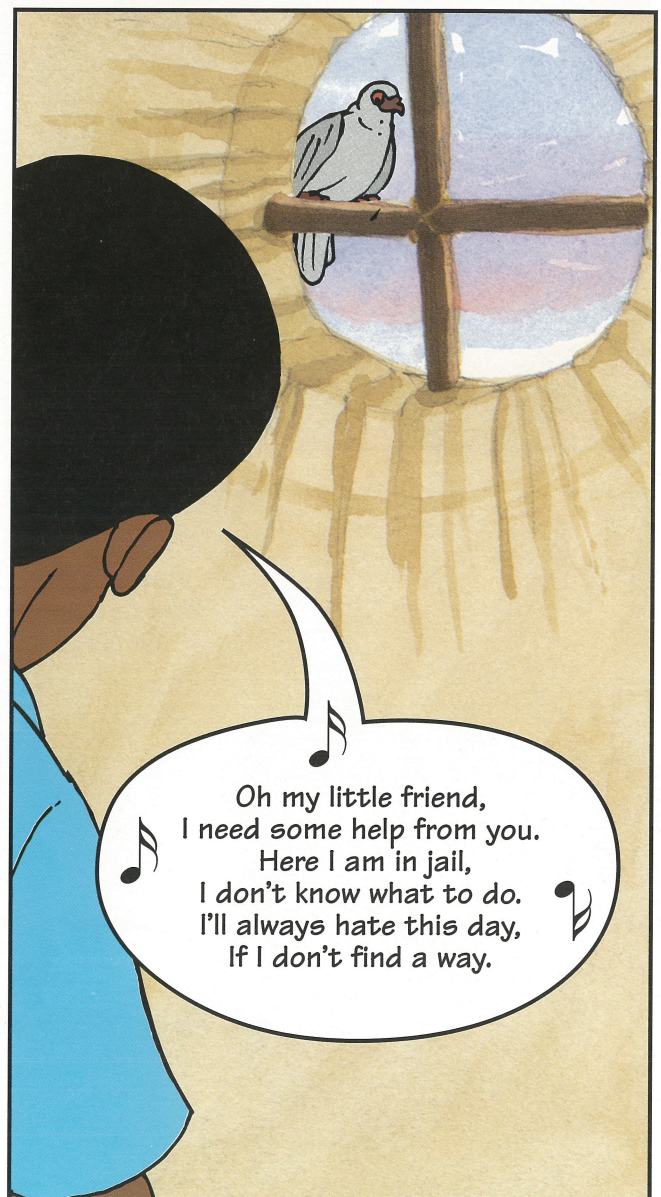
You really are a little lioness, aren't you?

But we will tame you soon. Put this on!



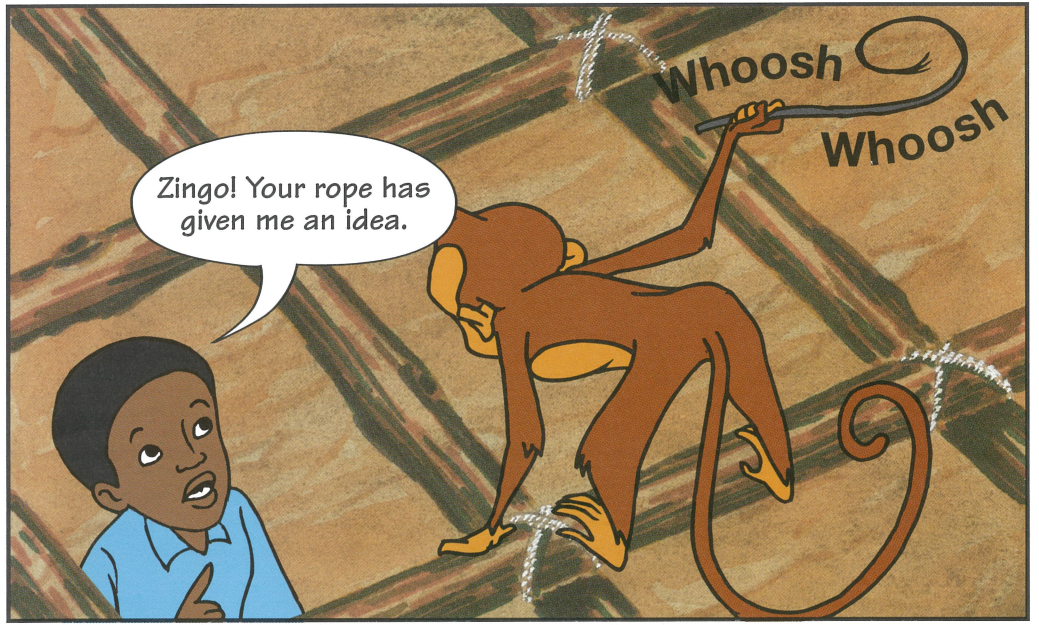
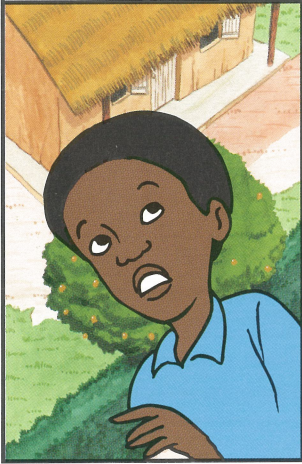
Oh, it's you!

Cool!
Cool!

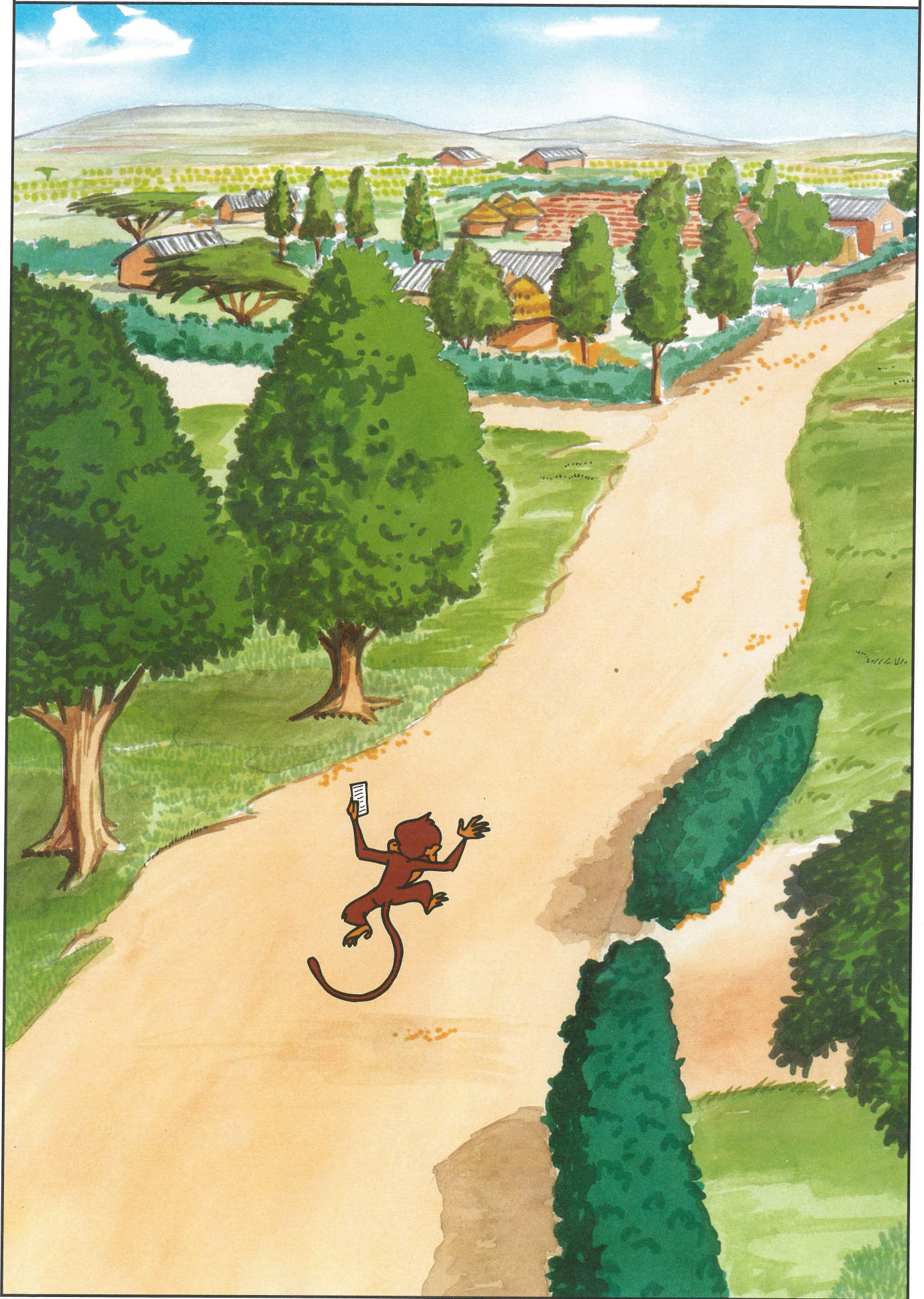


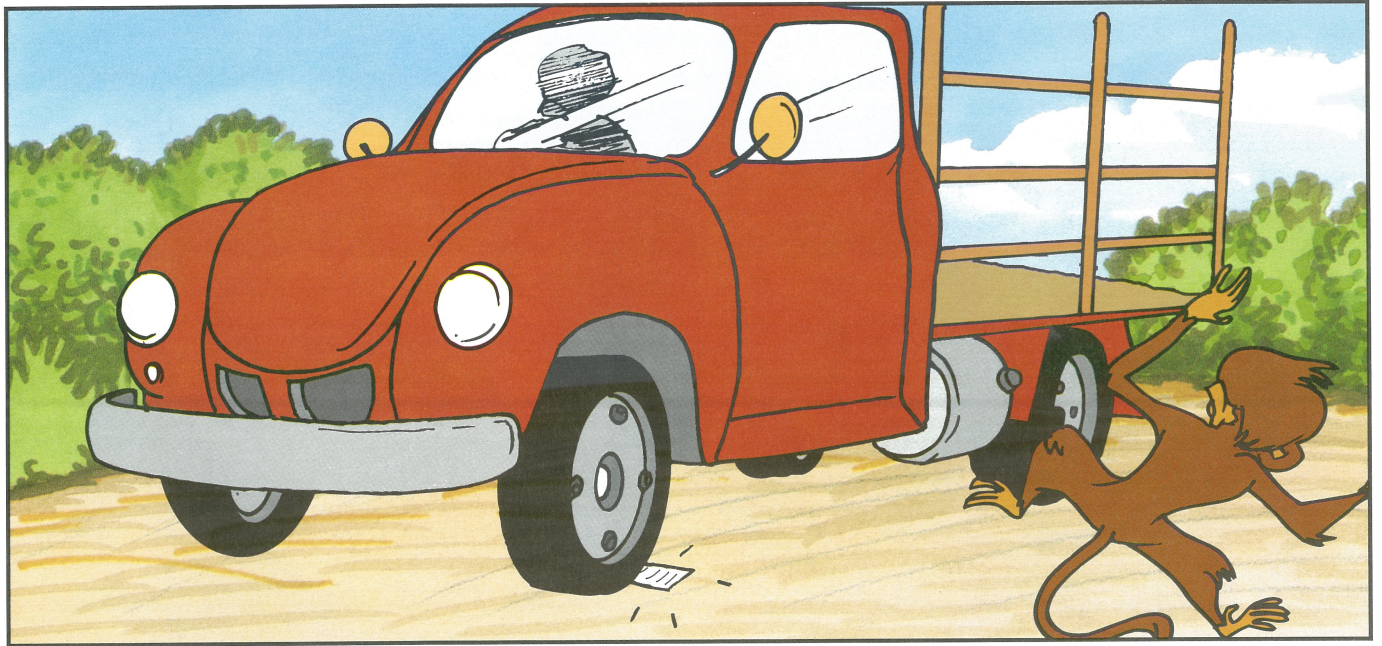
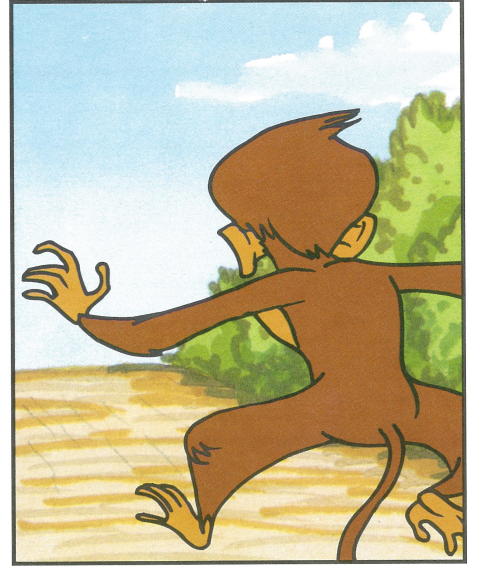
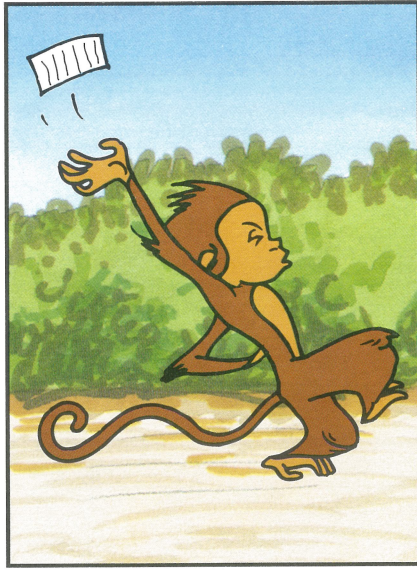
Oh my little friend,
I need some help from you.
Here I am in jail,
I don't know what to do.
I'll always hate this day,
If I don't find a way.

Suddenly, there is a whipping noise from above...



Zingo runs to Juma's house.





Sara joins in the dancing.

Huh! So the queen
has come to join us!

She thought she was
better than us. Ha!
But now she has
been tamed.



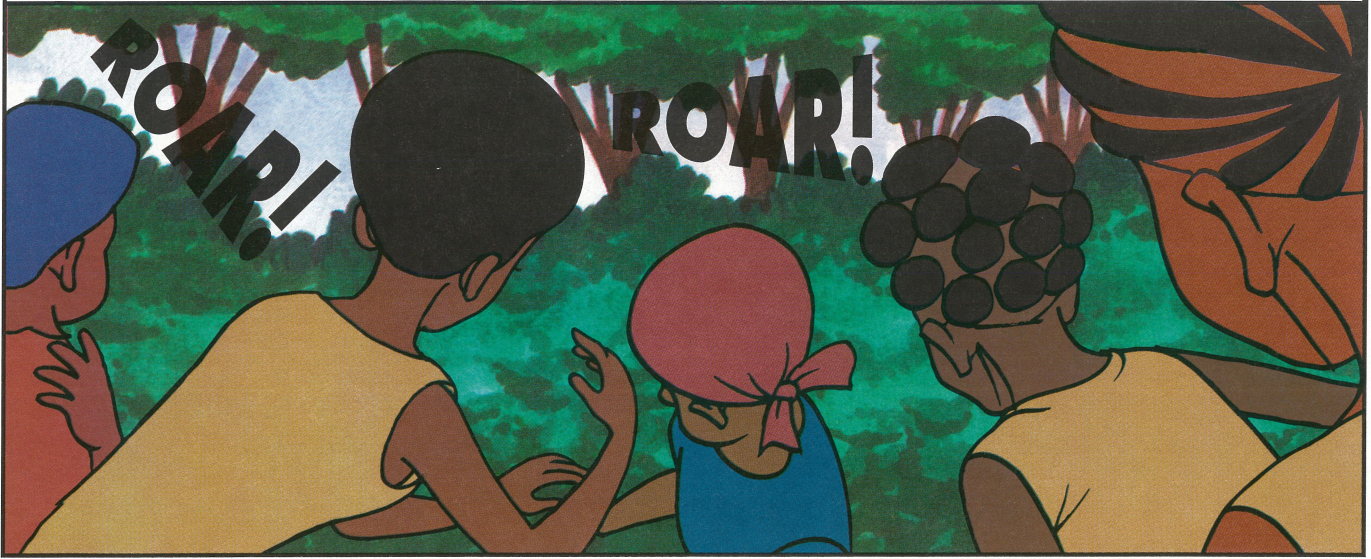
The dancing continues...



The circumciser arrives.



Suddenly, a loud noise like a lion roaring seems to come from the bushes some distance away. People start running...



Men armed with spears move toward the direction of the sound.



Sara takes advantage of the confusion and runs away with her friends.



Sara escapes to Amina's house. A big crowd gathers.



The circumciser signs to the women to grab Sara. Sara's mother steps in between.





You don't know what you're talking about.

I do! But I was afraid of what other people would think. How many of us are afraid of others?

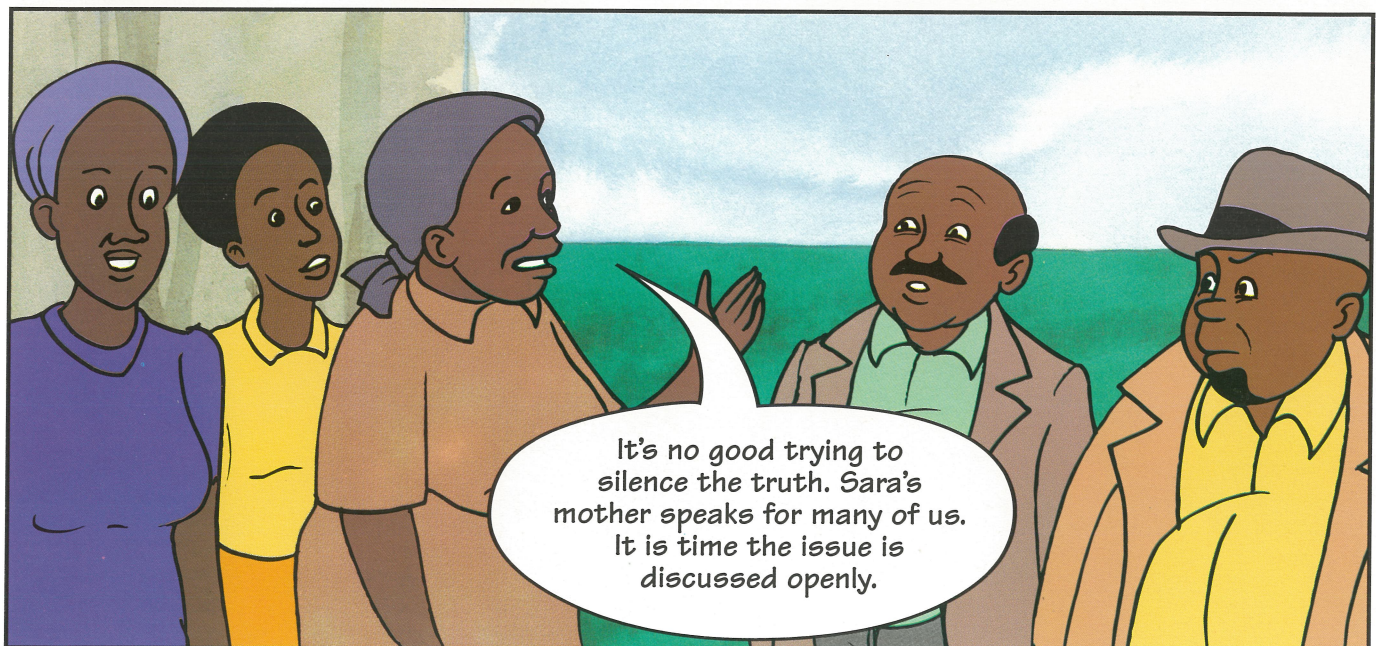


How many of us really want our daughters to be cut?



Sara has opened my eyes. Cowardice will lead us nowhere.

Sara's uncle is very angry while grandmother is confused...



Finally, the chief speaks.





Suddenly, they hear the sound of lions roaring again. It was only Juma.





The crowd laughs and ululates.



USERS' GUIDE TO "DAUGHTER OF A LIONESSE"

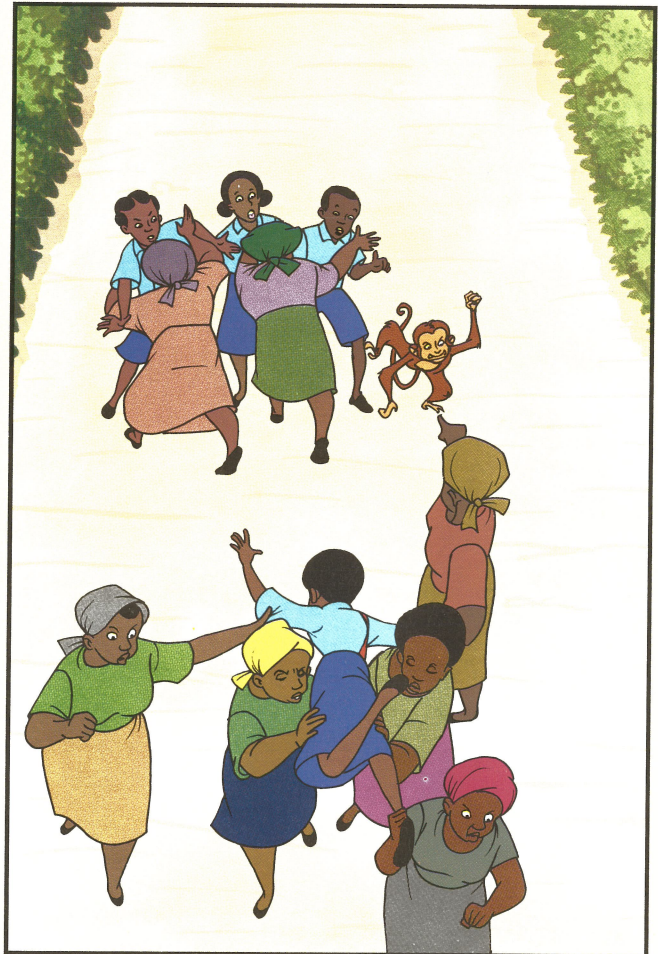
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision is a traditional practice which has survived for many centuries and is still practiced in many parts of Africa. The age of circumcision and the level of genital mutilation varies from culture to culture. In some communities, particularly in the Horn of Africa, FGM is performed as early as the first week after birth. In some cultures FGM is performed just prior to marriage, during first pregnancy or immediately after the delivery of the first child. In those countries where FGM is associated with the 'rite of passage', that is, as an entry into womanhood from girlhood, FGM is performed at puberty. In such communities, FGM is accompanied by ceremonies/ festivities and educational activities which may last for weeks.

FGM involves partial or total removal of the female genitalia and/or injury to the female genital organs. FGM is a practice which is deeply entrenched in the societal values and is accepted as a part of the culture. In many communities, it is believed that FGM should be practiced to suppress a woman's sexuality, to safe guard her chastity and to control her.

There are 4 types of FGM or female circumcision which are in practice:

1. Sunna: this type involves the removal of the hood of the clitoris.
2. Excision: this type involves the removal of the clitoris and glands with scraping of the inner lip of the vagina.
3. Infibulation: this type involves removal as in excision but is extended to include at least the upper lip of the vagina. This also includes stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening. In such cases, a small opening is left through which urine and menstrual blood can pass.
4. Unclassified (as categorized by WHO):
 - Pricking, piercing or incision of the clitoris and/or labia.
 - Stretching of the clitoris and/or labia.
 - Cauterization by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissues, using a hot metal to burn.

- Scraping or cutting of the vagina or surrounding tissues.
- Introcision or splitting the clitoris open.
- Introduction of corrosive substances or herbs into the vagina.



Women who undergo FGM experience acute pain and suffering throughout life. For them, sexual intercourse and child birth are extremely painful experiences. Such women usually have more difficulty during child birth and many die while giving birth. Moreover, girls who go through the experience during childhood, at puberty or afterwards, are often mentally traumatized. In addition, prevailing unhygienic conditions and unsterilized instruments/blades used for circumcision may lead to the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. Tetanus and septicaemia infections are common, and sometime prove to be fatal. Many girls bleed to death as a result of unskilled surgery on their genital organs.

Mutilating any part of a woman's/girl's body is considered as a violation of human rights, including child rights. The Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) calls for the elimination of cultural practices based on the inferiority of women. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) claims the protection of the child from all forms of mental and physical violence and mistreatment and requires the state to take all effective and appropriate

measures to abolish traditional practices which are prejudicial to the health of children.

Considering the harmful effects of FGM, it is time that the issue be openly discussed and communities mobilized to stop practicing this highly dangerous custom.

“Daughter of a Lioness,” produced by UNICEF-ESARO’s Communication Section, is designed to support and strengthen the existing programmes on prevention of FGM. It is a well-researched package that can be used as an educational tool by organizations, programmers and service providers working in women and community education programmes, and focusing on the issues of children’s and women’s rights.

ABOUT THE STORY

“Daughter of a Lioness” is an animated film, supported by a comic book, poster and a users’ guide. The package also includes a detailed, facilitators’ resource book (available separately).

OBJECTIVES

The story has a strong appeal and enough entertainment value to be used with different communities which practice different forms of FGM and other harmful practices. Research has shown that it can be effectively used to:

- Initiate in-depth and constructive discussions among adults on FGM and other prevalent initiation rites, their effects on communities, specially on girls’ survival, protection and development.
- Help the communities to understand the need for “changing with the times,” and for community mobilization to put a stop to harmful practices, opting for alternative, positive approaches towards initiation rites.
- Stimulate discussions amongst girls and boys on FGM and other initiation rites and encourage innovative ideas on how to promote healthy practices and reject harmful ones.
- Create an understanding of how young people can deal with negative practices and peer pressure by acquiring appropriate Life Skills and by developing positive, supportive relationships, including between girls and boys.
- Encourage the participation of young people in problem solving and community development.

THE STORY IS AVAILABLE IN

- VHS video (all signal systems)
- U-Matic or Betacam (broadcast quality)
- 16 mm film version (on special order)
- Comic book format

PREPARATIONS

It is best for facilitators using this story in video or film format, to consider the following:

- Why do you want to show the video?
- Who is your audience (gender, age, profession, etc.)?
- How should this sensitive issue be discussed: in mixed or separate groups of boys, girls, men and women?
- Where do you want to show the video (office, school, seminar, community, etc.)?
- What facilities are available for showing the video (power supply, seating space, chairs, etc.)?

Note:

Make sure that you have the right video cassette for your playback system. Facilitators using generator power should ensure that the generator is placed at a reasonable distance from the group to minimize noise level. Ensure that there is enough cable wire for this.

BEFORE YOU START

Explain to the group that the story is about the issue of FGM and initiation rites. Inform them that there will be a discussion on the film afterwards. This will help them to remain focused on the story.

DISCUSSION

After showing the video or reading out the story, you may initiate discussion by asking general questions.

These questions should be used only as guidelines for facilitating the group discussion. They are not meant and should not be used as a rigid questionnaire.

Allow the discussion to be as spontaneous as possible, ensuring maximum participation from everybody in the group.

BEGIN WITH QUESTIONS ON THE STORY

- Did you like the story?
- Can someone tell us briefly what the story is about?
- Who are the characters in the story?
- Who do you think is the main character of the story? Why?
- Which characters did you like best in the story? Why?
- Which ones didn’t you like? Why?

You may want to ask specific questions on the comprehension of the story:

- What were Sara’s uncle and Juma’s father discussing at the beginning of the story?
- Why was Sara so afraid?
- What did grandmother say to Sara?
- What was Sara’s reaction?
- Why did Sara have a nightmare?

- Can someone describe/narrate the nightmare scene?
- Why was grandmother angry with Sara?
- What did her mother propose as an easy way out to avoid circumcision? What was Sara's response to that?
- What happened at the school? Why did the boys and girls tease Sara?
- What did Ms Matata say about FGM?
- What happened to Sara on her way back from school?
- Who helped her in her plans to escape?
- What happened during the circumcision ceremony?
- How did Sara manage to mobilize the community to support her ideas on FGM?
- Who supported her?
- What was her uncle's reaction?
- What did the chief say? Do you agree? Why/Why not?
- What was grandmother's reaction?

REFLECTING ON THE ISSUE IN OUR OWN LIVES

- Do you think that Sara's behaviour in the story was appropriate?
- How would people react to such behaviour?
- Do you agree with the solution in this story? Is it realistic? What other solutions can you think of?
- Do you know of any similar incidents as described in this story?
- What do you think of the grandmother? Do you think her desire to get Sara circumcised was right?
- Do you think that mothers should support girls against FGM like Sara's mother? Why/Why not?
- Do you agree with what Ms Matata said about FGM?
- Do you think people would agree with what the chief said about FGM? Why/Why not?
- What do you think of Juma? Can such friendship be possible between a girl and a boy? Why/Why not?
- Why do you think people want girls to be circumcised?
- Who decides that a girl should be circumcised in your community?
- What happens if a girl or her family refuses FGM? Who in the community reacts in favour or against it?
- In case of infant circumcision, who do you think should protest against it? What should be her/his role?
- How do people react to girls or women who are not circumcised?
- Do you know about the effects of FGM? Who told you?
- Do people talk about FGM or other initiation rites openly? Why/Why not?
- Should FGM be continued? What are your reasons?
- How do you think FGM can be stopped altogether?
- Who in the community should take the lead to put a stop to FGM and other negative initiation practices? What could the role of the community be? What could the role of girls and boys be?
- Have you heard about alternative approaches to initiation rites, which exclude FGM? Please describe.

- Are you aware of any other initiation rites in addition to FGM? Please elaborate.

QUESTION GUIDES FOR GIRLS

- Do you like Sara? Why/Why not?
- Can girls do what Sara did in this story? Why/Why not?
- Can girls make decision for themselves? Why/Why not? How would the community react to such behaviour?
- Do you know of anyone who has been circumcised? Did they tell you about their experience regarding FGM?
- Do girls themselves want to be circumcised?
- Is it possible for girls and women to mobilize the community against FGM? What can they do? What support do they need? How would the community react to them?
- What did you learn from the story? Can you apply some of the lessons in your own life?

QUESTION FOR BOYS

- Do you like Sara? Why/Why not?
- Do you think girls can do what Sara did in this story? Why/Why not?
- What do you think about Juma's role in the story? Do you think he did the right thing by helping Sara to escape? Why/Why not?
- If you were Juma, what would you have done in a similar situation?
- What do people think about girl-boy friendships? Is it possible?
- What do you think of girls who are not circumcised? Do you agree with the reaction of Sara's school mates regarding FGM? Why/Why not?
- Do boys/men talk about FGM? Do you think girls and boys should discuss it among themselves? Why/Why not?
- What did you learn from the story? Can you apply some of the lessons in your own life?



QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- Do you think Sara's behaviour is appropriate? Why/Why not?
- Do you think school education has helped Sara in making a decision for herself? Is this acceptable? Why/Why not?

- Can girls make decisions for themselves? Why/Why not? How would the community react to such behaviour?
- If infant circumcision is practiced in your community, who makes the decision? Could that person play Sara's part in stopping the practice?
- What do you think of Sara's mother? Was her behaviour appropriate? Why/Why not?
- Are you aware of any other initiation rites? Kindly elaborate.
- How can FGM be stopped? Who can take the lead? What can parents do?
- Have you heard of alternative approaches regarding FGM? Can this be promoted?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

The following are suggestions for activities which will improve understanding of this story and how it relates to existing situations of girls in their own communities. The activities can focus on the issue of girls developing Life Skills, like critical thinking, decision making, assertiveness, coping with stress and peer pressure, negotiation/communication skills, etc., and the role of the community to support such development in young people.

Encourage the group members to participate fully in planning and carrying out these activities.

A. Group Discussions

Let the group discuss the story among themselves. One member can lead the discussion with room for others to join in. This can be done in groups of two, three or more.

B. Drawings

The group members could draw pictures of their favourite parts of the story. Discuss why they enjoyed that part, what lessons could be learnt from it, etc.

C. Survey

If culturally appropriate, ask the group to find out informally what different members of their community think about FGM. Is there any difference in the attitudes of different generations on gender? Find out if there are any interventions in your area to stop FGM, who is involved, and how are people reacting to it (if perceived as an intrusion into people's culture/custom), etc.

D. Drama or role play

Create drama or role plays on some of the themes of FGM and initiation rites, projecting whether it is possible for a girl or her parents to make decisions for herself. This will help tease out more ideas on the issue of FGM and on the need for Life Skills development to enable girls to take more control over their own lives. Also, try out other solutions for the story. Encourage every group member to take turns in acting out the roles.

Ask questions

How did you feel when you acted as a girl/boy/adult? How did you feel about the situation in which you found yourself? Can role play help people to focus on real life issues? Ask members to react to the play.

E. Brainstorming

Brainstorm on a list of actions which could be undertaken by the community to create awareness about the harmful effects of FGM and the need to reject the practice and support more positive ones. Also think about how young people, especially girls, can be supported in taking decisions for themselves.

F. Community involvement

The group could share the ideas of Sara's story with the community through some of the following activities. The group can perform these in public, with friends, NGO workers, women's groups, mothers' clubs, churches and other religious or community venues:

- A drama or skit with alternative endings and discussions.
- Story telling with references to real life experiences, alternative endings and discussions.
- Debates on the issues of FGM and initiation rites, and cultural demands to fulfill traditional expectations (more in case of girls and women).
- Puppet shows with Sara characters.
- Create songs, dances, poems and games on the themes of the story.

Some of the activities can be undertaken on open stage, on public holidays, so that more people can watch and participate in discussions.

You may want to form a club, committee or a forum for girls, to discuss various issues of young people related to healthy life styles. This group can also act as a support group for girls who refuse to undergo FGM. School teachers and NGO workers who are involved in women's issues can be active members of this group. They can create awareness against harmful practices, support positive behaviours and inform the community on the rights of the girls, women and children.

G. Discussing results

After a few weeks, the group can meet to discuss:

- What actions were taken at home and in the community?
- How did people react?
- What activities were successful? What problems arose?
- What can be done to reinforce their efforts to prevent FGM and to support young girls and their parents in decision making and acquisition of other important Life Skills?

SCRIPT

Richard Mabala, Tanzania

ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Development Communication Unit

CARE-Kenya

Nduhiu Change

Ham Kakembo

Joseph Kariuki

Tony Okuku

Dorothy Migadde

Principal Character Artists

Joel Chikware, Zimbabwe

Vic Kasinja, Malawi

Artistic consultation and training

Ram Mohan and team

Light Box Moving Pictures, Bombay

**Electronic production and
printing supervision**

Radhika Madan

Sara Logo

Elizabeth M^cKee

RESEARCHERS

Research training and direction

Dr. Mira Aghi, India

Deborah Gachuhi, Kenya

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHERS

Eritrea: Kebede Gebregzabher,
Ministry of Education

Ethiopia: Rosa Selassie
Mistre Sewasew
Ethio-Education
Consultancy (ETEC)

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHERS CONT.

Kenya: Wangari Mwai
Okumba Miruka
Justus Olielo
Isabelle Chege
George Kahuthia
Rose Chege

Uganda: Violet Mugisa
Gertrude Ziwa
Jessica Jitta &
Susan Kiguli,
Child-to-Child

Tanzania: Richard Mabala
Nezerina Boma
Esther Kiyondo

CREATIVE CONSULTATION

The Storyteller Group, South Africa

Media Arts Consultants, Zimbabwe

Rachel Carnegie, UK

Jacaranda Designs, Kenya

Mank and Tank, Kenya

Zerfinesh K. Bendow

Jane Kariuki

Olivia Yambi

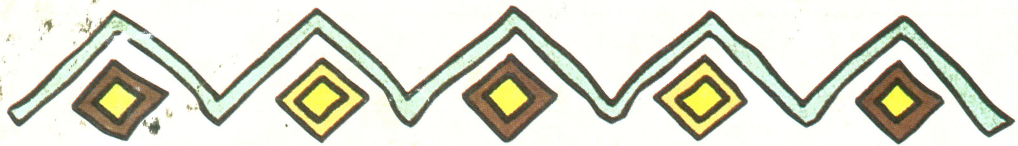
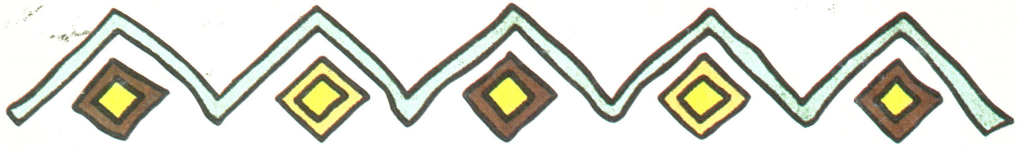
Wangoi Njau

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Neill M^cKee

Nuzhat Shahzadi

Justus Olielo



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