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Poor Milton

Lionel Damola

Key Words

no wonder, confident, popular, bumping into each other, smartened, notice

Milton really liked a girl in his class called Jenna. He desperately wanted to impress her so that she would like him too.

He daydreamed about her all day at school. In the playground, he watched as she chatted and laughed with her friends.

Milton thought Jenna was the most beautiful girl in the world. She was kind, pretty, intelligent, funny and very popular. She had long, curly, brown hair and the prettiest smile Milton had ever seen. When she laughed it reminded him of the tinkling of a mountain stream.

He tried to get her out of his mind and to concentrate on his studies, but it was no good! He just couldn't stop thinking about her. Eventually Milton decided to do something about it. He would just have to tell Jenna how he felt!



One morning, in the playground, he gathered up all his courage and walked up to Jenna, smiling his biggest smile.

“Hi Milton,” she said brightly. “Goodness me! You’ve been chewing a lot of betel nut!”

Milton’s hand shot to his mouth. He was so embarrassed that he didn’t

know what to say. He quickly backed away, without saying anything at all.

That evening he looked at his teeth in the mirror. They were dark red and stained. A mouth full of watermelon seeds!

“I look like the devil!” he thought to himself. “No wonder Jenna won’t talk to me.” He scrubbed and scrubbed and scrubbed his teeth until eventually they were white and clean again. He promised himself, “No more betel nut!”

The next day he felt more confident. With his nice, clean teeth perhaps Jenna would notice his smile and he would be able to tell her how he felt.

After class he went and sat down next to Jenna.

“Hi there, Jenna,” he began nervously.

“Hi Milton,” she said, “What’s that funny smell? Haven’t you washed your T-shirt this week?”

Milton was ashamed of himself for the second time in a week!

He moved away from Jenna without another word. Poor Milton felt completely out of place. How could he have been so stupid? A girl like Jenna just wasn’t going to be interested in him unless he really smartened himself up.

That afternoon after school, Milton rushed home and collected all his clothes. He washed them carefully and put them out in the sun to dry. Next he went for a wash under the standpipe. He scrubbed and scrubbed, until his mother shouted for him to stop.

“Don’t use up all the soap!” she called. “Leave some for your sister!”

After his wash, Milton selected his best clean T-shirt and his newest pair of shorts and had another look at himself in the mirror.



“Hmmm, not bad,” he thought. “I wonder what Jenna will think of me now!”

He decided that he couldn’t wait until the next morning, so he set off towards Jenna’s home. He waited around near the store just next to her house. After a while he saw her approaching. “Wow! There is the girl of my dreams,” sighed Milton.

His knees felt weak and his voice trembled when he spoke, but this time he felt sure he would be lucky.

“Hello, Jenna,” he said, covering his nerves with a big smile.

“Hello, it’s you again Milton. We keep bumping into each other, don’t we?” replied Jenna. “You look nice! All you need now is to comb that long, bushy hair and you’ll look really smart.”

Poor Milton! How could he have forgotten to comb his hair? He was so embarrassed that he just wanted to crawl under a stone. Ashamed once again, he hurried home as fast as he could and shut himself in his room.

Sadly he thought about what had happened. He wanted to just give up and forget all about Jenna. Being in love was just making him miserable. No matter how hard he tried he didn’t seem to be able to get her to think good things about him!

But in his heart he knew that he could not give up. So he got a pair of scissors, a comb and a mirror. He called his brother and asked him to cut his hair as neatly and as nicely as he could.

“That’s better,” he smiled, combing his short hair carefully as he looked in the mirror.

On his way to school the next morning, Milton looked back and saw Jenna behind him. He slowed down until she caught up with him.

“Jenna,” he began, “there’s something important I want to tell you.”

“Really?” interrupted Jenna. “That’s funny, because ever since I saw you at the store yesterday I’ve been meaning to tell you something too!”

Milton swallowed hard, “What is it?” he asked, hardly daring to listen to her reply.

“Well,” said the girl of his dreams, cheerfully, “You have smartened yourself up so much recently that you look really handsome. I think you should go and find yourself a girlfriend!”

Poor Milton was speechless!

What Money Can't Buy

Kyle (a Form II Student in America)

Money can buy books,
but it can't buy knowledge.

Money can buy a house,
but not a home.

Money can buy food,
but not a diet.

Money can buy medicine,
but not health.

Money can buy a bed,
but it can't buy sleep.

Money can buy a chair,
but it can't buy rest.

Money can buy toys,
but not enjoyment.

Money can buy make-up,
but it can't buy beauty.

Money can buy a television,
but not entertainment.

Money can buy clothes,
but it can't buy style.

Money can buy a clock,
but it can't buy time.



Michael In The Garden

Ralph McTell

Out in the garden, amongst the bushes, Michael is crying.
Caught in a spider's web, its broken wings beating, a
butterfly dying.

And they in their wisdom say,
"Michael's got something wrong, wrong with his mind."
Well they must be blind, if they can't see what Michael
sees.

Michael is silent, talking to no one of things that he sees.
But out in the garden he talks in soft whispers, like the wind
in the leaves.

And they in their wisdom say,
"Michael's got something wrong, wrong with his mind."
They see the signs, but they can't see what Michael sees.

And inside the building someone is calling his name through
the halls.

But he doesn't answer, though he easily hears each leaf as
it falls.

And they in their wisdom say
"Michael's got something wrong, wrong with his mind."
Well, they must be blind, for they can't see what Michael
sees.

Michael where are you?
Michael where are we?
We who see that there's something wrong with your mind?

And inside the garden Michael is smiling, smiling, at peace
in his world.

At one with the insects, the flowers, and the trees, and the
wind and the birds.



Oh! Michael sees all behind the high walls surrounding his kingdom,
Whilst we in our wisdom, still trapped in the spider's web
Far from the flow and ebb of life in the garden.

But Michael has pardoned us, for he sees
That really he's free and there's nothing to mend.
For his wings are not broken.

And they in their wisdom say,
"Michael's got something wrong, wrong with his mind."
They've seen the signs, but Michael feels fine, inside the garden.

Contentment

Alison Blaylock

Once there was an old woman who lived in tiny broken down house. The roof leaked when it rained. The door was broken and hanging on its hinges and when the wind blew the windows banged and woke the woman from her sleep.

“What a mess I am in!” complained the old woman to herself. “I hate this broken down old house. I wish I had a smart little leaf house with a veranda and a sup sup garden. And how I wish I didn’t get wet every time it rained!”



Next door to the old woman lived a man with magic powers. When he heard her complaining every day, he felt sorry for the woman and decided to use his powers to help her.

One day when the wind howled and the heavy rain was teeming down on the old woman in her house, her kind neighbour granted her wish. In an instant the poor broken

down old house disappeared and was replaced by a neat little leaf house with a veranda, a roof that did not leak and a sup sup garden with plenty of vegetables just ready to harvest.

The woman was delighted and settled down on her nice dry veranda to watch the rain.

A few weeks later her neighbour was busy in his kitchen when he heard the old woman complaining again.

“This leaf house is too small,” she grumbled. “And it’s so dark inside. I wish I had a big modern house with large windows and plenty of space.”

The man was sorry that the woman was still not happy, so he decided to help her again. That night after she slept he worked his magic one more time so that when the woman awoke she found herself in a large timber house with the morning sun shining in through the tall louvre windows. It was bright and spacious and the woman was delighted with her new home.



Some months later, as he was tending his garden, the kind neighbour overheard the old woman talking to herself again, as she swept the house.

“This house is too big!” she complained. “It takes me all day to sweep the floor and keep the place clean, and I’m always exhausted from so much work. How I wish I had someone to help me with the house work.”

By this time the neighbour was getting impatient that all his magical gifts had not made the woman happy. He decided to try once more. Summoning up all his magical powers, he transformed the woman’s house into a beautiful palace with many rooms. There were servants to do the cleaning, labourers to work in the garden and every kind of luxury for the woman to enjoy.

“Now she will be happy,” thought the old man to himself.

One day as he was working in his garden close to the high wall of the great palace, the old man heard a familiar voice.

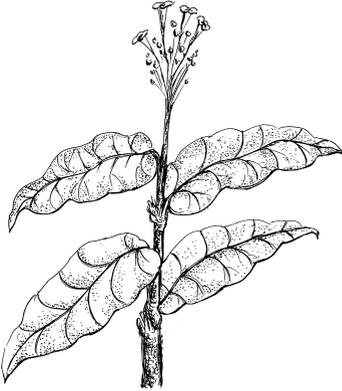
“I am fed up with these servants! They always seem to be arguing and I have to spend much time sorting out their troubles. This palace is really getting me down...”



The kind man did not listen to another word. Straight away he worked his magic for the last time. There beside him appeared a tiny broken down house. The roof leaked when it rained, the door was broken and hanging on its hinges and when the wind blew the windows banged noisily!

Nicotine

Lionel Damola



Nicotine is a chemical that has a strong effect on the human body. Nicotine comes from the leaves of the tobacco plant. There are thousands of chemicals in the tobacco plant.

People have smoked or chewed the leaves of the tobacco plant for thousands of years.

For many years people have thought that there might be a link between diseases like cancer, and tobacco use. Modern research methods have proved this to be true. Today public announcements that warn people of the health risks of smoking are placed on cigarette packets and on television.

Cigarettes contain about 8 – 20 milligrams of nicotine, depending on the brand. About 1 milligram is actually absorbed into the body when you smoke a cigarette.

Nicotine goes into our bodies through the small blood vessels that line the nose, gums, skin and lungs. From there it travels through the blood stream to the brain, and then is delivered to the rest of your body.

The most common way to get nicotine and other drugs into the bloodstream is through inhalation. This means breathing it in when smoking it. Once nicotine is in the bloodstream, it travels to the brain. The nicotine causes the good feelings people get from smoking. It also causes the bad feelings they get when they try to stop smoking.

Nicotine changes the way in which the brain and the body function. It can make smokers feel more lively or more relaxed, depending on how much and how often they



smoke.

The health problems caused by nicotine are far worse than the benefits of smoking. These can be fatal and include:

- cancer
- lung disease
- heart disease
- strokes

Another problem with nicotine is that people become addicted to it. This means that they start to depend on it and feel unwell or unhappy if they try to stop smoking.

We now understand that nicotine is a harmful substance and that smoking is very bad for our health.

Doctors and other health professionals encourage young people not to take up this deadly habit.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Aesop's Fables

There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village sheep. To amuse himself he sang out, "Wolf! Wolf! There's a wolf chasing the sheep!"

The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces.

"Don't cry 'wolf', when there's no wolf!" warned the angry villagers. They went grumbling back down the hill.

Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill again to help him drive the wolf away.

When the villagers saw no wolf they were even more angry, "Save your frightened song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO wolf!" they warned.



But the boy just grinned and watched them go back down the hill, grumbling.

Later that day, a real wolf came prowling around his flock of sheep. Alarmed, the boy jumped to his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!"

But the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come.

At sunset, everyone wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They went up the hill to look for him.

They found the boy sitting in the field crying to himself. The sheep were nowhere to be seen.

"There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! Some sheep are dead. I called you. Why didn't you come?" he asked through his tears.

An old man from the village tried to comfort the boy as they walked back down the hill.

"You see," he said gently, "Nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth!"

The Tortoise and the Hare

Aesop's Fables

There once was a hare called Speedy who bragged and boasted about how fast he could run until everyone was sick of hearing about it. One day, tired of his boasting, Slow and Steady, the tortoise, decided to challenge him to a race. Hare laughed out loud at the tortoise. "How could you beat me in a race?" he joked. "You are the slowest thing on four legs!"

All the animals in the forest gathered to watch.

"Ready Steady Go!"

Speedy set off down the road as fast as he could run but Slow and Steady just plodded off at a comfortable pace.

Looking back over his shoulder, Speedy laughed and joked at Slow and Steady and cried out, "Do you still think you can beat me? Watch me go!" And off he sped again.

Next time he looked around he couldn't even see the tortoise, so he decided to have a little rest.



Hare stretched himself out beside the road and relaxed. "It will be ages before that tortoise gets here," he thought to himself. In a few moments he fell asleep.

Slow and Steady walked and walked, slowly and steadily. He never stopped. He didn't stop when he passed the sleeping hare by the side of the road and he didn't stop until he passed the finish line.

The other animals clapped and cheered so loudly for Tortoise, that they woke up Hare.

He stretched and yawned and got up to start running again, but it was too late. Tortoise had already won the race.

After that the other animals would always sing out to Hare whenever he started to boast about how fast he could run.

"Don't brag about your lightning pace,
Slow and Steady won the race!"

Growing Up With Choices

Alison Blaylock

Key Words

complicated, depressing, arranged marriage, challenges

“Life is so complicated these days!” complained Linda, throwing the Solomon Star to the ground and turning round to look at her grandmother.

“What do you mean dear?” asked the old lady.

“Have you seen the headlines in today’s paper? More robberies in town; people growing marijuana because it fetches a higher price than taro; con men taking advantage of people and another suspected case of HIV at the central hospital.

It’s so depressing! It makes me feel like I just don’t want to grow up at all! How can I know the right way to live when there are so many awful things happening in our country?”

“It’s not just in the paper either, Granny!” She continued, “You know Sara? Her brother has just had to pay compensation because he got a girl pregnant and he’s been forced to move to town. He’s got nothing to do there and Sara says he’s miserable and has started drinking. He can’t come back or the girl’s brother will kill him. The girl’s been expelled from school too, so that’s the end of her education!”

Linda’s grandmother listened carefully to her granddaughter’s complaints. “You’re right my dear,” she replied eventually. “Life is complicated these days. You are growing up at a difficult time.”

“When I was young we had a much more sheltered life. I had never been to Honiara and only heard stories about the

place from my relatives. We didn't have videos to watch and the Solomon Star was certainly never delivered to this part of the country. I didn't know much about what happened outside the village.

Of course I didn't go to school either. There was certainly no money for education for girls in those days. I was expected to just marry the person my parents chose for me and have a child every year, raise the family, keep the garden going and the house clean for your grandfather."



Linda looked thoughtful. "So life was easy then?"

"I didn't say that dear. It was actually very hard. I was very frightened about my arranged marriage. You know that it turned out happily and that your grandfather was a good man, but at the time I was only 15! I felt very lonely and afraid when I had to leave my brothers and sisters and go and join this strange family. I had to work really hard to prove myself to my mother-in-law!"

"I had eight children in the first ten years of our marriage too and that was not easy either!"

“Eight?” interrupted Linda, “I thought you only had six.”

“Yes, said the old lady sadly, I never told you about the others. There was one little girl who died the day she was born and your mother’s brother, James who died of Malaria when he was three. In those days we didn’t have a clinic nearby and there was no road to Auki, so we couldn’t get him any medicine and he died.”

“I’m so sorry Granny, I never realised!” said Linda softly.

“That’s OK dear, I understand. In many ways life is much easier now, but you do have some special challenges to face as you grow up. The thing was, I didn’t have much choice about my life. I wasn’t educated and I didn’t travel around so I just accepted what happened and did the best I could.”

“Your life is different. You can read and write, you have a chance at secondary school and you are faced with lots of choices and opportunities. You can choose who you marry and when. You can even decide to get a job in town if you wish.”

“Yes,” said Linda, pleased that her grandmother understood her problem. “That’s exactly it! If you don’t have a choice you can’t make mistakes can you? I feel as if I could mess up my life by making the wrong choices, and it would all be my fault!”

“Linda, Linda,” said her grandmother, “Don’t talk like that! You have always been a sensible girl and you have always listened to your parent’s advice. As long as you think carefully about your decisions, I have confidence in you. You will do very well!”

Linda smiled. “Thanks Granny,” she said. “I hope you are right!”

Alcohol

Alison Blaylock

Based on an idea by Vincent Nomae

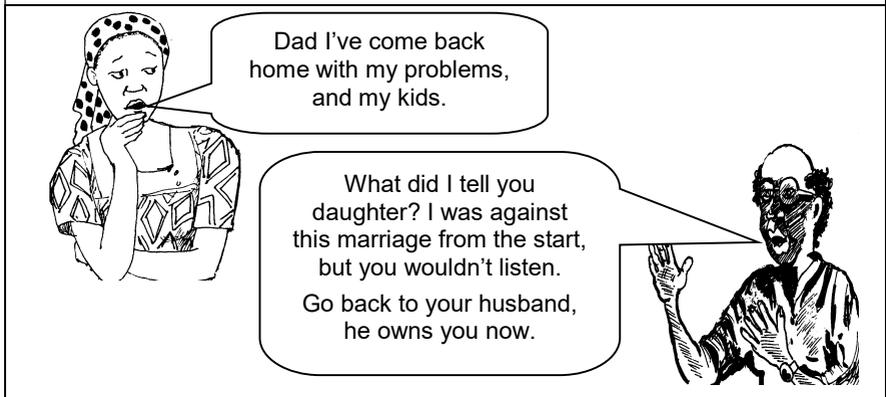
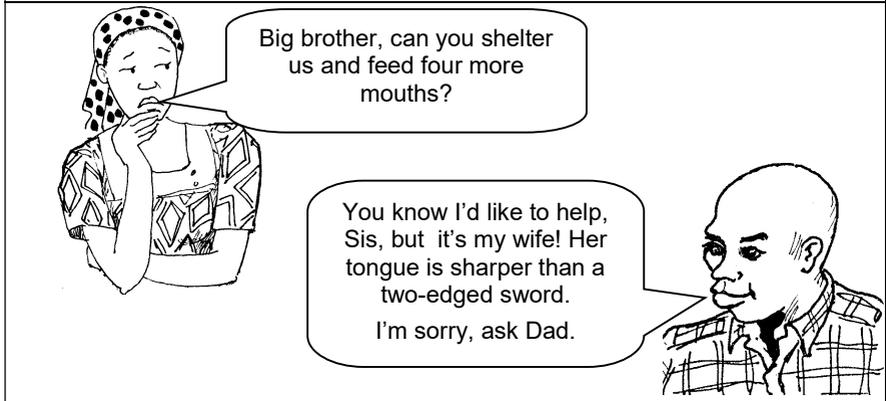
Alcohol is a con man,
Spreading lies and useless talk,
“You’re wonderful you are, and handsome too!
All the girls like you!”
(Until they see you staggering about, and making a fool of yourself!)

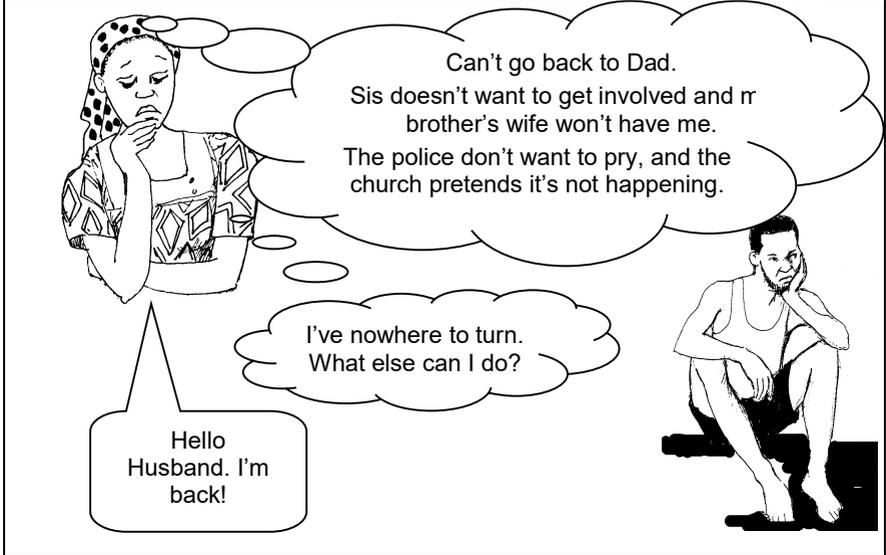
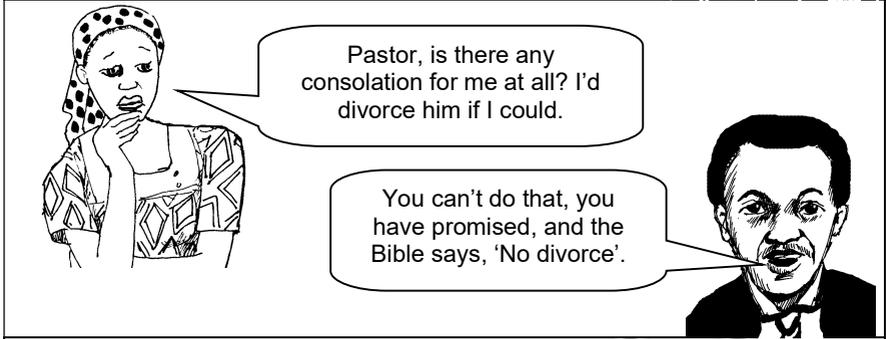
Alcohol is a thief,
Creeping up quietly at the bar.
Whispering gently in your ear,
“Have another one, just one more.
Go on, spend, spend, spend.”
(Until you stagger home with empty pockets!)

Alcohol is a home wrecker,
Making you forget your problems.
“One more beer and everything will be OK. ”
(Until, at home, your anger boils over, and your wife lies weeping where she fell under your drunken fist!)

Alcohol is a murderer,
Slipping in behind the wheel,
“Go faster, faster! You’re king of the road, you are.”
(Until, leaving the road, you hit a tree, the car is crushed.
The steering wheel buried in your chest, dead!)

Nowhere to Turn Anonymous





Mr. Chan's Dilemma

Ellen Wairiu

Mr. Chan had a small store on the corner of White River road right next to White River Primary School. He and his wife looked after the store. Every day, school children came in to buy soft drinks, biscuits and ring cakes made by Mrs. Chan to take to school.

"Where they get the money from, I don't know," he used to say to his wife, shaking his head.

Mr. Chan was a good storekeeper. He knew just what children liked. He was friendly and enjoyed chatting to the children when they came in each day.

One night he couldn't sleep. He was worried about something. He tossed and turned and eventually his wife woke up.

"What's the matter, dear?" she said.

"It's the children," he said. "Some of them are stealing from our shop."



Suddenly Mrs. Chan was wide-awake.

“What?” she said. “How do you know?”

“I see them, that’s how I know,” Mr. Chan said. “I watch them doing it.”

“Then report them to the police.” said Mrs. Chan, quickly.

“I don’t want to involve the police. You know some of these children don’t have breakfast in the morning and some don’t bring any food to school either because their parents can’t afford it. I feel sorry for them.”

“Yesterday morning I caught Jimmy stealing a packet of navy biscuits. I challenged him and he was really ashamed, but he said he’d had no breakfast and he was very hungry, so I gave him the biscuits.”

“It’s not really your problem if the children are hungry,” replied Mrs. Chan. “If you let this continue you are teaching them that it’s OK to steal!”

“If you really care about those children you will call the police and put a stop to this stealing now before they get into bad habits,” she said.

Poor Mr. Chan. He did not know what to do!

Who Made the Choice?

Lina Tangimalama

Chapter One: Betrothed

Key Words

Polynesian, astonishment, betrothed, apologise, marriage, introduced, ceremony

On my seventh birthday, we went to another village for Christmas. We were met by a family who took us to their house. The big living area of the house had beautiful mats on the floor and there was a long table laden with all kinds of food.

“What kind relatives we have,” I thought as I stared hungrily at the food. I followed my parents and grandparents and sat on a big mat in the middle of the room.

“When are we going to eat all that yummy food?” I asked my grandfather.

He frowned at me and told me to be quiet.

“But I’m hungry!” I said looking at my parents for support.

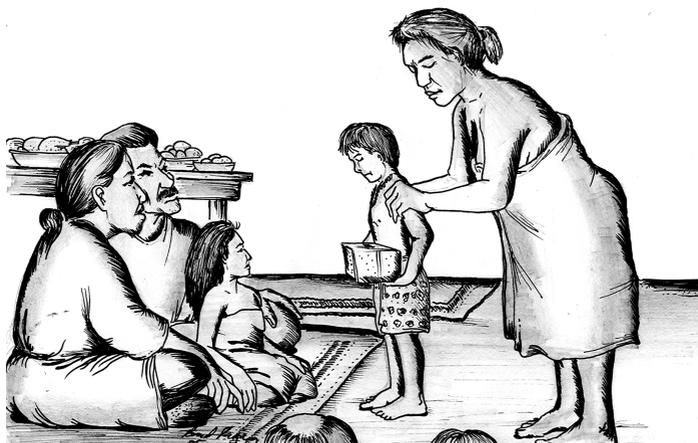
I was surprised to see them looking so serious. I thought that maybe someone had died. There wasn’t any wailing though, as is the Polynesian custom when someone dies. What was going on?

I was even more confused when my grandfather made me stand up and my grandmother started making a big fuss over my dress. My mother smoothed my hair and my father smiled at me in a sad sort of way.

They pushed me to the front and they all sat back. I felt a bit scared with everyone looking at me. A woman with a little boy walked towards me. The boy held a parcel in his hand.

Then I remembered. It had been my birthday the week before and these relatives must have prepared food and a present for me.

Now I understood! But the woman and the little boy walked right past me and to my astonishment, the boy gave the parcel to my grandfather.



“This boy has to be silliest boy in the whole wide world!” I thought as I glared at him.

Then they came and stood in front of me. I could only see the woman’s legs, but I scowled at the little boy. He seemed scared of me and moved behind his mother. The woman pushed the boy towards me. “This is your betrothed my son.”

“A be.... what?” I said as I turned around to look for my mother. My grandfather quickly spun me around. The boy just stood there and blinked fast. I felt really cross, confused and hungry. The woman told her son to shake hands. I lifted my hand and slapped him on the ear.

“Apologise to the boy at once!” Grandfather growled behind me.

I just stuck out my tongue at the boy. The boy’s mother scolded him for crying then she smiled at my family and told them that it was all right.



My grandfather and some other people made boring speeches. I didn’t even listen. When it was over, my grandfather led me to a room and clouted my ear.

“That’s what rude little girls get.”

“Ouch! Can I have some food now?” I asked.

My grandfather said no, because I had not apologised then he shut the door and left. I lay down on the mat with my feet on the wall. I wanted to kick a hole in the wall but I was in enough trouble for one day.

In a while I heard the door open. I sat up hoping it was someone bringing me some food. But it was the little boy. “My mother told me to bring you some food. But I’m not giving it to you because you slapped me.”

“I slapped you because you didn’t give me the present. It was my birthday, not my grandfather’s!” I retorted.

“I’m still not giving you this.”

As he walked towards the window to throw out the plate of food, I did a flying tackle that my rugby-mad uncles would have been proud of and caught him around the ankles. He fell and landed on his face. The plate and food flew in all directions. I grabbed a piece of melon off the floor and ate it hungrily. The boy stood up and stared at me in surprise.



“Do you play rugby?” he asked.

I nodded with my mouth full.

“I’ve been practising tackles like that because I’m in our junior rugby team now.

“What does betrothed mean?” he asked with a frown.

“I won’t tell you because you’re mean,” I said and looked for another piece of food that wasn’t too dirty.

He stood up and said, “Rubbish! You won’t tell me because you don’t know.”

Then he ran out the door.

“Cry baby! Brat!” I shouted after him.

Who Made the Choice?

Lina Tangimalama

Chapter Two: Learning to Play the Part

As time went on I grew taller and my body was definitely changing. My three young brothers were growing too. They were getting stronger too! I couldn't chase and catch them as easily as I used to. They laughed and ran away when I gave them orders in my 'big-sister' voice. I was told off for not washing the dishes even when I was busy doing homework.

"What about the boys?" I argued. "They have hands and they are not doing anything."

"You're the girl and it's your duty."

It was the same story with cooking, baby-sitting and cleaning the house. I still liked to play with my friends and so I would do my chores quickly so I could go out and play. Sometimes, I finished them too quickly.

"Is this how you will clean your house when you are married? Do you really expect your husband to eat rice that's hard like a rock?"

It was never-ending. I wondered why everyone kept talking about marriage. Goodness me, I was only twelve years old!

On the way to church, my aunt poked me in the back and told me to straighten my back when I walk. After church, we walked home in the hot sun. It was nice and cool on the veranda. I flung myself onto the couch with a sigh of relief.

"Get up at once!"

It was my mother and she looked very cross. I stood up and looked down at her. I had grown taller than her.

“Ladies don’t sit down like a rock landing on the ground! They go down gracefully with their knees bent. Now let me see you do it. And don’t forget to gather in your dress while you do that,” my mother scolded.

It was school holidays, so I went with my cousins to check out the second-hand shops. Then I saw a boy who looked familiar.



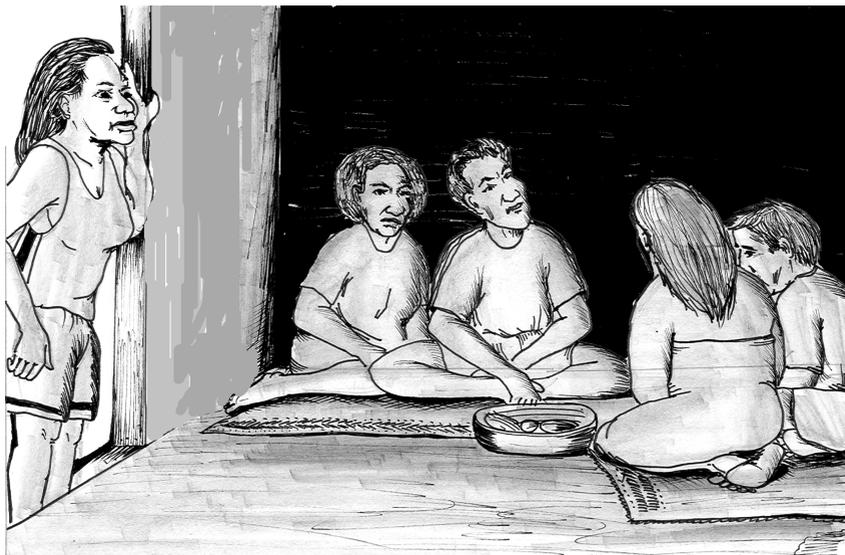
“Oh no! It’s him! My betrothed! Quick! Hide!” I thought in horror.

I ducked back into the shop. He recognised me too. He turned and scooted across the road like the devil was after him.

We played this ‘cat and mouse’ game for the next nine years! My cooking improved and my housekeeping skills were passable. I was still hopeless at weaving but my grandmother told me that I was learning to walk and sit down gracefully.

I left school and found a job. I was a grown woman at last. No one was going to boss me around any more. My mother despaired for me when I came home from touch rugby, all sweaty and with muddy boots. One evening after rugby, I came home and saw baskets of food outside our house. There was a lot of talking and laughing inside. I walked into the living area and it was crowded with people I did not know. Then I saw the boy I had been hiding from for the past nine years.

He was standing behind a big lady with downcast eyes. I recognised the lady. It was the same lady who had introduced us many years ago. I guessed why they had come and I backed away from the noisy room. I dashed out and starting running down the hill. I stopped when I realised that I did not know where I was going. I tried to think of somebody I could run to, but everybody I thought of was a relative. I knew they wouldn't hide me. I turned around and slowly walked back to our house with a heavy heart.



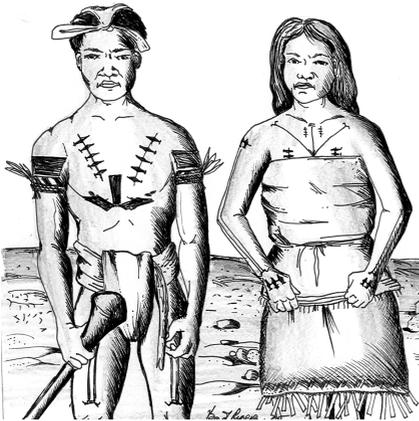
Throughout the evening I just sat there feeling numb. My relatives and my betrothed's family discussed the marriage and the ceremony. I felt hot, furious tears flowing down my face. Only the boy noticed me, but he did not say anything. He just shrunk further into a corner and stared back at me like a trapped fly.

Who Made the Choice?

Lina Tangimalama

Chapter Three: The Marriage

I can hardly remember my marriage ceremony. I cried buckets of angry tears, which everyone laughingly called, 'nervous tears'. The ceremony took place on the beach with lots of singing, dancing and speeches. The bridegroom and I were dressed in traditional costumes. I had worn our traditional costume for competitions and international days at school and felt very proud. But on that day it felt like I was wearing chains.



There were many gifts exchanged and the old chief who married me to my betrothed gleefully announced us, 'husband and wife'. The loud cheering drowned out my sobs and my new husband just stood there and looked at his feet as if he was seeing them for the first time.

My grandfather rubbed noses with me and congratulated us.

"You must know that your husband is now the head of your family," he told me in a serious voice. "You must do as he tells you." I could only stare at him in anger.

My grandmother came and hugged me.

"Don't let your grandfather frighten you," she said with a smile. "Sit down and I'll tell you a secret."

After looking around, she said in a low voice, “You heard what your grandfather just told you didn’t you?”

I nodded then she smiled and said, “In our custom, men are considered the heads of their families and there is nothing we can do to change that.”

If this is the secret then what a laugh! She patted my hand and said, “If the men want to be the head, let them be the head and the woman will be the neck, below the head.” Then she looked deep into my eyes. “It is the neck that turns the head doesn’t it?”

Then she got up and went to greet her new in-laws.

I’ve been married for several years now and I have a son. Last Christmas, my uncle asked if my husband and I had chosen a wife for our young son. We looked at each other in shock. We have often talked about our arranged marriage. It has been happy, but it might have turned out very differently. We both agreed that we would not arrange our son’s marriage but allow him to make his own choices when he grows up.

I have learnt many things from my experience and have come to understand my role as a woman in my society. Although women are treated differently to men in our society, I have learnt that there are women who are highly respected by men. My grandmother and mother, who were not only intelligent but also very diplomatic, are among such women.

One of my female cousins wanted to become a doctor, but all our male relatives refused. They thought being a doctor was a man’s job. The men wouldn’t even discuss it and my cousin could only shed hopeless tears.

My grandmother looked up from her weaving and quietly remarked that when male doctors examine women, they break a lot of taboos.



She said that it was not fair to male doctors to have them break taboos just because there was no one else to do it.

The men then began to see things differently. They agreed that we needed female doctors. My cousin eventually went off to study medicine with our family's blessing.

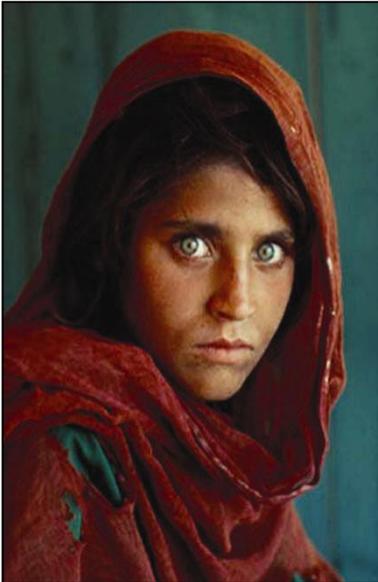
I have been lucky to have a good husband. He is the head of our family, but I have learnt how to help him make decisions. In fact, I shape most of the family decisions. The men in my family ask me for my opinion and that, in my society, means that I have the same respect as the men do, even though the men will never admit it.

The Afghan Girl

Linda Puia

In 1980, 80,000 Russian troops invaded Afghanistan. They waged war with a small group of Afghan militants. Many ordinary Afghan people were killed. Many more ran away from their homes to find safety in nearby countries such as Pakistan and Iran. They did not have houses so they had to live in refugee camps near the borders of these two countries.

In 1983, a photographer for the National Geographic Magazine visited one of these refugee camps. He wanted to show the world what life was like for Afghan people who had been forced to run away. He took a picture of a young Afghan girl at a refugee camp in Pakistan.



*Sharbat Gula's famous photo
By Steve McCurry*

The picture appeared on the cover of the National Geographic Magazine in June, 1985. The girl's haunting green eyes told the story of her hard and harsh life filled with too much suffering and terror. Her photo touched many people around the world.

Many people were curious about this sad young girl. Who was she? Where was she?

Sadly, the photographer, Steve McCurry did not know the girl's name. He had not asked for her name because it is the custom for Afghan women not to tell their names to strangers.

McCurry won an award for his photo. He decided to search for the girl, hoping to find out her identity and learn more about her.

First he went back to the place where he had taken the photo, he found that none of the refugees were still there. He searched in other refugee camps and looked in many parts of Afghanistan, but he always came to a dead end. McCurry began to fear that the girl might have died.

In January 2002, a National Geographic team again returned to the refugee camp in Pakistan where the photo was taken. The team's search took them from village to village until, at last, someone recognised the girl in the photo. He said he knew the girl's brother.

The team were not very hopeful when they went to meet the man because they had been disappointed so many times, before.

“As soon as I saw the colour of the man's eyes, I knew we had finally found the right family,” a member of the team reported.

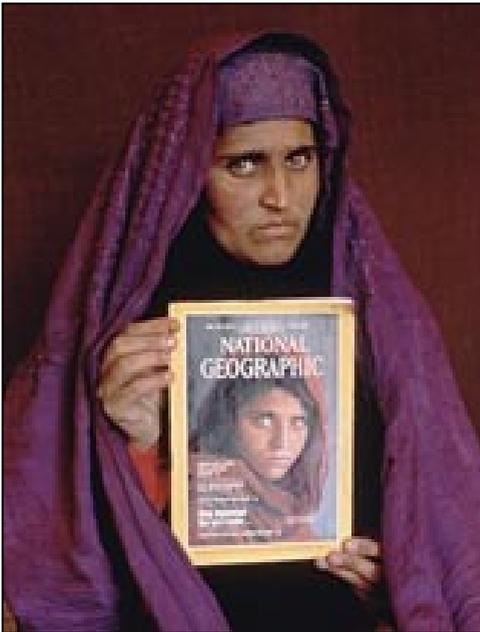
It had taken 17 years, but at last they discovered who the mysterious Afghan girl was. Her name was Sharbat Gula, which means ‘Sweet-water Flower Girl’. She was living in a remote region in Afghanistan with her husband and three daughters.

Sharbat Gula's Story

Linda Puia

Sharbat's family gave permission for her to meet the man who had taken her picture seventeen years earlier. Steve McCurry knew straight away that this was the right person.

"Her eyes are just the same now as they were when she was a girl," McCurry said.



Sharbat Gula with her famous photo in 2002

People all over the world had seen Sharbat's picture, but she herself had never seen the photo until it was shown to her in 2002.

She remembered McCurry because she had only been photographed once in her life. She did not realise that her face had become famous but she was pleased when she learned that her picture had helped to make people aware of the suffering of the Afghan people.

Sharbat told the photographer about her life. As a child she had feared the planes most of all. No one in the village knew when they would strike. She was just six years old when the Russian planes bombed her small village in the foothills of the mountains near Tora Bora, and killed her

parents. Sharbat, her three sisters and brothers were led away from the ruins of their home by their grandmother.

For a week the family walked wearily along miles of mountain roads towards Pakistan. It was winter and they were forced to beg for blankets from strangers to keep warm.

They finally reached safety in the refugee camp in Pakistan, where thousands more Afghans were already living.

Life in the camp was terrible. People didn't have enough to eat and many died because there was no medicine when they got sick. Somehow Sharbat survived.

In 1983, at the age of twelve, she was sitting on the floor of the school tent with dozens of other girls. They were surprised when a tall white man came in. He spoke a strange language. The teacher let him bring in his camera. For a few minutes he moved around the room taking pictures. She remembered the flash in her face when he took her photo. She felt embarrassed because her head cover was full of holes. It had fallen near the cooking fire and had been burned. The man was Steve McCurry, a photographer from the National Geographic magazine.

She was married when she was sixteen to her husband Gul. Their wedding was one of the happiest days of her life. In the 1990s, she returned to her village. It was a poor place with no roads, clinics or running water. She had to grow corn, wheat and rice. She gets up early each morning to pray before cooking and cleaning the house. One of her children died as a baby. She now has three daughters Robina, Zahilda, and Alia.

The National Geographic Magazine team wanted to help Sharbat. She told them that only two things mattered to her, her family and her religion. She wanted more than anything

for her girls to receive an education and for the family to visit the holy city of Mecca.

Arrangements were made for the family to travel to Mecca and for her children to go to school. Sharbat hopes that her children will have a happier life than her own.

Did You Know...? Women in History

Linda Puia

Women in Peru have only been allowed to vote in elections since 2002.

Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Guides in Savannah, Georgia, in America in 1912.

The Anglican Church ordained the first female priests in the Caribbean (Jamaica) in 1996.

Karoline Mikkelson was the first woman to set foot in Antarctica in 1935.

The First Woman to climb Everest (the highest mountain in the world) was Junko Tabei in 1975.

A team of five English women reached the South Pole on January 24, 2000, after reaching the North Pole in 1997. They were the first women ever to visit both poles.

Eileen Collins was the first woman to fly a space shuttle. She piloted the Space Shuttle 'Discovery' in 1995.

1912 Alice Stebbins Wells became the world's first woman police officer in when she joined the Los Angeles Police Department in 1910.

The first woman in space was Russian, Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova in 1963.

Bessie Coleman was the first American woman to earn her international pilot's license in 1921.

The first women's prison run by women was opened in Indiana (America) in 1873.

New Zealand was the first country in the world in which women gained the right to vote in elections in 1893.

The highest number of women in politics was recorded in Sweden where, in 1996, 11 out of 22 cabinet ministers were women and 40% of MPs were women.

Siramavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) became the world's first female Prime Minister in 1960.

In 2005, there are no female members of parliament in Solomon Islands.

Maria Estela Martinez de Peron became the first woman President of Argentina in 1974.

Kuwait is the only country in the world which still does not allow women to vote in elections.

Ellen McArthur, from the UK, was the fastest woman to sail around the world single handed. She did this in 94 days, in 1997, when she was just 24 years old.

The oldest woman to ever live was Jeanne Louise Calment. Born in France in 1875, she died in 1997 at the age of 122.

It's Just Not Fair!

Ellen Wairiu

Key Words

surrounded, caught my attention, curious, nap, realised

Last Christmas, I visited my village for the first time in seven years. I love being in the village, surrounded by children. I hardly recognised some of them as they had grown up so quickly. In the house next door to mine, one girl in particular caught my attention. She was about eleven years old and I had not seen her around before. I was curious to find out about her.



I first noticed her because she seemed to work very hard. I decided to watch her work. She woke up early, collected water for the kitchen, peeled potatoes and cooked them over the fire. During the day, my neighbour went to work in the garden. While she was away, the young girl looked after

my neighbour's baby and her other small boy. She bathed them, cooked for them and fed them. When they had eaten she put the baby to bed for her afternoon nap. While the baby slept, she washed the dishes and the family's clothes. She also watched the little boy whilst she did all of this.

I soon realised that this poor girl was doing everything in the house. My neighbour usually arrived home very late. By the time she reached the house the girl had prepared the evening meal for the family and was getting the children ready for bed.

One morning, after my neighbour left the house, I went next door. I held the baby while the girl did her work and we started chatting. Her name was Brenda. She was my neighbour's niece.

As we got to know each other Brenda told me her story. Brenda's mother was not married and she had struggled to raise Brenda by herself. When Brenda was seven her aunt had adopted her. Her aunt had three children of her own, the baby, and two other boys. The eldest boy was nine years old and he attended the local primary school.

"Don't you go to school?" I asked Brenda.

"I used to go, when I lived with my mother," she replied, "but my uncle says there is not enough money to pay my school fees, so I stay home to look after the other children."

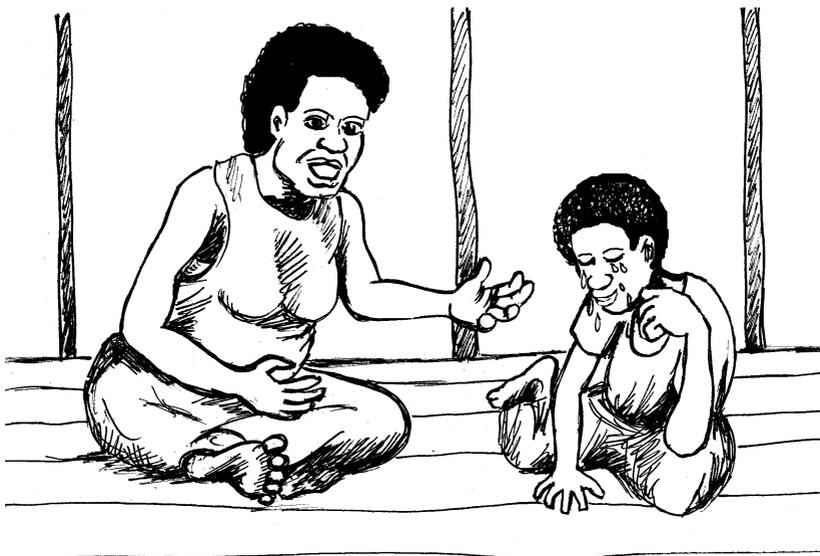
As time went on, I often went and talked to Brenda during the day. As we got to know each other I realised how sad she felt about her life.

She told me that she would love to go to school too. She dared not complain to her uncle because he was looking after her. She seemed trapped. She was only a young girl but she had to work like a married woman. It seemed to me as if her childhood had been taken away from her.

One day as we talked, Brenda started to cry.

“Life is just such a struggle,” she said through her tears.

“I get very tired looking after the children and sometimes I don’t manage to finish all the work. This makes my aunt cross. I can’t help feeling jealous of my cousin. He goes to school and has so much free time to play with his friends, while I just have to work all the time. It’s just not fair!” said Brenda, trying to hide her tears from the two children.



I felt so sorry for Brenda.

She was right of course. It was not fair. Not fair that her father and mother had not been married; not fair that her mother didn’t have enough money to look after her properly; not fair that she had to go and live with her aunt and uncle; not fair that she had been taken out of school; and not fair that she was being used to do all the work in their house!

Inside of Me

Author Unknown

Inside of me it is peace and there's calm,
Inside of me there is anger and rage.

Inside of me there is laughter and joy,
Inside of me there are tears and sadness.

Inside of me there is strength and there's courage.
Inside I feel weak and sometimes afraid.

Inside of me there is pain from the past,
Inside of me there is hope for the future.

Inside of me there is true and there's false,
Inside of me the struggle goes on.

Friends

Elizabeth Jennings

I fear it's very wrong of me,
And yet I must admit,
When someone offers friendship,
I want the whole of it.
I don't want everybody else,
To share my friends with me.
At least, I want one special friend,
Who, indisputably,
Loves me much more than all the rest.
Who's always on my side,
Who never cares what others say.
Who will let me come and hide,
Within his shadow, in his house.
It doesn't matter where.
Who lets me simply be myself,
Who's always, always there.

Falling in Love

Ellen Wairiu

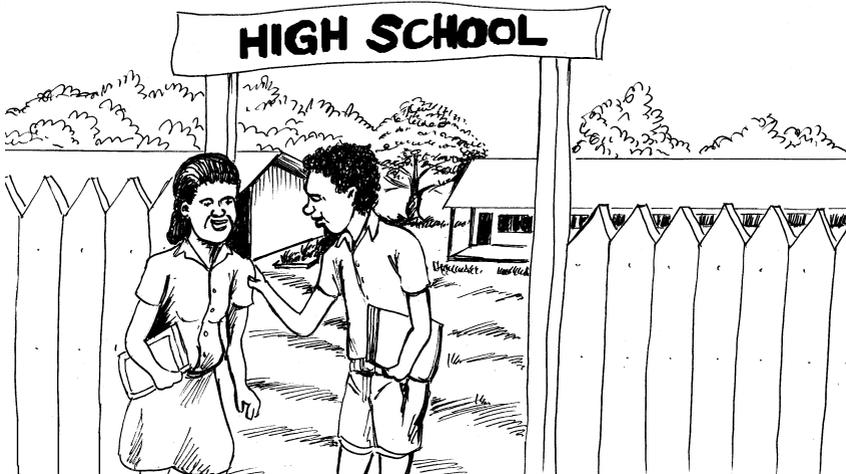
Jack and Emma were studying at the same high school. Jack was a shy but handsome boy in Form One. Emma was a talkative but very beautiful girl in Form Two. They came from different backgrounds, as Jack had come straight from his village primary school and Emma was a town girl.

On the first day of school, the school Principal asked all the students to assemble in the school hall. Emma was a school prefect, so it was her job to show the new students where to sit in the assembly hall.

As Emma moved around the hall, it wasn't long before she spotted Jack standing nervously by himself. Their eyes met, and Emma smiled at the new boy.

"Mmm, he's a handsome one!" she thought to herself.

Jack smiled back, and then quickly looked down at his shoes, embarrassed.



Every morning Emma had to stand by the school gate to welcome all the students. She had to write down the name of anybody who arrived late.

Jack looked forward to seeing her every morning. He always came to school early, looking very smart in his uniform.

He never walked through the gate without saying, "Hello," to Emma and he was always rewarded with a smile and a cheerful greeting.

After a while he became a bit braver. After coming through the gate, he would stand a bit longer talking to Emma. She was always friendly and chatted away to him. This put him at his ease.

Jack wanted to tell her that he liked her, but somehow he just didn't have the courage. If only he had known that Emma really liked him too and was just waiting for him to speak out!

One morning Jack arrived at school and was stunned to see Emma with her hair down and a flower behind her right ear.

"My goodness, she is gorgeous," he said to himself. "I must tell her how beautiful she looks," thought Jack.

As he walked in, he stopped and looked straight into Emma's eyes. Just as he was about to speak he was suddenly overcome with confusion. Instead of saying what he wanted to say, he mumbled an embarrassed, "Good morning," and hurried past into the classroom, with his heart beating fast.

"What is the matter with me?" Jack asked himself. He tried to concentrate on his studies that day, but all the time he kept thinking of Emma.

“Oh dear, I like her so much but how can I tell her?” he wondered.

He was full of doubts. “I’m just a rural boy, and she’s so popular and friendly with everyone. She probably has a boyfriend already. She’s not going to be interested in me, especially if I can’t even speak to her without getting all embarrassed!”

All day he thought of nothing but Emma’s face. The teacher threw a piece of chalk at him because he was not concentrating on his classes!

After school, Jack stayed back in the class and pretended to do some extra study. In truth, he was just waiting for Emma to come around to lock the classroom. He was daydreaming about her, when suddenly she stood in front of him with the keys in her hands.

“Hi there, Jack, I thought you had already gone,” she said, with her usual flashing smile.

“Why? Have you been checking up on me?” asked Jack.

“No, I’m just asking,” said Emma.

Before he could stop himself, Jack blurted out what had been on his mind all day. “Emma, I have something to tell you.”

“What is it?” Emma asked with a cheeky smile.

“She’s laughing at me now,” thought Jack, “I’m going to look like such a fool.” However, he had to finish what he had started.

Jack looked out of the window, because he was too scared to look at Emma’s face. “Well,” he began, “I just want to tell you that I have liked you ever since you smiled at me on my first day at school. I know you are older than me and I am

just a village boy. You probably have lots of other boys interested in you and you probably don't feel the same way, but....."

"Shut up Jack!" interrupted Emma.

"What?" he asked in confusion.

"Shut up and listen," said Emma with a smile.

"I like you too. I have done ever since that first smile. I've just been wondering how long it would take you to get around to telling me that you liked me!"



They both looked at each other and burst out laughing.

Suddenly, all of Jack's embarrassment was gone. They walked around the school together, locking the classrooms.

They were falling in love!

Things Will Never be the Same

Ellen Wairiu

Once there was a girl named Deborah. She was an only child but her parents loved her and cared for her very much. Deborah was surrounded by happiness and she had everything she had ever wanted. Her father worked and her mother stayed home to look after her.

When Deborah was about twelve years old, things started to change. She noticed that her parents hardly spoke to each other and there was an angry atmosphere around the house. Deborah didn't know what was wrong. She couldn't understand why her parents were not laughing and joking with her as they used to do. She tried asking her mother if something was wrong, but her mother just shook her head.

This made Deborah very sad. It was unusual for her mother to behave like this. She felt that she couldn't talk to her mother anymore and was afraid to speak to her father because he always seemed so angry. She hated the unhappy atmosphere in the house, so she started to stay in her room to avoid having to talk to anyone.

When Deborah's school friends came to visit, she didn't feel like going out with them, so she pretended not to hear when they knocked on the door.

One day, she heard her parents shouting at each other in the next room. She always hated it when they argued, but this was the worst argument she had ever heard. The shouting seemed to go on and on and Deborah just wanted to run away and hide.



After the argument, Deborah's father stormed angrily out of the house and Deborah found her mother in tears. She could no longer hide the truth from Deborah. Gently she explained that her father had met another woman at work and that he had been seeing her secretly. She had found out and told him to stop seeing the woman but he had refused. This is why they'd had such an argument.

Deborah was shocked, angry, sad and hurt all at the same time. She felt so confused. The next day her father didn't come home from work. Then while Deborah was at school, he came to the house, got a few belongings and moved out, without even saying goodbye to her.

Even though she was angry with her father, she still loved him very much. When Deborah came home and found out that he had gone, she lay down on her bed and cried and cried and cried. She just could not stop.

Deborah couldn't bear to see what was happening to her family. She hoped that one day her father would come back to them, but in her heart she knew that it would never be the same.

Different Feelings

Ellen Wairiu

I feel happy when I'm with you.

I feel happy when you think of me.

I feel happy when I share things with you.

I feel happy when you give things back to me.

I feel happy when I help you.

I feel happy when you make me laugh.

I feel lonely when I'm far from you.

I feel lonely when there is no one to talk to.

I feel lonely when I'm in a strange place.

I feel lonely when I'm sick.

I feel lonely when I'm afraid.

I feel lonely when I cannot find you.

I feel sad when I'm hurt.

I feel sad when people talk about me.

I feel sad when I fail.

I feel sad when I make mistakes.

I feel sad when nobody listens to me.

I feel sad when you leave me.

I feel jealous when you do better than me.

I feel jealous when you pass and I fail.

I feel jealous when you talk to others and not me.

I feel jealous when you laugh with others.

I feel jealous when you steal my friends.

I feel jealous when I see you walk away.

How Anger Affects You and Others

Cindy Watson

Anger is a natural emotion. Everyone feels angry sometimes. Anger can be very powerful. As you grow up, it's important that you learn how to deal with being angry.

Uncontrolled anger can lead to arguments, physical fights and physical abuse. On the other hand, well-managed anger can be a useful emotion that helps you to do the right thing and make changes in your life.

What does anger do to you?

Your body changes when you get angry. Your heart might beat faster and your breathing may get quicker. You may feel very tense or sick in the stomach.

You might behave differently too. People who are angry often raise their voices, walk up and down or clench their fists.

You can tell someone is angry because he or she shouts, throws things or slams the door. Not everyone shows their anger in the same way though. Some people are very quiet when they are angry and will not speak to anyone.

You can usually tell when another person is angry because of the way that they behave.

How can you deal with anger?

Anger affects people in different ways. Some people get angry easily. Others only seem to get angry after a long time. Feeling angry is uncomfortable, especially if it means you fight or argue with other people. It's a good idea to try to deal with problems so that you stop feeling angry. People deal with their feelings in different ways.

Unhelpful ways to deal with anger

Some people show their anger in harmful ways by exploding in a rage. A person who cannot control their temper may end up shouting or hurting someone. This is dangerous.

Some people think that they should keep their anger inside. This may be dangerous too as it can make you depressed and unhappy. Sometimes it can build up inside you until it explodes!

Dealing with anger in a positive way

Here are some better ways for dealing with angry feelings:

- Don't lose control.
- Do something to control your anger. Walk away, count to ten, take deep breaths or speak calmly to yourself until you feel less angry.
- Accept that being angry is quite normal. Everyone gets angry sometimes.
- Try to think about why you feel angry.
- Try to talk about the problem with someone you trust.

Nguzu Nguzu English

Poor Milton

and Other Texts



Standard 6
Reader 1

Illustrated by:

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Brad Pugeva
Paul Maesala

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