



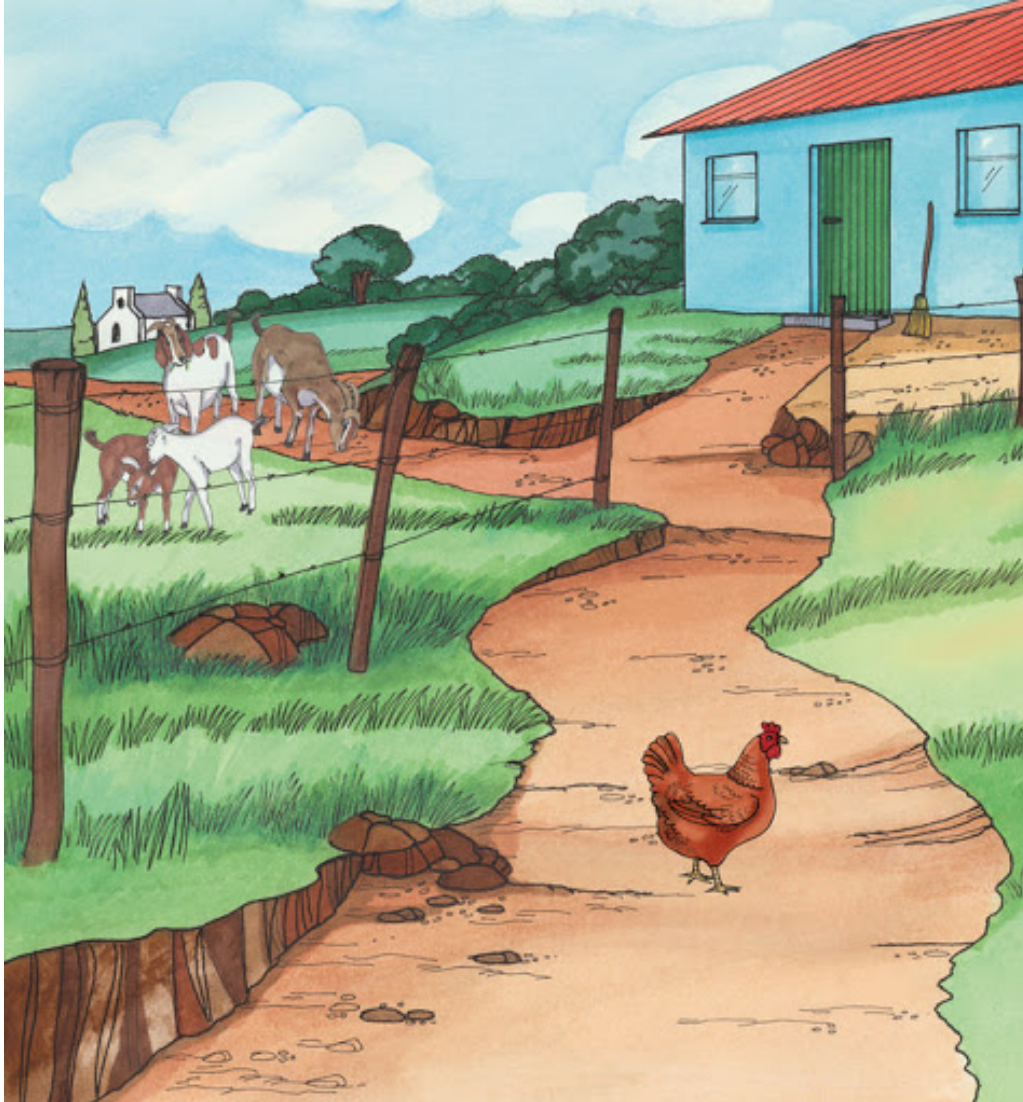
# Thembi and the Singing Tree

Kenneth Youngstein

Debbie Faber-Human







Walk down the red clay road and pass the small white church. You will come to a blue house with a red roof and a green door.





Here lives Thembi, her brother, Bongani, and their Gogo.

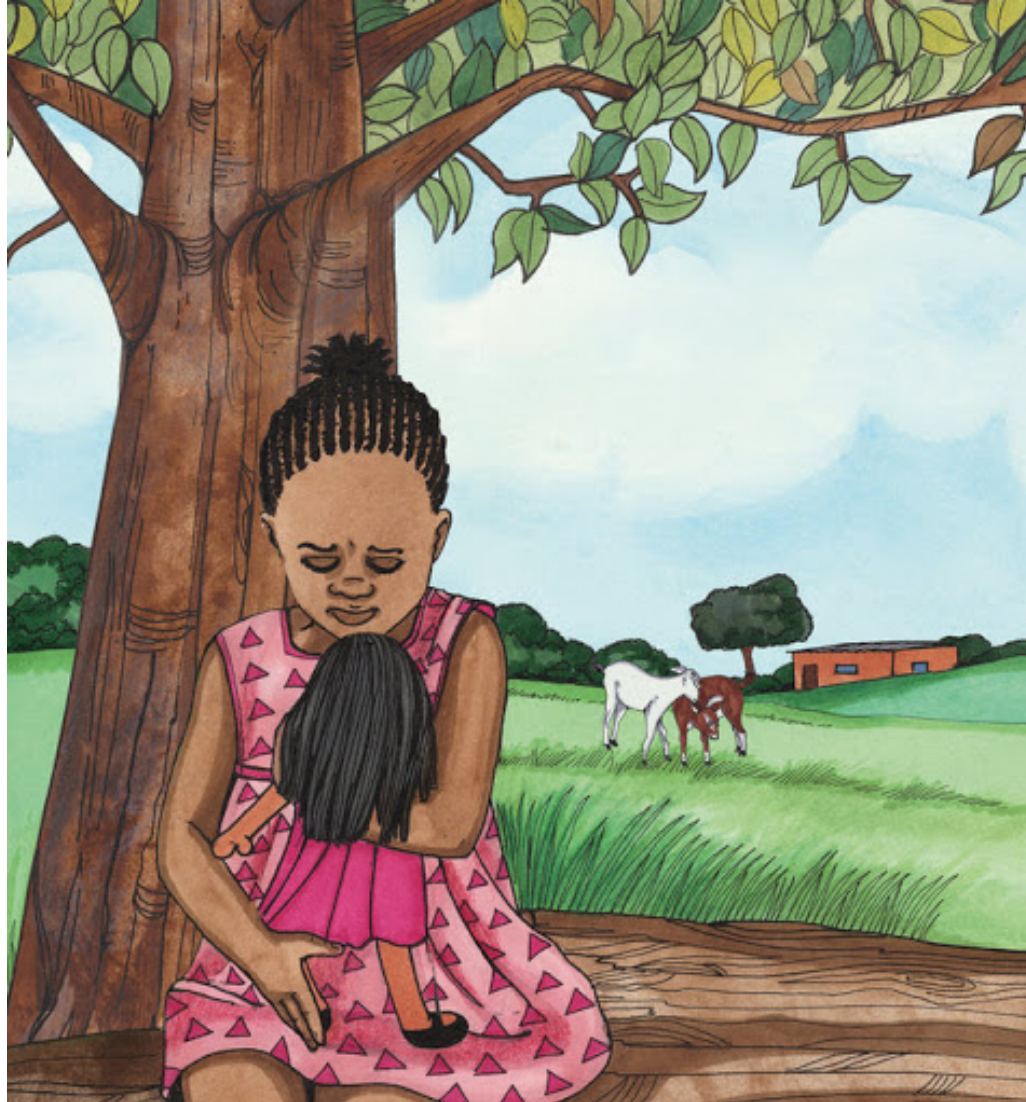


Gogo is in the kitchen, cooking dinner. From the window she can see Bongani and the other children playing. But where is Thembi?



Gogo decides to find Thembi. She takes off her apron and goes to find her granddaughter.



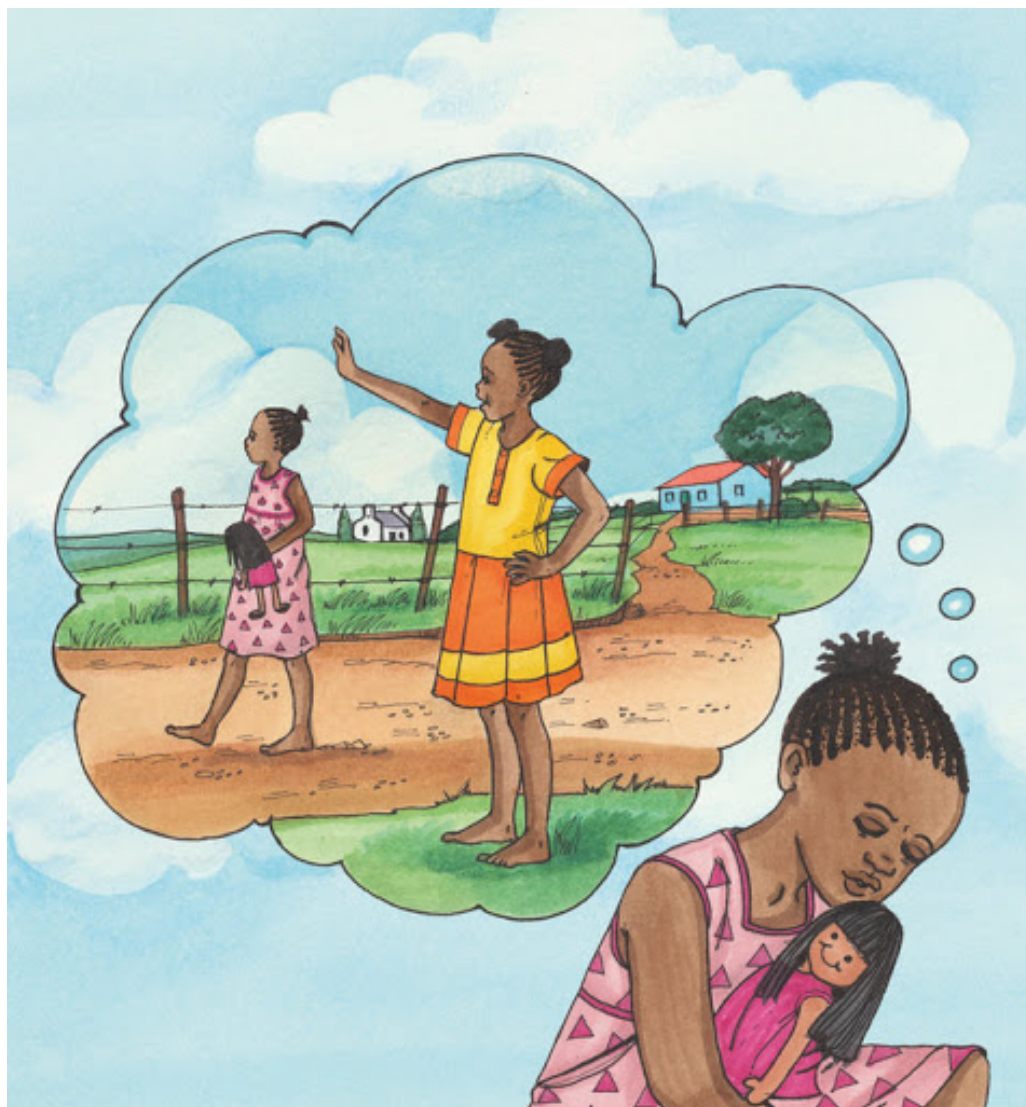


Gogo finds Thembi sitting under the big tree, playing with her favourite doll.



Gogo asks Thembi, 'Why are you sitting here, all alone?'  
'Oh,' replies Thembi, 'the other children don't want to play with me.'





'What about playing with your friend Sizani?' asks Gogo. 'Sizani is mad at me,' replies Thembi. 'She said that I just ignored her last week. Gogo, I really didn't see her.'



'And what about playing with your brother?' asks Gogo. 'Bongani doesn't like to play with me,' sighs Thembi. 'He says that I miss every time he kicks the ball to me.'



'But aren't you lonely?' asks Gogo. 'Oh no,' replies Thembi. 'I love sitting here, listening to the tree sing its beautiful song. Listen, can't you hear it?'

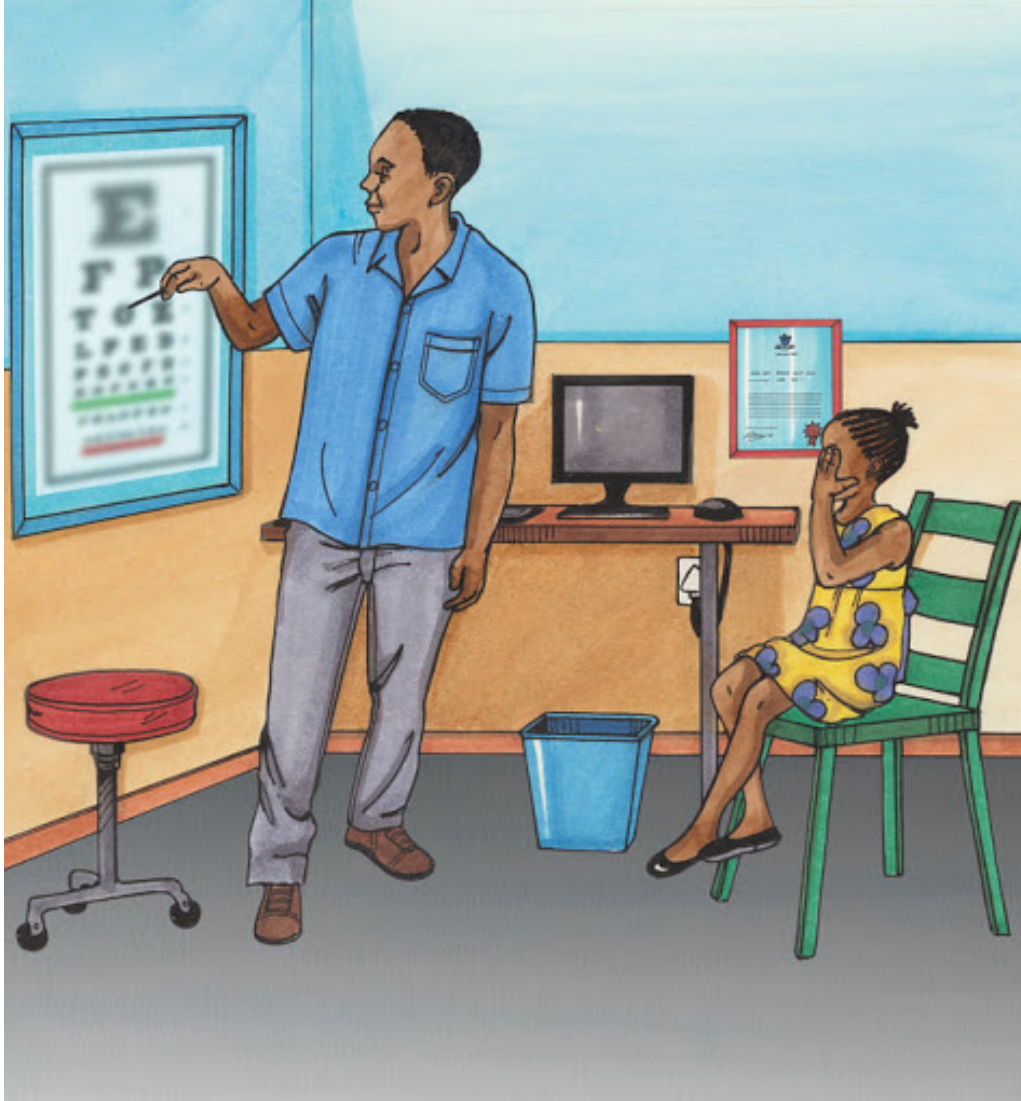




Gogo listens and then looks up into the tree to see a beautiful Kingfisher, a Cuckoo, and a Robin, all singing their songs.

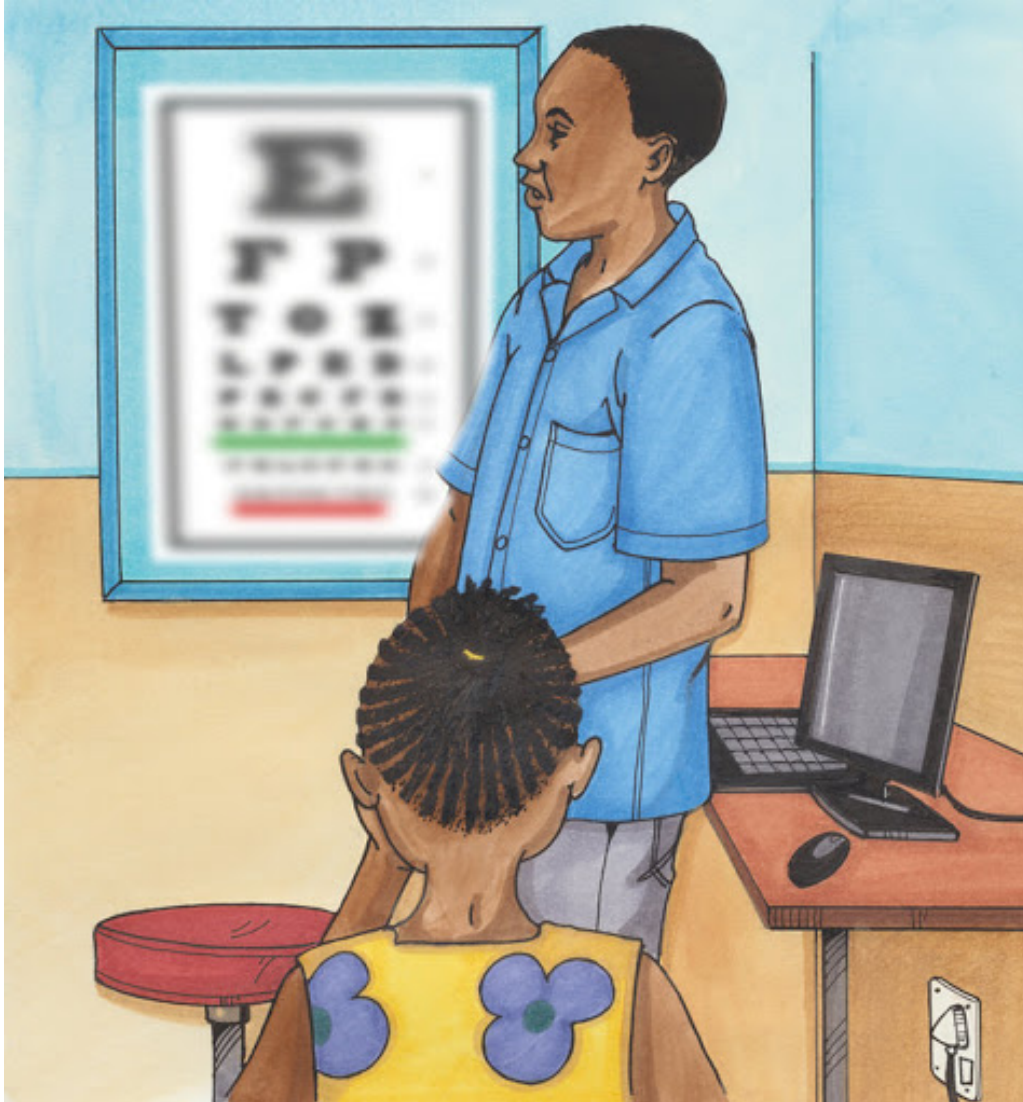


Gogo remembers Thembi's teacher once telling her that Thembi struggled to see things on the board. So, early the next morning, Gogo and Thembi walk to the local clinic.



At the clinic, they meet Mr Ntuli. He asks Thembi to cover one eye with her hand and to look at the wall in front of her and tell him what she can see.

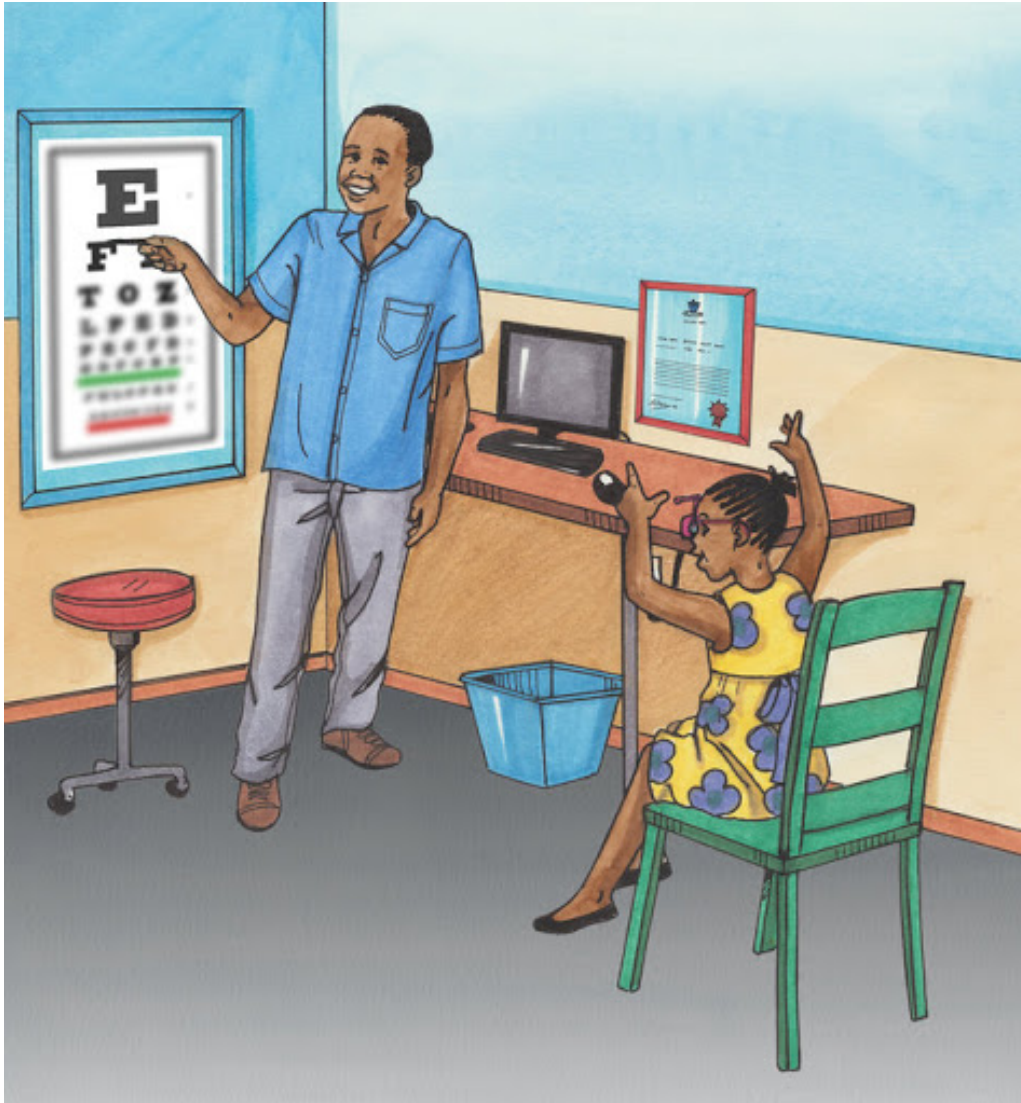




Thembi looks carefully at the wall and says, 'I can see something, but I am not sure what it is.'

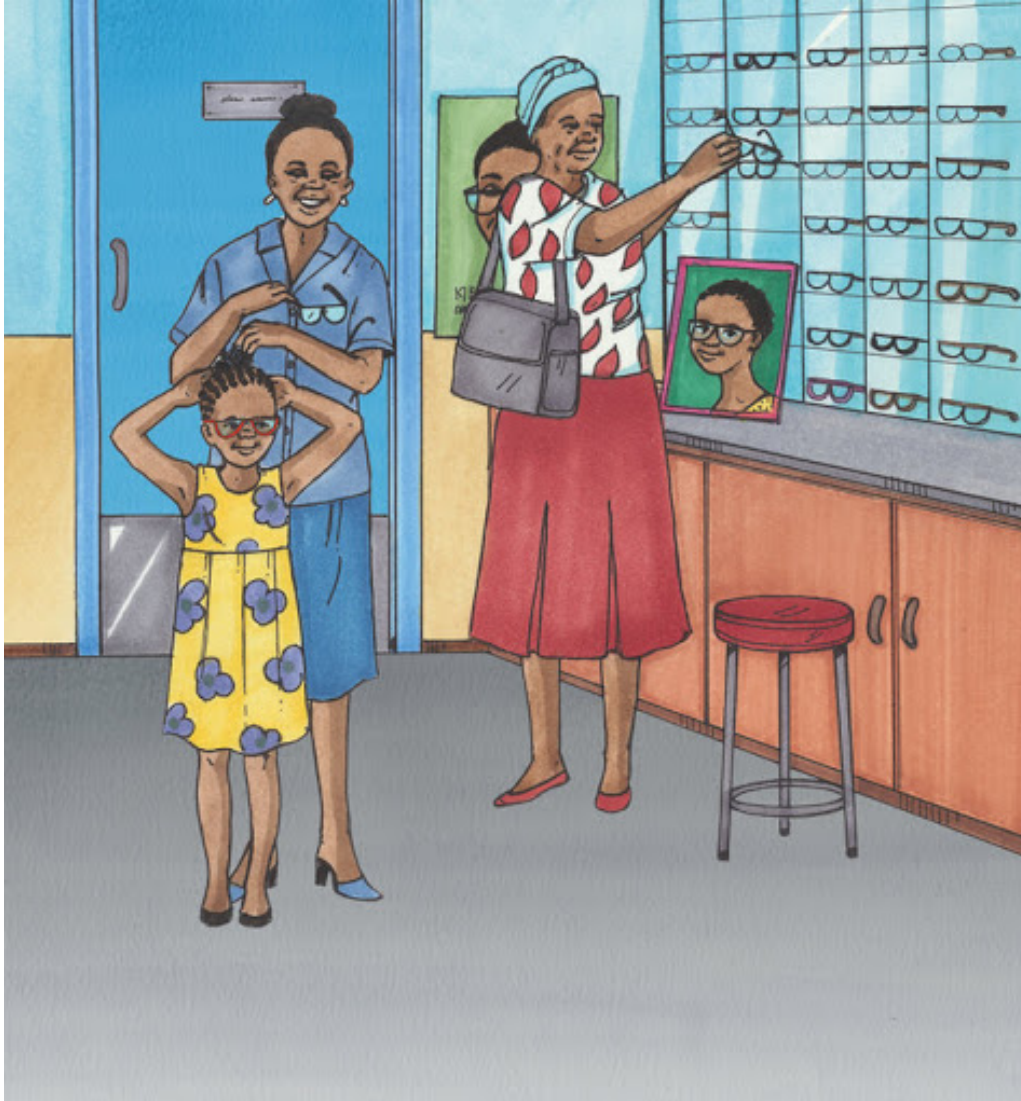


Mr Ntuli puts a metal frame on Thembi's nose. Then, he slides a round glass into the frame and again asks Thembi, 'Now, what can you see?'



'I can see everything!' shouts Thembi. 'I can see the letter E and F and P, and even the little letters, P, Z and D.' 'That's perfect,' says Mr Ntuli. 'All you need are glasses and you will see just fine.'





The nurse takes Thembi and Gogo to another room where there are many shelves filled with different kinds of spectacle frames. Thembi chooses a pair of bright red frames. 'A good choice,' says Gogo.



After one week, Thembi and Gogo return to Mr. Ntuli's office. Thembi tries on her new glasses. Mr. Ntuli asks Thembi to look out the window and tell him what she sees. 'Oh, I see people and there is a small dog and there is a black bird on top of that house,' says Thembi excitedly.



'Thembi,' says Mr. Ntuli, 'I want you to promise me that you will wear your glasses every day.' 'Oh, yes,' replied Thembi. 'I promise. I love my new glasses. I love all the wonderful things I can see.'

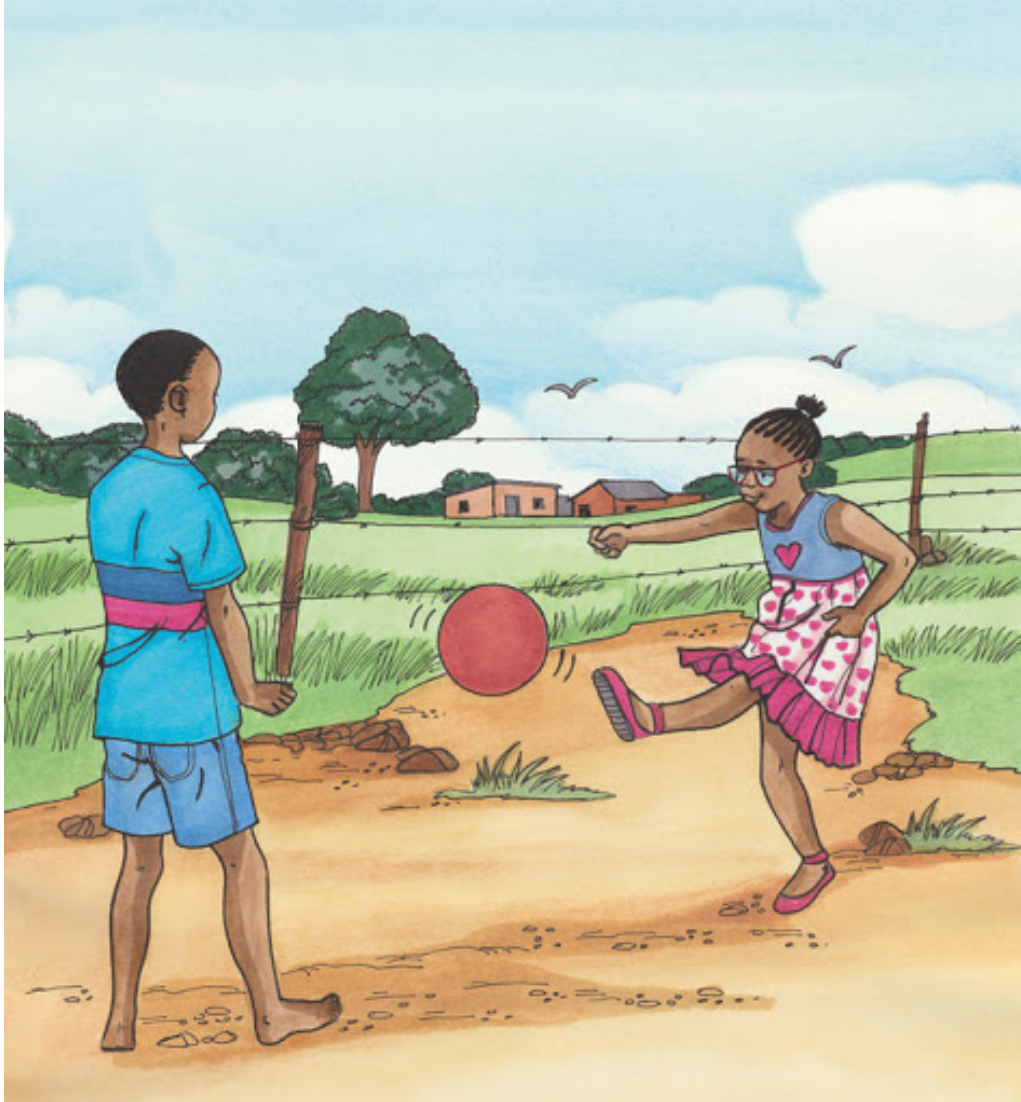




As Gogo and Thembi walk home, Thembi sees Sizani on the other side of the road. 'Hi Sizani!' Thembi shouts. She waves at Sizani. Sizani smiles and waves back.



Just before Gogo and Thembi reach their house, they meet some of Thembi's school friends. 'Oh Thembi, I love your new glasses,' says one girl. 'They make you look really smart,' comments one of the boys.



All of a sudden, a ball comes rolling towards Thembi. It is Bongani. Thembi quickly kicks the ball back. 'Do you want to play?' asks Bongani. 'Yes,' Thembi replies, 'but first I have something very important to do.'





Thembi walks behind the house and sits under the large tree. As she looks up, she can see the Kingfisher, the Cuckoo, and the Robin.



'Thank you, tree. Thank you for always singing to me.'

Brought to you by



**The Asia Foundation**

Let's Read! is an initiative of The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia program that fosters young readers in Asia. [booksforasia.org](http://booksforasia.org)

To read more books like this and get further information about this book, visit [letsreadasia.org](http://letsreadasia.org)

Original Story

Thembi and the Singing Tree, author: Kenneth Youngstein . illustrator: by Debbie Faber-Human.

Translations: © The Asia Foundation, 2019.