

□□□□□□ ***The House that became a Home***

□□□□□□ One day, when Khazamula was walking home with the herd boys and the cows, he saw his uncle's lorry coming along the road. His father was leaning out of the window and waving. Khazamula left the cows and ran after the lorry. When he arrived home, he saw the lorry parked outside the family huts.

His sisters, Khanyisa and Misaveni, were clambering onto the back.

Papa called to him, 'Hurry up. Uncle is taking us to the township. I have a surprise there for you.'

Papa swung Khazamula onto the back and got into the cab beside Mother. Uncle drove them to a plot in the township.

Men were digging up the soil and pushing wheelbarrows.

It was such an ugly place but Papa was smiling. 'Well, what do you think, eh? These builders are laying the foundation for our new house.

We are going to be living here.'

'Oh, that's wonderful!' said Mother.

Misaveni laughed with excitement. 'Then we won't have to walk so far to get to school.'

Khanyisa, Khazamula's older sister, pinched his cheek. 'Next year, when you go to school, it will be easy for you too.'

But Khazamula looked at the hole in the ground and said nothing. He frowned. He couldn't understand why everyone was so excited.

He loved his village and their family compound of huts. His grandmother had painted a beautiful design of red, blue, yellow and white triangles on the low wall that enclosed the huts in a circle.

His friends lived nearby, also in family compounds with thatched huts and beautifully decorated walls.

He and his friends played together everyday.

In the afternoons, the bigger boys sometimes let him help them bring the cows home. He loved running alongside the cows and listening to their merry bells.

Papa took them to the township again when the walls were going up. Papa, Mani and his sisters laughed with happiness but Khazamula was upset.

It was a broken place.

The walls were rough and there were no doors.

They went again just before the roof went up.

Papa could see that Khazamula really hated the house. 'Come with me, Khazamula, I want to show you your room.'

Khazamula went with him into a small, square area with rough, grey walls.

It looked so ugly.

It was not like the big hut that he and his cousins shared.

'Aren't you pleased?

You will have this room all to yourself.

You won't have to share with your cousins.'

Khazamula just frowned. He thought, 'I won't stay here. I will stay with my cousins.'

His parents saw how upset he was and did not take him to see the house any more. He was glad.

He did not want to go there anyway.

Weeks went by and he heard nothing more about the house.

He laughed and thought, 'They must have changed their minds.

They are going to stay in the village after all.'

Then one day, his mother started packing all their things. 'We are moving tomorrow,' she said. Khazamula was shocked.

'Hooray,' shouted his sisters.

‘Hey, Khazamula, don’t look so sour,’ shouted Misaveni, the younger of his two sisters, ‘we are going to move into our new house.’ He couldn’t believe it. He thought they had forgotten all about the house.

The next day his uncle came in his lorry to help them move. While everyone was busy packing the lorry, Khazamula ran away and hid near the river.

He lay in the grass and cried.

He was there for a long time and he thought they had forgotten all about him.

Then he heard Papa calling, ‘Khazamula, where are you?’

He saw his father coming toward him.

‘There you are, Khazamula.

Come on, son.

Why did you run away?

It’s getting late.

We have to go.’

‘I don’t want to go. I don’t like that broken house,’ Khazamula sobbed.

‘There, there now. It’s not a broken house. Anyway, you can’t stay here. Who will look after you?’

‘But I don’t want to go. I’ll stay with grandmother, grandfather and my cousins.’

‘Look,’ Papa said, ‘come and see the new house. If you don’t like it, I promise I’ll bring you back and you can stay here.’

They said goodbye to all their relatives and friends and drove off to their new home in the township. When they arrived, Khazamula looked for the broken house but he could not see it. They stopped in front of a beautiful house. His father took him inside. There were bright curtains on the windows, carpets on the floor and lovely pictures on the walls.

‘Papa, what are we doing here? Whose house is this?’

His father took him into a room. It had a little bed, a bookshelf, a lamp and a radio. On the wall was a large poster of Lucas Radebe, his favourite soccer star.

‘Papa, what are we doing here? When are we going to our house?’

‘Son, this is our house. This is your room. We are home.’

Khazamula couldn’t believe his eyes: there were doors and windows, no broken walls. Everything was clean and beautiful.

This wasn’t a broken house; this was their home.

And there was Lucas Radebe smiling down at him.

Suddenly Khazamula shouted, ‘Hooray, I love our home,’ and ran outside to help unpack the lorry.

