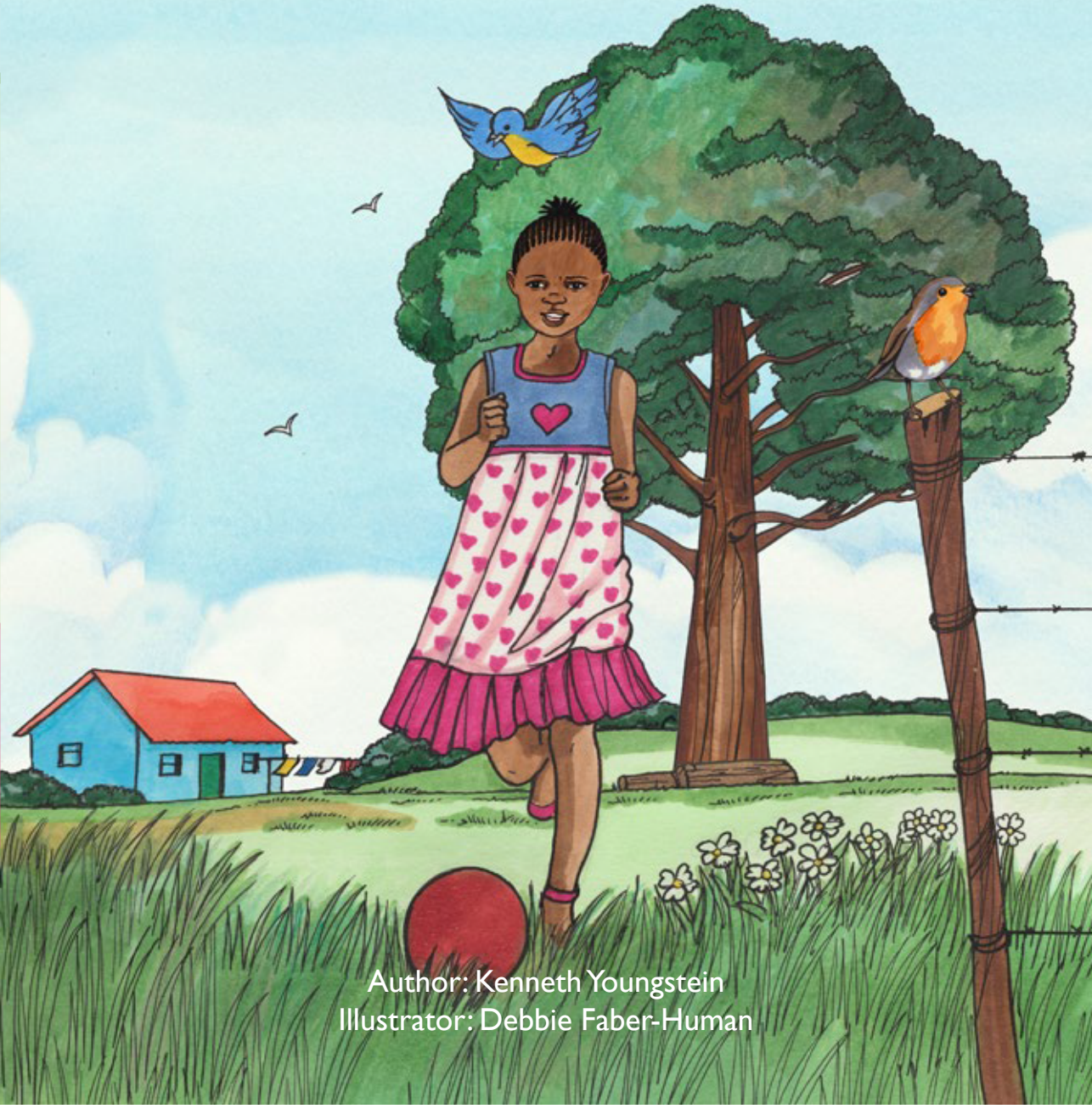


Mapalo and the Singing Tree



Author: Kenneth Youngstein
Illustrator: Debbie Faber-Human



MAPALO AND THE SINGING TREE

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Room to Read seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education. Working in collaboration with local communities, partner organizations and governments, we develop literacy skills and a habit of reading among primary school children, and support girls to complete secondary school with the relevant life skills to succeed in school and beyond.

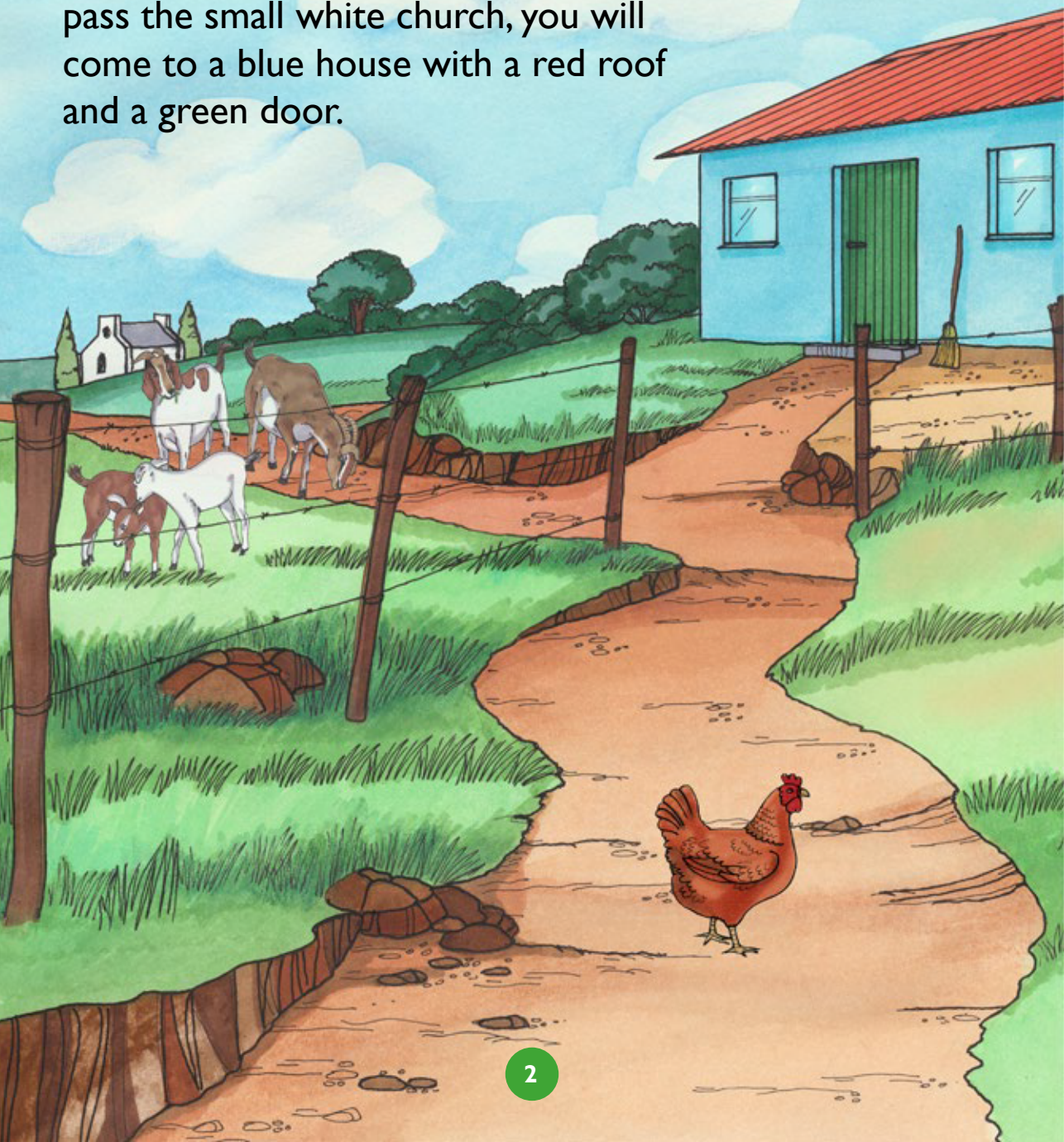
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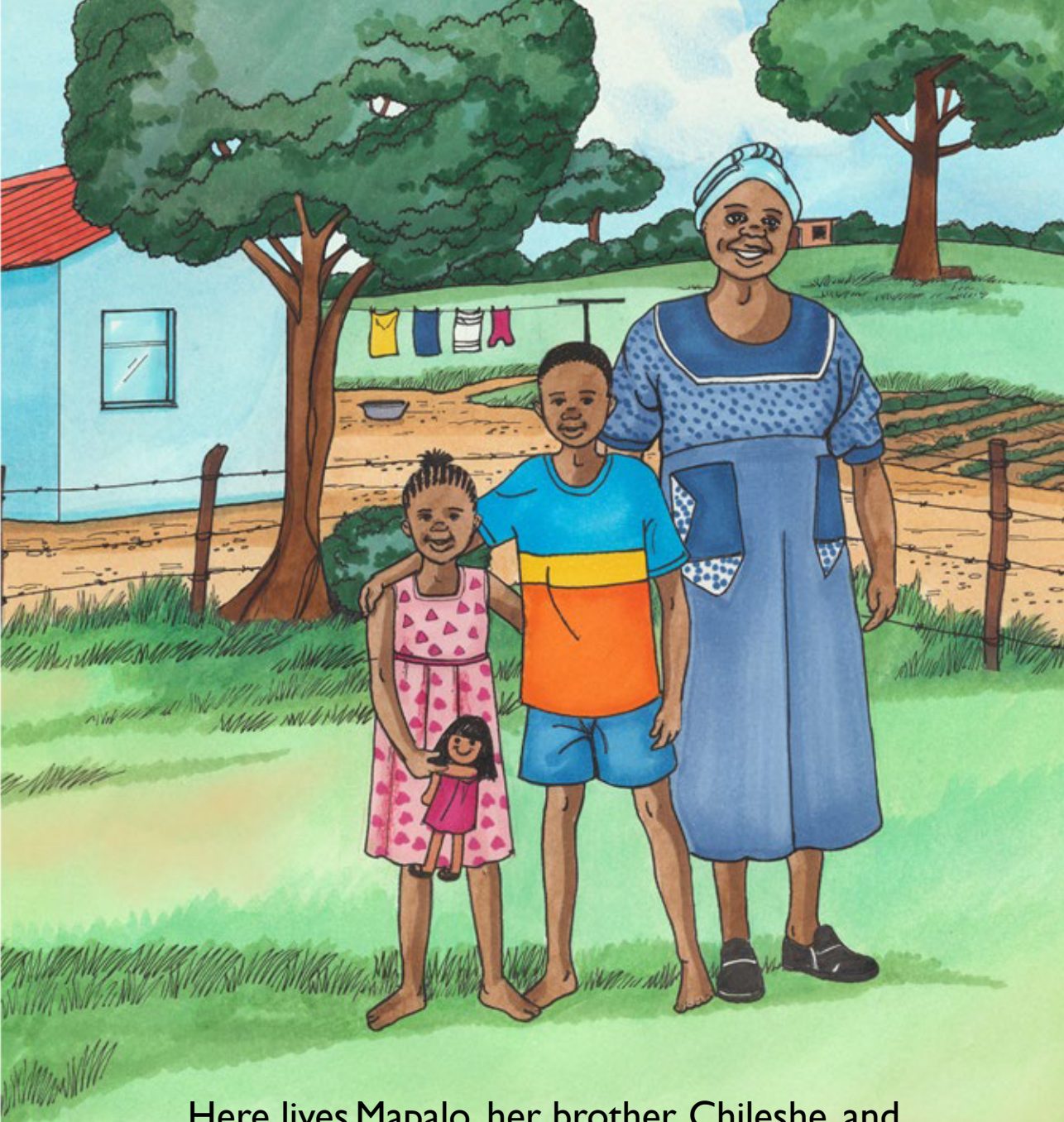
Mapalo and the Singing Tree



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If you walk down the red clay road and pass the small white church, you will come to a blue house with a red roof and a green door.





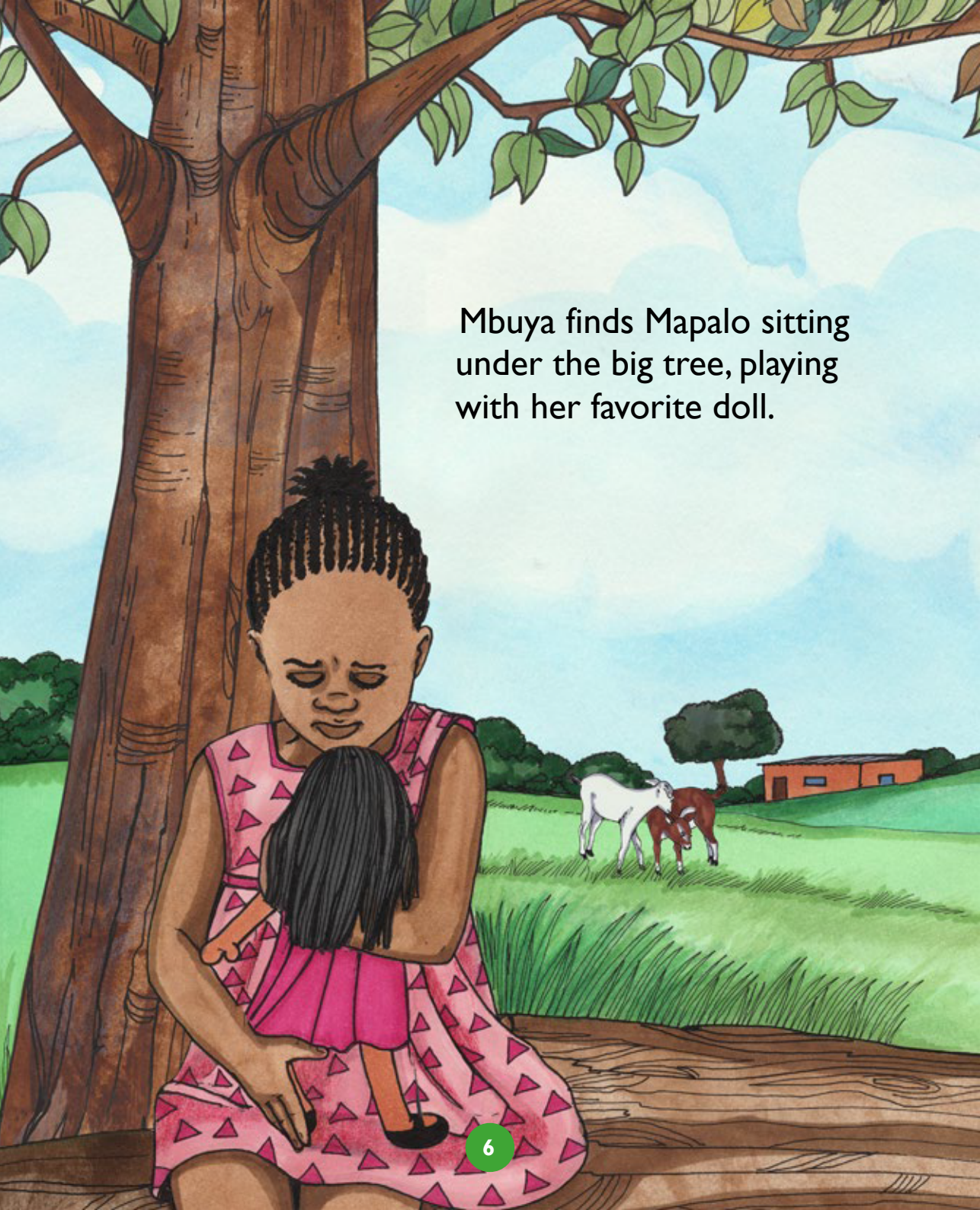
Here lives Mapalo, her brother, Chileshe, and their Mbuya.

Mbuya is in the kitchen, cooking dinner. From the window she can see Chileshe and other children playing. But where is Mapalo?



Mbuya takes off her apron and goes to look for her granddaughter.



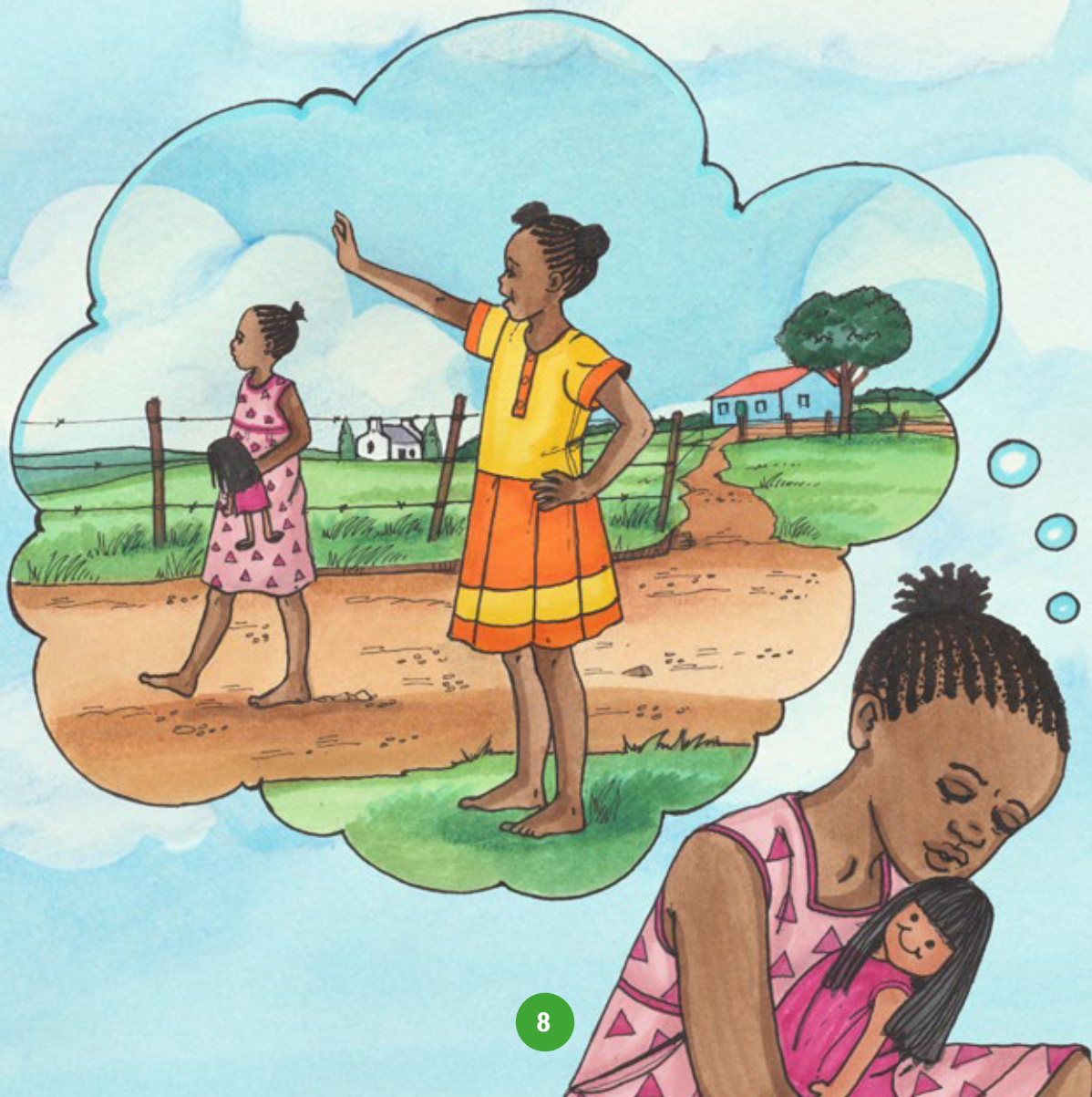
A young girl with dark skin and braided hair is sitting on the ground under a large, thick tree trunk. She is wearing a pink sleeveless dress with a pattern of small pink triangles. She is holding a doll with long black hair and a pink dress. The background shows a green field with two cows (one white, one brown) and a small orange building in the distance under a blue sky with light clouds.

Mbuya finds Mapalo sitting
under the big tree, playing
with her favorite doll.



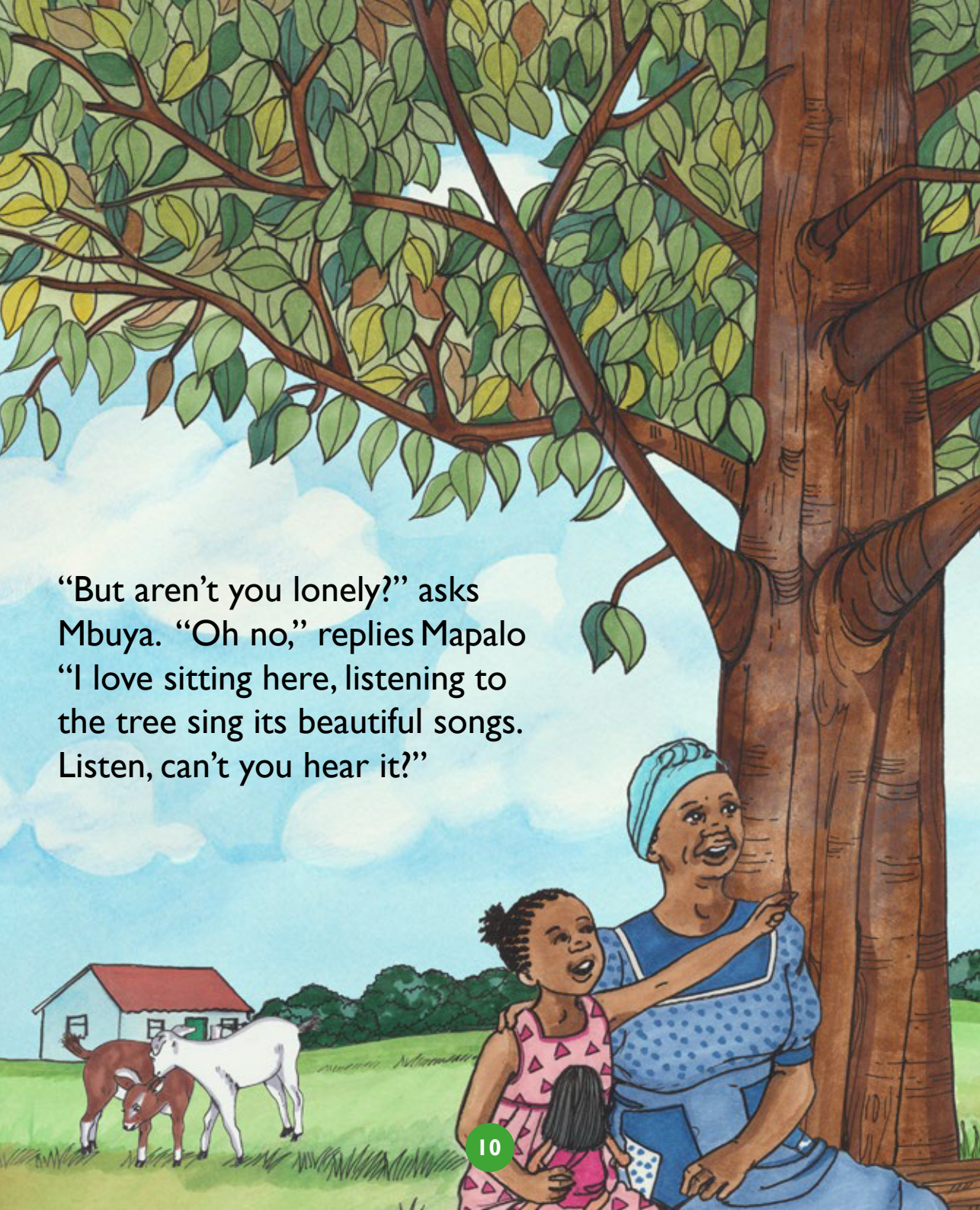
Mbuya asks Mapalo, “Why are you sitting here, all alone?”
“Oh,” replies Mapalo. “The other children don’t want to play with me.”

“What about playing with your friend Chipo ?” asks Mbuya.
“Chipo is mad at me,” replies Mapalo. “She said that last week she waved to me and I ignored her. Mbuya, I really didn’t see her.”



“What about playing with your brother?” asks Mbuya.
“Chileshe doesn’t like to play with me,” sighs Mapalo. “He says that every time he kicks the ball to me, I miss it.”



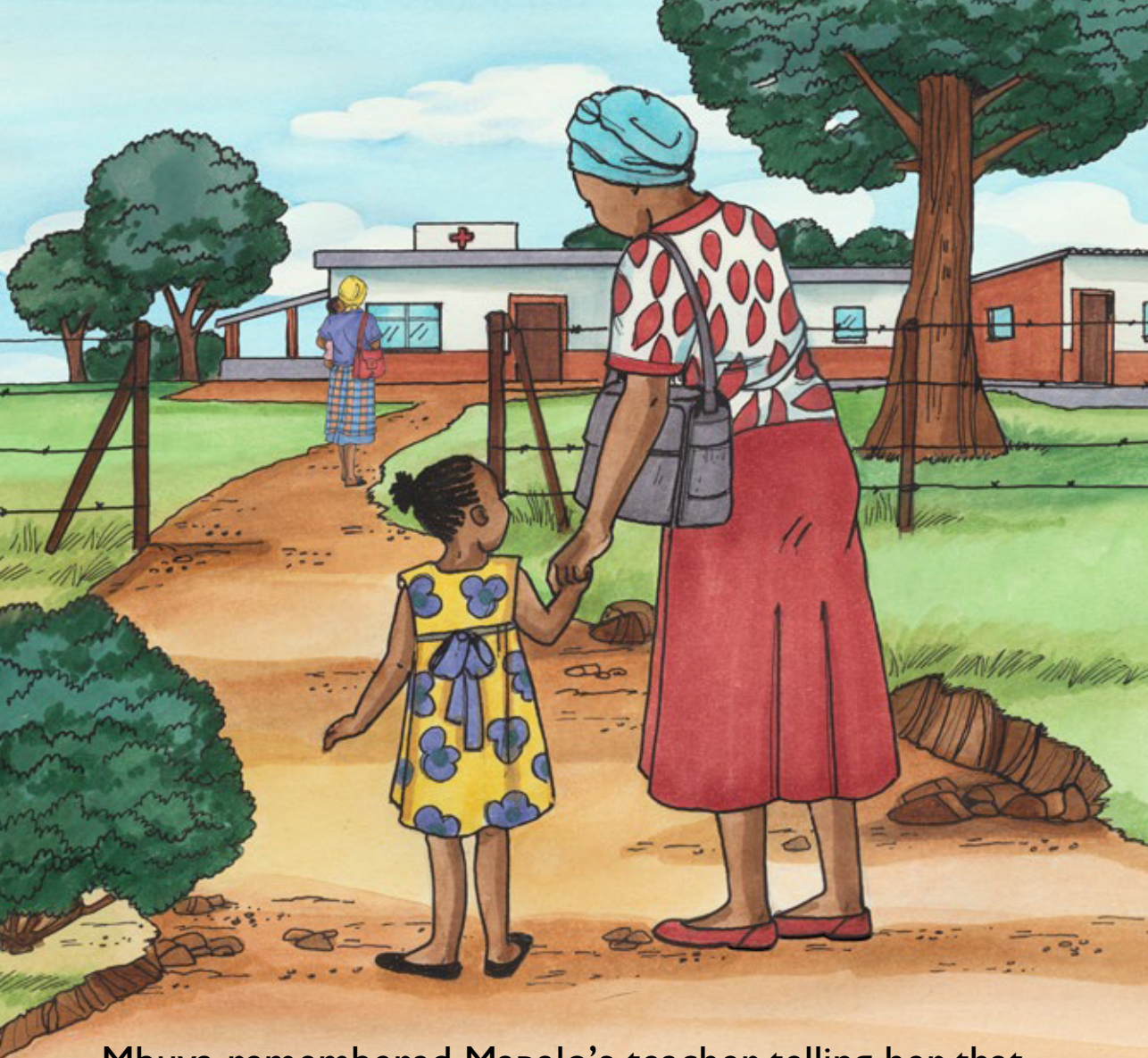


“But aren’t you lonely?” asks Mbuya. “Oh no,” replies Mapalo “I love sitting here, listening to the tree sing its beautiful songs. Listen, can’t you hear it?”

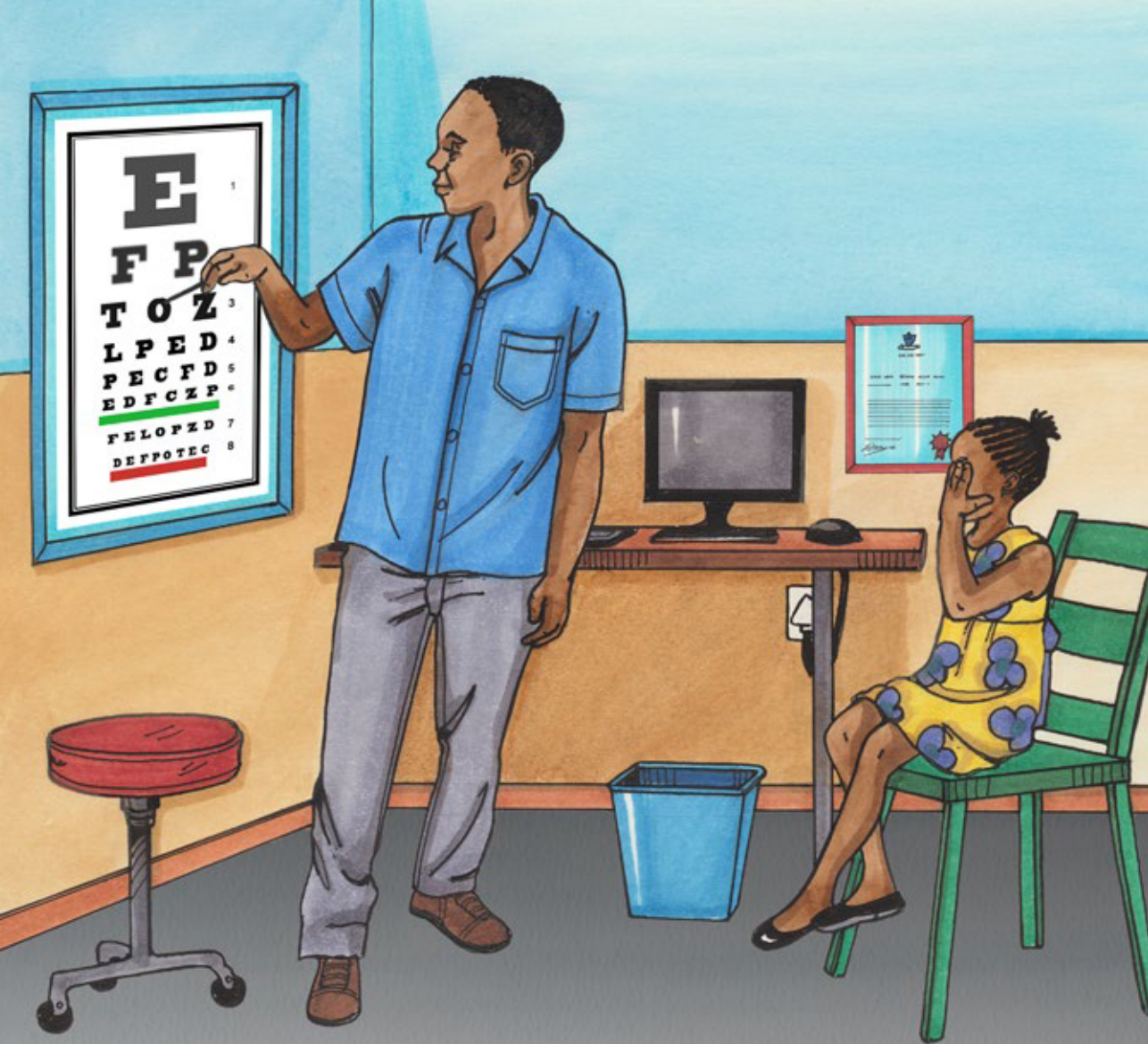


Mbuya listens and then looks up into the tree and sees a beautiful kingfisher, a cuckoo, and a robin, all singing their songs.



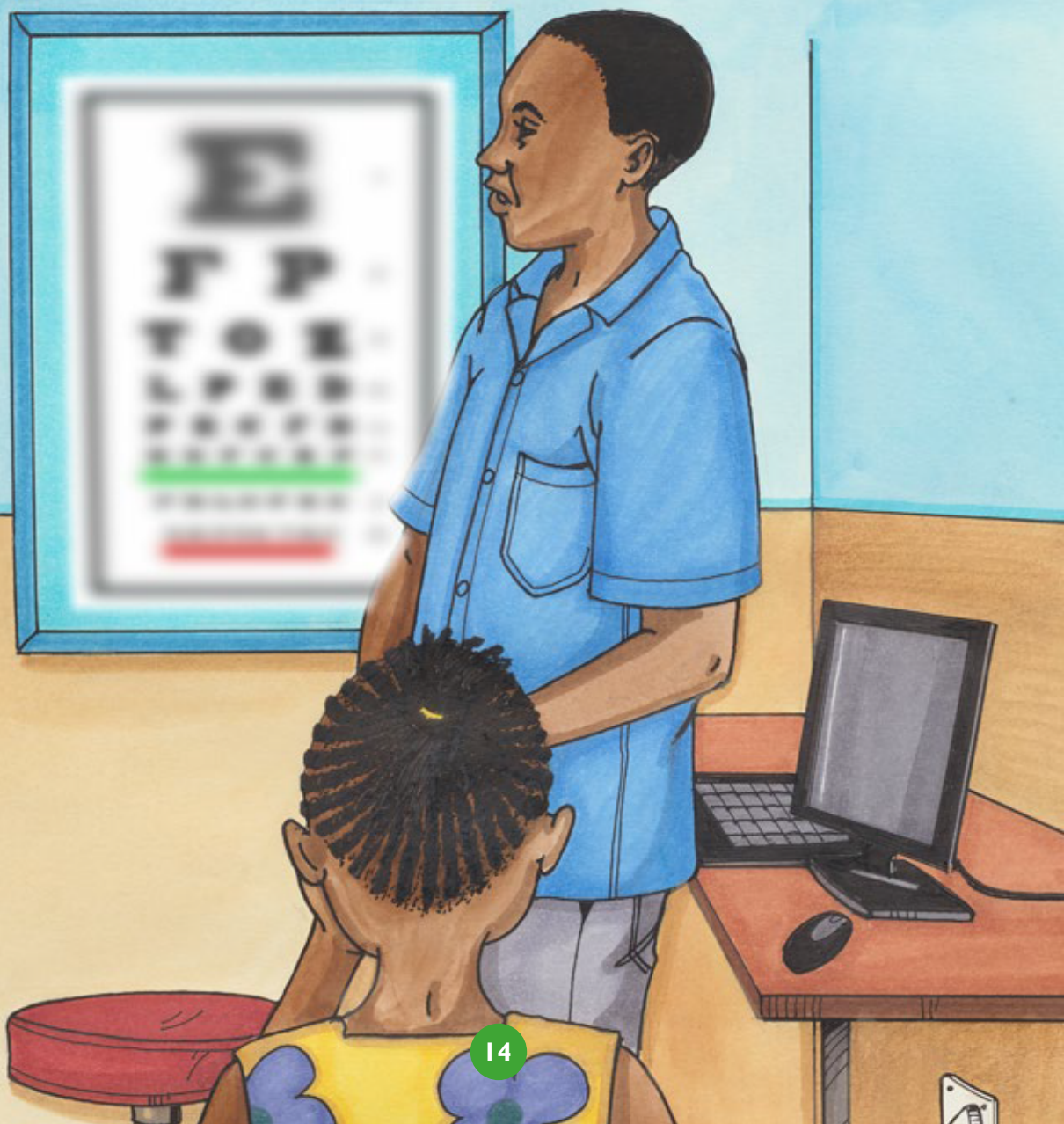


Mbuya remembered Mapalo's teacher telling her that Mapalo struggles to see what she writes on the chalkboard. So, early the next morning, Mbuya and Mapalo walk to the local clinic.

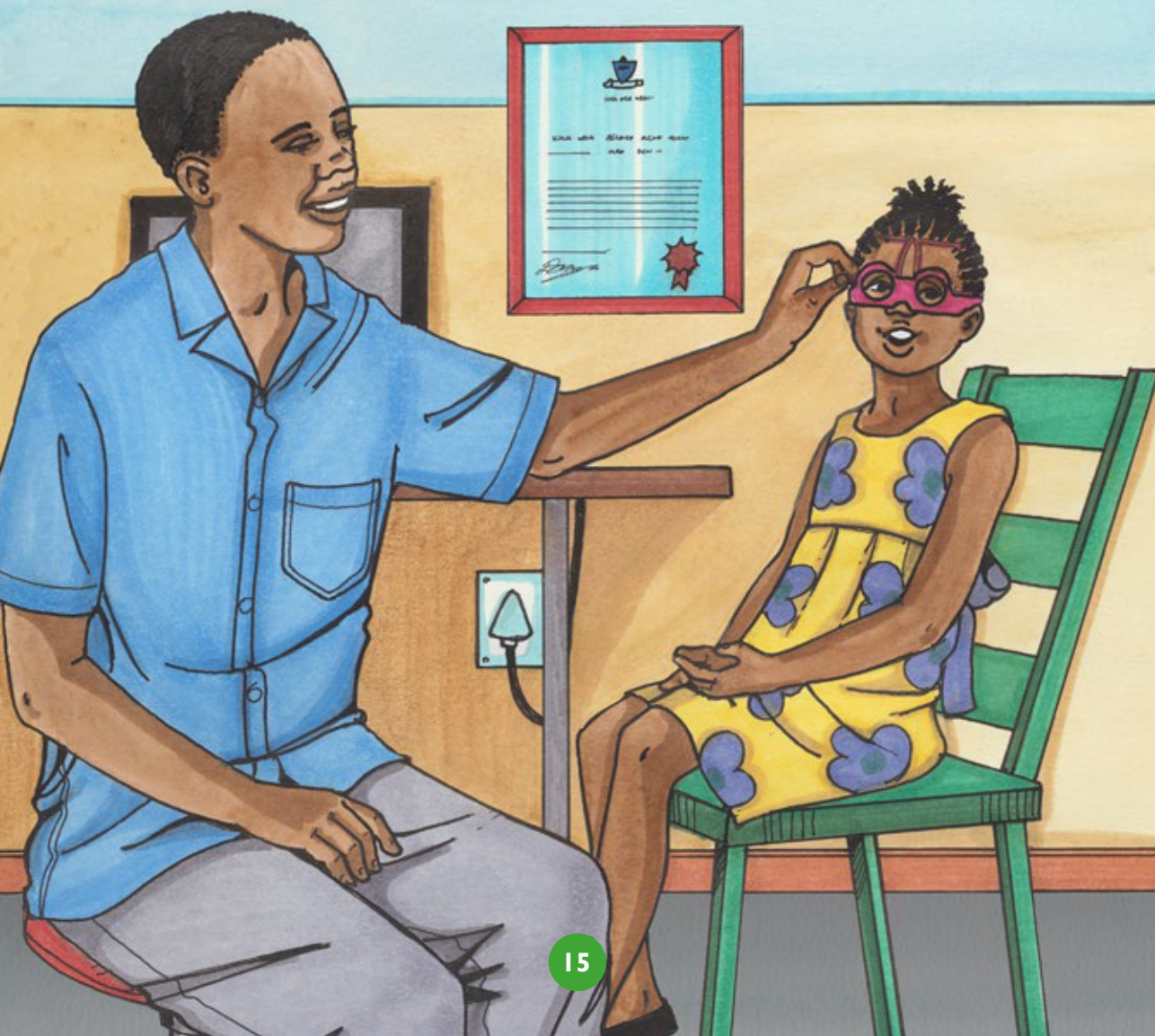


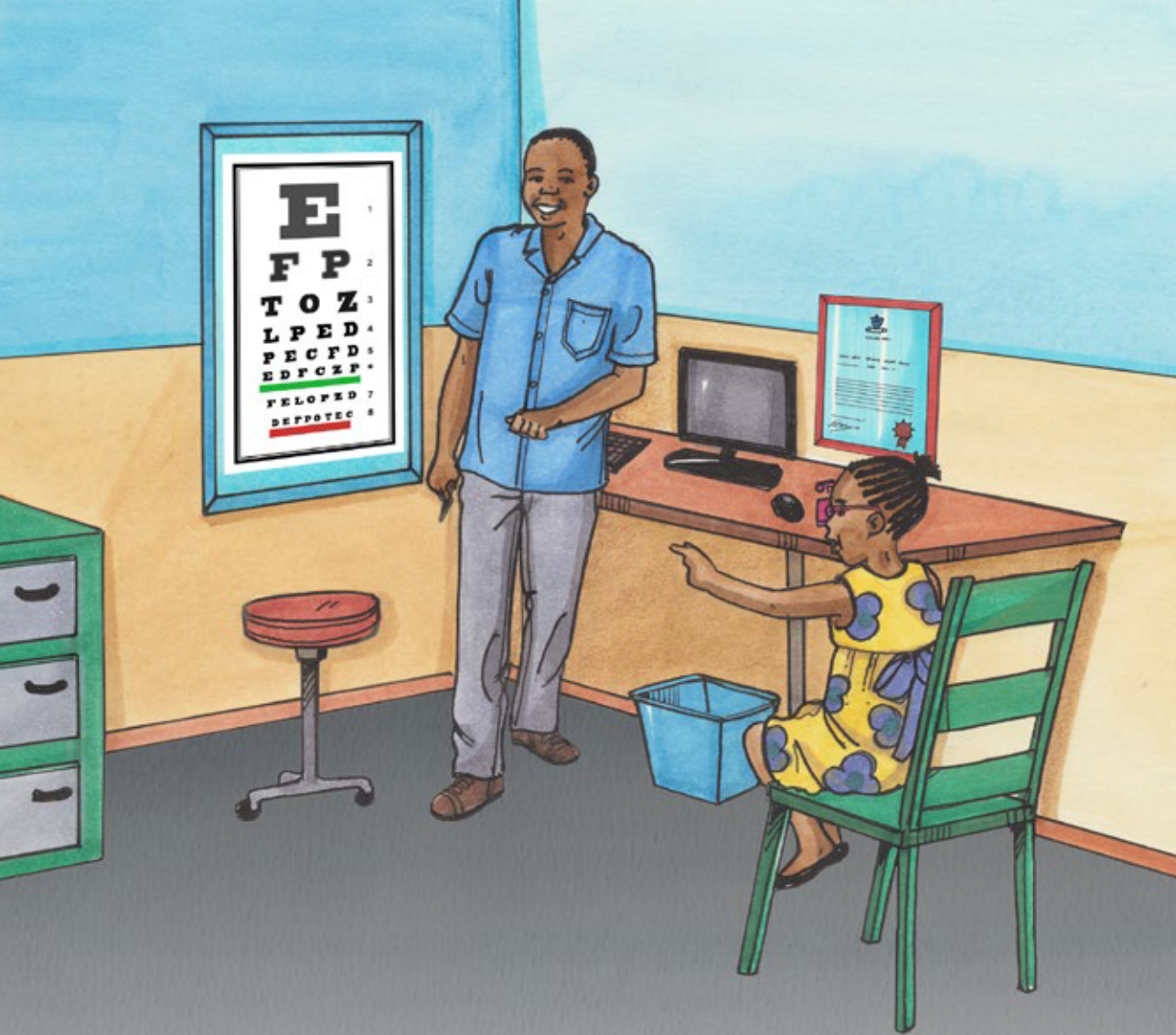
At the clinic, they meet Mr. Zulu. He asks Mapalo to cover one eye with her hand and tell him what she sees on the chart.

Mapalo looks and looks and says, “I can see something, but I am not sure what it is.”



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





“I can see,” shouts Mapalo.

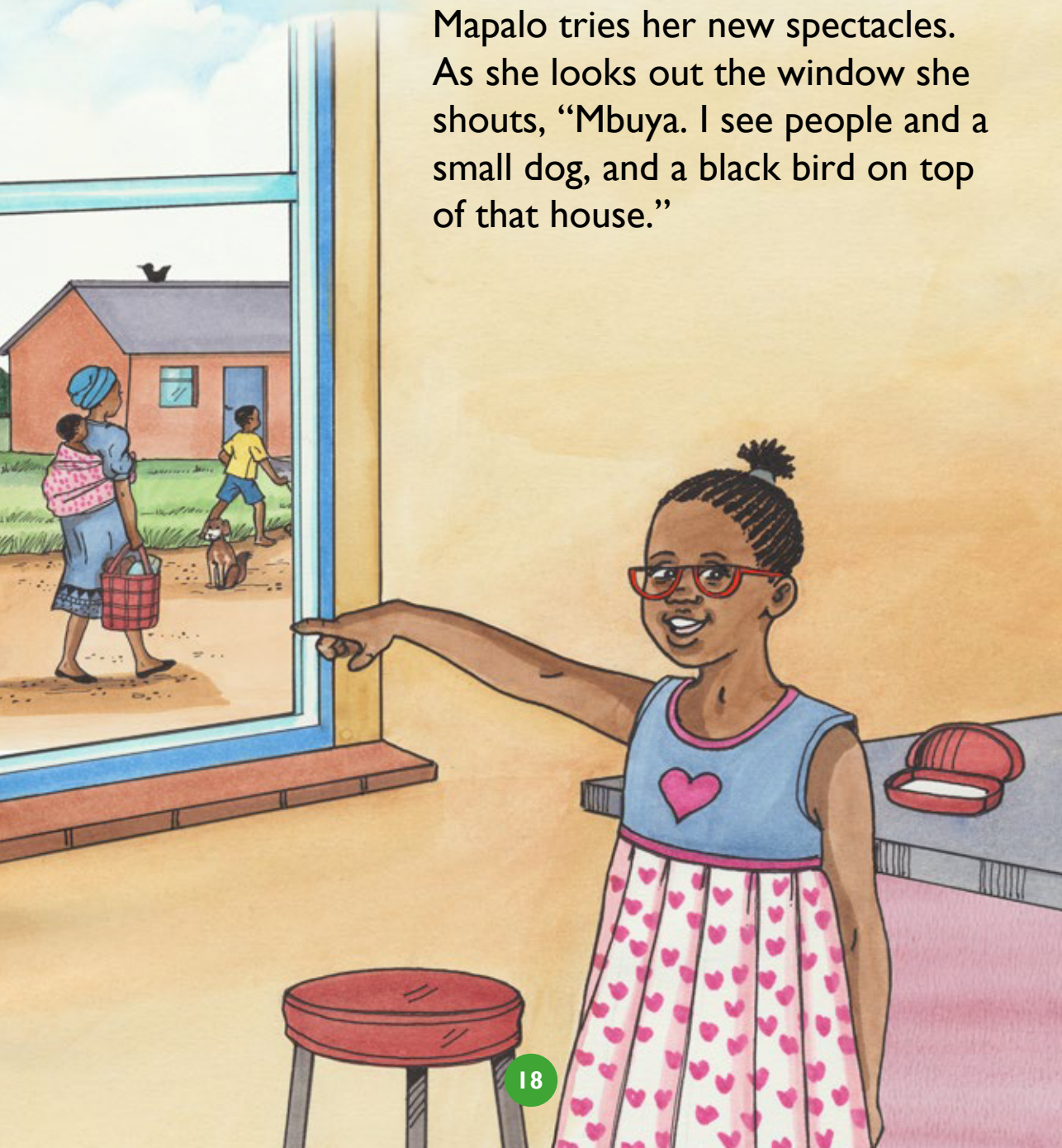
“I can see the letter E and F and P and even the little letters, P, Z, and D.” “That’s perfect,” says Mr. Zulu

“All you need are spectacles, and you will see just fine.”

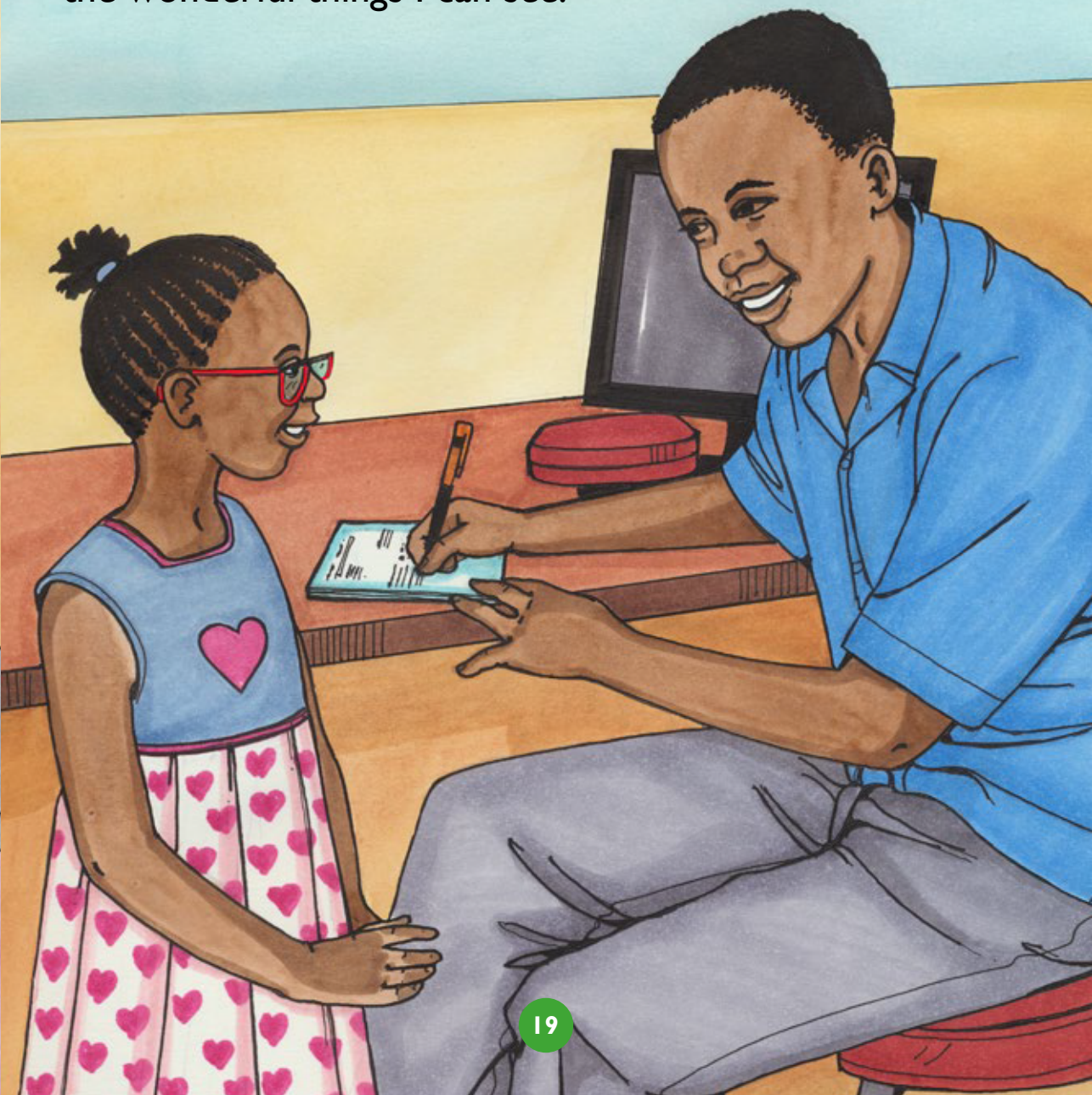


The nurse takes Mapalo and Mbuya to another room where there are many shelves filled with spectacles of all sizes and colours. Mapalo chooses the bright red frames. “A good choice,” says Mbuya.

After one week, Mapalo and Mbuya return to Mr. Zulu's office and Mapalo tries her new spectacles. As she looks out the window she shouts, "Mbuya. I see people and a small dog, and a black bird on top of that house."



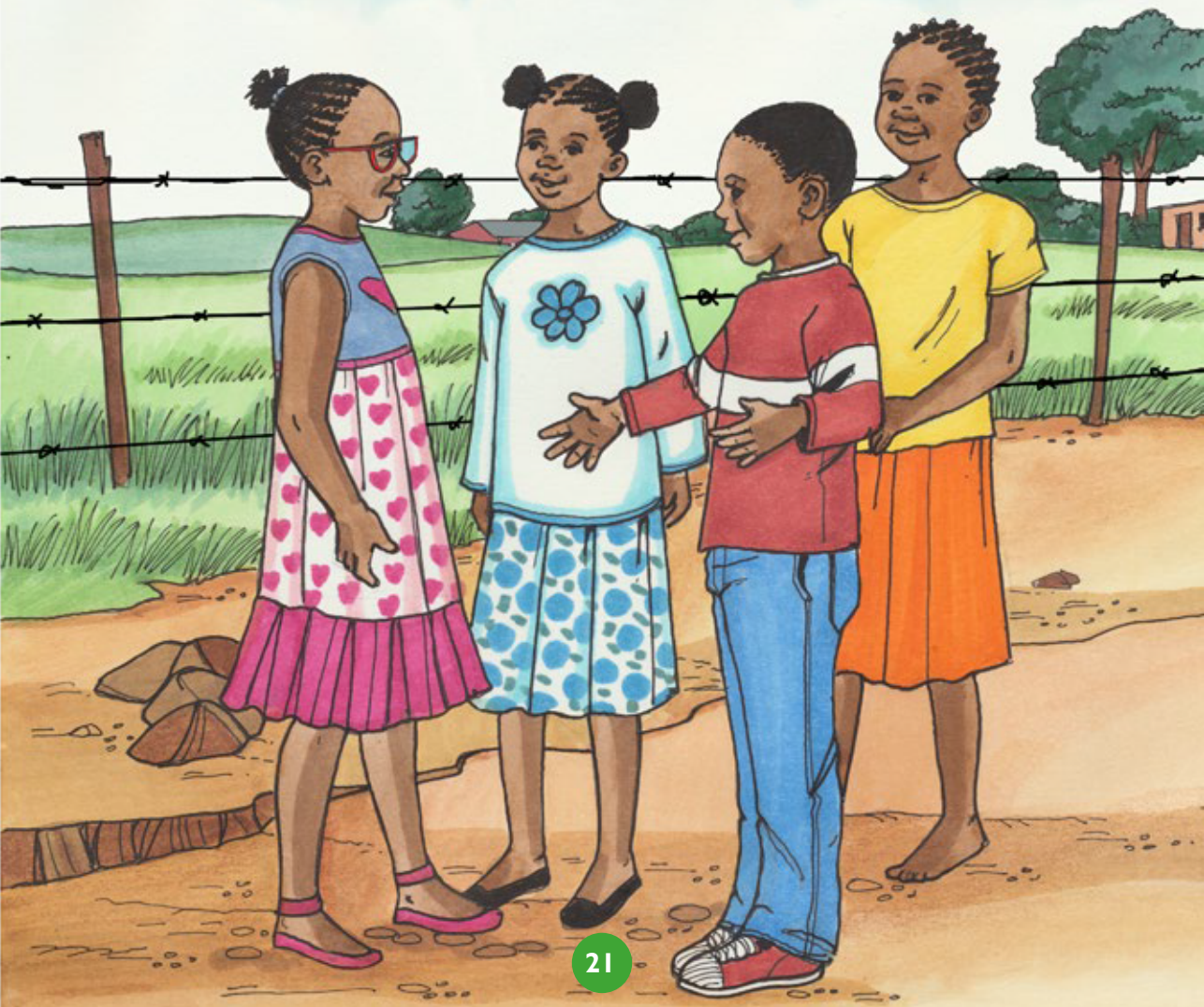
“Mapalo,” says Mr. Zulu, “I want you to promise me that you will wear your spectacles every day.” “Oh yes,” replies Mapalo. “I promise. I promise. I love my spectacles and all the wonderful things I can see.”



As Mbuya and Mapalo walk home, Mapalo sees Chipo on the other side of the road. “Hi, Chipo,” Mapalo shouts and waves. Chipo smiles and waves back.

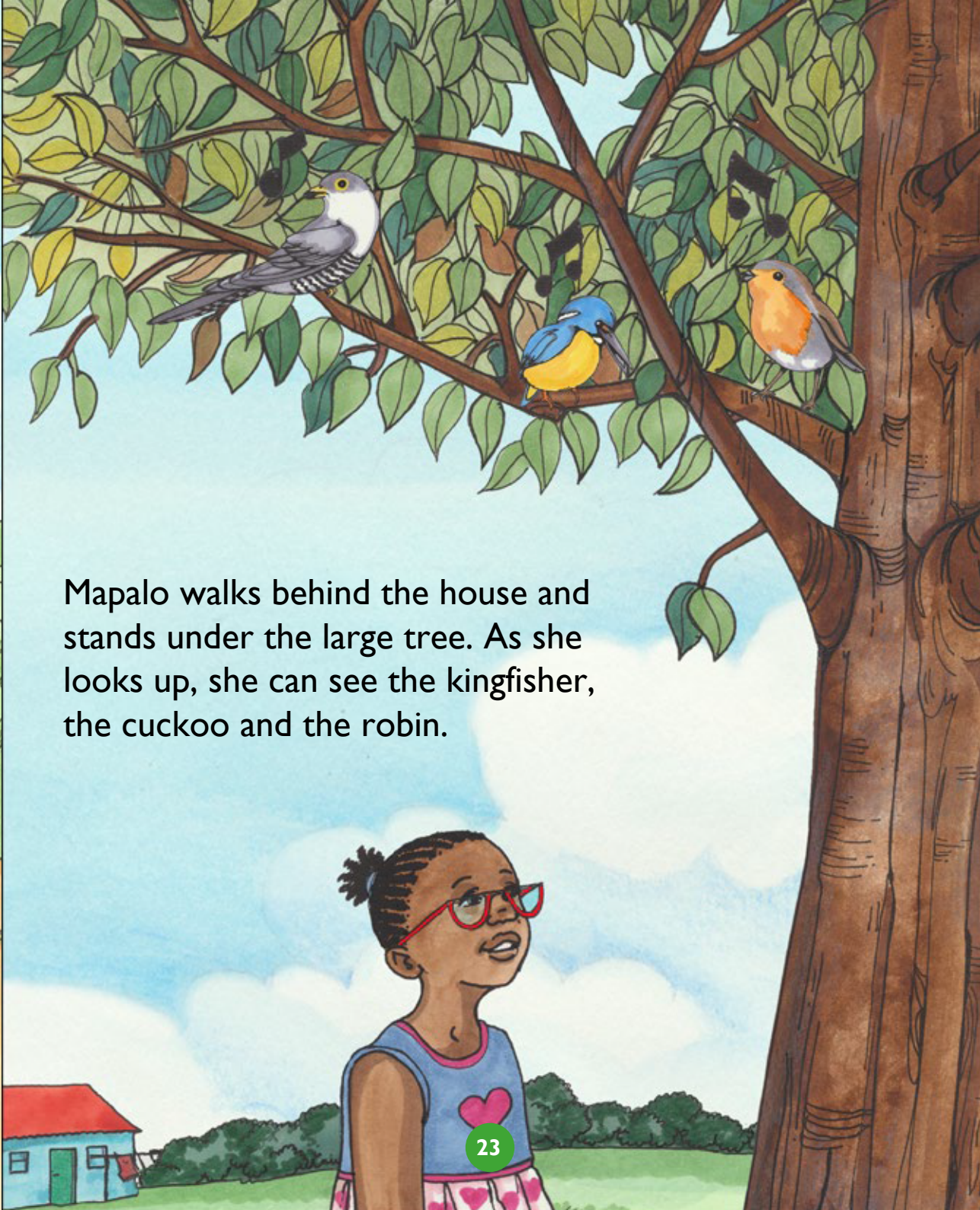


Just as Mbuya and Mapalo reach their house, they meet some of Mapalo's school friends. "Oh Mapalo, I love your spectacles," says one girl. "They make you look very smart," comments one of the boys. "Maybe I also need spectacles?" remarks one of the other girls.

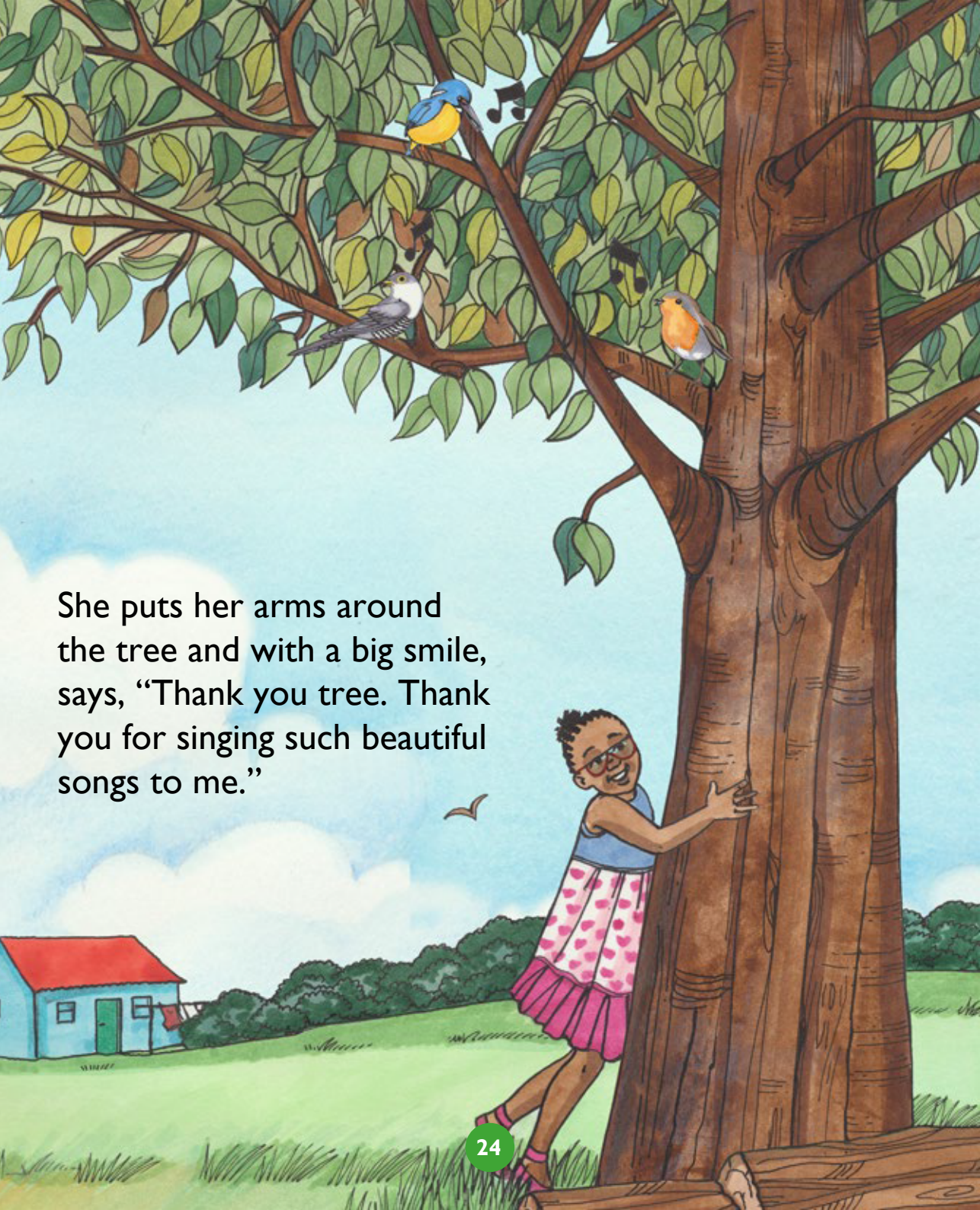


All of a sudden, a ball comes rolling towards Mapalo. Mapalo quickly kicks the ball back to her brother. “Do you want to play?” asks Chileshe. “Yes,” she replies. “But first I have something very important to do.”





Mapalo walks behind the house and stands under the large tree. As she looks up, she can see the kingfisher, the cuckoo and the robin.



She puts her arms around
the tree and with a big smile,
says, “Thank you tree. Thank
you for singing such beautiful
songs to me.”

The other children do not want to play with Mapalo. Her favourite place is under the big tree behind their house where she sits sad and alone, listening to the singing of the tree. Mapalo's grandmother worries about Mapalo and decides to find out why she is sad and lonely.
What will grandmother find out?



Author

Kenneth Youngstein has spent forty years developing educational programs for healthcare professionals and patients throughout the world.



Illustrator

Debbie Faber-Human was born in 1957. She started working at the SABC in 1978 as an illustrator and illustrated the children's television series *Wielie Walie* and various other television programs for 17 years. Prisma Graphics was formed in 1992, with the main focus on the illustrating of school books. Her passion is shared with her husband and as a team they do illustrations and graphics for all the major publishers of school books in RSA, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho.

Dedication

This book was made possible through the cooperation of the local community, Room to Read, Ingrid Barrage and Orbis Africa. It is dedicated to the children and teachers of Zambia, in whom lie the hope for a bright future through the power of education.



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