

# MY RICE IS **BEST!**



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PUFFIN





*For Shane, who gave me the gentle nudge.  
For Ziai, Yaima and Ovie, my heart's purest joy.  
For Mom, Karmel, and Asè for your endless love.  
And for Nanny, whose presence transcends all realms—  
forever by my side. - S.B.*



*Dedicated to my beloved big brother, Abiola (Kingsley), who  
inspired & nurtured my artistic gifts from a very young age.  
Also, to my dear Father, Mother & Grandmother. - M.A.O*

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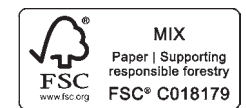
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Shane's eyes lit up,



his nose twitched, and his mouth watered



as he smelt the sweet scent of his favourite meal.

He sped to the kitchen table  
and plonked himself in his chair.  
There it was –

# THE BEST FOOD EVER!



A delicious bowl of  
rice and peas.



"These are the most **SUPER-DUPER, EXTRA-TASTY, MEGA-DELICIOUS, ULTRA-YUMMILICIOUS** rice and peas ever!"  
said Shane, shoving a big spoonful in his mouth.



The rice and peas made Shane  
feel **POWERFUL** and **MIGHTY** . . .

as though he was the  
strongest kid on his street.



No . . . his country. **NO** -





Shane asked, "Mom, why is this so yummy?"

"It's a secret," Mom whispered.

"Really?!" said Shane. "Tell me! **PLEEEASSS E E E E E E E E E E!**"



"OK. The secret is these – they're called pimento seeds," said Mom, shaking them into her hand before showing them to Shane.



Shane looked down at the brown seeds. They looked too small to be so special.

"This secret has been in our family for many generations," said Mom.

"Great Grandmother passed it to Granny when she was a girl, then Granny passed it to me. And now I'm sharing it with you!"



"Wow!" Shane was amazed!

"Would you like some special rice for your school lunch tomorrow?" asked Mom.

**"YESSSS!"** said Shane.





At lunchtime the next day, Shane opened his lunch box.



And there it was: the best rice in the world!

Sitting next to him was Yinka. She had her own tub.  
"What's in there?" asked Shane.



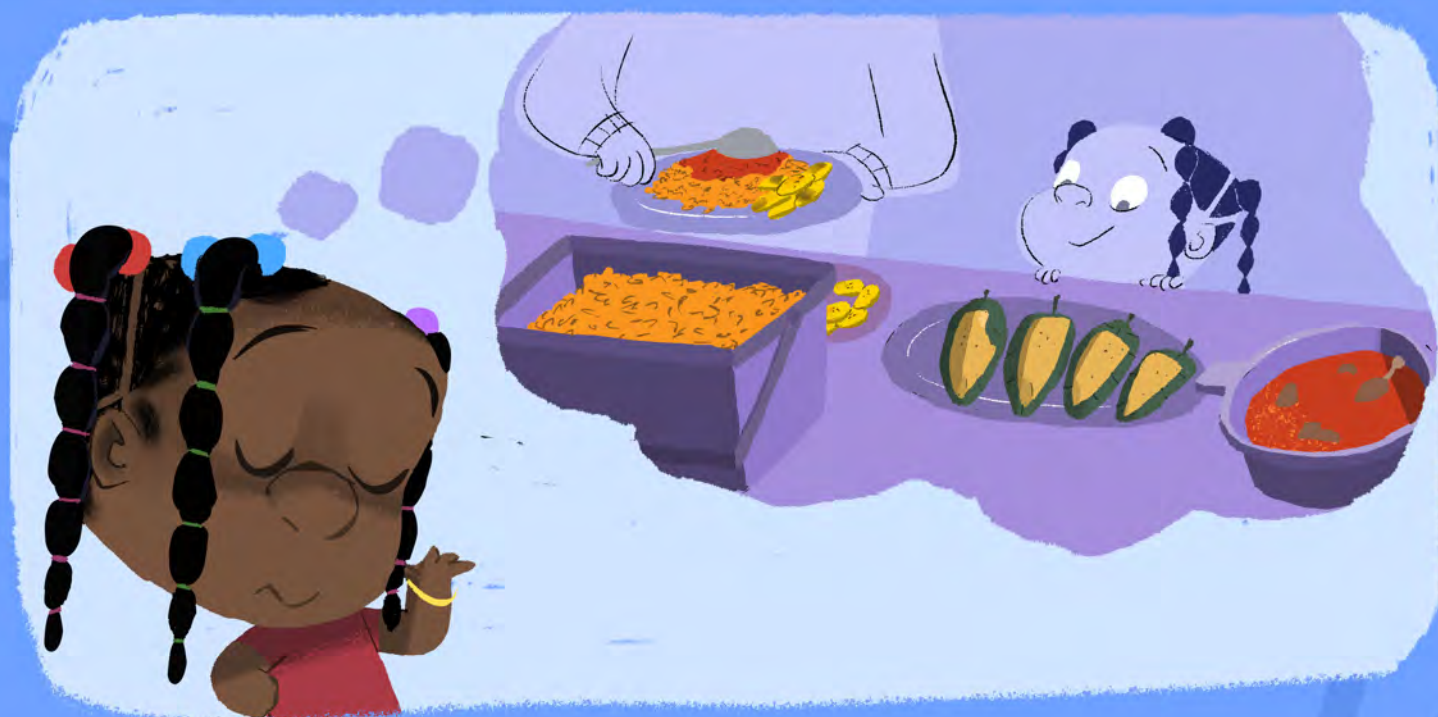
"This is the most **SUPER-DUPER, EXTRA-TASTY, MEGA-DELICIOUS, ULTRA-YUMMILICIOUS** food ever –  
the best rice in the world . . .



"Rice?" asked Shane, shocked. *Was it true?* Was there more  
than one tasty special best rice in the world?



"Yes," said Yinka, taking a big spoonful. "My family eat Jollof rice all the time. I love it with red stew, moi moi or plantain."



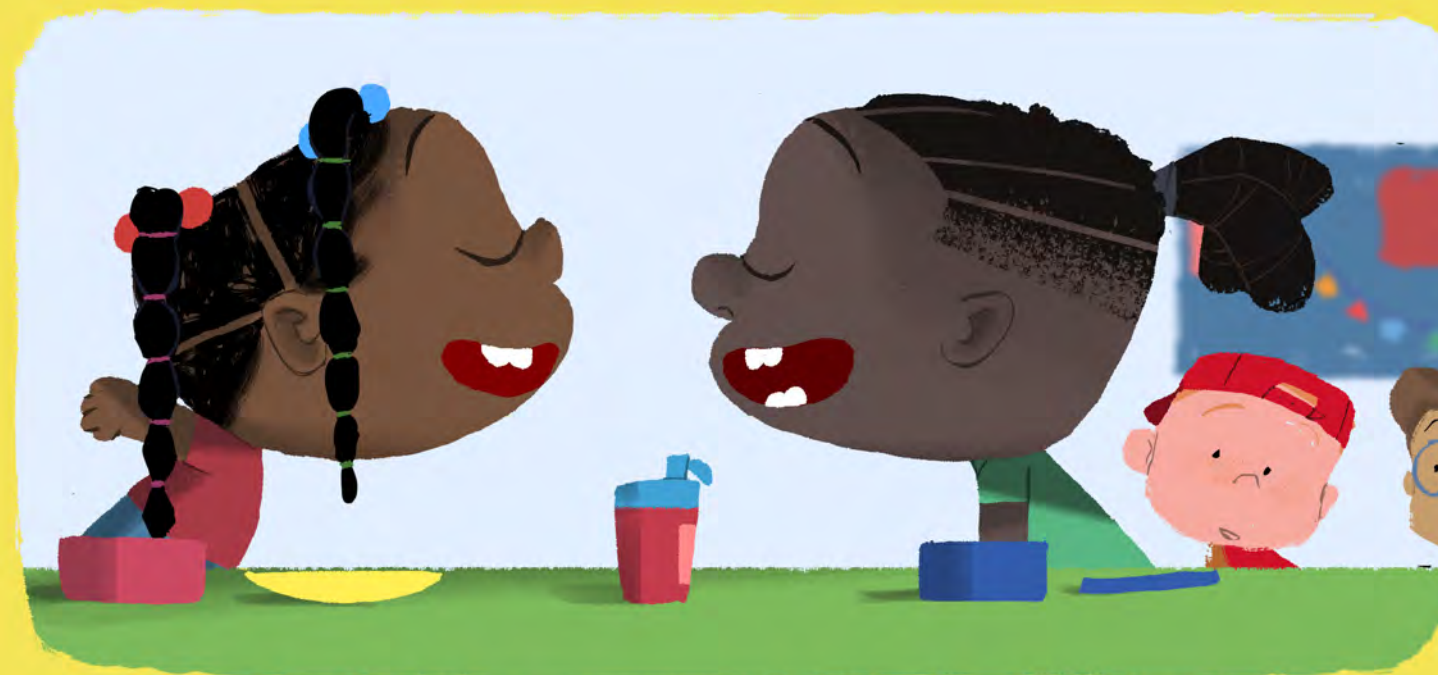
"Well, sorry – it just can't be, because rice and peas is the best rice in the whole entire universe," said Shane.



They looked at each other.



"No, it isn't," said Yinka.  
"Yes, it is," replied Shane.



How could he prove it?



"Does your rice feel fluffy, like a cuddly, comfy pillow?" asked Shane.



**"YES!"**

"Does your rice go squishy and sticky when you squash it between your fingers?" asked Yinka.

**"YES!"**



"Does yours get stuck in your back big tooth, tickle your tongue and swirl round and round in your stomach?" asked Shane.

**"YES!"**

"When you eat your rice, does it get stuck to the top of your mouth, slide down your throat and make your belly dance?" asked Yinka.



**"YES,"** said Shane.



"Because **MY** rice and peas is the BEST!"



"No! **MY** Jollof rice is the best!" yelled Yinka.