



The Children Who Saved the
Mangroves

by
Rehema Kibugi
Illustrated by Justine Greenfield



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Mangroves

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foreword

Rehema Kibugi is a living treasure in Kenya when it comes to recording nature's events, story writing, and debating. She has fought the good fight of embracing her passion by composing a children's book about mangroves. Mangrove protection is an important aspect of environmental conservation and should be embraced by all. Rehema's storybook enlightens readers to the fact that kids should learn about mangroves and be involved in protecting and conserving them. Mangroves save lives and therefore should also be saved. The law protects mangroves, and we all have an ethical responsibility to care for and protect them. The continued pressure on mangroves will further increase the need to develop better protection measures to save these important forests. Mangrove disappearance can lead to a nightmare for the communities who live adjacent to them.

In this context, it is critical to learn that mangroves provide a great source of money and food to the community living around them. From the global perspective, they protect our shores from being washed away by strong waves. They provide habitat, breeding places, and protection for fish and other wildlife. Mangroves also take in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help to moderate climate change. Lawmakers, communities, and non-governmental organizations around the world are dedicated to promoting mangrove conservation and regrowth.

The publication of *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves* is a very pleasing tale about mangroves that provides insight into the environment, values and threats that affect them, as well as children's power to create innovative solutions to issues facing our society. This book touches my heart and aligns well with the mandate of my own institution. It is a milestone in the awareness of mangrove importance and conservation. The book will go a long way in raising awareness about the critical roles that mangroves play in the achievements of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is an honor to commend Rehema's book.

— Dr. James G. Kairo
Chief Scientist and Head of Mangrove Program
Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute
MOMBASA



preface

This book is the culmination of an education tour through a mangrove forest, which I undertook with a brilliant and passionate girl who stood out differently. In preparing for the visit, I sought agemates who would keep her company throughout the activities. I assumed she would prefer younger company while we spoke science with her father; I was wrong.

“What was that name again?”

“Oh! What is that animal? Does it bite?”

“Uh! This must be a different species, right?”

“Why are there no trees here?”

“How come I do not see the small fish you mentioned?”

I had not anticipated these questions from the young and bold visitor and had to quickly step up and keep up with inquisitive Rehema’s desire to learn. Six hours of heat and humidity did not hold her back. She had not just accompanied her father (I suspect it was the other way round) to Gazi for play, rather she was out on a purpose: another knowledge-seeking adventure. A week later, I received a well-articulated narrative of the tour, capturing amazing detail, by keen Rehema. She chose not to end it there but to charmingly share her experience and passion for a healthy environment with the world through this children’s book: *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves*. It is such courage, such charisma, such yearning to make a difference that does make the difference. This book is written to encourage and promote the involvement of children in looking after their natural surroundings. A healthy environment begins with each one of us making a deliberate effort to be aware of what needs to be done, to do it, and to pass on the knowledge. I am glad to have contributed to the inspiration that has resulted in this great publication. I say “Thank you” to amazing Rehema for the great reminder and motivation to keep going.

Through this book, enthusiastic Rehema elaborates that effective communication with children is best done by peers and that it is never too early to bring them on-board and allow them the opportunity to be part of the positive narrative. Such amazing talent and charm has to be allowed to ooze out and encourage the little Barakas and Kamaus who are ready to stand up and be counted as *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves* and the World.

— Lilian Mwihaki
Marine Ecologist



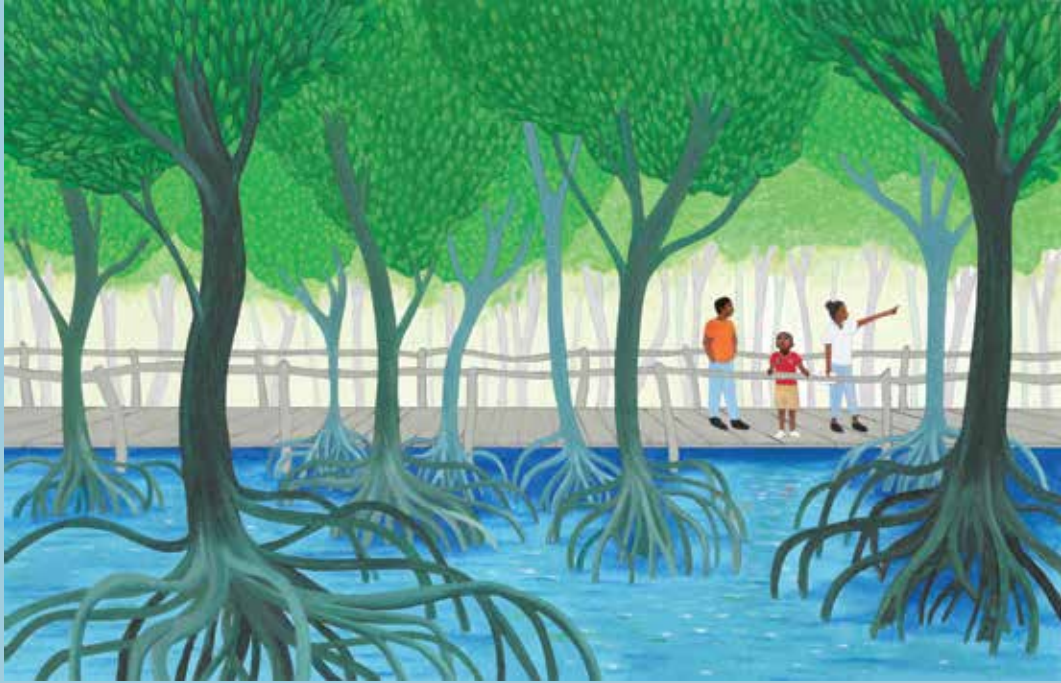
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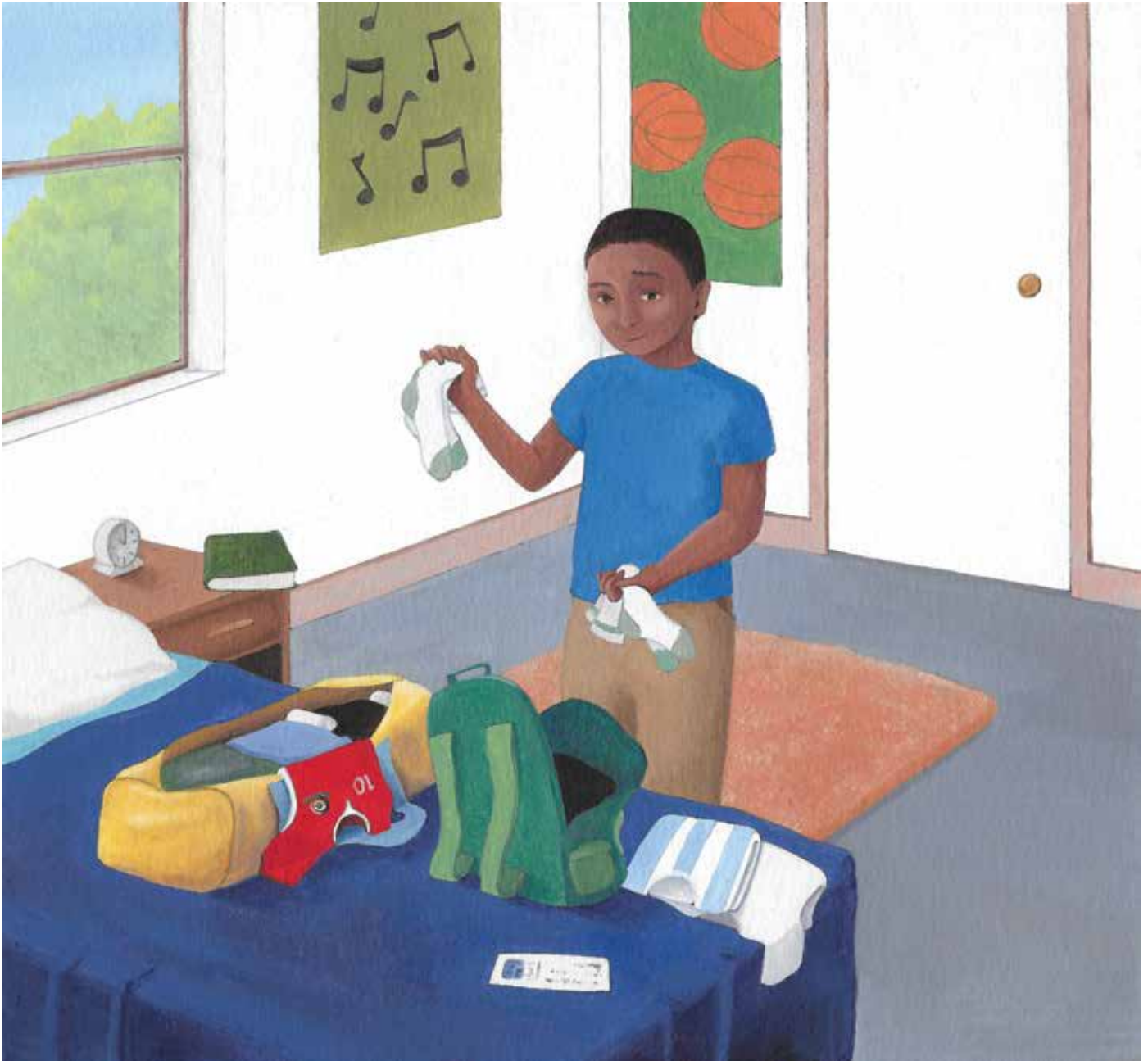
Sustainable development is a major concern for today's citizen. This was not the case three decades ago. The importance of ensuring that current generations treat the environment and natural resources in a way that takes the needs of future generations into account is underscored in multilateral environmental agreements. The 2030 United Nations Development Agenda and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also buttress the needs for sustainable development as does the Africa Agenda 2063.

It is within this context that the significance of Rehema Kibugi's story *The Children who Saved the Mangroves* is ensconced. Mangroves are a critical resource for coastal communities who depend on them for livelihood and economic purposes. They are however under great threat due to logging. Securing the future of mangroves calls for the enlistment of support from everybody, young and old. *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves* illustrates the role that children can play to protect natural resources from destruction and illegal harvesting. Raising children's awareness about the importance of resources such as mangroves makes them guardians of these resources at a young age. Kamau's journey to the land of mangroves, as told by Rehema, demonstrates how conscientizing children makes them custodians of resources. Since they are young and most adults underrate their awareness and ability to use technology, they can be undercover cops for threatened resources such as mangroves.

I laud Rehema for telling a very dense story in an accessible and compelling style. The story is a great encouragement for parents to expose their children to critical sustainable development issues. This equips them to be good stewards of the resources and to take the mantle of managing the resources in the spirit of inter-generational equity.

— Patricia Kameri-Mbote
Professor of Law
University of Nairobi





chapter 1

The trip to the coast

Kamau was packing for his trip to Diani. “I need shorts... and shirts... and socks... and vests...” he said as he gathered up his clothes. He tried not to overpack, but he couldn’t help it. Kamau knew he was preparing for a very special adventure.

Kamau’s family lived in Nairobi. His dad was going on a work trip, and he had asked Kamau to join.

“Kamau!” said his dad that evening, “I hope you have packed your bags.”

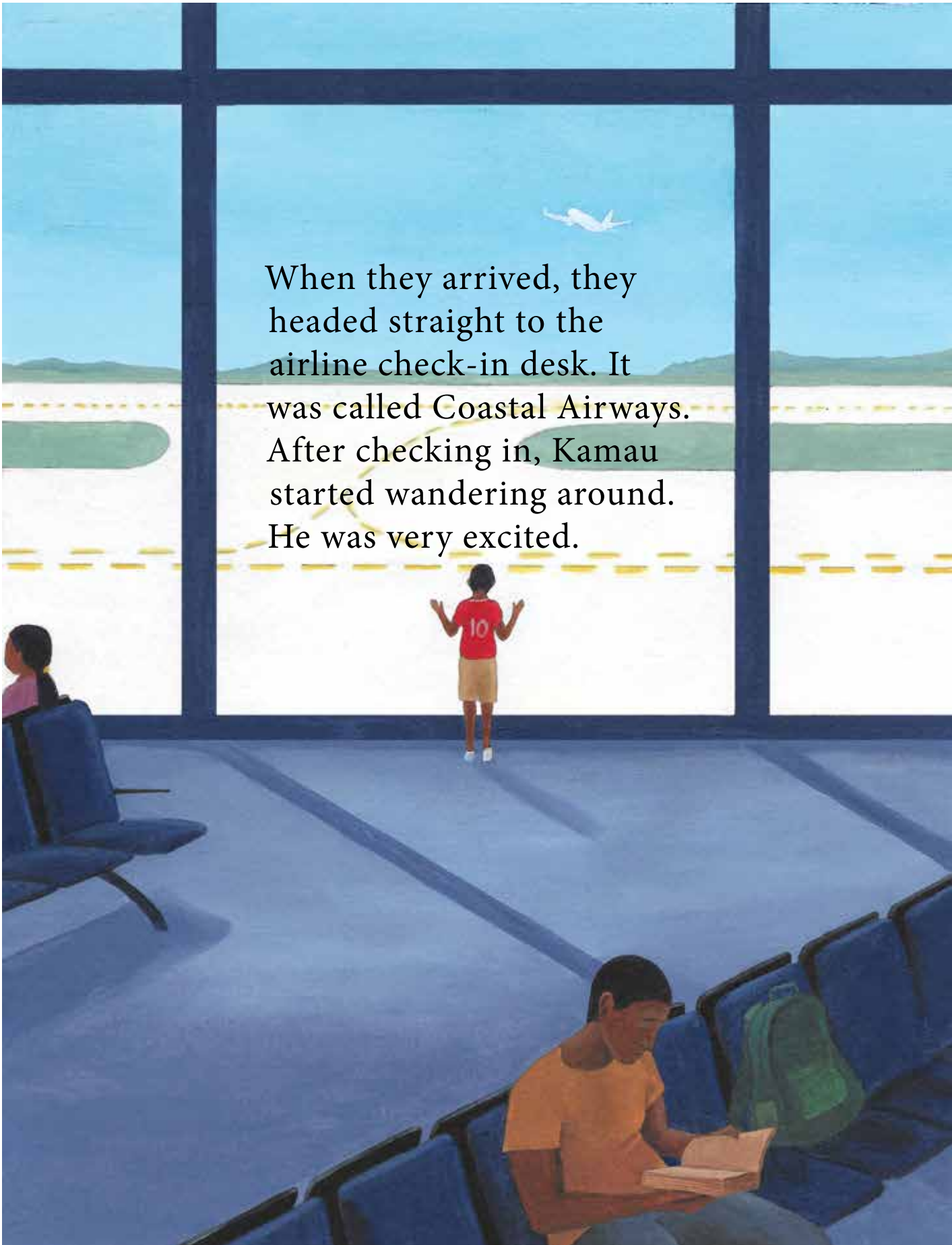
“Yes, daddy,” said Kamau.

“Perfect!” replied his dad, “Now you should shower and sleep. I’ll wake you up at five thirty in the morning since our flight is at ten.” After reading his favourite story, Kamau slept.



The next thing Kamau heard was, “Kamau, wake up!” It was early the following morning. Kamau got out of bed and headed straight for the shower. He then headed to his room where his clothes were already laid out for him. He ate up a pancake as quickly as he could, and then his dad called a taxi to pick them up and drop them off at the airport.





When they arrived, they headed straight to the airline check-in desk. It was called Coastal Airways. After checking in, Kamau started wandering around. He was very excited.





“Are we going to meet any children?” he asked his daddy.
“Yes, we are going to a village called Gazi, and there are many children living there,” his dad replied.

Kamau’s daddy also told Kamau that they would spend time in the mangroves.

“Mangroves? What are mangroves?” Kamau asked.

“Mangroves,” his daddy said, “are trees that grow on the sea. We are going to Gazi village to learn more about how mangroves are important to the environment.”

Kamau wanted to learn more about mangroves. Kamau’s dad told him that when they arrived in Gazi, he would be able to ask all of his questions.



chapter 2

Kamau learns about mangroves

When Kamau and his dad arrived in Gazi, they met a lady called Lillian. She was very polite, and she asked Kamau his name.

“Lillian, we are going to teach Kamau all about mangroves,” dad said. Kamau was excited! “That is great!” she answered.

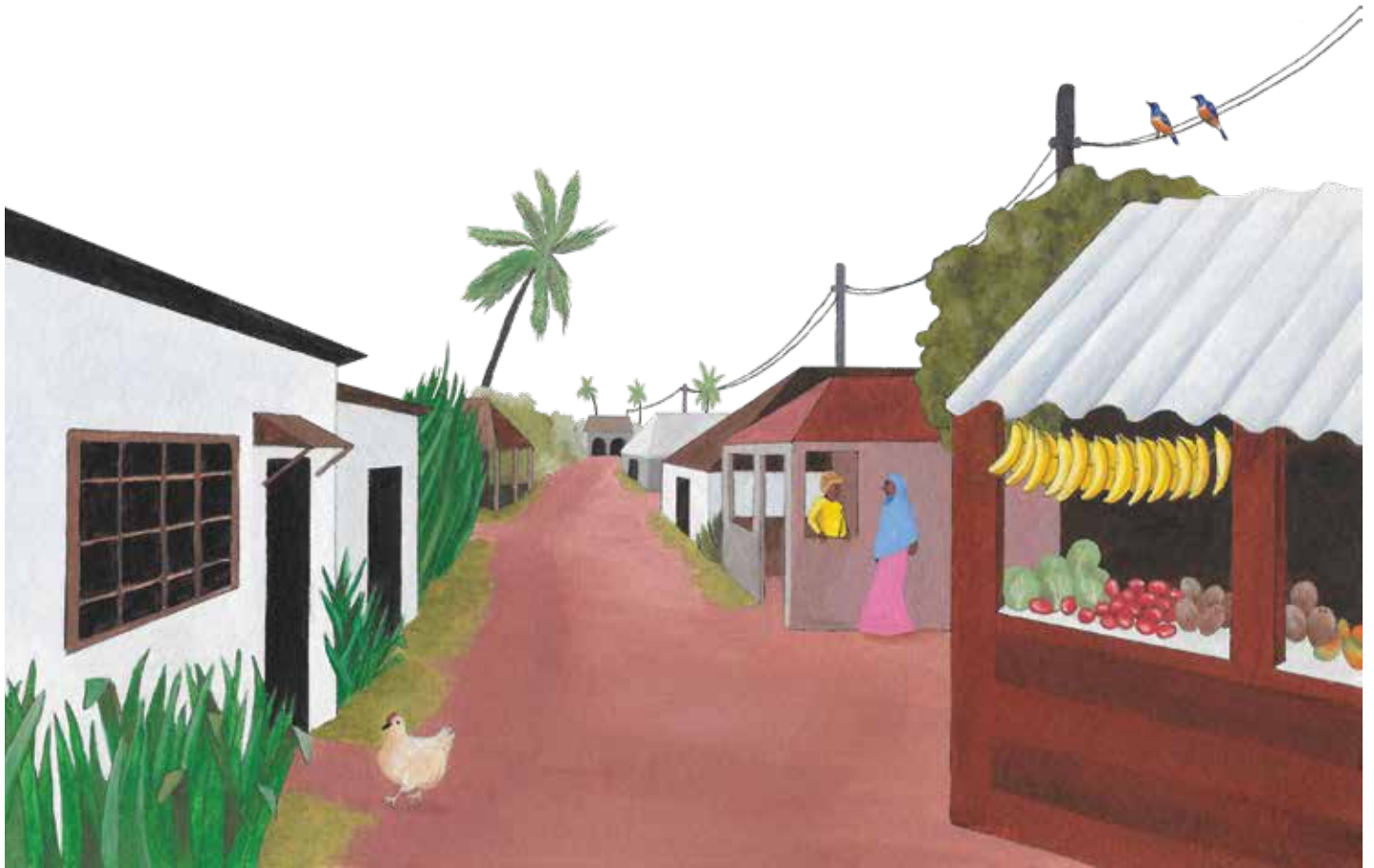
Lillian explained that they were in Gazi village, where people’s homes were close to the ocean and the mangrove trees.

“The people here take care of mangroves,” she said.

She told Kamau that she was a scientist who worked with people from Gazi to protect mangroves.

“Tell me more, tell me more!” Kamau exclaimed.

“Let’s walk to the mangroves, and I will show you,” Lillian said.



Lillian told Kamau there are many types of mangroves, called species.

“What are the names of the mangrove species?” asked Kamau.

“One of them is called mkoko (pronounced m-ko-ko), and its scientific name is *Rhizophora mucronata*.” Lillian told Kamau and his daddy that in the Kiswahili language, a mangrove is also known as Mkoko.

“Oh wow,” said Kamau “the scientific name is difficult to pronounce.” Lillian told him that the other type of mangroves was called *Cerriops tagal* (or Mkandaa, in Kiswahili, pronounced m-ka-n-daa).

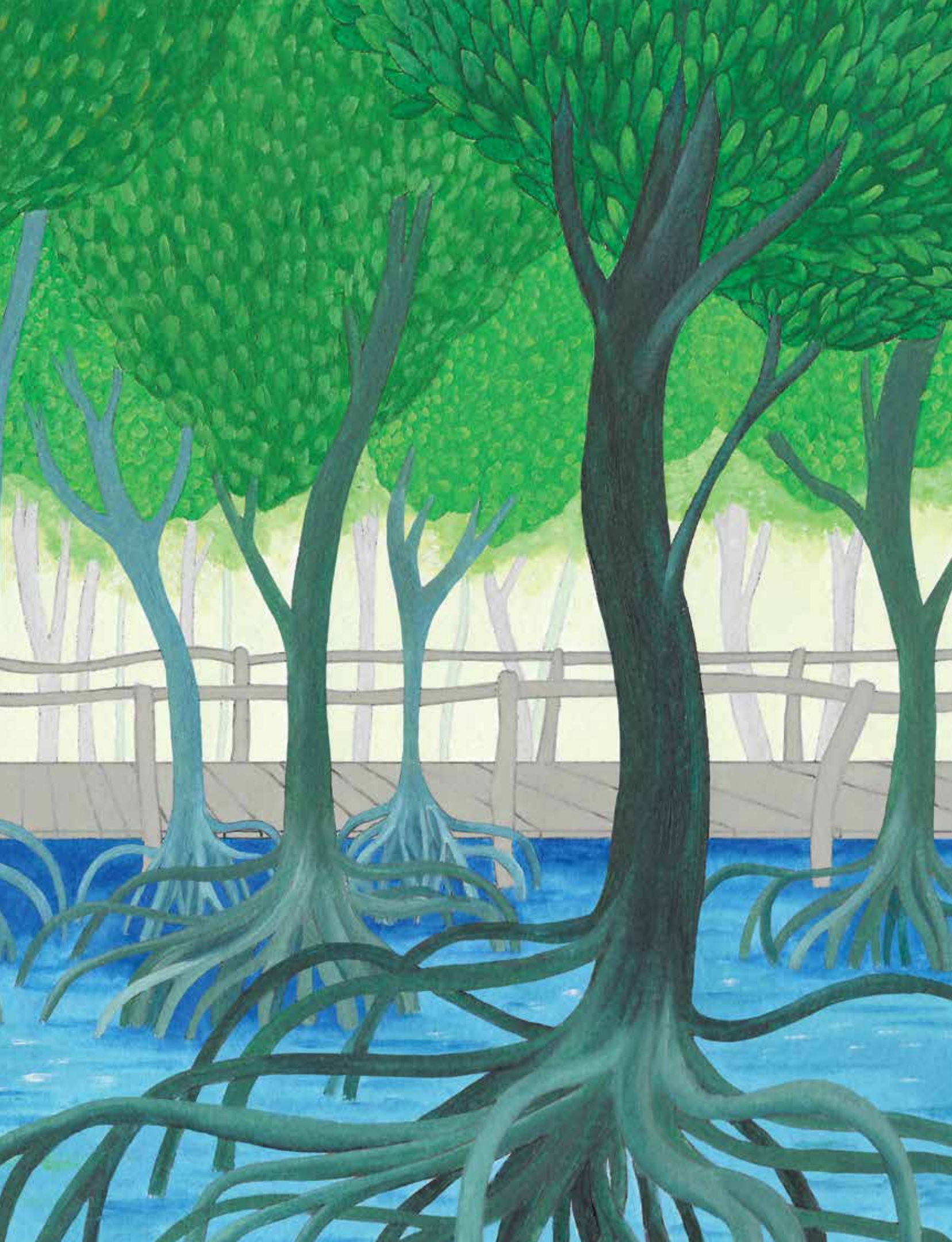
Lillian took them to a boardwalk and said the people of Gazi village had built the boardwalk inside the mangroves so that visitors can walk inside the forest above the water. Visitors pay money to enter, and they are entertained with traditional coastal music and dances.

“The money from the boardwalk is used for community activities like providing clean drinking water,” Lillian informed them.

“Women from the community also sell delicious coastal food for visitors to enjoy.”

“So Gazi people take care of mangroves and work on the boardwalk?” Kamau asked.





“Yes, they also work on aquaculture,” Lillian said with a smile.

“Tell me about aquaculture!” exclaimed Kamau. Daddy and Lillian both smiled broadly and told Kamau that they knew he would want to know more.

“We will take you to the aquaculture,” they assured him.



“Aquaculture is when people dig up small ponds amongst the mangrove forests in order to farm sea fish which they can sell and make money for their families,” Lillian answered. “We catch milkfish and prawns”.

“Okay,” Kamau said, “where do they get the water?” Daddy told Kamau that when the tides come, a lot of sea water flows into the mangroves and the aquaculture ponds fill up with water every day. “My teacher taught me about the tide in school,” Kamau remarked. “Are we near the aquaculture ponds?” he asked. Lillian and Kamau’s father smiled.

A few minutes later they arrived at the ponds.

Kamau was excited to see the fish in the ponds but he got bored quickly and wanted to see more mangroves.



chapter 3

The mangrove forest

As they walked on, they tried not to step on the sand. They climbed a small hill and arrived at a mangrove forest. It was dark, and there were many trees. Lillian said this was a plantation site.

“What’s that?” Kamau asked.

Lillian explained that many years ago, people cut down all the mangrove trees to use the timber for building, charcoal and firewood. There used to be no mangrove forest, and when the tides came, the water would rise up to the level of the houses.

“Why do they have such big and long roots”? asked Kamau.

Lillian told him that it’s because mangroves grow in a lot of water where the soil is super muddy. “The ocean tide that comes everyday is very strong, and the mangroves need strong roots so that they are not uprooted by the tide,” she explained.

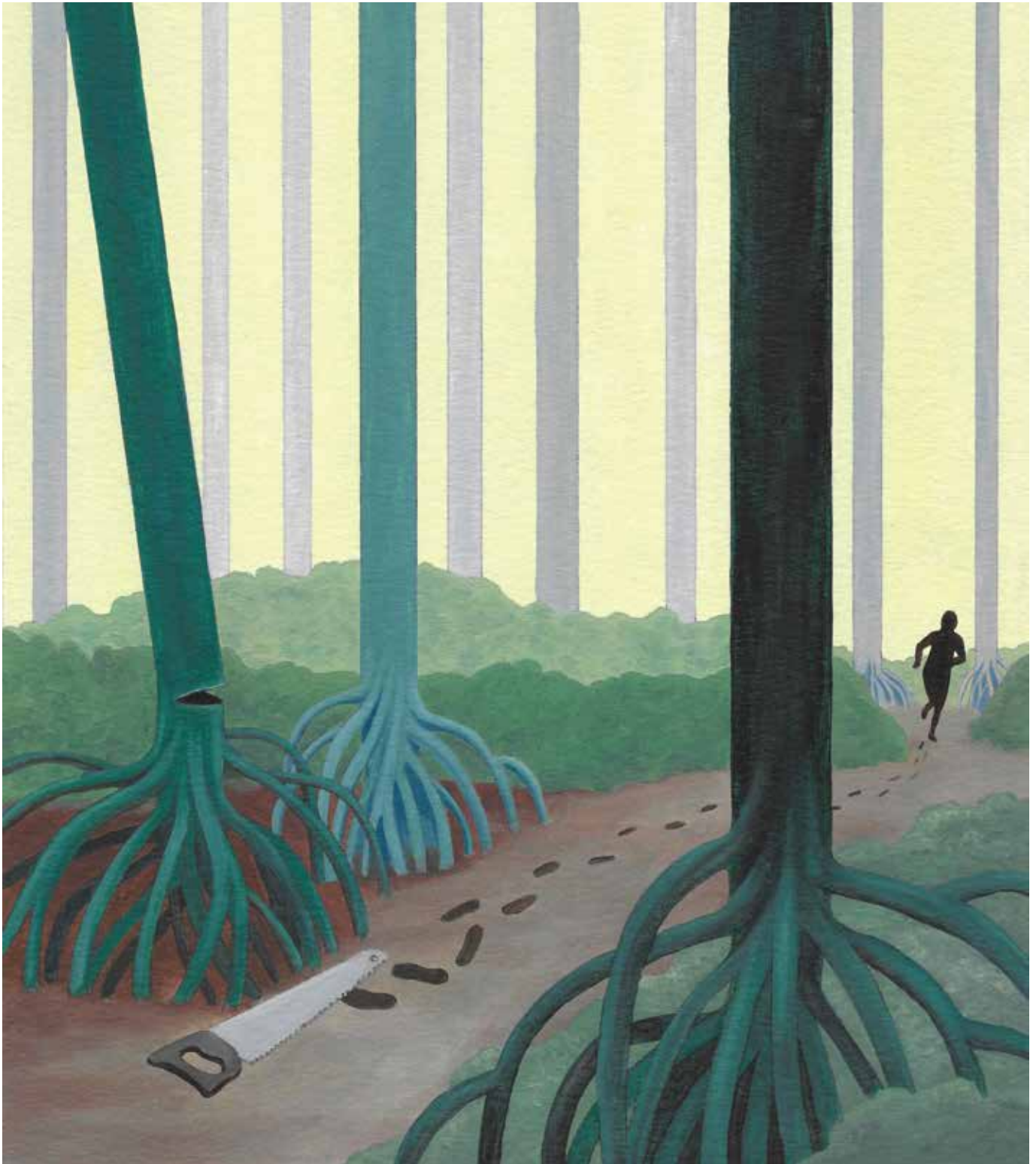
The mangrove forest was very muddy, and with each step, Kamau worked hard to pull his foot out of the mud. Luckily, Lillian had given Kamau and his daddy rubber boots for walking through the mangroves.



As they walked, they heard a noise. Lillian gestured for them to be quiet. They stood still and listened. “It is the sound of a saw cutting,” Lillian whispered.

Then they saw him.

There was a man who was busy cutting down some of the trees. When the man saw them, he dropped his saw and ran off.



Lillian said they should leave the plantation because the scouts were not there. “Scouts like the ones in my school?” Kamau asked.

“No, these are members of the community who we train to protect the mangrove forest. However, the forest is so big that I suspect they must be in another part,” Lillian said. She called someone on the phone and asked if the scouts could come to the plantation.

As they walked back to the village, Lillian told Kamau that if he wanted to learn more about the village, he should talk to the children.

“Here is Baraka,” Lillian said, introducing a young boy.

“Hello, my name means Blessing in Kiswahili!” Baraka announced happily. “I am a mangroves protector,” he told Kamau.





Kamau asked him what a mangrove protector is. Baraka told Kamau that he and other children sometimes walked to the mangroves to play and clean up litter that gets trapped in the roots.

“Where does the litter come from?” Kamau asked. Baraka told him that some of the litter comes from the village, and some of it comes from the ocean with the tide.

“Oh! I remember, my teacher told us that litter from the ocean can come from countries that are far away.”

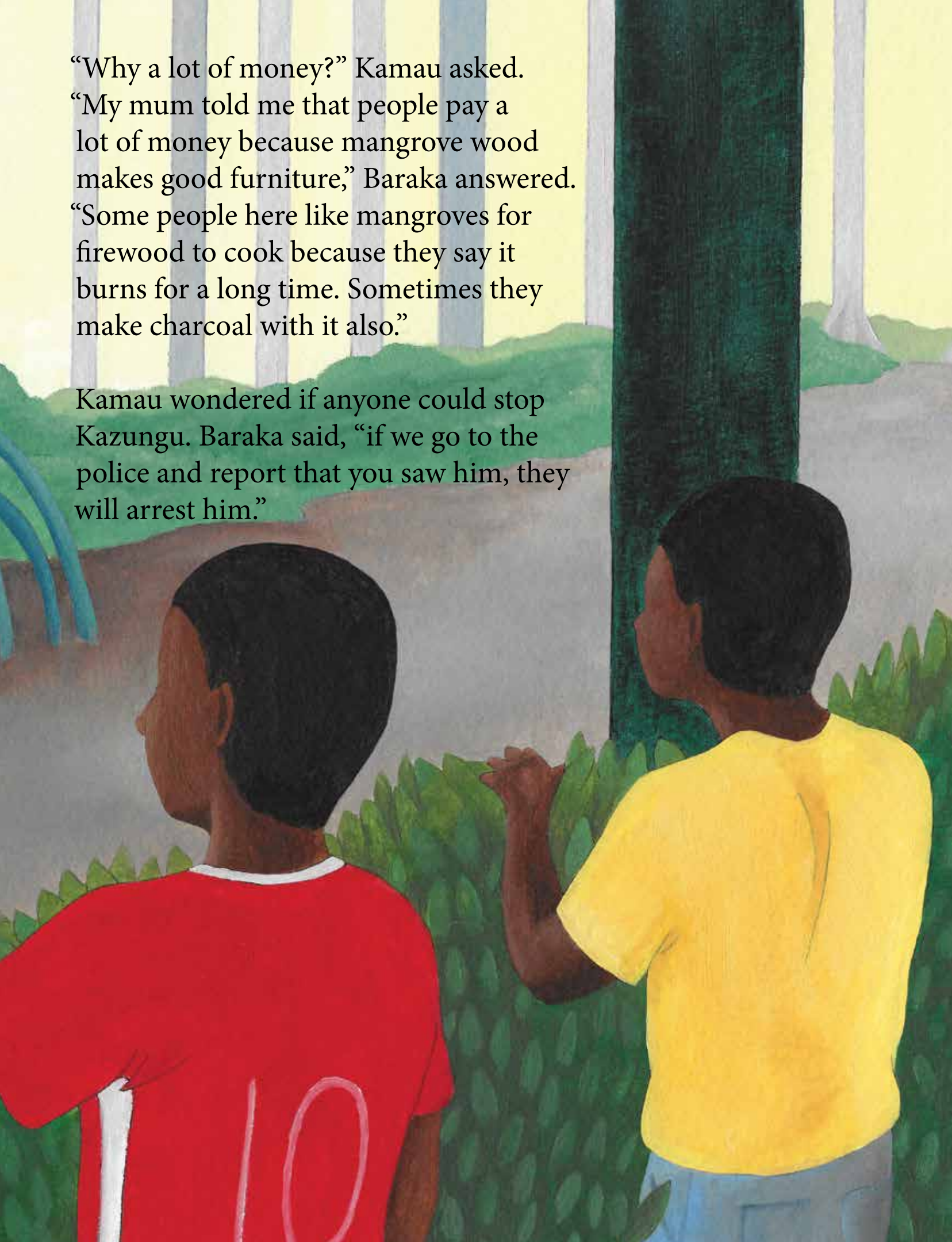
“Yes, Lillian told me that too,” Baraka replied. “Come! Let me show you some of the litter,” Baraka told Kamau, “we can collect some of it and put it in the garbage bins in the village.”

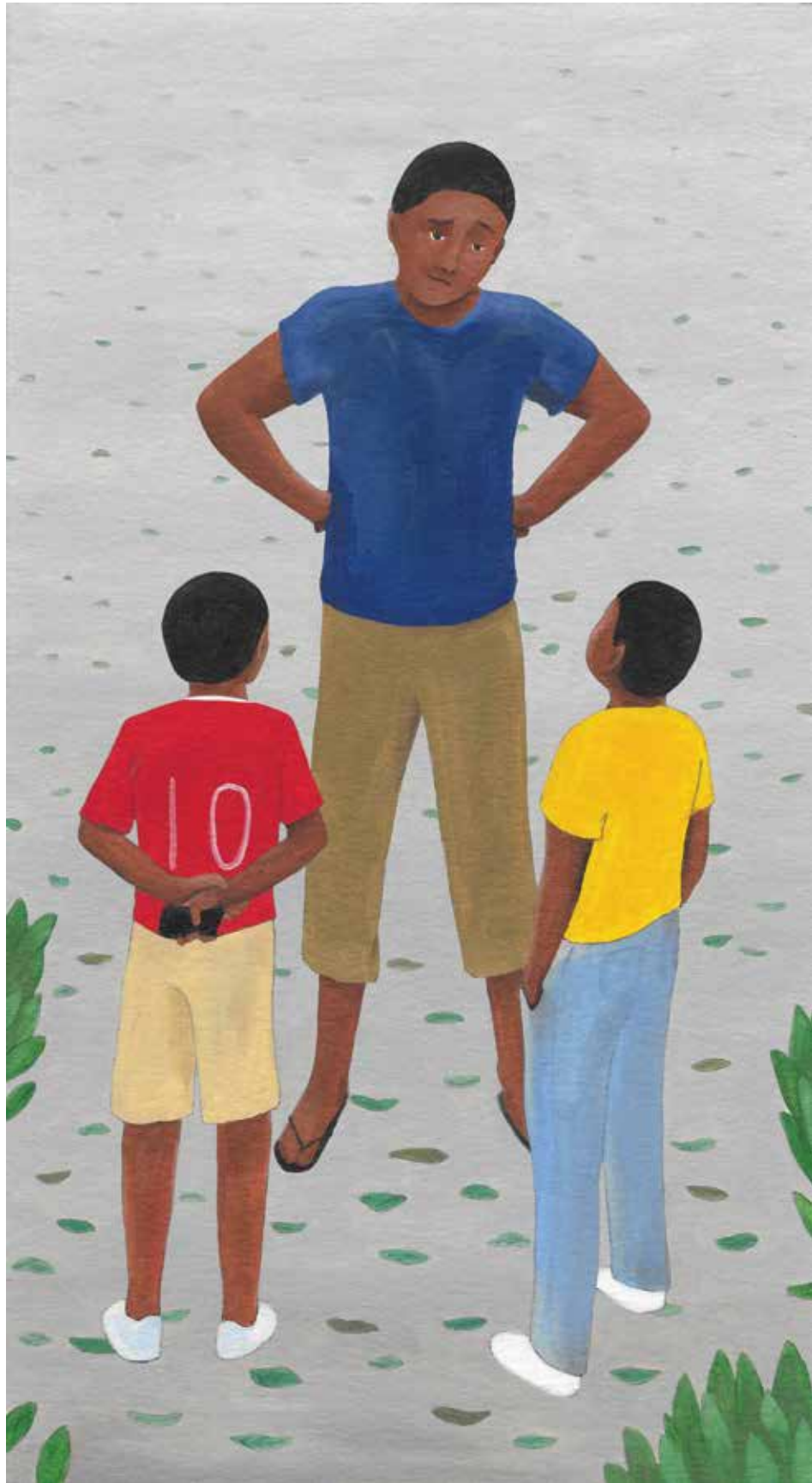


“Who was the man cutting down mangroves?” Kamau asked. Baraka lowered his voice and answered “His name is Kazungu. He is a woodcutter who cuts down mangroves and sells the wood to people for a lot of money.”

“Why a lot of money?” Kamau asked.
“My mum told me that people pay a lot of money because mangrove wood makes good furniture,” Baraka answered.
“Some people here like mangroves for firewood to cook because they say it burns for a long time. Sometimes they make charcoal with it also.”

Kamau wondered if anyone could stop Kazungu. Baraka said, “if we go to the police and report that you saw him, they will arrest him.”





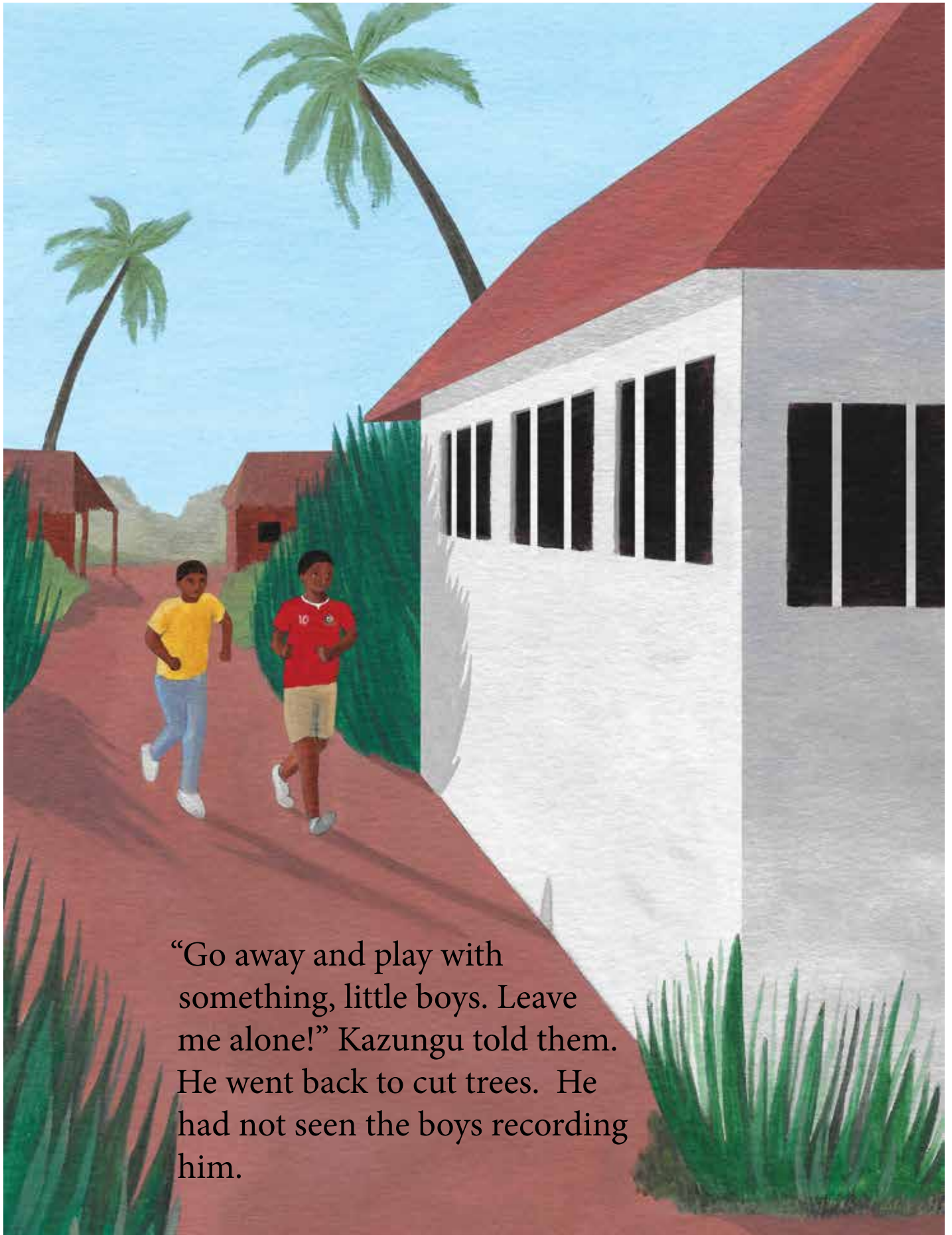
The two children went back to the plantation. Kamau had borrowed his dad's phone. They found Kazungu again cutting down mangroves. The two boys quietly recorded a video of Kazungu committing the crime.

Kazungu saw the two children and came over to them. "Kazungu, I saw you cutting mangroves at the seashore many times," said Baraka.

"This is a crime, and I think what you are doing is wrong", added Kamau.

"You're just children! No one will listen to you!" exclaimed Kazungu.

Kamau quickly replied, "Children know a lot about protecting the environment!"



“Go away and play with something, little boys. Leave me alone!” Kazungu told them. He went back to cut trees. He had not seen the boys recording him.



The two boys left and returned to Gazi village. They went to the police station and made a report. They showed a policeman the video of Kazungu committing the crime of cutting down mangroves. The policeman went to arrest Kazungu right away!



The next day, Kazungu was sent to jail for two years after telling the judge that he was the one cutting down the mangrove trees. The newspaper reported the story. Kamau and Baraka had their pictures on the newspaper as the two children who saved mangroves. Kamau's dad congratulated the two boys for making newspaper headlines, and told them how everyone knew that they were the children who had saved mangroves.

chapter 4

Kamau makes a speech about mangroves

Sometime later, Kamau’s dad received an email from someone called Amara, who worked at the United Nations Environment Program. Amara said after reading the news headlines, they were inviting Kamau to make a speech at the United Nations Environment Assembly.

“What is that?” Kamau asked. His dad told him that it was called “UNEA” for short. After doing some research on the computer, Kamau discovered that UNEA is where Kings, Queens, Presidents, and many other people meet every year to talk about environmental conservation. He was very excited about meeting all these people.

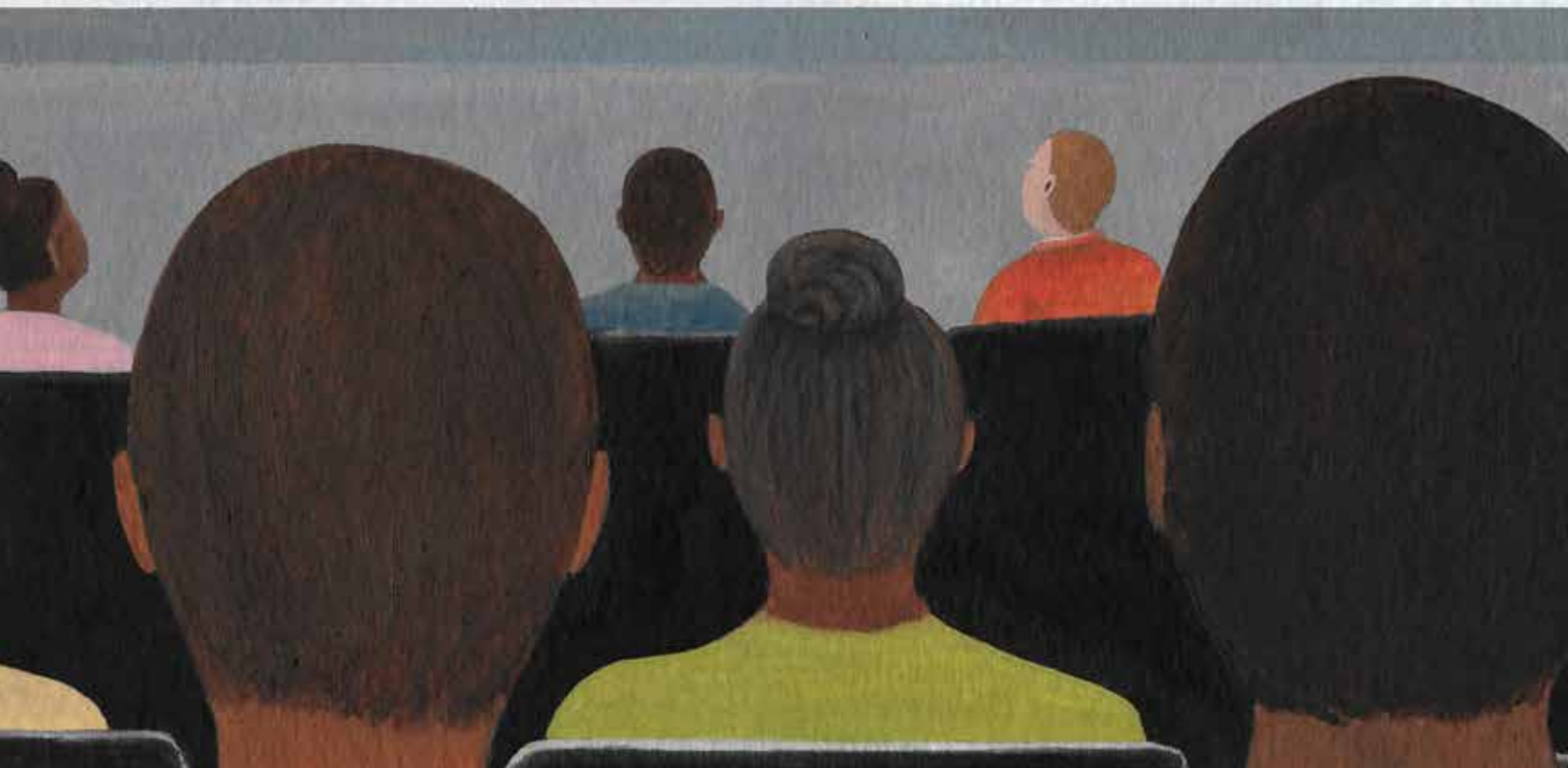


Kamau started working on his speech. It was hard, and he had to do a lot of reading and studying about environmental issues. Kamau learned about Sustainable Development Goals in his research. He asked his teacher about them, and she told him that they are also called SDGs and there are seventeen of them.

On the day of the speech, Kamau woke up bright eyed and bushy tailed. He arrived at the United Nations Office in Nairobi. Amara was waiting for them at the reception desk and took Kamau and his dad to the conference room.



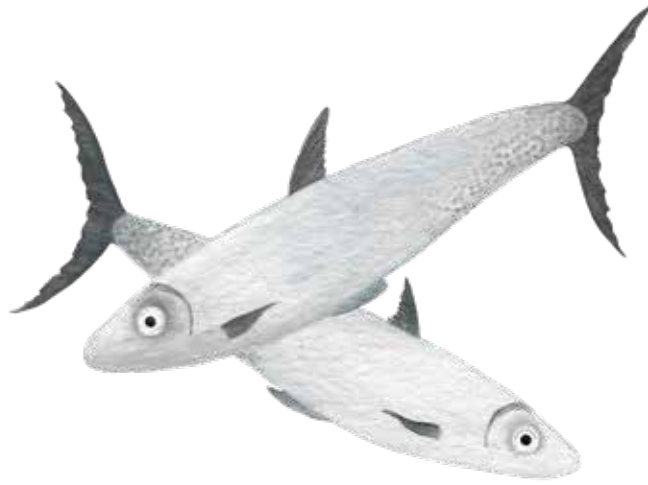
When the conference started, the Head of UNEA explained why children were in the conference room. She said these special guests would talk about how children protect the environment.





Kamau was elated! “Daddy, other children also protect the environment!” he whispered to his dad. After some time, Kamau’s name was called out. He was led to the podium. There were many microphones, and everybody was applauding and looking at him. He saw the President of Kenya smiling at him and clapping. Kamau started his speech.



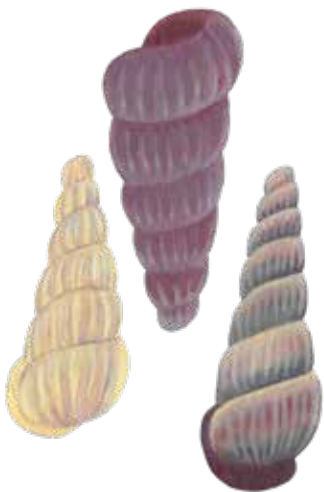


“Your Excellencies, All Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. All protocols observed. I would like to thank the organizers of this conference. My dad took me for a work trip to Diani and surprised me saying that we were going to see mangroves.

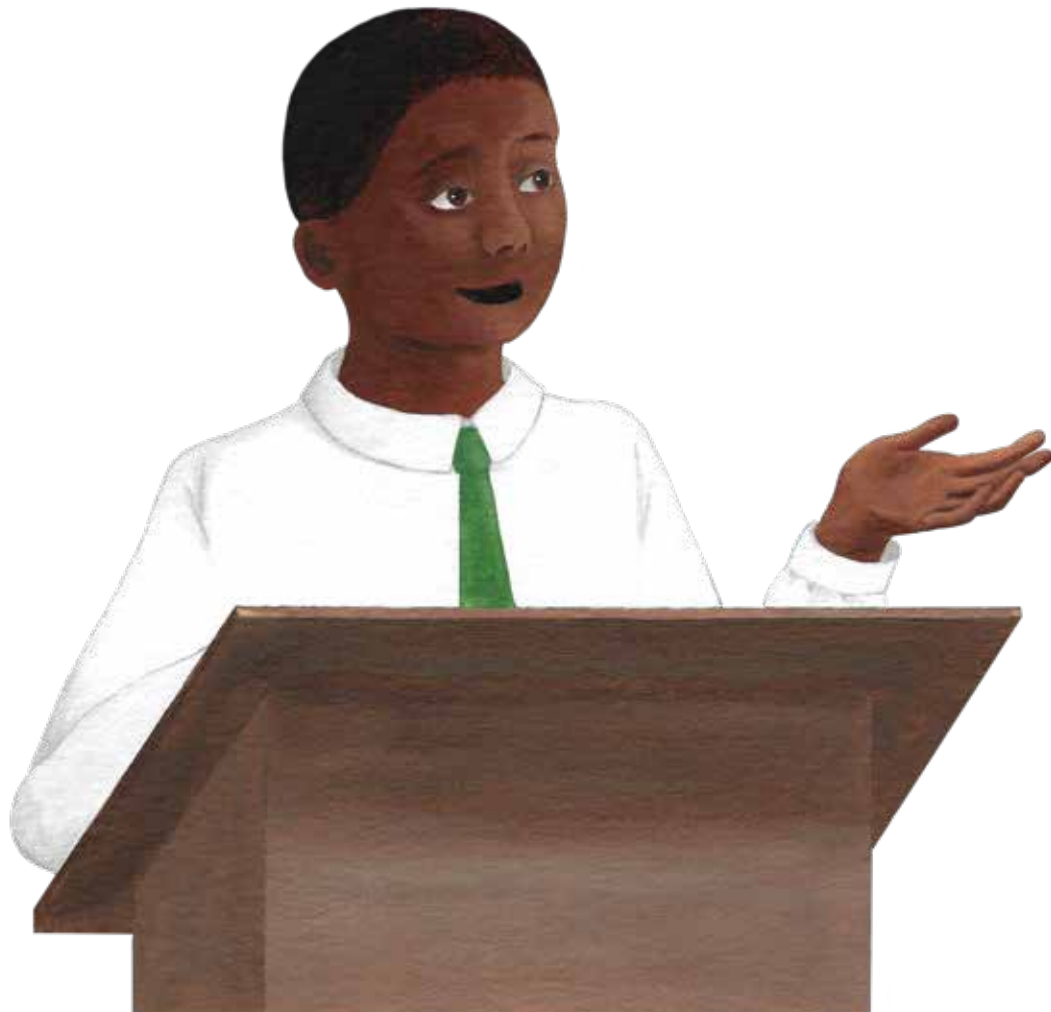
Mangroves are trees that grow in the ocean. I learnt that mangroves take in carbon dioxide and if there were no mangroves, there would be too much carbon dioxide in the air and temperatures would increase. Mangroves also protect the shore from extreme weather such as damaging storms, winds, waves, and floods. Through my own research, I learned that mangroves are important because they help the world implement one of the Sustainable Development Goals: to fight climate change. My friend Lillian told me that mangroves do this by taking in carbon dioxide from the environment. Lillian knows a lot about mangroves. She says if we do not stop logging of mangroves, the world would be hotter because there would be a lot of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.



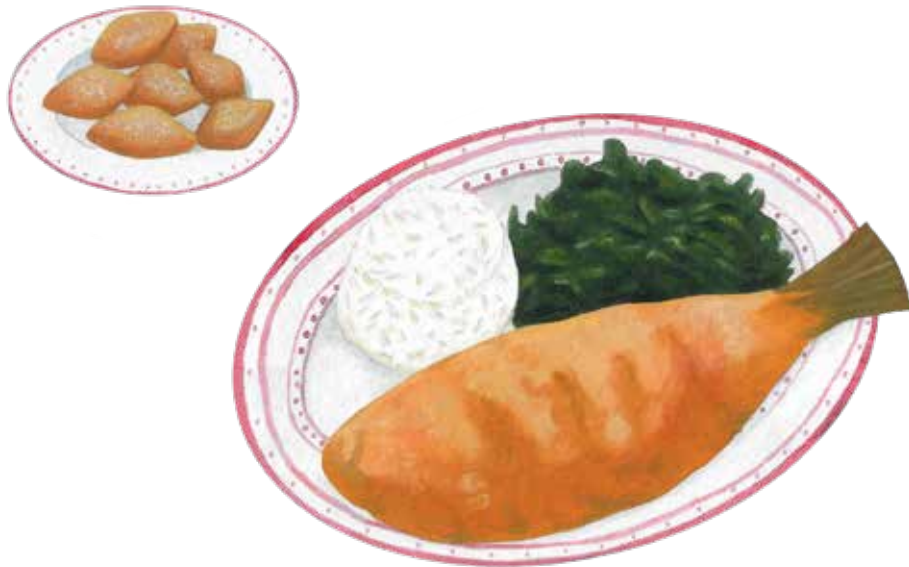
Mangroves also support threatened and endangered species such as crabs, snakes, and milkfish because they provide a safe home and food. Mangroves attract plants around them that provide food for animals like sea snails, and crabs called ukaa (pronounced o-ka). The sea snails rely on mangroves as their habitats because, when the tide is high, the sea snails can climb the mangrove trees and eat leaves. If there were no mangroves, those animals would die because the mangroves provide their food. Endangered species like crabs, snakes, and milkfish would become extinct.



Children can play a role in the conservation of mangroves by forming a mangrove watch. A mangrove watch is a group of people who walk through mangroves daily and report any problems. They are educated about mangroves, so that they know if a mangrove is healthy or not, and they report logging problems immediately. My friend Baraka and I helped the police arrest Kazungu the woodcutter. Kazungu was cutting mangroves illegally and selling them for money. We recorded him on video and gave it to the police. Kazungu told us no one would believe children, but he was wrong.



My teacher told me that children have the right to join or set up groups with their friends, as long as it's not harmful to others. Children all over the world can form groups to conserve and protect mangroves, and other endangered tree species. She said this is written in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. I read the Convention and saw that this is true. It also says that children have the right to give an opinion for adults to listen to and take seriously. Kazungu the criminal was wrong because the police listened to Baraka and me, and stopped him from harming our environment.



My friend Lillian told us that the mangroves also support the local community. When I went to Gazi village, I saw that people had built a boardwalk where visitors could walk inside the mangrove forest for a fee. When tourists come to see the mangroves, the villagers sometimes dance and sing for them and they get paid some money. They sell coastal food to visitors, and keep fish in the aquaculture ponds to sell in the market. My mum says this helps to prevent poverty among the local population.

I think children should be educated on the value and importance of mangroves so that they can form groups to protect indigenous trees and plants. Children like me should be taught about the SDGs and how they can help the world implement the SDGs. I think saving mangroves will be an important step to help us implement many SDGs.”

“Thank you for listening to me,” Kamau said as he finished his speech. He saw everybody in the room smiling. They stood up and clapped for him as he went to sit down. The President stood up and shook Kamau’s hand.

“Come to State House and visit me young boy,” the President said. “I want to invite more children so that we can all learn more from you.”

“Can my friends Baraka and Lillian come too?” Kamau asked the President. “They know a lot about how to save mangroves,” Kamau said.

“Of course, they can come!” the President replied. Kamau was hopeful as he sat down to listen to the next child give a speech on environmental protection.

The end.





about the author



Rehema Kibugi a Kenyan girl, aged 11 years and a Grade 5 pupil, lives in Nairobi, Kenya, with her mother, father, brother, and Rottweiler dog Mūmbi. Rehema enjoys writing, and she spends time writing stories and recording events around her. She also likes making art and learning about history. She is the head of the Journalism Club at her school. Rehema is a strong debater and also enjoys playing the piano. She and her family enjoy taking walks in the nearby Karura forest.

Rehema has written a children's storybook titled *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves*. The book is about mangrove forests and their importance to the environment. It speaks about the importance of mangrove forests and how they protect shorelines from damaging storms and winds, waves, and floods and provide income to the local people. It is illegal to cut, buy, or sell mangroves in Kenya. Her book proves that children have a voice and a right to speak against what they think is wrong and should be listened to at all times. The book draws awareness to the problem of land degradation, over-use of mangroves, climate change, and children's rights, all of which are important elements of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Rehema's hope is that the short story can inspire other children in Kenya, Africa, and further to speak about important matters through stories for even more children to read and enjoy.

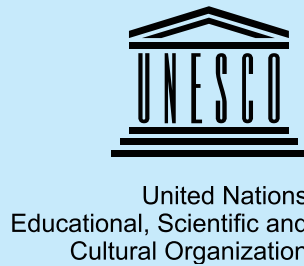
about the illustrator



Justine Greenfield is an illustrator and oil painter. She studied Art History, and though it still fascinates her, she prefers to create art instead of study it; therefore, she went to the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University in Toronto, Canada and graduated with a degree in Illustration.

Justine is also a figure skating instructor and loves working with kids. Her work with children and her childhood, which she spent playing in the fields and woods around her home in rural Ontario, serves as the main inspiration for her illustrations. She draws on subject matters that make one chuckle or think to create lovely illustrations suffused with a bit of mystery and fun.

She currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada.



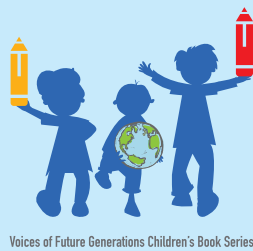
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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All children are holders of important human rights. Twenty-five years ago in 1989, over a hundred countries agreed on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the most important human rights treaty in history, they promised to protect and promote all children's equal rights, which are connected and equally important.

In the 54 Articles of the Convention, countries make solemn promises to defend children's needs and dreams. They recognize the role of children in realizing their rights, which requires that children be heard and involved in decision-making. In particular, Article 24 and Article 27 defend children's rights to safe drinking water, good food, a clean and safe environment, health, and quality of life. Article 29 recognizes children's rights to education that develops personality, talents and potential, respecting human rights and the natural environment.

— *Dr. Alexandra Wandel*
World Future Council



Voices of Future Generations Children's Book Series



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Sustainable Development Goals Statement

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a bridge from the previous Millennium Development Goals adopted by the international community in 2000 to the future. Construction of this bridge began in 2012 at the United Nations Rio+ 20 Conference on Sustainable Development. At this Conference, countries agreed that it was time to take concrete action for the present and the future by acting on issues such as climate change, poverty, inequality and biodiversity. This resulted in *The Future We Want*, a global statement of priorities and responsibilities for countries toward the people, environment, biodiversity and future.

In 2015, the bridge took shape in the form of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which countries agreed to implement between 2015 and 2030. The SDGs, as they are commonly called, comprise a set of 17 specific goals, over 160 targets within these goals, and hundreds of indicators to measure if the goals and targets are being met. The SDGs address the key issues that face our world community now and that will define this community in the future, such as poverty, climate change, education rights, gender equality, discrimination, health, food and water access and safety, and the promotion of justice for all members of society. Since 2015, children around the world have joined in efforts to incorporate the SDGs in their countries and communities, adding their voices and perspectives as future leaders. The SDGs show the power of all people, including children, to create positive and lasting change that addresses the needs of local and global society.

— *Dr. Alexandra R. Harrington*
Centre for International Sustainable Development Law



Voices of Future Generations Children's Book Series



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Thanks and Inspiring Resources

'Voices of Future Generations' International Commission

Warmest thanks to the International Commission, launched in 2014 by His Excellency Judge CG Weeramantry, UNESCO Peace Education Research Award Laureate, which supports, guides and profiles this new series of Children's Books Series, including: Ms. Alexandra Wandel (WFC), Prof. Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger (CISDL), Dr Kristiann Allen (New Zealand), Ms. Irina Bokova (Former Director-General UNESCO), Ms. Emma Hopkin / Ms. Hannah Rolls (UK), Ms. Julia Marton-Lefevre (IUCN), Dr James Moody (Australia), Prof. Kirsten Sandberg (UN CRC Chair), Judge Marcel Szabo (Hungary), Dr Christina Voigt (Norway), Dr Alexandra Harrington (CISDL).

'Voices of Future Generations' Goodwill Ambassadors and VoFG Team

Most sincere appreciation to HH Sheikha Hissa Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum (ELF / Middle East), Dr Ying-Shih Hsieh (EQPF / Asia), Dr Gabrielle Sacconaghi-Bacon (Moore Foundation / North America), Ms. Monique Gray Smith (First Nations of Canada), Ms. Melinda Manuel (PNG), Dr Odeeth Lara-Morales (VoFG), Ms. Chiara Rohlf (VoFG), Ms. Sarah Sanders (VoFG).

The World Future Council consists of 50 eminent global changemakers from across the globe. Together, they work to pass on a healthy planet and just societies to our children and grandchildren. (www.worldfuturecouncil.org)

United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) strives to build networks among nations that enable humanity's moral and intellectual solidarity by mobilizing for education, building intercultural understanding, pursuing scientific cooperation, and protecting freedom of expression. (<https://en.unesco.org/>)

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and its three Optional Protocols, by its State parties. (www.ohchr.org)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. (www.unep.org)

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) envisions a just world that values and conserves nature, working to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. (www.iucn.org)

Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) supports understanding, development and implementation of law for sustainable development by leading legal research through scholarship and dialogue and facilitating legal education through teaching and capacity-building. (www.cisd.org)

Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF) established in 1984 is the premier ENGO in Taiwan. Implementing environmental education, tree plantation, and international participation through coordinating transdisciplinary resources to push forward environmental and sustainable development in our time.

World's Largest Lesson (WLL) World's Largest Lesson brings the Global Goals to children all over the world and unites them in taking action. Since it was launched in September 2015, the World's Largest Lesson has reached over 130 countries and impacted over 8 million children each year. (<https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>)

Emirates Literature Foundation, home of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature is a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation that supports and nurtures a love of literature in the UAE and across the region through a programme of varied cultural initiatives. Recognising the distinctive contribution that literature makes to children's lives, the Foundation focuses on introducing and cultivating a spirit of reading while acting as a catalyst for writing and cultural exchange. (<https://www.elfdubai.org/en/home>)



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About the 'Voices of Future Generations' Series

To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Voices of Future Generations Children's Book Series, led by the United Nations and a consortium of educational charities including the World Future Council (WFC), the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL), the Environmental Quality Protection Foundation (EQPF), the Fundacion Ecos and the Trust for Sustainable Living (TSL) among others, also the Future Generations Commissioners of several countries, and international leaders from the UN Division for Sustainable Development, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and other international organizations, has launched the new Voices of Future Generations Series of Children's Books.

Every year we feature stories from our selected group of child authors, inspired by the outcomes of the Earth Summit, the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and the world's Sustainable Development Goals, and by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) itself. Our junior authors, ages 8-12, are concerned about future justice, poverty, the global environment, education and children's rights. Accompanied by illustrations, each book profiles creative, interesting and adventurous ideas for creating a just and greener future, in the context of children's interests and lives. We aim to publish the books internationally in ten languages, raising the voices of future generations and spread their messages for a fair and sustainable tomorrow among their peers and adults, worldwide. We welcome you to join us in support of this inspiring partnership, at www.vofg.org.

I am compelled to endorse this manuscript as it is simply unputdownable! As an Economist and having worked on the valuation of mangrove ecosystem services in Mida Creek and Tana Delta in Coastal Kenya, I fully identify with the story. What is most amazing is that it has been penned by an eleven-year-old who does not even live in the coast, let alone near a mangrove village. The way the story is weaved right from Nairobi, to Gazi, to the arrest of Kazungu, to the UNEA meeting, and finally to the Statehouse invite is quite captivating. I believe this work should be exposed to primary school kids in Kenya at all levels, as I am sure many do not even know what mangrove forests are. This story and others like it have the opportunity to broaden the minds of our children on environmental matters plaguing their micro environments, the nation and the globe. Bravo, Rehema!

Prof. Richard M. Mulwa,
University of Nairobi

The future of mangroves and forest conservation is in children and the young generation... Rehema has written a must-read primer for all who would like to understand the role of mangroves and their importance in sustaining livelihoods and climate change mitigation. As we embark on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, this is an opportunity to amplify the voices of children and help turn the tide and give people and nature a sustainable future.

Judy Ndichu,
Technical Specialist, UNDP

A very curious boy gets pretty muddy feet on the pathway to an arresting moment that leads to the summit of international environmental policy-making in Nairobi, Kenya. In this beautifully-illustrated drama, mangrove trees are saved, along with the livelihoods of coastal villagers. Any child could pull this off if we would just care to listen, leading to a more sustainable future for trees, oceans, wildlife and communities. I will be reading *The Children Who Saved the Mangroves* with my grandson not long from now.

Prof. Jamie Benidickson,
University of Ottawa

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