

Nomsa's shopping list

Nomsa was watching her big sister, Mandisa, make a necklace. Their mother called from the kitchen, "Mandisa, please go to the shop for me.

Here is the shopping list." Mandisa read the shopping list, "Bread, margarine, peanut butter, apricot jam, flour, eggs, sugar, milk, tea, and salt.

I'll need two bags for all this." Nomsa hopped up and down. "Can I come too? Please, can I come?" She had some money saved.

She loved the big round orange sweets at the shop. "Do you have to?" Mandisa sighed. She was twelve and Nomsa was six and

sometimes she got tired of her little sister tagging along behind her. "You'll have to help me carry the shopping then."

"I will, I will!" promised Nomsa. "Read the list again, I want to hear what we have to get."

"Bread, margarine, peanut butter, apricot jam, flour, eggs, sugar, milk, tea, and salt," read Mandisa as Nomsa counted the items on her fingers.

Ten items, one for each finger. Nomsa could not read yet, but she was good at remembering things.



The sisters went out into the street. The wind was blowing! It flapped their clothes and it sent the litter in the street racing and tumbling around their feet.

As they passed the hair salon in Mrs Ngubane's garage they saw Fezeka and Phumla having their hair braided. Mrs. Ngubane was very clever at braiding.

Fezeka and Phumla were Mandisa's best friends. "Yoh, you look good!" Mandisa said when she went into the hair salon to look at the new style in braiding.

It was very smart. "You're wearing a new shirt," Mandisa said to Fezeka. She bent over and felt the material between her fingers. "Where did you find this?"

Nomsa sighed. She wanted to get to the shop quickly. But all Mandisa thought about these days was clothes and hair and shoes.

“I love your new necklace, Phumla!” said Mandisa bending over to touch her friend’s new necklace. Then, oh-oh!

The wind snatched the shopping list out of Mandisa’s hand! It flew away over the wall, then over the roof next door. It was gone, gone, gone!

Absolutely and completely gone! “Now I’m in trouble,” said Mandisa as she put her hand over her mouth.

“I’ll have to go home and ask Mama for a new list and she’ll be cross!”



“You don’t have to! I can remember the shopping list,” said Nomsa hopping up and down. “I can remember everything.”

She held up her hands and counted the items on her ten fingers. Each finger was something from the shopping list.

“Bread, margarine, peanut butter, apricot jam, flour, eggs, sugar, milk, tea, and salt!” she said.

Mandisa looked surprised. “Well done, Sisi! I’m glad you came with me. Let’s get to the shop quickly and buy those things.

Otherwise, Mama is going to be cross.”When they got to Mambhele Cash Store,

Mandisa asked for all the things that Nomsa had remembered on her ten fingers and she put the things in the shopping bags.

Nomsa stared at the big bottle of orange sweets and the bottle of jelly babies near the till. She took her money out and gave it to Mandisa.

She pointed at the sweets she wanted and Mandisa bought them. Mandisa added a red lollipop as well.

“That’s for saving me from getting into trouble,” said Mandisa. “I know you like red lollipops.”

They each carried a shopping bag home and Nomsa sucked her red lollipop.

At home, they unpacked the shopping bags on the kitchen table and Mandisa asked, "Mama, can I make pancakes for supper tonight?"

She knew Nomsa loved pancakes. "Yes," said their mother. "I have a lot of school work to mark this afternoon. It would really help me if you made supper."

Together Nomsa and Mandisa mixed flour, eggs, milk, sugar and a little salt for pancakes. They let the mixture stand for an hour.

Then they made pancakes and pancakes and more pancakes. The kitchen smelt so good! When Papa came home, he went straight to the kitchen.

"My nose is telling me that we are having pancakes for supper! And I see that my two daughters are the cooks. What are you going to put inside them?" he asked.

"There's some mince left over from yesterday. We can use that," said Mandisa. "And there's also apricot jam."

"Apricot jam is my favourite in the whole world!" said Nomsa hopping up and down. "Mine too," said Papa and he laughed.

When Mama came into the kitchen, she clapped her hands. "Well done, my daughters!" she said. The pancakes were delicious.

"I can remember the ingredients for the recipe," Nomsa said. She held up her hand and counted them on her five fingers, "Flour, eggs, milk, sugar and a little salt!"



Her father laughed and patted her shoulder. "My clever little girl!" he said. "Maybe I should use my fingers to remember things too!"

