

THE GOOD POISON



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**COTTON ON
FOUNDATION**

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Text © Maria Nakirijja: 2026

Design and illustration © Cotton on Foundation 2026

ISBN:

First Published 2026

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Edited by: Oscar Ranzo/ Sarah Dowell

Publishing partner:  OASIS BOOK PROJECT
www.oasisbookproject.org



THE BIG EYES.

Najjemba had big eyes that made her notice everything.

She noticed ants carrying crumbs on the sleeves of her dad's lab coat.

She noticed clouds shaped like cows just before it rained.

If anyone did or said anything she didn't like, Najjemba just rolled her eyes and they got the message.



THE YOUNG MOTHER.

When Najjemba was 24 years old, she married a charming man called Kasozi.

Their first child was a boy, and when Kasozi broke the news to his family, his mother said she would be the one naming the baby.



THE DOUBLE EYE ROLL.

“My mother is coming to name the baby,” Rasozi told Najjemba.

Najjemba rolled her eyes.

“She will take the master bedroom while she is here.”

Najjemba rolled her eyes again and shuffled to the bedroom with her baby.

Inside her head, ideas began popping like popcorn.



There

There/with

There

There/with

There/with

There

THE DRAMATIC ARRIVAL.

Kasozi's mother arrived with seven suitcases, three handbags, one hat, and a face that looked like it had been arguing with people all day.

When Najjemba opened the gate, the woman cast her a stern look. "So, who are you?" She asked.

"I am your son's wife," Najjemba replied sweetly.

"Really!" She sized her up from head to toe. "I expected something else." Najjemba rolled her eyes at her.

"Did you just roll your gecko eyes at me?"

Najjemba just kept quiet and helped her settle in.



THE PATIENT WIFE.

But Najjemba's Mother-in-law was a woman who kept a grudge.

From that day, nothing Najjemba did was right.

Her food was either 'too salty' or 'too burned'.

Her hair was either 'too plain' or too neat."

Her eyes were either "too scary' or 'too uncaring."

Her smile was either 'too plastic' or too suspicious."

Every Morning, Najjemba complained to Kasozi about his mother's attitude, but all he said was, "Be patient," and then hugged his mum before running off to work.

The longer her mother-in-law stayed with them, the worse their marriage became.

Najjemba wondered what she could do to get her to leave their home.

Then she got an idea.



THE MOSQUITO CIRCUS.

That night, Najjemba made tiny holes in her Mother-in-Law's mosquito net while her mother-in-law chatted with her son.

As soon as Mother-in-law turned off the lights and entered her bed, the buzzing started.

BZZZZZ!

BZZZZZ!

BZZZ!

SLAP!

SWAT!

MISS!

*All night, the mother-in-law slapped the air, but the buzzing wouldn't stop.
By morning, she looked like she had fought a tiny army.*

"This house is haunted!" she cried out to her son in the morning.

"Why?"

"Look how they bit my face, yet I slept under a net"

"Maybe you didn't tuck it in well."

"I did, but the mosquitoes in this house are either too tiny or they are invisible ghosts."

All day, Najjemba fought to keep herself from laughing as her mother-in-law complained about the mosquitoes.

She, however, rolled her eyes when Kasozi returned home with a new net for her.



THE WHISPERING CEILING.

How do I get her to leave my bedroom? Najjemba wondered every day. Then, she remembered her mother-in-law mentioning ghosts, and got another idea.

Two nights later, Najjemba hid a phone with soft, spooky whispers in the ceiling - over her Mother in-law's bed. Soon after her mother-in-law went to bed, Najjemba dialled the hidden phone in the ceiling.

“HellllOoooo...”

“Gooooood evening...” spooky voices wafted out of the ceiling, waking the mother in-law up.

“Helllllloooooo,” the voices were scarier this time, and the mother-in-law started screaming at the top of her voice.

“Help! I hear scary voices!”

Rasozi jumped out of bed and ran to the master bedroom.

“What’s the matter, Mum?”

His mum pointed at the ceiling.

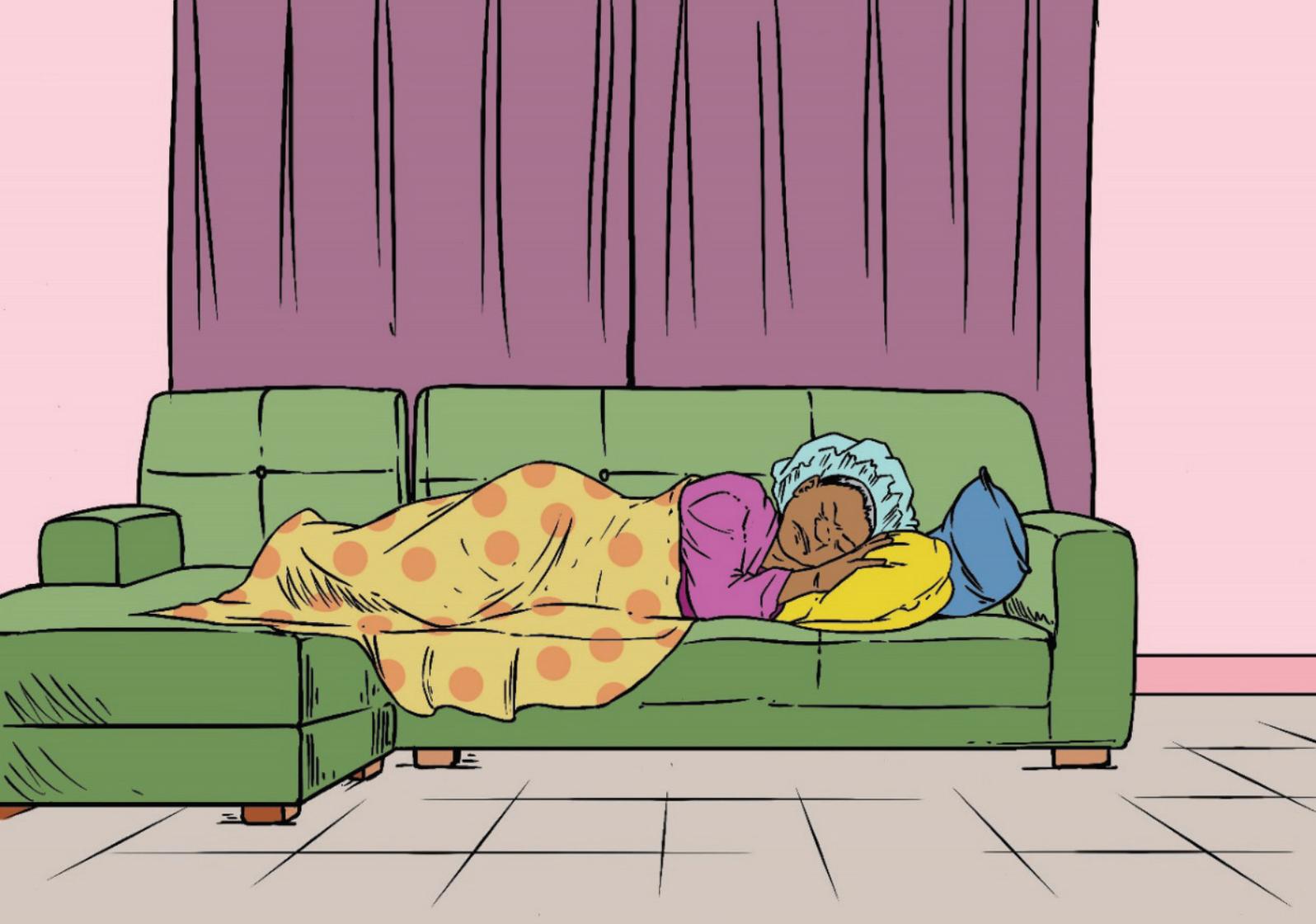
“GHOSTS! THEY LIVE UP THERE!”

“I hear nothing,” he said.

“Well, I can’t sleep in this room anymore,” she declared, and went and slept in the living room.

The next day, Rasozi asked her to go back to the master bedroom, but she vowed never to sleep in that room again.

And just like that, Najjemba got her bedroom back.



THE BOILING POINT.

Najjemba's mother-in-law told Kasozi that his wife must have cast the mosquitoes and ghosts her way, but he repeatedly dismissed her, so her frustration grew with every day that passed.

Then One day Najjemba forgot to warm the breakfast porridge before serving it, and as soon as the mother-in-law took the first sip, her face frowned.

"My porridge is cold!" she rasped and then tossed the cup across the dining table.

WHOOOPS!

Najjemba reached out to catch the cup as it slid towards the edge: the cup fell off the edge of the table just before she caught it, spilling all its content towards her face.

SPLASH!

Some porridge splattered in Najjemba's eyes just before she closed them.

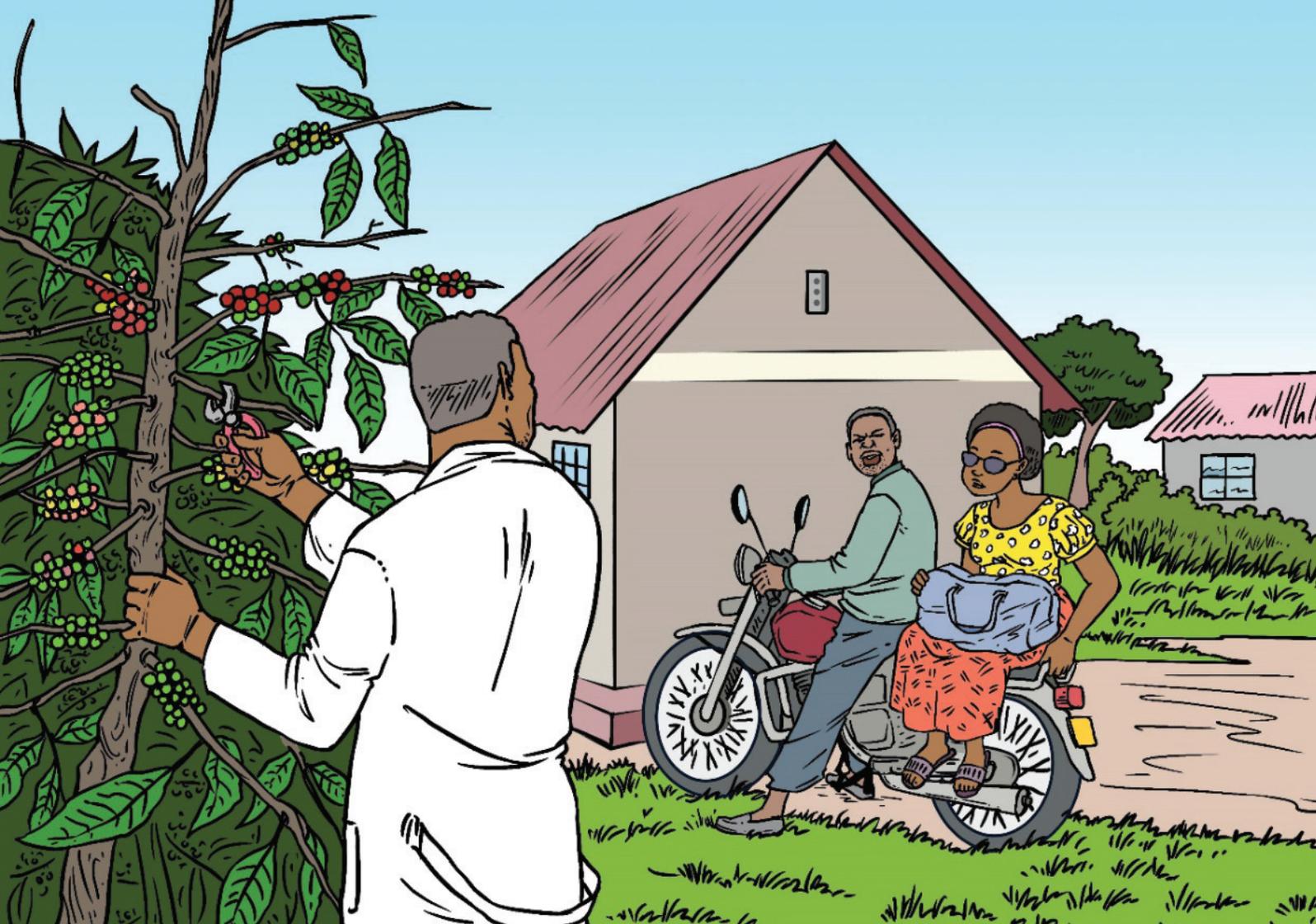


TOMATO SAUCE EYES.

“My eyes!” Najjemba cried out and then dashed to the bathroom to rinse the porridge out of her eyes. After some time, she looked at herself in the mirror, and found herself crying again.

*Her eyes were as red as tomato sauce. What has happened to my beautiful eyes?
I am going to teach her a lesson, she vowed.*

Before Kasozi returned home, Najjemba packed a few clothes in her bag, hid her eyes behind sunglasses, hailed a boda, and went to see her father, a lab technician and farmer, who lived in another town.



THE PINK LIQUID.

“What brings you back home?” Najjemba’s father asked as she jumped off the boda. Najjemba pulled off her sunglasses.

“Look at my eyes, Dad!”

“Oh dear! What happened?” He wondered.

“My mother-in-law is mean to me,” Najjemba said as they entered the house.

“She embarrasses me. And I want you to help me stop her.”

Her father nodded pensively. “And how do you think I can help you?”

“I need a very good poison.”

Her father raised his eyebrows in shock, studied Najjemba thoughtfully for some time, then quietly walked into his laboratory. Najjemba waited and waited... Several minutes later, her dad returned with a tiny bottle of pink liquid.

“Here is your poison,” he said. Najjemba blinked.

“That’s it?”

“Yes.”

“How does it work?”

“It makes people feel what they make others feel,” he said. “If she shouts, she will feel embarrassed. If she is unkind, she will feel sad.” Najjemba leaned closer. “However,” he went on, “this poison works like a mirror: If you are unkind, it will reflect back to you too.”

Najjemba rolled her eyes.

“If that’s what it takes to make her stop embarrassing me, I will be kind,” she said.

Her dad placed the bottle in her hand. “Then go,” he said. “And use your poison wisely.”



THE BIG EYES.

Back home, Najjemba stopped arguing with her Mother-in-Law and became polite the instant she started her mother-in-law's favourite juice with the pink poison.

She also started greeting her mother-in-law kindly every morning, spoke softly with her, and even shared her lotion...



THE STRANGE CHANGE.

At first, nothing happened. Then, one morning, her mother-in-law said, “Thank you,”

After using the lotion and Najjemba almost dropped the lotion.

Another day, she smiled.

Another day, she laughed—just a little.

Soon, the whole house felt calmer.

Then one Sunday afternoon, while Najjemba washed the dishes, she overheard her mother-in-law say to her husband: “You chose a very good woman.”

Najjemba dropped the spoon she was rinsing in the sink.



THE TURNING POINT.

That night, Najjemba stared at the bottle with the pink poison she'd been adding to her mother-in-law's juice every day and found herself whispering to herself: "I no longer want her to die."

The following day, while her husband was at work, Najjemba went to see her father again.

"What now?" Her dad asked as soon as he opened the door and saw her.

"I don't want to poison my mother-in-law anymore because I want her to stay. Please make me an antidote."



THE GOOD POISON.

To Najjemba's surprise, her father just broke out laughing.

"My clever girl," he said. "What I gave you was not poison: only vanilla extract and food colour."

"So... It was a good poison?"

"Yes," he said. "It poisoned you both with kindness towards each other."

Najjemba heaved a deep sigh of relief, glad that her mother-in-law was safe.

She went back home a wiser woman.

She'd learned that anger makes us make silly decisions, and that sometimes kindness can be a good poison for everybody.



TEACHER GUIDE

Comprehension & discussion questions.

1. *What kind of person is Najjemba? What does she do that shows this?*
2. *How does the mother-in-law behave when she first arrives?*
3. *How does Kasozi respond to the conflict between his wife and his mother?*
4. *Which moment do you think is the most tense or dramatic? Why?*
5. *How does Najjemba feel after the porridge incident?*
6. *What choices does Najjemba make when she is angry?*
7. *What choices could the mother-in-law have made differently?*
8. *Why do you think Najjemba's father gives her the pink liquid?*
9. *What does the story teach us about anger?*
10. *What does the story teach us about kindness?*
11. *Why do you think the story is called *The Good Poison*?*

TEACHER GUIDE

Classroom Activities:

Freeze Frame Drama

In small groups, students choose one important scene and create a frozen pose showing how the characters feel. The class guesses the scene and the emotions.

Big Eyes, Big Thoughts.

Students draw themselves with 'big eyes,' inspired by Najjemba. Inside the eyes, they draw or write:

- what Najjemba notices and feels in the story*
- how understanding feelings can change what someone does next*

Students share their ideas and connect them back to the story.

What Would You Do?

Students choose one problem from the story and suggest two or three different ways the character could respond. As a class, discuss which response is most helpful, which could make the problem worse, and which is the funniest.

The Good Poison Game.

As a class, brainstorm 'good poisons' that do not hurt people, such as kindness, listening, patience, or humour. Students explain how one 'good poison' could change a difficult situation in real life.

Rewrite the Ending.

Students write or act out a different ending to the story where the problem is solved in a new way.

The 50-Word Story Challenge.

*Students rewrite *The Good Poison* in exactly 50 words, including the beginning (the problem), the middle (the conflict), and the end (the change). Students count their words carefully, then share and explain what they chose to include or leave out.*

Extension: illustrate the most important moment.

**NAJJEMBA IS TIRED OF SHARP WORDS AND
RAISED EYEBROWS.**

**SO SHE COMES UP WITH A BOLD PLAN:
A SECRET REMEDY SHE BELIEVES WILL SOLVE EVERYTHING.**

**BUT AS HER IDEA UNFOLDS, SOMETHING SURPRISING
BEGINS TO HAPPEN.**

**COULD THE REAL CHANGE BE HAPPENING SOMEWHERE
SHE NEVER EXPECTED?**