

Important Visitors and Other Stories



STANDARD 4
READER 4

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Illustrations

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Making a Living

by David Sokaika

New words

*models, earn, skilled,
hobby*

Phrases

make a living, good old days

My name is Barry and I am forty years old. I am married and have four children. I live with my family in a small village on an island in Solomon Islands. My parents also live with me. The island on which we live is about one hundred kilometres south of Honiara, the capital city. I have an enjoyable life but I sometimes remember the days when my life was very different.

When I was younger we were very poor. I often sat and thought about ways in which I could earn some money. I enjoyed making models of animals using clay. When I became more skilled, I started carving animals from wood. I spent many hours working on my craft. Although this was just a hobby for me, I had hoped that one day I would be able to make a living by selling my carved animals. When I was twenty-one I became very adventurous. I decided that I would travel to Honiara and try to sell my models.

Early one morning I set off from my home. I walked from my village to the beach. From there, I travelled north to Honiara on a boat. When I arrived in Honiara I made my way to the centre of town. In town, I moved about trying to sell my models. I was hoping that someone would show some interest in my

craft. In Honiara there were many other craftsmen trying to sell their goods. I wasn't having much luck until I met an old friend. Her name was Ellen. Ellen and I had gone to school together when we were children.

Ellen and I talked for a long time. We talked about the good old days at school.

Ellen asked, "Are you working at the moment?"

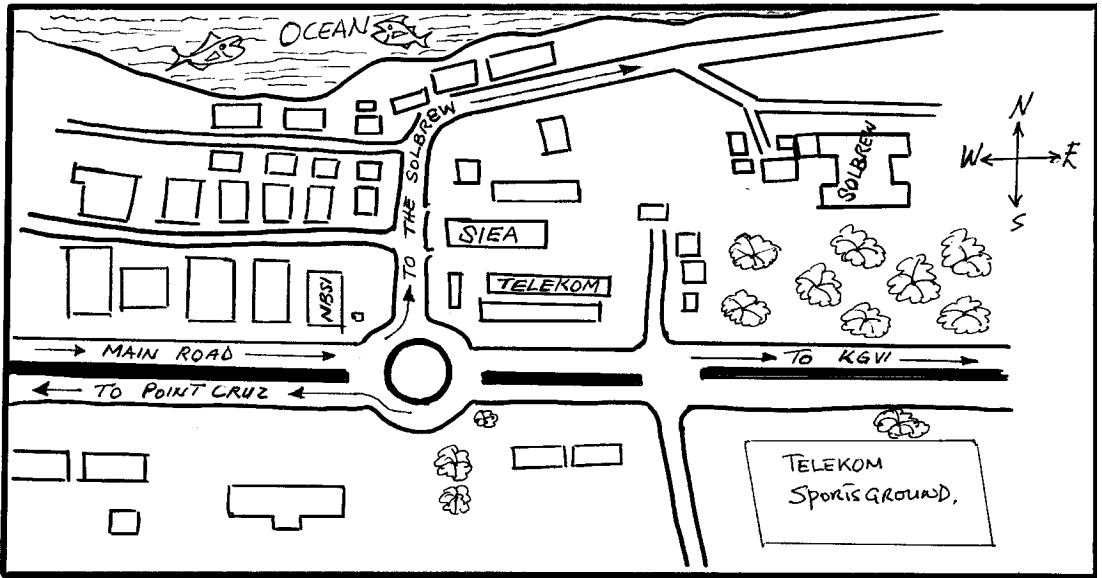
"No," I replied sadly.

"Why are you here in town?" she asked.

"I came here hoping to make a living selling my carved animals," I answered.

Ellen told me that she might have been able to help me. She told me to come to her office the next day at eight o'clock in the morning. She told me that she worked for a company named, 'Solbrew'. I was very excited. The only problem was that I did not know where Ellen worked. Ellen handed me a map and she explained the directions very clearly.

"Take the bus that travels east from Point Cruz. Get off the bus at the Ranadi NBSI Branch. From there, walk straight ahead. As you follow this road, you will be heading towards the ocean. This road curves to the right. Continue along this road and after the bend you will come to a road



on your right. Turn into this road and follow it until you come to a big white building. There is a sign at the front of the building that reads, 'Solbrew'.

When you enter the building you will need to climb one set of stairs. At the top of the stairs you will turn left and follow the corridor until you arrive at my office. My office is the third office on the right and I have my name on the door."

I wondered what Ellen had in mind for me. I thanked her for being so kind and I put the map in my pocket.

We said goodbye and as she left, Ellen shouted, "Don't get lost!"

I was looking forward to meeting her. I could not help thinking that my luck was about to change.

Important Visitors

by Lionel Damola

New words

warriors, visitors, frightening
tourists, fierce, magical

Phrases

more than before, as well as

If important visitors are coming to a village, a feast is often prepared. Just like long ago warriors welcome the visitors. These warriors can be quite frightening. They usually have painted bodies. They wear special head dresses. They carry axes and spears. They usually hide before the visitors arrive. Then they jump out as the visitors get close to the village.

The warriors jump out shouting,

“Kill those people! Eat those people.” They are very fierce. They follow the visitors to the village.

Usually, once in the village the

chief welcomes the visitors. There are then a few speeches. After the speeches there is some entertainment. Sometimes this is dancing.

Sometimes there is wonderful music played. This music is played on pipes made of bamboo tied with bush rope. They are called panpipes. Some of the pipes can be two metres long. The top end of the pipes is beaten with something that looks like a slipper. This makes the sound. There are also small panpipes that are played by blowing across the holes at the end of the pipes.





The sound made by the panpipes is very special. It is a deep sound that is very pleasant to listen to. Some people say that the sound can even make you remember good memories from your past. It is a magical sound.

These days panpipes are played in Solomon Islands more than before. Many boys and young men are learning to play the panpipes. Many young men have returned to their villages from the towns. They have become interested in music and the local culture in their village. They have become very skilful at playing the panpipes. They play together in groups. Some of these musical groups play for tourists in the big hotels in Honiara as well as in other provinces. They often play to very large crowds of people.

Music and dance in Solomon Islands is part of the culture. These young people who play the panpipes are helping to carry on this tradition. This means that in years to come Solomon Islands will still have its traditional music and dance. Young people learn how to play the panpipes and dance just like their grandparents did before them.

The panpipers and the warriors are all men. The women have to do different things when visitors come to a village. They make beautiful flower garlands. They welcome the guests and give them these flower garlands and then they sing and they dance.

The women also prepare all the food. A lot of the food is cooked in a motu or stone oven. It takes a lot of time to get ready for a feast.

Local feasts are very special. The day is always full of things to see and good food to eat. The day is full of excitement.

Dr. Lale Talks about Food

by Lionel Damola

New words

diet, community, expert
energy, explain, different

Phrases

balanced diet, body building

The Principal of Lata Community High School invited Dr. Lale to talk to the community. Dr. Lale was a food expert. He knew which types of food were best for children and adults to eat. The Principal wanted parents to learn about different types of food so that they could feed their children well. The Principal knew that eating the right types of food was important. He thought that parents should know which food to give their children so they grew well and were healthy.



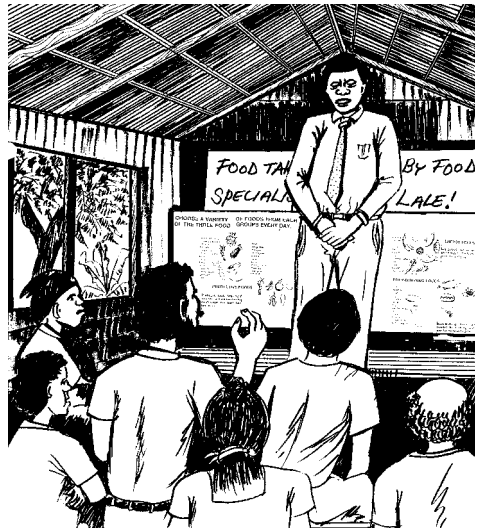
Dr. Lale agreed to come. The date was set and everyone was told about the talk. One Friday evening the people in Lata town gathered in the town hall. The town hall was quiet as everybody waited for the talk to begin. A microphone had been set up so that everyone could hear the talk.

At last Dr. Lale arrived and he began his talk. First he told everyone he was going to talk about the different foods and why they were good for our bodies. He said he would explain why it was important for us eat many different kinds of food.

The mixture of different kinds of food we eat is known as our diet.

Dr. Lale said he would explain why children and adults needed different diets. “Food,” he said, “Keeps us alive. If we did not eat food we would die.” He told us that there are many different types of food but all food could be put into three main groups.

The first group is food which is high in energy. We need energy to run and jump and walk, as well as to think and work. Foods that are high in energy include all kinds of fats like butter, cream, nuts, as well as fat on meat. Other energy foods are taro, yam, kumara, rice, biscuits, cakes, sugar, flour, bread and sweets.



All these foods give us energy. If we do not use up all the energy in the food we have eaten, then our bodies will store it. This extra energy is stored under our skin as fat.

The second group is food that builds our bodies. It is food to make us grow. This type of food also repairs our bodies. If we have a cut or a sore we need body building food to make it heal. Foods that are good body building foods are meat, fish, seafood and eggs. The third group is food that helps us stay

healthy. Foods that have vitamins and minerals in them protect us from becoming sick. Vitamins and minerals are found in fresh fruits like paw paw, guava, oranges, bananas, watermelon and pineapple and vegetables like tomatoes, capsicum, cucumber and cabbage.

Dr. Lale told everyone that it is very important to remember that vitamins are spoilt with cooking so everyone should eat fresh fruit and vegetables as well as cooked ones. He said that everyone should eat food from each of the three groups in order to be strong and healthy. “It is very important,” he said, “To remember that different people need different amounts of food from each group. Children and babies need lots of body building foods because they are still growing. Mothers need lots of body building food if they are having babies or feeding their babies. Most adults do not need so much body building food. People who use a lot of energy need lots of energy food. People working in their gardens, digging and raking use a lot of energy so they need lots of energy food to keep them going. Children and adults playing sports need lots of energy foods too. To stay healthy everyone needs vitamins and minerals so everyone needs foods from group three.”

Dr. Lale then raised his voice and said, “If you eat food from all three groups and you eat the right amount you will have a balanced diet. That means a diet that is exactly right for you. Children need a different balanced diet to men and men need a different balanced diet to women.”

Dr. Lale then sat down and the Principal gave a short speech. He thanked Dr. Lale for coming and asked if anyone had any questions. Malesi and Namole asked very good questions. These helped everyone understand why different people needed to eat different food.

When the talk was finished the women of Lata had prepared some food for us all to share. Dr. Lale smiled. He said he was pleased to see that the food prepared had come from all three food groups. It was an excellent balanced meal. The community laughed because they had learnt so much from Dr. Lale.

Christmas in Solomon Islands

by Kevin Walsh

New words

*guitar, Christmas, music
rattle, drum, prizes*

Phrases

Christmas celebrations, provincial centres

Christmas is an important time for many people in Solomon Islands. Most villages organise special Christmas celebrations.

Some people, who work and live in towns and provincial centres, travel back to their home villages for Christmas.

The village church is very often the centre of the main Christmas celebrations. The church may be decorated with colourful flowers.

Sometimes a nativity scene is prepared. This is a model of the stable in Bethlehem with statues of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus.

Some churches have a special midnight service on the night before Christmas. Others have services on Christmas morning. All churches usually have a choir, who sing special Christmas hymns called carols.

At Christmas time, many villages organise their own way of celebrating.



Music is an important part of the Christmas festivities. Panpipe bands play their bamboo pipes by blowing or drumming the ends with a slipper.



Other instruments are sometimes used, such as guitars, drums, rattles and keyboards. Often the panpipe bands perform traditional dances.

Other groups also perform traditional dances. The dancers dress in traditional clothes. They might carry dancing sticks and wear rattles on their legs. Special food is eaten at Christmas. Many village feasts are organised.



Sometimes families have a barbecue on the beach. Some villages have sports competitions. They might have canoe or running races. Teams compete for prizes in soccer, volleyball and netball competitions.

Christmas time is enjoyed by everyone. It is a time for families to get together and celebrate. The postage stamps shown here show some of the Christmas activities that occur in Solomon Islands.



The First Christmas

by Kevin Walsh

Cast List

Mary:	mother of Jesus
Joseph:	Mary's husband
Angel Gabriel:	a messenger angel
Elizabeth:	Mary's cousin
Zacchariah:	Elizabeth's husband
Roman soldier:	a soldier
Balthazar:	the oldest of the Three Wise Men
Melchior:	one of the Three Wise Men
Caspar:	the youngest of the Three Wise Men, who is always asking questions
Old man:	an old man on his way to Bethlehem
Inn-keeper:	a kind innkeeper from Bethlehem
First shepherd:	a young shepherd on the hills above Bethlehem
Second shepherd:	an older shepherd on the hills above Bethlehem
Third shepherd:	the oldest shepherd on the hills above Bethlehem
First Angel:	the leader of the angels
A choir of angels	
Shepherds	
People on the road to Bethlehem	

Scene 1 Mary's House

Mary is sitting on a stool. She is weaving a basket. There is a loud knock at the door and Joseph comes in.

Joseph: Hello, Mary. What are you making?

Mary: Hello, Joseph. I'm making a basket. I'm going to fill it with flowers to decorate the house at our wedding next year.

Joseph: Good idea. Have you heard the news from your cousin Elizabeth? She's going to have a baby.

Mary: Yes. I wonder if it will be a boy or a girl. I hope it's a boy.

Joseph: Poor old Zacchariah. He hasn't spoken a word since he heard the news.

Mary: Tomorrow I'll visit Elizabeth. She will need help to get ready for the baby.

Joseph: I've made a cot for the baby. I'll fetch it from the workshop.

Joseph goes out. Mary carries on weaving. The Angel Gabriel comes in. He is wearing a long white cloak.

Gabriel: Hail, Mary! You are a good, kind woman. You have been chosen by God to be the Mother of his son, Jesus.

Mary: I am just a poor woman, but if God has chosen me, then I am happy.

The Angel Gabriel leaves. Joseph comes back.

Joseph: Who were you talking to, Mary?

Mary: Come with me to the garden, Joseph. I have some very important news for you.

Mary and Joseph go out.



Scene 2 Elizabeth's House

Mary and Elizabeth are standing looking at a baby in a cot. Zacchariah is sitting in the corner.

Mary: He's a lovely baby, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Yes, he's a fine big boy.

Mary: He looks just like you, Zacchariah.

Zacchariah nods and smiles.

Elizabeth: Poor old Zacchariah. He hasn't spoken a word since before the baby was born.

Mary: Have you picked a name for the baby?

Elizabeth: Not yet. I like Mark.

Mary: What about Matthew?

Elizabeth: That sounds nice too.

Zacchariah stands up and starts shaking his head.

Elizabeth: What's wrong Zacchariah? What are you trying to say? Write it down, Zacchariah.

Zacchariah sits and writes. He gives the paper to Elizabeth.

Mary: What does it say?

Elizabeth: It says his name is John.

Mary picks up the baby from the cot.

Mary: Come on, John. It's time for your bath.

Mary, Elizabeth and Zacchariah go out.



Scene 3 Joseph and Mary's house

Joseph is making a wooden cot and Mary is sewing baby clothes.

Joseph: Just a few more days now Mary and this cot will be ready.

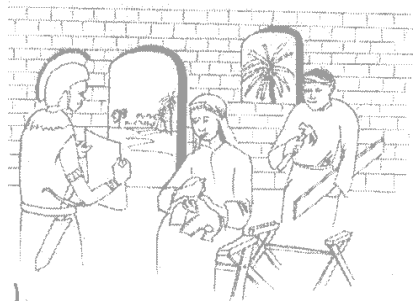
Mary: That's good, Joseph. The baby will be born soon.

There is a loud knock at the door.

Joseph: Now who could that be, knocking so loudly. Come in!

A Roman soldier marches in. He has a sword in his belt. He reads from a list.

Roman soldier: Joseph and Mary, you are ordered to leave Nazareth and go back to your home village, to be counted in the census, by command of the Roman Emperor.



Joseph: But our home village is Bethlehem. That's a long way away to the south of Nazareth. It will take a week to walk there and Mary is expecting a baby very soon.

Roman soldier: Sorry, but these are the orders of the Roman Emperor. You'd better go to Bethlehem or you will be in trouble.

He pulls out his sword and points it at them, then turns and marches out.

Mary: Oh dear. We'd better do as he says.

Joseph: We must pack our things and leave for Bethlehem today.

They both go out.



Scene 4 The Palace of the Three Wise Men

Balthazar is looking up at the sky. Caspar and Melchior are reading.

Balthazar: What a great night for looking at the stars. There are no clouds around at all.

Melchior: The moon should rise soon.

Caspar: Will there be a full moon tonight?

Melchior: No. Not until next week.

Balthazar: Oh. This is interesting. A big, bright light in the east. Come and look.

Caspar and Melchior go to look.

Caspar: What is it?

Melchior: It looks like a star.

Balthazar: It's moving slowly to the west.

Melchior reads from a book.

Caspar: What does this mean?

Melchior: It's a new star. It's not shown on the chart.

Melchior: Perhaps it is a sign.

Caspar: What kind of sign?

Melchior: A sign of something very important.

Caspar: What should we do?

Balthazar: We should stop asking questions and follow the star. Come on, quickly, before it disappears!

They all rush out.



Scene 5 On the road to Bethlehem

Mary: Let's stop for a rest here, Joseph.

She sits down.

Oh, that's better.



Lots of people hurry past.

Look at all these people, Joseph. Where do you think they are going?

Joseph: To Bethlehem, I think. It's going to be very crowded there. I hope we can get a room at an inn.

Mary: We'd better not rest too long then.

They continue walking. When Joseph and Mary are out of sight, the Three Wise Men arrive. They are each carrying a box and looking up into the sky.

Caspar: Are we going the right way?

Melchior: Yes, of course. We're following the star.

Balthazar: The star is leading us to the west.

Caspar: Are all these people following the star too?

Caspar stops an old man rushing along behind him.

Caspar: Excuse me, sir. We are the Three Wise Men from the East and we are following a bright star. Where are you going?

Old man: Sorry, I can't stop. I'm going to Bethlehem. We all are. The Romans want to count us all and if I don't get there quickly I won't get a room at the inn.

The man rushes on ahead. The Three Wise Men follow him, still looking up to the sky.



Scene 6 The Streets of Bethlehem

Joseph and Mary are looking for a room.

Joseph: I've never seen Bethlehem so crowded with people. All the inns we've tried are full.

Mary: Let's try this one. We might have some better luck.

Joseph knocks at the door. An innkeeper comes out.

Innkeeper: Yes?

Joseph: Can we have a room for the night, please?

Innkeeper: Sorry, the inn is full.

Mary: Oh, please, sir. We've walked a long way and my baby will be born very soon.

Innkeeper: Well, we have a stable at the back. It's warm and dry. You can stay there if you don't mind sharing it with some sheep and cows.

Joseph: Thank you.

They go to the stable.



Scene 7 The Hillside Outside Bethlehem

Three shepherds are looking after their sheep.

First shepherd: Bethlehem looks very crowded tonight. There must be thousands of people there to be counted.

Third shepherd: Never mind that. Keep a look out for the wild dogs. We don't want to lose any more lambs.

Second shepherd: Be quiet you two. Listen. Can you hear singing?
A choir of angels appear, singing. When they have finished, the First Angel speaks to the shepherds.

First Angel: Do not be afraid. Tonight we bring you good news. Follow the brightest star in the sky to a stable in Bethlehem and there you will find a new-born king. His name is Jesus and he is the Son of God.

Third shepherd: Come on, shepherds. We must go and visit this baby.

They all go off to visit the baby





Scene 8 A Stable In Bethlehem

Joseph is standing. Mary is sitting beside him, holding the baby Jesus. The shepherds come in. They bow and the first shepherd speaks.

First shepherd: We've come to see the baby Jesus. A choir of angels sent us.

Joseph: You have come to the right place. Come in. You are very welcome.

The shepherds come in and stand beside Mary. They look at Jesus in her arms. There is a knock on the door. The Three Wise Men come in.

Balthazar: We are three kings from the East. A star has led us here to see the new-born king. We have brought gifts. Gold.

He puts down the gold.

Melchior: Frankincense, a valuable perfume.

He puts down the frankincense.

Caspar: Myrrh, a rich ointment.

He sets down the myrrh.



Joseph: Thank you all, shepherds and Wise Men. This day will be remembered by people everywhere for years to come.

The angels appear, singing. Everyone joins in with the song.

Experienced writers can write letter poems either to or from an historical character. Here the poet tries to think herself into Mary's head as she writes to thank her friends for putting her up at the inn.

Letter from Egypt

by Moira Andrew

Dear Miriam ,

Just a line
to let you know how things
are with us and of course to
thank you (and your good man)
for all you did for us and
at your busiest time too
what with the census and
everything. I was quite
exhausted and the baby was
beginning to make himself
felt. If it hadn't been
for your help that night
my baby might have died.

Good of you
to put up with all our
visitors who'd have
thought, six scruffy
shepherds up and leaving
their sheep like that?
& didn't they ever smell?
Still they were good
hearted and they meant well.
I hope they brought some
extra trade to the inn.
They looked in need of
a hot drink and a meal.

and what about
those Kings, Miriam? Kneeling
there in their rich robes
and all? and me in nothing but
my old blue dress! Joseph
said not to worry, it was
Jesus they'd come to see.
Real gentlemen they were.
But what funny things to
give a baby gold & myrrh
and frankincense. That's men
all over! It wouldn't cross
their minds to bring a shawl!

Sorry we left
so suddenly. No time for
good byes with King Herod on
the warpath! We had to take
the long way home and I'm so
tired of looking at sand!
Joseph has picked up a few jobs
mending this & that so
we're managing quite well.
Jesus grows bonnier every
day and thrives on this way
of life, but I can't wait
to see Nazareth again.

Love to all at the inn

Mary



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