

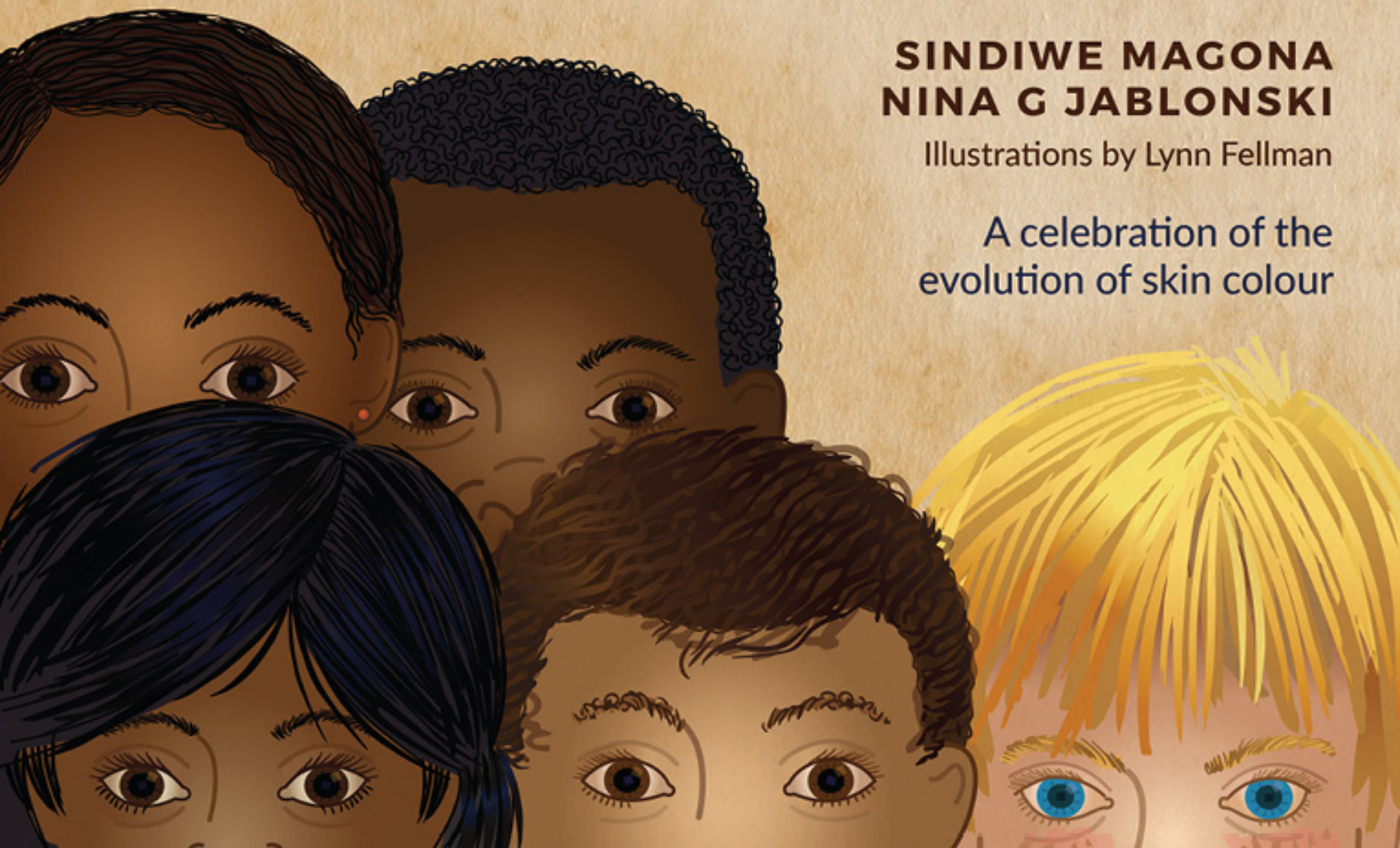
ENGLISH

Skin we are in

**SINDIWE MAGONA
NINA G JABLONSKI**

Illustrations by Lynn Fellman

A celebration of the
evolution of skin colour





“Lovely, isn’t he?”

Seeing the chameleon, Uncle Joshua comes over and lays a big hand softly on Njabulo’s shoulder. Then he takes a long look at his nephew, and it’s as if he knows exactly what he is thinking. “Relax, Njabulo – it’s going to be okay. You’re going to have a great afternoon.”

Njabulo is not so sure. His eyes wander back to the little creature on the leaf. “Uncle Joshua, why can’t we all change colour like the chameleon?”

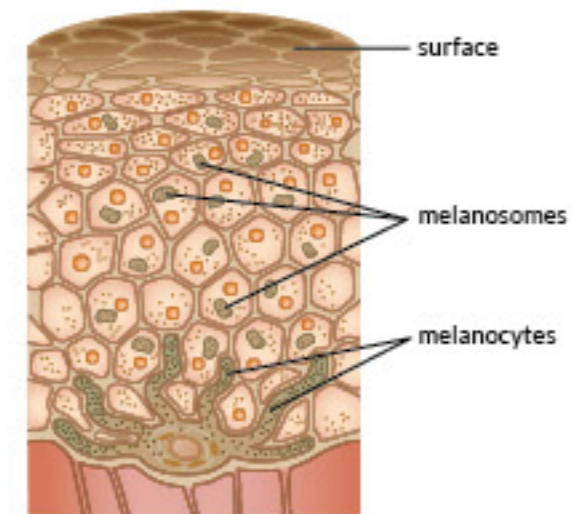
Uncle Joshua looks surprised at first, and then he frowns. “You want to change your skin colour? Now why would you want to do something like that?”

Why can't we change colour?

Our skin gets its colour mostly from the pigments, melanin and haemoglobin. These molecules are called pigments because they have natural colour. Melanin is produced in special cells within the skin, and haemoglobin is carried in the red blood cells found in the small blood vessels deep within our skin. Melanin is the most obvious and important pigment in the skin, and when a person has a lot of it, their skin is darker.

The amount of melanin a person has is controlled by specific genes in their DNA that they inherit from their parents. Most of these genes are dedicated mainly to producing skin colour. They don't determine any other features of a person's body or their behaviour.

Just because someone has a particular skin colour doesn't mean they are going to look or act any particular way. Skin colour just happens to be something we tend to notice.



Vantima van'wana lava nga va ndhuma

Maafrika-Dzonga yo hlaya va siyile mfungho eka matimu ya misava hikwalaho ka vutlharhi, xivindzi na tindlela leta kahle ta ku ololoxa swiphiqo swa vanhu.



Nelson Mandela



Thuli Madonsela



Siya Xuza



Desmond Tutu



Albertina Sisulu



Trevor Noah



Swa tika ku tshembha swilo swo karhi hi vanhu vokarhi, hi mhaka ya nhlonge ya vona. Kumbexana leswi malume Yoxuwa va vulaka swona swi nga va na ntiyiso. Njabulo a nga si tshama a ehleketa hiswona, marha nhlonge yi nga khumba njhani leswi nga ndzeni ka wena? Muhlovo wa nhlonge ya munhu yi nga ka yi nga khumbi vukulu bya byongo byakwe, hi ntiyiso?

Njabulo u ehleketa hi vanhu van'wana lava a nga dyondza ku va xixima, vanhu lava fanaka na yena. Vanhu lava va tlharihile swinene, walowo i ntiyiso!

“Hey, Njabulo!” rito ri huwelela hi tlhelo lerin'wana ra xitarata.

Hi mina Chris, hi yena wo sungula ku fika. Njabulo a tsaka. Chris a ri na n'wayitelo wa kahle na ku va na mafenya swinene.

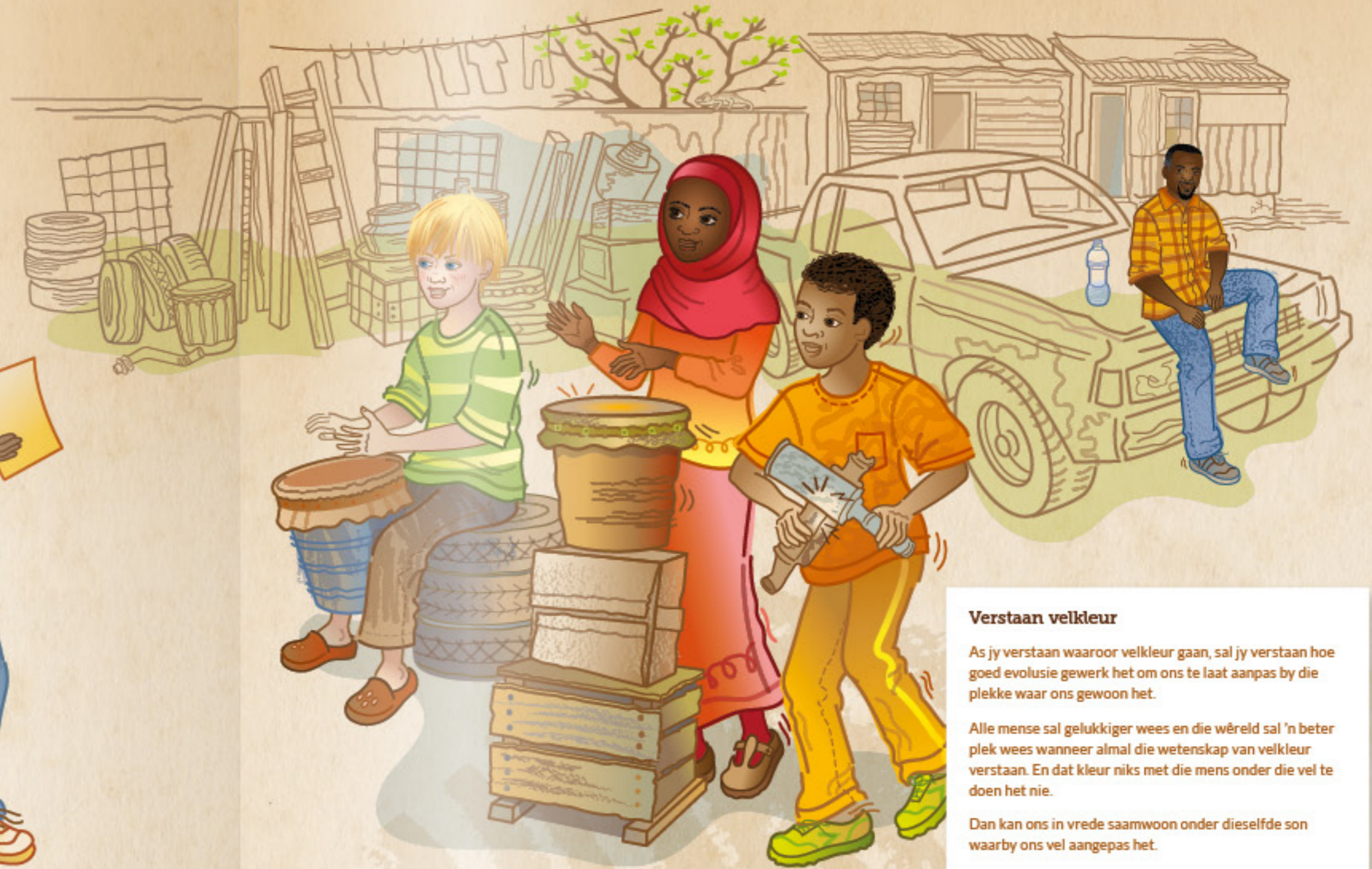
“Hey,” Njabulo a hlamula hi ku nyumela. “U amukelekile eka xikirepiyadi xa Malume Yoxuwa.”



“Hei, dit klink vir my soos ’n liedjie!” sê Roshni. Sy tel ’n stok op en begin die ritme uittik op die onderdele wat aan ’n tou hang.

Rippetie-tap, rippetie-tap...

Tim en Aisha begin trommel ’n vrolike ritme op die blikemmers uit. Dan begin hulle saam neurie. Nou spring Chris ook in en slaan twee ysterpype ritmies teen mekaar. Dan doen Njabulo wat hy die beste doen: Hy begin rap op die maat van sy maats se ritme en vertel hoe hy voel oor vel.



Verstaan velkleur

As jy verstaan waaroor velkleur gaan, sal jy verstaan hoe goed evolusie gewerk het om ons te laat aanpas by die plekke waar ons gewoon het.

Alle mense sal gelukkiger wees en die wêreld sal ’n beter plek wees wanneer almal die wetenskap van velkleur verstaan. En dat kleur niks met die mens onder die vel te doen het nie.

Dan kan ons in vrede saamwoon onder dieselfde son waarby ons vel aangepas het.