

**The Mouse The Frog  
And The Snake In The  
Story**

**By**

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## EPIGRAPH

*“You win a few, you lose a few. Some get rained out. But you got to dress for all of them.”*

*- Satchel Paige*

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*Please do not edit. Thank you, Gilbert Chisi*

*Printed and bound in the United States of America*

*Second edition*

## DEDICATION

*For Mom, who says I'm the next Ngugi Wathiongo*

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed for children's education and entertainment. It is designed to inculcate good moral values in children. It would benefit your child to read it to him/her every evening before retiring to bed. In this manner, these moral values will become part of him/her throughout their entire life.

## Chapter 1

### The Death OF The Farmer

Once upon a time in Malala village, Northern Zambia, there lived a farmer who owned a lot of domestic animals. This farmer used to cultivate a lot of crops in his fields. One day after harvesting his crops from the fields, he decided to build new barns where he would store groundnuts, maize and other crops. But in that farmland, there lived a mouse which used to eat his groundnuts. So, the farmer decided to put a mousetrap on the path that the mouse used to pass. When the mouse discovered the mousetrap, he went to notify the other domestic animals so that they could help him remove the mousetrap.

At first the mouse approached the chickens and said, “Chickens we are in trouble! The farmer has decided to put a mousetrap on my path to catch me. What the farmer has done is very wrong because he should have respected my right to eat his groundnuts. Don’t you think so? I am therefore requesting you to go and push the mousetrap out of my way by using your feet since you are much bigger than me.”

The Chickens replied, “Mouse, what has gone wrong with you in your head? Do you think mice traps are for chickens? Mouse are you not even ashamed of yourself by saying we are in trouble! The farmer is right in protecting his groundnuts from you the thief; just stop stealing because what you are doing is not right. You should go in the bush so that you are able to find food for yourself. As for us chickens even though we are being domesticated by the farmer, we have learnt to find food for ourselves. Why can’t you do the same? We won’t push the mouse trap from your path, just leave us at once.”

The Mouse replied back, “Although you have refused my request, you will remember me one day, because my problem is equally your problem just as your problem might be my problem too. Please don’t blame me whatever happens next.”

The Cock answered, "Mouse, we chickens are self-reliant animals. So we don't expect any problems from you or the farmer."

Then the Mouse went away with sadness in his eyes and approached the cattle and said, "Cattle, please I am requesting you to go and push the mousetrap for me with your feet out of my path which I use when going to the barns of groundnuts. Since yesterday, I have not eaten nor my family."

The Cattle replied, "You backward and stupid animal. The mousetrap is meant for mice and not cattle. What's the problem with you mouse? That is being crazy. Since when has cattle been in friendship with you mice. Just go and mind your own business."

The Mouse replied sadly, "Cattle, today you are able to boast just because you haven't seen the outcome of this huge problem. Anyway, my last words to you are that my problem is your problem, just as your problem is my problem too. Please remember that once the problem gets worse you will be affected as well."

The Cattle replied, "Mouse, when things get tough, you must use your brain by coming up with other means to sustain yourself with. We are not even interested in knowing whatever will happen to you."

The mouse with a gloomy face went to the goats, "Goats, I have a problem, the farmer has put a mousetrap on my path. Therefore, I am requesting you to remove it out of my path. You can just go there and set it off with your feet, and my problem will be over."

The Goats replied, "Why bother us with your problem, just go and deal with it yourself. We are not ready to stop eating millet. Therefore just look for another way of pushing the trap from your path."

The Mouse replied, "Don't come crying to me when things go bad for you, my problem is equally your problem, just as your problem might be my problem too. You will remember these words I have spoken."

The Goats replied, "If you have failed to live on this farm, the best you can do is to leave. Go to another farm. Mouse, we also have problems of our own. You don't see us coming to you for help. Therefore the problem of removing the mousetrap from your path is squarely yours and not ours."

The mouse went away to the Sheep and said, "Sheep, I am dying of hunger with my family because the farmer has infringed upon my rights, by placing a mousetrap on the path I use to go to the barns, where I get my food specifically his groundnuts. As you know very well that we mice depend on groundnuts for our survival. Therefore I am requesting you to help me by removing the mousetrap out of my path by kicking it with your feet."

The Sheep answered, "Your request is genuine, I understand it but the problem is that I don't know whether there's someone watching over the mousetrap or not, because if I am caught removing the mousetrap, I will be killed at once. This will lead to the suffering of my lambs. So my advice is that you look for a stick and pick the mousetrap with it. It will set off the mousetrap. This will be the end of your problems."

The Mouse, "Please Sheep, look at my stature, what kind of stick can I carry to help me set off the mousetrap? Sheep learn to solve issues once there are still small because once they become big, they will engulf even the innocent animals. Remember my problem is your problem, just as your problem might be my problem too. Once this issue bursts into a big problem, you should not complain, because you have accepted it."

The Sheep, "Mouse, we have got a lot of things to do as well. Therefore, we don't want other added responsibilities from mice. If you have failed to heed to the advice we have given you, then look for another way yourself."

Then the mouse approached the pigs, "Pigs, I need your help in removing the mousetrap out of my way. I am very hungry; I can't even hold anything in my hands."

The Pig answered, "I am afraid, man is a clever and dangerous animal. No wonder he has been able



to tame different animals on this farm. Man has always wanted to kill me for his relish because I have become too fat. Therefore, if he finds me removing the trap out of your path, I will be in great problems.”

The Mouse replied, “Pig remember to solve problems when there are small, because smaller problems if not solved quickly, they may turn into big problems. Last but not the least; my problem is equally your problem.”

The Pig, “Mouse, you are a liar, how can you shift your problem to the pigs which do not belong to the family of mice? We have nothing to do with you just go to your family.”

Then the mouse went to the ducks and said, “Ducks, I have a problem in which I want you to remove the mousetrap out of my way.”

The Ducks, “Mouse, since when have we approached you with our problems? Just use your common sense and remove the mousetrap from your path otherwise you will die from hunger. Remember, time wasted never gained. I have seen you begging different domestic animals for help, but if you had used your common sense by now you would have solved your problem. I can see that you are shivering with hunger, slow thinker. Just do something yourself before you die. ”

The Mouse, “Ducks, you will remember my words, my problem could be your problem, your problem might be my problem too.”

The Ducks, “Just mind your business we are not mice.”

## Chapter 2

### The Quarrel Between The Snake And The Frog

In the evening on the edge of the forest, a quarrel arose between the snake and the frog in which the snake accused the frog of having an I don't care attitude towards the snake's family.

The Snake asked, "Frog, where were you when my eggs got burnt by the bush fire? When you saw the bush fire coming towards my eggs, why didn't you push them into the tunnel for safety? What could have been the problem with you moving my eggs? If you say there was no tunnel then you should have pushed my eggs in the water, for sure they would have hatched into smaller Snakes today."

The Frog replied, "Where did we sign an agreement of protecting each other's eggs? Your eggs were just too many for me to push them in the tunnel or stream. From what happened to your eggs just learn not to be careless by not leaving them uncovered or hidden when you know quite well that there are a lot of enemies in this forest beside the bush fires."

The Snake replied, "Frog, do you mean I am careless? Apologize Frog for using that word."

The Frog, "Apologize for what? I am telling you the truth that you are careless, that's why your eggs got burnt by the bush fire."

The snake with a grimace on his face, "Mind your language you feeble animal of the Stream. Learn to choose your words carefully. I have been protecting you in this forest; does that mean I am stupid?"

The Frog, "Protecting who, you stupid animal without legs? If you are playing with me, I can cut you into pieces for your misleading statements. When I am looking for food in the forests do you go with me? I can eat you beginning with your long tail. "

The Snake angrily, "Frog, whom can you cut into pieces? Can you manage to cut my tail into smaller pieces and eat it? Watch your mouth. You nobody. What you are saying is nonsense, just heed my words. You should have protected my eggs when I was not around. Is that understood?"

The Frog, "Snake, understand what? What you are saying is utterly useless in fact you have seen for yourself that when I lay my eggs I hide them in the water safe from wild fires and animals. Don't shift blame on me. If you knew that you were going away, you should have left your eggs in the tunnel."

The Snake replied, "Let me punish you, for your unkind words. When I catch you I will swallow you alive. Frog you are a very rude creature. I hope you will never forget the wonderful lesson I am going to teach you. From now on, learn to be responsible for other creature's problems."

The Frog, "Punish who? I categorically refuse any responsibilities from you and any other creatures living in this forest. Let me repeat my statement that I am not ready to be your security guard, you backward creature. "

The Snake, "Frog, you have looked down upon me. Therefore, from now on you have become my enemy. Whenever I meet you there will be trouble."

The Frog, "I don't mind whatever you say. I will never be a slave to your family."

Then the snake started chasing the frog. The frog started jumping as fast as he could and left the snake by two meters. And as the frog kept jumping he saw the mousetrap and went near it. And then went the other side of the mousetrap and hid in the grass.

When the snake came to the mousetrap, he decided to pass in the middle while boasting, "Who has blocked my path without asking permission from me, the great snake? Let me rest for a while as I look for the footprints of the frog. "

Then the snake pulled the mousetrap on one side accidentally and the mousetrap fell on the body of the snake with a loud bang.

The Snake surprised, “What is this? Could this be a snake trap for me? Oh! I am still alive despite passing through the trap, but I must wait and see who did this. I won’t waste time to strike him if it is a human being because they should give respect to other creatures living in the forest; in fact this is exactly what I was telling the frog to be responsible for my family as well. Now by setting traps like this one, does this mean that human beings no longer care for other creatures? What would have happened if this trap had injured me severely on my head, definitely my snake family would have suffered greatly especially the young ones. Let me wait a bit as I can hear footsteps of a human being coming towards this place. What was he doing during the day? This is now time for wild creatures to play and find food to eat.”

When the farmer heard the sound of the bang he said, “Listen my wife, today the mouse which has been eating my groundnuts has been caught in the trap and I am so glad, the mouse is dead now. Let me go and remove the mouse from the trap. This mouse has really been troubling me for a long time.”

The Wife replied, “My husband, I think it’s dark outside, just go tomorrow when its daylight and see whether it’s the mouse in the trap or not. There are a lot of things crawling on the ground beside mice.”

The Farmer, “My dear wife, I am extremely excited over the death of this mouse. For sure it is the mouse which has set off the trap and not something else. I have been having sleepless nights imagining how to catch the mouse. This mouse had been eating groundnuts in my barns.”

The Wife, “But how will you see the mouse in the trap since we don’t have a torch?”

The Farmer, “Don’t worry my dear wife, I will simply use my initiative by lighting the grass to see the mouse in the trap and how big it is.”

The Wife, “I don’t agree with your initiative, you do that at your own risk.”

The Farmer in his heart, “I don’t know why women fear the unknown, I am glad to be a man making bold decisions.”

Since the Farmer knew the place very well so he lit a stack of grass to give him light and started going where he had left the mousetrap. Unfortunately as soon as he reached the mouse trap he hit his foot on a rock and the light went off as he fell on the trap. His hands touched the snake in the mousetrap.

Then the snake raised its head and struck the farmer twice, biting him on his forehead. The farmer shouted for help, “Oh my wife, my wife, I have been bitten by a snake. How I wish I had listened to your advice! Who knows the medicine for a snake bite? I don’t think I will survive this snake bite. Goodbye my wife.”

The wife started crying as she stood at the entrance of their small house, “I told you my husband not to go outside because it was too dark but you refused. If you had listened to my advice you wouldn’t be dying now. Anyway I will miss you my lovely husband. For forty years we have been together.”

Then that very night a message was circulated around the whole village that the farmer for Malala village had died after being bitten by a snake caught in his mousetrap on his farm.

## Chapter two

### The Funeral

When the news of the death of the farmer had been spread, even villagers from far flung villages attended the funeral. When funeral discussions were held among the council of elders, one villager said, “This is a funeral of a very rich man. We need to slaughter a lot of domestic animals for relish because neighbouring villagers are also in attendance at this funeral. So, we need to slaughter a bull and a cow, ten chickens, four goats, four sheep, four ducks and two pigs. The only domestic animal which will not be slaughtered is the dog because he is our security guard. ”

Then the adviser to the village farmer asked, “But what can we do with the cat?”

The brother to the farmer, “The cat is just too thin and ugly to be slaughtered for relish. Just leave it we shall use it for relish once it gets fat.”

Another villager asked, “I can see some doves there, they are very good for relish as well.”

The brother to the farmer, “Why waste your energy on small birds like the doves when there are cattle, sheep, pigs and so on. Just leave them we shall use them for relish at a later stage.”

Then after slaughtering the domestic animals there was drinking of beer, drum beating, singing and dancing. Mourners from within Malala village and mourners from distant villages became excited arguing with each other, the funeral became like a wedding party.

Then the domestic animals started mourning silently for their relatives who had been slaughtered for relish.

The mouse came silently and said, “Comrades, I hope you have learnt a lesson from what has happened to your relatives today. If you had listened to my request by removing the mousetrap out

of my path, your relatives would have been alive by now. Do you remember when you rejected my request? Who can now dispute my predictions which I foresaw, since my words have been fulfilled? Comrades, learn to take care of weak animals in your environment, because when trouble comes, it tends to affect everyone. Innocent animals including stronger animals like the cattle, the sheep, are now dead because of you. You told me to mind my own business. Are you not ashamed of what has taken place today? All of you comrades are now mourning for your relatives today. The problem hasn't singled out any animals on this farm, which is disastrous."

The Bull, "I think what you said mouse is true. This is a work up call, let us have a meeting of all domestic animals and see where we went wrong when we argued against your plan. For sure, we are all paying for what we did when we disobeyed your request. Today every domestic animal is feeling a sense of guilty for what has taken place here. "

The Goat, "If our relatives are dead then what is the use of having a meeting? Let us forget about our dead relatives, let their souls rest in eternal peace."

The male Sheep, "I think it's high time we come together as domestic animals. We should discuss and find out the root cause for the deaths of our relatives at length. Let us make sure these senseless deaths never happen again."

The Cock, "I support the suggestion of the Bull. Perhaps as we come together we may find a way of protecting ourselves from the cruelty of man. Who knows, maybe man might be looking for other domestic animals to slaughter. Having said this, let us try to find a common agenda on how to iron out our problems among domestic animals living on this farm."

The Pig, "The Goat is right, we domestic animals cannot overcome the wishes of man. Since we are tamed animals, we should all be ready to be sacrificial lambs on the dinner table of man."

The Sheep, "I think you are mad pig, every creature has the right to life. How I wish I had not left the forest to come and stay on this farm. I really made a very big mistake to leave the forest. The wild animals in the forest do not die like the way our relatives have been slaughtered mercilessly."

The Dog, “I think the meeting is okay, because we should talk about the responsibilities of every domestic animal living on this farm. We must definitely learn to support each other’s rights on this farm.”

The Dove, “I will not take part in your meeting. After all I was not affected in anyway.”

Cock, “You can remain if you want, you coward bird from the bush. By the way who even invited you our meeting? ”

Dove, “From now on I will regard you Cock with your family as my worst enemy. You are a very backward bird who cannot even fly although you have got feathers and wings. ”

The Cattle, “Let us hurry up by going to the edge of this farm and hold a meeting while the humans are busy mourning for the farmer. If the Pig and the Goat do not attend this meeting it is up to them.”

Then all the domestic animals including the mouse went to the edge of the farm. Then the Cattle asked, “Who is the chair leader of this meeting?”

The Cat answered, “I am ready to chair this meeting and without wasting time I am requesting the mouse to start the story.”

The Goat interrupted, “The mouse should not tell us about the story which has passed on. We don’t want to be reminded of the deaths of our relatives, because they died in pain unexpectedly.”

The Sheep, “Chair leader?” “I think the Goat is mad, we have told him to remain at the farm; but he has followed us, and always speaking negatively about this meeting. Please Goat leave this place, because you have nothing sensible to offer to this meeting.”

Cat the chair leader, “This issue can only be solved amicably when we know the root cause. After all I am not accusing the mouse of anything.”



Then the mouse stood up and said, “My friends, comrades!”

The Sheep interrupted, “Mouse, give respect to the big animals like the cattle, the goats, including me, to speak first. Remember that we are different in stature.”

The Cat, “Continue mouse, narrate your side of the story. Start from the beginning. Before the massacre of our brothers and sisters.”

The Mouse, “Dear domestic animals, I was near the mousetrap thinking of what method I could use to remove the mousetrap out of my way. When I saw the Frog jumping very fast, coming towards the mousetrap. I got scared and hid in the tall grass near the mousetrap. It is at this point that I saw the big snake following the frog at high speed.

The Snake came to the mousetrap and glided onto it thinking it was a small hut. The snake wanted to rest on the mousetrap. The snake shook the mousetrap setting it off with a loud bung. It fell on its body leaving the head outside the mousetrap.

The owner of the farm wanted to catch me. He must have heard the mousetrap go off. He lit a stack of grass because it was too dark. He bumped his feet on the rock near the mousetrap. The light from the grass he was carrying went off.

It was at this point that the farmer felt his hands touch the snake on the mousetrap. He touched the snake by accident, but the snake shook itself and struck the farmer twice on his forehead. He cried bitterly in severe anguish and then he died.

I was very sorry to see an innocent farmer die because of the crops which he had planted by himself. I will end here unless others would like to add something else.”

The Sheep, “Before the chairman comes in, the mouse was wrong because if he had followed my advice of pushing a stick in the mousetrap before the snake arrived at the trap, our relatives would have been alive by now.”

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