

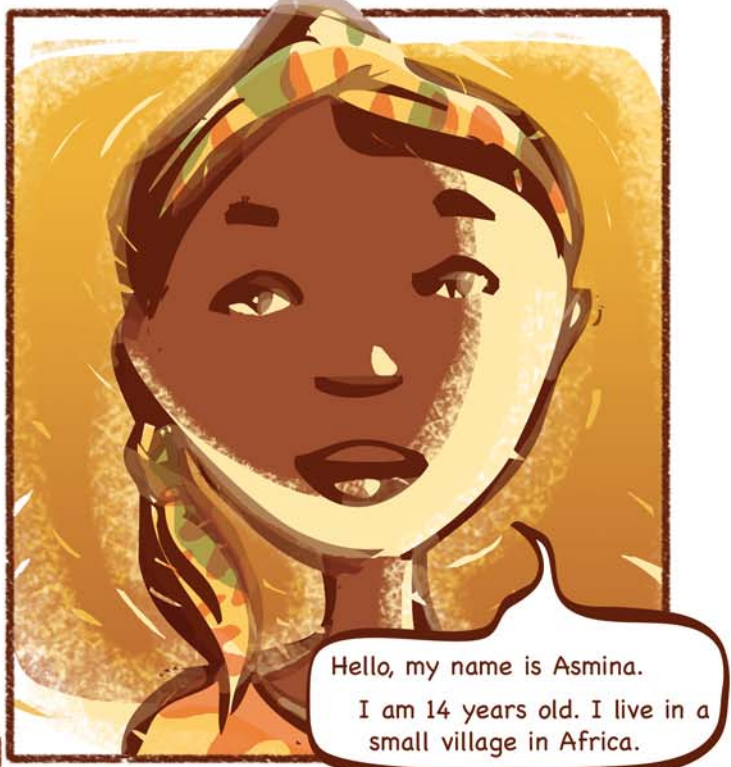
Asmina's Story:

A Child Orphaned by AIDS in Africa





Hello, hello.
Is it on?
Are we filming?

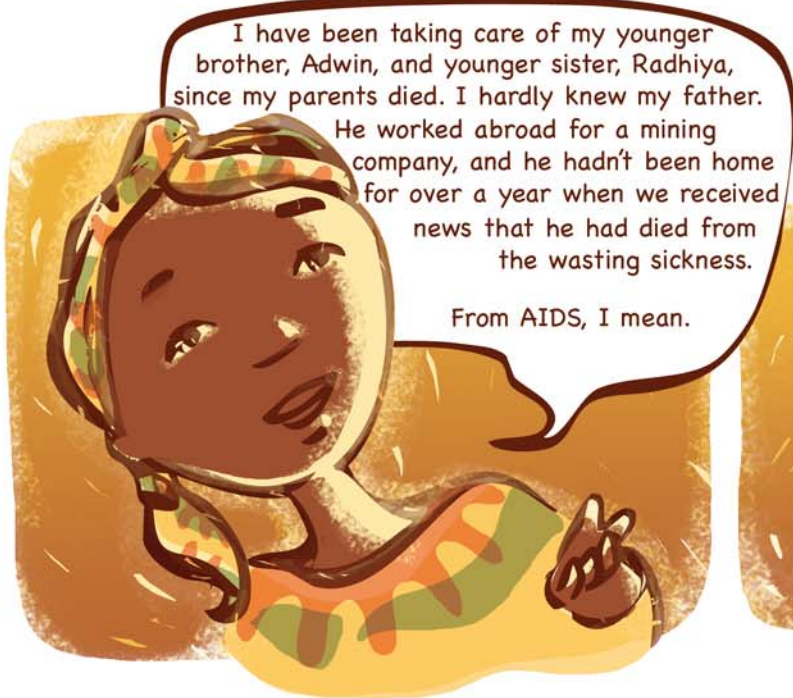


Hello, my name is Asmina.
I am 14 years old. I live in a
small village in Africa.



Yo, bro, wake me up
when it's over.

It's some girl Ashley met when she
was in Africa. Big whoop...
Why should we care?



I have been taking care of my younger
brother, Adwin, and younger sister, Radhiya,
since my parents died. I hardly knew my father.
He worked abroad for a mining
company, and he hadn't been home
for over a year when we received
news that he had died from
the wasting sickness.
From AIDS, I mean.



I remember my mother, though.
It has been over 2 years now, and
though the memory of her face sometimes
fades, I still remember
her voice clearly.

Asmina, Asmina...

Asmina, my kibibi,
it's time to get up for school.

Adwin, do you have to draw even before
the sun comes up?
Come and have your breakfast.

Walk safely to school,
you two.

Mama, I have 40 minutes.
Lornah Kiplagat could run
that far in 30.

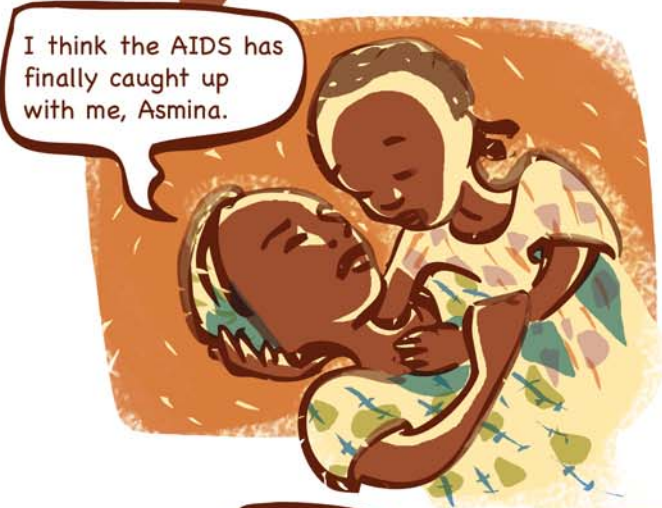
I'll be even faster someday.
Then I'll be the one with
a world record.

Asmina, don't dawdle or you'll
be late. You have
over 2 kilometres
to walk to school,
and you leave
later each day.

Yes, but you are not
Lornah Kiplagat.

Goodbye,
my little
gazelle.

COUGH
COUGH



A month later...

Adwin, Radhiya...
Come, get ready for school.



Adwin, come and
have your breakfast.

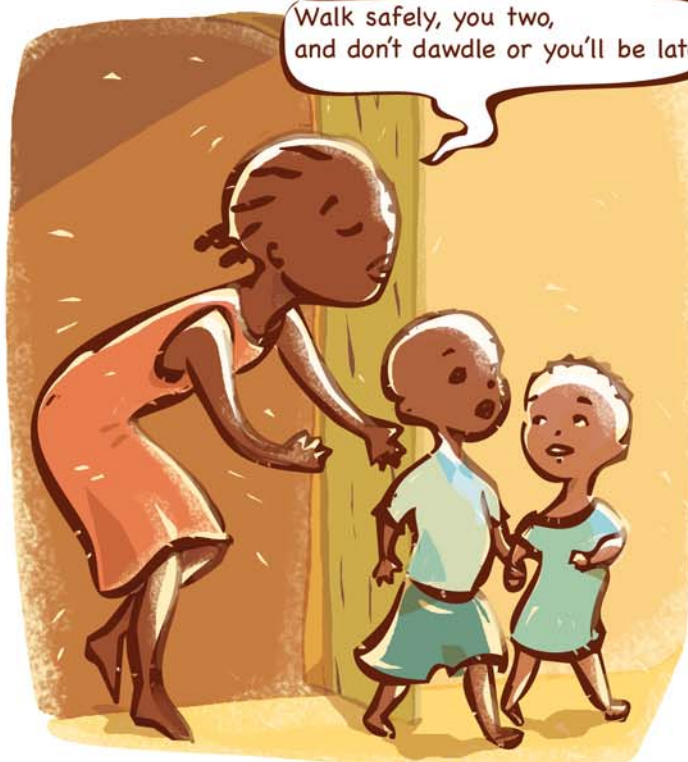


You never draw anymore,
mpenzi. Why not?



I don't feel like it.

Walk safely, you two,
and don't dawdle or you'll be late.



Late again, Asmina, and you couldn't be bothered
to put on your uniform.



Not only that, you have
not paid your school fees
for 3 months!
You don't attend this
institution at your own
convenience, young lady.
Perhaps we should think
seriously about whether
children like you should
be allowed to attend
school at all.



After all, we don't want
to bring AIDS into our school!

YOUNG LADY!

This is your work, correct?

You didn't secure your stitches at the waistband. Nothing but shoddy workmanship. I can't sell shoddy goods, and if I can't sell it...

... you don't get paid.

Don't worry about him, dear. Maybe you're not cut out for sewing.

With your good looks, you could be working for men who pay a lot more than that kombamwiko. I know someone I could put you in contact with.

No, I'll give this another week... But I'll think about what you said. Thank you, Monifa.

Later that evening...

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

Can I help you?

Hello, Asmina. You probably know who I am.

Thank you. We miss both our parents terribly.

Naturally. Condolences.

... I'm afraid I will have to take this house.

I'm Masud Odero. I own the gold shop in the village, as well as the loan bureau. I was a good friend of your father, God rest his soul.

Anyway, your father was in considerable debt to me. Your mother was trying to repay the debt, but now that she is gone...

Take the house? But where will we live?

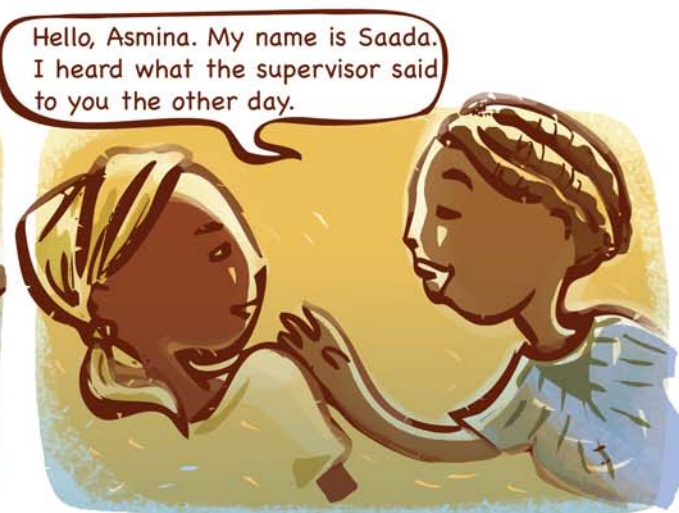
Your Aunt and Uncle Kifle have offered to let you and your siblings live with them if you look after their children and do the household chores.

I'll be back in the morning to finalize the arrangements.

If we leave this house, how will we be able to go to school and see our friends again?

I don't know, Adwin, but we have no choice.

The next day...



Hello, Asmina. My name is Saada. I heard what the supervisor said to you the other day.

Many girls in difficult situations, pretty girls like you, try that option. They look at it as a week's wages for one night's work.

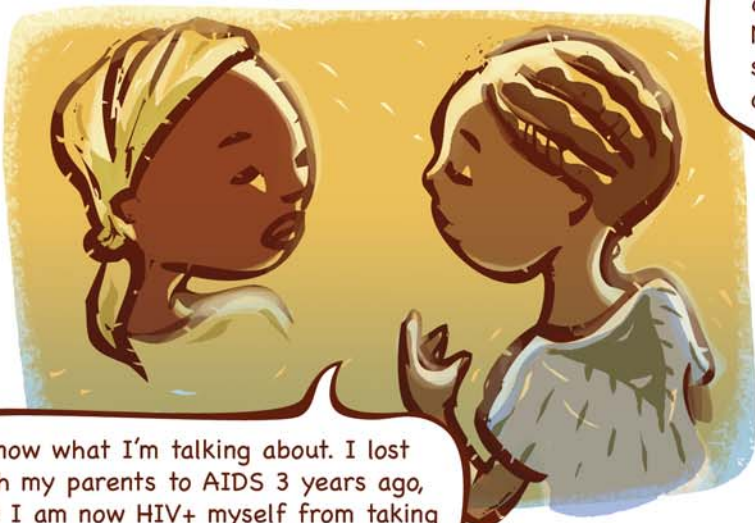


I also heard the offer that Monifa made you. You mustn't listen to her.



But they end up worse off than ever, often with the same AIDS that killed their parents.

Now I am supported by a local organization that receives international support through an agency called UNICEF. Now I have the chance to go to school, basic food supplies to feed my brothers and sisters and the opportunity to get the medical care I need.



I know what I'm talking about. I lost both my parents to AIDS 3 years ago, and I am now HIV+ myself from taking the advice of someone like Monifa.



Now, I am a peer counselor, and I reach out to young girls like you who are in the same situation.



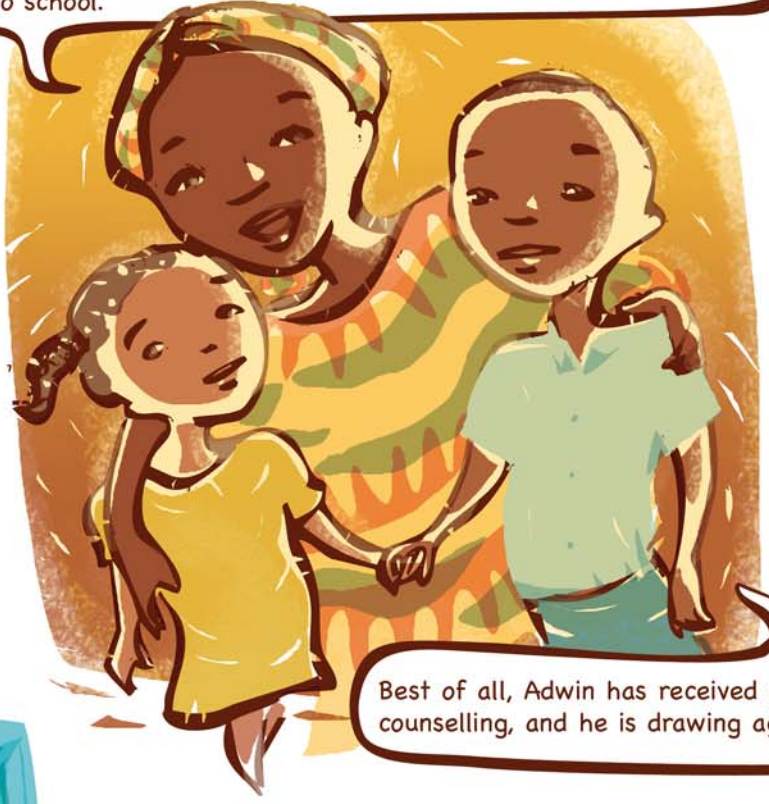
I'd like you to join me after work to meet some people who will be able to help you.

Two years later...



It's been over 2 years since my mother died.

But with the help of UNICEF, we now have the food and health care that we need to survive, and we also have the opportunity to go to school.



Best of all, Adwin has received grief counselling, and he is drawing again.



So much has changed for the better, and I'd like to say "thank you" to all the people in Canada who helped us by supporting UNICEF.



Where do I sign up?



UNICEF CANADA

2200 Yonge Street, Suite 1100

Toronto, ON M4S 2C6

Toll-free Tel.: 1 800 567-4483

Fax: 416 482-8035

E-mail: secretary@unicef.ca

Web site: www.unicef.ca

Produced in collaboration with the
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)