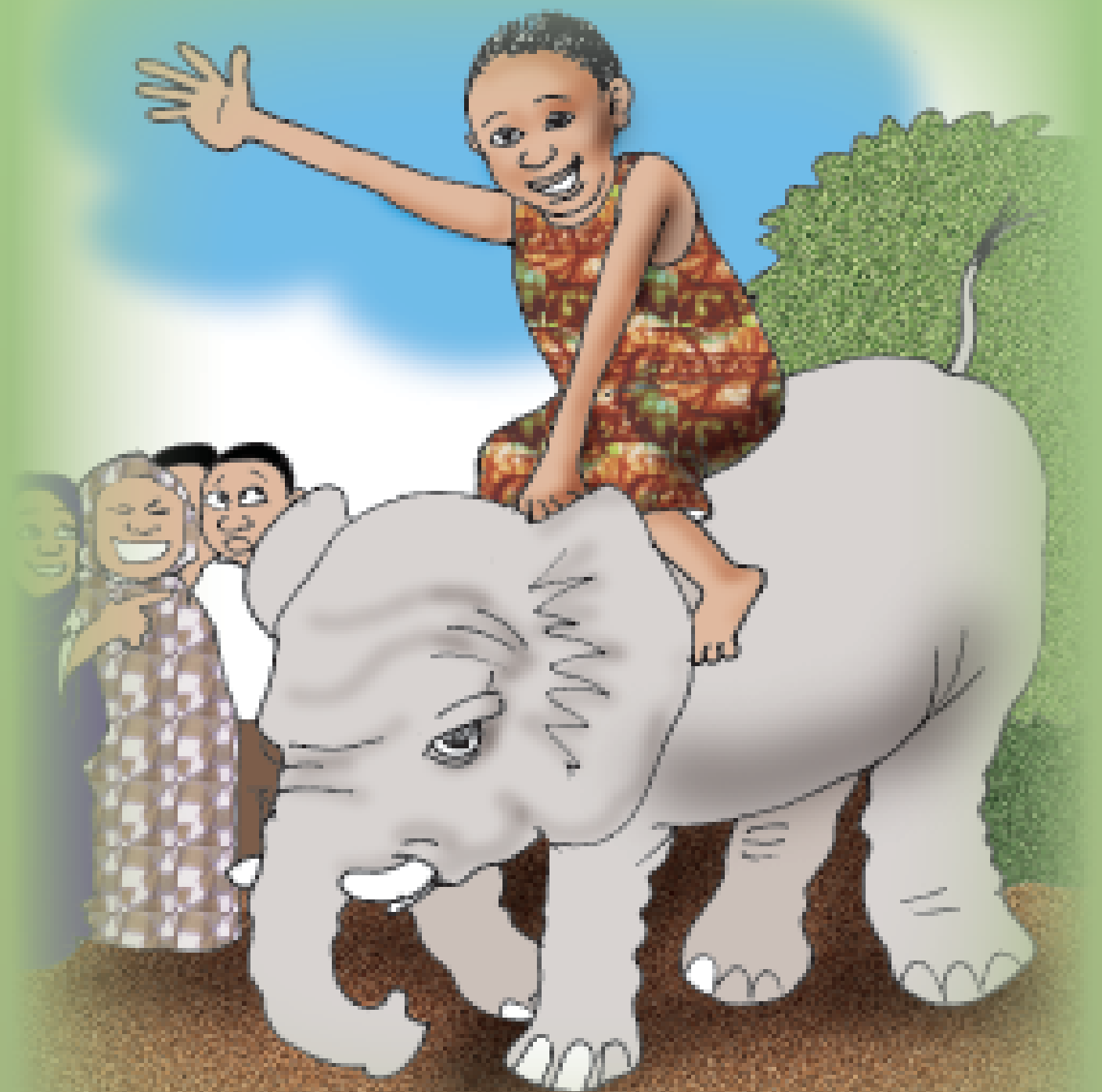


The Forest Girl



Anthony Muchoki

Rehema is a young school girl growing up in the city. She loves to draw wild animals and trees. She can even ride a baby elephant. Her classmates call her the forest girl. Her parents and teachers think she is messing up her life. But to her grandparents, she is the saviour of their community. The promised one.

The Forest Girl is a very interesting story for children as well as adults. It puts up a strong case for preservation of indigenous knowledge and enviromental conservation – Jumanne Saumu, tutor, Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE)

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Anthony Muchoki

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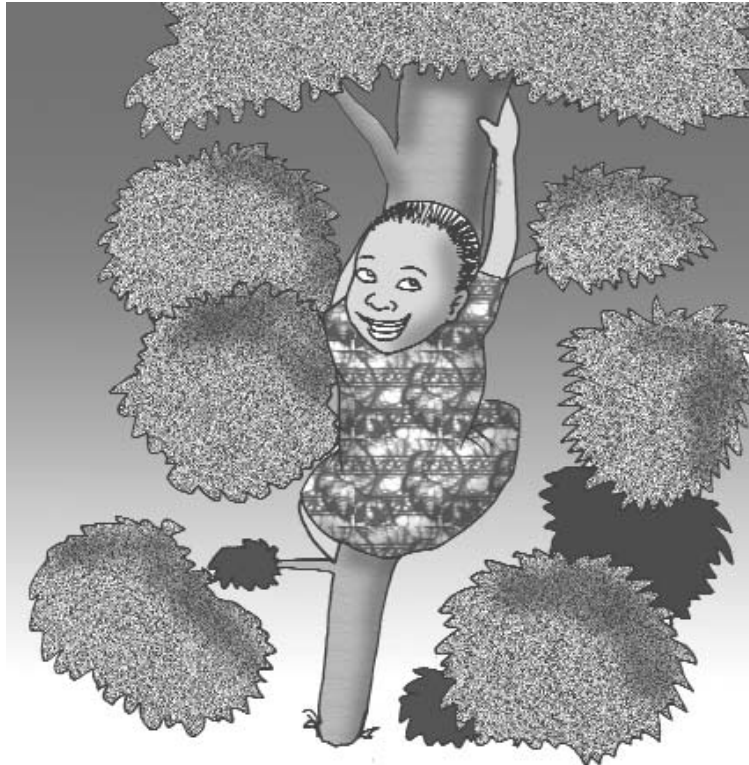
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ONE

Rehema was a very beautiful girl. She loved climbing trees and taking care of young plants. In their class in Mwega Primary School, Randiera City, whenever she was told to narrate a story, she would only tell of forests and animals.

Her classmates called her the forest girl. Even at home her elder brother would call her the same. At school and at home she used to make a lot of sketches of forests, individual trees and wild animals.

One day, Rehema drew a sketch of a baby lion during her mathematics lesson. Her teacher, Jonita saw the amateur illustration she was working on.



The teacher was very upset. She slapped her twice on the face.



Rehema closed her eyes and tried to swallow the pain, that she felt in her head going down her whole body. She lost her bearing. Hot tears streamed down her cheeks, though no word came out of her mouth.

“Nonsense! What you are sketching is rubbish. Never do it again. Never in my presence, you silly girl!” the teacher reprimanded her abrasively.

Jonita spanked Rehema again and again. Then she sent her out of the classroom for the rest of the lesson. Other pupils laughed at her. The class shouted in unison, “Shame, forest girl...” several times.

Rehema wanted the ground to swallow her. She ran home. She narrated to her mama what had happened. She too gave her a thorough beating.

“Forget about animals and forests. Being obsessed with wildlife won’t take you anywhere in your life. You must get your education first,” she told her.

Rehema was hurting all over her body. Her heart reverberated in pain. She was unable to take her supper that evening. She sat down crying for hours. Later on she went to bed with a heavy heart.

That night, she only half slept. She was longing for the school to close. Then she would go to Karurumo District to visit her grandparents. She loved them so much. Just thinking about them made her smile. For a moment she was able to forget the pain she was feeling in her body and heart.



“My grandpa and ma,” she thought. They were a jolly couple. She went to visit them every single school holiday. The days spent with them were the happiest days of her childhood. She felt they were the only people who understood her in the whole world.

They did not know how to read and write. But whenever they saw her draw sketches, they marvelled. They encouraged Rehema to keep polishing her artistic skills. In fact in their bedroom, hung a huge portrait she had made of them. She had given it to them as a gift when she was in class two.

She remembered a few days ago how her father had taken away all her drawing books. She had watched helplessly as he reduced them to ashes. She had begged him and begged him to stop burning them.

“Papa please, don’t burn my drawings, they are so important to me, please papa...” she had desperately implored to no avail.



"Trash is what these drawings are," he had told her. Rehema's heart almost left her body. Her spirit sank down and down as she saw all her work going up into flames.

For two days she refused to eat. Her mama beat her. "You are a very stubborn girl. My stick will teach you how to behave," she was chastised.

Two weeks later, the school closed for the August holidays. Rehema was the happiest girl on earth. She would now go and stay for a whole month with her grandparents whom she loved so much.

To make her joy full, her grandpa Mzee Kubeba came all the way from Karurumo for her on the very Friday she closed school.

Rehema was beside herself with bliss. She ran into his arms merrily. Grandpa held her high up in the air.

“Oh my little girl, you have grown so big! Just wait till your grandma sees you!” Mzee Kubeba told her as she put her down.

Rehema’s mother teased her, “I will not allow you to go to Karurumo this time; I need you here to help with the housework....” Grandpa would hear none of this. He threatened never to come back to Randiera City to his son’s house if his only granddaughter would not be allowed to go with him.

Since Rehema was born, there had been a special bond between her and the old couple. They loved and cared for her more than any other person in the family. Their house had many of her photos. Grandma used to jokingly say that seeing Rehema kept her breathing. Rehema always made their hearts glad.

Whenever Rehema was with her grandparents, she felt special, loved, confident and strong. She felt she could accomplish anything in the world so long as her grandparents were there for her. The previous term they had told her she could be at the top of her class if only she worked harder.

“Babu, Babu, I am at the top of my class. I am in position one this term just as you told me!” she told her grandpa excitedly and gave him the report card forgetting that the old man did not know how to read or write.

Her mama could not believe it until she took the report card from grandpa. In the past the best position Rehema had ever achieved was number thirty out of more than fifty pupils in her class. Her mama was shocked.

The following day, Rehema and Mzee Kubeba boarded a bus at Randiera Country Bus Station. They left for Karurumo. They reached home late in the evening. Rehema's grandma was very happy to see them. "Welcome home my breath," she told Rehema.

She had prepared them a tasty dish of forest chicken and rice. When she was leaving for the bed, she went and kissed their wrinkled hands lovingly.

"Grandpa, grandma thanks so much for trusting me....I love you so much," Rehema told them as she left to go and sleep.

TWO

Every time Rehema was at Karurumo, grandma, Bibi Kubeba would tell her many stories. She told her about wild animals, their families and monsters. There were the stories of brave men and women, which she loved most. Then there were the sad stories of wars and the wicked people.



Bibi Kubeba also listened to Rehema. She told her about the things they were taught at school, about her teachers and colleagues. Sometimes she told her what she wanted to be in future. She wanted to become a big shot.

“I will be a doctor or a pilot,” she would tell her. Grandma believed in her. When she told her that other pupils had laughed at her when teacher Jonita beat her up for making sketches, grandma did not mock her.

“You should never let anyone kill

your dreams. Move on with your dreams, you will have the last laugh," she urged her.

Rehema used to call her Bibi. Bibi would encourage her to go on and develop her talent.

"One day, that which they disdain will be your greatest asset," she had once told her. Those words kept echoing in her head whenever someone tried to discourage her.

"I am such a lucky girl to have grandparents like you," she told her grandparents the following morning.

Bibi Kubeba was an expert basket weaver. She taught Rehema all kinds of seams and how to beautify the baskets. After a few days she gave her some materials to weave a small basket, but big enough to carry her books to school.

When it was done it looked so spectacular. She loved it and Bibi said that her work was commendable. She said she would make another one for her mama.

Thinking of her mama, she became sad. She wanted her to be happy so much but it seemed nothing she ever did made her glad.

After she emerged top in her class in the end of term exam, the only thing she said was: "Let's see next term if you will not be at the tail as usual." The words pierced her heart deeply like a poisoned arrow. She had run to her bedroom and cried alone in anguish.

All the same she loved her mama very much. She wanted to see her mama happy, just like it was the case with her grandparents.

'One day, I'll make mama happy, very happy. Somehow,' she thought.

Mzee Kubeba saw Rehema in that pensive mood. He thought she was homesick. He promised her a trip to the forest, the following day in one of his journeys to look for herbs, roots, leaves, flowers and other extracts from trees for treating diseases.



At Ikolosa village in Karurumo, Mzee Kubeba was a renowned medicineman. (Note that he was not a witchdoctor). He used to treat diseases with herbs and other concoctions made from plants. He also advised patients with diseases that he could not manage to go to the hospital. People from far and wide used to come to him seeking treatment for various ailments.

Rehema had always wanted to visit the deep forest with him. Grandpa had always told her, the time was not ripe. The forest was quite near the village. Rehema used to visit its periphery with her grandma to collect firewood. She would take bananas to the monkeys. Later, she would sketch the monkeys happily eating .

Rehema couldn't wait for the following day. She imagined how the wild animals like lions and elephants looked like. Her heart exploded with joy, when she thought about seeing such animals with her naked eyes.

"I will forever be able to draw wild animals for real. Woh!" She thought her face beaming with smile.

Early, the following morning before dawn she was wide awake. Her grandpa had woken up even earlier. They put on some thick clothes and left for the forest.

For more than two hours before daylight, they walked without a single pause. Rehema amused herself, 'I am not scared at all, woh!' she thought.

She was also surprised by her grandpa's vigour. He did not behave like the old people she knew who could never make such a long journey without stopping to rest every few minutes.

Then the day started breaking. She could now see light penetrating in some places though largely blocked by huge trees reaching almost to the skies.

Rehema felt the serenity of the wild. She thought the forest was like another world. A world so good and beautiful. She was envious of animals that lived in the forest! She loved the forest. She wanted to be a part of it. There was so much peace in the forest. Walking with her grandpa a wide

smile was spread over her lips and her heart was full of abundant joy.

Looking at Mzee Kubeba, he appeared to have been transformed into another person, young and ageless with inexhaustible strength. Using a small machete, he would dig up roots, cut the bark of some trees and put the pieces he had chosen in his big basket.

Rehema watched him. He was extremely serious. It was as if what he was doing was a matter of life and death. More often than not they met wild animals. The young girl was amazed that the animals did not scurry away from them.

Around lunchtime, when they sat down to eat the food grandma had packed for them, which Rehema was carrying, they saw a pride of lions.

Mzee Kubeba told her to stay calm.

“Don’t move.”

He arose and went towards the lions. On reaching them, he touched each one on the forehead. It seemed as if they were bowing before him.

The old man left the pride of lion and went back to where Rehema was seated. They took their lunch in silence as the pride of lions calmly nested.

Rehema was perplexed. It was as if these dangerous wild animals and her grandpa knew each other well.

After they were through with their lunch, he told her: “Man can be friends with nature including wild animals. But, because we have been fighting animals and pushing them out of their natural habitat, when they see man they draw blood.”

THREE

Mzee Kubeba continued with his work, wearing the most serious face Rehema has ever seen. Without being told, Rehema started assisting him. After working for sometime she realized she had never felt such bliss in her life.

Rehema was excited by what they were doing. Silently, she wished her grandpa would bring her to the forest many more times. It was a new world, which she had fallen in love with.

It was around six in the evening when her grandpa felt satisfied with what they had collected. They went to drink water at a small stream in the thick of the forest.

The water in the stream was sparkling clean. She drew some with a mug she was carrying. She served her grandpa. Then she took another mug and gulped a mouthful.

Never before had she tasted such refreshing water. She felt the cold and transcendent drink cleansing and transforming her into a new, wonderful



being.

“Yes, Yes, I knew it!” exclaimed her grandpa. Rehema felt a revitalized person. “What is happening to me grandpa?” she asked.

The old man did not answer her. He just looked up in the sky, made some silent intonations and took another gulp of water.

Grandpa eyed Rehema with a strange look she had never seen before. He gave her some water from his mug. He commanded her to drink it.

It was taboo in his community for a child to drink from the same cup with an elder. But the oracle had said the woman, no matter her age shall be equal to an elder from an early age.

“You are the one. You are the one!” her grandpa shouted in a stupor. Rehema stood transfixed at one place. She felt her body glowing. She tried to talk to her grandpa. No words came out of her mouth. For more than 30 minutes they stood there staring at each other. Each one lost in own thoughts.

After that, Rehema felt light. She felt like power itself. She thought she was seeing the whole universe.

Her grandpa brought her out of her reverie. He said to her: “Never talk about your transformation. You must keep the secret and let your actions speak for you. Not your words. Never.”

Dazed, she slowly digested what her grandpa was saying. She heard another voice talk from a far off.

“This is not your power; it is the power of a deity.”

It was getting late and they were on their way out of the forest. Suddenly, they heard a commotion. There were elephants running away for their dear lives. They heard several gunshots.

“Poachers at work, the enemies of nature,” Mzee Kubeba exclaimed. “You know what; you and I are friends to animals. The animals know it, they

cannot harm us," he told her.

They saw a young elephant with a fresh gun wound. The other group of adult elephants had run away. Only its mother had remained risking her life to save its own.



Rehema went to the mother elephant. Mother elephant did not raise a finger against her. She stroked the animal in comfort. The mother elephant stroked her back lovingly with its trunk.

Rehema saw the pain the elephant was feeling because of the wounded baby. She was going to save the baby elephant. She took some herbs from her bag.

With her grandpa's assistance she started treating the baby elephant, who was scared at first. By the time they finished working on the extensive wound it was dusk.

"I will come back to check on you after three days," Rehema promised the baby elephant. The mother elephant was so happy.

FOUR

By ten o'clock at night, grandpa and granddaughter had not returned home. This worried Bibi Kubeba very much.

She silently prayed for their safe return. 'If anything happens to them, I will die..,' she thought.

Then from out of the blue came her loved ones. She welcomed them jovially. Before they had even sat down grandma asked Kubeba, earnestly looking at him in the eyes:

"Is she the one?"

"Yes, yes," he replied.

On hearing those words grandma could not hide her delight. Her face lit up with joy and exploded to a wide grin illuminated by the lantern. With extraordinary power she hugged Rehema tightly.

"O my baby, my baby. I knew it the moment you were born. My baby you are the one...." she cried, unable to contain herself any longer.

Rehema was mystified. A strange thing had happened to her in the forest and now her grandma's outburst. When grandma calmed down, she served

them with a tasty dish of mashed bananas.

After food she had a very refreshing bath using the soap her grandpa used to mould for her with herbs since she was a child. Before retiring to bed, grandma offered prayers seeking the mighty one to keep them safe during the dead of night.



Rehema went to her bed, which her grandpa had made for her the moment she was born. Though most of the time she would be in Randiera City, grandma never allowed anyone else to sleep in that bed.

She threw herself onto the bed. She felt worn out but was excited by the eventful day in the forest. All she wanted was to sleep and forget everything until the following

day. She closed her eyes. But instead of falling asleep she started seeing images of wildlife.

Suddenly, she felt as if she was sailing back to the forest. She was in the air. There was a figure full of light that was guiding her. She reached the forest. The forest appeared to be on fire.

In the morning Rehema suddenly woke up with trepidation. She ran to the kitchen where her grandma was preparing breakfast and hugged her. She was afraid and tears were freely flowing out of her eyes.

"I can't! I can't!" she was telling her while shaking all over. "How can I? I don't know anything about forests! I don't know how to heal!"

Grandma comforted her, "Daughter of God, don't worry. Don't cry mama. Everything will be all right. The power of providence cannot give you an assignment you cannot accomplish."

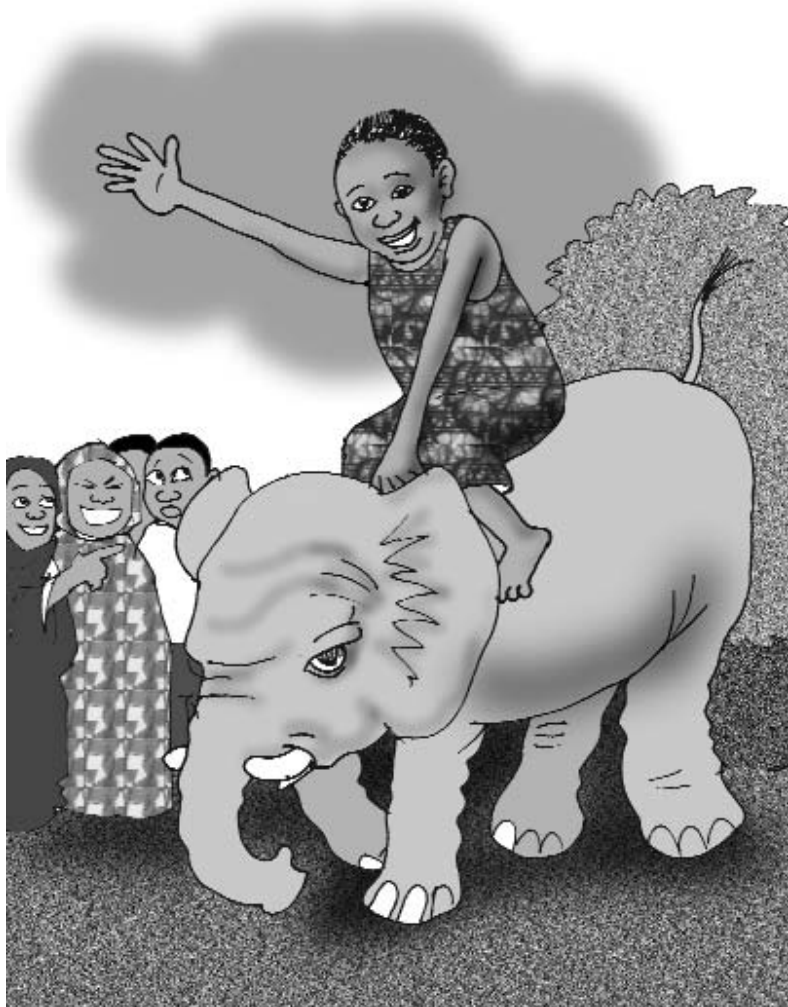
As they were talking, Rehema looked outside the house through the kitchen window. Guess what she saw? Her friend the baby elephant! She was so happy and quickly ran outside to be with the young animal.

When the baby elephant saw her, she raised her trunk in high spirits. Rehema was massaging it with her small hands. The bewildered villagers, who had followed the animal in order to kill it, watched the drama in awed silence.

Later, after examining the animal's wound, Rehema ran into the house. She came back with some cream belonging to her grandfather and smeared it over the lesion.

"You are my friend, you will get healed," Rehema told the baby elephant. She told her grandma she would take the young animal back to its mother.

Her friend refused to walk with her, and she was pointing to her to get on her back for a ride.



“No! No! You are hurt,” she told her. Baby elephant refused to budge. Rehema had to take the ride. The villagers were even more surprised.

“Young lady, that animal is going to be our lunch today. Better get off or we spear it while you are aboard,” one burly man with long unkempt beard, who was wearing a coat made of a rare mountain monkey skin, told her with fury.

“My friend,” Rehema answered him, surprised at her own courage. “This elephant is my friend. I don’t allow anyone to destroy my friends. Do you hear me?” she said sternly.

The enraged man, who was carrying a gun with him, lifted it to shoot Rehema who looked so helpless atop the baby elephant.

In her excitement, Rehema had forgotten the dream she had and the call to be the new forest keeper after her grandpa. Back in Randiera City she had seen on the TV and in movies what guns could do.

Her life in danger, she recalled the voice in her dream. With the power of that voice, she commanded the man, who had by now raised the gun to shoot her: “Drop that gun down and run for your dear life!”

To the surprise of the villagers who loathed and feared the burly man, he took off like lightning. Because he was very fierce and used to beat up villagers any time after picking a small quarrel, everybody was surprised. The man even forgot to run away with his gun.

The villagers shouted to his disappearing figure, “Coward, big coward.” The villagers cheered Rehema. She rode on up to the edge of the forest, where mother elephant was waiting for her baby.

FIVE

Rehema went back home after bidding the baby elephant and her mother goodbye. Word about Rehema's episode with the baby elephant spread like a bushfire. By the time she reached to her grandparent's house, the whole of Ikolosa village knew what had taken place.

"I swear I saw the elephant talk to her. She was not a normal human being atop that young animal, she was shining like a cherub," one old man who was even older than her grandpa told some villagers.

"Shhhh...she must be the next one," he concluded. "Yes," another old man said, "she must be the one the oracle prophesied more than 200 seasons ago. The oracle spoke of one voice being a woman, that she would save nature and mankind."

In grandpa's compound she met an old woman who was her grandma's friend. "Young one," she called out Rehema, "Iko Airobe?" Rehema was surprised. Those words as she knew them were used by young people to greet elders. She was not an elder. So instead of responding she greeted her in the same manner.

The old woman did not reply. "Young one, please I beg you to bless me," she told Rehema.

Rehema remembered the command to love people. She reached out her hand. Hand-in-hand they walked to grandma's compound.



As usual, there were many people there who had come to see Mzee Kubeba for treatment. He did not charge them any money. No matter what the disease, he never requested any patient for anything in return. That is how he had been running his traditional clinic for the past fifty years, since taking the mantle from his father.

But he never lacked anything. After people got healed they would bring many gifts to grandma. Some brought food, clothes and even money. There was one man who bought them a car, but grandpa donated it to the local health centre to be used as an ambulance.

Rehema took the lady to the kitchen where grandma was. After they had exchanged greetings, the woman continued pestering her for blessings.

“What do you wish me to do for you? I am just a young girl”

“Young one, my granddaughter who is your age has a problem. I don’t doubt your grandpa’s healing powers, but he has been unable to assist her. He advised me to go to the modern health centre but the doctors there have failed too. For the seven years, she said her granddaughter had been suffering from a wound in her armpit.

The old woman was now crying. “She really suffers, always in pain day and night. Please have mercy on her, young one,” she implored.

Rehema felt an overwhelming love for the girl. She wanted to be friends with her. “Where is she?” she asked.

The old lady whose name was Arumani told her where the girl lived with her parents about fifteen minutes walk from her grandma’s compound . The girl’s name was Tererio.

“I will go and bring her,” she told Rehema, her hope rising. “No, no you must talk to grandma first then I will join you later,” Rehema told her.

She went for her small bag in which she had put some herbs.

She borrowed her grandpa’s bottle and mixed four types of herbs with boiled water.

She whispered something into her grandpa's ears and off she left.

Fifteen minutes later, she was knocking at Mama Tererio's door. Mama Tererio had heard the fame of the Forest Girl. She felt blessed to have her in her house. Rehema told her she had been sent by Tererio's grandma to see her. She led her to Tererio's room.

The two girls easily struck a rapport and became friends. Rehema washed Tererio's wound with the medicine she had made.

The girl was surprised because for the first time in many years, she felt the pain subside. Rehema gave her the remaining medicine and told her to use it for one week.

"After you are completely healed, pay me a visit before I go back to the city," Rehema told her.

"I bless you grandma," she told Arumani after getting back. "Something good will happen. I can't say when. That is all I can say," Rehema told her.

A week and half later Rehema would be going back home. Schools would be opening. She had so much to learn from her grandpa. He taught her how to prepare doses. She was told the names of all important medicinal trees, shrubs and herbs.

Her grandpa was amazed by Rehema's power of understanding. "You are a fast learner," he complimented her. In the afternoon Tererio came to visit her. She was completely healed, only a scar was remaining where the wound had been. Even her grandpa was flabbergasted.

"You have to show me what you did. Tonight your grandma and I need to talk to you," he told her.

Rehema and Tererio were very happy to be together again. She told her in a few days time she would be going back to Randiera City. Rehema asked her new friend to accompany her to the outskirts of the forest to greet baby elephant the following day.

Tererio hated all animals, but she could not turn down the request after all

the kindness that she had been shown. She agreed. They went to visit Arumani. Then she saw them. She realized her granddaughter was completely healed.

She broke into a dance. "Thank you, Maker of Heaven and Earth, bless this young one for remembering me. It is a miracle....!" she was chanting, shouting and jumping. Neighbours heard her and came to check on what had happened.

Arumani was ecstatic and shouting words of thanks to the powers of the Providence. Rehema ran back to her grandpa.

Without knowing exactly how it had happened, Arumani was telling everybody how Rehema had healed Tererio instantly. The villagers knew how the girl used to suffer walking with her left hand lifted high because of the festering wound in her armpit.

They could not believe it. But she was now walking properly and she was not in pain.

"Yes, Arumani is not mad," said an old man.

"This is a miracle. Even the forest keeper, and our most powerful medicine man was unable to cure her. Yes, even the white man's medicine. This is a miracle."

In the evening grandma and grandpa sat Rehema down. They told her that one day they would leave everything they had to her.

"But for now, you must go back to your mama and papa. Every holiday we want you to come here and be with us. At school you must work hard, and be what you told us at one time, a doctor or a pilot," grandpa told her.

Her grandma added: "With the white man's knowledge about medicine, and what the good one who is never seen has bestowed on you, you will be able to save people and nature. You are a very lucky girl."

As they were talking, the telephone rang. Grandpa took it. The call was from Rehema's mother.

"Your father is very sick," Grandpa informed them after putting down the receiver. "You have to go home tomorrow."

SIX

Rehema loved her mama and papa very much. She was sad to hear that her papa was very sick. The following day, very early in the morning her grandparents took her to the bus stand, to leave for home.

She was carrying the two bags she had woven; one for her mama, the other one for herself. They were full of medicinal herbs, barks and roots cut into very small pieces and packaged accordingly in small polythene bags.

“Concentrate on reading and learning at school. The time will come to take up your new assignment. Be a good girl at home just like you have always been,” her grandma counselled.

On reaching Randiera Country Bus Station in the city her mama was at hand waiting. She admired the bags Rehema had weaved. She liked the larger one, which Rehema said was for her.

Rehema’s mama was irked by the concoctions inside the two bags. She wanted to throw them away. “Rehema, why have you brought this rubbish from your grandpa?” she asked.

“Mama, please, don’t throw my things away,” she begged her.

“We’ll see,” she said.

When they reached home, without wasting time her mama prepared food, which they took to Randiera National Hospital where papa had been hospitalized.

Rehema was shocked to see how frail and yellowish her papa had turned. She felt tears welling



up in her eyes. She loved her Papa with all her heart.

She recalled how her father long time ago had denounced his father's calling as a medicineman. Her papa believed herbs and all kinds of traditional medicines were barbaric and could never cure any ailment.

He was a perfect follower of modernity. "Papa, Papa," she called him, "you must take these herbs. I need you to be strong because I love you very much."

The sick man turned to look at his daughter. He felt as if death was closing in on him. He was desperate and very anxious. He wanted to see his daughter and son grow to maturity. That could not happen if he was in the grave.

"O my young one, I'd do anything you tell me," he said. She quickly prepared some herbs with bottled water her mother had brought to hospital. The man drank the concoction in small sips. He was too weak to gulp the drink quickly.

Just as he was sipping the last drop, the doctor entered into the ward. "What is that you have given your husband?" he asked Rehema's mama

Even before she could answer, he concluded, "It must be something to do with witchcraft. You will be a lesson to others."

Without waiting for an explanation, he immediately called security guards, who searched the bags they were carrying. They found in Rehema's bag some herbs.

"Yes, this is witchcraft," one guard said. They called the police. Despite

her sick husband's protest, she was handcuffed and led to the police station where she was accused of attempting to poison a patient.

Rehema was distraught. "Papa, how can they do this to mama?" she asked her papa. Now it was already night. Rehema left for home alone, sobbing. How sad! Her mama had to spend a night in the police cells.



After a few hours, Rehema's father started regaining strength. He asked for food for the first time in days.

He was sure now he would get better. Rehema's medicine had worked. He was full of joy at regaining his health but felt so sad for the unfair arrest of his wife.

"No, no, they should not punish my wife for nothing. They shouldn't," he thought aloud.

When the doctor came to see him during the night round, Rehema's papa said he felt healed and ready to leave the hospital. The doctor examined him: His skin was fast turning to normal. His body temperature too was normal. There were all the signs that he had miraculously improved, almost healed completely.

"Maybe the witchcraft works," the doctor thought silently as he wrote a discharge note. "I am sorry for wrongly accusing your wife of giving you poison. I will have her released first thing in the morning. I promise," the doctor said.

The following day he left the hospital very early in the morning. He went to the police station to see if his wife had been set free. True to the doctor's word, he had already phoned the station, and they were just about to release her.

At home, Rehema was just weeping. Her eyes were scarlet red after sobbing the whole night. She thought the world was so unfair. She felt overwhelmingly heartbroken. Then suddenly she saw her parents on the main road, coming home. She ran all the way to meet them..

She was very happy to see her dear parents. Do you know what they told her? "Rehema, we will never throw away your animal and plant sketches. You can draw as many as you want. You can even grow a small forest next door in the plot that we don't use. It is now all yours."

This was music to her ears. Rehema was so grateful to her mama and papa. "Thank you so much my parents. I love you," she told them.

The end

Want to learn some new words?

Amateur - untrained, inexperienced

Bliss – great joy, thrill

Reprimand – warn, reproof, rebuke, scold

Spectacular – fantastic, very impressive

Pensive – thoughtful

Witchdoctor – traditional doctor who uses herbs, spirits, other materials

Medicine man – traditional doctor who used herbs

Periphery - outside edge

Serenity – quietness, peaceful

Perplexed – surprised

Reverie – Daydream

Commotion – disturbance

Mystified – surprised