

# AMANDEBELE



AUTHOR: GRACE BOLOWANA

Artwork by E. Ndibongo

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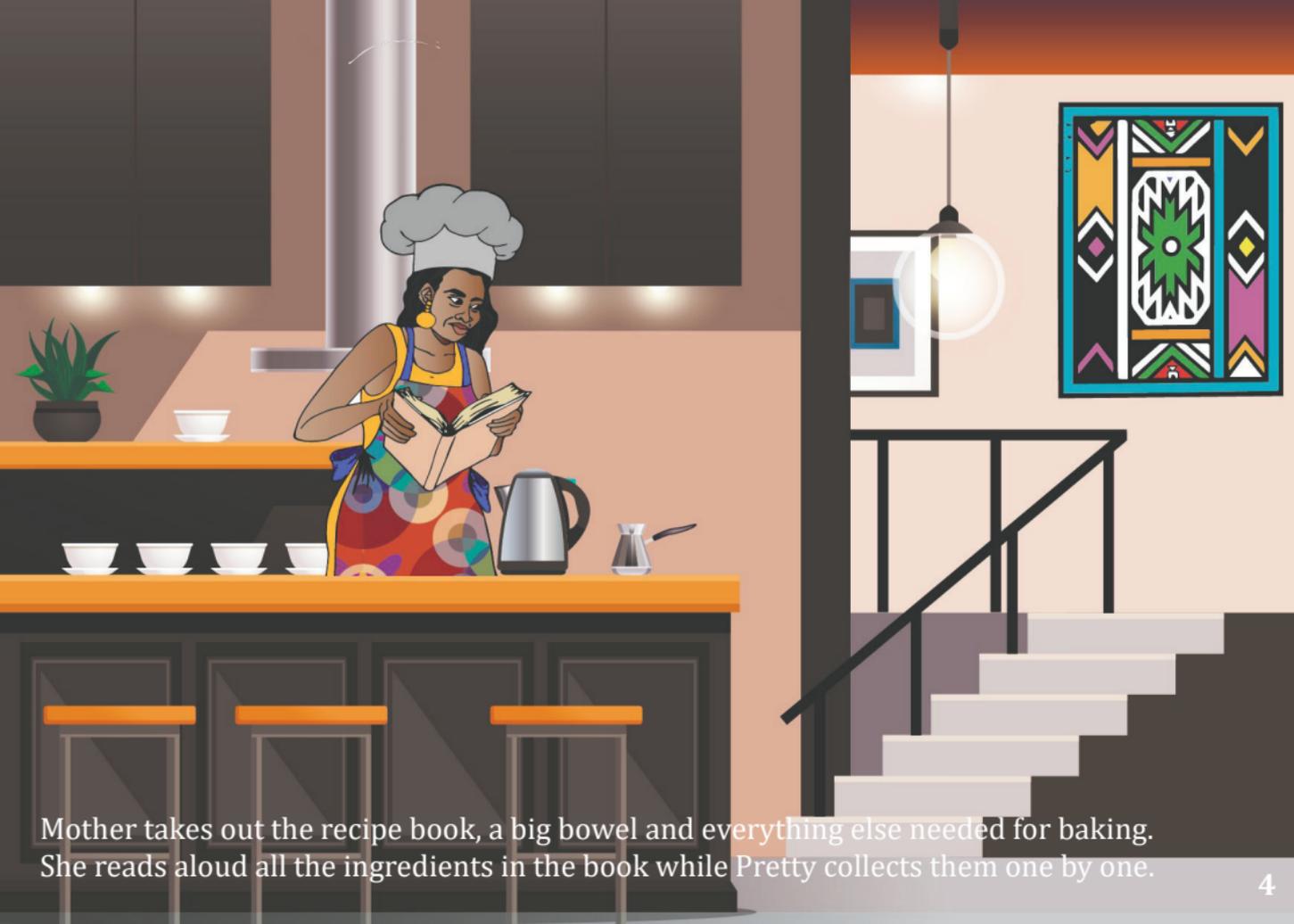
Pretty is very excited. It's granny's birthday and she is helping mother to bake a cake for her .



Mother said "Today is a very big day. Are you ready to bake the most delicious cake in the whole of Mzansi?" Pretty joyfully replies "Yes Mommy! Let's make a vanilla cake for her. It's granny's favourite."

Mother and Pretty are in the kitchen. They wash their hands before putting on their aprons and kitchen-hats.





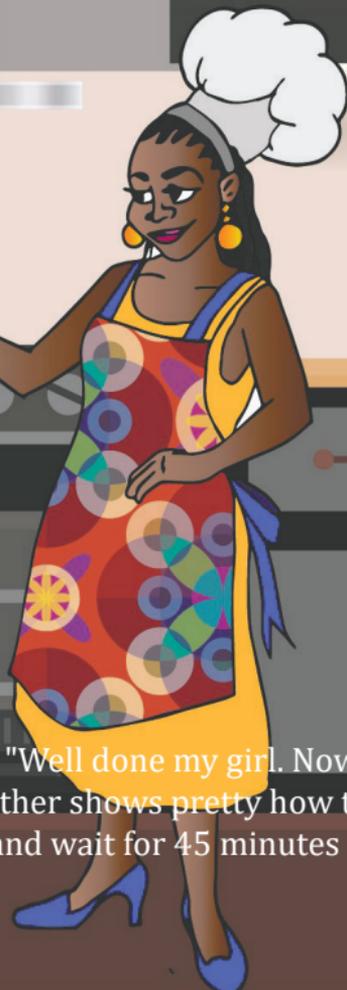
Mother takes out the recipe book, a big bowl and everything else needed for baking. She reads aloud all the ingredients in the book while Pretty collects them one by one.

(1 margarine, 2 cups of milk, 1,5 cups of sugar, 4 cups of flour, a pinch of salt and 3 spoons of vanilla essence. Pretty puts all the ingredients she's collected on the table.



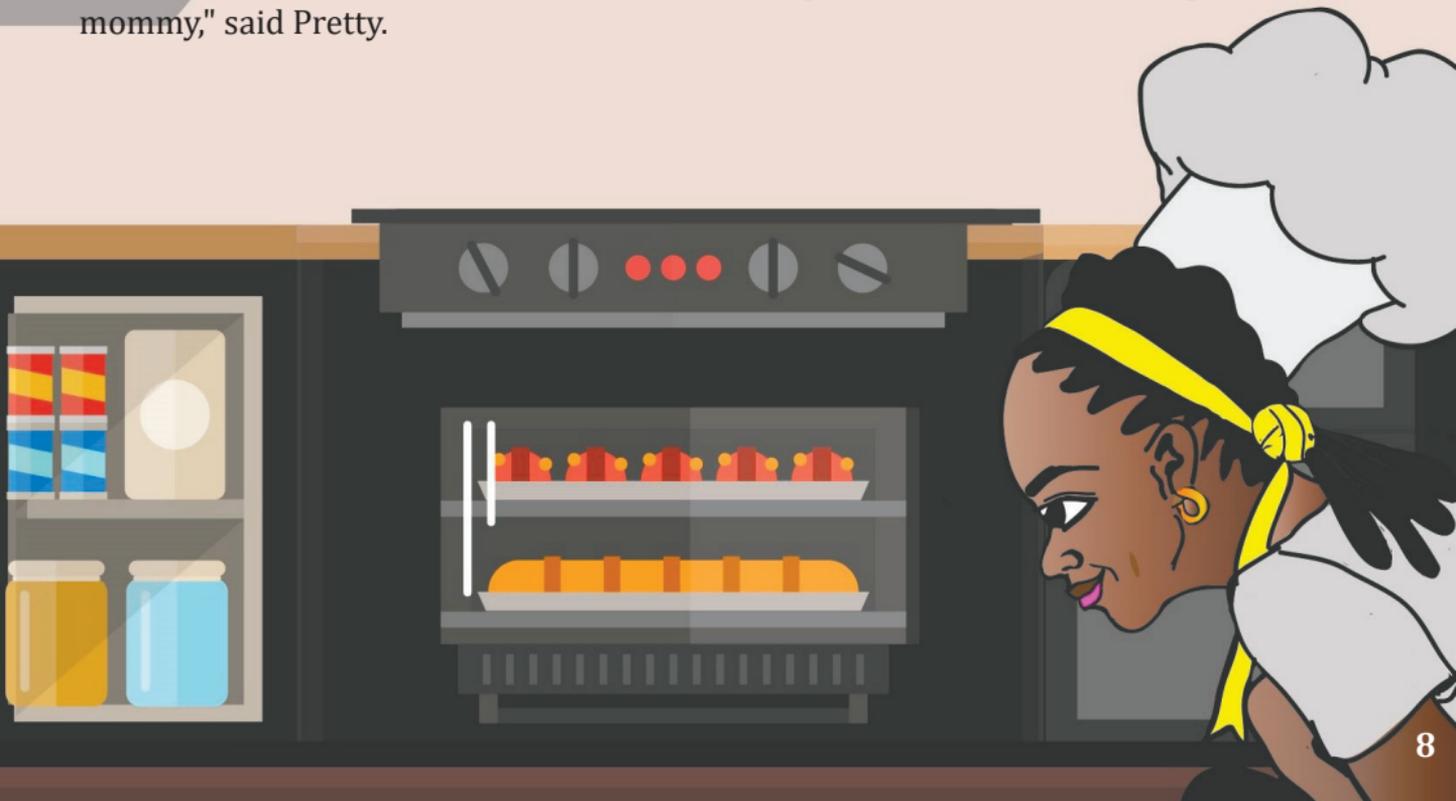
"This is our family's secret recipe. Watch and learn," says Mother. Her and Pretty skillfully mix all the ingredients together. "Please let me be the one placing the mixer in the pan," says Pretty. Mother agrees. She helps Pretty to do it.





Mother is pleased with her daughter's work. "Well done my girl. Now come let me show you how to switch on the oven." she said. Mother shows pretty how to switch on the oven saying, "Now we can put our dough in and wait for 45 minutes while you help me clean up this mess we have created."

After cleaning the kitchen and washing the dishes. Pretty excitedly watches the cake as it bakes through the oven glass. "Mommy, look the cake is growing!" shouted Pretty with excitement. "Doesn't that look beautiful?" replied mother. "It looks magical mommy," said Pretty.





"Now come over here and help me wrap these gifts for your granny while we wait for cake to get ready," said mother.

Pretty used colourful beads to make a necklace for her grandmother. "Mommy look what I've made for granny, do you think she will love it?" Pretty asked as she placed this necklace in the gift box.



"She is going to be so surprised. I know she thought I was not paying attention when she was teaching me how to do it." Pretty said. Mother replied "Granny is going to love it. It's so beautiful and colourful. I can't wait to get one for my birthday too." Pretty said in humour, "Hey, easy now Mommy." They both laugh.



"I think the cake is ready now." Mother switches off the stove, puts on her baking gloves and takes the cake out of the stove. "Wow, It looks perfect and smells great" said Pretty. "Come over and help me to decorate it. How are we going to do it?" Mother asked





Pretty said "I know! We are going to use colourful and bright geometric designs just like the one's from the amaNdebele culture, like granny's house." Mother was ecstatic and said "That's great idea." They started to decorated the cake.



After they had finished to decorate the cake, mother came with one of the gifts pack. Mother said "This will definitely go well with the gift I have for granny." she takes it out. Pretty shouted "Is the amaNdebele cultural doll! Wow...It looks just like granny."

Mother said "Now we don't only have the cake that looks like granny's house, we also have a doll that looks like her." they laugh.



Mommy and Pretty went to collect granny for her surprise birthday gifts. Mommy entered the kitchen holding granny's hand while Pretty closed granny's eyes with her hand.



Pretty removes her hand and said "Tadah" and they start singing: 'happy birth day to you, happy birth day to you, happy birthday dear granny, happy birthday to you.' Granny held her mouth from disbelief.



Granny looking very surprised "This is beautiful. Is that me? is that my house? She's excitedly pointing at them. Look I am playing house," she laughs. Pretty said " yes granny that is you with your house. You don't have to miss home anymore. The village came to you today to celebrate your birthday." Granny gives them a Big hug.

Mother, granny and Pretty sit down to enjoy the cake. Pretty then asked granny "where do Ndebele people come from?"

Granny answered "The Ndebele tribe or amaNdebele were a smaller group of the Nguni speaking tribes that migrated to South Africa. They were the first Nguni speaking people to move into the interior of the country instead of the coastal areas under the leadership of their last monarch King Musi, they moved away from the Nguni speaking population who had settled themselves in the KwaZulu coastal regions."



"Granny why is Ndebele culture so interesting?" Pretty said.

"Ndebele Culture is unique, especially our colourful and rich mural paintings. Mural-painting has been passed on from generation to generation from mother to daughter. Each and every woman has her own style, meaning and knowledge base about the different things which they use in their lives, which are depicted on the walls." granny said.



Pretty said "I often see the use of razor blade and flowers in the mural paintings.

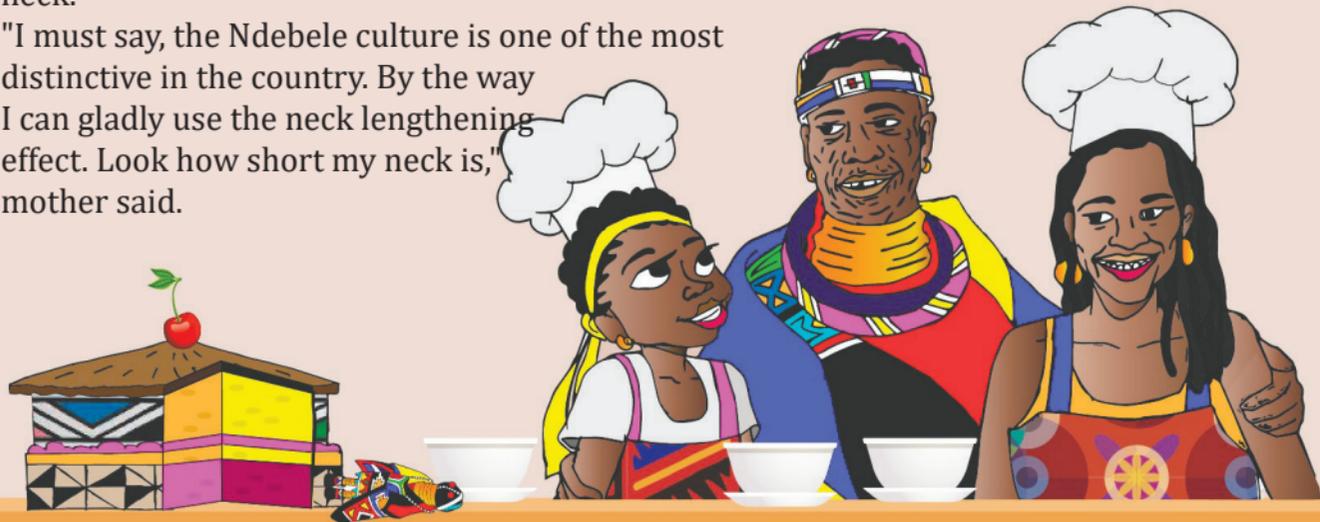
Granny replied "everything has a meaning and an importance in the eyes of the artist. The "Ndebele Flower" symbolises a Ndebele Women's fertility. The razor blade pattern is used extensively as it is used in traditional hair shavings, beadwork, household tasks and traditional ceremonies."



"Granny the Ndebele women are famously known for two things in particular that catches the eye. These are the stacked rings worn round the neck, arms and legs and most striking of all, the lavish beadwork featuring geometric patterns decorating skirts, tiaras and the long strips that trail behind," Pretty said.

Granny replies "is our tradition to wear thick brass rings around our necks and legs. This reflects our wealth whereas the beautiful dress and accessories of the Ndebele women reflect their age, social status and love of colour. The weighty brass rings are usually added to through the years which in most cases has the effect of lengthening the neck."

"I must say, the Ndebele culture is one of the most distinctive in the country. By the way I can gladly use the neck lengthening effect. Look how short my neck is," mother said.



# About Author



GRACE BOLOWANA  
gracebolowana@gmail.com

This book, Amandele was intrigued by Dr. Esther Mahlangu's current pursuit to pass on her remarkable knowledge of the Ndebele cultural practices and customs. She was taught by her mother and grandmother and she excelled in painting and beadwork techniques to the extent that she was the first person to transfer the Ndebele style of painting from murals to canvas; effectively preserving and promoting the Ndebele artform nationally and internationally. The story revolves around my dream to invite Dr. Mahlangu to my house, so that my twelve year old daughter Botle ( Pretty) and I could bake a cake for her.

# Summary

The book is inspired by the 84 year old Doctor Esther Mahlangu, who is an iconic artist of our time in South Africa and the world. Doctor Mahlangu is regarded as one of South Africa's National treasures.

The storyline is about three generations of Amandebele in one room, Granny, Mom and her daughter. Pretty and her mom are making a birthday cake for Esther Mahlangu.

The story is about the Ndebele culture being passed on from one generation to another. The book also looks at the fascinating cultural symbols and customs. It also gives an indepth look at the history of the Amandebele and their origins.