



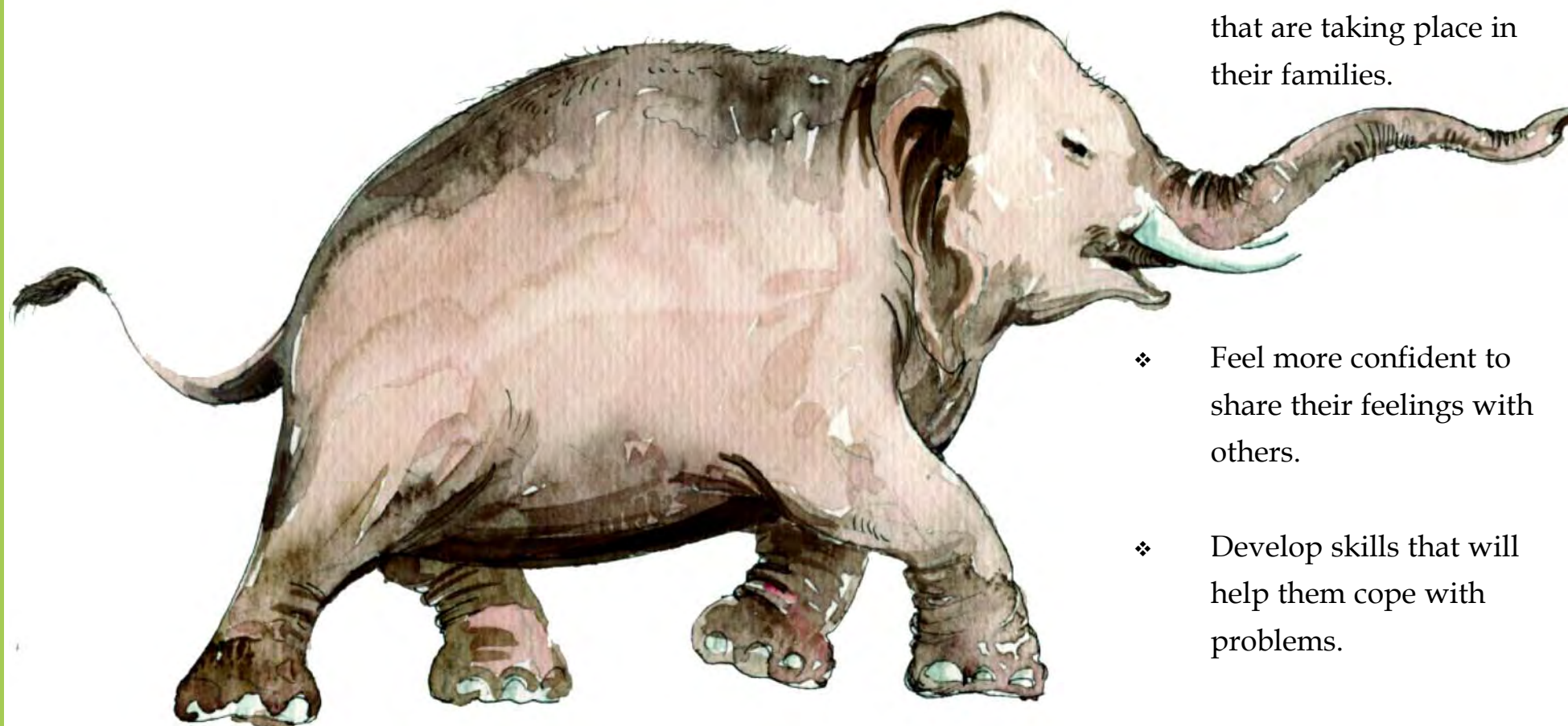
You Are Special

For children living in families affected by HIV/AIDS



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The aim of this book is to help children living in families affected by HIV/AIDS to:



- ❖ Understand the changes that are taking place in their families.
- ❖ Feel more confident to share their feelings with others.
- ❖ Develop skills that will help them cope with problems.

Contents

Page

1. Why am I special? 4
2. You are a wonderful seed like the lotus seed. 5
3. Being extra special means learning to be responsible 6
4. What is HIV? 8
5. Who can get HIV? 9
6. How does HIV cause the body to become sick? 10
7. Do I need to be afraid of HIV? 11
8. What should I do if I think I may be HIV+? 12
9. What is AIDS? 13
10. How does HIV/AIDS affect my family? 14
11. Why are people frightened of HIV/AIDS? 15
12. What problems can occur when someone in my family is HIV+? 16

Contents

Page

13.	What can I do to help my family cope with HIV/AIDS?	17
14.	What can I do when I feel sad?	20
15.	Things that might help when you feel sad	21
16.	What can I do when I feel angry?	24
17.	Breathing practice	25
18.	What can I do to stay healthy?	26
19.	Eat nutritious foods to stay healthy	27
20.	What will my friends say about HIV in my family?	28
21.	Things that might help you when talking to your friends	29
22.	How will I manage in the future?	30
23.	My special pages	31

Why am I special?

There is no one like you in the whole world. You have your own appearance, ability and talents.

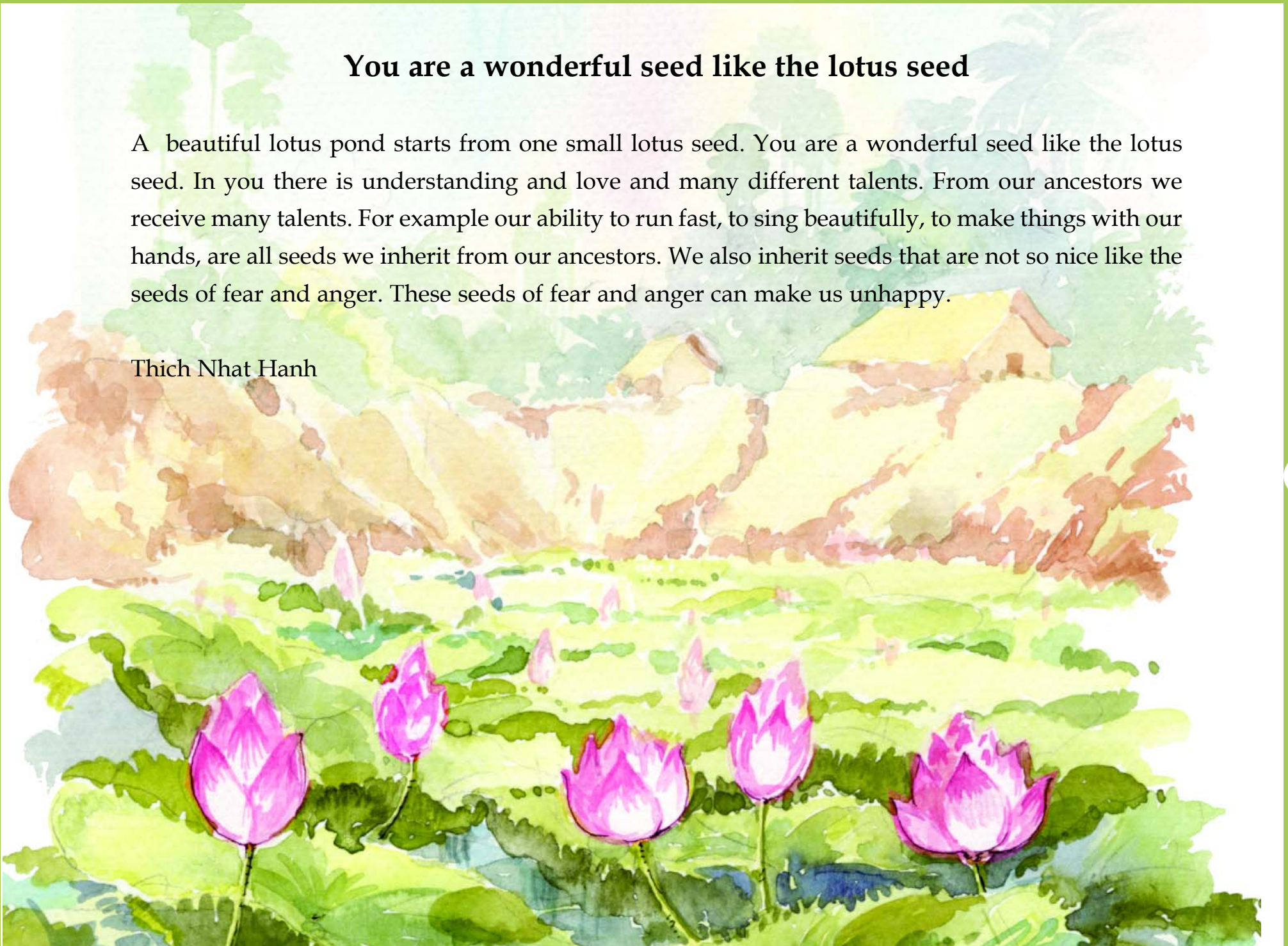


When your family is affected by HIV/AIDS you will discover new strengths and ways to cope when you face difficulties.

You are a wonderful seed like the lotus seed

A beautiful lotus pond starts from one small lotus seed. You are a wonderful seed like the lotus seed. In you there is understanding and love and many different talents. From our ancestors we receive many talents. For example our ability to run fast, to sing beautifully, to make things with our hands, are all seeds we inherit from our ancestors. We also inherit seeds that are not so nice like the seeds of fear and anger. These seeds of fear and anger can make us unhappy.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Being special means learning to be responsible

Being responsible is hard work. It means making choices and doing what you say you can do.

You can make good choices to :

- ❖ Stay healthy.
- ❖ Eat nutritious foods.
- ❖ Run and play.
- ❖ Continue studying.
- ❖ Share family tasks.





When you take good care of yourself it makes your family happy.



What is HIV?

HIV is a virus that makes people sick. A virus is a germ that you can get from someone else. It gets into your body and makes you sick. HIV doesn't go away like other viruses that cause colds, measles or flu. It stays in the person's blood for the rest of that person's life.

How can I tell if someone has HIV?

The only way someone can know if they have HIV is to have a special blood test. Most people with HIV look healthy and strong.

What is the cure for HIV?

There is no cure for HIV. People with HIV in their body can stay healthy and strong for many years if they take good care of their health. There are special medicines that help a HIV+ person stay healthy.

Who can get HIV?

HIV can infect anyone, rich or poor, young or old.

HIV can be transmitted in 3 ways:



1. Having sex with someone who is infected with HIV.

People can protect themselves from HIV by both partners staying faithful to each other, or using a condom during sex.



2. Blood from a HIV+ person entering someone's body through a used dirty needle or syringe or a skin wound or cut.



3. HIV may be transmitted to a baby born to a mother who is HIV positive. But not all babies who are born to HIV + mothers will be infected with HIV.

How does HIV cause the body to become sick?

HIV lives in the body and damages the body's protective system. When the protective system is damaged it is easier for germs to enter the body.



Do I need to be afraid of HIV?

Don't be frightened it is not easy to catch HIV from family members who are HIV+.

HIV cannot be transmitted by:

- ❖ Touching, hugging or kissing someone with HIV.
- ❖ Eating together with a HIV + person.
- ❖ Living together.
- ❖ Studying in the same class.
- ❖ Caring for a HIV+ person who is sick.



What should I do if I think I may be HIV+?

Talk to someone you trust about your worries and fears.

Remember HIV is not easily transmitted (see page 9 and 11). There is only one way to know if you are HIV+, that is to make a special HIV blood test at a center that provides pre and post-test counseling.

If you know your status, you can access services to help you stay healthy. You will also feel relieved to know the truth, rather than worrying about the unknown

Important : No one should force you to test unless you agree.

What is AIDS?

AIDS is the later stage of HIV infection. It can take up to ten years for a person with HIV to develop AIDS.

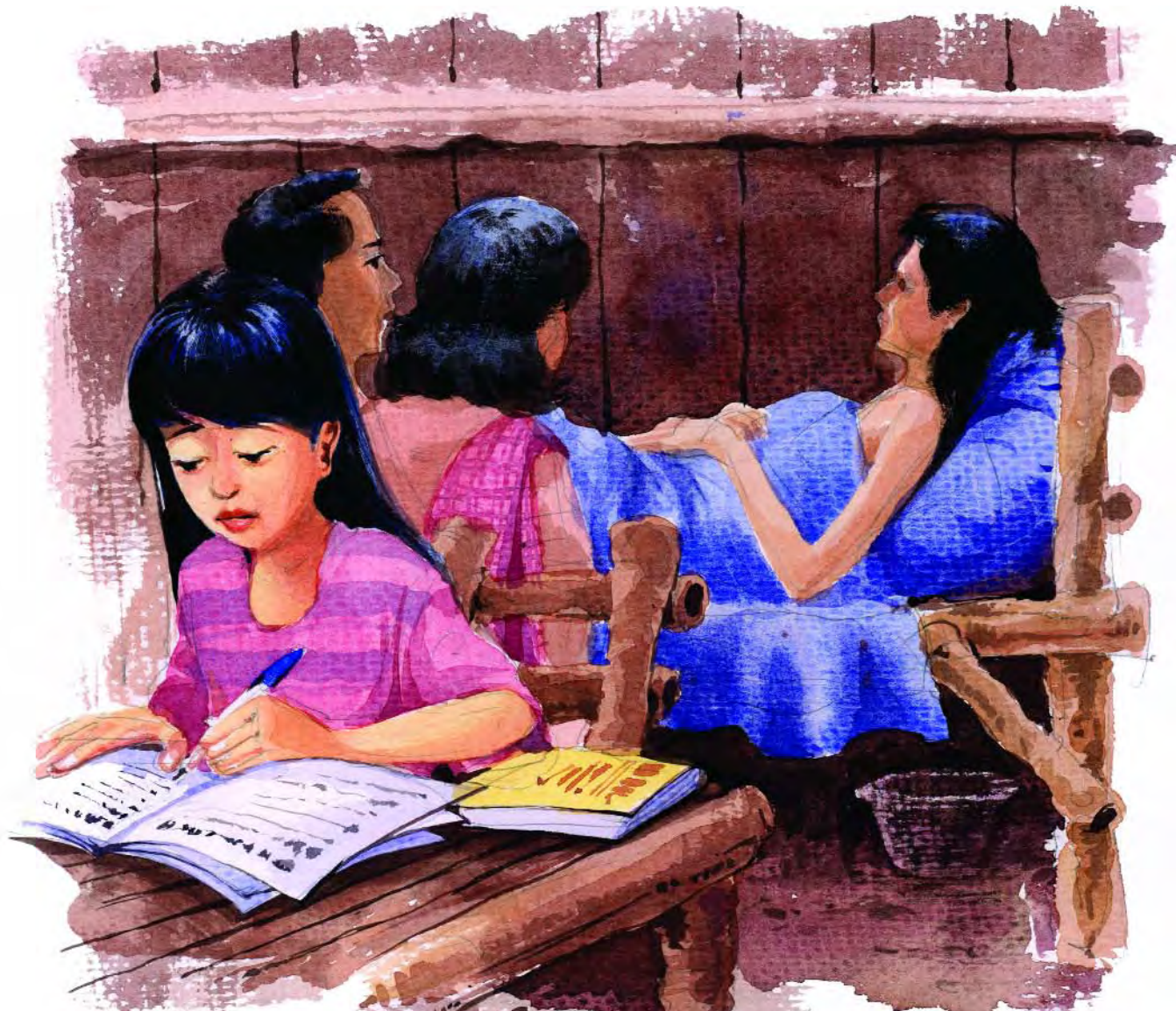
When a person with HIV develops AIDS they become sick with various diseases. Germs easily infect the body of someone with AIDS because their body's protective system is very weak.

AIDS is a chronic disease. People with AIDS will have some days when they feel OK and some days when they feel sick.



How does HIV/AIDS affect my family?

HIV/AIDS is a chronic disease. This means the illness can continue for a long time. When someone in your family is sick it affects everyone in the family and causes sadness and worry.



Why are people frightened of HIV/AIDS?



HIV/AIDS is a new disease. Some people are afraid because they don't understand it or know how it is transmitted.

Sometimes people may avoid you or your family because they don't know what to say or they feel frightened.

What problems can occur when someone in my family is HIV +?

HIV or AIDS can cause conflict and misunderstanding between family members. This usually does not last. Most family become closer and stronger when they face problems.

When someone in your family is living with HIV they may feel:

- ❖ Sad because they cannot work as before and earn money.
- ❖ Angry that this illness has happened to them.
- ❖ Worried and shy about what other people will say.
- ❖ Fearful about the future.
- ❖ Worried about money to buy food and medical care.
- ❖ Concerned about their children's future and education.



What can I do to help my family cope with HIV/AIDS?

You are an important member of your family. There are many things you can do to help:



Continue going to school. Education is important for your future. If you have a problem going to school, ask adults in your family to discuss this with community leaders. They may be able to help.

Help with household tasks like washing, carrying water and running errands. Your family will need more help.



Spend time with the person in your family who is sick. Hug the person who is sick.
It will make them feel happy when you show love and concern for them.



Continue to enjoy all the things you did before there was sickness in your family. Spend time playing with friends, go fishing and play sports.

What can I do when I feel sad?

When your family is affected by HIV/AIDS there will be sad days, but there will also be happy days. Sad days don't last.



Some reasons for feeling sad might be:

- ★ Fear that someone you love will die.
- ★ Worry that your friends are talking about you.
- ★ Concern about the future of your family or yourself.
- ★ Worry that you will be responsible for the care of younger brothers and sisters in the future.

Things that might help when you feel sad



Talk to someone who will listen. Share your feeling of sadness with them. Many of the problems you are worried about can be helped by talking.

Do something you enjoy, like going to visit a friend, watching a video, listening to music, singing or playing sports.

Things that might help when you feel sad

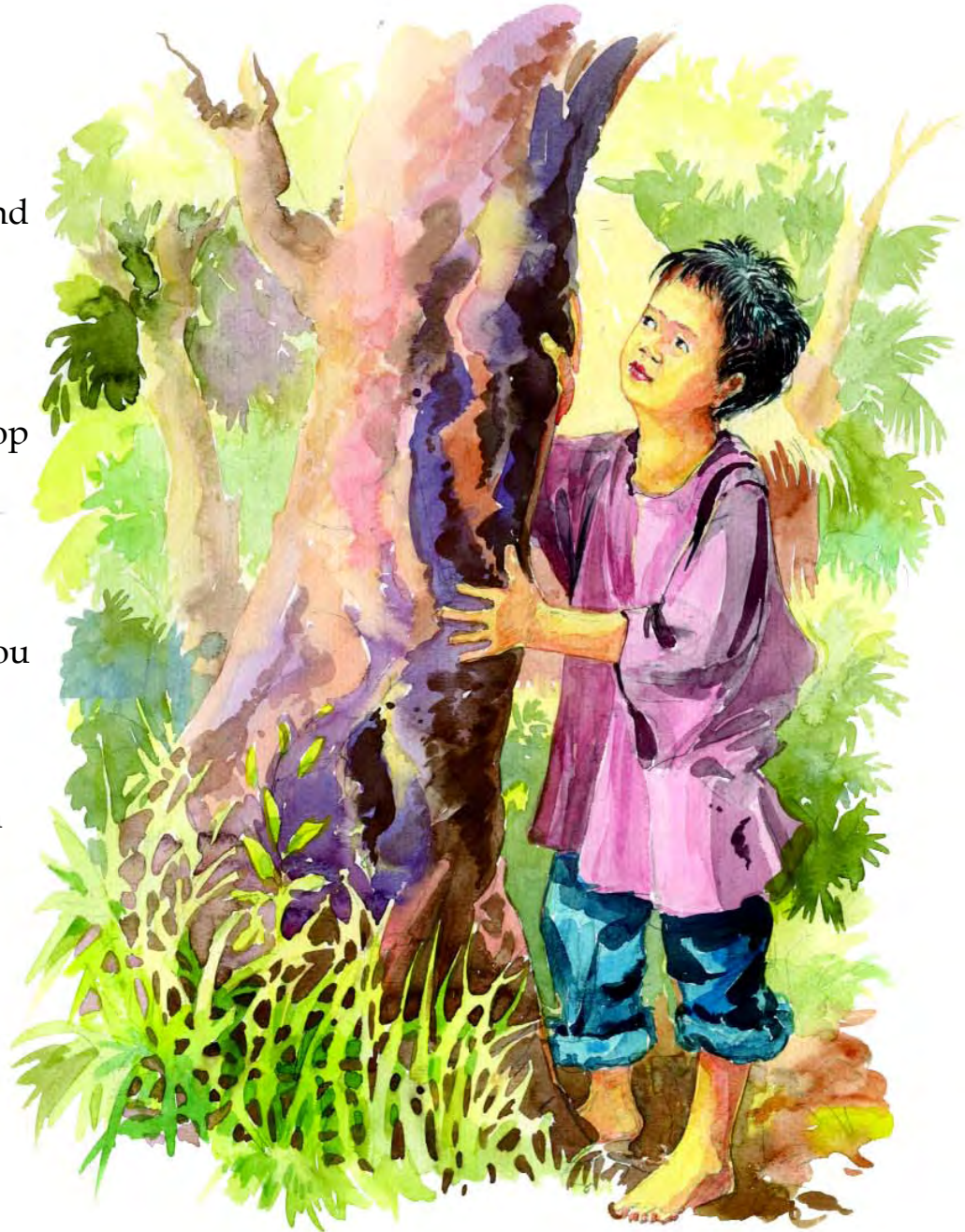
Tree hugging

When you touch a tree you feel something beautiful and refreshing back. Trees are wonderful. They are solid, even in a storm. We can learn a lot from trees.

Find a tree that is especially beautiful to you. If you stop and touch a tree you will feel its wonderful qualities. Breathing deeply will help you touch the tree deeply. Breathe in, touch the tree. Then breathe out. Do this three times. Touching the tree in this way will make you feel refreshed and happy.

Then if you like you can hug the tree. When you hug a tree, a tree never refuses. You can rely on a tree. It is dependable. Every time you want to see it, every time you need shade, it is there for you.

Thich Nhat Hanh





Things that might help when you feel sad

Touching the earth

When you feel restless or lack confidence in yourself or when you feel angry or unhappy you can kneel down and touch the earth with your hand. Touch the Earth as if it were your favorite thing or your best friend. The Earth has been there for a long time. She is mother to all of us. She knows everything.

The Buddha asked the Earth to be his witness by touching her with his hand when he had some doubts and fears before his awakening. The Earth appeared to him as a beautiful mother. In her arms she carried flowers and fruit, birds and butterflies and many different animals, and offered them to the Buddha. The Buddha's doubts and fears instantly disappeared. Touching the Earth is very good to heal you and restore your joy.

Thich Nhat Hanh

What can I do when I feel angry?

When we feel hurt we often want to say or do things to hurt other people. Usually someone that we care about. We think that by saying something cruel to him or her, we will feel better.

But we find we really do not feel better at all.



Breathing practice



We need to learn how to take care of our anger. It is better not to respond with words. A good way to care for our anger is to stop and do breathing practice.

The first thing to do is:

- ❖ Stop and to think about your breathing.
- ❖ Say “breathing in I know I’m angry, breathing out, anger is still there.”
- ❖ Continue to breathe like this for three or four breathes and then usually there is a slight lessening of the anger inside.
- ❖ Continue breathing and say “Breathing in I see anger in me,
- ❖ “Breathing out I smile at my anger.”

After doing this for a while you will calm down and you will be able to smile at your anger.

What can I do to stay healthy?

When your family is affected by HIV/AIDS they will be busy and worried about many things.
It will help if you take responsibility for your health.



To stay healthy

- ❖ Shower as often as possible.
- ❖ Wash your own clothes and wear clean clothes daily.
- ❖ Brush your teeth regularly.
- ❖ Keep your finger nails short and clean.
- ❖ Protect your skin from mosquito bites by sleeping under a mosquito net.

Get enough sleep. It is important to get at least 8-9 hours sleep a night.

Exercise such as sports and play are important not only for a strong body but also a healthy mind. Helping with family chores or working in the fields is also good exercise and can help you to have a good appetite and sleep well.

Eat nutritious foods to stay healthy



Nutritious food doesn't need to be expensive. Many foods that can be found in the fields and forest are nutritious.

Don't spend money on tinned drinks and packaged snacks which are expensive and not good for your health.

What will my friends say about HIV in my family?

When people don't understand about HIV/AIDS they may be frightened.
You may feel sad because people do or say something bad about you or your family.

Ways that other people or friends may react to HIV/AIDS:

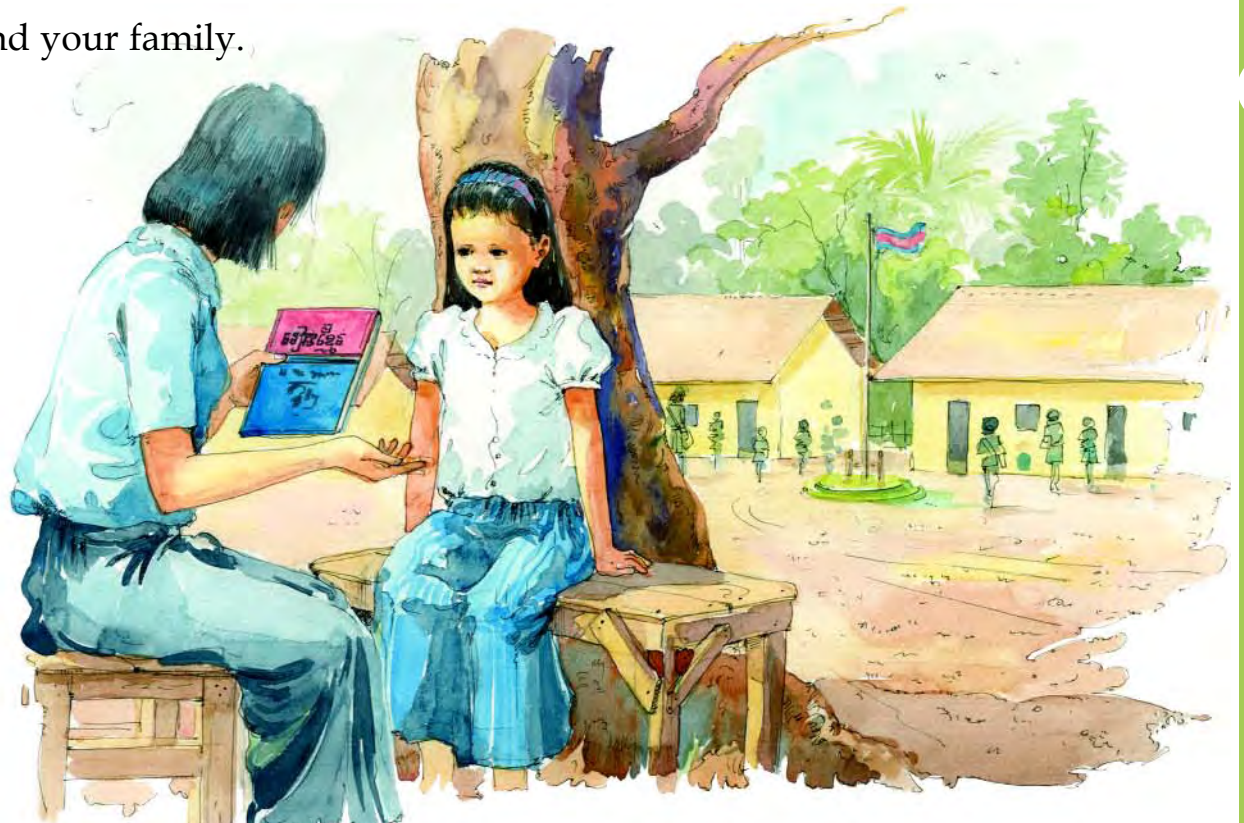
- ❖ They may want to help you because they know you face a problem.
- ❖ They may call you names or talk about you.
- ❖ They may pretend they don't know someone in your family has HIV.

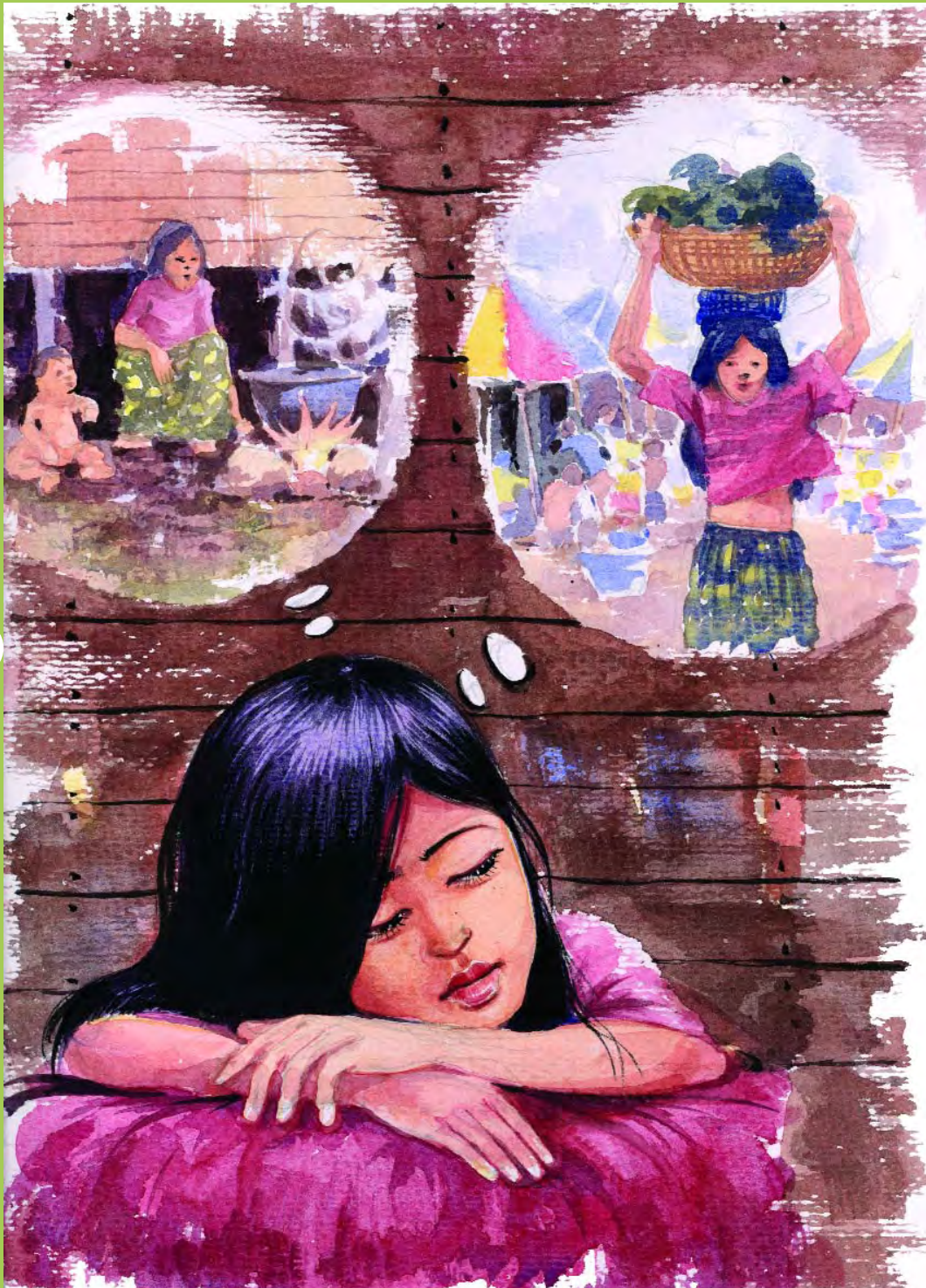


Thing that might help you when talking to your friends

- ❖ Accept that you are not the only child in your community to face this problem.
- ❖ Talk about HIV/AIDS with your friends and explain to them that it is a chronic disease that can affect anyone.
- ❖ Explain that HIV/AIDS is not easy to catch.
- ❖ Explain how they might help you and your family.

If you have a teacher whom you like and trust share your problems with him/her and ask that he/she helps you to explain to other children about HIV/AIDS.





How will I manage in the future?

When a family member is sick with HIV/AIDS, everyone in your family will worry about the future.

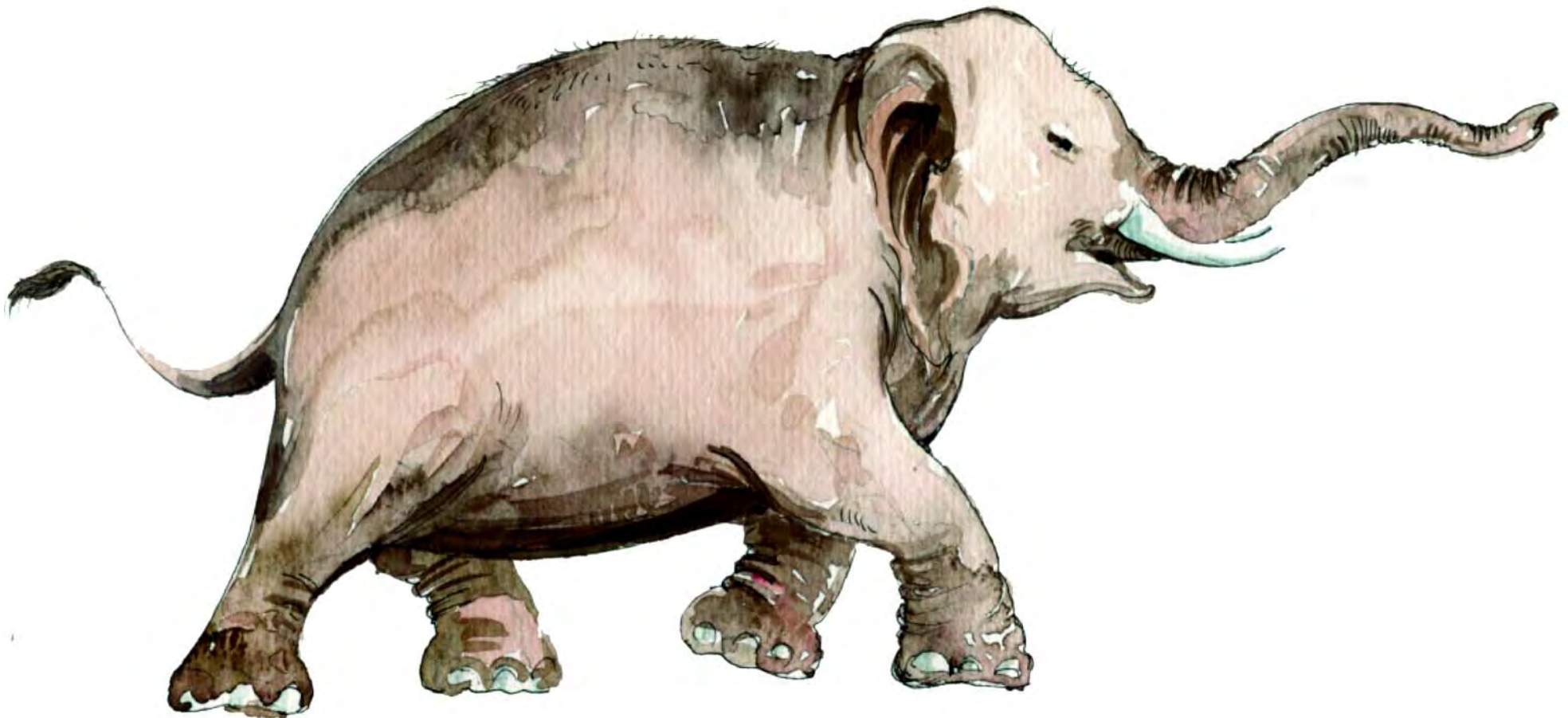
Some things you can do that will help:

- ❖ Talk with someone you love and trust. Discuss your worries and share ideas about what you would like to happen in the future.
- ❖ Make a big effort to continue going to school. School is important for your future.
- ❖ Remember that your parents and family love you and will try to do what's best for your future.

My special pages

This book is for you. On this and the following pages you can write stories, draw pictures, or stick pictures or photographs.

You can do this activity by yourself or with members of your family or friends.



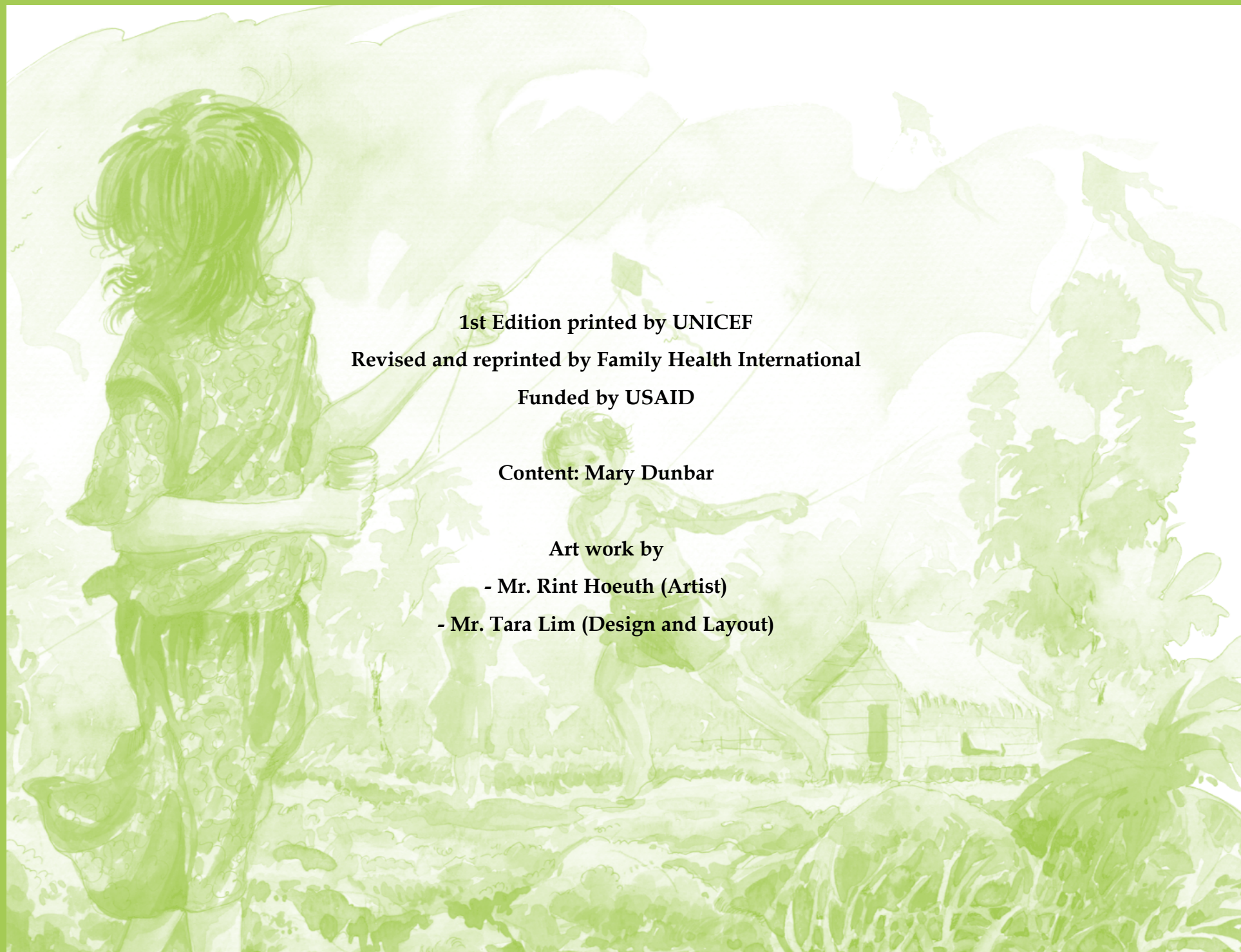
My family and home

My best friend

My happiest time

My saddest time

My dreams for the future



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