Ovipanana vya Tjikuukae

Grandma’s bananas

Ursula Nafula
Catherine Groenewald
Angelika Tjoutuku & Asnath Mundjindjiri

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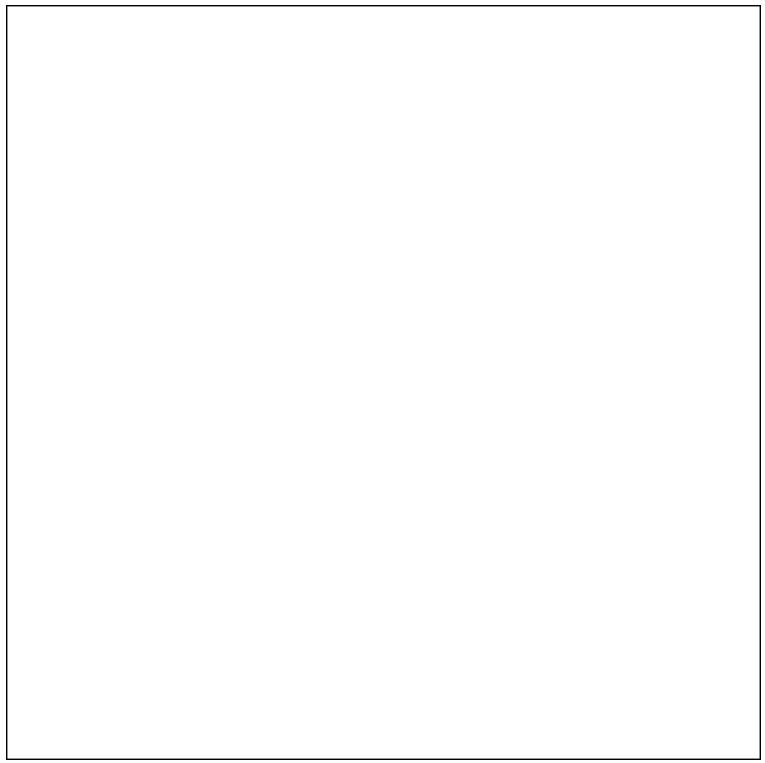

Otjikunino tja Tjikuukae tja ri otjiwa tjinene, mwa ri ozomiriva, ovikokotwa nokasava. Nungwari oviwa mu avihe vya ri imbi ovipanana. Nandarire kutja Tjikuukae wa ri novatekuru ovengi, ami movineya ee tjiwa kutja owami ngu mbi ri omusuverwa. Eye aruhe ee ndji ṉanga kondjuwo ye. Eye aa kara nouundikwa mbwe ndji hokorisa. Nungwari pa ri notjiundikwa tjimwe eye tjaa ha roro okundjiraera: imba eye paa horisire ovipanana.

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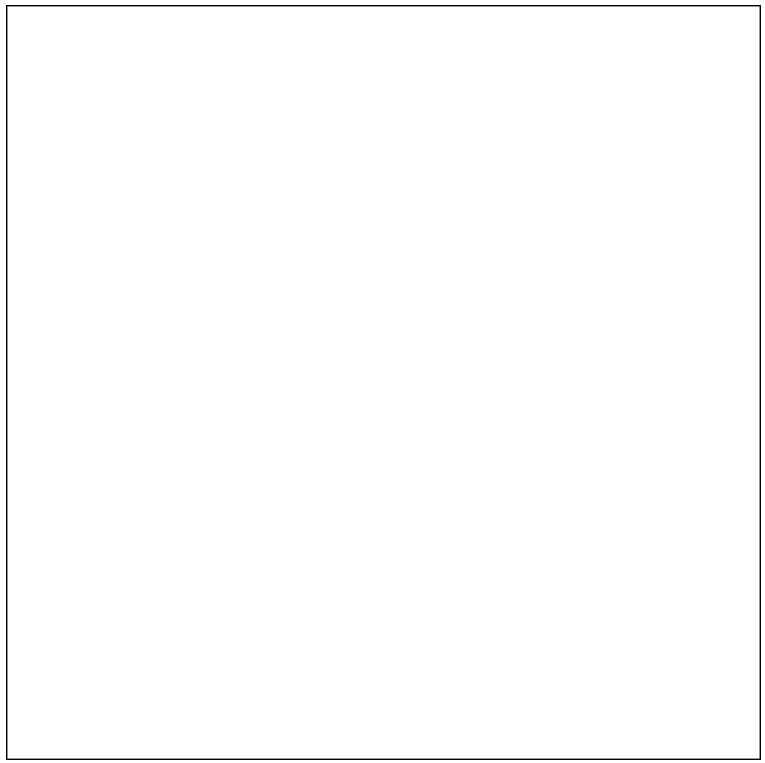
Grandma’s garden was wonderful, full of sorghum, millet, and cassava. But best of all were the bananas. Although Grandma had many grandchildren, I secretly knew that I was her favourite. She invited me often to her house. She also told me little secrets. But there was one secret she did not share with me: where she ripened bananas.



Eyuva rimwe ami mba muna otjimbamba otjinene tji tja tungwa pehozu atja tuwa pendje peyuva pondjuwo ya Tjikuukae. Tji mba pura kutja otjatjike, eziriro ndi mba pewa, “Otjo otjimbamba tjandje tjovihimise.” Meṇe yotjimbamba pa ri noviyao vyovipanana eye mbyaa tanaura pokati kotuveze. Ami ee vanga okutjiwa. “Hapo oviyao vyaye mbi Tjikuukae?” ami mba pura. Eziriro ndi mba pewa ra ri, “Ovyo oviyao vyandje ovihimise.”

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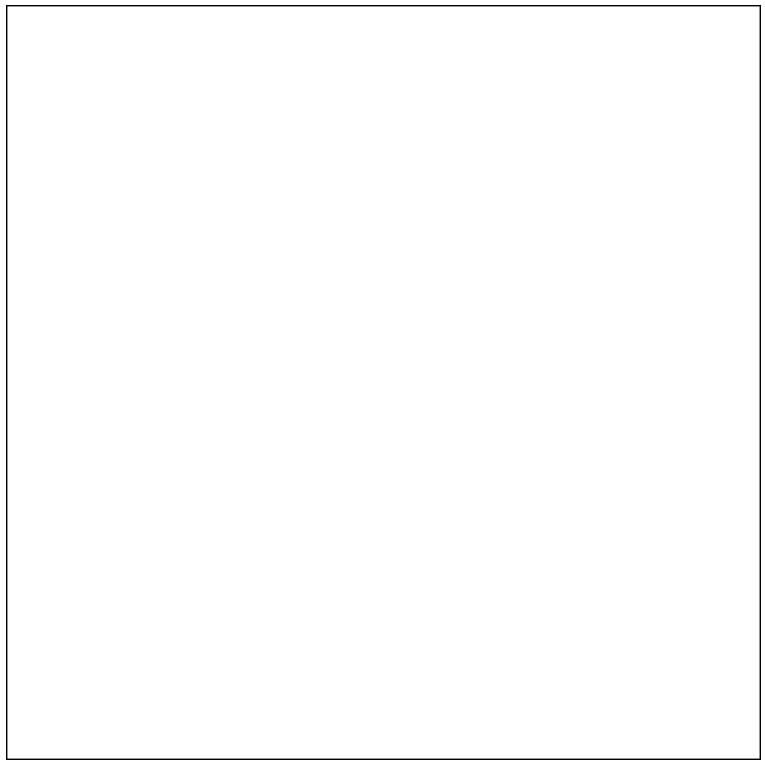
One day I saw a big straw basket placed in the sun outside Grandma’s house. When I asked what it was for, the only answer I got was, “It’s my magic basket.” Next to the basket, there were several banana leaves that Grandma turned from time to time. I was curious. “What are the leaves for, Grandma?” I asked. The only answer I got was, “They are my magic leaves.”



Oyo ya ri onyuṉe onene okutarera Tjikuukae, ovipanana, oviyao vyovipanana notjimbamba otjinene tjehozu. Nungwari Tjikuukae we ndji rambera ku mama. “Tjikuukae arikana ndji esa mbi tarere tji mo ṯunu …” Isa ouvara, tjita otja tji mo raerwa,” eye we ndji rakiza oukukutu. Ami mba purukuta okuyenda.

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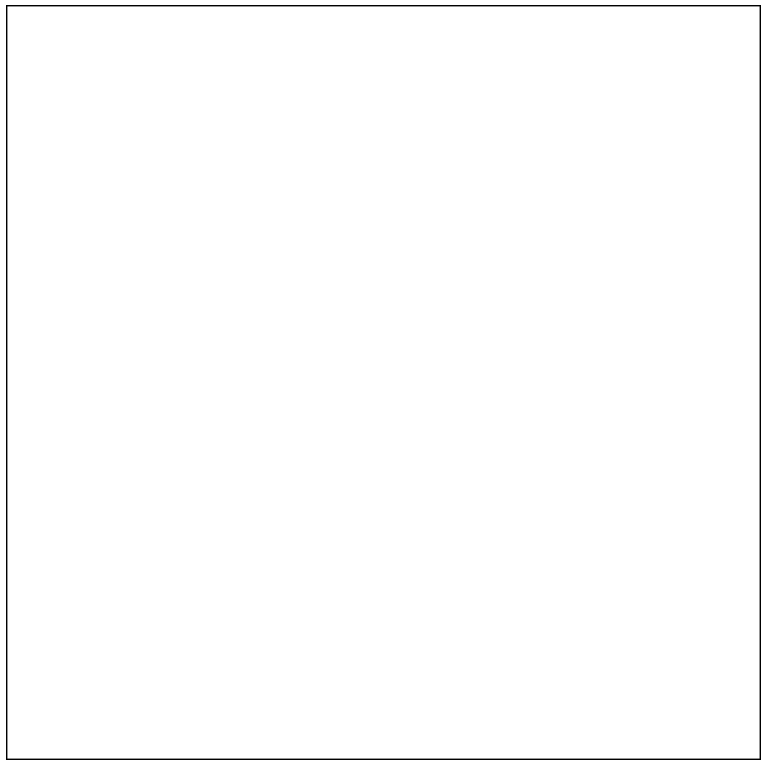
It was so interesting watching Grandma, the bananas, the banana leaves and the big straw basket. But Grandma sent me off to my mother on an errand. “Grandma, please, let me watch as you prepare…” “Don’t be stubborn, child, do as you are told,” she insisted. I took off running.



Tji mba kotoka tjandje Tjikuukae wa haama pendje nu imbi ovipapana notjimbamba kapu vya ri. “Tjikuukae, otjimbamba tji pi, ovipanana vi, nu imbi ovi…” Nungwari eziriro ndi mba muna ra ri, “Ovyo vi ri poruveze rwandje oruhimise.” Opo kape ndji pere ohange kaparukaze!

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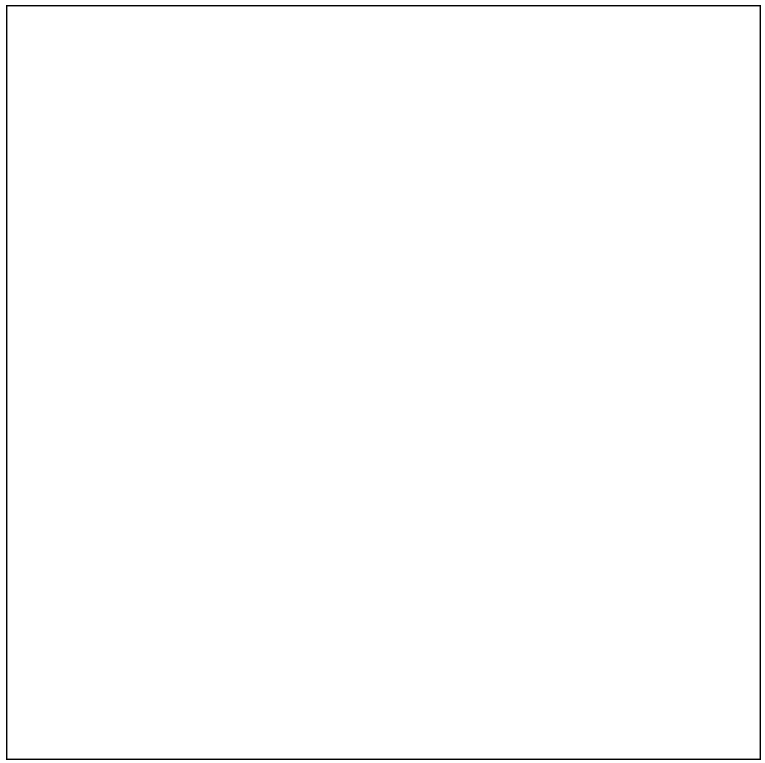
When I returned, Grandma was sitting outside but with neither the basket nor the bananas. “Grandma, where is the basket, where are all the bananas, and where…” But the only answer I got was, “They are in my magic place.” It was so disappointing!



Kombunda yomayuva yevari, Tjikuukae we ndji hinda okukaeta okati ke okaṱaṱero metuwo re romara. Ami tji mba paturura imbwi omuvero, mba yakurwa i ese romasa rovipanana mbi mavi horo. Metuwo rokokwara mwa ri ihi otjimbamba tja Tjikuukae otjinene tjehozu otjihimise. Otjo tja ri atja horekwa nawa kehi yotjirare otjikuru. Ami mba yerururа nu esenine inga okase okawa.

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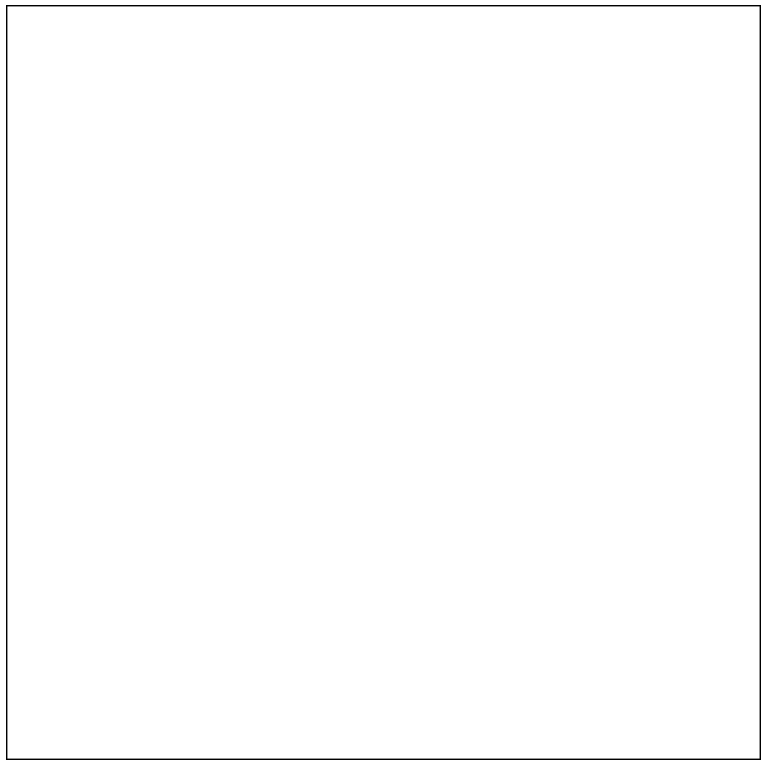
Two days later, Grandma sent me to fetch her walking stick from her bedroom. As soon as I opened the door, I was welcomed by the strong smell of ripening bananas. In the inner room was grandma’s big magic straw basket. It was well hidden by an old blanket. I lifted it and sniffed that glorious smell.



Eraka ra Tjikuukae re ndji handuza tje ndji isana, “Mo ungura tjike? Hakahana eta okati.” Ami mba purukuta nokati okaṱaṱero. “Mo yoroyora ye?” Tjikuukae wa pura. Epuriro re onde ndji honga kutja nangwari mba yende ame yorayora tji mba munu inga okaruveze ke okahimise.

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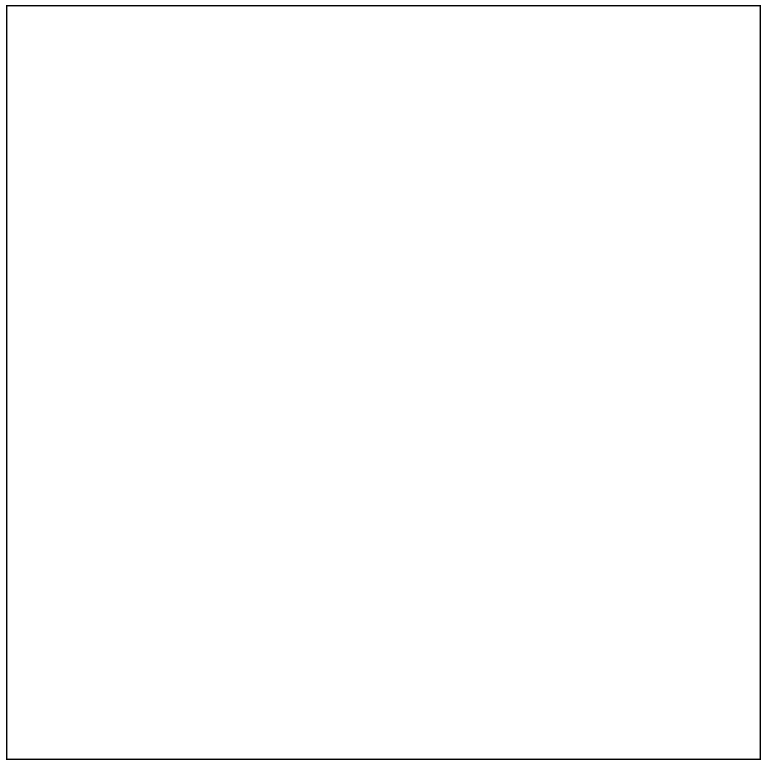
Grandma’s voice startled me when she called, “What are you doing? Hurry up and bring me the stick.” I hurried out with her walking stick. “What are you smiling about?” Grandma asked. Her question made me realise that I was still smiling at the discovery of her magic place.



Eyuva ependukirwa ingwi Tjikuukae tja kavarura mama, ami mbe rivaka okuyenda kondjuwo ye mbi katare imbi ovipanana rukwao. Pa ri epunda enene nda horo nawa. Ami mba toora tjimwe nu e horeke mokahorokweva kandje. Tji mba za nokukutjira ihi otjimbamba rukwao, ami e i kongotwe yondjuwo nu e ri hakahana. Otjo tja ri otjipanana otjiwa tjoutji tji mbi hi ya rora.

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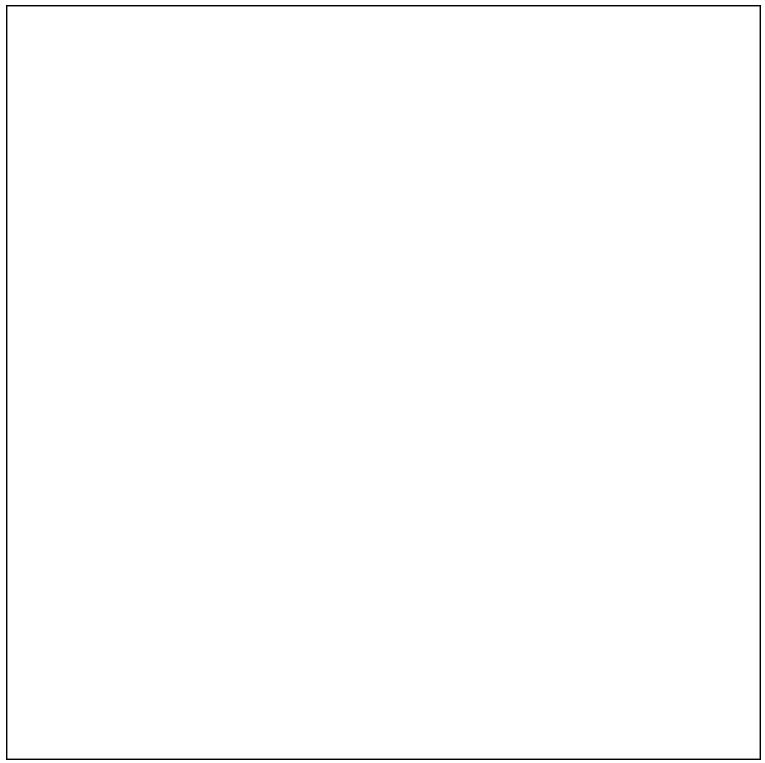
The following day when grandma came to visit my mother, I rushed to her house to check the bananas once more. There was a bunch of very ripe ones. I picked one and hid it in my dress. After covering the basket again, I went behind the house and quickly ate it. It was the sweetest banana I had ever tasted.



Eyuva ependukirwa, ngunda Tjikuukae ama pora ovihape motjikunino, ami mba nyonḍoroka nu e kamunina imbi ovipanana. Avihe tjandje vya horo nawa. Ami hee yenene okurihanda nu otji mba toora vine. Ngunda ame kaenda kotunwe nga pomuvero, e zuu Tjikuukae tji ma korora pendje. Ami mba yenena okuhoreka imbi ovipanana mokahorokweva kandje nu e varama pu ye e kapita.

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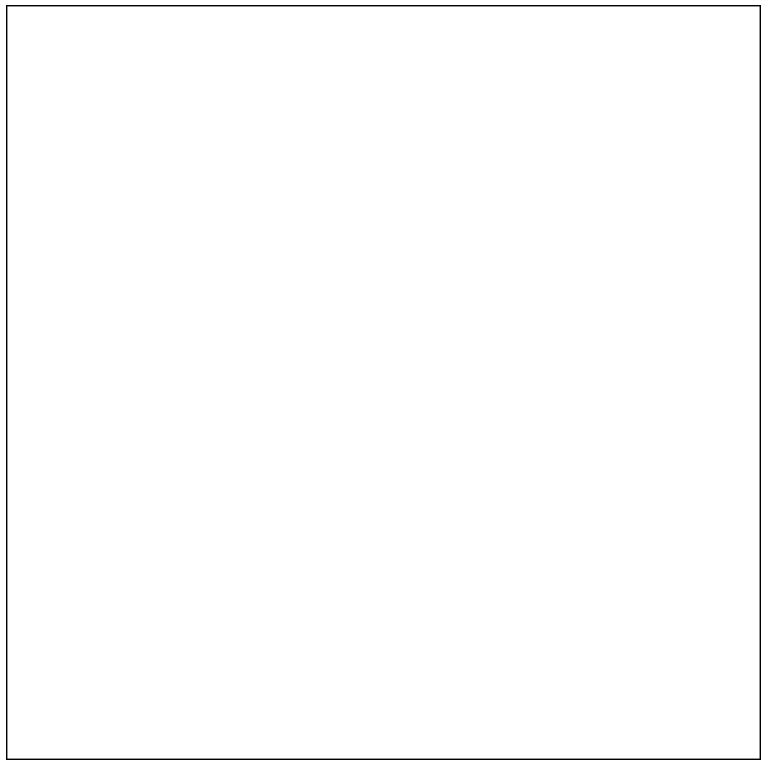
The following day, when grandma was in the garden picking vegetables, I sneaked in and peered at the bananas. Nearly all were ripe. I couldn’t help taking a bunch of four. As I tiptoed towards the door, I heard grandma coughing outside. I just managed to hide the bananas under my dress and walked past her.



Eyuva ependukirwa ra ri eyuva rokuyenda komaketa. Tjikuukae wa penduka rukuru tjinene. Eye aruhe aa twara ovipanana mbya horo nokasava okukarandisa komaketa. Eyuva ndo ami hi mba ri nohakana yokukaryanga ku ye. Nungwari hee yenene okukara kokure na ye oure weyuva.

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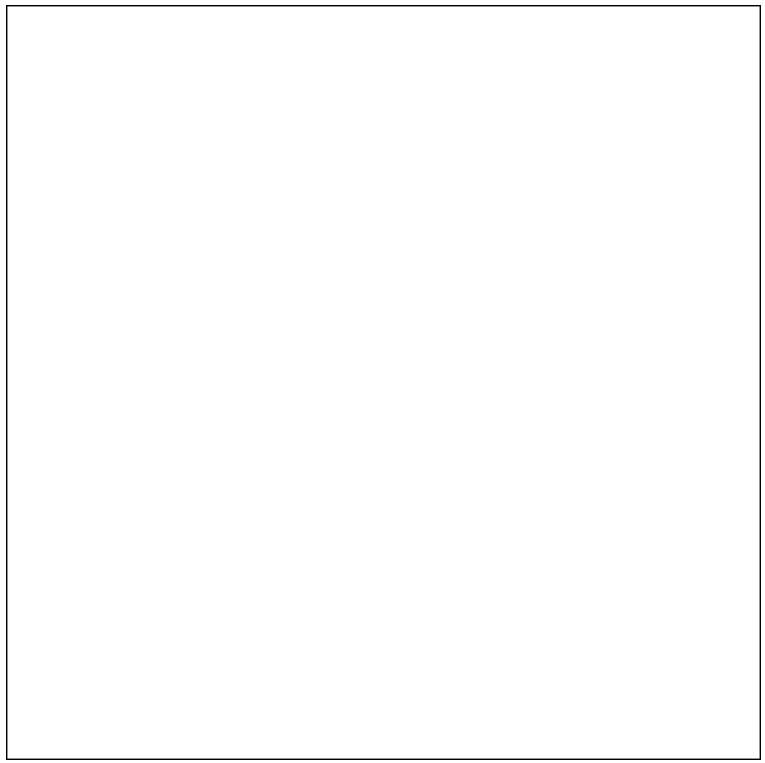
The following day was market day. Grandma woke up early. She always took ripe bananas and cassava to sell at the market. I did not hurry to visit her that day. But I could not avoid her for long.



Ongurova ndjo ami mba isanewa i mama, tate na Tjikuukae. Ami ee tjiwa kutja omena raye. Ouṯuku mbwo tji mba karara, ami ee tjiwa kutja himee vaka rukwao, kutja okuza ku mama omukurukaze, kovanene vandje poo komundu ngamwa auhe.

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Later that evening I was called by my mother and father, and Grandma. I knew why. That night as I lay down to sleep, I knew I could never steal again, not from grandma, not from my parents, and certainly not from anyone else.

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