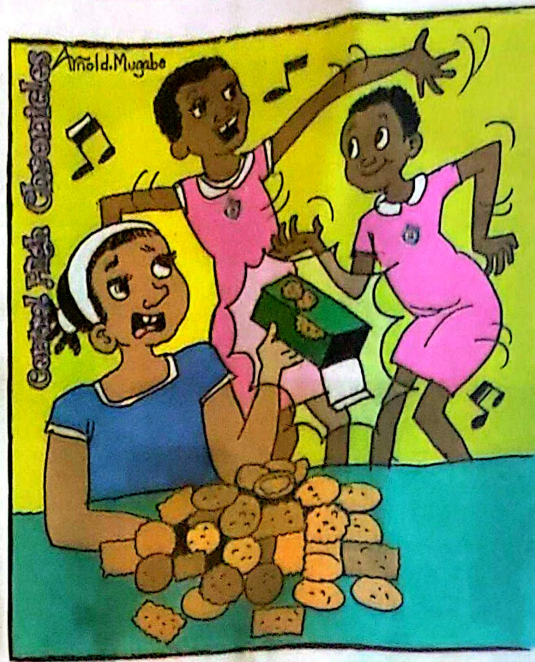




Sheenah and the expired biscuit

BY ARNOLD MUGABE

A few days ago, Sheenah was asked to pick up her little cousin Emily from her boarding school. Sheenah called the school matron to inform Emily that she would be the one picking Emily up.

"Hey Emily, what's up? Guess who's picking you up tomorrow. Yours truly!" Sheenah said. Sheenah loved Emily, and she knew the feeling was mutual.

"Wow, Sheenah! This is going to be fun. I hope you have got some cash. We need snacks on the way. I know you have been making money at school selling wigs and earrings," Emily teased.

"Don't worry, cousin. You know I always come through," Sheenah replied.

"So be ready. I'm coming early. And you know how I hate wasting my time," Sheenah warned.

"Wait! what? No, Sheenah. Not that early. Pick me around 4 p.m.," Emily protested.

"4 p.m.? Why? I thought you would be eager to come home by end of term."

"I am, but I have got some business to handle first," Emily said.

"What kind of business?" Sheenah asked, curious.

"Girl, bye!" Emily hung up.

Sheenah knew better than to ask the matron about Emily's "business." Emily had always been the sneakiest person she knew.

On pickup day, curiosity got the better of Sheenah. She decided to go early anyway. She knew Emily wouldn't agree to leave that soon, but maybe, just maybe, she would catch a glimpse of whatever mischief Emily was up to.

When Sheenah arrived at Emily's school, she headed straight to Emily's dormitory. Sure enough, Emily and her friends were inside, but they had tied bedsheets around their beds, creating a hidden "room." Inside, they were throwing a full-blown party.

Music blasted from a portable speaker like the ones used by street preachers. Fellow students did not dare to interrupt them. Emily, it seemed, was a boss lady at school. Sheenah peeped in, pushing her head through the sheet curtain. Emily was surprised but not shocked.

"I knew you would come. You are so nosy! Come here, I missed you," she said, pulling Sheenah into a hug.

On the bed, now serving as their table, were piles of snacks which included biscuits, juice bottles, sweets, bread, milk packets, and every grab students dreamed of.

Naturally, Sheenah joined in.

"We always save some of our snacks for a farewell party on the last day," Emily explained.

Sheenah grabbed a biscuit from a heap poured out from several assorted packets. As she ate, curiosity struck. What brands were they? She picked up one of the empty boxes to check. That's when she noticed the date. Some of the biscuits had expired nearly a month ago.

"Guys, wait! I think some of these biscuits are expired. Look," Sheenah said, alarmed.

To her surprise, no one reacted. The girls barely glanced at her before continuing to dance and eat. Meanwhile, Emily was casually pouring concentrated juice into a cup, without diluting it, and drinking it.

"Emily, that juice is supposed to be diluted into five litres of water!" Sheenah warned Emily.

Seeing Sheenah's concern, Emily just smiled. She picked up five biscuits, dipped them into her juice, and scooped them out with a spoon like it was dessert. Then she leaned closer and whispered into Sheenah's ear:

"Relax Sheenah, those expiration dates are just suggestions. The real deadline is when you can see the moulds or fungus."

"Tell me cousin, before you read the expiry date, did the biscuits taste expired or they were just delicious?" Emily asked looking into Sheenah's face.

Sheenah knew it was a trap question because the biscuits had indeed tasted normal and delicious when she ate them before seeing the expiry date, however there is no way in the world Sheenah would ever have admitted to it!

"Emily only two days' expiry is allowed, beyond two days or a month you are competing with rats and cockroaches! I refuse to identify as a house pest!" Sheenah swore.