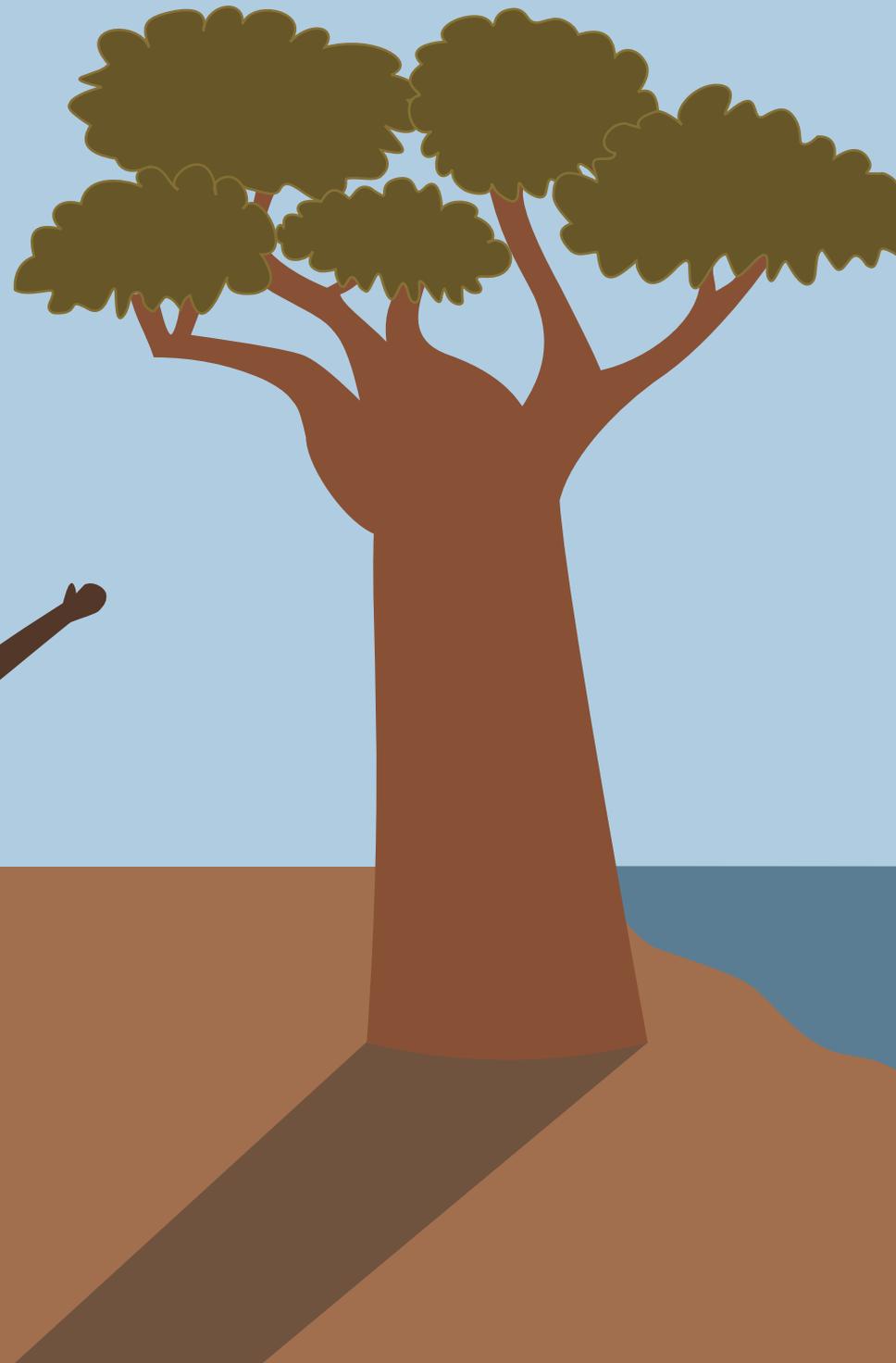


Nola & Yaro



Nola & Yaro

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Nola and Yaro have been best friends since they were very little.

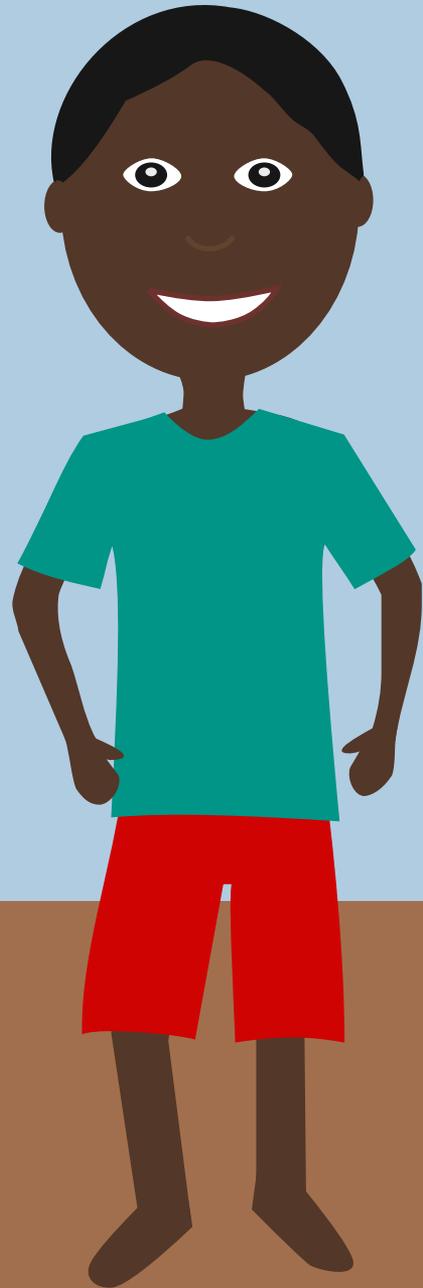
Every day after school they do something together.

Today they are going to the river.

Nola is a bit nervous.

She wants to tell her friend something difficult.

She does not know how Yaro will react.



After a long walk they reach the river.
They find a big tree and they sit down in the
shade.



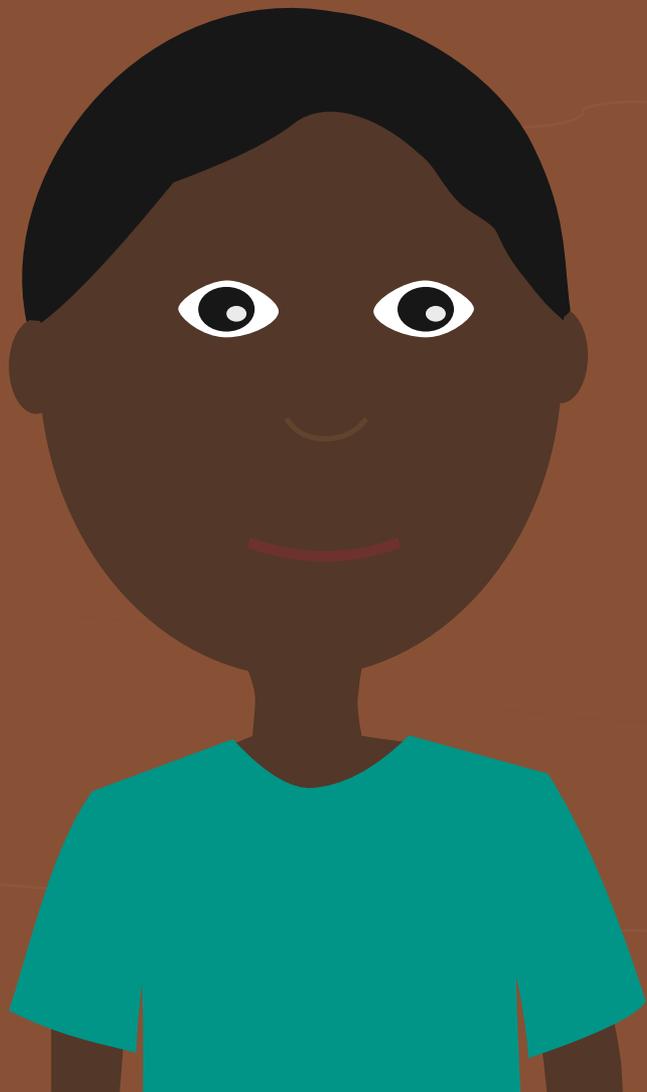
Nola starts talking: 'I have to tell you something, I am sick.'

Yaro reacts surprised: 'You do not look sick. What is wrong with you?' he asks.

'I have HIV,' Nola answers.

'That sounds awful,' Yaro says. 'Does it hurt?'

'No, I do not have any pain, it does not feel like I am sick.'



'What does HIV do?' Yaro asks.

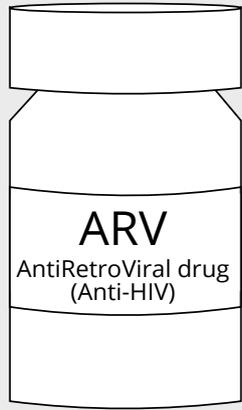
'HIV is a virus that attacks your immunesystem, which is the system that protects your body from sickness,' Nola explains. 'If you do not use medication, your body will get weaker and weaker, and eventually you can die.'

'Are you dying?' Yaro asks, a bit scared.

'No I am not, because I am using medication,' Nola answers.



'How often do you use medication?' Yaro asks.
'Every evening,' Nola says. 'The medication takes care of the HIV in order for me to stay fit. It is very important that I take the medication every day at the same time. Because of the medication I can do the things I like, without feeling bad!'



Yaro smiles, 'That is a really good thing'.
They lie on the ground and watch the
birds that are flying in the sky.



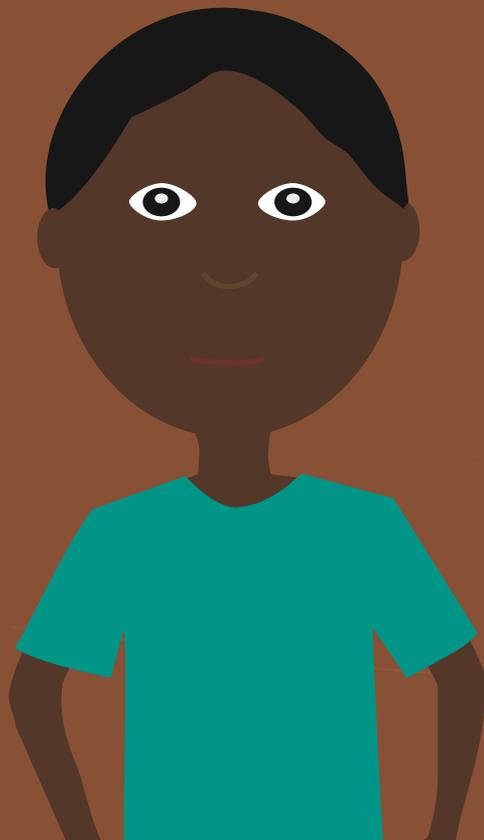
'Are you thirsty?' Nola asks.

'No, I am not thirsty.'

Yaro is, but he does not know if they can drink from the same bottle, he is afraid to get sick as well.

Nola sees that Yaro is thirsty.

'You know Yaro, we can drink from the same bottle. You will not get HIV if we share a bottle of water.'



Yaro is happy to hear that.

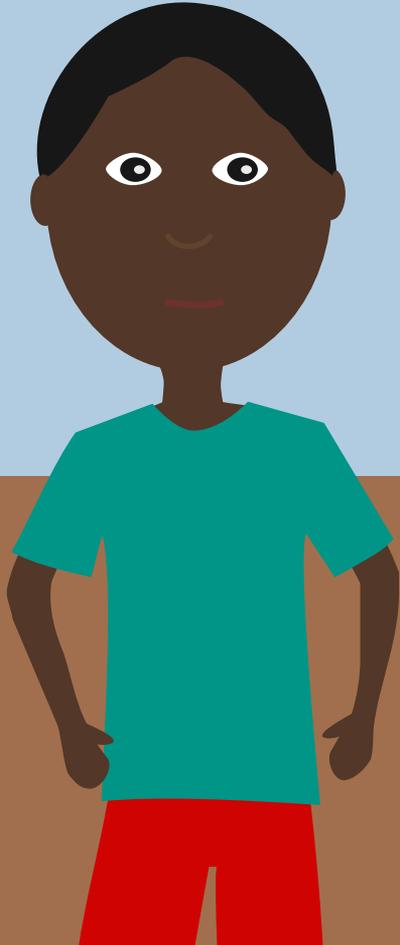
'Well then I would like some water,' he says
and they share the water.



They both need to go to the toilet, because they drank a lot of water.

There is only one toilet. Yaro wonders if it is safe to go to the same toilet.

Nola assures him: 'It is safe to go to the same toilet, you will not get sick by that.'



Yaro is curious and asks Nola: 'How did you get HIV?'

Nola answers: 'I got it from my mother, as a baby, when I was still in her belly.'

'How did your mother get HIV?' Yaro asks.

'I do not know, you can get it from your mother but also when a doctor does not use clean needles, or when people have unprotected sex.'



On their way home, they see a drum shop.
Mukisa is drumming.
He asks the children if they want to dance.



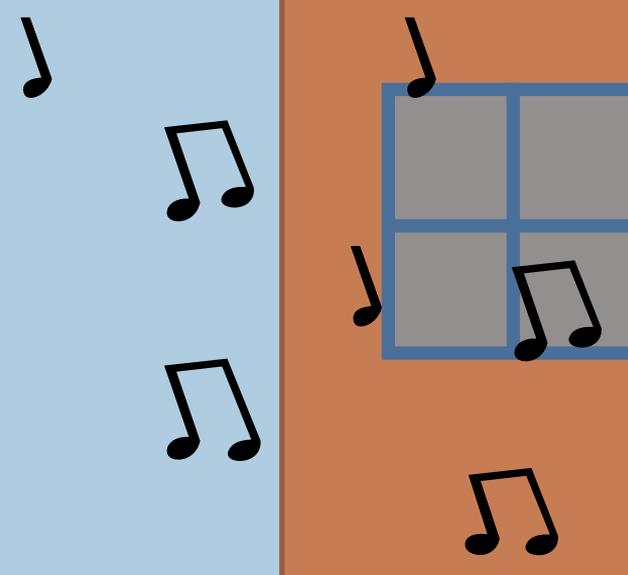
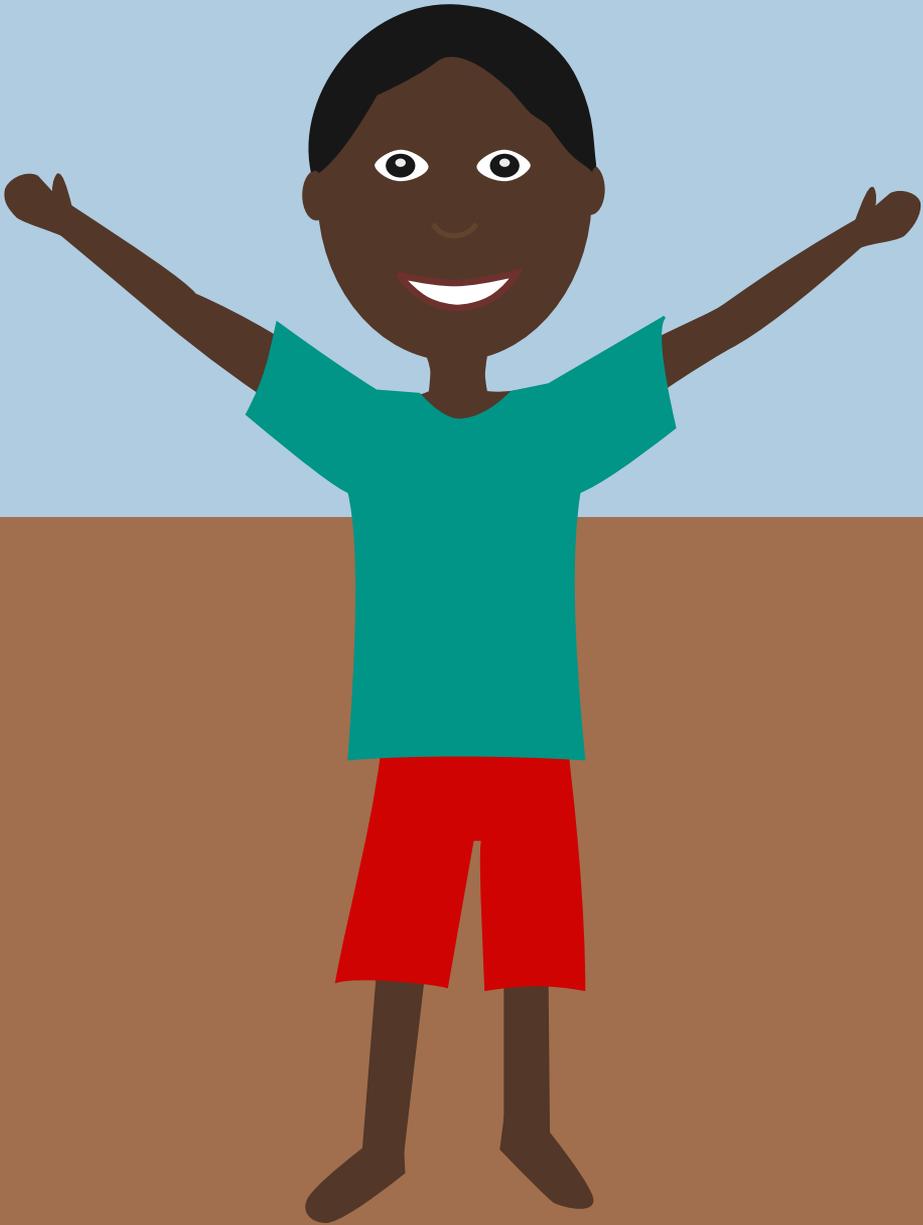
Yaro is very enthusiastic, he really likes music.

'Can we hold hands and dance together?'

Yaro asks.

'Yes, we can hold hands and dance, hug and we can also share food,' Nola answers.

Yaro is very happy to hear that, he loves dancing with Nola.



Mukisa plays the drum and Nola and Yaro
dance together for the rest of the day.
They are having a lot of fun!



They danced the whole afternoon, they danced so much, that they became all sweaty. Yaro wants to give Nola a hug but he does not know if that is safe.

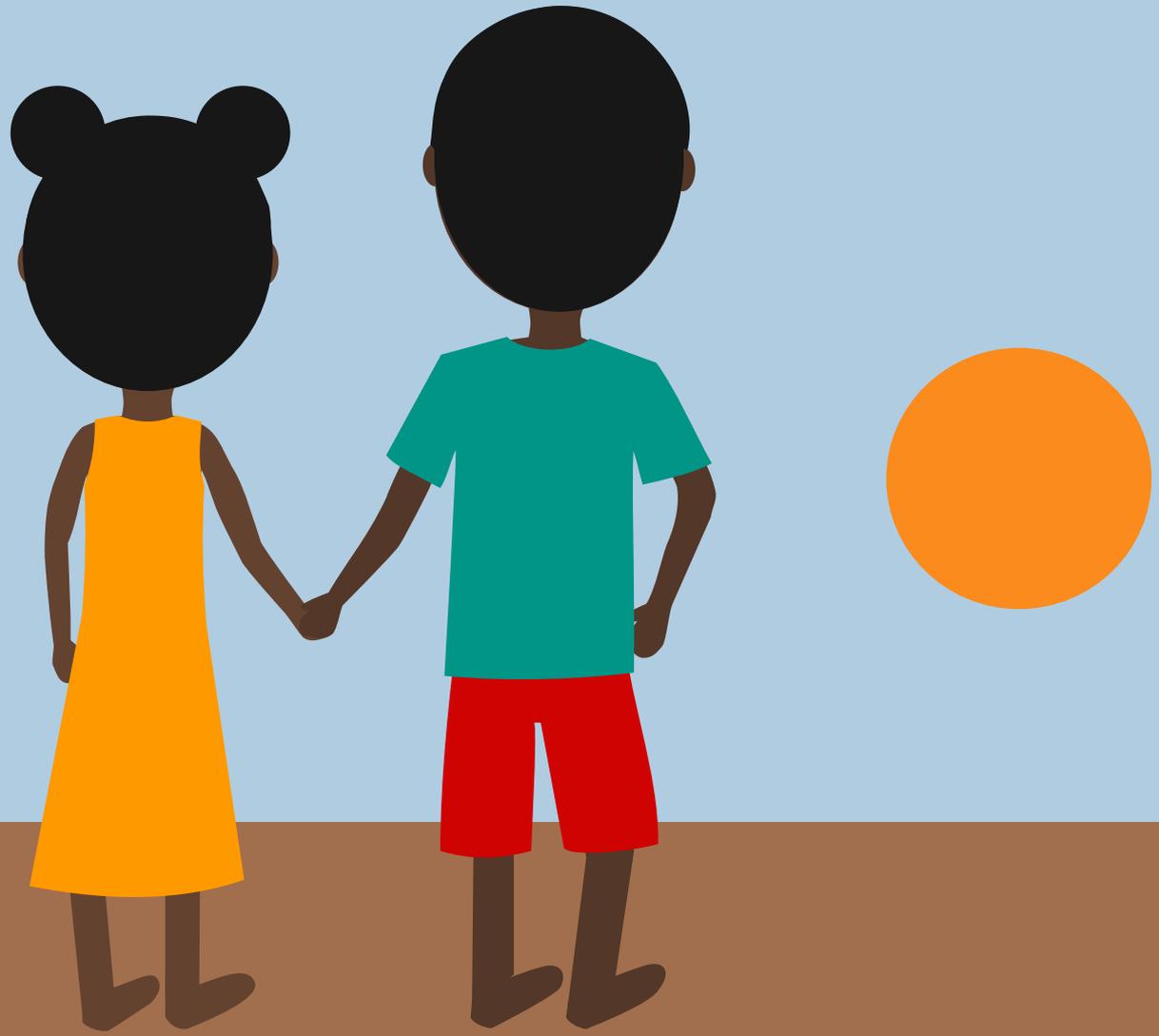
'It is okay, HIV is not in sweat.' Nola says.

'So, most of the daily things are safe?' Yaro concludes.

'Yes, I can do almost everything!' Nola says.



A few hours later they walk back to the village. Yaro takes Nola's hand. They smile at each other. 'I am really glad you are okay,' Yaro says. 'Me too,' Nola says, as they walk on, when the sun sets.



Illustrations, final editing: Malou Burger

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Nola & Yaro

A story about two friends and HIV.



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