

**INCLUDES**

interesting  
nutritional facts on  
various fruits and  
vegetables

# Sibo Goes Bananas



by  
**Ginny Stone**

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## *CHAPTER ONE*

# The School Spaza





"Sibo," mum said at supper, "don't make any plans for next weekend. We are going to visit the family at Flat-Water Stills."

"Oh great!" Sibbo looked at her mum, "But... aren't we taking malaria pills this time?"

"Yes, we are," her mother waved a packet of tablets around. "We'll start taking them tonight." She handed her daughter a pill and a glass of water. Sibbo swallowed it without any fuss; she knew Malaria was a nasty disease and definitely did not want to get sick.

Yes, we will  
take pills!





"Dad, please may I borrow your cell phone to send Mpho a message?" Dad handed his phone over with a smile.

Sibo sent her cousin Mpho a WhatsApp text,

"Awesome news! We are coming to visit next weekend, can I bring you anything?"

She stared at the screen anxiously, waiting for an answer. Then she smacked herself on the head, "Silly me! This goes to Mpho's dad's phone – it will probably take some time before she answers the message."



Sibo helped her mum clean the kitchen. Then she finished her homework and went to bed early. She wasn't sleepy, but she wanted to think about all the fun things that she and her cousin would be doing the following weekend.

The last time they had visited Flat-Water Stills, a group of kids had played at being 'Malaria Detectives'. They had emptied all the containers lying around filled with smelly old water, so that the mosquitoes could not breed in them. They had also fixed holes in window and door screens. It was great fun.

Sibo smiled as she thought about the bat house on a tall pole in the schoolyard. The little flying creatures helped keep the mosquito population down by snacking on them.







The next morning at breakfast, Sibho's dad said, "Here Sibho, you've got a WhatsApp from Mpho." He handed his cell phone to Sibho. She took the phone eagerly and read the message aloud.

"Yay! We are having a School Spaza on Saturday. We're going to sell fruit. Can you bring some paper bags?"

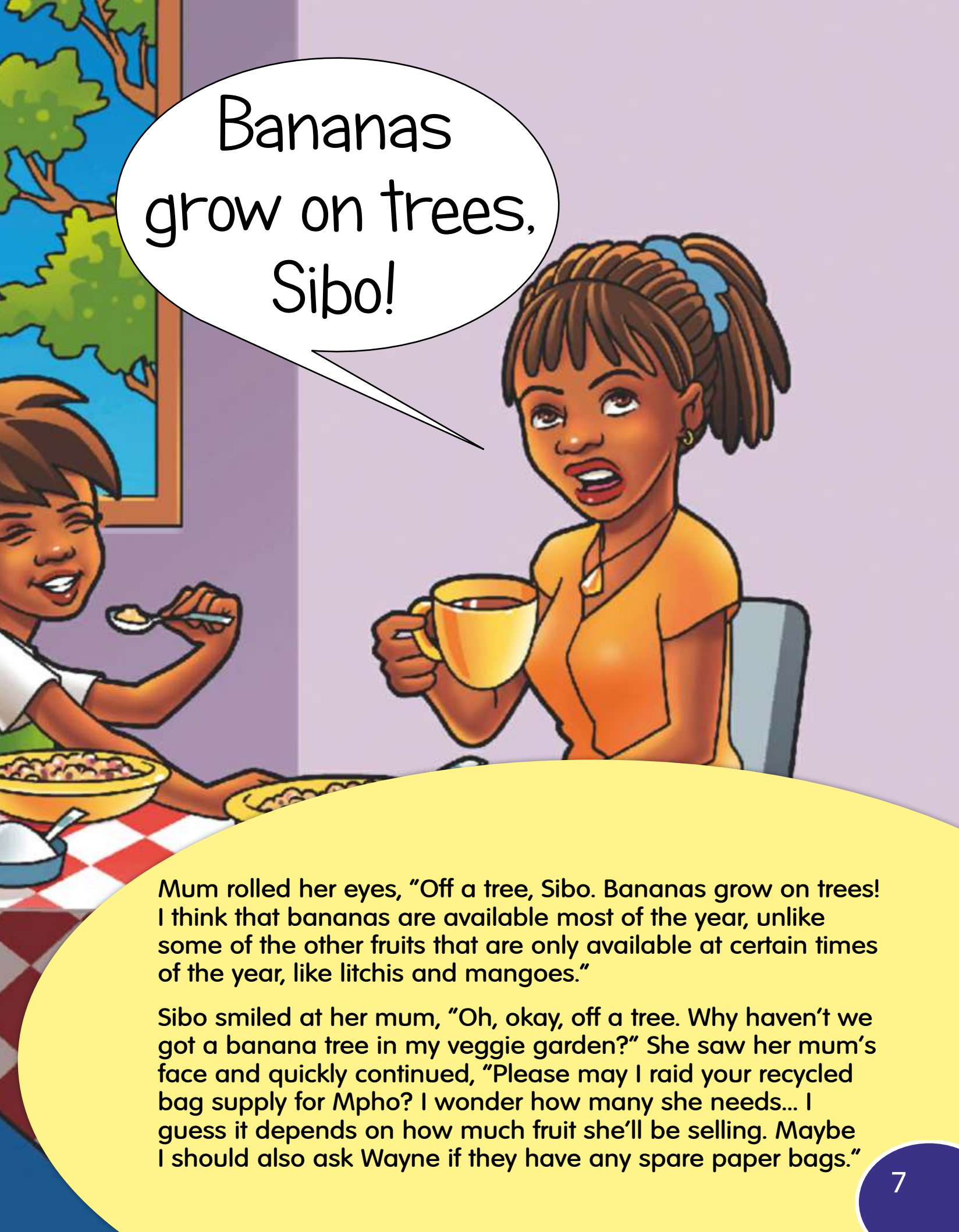
"Ooh!" yelled Sibho so loudly that her mum winced. "A School Spaza! That sounds awesome. I wonder what kind of fruit they will sell. I love fruit. Just as well I've got some money saved. I hope they have bananas."



Dad grinned, "Bananas, mangoes, litchis, guavas, paw-paws, pineapples... all the fruit you like grows there. Many people grow fruit on their property too, so they can be self-sufficient. Just as well, because the fruit grown in Limpopo gets transported to Johannesburg, is packaged and then goes back to Polokwane again, so the people end up paying more."

"What?" yelled Sibó, "People grow their own bananas? You mean they can just go outside and pick a banana off a bush whenever they want to? Really?"





Bananas  
grow on trees,  
Sibho!

Mum rolled her eyes, "Off a tree, Sibho. Bananas grow on trees! I think that bananas are available most of the year, unlike some of the other fruits that are only available at certain times of the year, like litchis and mangoes."

Sibho smiled at her mum, "Oh, okay, off a tree. Why haven't we got a banana tree in my veggie garden?" She saw her mum's face and quickly continued, "Please may I raid your recycled bag supply for Mpho? I wonder how many she needs... I guess it depends on how much fruit she'll be selling. Maybe I should also ask Wayne if they have any spare paper bags."



"We've got some bags, Sibó. Maybe you can ask your friends too. I'm sure some of the other kids at Mpho's school would also appreciate having bags."

Sibó's mum knew that bags were not always so plentiful in the rural areas, especially paper bags.

"I wonder what else there will be for sale at the School Spaza?" Sibó was very excited and wished she didn't have to wait a whole week before they went to visit Flat-Water Stills.





I'm sure there will be nice fresh veggies and maybe some home-made goodies too." Dad smiled at his daughter, she was always hungry for knowledge.

"Avos," murmured her mother, "Yes! It is always avo season too I wouldn't mind stocking up on some of those. There are so many wonderful things you can do with avocados.

Sibo sent a WhatsApp back to Mpho saying that she'd bring lots of bags, and if there was anything else they needed, she should let her know.



She'd never been to a *School Spaza* before. What a great idea to sell fruit – not only tasty but healthy too. Sibon decided to do some research during the week on the different kinds of fruit. It would help the time pass more quickly.

She discovered that Limpopo grew more tomatoes than any other place in the Southern Hemisphere. Bananas were marvellous things, but she knew that already. She found out that guavas were little gems too, packed with fibre and nutrients, as well as being an excellent snack for a person who wanted to lose weight.



"What does a person wear to your *School Spaza*?"

Sibo sent Mpho a text a few days before they were due to leave. She wanted to make sure that she packed the right clothes.

"Comfortable shoes," Mpho replied, "and bring a hat – it's hot outside."

Sibo looked at her parents, "Mum, did you hear that? You need to take comfy shoes, not fancy high-heels! You can take your pretty straw hat. Dad, pack in your new cap."







The night before they were about to leave, Dad gave Sibona her pocket money to spend at the School Spaza.

"Make sure you pack in socks and long-sleeved shirts for the night time. You don't want the mozzies to bite you," he reminded Sibona.

Sibona packed her case and then counted the brown bags that she had managed to collect.

"...28, 29, 30 – sjoe! I hope that's going to be enough," she sighed, smoothing them all out and putting them into one big bag.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Sibo Gets Ready





*School Spaza* day had finally arrived!

Sibo woke up early. She looked at her cousin lying under the mosquito net, "Psst! Mpho! Are you awake?" Mpho did not move.

"Come on, Mpho! Wake up! You don't want to be late for your *School Spaza* do you?"

Mpho groaned, stretched and then snorted out laughing, "Sibo, you silly Billy! It only starts at nine o'clock. We've got loads of time. Anyway, we still have to eat breakfast and wash the fruit.

Sibo had already climbed into her clothes and was busy lacing up her trainers.

Psst! Mpho!  
Are you awake?





"Where's the fruit? I'll wash it while you get dressed," Sibbo offered.

It's in a big box in the kitchen. We need to wash it very carefully so that it's nice and clean. Ready for people to eat."

"Yes," agreed Sibbo, "Mum always makes me wash fruit before I eat it too."

"It's a good idea. It gets rid of any dirt and pesticides. You don't want to eat those. Yuk!" Mpho shuddered.

"I really hope they don't use that neonicotinoid insecticide on the fruit," Sibbo made a face. "That's terrible stuff – it kills *all* the insects, not just the bad ones."

Yuk!  
That's terrible  
stuff.

Neonicotinoids

are much more **toxic**

to **invertebrates**

like insects

than they are to  
mammals and birds.

Studies have  
found a **link**

between neonicotinoids  
and **declining**

bee populations.



Without bees, people wouldn't have very much to eat!

The girls went into the kitchen. Mpho's mum had already prepared a tasty breakfast of porridge. They sat down at the table.

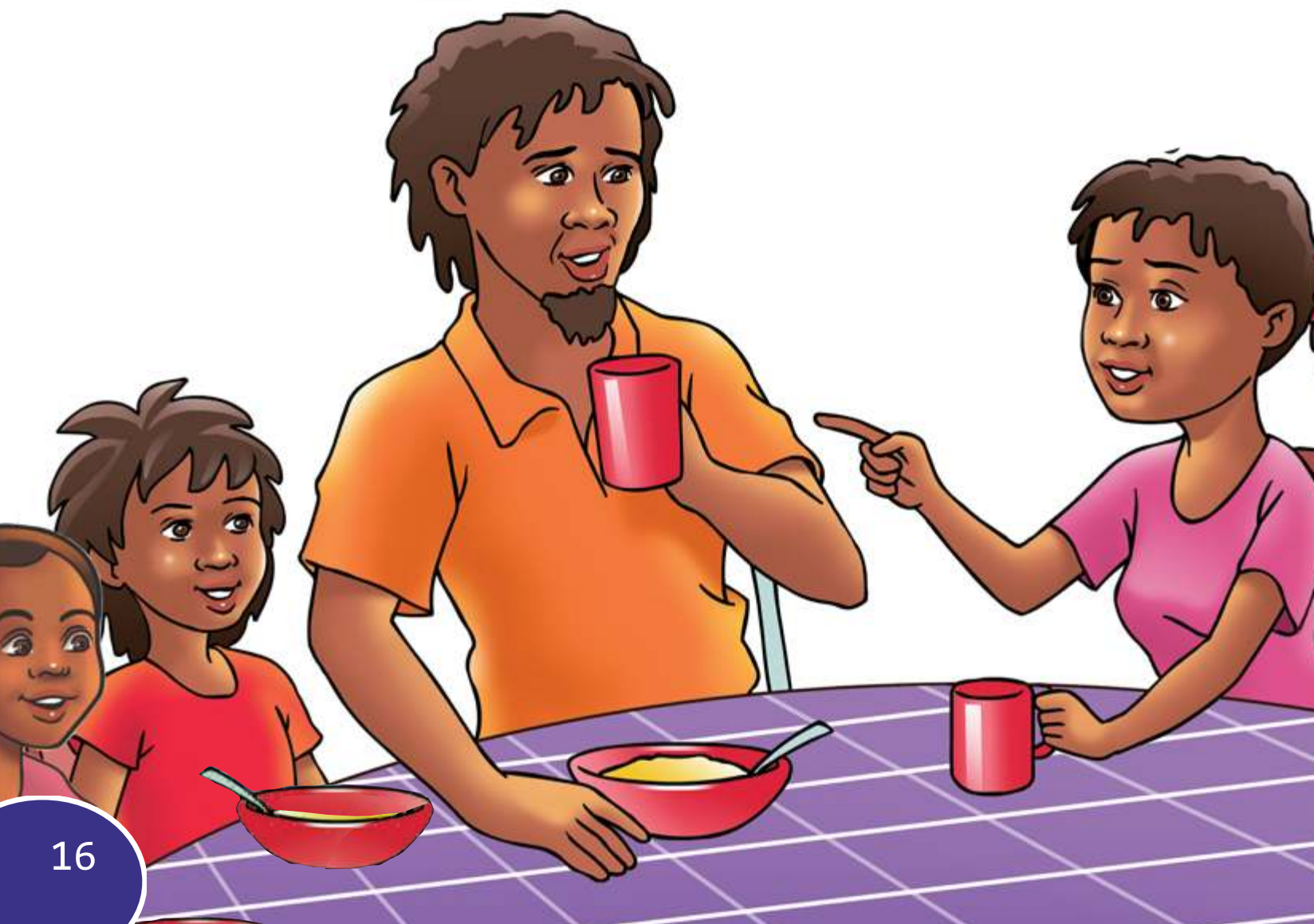
Sibo's mum frowned when she saw Sibó's small bowl of food.

"I don't want to eat too much because I'm saving space for stuff that I'm going to buy at the *School Spaza*," Sibó explained.

"Sorry Auntie, I don't mean to be rude. This pap is delicious."

Mpho laughed, "Yeah, sure Sibó, you're going to fill up on Mopane worms, right?"

"Worms?" Sibó gasped, "erm... no, I wasn't planning on eating worms. You're not serious are you?"



# Mopane worms



- ✓ Protein
- ✓ Iron
- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Phosphorous
- ✓ Fibre

You can eat them

RAW BOILED FRIED

Sibo's uncle smiled, "Actually, they are not really worms. They are caterpillars from a variety of the Emperor Moth. They live on the Mopane tree and eat the leaves. That's why they are called 'Mopane Worms'. They are delicious. Nutritious too – full of protein. Ask your dad, he also likes them."

Sibo looked at her father, "Really, Dad? What do they taste like?"

He laughed at Sibó's horrified face, "Yes! I like them when they are dried and crunchy. I haven't eaten them for ages. Maybe there'll be some for sale at the *School Spaza*."



There was a noise at the front door.

"Oh good," Mpho clapped her hands, "that will be my brother, Sandile and his wife. They said they'd come for breakfast. They're going to have a baby."

"No," Sandile corrected his sister, "we are *trying* to have a baby. There's a difference. Thandi isn't pregnant yet. That's why she has to take good care of herself."

Sibo looked at Sandile, "I'm confused. Don't you also have to take good care of yourself? Why is it always the woman that has to be careful? Isn't it important that you eat healthily and don't smoke or drink too much?"

Sandile smiled at his little cousin, "Yes Sibو, you're right. It's very important that men take just as much care of themselves as women do in order to have a healthy baby."

Yes!  
Men have to take care  
of themselves too.



Avoid  
smoking  
& alcohol  
Manage stress  
Keep cool  
Eat healthy  
Avoid toxic  
products

"Come on, let's go and wash the fruit." Mpho grabbed Sibó's hand.

Sibó looked at the fruit – there were mangoes, guavas and papayas. She was sad that there were no bananas after all.

She scratched her head, "Um... I'm a bit confused. Why are you washing this stuff? Apart from the guavas, they have skins that you take off. I could understand if they were apples or pears."

"I know," replied Mpho, "but people could touch these skins and then eat something else and the pesticides could be transferred from their hands to their food. Washing everything properly is much safer."

Actually, you should always wash your hands after touching the walls and other surfaces in the house after they've been sprayed."



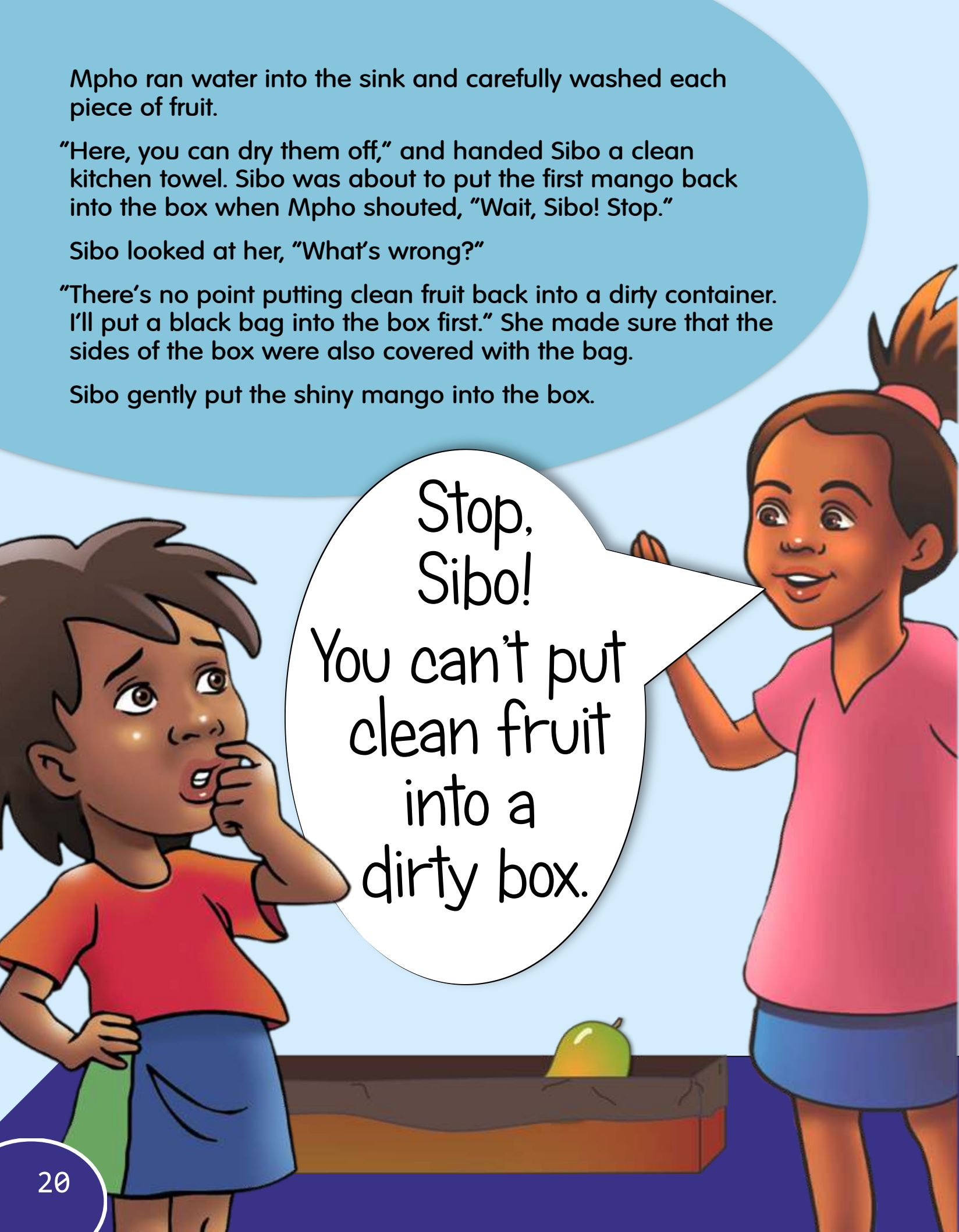
Mpho ran water into the sink and carefully washed each piece of fruit.

"Here, you can dry them off," and handed Sibho a clean kitchen towel. Sibho was about to put the first mango back into the box when Mpho shouted, "Wait, Sibho! Stop."

Sibho looked at her, "What's wrong?"

"There's no point putting clean fruit back into a dirty container. I'll put a black bag into the box first." She made sure that the sides of the box were also covered with the bag.


Sibho gently put the shiny mango into the box.



Stop,  
Sibho!  
You can't put  
clean fruit  
into a  
dirty box.



Use **PAPER BAGS** ~~not~~ plastic



Oh my hat!  
I nearly forgot...

### Did you know...

Plastic bags take between 400-1000 years to break down in the environment.

They do not biodegrade they photodegrade, which means they break down into smaller and smaller bits and then animals and birds ingest them.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Sibbo, "I nearly forgot."

"Your hat is on your head," Mpho laughed, "you haven't forgotten it."

Sibbo smiled, "No! I forgot to give you the bags I brought." She ran off to fetch the paper bags. "Here you are, I counted there are 30. Do you think that'll be enough?"

"More than enough, thanks. We'll share them with the other kids. People always need bags at the School Spaza."

Sibo's dad wandered into the kitchen just as the girls had finished washing and drying the fruit. Everything had been rinsed and patted dry.

"Do you need a lift to school?" he asked.

"Oh, yes please!" Mpho exclaimed. "I was going to put these in the wheelbarrow, but then they'd probably be all dusty by the time we got to school. Thank you very much."

"Come on then, I'll take you girls first and then come back and fetch anybody else who wants to go."



Sibo gave her dad a grateful hug, she had been wondering how they were going to get the huge box of fruit to school. It was really quite heavy.

"What about a table," Sibbo asked, "do we need to take one to put the fruit on?"

"No, we can use our school desks," Mpho replied, "as long as we clean them properly before we put them back."

Do you  
need a lift to  
school?





The *School Spaza* was being held in front of the school, under some trees. One of Mpho's classmates, Puleng, had already organised a desk and covered it with a gorgeous hand-painted tablecloth. Sibó's dad put the heavy box of fruit on the table.

Mpho and Puleng quickly arranged the fruit. It was almost nine o'clock and the children had finished setting up their stalls.

People were standing at the gate.

Sibó hopped anxiously from foot to foot, desperate to wander around and see all the goodies that were for sale. Except for worms, she did not plan on looking at the worms.

"Go, Sibó," Mpho gave her a push; "Go off and explore. But come back here at 11 o'clock so we can watch the soccer demonstration together.

Those guys are awesome!"



## CHAPTER THREE

# Sibo Finds Bananas



Sibo started to work her way around the stalls in an anti-clockwise direction. The stall right next to theirs had little bags of dried stuff called fruit chips.

"What's that?" Sibbo asked.

"Dried mango, here, try some," the stall holder offered a plate with slivers on it. Sibbo popped a piece into her mouth and chewed.

"Oh yum! That's delicious," she bought a bag. Dried mango tasted better than sweets. Maybe she should buy some for Miss Ball. Her teacher was always going on about the benefits of healthy eating. Dried fruit was probably very healthy.





The next table had little cubes of pineapple on sticks.

"How much?" asked Sibó.

"Only R1 a stick, or R6 for five sticks," the stall holder said loudly.

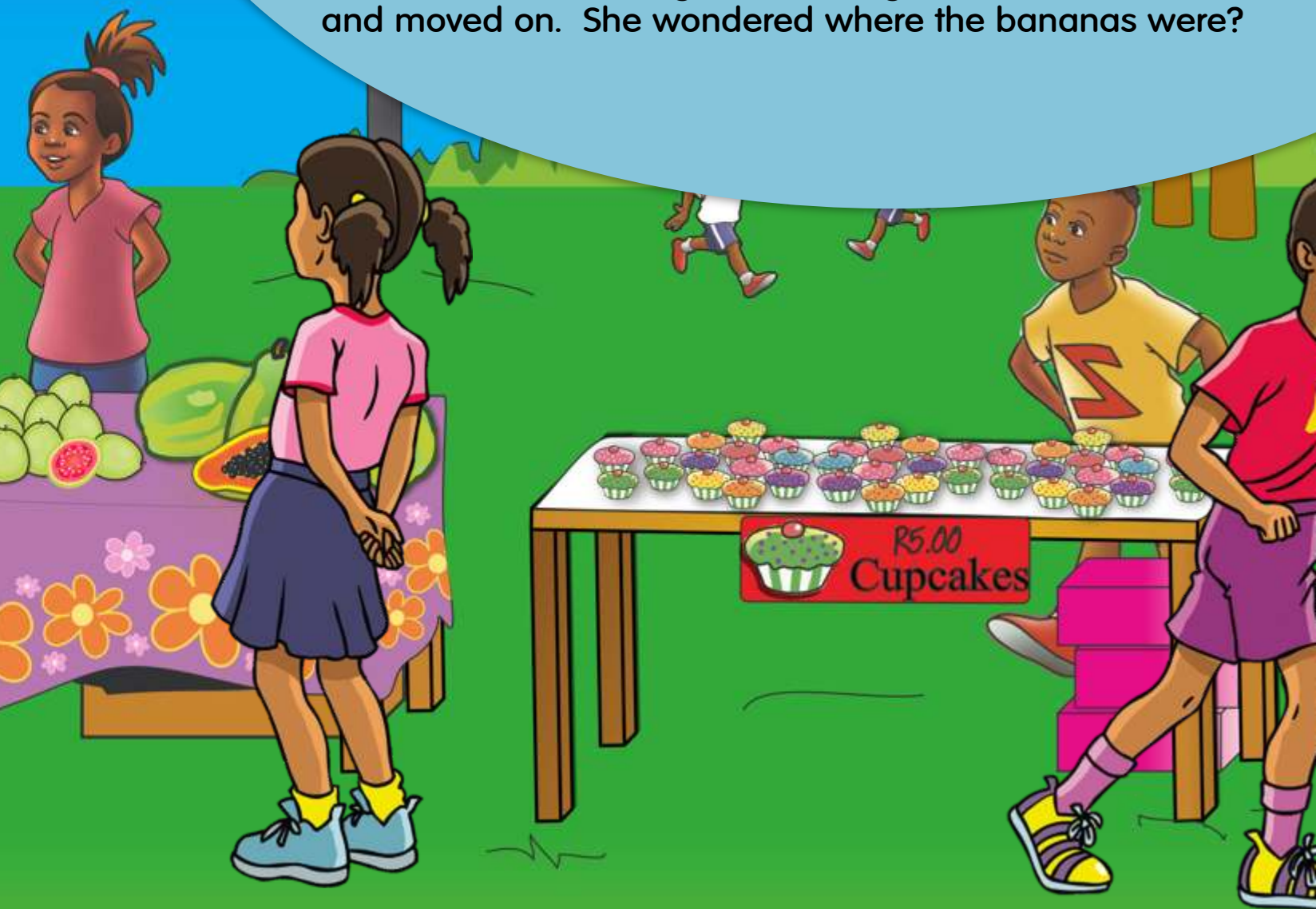
Sibó scratched her head—how did that work? R1 for one stick. R6 for five sticks...

"I think maybe you've got it wrong," she ventured.

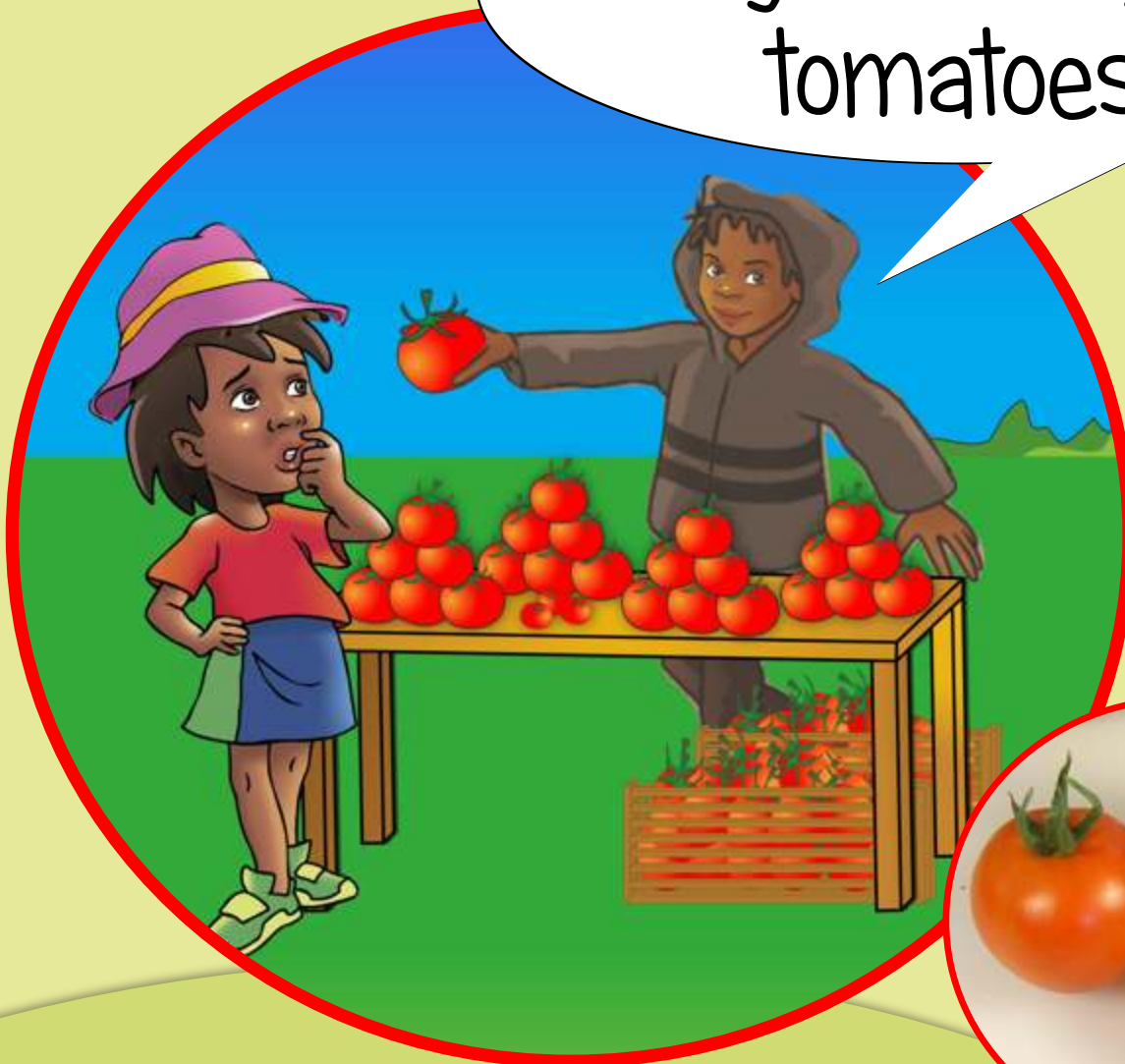
"Don't you mean R5 for six sticks?"

"That's what I said," the stall holder looked cross.

Sibó decided not to argue. She bought one stick and moved on. She wondered where the bananas were?



Lovely home-grown tomatoes!



Little mountains of shiny red tomatoes covered the surface of the next table.

"Buy my tomatoes, lovely ripe, home-grown tomatoes!" sang the dude behind the table.

Sibo shook her head, "No thanks," she wasn't going to waste her money on something that she also grew at home.

She had discovered ages ago that you could put a slice of tomato in a pot and cover it loosely with soil. It only took a few weeks before it started flowering and producing fruit.

Tomatoes are easy to grow. They are rich in vitamin C and are very good for you.

There was cooked food too – little fried spinach patties that smelled delicious. Sibò was tempted to buy one but remembered that her Auntie often made something similar. Her cash reserves were dwindling and she didn't want to run out of money before she'd found the bananas and maybe some macadamia nuts.

Suddenly, Sibò spotted a familiar figure in a straw hat at the avocado stall and went over to talk to her.





She watched her mother haggle with the stall holder.

"If I take twenty avos, how much are you going to charge me?"

"R40, ma'am – they are R2 each."


"Oh come on! Where's my discount?"

The stall holder thought for a second then said, "I can give you 10% discount. That will be R36."

"Deal!" Sibó's mum handed him the money and he placed the greenish-purple fruit in a bag for her.

10% discount,  
please?





Did you  
know avo is  
good for your  
eyes?

Sibo had Googled avocados too.

They were incredibly healthy – more like a vegetable than a fruit. Full of fibre, vitamins and other stuff like potassium and magnesium. They also contained an antioxidant called lutein that was good for your eyes. She'd been amazed to read that people actually make chocolate cake using avo instead of milk, butter and eggs.

She nudged her mother, "I hope you are not planning on feeding those to me, Mum?"

"No ways, Sibó. These are all for me."

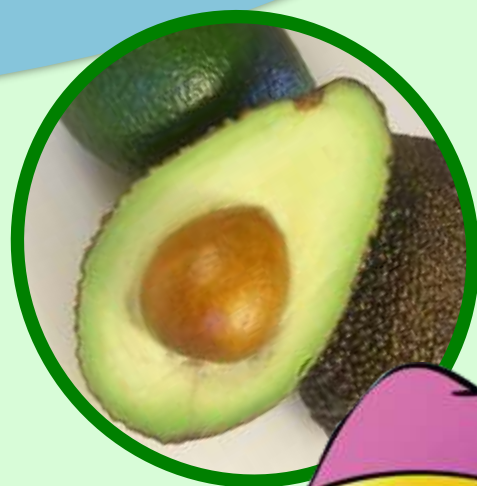
"Really? You are going to eat all of those by yourself?"

"No! I'm going to eat some, try that cake recipe you found, and then share the rest with my ladies group – they make a refreshing beauty mask."

Sibo looked at her mother curiously, "You're joking, right?"

"Not at all Sibó, if you mash up avo with honey and yogurt, it works wonders for acne or dry skin. You can mash it up with some banana too. Oh, that reminds me... where are the bananas? I want to buy some."

Sibo wrinkled her nose, thinking that putting banana on your face would be a total waste.



## Avocado Face Mask

**Method:** Mash the avo up in a bowl until there are no more lumps. Stir in the yogurt and honey. Mix well until it is smooth. Apply the mask onto your skin for 10-15 minutes or until it dries out. Wash with warm water.

### Ingredients:

1/4 ripe avocado  
1/2 teaspoon honey  
1 teaspoon plain yogurt

This helps with dry flaky skin.





She linked arms with her mum,  
"Come on, let's go and find the bananas!"

They soon found them. Sibon read the sign at the stall. It was about ways to use the *inside* of a banana skin. Apparently, you could rub it on your face at night, wash it off a few minutes later and the next morning your skin was fresh and dewy. You could also rub it on an insect bite to stop it from itching; or on cuts and scrapes, to reduce pain and swelling. One could even rub them on the leaves of house plants to make them shiny.

That was just using the skin that most people throw away! The banana itself is full of potassium, fibre and other healthy vitamins and minerals. Sibon ate lots of bananas – she loved them, but had never realised just how healthy they are.


Sibo came across her dad eating an ice-cream.  
"You'd better not let Mum see you. I'm sure all that sugar isn't very healthy either!" Sibbo smiled, wondering how she had missed the ice-cream stall.

"That's why I got a green one!" Dad laughed at his own joke.

~~~~~

Mpho was right, the soccer team was impressive. They did some fancy tricks with the ball. The *School Spaza* ended at noon. The girls carried the spotless table back into their classroom and threw the box in the bin.

They used the black bag to help tidy up the litter outside and soon the school yard was beautifully clean.

An illustration of a young boy with dark skin and short, spiky brown hair, wearing an orange t-shirt. He is looking up at a man on the right. The man has dark skin, a goatee, and short brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is holding a green ice cream cone. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned between them, containing the text 'Too much sugar is bad, Dad!'. The background is a simple green field.

Too much  
sugar is bad,  
Dad!



"What are you going to do with the money you've made?" Sibó asked as they walked home.

"We are trying to raise funds to fix our playing field," Mpho replied. "It's just as important to get exercise as it is to eat healthily. We can use the field for soccer, athletics, hockey, netball – any sport you can think of. The community can also use it."

They had reached Mpho's house.

Sibó sniffed the air, "Yum!" she yelled. "Your mum is making her famous spinach patties for lunch."



Which do you like best...

## Firm Green Bananas ? Soft Yellow Bananas ?

Green, unripe bananas have less sugar. They also help a person absorb nutrients such as calcium better than ripe bananas can.

On the down side - unripe bananas can cause a person to feel bloated and gassy. This is due to the higher resistant starch content.

Ripe soft bananas are yellow with brown spots. These are made up of 91% sugar - which means they are going to taste a lot sweeter. They also have anti-cancer qualities.

The problem with letting bananas ripen is that they lose some of their vitamins and minerals. Storing them in the fridge can slow this down.

People who have Type 2 Diabetes should not eat ripe bananas because of their high sugar content.



### Did you know?

Banana peels are rich in enzymes and these have a pulling action that will draw a splinter or piece of glass to the surface of your skin. This makes it easier to grab that nasty little sliver and pull it out.

#### This what you do...

- ★ Put a ripe banana peel (the side where the banana used to be) on the skin where the splinter is.
- ★ Leave it there for 15 minutes.
- ★ Take the peel off very gently without rubbing it on your skin.
- ★ Using tweezers (or sharp nails) remove that nasty little splinter.

### Banana peels

contain: vitamin C

potassium

vitamin E

iron

zinc

manganese

These nutrients can calm inflamed skin and reduce acne outbreaks.

### It's really easy to use!

Rub the banana peel over your skin and leave for 5 to 10 minutes.

### Rinse your skin.

For best results, do this first thing in the morning and before you go to bed.



Hey! Visit my website at:

**<https://sibo.co.za>**

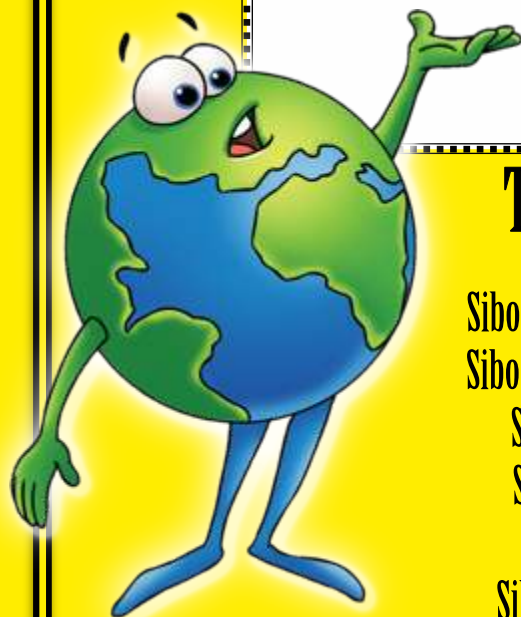
# Sibo Goes Bananas

Sibo is most excited to discover that there's a *School Spaza* at Flatwater Stills on the weekend that she and her family will be visiting. She's never been to such an event before and can't wait to see all the goodies that will be on offer. Apart from lots of deliciously healthy fruit, Sibbo also discovers interesting uses for parts of fruit that normally get thrown away.

Let's change our mind-set and start caring for the earth and each other...  
just like Sibbo and her friends.



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