

Ikani's Homestead Short Stories

A Colourful BuBuh Tale

**A COLOURFUL
BUBUH TALE**



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GLOSSARY

Abeg.....Please

Bebeh.....Baby

Garri.....Processed cassava flakes

Inna de.....In the

Kai.....Gosh! or Damn!

Mehn.....Man

'pon de.....Upon the

Stab.....Miss the lecture

Turanci.....English

CHAPTER ONE

Rubber bathroom slippers and toes wiggling about like funny looking creatures.

Vvvvwwa –a awwri! (Electric guitar)

Gbi –gbi – kah! (Drums)

Calves beneath worn- out jeans. Black shirt fluttering about in the gentle breeze. Male arms swinging, check out the plastic *Westair* watch.

Vvwwa –wawa- wawawa- waawrin!

Gbi-gbi! Kah!Gab! Gab!-gbi- kah! (Drums)

Oh yes, yes, go beyond the chest, here comes the neck and chin. The face, man! The face! Anas Artfu.

Vwwa –wa wawwn

(gbi-gbi-kah) – vwwa –wa –wawwn (gbi-gbi-kah)..!..!

vwaww-wwaaaawaluwa wawwwwwaaaavvvvwwn

(gbadi -gbadi- abum; kah kah ! gbi-gbi-kah-

gbi-kah-gbidim!)-vrrraww-wawwa-wawwa-wawawawa-wawa-wwwwwwwwaaaaavvvvwn...

.....Splosh!.....

"Kai! Rainmaker, what's your problem!"

"Sorry o!"

Anas Artfu was drenched to the skin. Walking around the boys' hostels on campus wasn't safe anymore. Crazy students kept chucking buckets of water downstairs without looking while they washed in front of their rooms upstairs. Not only did the imaginary "mean action soundtrack" in Anas's mind (which this "mean action boy" loved walking to) come to an abrupt end, but his wet shirt now stuck to his tummy revealing its smooth, round calabash –like shape, man, how embarrassing.

"Tchiw" he hissed as he took off his shirt to squeeze out the water.

"Hey, he-ii! C'mon everybody – macho- macho, masho-masho man!" Anas raised his eyebrows up and down, his shirt draped over his head as he stood posing hands akimbo. His round tummy had a nice shine on it – the result of a heavy- duty meal of boiled beans and *garri*. There was no one around to join him, though, and he sighed as he walked over to the door before him sprawled all over with posters. That was his destination. He rapped on the door.

Yo. Baby, baby o!

Anas on the scene

Saying, 'Hey door, what's up ? What's up'

Talkin' about.....

No, no, no, of course not! He didn't "rap" that way! What kind of author do you take me to be. I understanding *turanci* well goodie good good, you know.

Anas Artfu - twenty three years old, 'skin' haircut always, male, 300 level (his third year) Business Administration (B.Sc.) student at the BuBuh University, Zaria, Nigeria.

Slowly, slo-o-owly the door creaked open, Anas' best friend was supposed to live here.

Heartbeat. The creaking stopped.

Heartbeat. The door was opened just wide enough for Anas to peek into the room and discover..... heartbeat.... darkness. A mosquito buzzed out past his face.

Slowly, slo-o-owly it emerged out of the darkness- a smooth, white stick? Anas squinted his eyes. There was more, two funny-looking lips followed. Funny -looking lips and a white stick protruding out between them.

"Yeah? Who dat?"

A solemn expression hardened the features of the face now peering out of the doorway at Anas. The white stick and funny-looking lips, the face was also sparsely covered with *gringo* Clint Eastwood stubble. This face had 'dangerous' written all over it, man.

"Kayode, you look like a mouse," Anas smiled at the face, "your lips and your ears pointing out like this, so....."

"Okay Anas. You've told me a hundred times."

Kayode Adekunle - twenty-three years old, more hair on his head and face than Anas, shorter than Anas by some 20 centimetres (and Anas's of moderate height - *tsk,tsk,tsk*), male, 300 level Business Administration (B.Sc.) student at the Bubuh University Zaria Nigeria.

Kayode, Anas's best friend.

They shook hands and exchanged the best of peaceful greetings. Anas put his shirt back on while his friend opened his door up wider so he too could step in and be engulfed by the darkness contained by the room's four walls. The room wasn't very big and from his memory, Anas knew only a mattress thrown across the linoleum-covered floor by one wall; a row of clothes on hangers over the mattress; one small cupboard Kayode used for storing his books, stationery, utensils, cutlery and shoes; two buckets of water; and one made-in-China electric cooking stove were Kayode's only possessions in this small cubical structure. His eyes began to adjust. He could make out the room's only window behind a thick curtain which managed to hold back daylight. "NEPA took light," Kayode hissed. That meant: 'blackout' or 'electric power shortage or failure.' NEPA stood for Nigerian Electric Power Authority.

Vvssg! Kayode's companion whisked the curtains to one side. Bright sunlight poured in through the window.

"Aaaargh, Anas! No-o-o!"

"Aaaargh, Kayode! This is hideous!"

Room now illuminated, Anas's eyes bulged out at the sight before him. Kayode stood clad in a singlet and towel wrapped around the waist. He also had rubber bathroom slippers on. "You don't intend," Anas recovered from the shock "to go to Mr. Akpan's class dressed like that? Look at all that itchy stuff all over your legs! You'll frighten his poor students to death!"

"Gerrou! We all know you're hairier than I am!"

"Yes, that's why I know the 'orrible stuff that'll happen once your legs begin to conduct electricity"

"Well, at least then I could connect the electric boiling whatever to my legs and heat up some

water to bathe with. This water inna my bucket's co-old, man!"

They smiled. Friendship.

Anas's hand shot out again, this time to seize that smooth white stick twitching about between his friends funny –looking lips.

"Damn, boy! What is this, eh?"

His 'comrade- in- towel' stared at his feet.

"You promised me you'd give this up," he held out the stick before his nose, "look, my friend, lolly pops especially at nine o'clock in the morning, are some of the main causes of poor dental health in this country!"

"Yeah,.. I know.. I just.... couldn't... help myself..."

Anas frowned hard and his nostrils flared as he took two steps towards Kayode. He raised his fist.....

"He-e-iy!" He threw himself backwards, twisted his body in the air and landed on his back on Kayode's mattress, crossing his legs as he did so.

"Oo-o-oh! *Checkirahw*, check it out! Can you do that?"

Kayode waved him off. The dude rubbed his hands, shook each leg and then took a pouncing posture.

Anas scratched his head and advised him against trying to repeat or better the stunt in case he left his towel behind in mid air just as a neighbour burst into the room to borrow a spoon and then ... "Yaaaaaargh! Mummy, help! A Zombie!"... the police, soldiers, zoo-keepers, hunters, animal rights activists and 'cool water' hawkers surround the room. It would be all over the news with Anas giving TV audiences worldwide a *gangsta* thumbs-up and Kayode wrapped up in his mattress with a wide damn-Michael Jackson-could-be seeing-me-like-this embarrassed smile on his face showing all his teeth. Kai! It would be fun.... But unfortunately their parents would get to see them as well meaning no more pocket money for them since they'd now be TV celebrities. Kayode accepted the advice.

"O1' boy it's quarter past nine, let's go," Anas said. His companion bent down to dip the tips of his fingers into the bucket of water beside him, he clenched his teeth then his body wiggled back upright.

I can feel it coming in day and ni-ha-ight

Oh ye-e-eah, oh ye-e-eah

I can feel it coming in cold not hot

Oh ye-e-eah

"Quit singing and move, my friend," Anas hissed Kayode picked up the bucket and bounced out of the room towards the hostel bathrooms. Alone in the room, Anas idly flipped through a text book until a neighbour knocked on the door and asked about Kayode's whereabouts.

Ee-ee-ya-ah! Can you feel it coming in cold!!!

Hah (I) can fee-eel it!!!

CHAPTER TWO

The boys were still chuckling and trying to muffle their laughter as Mr. Akpan explained the concepts of communication and noise.

"... So you see, the message becomes distorted...."

"Hmm.... Ti-haha... Hmm... Hmmmph... Hmmm...."

"And the decoder or receiver is unable to"

"Bwa –ha hahaha!"

"What's so funny, you two goats?" came the disgusted bark which shook everyone in the lecture hall.

"Stand up!"

The Business Administration lecture hall had been designed and built to hold a full capacity of at least three hundred persons. Rows of seats were elevated gradually one after the other like seats in football stadium.

Anas and Kayode were fond of the back seats and so some two hundred and fifty–six heads turned to follow their lecturer's gaze up towards the boys.

"Hmm, K.C!" someone murmured.

Kayode was also popularly known as the *Kaftan Cat* (K.C.) and presently, one of this famous black kaftans adorned his person . Anas swallowed.

Mr. Akpan had been teaching Communications Strategy for years so he knew one had to be patient with some of the hooligans and blockheads one was bound to come across in every class. He smacked his lips and slid his forefinger up his nose to adjust his glasses. The culprits stared back at him. Okay.

Mr. Akpan stood hands akimbo, a sick of chalk twitching about in one hand.

"So what's so funny?" he asked again.

Finally, the strain became unbearable. The boys' resistance broke and, under the gaze of the five hundred and twelve eyes staring at them, they related the morning's events which had left them still chuckling in the Communication Strategy class. Mr. Akpan He smacked his lips.

"So, Kayode," said he "when he felt how cold the water was, began to do this?....."

The generously built man began to fling his belly forwards and backwards and wiggled his hips. Laughter broke out and drowned his whole class.

Mr. Akpan's hand slammed down on his desk causing a pen to roll off. They were in his office now. The curtains were drawn wide-open so that sunlight and fresh air could pour in. The little room had one filing cabinet, two pictures on the walls along with two calendars, a waste paper basket, one desk and three chairs with one man and two boys seated in them staring at each other. Whose hungry belly would growl first? Mr. Akpan could not take the chance of his being the first, so, he broke the silence.

"The embarrassment you guys caused me!" Came his bellow. " Wiggling my hips about in front of the class! Worse still, the Head of Department had to suddenly walk in and think I was boogie woogie-ing. Gah!"

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A musical interlude before the news was announced over the radio on the enraged man's desk. The sounds filtering out through the speakers were oriental - the ting-ting-tong-ti-tong of a stringed Chinese instrument, a flute and occasional blasts from a bass guitar. The sounds 'felt' like a kung-fu warrior training and displaying stunts amongst the green and yellow of leaves, and the white and brown of scattered trunks and stems in a forest clearing.

"Well, you goats?" came another bellow.

Kayode: Hey! Now you know my name, now I know your name
 You're A-k-pan and I'm Kay Cee
 So what you wanna do?
 I wanna shout: Oh, oh,oh,oh

Kayode fingers drummed against the desk in soft, rhythmical synchronization with the calm oriental sounds. Mr. Akpan kept glaring and Anas looked dumbfounded.

Kayode: C'mon, go everyone!
 It's dumping time
 So let's stab the lecture and communicate with
 A-K- pan
 When I say go A.K, you say go K.C
 So here we go....
 Go A.K., go A.K., Go

The Head of Department would have been astonished to see this- Mr. Akpan, still glaring and Anas, still dumbfounded, replying while sitting looking very composed.

Mr. Akpan and Anas: Go K.C, go

Kayode: If you're fed up
 You better get pumped up
 If you're stressed
 You better get out for some air
 'Cos Communo lectures
 Sure ain't Phono classes

"Communo? Phono?" Anas was puzzled. His companion just shrugged in response. Drumming fingers. Calm oriental sounds.

Kayode: Hey! Now you know my name, now I know your name
 Ey-hey! Now you know my name, now I know your name

His fingers stopped drumming and he folded his arms. It was his turn to look indifferent.
The *ting-ting-tong-ti-tong* of a stringed Chinese instrument. The flute.

Anas: Perchance we fail to see
 How understanding can be spread
 Far across land, far beyond the sea
 Awake are my people and I, even by day
 Awake maybe in the veils of night's blackness
 One essence shining one may say
 Is that communication giving life its uniqueness
 So don't let us fail to see
 See how understanding can be spread
 They to I, I to you, you unto me
 Far across land, far beyond the sea
 Following this chant
 Now that I'm done
 Let me partake, please, in-a de grubbing of
 Some *garri*.

Hmm! Poet man/dude/bobo!

The calm oriental sounds flowed on. Kayode's fingers joined in again.

Kayode: Hey! Now you know my name, now I know your name Ey-hey!
 Now you know my name, now I know your name

His fingers stopped just as the bass guitar took care to blast along with other sounds pouring out from Mr. Akpan's radio without damaging their calm patterns. The boys sat business-like and watched their lecturer.

Mr. Akpan: Hmm, I'd better take your names
 After making me
 Boogie woogie
 Before the H.O.D.

So youth has its ways
Old age plus experience
Also has its style and grace
An exchange of ideas and knowledge would be best
To put most problems today to rest
Listen to the words of kool, old
The stylishly bold Comm. Strategy man you behold
It's your wisdom we're trying to mold
When I lecture, do listen carefully
Ah-ah, so I'm this hot
C'mon, abeg, - Hit me!

Kayode: Hey! Now you know my name, now I know your name Ey-hey!
Now you know my name, now I know your name

"And here are the main news headlines." a friendly voice finally announced over the radio. Mr. Apkan was smiling and stroked his forehead. Kayode and Anas were pleased to observe this and they both smiled broadly and got up to leave.

"C'mon, will you goats sit down?"

They obeyed.

The lecturer grinned then looked at them both sharply.

"You remember my test comes up next week?"

They nodded.

"Heh-heh! Well, here's what's going to happen— since you feel you're so good at communication even while I'm lecturing, you two can have a special assignment in place of the test. Oh yes. My wife teaches Social Studies at Wiwanchyamonee International School just outside the campus. Class 6B is her class and she promised them she'd get some adults to speak to them about their real-life experiences. It's to help them have a better understanding of the course.

He sneered at them. It felt as though he'd grow fangs and pounce over the desk at them.

The boys looked afflicted - their necks straightened, their eyes popped open, their jaws dropped, their foul breaths. oh no,no,no, this author's just joking again.....

"S-s-social S-s-studies"" Anas gasped.

"Did...did you say 'class 6B' ?" Kayode felt faint. They began to complain but the sneering man cut them short.

"Tomorrow's Thursday, right? Good, you guys report at Wiwanchyamonee tomorrow by 8 am. And get to work with Mrs. Akpan's class. Mess up and you've failed my test. You've flopped, understand? Right, bye-bye."

ADVERTISEMENT

Oh!

**So, that's what
they mean by
"Nigerian Internet Art"!**



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CHAPTER THREE

Communicate with-a-de kiddies? Kai, what a crisis!

Gloomily at the end of their lectures for the day, the boys found themselves sprawled on their backs on the mattress in Kayode's room.

"Kayode, how does one communicate with children, some of them probably rude brats? I can't do it! Their minds aren't mature and rational enough to deal with."

"Mehn (man), what a disastrous situation, Anas. Mr. Akpan can't do this to us but if we complain he'd probably come up with some thing worse. Kai, oh no!"

"I'll never laugh in class again."

"Good morning, class"

"Goo-ood mor-ning, Mrs. A-a-kpan."

Aw, this was silly. Now one would be feeling even more stupid.

"Did you all read page 21 in your text books as I told you to?"

"Ye-es, ma-a-a."

Stoppit! Stoppit! Stoppit!

Why did class 6 children have to act this way?

Mrs. Akpan was a tall bespectacled (like her husband) woman who was always full of smiles. She had a brown scarf tied over her hair in what she called an 'Afro Sisi' style and wore a simple orange blouse and skirt. She began the day's work straight away as she walked into the classroom. Kayode watched her begin to scribble on the blackboard. Desks lids began to slam, pages began to rumple.

The boys remained outside the classroom, by the doors. This was most uncomfortable. Everyone was in one classroom or the other and the boys stood in an empty hallway feeling like new pupils in a school.

Heart beats.

Anas was in a black suit without a tie and Kayode was in a dark blue kaftan and trousers. Wiwanchyamonee International School was one of those 'high quality' nursery-primary schools with good reputations - this year alone the school had won five awards from five academic and sports competitions organized for primary schools in Zaria. High- class parents loved to send their children there. Foreign nationals in the country had their children here too. In fact the school even had a swimming pool, a gymnasium and its own amateur film studio. 'Wiwantachumoni Park'?- this was where that film about rampaging teddy bears and stuffed dinosaurs came from.

"Let's bust this and disappear," Kayode suggested. Anas was about to oblige when Mrs. Akpan beckoned them into the classroom. They shuffled uneasily inside.

"Class," Mrs. Akpan beamed, "As I promised, I've got two people- from Bubuh university to speak to you about life, their experiences and also answer some of your questions...."

Heartbeats. The boys gulped in unison.

"..So I want you all to welcome Kayode and Anas here, to your class."

The stood before the class, there were twenty-five students in all, fourteen of them girls and none of them looked older than eleven years of age.

Gulp.

"Goo-ood mor-ning, Mr. Ka-ayo-ode. Goo-ood mor-ning, Mr. An-an-as."

That panicked the 'adults' from Bubuh University.

"Remember," Mrs. Akpan whispered to them, "Mess up and you've failed the test, you've flopped. Good luck".

The boys could see that Mr. Akpan has kept her well posted on the nature of events. She retired to the end of the classroom, where she occupied a chair and desk behind her pupils.

Now who'd start?

"Kayode, go on"

"No, Anas proceed"

"Go on."

"No man, you proceed"

Finally, Anas summoned up courage and addressed Class 6B.

"Er. Hello... Good morning class."

"Goo-ood mor-ning, Mr. A-a-na-as."

"Er..er..Ehem.. Social Studies – a very interesting subject."

"Very interesting" Kayode joined in.

"It," Anas continued, "studies how people are social.....no, it deals with study of things happening in societies – this society, the Arab society the European society, the American society and all others in the world. Kayode?"

Kayode cleared his throat and came to his friend's aid.

"Yes and if there are extra terrestrial alien societies, Social Studies will study them too."

Class 6B remained silent and stared.

Anas coughed. Kayode sat on Mrs. Akpan's table then got off it again. Why did they laugh during lectures?

"S-so we know what Social Studies is all about" Anas could feel Mrs. Akpan's cold glare. "Our experiences on campus leads us to understand that in life you could come across different kinds of people. Some of them are very clever, some of them are very stupid."

There was some laughter and Anas felt more uneasy. He nudged Kayode forward.

Kayode spoke.

"Er... Our Bubuh experience... I mean, campus experience....Er... at times proves society can ... at times be easy to live in and at times very difficult to cope with. For example, I wanted to eat rice and stew at Bubuh Sweetie Restaurant one day but someone stole my money so I was kicked out."

More laughter.

Mrs. Akpan frowned.

This was a major crisis happening here. "Why don't you answer some questions instead," Mrs. Akpan's you-guys-are-daft-Bubuh-guys voice quieted class 6B's guffawing.

"Y-yes," the boys agreed.

A girl raised her hand. She identified herself as Nina Strauss, blond daughter of a German public health consultant in Nigeria.

"My textbook says people can fall in love in universities and get married. Aren't you married?"

They stared, petrified like statues.

"Answer the child!" Mrs. Akpan demanded.

"Er... no, we're not married. We don't have money to fall in love yet ... sorry, I mean we aren't engaged to anyone yet, because...."

"Because of the hard campus life at Bubuh"

"Er, yes... Because Bubuh life is hard life," Anas decided to agree with Kayode. Nina asked no more.

"Why do students still cheat during tests and exams at universities? My big brother's friend at Bubuh university told me some people carry scribbled notes called 'chokes' into exam halls in order to cheat. Why?"

This was Abdullah Dan Kulikili's question. He was the son of a well-to-do Zaria merchant.

It was agreed that Kayode would answer that question.

"It is true some people cheat during exams at Bubuh but I don't and Anas doesn't and Mrs. Akpan's husband doesn't either, though he's the one who sets exams for others to write. Stupid people do stupid things in society and as such, Social Studies covers this topic as well."

That was it.

The classroom began to buzz with all kinds of murmurs, hisses and chuckles.

"Who're these chappies?..."

"...Waddat? Waddat? Wo-o-oi..."

"...What'll mummy and daddy say when I tell them all about this?..."

Mrs. Akpan's face looked like twisted metal. *Allright, enough, you clowns! You're messed up, y'hear? And quiet, you lot, no-one's telling mummy and daddy anything because they're the ones paying the school fees!*

Kayode and Anas watched sadly as she rose from her seat at the back of the classroom, her motions causing an immediate wave of silence to suddenly engulf the class. It was as though she was about to throttle the boys who had so far ruined her brilliant idea to make today's Social Studies class really cool and funky.

"Excuse me," a hand shot up, "I have a question." Everyone watched Mrs. Akpan stop in her tracks and a handsome young lad (*mm-hmm, do tell us all about it*) with dark eyes, soft looking cheeks and small lips, stood up behind his desk. He was Asian, Pakistani to be precise.

"Yes?" Anas raised an eyebrow while Kayode folded his arms.

"Yesterday the boys in my class had a football match against class 6A. I wanted to play as well but the other boys wouldn't let me. They said I wasn't supposed to join in their games because

my skin wasn't the right colour. I don't think that's fair, is it?"

"Of course it is," someone shouted behind him, "it was an African G's only game, *mehn*. You dig?"

"Rubbish," someone spat back at the remark, "the light-coloured are the only civilized people."

"No they ain't, babe!"

"Don't call me 'babe', bush man!"

"Children, children. Please," their teacher pleaded "let's forget all about questions and do some reading instead."

"Wait a minute," Anas interrupted her.

"We haven't answered that question," said Kayode. She spun round and her maddened eyes shot lightning bolts at the boys. *What are you goats talking about, eh? You messed up flops come in here and*

"What 's your name?" Anas had his hands in his pockets in a serious-boy way while his colleague perched on Mrs. Akpan's desk, crossing his legs. "Ali Faruk."

"Ali, do you know what's called 'racism'? It should be treated some where in your Social Studies textbook. Anyway, racism is the belief that some people of certain race and skin colour are better than others. It 's a belief which leads to many problems and prejudices you ought not learn or experience at this age, or ever, in fact" Mrs. Akpan took a seat. This was better now some knowledge was being imparted.

"Some people would even go as far as killing others for no other reason than their skins are of a different colour," Anas went on. He felt more relaxed now, this was a question which had touched him deeply.

"That would do no good for if that's a reason for killing someone then you'd only be wasting your time - you'd also have to die someday and then be in the same state as that person you killed. Let me tell you a story. There once were two young brothers whose mother owned two goats. One goat had splodges of brown, black and white on its body while the other was pure white. Now these brothers both hated the white goat because its colour was 'too pale', 'too plain' and 'too boring'. They adored the other goat, however, and made sure they treated it as wonderfully as they could. The other they neglected and hurled pebbles and stones at it so much that their mother had to scold them frequently and tend to the poor creature herself.

"Well, one day their mother realized they'd run out of meat in the house. One of the goats would have to be slaughtered. When the boys had left for school one morning, she had the goat with the brown, black and white splodges slaughtered. After all, it had more meat to offer since it was healthier and better looked after than the white one. So it was.

"The boys were heart broken, upset. However when the fried goat meat was put before them on a tray, their spirits heightened again. They gobbled everything down happily, almost eating the tray as well."

Some laughter.

"Still, they kept maltreating the white goat. One day they hurled so many stones at it that the creature collapsed and began to groan in pain. Their mother nearly shed tears, her last goat was dying. She had no choice but to have it slaughtered as well. Confined to their room as punishment, the boys cheered as local butchers were summoned to do their job. They laughed and smiled as the poor creature's life was brought to an end.

"But when it was skinned they noticed something different. It had pink underwear just like the other goat but there were the dark patches of green all over the pink underwear. Green patches all over pink in a sickening combination. It was horrible. One of the butchers explained the dark green patches were as a result of all stoning and pains the animal had had to endure.

"The boys were horrified- that awful sight out there was their handiwork. They could picture having dark green patches all over their own bodies, even on their tongues and gums!

"When the fried goat meat was placed before them this time, they squirmed and pushed it away. Their mother asked them what they'd now achieved by caring so much for one of the animals and maltreating the other? If they'd thought first and not minded the difference in the goats' colours, they'd have both ended up with the same colour in the end, with the same rewarding satisfaction from the delicious dish they'd have offered."

It seemed only about a third of the class got the message Anas was trying to get across to them. His Bubuh colleague decided to lend a hand. An arm rather. He rolled up a sleeve and approached Ali. Kayode placed his arm against the Pakistani boy's. The arms were displayed before the blond German girl.

"Nina, which skin colour's better?" Kayode asked her. She picked Ali's.

Kayode now moved the arms before the "African G's only' boy. He picked Kayode's arm.

"Okay, people. That's good. Now I want everyone to get out a sheet of paper, please."

Ssshk., shk., ssshk., sheets appeared on desks. "Nina, look at your hair and Ali's and then write down all the reasons the colour of your hair's better than his. Ali, do same and show why your hair colour's better" Kayode pointed at the "African G's only boy "What's your name, please?"

"Jonathan."

You see that other boy over there with blue eyes?"

"Henry."

"I want you to write down all the reasons you think your brown eyes are better than his blue ones and, Henry, you write down the reasons the colour blue is better for eyes than brown."

Everyone else was given similar tasks to perform and soon class 6B was hard at work, writing, scribbling. Mrs. Akpan looked pleased.

"Right then," Kayode finally announced, Nina read out what you've got."

They girl stood up and read what she'd written "I think yellow hair's better than black because yellow is the beautiful colour of the sun which gives us light and energy. Delicious butter and lovely sun flowers are also yellow. Gold also looks yellow. That's all I can think of right now."

"That's very nice," Kayode smiled, "so that's why we don't need black hair? But black is the colour of the night when we close our eyes to go to sleep. Black is your shadow that follows you about. What about delicious black currant? So to make things better, Nina, should we get rid of all these things from the world because of their colour?"

"No." She replied.

"Then if you can have all those yellow things you listed and the black ones I mentioned together for a beautiful world, having yellow hair and black hair around together in this world must be beautiful too, hmm?"

She smiled.

Ali was all for his hair colour because black meant mean suits, shoes and sunglasses as well as

sleek sports cars, black currant, and crude oil.

"And that's why we don't need yellow hair and you're saying we can throw away the sun, butter and sunflowers into space or limbo somewhere?"

The boy shook his head.

"No problem with her having yellow hair and him having black," Kayode grinned. Jonathan was next.

"Mean G, talk, talk, talk to me

The beefy boy got up and read.

"Like, brown's a better colour for eyes we don't need blue. Brown's the natural colour of good soil, mehn. Brown's tree trunks and so on"

"And you're telling us," said Kayode, "we don't read blue skies and seas?"

"Aw, mehn!" was the reply.

"Blue eyes are better than brown eyes," said the lanky Henry, a British 'chappie', when it was his turn, "because blue is the colour of the skies and seas like you said and also the colour of my mum's lovely blue hat."

"No more brown eyes 'cos brown's the soils and tree trunks the world needs to get rid off and .."

"No sir, in fact my cousin has brown eyes!"

There, again, was laughter.

The same technique was used on all the other pupils and soon the class was as merry as people at a wedding banquet – only there was no food or orange squash drinks. "We all need the yellow sun, yellow sun flowers, black currant, brown tree trunks and soil, blue skies and so on for a happy life. Thus, if we have different hair and eye colours together in our world, life would be happy as well." Kayode made gestures with his hands as he began to conclude.

"And if we can't find any problem with having different hair and eye colours, there ought not be any problem, with different skin colours either, you guys get me?"

"Ye-e-es!" came the chorus.

Mrs. Akpan was very pleased indeed. She walked up to the boys and demanded cheers and thanks for them.

"Tha- ank you-u-u, Mr. Ka-ayo ode! Tha-ank you-u-u, Mr. A-a-na-as".

Class 6 children, here they go again!

"You boys've just *scattered* my husband's test,' the woman waved her fist above her head, "you'll get A's y' hear!"

"It's all Communication Strategy, madam," Anas puffed out his chest and beamed.

"Nothing Bubuh pros like us couldn't handle," Kayode added.

"Hmmp," Mr. Akpan grunted, "congratulations, you passed the test. You boys are lucky."

His wife had told him all about their performance and threatened him with a cold meal of hard eba (made from garri) and okro soup with only curry and no meat or fish for supper if he decided to do them a nasty turn. He had to keep his word.

They were seated once more in his office and the boys exchanged delighted, satisfied glances.

Mr. Akpan's finger slid up his nose to his glasses as he watched them shaking hands, murmuring what he assumed to be prayers of thanks and going "Awrih' behbeh!"

"Would you mind jubilating some where else outside my office? I've work to do, you know!"

"Oh yes, "Anas said" we've got to get back to Wiwanchyamonee within the next thirty minutes."

"Why"?

The Wiwanchyamonee Assembly hall was packed full of students, teachers and anyone else around interested in watching what was going on. Kayode was in his black kaftan and trousers. Anas was in his black shirt and faded jeans. They were performing on a makeshift stage.

Kayode: **One two, here we go!**

Some 'ip-'op 'jams' mixed with popular old Nigerian songs, courtesy of DJ Jonz (Jonathan from the Social Studies class remember?) using LPs, sounded like cool blue skies and sparkling honey flowing into a round glass container placed amidst a bundle of yellowish brown hay. Feel the colours of the sounds, get it? Good because I'm not sure I do ...

DJ Jonz's scratches: **Say-say what? Say-ee-say-ee say-ee what?**

DJ Jonz's 'scratched' statements came twice before his mixed 'jams' thundered forth from loud speakers. Not too loud, man. A pre-recorded chorus.

Chorus: **Hey, we've got to stop
All this stuff
About colours and flavours**

Chorused lyrics x3.

Kayode: **'Cos we're all colours and flavours
You're 'black' and he's 'white'
He's got flavour and she's got flavour
Together it's flavor
'Flave'.
Now let's get down to basics
It's racism everywhere and everyday
Some say a purple man's dirty**

Some say a yellow man's rotten
Others say an orange man's repulsive
But we,
Oh, we say we're all one
'Cos it don't matter if she's cream
Like whipped cream
Or he's brown like coffee
We,
Oh, we say we're all one

Chorused lyrics x3.

Kayode: Nn-yeah, I've seen faces and places
Colours and flavours
Black and white
Blue and peach
I say we're all one
We've got to do all that makes us one

Anas: Picture a journey
One through an orchard of lemons and oranges
Like an ant, slowly but delightfully
The yellows, the greens, the oranges
Dark soil, richly brown
Go along the interwoven curves and designs
Dug across the ground
Follow the sparkling clear water along this course
This course it has to take because
It needs to refresh the crops
So you give thanks and due praise
As the water's worth is proven by the sun's rays
Some call the sun yellow
A hawk glides past it and so the birds' flight you follow
Around the sky coloured like the sea
Crashing 'pon de beach as light foam

Drained down porous sands gradually
Suddenly,
Everything starts twirling and twisting
Swirling and spinning.
Then it all sinks into the little girl's mind
A little girl sipping orange juice, relaxing
While her big brother waters the garden out behind
With his comics spread out
Like one more multicoloured cover for her bed
A thought more wandered through her head:
"Should he arrive shortly
That green being of fantasy
His purple wife and blue siblings
Following closely, taking in the views
Would not this Earth of hues
Rightly seem so lovely
A lovely place to be?"
Go on. Go on.

Ch-chuji,chwii. Ch-chwii, chwii, chwii.

The DJ did his work . It wasn't over yet.

Chorused lyrics x3.

Kayode: Well let me put you on track
Get up, hold somebody and say
We are all one
There ain't no difference, okay?
Repeat - after- me.
You've got a face and I've got a face
You've got two eyes, two hands and all
And I've got the same
There ain't no reason to fuss or to blame
And there ain't
No room for racism
When we've got plenty of room for understanding

Yo! Keep listening
'fore we sign off 'til some other time
My colleague and I would like to say
Peace and greetings
To all the good people
Of the world

Kayode and Anas: Peace and greetings
 To all our good people
 Of Wiwanchumonih and Bubuh
 Bye-bye everyone

Ch-chwii, chwii. Ch-chii, chwii, chwii.

Chorus: Hey, we've got to stop
 All this stuff
 About colours and flavours

And that's how it all ended.