



## **Searching for the Spirit of Spring**

Nkanyezi can't wait for the Spring festival, but the people of Ndlovu have lost their spirit of celebration. She must go in search of the spirit of Spring. What will she find?



Searching for the Spirit of Spring  
Mosa Mahlaba

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# Let's Read

 **The Asia Foundation**



Searching for the Spirit of Spring  
Written by Mosa Mahlaba Illustrated by Selina Morulane



The Winter cold had passed. Spring was coming to Nkanyezi's village. Soon the villagers would gather to celebrate the new season. Nkanyezi looked forward to the Spring festival more than any other day in the year.



One warm morning, Nkanyezi overheard two village elders talking about the festival. “The people of Ndlovu have lost their spirit of celebration,” one sighed. “How can we have a Spring festival in a village that has forgotten how to celebrate?” asked another



Nkanyezi was worried. "How will the sun shine again unless we sing to wake it from its winter slumber?" she asked herself. Nkanyezi thought for a long time. "I must find what we have lost," she decided. "I must go in search of things that will bring back the spirit of celebration to my village."



The elders gave Nkanyezi their blessing for the journey. They gave her a bag to carry the things she would find. Nkanyezi was afraid, but she believed she would succeed.





Nkanyezi walked all day. She hiked up a hill, and down into a valley. She sailed across the great river, and climbed between sharp rocks. She marched across the plains until she reached the shadow of the red mountains



As night was closing in, Nkanyezi arrived at a village of patterns and colors as she had never seen before. She told the village elders about her journey to bring back the spirit of celebration to her people. The mother of this tribe gave Nkanyezi a gift. She told the girl, "With love we give to you this paint to restore color to a village that has gone dull." Nkanyezi thanked the elders and put the paint in her bag. Early the next morning she went on her way again, excited with this gift of color.



Nkanyezi walked all day, through a vast forest of giant trees. As the sky became too dark for her to see, she heard the sound of beating drums. She hurried towards the drumming, feeling the spirit of dance coming to her tired feet



Nkanyezi found herself in the village of the Bhubezi. People were sitting around a fire, drumming and singing. She had never before heard such wonderful music. She told the village elders about her journey to bring back the spirit of celebration to her people. The Bhubezi invited her to rest and stay the night.



In the morning, the chief called on Nkanyezi. "My child," he said, "here is a special drum. It plays a new song every time you beat it." Nkanyezi thanked the elders and put the drum in her bag. She went on her way again, delighted with this gift of music and dance.



On the third day of her journey, as she passed a field of fat cows, her nose started to tingle. An aroma tickled her taste buds and her mouth started to water. She followed the scent, and arrived in a village to find people standing over steaming pots of stew. This tribe was famous for its feasts and Nkanyezi had never before tasted such flavors. After she had eaten her fill, she told the village elders about her journey to bring back the spirit of celebration to her people



The next day, the council of cooks gave her a secret spice blend. “Our daughter,” they said, “with these spices, happy tummies are guaranteed! We give you the gift of good food.” Nkanyezi thanked the elders and put the spices in her bag. She knew she had everything she needed. With new energy, she started the long journey back to the village of Ndlovu.



When she arrived home the villagers gathered around her to hear of her adventures. She told them the tales of what she had seen, heard, and eaten. Then she opened her bag to share the gifts given. The people rejoiced to receive these treasures. Through the generosity of others and the courage of Nkanyezi, the villagers again found the color, song, and dance in their lives. And so the spirit of celebration was restored to the village of Ndlovu.





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