

MY THIRD OUMA

A Nama
midwife
story



Illustrated by
Nicola Visser
& Rosa Shepherd

by

Loretta Feris, Siona O'Connell, Leanne Feris, and Alicia English

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*Dedicated to all midwives:
those who brought us into the world,
those who brought our mothers
and their mothers into the world
and those who assist women every day
and help bring their babies into the world.*



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It is a quiet spring morning and the Namaqualand field is covered with a quilt of different flowers and many colours.

Ouma Toesie is in her garden picking herbs. A curious *dassie*, Mauricio, has come out to enjoy the morning sun.



Ouma Toesie gently picks some herbs and places them in her apron. She will use them later to make some ointment and oils.

Just then, Sonnetjie comes running towards her. “Morning *Ouma*, I’ve come to call you!” she says. She is very excited.



“Good morning my child, where are you going in such a hurry?” asks *Ouma*.
Mauricio looks on puzzled.

“I’ve come to call you, *Ouma*. It is time, mommy is ready to give birth,” says Sonnetjie, tugging at her *ouma*’s hand.



Ouma Toesie's wrinkled hands tell their own story. Hers are hands that heal and hold. As the midwife of Dassiefontein, her hands have helped many women give birth – too many to count.

Much like the expanse of the night sky, her hands have held the past, present, and future.



Ouma Toesie makes her way to Sonnetjie's house, a few streets away. Her one hand holds onto Sonnetjie, while the other clutches her apron pockets, filled with herbal medicines, ointments, and oils.

Mauricio follows them closely, keeping a close eye on *Ouma's* apron.



When they arrive, *Ouma* Toesie enters the house while Sonnetjie and Mauricio wait on the stoep.

Ouma Toesie was not much older than Regina, Sonnetjie's mother, when her *ouma* started passing down the wisdom of the midwife to her.

Her *ouma* taught her everything there is to know about the Nama way of life. Soon it will be time for her to share this wisdom with Regina.



Sonnetjies's mom is relieved to see
Ouma Toesie. Tears trickle down her face.

Ouma Toesie gently wipes away her tears.
Over the years, she has caught the tears of
many mothers during birth and stored each
tear in her heart.



After a long while, Sonnetjie can hear the sound of a baby crying from inside. *Ouma* Toesie finally emerges from the house and joins Sonnetjie and Mauricio on the stoep.

Mommy and baby are resting inside. “It’s a boy!” she says, much to the delight of Sonnetjie and Mauricio.



Ouma Toesie enfolds Sonnetjie's hands with hers. "One day when you're much older Sonnetjie, your hands will be the ones that heal and hold, just like mine."

"But I don't know the wisdom of a midwife like you do, *Ouma*," says Sonnetjie.

"Do not worry, my child. I will teach you the ways of a midwife just like my *ouma* taught me as a child."



The End



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Ten-year-old Sonnetjie has come to call *Ouma* Toesie. It is time, her mother is ready to give birth. *Ouma* Toesie is the midwife in Dassiefontein. Soon, she will pass down her wisdom to Sonnetjie's mom, just as her *ouma* before her.

Hands that heal and hold – A Nama midwife story captures the wisdom of the Nama midwife passed down through generations.



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