

Theo and the Giant Plastic Ball



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"Tunza" means "to treat with care or affection" in Swahili. UNEP hopes to inspire caring for the Earth through creative literature that sparks the interest and awareness of children, their parents and teachers.

Director of Publications
Eric Falt

Head, UNEP Children & Youth/Sports and the Environment Unit
Theodore Oben

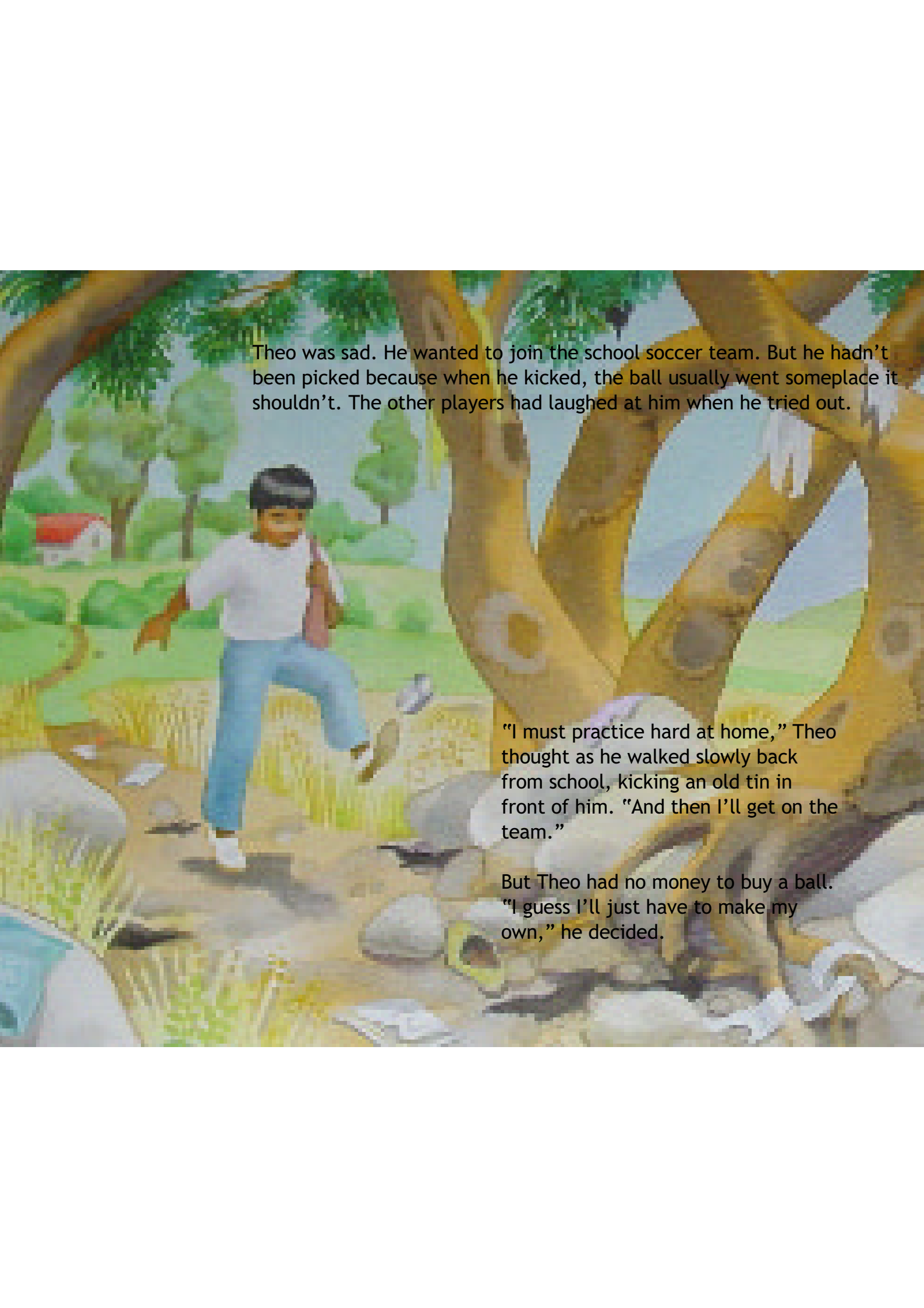
Writer
Carole Douglass

Illustrator
Adrienne Kennaway

Other UNEP Contributors
Design and Layout - James Mwaniki
Editorial Support - David Simpson, Naomi Poulton, Cecilia Kibare

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Children and teachers from the Braeside School in Nairobi for their ideas and enthusiasm.

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A colorful illustration of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue pants, walking through a park. He is kicking a small, old, silver tin can with his right foot. The ground is covered with dry grass and scattered leaves. In the background, there are large, leafy trees and a small house with a red roof. The scene is set in a bright, sunny environment.

Theo was sad. He wanted to join the school soccer team. But he hadn't been picked because when he kicked, the ball usually went someplace it shouldn't. The other players had laughed at him when he tried out.

"I must practice hard at home," Theo thought as he walked slowly back from school, kicking an old tin in front of him. "And then I'll get on the team."

But Theo had no money to buy a ball. "I guess I'll just have to make my own," he decided.



With that, he started to pick up plastic bags along the roadside. It wasn't hard—there were lots of them. He wadded them up and tied them together.

Before he knew it, he had gathered all the plastic bags along his way home—and had created a solid little ball.

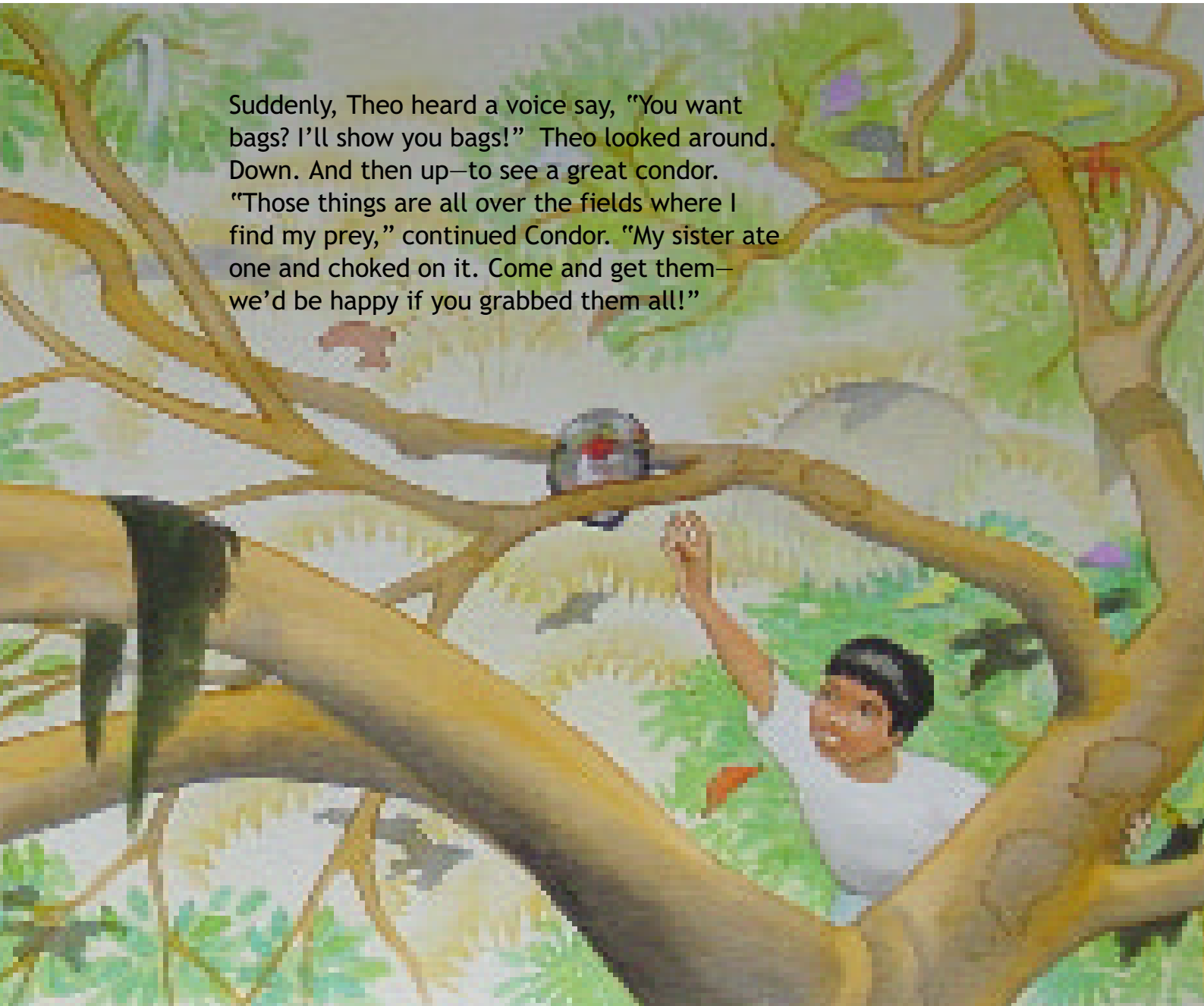
He kicked it, and the ball went flying into the top branches of a tree.





Up Theo climbed to rescue his ball. He was amazed to see how many plastic bags were caught on branches. They were pink, green, yellow, brown and white—the villagers called them “village flowers,” he’d heard. He decided to “pick” them for his ball.

Suddenly, Theo heard a voice say, "You want bags? I'll show you bags!" Theo looked around. Down. And then up—to see a great condor. "Those things are all over the fields where I find my prey," continued Condor. "My sister ate one and choked on it. Come and get them—we'd be happy if you grabbed them all!"





Down came Theo. In the maize field, he gladly scrunched more bags into the ball. Finally it was the right size for a soccer ball. One good kick and it sailed out of the farm to a rocky hill where a llama was munching grass.

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