**Lindelwe's Song**

By Susan Perrow (c) 2020

*This is a story that I wrote many years ago about the healing power of singing. It can be found in my book entitled ‘Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour’ (Hawthorn Press, UK) -* <http://susanperrow.com/books>  *and also in my ebook: A Spoonful of Stories #3: Fairy Tales For The 21st Century -* <http://susanperrow.com/e-books>*.*

*I think it has great relevance in our challenging Covid19 time when we need resilience tales to strengthen us and give us hope.*

*I presented the story as a gift to the women who were attending my training courses in Cape Town in 1997. Its metaphors, journey and resolution were inspired by the following comment made to me by a Xhosa friend, Nomangesi Mzamo, whose husband was incarcerated on Robben Island along with Nelson Mandela.*

*‘Without our singing we would never have found our way through the thorns of apartheid’.*

*Another Xhosa friend, Nombulelo Majesi, once described it as a healing story for the new South Africa. The song simply means ‘a golden pumpkin is sitting in the middle of a field’ - you can sing it in your own language and make up your own tune.*

*For many years after this, whenever I would visit Africa it was asked for it again and again by the children and adults I met and worked with – some of the children gave me the nickname ‘the pumpkin lady’. In Kenya, a group of teachers turned it into a story that was played out, with the children, in dance and song.*

*In Australia it has been performed as a play and a puppet show.*

*Open permission is granted for any translations of this story – all I ask is for you to email your translated version to me so I can add a link to it on my website (E:* *susanperrow@gmail.com**). I mention this as my previous story, ‘The Little Gnome Who Had to Stay Home’, written earlier in March 2020, was translated into 25 languages within 2 weeks of posting it online.*

*I also ask you to not put the text of the story into any kind of social media posting… Especially if you are sharing a translated version, ‘Google translate’ can kick in and a very poor rendition appears. If you want to share it please do so by giving the direct link as follows:* [*http://susanperrow.com/stories*](http://susanperrow.com/stories)

Once upon a time, in the middle of a field next to a village, a tiny pumpkin seed started to grow. It slowly spread out its green tendrils and leaves, and very soon, a pumpkin appeared in the middle of the pumpkin patch. It grew and grew and grew, until it was the biggest and most beautiful golden pumpkin that the villagers had ever seen.

But this was no ordinary pumpkin, and this was no ordinary field. Because as the pumpkin was growing, around the pumpkin patch was growing a circle hedge of thorn bushes. These bushes were thick with thorns - thorns as long as your finger and as sharp as a needle. The bushes were so close together that by the time the pumpkin was ripe and ready to be picked, no-one could get through the hedge to reach it.

The villagers had a meeting to decide what could be done. At the meeting an old grandfather said: ‘I have a sharp axe - I will try to chop down the hedge of thorns.’

The grandfather took his sharp axe and started to chop through the hedge, but every time he chopped through a branch, another one grew quickly in its place, and by the end of the day he had given up. This was no ordinary pumpkin, and this was no ordinary field.

Then one of the mothers of the village said: ‘I have a strong spade - I will try to dig under the hedge of thorns.’

The mother took her spade and started to dig down, but the roots of the thorn bushes were so strong and close together that by the end of the day she too had given up. This was no ordinary pumpkin, and this was no ordinary field.

Then one of the young boys of the village said: ‘I am such a good tree climber - I will try to climb over the hedge of thorns.’

The boy started to climb up the branches, but the thorns were as long and sharp as needles and they tore his clothes and pricked his skin. By the end of the day he too had given up. This was no ordinary pumpkin, and this was no ordinary field.

Then strolling into the village came Lindelwe, a young girl known to have the most beautiful voice in all the land. When she heard the problem, she walked past the villagers, sat down on a rock next to the hedge of thorns, and started to sing:

*Ithanga elikulu, Ithanga elikulu; lishleli ebobeni, lishleli ebobeni.*

Lindelwe's singing was so beautiful that all the animals in the surrounding fields came hopping and running to be closer to her to listen.

*Ithanga elikulu, Ithanga elikulu; lishleli ebobeni, lishleli ebobeni.*

Lindelwe's singing was so beautiful that the birds in the sky flew down to sit in the trees to listen.

*Ithanga elikulu, Ithanga elikulu; lishleli ebobeni, lishleli ebobeni.*

Lindelwe's singing was so beautiful that the worms and caterpillars crawled out of the ground to sit at her feet to listen.

*Ithanga elikulu, Ithanga elikulu; lishleli ebobeni, lishleli ebobeni.*

Lindelwe's singing was so beautiful that even the clouds in the sky came down low to listen. *Ithanga elikulu, Ithanga elikulu; lishleli ebobeni, lishleli ebobeni.*

One little cloud came so low that it was hovering right in front of her. Lindelwe stopped singing and smiled at the watching villagers. Then she stepped into the middle of the little cloud. The cloud lifted her up, up, up and over the hedge of thorns and right down into the pumpkin patch.

Lindelwe was now able to pick the beautiful golden pumpkin. She stepped back into the cloud and it lifted her up and over the hedge of thorns and carried her all the way to the village.

The villagers then chopped and cooked the pumpkin for an enormous feast that evening.

They celebrated how Lindelwe, with her beautiful singing, was able to find a way over the magic hedge of thorns to pick the most wonderful, most golden pumpkin in the land.