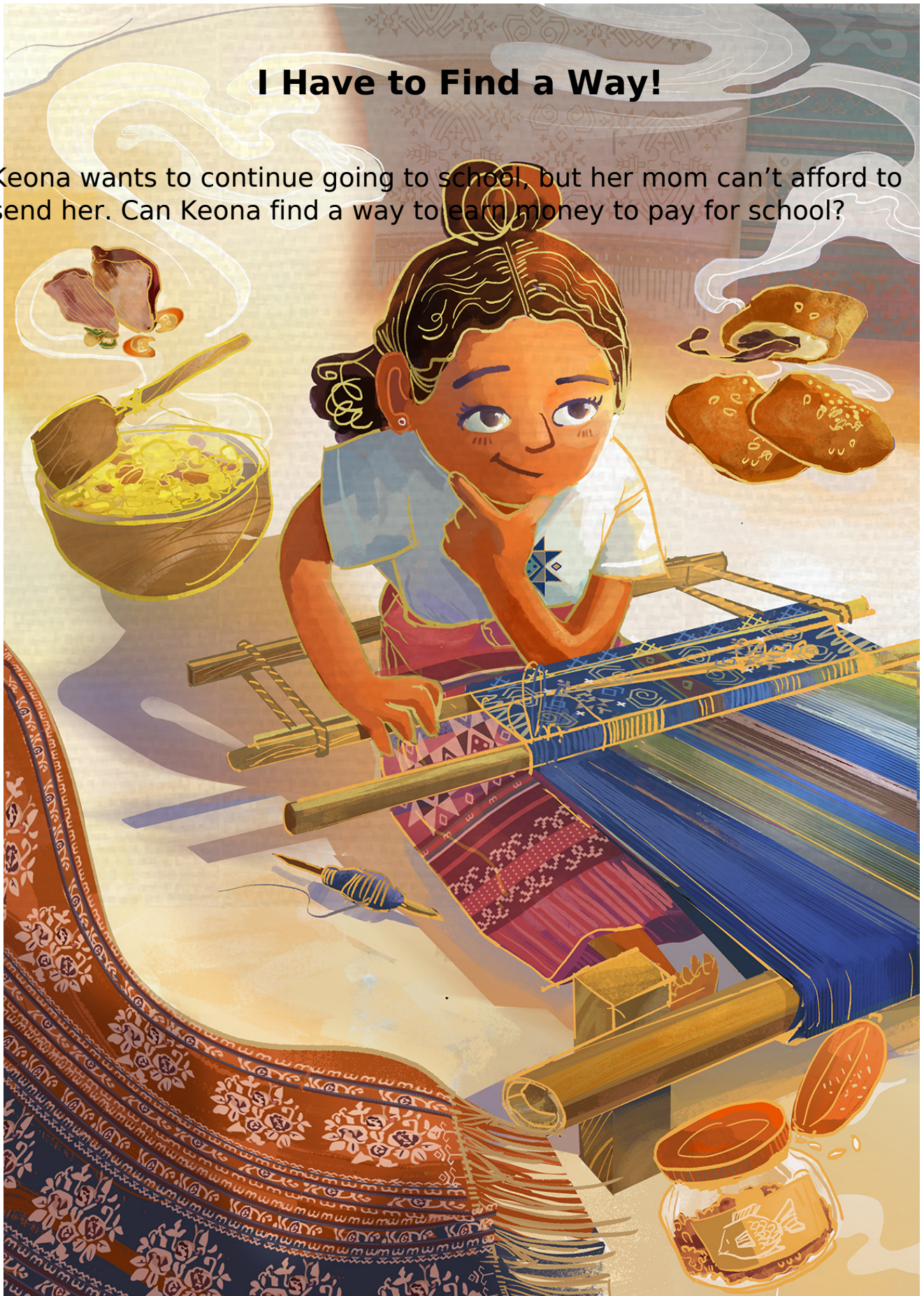


I Have to Find a Way!

Keona wants to continue going to school, but her mom can't afford to send her. Can Keona find a way to earn money to pay for school?





I Have to Find a Way!

Let's Read



The Asia Foundation



Goretti looks pretty in her traditional wedding clothes. But I am sad to see her. I prefer seeing her in her school uniform. “Why did you decide to get married? Didn’t we agree that we would go to high school together?”



Goretti says she cannot fulfill our promise. She says going to school requires a lot of money and her parents cannot afford it. I am disappointed. I have to talk to Mom. I want to let her know that I want to pursue high school. “Mom, I won’t get married like Goretti. I want to go to high school.”



Mom doesn't reply as we continue walking. Did she hear me? "Mom, I said. I want to go to high school." Now Mom is looking at me. "You know we need money to send you to high school. We don't have enough money for that." I know that Mom's weaving earns only enough for the two of us to eat. "But I don't want to be like Goretti." Mom just listens to me quietly.



I have to go to school. I have to think of a way. At school, I can make more friends. I can exercise. I can read a lot of books in the library. I can read stories of great people who pursue higher education. I don't want to end up like Goretti. I have to continue going to school.



If I keep going to school, I can go to Goretti's house, and we can study together. Goretti would like that. From now on, I have to save money so I can go to high school. But how will I earn money? Hmm, do I have to weave like Mom?



I've learned to weave, just like my friends in my village. But I am not very good at weaving. Maybe Mom can teach me again. "What do you want, Keona? Do you want to learn to weave again?" Mom asks.



Okay, here I go again. I have to concentrate. I have to thread the yard and pull the loom with all my might. "Aaah." My body hurts. "Keona, what is it?" asks Mom.



“I can’t do this, Mom. I’ll find another way to earn money.” I know weaving is not easy. I often massage my mom’s back when it’s sore from sitting too long. And weaving in the dry season makes Mom exhausted and thirsty. I make her a cup of coffee.



Mom drinks the coffee, smiling. "Is it good, Mom?" I ask. "Of course it's delicious. You're good at making coffee."



I am a big girl now. I can make good coffee. I bring the water to a boil and measure the right amount of coffee. All the guests I've served coffee to have loved it. Ah, I know. I will sell iced coffee.



Ice will make the coffee even better. “I’ll go buy some ice cubes, Mom,” I announced.



The stall that sells ice cubes is quite far from home. I have to run fast. But oh, why is the stall closed? Did the owner also go to Goretti's wedding? I head back home.



I'm tired and thirsty. I'm hungry too. It's really exhausting to earn money. Hey, what's that great smell? Mom must be cooking my favorite food. Bose corn! Mmm, that sweet corn topped with peanuts and coconut milk is my favorite.

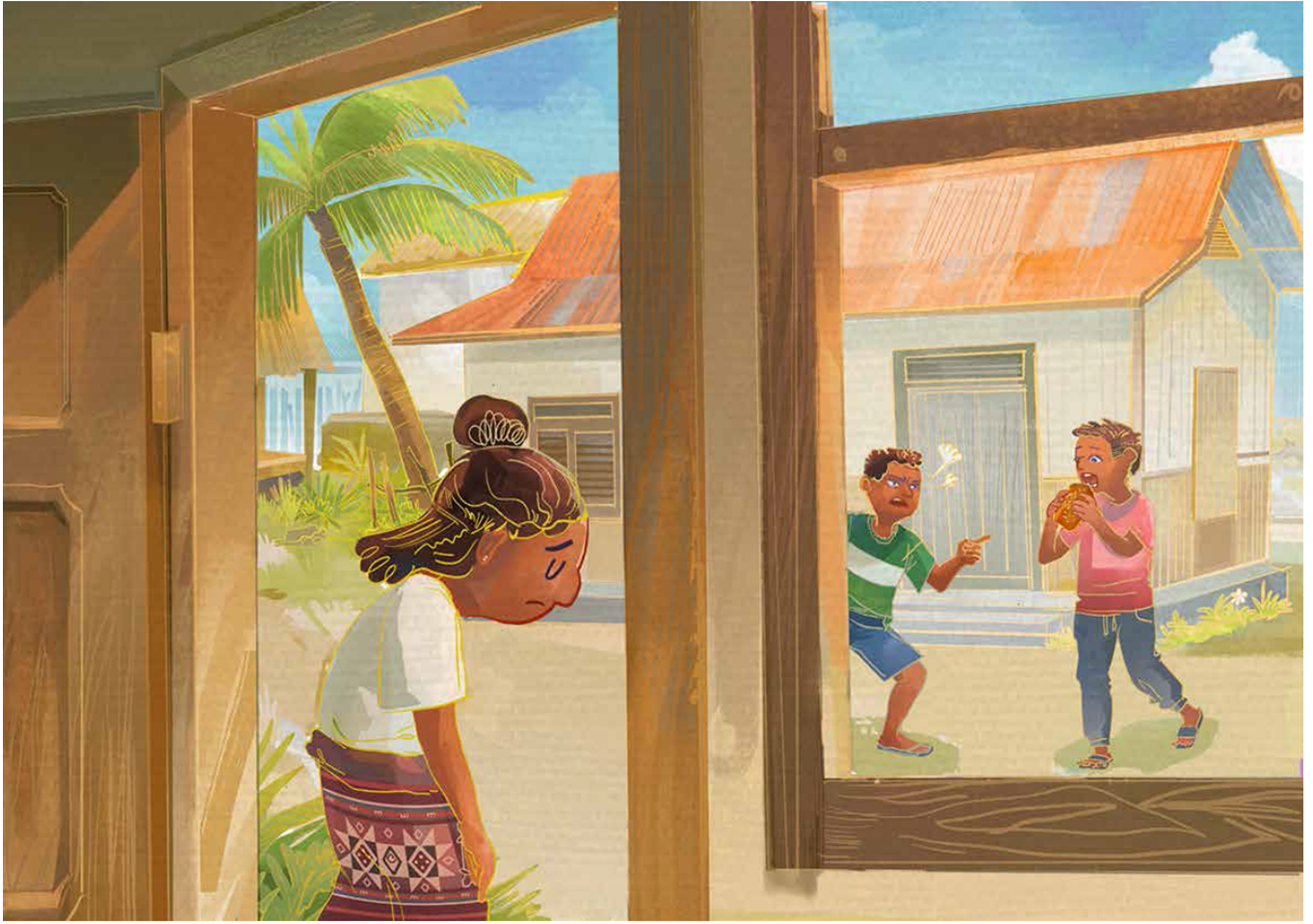


Mom's bosc corn is always delicious. Better than the ones sold near school. "Mom, can you make bosc corn with se'i meat? It would make it better."

*Se'i meat is a smoked meat enjoyed in Eastern Indonesia.



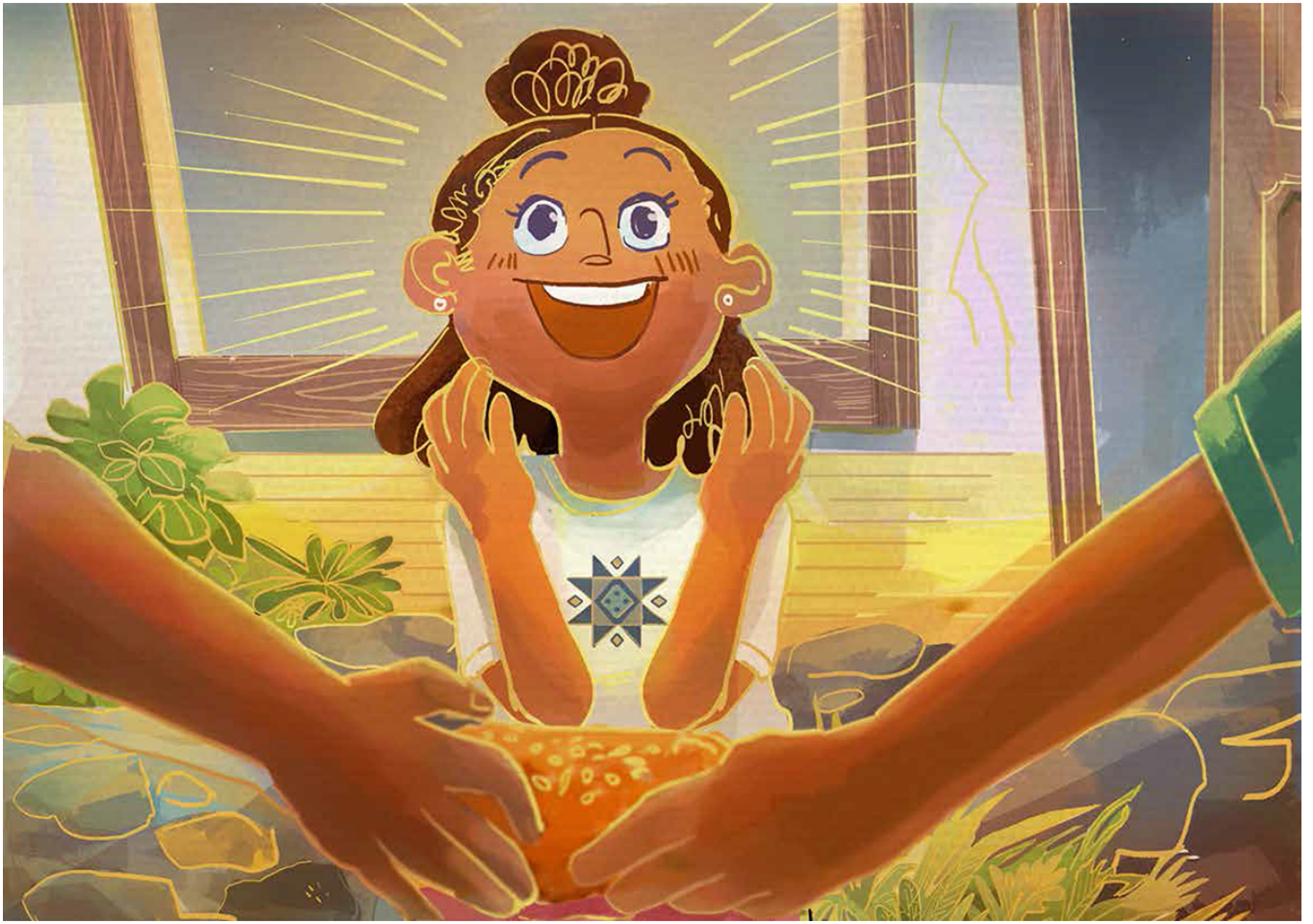
Mom seems to be thinking. “We have to wait to buy meat until we are able to sell the woven cloth.” Mom says the buyer will pick up the order from her in two or three weeks.



To start a business, you have to have money. Now I don't know what to do. Suddenly I hear a shout: "Hey, give me back my fried bun!"



Those two children are fighting over something. "Give me back my fried bun!" I have to bring the fight to an end. "There is only one fried bun in the stall, sister. I bought it first," said the big boy. Fried bun? Mama is good at making fried buns. "Do not fight. I will make some more," I tell them.



Fried buns! Yes, I'll just sell fried buns. I tell Mom, "I want to make fried buns to sell."



“Can you teach me how to make them?” I ask Mom when she finishes her weaving. “I’ll tell you the recipe, and you make them yourself, okay?” says Mom.



I already know how to make them. I just don't know how to make good ones the proper way. "Get some flour from the table," Mom says. I see the flour on the table, but there is little left. Mom must have forgotten that she'd just made bread to take to Goretti's party. I see the other ingredients, though. Could it be that Mom doesn't have any money to buy flour?



“You can use sweet potatoes for extra flour. The sweet potatoes in our yard are ready to be picked. ”Of course—Mom plants sweet potatoes to add to her bread dough.



Making bread dough takes a lot of patience. I mix the dough, wait for it to rise, and divide it equally. I fill the dough with coffee mixed with sugar. After that, I have to wait for the dough to rise again. See! The dough has grown. I can fry it and then sell it. But Mom laughs and points at the sky outside. "It's getting dark," she says. "You must wait until tomorrow morning." Oh no, more waiting!



Mom and I eat the fried buns for dinner. “Keona, the buns are delicious,” Mom says. Tomorrow I’ll get up early and make some more. I will also fill them with various ingredients. I’ll sell them and have a lot of money for school.



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