



your present.

I was going to give it to you at dinner but I think you need it now.'

Pleased and excited, Khazamula pulled the wrapping paper off the present. 'Mani, how did you know I wanted the *Supa-Strikas* comic book? Thank you, Mani. Thank you, thank you, thank you.' He gave her a big hug and kiss and then settled down at the table and began to read his comic book which was all about a soccer team and the matches they played.

Then he heard Papa's car in the driveway. He ran to the window and waved to his father. But Papa did not see him.

He was opening the car door for someone.

Khazamula wondered who had come home with Papa. When he saw the people getting out of the car, he groaned,

'Oh no! Uncle Makwanga and Aunt Makolo.'

'What's wrong, Khazamula?' 'It's Uncle Makwanga and Aunt Makolo! I hope that they are not staying for dinner.

They eat so much there will be nothing left for us.'

He quickly ran back to the dinner table, grabbed all the cutlery and put it back in the sideboard. He took the vase and put it on a side table. He pulled the tablecloth off the dining table, folded it and put it back in a drawer in the sideboard.

Then he went into the kitchen and opened his comic book again. His mother came in to get some cool drinks for Uncle Makwanga and Aunt Makolo.

‘There you are Khazamula.

I thought you were in the dining room.

Why did you clear the table?

You had laid it so beautifully too?’

‘It was too early,’ Khazamula mumbled.

‘That didn’t matter; you should have left it as it was. Now you will have to lay the table again. Please set two extra places.

Uncle Makwanga and Aunt Makolo are staying for dinner.’

‘Oh no,’ sighed Khazamula, ‘will they leave any food for us?’

‘Don’t be rude, Khazamula.’ Just as Mother walked out with the tray, Khanyisa and Misaveni came in through the back door.

‘Hey, here’s the birthday boy,’ shouted Khanyisa. ‘Why are you sitting here instead of entertaining your guests?’

‘Yes, your favourites, Uncle Makwanga and Aunt Makolo,’ Misaveni teased.

‘They’re not my favourites. Why did they have to come to spoil my birthday?’

Eyes wide open, Khanyisa pretended to be surprised. ‘You mean you didn’t invite them?’

‘Oh, shut up!’ Khazamula did not think it was funny but Khanyisa and Misaveni were laughing. Mother put her head round the door. ‘Khazamula, please lay the table. I want to serve the meal.’

‘I know. I know. Uncle and Aunt are very hungry.’

Mother gave him a warning look. ‘Girls, come and help me put out the food.’

Khazamula set out all the plates, forks, knives, spoons and serviettes again. But he did not put the vase of roses in the middle of the table.

Mother served the meal and they all sat down.

Father said grace, and the food was passed around.

Khazamula watched his Uncle’s and Aunt’s plates grow from full to over-flowing and he lost his appetite.

The sight of his Uncle and Aunt shovelling food down their throats quite disgusted him. He excused himself from the table and went to his room to finish the comic book his mother had given him for a birthday present.