

# FINDING THE RIDDIM



BY [CHILDBOOK.AI](https://childbook.ai)

The grilled metal door of the Portmore home didn't just close; it groaned under the weight of another exhausting day.

Sandra leaned her head against the cool iron bars, her shoulders sinking. She had just spent two hours battling the grueling Kingston traffic on the bus. Now she had exactly forty-five minutes to turn a few chicken parts and some rice into a proper brown stew supper, help her eleven-year-old with PEP exam prep, stop her five-year-old from jumping off the veranda, and somehow check in on her sixteen-year-old, who had lately become a ghost locked away in his room.



"Mummy! Mi nuh want no cabbage! Cabbage tastes like grass!"

The voice belonged to Zaid, her youngest, who was currently trying to climb up the kitchen counter to reach a packet of Shirley biscuits.

On the kitchen table, a sharp sob erupted. Liyah, her middle daughter, was sitting around the table with crumpled notebooks and sharpened pencils. "Mi can't dweet! Mi can't do the math! Mi too dunce, Mummy! Mi nah go pass PEP!"





The next evening, Sandra tried something different. When Zaid protested bedtime, she knelt down. "You're not tired yet? Tell me about your day." Zaid's anger melted. He talked about school, then yawned. With Liyah, Sandra said, "You're worried about the test. Let's make a plan together." Liyah nodded, feeling heard. To Ellikai, she knocked gently. "I miss talking to you. Can we chat for five minutes?" Ellikai looked up, surprised. "Okay, Mom." Sandra smiled. Listening felt better than shouting.



Weeks passed, and the house felt different. Zaid helped create his own bedtime routine with stories and hugs. Liyah studied with confidence, knowing Mom believed in her. Ellikai joined family dinners, sharing stories from school. Sandra still felt tired from work and traffic, but now she had a rhythm—patience, listening, and love. One evening, Zaid hugged her tight. "I love you, Mommy." Liyah smiled over her books. Ellikai laughed at dinner. Sandra realized she'd found the riddim—the heartbeat of her family, steady and strong.





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