

Stories From the World Bank

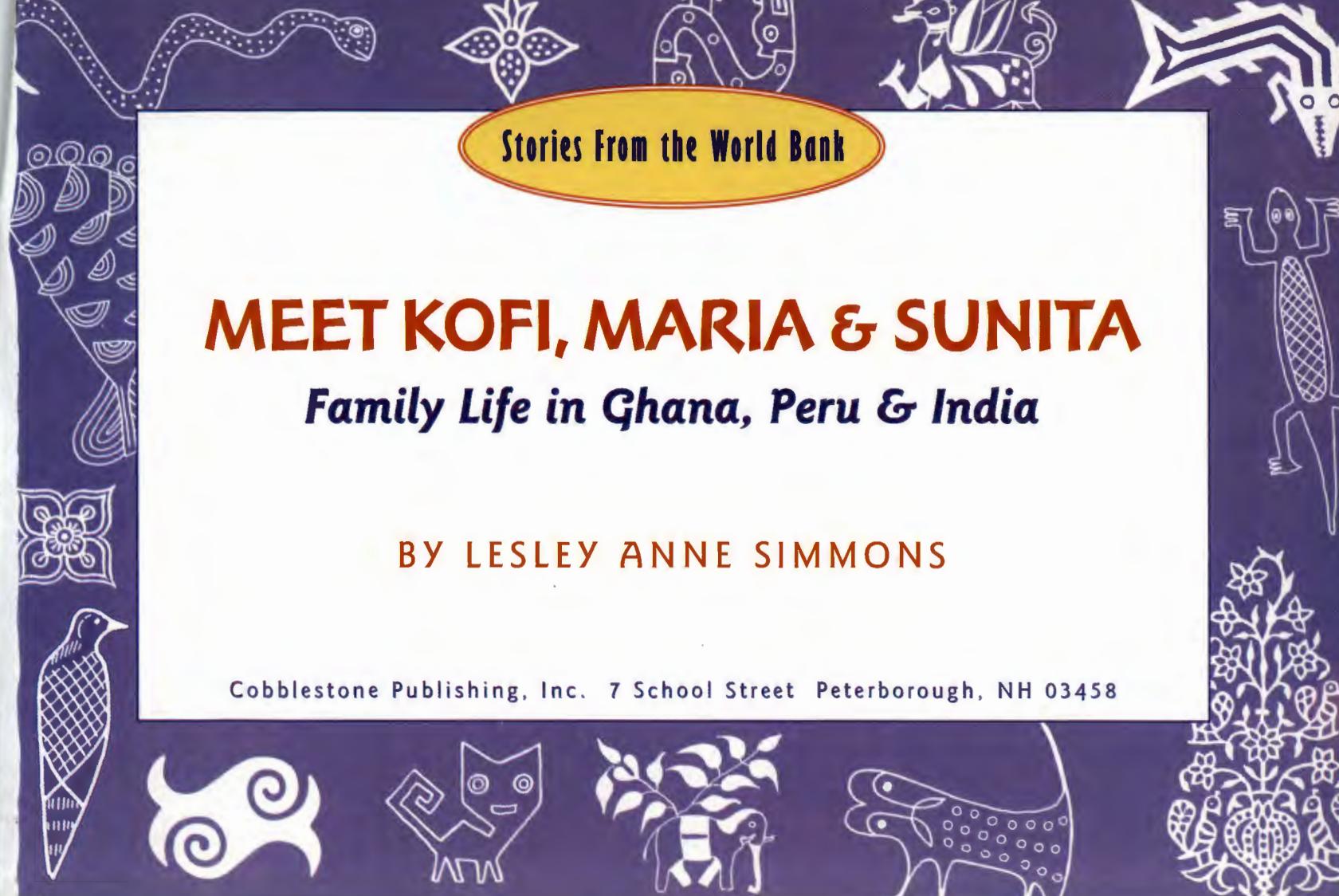
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MEET KOFI, MARIA & SUNITA



Family Life in Ghana, Peru & India

BY LESLEY ANNE SIMMONS



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For Freddy and Abigail

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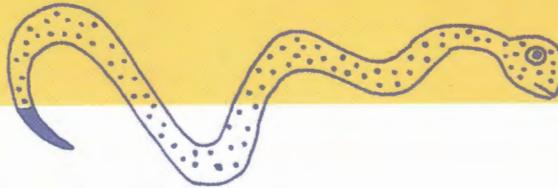
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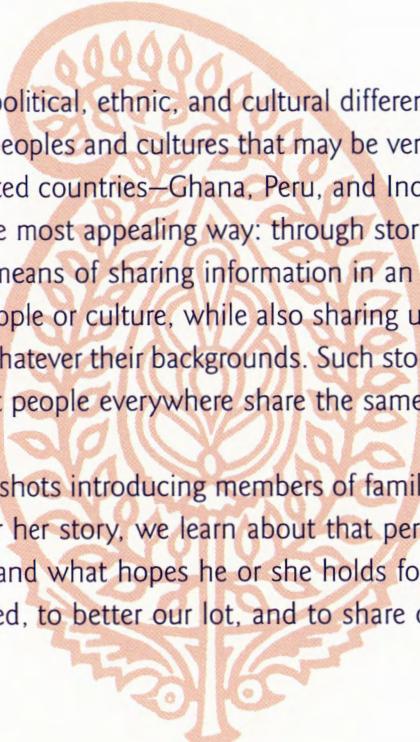


Foreword

As the world grows smaller, problems rooted in political, ethnic, and cultural differences seem to be growing. What is clear is the need to understand and value peoples and cultures that may be very different from our own. This book opens a window on three widely separated countries—Ghana, Peru, and India. But it is no dry social studies text. It shares a wealth of information in the most appealing way: through storytelling.

Stories have, since time immemorial, been a means of sharing information in an entertaining way. Myths, legends, and folklore preserve the traditions of a people or culture, while also sharing universal truths that speak to the hearts and minds of all listeners or readers, whatever their backgrounds. Such storytelling provides insights into another time or place, while underscoring that people everywhere share the same fundamental needs, feel the same emotions, and dream the same dreams.

The stories that follow are like a series of snapshots introducing members of families living in Africa, South America, and Asia. As each person recounts his or her story, we learn about that person—how he or she lives from day to day, what challenges he or she faces, and what hopes he or she holds for the future. These narratives remind us that the desire to love and be loved, to better our lot, and to share our stories with others is universal.



These stories also teach us about specific customs and ways of life. And we learn that many things we take for granted in the United States—homes with electricity and running water, for example—are in short supply in many other countries. Such information helps us to appreciate the uniqueness and some of the problems of each area. It provides basic blocks for building bridges of understanding between ourselves and others.

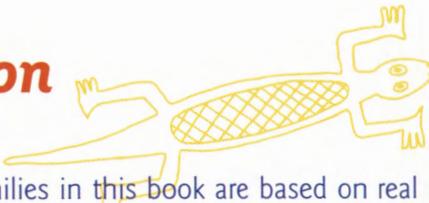
One of the many things that ties us all together is a love of storytelling and a sense of the richness of world literature. Kofi, in Ghana, enjoys hearing the traditional stories of Ananse, the trickster spider. In Peru, Maria rereads *Platero and Me*, a novel about an extraordinary donkey and the boy who is his friend. Sujata talks about India's world-famous filmmaking industry. Her favorite film is *Bombay*, which dramatizes the religious differences that divide Muslims and Hindus. Motion pictures are one form of storytelling, and good storytelling involves transferring wisdom. A film like *Bombay* helps Indians of one faith understand those of another.

The stories that follow can help us to appreciate people who live thousands of miles away. In a world that is increasingly divided and fragmented, and at the same time trying to cooperate in one global economy, there is no more urgent need than to understand and respect all our neighbors on earth. That is the real value of this book.



Robert D. San Souci

Introduction



The children and families in this book are based on real people, and their stories are true to life. They are the stories of people who live in developing countries. Most of the people who live in these countries are very poor, and life for them is very difficult. Many can't go to school or read and write, many are hungry and get sick often, and many die when they are very young. Four out of every five people on our planet live in a developing country.

About five years ago, I was asked to talk to some students from Amidon Elementary School in Washington, D.C., who were visiting the World Bank, where I work. They wanted to learn about what the World Bank does. I explained that the World Bank helps developing countries to improve the lives of their people by lending governments money to help build roads and schools; dig wells to provide drinking water; bring electric power to their farms, homes, and factories; and do many other things to help to make living conditions better.

I wrote stories about two children—Kofi, who is from Ghana, and Maria, who is from Peru—so that the students could put themselves in these children's shoes and begin to understand what life is like for people in developing countries. Some of the students played the parts of Kofi's family and some of Maria's family. They explained to the others what their everyday lives were like. When they had done that, they all set out to brainstorm ideas about what was needed to make life better for Kofi and Maria and their families.



They said that Kofi should go to school to learn to read and write. Kofi's family needed clean, fresh water nearby so that the children and their mother did not have to spend long hours walking to the river to collect the water they needed each day. They said that Maria's family needed to earn more money so that they could build a more comfortable home, or maybe build a latrine or get electricity so that they could have better lighting and a refrigerator. They thought of many things that both families needed to make their lives better.

Later, when I decided to write down the story of Kofi, I asked the students at Amidon Elementary School to draw some pictures. They did a wonderful job, as you will see when you read "Kofi's Folks." I wanted to write another story to go with Kofi's and Maria's stories, but this time set in Asia. So I wrote about Sunita and her family, who live in India.

That's how these stories came to be written. I hope that you enjoy reading about Kofi, Maria, and Sunita and their families. I know you will find that many things about their countries, their traditions, and their ways of life are different from yours. But you also will find that many things are the same. Perhaps later you will want to try to find out about people in other lands and write some stories of your own. I hope so.





KOFI'S FOLKS

A Story of a Village in Ghana

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDENTS AT
AMIDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Whittni Brown • Sandra Burgos • Milton Costen • Michelle Edwards • Erik Green •
Jamal Jones • Joi Nash • Carla Norde • Ingrid Pena • Jovan Washington • Christopher Zigler
under the direction of Mrs. Beverly Carpenter

Note: The Akan people of Ghana often use the name of the day of the week on which they were born as their first name.

Boys

Sunday	Kwasi
Monday	Kojo
Tuesday	Kwabena
Wednesday	Kwaku
Thursday	Yaw
Friday	Kofi
Saturday	Kwame

Girls

Sunday	Akosua
Monday	Adwoa
Tuesday	Abena
Wednesday	Akua
Thursday	Yaa
Friday	Afua
Saturday	Ama

My name is Kofi. I live in a small village in Ghana, a country in West Africa. My mother and father gave me the name Kofi because I was born on a Friday. Where I live, many children are named after the day of the week on which they were born. I am eight years old. I have just come home from school.







I am learning to read at school. I love to read stories about Ananse, a crafty spider. Ananse gets into mischief but is really a very good spider. Ananse is a bit like me. He gets into trouble for being bad when he doesn't mean to be bad. Like yesterday, I was playing football with my friends and kicked the ball really hard to score a goal. The ball knocked down one of Mother's tomato plants. She was very cross. But I saw she was smiling when she had finished tying it up to a stick, so I think the plant will be OK.

I have been going to school for almost a year. I work very hard at my lessons. I like reading best, but I like drawing and numbers, too. My brother, Kwaku (he was born on a Wednesday), also goes to school. He is six. We like to walk to school together. I also have a little sister whose name is Yaa (she was born on a Thursday).



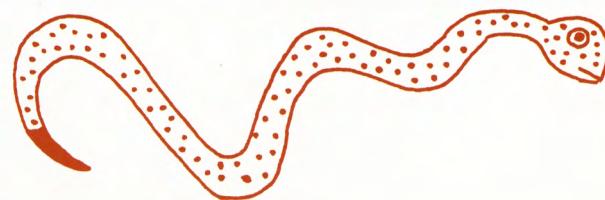
I think Kwaku is lucky to go to school while he is so young. I didn't go to school when I was six. I stayed at home to help my mother. We would walk together to the stream to fetch water many times each day. The stream is far from our house. The water was heavy to carry, so we would balance the buckets on our heads. My mother often told me stories as we walked. It helped make the long walk seem shorter when she told stories about her parents and grandparents. Now she tells us stories at night after we have eaten our evening meal.

We need a lot of water to cook our food and to wash. That's why we had to walk to the stream so many times each day. The stream water is dirty and not good to drink, but we had to use it. When our clothes needed to be washed, Mother and I would take them to the stream and wash them there.

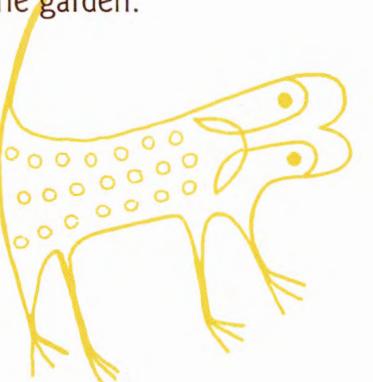


I can go to school now because I don't have to help my mother fetch water from the stream anymore. You see, a well has been dug in our village, and we get all the water we need from it without walking miles to the dirty stream. It is nice to have clean well water.

My mother says it is much healthier for us to drink clean water from the well. The stream water is dirty because the cattle stand in it to drink and people wash their clothes in it. The water carries germs that can make us ill. The well is very close to our house, so we don't have to spend the whole day fetching water. I have time to go to school now and to play with my brother and sister and our friends.



I am Akua (I was born on a Wednesday). I am Kofi's mother. I am working in my garden. It is hard work digging the soil, but I like to do it. I have had my garden for a year now. It is very exciting to see the tiny seeds grow into green plants, and then to see them flower, and finally to see the vegetables and fruits ripen. The garden is in front of our little house. I did not grow a garden before because I had to spend so much of my time walking to the stream to get water. Now it is a short walk to the new well in our village, so I can spend more time working in the garden.





Growing a garden is a lot of work. First, I dig the soil and pull out the weeds. Then I plant the seeds. If it does not rain, I must fetch water from the well to water the new plants each day. I also must dig out the weeds with a hoe as they grow between the plants. I grow tomatoes, peppers, spinach, plantains, and other vegetables that are good to eat. Before I had my garden, we usually ate only the maize or yams that my husband helps to grow in the fields the men work. But now, when my vegetables are ripe, we eat them. I cook them for my husband and children to have with maize.



If there are vegetables left over, I take them to the market on Wednesdays to sell. My husband often takes the maize he grows to the market, too. The market is quite far, and the vegetables are heavy to carry. A dirt road is being built from our village to the market. It will be much easier for us to go to the market when the road is finished.

I like my garden. I like to have fresh vegetables for my family to eat. I have planted an orange tree. My children love to eat oranges. When our orange tree is bigger and bears fruit, we can have oranges more often. If children eat fresh fruits and vegetables, they will grow strong and be healthy.

Now that there is a well in our village, I can work harder in my garden, because I don't have to spend all my time fetching water. I am happy that we have the well.

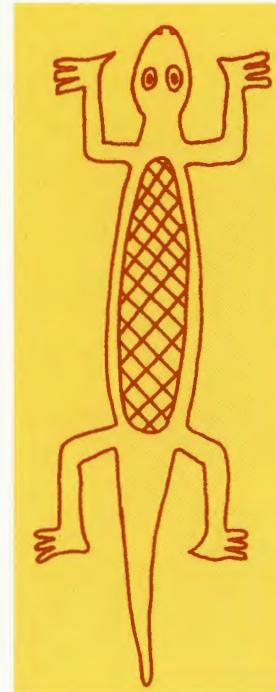




I am Kwabena, Kofi's father. I am happy that we have a well in our village, too. It is one of the best things to happen to the people in our village. All my children can go to school now. They will learn to read and write. They will be good farmers when they grow up because they can read and write. Or maybe they will get other types of jobs. When my wife and I were children, we did not go to school. We stayed at home and helped our parents with the household chores by fetching water or firewood. Neither of us can read or write.



Now that my wife is growing a garden in front of our house, she is able to earn some money, too. She works hard to grow the lovely vegetables. Those that we don't need for ourselves she takes to the market to sell. I take the maize I grow to the market, too. I carry the vegetables on my head in a basket. They are heavy. It will be easier to carry them when the new road is built. Now there is only a dirt track with lots of rocks and rubble. I often stumble and trip, and it takes me a long time to walk to



the market. In the rainy season, the dirt track is almost washed away, which makes it even more difficult for me to make the long journey to the market.

We are saving the money we earn from selling vegetables to buy some books for the children. One day, when the road is built and I have saved enough money, I want to buy a bicycle. Then it will be even easier for me to get to the market.

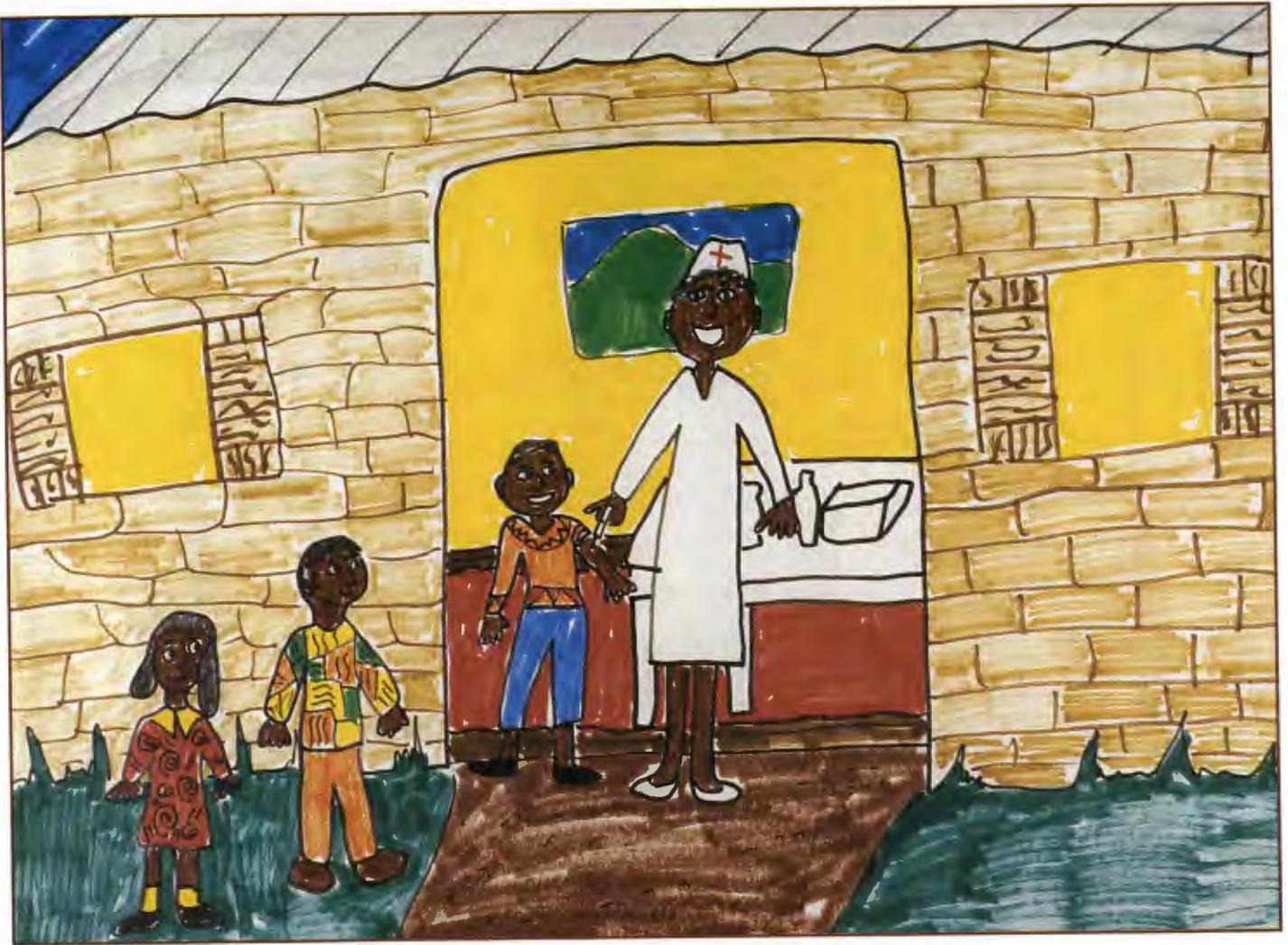




I am Kwaku, Kofi's brother. I am playing with my friends Ama (she was born on a Saturday) and Kwabena (he was born on a Tuesday, like my father).

Today we had shots at school. A nurse came. She stuck a sharp needle in my arm. It hurt a little, but I was brave. I didn't cry. Kwabena cried a little, I think, although he hid his tears from the rest of us.

My mother says I am lucky to be able to get shots. They will stop me from getting sick. My Uncle Kwasi got sick when he was a little boy, with an illness called polio. He was very ill and nearly died. But he was lucky; he got well. He cannot walk very well now. He has to use a stick. The polio hurt his leg. Lots of people used to catch polio. But because I had the shot today, I will never get polio, nor will any of the children in my school, because we all got shots.





I am Chief Adu. I help govern our village. Our village is very poor. Our country is poor. Our people need lots of things to help them live better. They need clean, fresh water to drink. They need water and seeds so they can grow food. They need roads so they can get to the markets to buy and sell vegetables and fruits. The children need to go to school to learn to read and write. They need inoculations against diseases, and they need doctors and nurses to help them get well when they are sick.

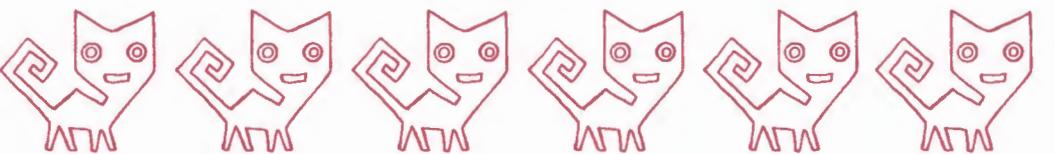
The people in our country want a better life. They are working hard for it—like Kofi and his brother, Kwaku, who work so hard at school, and like Akua, Kofi's mother, who works so hard in her garden. Our people deserve a better life.





MARIA'S BIRTHDAY

A Story of a Family in Peru



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NATALI SEGOVIA

The Greenwich Village School



New York, New York

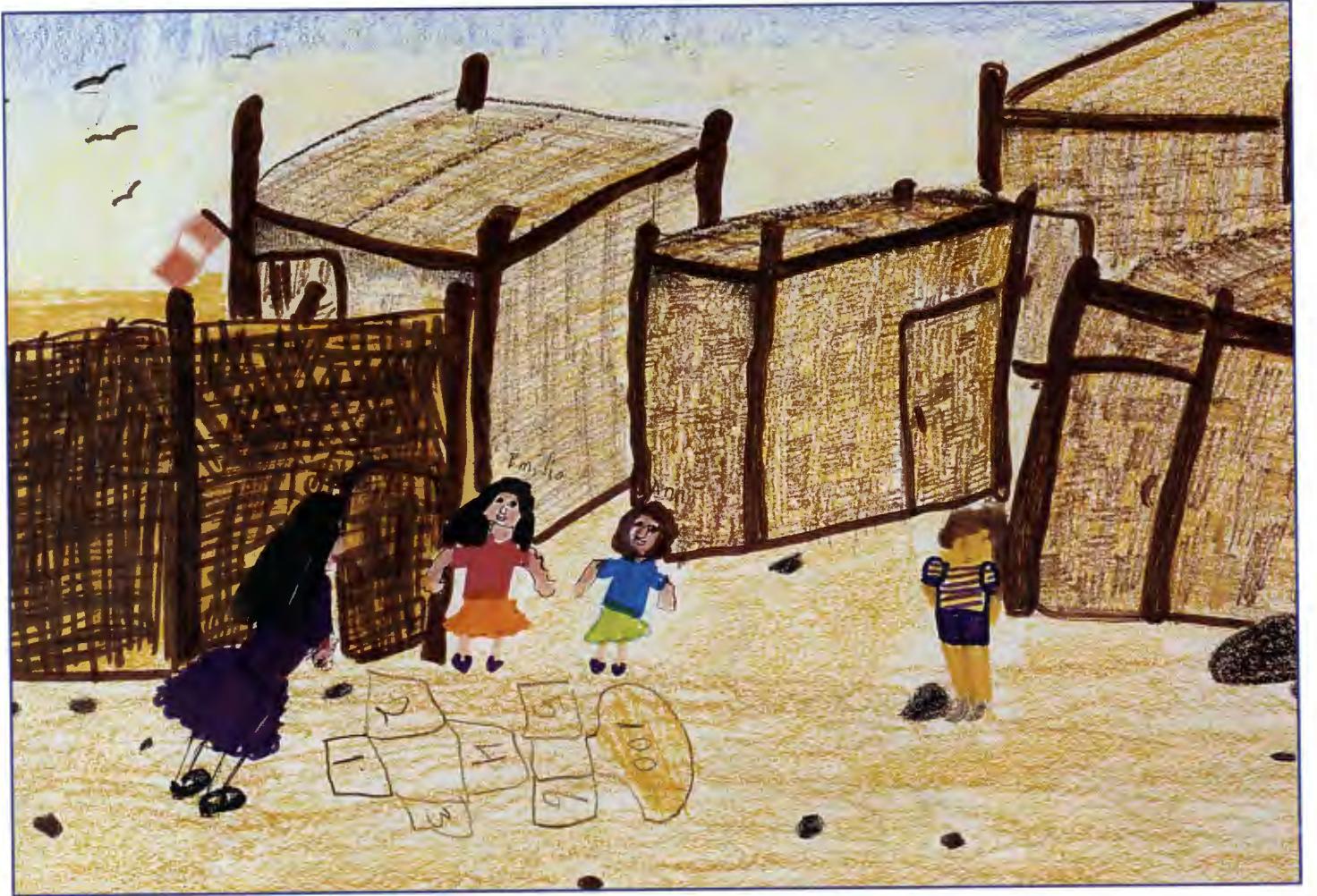




I

am Maria. Today is a special day for me and my family. It is my birthday. I am eight.

It has been such a nice day. My parents gave me beautiful, new, black, shiny shoes for my birthday. I couldn't wait to wear them. I wore them to play hopscotch with my sister Emilia and my friend Ana. Mama was cross with me. She says I can wear the shoes only on special days—on Sundays or for Carnival or for the big parade on independence day, July 28, which is next month. The shoes got dirty from the dusty street, which made me sad. Mama promised to clean them so that they shine like new if I promise not to wear them to play again.





I want to lie here on my mattress and think about the nice day I've had. It was so much fun. After dinner, we listened to music on our radio. It was nice to hear the music again. We haven't been able to listen to the radio for ages. The batteries were used up, and Papa didn't have enough money to buy new ones. We have to use batteries because there is no electricity in our house. Emilia loves to play and dance. She started to dance to the music, and before we knew it, we were all dancing and laughing.

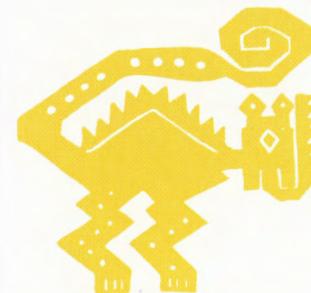
I am very tired, and I can feel myself falling asleep now. I will dream about a little silver donkey who is my dream friend. I will tell him about my lovely day.



I am Maria's mother. My name is Raquel. Today I made a special meal for Maria's birthday. Most days we eat some soup and potatoes or corn for dinner. But today I made ceviche. Ceviche is a very tasty fish dish. The fish is marinated in lime juice and has lots of spices. It is the favorite food of many people in Peru. To make the meal even more special, we had rice and meat, too.



Our lives are better now that we have moved here to Lima. Lima is the capital city of Peru, in South America. We moved here when Maria was five years old, from a small village in the state of Puno, which is in the mountains southeast of Lima. The village is close to a very beautiful lake called Titicaca. Maria's papa and I were both born in that village. We were poor *campesinos* (the name for farmers in my language). We earned very little from the potatoes we grew on a small plot of land and the few sheep we looked after for a rich man in our village. I also knitted woolen sweaters to earn extra money. We wanted to come to Lima so that we could earn more money to send our children to school and build a nice home for them.

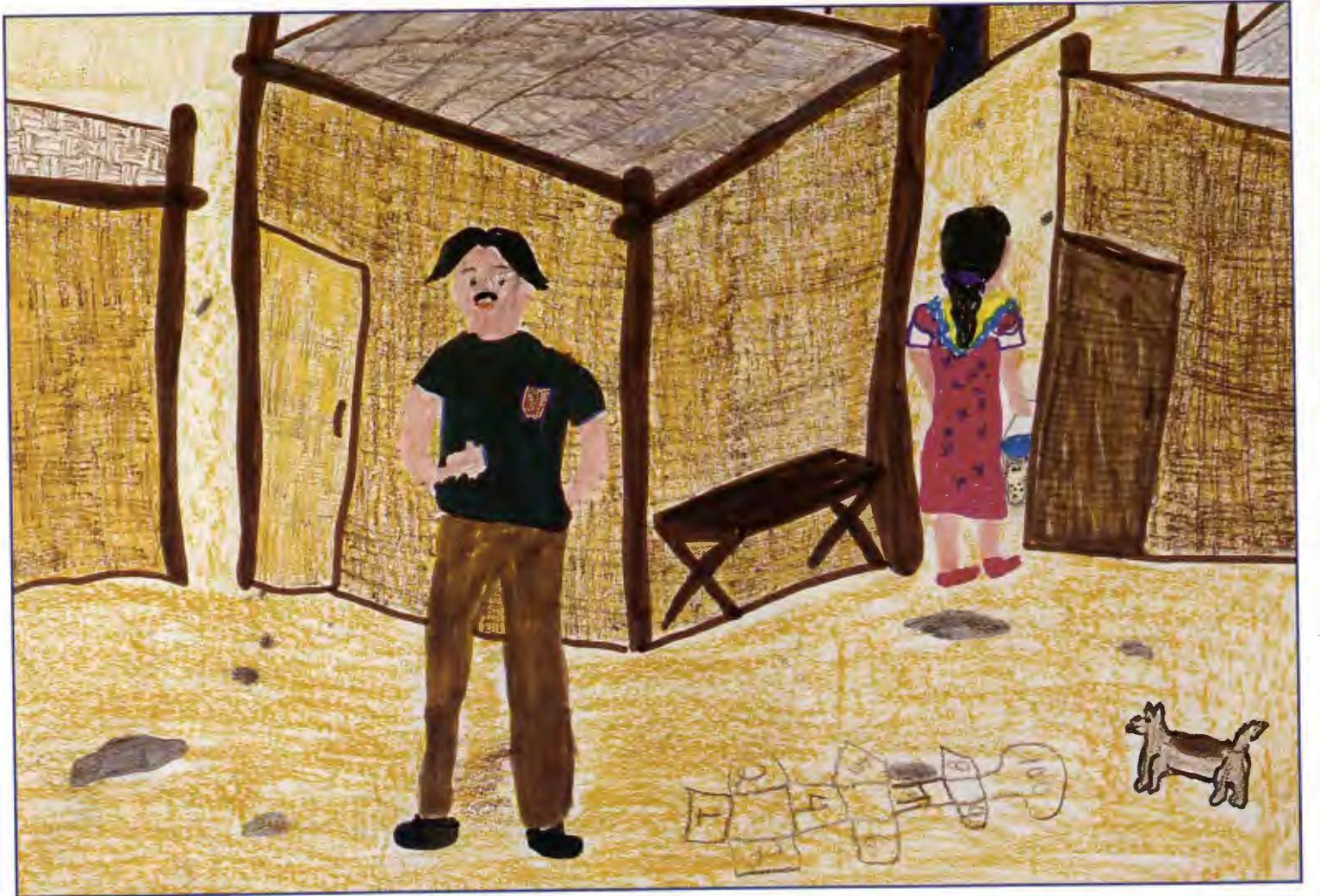


My older children go to school now. Maria is a good girl; she studies hard. Emilia is a tomboy. She loves to play and does not work so hard at school. Patricio is mischievous and is always getting into trouble. He loves to play football. Baby Dario will go to school in a year or two. I did not go to school. My husband did not go to school either. We cannot read or write. But we have our dreams.





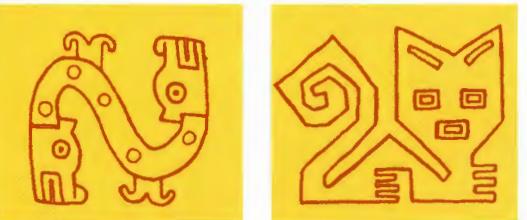
My name is Ernesto. I am Maria's father. I am happy on days when I get work helping to build one of the big office buildings downtown. Every day I wait in line with other men who are looking for work. There are more and more new buildings these days, so I was able to work most days last month. That's why we could buy special treats for Maria's birthday today.



My wife, Raquel, often goes to work, too. She does laundry for some rich people. She takes a long bus ride to another part of the city where they live. We are glad when we can both work. We have been saving to buy a cement water tank to put outside our house. Then we can have fresh water delivered to the tank. Today I told the family the good news: we have enough money to buy our tank! My wife and children will no longer have to carry water to the house from the public faucet on the next street.



After I buy the water tank, I want to save money to rebuild our house with brick. I built the house we live in now from bits of wood, iron, and cardboard that we found on the streets when we first moved here. I want to have electricity, running water, and a toilet like some of the neighbors have. These are my dreams for my family. It will take a long time to save for these things.





I am Patricio, Maria's older brother. I am ten years old.

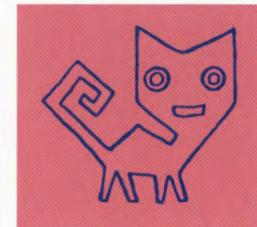
I am upset tonight because I won't be able to go to school tomorrow. That means I won't be able to play football with my friends.

My mother is going to work. When she is away, someone must look after our house. We have valuable things that might be stolen if no one is here. Our house has a kitchen and one other room. It has a dirt floor. Mama and Papa have a bed, and we children sleep on pallets on the floor. We also have a table and two benches,

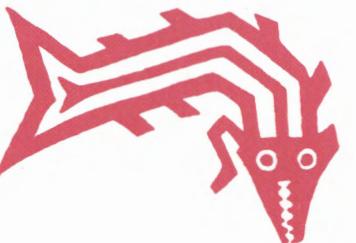


and the radio. In the kitchen, there is a kerosene stove for cooking. Because we cannot lock the house, our radio and stove would be stolen if no one stayed home to look after them. I would be sad if the radio were stolen. So would Papa, because we listen to the football game on Sundays.

I like going to school because I play football with my friends after class. I have to practice because when I grow up, I want to play football for my country. Peru has the best football team in the whole world! I got a football for my birthday a few weeks ago. Now I can practice often with my friends. But I won't be able to practice tomorrow.



Maria, Emilia, and I take turns staying home when Mama works. Tomorrow it is my turn. When my parents have more money, we will have a brick house with a wooden door that we can lock, and we will all be able to go to school every day. Tomorrow I will play with the slingshot I made last week from some wood and a rubber band I found. I will sit outside the house and shoot stones. I must be careful, because Mama will yell at me if she finds out I have been aiming stones at the birds and the stray dogs.





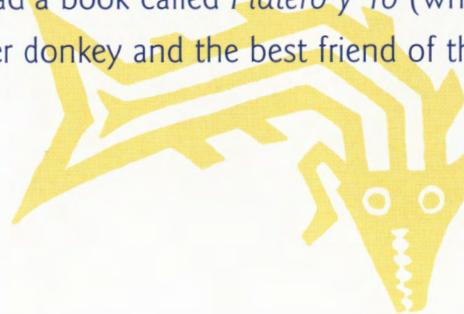
I am Maria's sister. My name is Emilia. I am nearly seven. Maria stayed home from school yesterday to watch the house. Patricio asked Papa if Maria could stay home tomorrow, too, even though it's his turn. Patricio thinks it's not so important for girls to go to school. He says boys get jobs and earn money, so they should go to school every day. Papa says Patricio is wrong. Girls should go to school, too.

I want to go to school. I want to learn to read and write, just like Patricio. I want to get married one day, too. But before that, I want to go to work. I want to work



downtown in one of the tall office buildings like the one my father is helping to build. I want to earn lots of money. Papa says I will have to work hard in school if I am going to work in an office. When I go to work, I want to give the money I earn to my parents so that we can have a better house and eat ceviche every day, just like we did today for Maria's birthday.

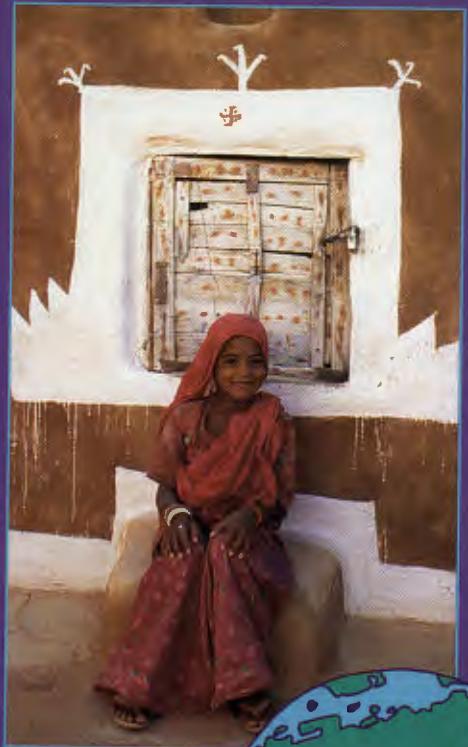
Maria wants to be a teacher when she grows up, like Señorita Rosas, who teaches us. That's why Maria spends so much time reading books. Even though she is only eight, she is very smart. She loves to read a book called *Platero y Yo* (which means *Platero and Me*). Platero is a pretty silver donkey and the best friend of the little boy who owns him.



I want Maria to teach my children when we grow up. But I want to stay in the city, and she wants to go back to the mountain village we came from. She says she wants to teach the children in the village. I think she wants to go to the mountains so that she can have a donkey like Platero.

What a lovely day! We had tasty food to eat. Mama and Papa gave Maria lovely new shoes for her birthday. Maria was so happy. She promised to give the shoes to me when her feet grow too big for them. Papa bought new batteries for our radio, and we danced and played to the music. He told us we are going to get a cement tank for water. That means Maria, Mama, and I won't have to go to the public faucet to get water every day. We are so lucky!

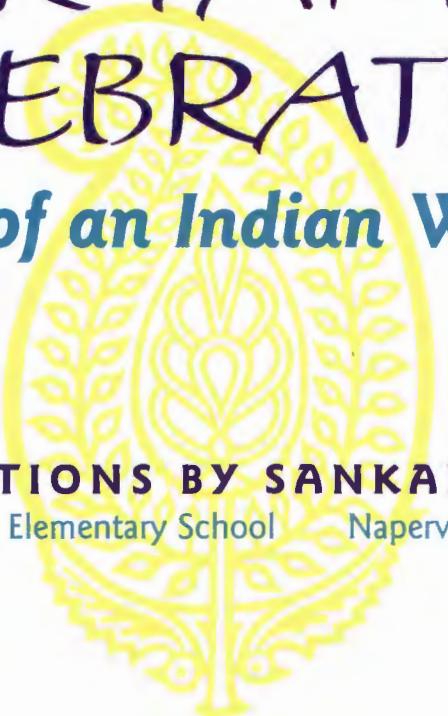




OUR FAMILY CELEBRATION

A Story of an Indian Wedding

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SANKAR MAJETI
Spring Brook Elementary School Naperville, Illinois



My name is Sunita. I am eight years old. My family follows the Hindu faith. We live in a village in the state of Tamil Nadu, which is in the south of India. My village is called Subiksha, which means “plenty” in our Tamil language. We have plenty of food to eat. People in my village grow rice and vegetables. Every family has a cow and a goat. We drink the milk from the cows and goats, and we make yogurt from it. There are plenty of chickens in our village, too. We eat the eggs.

I’m very happy today. Tomorrow there will be a big celebration in my village. My sister Amrita is getting married.

When people in our village marry, the bridegroom tries to borrow a car so that he can be driven to his bride’s house the evening before the wedding. All the friends and relatives follow the car in a procession around the village. When the bridegroom gets to his waiting bride, they both have beautiful garlands of flowers put around their necks. Then there is a short ceremony, and the Hindu priest announces that they are betrothed. The next day, the wedding ceremony takes place.





Tonight we had the procession around the village. Arun, who will be my sister's husband tomorrow, was driven to our house for the engagement ceremony. I sat with Arun in the front seat of the car that led the procession. Although we are very poor, Arun was able to borrow a car from a rich man in our village. It's a very old car with an open roof. It made rattling and popping noises that made us laugh. We decorated the car with beautiful flowers: sweet-smelling jasmine blossoms, roses, marigolds, and white lilies. I was so proud to sit with Arun in the front of the car. His little brothers and sisters sat in the back of the car. All of Arun's and Amrita's relatives and friends walked behind the car.

When we reached our house, Amrita was waiting. My brother, Ashok, put a garland of flowers around Arun's neck, and Arun's sister put a garland around Amrita's neck. Then the priest announced that my sister and Arun would marry tomorrow.

Arun looks very handsome wearing his white dhoti (DOH-tee), with its small gold lace border around the bottom, and his red and gold turban. I like him very much. So does Amrita. Although my parents chose Arun as her husband, they let them meet so that they could decide for themselves whether they wanted to marry. They did.

My mother sewed a pretty new orange and yellow skirt and blouse for me to wear. She bought Amrita a special wedding sari—a beautiful cloth of red and gold. Amrita looks wonderful in her wedding clothes.

My mother worked late into the night to have our clothes ready for the wedding. I am glad we have electric lights in our house now. If we did not, Mother would not have finished the clothes in time.

Before we got electricity in our village, we had to use a kerosene lamp all the time. It did not light the room very well, and it made my mother's eyes tired. We still use our kerosene lamp when the power goes out, which happens quite often. When many people try to use electricity at the same time, especially when the farmers start pumping water to



their crops, the lights get very dim or go out altogether. Sometimes they are out for a long time, and it's just like it was before we had any electricity at all!

I'll get married when I am eighteen years old, like Amrita. My parents found a nice boy for Amrita to marry. They will find the right boy for me to marry, too.

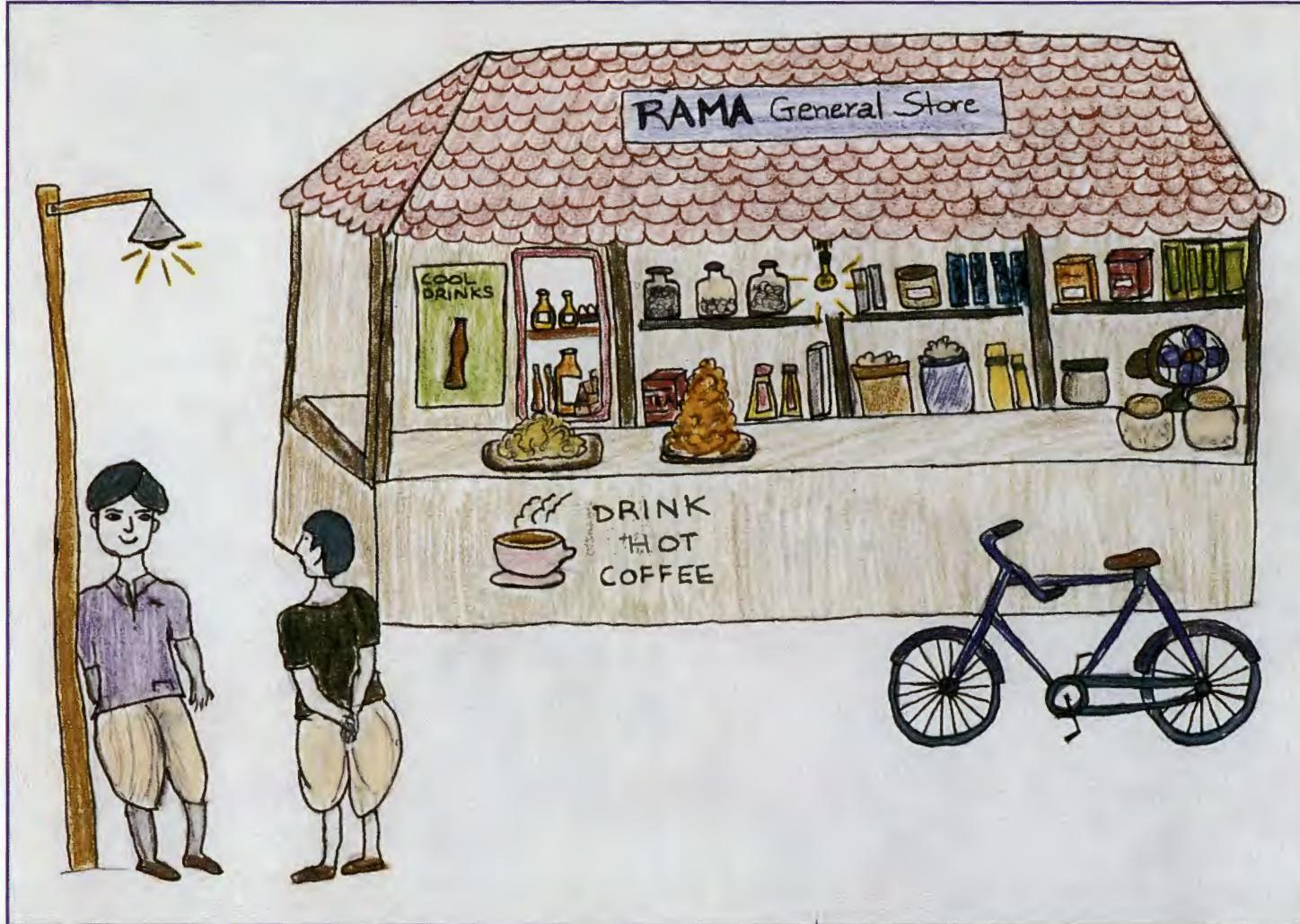
I am Sujata. I'm Sunita's oldest sister. I was married to Vinod two years ago. We had a big celebration in the village when I got married. Tomorrow we will have one for Amrita and Arun. There will be music and dancing. When I was married, four of the men from the village played music. Now there is electricity in our village, so as well as listening to the musicians, we will be able to play popular music over the loudspeakers, and everyone will be able to hear it. They will play music from the film *Bombay*. It is a very popular film with very popular songs. It is a love story about a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl who fall in love and get married in Bombay. In the movie, everybody is upset because they believe that Hindus should marry Hindus and Muslims should marry Muslims. Many Indians think that people of different religions should not marry each other.



I love going to the movies. We have an open-air movie theater near our village. I have seen six films there. *Bombay* is my favorite. India is famous for its films. Before we got our movie theater, we only heard about films from city people visiting the village or from the radio or newspaper. We could not see them. The theater opened when our village got electricity. A movie theater needs electricity to work.

I also love to see the colorful religious plays put on in our village. The plays have been performed for a long time—long before anyone even thought of making movies. They are lots of fun to see.





I am Krishna. I am Sunita's father. The village streets were all lit up as we walked in the procession tonight. Now that there is electricity in our village, we have lights in the streets. The men in the village often sit and talk under the streetlights at night. Electricity was brought to our region to power the pumps that water the farmers' crops. When that happened, our farmers were able to grow much more food. It took many years for the electricity to be brought to our houses, and even now it often goes out because too many people try to use it at the same time.

There is a lamppost outside my brother's little grocery. My brother's name is Rama. He is well-known in Subiksha. When the village got electricity, Rama bought a refrigerator for his shop, so people can buy ice from him. We keep sodas and drinks cold with the ice.

We will serve cold drinks, as well as the wonderful coffee for which our region is famous, at the wedding celebration tomorrow after the bride and groom have tied the knot. This is how people get married in India. Arun will tie three knots in the yellow



wedding necklace (called the *mangal sutra*) that he will place around Amrita's neck. Then they will walk seven times around the fire. When they have done that, they will be husband and wife, and everyone will start to celebrate. We will begin the celebration by giving everyone cold sodas or coffee to drink.

Because we have the refrigerator in Rama's shop, we are having ice cream at the wedding feast tomorrow. That will be a very special treat!

Rama's house is always full of people. He has a television. Family and friends from the village often go to Rama's house to watch his television. Many people in our village have radios, but only a few have televisions.

Rama has a huge satellite dish outside his house. The satellite dish brings television shows from all over the world. Last week we saw a show from America. There was a wedding. In the wedding, the bride wore a long white dress. In India, the bride wears bright, happy colors—red with gold—and lots of flowers. My daughter will wear red and gold at her wedding tomorrow.





I am Chitra, Sunita's mother. A wedding is a lot of work. I made a new blouse and skirt for Sunita and made garlands from flowers to decorate the processional car and for the bride and groom to wear. My sisters and neighbors helped me to cook food in big copper pots for the wedding feast. Sometimes we use charcoal to cook. Other times we use wood. We made yogurt dishes, rice and vegetable dishes, and lentils. For dessert I made rice pudding, which is everyone's favorite. It has been easier to prepare for this wedding than others in the past because at last we have electricity in our houses. Now that I have an electric light, I can see better to sew and to prepare food at night.

People say I sew very well. I am going to start a tailoring business. I will make clothes to sell to people in our village and in nearby villages. I have borrowed some money to buy cloth and thread. With the money I earn, I will be able to pay back the loan and maybe buy an electric sewing machine so that I can sew more quickly. I want to save enough money from my business to buy some furniture for our little house.

I want a new bed for my husband and me to sleep on. Right now, like most people in our village, I sleep on a mat on the floor, and my husband sleeps on a small bamboo bed with a thin mattress over it. Most of the houses in our village are like ours. It is made of clay bricks. It has just one room where we live and sleep. I make my cooking fire in a separate shed.

Our village is much nicer since we got electricity. There is an electric light in the school, so the children can see better and learn more. I did not go to school, but all of my four children learned to read and write at school, even the girls. I am very proud of them. I want them to be happy and healthy.

Sunita, the youngest of my children, has just been vaccinated so that she will not get whooping cough. I am pleased. Sunita had an older brother who died from whooping cough a few years ago. Sunita will be safe from the disease. Our health center has a refrigerator where vaccines and medicines are kept. They must be kept very cold, or they won't do any good. Before we got electricity, sometimes we didn't have the vaccines and medicines we needed, and people would get sick.



I am Ashok, Sunita's twelve-year-old brother. Sunita is the baby of our family. Sunita and I are very excited about Amrita's wedding. We'll get to see lots of visiting relatives and meet lots of new people. The music that will be played will be great fun, and I am looking forward to eating the special wedding food. It's fun to have a family celebration.

On weekdays, I go to school. After school and on weekends, I play with my kite or play chess with my uncle. I love to play chess. Now that we have electricity, I can sit under the streetlight with the men and watch them play chess at night. I often play chess with my sister's husband, Vinod. Vinod always beats me. When I grow up, I want to be able to play chess like him.

I want to work for the power company like Vinod, too. He climbs the poles and helps attach the electric wires to them. It must be fun to be so high on the poles. Vinod earned lots of money when he helped wire our village for electricity. Now he is installing electricity in a village a few miles from here. He and my sister have bought



furniture for their house with the money he has earned.

My parents are happy with Vinod, and he and his family are good to Sujata. Amrita is happy with my parents' choice for her, too. The whole village is pleased for them. Everyone will have fun celebrating the wedding.

I am Rama. I am Sunita's uncle and an elder of the village of Subiksha. I helped bring electricity to our village. Everyone was very excited about getting electricity, and they all wanted to have a lamppost outside their house. I was lucky to get one put outside my shop. Now it is easier for my wife and me to find things on the shelves after dark. Before, when we had only a small kerosene lamp, it was difficult to tell one lentil from another!

The people in our village will always be thankful to have electricity. It makes life easier in so many different ways. When people have clean, bright electric lights in their homes, they can work and go about their business after dark. Thanks to electric-powered refrigerators, they can keep food fresh and cool in their shops and medicines and vaccines fresh in the health clinics. They can watch television and listen to radios without having to use expensive batteries that wear out. They can see movies in the open-air theater.

Before we had electricity, most people earned their living by growing and selling food. Now we are going to start a small factory to make clothes and another factory to make rugs. Our children will have a chance to earn more money than we did. We will have fans in our buildings to help keep us cool in the hottest part of the day. It is amazing how many things we can have now that we have electricity.



Things to Think About

KOFI'S FOLKS



In 1993, there were almost 16.5 million people in Ghana. How many people live in the United States?

Most people in Ghana don't have a lot of money. They may have the equivalent of \$1.50 a day to live on. How would you and your family spend your money if each of you had only \$1.50 to spend each day?

In Ghana, four out of every ten adults cannot read and write. Why do you think this is so?

One out of every four children in Ghana doesn't go to primary school. Why?

About half of the people in Ghana do not have safe water nearby. What dangers does this present?

MARIA'S BIRTHDAY

There are 23 million people in Peru. Are there more Peruvians than Ghanaians?



Peru is one of Latin America's poorest countries. Most Peruvians live on about \$4.25 a day. Look at the things you said you would buy if you were living in Ghana. What extra things would you buy if you had another \$2.75 to spend each day? Would you save any money? Why or why not?

In the cities of Peru, only two out of every ten houses have electricity. How do you think people cook their food? How do they keep food fresh? How do they light their homes at night?

Most Peruvian children of primary school age today are enrolled in school, although many of the schools don't have enough teachers and have few books or supplies such as paper and pencils. Only one out of every three children of secondary school age in Peru is enrolled in school. How do you think that affects their hopes and dreams for the future?

OUR FAMILY CELEBRATION

There are 898 million people in India—many, many more than in Ghana or Peru. Which country in the world has the most people? Where is this country located?



India is one of the world's poorest countries. Its people live on less than \$1 a day. How would you and your family spend your money if you had just \$1 a day?

Half of the adults in India cannot read and write. People who do not read very well cannot read a newspaper. How do you think they find out what is going on in the world?

Each person in the United States uses thirty-two times more energy (electricity, oil, gas, and so on) than each person in India. Each person in Australia uses twenty-two times more energy than each person in India. Why do people in the United States and Australia use more energy than people in India?

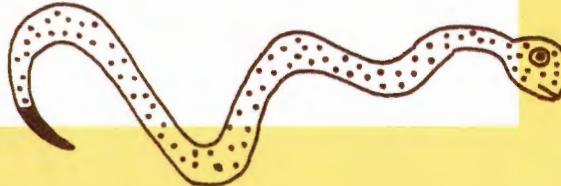
Answers on pages 79–80.

About the World Bank



Many factors contribute to a country's economic development, including the abundance of its resources, its access to other resources through trade, the quality of life of its people, and the state of the global economy. Because the world economy is becoming increasingly interconnected, economic development can affect people in all countries, both rich and poor.

The World Bank, which is owned by the governments of more than 175 countries, helps developing countries participate more in the world economy. It does this by lending money to these countries to help them strengthen their economies, expand their markets, and improve the health and education of their people, especially the poorest. World Bank loans to middle-income countries have longer repayment periods and often lower interest rates than commercial bank loans. World Bank loans to low-income countries are interest free and have even longer repayment periods.



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KOFI'S FOLKS

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Answers to Things to Think About

KOFI'S FOLKS

In 1993, the population of the United States was just under 258 million, more than fifteen and a half times the population of Ghana.

If you had \$1.50 per day to live on, you would probably spend most of it on food. If you had any extra, you would use it to buy simple clothes and shelter.

When most of the adults in Ghana were of school age, they were too poor or lived too far from a school, or they had to help out at home rather than go to school. Those who did go to school often did not go every day or didn't go for long enough to learn to read and write very well.

Most Ghanaian people (65 percent) live in rural areas where there are few schools. Many children spend their time looking after brothers and sisters, helping fetch firewood or water, or helping on the farm.

If people do not have clean water to use, they drink polluted water or prepare food in dirty conditions. This can cause sickness and death. Thousands of young children in the developing world die each day from diarrhea caused by drinking polluted water or eating unclean or spoiled food.

MARIA'S BIRTHDAY

There are 16.5 million Ghanaians, so there are nearly one and a half times more Peruvians than Ghanaians.

On an income of \$4.25, most people spend most of their money on food and water. (Because so few people have access to safe drinking water, particularly in the city where Maria lives, they buy water from vendors.) They may spend a little money on clothes, housing, and health care. But most have money only for life's necessities, not for luxuries.

Food is cooked by burning charcoal or wood in rural areas and charcoal or bottled gas in cities. People do not have refrigerators in their homes, so they can't store food. Any food that will spoil quickly must be bought daily. Beans, rice, and vegetables, which are the usual daily diet of poor people in Lima, do not need to be kept cold. Homes are lit with kerosene lamps, if at all.

Without a secondary school education, children can expect, when they grow up, to work on farms in rural areas or, if they live in a city, to work in construction, road building, or a factory.

OUR FAMILY CELEBRATION

China has the largest population, with almost 1.2 billion people in 1993. China is in Asia.

On \$1 per day or less, people spend all of their money on food. It is not enough money to buy enough food, so many people are hungry and malnourished.

Many Indian households have battery-powered radios. Indian people get their news as well as entertainment from the radio. People also spend a lot of time with friends and neighbors discussing local issues and events.

Industrialized countries such as the United States and Australia use a lot of energy for the following purposes:

- to run cars, buses, trains, trucks, and other forms of transportation
- to fuel industry
- to light, cool, and heat homes, schools, hospitals, offices, and other buildings
- to prepare food and to refrigerate food and other perishable items
- to power computers and other equipment
- to irrigate farms and gardens

Most ordinary Indian people use energy only to cook the daily meal. Very few have cars of their own. Although there is some industry in India, far less energy is used for this purpose than in countries such as the United States and Australia. Electric power is used extensively to irrigate crops in India.



About the Author

Lesley Anne Simmons is a spokeswoman for the World Bank in Washington, D.C., where she has lectured and written extensively for children on development. As a librarian in her native England, she especially enjoyed reading story hours for local children after school. Born in Kent, England, she trained as a teacher and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from London University and a master's degree in information science from the Catholic University of America. She lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with her husband, Jim, and two fat cats, Flannery and George.

GHANA



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