

Ikani's Homestead Short Stories

THE HUNTER

AND

THE BULL



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The Hunter And The Bull

By
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Dedicated to Abu Abba

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Let's imagine that once upon a time there was this little village with its inhabitants who lived happily together enjoying all the beautiful things life had to offer. The soil was very good indeed, and crops did very well so quite many farmers could be found here.

The river, which ran past one side of the village, was full of fish of all sorts and many fisherman frequented it as they sought the biggest catches that could bring them good fortunes in the marketplace.

There was also a forest close by and those who ventured into it and returned would tell stories to eager listeners in the village about the various and sometimes strange plants and beasts they had come across. Further flavouring the tales they had to tell of mysteries of the forest, brave hunters would proudly display the animals they had caught and brought back with them. There were antelopes, tortoises, grass-cutters and birds of all hues and sizes.

Once one hunter actually struck down a mighty lion with his bow and arrow on the outskirts of the forest. The mighty beast had been terrorizing the villagers' sheep and cattle for weeks. There was great jubilation and the act earned the hunter the reputation of being the bravest man in the village.

That hunter's name was Achimugu.

Achimugu was very pleased indeed to be named the bravest man in the village. He became the chief's personal hunter and wherever he went people were delighted to



be in his company and would offer him meals, fruits and gifts as a mark of their respect and admiration. All the young men wanted to be like him. All the ladies wanted to be picked as his lucky bride.

It was all very delightful, but soon all the fame and admiration began to get to Achimugu's head. He became arrogant and boastful.

“Achimugu is the mightiest, strongest and of course most handsome man in the land. All the men, women and animals fear me!” he would stand proudly in the marketplace and declare.

The people became worried. Even the chief was beginning to fear Achimugu would try to get rid of him and become the new head of the village. No one dared speak up to Achimugu though.

Life went on and so long as no one offended Achimugu, everyone was happy.

One day a strange sight befell the peaceful people.

An old man with clothes made of animal skins came riding into the village on an enormous, black bull. The animal's body was massive and muscles pumped out all around its thick skin as it moved. Its hooves seemed to crack stones and pebbles as it trod over them. It had angry looking eyes, which seemed reddened by some infuriating task it had to fulfil. Atop its big bulging head were two of the most deadly horns anyone had ever set eyes on. They were huge, long and sharp and were big enough to carry a fully-grown man on each of them.



As deadly as the bull looked, the old man on its back maintained total control over it. He called out to the people who stood watching him and his animal from a safe distance.

“Don't be afraid, my people, the bull won't harm you. Who is your chief? I am a traveler in need of some water to drink, some food to eat and a bed to sleep on for a night or two.”

They led him to their chief's home. He welcomed the visitor warmly and had a meal prepared for him.

“You can sleep in my house, old *baba*,” the chief told the old man, “I'll have my children clean up one of the rooms for you.”

“You are very kind, my son,” the old man replied, “May you be rewarded with good things in this life and the next for your generosity.”

The old man rested through the day. He had his bull stay outside the village close to the forest where it could also feed and rest as it waited for him.

The chief had a small feast organized that evening to welcome the guest.

Achimugu was also present.

“Where did you find such a terrible-looking bull, *baba*?” the chief just had to ask when everyone had eaten to his fill.

The old man smiled.

“You have never seen such a creature, right?” he said, “Ten years ago I set off

from my own village many, many weeks walk from here to a land on one side of the world where stories told of the mightiest bull any man had ever come across. People said it breathed fire out of its mouth and nostrils and ate five full-grown men each day. It was said anyone who could capture and tame it would become the most powerful person in the world. Hah, I told everyone I could and would get the animal. It took me two years to find this animal. It breathed no fire and ate no man, but, hmm, it took me another ten years to capture and tame it. Look at my legs.”

The people looked at his legs. For an old man, his legs were very muscular and tended to bend with ease in almost any position he pleased.

“I am taking the bull to my village. When I get back, all shall know that I am the bravest man in the world!”

Immediately, Achimugu jumped up and pointed a stick at the old man.

“You? An old baba like you? Haha, listen to me - I am the bravest and I shall show it to you!”

“Don't do anything foolish, my son,” the visitor warned him.

The chief agreed.

“Listen to him, Achimugu. We know that you are the bravest man in our village and that is enough for you.”

“Who are you to tell me what is enough for me? You don't respect me anymore?”

Okay!”

Achimugu stormed off and disappeared into the night.

No one said anymore. One by one the people began to retire to their homes and lay down to sleep. Achimugu didn't sleep. He put on his hunting clothes, got his small knife, bow and arrow and quietly made his way out of the village towards the forest. He spotted the bull some distance away, its dark hide concealed by the night and only its burning red eyes glaring out to warn intruders to stay away.

Achimugu hid in the bushes and studied the animal. He would wait for it to fall asleep and then he would strike.

The night went by and still those red eyes glared back at him. Suddenly as the sun began to rise, he could see the bull and it was bending its legs to settle its body down on to the soft grass. Achimugu could tell it was preparing to get some sleep. He pulled out an arrow and took aim with his bow. He aimed for the spot between the creature's eyes. Slowly he pulled back on the bow's rope.

That was when a little boy came prancing up behind him. He had been running down to the river to fetch some water when he sighted Achimugu amongst the bushes.

“Achimugu!” the boy called out startling Achimugu so he jumped and fired his arrow. The arrow sailed over the bull's head and struck its back instead. The animal's skin was so tough that the arrow just bounced off its back. But, that didn't

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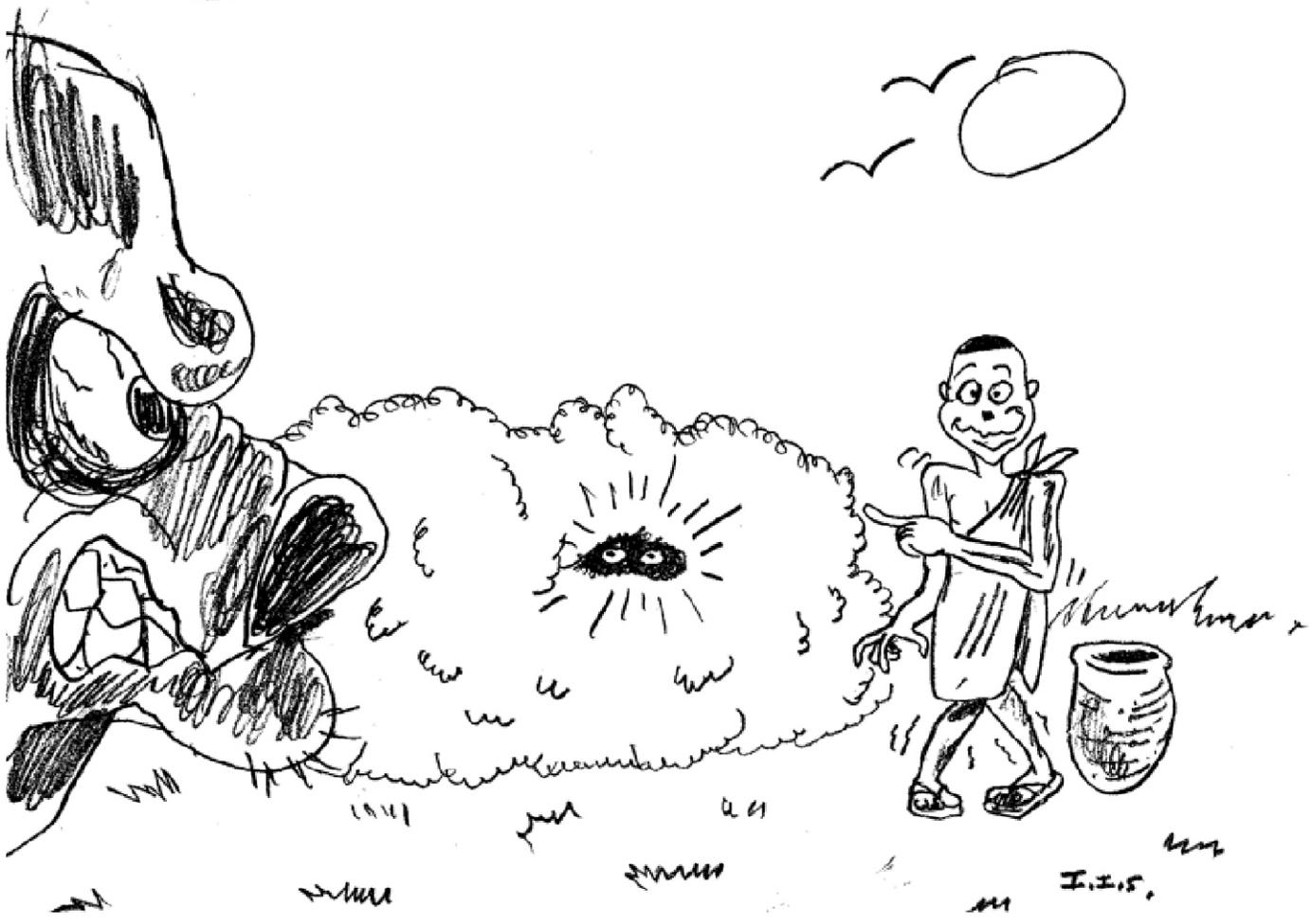
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they mean by
"Nigerian Internet Art"!**



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stop it jumping up onto its feet and bellowing out in rage.

Its maddened eyes swung round and fixed themselves upon the little boy. The frightened little human smiled nervously and pointed at the bushes. The bull sighted Achimugu. It ignored the boy who ran off and it began to puff hot air out of its nostrils while its hooves moved about impatiently digging out chunks of soil and grass.

Achimugu bolted.

The bull bellowed again and took off after the hunter at top speed. Powerful muscles worked all over the beast's body.

Achimugu ran as fast as he could. The bull was in hot pursuit.

Once the hunter picked up enough courage to stop and take another shot at the animal. The arrow hit the bull's teeth and broke into pieces.

“*Wayyo!*” Achimugu yelled in fright and took off again. He was screaming hysterically as he ran, throwing away his weapons in a bid to lighten the burden on his body. He was running as he had never run in his life before. He ran and ran and ran until his legs ached but the bull still followed him. He ran through the forest criss-crossing through the trees and bushes. The bull was right behind him. He ran up a hill and down the other side. The bull was right behind him. He ran up a tree, but the enraged beast hit the trunk with its head until it shook and flung Achimugu back on to the ground. He didn't stop to check himself for injuries, he

ran even faster as those terrible horns seemed to edge closer and closer to his behind.

“Eeeyah!” he screamed as he ran past the farmers and into their cornfields.

“Nnnggrrrrmmuuu!” the bull growled after him smashing through the corn stalks in the farms.

“Eeeyah!” he screamed as he ran past the fishermen and right through the river.

“Nnnggrrrrmmuuu!” the bull growled after him splashing through the river and throwing petrified fish into the air.

“Eeeyah!” he screamed as he ran past the villagers down the way to the chief’s house.

“Nnnggrrrrmmuuu!” the bull growled after him pounding the ground with its hooves and throwing up thick dust into the air.

“Eeeyah! Chief! Chief! Chief o!” Achimugu screamed as he sped past the chief’s door.

“Nnnggrrrrmmuuu!” the bull sped after him.

“Eeeyah, chief please tell the old man to save me!” he shouted again as he came past the house once more.

“We warned you!” he heard the chief shout back at him from his window.

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry! I’m sorry! Help me! Save me!” Achimugu sped past again.

“Nnnggrrrrmmuuu!” the bull sped after him.



He heard the old man call out to him.

“You and your big head! Look what you've done now. Are you still the bravest man in the world?”

“No, baba! No, I'm not he bravest man in the world!”

“Are you the bravest man in the village?”

The tip of one the bull's horns pricked Achimugu in his backside.

“Eeeyaguguwawa! Yeyh, the pain! No, please, no I'm not the bravest man in the village! I'm not the bravest anything! Save me before this *ojuju* (monster) of an animal finishes me off!”

The whole village had probably heard all his screaming but he didn't care. There was a mad bull after him here.

Suddenly he could hear a chirping noise coming from the chief's doorway. He ran past the house again to see the old man standing at the doorway with his hands cupped over his mouth. He was making sweet chirping noises like a bird. He heard a loud grunt and some shuffling behind him. He turned to see the bull slowing down. It was swooning side to side and coming to a halt. Then it stopped and stood still.

The old man walked over to the creature and stroked its head and back. It was calm and under his control now. People began to come out of their homes and gather round.

“It took me ten years to find out this bull is somehow entranced by the happy chirping of birds,” the old man smiled at them.

“Where is Achimugu?” he asked.

Everyone looked around. Where was the hunter?

“Hii-hyaaaah, hiii,” he had collapsed upon the chief and was holding on to his belly as he sweated and gasped for breath.

His legs were shaking like ripples upon water.

“Another ten years of that and your legs would have become as flexible as mine,” the old man laughed. He climbed back on to his bull. “Well, I’ll be leaving you people now. Thank you for your hospitality. I hope your hunters would have learnt a good lesson after this.”

The people cheered and saw him off.

They returned later to fetch Achimugu so they could take him back to his home to get some rest. They lay him on some cloth and carried him away.

“Yeyh, my legs, my legs, my chest...” he gasped. His arms and legs were till shaking. “Yeyh, yeyh, yeyh, I’m not the bravest you hear? Take me home. Take me home.”

Everyone laughed.

Achimugu became a very humble person after that incident.

Never walk the earth with foolish pride lest a big, black bull comes after you.

The End