



Help your children to live the legacy of Nelson Mandela. Pass on some of the values he stood for through this short series of stories focussing on honesty, compassion and forgiveness.

## Bear's haircut



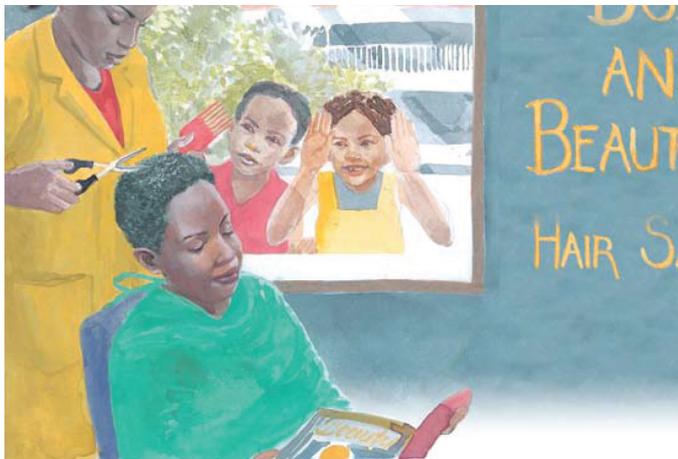
Author: Nola Turkington

Illustrator: Joseph Mugisha

On Phumeza's sixth birthday, Mama gave her a toy bear. Bear had bright eyes, golden brown hair, a small black nose and a smiley mouth. On the front of his red vest in big letters was written: I LOVE YOU. PLEASE LOVE ME.

Everywhere Phumeza went, Bear went with her. She loved Bear almost as much as she loved Thobeka. Thobeka was her five-year-old next-door neighbour, and her best friend.

One afternoon, Mama had an appointment at the salon. Phumeza and Thobeka watched through the salon window as the hairdresser cut Mama's hair. Thobeka was especially interested. She watched carefully how the hairdresser snipped off the hair with razor-sharp scissors. It looked so easy, and so much fun.

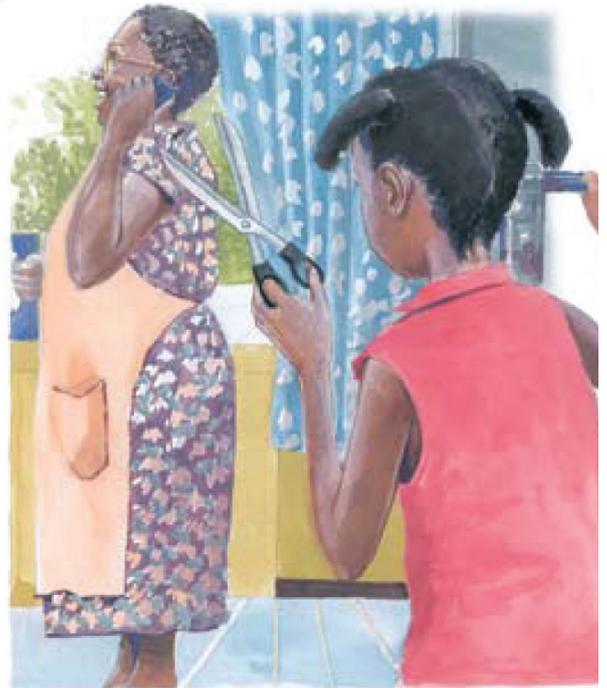


Later, Phumeza, Thobeka and Bear played in the yard. After a while Thobeka ran inside. She came back carefully carrying her grandmother's scissors. "Can I cut your hair?" she asked Phumeza.

"Not today," replied Phumeza. "I want to go home now."

"Then I'll cut my granny's," said Thobeka, and she ran off to find her Gogo.

So, Phumeza climbed over the fence and went home ... without noticing that she had left Bear sitting by the fence.



When Thobeka went into the house, Gogo was on her cell phone, so Thobeka left her alone. Thobeka's brother was asleep and she was frightened to wake him.

"Whose hair CAN I cut?" Thobeka wondered.

Outside, Lotto the dog started barking.



Waving Gogo's scissors, Thobeka walked down the back steps towards him. Lotto took one look at the scissors and ran off down the road with his tail between his legs.

Be the legacy: forgiveness



Only Bear was left, propped against the garden fence.

Thobeka sat Bear on her lap. Snip, snip, snip, went the scissors. A large clump of golden brown hair floated to the ground. She leant back to look. Oh, oh! There was a big bald patch on the top of Bear's head. Now Thobeka was worried. "That looks bad," she thought. "Very bad. What will Phumeza think?"



Just then Phumeza came running back to fetch Bear. She skidded to a stop. "What are you doing? OH NO! You've cut Bear's hair! Look what you've done! What a mess!" Before Thobeka could say a word, Phumeza grabbed Bear by one leg and shouted, "I'll never forgive you. You're NOT my best friend anymore!"

And off she went in a terrible temper.

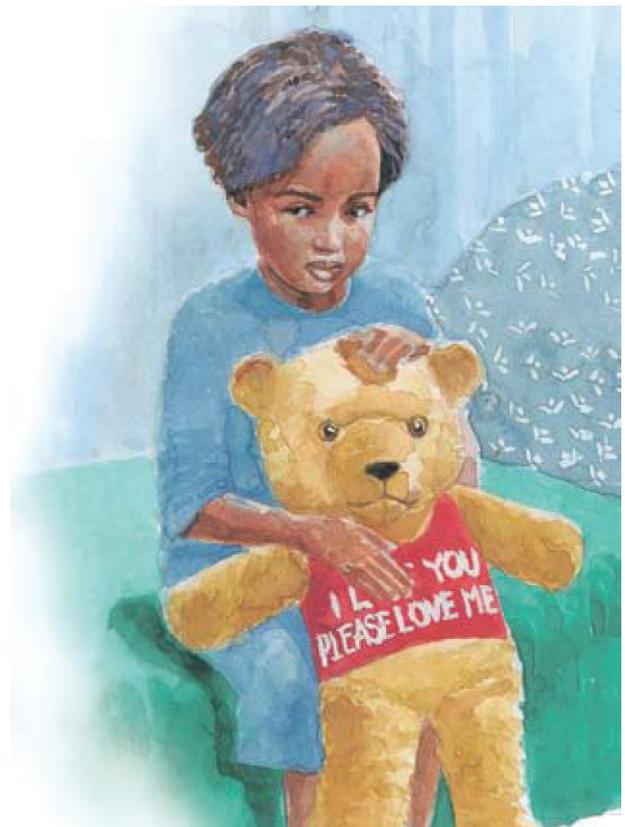


Thobeka felt horrible. She put Gogo's scissors back in the kitchen cupboard. Then she ran to the bottom of the garden and crept into the little henhouse. There she hid for the rest of the day, too upset to come out.

Phumeza's brother rode past on his bicycle. "Hey, Thobeka! Where are you?" Ben yelled. "I hear you're cutting hair today. Will you cut my hair too?"

Thobeka didn't answer. Ben rode away, laughing. Usually Thobeka ignored Ben when he teased her. Today she cried.

That night, as Phumeza got ready for bed, she patted Bear's bald head. "Poor Bear, your hair will never grow again," she said.



Phumeza couldn't sleep. She was sad about Bear's hair, but even more, her heart felt heavy and sore when she remembered Thobeka's face. She tossed and turned and buried her face in her pillow. "I shouldn't have shouted at Thobeka. I could see she was upset already. I said such nasty things."

Phumeza thought about the day Mama gave her two pieces of cake, one for herself and one for Thobeka. In front of her best friend, she'd eaten both pieces. Thobeka forgave her and didn't tell Mama how greedy she'd been.

Phumeza thought about the prayer her family often said about asking God to forgive them. She felt ashamed. It wasn't a good feeling.

At that moment – tap, tap – someone knocked softly on the window. Phumeza sat up. She was scared.

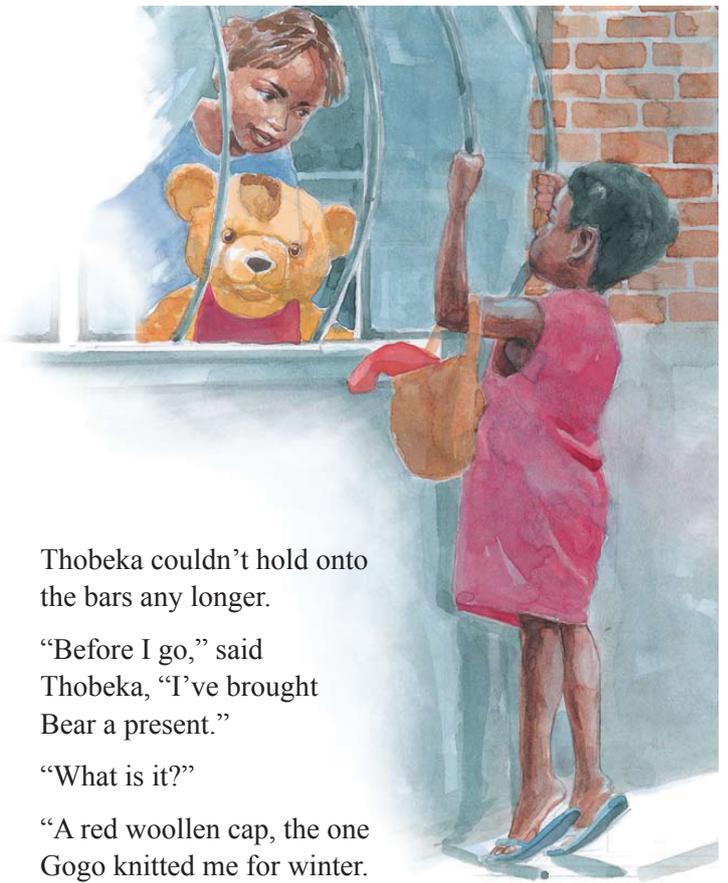
In a small voice Phumeza whispered, "Who's there?"

"It's me – Thobeka."

Phumeza jumped out of bed. She ran to open the window. Thobeka was standing on her tippy-toes holding on to the burglar bars. "I'm so sorry I cut Bear's hair. I wasn't thinking properly. Please, please forgive me."

Phumeza hugged her best friend through the burglar bars.

"I've forgiven you already, and I'm very sorry I shouted at you and said mean things." The girls talked until



Thobeka couldn't hold onto the bars any longer.

"Before I go," said Thobeka, "I've brought Bear a present."

"What is it?"

"A red woollen cap, the one Gogo knitted me for winter. It'll cover Bear's head, and match his red vest."

And it did.



# Get story active!

After you and your children have read *Bear's haircut*, try discussing some of these things.

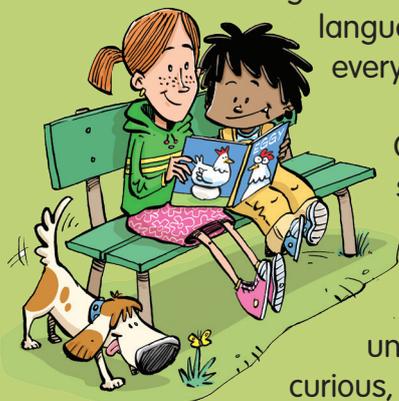
- ★ Why do you think Phumeza was so cross when she saw how Thobeka had cut Bear's hair?
- ★ Have you ever done something which made someone else cross, even though you didn't mean to? Share the story of what happened.
- ★ Ask open-ended questions (questions that have no right or wrong answer and instead, can be answered in different

ways). For example:

- ~ What does it mean to forgive someone?
- ~ Do you think Phumeza was right to forgive Thobeka? Why or why not?
- ~ Should we always forgive people who do things that make us angry or hurt us? Why or why not?

## About Nal'ibali

Nal'ibali (isiXhosa for "here's the story") is a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign. It seeks to spark and embed a culture of reading across South Africa, so that reading, writing and sharing stories – in all South African languages – is part of everyday life.



Children who are surrounded by print and immersed in great stories in languages they understand, are more curious, confident and

motivated to learn. They are more likely to become readers, and to do well at school in all subjects. Stories develop vocabulary, strengthen memory and nurture children's imaginations.

Since 2012, Nal'ibali has worked with various state, civil society and business partners to make sure every South African child has opportunities to fall in love with books and stories. Our founding partners include: the DG Murry Trust, PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) and Tiso Blackstar (formerly, Times Media). Through advocacy, training and high-quality reading materials, Nal'ibali is helping to nurture a nation of readers.

Nal'ibali is here to motivate and support you. **Contact us** by calling our call centre on **02 11 80 40 80**, or in any of these ways: