

## **Ananse and his jealous friend**

“Are you sleeping Ananse? I have come to discuss a very sensitive topic with you,” Wild Deer said. “Come in then, I am not sleeping, I am only thinking my head off in bed.” Ananse replied. “That’s good, I hope they are plans that will add some riches to our lives,” Wild Deer joked. “Well Ananse, let me get straight to the point: We have been in this village for a long time, actually throughout our whole lives. It is also a fact that historically, it is only my family and yours that have had any brilliant idea about the genesis of this village Kpandai.” I perfectly remember all that my late grandfather told me about how the village was founded. The wars they fought against the white, and even how the name Kpandai came about. That is a very long story, I cannot complete it today. So let’s leave it for the time being.

What are you driving at my dearest friend? I hope you are not going to keep me in suspense much longer, Ananse said.

No, not at all! I will not keep you in suspense any longer, Wild Deer replied. You see for some time already I have been particularly worried about this village. We have come a long way and we are no longer living in ancient days... Since then we have grown in population and in size. Everything about the ancient Kpandai has changed. Now tell me, how can a great village such as this, full of resources, natural and human be without a leader?

That’s a very sensitive point to raise, Ananse said, but what do you think we can do about it? Kpam! That’s exactly why I am here, Wild Deer said. He drew nearer to Ananse and spoke with an undertone. Listen attentively my friend, Wild Deer said, I know you are the type of friend I can rely upon at all times.

Listen my friend I have a very strong belief that the time has come for the people of Kpandai to have a leader of their own. It is time we, the people of this village, should choose a leader. All other villages have their own chiefs to rule them, we cannot be an exception

That’s a very good idea Ananse said, but we need some form of law to achieve this!

I think, looking at the historical influence of our families on this village, we (and our descendants) should have the right to share the stool amongst ourselves.

You talk very well Ananse replied, it looks like you have spend the past year on putting all these thoughts together. But in reality, do you sincerely think this can be possible?

We shall imply rotational royal inheritance between our families. After the death of a chief who comes form family A, it shall automatically be the turn of family B to choose the next chief. And the other way around of course. Ananse rose at his feet to take a deep bow for his friend. That is a very good idea! Ananse said, but in his hearts of hearts he was very sceptical about how the whole idea was going to work. He had very strong reservations within him since this was a maiden proposal. How are the people going to receive this? He asked himself.

In actual fact, Ananse would have very much loved to be the first chief, but fearing the entire plan would be a disaster he cunningly pushed his friend forward. I am extremely proud of you this morning, he said, and I will be proud forever. I thank you for your great wisdom. Indeed I thank God for giving you to me as a friend.

I have no doubt in my mind that if we were to have fire of your types in Kpandai, this village would soon develop into a modern city. I do not in my right sense think that Kpandai would have had any better leader in her maiden quest apart from you. I know it, I can smell it, the entire Kpandai community would be very delighted to have you as their first chief ever.

And so with perfect understanding the two friends took an oath of secrecy to forever keep that mutual agreement secret. Few days later Wild Deer managed to gather all the inhabitants and elderly of the village together. This took place in the only park located on the outskirts of the village. With Ananse standing at his right to lend support, Wild Deer announced why he had called for the gathering. Great men and women of Kpandai I greet you all. I know everyone of you is wondering why this gathering has been called. And even the mountain women stood amongst the others waiting for explanation. You all know this village has been without a leader for quite some time. This certainly is not good and we shouldn't continue like this. I believe the time has come for us to get things done in a more civilised way. There must be law and order from now on. We need a leader for this, we need someone to guide us. Yes, we must choose someone to lead us!

Everyone appeared to be consumed in the brainstorm of who should be chosen. But after a very long period of deliberation among themselves and like Ananse himself, they all shouted united: You are both qualified to be our chief, choose amongst yourselves!

Smilingly Wild Deer turned to his trusted friend next to him, and whispered into his ear. You see, the plan has worked! Now go forward and tell them what we have agreed upon. At his time Ananse became jealous. But it was already too late for him to make any change of mind. And so reluctantly he announced to the people their new and first chief.

Ananse stood in front of the awaiting crowd and raised his voice: Without any further hesitation, I introduce to you, your very first chief of the village, our chief: the Deer who from now on will be known as Torgbui Dasebre I. Myself, I will be his linguist and his adviser as well Ananse spoke.

On the return home that day the two friends rejoiced that everything had worked out according to plan. And as the night fell, the two dispersed to have a good night sleep after a hard day's work. However this was not the case for Torgbui Dasebre, recognizing his task he had difficulty catching sleep. Understanding that in order to make any significant impact on the people he needed to put a lot of plans and initiatives in place, as a consequence Torgbui Dasebre spent the entire night thinking about his administration.

On the end Torgbui decided he should have a palace in order to carry out his duties effectively. The day after he went straight to Ananse with this idea and Ananse immediately bought the idea. And so with great determination, within three months, the two friends mobilised the people and put up a very great and beautiful palace. It was a masterpiece. Everything about the palace was so splendid that one hardly believes that this was a village palace.

Immediately, Torgbui and his linguist moved into the palace to start serious business. Dasebre, who always believed in the potential of the village Kpandai to become a city, made very good use of the village's mineral resources. Kpandai had several sources of diamonds, bauxite as well as cocoa. He began making use of these resources to the fullest. He as well built some residential apartments to uplift the image of the village.

He was able to do this within his first two years of steering the affairs of the village. The people of Kpandai immediately saw the drastic transformation within a relative short period of time. They were very pleased indeed with what their chief had done. All the people of Kpandai praised Torgbui Dasebre and his linguist Ananse for their dedication to good leadership and development in the village. Gold was discovered in commercial quantities. It pleased the chief enormously that the most expensive and precious mineral was discovered in his village. This could provide him the money he needed to carry out his development agenda.

This world they say is full of surprises you know. And although Ananse was living witness to all the

development projects, he wasn't happy. He wasn't happy at all that all the time it was work, work, work. In his opinion they could better spend the money on themselves. I don't understand my friend: we get the finest opportunity to enrich ourselves and fill our pocket. But all he thinks about is development. If it is not the road, then it was a school or a hospital. Ah! Ebey! What was wrong with this man? Maybe he wanted to be poor, but certainly not me! Hmmmmm this my friend, na waah for him ooh! Na waah for him. I must be rich, I must be rich. I cannot be here and watch this foolish Torgbui or whatever they call him waste all these gold on his so called developmental projects, Ananse thought.

Soon he remembered the agreement they agreed upon. If the chief dies, the next family decides the new chief. If Torgbui dies....I will be the next chief.

How on earth would I forever stay a linguist to this foolish man? How can I remain linguist to this silly brat? The time has come for me to be a chief. Yes before I die I must have been a chief, yes I must definitely be a chief. So the chief must die! But he is my only friend, Ananse said, clearly doubting his wicked ideas. Quickly he recovered himself saying to himself that this was not a matter of being friends, what did friendship had to do with this? He made himself a chief, so I must make myself a chief and be rich! Ananse took time to work out his diabolical plan, and at the same time he tried to get even closer to his friend.

He did so by discussing more development projects with the chief, Torgbui Dasebre. "Torgbui, there is no doubt in my mind that we have reached the peak of our age, it is time we leave a mark behind."

"I sincerely believed that the only legacy that we can leave behind would be the extent to which we have developed Kpandai. You see the very first occupants of this stool, we have to do our best in order to leave a very indelible mark behind. Only then people would remember us even after centuries", Torgbui responded.

I also think that we have to be completely accountable to the people and offer them a selfless rule. Or what do you say?

Hmm! Ananse, I am not exaggerating, I am not trying to flatter you just because you are here.

Sincerely it is my belief that the greatest thing to have ever happened to me is having you as a friend. It seems to me we have almost everything in common. I am very proud of your matured and carefully selected thoughts. A leader they say is the servant of the people and not a lord over them. Torgbui said.

That's my friend. I like the spirit and that explains why you have been chosen to be our first chief of this village, Ananse said. That reminds me Torgbui, there is this idea that I wanted to discuss with you. I hope you are aware that River Praso is the biggest river in our community here. Don't you think it would be good to develop it into a lake? Then we can use it for both farming as well as for tourism purposes.

Torgbui Dasebre readily agreed and immediately, a day was fixed for them to go and inspect the place.

Ananse took his friend to a very deep spot. This place would be very good for our project, Ananse engaged him in a deep conversation. They talked and talked and discussed several issues. All this while, Ananse was getting very much ready to strike. And so unknown to Dasebre, Ananse went behind him and pushed him onto the river for he knew there is no way he was able to swim. As soon as he realised that everything was over for the chief Ananse wisely wet himself. Then he started shouting for help. Help! Help! Help! somebody help me, the chief is dying! The chief, our

chief is dying. He ran all the way to the village shouting for help.

Immediately all the fisherman in the village who heard Ananse's desperate cry rushed swiftly to the river. But alas. it was all too late. The die has been cast already. The chief died before their arrival and what a terrible death it was.

As a measure of covering his guilt, Ananse wept and cried so bitterly for seven solid days. He has refused to be consoled. Oh! What a tragedy. Why should it have to be you my friend. Oh death why why why didn't you take my life instead of the chief, Ananse pretended to have been carried away by the death of Torgbui Dasebre.

In the village itself, all the inhabitants were trying hard to recover from the shock. The death of the chief has brought great pain, sorrow and grief to the people of Kpandai. They have lost a great chief. Few days after the burial of Torgbui Dasebre I, the thought of a possible successor arose. All the elder of the village gathered to brainstorm who could be a possible successor to the late chief. It came to pass that after several hours of deliberations, all the elders unanimously agreed that Ananse should be made their next chief. They did this unaware of what the two great friends had already agreed upon. They were convinced of the fact that he was a strong founding member of the whole idea and also a close ally of the late chief, he was the only immediate person.

As such they went to Ananse in the palace and told him about what they have decided. But to the utter dismay of the elders, Ananse did not seem to have bought the idea. Of course he was pretending isn't it?

Elders of our land, I thank you very much for you support and wisdom. It is indeed an honour to have you all, as people behind me. I thank you once again. My elders, I believed each of you is very much aware about how intimate I and our late chief have been. In fact more that biological brothers. Oh what a great brother he was? May his soul rest in perfect peace. I sincerely believed and in fact I want to plead with you, that I should be allowed to mourn my friend especially in this early days instead of inheriting or succeeding him. In that way even his soul would be very much pleased with me. I am sorry, I am in no mood of inheritance now.

Please Ananse, accept our condolence, one elder said. We know you have lost a great friend and indeed we have also lost a great friend, brother and great chief. But Ananse you definitely cannot to contribute to mourn him forever. Life must go on. We must carry on with the lives and that is why we are here. We believed you are the only one who can step into his shoes.

The arguments went forth and back but at the end of the day, the elders managed to get Ananse to throw the towel. The people of Kpandai were subsequently informed and Ananse became Torgbui DasebreII. Ananse now Togbui Dasebre II later chose the eldest son of the late chief to be his linguist.

On his ascension to the stool, the elders of the village decided to allow him sometime to pull himself together and to complete mourning his brother.

Torgbui Dasebre II, we know that ever since our late chief has joined our ancestors, a lot of things have not been working well. As a result, we want to allow you that room of freedom to enable you start putting things in order. You can also use this period to mourn your friend finally, the spokesman of the elders said. Once again, we welcome you Torgbui as our new chief, you can always count on our support.

I thank you very much for you continuous support as well as your confidence in me. I promise you

that I would forever be available to you and the rest of the people. In the morning, afternoon, evening or in the night. I will always be there for even an day old baby. I promise you, my elders, I will never let you down.

This is the voice of a true son. I could see he would not be different from our late chief, one elder whispered to the other. Yes you are right, you are perfectly right and I feel very proud. After the elders had left the palace, Ananse got up, walked about and then sat comfortably in the golden stool. So I'm now the new chief of Kpandai, he wondered. The new chief of Kpandai, this is unbelievable.

I am now going to be the single controller of all villages resources, gold, diamond and cocoa. I can now sell any quantity that I want and use the money for my personal expenditures. I hope they are very much aware of what they are doing . I hope they are aware of what they are doing. I hope they are aware that this is a new chief who ultimately is coming with new laws.

That year the rains came and the cocoa harvest has shot up by over 300%. Both gold and diamonds were also mined surprisingly well.

Ananse knew money has come home. I am rich he said to himself. I am completely rich. I am sure by the time I finish selling this, I would be the richest person on earth. Everything is going to be sold. But I have to be careful the way I do it. I have to do it in a way those useless elders would not have any course to suspect. I have to use the old men themselves since they represent the voice of the people.

Immediately, Ananse summoned all the elders to a meeting at his palace. Elders of our land, he started. My calling you here today is to solicit your views on how to ensure the continuous development of our village. You all know that my predecessor has done creditably well in this regards. Talk about the roads, the schools and the hospitals among others. Fortunately for us this year, we have the highest harvest of all our major resources. This may fetch us about double of what er used to get in the past. It would interest you to know that i intend to connect our village to the national electricity grade. I have already signed the memorandum of understanding between our village and Central Electronics of China to undertake this important project. They have assured me that the project would be completed in three years. In order to enable them accomplish the project on schedule, they have demanded full payment of the total cost. As a result, all the revenue for this year would go into the project. Elder Kumi rose to his feet to seek clarification. Torgbui you saying that in the next three years this village would be connected to electricity. The light in the sly that you press something and then the light come by itself?

Yes elder Kumi, that is exactly what I am talking about. Chief! may you live long. Torgbui may you live much, much longer and may your knowledge continue to grow this way, elder Kumi praised Ananse. Then in Unision all the elders praised the chief for his foresight.

Having been able to convince the elders, Torgbui Dasebre II sold all the gold, cocoa and diamonds. He made a lot of money and kept it to himself.

Using the same tricks DasebreII managed to convince the elders the next year that he wanted to connect telephone to the village. He told them that contract which have been awarded to a Malasian firm be completed in two years. The third year came and Ananse told another lie. He wanted to lay PVC pipes to bring pipe-borne water to the village. This was contrary to what they have jointly agreed upon that the money be used to complete a bridge linking Kpandai and Ketekum.

But all the same the elders saw the need for clean drinking water and so allowed the plan to pass. They were hope full that at the end of the project, Kpandai would also be having her own good

drinking water just like Odomi and Fiesima.

Foolishly on his part however, he told them that the water project would be completed that same year.

So as it were the people of Kpandai were expecting three major projects to be completed on the end of the year. Electricity, telephone and water. Everybody was eager to see these projects come through. But alas the reverse is the case. That was to be a nine's day wonder. The year fastly drawing to a close and still there was no sign. There was not a single sign of the existence of any of these projects. It was October, November and till it was December and still there was no sign. All the people started murmuring. Everything became clear that their chief was not telling them the truth: Three projects could not fail simultaneously! Something has gone wrong somewhere, something must have gone wrong and I believe this must be coming from the chief, one youth remarked.

That's very correct echoed another youth. Haven't you seen how the chief has become a world bank in a matter of three years?

I sincerely believed the chief has embezzled all the money and we must show him where power lies, joined a third youth.

Tsooboe! Tsooboe! Tsooooboe! the youth marched to the chief palace, grabbed him and tore him to pieces. That was the end of Ananse.