I dedicate this
to the kids of Makoko,
and around the world.

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KOROBÁ

The Case of the Missing Kolo

Àlàbá Ònájìn





I'm Korobá!

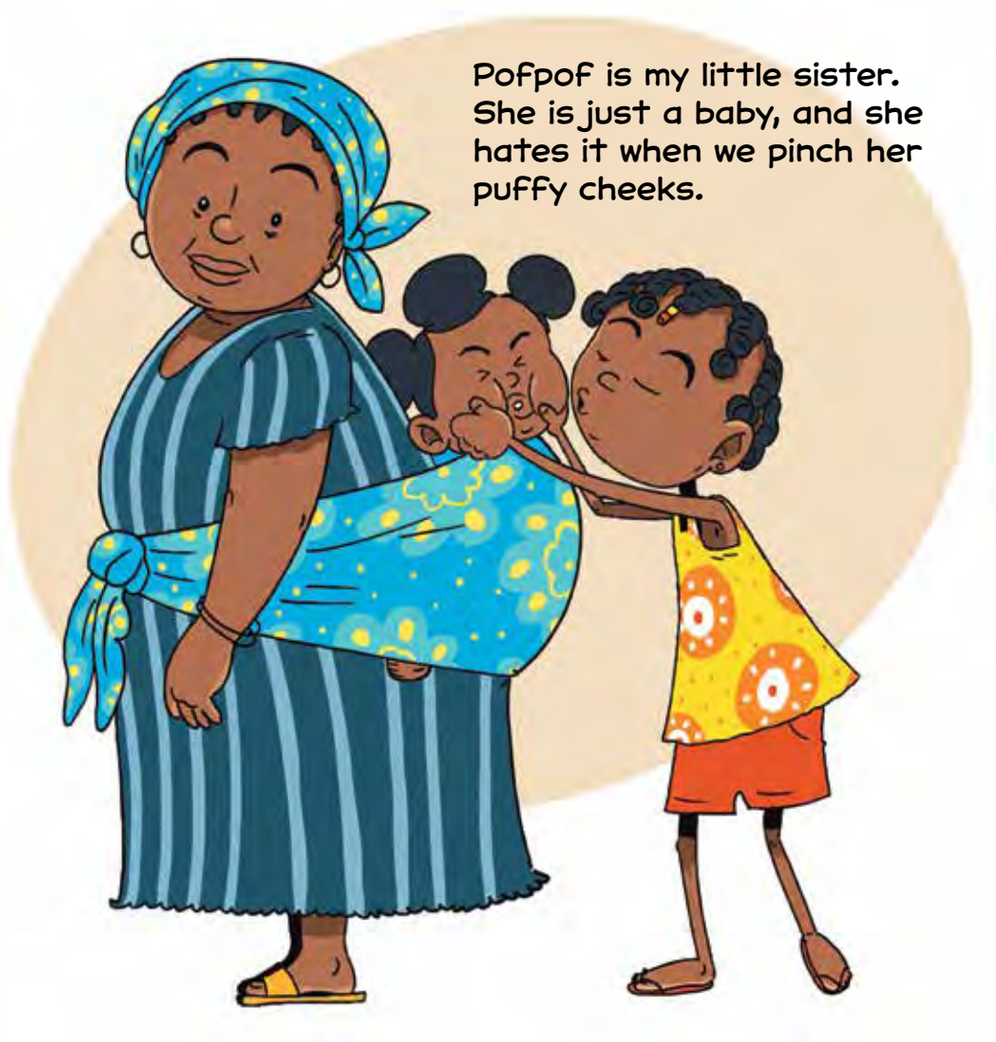
I live with my family in Makoko,
a small fishing community in Nigeria.



The funny thing is...
I don't like eating fish.
I got a stubborn fish bone
stuck in my throat when
I was little, and I have stayed
away from it ever since.



This is my mother. We all call her Iyá, the Yoruba word for mother. But most people call her Iyá Pofpof.



Pofpof is my little sister. She is just a baby, and she hates it when we pinch her puffy cheeks.

This is my little brother, Tájù. He is four. Tájù can be naughty and spoiled, but we get along most of the time.



This is my dog, Popi.





We are inseparable!

And finally, meet my two best friends, Saidat and Ọ̀ba. We go to Makoko Community Primary School, and we have lots of adventures together around the village.



During school holidays, I sell edé alata...



...or help Iyá at the fish market. (Don't worry: I don't need to eat the fish!)

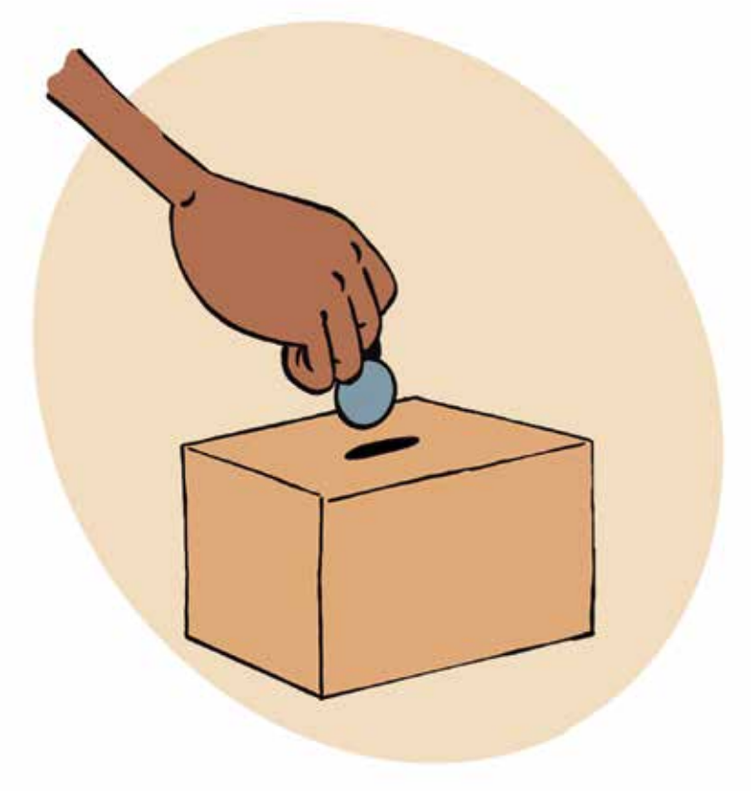




This week is an extra-special holiday in the community.

The Makoko Harvest Festival happens once a year. It's a time for celebrating our good fortunes and blessings. Everyone dresses nicely, there is a lot of dancing, and we eat plenty of food and sweets.

The children of Makoko save money for the festival all year in Kolo boxes – a wooden piggy bank that you can decorate with paint and colourful beads.





We get to smash the boxes on Kolo Breaking Day a few days before the harvest festival. Then we use the money to buy clothes and shoes for the festival, and we get to spend some of it on treats, too.


Just three days until this year's Breaking Day!


I'm off to the edé trap!

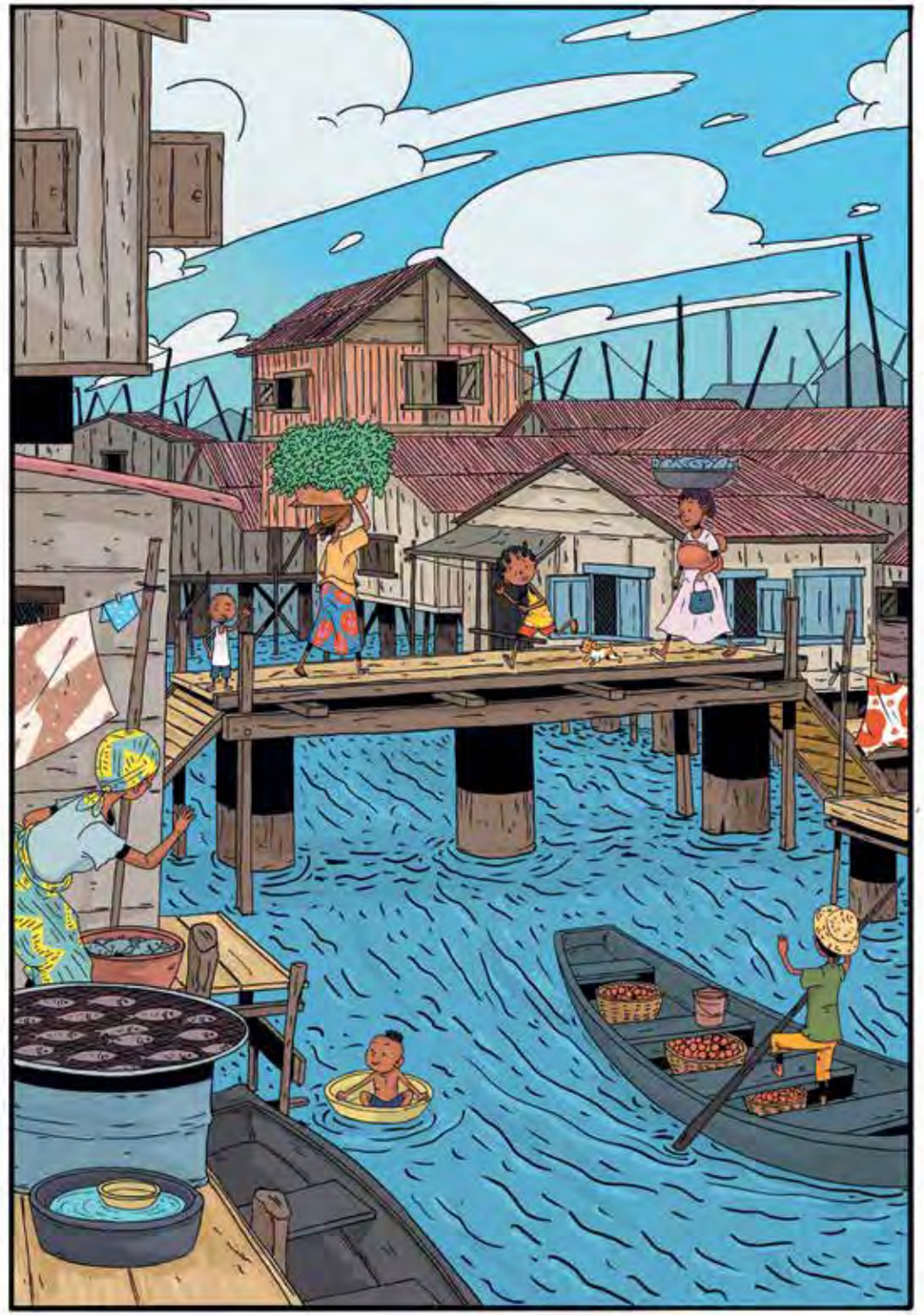

Oof. It's heavy.


That's a lot of edé!


Hey, Tájù. Look who popped out to say hello!

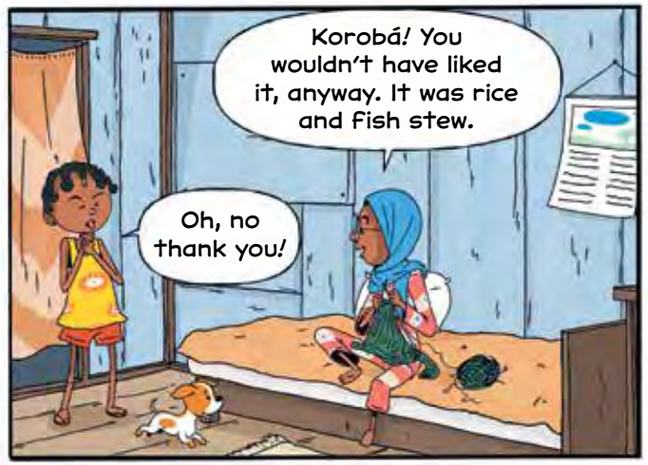

Ahhh!
The toad just wants to play!

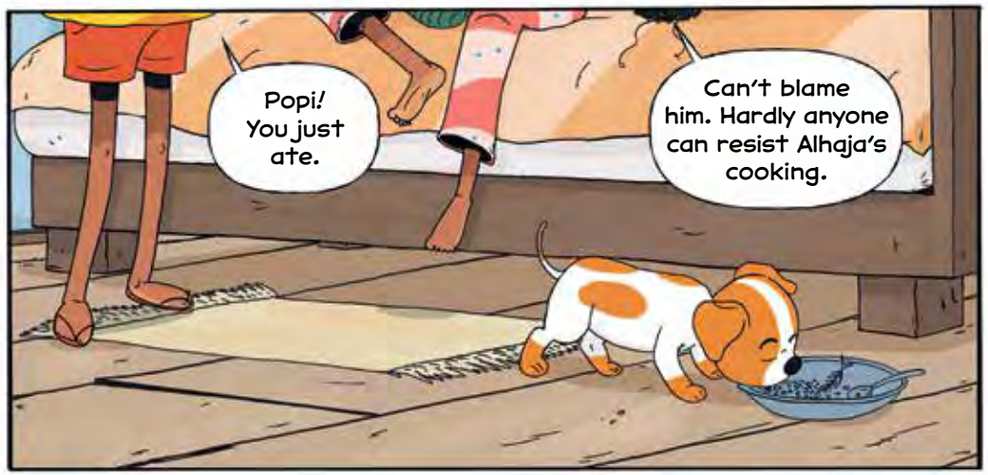

Korobá, what have you done to that boy this time, eh?
Iyá, why do you blame me every time Tájù cries?
I know you like to scare him.
It's a toad! I didn't do anything.
Here, take this money to Alhaja. I borrowed it from her at the market yesterday.
Don't stay too long playing with Saidat. The edé will be fried and spiced soon.





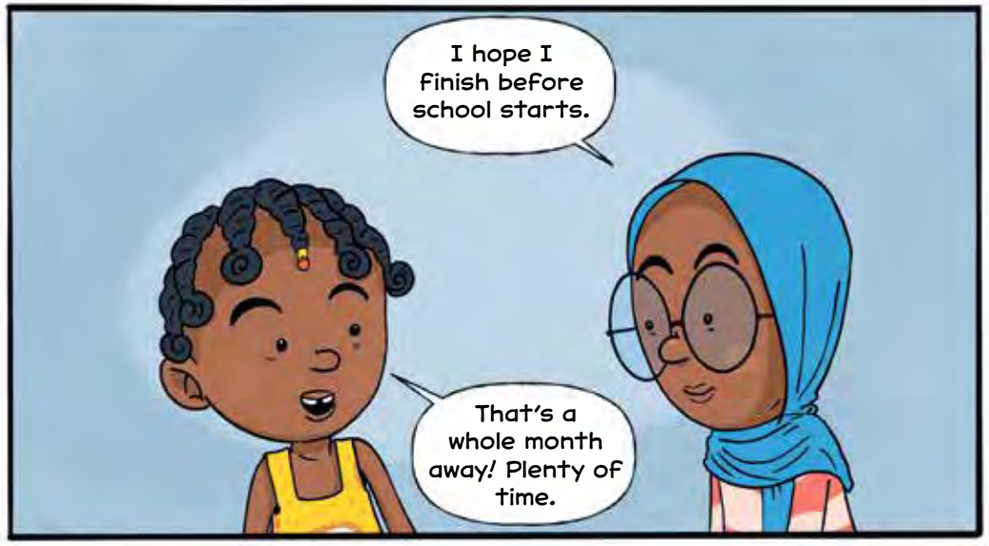

Did you finish your breakfast without me?

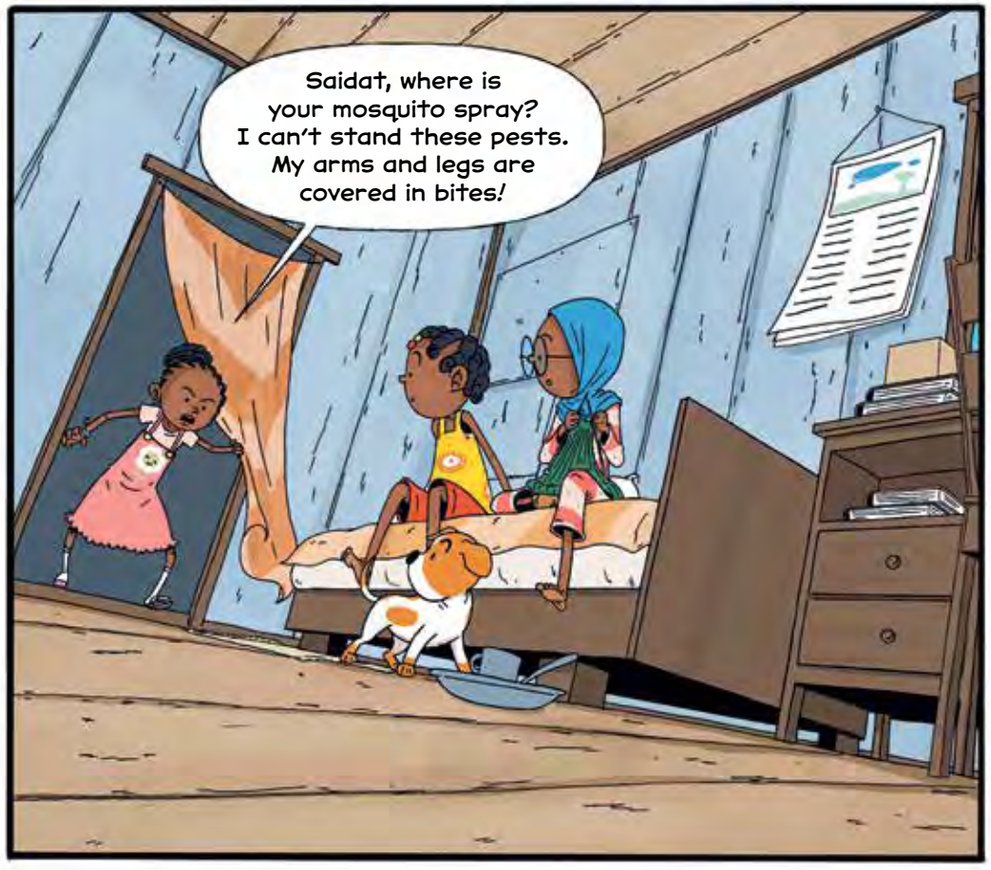

Korobá! You wouldn't have liked it, anyway. It was rice and fish stew.
Oh, no thank you!

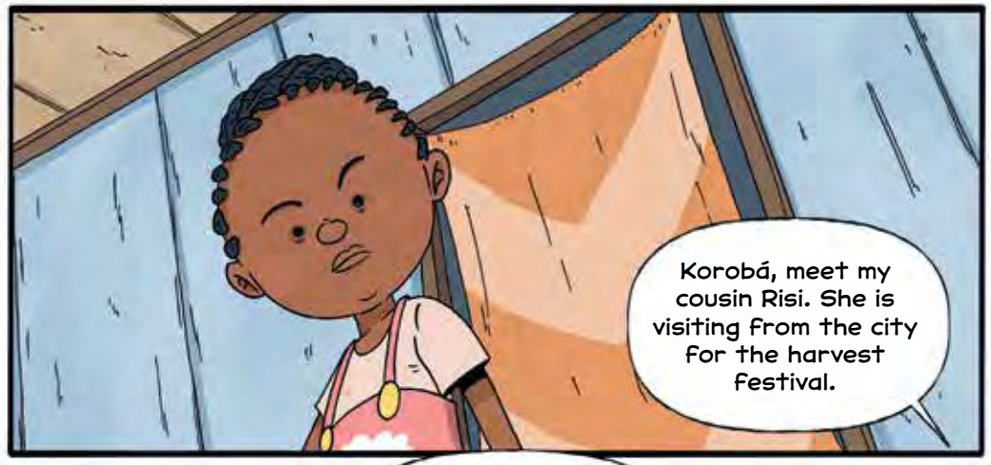

Popi! You just ate.
Can't blame him. Hardly anyone can resist Alhaja's cooking.


What are you up to this morning?
Iyá sent me to return some money to Alhaja.


Here, take a look. I've almost finished my sweater.
So pretty.


I hope I finish before school starts.
That's a whole month away! Plenty of time.

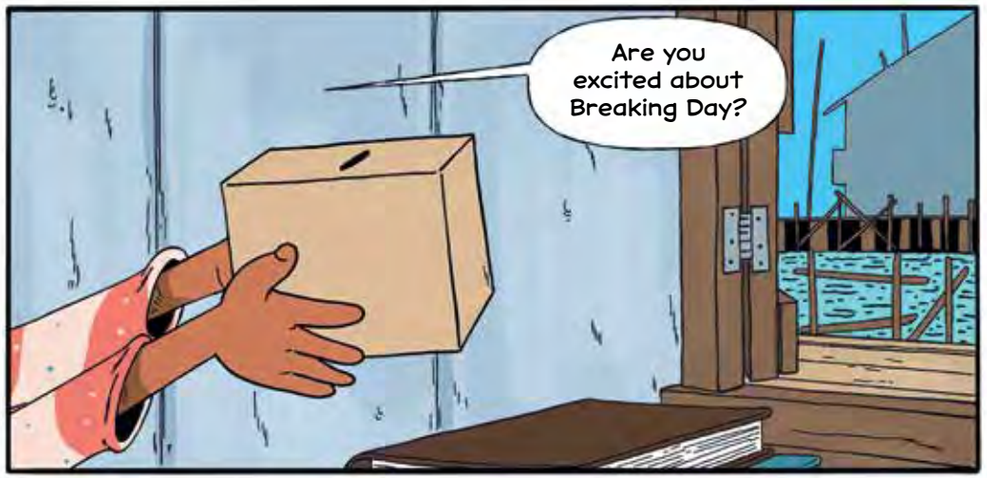

Saidat, where is your mosquito spray? I can't stand these pests. My arms and legs are covered in bites!


Korobá, meet my cousin Risi. She is visiting from the city for the harvest festival.


Hmpf! You make it sound as if I have a choice. If my parents hadn't forced me, I wouldn't be in this smelly dump!


We never get this many mosquitoes in the city.


Ignore her. She complains about everything.


Are you excited about Breaking Day?


It's so...plain. Why didn't you decorate it?
I've been too busy saving money! Plus, we're just going to break them, anyway.

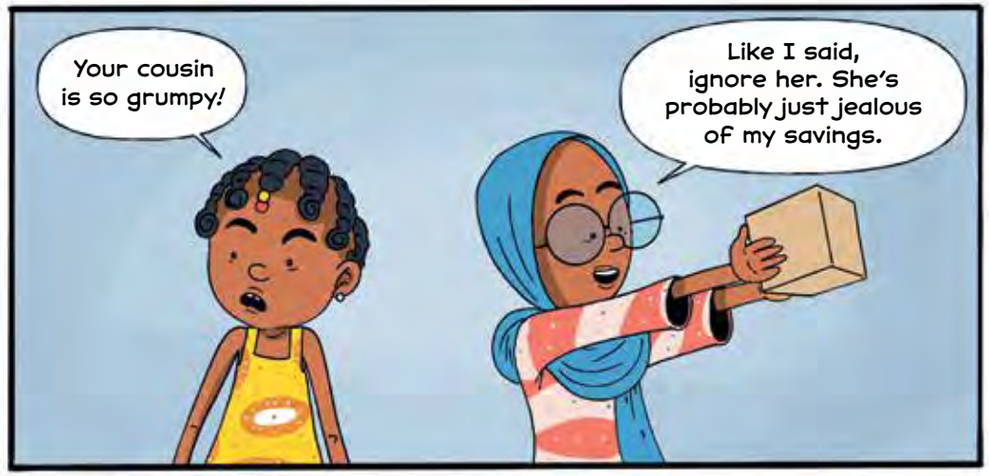

Look, I record every naira that goes in there.
Wow! I don't even know how much I've saved in mine.


Oh, I can't wait till Breaking Day. There's so much to buy.
I'm getting the red Ankara cloth we saw at the market last week.


Not if I beat you to it!


What a boring festival. I don't know what you're both so excited about.


And to think you'll waste all that money on one day!


Your cousin is so grumpy!
Like I said, ignore her. She's probably just jealous of my savings.


Saidat, you might want to get out of the house this morning. Benson, the carpenter, is coming to fix some loose floorboards.


All right, Alhaji.


Shall we go to Jọba's play shack and see what he's up to?
Great idea!


We'd better hurry so my iyá will not be angry.