By Eileen O’Hely
Art by Anton Syadrov
EARLY MORNING ON AN ISLAND IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC...

...THE GRASS IN THE VILLAGE IS BROWN AND PATCHY...

...THE CROPS ARE DROPING...

...THE SCRUB IN THE SURROUNDING HILLS IS DRY AND BRITTLE.

CREEEEEAK!

LEIANI WAKES UP ALREADY SWEATING.

LEIANI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP?

WAKING A SPECIAL BREAKFAST FOR PAPA. SHE DEPICTING A TREAT WITH A NEW SHEN ON THE LUNI!

I HEARD NOISES, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THE FLOWER IS NICA.

SHE LOVES IT'S PERUM.

LEIANI, CAN YOU SEE WHO IS KNOCKING?
AHHH!

JENANI, IT'S ME, LAGI.

SO I WOULDN'T BREATHE IN SMOKE. WE ARE BACK-BURNING TODAY TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE FROM FIRE. IS YOUR PAPA READY?

YOU AND TASH CAN LOOK AFTER YOUR MUM.

HE'S LOOKING AFTER MAMA.

CAN I COME TOO?

YES, WE NEED TO CLEAN UP THE YARD SO IF A FIRE COMES TO REACH US, THERE IS NO FUEL FOR IT TO BURN.

THANK YOU, LAGI.

YES, I'LL JUST GET MY GEAR.

BE CAREFUL.

NO, TASH, YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO COME TO THE HILLS WITH US. BUT THERE IS IMPORTANT WORK TO BE DONE HERE. REMEMBER WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT YESTERDAY?

EXACTLY, EVERYBODY HAS A PART TO PLAY TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE FROM BUSH FIRE.

I NEVER GET TO DO ANYTHINGS.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SERINA.

ARE YOU READY, RUP?

BYE PAPA.

WHY ARE YOU WEARING THAT MASK?

PAPA WILL BE TIRED WHEN HE COMES BACK FROM HIS IMPORTANT JOB. LET'S COOK HIS FAVOURITE DINNER.

OF COURSE.

BEFORE WE GET TO WORK, WE HAVE SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS.

YOU MEAN CHICKEN IN BANANA LEAF?

BUT IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, WE SHOULD MAKE WHAT YOU WANT.

I WANT TO THANK YOUR FATHER FOR PROTECTING THE VILLAGE FROM FIRE. I'LL GO TO THE MARKET. YOU FETCH BANANA LEAVES AND WOOD FOR THE FIRE.
MORE WOOD?

CAND BE BRASS ME THE MATCHES WHEN YOU COME BACK PLEASE?

THIS HSR FOR THE FIRE, IT'S FOR SOMETHING ELSE.

THAT SHOULD LOOK NICE, BUT HOW TO STOP MAMA SEEING IT?

PERFECT.

CAN I LIGHT THE FIRE NOW?

WOOL...

BANANA LEAVES...

WE HAVE MATCHES...

HERE ARE THE MATCHES.

NO, WE'VE FORGOTTEN THE MOST IMPORTANT THING.

WE NEED A BUCKET OF WATER, IN CASE THERE'S AN ACCIDENT, A FIRE CAN GET OUT OF CONTROL EASILY, ESPECIALLY IN THIS WEATHER.

O'E OF THE WATER.

I'LL GET THE WATER.

WILL PAPA BE SAFE?

YES, HE IS CLEARING THE UNDERGROWTH AROUND THE VILLAGE. SO A FOREST FIRE WON'T HURT US.

IT HAS NOT RAINED FOR A LONG TIME. THE BUSHES ARE DRY LIKE THIS FIREWOODS AND WILL BURN EASILY.

DAD IS HELPING WITH BACK BURNING. THEY WILL LIGHT CAREFUL PILES TO CLEAN THE DRY WOOD. ONCE IT HAS BURNED, IT CANNOT BURN AGAIN FOR A LONG TIME.
Today is a good day. There is not much wind for the back-burning to get out of control. They will be safe.

Here’s the water. Can we light the fire now?

Yes tank, you may light the fire. Then be sure to stand right back!

I will prepare the chicken inside. Who wants to watch the fire?

Remember, don’t put your hands too close to the flames. If you blur yourself, use the water in the bucket to cool your skin, then come inside, and I will put a dressing on it.

Mml.

Mml.

... and carefully place our food on top with some stones on top of the food too.

Now we cover with more banana leaf. It will be delicious by dinner time.

Now we cover the yard. Can you keep an eye on the ground over? I’m going inside to lie down.

The flames are small, but the coals are glowing.

That is good. It means they are really hot. We spread the coals over the stones so they heat up.

Now is our first!
I'M SO TIRED. PLEASE BE GOOD WHILE I SNOOZE.

ON, PLEASE DON'T LOOK UNDER THE SHEET! IT'S A SECRET SURPRISE FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY!

THIS IS STUPID. I SHOULD BE HELPING PAPA AND THE ADULTS IN THE HILLS.

MAYBE IF WE DO A GOOD JOB HERE HE'LL LET US HELP TOMORROW.

ONE OF US WILL HAVE TO SIT WITH MAMA, DIBS IT ISN'T ME.

I'LL LOOK AFTER MAMA TOMORROW, AND YOU CAN LOOK AFTER HER THE DAY AFTER THAT.

SOME HOURS LATER...

I CAN SEE THE BACKYARDERS COMING HOME. LET'S SERVE THE CHICKEN AND RICE SO IT WILL BE READY WHEN YOUR FRIEND WALKS IN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ER... SETTING THE TABLE.

PERFECT.
I can't wait to eat it.

But there are no flames, only hot coals.

Not so fast, let's get the table, so you can put out the fire.

The coals are still very hot. If the wind blows a dry leaf on them, it can ignite.

If the wind blows that flaming leaf or an ember onto the dry grass or a tree...

...it could cause a huge fire.

It's been very hot, and the rains are late. Which is why we need to clear all the flammable material away from in and around the village.

I remember that, an El Niño is when air and the sea get warmer in the south Pacific, and the winds blow the other way, blocking the rain clouds away from us.

Yes, we learned about that in school. It's because of El Niño.

I smell burning...

Climate change has made this the worst and longest El Niño, but our country has been global. Our village is feeling the impacts too.
I WILL TRY TO SMOOTHER THE FLAMES!

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

WE MADE YOUR FAVOURITE DINNER, CHICKEN IN BANANA LEAF.

I'VE GOT A BUCKET OF WATER.

DON'T TIP IT OUT!

DID YOU COOK IT ON THE TABLE?

NO, WE COOKED IT OUTSIDE IN THE GROUND OVEN.

DID YOU LIGHT THE CANDLES?

WHEN YOU LIGHT A FIRE YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. EVEN IF IT IS JUST A TINY CANDLE FLAME, FIRE CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS, AN ADULT CAN HELP YOU IF YOU NEED TO LIGHT A FIRE OR USE A MATCH. IT IS DANGEROUS FOR CHILDREN TO DO IT THEMSELVES.

I'LL GET A DRESSING FOR YOU, MAMA.

COLD WATER TO COOL YOUR SKIN, MAMA.

IT'S MY FAULT. I WANTED TO MAKE MAMA A CANDLE-LIT DINNER, WITH A PRETTY CENTERPIECE. THE LEAVES MUST HAVE CAUGHT FIRE FROM THE CANDLES.

NO, PAPA, I DIDN'T SEE IT.

YOU DIDN'T SEE IT HAPPEN?

YES, PAPA.
HOW ARE YOUR HANDS?

THEY'RE OKAY. THERE'S NO BLOOSTERINGS. LET'S SET DOWN AND EAT.

NO, THE WIND IS SUPPOSED TO PICK UP OVERNIGHT. IT WILL BE MORE DANGEROUS IN THE HILLS TOMORROW.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE VILLAGE CLEAR. BURN WITH OUR FIREBREAK. THE FIRE CAN JUMP!

YOUR WORK HERE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS BACK-BURNING IN THE HILLS.

YOU DID A GOOD JOB CLEARING TODAY. THE STRONG WIND WILL BRING MORE LEAVES AND BRANCHES TO CLEAR TOMORROW.

OUR FAMILY SHOULD ALSO PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT. WE'LL NEED SOME THINGS LIKE A TORCH, BATTERIES, FIRST AID KIT, CANDLES, MATCHES, BOTTLED WATER, CANNED FOOD AND A CAN OPENER.

LATER THAT NIGHT...

DO YOU THINK A BIG FIRE WILL COME, PAPA?

WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO PREVENT IT. CONDITIONS ARE BAD, BUT WE ARE PREPARED.
The next day is windy with a light rain.

I must go and work in the hills again.

I will, but if a fire does come, I will see you at the church.

No, you and your sister have important work to do here. Strong winds are coming and fires can jump the area around the hut must be clear too.

Stay safe, Papa.

Can I come?

You’re going a good job, Lelani. Where’s Tane?

He went inside because of the rain.

It smells like smoke.

I love the smell of rain. Can you smell that? Where’s it coming from?

The hills.

In this wind, the fire will soon come this way. We must go to the church. Let’s get Tane.

This wind is getting stronger!

Will Papa be alright?

Look, smoke. Now do as Mama says and put these on to protect your skin from the fire.

Tane. There’s a fire. We must go to the church.

Lightning can cause fire too by striking trees and dry ground. Even if there is some rain.

How can there be a fire? It’s raining.
It's time to prepare for an emergency!
Use your finger to trace the lines. Which items should go into the emergency kit? Which ones should stay at home?

You can use these questions to talk about this book with your family, friends and teachers.

What did you learn from this book?

Describe this book in one word. Funny? Scary? Colourful? Interesting?

How did this book make you feel when you finished reading it?

What was your favourite part of this book?

download our reader app
getlibraryforall.org
About the contributors

**Eileen O’Hely** is the award-winning author of the *Penny the Pencil* and *Kitten Kaboodle* books for primary school children, and *PEP Squad* for older readers. Her work is published in countries as diverse as Ireland, Korea, Turkey and China, and of course her native Australia.

**Anton Syadrov** has been a professional illustrator for over 9 years, specialising in comics and graphic novels. He enjoys creating character portraits and all kinds of digital illustration. He loves the challenge of each new project! Anton is proud to have illustrated several books for Library For All.

Did you enjoy this book?

We have hundreds more expertly curated original stories to choose from.

We work in partnership with authors, educators, cultural advisors, governments and NGOs to bring the joy of reading to children everywhere.

Did you know?

We create global impact in these fields by embracing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

libraryforall.org
What type of Library For All reader are you?

**Learner** - Beginner readers

**Level 1** - Rising readers

**Level 2** - Eager readers

**Level 3** - Progressing readers

**Level 4** - Fluent readers

**Middle Primary** - Curious readers

Discover your world through science and stories.

**Upper Primary** - Adventurous readers

libraryforall.org
#lettheworldread

ISBN 978-1-925986-99-0