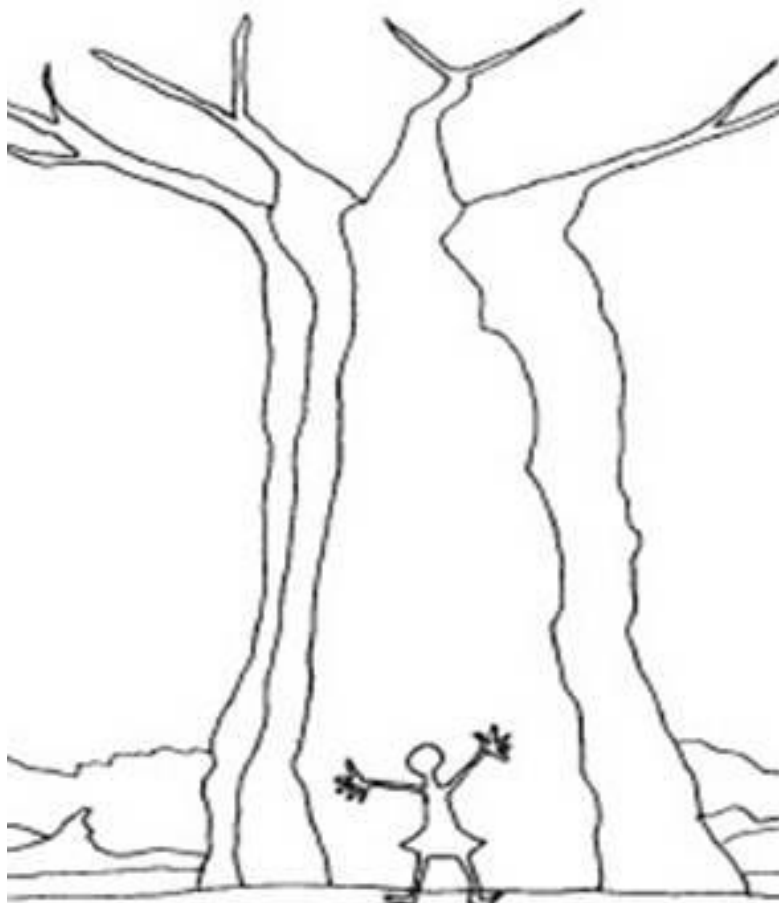
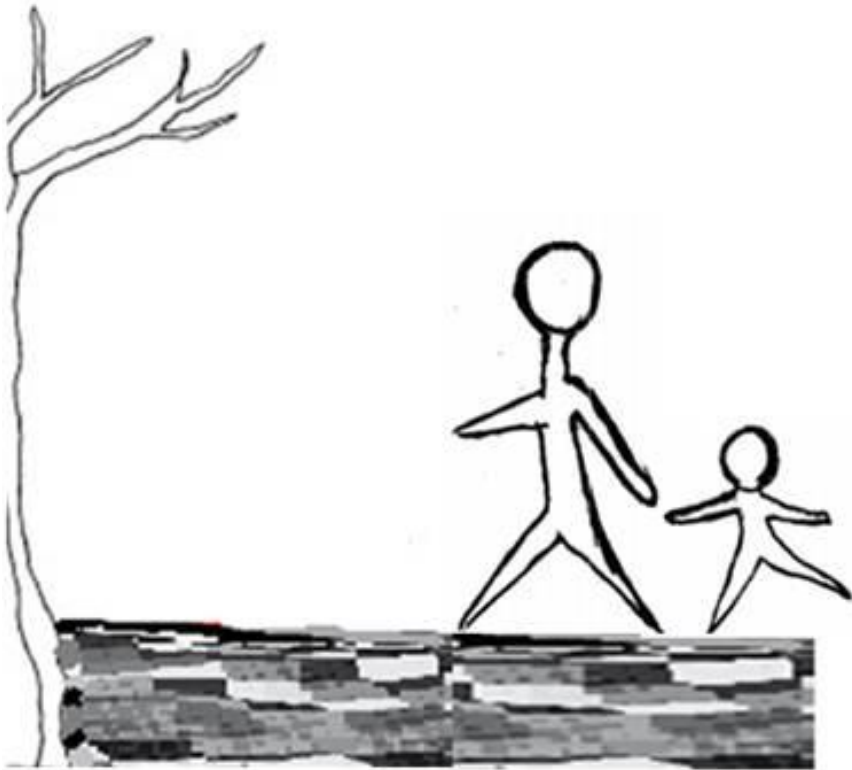


The tree that saved the village of Ombalantu

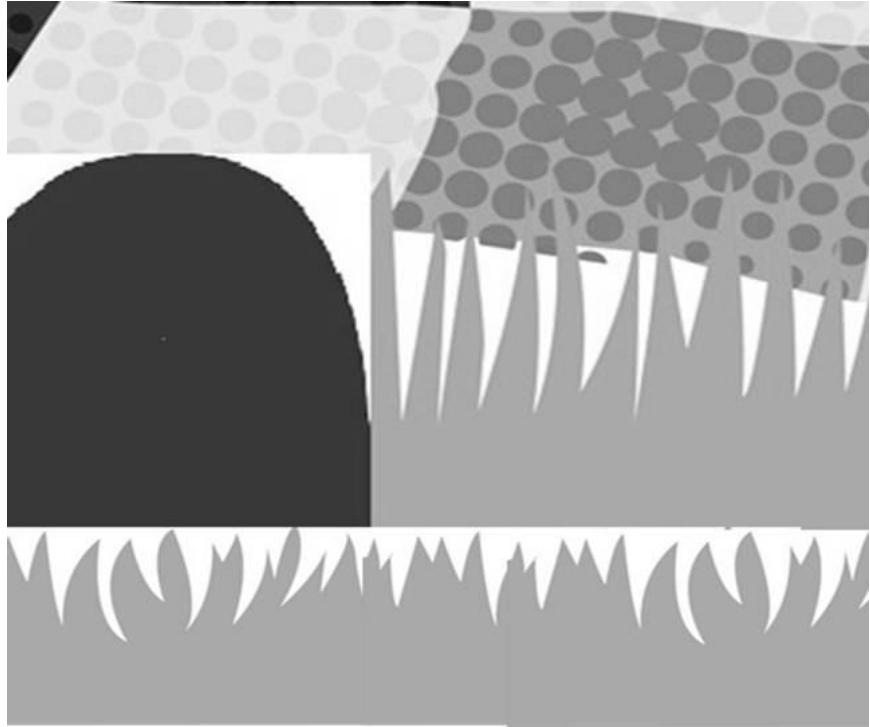
Karen von Wiese, Beryl Salt, Muhdni Grimwood and Barbara Meyerowitz
English

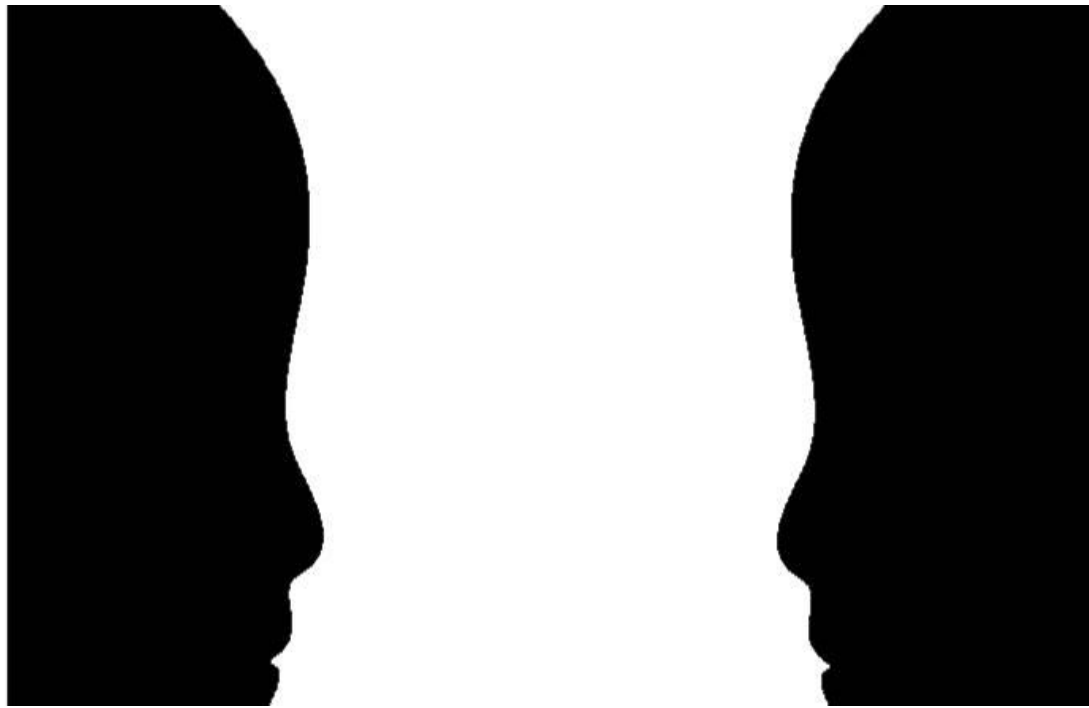




Thaimi lived in the village of Ombalantu. One day she went with her brother, Angula, to fetch water. While Thaimi was filling her pot Angula saw a hare. He ran after it. He ran and ran and ran but the hare was too quick for him.

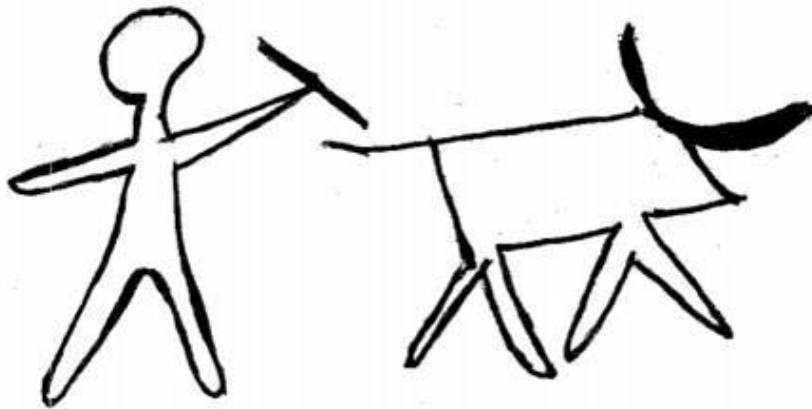
Thaimi's pot was full and she was ready to go home. She looked around but she could not see Angula. She walked and she walked and she walked, looking for him. At last she found him lying in the grass behind a large anthill.





As she came closer Angula held his finger to his lips. Close by a group of strange men were resting. The men had bows and arrows ... and spears!

"Angula," Thaimi whispered. "Those men are raiders. They have come to steal our cattle and burn our village. Come quickly. We must run home and warn the village." So very quietly and quickly Thaimi and Angula ran towards their village.

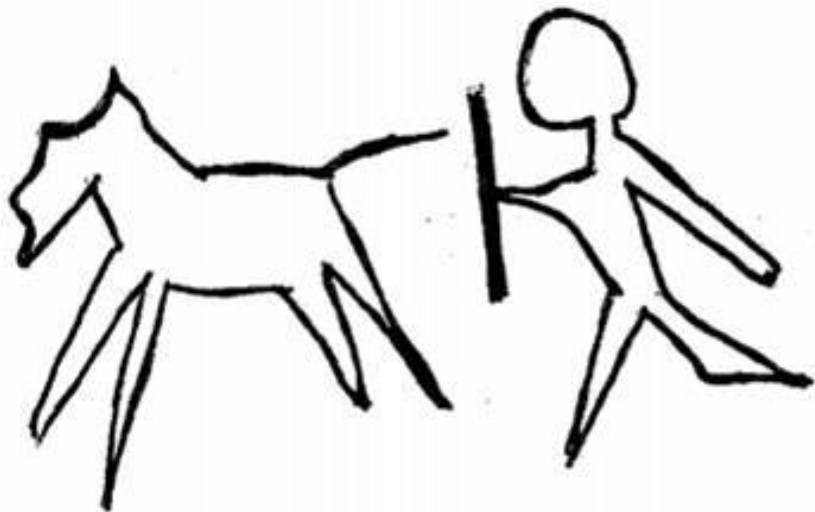


Near their village they met their uncle. He was taking his cow to the water. Thaimi called out, "Run, uncle, run! Men are coming to steal our cattle and burn our village." The man shouted at his cow and made her run towards the village.

Further on Thaimi saw her aunt working in the field and she called out, "Run, aunt, run! Men are coming to steal our cattle and burn our village!"

The woman took her hoe, picked up her sleeping baby and ran towards the village.





Further on Thaimi saw her grandfather. He was limping along the road beside a donkey loaded with grain.

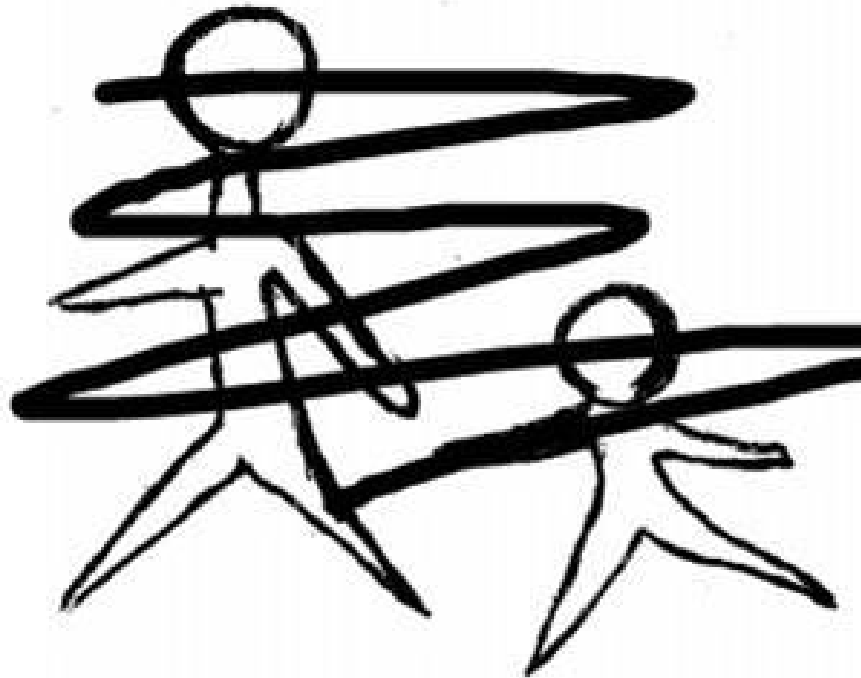
And she called out, "Run, grandfather, run! Men are coming to steal our cattle and burn our village!"

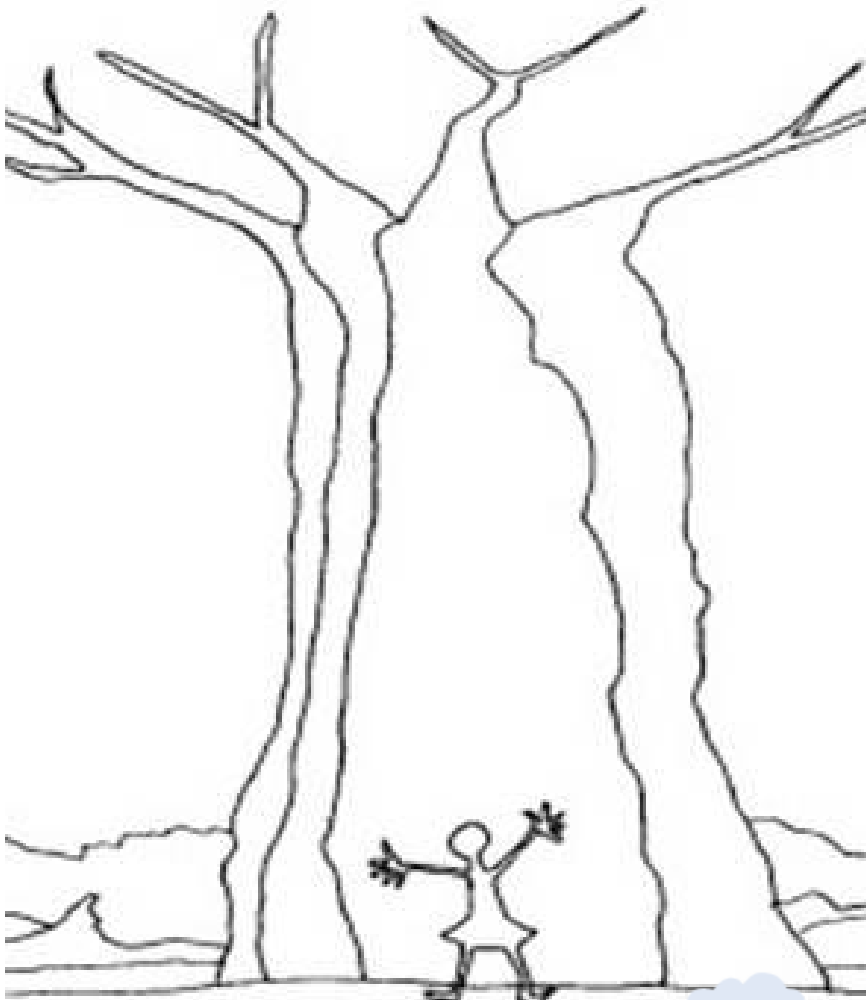
Her grandfather lifted his stick and chased the donkey until it ran towards the village.

When Thaimi and her brother reached the village she called out to everyone, "Run, run. Men are coming to steal our cattle and burn our village!"

The villagers were scared but they did not know where to hide or what to do.

Where could they hide their cattle?
Where could they hide their grain?
Where could they hide themselves?





Thaimi was very frightened but then she remembered the place where she and Angula sometimes went to play.

A safe place.

A secret place.



She picked up a drum and began to hit it as hard as she could.

Bam Bam Bam Boom Boom Boom

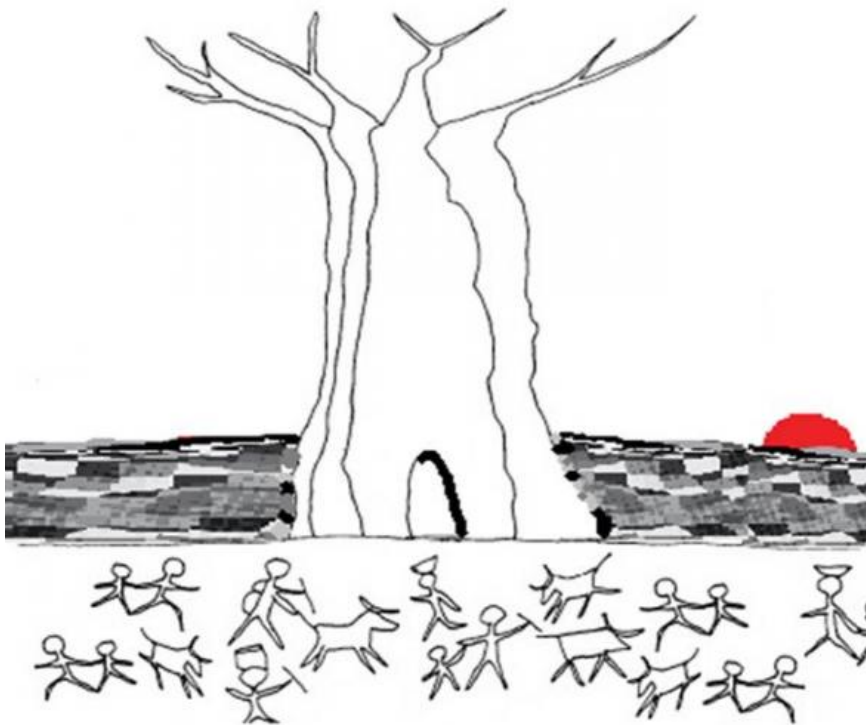
All the villagers stopped.

Thaimi called out, "I have a place to hide. Follow me."

She took Angela by the arm.

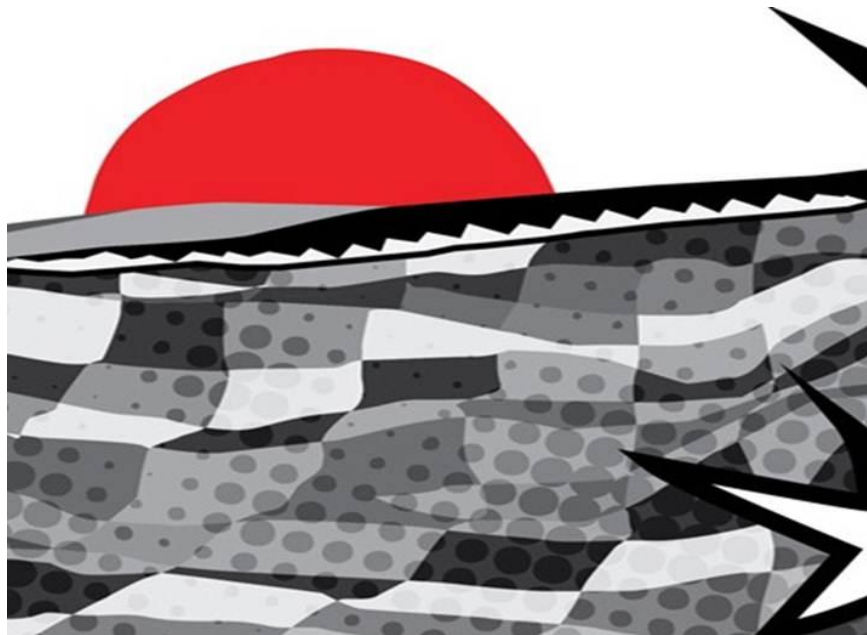
Thaimi and Angula led the way to a baobab tree which stood nearby. "Why have you brought us here? We cannot hide here," they said. Thaimi said to her father, "Come. I'll show you." They climbed into a small opening at the top of the tree. Thaimi and her father slid down into the big trunk. It was huge and hollow.

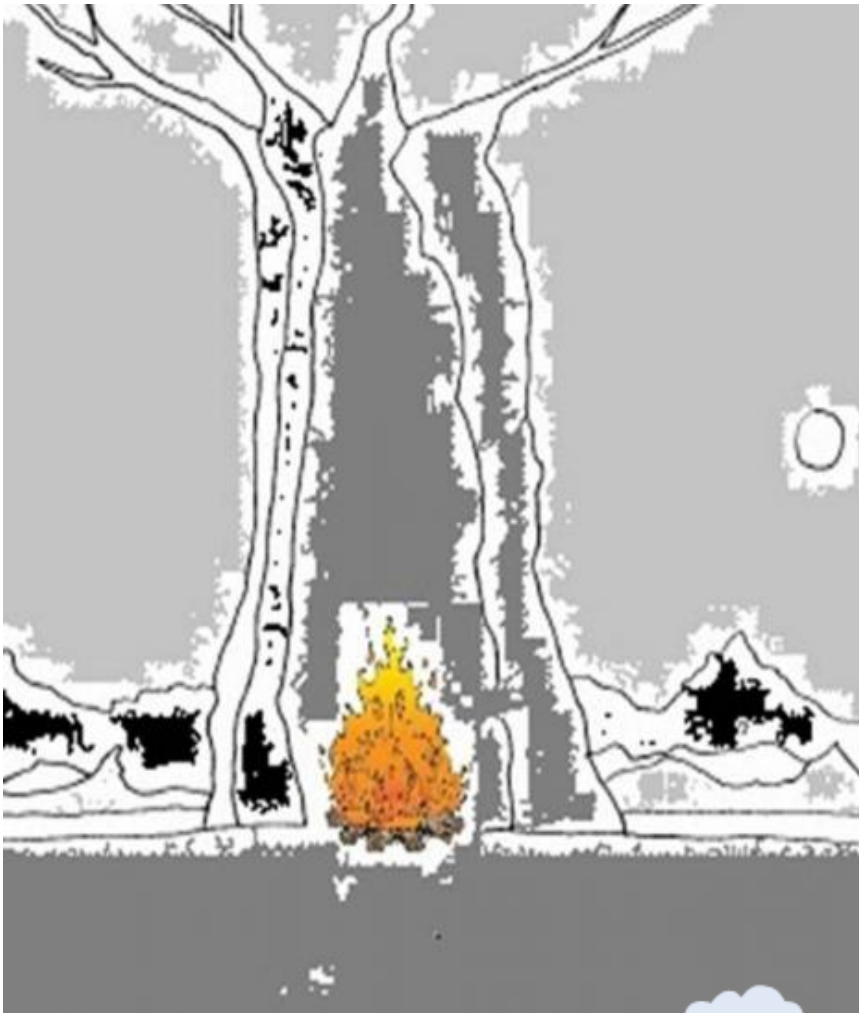




Thaimi and her father cut an opening in the side of the tree. All the villagers made their way through the opening into the great hollow inside the baobab tree. Some villagers collected the grain and the pots. Others collected the goats, the sheep and the cattle. And the strange thing was that there was room for everyone.

The sun went down.
The raiders crept up towards the
village. It was dark.
Inside the great tree the villagers
waited.
They were cold. They were hungry.
And they were afraid.
What was going to happen?

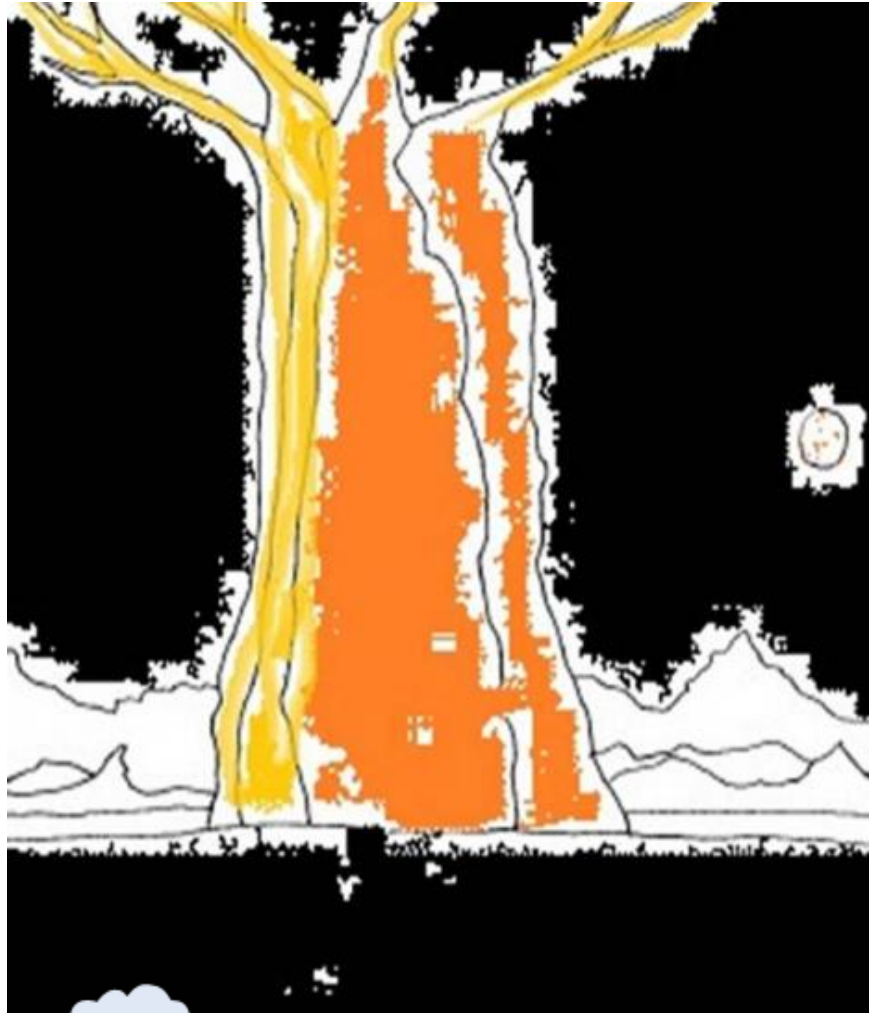




Then Thaimi said, "It's cold. Let's make a fire."

She took two stones and struck them together. The sparks caught the grass and small flames flared. Soon a bright warm fire was burning.

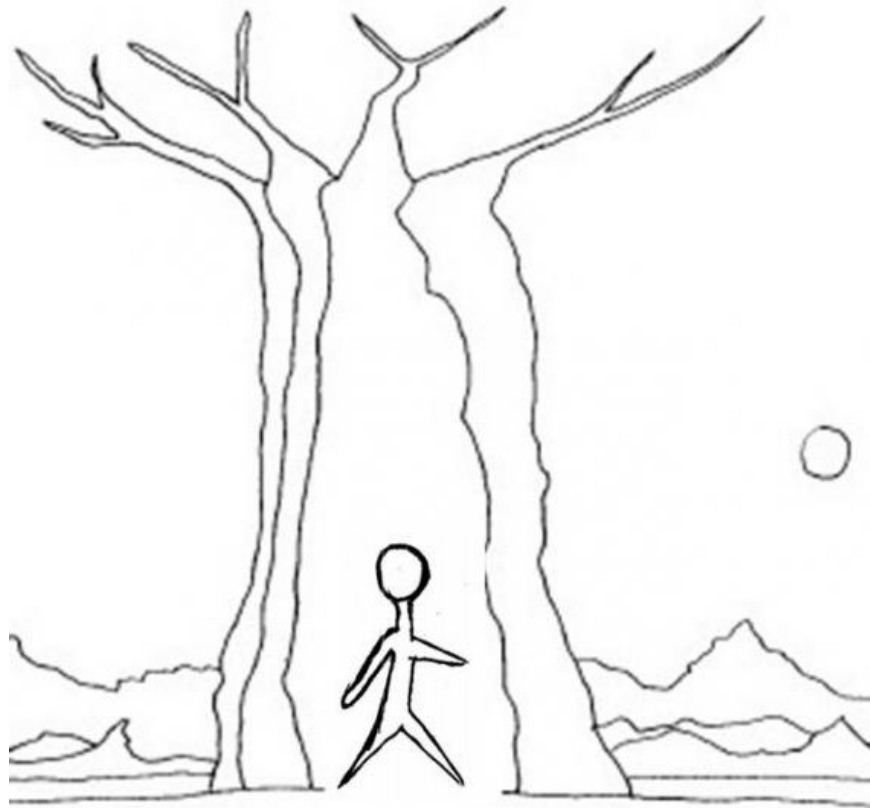
Light flamed from the tree. Fiery eyes shone from the trunk. Bright tongues licked the branches. Smoke curled into the sky.



Outside the raiders saw the tree.
"It's a great spirit!" they cried in fear.
First one raider turned and ran.
Then another turned and ran.
Then another and another.
Until they had all run away.
The people of the village of Ombalantu were saved.

What do you think?

Was it Thaimi or the tree that saved
them all at Ombalantu?



The tree that saved the village of Ombalantu

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Language: English



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