




Ihlathi Leenyoka

Forest of snakes

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 Xhosa / English

 Level 3

(imageless edition)





Ilali iSinyaire ijikelezwe ziinduli neentaba. Kuhlala iinyoka ezininzi kwihlathi elikwezi ntaba. Eyona nyoka inkulu yayibizwa ngokuba yi-Unyalego ngabantu belali. Le nyoka yayisoyikisa abantu abaninzi kuba yayiginya ibimbilize iibhokhwe kunye neegusha ezipheleleyo.

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Sinyaire village is surrounded by hills. Many snakes live in the forest on those hills. The biggest snake was called Unyalego by the villagers. This snake scared many people. It swallowed whole goats and sheep.



Ngenye imini u-Apiyo, u-Ajoh kunye no Atieno babesiya ehlathini beyokutheza. Umakhulu wala mantombazana wayewalumkisile wathi, “Nilumkele u-Unyalego inyoka enkulu. Ningathathi nenye into ehlathini ngaphandle kweenkuni.” U-Ajoh akazange ayihoye nokuyihoya into awayeyixelelwa ngumakhulu wakhe.

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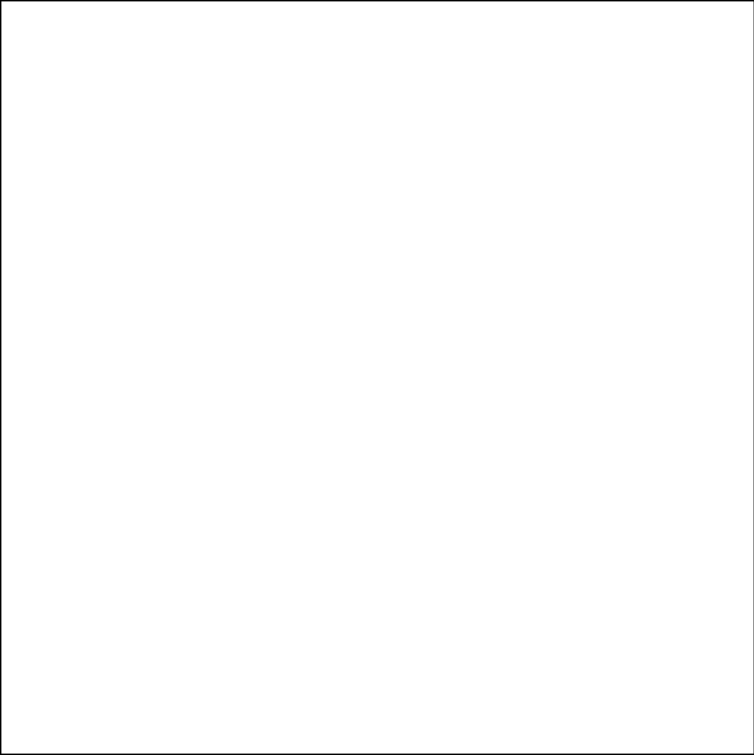
One day, sisters Apiyo, Ajoh and Atieno were going to the forest to fetch firewood. The girls' grandmother warned, “Beware of Unyalego the big snake. Do not take anything from the forest except the wood.” Only Ajoh did not pay attention to her grandmother.



Amantombazana apakisha umphako wobisi, iibhanana, ibhatata kunye namanzi. Athatha neentambo zokubopha inyanda kunye nezembe lokugawula iinkuni. Ahamba ke apha thelela ukuya ehlathini.

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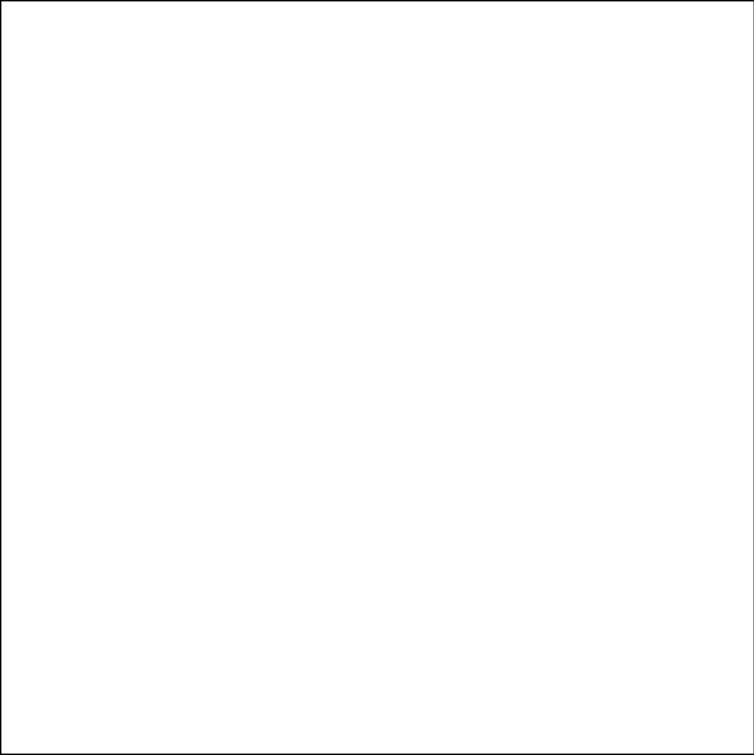
The girls packed milk, bananas, sweet potatoes and water. They took ropes for tying firewood and a sharp machete for chopping the wood. Then they left for the forest.



Endleleni amantombazana ayehamba ezincokolela nje futhi ehleka, kumnandi. U-APIYO owayemdala kubo bonke wavakala esithi, “Thulani. Sele sisondele apho kuhlala khona u-Unyalego.”

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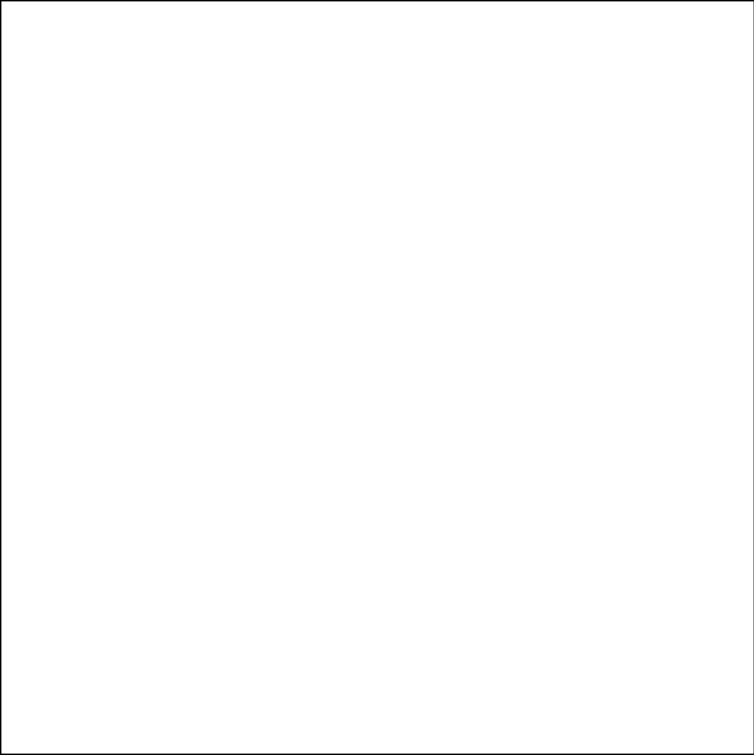
On the way, the sisters chatted and laughed. Suddenly, APIYO, the eldest of them, said, “Be quiet. We are coming to where UNYALEGO lives.”



U-Atieno wathi, “Yehake, khanijonje nanga amazinyo ka-Unyalego abugolide, masiwathatheni.”
U-Apiyo wabakhumbuza, “Ningalibali imiyalelo kamakhulu. Akufanelanga ukuba sithathe nantoni na apha ehlathini ngaphandle kweenkuni.”

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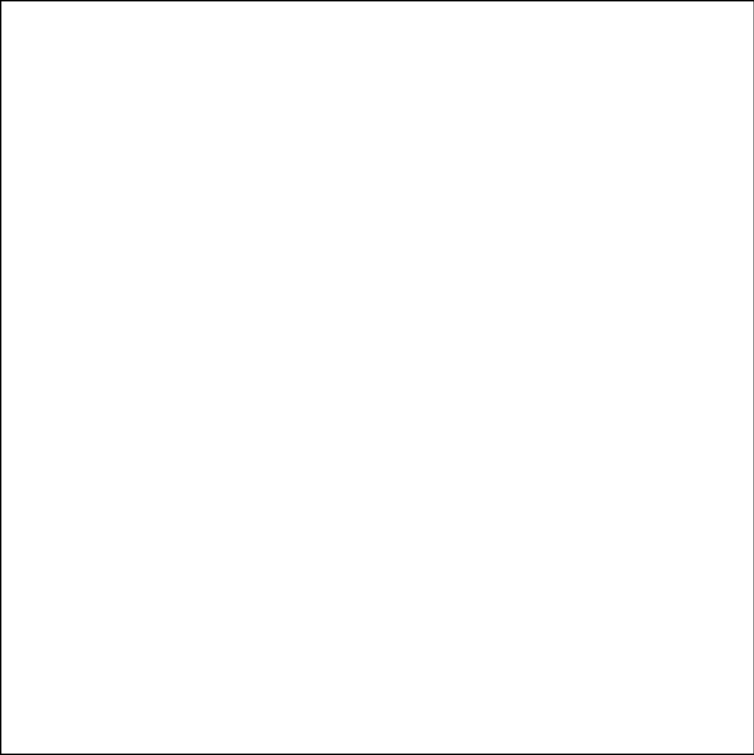
Atieno called to the others, “Look, here are Unyalego’s golden teeth. Let us take them.” Apiyo reminded them, “Don’t forget grandmother’s warning. We must not take anything from the forest except firewood.”



U-Ajoh wathi, “Andiyikholelwa mna into ethethwa ngumakhulu. Ndicinga ukuba ubesitsho nje kuba engafuni ukuba sizithathele izinto esizithandayo. Unomona umakhulu. Ndiza kuwathatha mna la mazinyo egolide.” Oodadewabo bakhathazeka kakhulu ngale nto. “Ajoh, uze ungathi khange sikuxelele.” U-Ajoh akazange abahoye.

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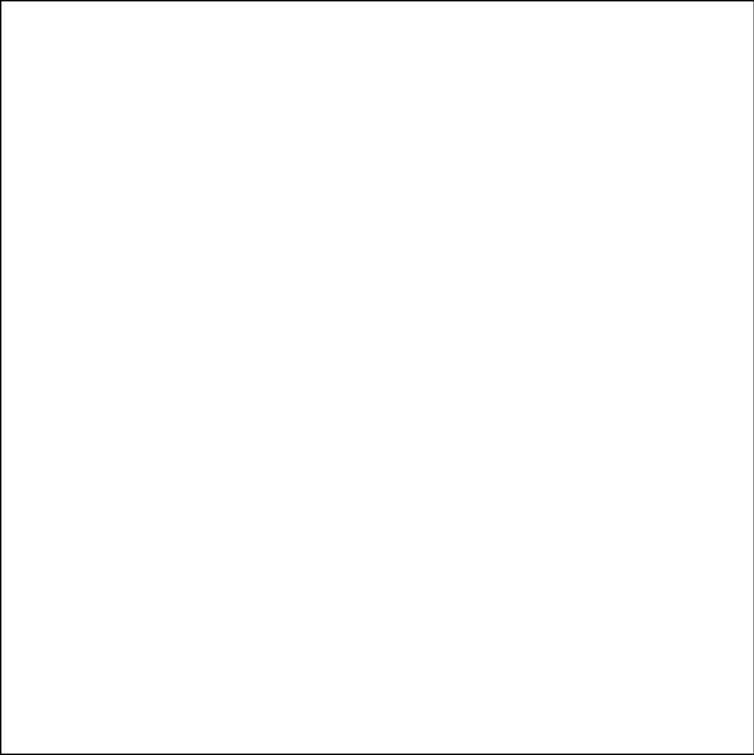
Ajoh said, “I don’t trust grandmother. I think she said that to stop us having what we want. I want the golden teeth.” Her sisters were worried. “Ajoh, we warned you,” they said. Ajoh did not care.



Kwathi kusenjalo kwathi gqi u-Unyalego ezokukhangela amazinyo akhe. Wacaphuka kakhulu akungawaboni. U-Unyalego weva amantombazana encokola futhi ehleka. Wazimela phantsi kwelitye elikhulu elalikufutshane nendlela amantombazana ayeza kudlula kuyo.

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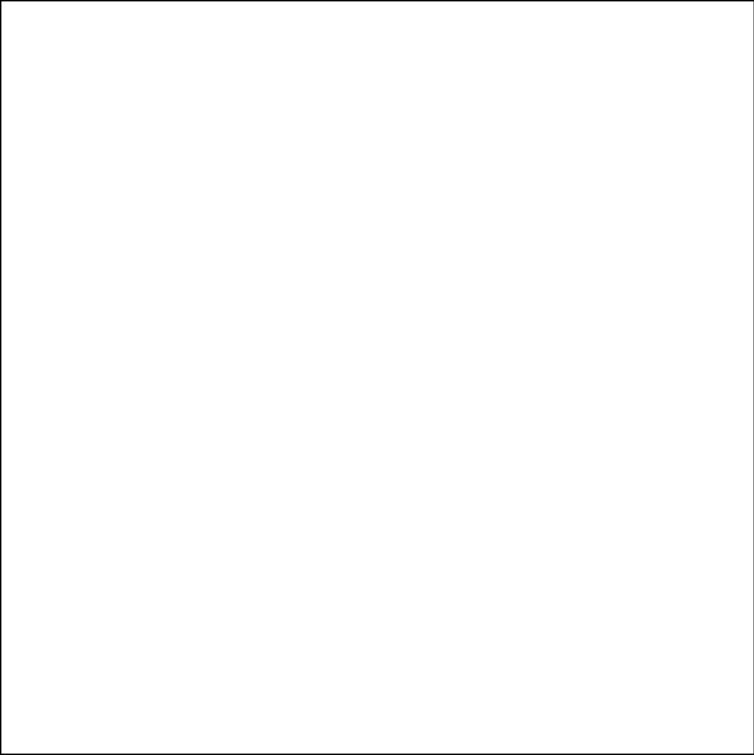
At that moment Unyalego came looking for his golden teeth. He was furious when he could not find the teeth. Then Unyalego heard the girls chatting and laughing. He hid under a rock next to the road where the girls would pass on their way back.



Amantombazana ayethwele iinyanda entloko. Eva ngomsindo wenyoka efuthayo, “Fu-u-u-u-u-u-u-u-u!” Oothuka azama ukuzimela. Nankuya u-Unyalego phambi kwabo evule umlomo wakhe elindele ukuluma.

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The sisters were going home carrying their firewood on their heads. Suddenly, they heard “Hzzzzzzzz!” There was Unyalego with his mouth wide open, ready to bite. The girls were terrified.



U-Unyalego wawabuza amantombazana wathi, “Ngubani othathe amazinyo am egolide?” Akuzange kubekho mntu uphendulayo. Inyoka yathi ndiza kumfumana umntu owabileyo. “Lo ongenatyala uza kucula kakuhle angayenzi impazamo kodwa lowo onetyala yena uza kuthi xa ecula kwenzeke impazamo. Uza kuba kukutya kwam kweentsuku ezintathu ezizayo!”

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Unyalego asked the girls, “Who took my golden teeth?” No one answered. The snake decided to test the girls. “Whoever is innocent, will be able to sing without mistakes. She will go home with her firewood. But the guilty one will sing badly. She will be my food for the next three days!”



U-Apiyo waqala wacula kakuhle akabinangxaki.
Kwalandela u-Atieno, naye wacula kakuhle.

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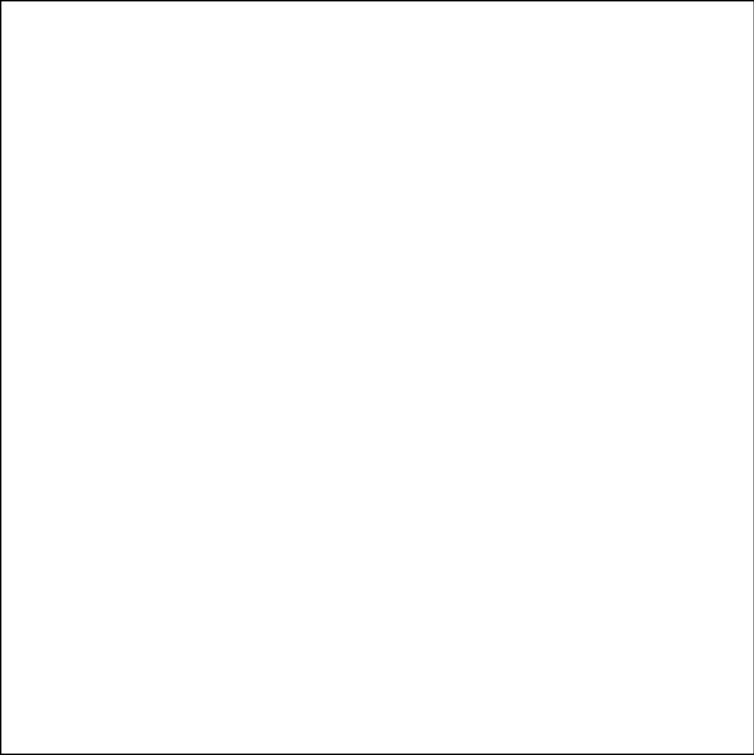
Apiyo started to sing with a clear voice: "Sio mimi, sio mimi aliye na meno, Mwenye meno bado yuko nyuma." Then Atieno sang the song. She also sang well.



Ekugqibeleni kwacula u-Ajoh. Wayenexhala kakhulu. Wathi xa eqala ukucula ilizwi latshothoza namazwi engoma akavakala kakuhle. Wakhwaza u-Unyalego wathi, “Awukwazi ukucula kakuhle njengabanye?” Inyoka yabona ukuba nguye kanye u-Ajoh owayethathe amazinyo egolide.

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Lastly, it was Ajoh’s turn. She was scared. She stepped forward and started singing. But her singing sounded terrible and the words were wrong. Unyalego shouted, “Can’t you sing properly like the others?” The snake knew that Ajoh took his golden teeth.



Bimbilili! U-Unyalego wamginya u-Ajoh.
Oodadewabo babaleka bagoduka bayokuxela esi
senzo sibi kangaka esenzekileyo.

...

Unyalego opened his huge jaws and swallowed
Ajoh. Her sisters ran back to the village. They told
everyone the story of what happened. "I warned
her, if only she had listened," the girls' grandmother
said sadly.



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