



Chimwemwe's Song

By Liezl Coetzee



Noela's mother, Chimwemwe, gave her the biggest hug. "Oh, Noela! What you did for Leo filled my heart with sunshine. You reminded me that every new friend adds a new verse to our village's song."



Chimwemwe's smile faded a little. "It also made me remember something we've forgotten." She led Noela to a dusty chest and pulled out another old book, smaller than the Book of Names. "This is the Book of Songs," she whispered.

The book was full of beautiful, handwritten songs, but the last few pages were empty and turning yellow. "We've been so busy, we've forgotten to add our new songs," Chimwemwe said sadly. "The story of our village is becoming quiet."



Just then, a familiar shimmer filled the room. Bokosi, the tiny starlight dragon, zipped around the book. "Quiet stories are waiting for a voice!" it whispered. Then, the magnificent rainbow dragon, Zokonda, swirled into view, its colours looking a little less bright than before.



"The threads of song are fading,"
Zokonda rumbled, its voice like a
low drumbeat. It looked at
Chimwemwe. "But I feel a strong,
old song sleeping in your heart."



Chimwemwe blushed. "I haven't sung for everyone in a long time," she said softly. "My voice is shy." Noela took her mother's hand. "But your voice is beautiful, Mama. It sounds like honey and sunshine. Please sing."



Taking a deep breath,
Chimwemwe closed her eyes and
began to sing. It was a song her
own Gogo had taught her, a song
about the secrets whispered by the
leaves of the great baobab tree.
Her voice, clear and sweet, filled
the room.



As she sang, a glowing thread of sunset-orange light spun out from her voice! It danced in the air like a ribbon. Bokosi zipped forward and caught the thread, carrying it carefully to the big rainbow dragon.



Zokonda took the thread and began to weave it onto a blank page in the Book of Songs. As it worked, the words of Chimwemwe's song appeared on the page, written in glowing orange ink. The whole book seemed to brighten.



The village heard the beautiful song and gathered around. Inspired, everyone began to share their own songs – songs about new babies, good harvests, and new friends. That year, the Mango Festival was also a Song Festival, and the sweetest sound of all was Chimwemwe and Noela, singing a new song together.