

A SAFE WAY TO SCHOOL



by: James Dwalu, Yana Tumakova

TO THE TEACHER

This book is meant to help readers to learn about safe behavior on roads and to internalize a few important rules of using roads as a pedestrian, a passenger in a car or on a motorcycle.

The book

- encourages the readers to be careful on the road,
- explains safe ways of crossing the road,
- highlights importance of using seatbelts as a passenger in a car,
- emphasizes significance of wearing a helmet while riding a motorcycle,
- educates to wear bright clothes to be visible at night, among others.

You can use this book in many ways. Here are some ideas:

BEFORE READING

- Ask students what road safety rules they know.
- Ask students what dangers they observe on the road.
- Ask students how they normally cross the road.
- Ask students what safety gears they know.

WHILE READING

- Note the questions the students have about unknown behaviors. That could be a good start for the discussion in class after reading.

AFTER READING

- See the questions to each chapter at the end of the book and let the students answer them.
- Ask students what they knew before reading the book and what they learnt from the story.
- Ask students what they are going to change in their behavior to be safer on the road.

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Illustrated by: Brima Wolobah



Chapter One

A SAFE RIDE TO SCHOOL





Momo and Leemu live on the North Road in the same neighborhood in Caldwell. Momo is eleven years old and Leemu is ten years old.

They must cross the main road every morning to catch transport to go to school in Upper Caldwell.

One morning Momo and Leemu waited by the roadside at the crosswalk. They were trying to cross the road.



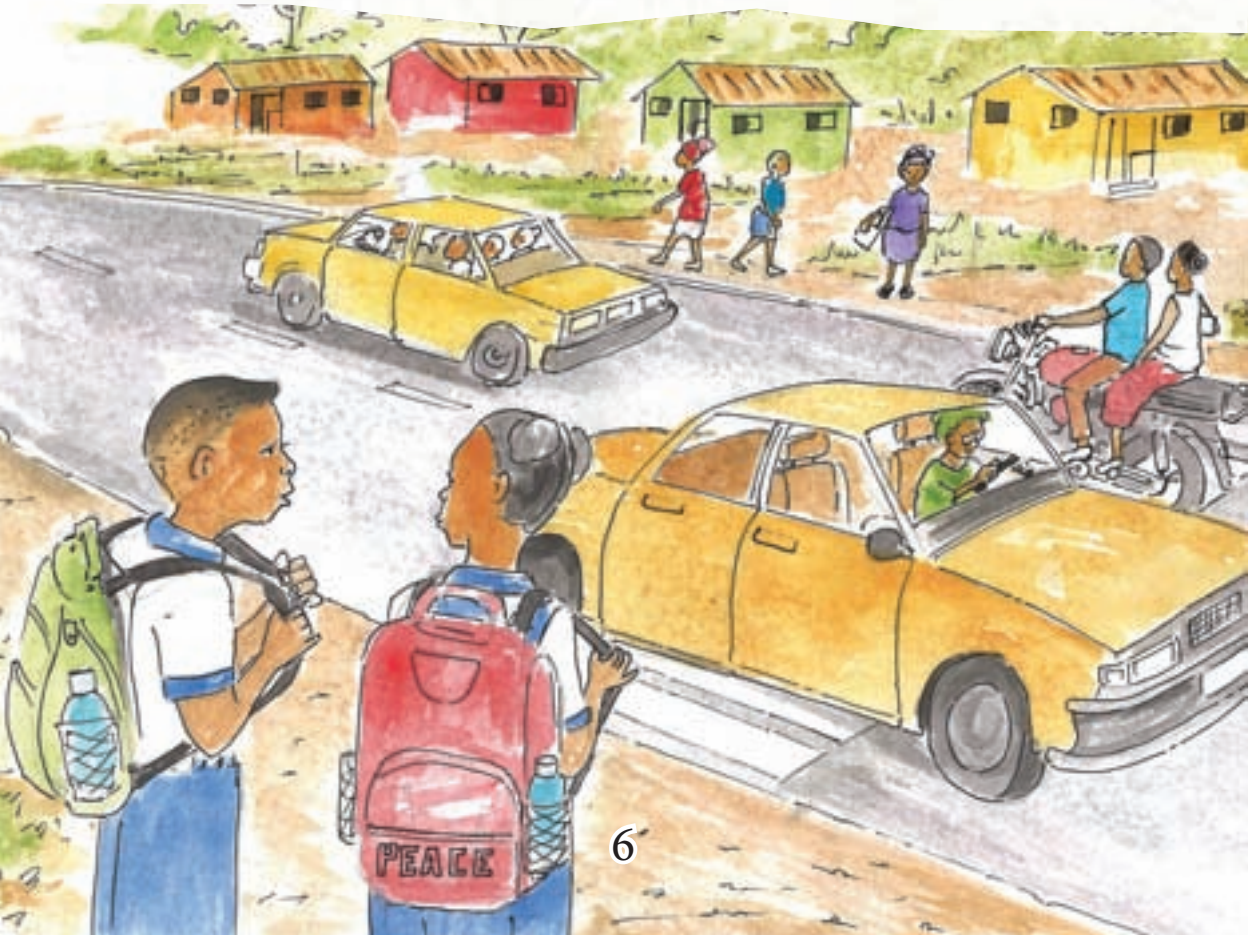
There were too many cars on the road. There were kekehs and motorbikes. There were large trucks carrying sand and others carrying crushed rocks.



“This road is always busy in the morning when we are going to school,” Momo said.

“It is also busy in the afternoon when people are coming from work,” Leemu turned to observe the cars.

“Sometimes I wish there was another way, like a walking path or a bicycle lane, leading straight to our school. Then we would avoid all this traffic.”



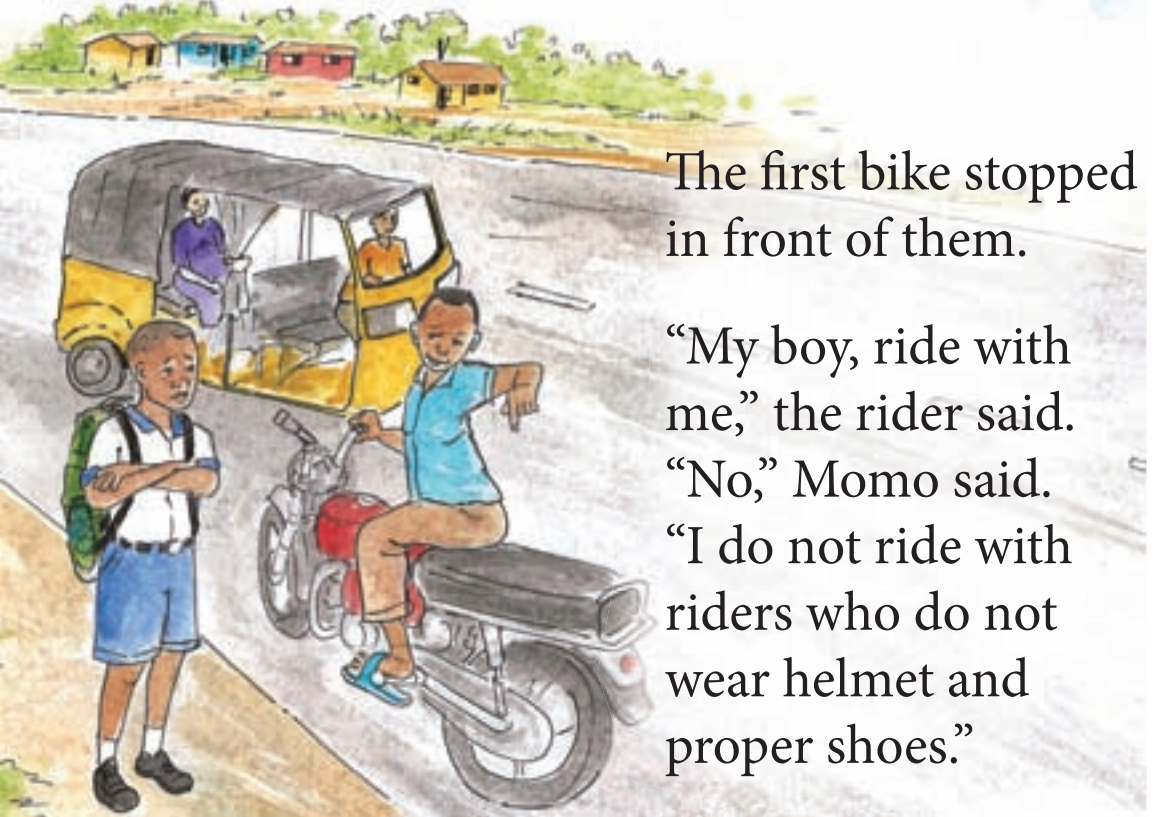
Momo and Leemu looked left. Then they looked right. Then they looked left again. They were looking to make sure it was safe to cross.



When the cars and bikes approaching the crosswalk stopped to allow the children to cross the road, Leemu and Momo got on the crosswalk and walked straight. They walked fast, but they did not run while on the crosswalk.



After crossing, they looked for a transport.



The first bike stopped in front of them.

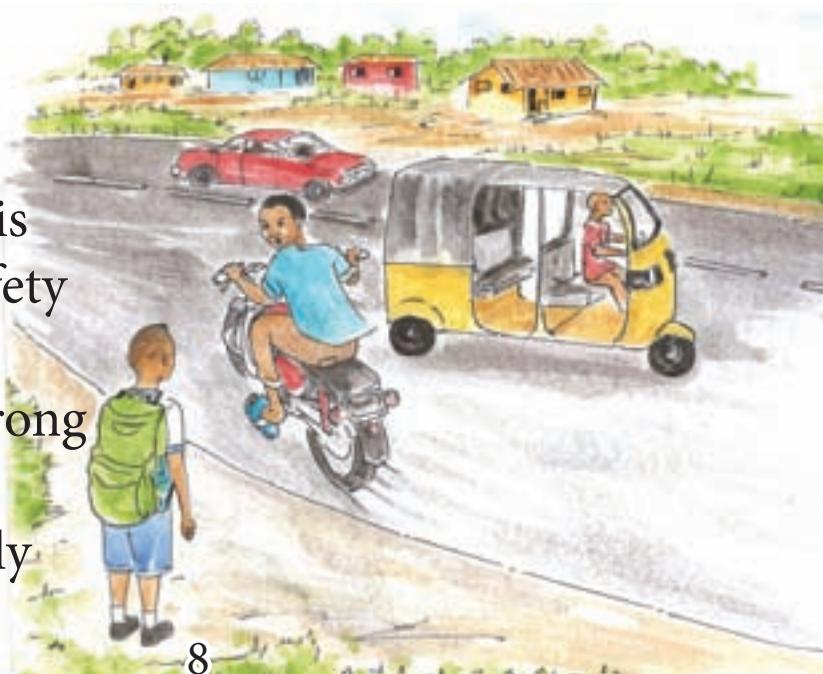
“My boy, ride with me,” the rider said.

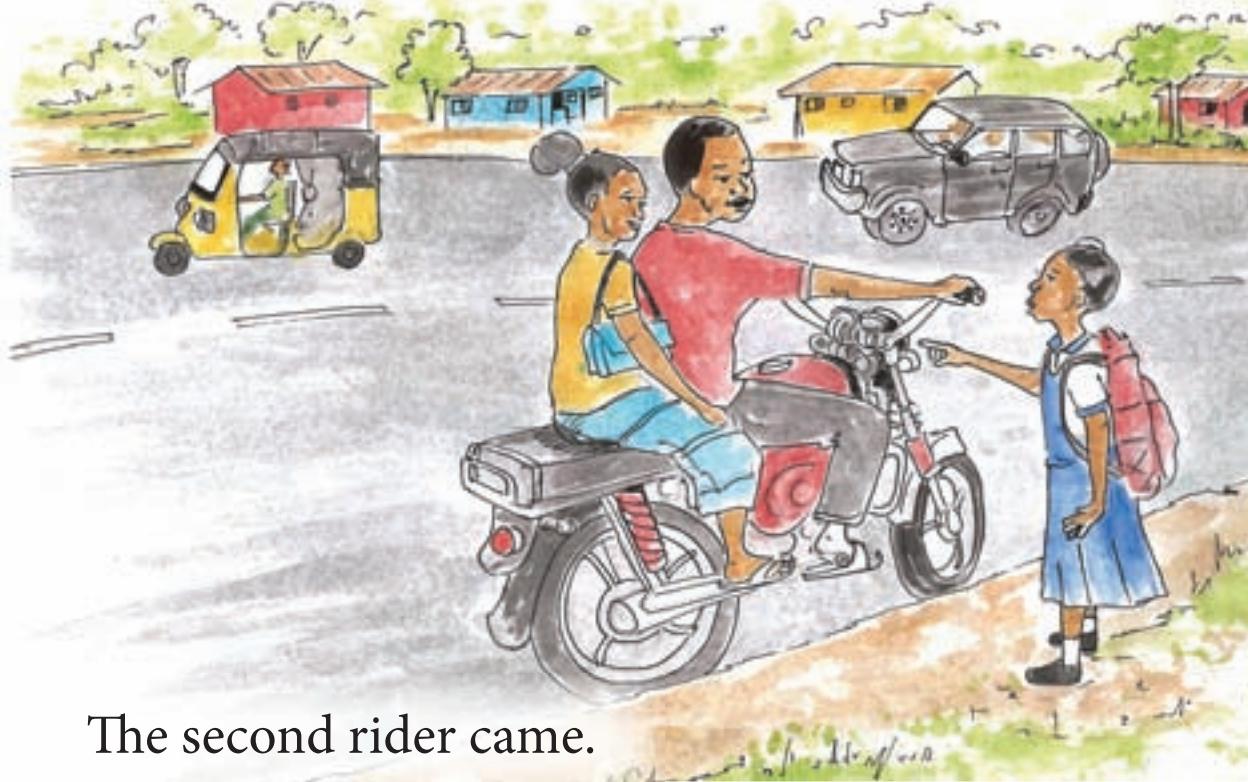
“No,” Momo said.

“I do not ride with riders who do not wear helmet and proper shoes.”

“My boy, don’t be scared! I have been riding like this for many years. Let’s go!”

“No! I will find another bike,” Momo told the rider. “No ride is safe without safety gears. You are riding into a wrong way also!”
The rider angrily rode away.





The second rider came.

“Let me take you to school quickly before you get late, little girl,” the rider said.

“No! I cannot ride with you,” Leemu said. “You already have another passenger, you do not have a helmet and you do not have shoes on, but slippers. They don’t cover your feet well.”

“It’s me riding you, not my slippers,” the rider replied. “And I can carry two persons.”

“No!” Leemu argued. “Momo and I want to ride a bike each. It is safer that way.”

Just then, two riders came by.
They were wearing helmets and shoes.
Both had clean spare helmets
and each wore a reflective vest.

One rider gave his spare helmet to Momo.
The other rider gave his spare helmet to Leemu.



“No one should ride a bike without wearing a helmet,” one of the riders said. “Riders should always wear a reflective vest, too.”



“Please wear your helmets properly, and buckle them up under the chin,” the other rider instructed. “Helmet protects your head in case we have a crash and you fall off the bike.”

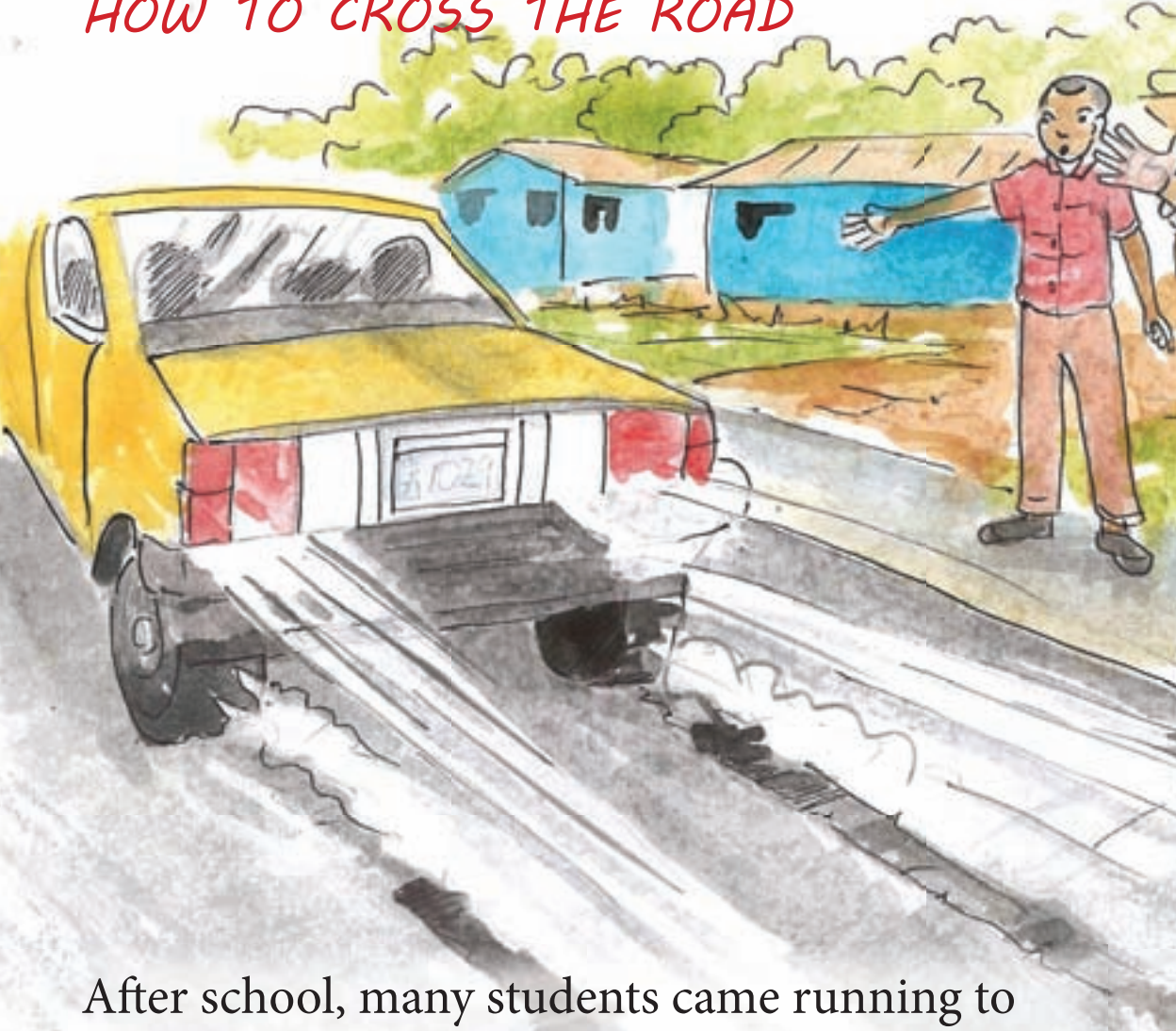


“Leemu,” Momo smiled,
“now we can have a safe ride to school.”



Chapter Two

HOW TO CROSS THE ROAD



After school, many students came running to cross the road. They stopped on the sidewalk.

A boy ran on the road without looking left and right. There was a loud sound of screeching tires. People standing by the road shouted!



The boy jumped back and bumped into the other students. The driver did not stop.

The boy was breathing heavily. The other students and some adults gathered around him.

Momo stepped out and said, “That is not a safe way to cross the road. Let us show you how Leemu and I cross the road.”

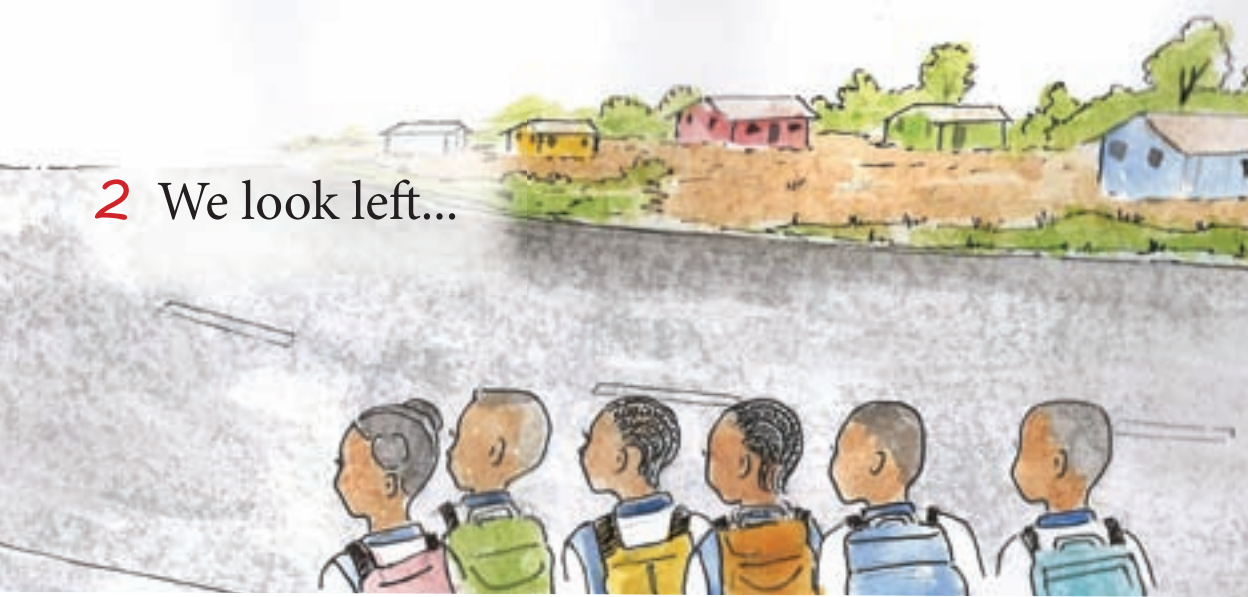
He and Leemu stood in front of them.

“This is what we do when we want to cross the road:

We step with one foot on the road and stop. That is a signal for drivers and riders to know that we want to cross. The drivers should stop to let us cross.



2 We look left...



3 ...and look right...

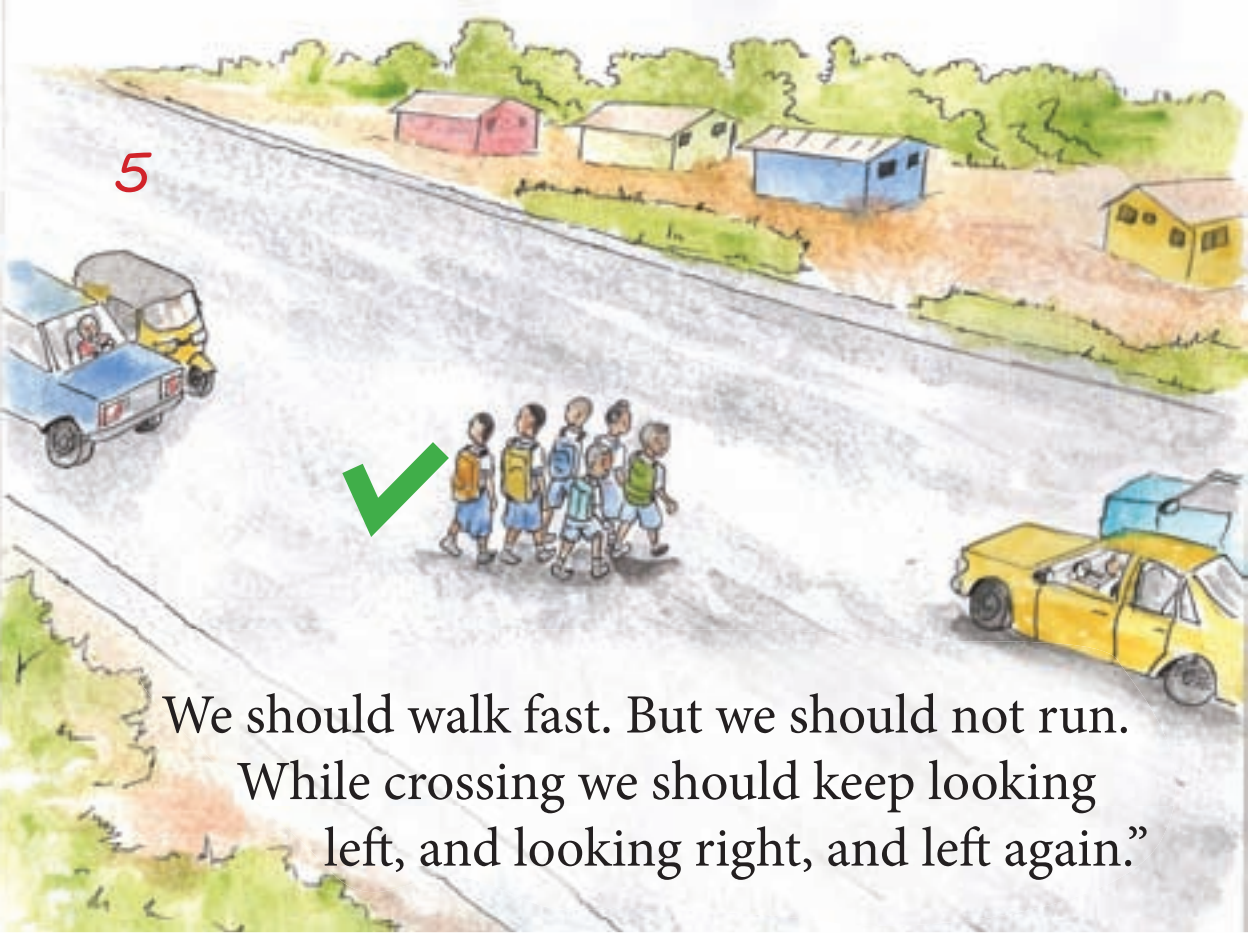


4 ...and look left again.



After vehicles close by have stopped, we can safely cross the road.

5



We should walk fast. But we should not run. While crossing we should keep looking left, and looking right, and left again.”

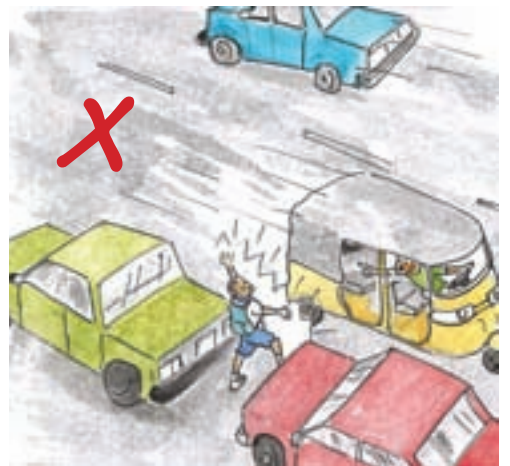
“When crossing, walk straight,” Leemu waved her hand. “Do not walk diagonally or bend-bend.”



“One more thing before you leave,” Momo said. “When we cross where there are no sidewalks and crosswalks, we first stand in a safe place.



We do not stand behind parked vehicles, so that drivers and riders can clearly see us.



We make sure there are no vehicles coming close before we cross.”



“Always remember,” Momo said. “When crossing the road Walk Fast, But Do Not Run.”

Chapter Three

RIDING IN A CAR



Going home, Leemu did not ride a bike like Momo.

She and three other students got in a taxi. Leemu sat in the front seat and fastened the seatbelt.

“Little girl, do not wear that belt,” the driver said.
“Why?” Leemu asked.

“I always take two persons in the front,” the driver replied.

“Two in the front on one seat?” Leemu asked.

“That’s how I make my money quickly. If you don’t like it, you get down for another person.”

“No!” Leemu responded. “The police keep telling us that there should be only one person in the front and three in the back.”



“The police say we should report any driver taking two in the front!” a girl in the back spoke up.

“I can’t let another person sit by me because I have to wear my seatbelt for safety,” Leemu said.



“Nothing will happen to you, little girl. I am a good driver. I have been driving many years before you were born. Do you see me wearing any seatbelt?”

“But that’s wrong,” Leemu said.

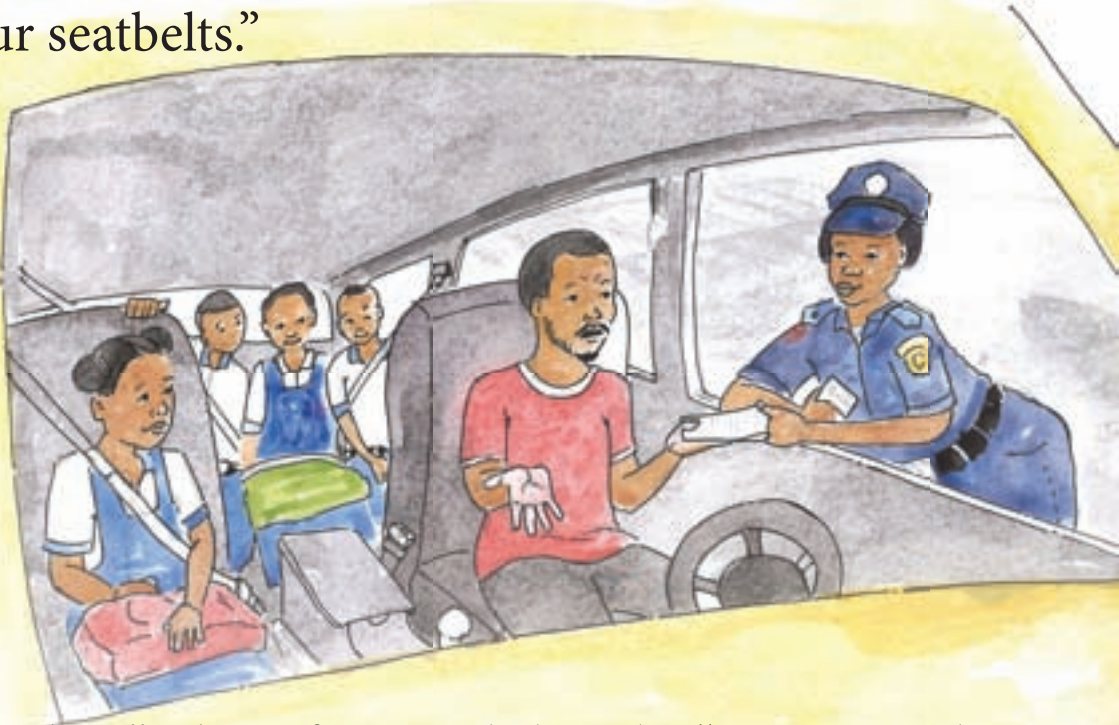
“The driver and every passenger in the car must wear their seatbelt.”

Soon, a policewoman came by.

“What is going on here, students?” she asked.

“This driver wants to take two in the front,”

Leemu explained. “He said we shouldn’t wear our seatbelts.”



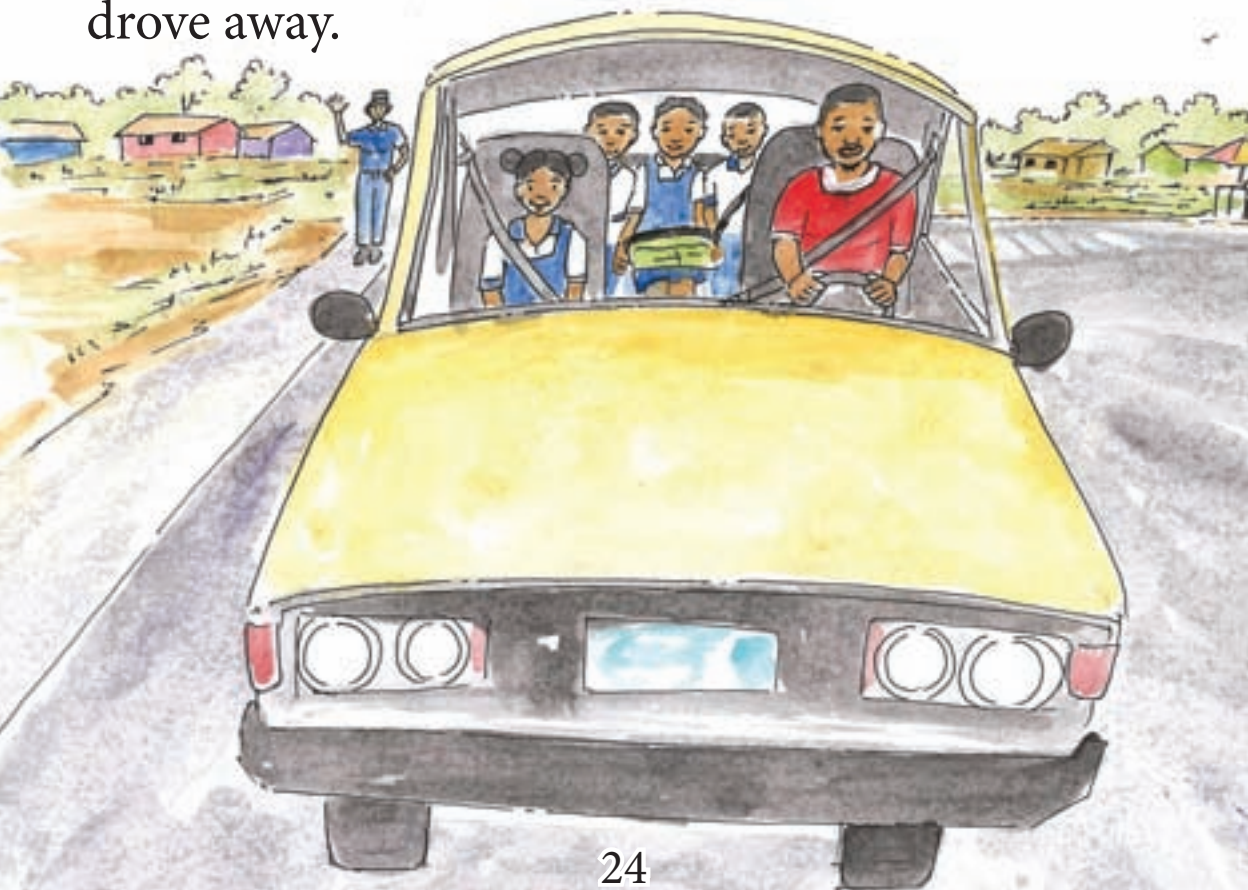
“What!” The officer said sharply. “You are right, little girl. It is a traffic violation not to wear a seatbelt.” The officer took her ticket book from her pocket and began writing.

“I am giving you this ticket because you were putting the lives of these children in danger,” the policewoman handed the driver the ticket.

“Please forgive me, officer,” the driver spoke sadly. “I will not violate the rules again.”
“Driver, wear your seatbelt!” the officer instructed. “When you put on a seatbelt, it must click to make sure it is locked.”

After the driver wore his seatbelt, the policewoman said at last, “Now you can go on safely.”

“Thanks, officer,” the students smiled as they drove away.



Chapter Four

GOING OUT TO PLAY

Now the weekend was here.
The children of the North Road
neighborhood ran out to play.

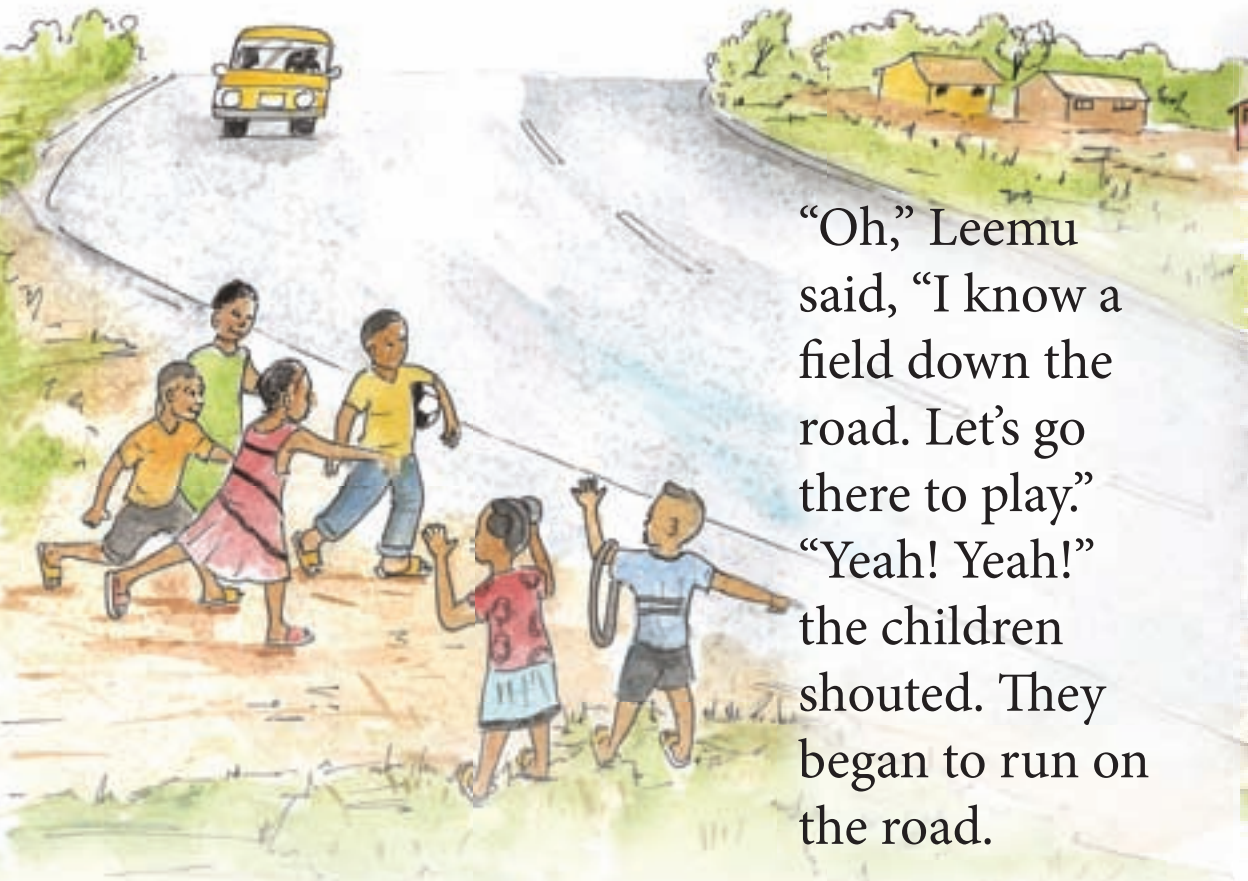
“Let us play kickball on the coal tar road,” one
girl suggested.

“No,” Leemu replied,
“the road is not a playground.”



“Why?” the girl asked. “Every Sunday we see older guys playing on the road. They pause their games when cars are coming.”

“But that isn’t right! You could get hit by a car!” Momo said sternly.

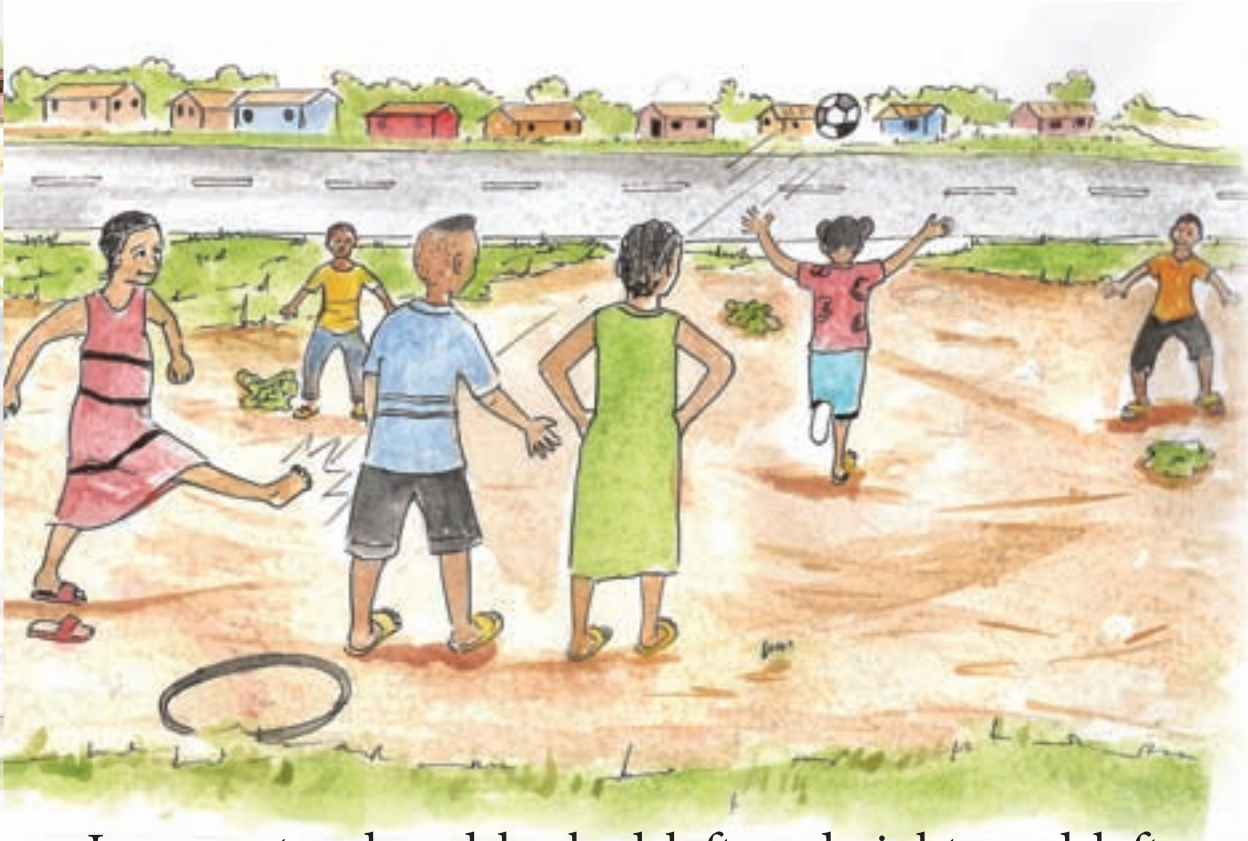


“Oh,” Leemu said, “I know a field down the road. Let’s go there to play.”
“Yeah! Yeah!” the children shouted. They began to run on the road.

“No! No! No!” Momo yelled. “Leave the road. Let’s walk on the left side of the road. That way we can see all oncoming vehicles.”



During the kickball game, a girl kicked the ball very hard in Leemu's direction. Leemu did not catch the ball. The ball flew across the road and she went after the ball.

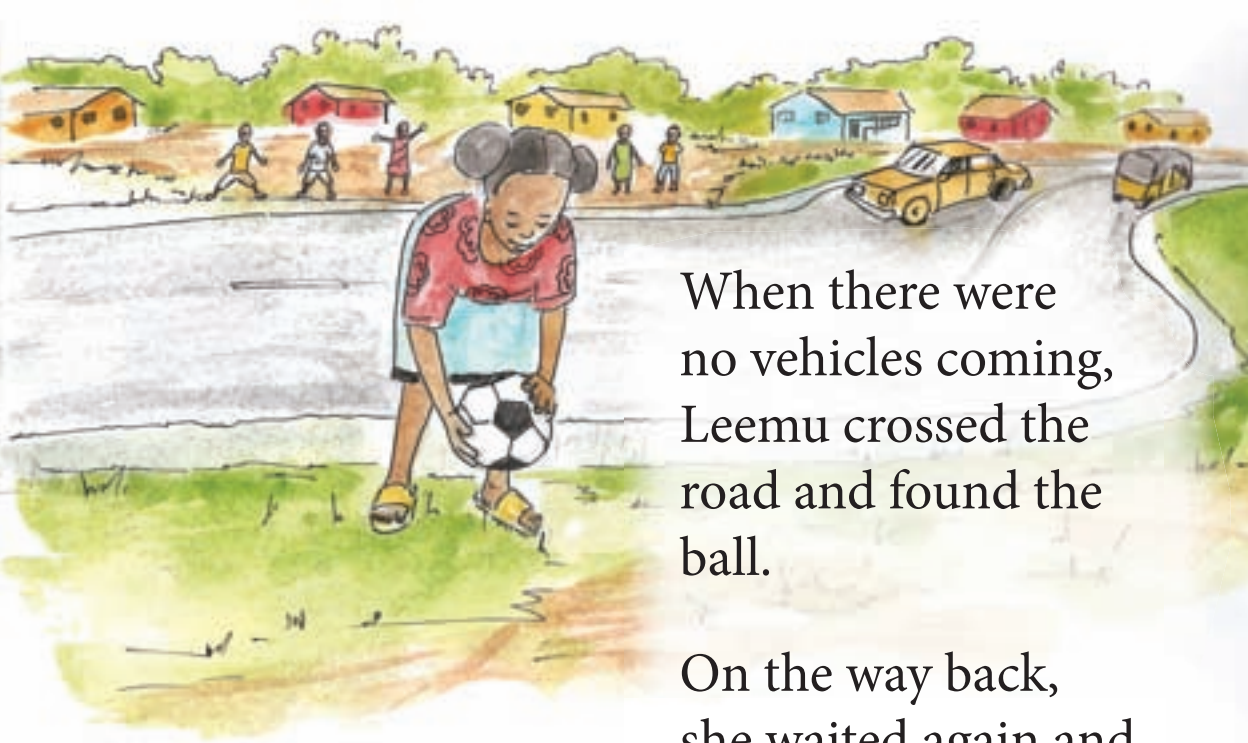


Leemu stood and looked left and right, and left again.

“Hurry across the road and get the ball, Leemu!” another girl shouted.



“I have to be careful,” Leemu answered. “The drivers and riders have no time to stop when someone suddenly runs on the road.”



When there were no vehicles coming, Leemu crossed the road and found the ball.

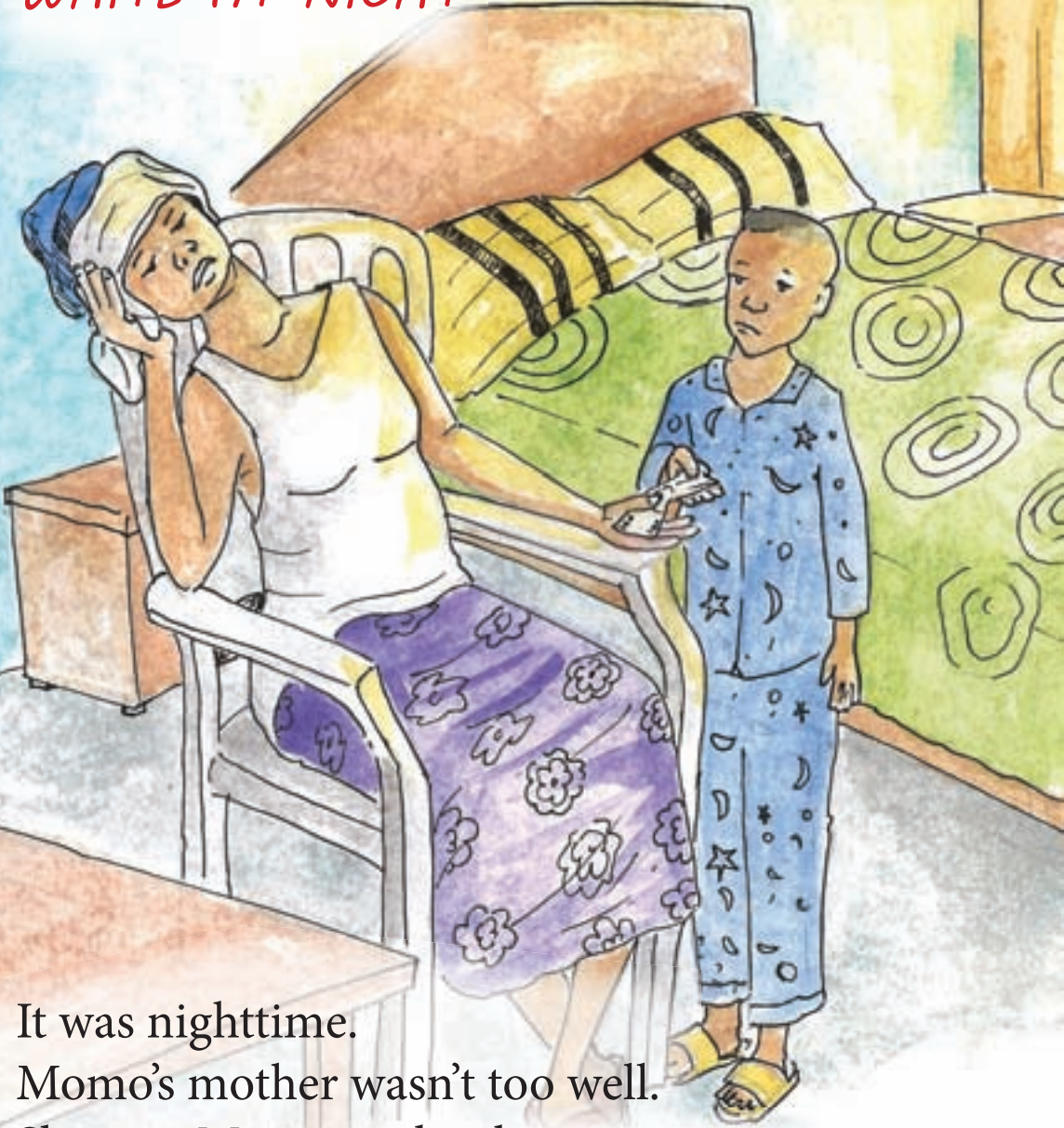


On the way back, she waited again and waved to the cars coming from her left. When the cars stopped, she crossed easily.

“It is not right to suddenly run for a ball across the road,” Leemu said again while her friends nodded. “Now let’s continue our game!”

Chapter Five

WHITE AT NIGHT

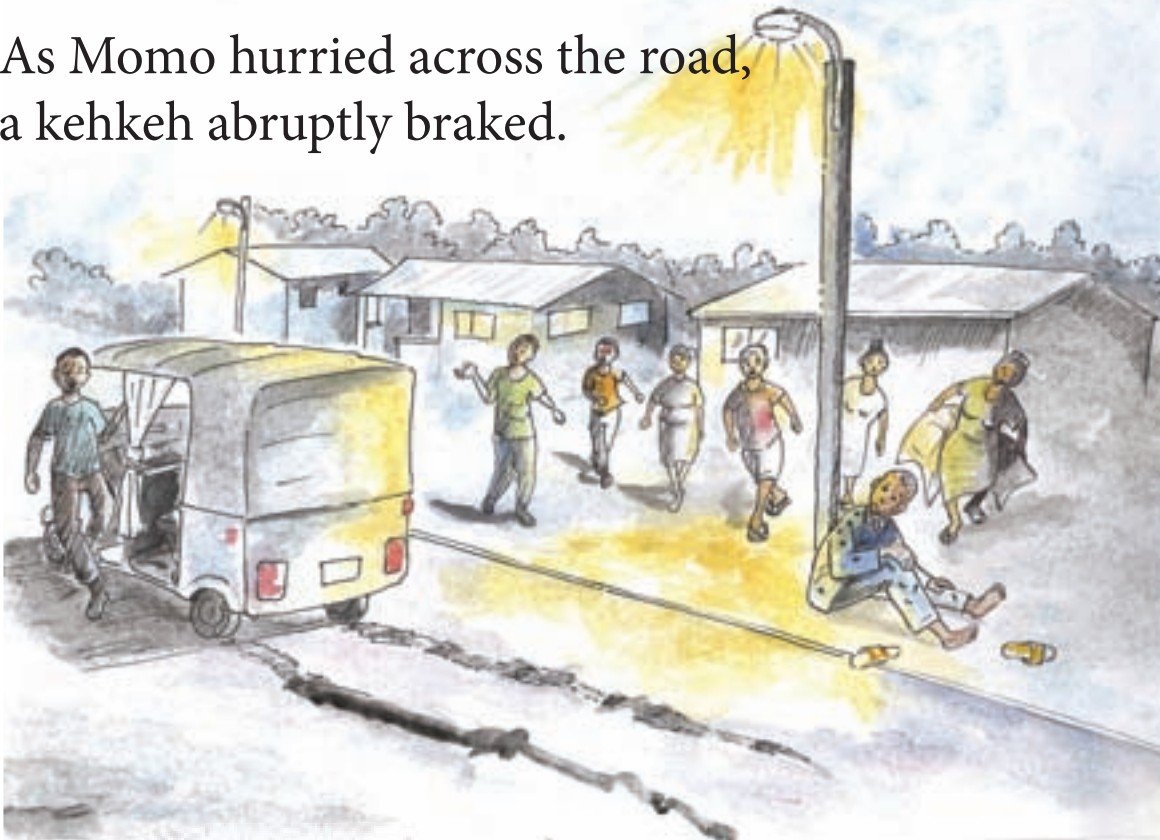


It was nighttime.
Momo's mother wasn't too well.
She sent Momo to the shop
to buy a loaf of bread.

Momo was already dressed in his pajama. It was a dark blue pajama.

“Just hurry across the road to Mr. Jalloh’s tea shop,” Momo’s mother said. “I want to have my dinner and take my medicines.”

As Momo hurried across the road, a kehkeh abruptly braked.

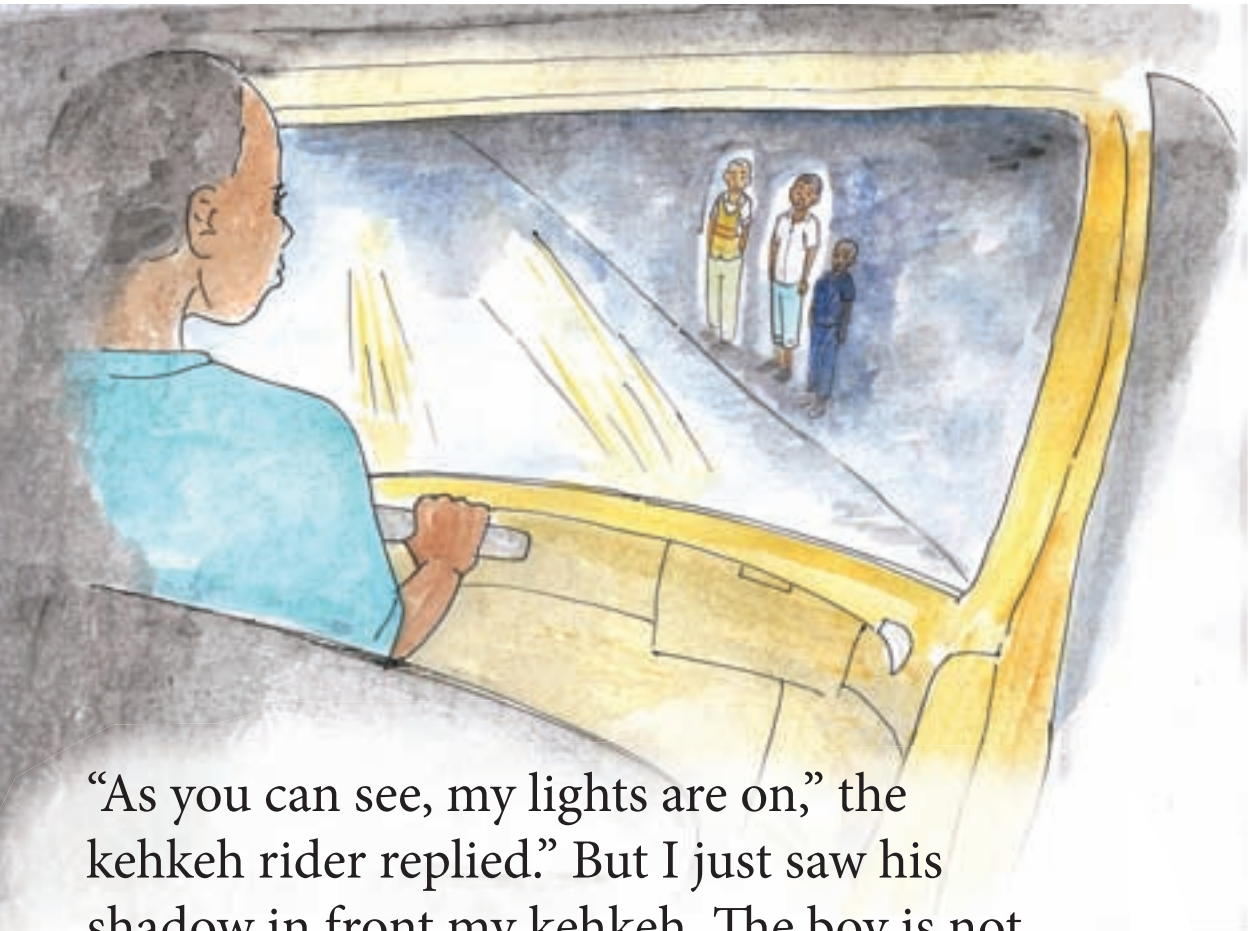


Many people came running to the road. Momo was on the other side of the road, confused and shaking.

“Oh, it’s Momo!” a woman shouted. “Let’s see if he is hurt!”

“These kehkehs never want to stop for anyone to cross,” a man observed.

“What really happened?” an older man asked as the rider got down.



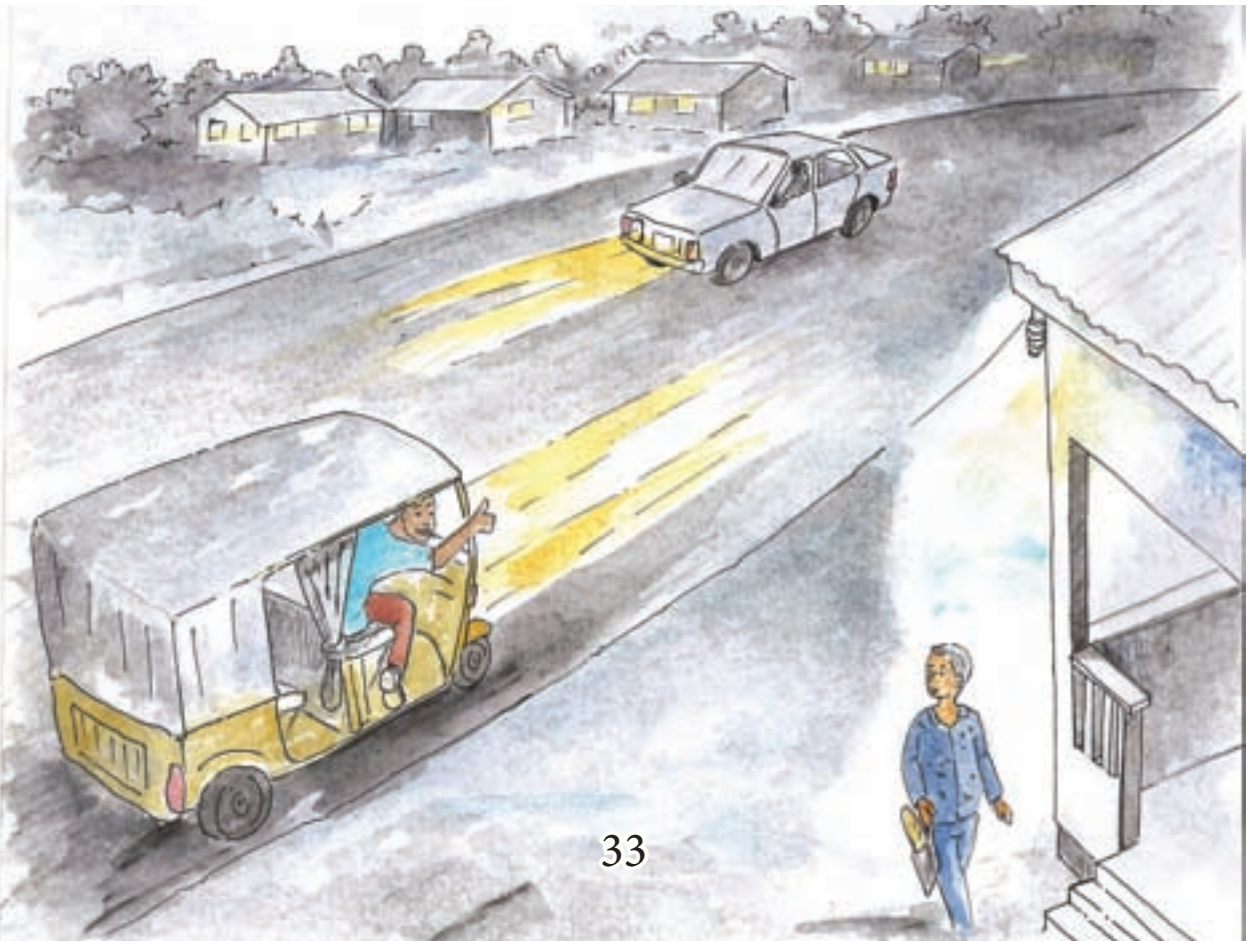
“As you can see, my lights are on,” the kehkeh rider replied.” But I just saw his shadow in front my kehkeh. The boy is not wearing bright clothes, so it was hard to see him.”

“Yeah!” someone added. “I heard on the radio that people should wear white color clothes or reflective jacket at night if they have to cross the road.”

“I was rushing because my mother is sick.” Momo sadly lifted his head.




“For any reason, Momo,” the older man said “when crossing the road at night, make sure you wear white or light color clothes.

STOP, LOOK and LISTEN before crossing the road”.









A SAFE WAY TO RIDE Activity

Chapter 1 *Safe Ride to School*



-  Why did Momo and Leemu refuse to ride with the first and second riders?
-  Why was it difficult to cross the road every morning?
-  Demonstrate how to wear a helmet.
Give the main reason for the use of helmets.

Chapter 2 *This Is How to Cross the Road*

-  What is the crosswalk used for?
-  When is it safe to cross the road?
-  With your friends, demonstrate the safe and unsafe ways to cross a road.

-  How do people in your community cross the road?
-  Why is it important to look left and right and left before crossing the road?
-  Draw a crosswalk.

Chapter 3 *Riding in a Car*

-  Explain the importance of seatbelts.
-  Why did the policewoman give the taxi driver a ticket?

Chapter 4 *Going Out to Play*

- ⚽ Why did Leemu not run across the road for the ball?
- ⚽ Why is the road not a safe place to play?

Chapter 5 *White at Night*

- 🚶 Why should people wear white clothes at night when crossing?
- 🚶 Discuss why you shouldn't stand behind a car when you want to cross.

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Concept
Yana Tumakova, Monrovia

Authors
James Dwalu, Yana Tumakova

Illustrator
Brima Wolobah

Editor
Llord Aidoo

Layout
Blessing Leo

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Dear reader,

This book is meant to help you understand the basic rules of safe behavior on roads. By reading you will get to know Liberian children, Leemu and Momo who live in Caldwell, Montserrado. Leemu and Momo go to school. They suggest how to cross the road in a safer way, explain why it is important to use a helmet and a seatbelt, as well as why to wear white clothes at night. Enjoy reading and be attentive on the road!

James V. Dwalu, Author



My name is James V. Dwalu. Going to school in Monrovia and Cape Mount, I had wonderful teachers who encouraged reading. I started writing in 1985. I have published more than twelve reading books, and more than fifteen stories in books about health, hygiene, rape prevention, food & nutrition, and work readiness for the Reading Liberia Program and INGOs.

Every day we ride motorbikes and cars. Riders and passengers do not follow road safety rules. They do not wear protective shoes, helmets or reflective clothes. Children and adults cross the roads without looking. Drivers do not encourage passengers to wear seatbelts. Drivers take more than the required persons in their cars. Too many people die or get hurt from road accidents in Liberia. That is why I joined Yana to write this book. I hope children and adults can enjoy reading it.

Yana Tumakova, Author



My name is Yana Tumakova. I came to Liberia to work for GIZ, German Development Cooperation, in 2017. My focus of work is road safety and sustainable mobility, for example education of traffic rules, promotion of cycling and safe road infrastructure. As part of my work, I support innovative measures for road safety sensitization in Liberia, such as Safe Streets Festival, Road Safety Comedy Competition, cartoons and social media activities.

Russian is my mother tongue and I speak English, German and Spanish fluently. I think traffic rules represent another very important language all of us must learn in order to be safe on the road. This schoolbook is a kind of ABC for road safety education. If readers learn and apply the basic rules presented in the book, they will be safe on the road.

Brima Wolobah, Illustrator



My name is Brima M. Wolobah. I am a Liberian. I started drawing at the age of seven as a refugee in Guinea. Illustration for children has always been fun and joy for me. Because of my love for cartoons and bedtime stories, I got inspired to do illustrations.

Now I am a painter and an illustrator. I am also studying construction engineering at the Salvation Army Polytechnic. I have participated in numerous exhibitions and trade fairs in Liberia. Seeing children being entertained by my drawings makes me happy.

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