1.

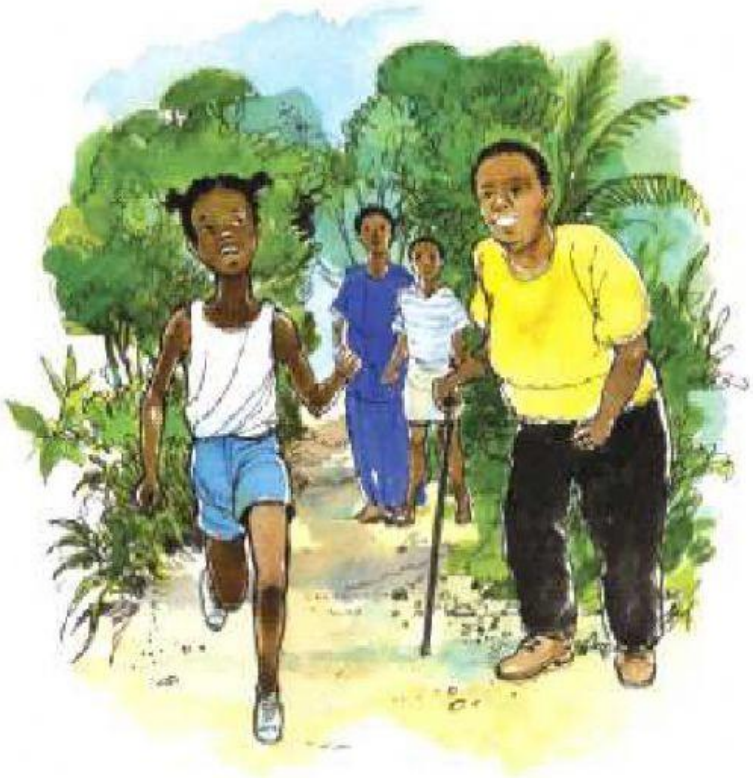
Legs' Race

"Run ... Legs ... run," chanted Uncle Udi.

"She runs like a cheetah," said her uncle proudly to the people standing nearby.

Legs was running through Zoo Park, training for the big race.
Her name was really Lepandi but everybody called her Legs. Except her mother.

Legs loved to run.



The race started next Saturday in Zoo Park. You ran out of the park gate. Then you had to run up the hill, round the church, past the whitewashed fort, through the school grounds, past the stone castle, down the steep road and back into the park. One kilometre from start to finish.

Last year Legs had finished in tenth place. This time she wanted to be in the first five.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

All week Legs had dreamt about running the race. On Wednesday night in a dream she was struggling through the Namib Desert, sand up to her hips. The next night she was running a three-legged race with her uncle who kept on tripping her up.
She woke in the hot room,wondering what the dreams meant.

Uncle Udi was a large man, short of breath. Legs liked him but did not want him as a running partner. She was sure about that.

"He's not only large, he's lazy," said Legs' mother.

The afternoon before the race there was a thunderstorm.
The heat broke as thunder cracked the earth like a whip. Rain bounced off the hard ground outside Legs' home and fell on the roof.

Everybody welcomed the rain. Uncle Udi moved into the middle of the street, his shirt blowing in the wind.

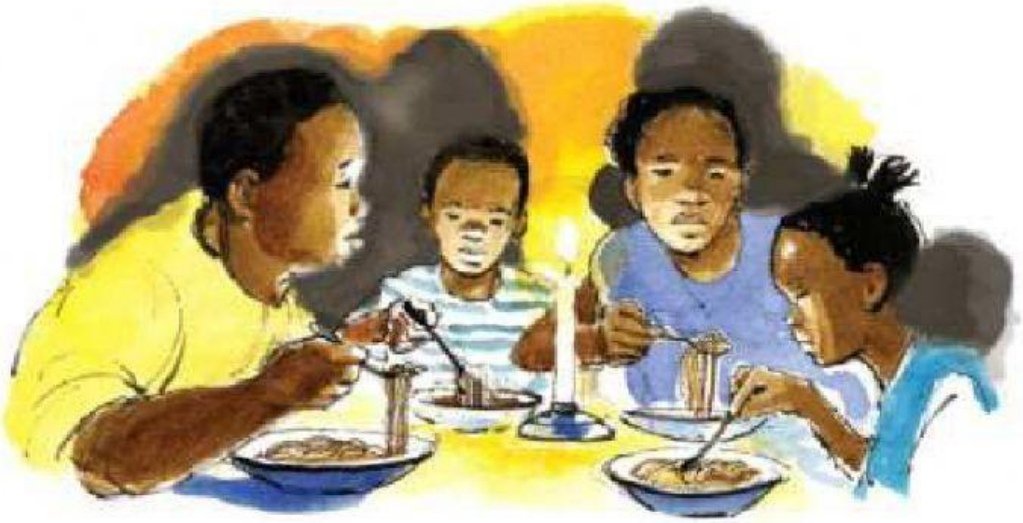
"It's a sign ... a sign that you will win tomorrow!" he shouted.
"Just listen to the rain on the roof. It's applauding your victory."
"I don't have to win. I just want to come in the first five," Legs told her uncle.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

That night the electrical power failed and the phones in that part of town stopped ringing. The storm had damaged the cables.

They ate supper by candlelight. Legs sat with her mother, her brother, Rudi, and Uncle Udi who lived with them. He had moved in a week ago, to be near the hospital for treatment. Uncle Udi's heart was giving him problems. It beat like a tired alarm clock.

Legs pushed her food round on her plate.



"Don't you like the spaghetti, Lepandi?" asked her mother.

"I'm not very hungry ..." said Legs.

"You need energy for the race," urged Uncle Udi.

"What time is your race, Lepandi?" Legs' mother asked.

"It starts at seven o'clock in the morning."

"And I shall be there to see you start," said Uncle, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

That night Legs went to bed early and fell into a deep sleep.
She woke in the dark. Someone was shaking her.

"Lepandi, wake up." It was her mother.

"Huh, did I oversleep?"

"No, my girl. It's your Uncle."

"What's the matter, Mama?"

"He's had an attack of some kind. I think it's his heart. We need an ambulance."

"Why don't you phone for one?" Legs yawned.

"I tried but the lines are still down. I can't send your brother, he's too small. You'll have to go."

Legs looked at the old alarm clock ticking away the time.
Nearly five thirty. She scrambled into her running vest and shorts and tied the laces of her tackies.

Legs ran out into the coming dawn and set off down the road at a steady pace. She slipped into her cheetah stride.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Legs had got as far as the corner café when a sudden thought came to her.

"Today's the race!"

Her heart and her stomach circled each other in a dance of sadness.

It would take her another twenty minutes to get to the hospital.

By then it would be six o'clock.

Then find help.

Then get a lift with the ambulance driver.

She might be in time for the start.

If she ran all the way.

"The distance I'm running is just as long as the race itself," she thought. Her heart drummed four beats to a stride.

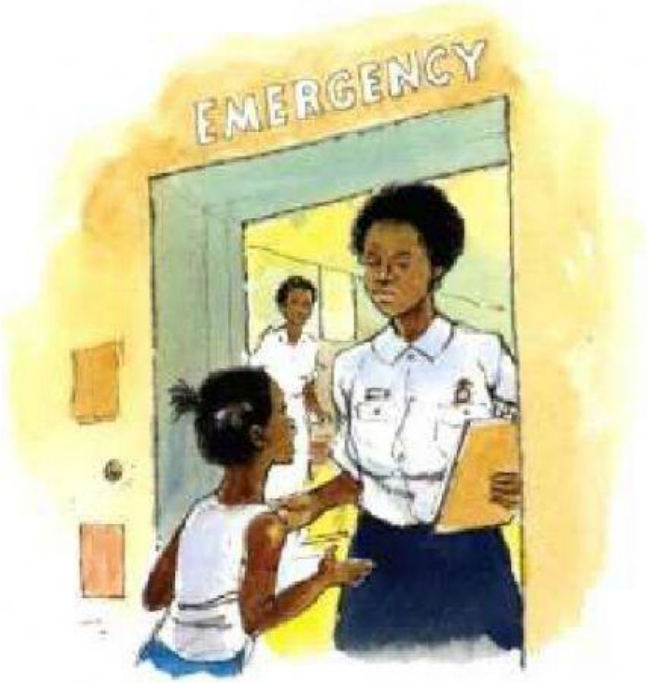
Then another thought struck Legs.
"Uncle Udi won't be there to see me run." She felt sad.

She saw the lights of the hospital at the end of the road and she increased her pace.

Legs ran through the door that read EMERGENCY and spoke to the nurse there.

"It's my uncle ... please come ... his heart ..."

"Name and address."
The nurse pushed a form at her.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

Legs could hear a giant clock beating time in her head.
She scrawled out the details. Then the nurse read it slowly, yawned and reached for the intercom.

Ten minutes later Legs was sitting in the ambulance.

At home Legs stayed long enough to see Uncle Udi into the ambulance ... then she set out, running towards the start of her race.

She ran and ran. She was so tired ... and now she still had to run another kilometre.

Five to seven.

"I hope they'll still let me register," cried Legs to herself.

She swung through the lower park gate. Was she too late?
People were milling around. She recognized Spider, her friend, who was also running.

Legs ran right up to him. "Can I run?" she cried.

"Where were you?" asked Spider.

"I was with ...my uncle ..." She was too upset to get her words out.

"Never mind, Legs. The race has been postponed."

"Postponed! Why, Spider?"

"Last night's rain has caused problems. A burst pipe flooded the top end of the park. We run next week. Same time. Same place."

Legs heaved a sigh of relief.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

She trained extra hard all week.

Legs was there in good time the next Saturday. As she stood with Spider at the start, an ambulance drew up. The ambulance driver lifted Uncle Udi out of the back. His frame filled the wheel chair.

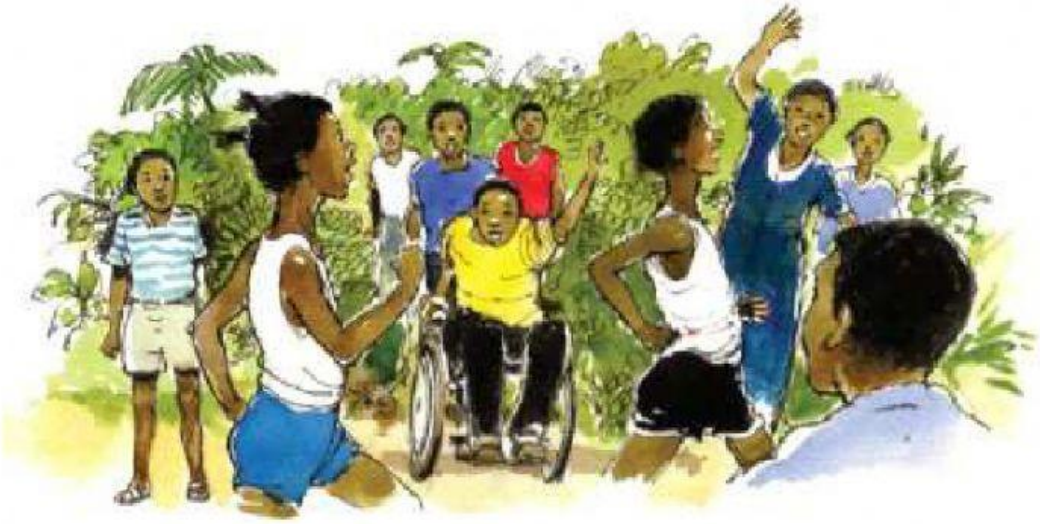
"I've discharged myself from hospital to watch you," he said.
And Legs laughed with joy.

Legs heard the announcer's voice over the loudspeaker. "All runners must report to the Starter." The runners lined up. The Starter's pistol fired.

"Run, Cheetah ... run," Uncle Udi cheered.

Legs ran her race. Round the stone church, then the fort, circling the castle, down the steep road and back into the park.

The crowd began to cheer. Spider was two paces ahead of Legs.
And as she passed the statue at the end of the race, Legs was in second place.



Legs' Race from *Legs, Bones and Eyes: A Children's Trilogy* by Dorian Haarhoff.
Published by New Namibia Books.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Legs' Race Year 4 optional SAT

Name_____

Date_____

1. Answer this questions about *Legs' Race*

1. Legs was training for the race. This year she wanted

to be first.	**to be in the first five.**	**to be second.**	**to finish in tenth place.**

1 mark

2. Uncle Udi had moved in with Legs' family

to eat supper by candlelight.	**to mend the cables.**	**to be near the hospital.**	**to watch Legs run.**

1 mark

3. That afternoon there was a storm which caused

the electrical power to fail.	**the phones to start ringing.**	**Legs' family to eat spaghetti.**	**the earth to dry up.**

1 mark

4. Legs was woken by her mother because

it was still dark.	**Legs had overslept.**	**it was time to get up.**	**Uncle Udi was ill.**

1 mark

5. Legs had to help by running

to the hospital.	**the race.**	**in Zoo Park.**	**another kilometre.**

1 mark

6. When Legs finally reached the start of the race she found

it was still raining.	**it had already begun.**	**it was to be run next week.**	**it had already finished.**

1 mark

7. a) Which animal did Uncle Udi compare Legs to?

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 mark

b) Why?

.....
.....

1 mark

LIVEWORKSHEETS