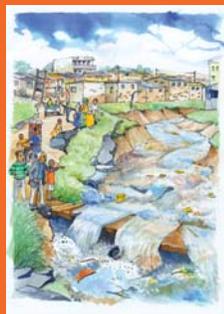


The Killer Floods

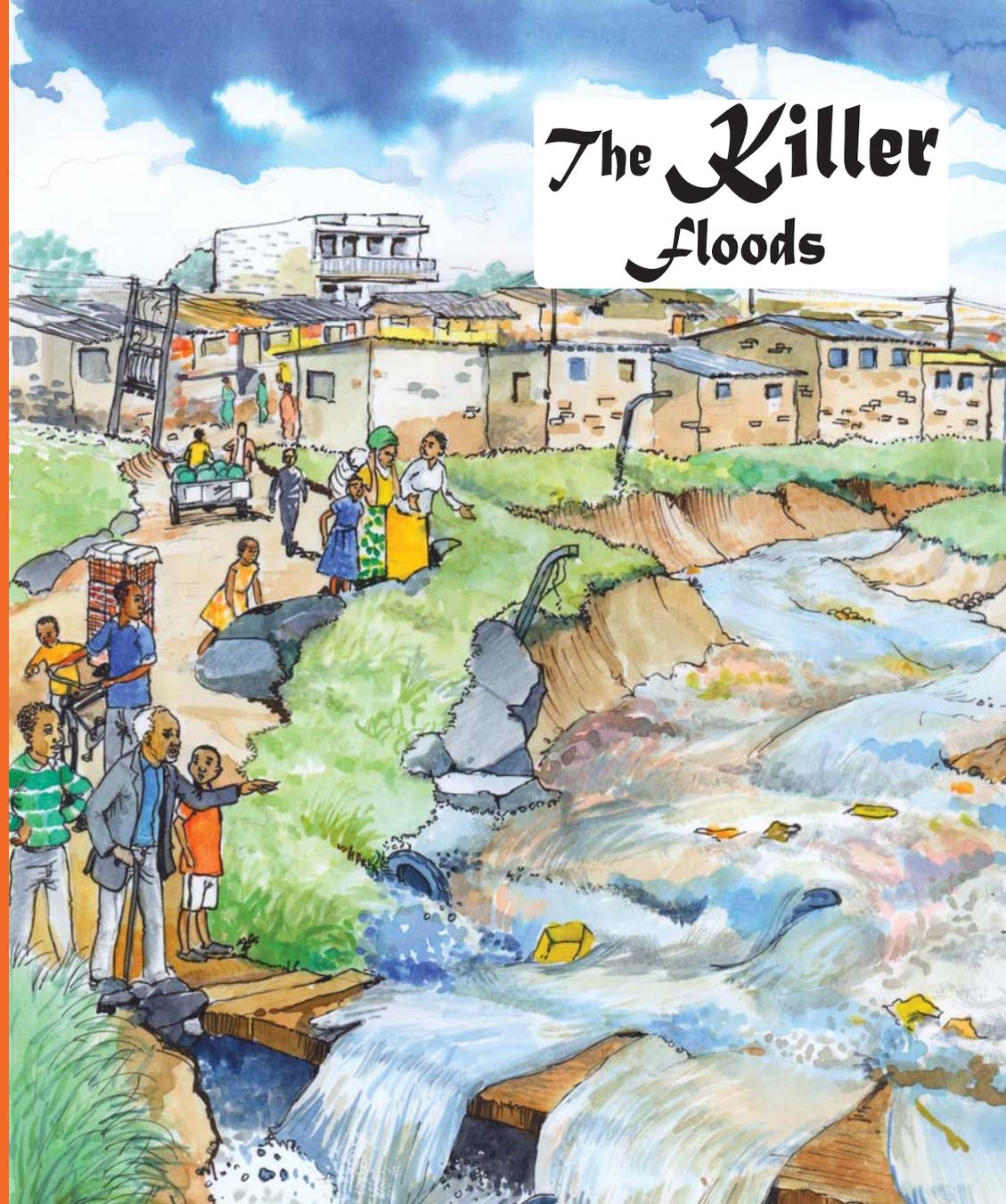
A deadly disease strikes fear in the hearts of all people. In this exciting story, you will find out what the disease is and how it is transmitted. You will also find out what happens to a girl named Mbona when she gets the disease. Will she survive? To get the answer to this question, read on...



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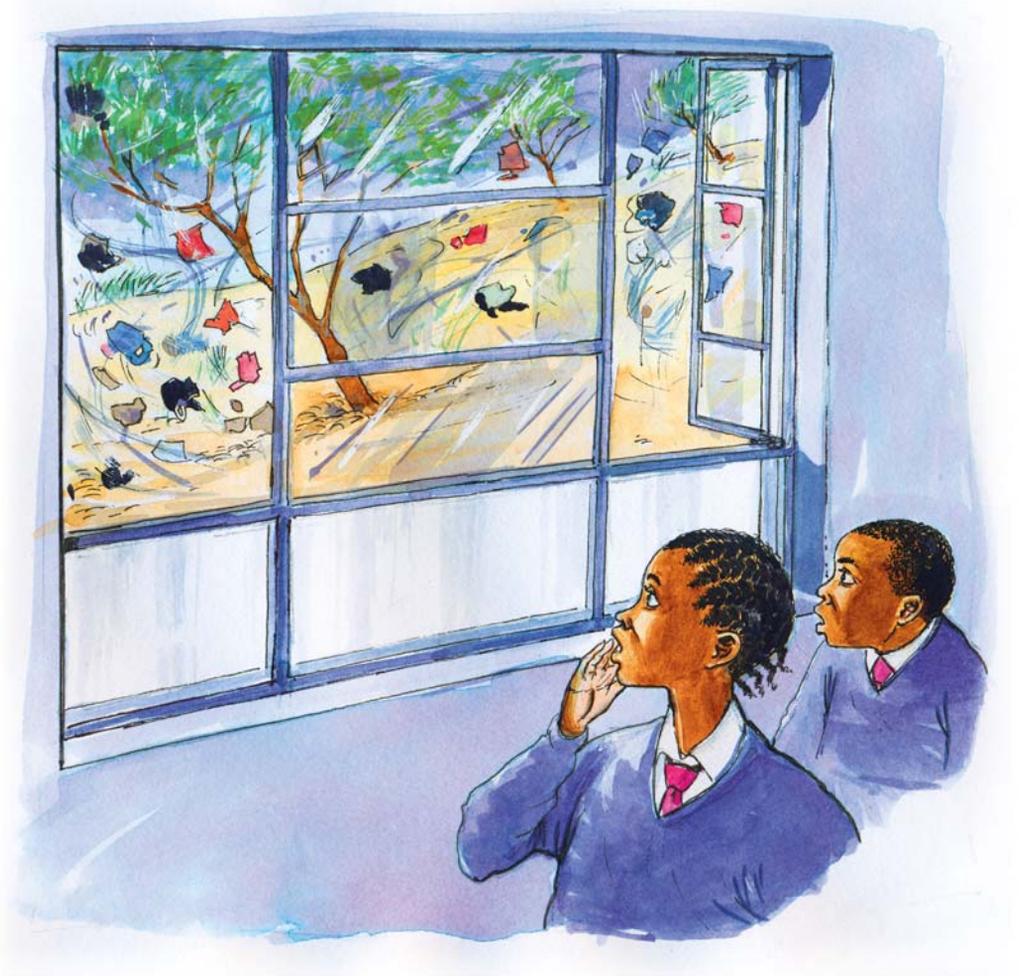
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Mingi watched as the sunny afternoon suddenly grew dark. Fierce winds came sweeping the ground. It was the second week since it had started raining.



She sighed. She liked the rain, but many children were falling sick because the river water, which their families used, was now muddy. The dirt which had been washed down the valleys was taken into the river by the rain.

The wind was furious. It whistled loudly as it swept plastic bags and other litter up into the air and went with them. Mingi smiled. It was funny the way things were flying.

Mingi thought of her best friend Mbona and sighed. She wished Mbona was there to see the flying garbage, but Mbona was in the hospital with stomach pains. The doctor said that Mbona too had dysentery like so many other children.

“Mingi!” Miss Ndimmo called sharply, and Mingi nearly jumped.

“Close that window and pay more attention to the lesson!”

Mingi closed the window just as raindrops started falling. Then, in another second, the rain roared on the roof until it was impossible to hear what anyone was saying.

After a short while, Teacher Ndimmo stared out of the window worriedly. They looked out as well and gasped. The small river down the valley below their school was already flooded! They could not even see the narrow bridge which everyone used to cross the river. It was already under water!

“My goodness!” Teacher Ndimmo exclaimed, “What are we going to do?”

Mingi looked at the skies and shouted, “The skies are turning bright once again, Miss Ndimmo!”

“You’re right Mingi, the rain is almost over. But I should let

you go home now before the river becomes too flooded to cross," Teacher Ndimbo told the class.

Everyone cheered. They liked Teacher Ndimbo, but going home early was fun too.

"Teacher Ndimbo," Mingsi shouted, "how can the river be already flooded yet it only rained for a short time?"

"That's a good question, Mingsi," Teacher Ndimbo said, "Remember I caught you enjoying seeing those plastic papers flying away?" she said.

Mingsi smiled, looking a bit embarrassed.

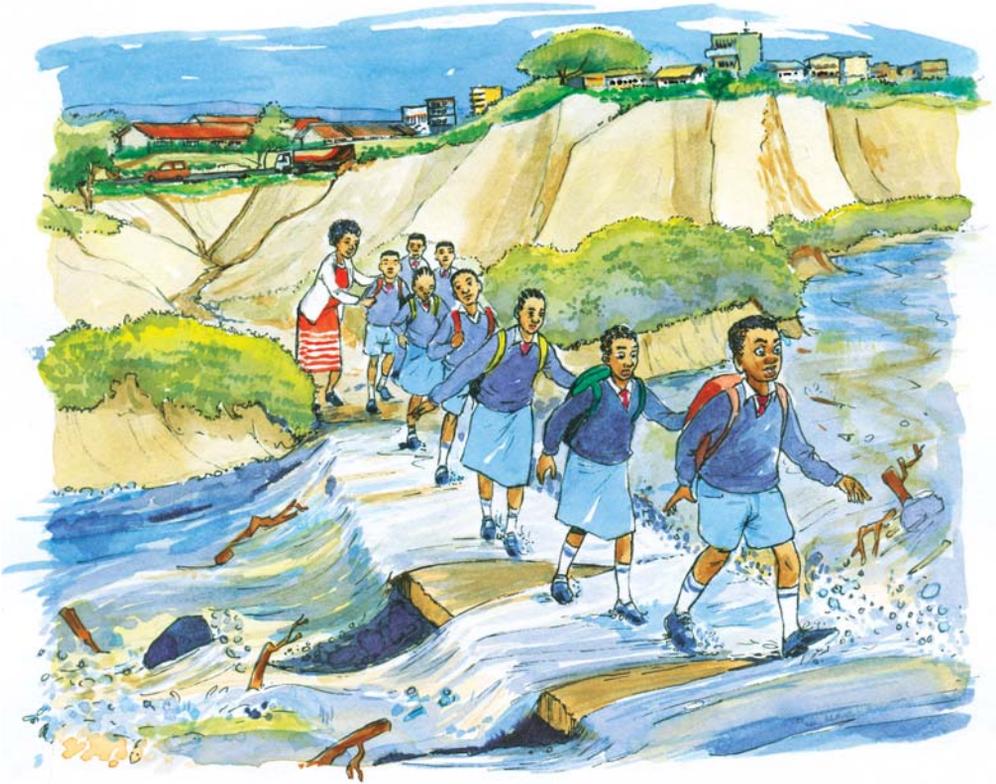
"When people throw rubbish like that around, some of it ends up in rivers. Once in the river, it starts blocking the flowing water until the river floods like that."

"Plastic bags can also kill animals," a boy added. "I once saw a cow die after swallowing a piece of plastic paper."

Teacher Ndimbo looked at the boy impressed. "That's right," she said, "There are many other bad things that rubbish can cause. One day, we will discuss them. You go home and think of others. We will discuss them on Monday."

Mingsi stared outside as she collected her books.

There were still more paper bags scattered all over the compound. She could even see some in the trees where they were caught by branches. Pupils carried their lunch in those paper bags, then after eating, they simply left them lying around. They looked messy, but Mingsi had never realised that they could be dangerous as well.



“There must be many more under the water,” she told Teacher Ndimo, “No wonder the river is not flowing properly.”

Teacher Ndimo nodded. Then she made sure all the pupils crossed safely to the other side.

“See you on Monday,” the teacher told them. “And remember your homework is to find out more reasons why some rivers flood so easily.”

Mingi walked with some of the pupils who lived near her home. It was difficult walking on the slippery steep path, and almost everyone kept falling.

Mingi reached the top of the valley and looked back. She was amazed to see that the river looked even deeper now, even though

it had stopped raining. How did that happen? She wondered. Then she noticed that rainwater from up the hills was still running into the river. No wonder the river looked all muddy.

Mingi's father was called Mr. Benga. He was a large jovial man. Until recently, he had been working in the city but now he wanted to become a farmer. Several neighbours thought it was the craziest idea they ever had heard for a long time.

"How can you farm on this soil?" they kept asking him.

"There is nothing wrong with the soil. We've been treating it wrongly," he kept telling them.

Mingi walked into the sitting room, and her father looked up from his newspaper. His face lit up, happy to see that his daughter had not fallen on the muddy ground, and that her uniform was still clean.

"Hello, Mingi," he said brightly, "I hope you didn't get too wet."

"No, dad." Mingi said. "But we almost got stranded in school."

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