

The Man who Planted a Tree



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Acknowledgement:

The day I wrote this story for our school was when NJA had planted 100 trees on Chipembere Highway. It is derived from a Hadith my mother-in-law once told me about. A simple message about the benefits of taking care of the Earth while we still have the opportunity to do so. The children thoroughly enjoyed the story and we decided to share it.

The benefits of tree planting contribute to the environment in many ways and it would be good to see today's youth get actively involved in activities that would heal mother earth.

The first publication was a joint effort with illustrations done by the students. In the second publication we were blessed to have Vitumbiko's creative mind at work. Thank you for the beautiful illustrations.

I would like to thank the NJA staff and students for their support and encouragement. I could not have done it without you.

For my mother in law, **Fatima Hajat**
for the love, kindness and guidance that she gives me - for the strength and positive attitude she always has towards the trials and tribulations that life throws in our direction.

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Note from the Author

My love for children and education goes back to my childhood.

I was born in Nairobi and being the youngest of a family of eight has its advantages and disadvantages. I ended up taking care of my many nieces and nephews and worked relentlessly to keep them happy and occupied. This is what brought out my teaching skills, even though I felt like the unfortunate one at the time.

My parents gave me an education that I will cherish forever. They taught me to be humble and courteous to others. To do something good each day and make a difference. My late father's unshakable honesty, commitment and generosity is a memory I treasure. I feel proud to be recognized as his child. His hard work brought wealth to the family and my late mother always taught us to appreciate what we had.

In 1980, I was shot by Cupid's arrow and married a charming young man who convinced me that Malawi was heaven on earth. In 1982, my second year in Malawi, I opened my first school, Loth-Lorien Montessori. My love for the environment goes back to this very time as some of my first students still remembered the butterfly funeral which we held when a child had accidentally stepped on one.

In 2005, Nyasa Junior Academy started and one of the values that we endeavoured to instil was to 'respect the environment'. Our first environmental school concert idea for "The second chance" came about after my disheartening experience of going back to Nairobi and finding that the animals we had seen as children on the road to Mombasa have now disappeared due to poaching. This concert was followed by a sequel "The aliens are back!" which focused on the issue of deforestation in Malawi.

I hope that this book will reach out to the children with the message that it's still not too late. Let's join hands and heal the environment.



It was a bright sunny day when the man passed away and very soon he felt as though he was being lifted up into the sky.



He was gently placed on a bed of clouds where a group of people were sitting and waiting to enter a large white room.

There was a lot of talk and confusion. Soon it was his turn to go into the shrine.

He entered the shrine where God's presence was felt and angels were fluttering all around him.



One angel gave him a chair to sit on while his deeds were about to be read out. There was a large scale next to a book labelled "Records". Two words were on the scale: "GOOD" and "BAD".



An angel opened the book of records and
read out aloud,

“When he was five years old, he pushed his baby
sister while she was taking her first step.”

* BAD*



“When he was seven, he snatched a pencil from his friend.”

***BAD ***

One angel continued to read while
another placed weights on the scale...



“When he was eight years old, he looked after his mum when she was ill. He made her breakfast and took care of all her needs.

* GOOD *

* GOOD *

The balance on the scale was starting to look better



“However, when he was twelve he used a catapult to kill birds.

* BAD *



“He was very good to his parents and teachers. He always respected his elders.

* GOOD *



“Sometimes he left the tap on while he brushed his teeth and therefore a lot of water was wasted...”

BAD





“When he turned eighteen he was given a car for his birthday which made him arrogant and selfish. He drove around showing off to his friends.”

* BAD *

* BAD *

* BAD *



God feels sad to see arrogance in people. He loves people who are humble.

The man felt sad and ashamed. His scale was not looking good at all!



“Not only was he showing off she continued, “he used to splash water on people walking on the pavement during the rainy season. He did not care about their clothes or how ill they would get if they stayed wet all day long.”

God DISLIKES people who are selfish and belittle those who have less

* BAD *

* BAD *





His scale had tilted completely to the bad end!

Just when he was losing all hope,
an angel rushed in...

“WAIT!” said the Angel. A message has come
from planet earth. Did you plant a tree when you
were a teenager?” she asked.

The man nodded his head, wondering what
would happen now - was that going to be
good or bad?

GOOD You contributed to the planet’s oxygen



God likes people who
look after the
environment!



“Well, your tree has now grown and has delicious fruits! School children enjoy these fruits every day.”
“Even birds have been eating fruits from your tree for the past seven years.

* GOOD *

* GOOD *

* GOOD *

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