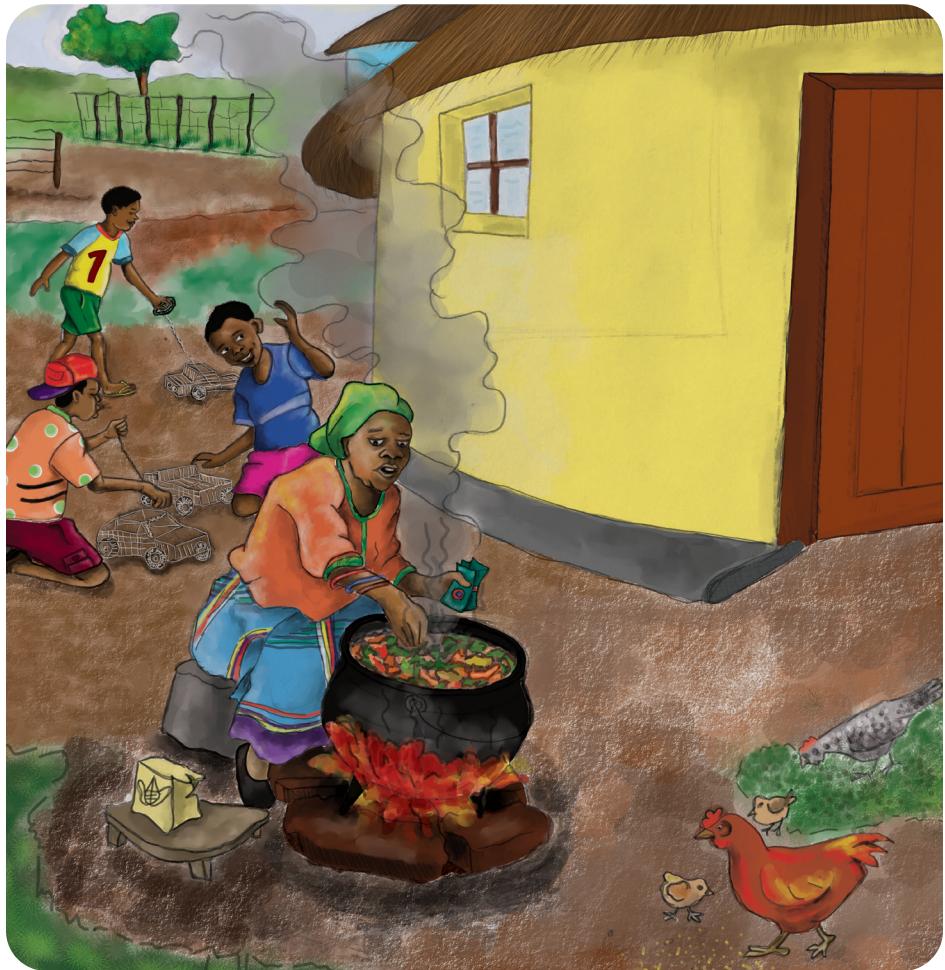




Umlilo!



Rotshidzwa Sigwadi



Ugogo upheka isiju semirorho samadina.
Uphekela isizukulwana sakhe uLwethu
nabangani bakhe. Upheka emlilweni ngepoto
ekulu enzima.

Abesana badlalela eduze ngeenkoloyi zabo.



Kunomoya obetha kancani.

Ngokuphazima kwelihlo, kuba
nesivunguvungu!

Isivunguvungu siphephula umlilo siwuphosela
emoyeni.





Isivunguvungu siphephulela umlilo
emfulelwani wendlu.

Ugogo nabesana baqala ngesizi umfulelo
uthungeleleka ngomlilo.

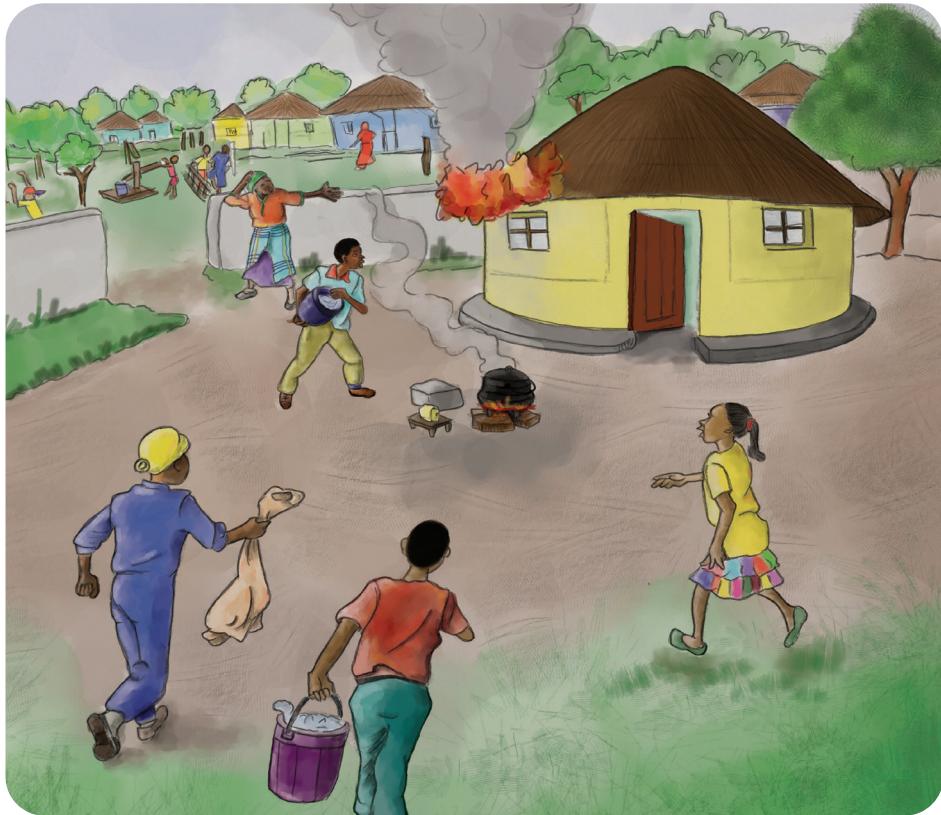
“Lokhu kuyarhaba! Sidinga irhelebho
elirhabako!” kutjho ugogo.



“Besana, rhabani niyokubawa irhelebho kibomakhelwana! Sifuna amanzi amanengi ukucima umlilo!” kulayela ugogo.

Ulinga ukwehlisa amaphaphu.





Abesana abathathu bagijima ngebelo basiya emahlangothini ahlukahlukenenko. Bagijima batjhiya iinthunzi zabo.

“Umlilo! Umlilo! Rhelebhani! Rhelebhani!”
kurhahlawula uLwethu.

“Umlilo! Umlilo! Rhelebhani! Rhelebhani!”
bayarhuwelela abangani bakhe.



Ngetjhudu bekunabantu abanengi
emakhaya.

Abomakhelwana beza ngokurhaba
namathunga anamanzi.

“Kuzokulunga, Gogo! Sizowucima umlilo!”
bayamduduza.

Balwa nomlilo. Bathela amathunga amanengi
wamanzi emfulelwani ukucima umlilo.





Emaphethelweni umlilo uyacima.

Ugogo uthokoza abomakhelwana.

Bese wasingatha uLwethu nabangani bakhe.

“Ingozi idlulile. Ngiyathokoza ukubiza irhelebho ngokuphazima kwelihlo!” kutjho ugogo. “Ngirhuluphelela kobana akhange kwenzeke, ngetjhudu elihle, siphephile!”