

Grade

Anthology

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Read Aloud Story 2

The end of Mr Jali

I am Nokuthula. My big sister is Zama. My baby brother is Mzi. We live with our mother and our granny in the township. Last year we had nearly no money. We had only my granny's pension. We were hungry.

But then my mother got a job as a cashier at the Hyper. We were very happy because at last we had money to buy things we needed. It was so good to not feel hungry. But my mother did not only get a job. She also got a smart phone and a new friend called Mr Jali.

When my mother got the new phone and the new friend we felt as if we lost her. She was always looking at her cell phone and laughing quietly and taking selfies and sending Whatsapps. She would not let us look at her phone. I was sad. I wanted her to be with us again. Zama and I did not like Mr Jali. We did not like the way he always told us he had a lot of money and was going to get more money. Granny did not like Mr Jali. She was very angry with him because he gave my baby brother whisky to drink. She was angry with my mother too. "How can you think that was funny?" she said, and she clicked her tongue to show what she thought. But my mother liked Mr Jali a lot.

One day Mr Jali came to our house talking loudly on his cell phone "That's a great deal Gaz'lam!" he said as he walked in "I'm in!" then he told us he was getting into a new business. "And what is that business?" asked my granny. Mr Jali said he could not tell us. "This is really big business," he said, "it has to be my secret." But he was very proud of himself. "I'm with the big boys now," he said.

Zama and I looked at each other. We didn't say anything but we knew we were going to find out about this business. So the next time he came to our house we pretended we were happy to see him. We made him tea while he waited for my mother. We told him his clothes were very smart. We told him we loved his car. We even told him we liked his aftershave. Granny called us to the bedroom. "Are you mad?" she said, "Why are you talking to this tsotsi like this?" We just smiled and told her to wait.

When my mum came home we asked Mr Jali if we could wash his car. "It's very dirty," I said, "we will make it beautiful again." "Oh you girls!" said Mr Jali "Okay – just don't open the boot," and he gave us his car keys.

So we went outside and pretended to wash the car. That's when we saw it had no number plates. And of course we opened the boot. It was full of huge packs of cigarettes. We closed the boot and I went to call Granny. She said "I knew it! He's a skelm!" and she came outside to see the packs of cigarettes. But then we saw Mr Jali in front of us. "Oh hello pretty girl," said Mr Jali to Zama "just a quick kiss while no-one is looking!" and he tried to kiss her. But Granny was too quick for him. She was carrying a frying pan and she hit Mr Jali on the head with it. She was shouting "You leave my girls alone! You skelm! Go! Go!" and she took the car keys and threw them at Mr Jali. "Go! Skelm! Take your illegal cigarettes and go! And don't come back!" And she hit him again with the frying pan.

That was the last we saw of Mr Jali. My mum was sad for a bit but the rest of us were very happy.