PRINCE OF WISDOM

In the life of nations and peoples, there are men and women whose advent changes or influences the course of their history. These men are created by times, events and circumstances to which they resemble more than their parents. They are listened to, because they analyse and interpret events better than others. They are followed, because they are incarnation of their own philosophies and doctrines. They are admired because they have the audacity, the courage to denounce in time and space with humility what everyone accepts with stoicism and passivity. They mold and shape the lives of their followers and sympathizers who worship them.

Tugna, the prince of wisdom, was such a man who was born to unite his people under the banner whose three colours were justice, love and equality, the only guarantee of true peace for which everyone aspires, individually and collectively.

A PREMONITORY DREAM

The shepherd looked up and saw that the sun was at its zenith. It was not hot despite this position of the sun in a period usually of great heat in Narenkabadu. But, the thing that usually worries a shepherd the least is the weather, because his most faithful companions are the hot sun and the rain, which is sometimes torrential. He simply wanted to gauge the position of the sun in relation to the distance that separated him from the village.

Famoro, the shepherd, in a stinking rag with a recorder flute and a crook, was sitting in the shade under a century-old neirei tree (a tree in the savannah regions), at the edge of a steppe with luxuriant grasses. He was contemplating the blue sky in which were hovering the raptor birds like the golden eagle and the peregrine falcon. In the middle of this steppe, the well-fed cattle were grazing around a pond almost covered with water lilies and bordered by a chrysanthemum of exotic-looking flowers which were attracting a motley crowd of mimetic butterflies and worker bees, in the background of croaking rampant frogs. Rare fact, in this herd which belonged to him without sharing, there was only one calf.

Taking into account the distance that was separating him from the pen, the shepherd decided to approach it while allowing his flock to continue grazing along the way. While going back, the only relief of the herd was attempting tirelessly to escape by dragging behind the others. The shepherd who, at the beginning, managed to detect the mischievousness of the capricious calf, ended up letting his attention be deceived by it, certainly because of exertion and the desire to see his family. He only realized the calf's disappearance when he was leading the cattle into the pen. Without going home as he would have wished, Famoro retraced his steps to search for his treasure.

He started with the immediate vicinity of the pen, then the other places where he did not have his attention fixed on the calf on his return, but in vain. Where was the calf? Was it caught by a predator or bitten by a poisonous snake? All these questions haunted his mind. The last thing that came to mind was the possibility of his calf joining its mother cow, which was in an area located beyond seven hills where it had been quarantined for a long time due to illness. But it was hard to believe that for the fact that the two had very little time together before the latter was pushed aside from the rest of the herd. However, that thought always was haunting him stubbornly. ‘‘What to do then? Should I attempt this uncertain adventure, that is to say, climb the seven hills, each steeper than the other, for an unlikely objective?’’ But the importance of the calf was worth the effort. For this, he sent his younger brother to fetch the calf from the side of the mother cow.

The latter, armed with his shotgun surrounded by a herd of well-trained dogs, climbed all the seven hills only to see his efforts seemingly rewarded when descending the last hill where he saw a calf galloping through the reeds. in the valley. All of a breath, he hastened his steps, jumping the ditches and the shrubs, which rose up in front of him and crushing the pebbles while raising the dust such as a battle. After a few minutes, he reached what he believed to be his target, but unfortunately for him, instead of the sturdy black calf he was looking for, he only saw a weak white calf. He realized that he had made a mistake and stopped, looking haggard. He returned in despair to the house without continuing the search, because this event happened right near where the suffering mother cow was. He went back to report to his big brother.

Famoro woke up with a start and found that everything was in order. He still remained indeed the wealthy king of Simandu of the diaranké dynasty. But it was evident that this dream, which was probably premonitory, had to retain his attention. The night was taking its course. It must have been far from dawn, for no rooster had yet crowed. All was calm in the royal courtyard lit by the moon, which was shining insolently as on its fourteenth night.

* I think we have to wait until morning to explain this dream to the scholars of the kingdom, he murmured.

But waiting, for the morning was a hardship to bear, because the night was still long. Insomnia was too annoying. It was, moreover, a moral torture. He ends up breaking:

* I have to go see Kassakoro. He resolved.

He left by the security exit arranged behind his palace and of which he was the only one to know the location. By this evasion, he went to see his favourite seer. Kassakoro, the greatest diviner, the greatest master of geomancy in the kingdom, was in a hut in a very advanced state of disrepair, isolated at the bottom of the city. A mango tree was covering the seer's house with its shadow in this moonlit night. It was ideal moment.

He knocked lightly on the seer's door. The connoisseur of the future took a little while to open the door. When he opened it, to his great surprise, it was the sovereign he saw standing in front of his door. Not knowing what to do, he immediately closed the door as the surprise was great and unlikely. This nightmarish visit could not have been fortuitous. He even imagined that it could be a zombie transmigrated or reincarnated in the form of the king to make the spell of him. Several ideas of this kind jostled in his head. He was shaking, whistling and murmuring in this hut, slightly lit by the luminous rays of this full moon which crossed the dilapidated roof. There was really something wrong. An all-powerful king found in front of a subject's door in the middle of the night without any guards. There must be an overpowering circumstance.

* Open the door, Kassakoro. I am your king. Do not be surprised, reassures the sovereign.
* I wonder what his majesty may need from me at this moment. Why don't you call me? Said the seer while remaining inside the house.
* We come to two persons at this similar moment: the one we love and the one in whom we trust. Open the door, you knower of all secrets, insisted Famoro.

With this assurance on the part of the king, the seer, shirtless, wearing only a *bila* (underpants) whose long tail was going down to his knees, reopened the door. This 40-year-old had prominent muscles capable of deterring any attempt at physical attack from an enemy. But the king had a completely different objective.

* I come to tell you about a dream I had last night. I'm worried about it.

He then carefully told his dream to the seer without omitting any detail. The seer took out a very clean calabash and put clear water in it, then covered himself with a white cotton blanket as well as the calabash and began the service of geomancy. He said he was communicating with the Geniuses who were sending messages for the sovereign. It was the rule.

* The Geniuses say that we must begin the explanation of the dream with the sun. They want to know in which position it was in the sky, asked the seer.
* Above my head

The seer paused, then, shook the calabash, this time speaking aloud:

* Talk to me, you Water of truth; Water of cleanliness; Water of love; Water of life. Talk to me. You never lied to me. You never lied to my ancestors. You will never lie to my descendants! He babbled grotesquely. Ah! Ah! Ah! What a good dream! The Geniuses say that his majesty must know that the sun symbolizes reign in a dream. Its position in the sky represents the evolution of the reign: when it is rising up, it announces that a new reign is about to begin. When it is setting, it is unfortunately the end of a reign. But when it's overhead, as in your case, unmistakably, it's the continuity of the on-going reign for quite a while, and since it wasn't hot, that means your people are absolutely not complaining of your governance.
* I follow you with interest, my spiritual guide, said the king in support of his seer.
* The Geniuses recommend me to transmit to His Majesty the messages as exactly as they communicate them to me. That is to say without alteration, warns the seer.
* There is no problem. You can trust me.
* His Majesty must also know that the herd designates the people for a leader, the family for a head of the family. In the specific case of his Majesty, the herd can have two meanings: the people as king, and the family as the head of the family. Either way, the calf means, child.

Hearing the word child, the king, who had never had a child in his entire life and was looking for one with all his heart, sighed deeply. The seer paused and resumed his explanations.

* If we look at the side of the people, we dare not say that yours has no other relief than a single child who, moreover, must end up leaving them to join an unknown horizon. It's unimaginable. We can only look on the side of your family.
* Hmmm! growled the sovereign. He already knew what the seer was coming to. The logic was clear, if is not possible for the people not to have a successor, then it is the family, if there were only the two alternatives in the dream.
* What does his majesty say? The seer worried.
* No, nothing. I'm listening.

With this assurance, the seer bravely spoke again.

* We can only consider the herd as the family of His Majesty, he said nonchalantly. He became silent for a moment then resumed. So, the Geniuses say that his emperor will indeed have a child, but without a mother. Or, at least... That is to say... blablabla, the diviner got confused, without understanding or without wanting to convey exactly the message of the Geniuses so as not to certainly provoke the sovereign's anger.
* Yes go ahead! Foolish. What do you mean? What do you call a child without a mother? How can this happen? Or are you saying that I won't have a kid, you scammer? You and your Geniuses are just a bunch of gravediggers. Shit! Roared, the king to storm out. While soliloquizing along the road in the breeze of the dawn, he returned to his yard.

It should be noted that since the creation of the kingdom of Simandu, there was a legendary stability prevailing there. This stability mainly resulted from the economic prosperity enjoyed by the inhabitants, underpinned by a well-structured political organization. Succession to the throne was from father to son, usually the first son. In the absence of a son, a daughter of the king would succeed him according to birth order. And if he did not have a child, then a brother of his could succeed him by the same way. But this case had not yet happened in the history of Simandu.

However, unlike his predecessors, King Famoro had not yet gotten a child at the age of seventy and with one hundred wives. And if this situation did not change until his death, it would mean the extinction of his own lineage, something very difficult to imagine. This was his concern and the reason of his wrath against the seer Kassakoro. In this state of mind Famoro returned to bed for the rest of the night.

The night was continuing with the same calm and freshness. The first roosters had started crowing. Famoro felt a light sleep after long hours of insomnia and anguish. He suddenly opened his eyes and exclaimed:

* I'm going to wait until tomorrow to go see the other clairvoyant, Simbo. I'm dying of anxiety. I am sure he can better explain this dream to me.

For Kassakoro, he couldn't wait for the morning. He was feeling a threat over his life from the king. He had to find ways to avoid the sovereign's wrath. Then he went to see his colleague, Simbo, the same man Famoro intended to consult the following night. He explained his hitch with the king to him from top to bottom.

* Do not worry. His anger will subside and he will forgive you. We're going to consult the geniuses. You still have to admit that you made a mistake. He is a desperate man. You always have to find words to calm him down. We will implore the grace of the dead, consoled Simbo.

Simbo was also another very renowned seer for the relevance of his geomancy and his predictions. At night, and at the same time as the previous one, the king ran to see him and explained the content of his dream to him. This time he asked him to go beyond the dream to ask the oracles about his future as a father.

The seer, after having listened attentively to the king, took down his game bag in which there was a piece of fine sand of a rare whiteness and sparkling. He spread the sand on the ground then began his geomancy by putting dotted lines and esoteric figures in. While he was doing these cuneiforms, he was uttering amphigoric logorrhoea. He groaned for a moment then shook his head before smiling disinterestedly.

* Talk to me, you sand. What can be more numerous than you to unlock all the secrets even at the bottom of the oceans? Nothing! For the dream, let's say that you had a great dream. A dream that announces a good omen for your succession. It is clear that his Majesty will have a child. You will have the child very soon, by the way. The sole calf of the herd appears to be a power-hungry one who will seek to circumvent traditional provisions to get to power after your death. But as you can see for yourself, he will leave the kingdom on tiptoe to take refuge behind seven kingdoms where no one will hear of him.

The big boss flashed a broad smile while shaking his head in satisfaction.

The diviner paused as if to change the subject, then resumed after that simpering.

* His Majesty will have a child as I said earlier. But it takes a little effort, because the woman who will make this child is already in a marriage bond. You have to bring about a divorce, but not by force. It is necessary to seek the help of the oracles so that she can come and get this child for the king and go back to her husband. The rest will find its solution when the time comes, he says cautiously so as not to spoil the party.
* How can I recognize this woman without any clear reference? The sovereign wondered.
* The only possible reference is that she will have already had two children with her husband by the time you will find out that she is the one.
* In the name of the ancestors! What can we do to make it come to me?

The diviner questioned the sand again for more precision. He resumed, looking into the eyes of the sovereign and said with a very firm term.

* His Majesty will only be able to recognize this woman when she will have already conceived the pregnancy that will give birth to his only son. That's it! There's nothing else we can do about it.
* What should I do to get everything done in a reasonably short time? I am old and very desperate, said the king pitifully.
* It is to remain calm and wait for the time. Do not anticipate anything, especially not a forced divorce. Everything will be good with the will of our predecessors. Such an event cannot happen without a warning sign. At this time, acts will be automatically performed by his majesty to expedite things or remove any obstacles.

The king left Simbo’s house not in anger this time but in suspense and bewilderment, for he had to trust the vagaries of chance. Arriving home in a half-fig half-grape state, he gave the order to arrest the first seer and kill him to prevent him from divulging the sovereign's secret as he did not seem to have the solution and he could share his apprehensions about the king's succession. This order was carried out with diligence.

A PARTICULAR MAIDSERVANT

Moreover, live in the kingdom was requiring special attention and for good reason, the country was hit by an unprecedented economic crisis. Indeed, this crisis was the result of enormous expenditure made by the authorities to acquire arms and ammunition as a prelude to an eventual attack from the sworn enemies of the kingdom. They had adopted a hostile attitude towards the kingdom of Simandu because of bitterness of its economic prosperity and his political stability in a world of perpetual turbulence.

To remedy this situation, which was putting the survival of the kingdom to the test, an extraordinary Council of the wise men of the kingdom was convened by the sovereign. At the end of this meeting, it was decided that each province should contribute a quantity of gold proportional to its population. And the provincial governors had to distribute their quota between the cities of their jurisdictions, and the cities between the villages, the villages between the families without taking into account the purses of the inhabitants. A variety of measures were envisaged against possible offenders.

Those measures ranged from expropriation for the benefit of the royal treasury, imprisonment for an indefinite period; debt bondage to duty. Any head of family who abandons his family would be substituted by his wife or one of his wives for the same penalties.

Several families suffered one or other of these sanctions for failure to pay their duty. Among these failing families was that of a young man called Djery. The latter, finding himself unable to honour his obligations, had decided to abandon his family for an unknown destination in order to escape the penalties provided for.

In accordance with the provisions on the subject, the young man was replaced by his wife who was in an advanced pregnancy and who had her first son with her, to serve the sentences. However, given the state of pregnancy of the woman, she could not do field works. For that reason she was assigned to the royal yard to serve as a maidservant.

In the royal courtyard, each of the sovereign's wives had ten maidservants in their service led by the senior among them. At this particular moment, the king's favourite wife had just lost one of her maidservants after a short illness. That had not yet been replaced. The wife of Djery, the fugitive, was then introduced into the courtyard to replace the deceased maidservant.

Mamakany, the king's favourite wife received her new maidservant with the same customs. No particular protocol, the usual tasks being already known to all the maidservants. She immediately began her new duties with commitment. The deceased has been forgotten after few months.

Thus, from the first months of beginning her works, the favourite wife of Famoro positively noticed some particular qualities in her new maidservant. She had the intuition that this one was different from the others in many ways. That she was a special maidservant because of the quality of her analyses; the dexterity with which she carried out her tasks and even the aura she spread around her.

In order to verify her impressions on the newcomer, Mamakany decided to approach her much more through the multiple missions she entrusted to her. Finally, it was found that indeed Suwo, the new maidservant, had some very rare qualities compared to her colleagues. To the detriment of the senior of her maidservants, Mamakany and Suwo forged bonds of friendship that went beyond those which should normally exist between a maidservant and her boss lady, to reach the level of a friendship between two people of the same social rank. Sometimes Mamakany forgot that Suwo was a maidservant, but the latter never forgot that she remained a mere maidservant.

From that time, Suwo began benefitting from this esteem of her boss lady. Innumerable gifts were specially intended for her; private meetings were regular between the two in full view of everyone. Famoro's favourite wife revealed to her maidservant a lot secret during their many excursions in the king's garden. It didn’t take long time for the king to notice the complicity between the two women. He made it the subject of a chat with his favourite wife one night:

* If I'm not mistaking, you must have special esteem for one of your maidservants, and probably to the detriment of the others, right? Famoro asked to introduce the debate.
* I think His Majesty wants to talk about Suwo, the newcomer, the one who has just given birth, isn't it?

Suwo, who had left her first boy with her parents in the village, gave birth to her second boy as soon as she arrived in the royal courtyard. She said to continue speaking:

* She is an exceptionally very wise and intelligent woman, believe me, Mamakany tried to reassure the king about the special qualities of the wife or ex-wife of Djery whom she herself had just met.

-You can't be so naive. A woman you just discovered barely a month ago.

* Of course! She came a little over three months ago. Never mind, a person of such exceptional qualities as that of this young woman is easily recognizable, says Mamakany with more persistence.
* Now for the specific case of this woman, what made you…?
* His Majesty must know that since my childhood, I have been surrounded by young girls from all over the world. Among them, was one who came from Wasulu a little older than me. She was so wise and so tender with me! This one reminds me of that girl, Mamakany cut her husband off for the first time.
* Especially since she is from Wasulu too, adds the sovereign to support his wife, Princess Mamakany.
* Yes! I feel that the people of this country are very wise. Especially the women.
* And what you want me to do for her then, as a reward for her good behaviour, said the king, apparently conquered by the caresses of his beautiful wife.
* I would like you to replace her with another maidservant and leave her to me as a special companion. And especially since she has just given birth, I want you to commit another maidservant to take care of her child. Then, she can be free with me.
* No problem. I accept. From tomorrow everything will be done as you request. In fact, she is already your de facto companion, isn’t it? Said Famoro with a smile.

The next day, as soon as they met, Mamakany explained the content of her meeting with her husband to Suwo. She took a deep sigh before letting tears of joy flowing down her cheek.

As planned, the following day, the king did everything that his favourite wife had requested in favour of her maidservant.

* Thus, Suwo had just made an unprecedented leap, a dazzling rise never before achieved in the history of this kingdom. She had transcended from the caste of simple maidservant for an entourage of royal dignitary. But this promotion obtained by Djery's wife was not received with kindness by her colleagues, in general, but especially by Wuria, the senior of the maidservants of Mamakany.

Before Suwo's ​​arrival at Mamakany’s home, as with the other queens, the senior maidservant was usually the most pampered. She was enjoying all the favours due to her rank as a corollary of her age.

However, in reality, the advantages usually granted to Wuria, the senior, had not undergone any negative change. Only, she couldn't understand the special treatment Suwo, who had just arrived and who apparently had no particular merit, was receiving. Above all, pursuant to the new status acquired by newcomer, she could give orders to the senior, from now on.

A sort of unnamed cold war was unilaterally engaged by the senior maidservant against Suwo. But that one did not understand anything about that, simply because she was not expecting to have enemies in the entourage of the queen. In fact, she used to treat her senior maidservant with the same respect as if she had not benefited any promotion. As if she was still her subordinate likewise the other maidservants.

FADA, THE PATRIARCH, THE WIZARD

Life in the courtyard of Famoro continued with its daily grind. The days that were following resembled each other. The king who was over seventy still had no child. This became a procession of worries for the whole royal family as well as the allies. The question of the king's succession was on everyone's lips as the stakes were high. The king himself was dumbfounded. Princess Mamakany, the king's favourite wife and Suwo's ​​friend was determined to bring about this much desired child and that by all means. She was maturing the ways and means to achieve her goal. Suwo, too, despite her rise in the hierarchy in the royal courtyard, had not forgotten the good days of her marriage with her young husband, Djery who was on the run as well as her first son who had remained back home. She was subtly saddened by nostalgia. The senior maidservant, who felt relegated to the benefit of an unknown, was nourishing the ambition to avenge herself for what she was considering as an insult. In other words, the atmosphere was not cordial in the courtyard; that was the least that could be said.

That situation, as one might expect, had a negative impact, particularly on the life of the king's family, but also on the general life of the kingdom. As a result, orders were no longer given in accordance with normal procedures and they were only partially executed. That low morale in the country of Famoro was felt beyond the borders of the kingdom. There could not be a better time for the enemies of all time to organize activities to destabilize the realm. It was the kingdom of Kedugu led by King Kongoba.

After some repeated raids, this kingdom launched a large-scale attack from the border which separated the two monarchies.

The attack was aimed at recovering a strip of land renowned for its rich fauna and flora that this king was considering as belonging to his kingdom. In reality, the men of Famoro were not surprised by this attack even less by its magnitude, because this kingdom had always kept a belligerent attitude against them for a very long time. It can be recalled that it was as a prelude to such an attack that the campaign to acquire arms and ammunition was organized shortly before the start of hostilities.

There had been a similar attack from these same enemies one day after Famoro assumed the reins of the throne after the death of his father. At that time, these people wanted to take advantage of the change that took place at the head of the kingdom, which should have had a negative impact on the quality of command in the kingdom.

That violent attack was orchestrated under the command of the greatest wizard, the most feared warrior of the region of Farafina where the kingdom of Simandu was located. It was a region made up of several monarchies of varying wealth and sizes. While some were big and powerful, others were very small and weak.

The invulnerable wizard doctor organized the attack in such a way as to deter, at once, the men of Famoro from any hint of resistance. They occupied the disputed strip in its entirety at the very beginning of the hostilities. They caused several casualties and countless wounded in the ranks of the men of Famoro who were guarding the strip of land.

The news of this attack and its magnitude plunged the entire kingdom of Famoro into a deep stupor. Part of the population of the affected area began to move towards the capital and other localities very far from the war zone, while others preferred to leave the country altogether.

King Famoro, having been informed of the attack, called an emergency meeting of his warlords in order to put them in war order to contain this all-out attack which was likely to destabilize his reign. At the end of this crisis meeting, it was decided to set up a riposte commensurate with this provocation. An elite troop made up of all the great warriors of the country was placed under the direct command of the great commander Jongojaba. This experienced soldier, for having commanded this army for several years, and participated in the first war which had broken out between the two monarchies and which had turned to the advantage of the men of Famoro.

The reprisal by the warriors of Famoro who were renowned for their bravery in combat, pushed back the attackers inflicting a crushing defeat on them. That victory, which restored the kingdom former pride, was celebrated with splendour throughout the territory.

However, the wish solicited in the country was not brought by this brilliant victory in full, for the fact that, the king had not yet obtained this precious sesame he had always been looking for. That was the only way to achieve true happiness for him, his heir. It was his most burning concern and that of his wives.

Mamakany, his favourite wife thought she could make this child for her husband, by all means. In her intimacy with Suwo, her maidservant and particular friend, she has been informed by the latter of the existence of a tribe of blacksmiths in the south of the country, who might get some great secrets. According to the maidservant, that tribe had been living under the protection of a very powerful Genius for several centuries. That Genius was responding to all their concerns, and procuring them with all the desired happiness. Still, according to the maidservant, that Genius had always lived and had to live forever, because it was the only recourse of the disinherited souls. He had to protect the poor spirits who needed support. He was protecting orphans deprived of maternal tenderness. He also was punishing those who displayed greed and ostentatious power to the detriment of others. This supernatural being was in a cave on the top of such a mysterious mountain, located near the village of Tomakuna. He had solved problems more serious than that of Famoro.

After Suwo's ​​very precise explanations to the queen about the protective nature of the Genius, she decided to discuss it with her husband in order to convince him of the opportunity to go there and try her luck. Mamakany went to see her husband and explained to him the content of her conversation with Suwo. She took advantage of the same opportunity to request a trip to that locality in order to consult the Genius. Famoro made no objection to his wife's proposal.

Once the permission for the trip had been obtained, as one might expect, the trip was prepared with Suwo, accompanied by ten other maidservants and fifty slaves. The latter knew nothing about the reason for this unusual trip of the sovereign's favourite wife.

After ten days of restless horseback riding, Mamakany and her retinue arrived at Tomakuna, the blacksmiths' village. After the usual greetings with the first inhabitants encountered, the visitors, whose identity was totally unknown but whose appearance could hardly conceal the quality of their personality, asked to see the home of the patriarch. That wasn't difficult considering the size of the town. They were taken to Fada. This patriarch was working in his forge looking very busy. But at the sight of the strangers, he gave up everything to take care of them.

The blacksmith patriarch was the intermediary between the Genius and the humans. He had the exclusive power to communicate with the Genius.

Fada received the visitors with the honour due to their appearance. Being accustomed to such visit, he lodged them all, each according to his or her social rank and gave them food respecting all the usual protocol. After a well-deserved rest, he went to see Mamakany at her accommodation to inquire about the reason for her presence. He met the latter in the company of her favourite maidservant. Mamakany spoke with gratitude:

* First of all, I would like to thank you for the significant honour with which you and your wives kindly reserved for me and my retinue. By the way, I am the favourite queen of his majesty Famoro, the king of Simandu. I am his hundredth wife and none of us have yet been blessed with a child, despite all the efforts made by the king and ourselves. The king finds himself in a very delicate situation. He is seventy years old or a little more. He reigns over the kingdom of his ancestors for fifty-three years after the death of his father. He is the tenth emperor of their dynasty whose succession is from father to son. The first nine predecessors of my husband were blessed by the spirits of the ancestors by gratifying them with an offspring to ensure the succession. He is the only unfortunate exception for not having had a child so far. In my attempts to find a solution to this problem, which concerns our entire community, I learned that you can help us with the Genius so that our wish can be granted. I am the daughter of the King of Turu, the rich of the riches. I promised my husband that I would do everything to bring him this happiness. This is why, under the guidance of my inseparable maidservant and friend, I have decided to come and entrust myself to your august person so that you may intercede with the benefactor Genius on our behalf, Mamakny showed Suwa while talking about her inseparable maidservant and friend.
* Who informed and advised you to come and see me, asked Fada.
* This woman. She is my most faithful companion. I'm not hiding anything from her. She knew of the existence of the Genius and the privilege you enjoy with him, Mamakany said, showing Suwo once again.

Fada, with a pensive look, took the floor:

* No problem, her majesty, the queen, you don't have to thank me, because each time you are thanked for having taken an action, it is to say that you were not obliged to do it. That is not the case here. Between you from Simandu and us, the blacksmiths, there has always been an obligation of assistance. This is, in fact, the reason why there is no marriage between our two communities. Because in any marriage there are moments of frustration and clashes. That is not allowed between us. Just, so as not to compromise our centuries-old good relations. We want to keep these good relationships intact. I promise to do everything in my capacity to find a solution to the concern of my Sanaku, joking cousin, Famoro de Simandu, concluded Fada with a small smile.

Mamakany gave the patriarch-blacksmith the modest presents her husband had sent to him. Visibly satisfied with this gift, Fada decided to embark on the trip that very evening to meet the Genius about the request in that cavern in Dawanian Mountain.

* You will have to stay here for fifteen days, just to allow me to meet the Genius for you. His reaction will tell us what will be done for your request.
* He must be far from here, then, asked Suwo.
* Oh yes! I will have to spend seven days to go there and seven days to come back on a special horse given to me by the Genius himself. That's why I told you to wait fifteen days. It runs faster than all the horses on earth. All patriarchs are endowed with it in order to be able to get in touch with the Genius as soon as possible whenever the need arises. If it wasn't for this horse the trip would have taken me more than double that time.

By that statement, Suwo understood that it was a mistake to say that the Genius was near the village of Tomakuna, as she was previously told.

* Is it possible that other horses go there?, Asked Mamakany.
* Yes. But on condition that their holders be invited by the Genius and that the horses are prepared accordingly.

With these words, the conclave ended. The patriarch left to order his assistant to take care of the strangers in his absence. The rest of the time was devoted to preparing for the journey which was to begin soon after dusk.

For seven days Fada rode relentlessly towards the abode of Niginanga, the eternal protective Genius of humanity. He arrived there as planned on the seventh day after nightfall. Arrived in front of the entrance of the cave which sheltered the Genius, he pronounced the magic incantation which allowed opening it.

* I laka san da ani dugu da. Here da ni tugna da. Telen da ni ben da. I laka.

This incantation was known to all the patriarch-blacksmiths who were to enter that cave. It was being revealed to them by the Genius himself when they were taking office. They were to keep it for themselves until death. As soon as he recited the incantation, a small crack appeared next to the large stone that was serving as the closure of the cave. It was a huge rock that nothing else could move. He entered the cave through this crack and sat down on a stool which was set up there for that service. He had two iron bars in his hand. He struck them against each other. A sharp sound broke up, ken! Then two knocks, kén kén! Then three, *kén kén kén*! Before saying solemnly:

* I am Fada, your humble servant. Please listen to me as you have been usually listening from the times of my ancestors up to mine. You are our tireless protector. You who unfailingly protected our ancestors yesterday; who are protecting us today and will protect our children tomorrow against evil spirits, bad weather and epidemics. We know you will never forsake us, and we will forever remain your most faithful and devoted servants. You are our closest and most available protector. We are confident that you will never stop repeating your benevolence towards us. I am here to consult you on behalf of the sovereign of Simandu. This very honest king enjoys all the happiness of this world except that of a father. This concern has become that of his kingdom, as a whole, because his senility is more and more worrisome. There is a risk of confrontation in the country if he dies in such a situation. He sends to you his favourite wife to consult you in order to find a solution to this problem. I know that you know all this. If this woman who made the trip and who showed generosity towards me could be the happy mother of this child, it would be even better. My benefactor Genius, I join my voice to theirs in praying to you to please extend your infinite grace and mercy to this man. You, the indefatigable protector of the universe, please save this sovereign who is respectful of the values ​​which are dear to you, from extinction.

These dithyrambs of Fada did not leave the merciful Genius indifferent. The whole place suddenly lit up from the invisible bottom of the cave. Thanks to this light, Fada saw an alley winding between the stones that littered the corridor that was going to the depth of the cave.

Suddenly appeared in front of him out of blue a two-headed escogrife, his teeth were similar to an elephant's tusk; his two feet ending with hooves like those of a horse; his robust arms were like those of the orang-utan but much bigger. All the rest of the body was covered with crocodile skin. This giant prostrated in front of Fada then got up to disappear as he had appeared earlier. This well-known sign of the patriarchs simply meant that the message was well received.

Visibly satisfied, Fada stood up and crawled out of the cave through the same crack that served as his entrance. The cave closed behind him and he found himself alone with his horse in the darkness at the top of the mountain. He took the way back with only one piece of luggage “the message was well received.” The rest was random. The Genius had to give his answer by the means at his disposal. And since nothing obliged him, he could say nothing. At this case, it was said that he declined the request. The suspense was great. That was the rule. No one could change.

BIRTH OF A PRINCE ANNOUNCED

Meanwhile, in Simandu, the king was lying in the courtyard garden immersed in meditation while gazing at the beautiful stars twinkling overhead in the dark sky. In this garden there were flowers of all kinds whose exquisite and soporific perfumes supported by a serene calm could give a paradisiacal voluptuousness. Despite this atmosphere conducive to a restful sleep, Famoro had not closed his eyes since he had been there at sunset. Thoughts were racing in his head. Sometimes, he would imagine becoming the father of a boy capable of ensuring the succession to the throne. Sometimes, against his will, his thoughts were bouncing on the possibility of his death without having had a child, giving free rein to all sorts of eventualities. In that period of uncertainty where a fratricidal war was possible, once again the irreducible enemies could attack the country and take advantage of its immense wealth.

Coming back from his dream which was literally suffocating him, Famoro suddenly jumped up and sat down, then exclaimed:

* No! It's not possible!

From there he remembered that his favourite wife was on a journey to find a favourable solution to their problem. His grief intensified at the thought that the rest of this trip was purely random. Previous failures in this endeavour were not assuring.

The queen and her companion were in the same anguish. They had not been able to sleep well since the departure of Fada. Their conversations have never ceased to focus on this trip considered to be that of the last chance.

Wuria also couldn't sleep well for the simple reason that she didn't know anything about that journey while her rival, Suwo, seemed to be in the thick of the whole situation. That was to corroborate the intuition of her relegation. She was simmering on ways and means to get revenge on whom she was calling a brazen intruder who had upended the order that had prevailed in the royal courtyard for decades.

Fada, who was coming alone in the darkness on long rides, did not know what the reaction of Famoro's favourite wife would be, or the follow-up that the Genius would give to their request. Suspense upon suspense. The tradition required that visitors spend at least thirty days or a month on the spot after transmitting the message to the Genius, to wait for his reaction, if there was any. Either he straight grants the wishes requested or he makes recommendations in this direction. If he did not react within thirty days, they would have to wait for three months from the day of the transmission of the message, but that time, they would have to go back home. If after the three months’ time, he did not react, it was necessary to wait for three years from the same day. And if after all those deadlines he did not react, it would be because he had declined the request.

Fada arrived at dawn after fourteen days of the mystical hiking. He would have wished to rest for the rest of the night if he had not met Famoro's wife and her companion in his room waiting for him, knowing full well that he would arrive that night, after all calculations made. He gave them the report without protocol.

* The message was well received, he said.

A great silence fell over the room. It was too short as an answer.

* And then? Asked Mamakany.
* You must stay here for twenty-three days, just to wait if there can be any recommendations from the Genius. You know the Genius responds either in thirty days, three months, or three years after receiving the message. As I gave him the message seven days ago, you have only twenty-three days now to spend here. I do not wish, if he does not react within thirty days, you will have to go back home to wait for three months or three years in the worst case. In one or the other, I will contact you immediately the same day by the means that he will put at my disposal to inform you.
* And if nothing reaches us within this time, should we come back to see you? Suwo wondered.
* Good! At this case, it is because he will have declined our request. But I doubt that it will be so considering the diligence with which the Genius reacted to my message. Otherwise, he doesn't have to. We wish the best.

Without saying a word the queen rose sceptically and left, followed by her favourite maidservant. Everything seemed uncertain and hazy to her. But Suwo kept cheering her up with the right words. The advice given by Suwo helped the woman to resist the anguish that was overwhelming her.

Fada understood the state of the woman and was expecting it. But he had no intention of creating a false hope, because he himself could not say when the Genius was going to send his answer or the nature of that answer.

The queen's apparent bad temper since Fada's arrival, underpinned by her absence with her accomplice the whole night, spoke volumes to Mamakany's other maidservants about the outcome of the patriarch blacksmith's journey despite the fact that they didn't know anything about this trip. That has been subject of their conversation that morning:

* What is going on? The queen seems to have problem since this morning. She no longer speaks to anyone except her partner. God only knows what these two women keep talking about this morning, noted a maidservant.
* I learned that the old man arrived at night. Since our arrival he had disappeared.
* If he could free us to go back, we're getting bored now. His Majesty Famoro made a mistake by bringing a girl from Turu into his noble courtyard. This astute lined with mythomaniac won't do anything serious, especially when she's in the company of a certain Suwo. She will end up destroying the kingdom of her husband of which she is unfortunately the favourite. But Suwo, meanwhile, will find in me a strong opponent. I'll make her leave on tiptoe out of the courtyard. Whoever laughs last laughs better, said Wuria in a trivial tone.
* They are definitely planning a coup against the other queens, even Famoro, himself, colluding with the blacksmith, because everyone knows that the blacksmiths and the people of Simandu are sanakun, joking cousins, so they can easily succeed against each other.

These revengeful words from Wuria reflected the antipathy she had towards Suwo, who, however, was ignoring these attitudes, and was continuing to treat her with all the respect due to her rank as the senior maidservant. In the same morning Mamakany sent an emissary to go and explain to her husband the turn the adventure seemed to be taking.

Since the departure of his wife, Famoro couldn't sleep or eat well anymore. He had retired to his garden where he was passing most of his time like a hermit. However, he had not told anyone about the destination and the reason for his favourite wife's trip despite the multiple attempts by the other wives to extort the slightest word from him, let alone the reason for his lack of appetite. He just used to say, “I have no appetite. But above all, don't worry. This penance will purify me before the spirits of my ancestors.’’ About his wife's trip, he was saying, "Let's wait and see. As soon as she will be back you will know everything as tradition dictates.

It was in his garden that the emissary of Mamakany met him and gave him the very first news of his wife and her retinue.

* What happened? Where is Mamakany? He asked, looking visibly agitated, not responding to the greeting of his wife's emissary.
* It is she who sent me to you, His Majesty to tell you that the message was well received. She told me to tell you that she must stay for twenty-three days to await the response and the recommendations from the Genius. And that if the Genius does not react in that time, we will have to wait for three months or three years. In this case, she will come and wait for these deadlines here. She will give you the rest of the details, herself.
* But who says she has to wait for twenty-three days? The message was received by whom?
* I do not know. That's all she told me.
* Oh, may the spirits of my ancestors help me! He exclaimed.

The king returned to his meditation, after a little calculation to know the day of his wife's arrival. He sank into the meditation ignoring the presence of the emissary to begin his countdown. The emissary of Mamakany, after his private meeting with the sovereign, was intercepted by some queens of Famoro who wanted to know the reason of their mate's trip. But since he knew practically nothing about it, he couldn't say much.

* I know nothing. It is said to wait for twenty-three days or three months for the response to a message well received. But the content of the message, the expected response, the source of this response, really, I don't know...

Nevertheless, this shred scrap was enough to arouse or aggravate the anguish of the other queens who shared among them in record time what the emissary in this ultra-secret trip was able to disclose. They were sure of the fact that the king's major concern was his problem of offspring. So, that must inevitably be the motive for the trip of their mate. “And if that is the case, failure is the least we can hope for from this trip of Mamakany” they said to themselves. They also managed to create a hope in this ocean of debilitating despair that in the event of the death of the childless sovereign, it would be the never dreamed opportunity to share among them the immense wealth of the kingdom hoarded for ages, because by that time, the brothers would be killing each other for the throne.

* For something, misfortune is good, rejoiced one of them.

Mamakany, meanwhile, was not expecting for anything extraordinary to happen during those twenty-three days. On the contrary, her partner Suwo had a blind hope in the process. She never stopped sharing this hope with the queen. That moral support was a sort of opium for the spirit of the queen.

* Even if nothing happens in the next twenty-three days, I'm sure that within three months there will be a reaction from the Genius, let's hope that it be positive. I do not wish, if in this interval of time, we see the same silence on the part of the Genius, three years are not impossible to wait for. This time, I give my head to be cut that there will be a response from the Genius. I remain optimistic about its content.
* But my husband is becoming fragile day by day. Will he have time to resist the grief for long?
* Don't worry. He's got another century to live. Just cheer him up, Suwo said smiling while patting the lady on her shoulder.

The conversations of these two women continued to focus on this topic throughout the day, and above all they were cantering on the suspense aroused by Fada's report. During that time, the latter was busy in his forge manipulating iron while ruminating on his trip and the hope it is creating for the royal family.

The first of the twenty-three fateful nights was approaching. But very little was expected from that night, even among the most optimistic like Suwo. Everything seemed too soon for such an important event. Even the patriarch blacksmith, this tribune of secular cults shared the same apprehension. Nevertheless, they had to start counting.

The night was coming slowly but surely. They would certainly start counting, "One..." Would they count up to twenty-three or more? No one could say. Anyway, the countdown was beginning with little enthusiasm.

That night, due to the gloomy weather or as if by magic, all those who were involved in this process, both in the courtyard of Famoro in Narenkabadu and at Fada's in Tomakuna, went to bed right after the night fell. In fact, Fada, was among the first to go to bed. He had to sleep alone, because he had to be prepared for any eventuality. Even though, he was expecting little to happen that first night, before going to bed he correctly performed the liturgy required for such an event, in order not to be surprised.

As soon as he went to bed, Fada fell into a deep sleep. A few hours later, the whole village fell asleep. Everything became calm. Even dogs which usually spend all night fighting over bitches in heat were very calm this time around. It was down in the middle of the night, when the whole countryside was invaded by this great silence which was observed even by the birds, that the patriarch was disturbed by a mysterious harassment, of which he was the only one to perceive. This harassment, over time that was like a daydream or a nightmare, ended up being a reality. He understood that something special was happening. It was his first time to have such an experience. Wise as he was, he left himself being carried away by the event.

He remained in bed although completely awake with his eyes tightly closed. He was expecting to receive commands from the Genius of immeasurable power who was the only one capable of acting in such a way. The bed and the whole house began shaking. Suspended objects like his bags of fetishes and amulets were falling. It sounded like an earthquake was taking place. It wasn't only the earth moving; a powerful whirlwind shattered everything in the room and swept away the entire roof of the house. Fada was then exposed to the open air. He mechanically opened his eyes and found that the sky which was illuminated by thousands of twinkling stars at the beginning of the night had darkened. It had become dark with the presence of large and thick clouds.

After his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he saw through the clouds a large bird of an indescribable nature. The only eye it had was fixed in the middle of its head. That eye was flashing each blink a bright light like the lightning during the tornado. It had a large albatross-like beak that could measure hundreds of meters. This mysterious bird hovering above the clouds suddenly dove towards Fada like a hawk descending on its prey. The speed with which it sliced ​​through the cumulonimbus clouds with whizz was beyond any human imagination, making a deafening noise with dreadful howls. These ululations, as powerful and strident as they seemed, were only audible to Fada. But he remained inept.

Suddenly, the giant bird pulled out, by its beak, Fada from his bed, which was already breaking under the effect of the tremors. It threw him into the void then harboured him on its back which was as wide as a glade. Fada was still serene.

Once on the space giant's back, he clung to the bird's feathers that had the size of savannah shrubs. The giant bird called Sukono, was not strange to Fada. He had seen some of them during his previous trips there but never had the opportunity to ride them. It flew above the clouds and headed for Dawanian the abode of the Genius. All this happened in a few minutes.

It was in an isolated corner of Dawanian that the slot was reserved for the transmission of the responses and recommendations made by the Genius. Dawanian was a true architectural masterpiece of nature, certainly created by an earthquake. The crack caused by the separation of the tectonic plates may have sculpted this marvel. This explanation is only a speculation, because no one could explain exactly the advent of that infrastructure of nature.

Fada was dropped off in this corner by that “plane” on an esplanade lined with fringing rocks reserved for the servants of the sacred cave. There, the messages of the Genius and sometimes those of the late ancestors for the livings were received by the patriarchs. The time the bird took from Tomakuna to this area was less than five minutes, whereas it had previously taken the patriarch seven days on a special ultra-fast horse to cover the same distance. After putting him down, the Sukono disappeared behind the rocks for a destination known only to the Genius and the inhabitants of this locality.

Fada took place on the platform intended for only the patriarchs during these ceremonies. Everything had to start at the will of the great commander of humanity. A moment later appeared a man of a purely human appearance and wearing a hat visibly made of human skin. He was indeed a dwarf. He came and kneeled before the patriarch and said:

* The lord of men asks me to tell you to tell His Majesty that he will have a prodigious son to whom special attention must be paid. For the rest, he asks the king to make a sacrifice of one hundred oxen including one red bull, one hundred camels, one hundred rams, one hundred goats, one hundred roosters, one hundred bowls of rice, one hundred bowls of fonio, one hundred bowls of millet and one hundred bowls of toh to offer to the needy. The immolation of the animals must begin with the red bull of which he will completely remove the hairs from the head, and then incinerate them to put the ashes in a cinerary canary. After the sacrifice that the king shall allow his wife whom he wishes to make the child for him, to come with you, on the night of the neomenia of the moon of Jombede. On this occasion, the prodigious child will be given to her by the immaculate hands of Niginanga, the omnipotent god of the universe. At the birth of the child, they shall put the ashes of the cinerary canary into the oil of shea then rub the blend on his body every day after washing him for seven consecutive days.

Then this bizarre being got up to disappear between the gigantic rocks of Dawanian. Fada who had just received the long-awaited message from the Genius without protocol, was transported in the rest of the night to his home by the same supernatural means of transportation with the same promptness as on the way out.

The next day, this message of happiness was announced to the woman and her companion in the early hours of the day. They were both pleasantly surprised by the rapid and positive development of the situation. A messenger was dispatched to inform Famoro of the good news in order to put him in a relatively better moral condition before his wife and her retinue would arrive.

THE GREAT SACRIFICE

In Narenkabadu, the king was awaiting for the return of his favourite wife not only with great circumspection but also great anguish. Everything seemed to be too long and uncertain. This adventure of his wife was considered as that of the last chance. In case of failure, he could only wait for his death to put an end to his suffering which would have only lasted too long. The future of the kingdom would be mortgaged, because the centuries-old system of accession to the throne would have been interrupted without having provided for another alternative. Instability could not be excluded. However, in case of success, hope that many people did not expect, the other wives of Famoro, would only have their eyes to cry, because the victory of the most beautiful and the youngest of them, Mamakany the lucid princess, would be without an appeal.

Three days after delivering the message to the king by her forerunner, Mamakany and her retinue arrived in Narenkabadu. One could feel the subtly concealed good humour of the two women who were the most steeped in the development of this business, namely Mamakany and Suwo. The king, not wanting to waste any time to understand more, invited his wife for a closed doors chat. Even Suwo was not associated with this meeting.

She gave him the faithful account of this journey as a kind of epic story. She insisted on the anxieties and the intrigues that she endured with her companion in this peregrination. She explained everything in the smallest detail except for Fada's nocturnal trip, the details of which she did not know.

* His majesty must not forget that everything must remain as a tribal secret between the three of us, she said pretending to leave.
* Wait! Two of us or three? Famoro wondered.
* Yes, three. Suwo kept me company at all levels of this adventure. Without her, alone, I could not hold on, so much that the anguish was great. She has been invaluable to me in this journey.
* The spirit of the ancestors! Your friendship is gone so far as to involve her in matters as secret as this? I cannot allow a talkative slave to be associated with my private life. What can be the contribution of a maidservant in a sacred affair concerning my family? I advise you to be very careful in your dealings with this captive of Suwo.
* I think that His Majesty is once again mistaking about the nature of this woman. I repeat to you that she is extremely wise. I am not exaggerating in saying that not only is she the wisest of my maidservants, but of all the thousand and one maidservants serving your wives. Me, I must have been lucky that she was on my side. She could bring this happiness to any other woman. Her Majesty must not forget that it is through her that we learned about the existence of the old blacksmith who is just helping us. I insist on the fact that it is by her help that I was able to bear the sorrow in this world as distant as it is bleak. I had lost all hope, but she is incredibly optimistic. And she is very discreet.
* So be it, conceded the sovereign before saying, tomorrow I will issue the order throughout the kingdom so that everything can be prepared by the appointed day. If we count correctly, the sacrifice will be in a week. So everything has to be made available to me by that time. If I can get more than the number required by the Genius, so much of good.

At the end of this tête-à-tête with the king, Mamakany went to greet the other queens with respect. Through her face lit by the twinkling eyes and the dazzlingly white teeth exposed through the suspicious smile scherzando drawn on her lips, these women guessed *a priori* that there was a good news from the trip.

Even Suwo's ​​gestures insinuated an ill-hidden joy after that journey which had taken on the importance of a pilgrimage. This joy was logically a source of sadness for Mamakany's mates.

From the early hours of the next day the message was sent to all the thirty-one provinces that constituted the kingdom of Simandu in order to gather animals and cereals for the sacrifice without giving any reason. All this had to be done in a short period of time, given the urgency of the situation. This time, the quotas were set taking into account the capacity of each territory to honour its obligations. Thus, all the territories were presumed to be able to pay their share without too much trouble. With strict respect for equalization, everything was done as planned. Due to the enthusiasm with which people were willing to offer their quotes-parts, the number required was completely exceeded. And the king paid a symbolic sum against each element that was to go into the sacrifice, for it was his personal sacrifice and not that of the whole kingdom. Otherwise, the happiness sought could go to other families.

It was in this atmosphere that the other queens of Famoro, under the leadership of the queen senior, decided to meet him in order to be informed of the situation prevailing in the courtyard. They were received at their request in the king's private room. They prostrated themselves one by one before the sovereign, and then took seat without being authorized to do so. It was the queen Senior who spoke on behalf of her mates after the usual greeting. She spoke through the great Counsellor.

* We thank His Majesty for receiving us as soon as we made the request. We are here to express our astonishment and dismay at his attitude towards the rest of us in the affairs of the royal courtyard. We all feel marginalized, with the exception of Mamakany, in all that concerns the courtyard. We are not aware of anything. We have learned like anyone else that there will be a great sacrifice here very soon whereas none of us knows the reasons for this sacrifice except Mamakany. It is you who embody justice and righteousness here. We believe that there must be a reason for our exclusion, certainly. We apologize to you if we have failed in our duties as his Majesty's brides to deserve this treatment.

She paused to allow her mates to show their approval through gestures. Then, she resumed.

* None of us has a child. And we all are striving to get one for you. We seek His Majesty's assistance in achieving this noble goal. In addition, from now on, we would like to be informed about everything that happen in the courtyard in an official way as tradition dictates.

The king, who had very little time to analyse the grievance of his wives, could not say much. All he knew was that something was going the right way. They had to wait for the sequel. And as everything had to remain top secret, caution was in order.

* I understand what you're saying. You are right. All I can tell you is to be patient until we know where we are. You will be informed with the entire honour due to your rank, in accordance with custom and mores.
* It is you who embody this custom, we are confident that you will respect your commitment, said the queen Senior.
* Thanks!. May the spirits of our ancestors guide our steps. The meeting is close, Famoro concluded, then turned his back to continue his nap.

The women remained dumbfounded for a while at this reaction from their husbands, which they considered too limited, and they left without saying goodbye. They knew now that the reasons for the announced great sacrifice were hidden from them.

Meanwhile pandemonium was in full swing in the kingdom. Everyone was seeking to offer the best they could to please the sovereign. Pens were built here and there to shelter the animals destined for the sacrifice which flocked from all sides. After a few days the number of animals required was largely exceeded. Cereals overflowed the granaries built to receive them. They were just waiting for the D-Day to make the big sacrifice, as they were already starting to call it.

On the day of the slaughter, it was the patriarch blacksmith, himself who opened the ball with a red bull as recommended by the Genius. He slaughtered it at dawn. The other men chosen in advance to slaughter the thousands of animals followed suit. Each animal literally was lying down to wait for its slaughterer, and was not moving any part after being slaughtered. One had the impression that they were happy to be destined for that sacrifice. The blood that flowed from the immolation sight caused an erosion giving rise to a backwater in which the water no longer stopped flowing.

The dishes were served: people ate to their satisfaction and they took some foods to those that were absent. The whole world was astonished by the magnitude of the sacrifice the echo of which reached the four corners of the globe. People were saying everything about the event. Some were putting the number of animals slaughtered to the double, even the trice of reality.

After the ceremony, in a state of mind visibly satisfied, the sovereign invited his favourite wife, the Grand Counsellor and the patriarch blacksmith in his private room. He spoke to Fada through the Grand Counsellor in these terms:

* Grand Counsellor, tell my cousin Fada that I don’t have enough words to express my sentiment with regards to all he is doing to create hope in home. I thank him whole heartedly. Today, I can’t express my feeling through any material means because all that I will give him will not be enough compared to what he has done and continues to do for us. Notwithstanding, I order you to load hundreds of slaves with gold, silver and food stocks to accompany him with at home. I’m sure that the child to be borne will be more grateful towards him.

The blacksmith started speaking when the Grand Counsellor invited him to. Speaking to the king through the Grand Counsellor he said:

* Grand Counsellor, tell the sovereign that I am not surprised with his liberality, even less at his humanism, I am just surprised that such a gesture be made in favour of a blacksmith of my quality. We are not destined to become rich; we are condemned to remain in the forge near the fire which melts gold, silver and iron. It is the work of my ancestors; it is also mine and that of my children. It is this profession that Genius commands us to do. For this reason, I decline the offer with all the gratitude it deserves. I promise him that I remain at his disposal night and day.
* Grand Counsellor, I want my cousin Fada to leave with this gift, it does not prevent him from remaining a blacksmith and continuing to practice his profession. It's my way of showing my appreciation for the Genius, insisted Famoro.
* For that, Grand Counsellor, tell the sovereign to accept that I go to consult the Genius. Let me go and get his opinion yet. Regarding the future king who will be that of my children, all gestures of recognition will be welcome between them.

The sovereign was surprised by this attitude of the blacksmith towards the material which seemed to him paradoxical. He had very little to say:

* All right. These things are there for you. As soon as you get in touch with the Genius, we'll send them.

The meeting ended on this note. The patriarch took leave to return home. Once back in his village, he went immediately to report to the Genius who already knew everything, but the custom had to be respected. This supernatural being was visibly satisfied with the sacrifice.

In response, the Genius expressed his complete satisfaction with the way in which his recommendations had been carried out. He instructed the patriarch to convey his friendship to the sovereign and to congratulate him for his efforts. With regard to the donations made by the sovereign in favour of the blacksmith, the Genius decided to divide them into two equal parts: that the first half be deposited on the esplanade intended for the reception of the responses of the Genius. That would be the share of the inhabitants of the cave. The second half would be distributed to the poor and destitute of the kingdom each according to his needs. For the routing of the part of the inhabitants of the cave, the Genius had to ensure it by his infinite power without any slave being involved. Everything was done as requested by the Genius.

THREE RIDDLES FOR FAMORO

They were only a few days away from the fateful date, the date of the happiness. The first day of Jombede, as already mentioned. It was in fifteen or sixteen days. Mamakany and his companion were arguing about it, because not everyone knows the lunar calendar. But Fada knew it very well. So there was no worry about it

The queen, in the company of her companion and two other maidservants including Wuria and five slaves, was already at Fada's. This second trip was undertaken as secretly as the first. Everything was ready for the journey to the unknown horizon. The anxiety was at its peak.

They were in the dry season, the weather was hot and dry during the day, but at night it was sometimes very cold. The sky was not as clear as one might imagine, because the bushfire had just ravaged everything the day before. Smoke was visible in the sky.

As soon as the night fell, the horizon lit up with the bushfire which continued to devour the landscape in its path. That night, it was cold, the darkness was particularly dense. Everyone went to bed unusually early. It was the twentieth night of the moon which preceded the Jombede. The whole village was calm; the sky was gray. The stars shimmering in the sky seemed to be too high. It was this night that Fada chose to begin the epic journey to the home of the Genius.

When Fada knocked at the door to wake up the woman for the trip, she was soundly sleeping. She got goose bumps. She was anxious, nervous and started shivering.

* Wake up. We're leaving tonight, said Fada.
* I want to go with my maidservant. She is really indispensable to me in difficult moment, Mamakany pleaded wistfully.
* No problem. I want you to feel comfortable on the trip, conceded the patriarch.

Everything was ready. It remained to make the essential liturgy for the trip. The patriarch had already made his geomancy, and the offering required for such a journey was made. He took out of his bag a gourd full of a liquid substance of which he was the only one to know the nature. He asked the women to kneel down and he poured some on their heads and asked them to rub their faces, necks and arms. He poured it on the horses, and hen, himself did the same.

* Now you are made invisible to all uninitiated to the cult of the cave. I'm the only one who can see you being the only insider here. However, you can see everyone without being able to touch them or talk to them. You can't touch anything until the substance is annihilated. You will not eat or drink during the whole trip. You won't feel hungry or thirsty, either.

The two women just listened without saying anything. They were like hypnotized feeling nothing, even their own bodies. The journey was to take them ten days, or twenty days for the round trip.

The trip began with a medium pace and continued like this for nights and days. They weren't talking to each other. Everyone was immersed in their own introspection. It was after five days of riding that they saw the top of a mountain far away at the horizon. With a sign of his hand, Fada beckoned them to say that this was their destination.

Gradually, Dawanian, the iconic peak of the mountain began to take shape. Two human-like escarpments were seen rising majestically on either side of a large and seemingly bottomless pit. The first presented the profile of a man wearing a hat who was looking in the same direction as the second who was on the other side of the pit and who looked more like a woman of rare beauty. They would have been taken for couple. These two natural sculptures had always existed there

Five days later, it was the day of their arrival; the travellers entered a vast clearing which extended as far as the eye could see at the foot of the mountain. A hill appears out of nowhere at the end of the clearing. It was no less blessed by the natural sculptor of eternal beauty than Dawanian itself. Its peculiarity was that it had no trees or grass, nothing but smooth white rock brighter than flint.

Beyond this hill another clearing was seen through lush grass almost of the same size. It was stretching from the foot of the mountain to this pit on the side of the female-looking escarpment. Beyond that, they noticed that the pit split Dawanian from the ridge to a depth that no human eye could discover.

As expected, they arrived at their destination just after sunset on the evening of the tenth day of the trip. It was exactly the first day of the moon of Jombede. Time allowed them to admire the magical landscape of the vicinity. The cool breeze that was coming from the clearings was refreshing their bodies and making them forget the ordeal of ten days of horseback riding. The heavy calm in the mountain was justifying any idea of ​​a world entirely apart, different from that inhabited by humans. The clearings, the pit, the beautiful hill, the green and lush landscape, all observed from the top of the mountain beside the escarpments forming Dawanian, was offering a panoramic and picturesque spectacle of this particular and isolated relief of the residence of the Genius, Ninginangan. Far on the horizon, they could see a few columns of smoke spiralling up, which eloquently proved that they were far from any human existence.

Now, slowly and surely, the last evening light, the only memory of the day, was giving way to the darkness of the night. Everything was darkened by the thick damp darkness in the mountains. Then, right after the sunset, the new moon disappeared behind the mountain of Dawanian.

When it was completely dark, the patriarch asked them to approach the entrance of the cave. They descended a few meters to find themselves in front of the same giant wall. The stone gate was more apparent this time than when Fada came the other time.

As usual, the patriarch pronounced the magic incantation which sounded like a simple babbling to the two women. As soon as he finished reciting it, that big block moved and the mountain literally parted creating a large boulevard leading to the interior of the cave. Fada was the first to enter, and then invited the women to do the same.

The interior of the cave was very dark and cool. The place was so quiet that one could not imagine that there were living beings in there. The darkness was dense. It seemed more like the bottom of the abyss or in a tomb than the dwelling of a living being.

The visitors were all in a kind of expectation. Fada, who was meeting the Genius for the very first time, was as anxious as the women. He had no idea about what he might look like. The women, on the other hand, were torn between fear and apprehension.

The opportunity to meet the Genius, the personal friend of their phratry for ages was the greatest source of joy for Fada. He had a thousand and one ideas about what Genius might look like because the golden rule that all visitors to that cave had to respect was the following: ''DO NOT TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN BUT ABOUT WHAT YOU HEARD'' This means that no one was to talk about his appearance. Everyone was sternly warned before the start of the ceremony. This is to say that this night was exceptional for all three.

In the darkness, from the depths of the cave, came a Mephistophelian and authoritative voice which ordered them to sit down where they were standing, and wait for the Genius to be ready to light up the place. They complied with discipline without having the order repeated. They remained for quite a while without receiving any other sign. A sort of austral aurora began to illuminate the back of the cave. As the light was increasing, the visitors could distinguish their surroundings. They understood that they were seated in a vast sphere. A place so vast that they thought it had no limits. The horizon was receding as the light was intensifying. The patriarch himself was surprised of the size of this underground expanse. He had never noticed it since he walked through the door of this cave for the first time.

They were surprised to see an indeterminable number of imps sitting around them, all looking like the same creature who delivered the Genius's response to Fada the other time. Without looking up, they were humming an indecipherable lyrical melody backed by a divinely arranged symphony. The visitors realized that they were in a different world from that of the humans. Suddenly, a group of giants emerged from the depths of the cave, all like the one Fada had encountered when he came to seek the help of the Genius in favour of the sovereign Famoro. These giants, whose number exceeded all understanding, were followed by Sukono like the one who transported Fada for the reception of the Genius's recommendations, with the slight difference that these ones had the shape of pterodactyls. Some were bigger than others.

Those giant birds were hovering overhead relentlessly. While visitors marvelled at these indescribable beings, large numbers of dogs appeared. But these dogs were not like ours, because they had two heads, and they were bigger than horses. Yet it was not over; in fact, it was just getting started. It was the turn of the giant scorpions to make their entrance. These arachnids had some peculiarities: apart from their big sizes, they had flaming golden-coloured spines and their bodies were covered with scales. The procession of these mystical beings was continuing unabated. Very long winged horses followed. They were angelically beautiful with silver like hair. The giant snakes of all kinds closed the ball. They followed each other in order, coming towards the visitors.

The queen was now out of breath. She was wondering why all this exhibition of the supernatural power of Genius. When the snakes visibly approached them, Mamakany began to moan, to quiver. The questions she was addressing to Fada about the nature of these bizarre beings were getting no answers.

What was most disturbing, was the macabre procession of a cohort of zombies all covered in white up to their necks. The skull was partially covered with long, dishevelled hair. They were looking sclerotic. Their eyes were wide open and their lipless mouths exposed their white teeth. They followed each other in two parallel rows with a monotonous and rigid gait. They walked towards the frightened visitors. When the two leading heads of the lines reached Fada and his companions, they prostrated, and all the rest did the same. These long lines of people dressed in white in the position of prostration over a seemingly unlimited expanse, presented a horrible and frightening spectacle. The two rows formed a hedge as if to receive a distinguished guest. All this happened in a funereal silence against the background of this psalm of the imps which was continuing without respite.

The breathless queen, overwhelmed by this phantasmagorical scene went into a trance; clung to the arm of her maidservant and fainted suddenly.

However, the ceremony was not yet over. In the meantime came two giants with bulging muscles with a lion's chest and a single eye fixed on their forehead. They were holding in their hands a kind of harquebus. They came and stood right behind the visitors as if to mount their guard.

After them, there was a hiatus in the stream of these troglodyte monsters. Then the brightness doubled, tripled, and quadrupled. No one could qualify the density of that light from a divine source which forced everyone, including the strangers, to close their eyes. A man of purely human appearance entered and advanced between the two ranks formed by the zombies who had always remained in the same position since their arrival. He was holding in his hand a tambourine that he was tapping in a weak way with a stick, emitting a sound hardly audible. He walked towards the strangers. He stopped at their level and said:

* Open your eyes, humble visitors and listen to this message, he said and waited for the visitors to open their eyes.

When Fada and Suwo, who were the only ones following the scene, opened their eyes, they found that the light had decreased considerably in intensity. The man continued his speech.

* Remember that after here, you should only talk about what you heard but not what you saw. All those who have failed in this rule have perished without being able to utter a single word. No one should know of what exists in this sacrosanct abode of the Genius without having had the honour and the privilege of being invited here by him. The eternal commander of the universe, the supervisor of the astral world, the absolute master of the occult sciences, the owner of the aerial and aquatic worlds, the holder of wealth, wisdom and happiness. Now, I will tell you about the inhabitants of the cave here present: all the men and women dressed in white whom you see here in prostration are sent by your ancestors who want to communicate with the living. The beings who are chanting that you take for dwarfs or imps are normal human beings, in reality they are children, orphans of father and mother who could not have someone to take care of them in the normal way and died because of this lack of affection. Their spirits have been collected by the benefactor Genius to be able to find the warmth and tenderness they need under normal conditions. They are small because they eternally retain the shape they had when they died. The horses provide ground transportation. They have a capacity that no human-made device can have. The birds, each according to their specialty, are responsible either for transmitting messages in remote places or for transporting guests in the event of an emergency. They move at an unimaginable speed for you. The scorpions are in charge of chastising the refractory to the orders of the Genius. Snakes have multiple roles. Sometimes they serve as intermediaries between the inhabitants here and their victims among the living. Sometimes, they allow the soul of a child to be breathed into the body of its mother in order to be reincarnated there. The Two-Headed giants essentially serve as an interface between the patriarchs and the Genius. It is about receiving messages and transmitting them to the Genius vice versa. They don't get out of here, because they keep the cave dwellers safe by protecting them from one another and doing justice between them. They are also responsible for housework. The dogs-with-two-heads are in charge of carrying out permanent investigations around all those who have had the privilege of visiting here in order to know if they obey the prescriptions of the Genius. In case of blasphemy or violation of these principles, they have telepathic abilities to inform the Genius of that violation. Signals reporting the offense simultaneously indicate the places and perpetrators of the offense in a fraction of a second. That message which passes through the Genius is instantly sent to the scorpions and the birds. Immediately, the bird and the scorpion chosen to punish the refractory are set in motion. The bird carries the scorpion to administer the punishment that that behaviour deserves. Most often the moment the scorpion injects the substance into the rebel, he melts like shea oil in the sun. This whole mechanism happens in the blink of an eye. Here is in part, that is to say, in size reduced to the spiritual capacity of the visitors, the device at the sole service of the Genius. This device, of which you have just seen a tiny part, is only an indication of the personal power of the Genius. If you have any questions, you can ask them now.

Patriarch Fada, encouraged by the human form of their interlocutor, and the invitation he had just given them, decided to ask some questions about the beings they were seeing.

* The beings that are present here live for how long, and what do they eat?
* Oh! Listen! When you enter here as an inhabitant, you no longer die. Everyone here was already dead. Their spirits have been recovered, reanimated and reincarnated for a life that is eternal. These people are reincarnated in forms that reflect the creative ability of Genius. But to come here, one must have been chosen by the Genius himself, without intermediary, as a reward for an irreproachable conduct in terms of moral probity during the previous life. Remember that every man and woman, even the children who live here have personal power, albeit limited, over the fate of the living with whom they have interacted in one way or the other during their previous lives. That said, you have to remember that only clean spirits can come here. These inhabitants are in a heavenly happiness that you cannot have anywhere else. Know that once here, you don't go out. They no longer know another life. They don't even need it, because there is nothing like it anywhere else in terms of pleasure and joy of living. As for eating, they don't eat here and they do not feel hungry either. They do not sleep and neither do they feel sleepy. They do not have carnal desire. All these needs are met upstream with abundance by the Genius, the god of reincarnation and mercy. You may find it hard to understand me, I know, but remember the stuff that was poured on you before you started this journey. You know that not only did this substance make you invisible to all living beings, but also, you were not hungry, thirsty or sleepy. Is not it? This substance comes from the divine power at the disposal of the Genius. I who am speaking to you, I am in this appearance so as not to frighten you, otherwise I am like those who are dressed in white here. The guards who are posted behind you have the task of ensuring the safety of visitors in case a resident here gets angry with humans and tries to harm them. Each of them is physically stronger than a thousand well-fed young human beings. They are not human or of human origin. No one will be able to tell you where they come from. Moreover, apart from the men and women in white and the children here, no other being here is from your world. They are all creatures of the skilful hands of the creative Genius; the result of the fruitful vision conceived by the Genius, and executed by him alone. Now, I leave time for the envoys of your ancestors for their message of necromancy.

These living dead, while remaining in the position in which they had been since their arrival, said in unison:

* Your ancestors tell you to obey the child who is about to be born, because he is the embodiment of divine wisdom; of the trinity of justice, love and truth. He comes to command all Farafina and beyond for the victory of good over evil; peace over war; love over hatred.. His sword will be given to him by the Genius himself.

After this relatively concise message, the great rhetorician spoke again:

* They have just transmitted to you the message of your ancestors. Your ancestors who died centuries or even millennia ago whose spirits are either in the heavens or in this cave here. They watch over the destiny of each of you under the command of the Genius. They can intercede on your behalf with the Genius just as they can compromise your chances with the same Genius when you are guilty of serious sins.

Suddenly, a cemetery silence descended on the square. Even the hymns have ceased. The light that was already great there was literally overwhelmed by another denser one, plunging the whole place into an orgy of light. However, this light was not dazzling. It had the radiance of that of the sun and the harmlessness of that of the moon.

* It is the Genius that is about to appear. Ah, how grandiloquent! This is the first time I have witnessed the physical appearance of the Genius since my resurrection thousands of years ago. Do not be afraid. He brings you the child, himself. The rest of us have to close our eyes, because we are not allowed to see him. The child he brings to you is the metempsychosis of thousands of holy men. He is of incalculable importance for the Genius, that is why he, himself moves to bring him to the woman who must carry him in her womb. If the Genius was not attached to the particularity of this child, he breathes the soul of the child into the body of his mother through the serpents. If it is material happiness, he sends it through two-headed giants.

Without having finished his eulogy message, a deafening noise like the explosion of a bomb weighing several tons of TNT shook the whole area. It was at that moment that the laudator uttered cries followed by onomatopoeia:

Ah ! Ah ! Ah ! Ah !Ah !Ah !Ah !

Woré kaba

Na kan ba bi taa kann ba;

Kirifofo ni badjo

kuru la dèn ba ani kuru djessen ba.

Kon fén konondo

Kanin fén konondo

Sukuku ni sakaka,

Nama fognoba jonjon

Semba konondon don tu

Dunumba kalantan ani fobaalagnani

Kelemassaden jakoli

Seyi fawuren, jonti ye wo sii kuntèma

Ko ile di itoloma kome ?

Tamba nya kelen Jelyibodiya konon don

Gbrerenen jiri ni sokon jiri

Tie yi faa fida

Saa jula ani kombi

After thay dithyramb, he ran to prostrate like the others. The orphans who had been humming since the beginning of the ceremony rushed to get into the same position. It was this quake that woke Mamakany from her syncope since the beginning of the ceremony. But that was for a short time, as she fell back again as soon as she saw this gruesome-looking scene after opening her eyes wide. She no longer saw anything of the rest of the rite. The tremors redoubled in intensity. Everything was shaking like an earthquake of several degrees on the Richter scale. The patriarch whispered in the ear of Suwo who was now alone with him to follow the scene.

* It was by the effect of such a tremor that the mountain split to create the architecture of Dawanian. But no one should know this without having witnessed such a scene. I was informed of this during my enthronement as blacksmith patriarch after the death of my father. I admit that I only heard the noise without seeing the Genius. This is the first time I will have the opportunity to see him. Many of my predecessors were not so lucky. What a grace!

Suwo said nothing. She was taken aback by the show she was taking place. A moment later the visitors saw at the bottom of the cave a sort of mountain moving. It was silvery and dazzlingly white. Right at the top were shining two big emerald-like balls. It was Ninginangan advancing. It had the shape of an iguanodon or a tyrannosaur and was moving on two feet like a horse in pesade. He was trailing behind a large tail very shiny like diamond. He had two relatively small arms. Visitors saw his head high in the sky. It was so high that you could not imagine for a moment that all of this was happening in a cave. It was from that time that they understood to be in a world bigger than theirs.

The Genius advanced towards the visitors in a majestic way. In his hands was a cradle in which a fresh, innocent new-born was gently quivering.

* It is the child he is bringing to you. What greatness, the Genius himself bringing the desired happiness! I can't believe it, Fada whispered in Suwo's ​​ear. But as always, she was so confused that she couldn't say anything in response.

The Genius was always approaching with a slow and divine pace. He stopped without the visitors having had the time to take a good look at him, and handed the cradle to them. The queen, who was in an insurmountable sleep, could do nothing. With a nudge, the patriarch urged the maidservant to go and receive the baby. He didn't want this opportunity to be missed. With a phantasmatical gesture, she got up and climbed a kind of ladder towards the cradle. The Genius handed it to her with the baby, and she immediately came down to go sit next to the patriarch. The Genius began moving backwards at the same pace as at the arrival.

After the Genius had disappeared all those that were prostrating raised their eyes and looked towards the future mother of the blessed child, the happy recipient of the child “wisdom;” the saviour of mankind. But to their astonishment, instead of the favourite wife of the sovereign whom they had recognized from the place she was occupying during the ceremony, it was her companion whom they saw standing with the cradle trembling.

Suwo, after receiving the cradle, remained perplexed for a good while, not really knowing what to do with it, because it was not initially intended for her. But if she hadn't reacted when the patriarch beckoned her, the opportunity could be missed forever for the king to have a child. She told herself that as soon as Mamakany would have come back from her sleep, she would give her the baby. It was in this state of confusion that the enigmatic baby began transforming in the cradle, then became a kind of white smoke that swirled in the cradle and then came out and began girding her in a perfect circle. The circle narrowed little by little until it penetrates the body of the young woman. She started wiggling and almost burst into tears believing to have ruined the only hope of the royal family. She only had the empty cradle in her hands.

It was the transmigration by which the soul of the child was carried into the body of a human being in order to be incarnated.

* Is she the wife of the sovereign? Asked the laudator.
* No, it is her maidservant and her intimate companion. Had it not been by her presence, the queen alone would not be able to bear the adventures of this trip. The queen has fainted and she's still unconscious, Fada explained.

The man in the cave chattered for a moment, and ran in the direction the Genius had taken. He came back a moment later to say:

* The Genius sends the following message to His Majesty Famoro: that the iron will come out of the stone; that the name of the fruit and the tree that bore it will always be associated, and that the crocodile emerging from the urine will chase the one who urinated. Finally he says: I want to remind you that you should not say anything about what you saw here once you left. Only about what you heard, he said to leave without saying goodbye to them.

It is those words that woke Mamakany up. She listened as the laudatory was conveying the message to Famoro.

The congregation immediately fell into recession, first the giants, and then the zombies and the rest followed in silence and order. After a few minutes the place got empty. It was the end of the ceremony. Everyone was repeating to himself the sacrosanct principle of the cave:

ONLY TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU HEARD BUT NOT WHAT YOU SAW.

Suwo remained with the empty cradle without being able to explain to Mamakany its origin, because that would be a violation of the rule of discretion dear to the Genius. Mamakany was not interested either.

The same night in Narenkabadu, the other wives of Famoro were in conclave at their senior's in order to put in place a strategy aimed at thwarting the tricks of Mamakany and her accomplices. Everything had to be done to prevent the happiness expected from the consequences of her manoeuvres, which they were describing as suspicious. Proposals of all kinds were made by each of them. The strategy that was adopted was that they wait for the return of the travellers to seek for some corruptible accomplices in Mamakany's immediate entourage in order to associate them with the final decision.

* In principle it should not be complicated, because among the maidservants of the favourite, one can find dissatisfied people. Of course, they will be available to help us put an end to this unbearable situation, said one of them.

Meanwhile and at the same time, in the village of Fada, Wuria, the senior maidservant who had been excluded from Dawanian's journey, had made the decision to collaborate with anyone who would be seeking to harm the Mamakany's interest, anything that would help her to get revenge on Suwo. She could not digest her relegation for the benefit of that one.

The night was taking its course. The visitors had left the cave which had immediately closed behind them. Dawn couldn't be far off because the stars were twinkling less than at the beginning of the night. The wind had become colder. There was graveyard silence around them. That silence was disturbed from time to time by the hooting of the mountain birds. The village of Fada was thousands of kilometres away from them. The return was expensive. Both women dreaded of this ordeal.

The Genius, knowing the feverish state, both morally and physically, of the visitors, decided to transport them there by his divine power in the little time that was remaining of the night. He put them to sleep and then transported them in the blink of an eye through the Sukono to Fada's room. The patriarch poured a liquid substance on the heads of the two women who were sleeping soundly. That substance was the antidote to the first one they had received at the beginning of the trip. They were now visible, and had regained sensation at the same time.

Mamakany and her companion did not wake up until very late in the day. They were surprised to see themselves in the patriarch's room. But the surprise was not too great, because they were already edified by their passage in the abode of Ninginanga. They were now in good shape and had regained all their lucidity. As for Fada, he was already in his forge, casually. The two women were equally retaining everything about the marvellous relief of Dawanian but not in the same way about that spooky world which is the abode of Genius. But they weren't just to talk about it.

* Wait! I fainted for a while. I did not witness a good part of the liturgy; can you remind me what happened? Mamakany asked her maid.
* You know the order. They told us to only talk about what we heard but not what we saw.
* And about the three riddles, what do you know about them? Insisted Mamakany.
* Absolutely nothing.

The blacksmith understood by this conversation between the two women that they had woken up. He left everything to join them in his room. Greeted them with deference and reminded them of the instructions:

* Remember that you should only talk about what you heard but not what you saw. Even between you. The punishment is heavy. The return to Simandu is scheduled for tomorrow in early morning. You have the whole day today to rest.

At the other end of the world, Suwo's ​​husband had come out of exile. He knew that his wife was performing her duty in the royal courtyard. But his concern was how long this service would take, and above all, if one day she were to regain her freedom. He was doubtful. So, it was better to consider their relationship not as a legal separation but rather as a forced divorce. A second marriage was the solution.

Suwo, as for her, this marriage was no longer part of her concerns; the status she had just gained was the priority. She knew to have made a giant leap from her former situation to a much higher level in the company of Mamakany, the favourite wife of the all-powerful and wealthy king of Simandu. So the divorce between the two was the least they could say. It was the sovereign's will, for the work of a maidservant in the royal courtyard was a service of perpetuity. A maidservant or any slave, for that matter, who had served in the royal courtyard, was to know no other life outside. It was there that they were getting married to each other except in cases of force majeure.

Wuria had her own reason to be hurry for their return to Famoro's courtyard. Being ignored on this important journey was an unbearable source of boredom for her. Once in the yard, she thought she could take her revenge.

Like Wuria, Famoro's other wives had their own reason to be impatient of the return of the travellers, especially their mate, who was enjoying more than a preferential treatment. The treatment had culminated in the immolation of hundreds of animals, the details of which they were ignoring. However, the desire to obtain an heir was known to everyone. They rightly thought that this must be the reason for this legendary sacrifice.

The return of Mamakany and her retinue was meticulously organized at night. It is in this atmosphere that the patriarch called Suwo aside when Mamakany fell asleep, to discuss with her:

* Do not hesitate to accomplish any task that your queen may ask you to do.
* May I know what you are insinuating? Suwo wondered.
* No, nothing special. But a maidservant, especially a special one, must do everything her queen commands her to do. That means, total submission. This is it.
* Thank you, my patriarch. She is my queen; I will try to deserve her confidence and the love she never ceased to show on my behalf. Once again, thank you for this wise advice.

In the early morning as planned, the travellers got on their way back. Suwo, who was constantly meditating on the oddities of the trip, found no limit to the grace that the queen gave her by allowing her to discover all these wonders of which she had never imagined the existence. She decided to devote her whole life to be graceful for this honour.

Mamakany, too, in her imagination, was wondering how to reward her favourite maidservant for the opportunity and hope she had brought to her and her husband. And above all, the avatars she endured stoically with her on this journey full of mystery. She decided to give Suwo all the honours she deserved for the discipline and discretion she showed throughout the process.

Fada, who had followed the whole process with interest, was thinking about the incident that took place during the ceremony. Certainly, he knew that that constituted a reversal of the order of things, which was moreover the will of the Genius, but he could not predict the continuation of the event. However, he was sure that it would not remain without consequence.

Along the way, while a heavy silence was overwhelming the travellers, a group of birds began singing frantically to their right.

* Isn't the same thing those birds did when we were going? We were all scared. If we had guns we would have shot some of them, said Mamakany, who was disturbed in her dream by the birds.
* Luckily you didn't have guns. These birds are harbingers of the result of a travel. When they sing to the right, it augurs a successful journey. But if it is on the left, we should not hope for a positive result from this trip. It is often a kind of curse. Here we can hope that we will find happiness in front of us, explained Fada.

The queen said nothing more and plunged back into her dream. She was looking for the slightest sign that would indicate that she was the one who would make this child. She was sure of the arrival of this child one day. Maybe the birdsong was that sign. She thought to herself. But it was still insufficient. Her concern was that another queen could make this child for the fact that each of them had an equal number of nights to spend with the king. Despite the doubts she had about her husband's virility, anything could happen with the involvement of the Genius. To make sure, she called the indispensable Suwo to talk about it with her.

* Come beside me, Suwo, she said

She approached eagerly.

* What did you hear about my future child? I need to know all about it so that I can give my husband a full account of the trip. At least you can tell me what you heard.
* Yes. He is said to be the embodiment of divine wisdom; the trinity of love, justice and truth. His sword will reach him from Genius, himself.
* Are you sure that it is I who will make this child? She insisted.
* I have no reason to doubt about that, after all this suffering you have endured.
* It must be said that we endured. We did everything together, corrected Mamakany.
* No. Everything I do is in your name and on your behalf.
* Thanks baby.

After this short conversation, Famoro's favourite wife plunged back into her illusory dream where she saw herself becoming the mother of a prince, a superman, a demigod, the commander of all Farafina's souls and beyond. Then she would get whatever she would desire. She would be like a goddess; her mates reduced to the rank of simple maidservants. Suwo would always be at her side as an advisor. The kings of the other monarchies would be chosen among the members of her maternal and paternal families, just those.

After several days of cavalcade, they arrived in Narenkabadu. That day, as usual, the king had gone out for a walk. But this time he did not go in the usual direction which was the way to the village of the patriarch, not expecting the arrival of the travellers that day. On his way back, he twice stumbled his right foot against the stones. Being familiar with tradition, he thought that there was happiness waiting for him at home. This prompted him to hurry. He was not mistaken; from afar he understood the arrival of his wife through the horses that were tied in front of the yard. The atmosphere prevailing in the courtyard was artificially festive.

However, in reality the mood was far from a party. The other wives had a lot of reservations. So they did not receive Mamakany with the usual enthusiasm; and that one, as well, did not show courtesy towards them, or the pleasure of meeting them. Her worry was elsewhere. It was about preparing a detailed report for the king in order to persuade him that she was indeed the future happy mother of his heir; that that would have been said by the Genius, himself.

But such a mock record would be difficult to craft without the participation of her particular maidservant. The problem is that she had not witnessed the essence of the liturgy. Suwo who saw everything could not tell her that the Genius brought the baby during the ceremony. It would be to say what she had seen, a violation of the prohibition of the cave, an unpardonable sacrilege. However, the physical appearance of the Genius had a dreamlike effect on her memory, but she couldn't explain anything about that. She knew that that was the major turning point of the liturgy. It is this reality that she wanted to share with her companion before meeting her husband.

The king merrily entered his courtyard with a mad longing to see his beloved one; and especially to know about this trip of the last opportunity. As soon as he arrived in his room he sent someone to invite his favourite wife to come and give him a detailed report of her trip.

* May His Majesty allow me to bring my companion who has been a helping memory for me in this mystical journey, said Mamakany crossing the door of her husband's room.
* You mean that a slave has to enter my room? What an outrage! That would incur the wrath of the household, for this is my married life, Famoro said indignantly.
* I think the Penates will understand that it is a case of force majeure. This woman is more than what His Majesty imagines in this matter. It’s only the blacksmith patriarch can estimate what was her contribution in this journey. She is an essential character in the realization of our dream.

By these words Famoro understood that that woman must have played a leading role in that journey.

* All right, you can call her. Famoro capitulated to his wife's intransigence.

This is how Mamakany went to see Suwo, who was also surprised by this exceptional honour. It was for the first time, perhaps and surely for the last time, that Suwo would discover the king's private room, an unprecedented honour.

* Good evening, my sovereign commander of the blessed kingdom of Simandu, said Suwo as soon as she entered the room, while kneeling carefully before the king.
* Take a seat near your friend, said Famoro.

Suwo sat near Mamakany who took a deep sigh of relief.

* Yes, what can we know about your trip? Famoro asked, looking at his wife.
* May His Majesty ask Suwo, please? Me, I have been so overwhelmed by the event that until now I can't understand myself. I cannot say anything. After her, the patriarch blacksmith can tell you better.
* Really! Good! Suwo, what can you tell me?

Suwo sensed impatience in the sovereign's words.

* First of all, I would like to say that the rule that applies to all visitors is to say only what has been heard and not what has been seen. Any attempt to violate this rule is suppressed by the last energy of Genius. The person melts like shea oil in the sun without being able to utter a single word.
* But you can tell me what you heard, right?
* Yes, His Majesty.
* Then tell me what you heard.
* Only, I would like that this be done by a more authoritative voice. This is the patriarch blacksmith who insisted on accompanying us so far.

It was from there that the sovereign understood that Fada came with them. He regretted why he hadn't cared for him.

* I didn't know that he was here. So tell him to come.

Fada came immediately and saluted the sovereign with deference, then sat down uninvited.

* Good evening, my sovereign. Everyone greets you.
* Good evening, my respectful cousin. I'm dying to know what happened on this trip. My wife can't say anything, and her maidservant says she doesn't have the authority to speak in your presence on this matter.
* She's right. She must be intelligent. First, I remind you of the forbidden rule of the Genius: it is to only say what one heard but not what one saw in the abode of Ninginangan. Mainly, the Genius asked us to deliver to you his message contained in the following three enigmas:

1. The iron will come out of the stone
2. The name of the fruit will be associated with that of the tree that bore it
3. The crocodile coming out of the urine will chase the man who urinated.

* Can you explain to me the meanings of these riddles?
* No. Neither me nor anyone else.
* All right, go ahead, he said, beckoning Fada.
* Our ancestors instruct us to tell you that the child who will be born must be obeyed by all. That he is the embodiment of divine wisdom. The trinity of love, justice and truth. That he will come to command all of Farafina and beyond. And that his sword will come to him from the Genius himself, but not through his father's throne.
* Ah good! So he will be above me? Thank you. The meeting is over, said the sovereign in a tone of satisfaction, for he knew now that he would have a child.
* Now, I inform the sovereign that I will have to leave tomorrow.
* Okay, my dear cousin. The High Counsellor will give you something. I would now like to know if there will be a warning sign, when the time comes?
* I was not told that.
* Haven't you been told either if it is this or that woman that will make this child?
* The answer to this question is within the competence of Genius alone.

As promised, the high Counsellor gave gifts to the blacksmith, who got satisfied. He left immediately to go to Mamakany's residence, to say goodbye to her. The latter, who had not yet regained her former mood, only thanked, with indolence, the patriarch and wished him a safe return to his family. The latter, who understood the woman's state of mind, wasted no time. He immediately left to go to Suwo, whom he found with his child.

* Is this your child, this handsome boy?
* Yes.
* Oh, what a handsome boy! I come to tell you that I am leaving very early tomorrow morning. We won't see each other. I want to remind you that you must obey your boss lady in all circumstances. A maidservant is bound to scrupulously respect her boss lady and to carry out to the letter everything she commands her to do without questioning, no matter how intimate their relationship may be. That's what the Genius likes and that's what he recommends.
* I reiterate my promise to do whatever my boss lady will ask me to do.
* Everything, insisted the blacksmith.

He took two identical silver rings from his pocket and gave them to her.

* Keep them on you. You will put one on the ring finger of the baby's left hand from birth after washing him. Don't consult anyone. They can think that the child was born with it, even though that is possible, the Genius decided otherwise. It is his will. And you will keep the other on you at all times and in all places for any eventuality. Then you will ask Mamakany to show you the cinerary canary; you will mix shea oil with the ash that is in there and then you will rub this substance all over the body of the new-born. Remember that the baby should only lie in the cradle that is with you.

And this operation of massage with shea oil must be repeated every first night of the moon at midnight for up to one year. You don't have to tell anyone where this cradle comes from, you know why.

* All right, but how can I put the ring on the child's finger without everyone knowing when his mum will have to be near him? Suwo wondered.
* Yes, but because it has to be done, that will be possible, he said to get out.

In the royal courtyard, Suwo's ​​child born just after taking over as Mamakany's maidservant was growing up well. He was starting to give a hard time to the special maidservant who was taking care of him. She could no longer bear his whims. Besides that, she was no longer feeling comfortable taking care of the child of another maidservant like her. This feeling of contempt was reinforced by the other maidservants that were pushing her to disobey. But in reality, she could do nothing as the order came from Mamakany with the agreement of her husband himself.

That maidservant was sleeping in Suwo's ​​room whenever she was away. And Suwo's ​​room was next to that of her boss lady, so she could always be available in case she needed her. In reality, the time Suwo spent with her child was very little, despite the longing she often felt to be with him. But all that was part of what the queen was calling immeasurable service.

During the night, when the sovereign was alone with his wife, he came back on the same subject:

* The patriarch gave me an account of your trip, but I remained unsatisfied. He seems to be afraid of something he doesn't deign to reveal to me. You, you are my favourite wife; you can't hide the reality from me, can you?

Despite the hopes raised by the patriarch's report, the sovereign wanted more assurance about the eventual birth of this much-desired child.

* First of all, His Majesty must know that no one has the right to say what he sees there, except what he hears, especially the message from the Genius or the ancestors.
* Okay, about the message, I did not understand the riddles. What do you know about them?
* Of course, no one else knows their meanings. Just know that these are predictions. We must remember them and try to find explanations of the future events by referring to them. As announced, these events will occur. Be careful; and accept things as they come.
* But is it sure that I will have a child. Yes, the Genius never contradicts himself.
* But is it sure that you who will get this child, as I wish?
* I am very confident, since I am the only one to arrive at the Genius abode. You remember that he said that you should send your wife you wish to get this child. I was introduced there as that wife, your favourite one¸ and I benefited from the treatment associated with this status.
* Thank you, I am overjoyed. I hope everything will go as planned.

Mamakany nodded and the two fell asleep.

MAMAKANY'S TRICKS AND HER MATES’ PLOT

While one could believe that Mamakany had done everything to fulfil the promise she made to her husband, that of giving him the desired child, she herself was not yet optimistic. Despite her belief in the existence of the Genius, his ghostly surroundings and his evil power which she would do everything to avoid, she was not convinced that the Genius could change the situation in Famoro's household, especially in her favour without her own effort. She wanted to add her little trickery contribution to it, so to speed up the realization of her wish. Above all, given that her husband was at such a very advanced age, she had doubts in his sexual capacity to procreate. For this she resolved to help the Genius in his efforts to grant their wish. It remained to determine the ways and means to achieve this.

It is in this context that Mamakany decided to make a final trip, if only briefly, to the kingdom of her father, just to involve her mother in her manoeuvres. She thought that with the collaboration of her mother, everything would be done in the total discretion. She wanted whatever decisions were made to be between her and her mother. Even Suwo was to be excluded from this plan.

She went to see her husband to ask permission to go see her parents for a few days only.

* Why so soon? Famoro wondered after listening to his wife.
* You know, after a trip as full of adventures as we did, it is necessary to share with one’s parents, who have the same concern, the hope aroused by this trip and above all to seek their blessing for the realization of our dream. That's why I want to go to my father so that he can make his part of the sacrifice.
* I thought that we needed a little moment of friction between us, an act necessary for the conception of the pregnancy which must give birth to this child before anything else. Nobody knows when the Genius will be ready to breathe the soul of the child into your body, says Fmoro to dissuade his favourite wife.
* Yes I know. That's why I would only spend a few days if you agree. I think that from the moment the Genius has decided to make me get this child for you, he will. He never goes back on his promises, for nothing at the time. However, for safety reasons, please refrain from having sexual intercourse with any other woman until the conception of this pregnancy. This is to avoid the anger of the Genius at the idea that you intend to have the child with another woman than the one who has suffered so much.

The king could find no fault with such an argument from his favourite wife, for he knew that it was she who had suffered a great deal, for having made all that journey. And it was she who knew about the existence of the Genius and his mystical power. For this, he accepted Mamakany's grievance while insisting on respecting the travel deadline.

Once again Famoro's favourite wife had to be outside the marital home. This time, she was accompanied by only a very small number of people. Just two slaves and Suwo. No one knew the real motivation for this trip, including Suwo, who refrained from asking her boss lady any question relating to the reason of the trip. She made no attempt to find out, because she knew that if Mamakany hadn't told her the motive, there must be a good reason. She had not for any moment forgotten that she was just a maidservant and not a friend to Mamakany, as she liked to say. She had only to wait for the order to execute it.

It is a very long distance that was between Narenkabadu and the kingdom of Turu, home of the parents of Mamakany. It took ten days of horseback riding for Mamakany and her retinue to get there. At the threshold of the city, they met her father who was leaving for a hunting trip which would have taken him from two to five days. Fortunately, they arrived at spades, because the arrival of the princess was not announced like the other times.

The king, surprised by this unexpected arrival of his beloved daughter, ipso facto postponed his trip to find out what was wrong. The very limited number of persons in the retinue of the princess was not reflecting her personality. The king feared that this arrival was the result of a misunderstanding with her husband. Usually, her arrival was announced by a forerunner weeks in advance. Inhabited by anguish and apprehension, he ordered the slaves who were accompanying him to return home. Hunting was cancelled *sine die*.

As for Mamakany and her companions, they entered the royal courtyard noiselessly. She and Suwo went straight to her mother who was also her father's favourite. The latter was no less surprised than her husband by this fortuitous arrival of their beloved daughter. She was imagining everything but good.

Mamakany, knowing the anguish of her parents, behaved like a spoiled child. She did not rush to explain the reasons for her presence, taking pleasure in the consternation of her parents which was reassuring her of their affection. She was her mother's only child, so the darling girl of the royal courtyard.

* About your husband, is he fine? Asked her mother, after having invited her to her private room. She couldn't go on putting up with her daughter's whims.
* My husband, he is very well from the height of his seventy years and more. He is very resilient.
* Are you in good terms, you and him? Wondered the queen.
* Yes. There’s nothing wrong between us. In fact, he loves me today more than before. He is very kind. He is the best of husbands, certainly apart from yours, she said with a broad smile.
* So, how is it that you arrived in such a way? Your father must be worried for having cancelled hunting which is his only predilection as you must know. Said the queen without following her daughter's cajoling.
* Yes I know. Don't worry. It was I who decided that my trip would not be so pompous for a mission that I want to be secret. No one must know the real reason for my being here except you, even my father. Everything must remain an inviolable secret between you and me.
* All right. Now, after this stern warning, can you reveal it to me? I'm dying of anxiety.
* Don't be in such a hurry mom; I'm going to sleep with you. We'll have all night talking about it. All night long. That's why I came. First of all, I have to go and meet my father to talk to him.

Mamakany immediately left to go see her dad. She found him alone in his bedroom as if expecting her. He too was dying of anguish.

* Good evening dad. She said entering the room.
* Welcome Mama in the kingdom of your father who loves you. Say, what's wrong with you? How can you come like an ordinary girl in my kingdom? You must have problems with your husband? Asked the king with a worried look as soon as his daughter, whom he was affectionately calling Mama, entered his room.
* No, dad. Nothing to worry about. There is nothing wrong between us. Everything is fine between us, and my husband is well and kicking. He greets you with all the honours. It was I who decided this, just to spare my mates who are becoming more and more jealous of the treatment I receive from my husband. I have…
* No, listen, you have nothing to fear. You are a princess. Your father is the richest of all the kings. Your mom is my favourite wife. The most beautiful of queens. You are her only child. You have to feel it when you travel. You were born to be happy. Your mates have to come to terms with this reality. You understand, right? The king interrupted his daughter in her explanation.
* Yes Dad. But I want to tell Papa that I am already enjoying in my husband courtyard all the honours due to the qualities you mentioned. Never mind, the change that is taking place in me requires a certain degree of humility on my part. This is the very reason for my presence here today.
* I'm listening to you.
* You know, dad, that my husband does not yet have a child to succeed him. So if he dies in this situation the traditional mechanism of succession can no longer be respected. Above all, there is a risk of confrontation between his brothers to succeed him, insofar as nothing is planned for such a circumstance.
* I know all that. Go ahead. The king whispered.
* Since my arrival in the royal courtyard, there has been a general intuition that I am the woman who would make the king's much sought-after child. Even the king shares this hope. It is what is about to become a reality.
* Wait, are you pregnant? Asked the king.
* Wait for me, dad. I made contact with a Genius whose existence was revealed to me by one of my maidservants. This Genius is the protector of the destitute and the disinherited. When I made contact with him through a patriarch blacksmith, the Genius let me know that I will make a child who will rule all of Farafina. That he will be the embodiment of divine wisdom, the trinity of love, truth and justice. That child, it’s I who will get him. Ah, what a happiness, what a happiness, dad! She exclaimed, bursting into tears before kneeling down in front of her father.

The king, after listening to his daughter had mixed feelings. He had joy, but a joy tinged with concern: the idea that his beloved daughter would become a mother, especially the mother of a man of such greatness, was a source of immense joy. However, the sovereign felt a sense of anguish at first, the justice which would be the workhorse of the child, was not a virtue in the governance of the monarchies of that time. The stratification of the societies into advantaged and disadvantaged strata was the system. It was like a criticism of his own governance. Again, the fact that this child who would govern all of Farafina and beyond including his kingdom, even though that assertion seemed a hoax to him, would be from another monarchy and not his own, be it his grandson, was not a good news. But everything had to be done to conceal his disenchantment from his daughter. Thus joy took over.

* If I'm not mistaking that was the reason for your legendary sacrifice, wasn't it?
* Yes, so that I can get this child. But only he and I know that in the courtyard, naturally with the woman thanks to whom I learned of the existence of the Genius.
* So, where is the benefactor through whom you came into contact with the Genius?
* He is in a village of blacksmiths where he is the patriarch. It is a very far village from our place called Tomakuna. But the Genius is not there.
* All right, About the Genius, since you talk well about him, have you seen him?
* Hey, dad! It is forbidden to talk about what you see there only what you hear, which are often recommendations.

The firmness with which the princess reacted sounded like a warning to the king. He fell silent and paused for a long time. The king, impressed by his daughter's explanations and the conviction she was showing when speaking of the Genius and her supernatural power, decided to tell her his part of the truth.

* My daughter let me tell you the truth today. If you see that I agreed to give you in marriage to this old king against the wishes of your mother and even of my younger brothers, first of all, it is because I am tempted by the bravery and intelligence of people of this monarchy for having followed all the battles they have been fighting against their lifelong enemies. I'm sure they have real blood of warrior in their veins. I wanted to associate myself with them by blood in order to have among my descendant, children of their bravery and tenacity. The second reason, I say it to you, is to be able to benefit from the immense wealth that this kingdom abounds, So, if you manage to make this child, it means that all the wealth, for which I feel a real bulimia, will be ours. I am telling you all this today, because I have realized that you have acquired the lucidity required to keep the secret. The fact that you decided to come to explain to me the progress that is taking shape in your home after making the trip, really I am happy. You will know how to be more careful to help us getting our hands on the immense wealth of this dying old man. I also know that you will be able to accomplish other missions in the future. Good luck! You have my full blessing. I will have you protected again by my great fetish, Mangana. With its protection, no one will be able to do arm to you or your child for the fact that he will have double protection with that of the Genius, Ninginanga.

On this note, the king let his daughter out. It was after that she began to make the rounds to greet members of the royal courtyard. She greeted everyone starting with the other queens, then her brothers and finally, the maidservants and slaves. And everywhere she went, she felt the same jubilation in people's faces, even though everyone was surprised of the fortuitous nature of her arrival.

After all that, the time came to be with her mother in the company of Suwo, whom she presented as her best friend and not a maidservant. The three women spent the rest of the day together.

As night was approaching, Mamakany began to distance herself from her companion. Whenever Suwo was approaching her while she was chatting with her mom, she was keeping silent. Suwo immediately understood that the purpose of their trip would certainly be on the agenda between her boss lady and her mother that evening. To make it easier for them, she decided to go to bed very early as soon as the sun went down, using the alibi of being too tired after this long journey. Her boss lady also understood that her intelligent maidservant had understood her game.

As expected, immediately after the evening meal, Suwo retired to go to her room which was adjacent to that of his boss lady. As the night was progressing, the courtyard of King Oury was becoming calmer and calmer. Only the voices of the slaves which were rising sporadically at the gate of the courtyard were heard. That means that everyone had gone to bed. The yard was dark, despite the stars that were shining high in the sky. But with the moon peeking out over the horizon, they expected everything to become clear very soon.

Mamakany and her mother Nenegale were looking for a place where they could be safe from prying eyes to chat with each other. The Queen Mother led her daughter into a somewhat isolated cubicle. From there, they were sure not to be spied on.

* Tell me now my beloved daughter, what is wrong? Asked Nenegale in a worried tone.
* Everything is fine between my husband and me. It is just that, mother; there is a change that is taking place in my home. It's an opportunity that I don't want to miss under any circumstances. That's why I have come here to ask for your cooperation.

Mamakany explained thoroughly the efforts already made, from her adventure to Fada’s village and Dawanian, to the prospects that were emerging, passing through the recommendations of the Genius without transgressing his prohibitions. Her dumbfounded mother kept looking at her with feeling. She insisted on the position of her mates with regards to that situation without having clear information on the arrangements they were intending to make. Finally, she shamelessly expressed her doubt about her husband's virility to be able to impregnate a woman, not only because of his age but also because of the worries that was weighing him down.

* This is why I am asking for your contribution so that I can become this happy mother. You must do everything within your means to help me so that I can have this child who will ensure the continuity of your offspring and that of my husband.
* All right, let me think. We'll talk about it tomorrow.

The queen mother spent the rest of the night searching for ways and means to satisfy her daughter's request. She couldn't close her eyes all night. It was complicated

The king who had just listened to his daughter had not been able to close his eyes all night, as well. He was looking for an immediate and adequate solution to his daughter's situation. There was a dead end for him. On the one hand, he could not agree with his daughter to prevent the birth of this child of prodigy, who will be his grandson, on the other; the child's belonging to another monarchy was difficult to digest. He made thousand and one proposals without being satisfied. A last proposal came to his mind, but once again, her daughter's support was essential. He decided to invite her to discuss about it.

* Mama, I want to make you a proposal. Don't answer me on the spot. You have to analyse it well before telling me if it suits you. Otherwise, we will continue to think about. It is as follows: you wait for five or six years after the birth of your child, and then you get rid of your husband. At that time, the right of the child to the throne will have no longer been in doubt. You can bring him here for his protection during his regency period. When the time comes for him to get his throne he will be able to conquer it from here and under my clairvoyance. Then, by his power of divine source, he will be able to extend his power over all the other monarchies.

The king, who was fearing losing his power to the benefit of his grandson announced as commander of all Farafina and beyond, wanted at least his kingdom to be the command centre of that power. At that event, even if he himself would not be the holder of power, he would have considerable influence in this regime of which he is the grandfather of the commander. He could then have a grip on the immense wealth of the monarchy, something that had been his only dream and that of his predecessors for decades.

* I agree with you right away, dad, because I know that you, mom and you, are never going to put me on a bad path.
* We agree on that. You can go now.

The princess left her father's house. The king, meanwhile, was relieved at the end of this meeting, even though he was not completely confident in the advent of such a child; he had to be careful, because the bravery of the people of Simandu was unusual.

The princess went back to her mother for the rest of their debates. Nenegale knew that the task was not easy. She had no idea about what to do or what not to do. She had only one seer who was both her adviser and her confidant. That seer was enjoying an indisputable notoriety throughout the kingdom. She suggested to her daughter to go see the latter for consultations. It had to be done without delay.

In the evening, the queen and her daughter went to Thierno, the seer who had his home at the other end of the town. Arrived there, the queen, in hiss, explained the reason for their presence to Thierno without concealing anything.

The seer immediately began the work with apparent humility and serenity. He used sand as Simbo for his geomancy. A terrible silence was reigning in the room while Thierno was performing his geomancy. He paused, staring at the figures in the fine, glistening sand and said:

* Hmmm! It is really extraordinary! A child will soon be born in this country. We can even say that he is the child of the king. This child has a sublime soul. He will have a great power which will exceed the territory of his father and to which no one will be able to resist. His destiny has already been decreed by a divine power that will jealously watch over him. As for your daughter, our beloved princess, the child is very close to her. I can't say whether it will be hers or not.
* Wait, it's my daughter's child or a child close to her. What a way of speaking? Wondered the queen.
* Listen, Her Majesty, Queen of Turu, this child is very close to your daughter, he could be hers, for that, it is necessary to make a little effort.
* That's it! I told you so mom. This old man is sterile. He can no longer have children. He is very tired. We must stay behind the seer's wisdom to show us the way forward, Shouted Mamakany.

This intervention of the princess gave an idea to Thierno who was somewhat disconcerted.

* Good! You see Her Majesty, as his own wife recognized his sexual impotence, we must imagine a less expensive but effective plan to attract the soul of the child to your daughter, says Thierno.

But Nnegale was sceptical of such a possibility. She had no idea on how to attract a soul to a woman. Anyway, she refrained from interrupting the clairvoyant who continued to speak:

* You know, Her Majesty, the soul exists freely in the astral world. It can live there forever. Now for it to be able to live in the world here below, it must be incarnated by a body. It is this body that must be made and mold into that of a living being through a carnal act, that is to say, a fruitful sexual intercourse. But if one of the partners in the copulation does not meet the biological requirements of that relation, that is to say the standards requested by the souls, needless to say that the incarnation will not take place. That's why we need a boy who meets the criteria of the chosen soul. That one must have carnal relations with your daughter in place of her sterile husband in total discretion just long enough to attract the soul which must be incarnated in her body. The soul of the child has already left the astral world for our world by the grace of the immense sacrifices offered by her husband under the watchful eye of a supernatural being who has perfect control over this world of the stars.

The queen, who, at first, was reluctant, listened with torpor to the very convincing explanations of her seer. She did nothing to interrupt him. And Thierno continued speaking:

* To guide you, here is what I suggest: you disguise a young boy as a young girl to be presented as a new maidservant that her father places at the disposal of his daughter at his own expense. The king, who will suspect nothing of this transvestite, will leave all the time to his wife to have the necessary relations for procreation with this boy. However, to prevent any leak of information, I advise you to kill that young man as soon as the pregnancy is achieved before he, himself, notices that the woman is pregnant. You know as well as I what might happen if the boy stays alive and he finds out that the princess is pregnant, and that he is the father.
* I think it's the best plan, said Mamakany.
* I think so, too, said Nenegale with a big sigh.

Finally, he said to the princess:

* You have to give me a little time, just to prepare something for your protection.

The two women went out to allow the seer to prepare his substance. It was Mamakany who was to come back to get it afterwards. It was early the next day that the princess came alone to the seer. She found that everything was already ready.

* To protect you from any spell, I give you this substance which will make you invulnerable to any curse. You will put a small quantity in a dish that you will prepare yourself and you will eat it with the boy in question. It is not forbidden for other person to eat it. You will rub yourself with a similar quantity before going to bed. You will repeat the massage every night up to seven consecutive times. Do everything not to touch any other man before the conception of the pregnancy which will take place between fifteen to thirty days of the first physical contact with the young man.

He put back this gourd full of decoction of which he was the only one to know the source and the nature.

* Thank you for everything you do for us. I promise to be grateful, and that I will rise to the challenge. We are leaving now. Your reward will come. The king himself will take care of it. Said the princess.

Mamakany went out with the concern of finding this young boy who would be able to play that role the best. In principle, this problem should not be difficult in view of the unlimited number of young boys suitable to be this joker in the royal courtyard. However, it was necessary to take into account the social rank of the concerned person to avoid any transgression to customs and mores. Further, he had to be someone of whom they could get rid of after the operation without too much risks.

After multiple ideas and discussions, the only boy who was meeting all the criteria was a young man called Kassim. He was the son of a king who had been captured at the front by King Oury's men during a battle, when his territory was invaded by them. The misfortunate king and his family, including Kassim, were sequestered in the royal courtyard, his property seized and his territory attached to that of Turu.

So Kassim had the blood of the nobility and was a seasoned and fearless warrior. He was the chief of staff of the army of his father's kingdom. He also had youth in his favour. At twenty-five, he was displaying peremptory vigour and had an irreproachable beauty. Finally, if the plan succeeded, the queen could get rid of him without fear.

That’s why Nenegale invited Kassim to her private room in the presence of her daughter. The latter welcomed this honour with a feeling of pride and ill-disguised concern, because he did not know what was hidden behind that surprise.

* I'm calling you in my own room to entrust you with a very delicate mission. It takes someone like you to fulfil it. But before telling you anything, I want to tell you that everything must remain secret between the three of us. Otherwise, what should have been happiness for you will turn into misfortune.
* I promise in advance to the favourite queen of Turu that I will know how to be discreet, whatever the nature of the mission in question.
* Good! It's my daughter who just arrived from her husband's kingdom, as you might already know. She is the favourite wife of the wealthy king Famoro of Simandu. But this man has no child, despite the number of wives he has. Now it has just been proven by a Genius that he can no longer have a child without the assistance of a third person. But that the child already exists in the astral world. Now, it must be drawn into our world by someone else, with the understanding that he himself can no longer procreate biologically. Since he wants the child to be made by my daughter, he has sent her here to look for that person who can help them attract the soul of this child to my daughter. I thought that you can help us accomplish this task of great importance for my daughter and her husband.
* All right. What exactly does Her Majesty think I can do.
* Good! Without delay, I will tell you what you must do. You know, my daughter’s husband is very old. He is no longer able to have a child on his own. He needs an assistant. That has been said by all the experts. That’s why I'm going to dress you up as a young lady and put you in my daughter's retinue. She will introduce you to those around you as a maidservant that her father puts at her service. That way you can have intimate relations that are essential for the procreation with her. As soon as the pregnancy is conceived we will know how to do the rest.

In response, Kassim was a little dubious as he thought his slave blood was not compatible with that of the princess.

* I doubt that our bloods are compatible. He said.
* I know what you're referring to. You are not a slave. You and your parents are not slaves. Your kingdom has lost an unjust war imposed on you by my husband out of sheer greed. You have noble blood like the rest of us, explained the queen.

This explanation corroborated the judgment that Kassim and his parents were making of that war. Satisfied with Nenegale's message, Kassim agreed.

The contract was literally tied up on that basis to the satisfaction of all three. Mamakany had followed all the discussions with interest without saying anything. All what remained was to prepare for the return of the princess. Kassim slipped out of the queen's chamber as he had arrived unnoticed after receiving once again another stern warning of his obligation of discretion.

Suwo was neither closely nor remotely associated with these negotiations. The princess arranged everything with her mother. Nor had she shown any curiosity to her boss lady about what she was up to with her mom.

For the return of his daughter, the king, formed an ostentatious retinue made of dozens of slaves and other maidservants who were carrying food and works of art. Several others were assigned to perform light housework along the way. They were all wonderfully dressed. Wherever they were passing, a crowd of admirers spontaneously were coming out to cheer them on. If they had to spend the night in a locality, there was a party throughout that night for the inhabitants.

Kassim disguised as a girl, responding to the name of Marly, was already next to Mamakany. He had in fact supplanted Suwo, to whom he was introduced the day before the trip. She understood then that something had changed in the immediate entourage of the sovereign, and that was the purpose of their trip. She knew how to adapt to the new situation. Suwo was in no way bothered by this new deal, on the contrary; she was always trying to approach Marly in order to establish friendships with her something that that one was vehemently rebuffing. Certainly she was avoiding that her travesty be shown through. Kassim somehow managed to adopt a female voice in public the few times he had to speak.

Suwo had noticed nothing. She also thought that her "sister" was so jealous of her new situation that she was suspicious of everyone. Both intelligent and versatile, she knew how to keep her distance from her boss lady and her new maidservant. Mamakany, too, was becoming increasingly restrained in her communications with Suwo. This situation, far from irritating her, allowed her to rest after so many years of servitude. However, she always remained docile and quick to make herself available whenever needed.

Meanwhile in Simandu, the manoeuvres of Gnalen, the senior of the wives of Famoro and her collaborators were only accentuating. They wanted to arrange everything before Mamakany’s arrival. This umpteenth trip for unclear reasons further had fuelled her anger for revenge. She knew very well that to succeed in any operation against Mamakany, she needed the involvement of someone close to her, in this case one of her maidservants. To do this, she decided to seek accomplices among the frustrated people around Mamakany. It should not have been difficult for her, because knowing the change that the favourite wife of Famoro had made in her entourage with the preference of Suwo to the detriment of Wuria. She felt, rightly, that this was an avenue to explore.

Already, as she knew that Wuria was not part of Mamakany's retinue on this present trip, one could imagine that it would not be difficult for her to be drawn into the conspiracy. That is why she called Wuria:

* Ah, favourites of the courtyard, why didn't you go this time with your boss lady? She asked her in a mocking tone.
* Well! I was not invited. Certainly, she was not in need of my service on this trip. Better for me. I'm tired of roaming around behind this ungrateful person like a mountebank on trips the ins and outs of which are unknown to almost everybody. She replied with a clearly visible anger.
* No, it must be said that we do not know the underside of these trips, but the main people concerned do; especially, your colleague Suwo. She is supposed to know everything that's going on. Frankly speaking, your boss lady wasn't fair to you, huh! She got rid of you in favour of a newcomer without qualms.
* But, my sovereign, this one can only be ungrateful. She could only do what she did. I'm not really surprised. But as for that intruder Suwo, I will never rest until I get my revenge on her. She will regret of having come between Mamakany and me without any merit, Wuria emptied her bag after these instigating words from Gnalen who was going in the same direction as her own analyses.
* I, at your place, would avenge myself. Ungratefulness must not go unpunished. With me, you can see for yourself, the senior of my maidservants has remained the closest to me since my youth time. She is my accomplice. But it is not the same with Mamakany, it seems that this woman has bewitched her.
* I wouldn't say otherwise. Either way, I'm still determined to get revenge on her.
* But if you take revenge on her without taking revenge on your boss lady, it would be a waste of time, because she could do it again with someone else. In fact, she is responsible for everything.
* For the boss lady, I remain limited in terms of means. Otherwise, she is the prime target.
* Nevertheless, you must know something about the reasons for their multiple trips, Mamakany and her friend Suwo, right?
* You are right to call their relationship a friendship. I don't know what these two women are up to. They do everything between them, and everything is limited there.
* But, whatever they do, I see a bitter failure awaiting them. We will never allow this viper to carry out her satanic plans, if it is to make the heir of Famoro. In fact, this old man is sterile and impotent. He can no longer have a child. The day he dies we will know who is who in this courtyard. Said Gnalen.

Wuria was not surprised by this revanchist attitude of the senior of Famoro's wives. Before that, as soon as they returned from the blacksmith village, she has been informed about the holding of a meeting by the other queens of Famoro around the ill treatment to which they were subjected to for the benefit of Mamakany. At the end of this meeting, they would have agreed to take firm measures against Mamakany in order to put an end to this unjustified discrimination.

* In any case, I promise my availability to collaborate with whoever can punish this minx Suwo for me. Even if it means undermining the interests of my boss lady, assured Wuria.

Gnalen was overjoyed at Wuria's readiness to collaborate with them in their struggle. She knew that with that complicity in Mamakany's immediate entourage, she would only be an easy prey. To lure Wuria further into the plot, she says:

* Be sure that with us, you will easily take revenge on Suwo, your rival. You can go now.
* Thank you, Her Majesty.

With an air of euphoria, Wuria left Gnalen's house. The time was now to look for ways and means to achieve that goal. It was necessary to do everything to avoid a failure and above all they shouldn’t waste time with the risk that could be leak of the plan. Gnalen reported to her mates the outcome of her meeting with Wuria and urged them to find the best way as soon as possible before the travellers would return.

* Do not wait for her to be here to try anything. Everything must be prepared before her arrival. She demanded.

Like the previous meeting, suggestions and proposals came from everywhere. When some proposed an excommunication of Mamakany, or a massive revolt on the day of her arrival, others proposed an arson attack on her home in order to destroy everything she would have kept inside as part of her project. The most extremists suggested her physical elimination purely and simply.

At the end of the meeting, a commission of reflection was set up to summarize all these proposals and choose the one that seemed to be the most appropriate. This commission, after a few sessions presented its conclusion through its spokesperson to the assembly of queens gathered on the sly in the room of Gnalen.

* We have just, as you requested, made an in-depth analysis of each proposal, including the short and long term consequences. A priori, they are all judicious, but as they cannot all be retained, we retained by consensus the one which seemed to us the best. It is about her physical elimination. We felt that by eliminating her physically there is a good chance that there will not be a serious investigation, because it would be believed to be a natural death if we are careful enough. The other options may be investigated and possibly our liability may be demonstrated. This is the case of fire, for example. Not only is the king capable of over-replacing all lost goods, but also the maidservants can be considered as prime suspects, while there are some among them who collaborate with us, in this case, for example their senior. They can denounce us. You can imagine the rest. And if we organize a massive revolt, the king is capable of getting rid of all of us for her sole benefit. Finally, we decided to prepare a poison made from crocodile bile. We will give it to the senior of her maidservants to be put in the dish that she will eat as soon as she will arrive. People can easily imagine that she came with this sickness. I believe that with all the caution that this kind of operation requires, we will be able to get rid of her without too much risk.
* What will happen if she doesn't eat the food? Interrupted a woman without giving the spokesperson time to finish her speech.
* It is sure that she will eat it, because it will be her own maidservant that will serve it to her. Either she eats alone or she eats with Suwo, her favourite maidservant. At this point, we will have killed two birds with one stone. It's not my maidservant Wuria that will tell me otherwise, said Gnalen with a little humour.
* No, I disapprove this decision. It's too much as a punishment. She did nothing to deserve such a fate. It is our husband who is unfair. It is he who must be punished, even killed for his injustice. She is nothing but an innocent who only benefits from a position that we all aspired to.Protested Famoro's youngest wife after Mamakany.

These remarks full of logic, far from deterring Gnalen and her accomplices, just galvanized their position, and fuelled their resentment.

* You are right to talk like that because you let yourself be bribed by her. You forget that it was she who supplanted you and all of us gathered here with our husband. We are reduced to the rank of simple maidservants. She appears to be Famoro's only wife. In other monarchies, it is true, there are also favourite wives, but going so far as to reduce the others to the rank of slaves in the courtyard, that is only here. And it's her fault. Before her arrival the king was not acting like that. Let’s put a stop to that. It's... Replied a first one before another one cut her off.
* If you see that you are talking like this, it means that you are ready to betray us. But if you try this, you will regret it.
* In fact, we must not let her get out of here; otherwise, she will be able to take action before us. I even propose that she be the first to be killed. Our husband will not attach any importance to her death being a simple peasant girl. Said Gnalen.
* We must not kill her otherwise we will have the risk of starting badly, and not going far. I propose that each of us swear not to reveal anything, even to our next of kin.
* How can you be sure that no one will break the oath? Ganlen retorted.
* To be sure of that, each of us should pour a drop of our own blood into a vase of water that we will mix. So each of us will plunge, in turn, our right index finger and put it in our mouth, promising not to tell anyone about this plot. Otherwise, the blood of the others will become a poison to kill her. Proposed another more cautious and who was enjoying special respect among them.

This proposal was accepted unanimously by the participants. The devices were brought together and with courage each of them shed a few drops of her blood and the oath was taken as agreed upon.

The plan was put together with the approval of the whole assembly, and Wuria accepted her role with kindness. She was only waiting for the time to execute it. The women separated at dawn.

It took almost a month for Mamakany and her retinue to arrive in Narenkabadu. This return in a bluffing atmosphere was considered triumphant by her and her allies, because the hope was high. However, that festive atmosphere further radicalized the detractors who saw it as defiance.

Wuria still had a lot on his heart, especially seeing herself excluded from such an atmosphere. The king, meanwhile, was full of pride, because the atmosphere magnified the excellence of the relationship between the two sovereign families. Suwo, finding a degree of freedom in the yard, was hoping to have time for her child. She thought she had done everything expected of her as a favourite maidservant.

Mamakany presented her new ‘‘maidservant’’ to her husband as the honour reserved for her by her father. Famoro was happy with all that, but especially with the arrival of his wife from a trip he considered as the last of her soap opera trips. He could have time to live with her while waiting for the Genius to manifest his grace on their couple.

Wuria who had prepared everything as agreed with the other queens rushed to bring the poisoned meal to Mamakany. She was surprised to find Famoro's favourite wife sitting with her "new maidservant" in complete privacy, whereas she expected to meet Suwo there. Mamakany introduced to her, with all the honours due to her rank, her "new maidservant" as the honour bestowed on her by her father. At the same time she introduced Wuria to Marly as the senior of her maidservants, and above all the most devoted of them.

When she left, Wuria was doubly happy; first the honour with which she was treated in front of the “foreigner”, but also the fact that Suwo had in turn been relegated in favour of someone else. She began feeling a guilty conscience for the act she was about to commit. She wondered what would be her fate after Mamakany's death. She would be without a boss lady, because the others would be suspicious of her for agreeing to betray her own boss lady. Anything she wouldn't hesitate to do again against another person. And above all, the honour she had just received from Mamakany should have been requited that way.

But Mamakany, the gallows game, had the concoction given to him by Thierno, the seer. She knew she had to take it to the meal she would have cooked herself. So she should not eat the meal that had been reserved for her by her maidservant. Without suspecting anything, she simply poured the meal in the garbage can to wait for the one that she had already started cooking as recommended by the clairvoyant.

Gnalen and his accomplices who expected to hear cries in the entourage of Mamakany remained unsatisfied. They wondered if Wuria had not betrayed them. Suspense won a background of anguish won their hearts; but no one could talk about it.

THE IRON WILL COME OUT OF THE STONE

One thing that should be remembered about Mamakany is that she didn't have a friend, and she wasn't actually looking for one. She only makes friendship for well-defined short or long-term goals. Her relationships were just instruments she used to achieve those goals. Because of this reality, and considering everything that has already happened between Mamakany and Suwo, one can guess that she could not do without her services. It was only a postponement. She was confident of her spiritual abilities and resilience. That is why she invited Suwo when her room got emptied.

* Suwo, my dear maidservant, you know, after all the emotional upheaval we've been through, I can't do anything without you. I can't do anything without your moral and spiritual support. That being said, I called you to entrust you with a very delicate mission. Only you can do this mission and, above all, it should remain confined between us. I know you can do it with no problem. First of all, you should know that all the comings and goings that I was making with my mother when we were at home were for the search of a very precious medicine. This medicine is essential to the realization of our wish, my husband and I, even yourself too. It’s about my problem of child. Despite the assurance given by the Genius, it seems that I must be physically and mentally prepared to receive this exceptional child. You remember that I fainted in Genius’ cave. It is to prevent such an incident from occurring that I need this medicine. It is already prepared. Here is it, she showed the gourd to Suwo before continuing. The fulfilment of our wish depends on the correct application of the recommendations relating to this substance. I have to use it for fifteen to thirty days. During this time, it is strictly forbidden for a man to touch me. But you yourself know that if I tell my husband that, he won't be happy. Considering the long time we've spent without having an intimate contact. He may think that I don't want to sleep with him anymore out of desperation. His grief may increase. While in reality, he can no longer have a fruitful sexual intercourse because of his senility. But with this medicine he will regain vigour and will be able to perform the act necessary for procreation. So, I came up with a plan. It's to let you sleep in my place in his room during that period of time.
* No, if he comes to realize my presence. I'll be screwed. He is going to kill me, Suwo interrupted without imagining that she was with her boss lady.
* Don't be so naive. You think that I am going to do this without making the necessary arrangements. I will tell him not to touch me, not to communicate with me, and even not to light the fire in the room while I am there until I finish the treatment. And especially to let me out at dawn to allow me to take bath before people wake up. That that was the recommendations of the Genius Ninginanga and the fetish, Mangana, of my dad.
* But, my sovereign, if you are sure that the king will respect all these instructions, you can sleep there without being touched by him. Isn’t it so?
* You don't understand what I'm saying or you don't want to understand. I tell you that I must not come close to a man as soon as I put this product on me, let alone sleep on the same bed as a man. You want the fetish to kill me?

Suwo who was reluctant remembered the advice of Fada, the blacksmith who asked her to do whatever her boss lady asks her to do. In addition to the assurance given by her boss lady in relation to the safeguards envisaged by her, she could only agree.

* Ok, I will do whatever my queen asks me to do.
* The opposite would surprise me. I need not to ask you to be discreet. We didn't know each other today. You just have to be very careful.

Mamakany went out to have her plan ratified by her husband:

* May His Majesty please forgive me for forgetting to mention one last point? Always, to strengthen our protection, we consulted Magana, my father's fetish; he gave us a decoction that I must use for at least one month. The problem is that for the whole time I'm going to use it, I mustn't get too close to a man let alone be touched by him, including you. If we manage to respect this measure, as soon as you touch me the pregnancy will be conceived, and the child will be born with all the possible protections.
* Is there an explanation for this? Asked Famoro.
* As I told you, it is to strengthen our protection. It will purify us of all the bad acts that we have committed in the past before the conception of pregnancy. In a way, it is a purifying abstention.
* It's complicated now. It just takes too long. I suffer from your absence by my side. But at least we can sleep together, right?
* Of course, but on condition that you don't touch me, you don't talk to me, and you don't even look at me. This means that there must be no light in the room for the whole time that I will be there. And above all you let me go out very early in the morning to take bath before dawn.
* There is no problem. I can abstain. I just want to feel your warmth.
* No. No warmth, my sovereign. You must not come close to me.
* No… It's a way of speaking. I won't even come near you.
* Good! Thank you for your usual understanding. Very soon we will be at the end of our troubles.

Mamakany was now on the verge of victory. The moral configuration of the protagonists in the life of the Famaro courtyard had taken on the appearance of a cosmopolitan microcosm for various reasons. First Suwo, who was one of the key pieces, found herself involved in a game of which she did not know all the rules. She couldn't say anything about the consequences of the role given to her. Kassim, who was rejoicing in a newfound happiness, was unaware of the fate that was awaiting him after achieving the goal that Mamakany and her mother had set for themselves. In any case, he must have known that it was not for free, but he was ignoring his own fate. Famoro who had just given in to his wife's deceit did not know the implications of his decision. It's true, like any informed man, he had a vaguely persistent intuition that his wife was getting tired of his carnal contact. He considered her argument as a ploy. Wuria and the other queens who had had no feedback to the famous poisoned dish that Mamakany should have eaten were still waiting. Their worry was increasing with the idea that the plot might have been discovered, the reason why Mamakany would not have eaten the meal. If that were the case, what would be Mamakany's reaction with the support of her husband? That's the question they kept asking themselves. They imagined a sort of Damocles sword over their heads. Finally, Mamakany, the director, the linchpin of the whole scenario, believing to have taken all the necessary precautions to avoid any possible upheavals in achieving that goal, did not know with certainty the outcome that was awaiting her. In case of failure, what would be the fate of Kassim? Nothing had been planned in this regard. Anyway, from the inception, everything seemed to be ready to go like clockwork for her, due to the keenness of the plan.

The first night of this plan was one of experimentation and suspense for Mamakany; a night of experience for Kassim and of dilemma for Suwo. That fateful night was coming inevitably. Everything was ready. The king was determined to obey the instructions and even the injunctions of his wife in all their compartments. He knew or at least believed that the success of all efforts depended on it. He kept telling himself "don't touch her, don't talk to her, don't look at her, let her out very early in the morning, simple as that".

The night arrived, the hour arrived, Suwo resolved to enter the king's chamber with horrifying dread. Entering Famoro's opulent bedroom for the first night, it reminded her the night she entered the Dawanian cave. She was seeing the same darkness, she felt the same fear, there was the same silence. When she entered the bedroom, the king was in the bathroom. Immediately, she lay down in the sovereign's bed. She found the bed very large and majestic. She snuggled under the thick blanket and faced the wall. A moment later the sovereign entered the room and did not inquire who was in bed and went straight to bed.

Dead silence fell over Famoro's dark and cold room. At first this silence was voluntary, everyone wanting to respect Mamakany's instructions. But as the time was passing and the night was progressing, that silence went beyond their control. They all sounded like they had lost their voices, even though they were wide awake. A superior supernatural and invisible force was holding them and was imposing on them the silence. After a while, Suwo felt a sensation as if seized by an irresistible force. She began to replay the scene that took place in the Dawanian cave, point by point, like a movie being watched for a second time. A hallucination or a reality, but Suwo was seeing everything as before.

At the same time, the king was feeling a transformation happening in his organism like a real metamorphosis. He felt that he was regaining the same physical and moral strength he had at the age of twenty-five. Concomitantly, he was feeling a sexual desire that was becoming more and more ardent. However, he was struggling to control himself, always trying to respect Magana's instructions so as not to frustrate the hope that was created.

Suddenly this desire became an ecstasy that no one can resist. He was like hypnotized. With a frantic gesture, he turned to Suwo whom he was profoundly taking to be Mamakany. He grabbed and pulled her toward him with a force that was beyond Suwo's ​​comprehension. That one, who could not resist, let herself being carried away by the event, because she herself was feeling the same unusual orgasm. Famoro's sexual vigour was on par with the physical strength he had just regained. Both succumbed to the unearthly sensation that had gripped them.

Meanwhile, Mamakany and Kassim were copulating with impunity in her bedroom and on her marital bed, which was intended only for her and her husband. The aphrodisiac orgasm she was feeling forced her to surrender to the sexual voracity of this young man full of vitality. She was telling herself that her husband could not do as much.

The king and the maidservant of his wife automatically fell back into sleep after this accidental act. The king had understood nothing of the identity of his partner in this voluptuous coitus. He was still thinking that it was Mamakany and did not regret having violated the instructions, because he himself was surprised at his physical and moral state during the scene.

A moment later the king began a dream full of mysterious imbroglio. In this dream, he found himself in a dark cave, calm and frightening. In this cave he saw indescribable and mysterious beings, as well as the whole scene of what happened during the stay of his wife in there together with Suwo and Fada, the blacksmith. He recognized them all. He especially saw and remembered the moment when a gigantic being arrived with a baby in a cradle. He handed the cradle and the baby to Suwo, while Mamakany was lying on the ground and seemed to ignore everything.

After this dream, he lost control of himself. He got up abruptly and sat in bed in the same darkness. While sitting at that time a voice came to him right in front in the room, speaking to him clearly and without ambiguity:

* You have just seen the woman who will have your child. Now that you've known her, give her all the respect she deserves. The iron will come out of the stone. It is the will of the Genius. There's nothing we can do about it.

Without having seen the owner of the mysterious voice, he recognized that of Fada, the patriarch blacksmith. Famoro abruptly turned on the light as if he was afraid of being caught by something. But Suwo did not hear anything of these. She too was seeing, in the dream, herself in the same cave and was witnessing the same scene as the king. Famoro was always thinking of being with his favourite woman. He pulled the blanket off the woman in order to ask her questions related to his dream. But to his amazement, he saw Suwo lying next to him shivering as if she were under freezing rain.

Famoro, under the effect of the dream he had just had, took a long time to recognize her. He stared at her for a long time before knowing that it was indeed the maidservant of his favourite wife. He had a melancholy feeling. The mysterious voice in his room was still ringing in his ears. He remembered seeing this woman in the dream, and he had a feeling that she knew that he had had this dream.

* Is that how it happened?
* Yes, exactly, His Majesty. But as you have seen everything, you must not tell anyone about it, otherwise the sanction is very severe.
* About Mamakany in all this? Famoro asked in a boring tone.
* She's the one who told me to come here to replace her with you, as she's taking a medication that doesn't allow her to be near a man. She was afraid that you would refuse to give her time to follow the treatment. As soon as it ends you will be together with her. She assured me that you weren't going to touch me and that you were going to let me out early, so you wouldn't recognize me.

The king lowered his head and bit his lower lip in humiliation at the thought of having had sexual intercourse with a maidservant. It was an intolerable infamy for him. He had, for a moment, the urge to kill the woman to prevent the news from leaking out. But he refrained, thinking once again of that mysterious voice commanding him to treat the woman with all due respect. Should Suwo be this woman? Caution was in order.

To extinguish the flame of his anger for having touched a maidservant, he ordered the woman out.

* You have to leave. I have nothing to blame you for. You only performed your duty, which is to obey your boss lady. Anything that is normal in our relationships. But I don't want to see you here anymore. Arrange to make Mamakany believe that you continue to carry out her order. But even if I see you outside my door at night I will kill you. Do not enter my house here again unless it is a case of force majeure, an extreme emergency. I can abstain until she finishes her treatment. And above all, don't tell her anything about the unfortunate incident that just happened.

Suwo tiptoed out into her room. She was then alone in her room with her child, having escaped the wrath of Famoro. She just said to herself, "Ah, this queen viper, when she decides something."

Meanwhile, right next door, Mamakany and Kassim were indulging in the most extravagant sexual prowess while gossiping nonsense about the old king whom they called powerless and impotent. The night seemed short for them. The roosters were starting to crow.

The courtyard was slowly waking up as usual. In the morning, it got the atmosphere and the cheerfulness that was lacking for long time. Everyone was going about his business. They were greeting one another here and there, and were talking to each other about everything and nothing. The elders were passing one by one to greet the strangers who had accompanied Mamakany. The young people were slaying animals every time in honour of the guests. The other queens were coming to greet their mate with unusual obsequiousness.

However, this good-natured atmosphere was only a parody for Famoro and Suwo. While the former was in a sort of compunction that had taking away all feeling for life, the latter was in shock at having narrowly escaped death through the fault of her boss lady. She was telling herself that sooner or later, knowing the man and his wife, she could be the victim either of the husband's blunder or of the wife's fantasy. So, morally, the two were out of the revelry that was going on in the royal courtyard on behalf of the accompanying personnel of Mamakany.

The party was continuing every day on behalf of the strangers. But as soon as they left, the party gave way to traction between Famoro's wives. On one side the supporters of Gnalen, including almost all the queens, on the other, the king, queen Mamakany and the two maidservants, namely Marly and Suwo. Wuria had succeeded in dragging the other maidservants into the opposing side. These tractions led to a systematic and spontaneous polarization of the inhabitants of the royal courtyard.

Anguish was the backdrop of the life in the group of Gnalen, as no one knew the cause of the failure of their previous plan. All the queens thought that Wuria had betrayed them. That she might have changed her mind. If so, what would she be doing next? But if she had very well played her part as she claimed to have done, how can a normal person survive such a poison without the slightest sign of illness? All this was part of the questions that these women were asking themselves without being able to find a clear answer.

In Mamakany’s group, where the superiority complex was dominating, after the emphatic assurance given to her by her father, they were determined to further marginalize in a shameless way the other wives of the king and their subordinates. They were openly considered inferior to her by birth. Therefore, to be favoured, you had to be on the side of the favourite wife. Self-interest served as a stimulus to attract slaves to Mamakany side. And the king himself deliberately subscribed to it.

It had already been one month since the unfortunate incident occurred between King Famoro and the maidservant of his favourite wife. It had also been a month since Mamakany had not set foot in her husband's room. Naturally, she was thinking that Suwo was playing her role and that her husband was fooled enough to continue being hoodwinked. This idea was reinforced by the answers that Suwo was giving every time she inquired about what was going on with the king at night, Suwo was always making her believe that everything was fine, and that the old man was not noticing anything. . So she could continue enjoying her double life.

As for Suwo, the most notable thing was that she had not yet had her period since that incident. That is a situation that no woman ignores. She thought at first that it was a delay, which was common with her like some women. Therefore, there was nothing to worry about. But with Mamakany, nothing had changed. Kassim's prowess had come to nothing. Nevertheless, she could still go on hoping.

Two months had passed since the beginning of Mamakany’s plan; it was the status quo on both sides. Anxiety was growing, on one side in proportion to the impatience on the other. Suwo was showing the signs of early pregnancy with vomiting, weariness and other signs characterizing this state.

However, Famoro was beginning to get irritated by this prolonged and unjustified absence of his wife from the marital bed. He suspected a subterfuge. He kept asking himself why Mamakany had preferred to be replaced by her maidservant. At the same time something was stubbornly in his mind in relation to the dream he had that night, it is the fact he had seen his wife lying on the ground ignoring the whole scene. Is this what really happened, as acknowledged by Suwo?. And above all, he saw the Genius handing over the baby to her maidservant and not to herself. There was no explanation for that. And no one should talk about it.

Three months had passed since, not only the arrival of Mamakany, but also and especially the famous sexual intercourse. With the experience of two previous pregnancies, Suwo knew for sure that she was pregnant. For Mamakany, although she believed unbelievably that for three months her maidservant was still succeeding to fool her husband's vigilance, she knew that the initial alibi of medication for a period of fifteen to one month no was longer holding water. She was aware of it, but didn't really know what to do. Kassim, with the proven failure of their plan, was literally placed under house arrest to prevent him from making compromising revelations, not only about his true identity but about the reasons for this plan.

The king was fed up with his wife's mania, at the same time he was feeling a subtle urge to inquire about Suwo's ​​condition since the unfortunate incident. “Everything could have happened.” He thought. How to find out more? Every time he thought about what happened that night, he couldn't explain the vitality he regained in contact with Suwo. He wondered why he couldn't resist the sexual desire he felt that night. Maybe a supernatural hand had something to do with it, he thought. But there was no opportunity in sight to be alone with his wife's maidservant. He had to keep on waiting for an opportunity to avoid a hitch.

However, if the king could continue waiting with regard to Suwo, it was not the same for his wife. He decided to have a meeting with her, because he was beginning to worry that his wife was going away from him in despair. Wasting no time, he dispatched a slave to call her. But Mamakany, who had not prepared anything as an argument to maintain her husband in his obscurantism, did not come on the spot. She wanted to give herself time to find a solid argument. She hurried Suwo to go and tell the king to be patient a bit, that she was not feeling well. It is clear that a little time was enough for this mischievous to find a lasso.

* Good evening, His majesty, said Suwo.
* But, about Mamakany? He asked furiously, not responding to the maidservant's greeting.
* She says she is not feeling well. She begs you to be a little patient. That she will come as soon as she finishes taking the medicine.

The king was exasperated by this attitude of his wife, which confirmed his apprehensions of discouragement on her part.

* But let herself come and tell me that.
* She will come as soon as she finishes taking the medicine. Suwo said, trying to get out.

But the king held her back. For him the opportunity was unique. This godsend should not be missed.

* By the way, how have you been doing since the last time? He asked.

Suwo nodded without saying anything

.

* Speak! It's not your fault. Let's ignore what you're thinking about. This case interests all of us, you and me. So talk fast!
* I haven't seen my period since that day, she said in a direct and concise way.

But the king got what he needed to hear, as he himself saw changes in Suwo's ​​appearance that presaged a pregnancy in an early stage.

* Okay, go and tell her to come as soon as she's finished taking her medicine. He said with a tone of relief.

Suwo immediately left to convey the king's message to Mamakany. It took no longer for her to respond to her husband's invitation. But already, she had had time to prepare a way out. As soon as she entered the room, she immediately knelt down to greet the king, pretending to shiver.

* You're so sick, you can't tell me that? Why? Famoro said menacingly.
* You know, it's hard to explain. One night when I was lying near you, taken by sleep, you threw yourself on me as if you were trying to pamper me. But I pushed you back slightly to avoid the worst. So, since that night I do not feel well, certainly, the Genius was not happy with this act, because the treatment was not finished yet.
* And then? Famoro said as if beginning to get bored with his favourite wife's lies.
* No, as soon as it ends, he will alert me, and I will inform you. I believe it will be very soon.
* All right, I understand you. You can stay at home until the end of the treatment to avoid a recurrence.
* Thank you, His Majesty, said Mamakany with a tone of relief.

By this attempted getaway, Famoro was sure that his wife was no longer playing a fair game with him. He couldn't just tell the real motivations behind her behaviour and how far she intended to go. So, the best thing for him was to pretend ignoring everything in order to observe the escapades of this octopus of a woman. So, getting away from his wife would allow him to carefully scrutinize her manoeuvres.

On the other hand, the opportunity to meet in secret with the maidservant of his wife was not foreseeable. But he had concerns, first if Suwo was pregnant, how could he formalize the paternity of this child without falling into dishonour which could make him unworthy of his status as king? Then, what if Suwo gave the paternity of this child, of whom he is certain to be the biological father, to someone else? He would powerlessly witness the departure of his blood elsewhere. He decided to remain patient and rely on the chance that had characterized their relationship.

But, about Kassim in all that?

THE FATE OF KASSIM

Upon returning to her room, Mamakany gloated in her ability to induce or keep her husband in his ignorance. But convinced of the failure of her adventure with Kassim, she understood the need to change tactics. This time, she decided to put herself permanently at her husband's disposal, after getting rid of Kassim who was becoming too cumbersome. If after all, they were unsuccessful, she could blame her husband of their failure for violating Magana's order not to be touched by a man during the entire treatment. She could still continue the struggle to have a child, even if it meant having one through the back door.

Now getting rid of Kassim on the sly was the Gordian knot. She thought for a moment of poisoning him. But she knew that it would not be easy to do this alone without complicity. And if there was a leak, she would be charged with two offences, first, the voluntary homicide, and secondly, the adultery, because those that would be in charge of the burial would discover his real sex.

Being convinced that she could not do the operation alone, whereas getting rid of Kassim had become more than necessary, the search for an accomplice was obligatory. But who was to be the executioner of this dirty work, and that would be able to keep the secret confined. His choice fell on the leader of the slaves. He was a sneaky and seemingly discreet fellow. She invited him at home through one of her maidservants other than Suwo. He came on the spot.

* I want to entrust you with a very delicate mission. So delicate that it takes someone of your posture to execute it. This is a mission that requires discretion and moderation on your side. She addressed Farawany, the leader of the slaves.
* I promise in advance that I will be able to be discreet up to your confidence.
* Thanks. This mission consists neither more nor less of making disappear the maidservant I brought from home. It is Marly. Frankly speaking, she came to be sacrificed and offered to my father's great fetish, Magana. This sacrifice is necessary for me to have a child. There is a huge reward waiting for you if you manage to do this with the utmost discretion. Indeed, the recommendation is that the sacrifice should be made just after three months from my arrival. This is now the case. After killing her, you throw her corpse into the river. This is the share of crocodiles and other aquatic animals. I'll take care of it of the rest.
* I can do it alone; don't you think that's better? Said Farawany.
* I want you to be assisted by someone reliable, out of prudence. Anything can happen, Said Mamakany, knowing that it was a boy instead of girl, especially a very nimble boy who couldn't be easily overpowered by one person.
* You can rely on me. Just give me a little time to be able to find the one that best marches to the criterion of choice, especially with regard to discretion.
* Okay, but it has to be done within the next five days. There is a time limit for the sacrifice to be accepted by the fetish.

Two days... three days passed, Farawany was fumbling between his men. On the fourth day, his choice fell on one of them, and he informed Mamakany. Immediately, Mamakany unexpectedly informed the king of a trip Marly was to make to her parents. As usual, he nodded easily. Kassim was also informed of his return for a few days to Queen Nenegale. The little innocent had very little time to prepare for this trip, of which he was unaware of all the outlines.

It was in the middle of the night that Kassim was awakened by the two boys, so-called guides, for the trip. Suspecting nothing, he went to say goodbye to Mamakany and promised to come back as soon as possible.

They took the path of no return for Kassim. After a few kilometers from the city of Narenkabadu, when the executioners felt that the moment and the space were favorable. They decided to take action on the banks of a River. Farawany made a sign to his companion to say that it was time to act. He was the first to get off his horse, and his friend followed suit, then asked Kassim to do the same. As soon as the latter set foot on the ground, Farawany's companion leapt on him, seized the both arms and twisted them behind him. Farawany immediately grabbed him by the throat to strangle him. But, with a martial reflex, Kassim jumped and did an acrobatic flip from behind to pass over the one who was holding his arms behind his back. He pushed him forward on Farawany and tumbled backwards to distance himself from his attackers. Farawany, this bold warrior, despite the surprise by this prowess of Marly as a girl, leapt like a beast on its prey, belted him then brought him down before tying him up like a bundle of wood with the help of a rope he was carrying on him.

After this brief but bitter brawl, Farawany wondered about Marly's agility. He wanted to know more. "What a strong girl she is," he thought to himself.

* Wait! Where did you learn to fight like a high-class warrior, you young lady? Asked Farawany with a tone of astonishment.
* Before saying anything, I first want to know what I did for you to bring me here and try to kill me. What did I do? Kassim wondered with a deep voice that broke with the feminine voice he had adopted since his arrival in the royal court.
* What you don't know is that you came here to be sacrificed to the fetish of Mamakany's father, King Oury. This fetish claimed a young girl as a sacrifice three months after Mamakany arrived from her father’s kingdom. This is so that she can have the child so much sought after by her husband. That's what you wanted to know isn’t it? You are sent here for this. Now how you learned to fight like a true warrior from birth? Insisted Farawany.
* Were you told that this sacrifice must be a young girl? Kassim asked.
* Yes.
* No! You are rambling. It's wrong. The princess didn’t tell you that. You want to kill me out of sheer jealousy and malice. I am the princess' favourite maidservant. She can never ask to kill me. She loves me very much. I think she is sending me to get her medicine. You accompany me there.
* You've had enough time. Now we will execute you as recommended. I just wanted to know where you learned to fight, but since you're not saying anything, we'll take action, Farawany said, raising the axe to cut off Kassim's head.
* Don’t kill me. Let me tell you the truth. You say the sacrifice must be a young girl? So, if you kill me the wish won't be granted, because I'm not a girl. I am a boy like you, my name is Kassim and not Marly, Kassim shouted to escape the certain death.

Farawany lowered the axe gently, to pay attention to this statement from Marly. First his physical strength, his fighting prowess and his voice which had become castling, had left him with an intuition about his sex.

* What should I do if I find out that you're a girl?
* You kill me without hesitation.

It was not difficult for Farawany to realize that indeed, Marly was not a girl, but a boy.

* But why this? Why? Why this travesty? Speak! Exclaimed Farawany.
* No, I can't tell you more, otherwise the queen will kill me.
* Stop! Don't you know you're on the verge of death, here? It was she who sent you to be killed. If you don't tell us why she concealed your sex, we'll kill you here, throw your body in the river as recommended, but if you tell us the truth, we may spare you from death.
* But if I tell you, you must not tell anyone else, otherwise you will be the next targets as soon as she realizes that you know the reality.
* Keep quiet on that. We know her very well. She will know nothing and you will be saved.
* My God! It's hard to explain. First of all, my name is not Marly but rather Kassim as I have already told you. I am the son of a former king whose territory was invaded by the men of Turu, the parents of Mamakany. We were arrested and brought into the royal courtyard as slaves. Now, because queen Mamakany is childless, and it is proven that her husband cannot have any more child, she brought me here to have sex with her so that she can have a child and attribute it to the king. And I, having noble blood, she found that there is no incompatibility between us. All this was fomented through the intermediary of the queen of Turu, her mother. She made her husband believe that I fled to an unknown destination to avoid suspicion. I had received a firm promise from the Queen Mother that my parents and their other children would be released and join me wherever I decided to settle if the plan succeeded. Now that it has failed…, Kassim was tearfully stopped from continuing the narration.
* Now that it has failed, we release you. You can go wherever you want. But if you get spotted, it will be too bad for you. We will tell Mamakany that we have done the job. Come on! Disappear!

Kassim freed, threw himself into nature to definitively escape the grip of Mamakany.

IMBROGLIO OF THE PREGNANCY

Suwo was presenting indisputably the appearance of a pregnant woman. She was doing everything to keep on concealing this state. It was getting harder and harder, as all the signs of pregnancy were obvious. She tried to avoid the prying eyes of the inhabitants of the courtyard, especially that of Mamakany, not knowing what her reaction would be. In her manoeuvres, she was always assisted by the maidservant who was taking care of her child. It has been that lady who discovered her pregnancy which was in its sixth month, in the first place, apart from the king himself, the responsible.

It is often said that only your friend knows your secret, and only he or she can reveal it to people. That was the case. It was Suwo's maid​servant and friend that brought out the news of her pregnancy. Either, it was out of spite or simply out of a desire to fool around, that she called the attention of the senior of the maidservants to that situation. She told her that she believed the appearance of Suwo to be something like a pregnancy as the way she saw her the last time in her room. She spoke with so much of conviction that Wuria had to take interest in her statement. The mystery that surrounded this pregnancy was to know who would be responsible, fornication and adultery being prohibited in the courtyard. And Suwo had been separated with her husband for long time.

* To avoid the mistake of the past, I will first of all check if she is indeed pregnant, before trying to find out who is responsible, said Wuria cautiously, remembering the aborted assassination attempt against Mamakany.

Since the failure of that attempt, Wuria had distanced herself from Suwo. She thought that this case remained a time bomb for her and her accomplices. However, this time she couldn't stay away and understand what was happening. They had to improvise an opportunity to meet Suwo. She decided to pay a visit to her because who was getting infrequent in the yard. So she improvised a visit in the name of a balanced sympathy.

* Hello my little sister. I haven't seen you for a while. I'm a little worried about you. You know I care about you.
* How are you? Just I have a little discomfort. But I think it's temporary. Besides, it's beginning to improve.
* But I see you very different. Are you not pregnant? We are all women. We help each other discreetly. You can rely on me for any assistance within my means.

In her skilful and mischievous manoeuvres, she succeeded in extracting from Suwo's ​​mouth that she was indeed pregnant. But the perpetrator was still an enigma.

Verily, Wuria was not a friend of Suwo. Any difficulty of the latter was a godsend for her to get revenge for all those years of relegations she suffered by the fault of Suwo, as she thought. Wuria was not ready to keep this secret at her level alone. She had to make the most of it to achieve her goal. She immediately went to find Mamakany to tell her that her factotum was not a chaste, but on the contrary, she was a vulgar woman.

* Good evening, my queen. I get the feeling that you are unaware of certain things in your husband's courtyard.
* Like what? I know everything, said Mamakany.
* I do not think so. It's a bit unfortunate since it's your entourage.
* So what is it? I'm a little worried, Mamakany looked more serious.
* I won't be able to hide anything from my sovereign. This is about Suwo's ​​pregnancy.
* I do not believe it. Except by a miracle, otherwise I don't see how she can get pregnant since she has no opportunity to touch a man? Nevertheless, I will look into it.

Wuria left after giving this valuable information. Mamakany immediately called Suwo to her room to inquire about this news. As soon as she set foot in the room Mamakany invited her to sit down.

- I see that you are infrequent this time. Can we know why?

- No, my sovereign, as Marly is near you, I don't want to bother her.

Meanwhile, she was scrutinizing Suwo's ​​appearance, to be able to detect any signs of pregnancy. It didn't take too long to realize that her maidservant was indeed pregnant.

* But Suwo, you seem a little changed to me. What do you have? Tell me the truth, she insisted.
* I cannot hide the truth from you. I think I'm pregnant. Anyway, that's the impression I get.
* If that is true, can you tell me who is responsible?
* I do not know. May Her Majesty forgive me. Please protect me. She said in tears.
* All right, you can go. I will make the appropriate arrangements.

Sitting in her living room with her head in the palm of her hands, Queen Mamakany was dithering between the decisions to be taken that would be advantageous for her. Her philosophy in her decision-making has always been to place her self-interest above all else. First, she was convinced that that pregnancy was the one she was supposed to carry. But for having made the trip with her maidservant in the Dawanian cave, the Genius must have mistakenly breathed the soul of the child into the body of her maidservant, not knowing the difference between the two. So, it was necessary to act in that direction if it was true that Suwo became pregnant without having been touched by a man. The sooner the better; before the news of Suwo's ​​pregnancy would make the rounds of the courtyard. But this time, caution was in order not to commit a second blunder, having the case of Kassim in mind. After a lot of reflections, she came up with an idea that she thought was the best. She called Suwo to submit it to her.

* Suwo, is it true that you got pregnant without being touched by any man? Mamakany asked as Suwo sitting right near her in complete privacy.
* Yes, believe me.
* I believe you. You know you have always been very close to me. You have been my confidante. It was in this intimacy that we made the trip to the blacksmith’s village together. As a result, there was confusion between the two of us. So the Genius got it wrong between the two of us and breathed my child's soul into your body. Don't you see?
* I think you're telling the truth. You are right.
* So you are carrying my child if, once again, it is true that you have not been touched by any man. Logically, a slave cannot give birth to a crown prince, but the child of a queen can simply pass through her body. That said, you must renounce to the pregnancy from now on, and tell yourself that it is my pregnancy that you are carrying. For that you must remain confined in my room, as being sick, until the delivery. I'll take care of the rest. I will be getting the same signs as you as the pregnancy progresses.
* All right, my queen, agreed Suwo, who had no choice, not daring to give the name of the biological father of the child she was carrying.

However, Suwo even thought that logically, the child was for Mamakany, not only because it was when she asked her to take her place at her husband's house that the incident occurred, but also, in mind of the king during the act he was with Mamakany, his legitimate wife but not Suwo. She simply had to benefit the care worthy of the secret she was holding.

* About Wuria, how did she know? Asked Mamakany in order to know how to broach the subject relating to Wuria.
* She observed me and questioned me insistently. I couldn't avoid telling her the truth. Pregnancy cannot remain hidden forever.
* I will send her to my parents for four months. She won't know anything about it.

Meanwhile, Wuria and the maidservant who was taking care of Suwo's ​​child, continued to argue about her confession about her pregnancy. They were imagining the penalties that must be inflicted on Suwo for that despicable act, according to them, in the holy courtyard of the king. Even the eventual responsible of the pregnancy should receive an unprecedented punishment to heal the image of the courtyard of Famoro. The two women were rejoicing at that new opportunity to reduce Suwo to her smallest expression. They decided to bring the news to Gnalen's attention. But that woman did not attach any special importance to it. She was considering it as a minor matter.

As expected, Mamakany told her husband that she thought she was pregnant. That according to the signs she was seeing, the pregnancy must have been in her sixth month. However, the last sexual relationship she had had with her husband was barely a month ago. Despite this disparity between these times, it was not difficult for Mamakany to make her husband, whom she still believed to be a dupe, accept that such a pregnancy should not last for more than four months. Which meant that the pregnancy, which was appearing to be its sixth months; was actually only one.

But actually, the king was only observing his wife in her games. He had understood that she had been informed of Suwo’s ​​pregnancy, and that she was trying to divert that situation in her favour. Knowing that he was the biological father of the child, he was appreciating these efforts of his wife. What the other did not know, fortunately. To convince himself of this, he inquired about the fate of Suwo, in a subtle way in these terms:

* About your maidservant or your adviser, she must be very happy, I imagine? You really suffered together for us to see this day.
* You are right, but currently she is seriously ill. She can't even leave the house. It must be the repercussions of the many trips we made together.
* I agree with you. You really have to take care of her.

He had now understood the whole scenario that his wife was putting together. That was apparently favourable to him because not only would he keep his child in legitimacy, but also his act which one can describe as putative adultery would remain completely concealed. Mamakany took the opportunity to ask permission from her husband to send Wuria to her parents to tell them the good news, and at the same time to stay there for at least a year for services that only she could render.

Before accepting his wife's request, he inquired about Marly's fate.

* Maybe she will stay there for a while longer. Currently she replaces a maidservant of my mother who has just died, according to the information I have just received. Kassim or Marly's page had then been closed permanently.

Famoro granted the required permission, as usual. Wuria was immediately dispatched to Mamakany's parents, certainly to deliver the message she described as good news, but also with this other message worded as follows: "*You must eliminate the hen sent because it is the one which knows about the donkey’s gestation in a stable where rather a foal is expected*". In order to avoid Wuria suspecting any threat to her life in that message and would refuse to transmit it, she made her understand that the message is about a new maidservant who had just arrived at her mother's house.

After almost a month of travel, Wuria arrived at Mamakany's parents' home in the evening. She wasted no time reporting to the queen with zeal. Nenegale understood nothing of the message. However, she did not have any doubt about the importance of its content. That's why she went to see Thierno, her lifelong adviser, to ask for his opinion on the content of the message.

* Karamoko, I have just received a message from my daughter, Princess Mamaknny, on the content of which I have no idea. Here is the message, "*You must eliminate the hen sent because it is the one which knows about the donkey’s gestation in a stable where rather a foal is expected.*"

The seer gave himself a little time to think in order to find an explanation, even if only sophistical, to this enigma. After an apparent oneiromancy, he says:

* If I'm not mistaking, she sent you an emissary, didn't she?
* Yes. She is the bearer of this message. She is my daughter's senior maidservant. For your information she told me that my daughter is pregnant.
* May the ancestors be praised! I think it is this woman who is the hen in question, and it is she who must be killed. She must hold a secret that only rulers should know.
* Can you tell me what this secret must be?
* I think this secret is related to a pregnancy carried by a lower class woman while it is a higher one, like a mare compared to a donkey, which is supposed to be …Verily, it is a bit difficult to explain. I think that the steps are underway to return the pregnancy to the legitimate woman.

Remembering the plan she had made with her daughter on her last trip and fearing that there was a leak for which Wuria would be responsible, Nenegale had a fit of blood.

* It's true. I have understood everything. You're right; she must be killed for straining her ear to discover the secrets of my daughter's home. For spying on my daughter and her husband. She must be killed like a mangy female dog. I entrust you with this task, which must be carried out with diligence and discretion. Before my husband realized her that she was here. Do this well. If not... If not..., the queen slammed the door on her way out without being able to finish her sentence.

The threat was clear. And Thierno did not mistake.

* No problem. Send her to me. Said Thierno.
* I will send her on the pretext of accompanying you into the bush to look for medicine. Then you can kill her there and bury her body in the bed of a backwater after blocking the passage of water to dig her grave. Afterwards you will let the water return to its usual bed. No one will find his body there.

Thierno, the queen's seer and adviser who was on the way to becoming an executioner in her service, led Wuria into the bush far to the source of a backwater where no human presence could be imagined.

Arrived where he was estimating propitious, he dismounted from his horse and Wuria dismounted from hers without waiting to be asked. Thierno stared at Wuria for a long time; a deep pity settled in his heart. He had a feeling of guilt for suggesting that Wuria should be killed. He took a deep sigh and then said:

* Do you know why we have come here? He asked.
* Yes. It is to look for a medicine that you must know, and which will be sent to her daughter, Mamakany, the queen.
* Hahaha! You are wrong my dear. There is a saying that the fish only realizes the true intention of the fisherman when the float disappears into the water. Actually, we came here to kill you. Your fault is simply to have a secret that only Famoro and his wife are supposed to know.
* No. You're kidding. I don't know any secrets, Wuria protested.
* Oh yes ! You must be informed of a concealed pregnancy in the royal courtyard, right? I know it's true and that's why you must be killed. Now, you have to talk. It is out of pity that I argue with you, otherwise I was told to simply kill you. But I want to know if my explanations are correct before I kill you. You have very little time.

Wuria understood that it was serious. She had to say what she knew. Thierno's eyes was speaking volumes.

* Yes, it's true. I know Suwo is pregnant. But I don't know who is responsible. She doesn't want us to know. She does everything to conceal this situation. I'm almost the only person who knows that.
* Who is Suwo?
* She is the cherished maidservant of Queen Mamakany.

Thierno was silent for long minutes after that detail. He wanted to make a Cartesian correspondence between the characters of the message and those of the royal courtyard. At the end of his contemplation, he managed to deduce that a pregnant maidservant corresponded to a pregnant donkey while the queen corresponded to a mare. So if you need a foal, it's the mare, therefore the queen, who should be pregnant, which must not be the case with Famoro. ‘‘So why kill Wuria, the hen, for the simple fact that she is the one who is aware of this reality?’’ He wondered. He came to the conclusion that Mamakany must be intending to abduct this pregnancy. And since Wuria already knows who is really pregnant, that's why she has to make her disappear so as not to expose this plan.

Because he remembered the plot he had set up with the complicity of the queen mother, he thought that this plan must have failed. His concern was then the fate that would have been reserved for Kassim/Marly.

* About Marly, the new maidservant who went with Mamakany?
* She has come back here. The queen turned her back for a moment, Wuria said innocently.
* No. that's not true. She's over there.
* I swear. She flipped her. I am the senior of all the maidservants. She was accompanied by two slaves including Farawany, the leader of the slaves.

Thierno understood from then on that Kassim had been the victim of the same fate that Wuria was about to suffer. He felt guilty and revolted.

* So she has killed him. It's certain.
* Please don't kill me as you know the truth now as much as I do. I can disappear without a trace. Wuria lamented.
* Can you leave without anyone seeing you? You can?
* Yes, I can, if you let me use my horse.
* You know, I am not an assassin. If you know that you can leave without either Mamakany or her mother realizing that you are on the run and not dead, I will let you go. But be careful. The environment there is very dangerous. It is infested with agents of Nenegale. You can use your horse.

In Narenkabadou, Mamakany, for her part, was delighted to have gotten rid of Wuria. At the same time the news of her pregnancy was becoming official day by day, while the news of Suwo's ​​illness was spreading like wildfire in the courtyard. But no visit was allowed to her except that of her the boss lady.

This intriguing news could not leave indifferent Gnalen, the eldest queen of Famoro and her mates. They doubted its veracity. First, Suwo's ​​pregnancy, confirmed by a reliable source, had not been followed up; then that of Mamakany was known only in its sixth month. That time strangely was corresponding to that of Suwo. They saw a vicious character in the coincidence of these events. They decided to take an interest in it. To do that, they requested an audience with King Famoro. The audience immediately requested was granted.

At the meeting with the king, Gnalen spoke on behalf of his mates:

* We thank His Majesty for having given a favourable response to our request as soon as it was formulated. We draw His Majesty's attention to the fact that we have always requested to be informed officially and exclusively of everything that happens in this courtyard. And he promised to do it. But unfortunately, we observe today with bitterness that nothing has changed in this direction, as proof for that allegation, we learned like everyone else the news of Mamakany's pregnancy as well as the illness of her maidservant Suwo. We are all more or less concerned in this situation. Notwithstanding this contempt, we have come to see you to allow us to pay a visit to the sick maidservant who is a maidservant of all of us. We want to take care of her, just a little, because she is a very docile and devoted maidservant. For this pregnancy, it is happiness for all of us. So, we stick to this information, and we wish a peaceful and healthy birth of the child and a speedy recovery of the mother. From now on, we hope that the king will not forget to inform us as required by our customs.

The king, who was impressed by the good words spoken and the correctness of Gnalen's arguments, indirectly accepted their solicitation. He asked a slave to go and call Mamakany to come meet her mates.

* I would like it to be arranged between women. You know how to see the patient, because I don't even know what's wrong with her.

Mamakany took almost an hour before entering Famoro’s lounge where her mates were waiting. She wanted to make sure her pregnancy masquerade was working perfectly before showing up.

* What were you doing all this time? Didn't they tell you that the others were waiting for you here? Asked the king as soon as Mamakany entered the hall.
* I was in bed, His Majesty. I had to take bath before coming. You know how often pregnancy is penalizing. I'm sorry if I offended you. She said amorphously to go sit down.

Gnalen objected. This gesture did not go unnoticed by the king who had been watching her since they entered the room. He thought that Gnalen also had understood the game. This gesture of Gnalen was provoked by the fact that she had seen no signs of pregnancy on Mamakany, except her belly, which was, in fact, too big to be in its six months. Certainly, she had not had enough time to properly arrange her belly. The king was the first to speak to explain to Mamakany the reason of the presence of the other queens in the setting room.

* I thank His Majesty for giving me the floor. First, I apologize for keeping my mates waiting so long. Regarding this pregnancy, I would like to ask my mates and their maidservants to please stay away, because there are witches among them who can utter imprecations against my child. As for my maidservant, I will see the opportunity of meeting her. Since it is a maidservant of mine, I think it is primarily up to me to take care of her.
* No. She is a maidservant of the royal courtyard; her fate concerns everyone, me the first. Everyone depends on me. It is I who made her available to you. You have no right of life and death over her. It's me. I want the other queens to visit her as soon as possible. She is sick. It must be dealt with. That's why, there's a special healer in the courtyard to take care of everyone, Famoro said with an annoyed tone. He, himself was worrying about the fate of Suwo, for an unacknowledged interest. Finally, he said: now, I order that the other women visit her immediately, and that the healer take care of her treatment. On this I declare the meeting closed. Famoro withdrew furiously and entered his bedroom.

Mamakany was taken aback by this reaction of the king as well as his very obvious concern for the treatment of Suwo. She couldn't resist. All the queens went out in the move to visit Suwo. But Mamakany had not yet said her last word with regards to the order given by Famoro, compliance with which was imperative. She called Gnalen aside to ask her to tell the other women to postpone the visit that day, and to wait until the next day on the pretext that Suwo was undergoing a treatment which should not be interrupted. The women accepted the grievance, which in no way diminished their determination to see what they wanted to see. So the visit was postponed for the next day at the same time.

Gnalen and his mates were sure that just by seeing Suwo's ​​face, they would detect whether she was pregnant or not. The next day arrived, and the fateful hour struck. The impatient queens were already gathered in Gnalen’s room which was chosen as a starting point.

Mamakany had taken every precaution to conceal Suwo's ​​pregnancy. She had no intuition that anyone else could be informed of this pregnancy of Suwo, except Wuria who was supposed, for her, to be already dead. But she took the precautions knowing that there were very savvy women among them who could easily detect the pregnancy and make it their favourite. It would then be necessary to produce two children at their simultaneous deliveries.

Before the arrival of the visitors Mamakany prepared a pot filled with warm decoction near which she made Suwo sit and covered her with a large cotton blanket on the pretext that she was warming herself at the heat of the medicine.

By the time the visitors were entering, Suwo was already sweating as if coming out of a furnace. They took their places just in front of her. Courtesy greetings followed as well as wishes for a speedy recovery. Suwo was answering them with “Amen” and a smile.

* Thank you for coming in such a big number to see me. I know that I am in a community of love and solidarity. I wish you a safe return to your respective homes. I am overjoyed, said Suwo to cover herself again with her blanket.

The queens and their maidservants asked for the way back which was immediately granted to them, and they went out quietly. The visit was short but warm, especially between Suwo and the maidservant who was taking care of her child. The old ladies had very little time to get an idea of ​​Suwo's ​​condition in relation to a possible pregnancy. Nevertheless, the most informed were able to observe, despite the sweat that was covering her ​​face, a pallor that would not result from an illness, because it was not the corollary of weight loss due to a long illness. While Mamakany wanted them to believe that the pallor of her skin was due to this disease.

Gnalen and her retinue recommended that the healer should go and take care of Suwo.

These women certainly went out, never to return. The maidservants who were on their very first visit to the rich room of Mamakany, found there a subject to quibble between themselves.

In Turu, Wuria, released by Thierno, took her horse and set off into nature without knowing where to go precisely. She was galloping on the path which was winding along the mountain under the trees. All what she was looking for was to leave this country as soon as possible, but above all not to go to Famoro's home where she was already presumed dead by Mamakany. It is needless to say that she knew how to handle equines well, considering her long stay in the royal cog. Without provisions or hope of finding any, the ex-senior of Mamakany’s maidservants was wandering in the countryside.

She spent a day and a half of breath-taking hiking through the kingdom of Turu, without eating anything. Feeling out of danger, exhausted and almost starving, she decided to stop in a village, just to find something to eat and to graze her horse on some herbs. But, if for the horse, the problem practically did not arise, it was not the same case for her, who was impecunious. The timing was wrong, as everything was green in the fields.

She told herself to go to families to beg for food. But even that was difficult because of her appearance which was showing an upper class status. Her adornment was made of objects of royal value. She was dressed in a suit of *danfany* (woven garment) skilfully woven and embroidered by the skilful craftsmen of the kingdom, and she had on a pair of beautifully tanned leather sandals; first-class gold earrings were dangling from her earlobes and adorning the helixes; well braided hair with a hairpiece of rare quality; a black *dissa* (ribbon) tied at her hip; her feet and hands were proudly tattooed with marvellous figurines in henna, and a pearl necklace was adorning her neck.

Beyond this external appearance of parade, Wuria had planned nothing for the questions which seemed to her inevitable to be asked, namely, why was she walking alone? And where was she going? Despite this apprehension, it was necessary to act, dying of hunger aggravated by tiredness.

She dismounted from her horse before a lonely house under a mango tree where her presence might be less noticeable on the edge of a village. A girl in her twenties came out. She was immediately struck by the woman's foreign appearance. She understood that she was dealing with a royal personality. She knelt down obsequiously to greet the unknown visitor.

* Do not worry, I am like you, protested Wuria against this flattering welcome from her host.
* Thank you for your humility, because even by seeing you one can realize that you are from a royal courtyard. Isn't it, the appearance makes the difference? Indeed, can we know the wind that brings you here? Insisted the girl.
* Okay, I'll explain. I want it to remain between us. I made a bet with the crown prince of Turu, it is a question of touring the kingdom in a record time of a month and a half. Our marriage depends on winning this bet. But all this must remain at our discretion, him and me. It is because of your insistence and your appearance of a lucid and discreet girl that I am explaining it to you. By the way, where is your husband?
* My husband has died. I currently live with my parents.
* And where are your parents? I wanted to spend the night here. I have no money and I am starving. It's all that part of the bet. What's your name?
* My name is Yari, and you?
* Me? I’m Wuria.
* You don't have any money, you say? I doubt. You just want to test my generosity and my hospitality. My parents are gone to the field. They won't be long to come.
* Then try to house me safe from all outsiders; and you tie my horse somewhere.
* There is no problem. You will sleep in my room, which is separated from those of my parents. You can stay here as long as you want, no one will notice, said the girl as she was opening her bedroom door. She went out to tie Wuria's horse in a hidden place. She brought to it some weed before going back.
* What kind of food do you want? I will try my best to satisfy you, even partially. She said as soon as she arrived from the bush.
* Any food. I just want to eat. I have no choice.

With these words Yari went out to look for something to eat for Wuria. On her return Wuria was provided with a large quantity of food of all kinds. She, visibly satisfied, stuffed herself like a glutton.

As soon as night fell, the two went to bed and fell asleep after exchanging few words. In the middle of the night, while Yari was sleeping with her fists closed, Wuria shook her slightly.

* Get me the horse.
* Why? She wondered.
* I have to leave now, murmured Wuria as if she were becoming voiceless.

Everything was done in a hurry and on the sly. The horse was prepared and Wuria was about to mount.

* Show me the shortest way out of the kingdom without being spotted.
* You're on the run, aren't you? Tell me the truth, we're friends now. Yari questioned without too much scruple.
* Yes, you're right. I am on the run. I am hiding from my enemies in the royal courtyard.

Yari showed her a path in wilderness behind the house. Before moving, Wuria explained her story in an introductory way. She promised the young woman recognition for her benevolence. And Yari, who was heartbroken by the abject behaviour of this interloper Mamakany, took pity on Wuria. She gave her a small sum of money to buy something to eat along the way.

She followed that path that was weaving through the trees in the direction of Sansamba, a neighbouring kingdom. Wuria thus resumed her odyssey for an uncertain destination. First of all, she had to set sail for that kingdom which did not always have good relations with that of Oury.

Wuria got her freedom as soon as she found herself beyond the border between Turu and Sansamba. Wherever she was passing, she used to receive homage due to her appearance. After about ten days, she arrived in the capital city of this kingdom which was by far less wealthy than those of Simandu and Turu.

Arrived in that city, the first person that Wuria met immediately led her to King Zaoro who had the same impression on her personality.

* Welcome, Her Majesty. To whom have I the honour? Said King Zaoro.
* My name is Wuria. I would like to have an audience with His Majesty, please. Wuria said with affected humility.

That audience was granted on the spot. Wuria took the time only to wash her face. In front of the king aside, she spoke:

* My name is Wuria, I am the wife of King Famoro's younger brother. We got married a long time ago. He surrounds me with all the honours a woman needs in a family like theirs. Despite all this, I confess that I do not feel happy in this home. So, aware of this fact, he decided to free me with all the wealth I could take so as not to bother me. But, me, I renounced to these riches, I only wanted to get my freedom. This is how he let me out without anyone knowing. That's why I walk everywhere looking for a soul mate to make my life happy, even if only morally.
* You are at home. You can stay here as long as you want until you get a husband of your choice.

In the long run, King Zaoro ended up marrying Wuria to be, moreover, his favourite wife. As gratitude, Wuria sent for Yari to be her favourite maidservant in the royal courtyard of Zaoro.

Elsewhere, in Famoro courtyard, Suwo was doing quite well with her mysterious pregnancy. Almost every night, she either was going to the Dawanian cave in her dream or she was receiving an emissary from the Genius. She was not sharing her experiences with anyone. She was keeping them at her level with the assurance from the Genius that she was running no risk. The pregnancy was in its eighth month. The belly was quiet. The prodigious child was not moving unlike ordinary pregnancies. He was lying there peacefully.

The king, since his meeting of the last time with the queens, has always intended to inquire about the state of Suwo. Famoro, king of his state, had no valid argument to require a meeting of a maidservant, be it that of his favourite wife. Mamakany was fiercely opposing any attempt to meet Suwo.

The ninth month had arrived for Suwo. Everyone knows what this month represents for pregnant women and their partners. Above all, this present case was which of capital interest for the entire royal courtyard of Famoro, it can even be said the entire kingdom for various reasons. The official reason was the month of the birth of the long-awaited heir of the king. Everyone was holding his breath.

Mamakany, this shrike, was sparing no effort for the success of her plan in order to achieve a salutary epilogue for herself and her husband. She had already brought in an old midwife through her mother to take care of her pregnancy. This one, as soon as she arrived, was introduced into the plan with all the convincing arguments of a possible transmigration of the soul of the child from the body of Mamakany to that of Suwo following an error on the part of the Genius. But all that had to remain an inviolable secret at the risk of exposing herself to the sanction of Genius and that of the king.

* Any person who violates this secret will be liable to death penalty at the same time as the person to whom the secret will have been delivered. Threatened Manakany with a tone that handled the candle.

The midwife was warned. She had to hold her tongue, because her life was depending on it.

During this month there was a positive change in the king behaviour. He was looking jovial in contrast to his usually frowning face. He was going out for walks more regularly than before. He was addressing his subjects with an affability that was out of the ordinary. The whole courtyard noticed this change in the king's mood, all of which had a positive impact on the once insipid atmosphere of the court. One could hear the slaves and maidservants laughing in every corner of the courtyard, as well as the other inhabitants of Narenkabadu.

At the same time, the king was nightly haunted by mysterious signs relating to the birth of his heir. He knew it was all about Suwo's proxy ​​pregnancy. He was delighted that Mamakany managed to turn this situation in her favour in order to give legitimacy to the child. It was in this atmosphere, during one of the sleepless nights that Famoro heard the same voice that had come to him after the accidental sexual intercourse with Suwo: ''Respect the woman who is bearing this pregnancy because of the nature of the child she will give birth to.’’ But the king paid no attention to that voice, which had nothing dreamlike about it.

Suwo, still sequestered in Mamakany's room, was giving the impression of nagging weakness. She was losing herself in worrying about the uncertainty that was weighing on her life after delivery. Mamakany's determination to make the unborn child her own was beyond doubt, but what would be her fate after giving birth to the child? What Suwo knew for sure was that Mamakany would never agree to keep her near with the risk of leaking that secret, which was only open air in reality.

However, Suwo had no intention of claiming the motherhood of this child, but it was Mamakany who would never have trusted her. She was a woman who did not like to take risks. For that, she knew fully well that that woman was able to do everything to save her selfish interest, including killing her to cover up all avenues of protest. She was afraid for her life. But whenever despair was gripping her heart, she was finding a ray of hope when she was thinking of the ineffable scene in the cave which was reassuring her of the protective power of Genius.

The other queens, despite this festive atmosphere that was reigning, were not happy, and for good reason, they were suspecting a desire on the part of Mamakany to divert Suwo's ​​pregnancy in her favour. And above all that she was on the way to winning her bet, which would make a slave the crown prince of the rich kingdom of Simandu. They said that they were determined to prevent this usurpation of title from taking place. But in reality, they had little room for manoeuvre insofar as the sovereign himself was benefitting from that.

To a large extent, the protagonists of this imbroglio of the royal courtyard awaited this birth with scepticism. The count was made by everyone and wisely. But the first concerned were Suwo and Famoro. The latter began to worry about the fate of Suwo after childbirth. He knew that his wife would do anything to remove any clue leading to the discovery of the truth.

The prince had to be born now. It was a Monday, the first day of the lunar month of Harajaba. It was around two o'clock in the morning, when everyone was sleeping peacefully. Everything was calm. Ninginangan was listening to his subjects. Suwo felt the beginning of the labour for childbirth. She understood this from her previous experiences. She was worrying about it for a long time. But paradoxically, after a brief and painless parturition, the child was born. Everybody was asleep including Mamakany and her so-called midwife. The two people who were awake at the moment were Suwo herself and Famoro who was in his room thinking about everything and nothing.

The advent of that child did not go unnoticed by anyone in the royal courtyard, not to say the entire kingdom of Simandu. First, as a precursor sign, the whole kingdom was covered by heavy clouds without rain for the three days preceding his birth. On the very day of the birth, an earthquake shook the entire monarchy, producing a stir that exceeded all understanding, but without causing any casualties. This din was followed by a maelstrom that swept the whole country, this time causing rumbling in the stomachs of several people. Suwo who had experienced such a phenomenon in the cave of the Genius when he was approaching, was less alarmed.

As soon as she gave birth to the child, she immediately put the finger ring on the ring finger of her left hand. She then went to wake Mamakany and the midwife up. But incredibly, these two women couldn't wake up, despite Suwo's ​​repeated calls and pats. She immediately returned to the side of the baby who squealed with all his lungs. This cry resounded with a strange amplification in Famoro's room as if the baby was lying there. The old man instinctively jumped up and rushed to Mamakany's room without thinking about the consequences of such an act. He found there, with bitterness but without surprise, Suwo and her baby on her lap, breastfeeding him.

Without greeting the maidservant, Famoro glanced at the new-born baby, first to make sure of his sex and then of its state of health.

Coincidentally, the night that Zaoro and Wuria first met as a married couple, it was the same night that Famoro's child was born. This is to say that the moment Zaoro was in Wuria's arms for their wedding night, Famoro was near Suwo and her new-born baby.

* About Mamakany, where is she? Asked Famoro furiously. He was still feeling unworthiness in that birth, even though he remembered the circumstance of the conception of this pregnancy.

He would like not to be associated with the hijacking of the pregnancy orchestrated by his wife. He wanted to be presumed to know nothing.

* She's sleeping. I did everything to wake her up with the midwife, but I couldn't. I no longer know what to do. Otherwise, I didn't even want you to know that I am the biological mother of this baby, who is not actually mine.

The king sneered at the thought that these two women could not overcome their sleep. Nevertheless, he was happy about it insofar as not only was Mamakany still unaware that he was aware of her plan, but also the fact that Suwo was willingly renouncing the motherhood of the child.

Famoro was for the third time together with Suwo, the biological mother of his child.

* Thanks! As you already know, you gave birth to the child, I congratulate you, but it cannot be yours. You are just a slave. You can't give birth to a prince, logically. That said, from now on, the child belongs to Mamakany. Never mind, you will receive the recognition and treatments provided you know how to hold your tongue. Otherwise…
* I promise that I can hold my tongue. I only beg His Majesty to spare my life. My child is still too young. Worried Suwo, knowing the versatile and sadistic character of Mamakany.
* You have my word of honour. Promised the sovereign and left without touching the baby.

Suwo went back to bed near the baby and continued to breastfeed him. A few moments later, Mamakany woke up alone to see the situation.

* It's incredible! You gave birth on your own, why didn't you wake me up? Mamakany said while grabbing the baby as if she the one had delivered it. What a beautiful boy! She exclaimed. Before continuing. About this ring?
* I did everything to wake you up but I couldn't, and you and the midwife. For the ring I saw it like that on his finger.

It was then that Mamakany remembered the midwife who was awakened by the noise of Mamakany and her maid.

* You, I shouldn't have brought you here. But you're leaving very early tomorrow morning.
* Suwo, you did what you had to do. Now you walk away from the child as I know you already smart. All right?
* Yes, Her Majesty. You can rely on me until the end of my life.

At the end of a transfer of service which did not say its name between Mamakany and her maidservant around the baby, Suwo gave up her place and went into a cubbyhole to go to bed as always sick.

After assuring herself of the perfection of her simulacrum, Mamakany dispatched a maidservant to go call the Grand counsellor and inform him of the birth of the child, a boy, the perfect heir of Famoro. It was up to the latter to inform the sovereign.

* My Sovereign, the absolute master of Simandu, our enlightened guide, the emeritus and the revered king of this land blessed by your ancestors, please wake up to be informed of the birth of the long-awaited heir to your kingdom thanks to your beloved wife, Mamakany, the princess of the princesses of Turu. Come out and see what nature has been witnessing for more than three days. The birth of a superman among us.

After this dithyrambic statement from the voluble great orator, Famoro, this old sprite extricated himself with an artificially tight manner from his room. He pretended not to know what to do. Then went to Mamakany's room where he found this time the latter sitting near the baby. He took the baby in his arms, kissed him tenderly and put him back on the bed.

The rest of the courtyard was awakened by the hustle and bustle that followed the announcement of the baby's birth. A spontaneous dance took place for the rest of the night and continued until sun rise. Instruments of all kinds including balafon, tom-tom, bolon and drum were brought into the courtyard.

It was in this din that a delegation was dispatched to Mamakany's parents to announce the good news. This is what the tradition required. The in-laws must be informed through official channels. The rest of the kingdom and the other neighbouring monarchies were informed in turn by conventional means in the hours following the birth of the baby. This was done by drums and tom-toms beatings as follows:

Kuntunkutoun (bis): Listen!

Kururukuntun (bis): Very important message

Kunkunkutu (bis) Birth of a child

KuntunPanan (bis): A boy.

Kunkun-kuntun-Panan-panan (bis): A prince.

Ping-ping (bis): Message from Simandu

This message was relayed instantly from village to village, from town to town, to the last locality concerned. After a few hours everybody was informed of the birth of the Prince of Simandu.

It was in this infernal noise that was raging in the courtyard of Famoro that Fada, the great patriarch of the blacksmith phratry of Tomakuna entered. How had he been informed? That's the question everyone was asking. He got off his horse, his hair dishevelled, and his beard scruffy, he saluted the king passing by to head straight to Mamakany's room. Famoro recognized the same deep, commanding voice that came to him in the darkness in his bedroom the night of the infamous incident.

Fada entered Mamakany's room without any obstruction, where he was not surprised not to see Suwo. He didn't bother to greet Mamakany who was lying behind the new-born. He put his right hand on the baby and said, “*I welcome you to this world of injustice and greed. Your mission will be to change all that to make it a world of peace and love*.’' He said before greeting people, starting by Mamakany, then her husband and the other courtiers.

The fate of the midwife was already decided. It is predictable that Mamakany could not let such a reliable source of information go free. She was to be killed as Kassim and Wuria were presumed to have been.

She was already in the hands of her executioners, including Farawany, the irremovable leader of the slaves. That one, who was no longer a stranger to Mamakany's cunning, expected an ulterior motive in her version according to which this poor woman was to be killed as a sacrifice on the day of the prince's birth. That would have been a Genius recommendation.

* Let's stop here. Get off your horses, said Farawany.

His companion was the first to get off his horse, the woman, surprised, follows with visible reluctance. She took a deep sigh, her eyes fixed on Farawany.

* Are you a man or a woman, asked Farawany alluding to the case of Kassim.
* Why this question? I'm a woman, can't you see that?
* All right. I inform you that the queen tells us to come and kill you as a sacrifice on the day of the birth of her child.
* I don't think so, unless you want to take my life away for free. Do what you want; I can do nothing. I am already old enough to expect death at any moment.
* I want to know what you had come to do in the courtyard.
* The queen made me come here as a midwife to assist her during her delivery in order to thwart the imprecations of the midwives here who are all witches, and who have bad intentions for her. That's what I did. Now I'm going back home.

At this idea of ​​childbirth, Farawany had the intuition that that scoundrel Mamakany was hiding something, insofar as she did not need to bring in a midwife from another monarchy while her husband's kingdom was full of qualified maieuticians. There was something fishy. And why kill the midwife who had come to render such a service? He wondered to himself.

* You’re taking us to be stupid, don't you? Tell us the truth otherwise we will kill you as she commanded us to do.
* It's the truth. What else do you want me to tell you?
* Get out the axe; we're going to cut her neck, as she doesn't want to tell the truth, ordered Farawany to his subordinate.

That one pulled out the axe the sharp blade of which was shining insolently despite the darkness in that cool night.

Please! Do not kill me. Let me tell you the truth, shouted the woman who thought her tormentors already knew the truth.

* Then speak quickly. Said Farawany's companion.
* Mamakany was not pregnant. It is her maidservant that was pregnant. She had asked me to come and assist her during her delivery. But, please, don't tell anyone.
* And then, were you able to do what you were brought here for?
* No. She gave birth when we were both asleep, Mamakany and I.
* All right. It's understood. You can save yourself now. Shouted out Farawany.

The woman jumped behind the nearest bush to run wildly through the wilderness. Mamakany therefore had three enemies in the wild that she thought were already dead. Each of them had his share of truth about the imbroglio of the royal courtyard. For Kassim, Mamakany was trying to deceive her husband by introducing an illegitimate child as the crown prince of the kingdom. Wuria was sure that Mamakany was not pregnant; on the contrary it was the pregnancy of her maidservant she was trying to divert to make it her own, thus introducing a child of an unknown biological father into the line of Famoro. And finally, the midwife, the eyewitness of Mamakany’s plunders at the expense of her maidservant. But the last two who more or less knew the child's mother were ignoring his father to the same degree.

In the royal courtyard, the party was gaining momentum. Gifts of all kinds were raining down on Mamakany and her “child.” Delegations accompanied by musical groups were arriving from all four corners of the kingdom. Folk dances were going on day and night. The zealous dancers were making demonstrations that were sometimes both marvellous and perilous.

The nature, through the good weather, contributed to that thunderous and endless atmosphere. During the day, with a mild sun, especially when the evanescent clouds made room for it, was embellishing the party. During the night a fresh wind was blowing, gently caressing the bodies of the instrumentalists and dancers glistening with sweat. Those of the dancers and spectators who were exhausted were letting themselves capsize near the wall or wallow in the seats arranged for the occasion. But no one wanted to be told about this event of a spree zest.

Finally, the child got to the cradle that had been offered to him by the Genius, after spending two nights and one day on the birth bed

Farawany, Mamakany's conniving henchman, had serious problems keeping all those secrets he and his companion were holding about the life in the royal courtyard. He knew for sure that sooner or later, and somehow, these secrets would leak out. And he didn’t want to be accused of connivance in the process of introducing an illegitimate child into the holy royal courtyard, above all, of having made a child of slave ascendance of an unknown biological father, the crown prince. He decided to alert Gnalen of the danger which was threatening Famoro’s courtyard, after having despoiled Suwo of her child.

Gnalen brought the news to the attention of the other wives of Famoro. These women were outraged by the confirmation of the suspicion they had long had. They lost themselves in ideas of what to do to prevent that abjection from taking place. However, they did not know anything specific to do, because this birth seemed to give the greatest joy to the sovereign who was exalted in an uncontrolled way in the courtyard. Any attempt to prove him wrong would be suicidal. So a bit of patience on their part was necessary, to be reasonable.

Mamakany, with a sly look, was behaving like a happy mother, while Suwo secretly was nursing the child. However, she made the clumsiness of letting her out just three days after giving birth, thinking that people would take her condition as signs of recovery. But that was enough for others to see the appearance of a nurse through her breasts. The women understood that Farawany was right. Since that day such an error has never been repeated by Mamakany. Suwo was kept out of sight of everybody. But that didn't worry anyone now, because the atmosphere that was prevailing in the kingdom had finally calmed the ardour of the detractors.

The child was not yet named; that was another event in perspective.

THE NAMING OF THE PRINCE

The celebration of the birth of the prince was to end with his naming. According to the recommendations of the Genius, that was to be done in the third month after his birth. Thousands of personalities from the monarchy as well as neighbouring monarchies have been invited. Among the first distinguished guests were the in-laws from Turu, King Oury and his wife Nenegale.

Happy to see their wish granted or in the process of being granted, the king and his favourite wife decided to honour the event by their effective presence. They prepared their trip in a grandiloquent way. The king called on all the laudators, the orators, the cantors, the horsemen, the troubadours, in short, a whole host of people and masterwork that marked the cultural and economic riches of which this century-old kingdom was proud. They were things that were eloquently justifying the pride of that world of beauty.

The imminent arrival of the royal delegation from Turu announced fifteen days in advance created a euphoric atmosphere in the courtyard. It was the same in all the localities crossed where the move of the delegation was arousing an indescribable enthusiasm.

King Oury and his wife had spared no expense for this event. The horses and camels that were transporting people and items numbered around one thousand and five hundred. The oxen destined for the sacrifice could reach five hundred. The quantity of gold powder was estimated at hundreds of kilograms.

A human tide made up the delegation. The dust kicked up by them during that dry season created a thick cloud in the sky that could be seen miles away. The shock made by feet and hooves against the ground was producing a terrible noise like a natural cataclysm.

In the royal courtyard of Famoro, hysteria was at its peak. The city of Narenkabadu was vibrating to the rhythm of the event. Everyone was waiting for the arrival of the people from Turu the comments on which had gone all around the kingdom. Famoro, in delirium, had taken all the measures with excess for the success of the event which he was describing as unique. Nothing was neglected; starting from cooking with the arrival of all the women of the kingdom renowned in the culinary arts, to accommodation with the fitting out of all the houses in the city and the surrounding villages which were painted with kaolin and decorated with graffiti by the best designers in the country, through the building of thousands of tents and sheds. The streets were cleared and widened. In short, the city had made its beautiful toilet and was already full in an unprecedented way. Everything was ready for this historic ceremony.

Fada, the witness of ancient times and who was also the witness of everything concerning this incredible birth, had to stay until the naming to ensure that all the rites linked to the ceremony were respected. He was of the opinion that the child belonged to Mamakany, given the efforts she had made as well as the legitimacy of the child which was attached to that. He would only wish that everything being managed with limited transparency. Especially, that Suwo should have benefited from the treatment due to having been involuntarily the carrier of this pregnancy. He knew that the Genius was not happy with the treatment of Suwo by the queen.

But practically the Genius only had time for the baby who was to embody him. His father nor his mother, let alone a maidservant, had the slightest importance for him. The attitude of the child towards them in the future would only be the result of the hazards linked to his birth as well as his private life.

The people of Turu were finally close to the city of Narenkabadu. They deliberately decided to camp in a suburban village in order to inform the king and his subjects of their imminent arrival. As expected, they arrived the next day in the evening. The king had laid out a human hedge on both sides of the road from Narenkabadu to the village where they had camped, about ten kilometres. Everybody was dressed in his finery to show off the ancestral values ​​of the kingdom of Simandu.

All this swarm of well-dressed and disciplined people was chanting folk songs of the two monarchies to welcome the distinguished guests. These songs, accompanied by dance steps performed in harmonized movements by artists in carnival attire, were magnifying the show and expressing the choreographic mastery of the artists of the kingdom. The cloud of dust supported by a deafening din was confirming the eminence of the royal move. The space between the two rows offered a platform for the many riders of Turu to show off their talent as absolute masters of riding. These performances made the spectacle more moving and the crowd of jubilant spectators was expressing their amazement with frenzied rounds of applause.

The illustrious guests finally entered the city of Narenkabadu under cover of the evening darkness. The organizing committee that had been hard at work since the announcement of the day of naming had instituted a reliable protocol service. No error was recorded during the reception. The tents, sheds and scaffolding were occupied smoothly. The few overruns noted here and there were corrected without altercation. All the personalities received the care due to their ranks without a hitch. The main ceremony was scheduled for the following day. All the guests were already there. The other people who were coming by curiosity without being invited were still flowing into the city.

From dawn, people began to rebuff each other in the streets making their way to reach the place of the ceremony. The place, which was reserved for such ceremonies, had been enlarged for the occasion. It was stormed from the first hours. That space seemed unable to contain the crowd.

Special places had been set up to house categories of guests, each wearing the specific colour of their class. Among these groups there were *Jon* (slaves), *Numu* (blacksmiths), *Jely* or *Nyamakala* (griots etc.), *Garanguey* (craftsmen), etc.

Special seats that were reserved for distinguished guests such as kings and queens and their followers all-white clothed, were occupied. A special hangar was set up to house guests from Turu, with the exception of the in-laws who had their own box. King Famoro, his favourite wife surrounded by the other queens also all dressed in white and the patriarch Fada had their own box. Everything was ready for the start of the expected ceremony. The Grand Counsellor took the floor to invite people to silence:

* Keep quiet, please! Listen, my fellow musicians. Stop the drums, balafons and all other instruments. The ceremony for which we are gathered here will soon begin.

All the musicians complied, and everything became quiet. The uproar that was raging faded, giving way to a dead calm. A dreadful silence fell over the congregation. Even birds chirping in the distance were no longer heard. It was the proof that they, too, were part of the party.

Contrary to the tradition according to which it is the Grand counsellor that should address the crowd in such circumstances, the honour fell to Fada, the blacksmith, to give the name of the child. That was also a recommendation from the Genius. He stood up. The silence was heavier.

* I greet you and thank you in the name of King Famoro, the queens and the mother of this blessed child.

Fada did not want to pronounce the name of Mamakany knowing that she was not the biological mother of the child. As mentioned before, he was of the opinion that the child should be recognized to her for his legitimacy, but in a manner consistent with good morality. The king found this omission of Mamakany's name normal. He thought in fact that no one would understand the merit of this omission, and was convinced that Fada knew about it without having discussed it with him. He continued. Each time he was speaking, he used to give the Grand counsellor time to repeat what he had just had said. That was the tradition.

* I particularly thank King Oury and his wife for the fabulous gift offered to the prince. They are known for their liberality. I want to point out that this child deserves such a gesture. Finally, I thank the eternal Genius, the benefactor of humanity, the saviour of the disinherited and the punisher of the unjust. I want to talk about the merciful Ninginangan who watches over the soul of this child as well as those of his parents.

This name Ninginangan surprised and amazed people, because it was the first time that many were hearing it. The queens were the most upset. They said to themselves that this child's affair had not yet finished with its procession of mystery. This revelation showed them to what extent they were ostracized in the activities of the royal courty ard. Fada was going on speaking.

* That being said, I am going to announce to humans and Geniuses; to the living and to the dead, the name of the child. This child born great, blessed, prodigious and wise. The future king of all Farafina and elsewhere. I respectfully thank the woman through whom such a soul has come to us.

Suwo jerked when she heard this passage of the speech. She took a deep sigh. She thought that only Famoro and his favourite wife knew that Fada was talking about her. But her reaction did not escape the attention of some maidservants who were seated near her. Fada continued speaking without interruption.

* His name is an inspiration of the Genius he embodies. We hear it, accept it and apply it. His name is!
* Malley! Malley! Interrupted the Grand Counsellor.
* His name is. He said again.
* Malley! Malley! Retorted the Grand Counsellor. They repeated this exercise seven times before the blacksmith could pronounce the name:
* His name is Tugna.
* Malley! Malley! Resumed the whole crowd of spectators.

The echo of the screams of thousands of people that were gathered there spread over all the valleys and plains, on the sides of all the mountains up to miles around the city of Narenkabadu.

As Fada was pronouncing the name of the child, he was holding the cradle in which the child was lying wrapped in a swaddle that reflected his social rank. He solemnly invited the mother of the child to come and take him:

* Let his mother come and take him under the watchful eye and protection of the Genius.

Mamakany got up and walked forward, still smirking. Arrived at the level of the patriarch blacksmith, she stretched out her two hands to receive the baby in the cradle, and Fada handed down the child to her while looking away as if not to condone this farce. Mamakany picked up the baby and then softly went to kneel before the king, whom she ogled mischievously as if it were an ill-arranged complicity. She returned to her seat with the same measured gait.

One fact caught the attention of the maidservants during the ceremony, as soon as Mamakany got up to receive the baby, Suwo burst into tears frantically. Was that the proof that she was the real mother of the child? The comments were going well.

After Fada’s speech, the order was given to immolate the sacrifices, starting by the stout red bull among the animals offered by Famoro, then those offered by his in-laws. Mamakany carried the child home to the hubbub of instruments and songs of griots in the hundreds who were singing the new-born’s names as well as praising his parents to the skies.

Right after the ceremony, the guests started returning to their various localities, leaving behind their lodgings redolent of the scent of perfumes and the exquisite smell of the hearty meals which had been offered to them as proof of the pageantry which marked this eventful naming.

At the time, the news of Suwo's ​​visceral crying was sweeping through the city. The tireless queens got a talking point hoping that this reaction from Suwo would be the beginning of something.

Thus, Tugna entered the life of his father's kingdom in a breathtaking way insofar as it was already known who the successor of Famoro was, even if his legitimacy remained doubtful for an important fringe of the actors of the life in the royal courtyard.

The convulsions around the coming of the crown prince of Famoro were not through with its upheavals.

THE NAME OF THE TREE AND THAT OF ITS FRUIT WILL BE LINKED

Tugna, the child of Suwo or Mamakany was growing at an incredibly fast rate: at three months, he could sit completely; he was even trying to crawl. But he wasn't yet laughing, nor crying, either. He was staring at people as if he had met them long time ago. At five months, he was crawling all over the yard. Still, he was neither laughing nor crying. At six he started walking perfectly. He took his first step on the last night of his fifth month, that is, the first night of the first day of his sixth month. His steps were firm and quiet. He was going everywhere in the courtyard and playing with a few privileged people there. Of course, not everyone was lucky enough to touch him. Many were contenting to seeing him at distance and grinning in return.

He still wasn't laughing; his gaze was pensive and heavy. The king himself, who had a mad love for his heir, was surprised at his lack of temper. He was a little suspicious of him. His mother, who was expressing zeal in all her actions towards the child, was surprised at his sullenness. All the gestures were easy for this child who was acting as if he were two years old. All the animals were obeying him in the yard, especially the horses, which used to kneel as soon as he was approaching them.

A fact became palpable as the child was growing; it was his unmistakable resemblance to Famoro, the king. No one could argue otherwise, even the most diehard detractors like the other queens. Mamakany was among the first to notice this state of affairs.

Mamakany, as always, relentlessly, was seeking to take the lead. She always had to anticipate problems. This time, she felt that in order to protect herself from any unpleasant surprises, she had to get rid of Suwo, herself. For her, Suwo, was the only person to know the reality around the birth of the prince, after the alleged death of the others who knew more or less about it. Therefore, her presence in the yard near the child was a jinx on her side.

However, one thing remained clear on her mind, it was the role played by Suwo throughout the process as well as her acquaintance in the entourage of the Genius and Fada. She was convinced that the Genius would certainly not accept that Suwo be victim of a flagrant injustice. He could get her in trouble at any time. So an amicable separation with Suwo was the best solution.

That meant, putting her in a situation where she could not be harmful, without her life being in danger, herself. The solution she thought would be appropriate was to accuse her of the beginning of madness. So, she had to be sent for treatment. With this argument, Suwo could be sent outside the kingdom to an area where she could not be harmful. But it was necessary to convince her husband about the proposal. That's how she went to see that one.

* Good evening, His Majesty, the healer has just brought me information concerning my maidservant. It seems that she is getting crazy. That her long illness was just the beginning of that. In order to prevent her from sullying our honour, the usual solution is her extermination, but considering the services she has rendered to the family, I would prefer that we send her to a locality that I know for her treatment. If she heals, so much of good, we can get her back one day.
* Are you sure she’s really gone mad? Asked the king.
* Why not? Since it is the healer who said so. I have no reason not to believe it. He is an experienced man. He has no interest in lying to us. Myself, I was beginning to detect some disorders in her behaviour. Nevertheless, you can ask the healer for more details. Reassured Mamakany.

The healer was brought into the plot with the argument that Suwo, herself, would have requested to go back home. As it was forbidden by the law of the monarchy for a maidservant of the royal courtyard to have another life after her retirement, a solid argument was needed to convince the sovereign. She told the healer that this alibi of madness was needed for the king to give in to this case of force majeure.

For the king, if the healer had no interest in lying, Mamakany did. So, he understood his game. He even found it well-founded insofar as it was in his own interest. He did not resist long before succumbing to his wife's arguments. He found there a happy ending to this imbroglio of Suwo’s pregnancy which had only lasted too long. He had totally ignored the message from the mysterious voice that came to him on the night of the accidental sexual intercourse, that the child's biological mother should be treated with all the honour and respect due to the rank of the child that she gave birth to.

* But for me, the best solution would be to send her to her husband while warning him against a possible escape of his wife, something that could sully the honour the royal family where she had lived for a long time. It is he who will know the arrangements to be made during the sequestration. Already, it's a remote corner of the kingdom; and with the madness tag on her, people will know how to be careful with her.

Famoro and his wife were all satisfied with this epilogue of Suwo case. The first found a sigh of relief there thanks to the tailor-made accusation that his wife made against her maidservant, even though he knew her unacknowledged intention. The second who believed to have fooled her husband and the entourage of the royal family for the umpteenth time, finally believed herself out of every danger with regard to the prince, her beloved son.

As usual, Suwo was taken aback by Mamakany's ​​decision to return to her home. She was escorted there by a number of slaves who were following her closely in accordance with Mamakany's instruction, to avoid any risk of escape up to her destination. Nothing was said to the other queens let alone the other maidservants, or anyone else. Everything was done on the sly. Suwo case was thus closed to the satisfaction of Famoro and Mamakany, but to the grief of the other queens.

Precisely, the other queens who were also taken aback by this decision and its subsequent execution were completely lost. For them, there was no longer any other means to let the king and his relatives know the truth about the prince. The latters were in fact not ready to accept any idea contrary to theirs. In short, the page of Suwo was definitely turned over. No one had to talk about it. She was just a slave. She has been freed thanks to the generosity of the king and his favourite wife. She should no longer exist in people's minds.

Despite that moral disposition of the king, he was feeling a little remorse, because at his age, he could not but to feel guilty of a wrong after that act of his wife to which he had subscribed voluntarily.

After some weeks of trots, Suwo reached her marital home. She returned there with the label of a madwoman who had to be watched closely. Suwo's ​​acquaintances, including her husband Jery, were surprised by her arrival. At the same time they were all unanimous on the change she had undergone thanks to life in the royal courtyard. She was no longer the same sneaky peasant woman who had been captured years ago. Her good looking and her behaviour marked by good manner were proof of this.

But what had changed the most in her, was her mind. Her proximity to Mamakany, the experience acquired during the trip to the Dawanian cave, the upheavals around her pregnancy as well as the circumstances of the occurrence of this pregnancy, had given her a personality of great soul. She had become a mature woman, wise, of great human knowledge and loving tolerance and peace. She was very sober in speech and often very thoughtful seeming to be very far from her surroundings; something that was corroborating her label of insane by the people of the village.

Precisely because of this she was housed a little apart from the other members of her husband's family. This treatment, far from frustrating or offending her, pleased her, because she could calmly reflect on all that happened during the life in the courtyard of Famoro. She had witnessed so much and had been victim of so much of injustice that nothing could surprise her any longer. She knew how selfish, mean, harmful, and unpredictable a person could be.

She was in her hut with her first child who was with her mother and had returned home as soon as his father got remarried, and the second child, of whom she was pregnancy while entering the royal courtyard. Suwo thought she had acquired sufficient maturity to educate her children well in relation to her moral and spiritual experience.

In her new life, Suwo was forced to go to the bush to look for firewood to resell in order to meet her needs and those of her children. The children were helping to lighten their mother's burden by going fishing in the river to bring her the fish that she was also selling. The daily routine of Suwo and her children was limited to that. Her husband had practically no time for her, because his second wife was already enough for him. He didn't want to bother with her anymore.

Suwo lived for years in this situation which she had become completely accustomed to. She had no nostalgia for her life in the royal courtyard which she considered as an accident of life. She said that that kind of life was not for her. She enjoyed becoming the same peasant and sneaky woman as before. She tried to forget that she had a child who was made for that life and who was living that life away from her. She believed to have been separated with that child, she didn't deserve, forever.

However, the mystery was always present in her life, because she was following the evolution of the child in dream. She was seeing him regularly in her dreams and sometimes she would communicate with him so clearly in such a way that she could not imagine that they were mere dreams.

Far from Suwo, in the royal courtyard which she had left six years ago, all was quiet. There hadn't been any other child in the royal family. In fact they weren't even looking for any other child, apparently. Mamakany who was congratulating herself for her lucidity, was ostentatiously enjoying her status as favourite wife and mother of the crown prince. The other queens were just biting their fingers only having their eyes to cry. However, the injustice they were continuing to suffer in flagrant and repeated manner from their husband was only fuelling their resentment.

The child who at first, was not laughing, began to flash some affected grins. That was enough to make this beautiful world happy. He was walking everywhere in the city of Narenkabadu, naturally with his guards. He was coming into every family. He was making friends with all the young people of his apparent category even if he seemed older than his age. So he made friends with children who were actually older than him. He didn't put himself above anyone. He treated everyone with respect and consideration. He could sleep in the dilapidated rooms of his friends.

As he was growing up incredibly fast, his father decided that he should be given riding lessons so that he would become a horse master like all the other princes of that time. A groom was exclusively assigned to that task. That one promised to do a remarkable job to earn the king's confidence. A regular training schedule had been established with that groom in the garden of the royal courtyard. It was every morning for at least three hours. Everything was prepared beforehand for the smooth running of the exercises. He learned there, among other things, speed races, high jumps and long jumps, trotting and dancing on horseback.

From the first training session, the groom was impressed by the intelligence of the child and the docility of the horse under his command. Practically, nothing was taught to him. He knew everything and did everything perfectly. But the training sessions continued; they even multiplied, first of all, because the child was enjoying it, but also the groom wanted to show dedication, in order to continue benefitting from the advantages of this company.

One day, after one of these exercises, little Tugna came home very exhausted, for having exerted more effort than on the previous days. He immediately went to his mother’s home but did not meet her there. Feeling tired and hungry, he got angry and played the spoiled child. The rule was that he shouldn't complain about anything. Everything had to be available for him at all times. But this time, there had been a setback in the service in the way that rule was not respected.

In a rage, he went to find Gnalen whom he was calling, "grandma."

* Grandma, where has my mom gone? He said, addressing Gnalen.
* I don't know. She said casually.
* But let her come and give my food. In fact, I'm going to tell Papa, said Tugna. Then he changed the topic. I know my mom is going to be happy with me today. I went hundred times round the garden today. I know she is ready to cry foul. But the groom can testify what I’m saying. He himself was amazed at my performance. He said lying down in Gnalen's bed

After about thirty minutes, believing that the child was asleep, the senior maidservant of Gnalen spoke in a slanderous tone.

* This child always takes Mamakany for his mother. It is really funny. Ah! if he knew where his mother is right now and who is she.
* Above all, if he knew how she was expelled from here by this rascal Mamakany to hijack her child.
* But, by the way, Her Majesty is not surprised by the extraordinary resemblance between this child and the king. No doubt it is his child.
* Yes, I know that he is the blood of the king, but not of Mamakany. The rest, no one knows. That's why I don't want to think about it too much. One thing is clear; it is Suwo his mother as her features are clearly showing on his face.
* The future will tell us the truth. The people say that if you don't want people to know what you're hiding, don't live long.

His resemblance to the king was the inexplicable aspect of the situation, for the fact that trying to allege that the child was born through a carnal intercourse between the king and the maidservant of his wife, would lead to making the prince an illegitimate child, therefore, unfit to exercise the function of the king. At the same time, it would make the king guilty of adultery; which would disqualify him from his right to reign over this country, orthodox of the ancestral tradition of probity and modesty.

Tugna, who was not sleeping as the two women who were imprudently quibbling believed, had heard and understood everything. However, he was not so surprised because of the premonitory dreams he was having regularly in which he was communicating with an unknown woman who was explaining to him the circumstances of his birth and the subsequent events. But this woman in the dream kept telling him that Mamakany remained his legitimate mother, and that he had no interest in looking for another mother. He didn't know what to do really. He decided to give himself time to think. Fortunately, his intelligence, his courage and his physical and moral strength and his bravery were a reflection of his miraculous birth.

He left after the two women had finished telling each other everything, and then went to bed without trying to eat or drink anymore. He spent the rest of the day in the same way, and at night he hid in a corner of the yard to continue meditating.

Having noted the disappearance of their child, Mamakany alerted her husband and the two proceeded to a systematic search in the whole courtyard without attracting the attention of people. After a few minutes they found him blubbering in that corner of the courtyard. They led him to his room quietly, as they did not want the other queens to notice the incident and take advantage of it for vicious purposes.

Two in the room, Mamakany consoled him and tried in vain to get a word out of him about the reason for his bad mood. As the prince was saying nothing, Mamakany retired to her room. From that time, that kind of behaviour became a habit of the prince. Every day he was found in one or the other corner of the courtyard meditating like a hermit. Each time, Mamakany had the same words for the child.

* What's wrong? Who hurt you? Who told you something? She used to say.

But one day she went further in her questioning:

* My son, what have you been told? I am your mother, and no one else.

Tugna looked up to fix Mamakany in her eyes, and said to relieve her:

* I know you're my mother. I like you. I am following my destiny. It is an obligation. Do not worry.

These words reassured Mamakany. She stopped following his movements and she no longer paid attention to his mood.

As for Suwo, in her husband's village, she kept thinking of her child without the slightest hope of seeing him one day. She had no illusions about their relationship. She knew that by right, the child was not hers, but the biological link between the two was indelible. She felt like she had been deprived of her child since the Genius's choice fell on her in the Dawanian Cave. Each time her mind was brushing against the existence of the Genius and his immeasurable capacity, she used to get a glimmer of hope of seeing one day her child. But this evanescent gleam was disappearing in face of the immoral character of the contact which gave birth to this child.

Despite this reality, she was spending sleepless nights thinking about Tugna. She was no longer eating enough. Clothes no longer mattered to her. It had become an obsession for her. But she was telling no one about it, even her other children. This disinterest made people to think that her madness was getting worse.

It was in this state that appeared to her in her room in the middle of one night, the indefatigable Fada, the patriarch blacksmith. It was not a dream, but a reality. But how did he come? How did he find Suwo's ​​house without asking anyone? How did he get in without being seen by anyone? All of this remained a mystery. But Suwo was not too much surprised, because she knew that the Genius was capable of anything. She remained taken aback, because she did not expect that visit. She didn't think she had any more place in this mysterious environment of the Genius.

* What does this unexpected visit mean to me? She asked.
* Don't be surprised. All this had been planned by the Genius. The king and his wife do not believe in him. That is why they did not respect his instructions, which were nevertheless very clear. It was about treating you with all the honours that the biological mother of this child deserves, even if you cannot be his legitimate mother. Now I come to tell you that you can call your child, and he will come to you.
* How can I call him, wise man?
* By the means that the Genius gave you and by pronouncing the words that he will put in your mouth. That's all. Bye! He said, to disappear as he had appeared.

Suwo sat down in the middle of her bed and put her head in her hands. She spent the rest of the night in that position without closing her eyes. As said earlier, although she was surprised by this appearance and disappearance of the patriarch, but she was not amazed, because likewise about the Genius, she knew or at least she believed in the spiritual capacity of that sexagenarian patriarch. She was just trying to find out what the patriarch was calling “means placed at her disposal by Genius.”

It was around dawn that her mind reached the two rings given to her by the patriarch in the name of the Genius, one of which had she put on the finger of the child right ring finger after birth, and she herself, was keeping the other one. She had that ring on her everywhere she was going, without knowing what to do with. The miracle of this ring was that since it was put on the child's finger, it seemed to be stretching out with his finger following the extraordinarily rapid rate of his growth.

Suwo thought that the second ring she had must certainly be the means the patriarch was referring to. This is how she began to rub the bezel of the ring while reciting this wild logorrhoea pronounced under her breath.

Come to me, my child.

Come to me, my child.

Come so that the name of the tree

And that of its fruit be associated.

Come to me so to prove

That the iron came out of the stone

Come to me so that your name can be wisdom

That your heart can be love

Your act can be righteousness

Your words can be truth.

Truth that you will proclaim urbi and orbi.

Come so that the crocodile coming out of the urine

Can chase away the man who urinated

In the name of justice, truth and love.

Come so that peace reigns everywhere

In equality and respect for all.

Come my child to command everynody in Farafina and beyond

With a swords given by the Genius.

These words that Suwo was uttering in a low voice were echoing in the ears of her child thousands of miles away. He was hearing everything and seeing his mother reciting these incantations that were reaching him telepathically. He was seeing her sitting and holding in her hand the ring which was identical to his. He understood then that what the women were saying at Gnalen's home the other day was true; his biological mother was not living in the royal courtyard. And she should be the only person capable of telling him everything about his birth. The only one capable of explaining how can he resemble his father, the king, at the same time have a mother who was not a queen, and justify his legitimacy for the throne. But the problem was that he didn't know who that woman was, neither where she was living.

However, despite the possible dangers and uncertainties that was surrounding such an adventure; the prince was determined to set off in search of his mother. He was determined to go everywhere and to challenge all the risks that would entail such endeavour. He just wanted to discover himself.

He was sure to be able to recognize the woman with whom he had that telepathic conversation. He knew that the ring this woman was holding and which was identical to his could serve as a compass to attract him towards that mysterious woman.

Since harbouring that belief and ensuing decision, he started eating well, joking with people, and laughing his head off. He was sleeping well, which was unusual. Everyone was rejoicing at this change in the prince's mood except the other queens.

But, alas, one day! One of those days, when a man decides to carry out his plan, a long temps nurtured and matured plan that highlights his physical, moral and spiritual capacity, one of those days, Tugna decided to take action. That was to join his biological mother, this stranger of dreams in an unknown horizon.

On that day, the sun rose as usual, from East to West. The weather was nice and calm with fresh, clean air. The atmosphere in the royal courtyard was usual: people were wandering about their business, like the farmers who were going to the farms; or the others who were already there, while the women were carrying water from the river, and the pestles were resounding in the mortars here and there. Smoke was rising above the kitchens spreading a pungent smell around. The children were busy with their usual various games such as hide and seek, wrestling and racing.

Tugna was far from these hubbubs. He was focused on the plan he was developing in solitude, free from suspicion, with deep introspection, but also with circumspection and firmness. He spent the whole day in that state of mind. Nobody was caring about that, because the change of mood he had shown had reassured the king and his wife.

As soon as the sun set, he went to bed waiting for the time to cast anchor. In the middle of the night, he was to begin his adventure. When the time reached, while the courtyard had become completely quiet, he left his mother's house where he was sleeping and tiptoed towards the stable to get his horse out. The harness was already prepared. He found the latter miraculously sitting up. Without worrying about that strange position, he grabbed the reins and dragged the horse outside. With the dash of a great horseman, he put his foot in the stirrup and jumped on its back and headed for the exit. Everyone was asleep, even the slaves who are often the last to go to bed were in bed, which was a rare occurrence.

Arrived at the foot of the wall of the courtyard, he made a pesade with the horse in restive motion, then animated it and encouraged it to jump the wall. He closed his eyes and only opened them when they landed on the other side of the parapet. Vaguely counting on the ring that was on his finger, he told himself that any woman who would have a similar ring would probably be his mother. Once outside the courtyard, he heard a mysterious voice saying: "*Follow the one who is leading you to the one you are searching*."

He let himself being led by the horse which took the direction of the south from where the voice seemed to have come from. He gripped the reins tightly; adjusted the saddle and positioned his feet well in the stirrups. The trek to an unknown destination had just begun. What he didn't know was that he had to cross seven rivers to get to the village where the woman he was trying to reach was.

Tugna on his red piebald racehorse was running at full speed producing a roar in the wind which was thwarting them. The manes lifted by the wind that they were tearing, were fluttering like grass during the passage of the typhoon. The tail erected horizontally put the horsehair in a rout. Always with the reins firmly held, Tugna was glued to the withers of that horse the hooves of which were striking the ground like a real drum. They were ready to tackle any distance. His gallops were increasing tenfold over time.

Tugna's absence was not noticed until late in the day, because no one could imagine such a turn in the prince's behaviour. It was Mamakany who was the first to notice this when she saw that the child was not on his bed, nor had he had breakfast. She sent someone to fetch him from another room where he was often resting. It was when she saw that he was not there that she alerted her husband. The two searched quietly. Then some of the closest slaves, including Farawany, were involved in the search, to no avail. Gradually, the other queens and their maidservants became imbued with the troubles the king and his favourite wife were having. The information was brought to their knowledge officially under the order of the king himself.

* The king asks me to inform you that the prince has disappeared. He thinks that this disappearance may not be voluntary. That is why he urges everyone to get involved in the search. However, he adds that anyone who will be directly or indirectly linked to this disappearance will answer for that act. No comment. Investigations continue.

This news, which spread rapidly to the four corners of the kingdom and elsewhere, was received in various ways. If it was regrettable and annoying for some, it was normal and logical for others.

People were initially deployed all over the town of Narenkabadu. Then teams of researchers began to crisscross the country. Missionaries were dispatched to neighbouring monarchies. The searchers were competing with each other, each one seeking to be the first to find the prince in order to benefit from the advantages of that achievement. But despite their zeal, those efforts were in vain.

What they could not imagine is the possibility for that child to go to his biological mother. This for various reasons, first, he was presumed never knowing that Mamakany was not his biological mother. Second, he was presumably never have known Suwo nor heard about her. Finally, one could hardly imagine the possibility for him to discover the distant village where his mother was, even if he knew the reality.

It was in this commotion that the king left the royal courtyard to go see his seer, Simbo. He simply wanted to know if that disappearance of his son was linked to his past dream. That would amount to saying that the child had to be sought from his biological mother's side. Therefore the long-kept secret would have come to light.

All these ideas were jostling in his head when he arrived at the seer’s home. Unfortunately for him, he met that bedridden old bachelor in a deep coma in the corner of his hut. He couldn't speak anymore. The king got a slight feeling of guilt for having forgotten him for years. But this regret no longer mattered to this dying man who was groaning like a game hit by a fatal bullet. Desperate, Famoro threw himself on the seer, shaking him to wake him from his coma.

* Don't die my scout. I have problems. You are the only one who can elucidate me. Please! My child has disappeared.

This cry of distress from the sovereign sounded in the ears of the seer like a burst of thunder. He slowed the groan as if coming out of a dream, then moved his mouth with a barely audible sound.

* It is true that the herd was your family. Said the seer this apothegm, then took a deep sigh and passed away.
* So it is true that the calf was my child? That Kassakoro was right, huh? He said to exit abruptly without wondering if people were following his movement, and without informing anyone of the death of the seer.

Arrived at home, he summoned his wife and gave her the account of his visit to Simbo without concealing anything. He began his story by his hitch with Kassakoro who was the first seer he consulted immediately after this famous dream. He insisted on the relevance of the correspondence between the animals of the dream and the characters of his family in this situation. Mamakany then had the intuition that the child embodied the calf. And the rest was known.

Mamakany who had said nothing during her husband's narration, had the intuition that the child had gone to his biological mother. She summoned some of her slaves, including Farawany, and asked them to accompany her to the region where Suwo was. This is how she went to see her husband to explain her intention. She put forward to her husband the argument of going to solicit the help of Suwo to consult an oracle of which she was the only one to know the place of residence. But Famoro who had understood her game was very happy of that decision. He knew that his wife had sensed the message of the dream.

Famoro, before agreeing, specified:

* Be careful! To go there you will have to cross seven rivers. As soon as you will have crossed the seventh one, you will climb a hill behind which you will see a village on the left, not quite on the side of the road, it is Moridou, you will ask after Jery. He's her husband. The rest you know how to do.

Mamakany had decided to be part of the trip herself so that she could continue to cover up what she was thinking to be a secret at her sole disposal. That trip was undertaken on the sly, especially the destination, so that people would not wonder what the name of Suwo was looking for in this affair. Even the slaves who were accompanying her were not informed of anything. She only told them to follow her. She was hoping to catch up with the prince before reaching his mother's house because of all these abovementioned obstacles and the age of the child, he must not have gone far, she thought.

At, that time the prince was already far away, not only because was his mount the best but also the Genius was making it easier for him to cross the rivers. For instance, shortly after leaving, he reached the first river. He very quickly pushed the horse into the water and then clung to its tail. That great swimmer got him across in less than two minutes.

The trip was continuing at the same pace. After miles he saw a village on the side of a hill. To avoid being seen by the locals, he decided to go into the bush to deflect it. By small paths, he managed to bypass the village without being spotted. As soon as he got back on the road after the village, he saw another horseman from a distance but who was galloping less quickly than him. He caught up with him in a few minutes, but still in order not to be recognized, he entered the bush and bypassed him without being seen. That is how he bypassed the villages and people he was seeing on his way.

When he got hungry after a few hours he tied the mount in a bush then went to the field near a small village he had just bypassed. He found plenty of food there and used it without difficulty. He ate his fill and went down into the stream and quenched his thirst enough before resuming his journey. The horse also took the opportunity to graze on some grass. The trip continued with the same pace for several days with the same types of stops.

Five days after his departure, Tugna had the last river to cross. He jumped it in a single gallop so much that he was looking forward to seeing his mom, because he was seeing the same environment he saw in the dream. He felt the fervour. Already, he knew his mother's name through the talk of Gnalen and her maidservant. He has never stopped repeating this name 'Suwo' since that day. On the other bank of the river, he saw a woman sitting on the hilltop that was right in front of him staring at him coming. She was holding in her hand a ring similar to his which she was still rubbing its bezel. Tugna got the vague impression of having seen that woman somewhere. Then, he understood that it was the woman of the dream.

If there was any doubt in the boy's mind, it was the contrary with the woman. As soon as Suwo saw the boy jumping the river she immediately understood that it was her son coming.

Since the night in which Fada recommended the ritual of calling her child, Suwo had gotten into the habit of coming every evening to sit on the banks of this river to look in the direction where her child was eventually to come from, hoping to see him coming. There was no doubt, the Genius had granted her prayers. He had never abandoned the victims of injustice. She took a deep sigh and inwardly said, "Finally, he's here." Without hesitation, she held out the ring.

* You are my biological mother, said Tugna.
* I knew you would come, my son.
* I want to know the whole truth.
* You will know the whole truth. It's what you deserve. Let's go home! Said Suwo getting on the way back home.

Tugna followed her mom while sitting on his horseback. The horse dropped the prince off and immediately started going back. On its way back, the horse was avoiding all the villages and people it was meeting on the way likewise when they were going

Suwo and her child were alone in her hut lost in the thick grass which could only shelter the most offensive snakes. The two were watching each other with a certain curiosity and suspicion. They were morally preparing their great talk. The son was preparing his questions, and the mother was preparing the answers to questions likely to be asked. At dawn, the long-awaited question and answer session was introduced by the prince:

* Mom, I know that you are my mother. I also know that my dad is my father. But I want to know how this could be possible?
* My son, know that your father is your father, your real father. No doubt about that. You deserve the title of prince, because you were born prince and you must remain so. Said Suwo.
* So, how is it that a worthy prince, as you say, is the son of his father and his mother who are not married, and do not belong to the same social category?
* Yes, this was made possible by the fact that the mother already was carrying the soul of the child in her body before coming into physical contact with the father thanks to a being of divine power.
* I don't understand, mom. Tell me what really happened.
* You can't understand, and it's not for me to tell you. You will be informed by the most authoritative voice. Mine is not allowed. Just know that what I am telling you is true. We will talk about many things. You will understand many things. More than me, more than your father, and more than your mother, the queen. She is your legitimate mother. You have to believe in it and give her that respect. I'm just your biological mother. A simple intermediary.
* It's even more confusing now. If the queen is my legitimate mother. I don't think I'm at the end of my pain yet. But, tell me, am I an illegitimate child? That is to say, a bastard?
* No, my son. You are clean. You are a nobleman. You don't have to blame yourself. You will understand very soon. You need some rest.

On the other side, Mamakany and his companions had begun their journey. They had chosen the best horses. These animals experienced in running, made available to these riding experts, were real running machines. Mamakany herself was as nimble as the boys on the horse back. She had been initiated into it since her childhood in her father's courtyard.

Mamakany and her companions succeeded in crossing all the seven rivers without difficulty and in a record time. And each time they were arriving in a village or meeting a traveller, Mamakany used to approach them to know if anyone of them had seen a rider on a red piebald horse. The answer was always the same: “There is only one horseman in front of you. For sure you will catch up with him very soon.” They had not met the prince's horse on his way back. After the seventh river, they saw a horse trotting not far ahead of them. Mamakany unconsciously shouted at the sight of that horse:

* Let's go fast! It's him! We will catch him before getting to the village. She said without thinking that the slaves did not know the reason for their trip.
* Who is it? Asked Farawany.

It was then the queen remembered that her travelling companions did not know why they were travelling and where they were going.

* Just wait. You'll know as soon as we get to him.

They multiplied the trots, and after a few minutes, they arrived at his level. She also cried:

* Stop, my son. She said, paying no attention to the rider's senility.
* Why do I have to stop? Said the old man, looking back.

It was then that Mamakany realized that she had made a mistake. This old rider, who was a citizen of her husband's kingdom, also recognized the queen and profusely apologized:

* Excuse me, Her Majesty. I didn't recognize you. I did not flee; I am going to visit my daughter who is married in this region. I won't stay long. Said the old man who thought he was being blamed for fleeing the kingdom.
* How many days have you been on this path? Asked Mamakany who had her mind elsewhere.
* Let’s say, a little over two weeks. I take my time. I stop in villages, just to rest. What wrong did I do, princess of princesses, the favourite queen of our dear king, his majesty Famoro? I am available. I am your subject.
* No rider has passed by you on the way since you left Narenkabadu?
* No. Nobody. And no one told me about a rider. Did not you ask in the villages you passed through?
* Yes! But we were told of only one rider who can only be you according to the description they gave us. All right you can go. Mamakany said desperately then turned to Farawany and said
* Good! I don't think we can go any further than here. Let's go back!

They returned with less ardour this time. Mamakany did not know that she was on the verge of seeing her child. At the same time, a few meters from them, Suwo and her child were talking quietly in her hut preparing the continuation of their talk of truth.

For the continuation of their famous talk, they decided to leave the village altogether to sit at the top of the hill where Suwo used to come and wait for his son. While Mamakany was on her way going back to Narenkabadu, Suwo and her child were sitting on the hill talking quietly:

* Listen, my son, the blessed prince, now, to the limit of my ability, I will tell you who you are, and how it all began.

She told the marathon story of the whole journey she made with Mamakany, passing through the stay at the patriarch blacksmith’s village, until the circumstance of the conception of the pregnancy and the subsequent birth of the child in an incredible condition. In a few hours, the prince was enlightened on himself, without mentioning Dawanian so as not to transgress the prohibitions of the Genius. She only said that she felt the child's soul seeping into her body. She ended by saying that in all of this, she only served as an intermediary for the birth of the child, and that Mamakany remained his legitimate mother. Notwithstanding, she has been victim of ungratefulness on the part of the queen and the king. She did not benefit from the treatment recommended by the Genius. This injustice can only be rectified by the prince of wisdom, their common son.

To conclude her narrative, Suwo said:

* You will conquer the throne which is destined to you by your wisdom, and not by force. It is the will of the Genius, because anything that is acquired by violence can only be retained by violence, or may be lost by violence. Whereas anything that is acquired by reason is retained by reason and outlives its originator. Therefore, it may stay.
* Now, how and where can I get this wisdom you are talking about?
* Wait for the time. It is the one that creates everything and it is the one that puts an end to everything. She said to get on the way back without inviting her child to follow her.

When Suwo and her child were getting to her hut, Mamakany and her companions were going to Narenkabadu where Tugna's horse had already arrived. That was something that increased the despair of the king because first of all, this horse of good breed was the surest mean to identify the prince, therefore, to find him. Again it proved sufficiently that this disappearance of the prince was deliberate and not involuntary as some were beginning to infer.

A few days later, Mamakany and his retinue entered the royal courtyard. She was hoping to come meet that the prince was found. From the portal, she felt through the gloomy atmosphere inside, that nothing positive had happened after her. So the concern remained. The king, too, had founded all his hopes on this journey of his wife.

* Did you get any information about his destination, said both the man and his wife.

It was Famoro who had been imprudent, because his wife had not told him that she was going to fetch the child. But the tension was such that they had no time for this kind of hypocrisy. Obviously, the question of one served as an answer to that of the other. Anxiety grew in the city. The two did not talk about Suwo. So the king didn't know that his wife had not gone all the way, and that she didn't meet Suwo.

Now, no hypothesis was to be excluded. All avenues had to be explored. This is why a strong delegation was dispatched to Fada, the patriarch blacksmith to request his contribution. This delegation was led by the Grand Counsellor.

After a few days of travel, the delegation arrived at Fada’s home. Indeed, he who was not surprised by this arrival, because he was following everything that was happening in the kingdom of Famro especially with regard to Tugna. The Grand Counsellor and his retinue were received with all the honours, followed by the requested meeting:

* My cousin Fada, we have come to tell you a sad news, introduced the Grand Councillor, the discussion. He paused to mark his grief underpinned by a great silence in the room. I won't be long...I come to inform you that the child you helped us to get has disappeared. We wonder if you didn't take him back because of some bad behaviour on our part. If it takes a sacrifice to give him back to us, we are willing. We are relying on you to intercede with the benefactor Genius. He said with all the signs of frustration that this situation deserved.

In response, Fada, with the eloquence of which only he had the secret, said:

* Genius is a benefactor. He cannot plunge any family into mourn. He has finished giving this child to the king; he can no longer take him back. If the child is lost, it is because he is certainly on the trajectory of his destiny decreed by the Genius to be in accordance with his predictions. Go tell the king and his wife to find the solution to the problem in the riddles that made up the Genius's message for them. They were said to serve as a guide in the quest for solution to their eventual problems.

After this brief exchange, the delegation dined, and then asked for the way back. This was done without protocol.

In Narenkabadu, waiting for the return of the Grand Counsellor and his retinue was a hard test for the king and his wife. They had all sorts of negative ideas. The delegation arrived in Narenkabadu in an atmosphere of sadness. The Grand Counsellor, too, was cherishing the hope of coming to meet the Prince in the courtyard.

* No news? Famoro asked as he received his emissaries.
* This means that the prince has not yet been found. What a pity! Murmured the Grand Counsellor.
* Let's go in. We have no time to waste said, Famoro ordering his envoy to follow him; and that one complied obediently.
* What information or recommendation did you get there?
* His majesty, your cousin the blacksmith salutes you, said the Grand Counsellor before starting his report. All what we could get from the blacksmith was to tell you to think about the Genius riddles that you already know. So now is the time for action. You have to think about them to decipher them and take the necessary decisions.
* The riddles… The riddles? I will see. Yes, ok, I know some. Now let me think about them, he said to retreat to his room.

For days he did not communicate with anyone.

Far from this atmosphere of anguish and consternation, Suwo and her child were getting used to each other. The mother was appreciating the intelligence of her child, which she was considering to be above average. The child, too, was appreciating the same way his mother's maturity and wisdom. He was sharing her pain of being treated as an outcast in that village. Suwo had taken every precaution to ensure that the presence of her child was not noticed before she could have prepared a solid argument relating to his identity. Fortunately for her, neither her husband nor her mate, were visiting her in her small hut, let alone the other inhabitants of the village. That favoured the prince's stay without being disturbed.

Every day, the child used to ask his mother questions, and she was trying somehow to answer them. The injustice that Suwo and her two children, Tugna's two elder brothers, were enduring gave the prince motive to ponder about the behaviour of human beings. It was the first subject of meditation for him relating to human nature. Despite his young age, he was spending long hours thinking about it without his mother noticing. It was for the first time that he felt injustice, discrimination and poverty.

In Narenkabadu, Famoro was also immersed in meditation on the meaning to be given to the enigmas of the Genius in order to find the solution to his problem. The riddle that gave him a hard time was the one that talked about the tree and its fruit. He didn't want to believe that that announced a possible meeting between Suwo and her child one day. He would have preferred not to have a child than to be thus exposed to the face of the world. The one that talks of iron and stone was the simplest, because the prince having been brought into the world by a slave woman was its most eloquent interpretation. As for the last one which was about the crocodile coming out of the urine, he didn't even want to think about it, because he couldn't understand that his own child would chase him from his throne one day. He wondered why the child would fight for a power that was meant for him by right. A throne reserved for him by the nature.

However, the idea of ​​possible meeting between Suwo and his child, which was perverse for Famoro, continued haunting him with perseverance. He decided to think about it with courage and objectivity, because his retirement had lasted too long. That meant that it was once again necessary to seek for the prince on the side of his biological mother.

But problems still remained at that level, because the sovereign always pretended to ignore everything about the circumstance of the birth of the child. And his wife had the same conviction. So he had to find good pretext to be able to share with his wife the decision to go look for the child on Suwo's ​​side without she suspecting that he knew of any link between Suwo and this child.

He called his wife after weeks of voluntary sequestration to talk about it with her. Caution was in order.

* Tell me, can't we also look for your child on your maidservant's side with whom you had come to the Genius. What's her name yet? Yes, Suwo. Maybe when you went the other day, he hadn't got there yet, said the king with a little disinterest.
* What makes you think so?
* Nothing in particular. Since she was with you on your trip to the blacksmith, and the intimacy of your relationship, out of desperation, I think we can inquire around her. He may have gone there by magic or by evil spirit. I don't know anything anymore.
* But the two did not know each other. Above all, Tugna did not know her. When she was leaving Tugna she was just a baby.
* You're right. I say this out of desperation. You know this child is not an ordinary child. You yourself know how fast he was growing here.
* I think you're right. I will lead the delegation, myself. This time I will go all the way, whatever the cost.

It was from therenthe king understood that his wife did not arrive at Suwo’s home on her previous trip. He regretted why he didn't find out this that day. And it is also from there that Mamakany understood that she had been wrong not to have been to Suwo’s home. Maybe he would have had clues there. She knew full well that there was a good reason. She regretted her hasty decision that day.

* If you find the child there, for one reason or the other, you bring both of them here discreetly. It is here everything will be decided.

PRINCE, SLAVE AND HUNTER

Near his biological mother, the prince was to have his first big dream since his arrival. In this dream, he saw a rapacious bird trying to take him away by diving from the sky onto him like a sparrow hawk at an extraordinary speed. Miraculously, the eagle missed him. But it tore his shirt off by its sting-like claws. At dawn, Tugna explained this dream to his mother. And that one was not so profane in the interpretation of dreams.

* I think the time has come for us to separate. You will be separated from me by will or by force. I want it to be voluntary. It's normal, even if we don't want that, you and I. Your destiny is very complicated; you have to take it.
* That means they'll come get me, right? The prince wondered.
* Yes, and imminently.
* So, mom, I'm leaving. I'm moving tonight. I haven't finished knowing myself yet. And here is not where I will know myself, because my destiny cannot be forged while staying here.
* Where are you going? Suwo wondered.
* Anywhere mom. Wherever fate takes me to gain the wisdom you told me about.
* All right. I accept. You can go when you want and where you want. I remain convinced that you will come back to me. You have to remember that Mamakany remains your legitimate mother. I only served as an intermediary. Just by ingratitude, I did not benefit from the treatment which was due to me with regard to the role I played in the process. Ingratitude is the strength of the weak. The gratitude is the force is the strong.
* Yes, I will come back as sure as the rainy season comes after the dry season, to grow grass for the animals; to fill the beds of watercourses for aquatic beings, to make the land cultivable for men. I will come back to bring hope to broken hearts. To give justice to the disinherited, to give light where there is only darkness. I will come back to sow justice and equality among men; to bring peace to all of Farafina and beyond.

Suwo was just staring at her child as he was making this litany of missions he had to accomplish. She was very proud of him. Late at night, Suwo and her child made preparations for the child's trip. They were essentially spiritual.

* You certainly don't need clothes, do you?
* No. Mom. This can be used as a clue to find me, because these are the clothes of the royal courtyard.
* Before letting you go, I will give you the first lessons of wisdom through the traditional libation of our ancestors.
* All right, nodded the prince,

It was decided that the child should abandon his clothes in favour of the rags of his elder brothers. When the child was about to leave, his mother took a very clean calabash and put in clear water as clean as the calabash. She began the liturgy of the libation, pouring little by little the water from the calabash on the ground:

My son, my hope,

You're going on an odyssey

Towards a horizon that is unknown to you

But you'll find men and women there

They can become your father and your mother.

It will depend on you.

You will also find boys and girls there.

They can become your siblings,

It will depend on you.

You will find rich-poor there,

Many poor-poor

Few rich-rich

And very few poor-rich.

My son, my pride

Know that in life

Everything is a logical consequence,

Success comes through hard work

Respect through justice

Good justice, through knowledge of the facts

And the good will to judge.

Friendship by the concession,

Peace through tolerance;

Wisdom through patience;

Admiration through humility;

Love is preserved by a trilogy:

Respect, tolerance and understanding.

My son, my love,

Know that where love gains ground,

Mistrust and fear lose out;

Where hate gains,

Love goes away there. So,

Converting an enemy into a friend is strength.

And letting a friend become an enemy is weakness.

My son, my righteousness

Know that it is better to denounce an evil

By doing good than by criticizing.

If you lose the material, you will have lost something;

If you lose honour, you will have lost something.

But if you lose the courage, you will have lost everything.

Any problem of which you have no solution

Must not be one for you.

My son, my soul,

There are three companions for you;

Your fellow men, your wealth, and your deed.

But only your deeds will outlive you.

There are three days in your life,

The first, they do it for you;

The second, they do it with you.

The third, you do it yourself.

My son the prince of wisdom,

Never decide in anger;

Never promise in euphoria

My son, my peace

There are three kinds of sons:

He who does not reach his father,

He who reaches his father and

He who surpasses his father.

My son, my hope,

You will surpass your father.

The crocodile emerging from the urine

Will chase the one who urinated

My enchanted heart opens to you

The path to success.

After this ritual teaching, Suwo let her son out and followed him to the exit of the village where everyone was sleeping soundly. She said goodbye to Tugna, turned her back and never looked back until the house.

On her return, near her hut, she was surprised to see horses of good breeds, three in number, standing in front of her door. She stopped for a while to see what was going on. Then she saw three people sitting under the mango tree that was overlooking her little hut. It wasn't easy to identify them in that darkness, but there was no doubt that they were people of royal rank. It was after some time that she relized that indeed it was Mamakany herself who had come to her house in the company of two slaves. She already knew why this visit and thought that the interpretation she had made of Tugna's dream was relevant.

As soon as she reached their level, she hastened to go towards Mamakany, and knelt down to greet her.

* Welcome Her Majesty the favourite queen of our dear king, Famoro. How did you find here?
* It's your husband Djery, who brought us here. It was by the help of Farawany that we were able to see him without attracting people's attention.
* What an honour, this visit! Suwo exclaimed with an innocent smile.
* Don't be surprised. We do not easily abandon our people; especially after such a loyal service that you rendered to the king's family. We have come to pay you a friendly visit. I don't want any fuss. That is why we are insisting on returning tonight. We don't do this for everybody. Let's go in for a close meeting between friends. We have to leave before dawn, she said with a disinterested smile.

The two women entered that sordid hut. Suwo invited her boss lady to sit on the bed which was made of beaten earth, raised in a corner of the hut. An old loincloth was serving at the same time as sheet and blanket for her and her children. There was no pillow. Mamakany had a fleeting sense of guilt for not allowing her to take her belongings.

* Suwo, we’ve come to look for my child. All the indications showed that it is here he has come. It is not worth denying, we already know everything. Above all, don't be afraid. You risk nothing. You know why and I know why; and you know that I know why; and I know that you know why I know that you know.
* I also know that her majesty knows that I have nothing to be blame about in this situation. I did nothing bad in this, Suwo said without being clear in her answer, whether or not Tugna had arrived at her home. She thought that Mamakany and her retinue already knew that the child had come to her.
* You mean it's not true what I say. Do you want to tell me that the kid hasn't been here all this time? All right, I'll search all around here. You will see if we find him what will happen to you. You'll be charged with rap, forcible confinement. She said in her usual temper and reckless impatience.

Yet, Suwo was trying to explain the circumstances of the child's arrival without having contributed to it. But through Mamakany's reaction Suwo understood that she did not exactly know whether the child had come to her or not. And since she knew that the prince was already far away, she did not hesitate to tell her boss lady to search.

* You can search everywhere here, she said.
* Good! Come in, Mamakany ordered her retinues. Search everywhere here to get my child out of this witch hand, she yelled to finish.

The search began immediately; an easy exercise considering the size of Suwo's ​​house and the things that were there. After having turned everything upside down, they ended up finding the clothes that Tugna was wearing when he arrived at his mother's house.

* Send me this outfit. This is the proof that my child is here and nowhere else. She yelled again.
* I tell you, my queen, to look throughout this village to see if anyone has seen a stranger child in my home here. I am here with my two children only. Or if you see a mere trace of your child. The dress you see here, I came with it as a souvenir. You know why, and I know why. And I know you know why I know. I also know that you know why I know that you know.
* Yes I know.

These words created doubt in the heart of the queen by the firmness with which Suwo pronounced them.

- So, can you help us?

- Now, I doubt I can do much about this affair between the noblepersons. Nevertheless, I remain convinced that what must be will be. And what must not be, will never be. Thanks for your visit. I wish you a safe return. Extend my greetings to Queen Gnalen, my big sister Wuria, when she come back, I hope; and all those that will remember me, said Suwo as if to send visitors away without offering them food. Dawn was already approaching.

Mamakany says nothing about Wuria whom she thought had been dead for a long time. The return was decided on the spot. Mamakany asked her troop to follow her without abandoning Tugna's shirt that she was holding mechanically in her hand.

After a few days of unenthusiastic trotting, the emissaries arrived in Narenkabadu where the atmosphere was even more than gloomy.

* No news? Inquired the king, without responding to his wife's greeting.
* No. Except this outfit we saw with Suwo.
* What? Had you gone to look for the child or his clothes? I need my child and not his clothes, reacts the king without being interested in this clue which was however very significant insofar as it was the proof of the passing of the prince at Suwo’s home.
* Say our child, all of us. We have the same concern. Reacted Mamakany.
* You are the one who knows whether he is our child or not. He said with rebuff.
* All right. I am leaving, in fact. Conceded, the queen in the light of the tension created by that dispute which was taking a worrying pace.

Since that moment, it was smacking of heresy between the king and his favourite wife. Their relationship was only going from bad to worse. The king instructed his Grand Counsellor to thank all those who contributed to the effort of searching for the lost prince and also inform them that the search was suspended sine die. That was done as recommended.

Since then, the break appeared to be real in the relationship between Famoro and his favourite wife, on the one hand, between him and the other courtiers on the other. His contact with people was reduced to simple customary greetings that were repeated every morning.

The potentate of Simandu had almost become amnesiac, after having convinced himself that all the efforts made had been wasted. That is how he entrusted the management of the current affairs of the kingdom to the Grand Counsellor to give himself time to think about the measures to be taken.

This delegation of power, which did not say its name, did not make everybody happy in the king's immediate entourage. Some considered it as upsetting, especially, his younger brothers who found themselves pushed aside in favour of an outsider. This interference of the Grand Counsellor was intolerable for them, hence, the source of a latent joust in the courtyard with unpredictable consequences.

Very far from Narenkabadu, in Turu with Mamakany's parents, the disappointment was very great. For the king and his wife, the loss of their grandson was conceived differently. For the former, it was the loss of all hope based on a possible seizure of the immense wealth of the kingdom of his son-in-law when the reins of power would have passed to his grandson. For the latter, the disappearance of the child of her only daughter sounded like the bell toll for her offspring. So the happiness brought by a grandson was lost forever. In this circumstance, they were far from suspending the search in Turu, in fact it was gaining momentum.

Mamakany was with her mom in Turu. She had decided to go see her in order to participate in the efforts of search. Given the deterioration of her relationship with her husband, this time she travelled without informing him, let alone asking for his consent. But actually, the king did not need that. His disappointment was bordering on madness.

In Turu where she had arrived after the sunset, her father was neither alerted nor informed of her presence. She wanted to do everything with her mom.

* Is your father informed of your arrival? Inquired Nenegale, as soon as she saw her daughter
* No. I don't want to inform anyone.
* Does this mean that he will not be informed?

- Not at all. I don't want to make his grief worse.

* About your husband?
* Even him. He's so disappointed that he can't stand my gaze. I want us to see your seer. Said the queen-daughter.

They immediately took the road to go see Thierno under cover of the darkness of the night. The latter was awakened with a start by the terrible knocks that the two women were giving at the same time at his door.

* Good evening. What can I do for you, Her Majesty? Worried the seer.
* We come to seek your wisdom, as usual. Assured Nenegale.
* I am surprised that Princess Mamakany arrives here without everyone knowing about it.
* You're right. But this time, no one will be informed, even her father.
* Really? All right. I’m listening to you, my sovereign.
* Thanks. It is with a deep regret that I inform you of the disappearance of my daughter's child. Everything has been done by her husband to find him, in vain. The only hope left is in you. That's why we’ve come to you so that you can do everything to put us on his trail. I know you can.
* Thank you for your confidence. I will do everything in my knowledge to satisfy you, He said, taking down his satchel which was hanging on the wall.

Before beginning his geomantic manoeuvres, he asked about Kassim's fate.

* Everything was done as agreed and with the utmost discretion. Said Mamakany.

Thuerno poured the sand which was contained in his bag on the ground, spread it, and began to make dotted lines and esoteric figures there, then said:

* The child is living and is safe and sound. He said before observing the pure sand for a long time, better scrutinizing the figures. Hum! What are you saying? I know this is the outward journey, so this one can only be the return. But, why is the return way larger and above all, much larger than the outward one? I don't believe it. Murmured the seer.

He took long time in this position without looking at neither the queen-mother nor the queen-daughter who were staring at him with wide-open eyes without interrupting him. He continued.

* But, it's amazing! A child who turns the barrel of the gun against his father. I do not understand.

He turned to the queens, looked at them for a long time, and shook his head.

* What's the wrong? Talk to us now. We are dying of anguish. Said Nenegale.
* I told you earlier that the child is alive and safe. I see that there is a very powerful hand behind his disappearance. A supernatural hand that no one can thwart. Me, I can't do anything about it. In fact, anyone who ventures in this direction exposes himself to a great danger. However, what is certain is that he will come back, and in an eminent way. I ask you to go and wait for the time to tell us what no one else knows today. He concluded.

The two women left quietly without saying a word to each other. The case was taking a turn that was slipping out of their understanding. The return of the princess to her husband was organized as on her arrival. The failure of the efforts made both in Simandu and in Turu was accepted with the suspension of all searching operations.

Meanwhile, the prince was beginning his adventure to an unknown destination after his stay with his mother. He had already passed by many villages where he managed to infiltrate the group of young people of his age where he was claiming to be pursued by his enemies. He was succeeding to convince these young people that no one else should know of his presence except his friends. These young people who unanimously were sharing his pain were giving him protection and food. He was resuming the journey the next day.

After one month of trekking in uncertainty and illusion, the exhausted little adventurer met a woman on the threshold of a village who was leaving for the farm. This fortuitous meeting was to mark his destiny indelibly.

* What's your name, handsome boy? Asked the woman to retain the prince.
* My name is Kerfalla. Said Tugna trying to conceal his true identity.
* My name is Kurany. Said the woman before continuing. Where do you come from?
* I come from Boidu.
* I see you are traveling alone.
* Yes.
* About your parents? Are they dead?
* Mom… dad…, Tugna remained agape.
* Come. Follow me. I will accommodate you. Don't be afraid. Said the woman who already had guessed that the little boy had problems. She held him by his hand. They went to the field together.

They didn't talk about the child's life for the rest of the day. In the evening, when they returned home, the child was introduced to the neighbours as a nephew who had come for a stay. It was when the night was advanced that the new guardian of Tugna who answered henceforth to the name of Kerfalla woke him up to begin the debate. Tugna, who was expecting this exercise, had already planned what to say to completely conceal his true identity.

* Tell me now Kerfalla, how could you find yourself alone on this dangerous road? You’re taking a great risk, don't you know that?
* I know. But I was coming with my mother. We arrived in a valley where there were several very threatening wild animals. Suddenly, a feline rushed towards us. That's how we scattered, and I climbed a big tree. From the top of that tree I saw the animal devouring my mother like a hungry cat on its prey. I screamed, cried out, "leave my mother! Leave my mother!" It was just eating my mother. When they all disappeared into the forest, I slowly got down continuing on my way. That's why I ended up being alone. Tugna explained.
* Where are you going, then?
* We were going to my father’s village; but I no longer know the name of this village.
* About your daddy. Asked the woman after a long sigh.
* My dad, I didn't know him. He died when I was just a baby, according to my mother. Now I was going with my mother to his village, the name and location of which he had told my mother. But I don't know them.
* Where were you from? I mean your place of residence.
* I told you that we come from Boïdu, a village very far from here in Simandu. We were stopping in villages to do some work for the people in order to get something to eat along the way.

The woman was therefore sure that Tugna, having no parents and not knowing where he was going would now be at her mercy. She had three children, two boys and one girl, who was the youngest. She was the first to take an interest in Tugna to get to know him.

* Mom, who is this boy? I like him.
* He is a little slave that I have just bought. He's your slave.
* No, he's my slave. Said her elder brother. The latter had apparently the same age as Tugna.
* Who says he's your slave? Somebody who can beat both of you, even together. Said the oldest of the three.
* No! He dares not beating you. A slave never beats his master, even if that one is small. That act has a very serious consequence for him. Warned the woman indirectly to the attention of Tugna who was listening with great attention. He understood the meaning of these words without being afraid of them.

Tugna's life in his new family began, not with the status of a child, let alone a prince, but as a slave like his former groom in his father's courtyard. He was committed to all the tasks, some more sordid than the others. He had daily to look for firewood, do the laundry, to watch on the animals among other occupation. His arrival had relieved the woman's children of their daily burdens. They had nothing else to do but walking here and there.

This inhuman treatment of Tugna by his boss lady ended up irritating her neighbours. One of them decided to react. She called Tugna for a discreet chat.

* Kerfalla, my son, I know that you are suffering in the hand of this woman. I see that you do not have enough to eat, and the work is hard for you alone. But as for the moment, I can't help it, all I can tell you is to come and eat at my house whenever you want. You can do whatever you want here.
* Okay. Agreed Tugna.

He wasn't actually complaining. He thought these were the obligatory passages to acquire wisdom.

* Think of me as your own mother. My children are your full siblings. I have six. They are bigger than your boss lady's. If she gets mad, I know how to handle it. We know each other in this village. She's a shrew. If I take a stand, she won't be able to do anything against you. Do not be scared. It was this witch who ate her husband and his brothers. She may try the same thing against you. But I'm here. You can rely on me. We all know how to manage in this occult science.

From that day on, every time Tugna had come from the bush, he used to go straight to that woman he was calling mom. He used to eat there; to take bath there and sometimes even spend the night there.

Tugna's boss lady did not realize this fact until a little late for the simple reason that nothing was of interest for her about the prince except his hard work. Since he was carrying out the tasks assigned to him with dexterity, there was no problem. But as soon as she realized that her slave was receiving favourable treatment from her neighbour, the reactions were quick to come out. The cuffs, insults and reprimands multiplied towards Tugna. But he was saying nothing to the nice woman however; he took a little distance from her to spare the sensitivity of his boss lady.

When she noticed that the prince was starting to become less frequent at her home, she called him to inquire about his motives.

* I see that my boss lady is not happy with our relationship. I don't want to compromise your relationship. Said the prince.
* No. Do not be afraid. I'll take care of it. From now on I will mind her reactions.

A few days later, the woman witnessed a scene of the prince being beaten by his boss lady. Immediately, the woman reacted vehemently:

* Stop traumatizing this boy. You act like you don't have kids. You're too mean, you witch! But if you try to eat this boy, he will be a big lump that will stick in your throat. You know me. I will do anything to stop you.

The woman said nothing. It's as if she was somewhat surprised by this reaction. She got a guilty conscience.

This reaction alleviated the mistreatment Tugna was suffering from his boss lady. From there, he understood that not all the women were as wicked as his boss lady; that others were able to offer the same treatment as his own mother. He agreed with his mother who once said that far from your family there can be women, men, boys and girls who can serve as mothers of fathers or brothers and sisters.

Tugna thus spent three years from the outset in fatigue-duty and convict labour. One day everything was to change or at least turn upside down. The prince, after starting the day in the field where he cleared good plots, he looked for a big bundle of wood which he put in front of his boss lady's hut. He passed to go watch out the cattle without having eaten as; in fact, he had found nothing to eat. In the evening, due to fatigue or certainly due to hunger, he was unable to bring all the animals back into the pen. A heifer had managed to fool its vigilance and escaped.

Unfortunately for the prince, his boss lady had to pass for one of her routine checks in the pen that evening. She wanted to know if there was any missing among her animals. After a quick count, she saw that there was an ox missing. The prince had watched out the oxen for three years without registering any missing. One could imagine a margin of tolerance on the part of his boss lady. That was not knowing that woman. The gunpowder was on fire. She burst into flames when she entered the house. Without addressing Tugna, she went straight to his adoptive mother who was her de facto rival whenever Tugna was concerned.

* You who are ready to react whenever this child creates problem. Go look in my pen to see for yourself what he did today.
* What has he done? Asked the woman with a conciliatory tone, thinking that Tugna had done a mess.
* Go see if my black heifer is in the pen. Maybe it has gone to cause damage to someone and put me in unnecessary expenses. But if this is the case, it is he who knows how he will repair this damage. I have nothing to pay to anyone.
* Listen. Since he’s watching out your animals, how many times has he caused damage that has cost you expenses?
* No. We need not to count. Even one time is enough, because he should not cause damage to anyone in caring out his duties. That’s the rule.
* Is that why you're yelling as though he had killed someone? How many times have your own children made you repair the damage your animals have caused to farmers? For three years this child has been watching out your animals without even once causing harm to anyone.
* Now he has.
* You have to be indulgent towards him as it's his first time.
* I knew that you were going to react like this. But you have to know that this boy is a slave. You can't compare him to my children who are noble ones. He has no room for error.
* But he can't do anything beyond his means. You're not giving him enough to eat. You should know that he is not a slave as you like to say. It was the wild animals that devoured his mother that is why he found himself alone on the road. The same thing can happen to you.

Tugna's boss lady thought she was the only one to have this information. She was both surprised and outraged.

* Now I have the proof that you are in a scheme against me. You’re telling each other everything. But he will see tonight if he does not bring my cow back. She said before turning to Tugna. You will know me today. It’s I who brought you here. Now you got another gardian. But it's over for you. I'm asking you to bring it back right away otherwise you'll see what I'm talking about.

The threat of the woman was clear, and the prince measured it at its fair value. The solution was to resume his journey. He certainly had what he was looking for. He waited until his boss lady had gone to bed to go see his adoptive mother.

* I have to go now. I will leave after bringing the animal back to the pen. It's time for me to leave. I thank you for your kindness. You proved that my mother was right when she told me that I could find mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters wherever I go. I will tell her.
* So your mom is not dead? So where are you going?
* I am going where I was going when I met my boss lady. My mother and my father live well and truly. I am following the normal path of my destiny. I'll be back. I take you as my third mother. My name is not Kerfalla. My name is Tugna, the prince of wisdom. Remember this name. You will understand the rest when the time comes. Don't fear for me. My destiny is traced by a very powerful being. More powerful than anything you can imagine.

The woman stared at him for a long time. Held his hand; hugged him to her chest and said:

* I wish you all the happiness.

Without saying a word, the little boy left. He found the heifer just in front of the entrance of the pen, he pushed it in the pen before continuing on his way. The darkness served as a cover to conceal him while his boss lady was sleeping with her fists closed.

In the morning, his boss lady woke up and immediately went to see if the little boy had carried out her order. It was hours later that she noticed the child's absence. She began to worry, not really for his fate but for the work that was not yet done. She went straight to Tugna's adoptive mother to complain.

* Do you know where Kerfalla is gone? Since this morning, I haven't seen him even though he was supposed to be in the field by now and later to go watch out the oxen.
* No. I don't know, said the woman a little dryly.
* Maybe he has been bitten by a snake. Or maybe he’s fled or…, she nit-picked.
* Listen, this child is far from what you think he is. He told me that his parents are living and well. That he is following his destiny.
* Who does not follow his destiny, then? Retorted the woman who didn’t want to be influenced by the words of the foster mother of her slave.
* It's not the same thing, for him, it's premeditated. He promises to come back sooner or later. But in reality, he didn't tell me where he was going.
* Well, let him go. I don’t care! She said desperately.

The prince was walking day and night. He used to sleep wherever the night was meeting him. He was making friends and acquaintances wherever he was passing. After three months of trekking, the destiny of the child once again had to be clarified and determined. It all started with a torrential rain that fell on the whole region one night. In the darkness of that night, aggravated by the tornado, Tugna could not see where he should set foot. He came to a river whose depth could not be estimated by him. He threw himself directly into it.

The current of water, which was very strong, carried him violently downstream. He was at risk of drowning when he clung to a tree branch that was nearly submerged by the flood. The branch in his hand, he took the momentum, and then swam in crawl to reach the other shore.

The ordeal was tough. He ran into the valley, climbed a hill to the top to watch the rising water. He could see the expanse of water by the lightning that its surface was refracting. The water was just rising, because it was just raining. Finally, the water covered the entire area of ​​that vast plain.

With steely courage he strode through the darkness. The lightning served him as light and the thunder held him as interlocutor. He continued to walk until he came to another plain that was stretching as far as the eye could see. Dawn was not yet near. He imagined with concern that there must again be a river.

He continued to walk despite the fear in his stomach. Exactly, as what he was fearing he saw through the lightning a body of water which extended in the plain. Tugna looked from left to right to find shelter. He told himself that there are always fields in the plains, and that there are always huts to shelter the cultivators during their hours of rest or of eating. He was not making mistake; there was indeed a field in which there was a hut. Very happy, he headed for that hut to be able to rest for the rest of the night, because it was no longer far from dawn.

Once in the pied-à-terre, he immediately took off his water-soaked rags and lay down on the bare ground. He fell asleep immediately chilled with cold and stricken with fatigue. After a few hours of sleep, Tugna was awakened by a strange noise which was reaching him a little far away. He looked in all directions, and then noticed that stalks of rice were waving as if by a light wind. He wondered inwardly what it could be. The rain had completely ceased along with the accompanying wind.

It is easy to guess what can crawl in a rice field in the middle of a plain by a river. “It must be a crocodile,” he imagined. But he couldn't do anything. He closed his eyes thinking: ‘‘come what may’’. A few minutes later, he felt the large reptile's claws tickling him. Then it took him in its mouth; lifted him squarely in the air and headed for the river.

The crocodile crossed the valley at high speed and threw itself into the river, plunged at a dizzying speed towards the depth. Tugna was feeling the different layers of the water of the river through their temperatures: from a fresh layer, he reached a lukewarm to finish with another very cold layer. All this happened in less than a minute. That allowed the child to hold his breath without suffocating. After this layer, the crocodile began to climb to the other side.

On the other side of the bank, it entered a burrow which was a wide hole that was rising out of the water where the reptile had made a large gallery. It was in this gallery that he deposited the prince, then immediately retraced its steps. When the little boy opened his eyes he couldn’t see anything in the intense darkness. He began to crawl through this gallery without knowing where to go. His hands touched animal remains, other crocodile’s preys. He already knew what was awaiting him.

The gallery was wide, but one could suffocate in it after a few hours. The prince did not admit defeat. He remembered one of his mother‘s sayings, ‘‘if you lose courage, you will have lost everything’’ He crawled to the end of the burrow to lie down there. He could still feel the claws and fangs of the reptile on his body. Desperate, he lay down to await the inevitable return of his captor. From there, he thought of his mother and said the following words:

I think of my mother

In my bitter life.

In response to your love

I preferred a long stay

I preferred an absence

In the silence.

For your loneliness

I had no concerns.

I think of my mother

In my bitter life

For lack of mother

I met a shrew.

Deprived of your shade

My life became dark.

Now I'm in pain

At the bottom of the abyss.

I think of you, my mother

In this bitter situation.

You, tree woman.

Be a haven for me.

Woman of the river and the stream

Of axe and bundle.

I think of my mother

In my bitter life.

You who tell me stories

Which put my worries in oblivion.

Between your children you make judgments

Always with dedication.

For us, you become a child

To make us happy.

Mom, I beg your pardon,

To bind your cord to me.

To extend your hand to me

To get me out of the raptor's mouth.

Accept, mom, my whining

In this sheepish situation

I love my mother

You who tolerate me

I'll take you out of your loneliness

To put you in gratitude.

A few moments later, when he was beginning to suffocate, he felt pieces of earth falling on him. They were dropping from the top of the burrow. He stared desperately into the darkness without seeing anything. And then the pieces kept falling on him. He climbed still further towards the summit hoping to find a ventilator there. Without seeing anything, he heard a stridulating. He thought it must be a cricket. So he shouldn't be far from the surface.

He was right; there was an emergency exit that the reptile had arranged to be able to breathe and especially to flee in case of threat. This is often the case in all underground shelters. Luckily, the insect, which had been disturbed by the flood, was digging a new burrow there. It was that one that fell on the thin surface that the reptile had left which no one could see.

He began to scratch with his fingernails deploying the little that was remaining of his strength. He widened the cricket's hole and began to take deep breaths of fresh air. This cool, pure oxygen gave him extra strength to dig. He redoubled his efforts to be able to get out before the crocodile's arrival, which was certainly imminent.

The hole widened to allow him to stick his head out. He then put his head out and used his last energy to push the earth with his shoulders, and managed to extricate himself from the hole covered in firth like a small snake coming out of the hatching egg. He crawled, using his arms which were already free.

On the surface of the earth, Tugna noted that the water had withdrawn from the entire plain. He sat down to recover for a bit. Exhausted by hunger and the hard work he had just done, underpinned by the fresh air he was resolutely inhaling, Tugna fell into an irresistible sleep. And without detour, he literally lay down near that orifice without worrying about the certain return of the crocodile.

The crocodile, being presumptuous for the safety it thought having in its gallery where he used to leave his prey to starve, did not rush to come back from his lookout. This weather, not only allowed Tugna to deepen his sleep, but also to be discovered by a renowned hunter of the region.

Dankabaly, the hunter was walking on the edge of the plain in search of game after that torrential rain. From a distance, he saw something lying on the edge of the river. At first he thought it was a crocodile. He got into a firing position while advancing slowly towards his target. As he was progressing, he realized that it was rather a human being. He thought it was a dead by drowning. He put away his gun and then rushed towards what he believed to be a dead body. When he got to the side, he shook him slightly to make sure that he was indeed dead. But to his amazement, he found that the child was sound asleep. The child opened his eyes. He seemed to be disturbed in his sleep.

* What are you doing here? Where do you come from? What is your name? Asked the hunter without waiting for the stranger to answer.
* I was resting. I'm from here. He said, pointing at the hole, then continued. My name is Kemo.
* How do you come from here? From this hole?
* Yes. He said calmly.

The hunter thought the child was a devil. With the courage worthy of a hunter, he sat down beside him, to fully understand the nature of his interlocutor.

* So explain to me. What happened? I can help you.
* You can help me but on condition that it is free.
* What do you mean?
* I mean that I will no longer agree to become someone's slave. Said Tugna with a calm tone.

These words surprised the hunter. He did not let the child understand his surprise. He then told himself that he must be a human.

* I do not need a slave. I am just a hunter. I'm not a rich man even less a chef. I have no slaves. You can stay assure.

The hunter understood that the little boy had problems but did not insist on, sparing his susceptibility.

* Do you have children? Asked, the prince.
* Yes I have one. He is apparently younger than you.
* About your wife?
* She died when my son was just a baby. I have not yet decided to remarry.
* For what?
* I don't want another woman to poison my relationship with my son. If I marry another woman, it is possible that she will make my child suffer, even though I love him very much. I was waiting until he grows up before looking for a new wife. Now that he is grown up, I will soon remarry.
* You are right. Can you promise to let me go as soon as I express the desire?
* You have my word of honour. You can leave whenever you will want to and go wherever you will want to, without any objection on my part.
* All right. I accept.

They took the path to go to the hunter house after the latter had girded the hip of the child with a flap which descended to the level of his knees. They followed each other without saying a word. Hunting was cancelled. They travelled a long distance before reaching to the foot of a hill.

* There, is my house. We are almost there. Said the hunter, pointing at a small hut perched at the top of the hill. Tugna followed him arms swinging without saying a word.

After a few minutes, they arrived at the door of Dankabaly's hovel. The leaf of the door was made of *kirini* (ingeniously woven reeds) that was hanging from one side of the door to which it was tied by a rope. This rope was passing through a hole dug in the wall as a hinge. A long stick which was passing through another rope tied in the middle of the leaf of the door, and placed askew against the wall, prevented the door from opening in by the wind. The roof was covered with badly plaited thatch. The hunter grabbed the stick, turned it upright, and the door opened noiselessly. They entered.

The interior of the hut was cool and dark. A bamboo Sofa with no cover and a small stool were the only furniture visible in it. They sat down without saying a word to each other, and the hunter went out immediately without telling his stranger where he was going. He retraced his steps with some firewood. He lit the fire in the ash hearth and invited Tugna to come and warm himself. Then he put a pot on it to warm the water for the bath. Then he took out some tubers in a bag that was hanging on the wall, buried them under the fire. Meals were getting ready.

* About your son? Asked Tugna.
* He'll soon be here. Whenever I have to go for night hunting, he sleeps elsewhere for fear of evil spirits.
* Are there many here?
* No. But, nothing should be ruled out, as he is alone. But, together with you, you will have nothing to fear.

The roasting tubers were producing a thick smoke pungent smell which made the unaccustomed little stranger breathless. He decided to go outside to get some fresh air. While on his way out he met with the son of the hunter who was coming from where he had spent the night. The boy stared at him with astonishment without saying anything.

* Who is this boy, papa? He asked his father as soon as he entered the hut.
* He's your big brother. I got him from another woman before I married your mother.
* What's his name?
* Kemo.

After this short conversation, of which Tugna lost no word, the hunter took out the bucket of warm water to send it into the fence that was serving as bathroom. He asked Tugna to go take bath. That one took bath very well, removing the mud that was everywhere on his body, then returned to the hut. The hunter gave him an old garment of his child to wear, and he served him well roasted tubers.

* Eat and rest well. You must be very tired.

As soon as he finished gorging himself with the tubers, he lay down in bed on his back without talking to anyone. This allowed him to scrutinize the interior of this small hut. He saw that the frame was made of bamboo, well tied with lianas. It was blackened with soot formed by the smoke which was rising there almost permanently. There were fetishes made of skins, skeletons and amulets of all kinds hinging all over the wall made of adobe. In addition to the fetishes, there were animal hides such as deer, gazelle and impala antelope which numbered in dozens. There were also a few of buffalo and boa conscripter. The table was completed by four hides of panther and two of lion. Game bags and a fetish outfit were clearly visible. It was the fetish outfit that particularly caught Tugna's attention. It was stuffed with carnivorous fangs of all kinds, and a skeleton of a red monkey and that of a black cat. These details were given to him by the hunter himself. Naturally, a herd of dogs were shuttling between the outside and the inside of the hut.

On the smooth floor painted with cow dung, there was a clay court stool right near the door. There was also a covered canary and two large jars, one of which was filled with grain and the other with stinking rags. In a few minutes Tugna had finished reviewing all the contents of Dankabaly's hut. Apparently there was nothing left to see.

From there he thought of the rich rooms of his parents. He saw the opulence exhibited there in excess. He noticed how great the difference was between them and that of his lodger. He felt an injustice the basis of which was slipping out his young mind. He remembered that each year the population was paying taxes in kind and in cash to the account of the throne. Others were working in the fields and the plantations of the king or supervising his livestock. He wondered why others should work to give to others or on behalf of others without pay. Why were some slaves? Why did they alienate their freedom? Were they born slaves? Why did they devote themselves body and soul to the service of his father? Were they born to suffer? Didn't they have a right to happiness like everyone else? '' No that's not true. I have been made slave while I was born prince,'' he exclaimed inwardly. He thought that something was wrong with the management of the world. Was he on a mission to change that? He couldn't tell. But he knew that if he had the panacea, he would have changed everything. “I promised my mother to come back to save those for whom life was synonymous with suffering. Can I keep this promise? It is my wish.''

These thoughts and many more were keeping Tugna from getting the sleep he needed. He knew that there were many people like Dankabaly including his own biological mother who was suffering martyrdom in her abandoned hut in Moridu. While his father and others of his class had more than they needed. Why that?

In the evening, the hunter who had not exchanged with his makeshift host the whole day, wanted to deepen his acquaintance with him. He lit the hut with a lantern made of a recipient filled with palm oil in which was dipped a long wick of rag at the end of which he set fire.

* Kémo, can you tell me now what you were doing by the river? I will know how to keep the secret. Or please, tell me where you want to go.
* Don't be in a hurry. Everything comes with the time.
* That’s it. You're right. Good! I inform you that tonight, I have to leave for a hunting party again. You have to sleep with your brother here. I will be back very early in the morning.
* No problem. He said.

Exactly, at night, while the children were sleeping, the hunter took the hunting equipment and went out without disturbing them. The two children spent the whole night without saying anything to each other despite the manoeuvres of the hunter's son to start conversations with his new brother. Tugna, who had a lot on his heart because of the injustice he was seeing in life, was not in a good mood to talk to someone.

As expected, Dankabaly came back very early in the morning from hunting. The hunting was a total success, although he did not bring a new child like the previous one. He brought a big deer on his shoulder, and his bag was stuffed with several carcasses of small game.

* Get up to help me skin these animals.

The children woke up with a start. They ran to wash their faces while the hunter was making the fire. Tugna found good humour in this atmosphere which was a novelty for him. The atmosphere became good-natured in the hut. Tugna, always, in his shred, participated from start to finish in the butchering of the animals with joy.

After this work, Dankabaly rushed his son with a big leg to the neighbouring village to exchange it for cereals and condiments. The child was accompanied by Tugna who was very happy.

On their return the hunter made a good dish with a lot of bush meat. Everyone ate their fill. Tugna, changing mood, a good atmosphere was created in Dankabaly's hut. The two children, who thought of themselves as brothers, were doing everything together.

Tugna, who was observing his foster father with meticulousness, noted with admiration in the latter the characteristics he was looking for, namely probity, humility, wisdom, temerity and resilience. It was long after that the hunter told him that these virtues are common to all hunters worthy of the name.

Months later, when Tugna got used to his foster father, he got the courage to ask him some questions.

* How do you kill all these animals in the bush? He asked.
* You're curious, aren't you? But I can't tell you everything here, it would take too long because not all the animals can be killed in the same way.
* Tell me a scene, at least.
* How curious this boy is! Listen, there is the trap, there is the lookout, the chase with the dogs or alone, the battue, etc. If you really want to have ideas on this, you come with me tonight.
* All right. I'm coming with you.

The prince spent the rest of the day in anxiety, not knowing what a hunting party was like. The night fell in that state. The hunter sent his child to sleep elsewhere as he had to go hunting with Tugna. As usual, he had to do the rituals before going out. He took down his bag which was hanging on the wall. In this bag he took out several small pebbles of various shapes and colours. Some were round, oval or flat. Some were black, brown or white; but they were all very smooth. He sat in a corner of the hut, and threw them on the ground, then began scrutinizing them in relation to their positions.

* You never lied to me, the knower of future days. He said, and then shuffled them again, still murmuring words that were barely audible.

After that scene, he went near larger black stone, the presence of which was not known to the prince, in a corner of the hut. He took a red kola, cut a large piece of while murmuring esoteric logorrhoea. All that the prince could decipher was this sentence '' *If on hunting, I will kill, either the male of the deer, the antelope, the gazelle, the buffalo or the elephant, as soon as I'll give you this kola, may the sky feel it and the earth feel it'*', then he crushed it and sprinkled the residue on the stone. As soon as the kola touched the stone, they heard a burst in the sky, and the hut was filled with smoke. "*I know you for this*," He said. Tugna took fright.

* Do not be afraid. That's what I always do before I go out. But, I often do it when you've fallen asleep. Today, I wanted you to attend the ritual to get the full experience of hunting. I see the hunting will be successful tonight. Said the talkative hunter, beaming with joy.
* You only talk about male. About the female, should they not be killed?
* No some can be killed. Not all of them. Some are protected. It's forbidden to kill some females as well as the young ones. I prefer the male.

After this liturgy, Tugna and his foster father got on the way for hunting. They went directly to a mountain which was not far from their dwelling. Dankabaly was using a luminary that he was wearing on his head. From the foot of the mountain, in the light of his headlamp, Dankabaly saw an animal crawling in the grass. The animal was trying to escape the sight of the hunter who was already seeing it clearly. Immediately the hunter rushed in the direction of the animal, which was crouching behind a bush, then unloaded his gun on it. The animal did not move. The hunter ran to go slay it. He saw that it was a fox. It was the first victim.

* It's not bad already. He said, putting the animal in his bag. Often, I catch them using the trap. The kid said nothing. He didn't know what the hunter was calling trap.

The hunting continued. A few hours later, the hunters arrived in a valley. Dankabaly, who was walking cautiously, noticed an unusual track on the path. He sent his hand behind to stop Tugna from advancing. He bent down to take a good look at the track.

* It's probably the hoof prints of a buffalo. They are the same size and the steps are equal, so it's a single animal. He muttered, taking a straw, he broke it in order to estimate the surface covered by the hooves. He measured with his hand the lengths of the steps. He found that they were less than two spans. It must be a big buffalo. It was walking slowly. He shouldn’t be far from us. He estimated the distance between the hind legs. It must be a bull or a female in advanced gestation. I wish it was a male, because, as I told you earlier, we don’t kill all the females. He said, addressing to Tugna. He knew that the latter was following him with interest as a good student.
* How do you determine if it is a bull or a pregnant cow? Asked Tugna for the first time they had been out.
* You know, if it's a bull, the hind legs are spread apart by the testicles. If it is a female in advanced gestation, the legs are spread apart by the udder. He said succinctly before saying. Let's go and above all let's be careful.

He was going while continuing to look on both sides of the road in search of the slightest track of the game. This is how he saw some grasses cut. He looked at the tips of the grasses to see how long they had been cut.

* I see that these grasses have certainly just been grazed by the same buffalo. He must be around. We have to go carefully so as not to alert him.

After a few steps, the hunter knelt down and put his ear to the ground. He took some time in that position while Tugna was standing behind watching him. Then he straightened up.

* The animal is right near. I heard the sound of an animal grazing. You must follow me quietly.

A few minutes later, he climbed a tree and sat astride in the fork and asked Tugna to climb another tree which was not far from his. The child complied instantly. The hunter shone the light in the direction of the animal, which immediately became visible. The animal raised its head to look in the direction from where the light was coming. It was the ideal position. A detonation was let out from the barrel of the homemade gun. The animal jumped up and began bellowing two or three times, furiously searching for the shooter. The hunter immediately began to reload his gun with a ball of sponge, three fingers of gunpowder, then large balls in pieces of iron, and the rag all compacted with the help of a well-suited iron rod; and you were done. He made little cries to attract the animal towards him. He unloaded it on it again, and the murderous projectiles hit it head-on. It froze in a pool of blood, gasping. As a precaution, the hunter remained in his position for a good few minutes, because this goblin animal, sometimes when hit by a bullet, can lie down pretending to be dead to fool the inexperienced hunter. When the hunter was convinced that the buffalo was dead, he went down to cut its throat. Then he cut off the tail, put it in his bag, and asked his companion to come down.

* Let's go home. He ordered.
* Is the hunting over?
* Yes, soon it will be daylight. We're going to alert people to come and help us butcher the animals here.

But the hunting was not yet over, because on the descent into the valley, Dankabaly noticed a screeching of birds.

* Stop, there must be something. These birds never screech for nothing.

They waited a good thirty minutes to understand why the birds were screeching. Suddenly, they saw a big panther emerging from the grass, crossing the road dragging an antelope it had just killed. The antelope was so big that the panther had trouble dragging it to a safe place where it was going to devour it peacefully. The hunter got into battle order. He literally threw down his bag, turned off the lamp and began to crawl in the direction of the feline, ordering Tugna not to move, because this animal is dangerous. He cautiously followed the panther to its place of entrenchment which was not very far. It had dropped its catch there to start devouring it. The hunter moved into position to fire. In the light of the rising dawn, he could clearly see the predator. He aimed at its head and shot at it with a single shot. The feline tried desperately to crawl under the shrubs after a small bound. It was its head that had been completely torn off. He took a relatively short time before going to the animal that was lying in blood. He slaughtered it and the antelope it was trying to devour. He also cut off the panther's tail and put it in his bag, then returned to his apprentice. He had killed two birds with one stone, as they say, the panther and its antelope.

* The hunting was a real success. The fetish had told me well. You are very lucky. We're going home now. He said

At the threshold of the village, Dankabaky took a kind of recorder flute out of his pocket, whistled it three long times, then fired a shot into the air. The sign was known to initiated. It was to announce that he had had a good hunting. Each time a hunter had killed a big game or a dangerous animal, he had to make this sign before entering the village.

All the other hunters rushed to the space reserved for this kind of ceremonies. The ritual dance of the initiated of hunting began immediately. All the hunters circled around to dance, firing intermittent shots into the air. Dankabaly entered the circle and then took out the bag the two tails, that of the buffalo and the panther. The hunters were amazed at his bravery. He indicated the location of these three dead animals. The young people were dispatched to go pick them up.

To reward Dankabaly for his bravery, the village chief offered him one of his daughters in marriage. An offer he accepted with humility and pleasure. Arrangements were made to celebrate this marriage in a great soberness.

Two months passed after this hunting, Tugna was seduced by the practice of hunting. He was marked by the strategies, the spirituality, the solidarity and the humility of his master. This is how he decided to deliver his new intentions to his master and foster father whom he had learned to get used to:

* Dad, how did you become a hunter? He introduced the debate when Dankabaly was narrating one of his many hunting parties to his new wife and children. He was making that with some bluff.
* It was the father of a friend who attracted me in it. He had discovered in me, according to him, the qualities of a worthy hunter.
* And what are those qualities?
* You won't accept them, or at least conceive them unless you really want to become a hunter.
* I want to become a hunter. A great hunter like you. Since our hunting last time, I have begun to admire hunting. I would like you to introduce me to it.
* I swear, my child, that there is no profession as noble and virtuous as hunting.
* You kill innocent animals, however, reacts his wife who was following their conversation.
* No. We don't kill all the animals. We do not kill the parturient females or in gestation or even at childbearing age. They guarantee the renewal of the animal population. We don't kill the little ones. They are the next generation. We bandage injured animals and care for sick ones, and we protect them from predators. We hunt selectively and in accordance with humanitarian morality. We protect the environment by protecting the habitat of animals, because without these habitats animals will certainly migrate to elsewhere or will die. We receive many secrets from the animals, especially the recipes to cure certain diseases. Do you agree with what I'm saying? He said, addressing Tugna.
* It may be true, but I don't know anything about it.
* All right. You will know once you become a hunter. Now, when it comes to the qualities of a worthy hunter, they are many, but the most notable is wisdom. This, by dint of being outside the community all the time and at the same time, observing it with patience and impartiality. And witnessing the unusual scenes in the bush from both animals and humans when on the prowl, the hunter gains much wisdom that no one else can. But he is above all discreet and sober in communication. He is aware of everything but says nothing of what he knows. He makes his judgment without bias and above all without hatred. On the contrary, it is with love inspired by the pity he feels towards the society where people cling to trivialities to the detriment of the essential. The society where everyone blames everyone else for his misfortune without blaming himself, whereas we are most often the source of our own problems. The society where we care more about appearance than reality in order to be taken for what we are not really or more than what we really are. We, hunters are the interface between animals and humans, that is to say, between nature and human society. As much as we protect humans, we protect nature, that is to say, the environment. Nature is our school where the masters are the creatures we observe in their environment *in situ*. We understand that nature is livelier than cities. This is why we are not bored in the bush. When we observe the interactions of beasts, critters and even insects, we realize that they are very intelligent and united. So they deserve our affection, our compassion and our protection.
* Therefore, in order to acquire wisdom, you have to go for hunting? Said Tugna at the end of this presentation in the style of a lecture by Dankabaly.
* Yes. I insist. What I insist on more, is that the hunter is above all a discreet man.

Since that day, Tugna multiplied the outings with his master hunter, just to deepen his knowledge of the techniques and the places of hunting. Appetite comes while eating, they say. Tugna becoming a hunter, one day, decided to go for hunting alone. He thought he could do without his master's supervision.

As it was his first time, he did not stray too far from the village, first for fear of meeting dangerous animals but also of getting lost in the nature. Just after a few kilometres, he settled very high in the branches of a tree with large foliage. He wanted to be sufficiently shielded from the sight of ferocious animals.

After a few hours, when he was beginning to doze, he heard a faint noise under the tree on top of which he was perched. He readied his gun, thinking of the presence of game. But, instead of the game, he was surprised to see the wife of the village chief, the mother-in-law of his foster father, arranging a place to rest at the foot of the tree. He wondered what the hell she was up to there. Afterwards, she lay down quietly under the tree. While Tugna was trying to guess what this woman was doing under the tree, after a short moment he saw a young man coming on tiptoe. He recognized this young man; he was the slave of the husband of the same woman.

Immediately arrived, the two began caressing each other in idyllic positions between two words:

* About your husband? This stupid old man continues his scenes of jealousy still?
* Oh yes. He becomes more and more observant. To get out, I have to find a thousand and one arguments. For the key he is very suspicious now. It looks like someone has tipped him off. Otherwise the other times it was not difficult.
* Say that you are not intelligent. Just be a little more subtle. Tell me; didn't you bring anything for me? You haven't given me anything for a long time, huh?
* My husband is getting stingy these days. He hardly spends his money.
* Stop! It must rather be said that you are no longer as in love with me as before.
* No, that's not true. I love you today more than yesterday. I can't refuse you anything, you know that.
* You lie. You are cheating on me. The slave reacted violently by giving a pair of slaps to the woman.

She began to whine while asking forgiveness from her husband's slave, and promising to bring him money next time.

* Shut the fuck up, you bastard! I'm sick of your broken promises.
* Trust me, for the last time.
* All right.

After this friendly bickering, the slave passed on the woman on a background of mockery against the old chief of the village. After that, they took the way back each on his side. All this happened under the dumbfounded eyes of the young hunter.

Tugna knew this woman; one of the most respected in the village. She was the favourite wife of the respected village chief; the mother of his foster father's wife, therefore, his foster mother. He was expecting betrayal from a woman or a man, but not with a slave or a maidservant, moreover that of her husband or his wife. He said to himself, was it not in reality in such a circumstance that his mother conceived the pregnancy that gave birth to him. He gave up hunting, came down from his hiding place to go home and to go straight to bed without eating anything.

Dankabaly was surprised by this rapid come back of his hunter student. He realized that something was wrong.

* What's wrong? Are you sick?
* No. I’m fine. I have just decided to postpone the hunting of today.
* But you had left, didn't you?
* Yes, it's true.

The hunter understood immediately that the young hunter had seen an unexpected scene.

* You must have seen something, I know. I told you that the hunter encounters many things in the bush. He witnesses many things. Just, he must be discreet. This is the basis of his wisdom. We encounter such an event almost every day. But we, we are accustomed. We don't mind, the hunter said mockingly.
* No, what I saw, no hunter can see that and go on hunting.
* Then go ahead. Tell me what you saw.
* I can't tell you. It is shameful. It is dishonourable.
* It's okay; I already know what it is.
* Then tell me, if you know.
* You must have seen my mother-in-law and her lover, right? Dankabaly said with a smile. He had witnessed such a scene during a hunting party.
* But, you can guess everything except that this sleazy slave can slap such a beautiful, noble-looking woman.
* Of course yes… And you know why?
* Surely it is related to money and an object that she must take with her husband to give it to him.
* And what is this thing? Insisted the hunter.
* That, I don’t know.
* Good! Listen, this whore of a mother-in-law wants to remove the key of her husband's treasure store to give it to this slave of uncertain origin. But, once again, I tell you that the hunter above all else is a discreet man. If it is he who saw it, nobody has seen it. We are not part of this world of lies, and treachery. We are just observers.
* But we can't let this kind of crime to take place. Otherwise, we will become passive accomplices. It is non-assistance to a person in danger.
* I have already alerted the man without mentioning his wife name. He has changed the lock and is becoming very cautious.
* I see. That’s why the lady said that her husband is becoming more and more suspicious.
* Well, that's how we do things. From upstream without damaging people's relationships.

The child began to meditate after the departure of his master. He wondered what would be the fate of the village chief if the slave had gotten hold of this key. He would be destroyed by the fault of his own wife. Especially the one he had put above all other women. What would be the fate of the traitorous woman, herself? Why would the woman be so imprudent towards the boy, Don Juan, pushing the presumptuousness so far as to give him the key to all the treasure of her husband? Why would a man be so reckless with his wife? What excess of confidence would drive a man to give the key of his treasure to a woman be she the favourite? He couldn't find an answer to these questions. The only possible answers were trust and love. He remembered a saying from his mother that **wherever trust and love gain ground, fear and prudence lose ground**. “My mother was right,.” He told himself.

The prince resumed hunting a few days after recovering from his moral shock. He told himself, proving his mother right once again, **that success is achieved through hard work**. Days after the resumption, another no less surprising scene was to strike the young conscience of the prince who had become a hunter. That day, he was hunting in tandem with his master. When they arrived in a field, they saw traces of game. They decided to be on the lookout, because everything suggested that it was the lodging of these animals.

But instead of the game, it was the village *griot* they saw coming hurriedly while murmuring: “*They are so mean, these so-called rich people of the village. They never give, even if you have to starve in front of them; only fine words, never followed by deeds. They want to be the only ones to wear the best clothes, to eat the best foods. That won't work. From now on, I will take for my part, as it is what they want. God does not like people like them. This is not theft. It's only justice done*."

As he was saying this, he was removing sheaves of hand-harvested rice piled on a watchtower. Each time he was taking one, he was putting it in a big bag he had brought for this purpose. He took everything he wanted to take, and headed back briskly, thinking that he hadn't been seen by anyone.

After his departure Dankabaly looked at his pupil then smiled.

* What do you say about that?
* No. I'm no longer surprised at people's dishonesty, but the only thing I can't understand is that while they're hurting others, at the same time they're criticizing them. The last time, when the slave was cheating with the wife of the village chief, he and his lover were cursing the old man, calling him all the names of birds. And this time again, you yourself have seen how the old *griot* treats the one whose property he is stealing. Why not do what they want to do and walk away instead of vilifying their victims, further?
* After hunting, we'll talk about it.Said Dankabaly while adjusting his seat.

Hunting continued until dawn. The two hunters collected their gains and went back home. And the debate resumed around the fire.

* Don't you understand why criminals denigrate their victims? Introduced Dankabaly.
* No.
* You know, my son, human being is the first judge of himself, because he knows best what he does. He knows whether what he is doing is a good or an evil act. And since he knows that evil is rejected by everybody, including himself, in order to be able to justify for himself the evil act he is doing, he must transform it into justice. Otherwise, he will not be able to do it, because his conscience will judge him and prevent him from doing it. You know, **an evil becomes justice when it is wisely done in response to an evil that the perpetrator has suffered. That can either be done by victim, himself or on behalf of him.** It is a clumsy attempt to turn the evil they are doing into justice so that they can justify their act. At this moment their conscience will no longer reproach them.
* Thanks. I understand.

It is this kind of incident, some more moving than the others, that punctuated the many huntings that Tugna carried out during this stay with Dankabaly.

When Tugna felt that he had had, in part, what he needed in terms of wisdom, he thought it was time to continue his adventure. He told his master:

* Thank you very much for your contribution to my training. I intend to leave now. I think I got what I needed to have from you. It is true that our meeting was fortuitous, but it gave me what for which I should have travelled to acquire. Now it's time for me to tell you the truth about me, Tugna said to introduce the talk.

Through this chat, Tugna told his master everything he knew about his own life, starting with his real name, his parents, and the circumstances of his birth. The only aspect he didn't touch was the possibility of him becoming all-powerful ruler of all Farafina and beyond. He, himself had doubts about this possibility.

* I'm happy to have met you. You have great potential. You did well to begin your life with difficulty. It allows you to have your own story, your own past that you will tell people. It is a truth that **no human past can be interesting to tell if it is not made up of moments of overcome difficulties.**  **Every particular story can be a particular source of hope for particular people. That** is why **those who see far foresee**. That's what you’re doing.
* Thanks. I will remember your tales and fables forever, said Tugna.

For five years, Tugna not only learned hunting techniques with Dankabaly, namely the lookout, quarry, battue, rituals, but also many fables and tales. “Tales and fables are the main sources of wisdom for us, the hunters,” Dankabaly was often saying. So he decided to tell one last fable to his former student.

* All right. Now, before leaving, I will tell you a last fable which will be as useful to you as, if not more than, the previous ones. You know that **we remember long time what we hear than what we see**. Dankabaly said to start. ‘‘Once upon a time, a hunter, like us, was chasing a buffalo which he had fatally hit by the bullet of gun in a game-filled forest and had gotten lost. He has been surprised of not being able to find his way back when he couldn't see the injured animal. Although, he knew very well this area, for having hunted there several

times with his colleagues, this man couldn’t find his road to the village. In desperation, he followed a path without knowing where it was leading him. He stayed on this path until he came to a city he had never heard about. It was a very beautiful and big city. But this city had a peculiarity that there were all kinds of wealth in abundance, but no human being except a young girl. That girl was extraordinarily beautiful. And this man was known for his greed. He wanted all for himself. He was seeking everything voraciously. The girl was surprised by this fortuitous visit from the hunter. “What are you doing here, good man? Said the girl. ‘‘I am a hunter. I was hunting when I got lost in an area that I know very well. I was trying to find my way back when I found myself in this beautiful city. But since I arrived here, this is the first time for me to see a human being. I also observe that there are all kinds of wealth here.” ‘‘Ah! Noble hunter, I am the only person living in this city you call a beautiful city. And all the riches you see here belong to me without sharing. The greedy hunter got a heart stroke when he heard the word wealth. He wanted to know how to take advantage of it. "Are you married, where are your parents?" he inquired greedily. “My parents and everyone in this town, all died in a war. I'm not married. I am also looking for a husband with whom I can share all this wealth. “But I have never heard of this war or of this city, even though we are not far from here.” “No, my hunter, you are wrong. You are very far from home. You have lost the knowledge of time and space. “So then, I am quite lost. But I feel good here if I could gain your consent.'’ “My consent? You already have it. I'm nostalgic here." ‘‘You mean you want to get married?" ''Of course; I want to get married, and as soon as possible'' “So what does it take to marry you?” said the hunter. ‘‘To marry me, you don’t need any material, but a little physical effort.’’ ''Which one? I am ready to provide any effort except the material given my current situation.’’ “Now, you have the opportunity to get married cheaply, and especially with the possibility of becoming rich through my wealth.” ''I'm ready.'' “All you have to do is to chase me in the wild. As soon as you get me, I will ipso facto become your wife.’’ ‘‘I am ready, even immediately. By the way, may I know your name?’’ “My name is Dunya” “What a lovely name! Can we start?’ he said *scherzo*. "Won't you rest and eat something?" ‘‘No. I want to start now. I'm in a hurry. Then I can eat as a newlywed.” ''All right; let's go!'’ ‘‘I want you to go and stand at the end of the village, and I will chase you from here. That way I can deploy my strength as a professional hunter.” “No, I stop at a distance where your hand can brush my dress. I don't want you to suffer too much.'’ "As you wish, my dear," said the hunter with a broad smile. “So, ready?” ''Yes!'' ‘‘Hop!’’ The race began with less intensity, the hunter mistaking the girl for an easy prey. But as the race was progressing, the girl proved herself not as a prey, easy or not, but rather as a tenacious contender. The race lasted the whole day through this rich city. Passing through the city, the hunter was discovering wealthy neighbourhoods with high-end buildings. Realizing that all this wealth could come to him, the hunter was redoubling his efforts. And each time the hunter was showing determination, the girl also was doing the same. Towards evening, the hunter started getting hope of reaching his goal for, his hand was seemingly touching the girl's body. It was in that euphoric atmosphere that they arrived at the edge of an abyss whose depth was unfathomable. The young girl, who was expecting this pitfall, had prepared to jump this ditch. That’s how she literally flew to cross the pit. But the hunter who did not know the terrain, and was not expecting such an unpleasant surprise, could not do so much, and as a result, he found himself at the bottom of the abyss. The girl retraced her steps then looked at her unfortunate contender in his misfortune. She said with a Mephistophelian laugh. ‘‘Ah! it's me, Dunya! The world here below. You will look for me throughout your life with all possible greed, when you hope to get your hands on me, death comes. You die with your project. Life is like that. This is the fate reserved for all the greedy, because no one can get me.''

Dankabaly concluded by saying, addressing to Tugna he said:

* Did you understand the meaning of this fable?
* Not entirely.
* Listen. The girl and the wealth constitute the world. The race is the effort that human beings make to acquire these riches. The day is the life span of human beings. The abyss is the death that awaits everyone at the end of his life. It always comes as a surprise to the greedy people. Think about it.
* Thank you for everything you gave me as an education. I will know how to use it in the future. I promise to be grateful to you. You will receive from me all the treatment that a benefactor deserves. You are my second father and my master. Your wisdom will guide me on the right path in my life, I am sure. He said.
* And what do you remember of me with sincerity, Tugna? I want to know if the lesson has been well assimilated. Said Dankabaly pronouncing for the first time the real name of Tugna that the boy had just revealed to him.
* I remember a lot about you especially, as a hunter, my master. Listen to this incantation, then tell me what's lacking:

My master, my father

In pursuit of lions, buffaloes and panthers,

You walk in the bush, the valleys and fallow land.

You are seasoned, reckless and fearless.

But also bold, daring and lucid.

Armed with your gun and your assegai,

You stand on the lookout.

With your gun and your arrows,

You kill antelopes, gazelles and deer.

With the club and the traps.

You kill agoutis, hares and foxes.

My master, my reference,

Armed with courage and patience,

You wait in silence.

When the game seeks to cheat,

You start to curl up.

Extremely clever,

You move like a feline.

You carefully clear the leaves,

Then you close one eye.

You take a deep sigh

Like from the depths

You pull the trigger,

Of your wicked weapon.

The flaming machine,

Let out a thunderous noise.

And the prey agitates while moaning

Immediately you take on a fond look.

My master, my muse

At home, we are waiting for you with greed,

Already suffering from obsession.

Your wife makes good food

For us, foodies.

Proud of your achievement

You behave like a king.

Always in your rag,

You eye the pot of broth.

Children celebrating the feast,

Sing loudly.

My master of hunting and philosophy

You tell your adventure of genius,

The children listen with euphoria.

These long stories of epic,

Are really fantastic.

Is not hunter who wants,

But who can.

* Everything you say is true, prince of wisdom. I am amazed at your intelligence, you have a great soul. Your future will be at the image of this soul.
* What! Did you say, prince of wisdom? My mother called me like that once. May I know why? Tugna wondered.
* It is because you will conquer the power by your wisdom but not by your blood. The rest will be explained to you in time.
* About you, can you tell me what you remember about me? Said Tugna jokingly.
* I remember a lot of things on you. Let me imitate you.

Both ambitious and curious,

Your objective may seem tendentious.

In a great wandering

You advance without circumspection.

Without reluctance or worry

You face all the vicissitudes.

In this incredible adventure,

Which, sometimes seems burlesque,

You carry your backpack

And cross Dion River.

On this path of loneliness,

You make encounters of uncertainty.

You get used to the songs of the birds,

And animal escapades.

In this sibylline situation,

You are firm and taciturn.

Like an eumenes,

You hold on and struggle.

Admittedly, the journey is long

Sometimes under a blazing sun,

Or in very cold nights,

You are drunk with fear.

Certainly, your destination is uncertain.

But there are opportunities for bargains.

You console yourself in soliloquy,

Hoping for a good epilogue.

The Adventurer goes without flaw

Soon, will appear the ventilator

Through which the light will reach you,

And that will be the end of your misery.

* You are wonderful, my father. You are the wisest man I have ever met. I hope to see you again for better opportunities, Tugna said to leave.

As he was walking through the darkness, he was brooding over Dankabaly's words that were ringing in his ears. And his mind was going as far as to the kingdom of his father. He couldn’t imagine what was going on there.

THE RISK OF COLLAPSE OF THE KINGDOM

In Narenkabadu, moral decay was real. The king who was accusing his favourite wife of his misfortune had put that one out of all the activities of the courtyard. She was in a situation of ostracism that was not saying its name. Naturally the other queens could only but applaud this situation they were seeing as justice done.

At the same time, the brothers of the sovereign, Famoro, who were all living outside the royal courtyard, were conferring on the sly to designate a possible successor in the event of the king's death without having had a child. The reason was simple, Famoro, with the age aggravated by the concern for his offspring, presented a mark of very advanced senility.

After numerous meetings, it was decided that his younger brother should be appointed to take over. It was this decision that had to be endorsed by Famoro himself to avoid a fratricidal conflict when the time would have come. The question that remained then was who to bring this decision to Famoro's knowledge without provoking a desperate reaction from him. "*Who shall bell the cat*?" as in the fable, when the mice decided to tie a bell to the neck of the cat to be alerted each time the latter would approach. But who was to tie this bell to the neck of the feline among them without being devoured.

While Famoro's brothers were exploring every possible avenue to bring this decision to his attention without provoking his dreaded wrath, the news of their plan had come a long way. The walls have ears, they say. How had there been leak, whereas the brothers had firmly promised to keep the secret at their level only? One of them had imprudently revealed the project to his wife during an intimate chat:

* Tugna has definitely disappeared. He introduced.
* Ah, this child, how handsome he was. Who knows if he was not been killed by the witches of the courtyard? Said his interlocutor.
* We don't talk about this child anymore. He has disappeared since fifteen years. And no one has heard of him despite all the efforts of each and everyone.
* Indeed, there have been efforts.
* We are exploring other ways for the succession to the throne. Said the indiscreet energumen.
* Which one? Asked the woman logically.
* We have to find someone to replace the big brother in case he dies without having had a child, which seems to be the case. We cannot then remain indifferent to the risk of one day witnessing a predictable fratricidal war in our country. Said the talkative man.
* So, will you be able to find someone of consensus?
* We’ve already found that. It is the big brother Paté. He is the oldest of us. From now on, no one will be excluded from the management of the kingdom. There will be a kind of collegial management. He will only apply what we will have decided in council of the brothers. It remains to inform Famoro of our decision.
* There is the problem!
* I'm telling you out of confidence, huh? Let no one else know until the decision becomes official. It was I who insisted on the discreet nature of the decision. So the leak must not come from my side.

This woman had a close friend who happened to be the maidservant of one of Famoro's underprivileged wives. It was to that one that she revealed the ultra-secret decision of the kingdom. And the maidservant, to acquire the friendship of her boss lady passed it on to her without being able to insist on the secret nature of the decision. The race against time was on for the decision to reach the recipient in the best manner.

But the bet was already lost for the brothers of the sovereign. The queen, in bad conjugal favour, decided to bring the news to her husband without further ado. The woman, without waiting for her turn of night in her husband's room which might never come, asked for and obtained an audience with him:

* I have just learned something serious. Said the queen as soon as she found herself alone with her husband.
* What is that? Said the king with a worried look.
* No, it's really difficult to talk about it for us women who have nothing to do with the problems that only concern the brothers of the royal courtyard.
* No, go ahead. Everything that concerns me also concerns you, as well as all my other women. Tell everything. There is nothing to be afraid of,
* I have learned from a reliable source that your brothers would have decided to have your younger brother succeed you, in the event of your death or proven incapacity.
* What? Repeat that to me.

The woman repeated her declaration without forgetting a single word, while insisting on the relevance and reliability of her source.

* So they have the assurance that I will not have a child. That my son will never come back? Maybe they're involved in his disappearance. Thanks. You can leave now. Let me think about it.

The woman left without the order being repeated. Sometime later, Famoro dispatched an emissary to fetch his Grand Counsellor. When the latter arrived, he spoke after a short greeting:

* I have information to share with you. I ask for your usual sincerity, which I will stick to, because the situation is very complicated. I promise you in advance that you will be consulted on any eventual decision that I will have to take.
* What is this so important information, I am dying of anguish, I was going to say of anxiety. Said the Grand Counsellor.
* I have just been informed that my younger brothers have decided to choose Paté to succeed me after my death. The problem is that I don't know whether to wait until they themselves bring the decision to me or to consider response measures already. Sometimes I tell myself that they are right. That if I do not get child. If Tugna is not found, another successor must be found, because sooner or later I am going to die. I really don't know what to do. I'm listening to you.
* All right, His Majesty. Give me time to think.

After a short time of reflection, the Grand Counsellor returned to see the Sovereign. He had another explanation to the attitude of Famoro’s brothers. For him, if they did not wait for the good will of their big brother to discuss his succession, or even wait for his death to choose his successor, insofar as he would not have children, it is that they had a bad intention. If that conjecture was accurate, then, it is his personal interest as a Grand Counsellor that would be threatened insofar as the new king would choose another Grand Counsellor. He already had the intuition that Famoro‘s brothers had resentment towards him since he had once been chosen by the sovereign to manage the day-to-day affairs of the monarchy during his retirement. Therefore, he had to preserve not only the interests of the sovereign but also his own.

Benefiting from blind trust from Famoro, he decided to play the game in his favour exclusively. For this, it was necessary to distance the brothers from the throne by opposing them to their big brother. All dreams would be possible then if the death of the sovereign had occurred in such a situation. He could repeat his feat of becoming the de facto king.

* After all judicious analysis, one realizes that there is something fishy in their decision. First, it assumes that you will not be able to get any more children. That your son will never come back. Whereas everything is yet possible. But even if not, they should have come and meet you directly to discuss it with you. Then, having unilaterally made the decision, why didn't they come and bring it to your attention? That would be honest. You would be free to approve or reject this decision, either to reformulate it or to make your own proposal. After a deep reflection, I came to the conclusion that they are fomenting something more dangerous for the future of your kingdom. He said before pausing and then drove to the point home. In all this, who knows if they are not involved in the disappearance of your child; if we analyse their relentlessness for the throne?

Through these fabricated allegations, the Grand Counsellor succeeded in convincing the Sovereign to take draconian sanctions against his brothers. Finally, he says:

* As it has long been decided that anybody closely or remotely associated with the disappearance of your beloved child, the hope of the whole nation, will suffer extreme punishment. So, it stands to reason that your brothers should suffer the same fate. May law in all its fullness apply to them for the cause of justice, if they are found to be involved in this heinous act
* You must be right. I had had this intuition since the disappearance of my child. If this is the case they will be eliminated without qualms. Now for the succession, my son or nothing.

After this unusual conclave with his Grand Counsellor, the king called his favourite wife to inform her of the turn things were taking; convinced that he had been wrong to have accused her of being responsible for the disappearance of his child.

* I knew, His Majesty that the truth would come to light. Exclaimed Mamakany after the king's explanations. I had this intuition, but I could not say it so as not to be the cause of a conflict between the brothers. Being thus, I think that you must call all these traitors to make them submit to the law in its entire rigor. I wish you the greatest happiness and honour. She said to leave without saying goodbye.

Mamakany had the opportunity to regain her husband's favour and her former power. The tigress could pull out her claws again to the detriment of the unlucky.

At the instigation of his Grand Counsellor but especially of his favourite wife, the very evening of his separate meetings with them, the king invited his brothers to an informal meeting. The brothers, who were surprised by this invitation, not knowing what could be the reason, met in large numbers with the only absence of Dioume who was gone to his in-laws. This absence did not catch the attention of the sovereign neither that of his entourage because of the urgency of the meeting, and even though he was the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Royal Army.

In the large meeting room this evening, the atmosphere was not good. You could read the sadness in the face of the sovereign and that of his Grand Counsellor who was doing a little too much. Famoro, spoke in an icy tone, without using the traditional form of greeting towards his brothers.

* Grand Counsellor, tell my brothers that they are invited for an affair that concerns all of us, children of Narenkaba. It is related to my succession as king of Simandu.

He gave his Grand Counsellor time to repeat his words as it was the custom. That one repeated them exactly then continued:

* Tell them that I accessed to the throne through my father as tradition recommends. The question of succession has not arisen for centuries, because the rule is already established on this matter. Tell them that I know they don't want to follow that rule. That I know that they have already chosen my successor without waiting for my death.

Hearing the word successor, Paté sighed; a gesture that did not go unnoticed. Famoro glanced at him; another gesture that did not go unnoticed. The brothers understood that there had been a leak. But it was too late to find out the one through whom the leak had come. Famoro continued his speech.

* Tell my brothers that I know about the coup they are plotting against me. Tell them I know that they are involved in my son's disappearance and probable murder. Just to succeed me.

Hearing the word murder, the Grand Counsellor jerked. He let out a cry. The king continued his speech which was expressing the seriousness of the accusation.

* That I know that they have chosen my younger brother Paté to be my successor without consulting me. The king looked at Paté for the second time.

This time his gaze met Paté's. He paused to allow his Grand Counsellor to repeat what he had just said, then went on speaking.

* Pursuant to the ruling relating to my child's disappearance according to which anyone involved in this act shall face the full force of the law, my brothers will have to face the law for their forfeiture, which is aggravated by a case of high treason; he said to withdraw in fury.

The slaves who were posted in the four corners of the room immediately came out to seize the brothers and literally drained them into an ergastula without giving them the opportunity of presenting their version of the facts.

The news of the arrest of Famoro's brothers by himself spread like wildfire. Their destination and fate were the only unknowns in the equation. It was after their arrest that Famoro noticed Jumey's absence. The issued the order to arrest him and send him *manu military*.

However, as soon as Jumey, having heard the news of the arrest of his accomplices following a summary judgment which he described as unfair, decided to undertake a rebellion. As Deputy Chief of Staff, he found no difficulty in attracting almost half of the troops from Famoro's army within a few days.

A rebellion was thus organized under the command of Jumey against Famoro. It all started with smaller-scale actions, raids from the territory of Bambadu to stock up war equipment and food. Bambadu, which has always been a territory hostile to that of Simandu, served as a rear base for the rebellion. A few months later, the rebels began temporary occupations of varying lengths of certain territories. These occupations later became regular. Famoro's army, which was torpedoed daily by the rebels, conceded villages, then towns and entire regions to Jumey's men. In less than one year more than half of the territory of Simandu passed under the control of Jumey.

This unexpected success of the rebellion galvanized the appetite of Jumey and his men to gain more ground. The capital city was already in their sights. His big brother's throne was now the ultimate goal. All attempts of negotiation between the enemy brothers were doomed to failure. The numerical superiority and striking force of the rebels over the already demoralized loyalists was visible. The only reason for a truce could be a capitulation of the king and the accession of the rebel leader to the throne which he believed to be legitimate being that he was of the same blood as Famoro.

In Narenkabadu, where relationship between the king and his favourite wife had improved markedly, the news of the crushing defeats of the loyalist troops at the front was stoically wiped away. However, this atmosphere with the scent of reconciliation between the two was gradually fading. The laughter started to turn into grins. Worry seized the heart of Famoro and that of his wife. One night, that situation has been the subject of conversation between the two:

* You know, my men are losing ground to the advancing rebels. I'm afraid that this lascar Jumey set my whole kingdom on fire.
* If his majesty is looking for support, I can go to my father to request the intervention of his army in this war. I'm sure it could pay off, Mamakany offered.
* I believe you are right. Salvation could come from there. We will try this alternative.

The next day, a trip by Mamakany to the country of King Oury was unusually quietly improvised. As soon as she arrived, the beloved princess of King Oury was received by the latter in such a discreet audience. The king acceded to his daughter's solicitude without hesitation. Two reasons motivated this promptness: first King Oury wanted to dry the tears of his beloved daughter, but also and above all it was an opportunity for him to have rights to the immense wealth of Narenkabadu that he had been waylaying for a long time, given the advanced age of Famoro.

* All right, I'm going to make the necessary arrangements to send a substantial contingent there. But, my daughter, I want you to understand that all of this has a price. In return you must help me to have access to the resources of your husband who is aging and childless. It's in your interest, by the way.
* I understand dad. You can rely on me. I myself know that my husband now does not have long time to live. So, it's time for us to prepare our plan.

King Oury dispatched an elite unit with the latest generation of weapons made by the blacksmiths of Turu to go help the army of his son-in-law. They entered readily in the war.

However, despite this salutary arrival of King Oury's men, it took several months to overcome the rebels. Nevertheless, the rebels were finally defeated. Having lost the war, Jumey found refuge in Bambadu. Peace had definitely returned to the front, but certainly not in the hearts of the men, for the fact that the prince was not yet found.

Mamakany had regained all her rights as a favourite wife. Her father was very close to his goal. Famoro was in control of all his territory.

While the victory over the rebels was being celebrated in both Narenkabadu and Turu, the prince was following his destiny.

OTHER UPHEAVALS OF THE GLOBE-TROTTER

Six months after his separation from his master, he was to fall into one of the many pitfalls that littered his path and shaped his destiny. As usual, this evening, he stopped in a village. In Nawé, the village in question, he was housed by a young man apparently of his age named Cece. He had met him at the edge of the village by chance:

* Good evening. Greeted Tugna the young man who was sitting by the side of the road as if waiting for someone.
* Hello, my friend. Answered Cece cheerfully, as if he already knew him, before asking him where he was from.
* I come from Moridu, said Tugna without adding anything.
* And where are you going?
* I don't know. I just want to sleep here tonight.
* Do you know anyone here?
* No.
* Do you speak our language? Insisted Cece.
* No

The conservation was being held in the language of Tugna. Cece continued with his questioning.

* What's your name?
* My name is Tugna. And you?
* My name is Cece. I am from this village. Now, what I will tell you is to be very careful here. There is a fratricidal war going on here.

Cece was a young man from the Guerzé ethnic group. The conversation faded for a moment with an air of worry, then Cece resumed.

* I can accommodate you, if you want.
* I gladly accept, since I don't know anyone else here, and I can't go on tonight now, especially with this conflict you're talking about. I thank you for your generosity.

Tugna, at the age of fifteen was looking like in his twenties or more. So he was no longer afraid of being mistaken as a stray. He had all the plausible arguments to convince people of his destination. The two new friends crossed the whole village to reach Cece's home. After dinner, the teenagers who were beginning to trust each other immediately went to bed in order to have time to chat. During their talk, Tugna, without reserve, recounted his journey from Narenkabadu to Nawé via Moridou. His host was dumbfounded and amazed.

In the kingdom of Sansamba where they were, there was a situation similar to that of Simandu. This kingdom was once ruled by a king who died when his child was just five years old. To avoid the power vacuum of incalculable consequence, an interregnum king was appointed from among his brothers. This one had to reign just long enough for the child to reach his majority to exercise power. The rule was that it should be the son of the king to succeed him. It was in the absence of a legitimate child of the king, that one of his brothers, generally the oldest, could become the king. Twelve years later when the regent reached his seventeen years of age, the minimum age to take up his duties as king, under the impulse of his mother, claimed the power which was due to him *de jure*. But the *de facto* king did not hear this with his ears. He was no longer as the same as he was twelve years ago; neither was his family. He said that he had the same right to the throne as was his late big brother since they were of the same blood. The latter had inherited the power of their common father just by birth right.

Given the intransigence of the ruling king and the threat he was making, the wife of the ex-king and her child decided to leave and seek refuge with her parents elsewhere. The news of the flight of the woman and her child under the threat of the king, whom people were describing as a usurper of power, created a stir in the country. The Soffah, the warriors of the kingdom, for the most part decided to join the woman and her child in their exile so as not to condone this palace coup.

Zaoro, the usurping king, realizing the defection of a certain number of his Soffah, ordered to fight them with the last energy. The order was given to kill all renegades, as he was calling them, and their accomplices. A list was drawn up comprising the names of villages and towns suspected of sympathizing with the insurgents. Nawé, the host village of Tugna was on this blacklist.

Thus, late at night while all the villagers were sleeping peacefully after the hard labour of the day, the shots started ringing out all around the village. The inhabitants woke up in disarray, distraught to find that they were already surrounded by Zaoro's men. The invaders, pursuant to the order passed, were shooting at anyone who was moving. In a previous attack, the insurgents had inflicted heavy losses on the loyalists in a locality near Nawé. The virulence of the present attack was in retaliation for that defeat. Another reason was that Nawé was very close to the birthplace of the rebel prince's mother, which was also the centre of the command of the insurrection.

The invaders, like sworn killers, were going from house to house to do their dirty work. People who were completely off guard could only surrender. They were witnessing carnage; a large-scale massacre. It was in this chaos that Tugna and Cece went out to fight their way through in order to escape the vindictiveness of Zaoro's men. Unable to find better, each of them hid on his side. Tugna climbed into an attic, while Cece found shelter in a cellar where it was almost impossible to spot him. This cellar, of which he was among a few people to know of its existence, had been fitted out as a prelude to such situations. He could not invite his stranger for fear of attracting the attention of their executioners.

Tugna was found in his hiding place by the assailants who were carefully searching everything on their way. When they found that Tugna was speaking a language other than their own, they subjected him to careful questioning.

* With who are you? Asked a soldier.
* I do not understand your language. I'm just passing by.
* Are you alone here? Resumed the interlocutor, this time in the language of Tugna.
* Yes I am alone.
* Who are you staying with here?
* He has left. He abandoned me.
* You lie!
* It is true.
* If you don't tell the truth, you will be killed. It's clear. Or if we find someone else around that you refused to show us, we'll release him and kill you instead. But if you show us someone who slipped out of our vigilance, we will free you; it is him who will be killed, since you are a foreigner.
* You better not waste your time. There is no one here but me. Everyone is gone since the first gunshot. If anyone's worth to be killed, it's me.
* All right, as you want to defy us, you will see. We have to kill him and move forward, shouted the soldier.

They tied him up, and then one of them took out the knife.

* If you don't tell the truth, we'll cut your throat.
* No problem. You can kill me. Said Tugna.
* That's true, said the leader of the group. Kill him and let's move on. He ordered.
* This young man is very handsome. Do we have to kill everyone, even strangers? Asked one of the youngest ones.
* Kiss my ass! Compliant! We've already killed so many other handsome boys.
* But this other one is a stranger unlike the others. We are taking the risk of diversifying our enemies.
* We kill him and we pass. We've wasted enough time. Said the leader of the group.

It was during this time that Cece emerged from his shelter, being sure that Tugna was on the verge of death.

* No, don't kill him. He's my stranger. Kill me instead.

All the Soffah rushed towards him, tied him up immediately. Addressing Tugna:

* You who were pretending that there was no one else here; that means we have to kill you and release him, right?
* Yes I prefer. Tugna said.
* No, kill me instead. He's a stranger. Cece protested.
* Where is he from? Asked, the chief
* He comes from Moridu.
* Let's stop useless discussions; the order is to kill anybody that is moving. Said a zealous fighter.
* You are right, my child; but remember that if we had not questioned the first we would not have found the second. And then we find ourselves in a very delicate situation: one of the boys is a foreigner who does not even speak our language. Normally, he has nothing to do with our conflict.
* But he lied to us. Insisted the zealous soldier.

They remained in this controversy the head of the operation came. Everything seemed to be complicated then, because he was, moreover, the chief of staff of the loyalist army.

* What is going on? Why don't you kill these people? He said in a fury that expressed the deleterious state that was reigning in the city.
* You have in front of you here, two young men, one is a foreigner and the other is a native. What is paradoxical is that each of them asks us to kill him to release the other. Said the leader of the group with a relatively conciliatory tone.
* I do not believe. Prefer death to save someone who is neither your child nor your father or mother or a brother? He wondered. I order the native to be killed and the foreigner to be released.
* No, kill me. Protested Tugna again.
* No, it is me who must be killed. Retorted Cece.
* Then, kill all of us, chief. Insisted Tugna.
* So you are not afraid of death?
* Yes. We are very afraid of death but we are afraid of something else more than death. That is dishonour. In face of dishonour we prefer death.
* All right, let's keep them until the end of the operation. That's a new experience. It is a dilemma.

At the end of the operation, the village of Nawé presented a macabre and desolate scene. Dead bodies lay in every corner. Some were bearing signs of atrocity and torture. Cemetery calm was reigning in the village, broken from time to time by the murmurs of the combatants who were carrying on their search. Scavengers were beginning to fly over the village hoping for an opportunity to feast on the bodies of several innocents left behind. It was an ugly sight.

After this spectacle of sorrow and dismay, the combatants when back to their base to make the report of the unprecedented victory. Exactly, in the camp where the two young men were awaiting their fate, it was time to celebrate. This victory in Nawé was to be celebrated with pomp. Drinks of all kinds, especially white wine were there. The chagrin feast of chickens and pigs was without comment. It was in this hubbub that the architect of this unprecedented success spoke.

* Listen valiant Guerze people, in the name of King Zaoro, I thank you for your heroism, your bravery which got the better of these traitors. They were destroyed as far as in their last entrenchment, and above all, we did not suffer any casualty

We had decided not to keep any prisoners, because they only deserved death. But we have two here. We want their fates to be decided in front of everyone here. Bring me the two prisoners there,

The two young men who had been kept in safe places since their arrests were presented to the audience. People were impressed by the beauty of Tugna which was exceptional.

* You see these two young men, one is a stranger; it's this one, and the other is a native, it's this one. They are not related to Adam neither through Adam nor Eve. The native was hidden in a hole where it would be difficult to find him, but he came out of hiding when he understood that his stranger had been captured. This stranger, too, had preferred death to showing us his friend whom he knew was hidden not far from us. I'm going to ask them the question in front of you, said the chief of staff before addressing the two young people: You know that you deserve death, especially the latter, the native, but I allow myself to spare one of you and kill the other. Why am I going to do this? Simply, because, the foreigner is not concerned, but he is suspected of being an accomplice, but the native showed bravery by coming out of his hiding place where no one could see him, just to substitute for his foreigner. Now tell me who among you deserves to be killed, and who deserves to live? All the Soffah laughed so much that the question seemed to them absurd.
* Yes, but listen, that's why we brought them here. Said the commander to silence the crowd.
* I want to be killed. Said the two prisoners with pride and courage without looking at each other.

The crowd was amazed. There was a sudden silence in the square. They separated the two children for separate interrogations. They put Tugna in a hut so that he wouldn't follow Cece's interrogation. Without losing his patience, the commander continued:

* You, why do you prefer death to save a stranger? He asked Cece.
* It is to deserve the trust he placed in me by staying with me, because if he knew that by staying with me he was going to face death, he would have gone elsewhere. Even at the cost of my life I will like to deserve this trust. If everyone sacrificed himself to keep each other's trust, there would be no betrayal. Cece said without hesitation.

Cece was, in turn, sent to the hut, and Tugna was brought back.

* You, why were you ready to die instead of showing us your friend whom you had just met, barely, above all, you knew that you were risking little, as a foreigner, by showing him to us? He asked Tugna.
* It is to deserve the friendship he showed me by lodging me without knowing me. Then by braving death to come out of hiding to plead my case, while he had a good chance of not being found. If everyone paid for good with evil, there would be no benefactor on earth.

The public began to murmur giving reason to the young people and saluting their sincerity.

* All right. I thank you and set you free. You can go.
* No. First tell us why you are releasing us when the order is to kill everyone? Asked Tugna.
* It is so that forgiveness and tolerance do not disappear in the hearts of the men. If nobody forgives anybody, human beings will never live in community. Now that you are free, you have the choice to join us in our cause or go wherever you want.
* Thank you so much. But we want to know this cause first before deciding. Said Cece.
* All right, we are fighting for our people. To rid it of bandits, criminals who are sowing terror in our country. We will exterminate them wherever they are. We will rid our country of bandits and criminals by all means! He exclaimed, raising his fist in the air.
* We will rid our country of bandits and criminals by all means. Repeated all the Soffah raising their fists in the air.
* All right, we join your group, not because of your cause, but because of you. Tugna said, pointing at the commander.
* Why me?
* To encourage our forgiver to continue forgiving, because if everyone forgives everyone, love will overcome hate; good will dominate evil; peace will overcome war and life will be good. Concluded Tugna.

Tugna and Cece were thus enrolled in the army of Zaoro under the command of the man who had saved their lives. They had to get used to the tactics of war, which are not very different from those of hunting. It is a question of setting up ambushes as if on the lookout for animals; prudence and temerity as in the pursuit of wounded beasts. Tugna had known about them for a long time as a hunter.

From the inception, the prince did not appreciate the practice of Zaoro's men, which consisted in literally exterminating the enemies. Tugna was considering it too barbaric and imprudent. It could radicalize the enemy, he believed. He also did disapprove their tactic which was entirely reduced to instant retaliation for any attacks from the enemy, even to the detriment of their own side.

About two months after their enrolment in the army, the unit to which Tugna and Cece were assigned came under a rebel attack one day. As usual, the leader of the group immediately gave order to pursue the enemies so that they could not escape.

* Let's immediately pursue them. Later we will bury our dead otherwise they will escape from us. They are not as numerous as we are.
* Chief, I think we have to take a little time, just to prepare the retaliation very well, otherwise we risk falling into a dirty ambush and losing our men that we could avoid.
* Who’s speaking like this? Asked the leader of the group with indignation.
* I am the one, chief. Tugna introduced himself.
* You are just a newbie. You don't know anything about war. In fact, you say that we can avoid the loss of human life. Why should a soldier avoid death? We pledged to die for the king. We must not be afraid of death. This is the field of honour. You have to chase the enemies as soon as they attack you to show them that their attack only galvanized the troops. We must make them pay the price for their insult to us. This is to deter them from further attacks, as they will know that it only brings their own misfortune. Is the lesson understood?
* I think we should save lives as much as we can. Even on both sides if necessary, while gaining ground. For this we must avoid ambushes while multiplying our own ambushes of small groups to trap the attackers. Retorted Tugna.
* My orders are given. They cannot be argued upon. Ambushes are cowardly tactics. Why not show the enemy that we are not afraid of death? Come on, forward! We've already wasted too much of time.

Tugna was silent to avoid an unwelcome hitch. Moreover, is the rule, in the matter: execution before explanation. As if the rebels were expecting to be pursued, as soon as they left the village they mounted an ambush in which the unwary loyalists fell. A hellish battle ensued. The fight lasted several hours and caused many casualties among the loyalists. The survivors were almost all wounded, including the commander of the group who was seriously injured in the head. Tugna and his friend were among the few miraculous survivors who escaped unscathed.

Upon returning to camp, the commandant was outraged at the extent of the loss. He brings together all his staff to draw the consequences of this defeat which made them forget the success recorded in Nawé.

* It's a humiliation. We have to draw the consequences to avoid this kind of affront in the future. You know we suffered such a defeat not long ago. Do you think it gives a good image to our army?
* No! Responded in chorus all the Soffah present.
* So what should we do? Everyone has the floor.
* My chief, I think that this defeat was foreseeable, therefore avoidable. I did not fail to point it out before we moved. You know that the enemy should be attacked at a time when he least expects to be attacked; You retreat when you feel weak; you seek to negotiate when the enemy has the advantage on the ground; and you take the initiative of war when you doubt about the fighting morale of the combatants of the enemies. But if you have to attack immediately every time you come under attack, I'm afraid that it's to make human sacrifices. Tugna explained easily. .
* It's true; he had a good discussion with the chief before going. Testified one of the survivors.
* Is that true? Call him for me. Shouted the commander
* He is hurt. He was shot in the head. Said Cece.

In the middle of the debate, a Soffah arrived to inform the commander that the wounded platoon leader had collapsed in syncope. Without taking care of this situation, the commander ordered that Tugna be the new leader to replace the injured leader.

* Good! Until further notice, you, the foreigner, you’re appointed as the interim chief of your group in replacement of your wounded leader. If you deserve trust and you prove by practice what you have just explained, you will be able to advance in rank and position. I expect your response by tonight.

Before accepting the position, Tugna preferred to consult with his friend.

* What do you want me to say? Should we accept? Trust is expensive, they say.
* But, you accept, that's all. The rest will come by itself. Said Cece.
* No, the problem is that I don't like killing people. I cannot give order to kill unnecessarily. I don't think that's the best practice for success.
* I understand, but you can't refuse such an honour. It would be a disappointment and a disavowal for his confidence.
* All right, I'm going to tell him that I accept on condition that he lets me define my own strategies and tactics of war.
* Ok, Go!

Tugna immediately went to see his commander to give his approval on certain conditions.

* Good evening chief. I accept your offer. It is an honour for me. However, so as not to disappoint you on the ground, please allow me some leeway in deciding on war tactics, Tugna told his commander.
* There is no problem. You have complete freedom to adopt the strategies that you deem appropriate in time and circumstances, provided you give me a detailed explanation before proceeding.
* All right. Thank you for your trust, and I promise to do everything I can, not to disappoint you.
* I will report to the king, who must confirm the decision.

King Zaoro did not hesitate to confirm the appointment of Tugna to the post proposed by the Chief of Staff of his army. So after two month of his enlistment in the royal army, and at the age of fifteen, Famoro's son had just been appointed commander of a military corps in a foreign country.

Honoured by that appointment and encouraged by the backing of his superior, Tugna convened a meeting with the combatants under his magisterium. He spoke to them through an interpreter despite that the vast majority of local men understood his language. He just wanted to make sure that his words were understood clearly.

* As you already know, I'm your new chief. And who says new warlord, says new policy, new stratagem, new philosophy and so on. I know you are obedient and disciplined. I urge you to persevere in this attitude. Have high morale. The results may be slow in coming but I tell you with extreme optimism that they will be positive.
* We believe in you, and we promise you obedience and abnegation, says the spokesman of the troop.

Tugna made an introductory presentation of what was to be his tactics of war. It was essentially the lookout which consisted in permanently posting agents at the edge of the locality of the enemies in the watchtowers. These agents would report all suspicious movements from the reputedly hostile camp. He also suggested seeking contacts among the enemies in order to have information on their war strategies and programs. It is obvious that these spies were to benefit from the favours of Zaoro. He also recommended the formation of groups specialized in setting up ambushes.

After discussions with the Chief of Staff, it was decided that the first objective was to find the spy, because his work was crucial for the success of Tugna's plan. Instead of looking for this spy among the enemies, which would be a bit risky, the Chief of Staff suggested that it must be someone intelligent and loyal from their own side.

This is how the choice fell on a mischievous child who was to be adopted into the enemy camp as an orphan whose parents have been killed by Zaoro's men. This Trojan horse who was going unnoticed had to go daily to the watchtower to give his observations to the Soffah who was on duty. In turn, the Soffah would report to Tugna once at the base. Meanwhile, groups formed to stay in ambush were relieving one another in discipline unnoticed. The shift between the Soffah at the watchtower was done every twenty-four hours, and the little spy was required to be present during this exercise so that the news he brought would be transmitted by the departing Soffah.

They remained in the operation for some times. The wait for the outcome of Tugna’s strategy was taking long, as the enemy camp was becoming more and more cautious. The commander who promoted Tugna was also getting impatient. So he called an emergency meeting to express his concern about the status quo since the last defeat that was still sticking in his throat.

* Tugna, what are we waiting for to act since your appointment? Do you think that the initiative of the battle should always be left with the enemy? We must take revenge for the humiliation we were subjected to, the last time. He said addressing Tugna.
* I think we should take advantage of this time to further train our men. Answered Tugna placidly.
* All right, I'll give you a week to show that you're right.
* Give me time, chief. A lot can happen by then.
* Okay. Two.
* Thanks.

During that time, Tugna's war machine was working wonderfully, everyone playing his part to perfection. Confidence was reborn among the troops. Fourteen days had passed since the Chief of Staff's deadline, in the status quo. There was not a shadow of an enemy, as the pessimists waited impatiently to see Tugna's plan put to the test. The deadline given to Tugna was still running. But a failure would not be frowned upon to disillusion that little stranger who had just turned everything upside down.

On the fifteenth day, the little spy sprite arrived panting at the usual place. The Soffah understood immediately that there was something new.

* Tomorrow…Tomorrow, a large number of Soffah will be mobilized to come and attack us. They will first camp in the kpo valley tomorrow right near us. They will leave there at night to catch us sleeping. We only have time to leave to go and inform the chiefs.

The Soffah immediately left with the child to join their base. They made the report to Tugna who was just waiting for it. His plan was starting to work. They had to take the necessary measures for the continuation of the plan.

* Get up and follow me. The enemies are coming. They may have moved now. That they are going to come and camp in the nearby Kpo valley, just to attack us while we are asleep. That's what they used to do. We need to be near the valley before their arrival. At this time we will be able to see the arrangements they will make. Instead of they, surprising us, we are going to surprise them.

Tugna's men took position all around the valley from the hill overlooking it. As expected, the enemies arrived in the valley. The moonlight helped the men of Tugna to observe them in detail. They stored their weapons and ammunition in a shed sheltered from possible rain. Hearths of fire were lit around which they formed circles to warm themselves against the cold of the valley. As soon as they were installed, they were dominated by a deep sleep, exhausted for having walked at a trot all day through the bush.

When the calm was total, proof of their reckless sleep, Tugna gave the order with a sound of the recorder he had received from his master hunter. This conventional sign unknown to enemies could be mistaken for a bird's squeal. This is how the men of Tugna descended into the valley in discipline. They began with the sheds which were housing the weapons and ammunition. All were emptied of their contents by making the chain. It didn't take long considering the number of Soffah involved in the operation. They went towards the enemies who were sleeping with closed fists. They literally surrounded them. One could have feared carnage like what happened in Nawé, but the opportunity was unique for Tugna to prove the efficiency of his philosophy of war.

* Get up, a good Soffah doesn't sleep. Said Tugna as signal.

The enemies woke up with a start. There was a stampede. Everyone was crawling frantically in surprise. They were trying to go and retrieve the weapons.

* Do not try anything; you are completely surrounded by my men. The best for you is to lay flat and wait for my orders. Any attempt of resistance will be put down with the utmost energy, Tugna said firmly.

The warning was clear and the enemies did not mistake about the content of this summons. They lay down back like good children. They were all carefully tied up under the watchful eye of Tugna. After all, he invited the leader of the enemy troop to a private meeting at which Cece took part.

* You know that if I want now, I can exterminate you all here. That's what you used to do, right?
* Yes. Acknowledged the rebel leader.
* But with me, it's not like that. Before killing the enemy I would like to know the motivation of his struggle. We debate on it, because the war begins in the head, and it is in there that it must be waged first. Do not hesitate. Tell everything you think is the truth.
* We are fighting for our right. The right of our people to be free from usurpers. You know that Zaoro clings to a power that he was only supposed to wield waiting for the majority of the crown prince who is the first son of the deceased king. Now that this boy has reached the age of taking power, why doesn't he return his throne to him? That is why we’re fighting. We are fighting for our people who have the right to be led by someone legitimate.
* Did you hear that? Asked Tugna addressing to Cece.
* Yes I understand. There, too, they say, fighting for the people.
* To save your life, you must explain your war strategy to me. Your secrets of war. I want to take advantage of it, Said Tugna turning to the rebel leader.
* Thanks. First of all, I would like to thank you for sparing my life; or at least for allowing me to explain myself, something that I would not have done in your place, as you said so well. Because of this I will tell you all our secrets as a reward for your spirit of tolerance. We have one tactic. We split into two groups. The first attacks you. Often, it is by a relatively limited number of Soffah. While the second group, this time, better equipped and more numerous, awaits you in ambush. We make the ambush on only one side of the road for a long distance. Knowing full well that you retaliate immediately after being attacked, our attacking party wastes no time in retreating until they pass by those in the ambush. You pursue them eagerly until you fall into the ambush. It is when the last Soffah in the ambush see the first pursuing enemy coming that they open the fire. Your men try to retreat, but impossible, because those that you had already passed by, will open the fire on you again, in turn. You find yourself caught in the crossfire. We often manage to kill everyone with a few injuries on our side, without taking any casualties, because the Soffah are on the same side of the road know where to point the muzzle of gun to.
* About tonight, when were you going to divide your men into two groups?
* The division is already made. The second group will arrive this coming night. It's just a day that separates us. They outnumber us. When they will arrive, they will camp at the same place here. The first group would have left a bit earlier to prepare the attack at midnight.

Immediately Tugna decided to transfer the prisoners to the top of the highest hill. He ordered his men to prepare to wait for the second group. At the top of the hill, the prisoners were surrounded by well-armed Soffah and untied. They were later fed and treated humanely while the men were positioned to await the imminent arrival of the second group. Caution was required, as there were more numerous than them.

As expected, this second group arrived and the fighters settled in the same place occupied by the first group. After the conventional flute, with the same caution this group was surrounded and were all arrested without a single gunshot.

Meanwhile, people were getting impatient at the base. Since Tugna and his men had left, there was no news of them. This situation gave free rein to all sorts of speculation, ranging from the hijacking of Soffah for the benefit of the enemy, to the defeat of the troops. Many knew nothing of the new strategy.

At dawn, Tugnaa and his men fed their prisoners then tied their hands, because they were several times more numerous than them, and got ready to go to the base. While the most pessimistic, believing in the possibility of a diversion or a defeat of the troop, were preparing their reaction to the scent of joy.

The news of the unprecedented success of Tugna's strategy arrived to the base well before them. It was spreading like wildfire: hundreds of enemies arrested without causing, neither death nor injury on both sides; and moreover without a gunshot. After taking all the appropriate measures, they decided to go home with these several hundred of prisoners. It was with fanfare that they arrived to the sounds of drums and tam-tams. People were flocking from all sides to come and see with their own eyes this event. No one wanted to be told the story. King Zaoro, who was logically one of the first to be informed of this unprecedented feat, decided to honour with his presence and those of his wives, including Wuria, at the celebration of the greatest success in the history of the army of his kingdom.

Before this compact crowd, the camp commander, Pecanou, spoke with a vehemence that was shading the military genius of the young prodigy. He brought everything back to his ability to command:

* I decided that his majesty, king Zaoro, be here in person to take part in this celebration of the victory of his army over these abominable criminals. I promise, this is just the beginning. It should be noted that this victory was won with great struggle under my own leadership. My new tactic and my stratagem prevailed over the barbarism of our enemies, over the brutality of those bloodthirsty rebels who tarnished the image of our beautiful kingdom once known for its stability and hospitality. And as they say, short tail is paid for by short tail, these diehard bloodthirsty people will have to suffer the same fate that they have subjected us to for years. I decide to execute them all in front of our people to avenge them for the hardships of the past and to serve as a warning for all those who may harbour such a desire. It's your order, his majesty! He said, shaking his fist in the air

The king, visibly pleased, shook his head in approval.

* No, His Majesty, please don't kill all these men. It would be a cruel punishment. This could justify their barbarity, which we rightly criticize. With your permission, His Majesty, I object to any such execution. We must not pay evil with evil, but rather with justice. Said Tugna unfortunately.
* Who is this unruly man who is disrupting the ceremony? Asked Pecanou.
* I am the one, your servant, Tugna.
* What right do you have to speak to interrupt me? It’s I who command here. Don't repeat that again, otherwise you'll suffer the same fate, idiot, badly educated, intruder, and neophyte. Do not listen, my king, to the sophistry of this little moron whose life has been saved by myself. He is rambling, quibbling for nothing. He is a foreigner who does not master the realities at home and who does not have the same patriotic inclination as we do. Said Pecanou in an artificially chauvinistic tone.

These insults whipped Tugna in his pride. He replied.

* His Majesty, it was under my leadership that these men were taken prisoner. I spoke with their commander; he gave me a lot of secrets. Moreover, it was he who helped me to arrest the members of second group without bloodshed, neither on their side nor on ours. They were, however, several times more numerous than us. It was the new strategy that I adopted after my appointment by His Majesty that bore fruit, while he was thinking that I was going to fail like my predecessor who sacrificed many of your brave fighters for nothing. If we spare the lives of these prisoners not only will they help us in our future fights, but also, others can be encouraged to give themselves up. His Majesty, I oppose any manslaughter, any form of massacre. It is something that sows the spirit of vengeance in the heart of the enemies and makes them further fierce. And which leads to a vicious circle of violence that takes us away from the initial objective of the war to plunge us into the logic where one kills only so as not to be killed. For your enemy to become your friend you, yourself must be willing to make concessions, for, **agreement is obtained by concession and peace by tolerance**. However, wherever fear dominates, love recedes. Just like trust, as well as peace. He just said that he saved my life, that's one more reason to say that we must save human lives as much as we can. If he had killed me that day I would not be useful to you today. I think that this evidence is well established, and that I deserve your support to be able to put an end to this hopeless war. In a war, no matter how successful one can be, as long as the one which is dominated does not accept defeat as a reality, the war continues. And for him to accept his defeat as a reality, he must sense in you a spirit of tolerance. We know that tolerance only makes sense if you have the capacity to do harm and you renounce it voluntarily. Otherwise one is simply a coward. To conclude, His Majesty, I would like to thank your Soffah who were involved in this operation, in particular those who spent days in the watchtowers, in the cold under the rain and the hot sun. I also congratulate this very intelligent and disciplined child who allowed us to follow all the movements of our enemies.

Tugna introduced the mischievous child, and the stunned crowd cheered frantically. Tugna continued his speech after a brief respite.

* I teach my chief Pecanou, that in a war you have to fight more against the heart of the enemy than against his body. It is in the hearts of men that war begins and it is in these hearts that it must be ended. It is the heart that directs the body. Rather, you have to fight to be accepted into the heart of the enemy. We must be respected through justice but not through force.

This intervention by Tugna, which borders on presumptuousness, did not slip out of the king's attention. The arguments put forward were solid and full of meaning. He couldn't ignore them.

* All right. I think I need to speak privately with you two. We shouldn’t wash our dirty linen in public.

An emergency meeting was improvised between the king and his henchmen men. At this extraordinary meeting, the interest was not to reconcile Pecanou and his subordinate, but rather to define new approaches in this war.

* I think we have to change our strategy in this war. I ask Pecanou to leave all the command of the troop to Tugna so that he can give us the benefit of his expertise.
* All right, His Majesty. Agreed Pecanou.
* I thank you for this confidence, His Majesty. But I would like to speak with you in private before giving my final decision.
* No problem. Pecanou, you can excuse us for a moment. Conceded the king.
* Are you abandoning me because of this foreign jerk that has no respect for our habits and morals? Who doesn't even speak our language?
* No. I want to have a private meeting with him. I will never abandon you.
* All right. Agreed Pecanou.
* Thank you, His Majesty. I simply want to tell you that we must enter into negotiations with the rebels without conditions. Because if they fight, it's because they think they have a reason. It is this reason that must be dismantled. Explained Tugna.
* Do you want me to talk to these delinquents?
* Yes, since they do not consider themselves as such.
* Do you know why they are fighting me?
* No!
* They want me to return the power to my nephew.

Zaoro traced the history of the war, from its genesis until the time the rebels took up arms.

* Don't you think they are right, on the one hand?
* I know. So what to do then?
* You have to negotiate with them at all costs.
* And if they request the return to customary order?
* Negotiate at all costs if you know they are right.
* So, I must consult my people to see what needs to be done.

King Zaoro summoned a meeting of all the elders and all the military leaders at the headquarters of his kingdom. Everyone agreed to meet there without knowing what it was going to be about.

At the meeting, without protocol, Zaoro took the floor to talk about his meeting with Tugna, while insisting on the latter's proposal. This was an opportunity for Pecanou to try to recover his position of favour vis-à-vis the king. He spoke without giving time to the elders to express themselves as was customary.

* His Majesty, what I said in the past is what is being confirmed today. How can you be asked to negotiate with the criminal rebels who have bereaved so many families in our country? This cheat is only trying to oust you and put this band of outlaws in your place. My king, the mess has gone on far too long; allow me to end it all.

Without waiting for the king's reaction, he ordered his Soffah to arrest Tugna and his sympathizers.

* Arrest him with his friend. With the king's permission, I'll have him replaced on the spot by his deputy. Said Pecanou, without worrying about the king's reaction.

But the Soffah did not move one iota. A great silence fell over the square.

* Are you disobeying me because of this intrepid talkative who only talks nonsense? This intruder who knows nothing about our culture? He said addressing the Soffah that were remaining motionless.
* This intruder has more regard for our lives than you. He does better than you for our well-being. He has more military strategies than you. You are only hypocrites and corrupt. Sad a Soffah.
* Yes, it's true what he says. Said another.
* He's right. Resumed all the Soffah.

These words of a blasphemous and iconoclastic nature did not leave the king alone. He immediately rode his horse home inviting his guard to follow him to avoid the insult. But to his great astonishment, no Soffah moved, neither on the side of his close guard nor on the side of the fighters with the exception of Pecanou. On the contrary, they all lined up behind Tugna. This is to say that the fate of Zaoro and that of his chief of staff were already sealed.

These bickering rang the death knell of Zaoro’s reign. Tugna, standing in the middle of the defective Soffah as well as a large number of people made up of sympathizers and simple curious who had remained on the spot, did not know what to do. His intention was not to stage a coup but rather to help improve the governance of the kingdom.

* Now that they have fled, what should be done? He wondered.
* We're going after them to arrest them. We'll put you on the throne, suggested one of the deserters.
* No, I'm not like that. Don’t ever make someone regret of his goodness. True, they lacked courage and intelligence, but they did nothing wrong to us intentionally. We are going to look for a new place to settle.
* Let's settle at the top of Mont Bignan. We will be safe from unpleasant surprises. Said Cece.
* Where is Mont Bignan? Asked Tugna.
* It's not far from here. You can even see the summit from here.

After some effort, the summit of Mont Bignan was shown to Tugna. Immediately, everyone without exception took the path to reach this mountain.

TRANSCENDENCE

After a half day walk, they reached the top of the mountain. At the top of the mountain where there was a vast clearing dotted with shrubs, Tugna gathered all his men including the prisoners of war who were already untied under his command and were carrying their weapons. That was for the ceremony oath taking of the Soffah before Tugna as the new king.

All the Soffah took an oath of allegiance, starting from the rebel leader who had decided willingly to be the first to take the oath before Tugna. He invited his men to do the same. They took an oath in these terms:

* If I betray you, my saviour; if I betray the Prince of wisdom, let me perish together with my offspring.

After the former rebels, came the turn of the defectors who passed one by one to repeat the same words by putting the left hand on the chest and the index finger of the right hand on the ground then put it on the tongue and then pat the back just below the neck with the palm of the same hand.

After this sacred gesture which was known to everyone, Tugna spoke, visibly satisfied:

* You called me prince of wisdom, may I know why? He asked, surprised to hear this beautiful name, which his mother and his master hunter had once used while addressing him.
* It is because your destiny is traced to command all of Farafina, without having been declared crown prince through your parents but rather, through your wisdom. Said the completely repentant rebel leader.

Standing in the midst of his proselytes who were seated in circle, Tugna resumed speaking, after this reply from his new conquest.

* Thank you for following me. I hope you will be faithful to me in the discipline and self-sacrifice you are showing today. Sitting together in communion, know that you are like brothers. Yesterday you were enemies; but only yesterday. Today you are brothers. Only yesterday, you were killing one another like animals in the jungle, without knowing one another individually, without having met one another before. Which means that you were made enemies by your leaders who one another, and who are enemies because of their interests. Therefore, we, who don't know one another, fight for our leaders who know one another. In this case, are you actually enemies to one another?

The Soffah answered all together, no! He continued speaking again:

* Then you agree with me that you are not enemies among yourselves, individually taken. You know, when I asked my colleagues the day of my enlistment in the army, to know what King Zaoro's men were fighting for, they told me that they were fighting for their people, and when I asked the same question when we arrested the rebels, they told me that they were fighting for the same people, right? He said addressing the leader of the group of former rebels.
* Yes. Answered the latter.
* Now, you understand that it is the leaders who make war, if everyone is fighting for the same people. And it is you and I, the low people that constitute those people and it is you and me that the war kills. So it's about killing the people in the name of the people. Quite simple, it is the leaders who are enemies of one another on the people, I mean on the back of the people, in the name of the people, for their own interests. Listen, as long as your country is not attacked by another country, or as long as the vital interest of your people as a whole is not at stake, the citizens of the same country, have no reason to make war among, themselves. I warn you, we have a lot of challenges to overcome together.

To conclude his long speech in which he displayed all his mastery of the rhetoric, of a tribune and an apostle of peace, Tugna pronounced these incantations:

In my veins runs blood

Red blood like yours;

This blood is sacred, for it is unique

There is no blood of white

Different from the blood of black.

There is no blood of women,

Different from the blood of men.

There is no blood of slaves,

Different from the blood of noblemen.

There is only human blood

Stop all that evil spirit

which causes war.

That war that kills the people

In the name of the people.

Kills the children and abandon their father

In the name of the people.

Kills the man before the helpless eyes of his,

In the name of the people.

Displace people, and separate families,

In the name of the people.

In my veins runs red blood.

Who are these people in whose name the blood is shed?

You are these people.

We are these people.

And it's you and us that war kills

In the name of ourselves.

In my veins runs red blood

I bow down to you

So that this blood can no longer be shed.

So that prospers in us

The spirit of tolerance and peace.

To stop these useless massacres.

To end this war

Which ruins villages and cities.

Which causes starvation and disease.

Who prevents prayers and worships.

Which destroys civilizations and cultures.

Which kills love and sows hate.

Which impoverishes the rich

And causes other wars.

In which one kill just

Not be killed.

In my veins runs red blood.

A war can never be won

Because it can never be sufficiently prepared.

It can only be avoided.

And to avoid it, let's sow love.

Which is made through confidence, tolerance and comprehension.

It is the water that extinguishes the sources of tension

And the air that breathes peace.

Let's all say no to war

And yes to peace.

All the combatants repeated these last words in unison: ‘No to war, yes to peace.’ Many of them were in tears towards the end of Tugna’s intervention; so much that they were regretting the crimes they have been committed against innocent people.

* I am leaving to disseminate this message in the hearts of people around the world. Said the former rebel commander.
* We’re all going to bring this good message wherever people are killing each other. Wherever men are victims of ignorance and injustice, anything that leads to war. Said the combatants.

Thus, the followers of Tugna were divided into two groups: a first group had to go and pass the message through all of Farafina and elsewhere, the other group remained to ensure the security of the headquarters. They quickly built the residence of Tugna there. A military camp was also built in the first months of their arrival.

Tugna had made a spectacular leap, after being orphaned and enslaved; he went from hunter to fighter, now he is declared king in the mountains, at the age of fifteen years and a few months. It must be remembered that at this age he appeared in his twenties or more and his moral and spiritual maturity was well above the ordinary.

On the first night of his installation at the top of Mont Bignan, Tugna had a dream which was just a spiritual initiation. He saw himself in a cave where a ceremony was being held attended by his two mothers, Suwo and Mamakany, and an old man he did not know. During that ceremony appeared a gigantic being carrying a cradle in which was a new-born baby. That gigantic being handed the cradle and new-born to Suwo while Mamakany was lying on the ground unaware of everything that was happening.

One already understands that that cave was indeed the residence of the Genius. He had just seen the summary of the ceremony during which he was given to his biological mother by the Genius. Despite the fact that he didn't understand anything about this dream, he knew that it was not an ordinary one.

He woke languidly in the morning under the trauma of this dream which was too strong for his young mind. In that languor, he received the visit of an old man whose face was somewhat familiar to him, but he couldn’t say where he must have seen him for the first time. A few moments later when he stared at the old man, he realized that he was looking incredibly like the one he saw in the dream.

* Good morning Prince of Wisdom. Said the fellow.
* Good morning, Dad; He said in a surprised tone, because the man addressed him in a familiar way. Wait! It looks like I have seen you somewhere. He said, encouraged by the old man's language.
* I know where. It was me. My name is Fada. I am a blacksmith. I know you've already been told about me. I came to tell you that you are invited there tomorrow. Don't be surprised at what may happen to you at night. You have been warned; so you let yourself go. Let yourself be dragged according to the eventualities.
* I thank you infinitely. I will follow your instructions.
* You have to go to bed very early at night, and must be alone. Said Fada leaving the house without saying goodbye.

All the followers stared at the old man without saying anything. But everyone knew that this visit was not accidental. It was the harbinger of something of capital importance.

The next day, as recommended, Tugna went to bed very early. It was in the middle of the night that he was transported by the usual means of transportation of the Genius and deposited in front of the residence of the Genius. Unlike other the times, he :met the cave wide open. This time, Fada was not involved in the trip. So Tugna was alone. Neither Fada nor anyone else was with him. He was received by the inhabitants of the cave from the threshold of Ninginangan's dwelling.

Inside the cave, he could see everything that was there thanks to the abundant light that was shining through it when he arrived. Without going back to the inhabitants of the cave, it is important to point out that the beings which were only shown to other visitors in a tiny part were totally exposed this time in front of Prince of wisdom. It was a real pageantry of power that the Genius, Ninginangan, the eternal supervisor of the universe, made in honour of the man who embodied him. The reception was exceptional for an exceptional man.

At the ceremony, it was the Genius himself who took the floor to address Tugna:

* You embody me. I send you to rule all the men of Farafina and elsewhere. You will reign by the force of the spirit, the force of morals but not by the force of arms, physical force. Only you have permission to say everything you see here. These are your arguments. You will be able to prove them by using the entire device here present. It is a force of deterrence or persuasion, but not of domination. You will dominate only by the force of the arguments that I will put in your mouth.

After that intervention of the Genius who was speaking without being seen, the cantor of the cave proceeded to the presentation of the inhabitants of the cave to the Prince of wisdom in a much more perfect eloquence than before. Now was the time to show him around the cave. Tugna, in a process marked with harmony, toured the locality, and was thus impregnated with all the reality of the residence of Ninginanga. The visit ended with the throne that had always been reserved for him.

* Here is the throne, yours. Said the laudator of the cave.

Tugna scrutinized this gigantic and marvellous throne: the supports and the armrests were in solid gold, the backrest and the seat in diamond. It was shining at night like the full moon. The whole corner was lit up with its brilliance as when Mamakany and her maidservant visited there.

After this tour which was far from being tourism, Tugna came to sit in his initial place. Shortly after he saw the Genius arriving from the bottom of the cave where, incredibly, he had not noticed his presence during his passage, despite the light coming from the throne. The Genius was holding in his hand a sword that was sparkling like sapphire in the darkness. He handed it to him.

* Here is your sword. Your installation will take place on the first day of the next Jombede moon. Tugna knelt down and raised his hands up to receive the symbol of his power.

The ceremony ended around dawn and the Prince returned to the top of Mont Bignan where everyone was sleeping with their fists closed; which was amazing. Tugna, who had just arrived, began to walk through the huts, just to observe the landscape that was stretching as far as the eye could see at the foot of the mountain. He told himself in his heart that everyone there would soon be his. He promised himself to make justice and peace reign everywhere. He tossed and turned and gesticulated as if he was losing his mind. “I, Emperor of Farafina and surrounding, Commander of all those monarchies, justice will be my leitmotif, peace will reign,” he said to himself

He went to bed when some were starting to wake up. It was late in the day that he woke up, which was not usual for him. However, no one bothered him or cared about it as if people were warned. The followers were gathered in large numbers in front of his residence. He went out and greeted the people in a tone that suggested that he had come from a distant journey:

* Good morning. How are you here? He greeted.
* The Prince greets us as if he had just come from a trip. Can we know why? Asked one of the followers.
* Exactly, that's why I'm inviting all the partisans tomorrow morning for a debriefing.

No sooner said, than done. All the devotees met in front of the headquarters of the Prince in the next morning. He came out of the house then spoke without protocol.

* Day before yesterday in the morning, you must have noticed the unexpected presence of an old man here.

They shook their heads in approval, and curiosity was on each of their faces. Satisfied, the Prince spoke again.

* He had come to announce to me an event that was to occur at night. Exactly last night I was transported to the abode of the Genius who watches over all of us. This place is very far from here. Do not be surprised, he has extraordinary means of transportation. When I met him, he declared me emperor of all Farafina and abroad, and he commanded me to bring justice and peace to all of this land. As proof, he gave me this sword as symbol of my power.

He pulled the sword out of its sheath to show it to the audience. But the refraction of the rays of the rising sun suddenly dazzled everybody. He was surprised, himself. He immediately put it back in its sheath and brought it into his room, to allow people to open their eyes.

* I'm sorry. He said. Go and spread the news everywhere, and tell people that my installation will be in six months on the first day of the moon of Jombede at the top Mont Bignan, here. Everybody is invited here.
* Will you be alone in this mountain? Asked a young man.
* It's the will of the Genius. I can't do anything against it.
* I will stay with you. Said Cece.
* You can stay, Cece. He accepted.

This second wave of followers of the Prince, the chosen lord, joined the first to further spread the message throughout Farafina and abroad. After a few weeks, the men of Zaoro were the first to abandon their leader to join their colleagues on the height of the mountain-headquarter. Those of Nyankoye, the rebel leader, followed suit; and the whole kingdom of Sansamba fell under the authorities of Tugna. Zaoro and some supporters of his regime found refuge in Damaro with the hope that this monarchy would be useful to him in the reconquest of his throne.

Farafina was made up of several kingdoms, some larger and richer than others. On the other side of the world far from Farafina was Damaro. It was the most powerful country on earth both militarily and economically. There were other intermediate powers the influence of which was limited to acceptable proportions by the Empire of Damaro to which they owed allegiance and loyalty.

Like the other territories, all the monarchies that made up the territory of Farafina, were living more or less under the militaro-economic hegemony of Damaro. This irresistible hegemony was underpinned by a hurtful arrogance that all other monarchs were stoically accepting at the expense of their sovereignty. Any other attitude to the contrary was suicidal, because it would expose its author to unbearable economic, diplomatic and military sanctions. The number of countries subject to one or the other of these sanctions, or all three at the same time, was growing. However, this growing number of pariah countries for Damaro hardly worried its authorities.

It was in this one-way geopolitical situation that Tugna had the heavy responsibility of leading Farafina and abroad, that is to say, all the monarchies that made up that part of the world.

Three months after Tugna was established atop Mont Bignan, one of his missionaries arrived in Moridu, the village of Suwo, his biological mother. As soon as he arrived, the emissary invited all the inhabitants to a meeting without passing by the village chief. The latter that was overlooking the scope of the meeting, did nothing to prevent it from taking place; but he did not attend, either. Suwo, who was suffering from de facto ostracism, did not also attend the meeting. Apart from these two, almost all the rest of the community was present.

During the meeting, the emissary of Tugna spoke boldly:

* I am on a mission from my sovereign, the Prince of Wisdom. This is to inform you that he is declared commander of all the territory of Farafina and abroad by the almighty Ninginangan from whom he has already received his sword. His mission is to make peace throughout the territory of Farafina. He will rid us of the injustice, intolerance, wickedness and hypocrisy from which we are suffering bitterly today. From now on, all the monarchies come under him. I can't tell you more. Just remember that his enthronement will take place at the top of Mont Bignan on the first day of the moon of next Jombede. Do everything to be there that day if you want to know him. I swear before to you in the name of the oath of allegiance I took to the Prince of Wisdom that if you listen to him once, just once, you will no longer obey our current hypocritical and corrupt little leaders. They are small in spirit and morality. I stop here so as not to abuse your precious time, to continue my mission. I leave you while hoping to meet you at the induction ceremony.
* What's his name? One of them asked.
* Call him simply, Prince of Wisdom.
* Where will the induction take place? Asked the same, visibly interested.
* I told you that it is at the top of Mont Bignan, in the kingdom of Sansamba, not far from the capital city, Bignamu.

After this brief speech, the missionary of Tugna took leave for the continuation of his mission. The next day, this message was the main topic of discussion in the village. Everyone was unanimous on the courage and temerity shown by the missionary in his speech. He must have the proof of what he was saying. They said.

Informed of the news of the passing of the emissary and the irreverent and disparaging remarks he made, the village chief sent someone to the governor to explain the event to him while insisting on the dangerous nature of his message.

Suwo who knew nothing about it was later informed of the meeting held by her son's envoy through a conversation between women who were going to the river for washing:

* This young man is really daring. I'm sure the king will soon take action against him. Said the first.
* But, what do you mean? The kid is telling the truth, right? You'll see that everyone will eventually follow them. Replied the second.
* That's what I believe. My husband has already decided to be present on the day of the enthronement of the Prince of Wisdom.

These words ‘prince of wisdom' did not slip out of the notice of Suwo who was listening to them without saying anything. It was the first time she had heard of her child since his departure.

In Narenkabadu, as soon as King Famoro was informed by his governor of the arrival of one of the emissaries of Tugna, without knowing that it was an envoy of his child, and the message he was conveying, he gave order to prevent him by all means from holding his meetings and to arrest him if he did not comply. The other missionaries were also more or less confronted with this kind of threat from the authorities of the localities they were crossing. But the echo was always favourable with the populations who were aspiring to change in the governance of their territories. The missionaries were encountering obstacles as the adhesion of the population was becoming significant.

Still under the shock of the destabilization he suffered, Zaoro was established in Damaro. He was under the protection of the all-powerful emperor there. In collusion with this emperor and the territories under his hegemony, Zaoro succeeded in weaving a plan of attack on the Headquarter of the Prince on the day of his induction. It would be the most suitable day, because of the supposed effective presence of his Soffah, including the deserters.

The formidable army of Damaro was presumed capable of overcoming all the men of Tugna whatever their number and their level of determination might be, especially under the effect of surprise. It was the same with any other army on the globe. All the appropriate arrangements had been made for an expeditious and efficient operation that day. Zaoro had made the decision to be present that day in order to attend the arrest of Tugna when he will be expecting to be enthroned.

INDUCTION

At the top of Mont Bignan, everything was ready for this ceremony of induction: a wide road was made from the foot of the mountain to the ridge. The huts and platforms were built by followers and other volunteers who came to offer their services free of charge just for the success of the event. Almost the whole mountain was cleared; trees and shrubs were pruned. Several thousand bamboo benches were made and placed here and there. Camps were erected for the accommodation of the guests. People were pouring in from all sides.

The party began almost two weeks before the D-Day. Artists converged from all over the world to reach the summit of Mont Bignan, some defying opposition from their authorities.

The day that everyone had been waiting for, some with antipathy, others with apprehension and anxiety, but the vast majority with hope, finally arrived. It was a Thursday, let's say, a great Thursday. By way of comparison between the day of the naming and the day of the enthronement of the Prince of Wisdom, by far the second was the greatest, both in terms of the interest it aroused and the number of participants. So, no need for spiel on this subject. It should be remembered, however, that among the people present that day, there was someone called Wuria, the former elder of the maidservants of Mamakany. She was married to Zaoro but did not follow him in his exile to Damaro. She feared to meet there an acquaintance of the royal courtyard of Simandu who was allied with this monarchy. It was out of sheer curiosity that she had followed the people leaving for the enthronement ceremony of the Prince of Wisdom.

When it was time to begin the main ceremony, it was Fada, the blacksmith, who was the president of the ceremony that spoke when everything was ready:

* May the Prince of Wisdom rise and come to this place, please. He said in an authoritative tone.

Tugna got up with dignity to go on a platform which was set up for the occasion. Arrived there, he planted his sword, held the helve in his hands and rested his forehead on the end of the helve. Fada, too, with a slow and orderly gait, joined the Prince. He put his right hand on his head and said:

* Under the order and with the benevolence of the eternal Ninginangan, I declare you commander of all the men of Farafina and abroad. May your word be Truth, your action be Justice, your will be Love and your name be Wisdom so that peace reigns on this earth, and that the joy of living be rediscovered by all. So said, so be it. May the Emperor of Farafina rise to address his people who have always been waiting for this moment.

Tugna rose to speak.

* I greet you worthy sons and daughters of Farafina. I greet you my fathers and mothers. Thank you for coming in such large numbers to attend my induction. Before going any further, I would like to inform you that as I am speaking to you, our headquarter is completely surrounded by the men from Damaro to attack us, arrest me, even kill me if necessary in order to reinstall Zaoro who would be in the pay of Makim, the emperor of Damaro, against the wishes of our peaceful citizens. They think that my objective is their power. Let me tell them that they are wrong; the throne of King Zaoro does not interest me as well as those of other monarchies. I govern all of Farafina and allied, so they are all my subjects, without exception. I am no longer who I was when I was not who I am today. To the rest of you, I ask you not to panic when they arrive. Let me alone deal with them. I'll take care of them.

After Tugna got to the heart of the matter.

* Listen now to find out who I am. I inform you that I am the son of King Famoro of Simandu. The capital city of that kingdom is Narenkabadu. He did not get me with one of his wives but from a maidservant of his favourite wife called Mamakany. The maidservant is called Suwo. She is my biological mother.

Tugna went into the details of the adventure of Mamakany and Suwo up to the circumstance of the conception of the pregnancy from which he came to life, passing through the cave, the residence of the Genius. Just as he was finishing the narration of this incredible story, the men of Damaro, equipped with all the weapons, which were making the pride of this superpower, appeared from all sides. Despite the instructions given, people began to stir in fear.

* I told you not to panic. Leave me with them. Indeed, they are not enemies to us actually. They are under the effect of a moral corruption on the part of their leaders who have lost all hope of survival for their powers. They see their interests threatened by the triumph of truth and justice. You were like them not long ago. Said Tugna before addressing the attackers: Stay where you are if you have malicious intentions towards us; but you can move forward if you simply want to honour my induction ceremony with your presence. I don't blame you, because I know that you are fooled by your corrupt leaders who do not want you to understand their game of deceit which consists in merging their selfish interests with those of the people in whose name they use the power. They kill the people in the name of the people. Finally, we no longer know who these people are. In reality, they see themselves as the people. They make you believe that by defending them, you are defending the people. What a skilfully maintained amalgam? Tell me if there is a child of Zaoro or Makim in front of the troops for the war you want to provoke today or any other wars. Every time you see them in a war, they're all behind, right; to ensure the loyalty of the fighters. They send you, children of the poor and the ignorant under fire to safeguard their interests in the name of the people. That's what you don't understand, and that's what you need to know. Since they knew that you were coming to face death, despite our presumed weakness, they did not put their children before you.

All invading Soffah comply automatically. There was a graveyard silence for a while. After this disconcerting silence, the most incredulous of them spoke without having asked permission from his leaders.

* You just want to fool us in the image of all those around you for your personal interest too, even selfish. That's what they don't understand and that's what they need to understand.

Tugna, shocked by these iconoclastic and sacrilegious remarks, suddenly pulled his sword out of its sheath and brandished it in the air. A bright light caused by the reverberation of the solar rays on the blade of the mythical sword blinded everyone both on the side of the supporters of Tugna and that of the enemies. Everybody instinctively knelt down and lowered their head to avoid the blistering glare of this extraordinary light while covering their eyes with their hands. A few moments later, he put the sword back in its place and people regained their sight.

* Oh! It is true that he is not an ordinary man; I rally to your cause, Prince of wisdom, the commander of all souls of Farafina and allied, the child of prodigy from Simandu. Said this fighter who previously made the derogatory remarks.
* We all join you and become your fighters. Proclaimed all the others including Zaoro.
* You are welcome. Said Fada.

After this bickering, Tugna resumed speaking.

* Now, I'm going to tell you about Ninguinangan. He is the eternal overseer of the universe. He has undivided control over the life of each of us. You may not believe it, but it's true. When I had the honour of visiting his home six months ago, this is what I saw there.

Tugna made a meticulous description of these places including the Genius devices as he was the only one authorized to do so. No one else knew all these details. Then he came to the people who live in there.

* I saw orphans there who died for lack of adequate care. After their deaths, their minds were recovered by the Genius in order to give them the care that every child needs. There are also men and women like you and I who had lived virtuous lives. They are rare among us, but there are still some; like orphans, their minds are recovered after death and then a soul is blown in them, and they are reincarnated into a form in accordance with their own wills. The Genius who is the demiurge of reincarnation gives them a second life this time eternal near him, in all possible happiness. This means that if you live honestly, uprightly and humbly in your first life, such a fate will be reserved for you after death. I must not forget to tell you that these men and women, including children, whose minds are recovered, have a power, albeit limited, over our destiny. They can bewitch us or charm us, but also protect us against our most dreaded enemies, if we are good people. If a person has been the victim of a violent act or cheating by you which led to his death, this person may have means of revenge against you, if his mind had been recovered by the Genius because of his good character. Above all, he has an influence on your destiny. Remember that the acquisition of this new status dependents on the good behaviour proven in the previous life.
* About the soul in all this? Because, you just talk about mind.
* Concerning the soul, it does not die. It is the body that disintegrates after death. The soul leaves the body to seek another body and another mind in order to be reincarnated for a new life, just to perpetuate the existence of life on earth. A soul in the sidereal world is free, drifting and spinning through space like smoke. It can descend into our world for two reasons: either, through an approved sacrifice or through misguidance. An approved sacrifice is either an offering recommended by a supernatural being and duly performed, or behaviour of probity on the part of the requestor. At that moment, it is sent by the creator himself for well-defined missions. But when a soul wanders off and finds itself in our space, it stays long to find another body and mind so that it can exist in living form.
* And if the conceived body does not find a soul that it can integrate? Asked a curious.
* The child is born stillborn.
* Now, if the mind is not recovered?
* Then it dies. The mind like the body, if it is not recovered it dies.
* So a conceived child is not alive until a soul is blown into it. Wondered another.
* Yes. But you should know that before having his own soul, the soul that animates him is only an extension of that of his mother. So a dependent soul. The break between the soul of the mother and that of the child must be done simultaneously with the integration of a free soul that the body of the baby will have to incarnate as its own soul.
* Cannot we confuse the soul and the mind? Asked another.
* No! You know every living being is made up of a material part, the body and another immaterial, the mind. Both are animated by the soul which is a part or an extension of the creator, himself. It is important to point out that the soul can momentarily abandon the mind, without death occurring. But as soon as it leaves the body, death follows, because the body is the support of both the mind and the soul. However, when the soul leaves the mind, one loses consciousness, there is syncope, coma, and so on. But the body continues to live until the soul returns in the mind, because it is the soul that provides the link between the two. The soul animates both the mind and the body, but likewise the mind it is incarnated by the body. However, both the soul and the body are guided by the mind. A person's mind is made up of two parts, one from the mother and the other from the father. Hence, similarities in behaviour between the child and his parents or other ascendants. It is the same phenomenon that we see at the level of physical appearance; the body.
* So the body, meanwhile, is made up of part of that of the father and that of the mother, explained Fada. Tugna smiled and resumed his speech.
* You now know that to get a favourable life in your future life, it is evident that one has to show probity in his present life. At this moment there are two alternatives: either the mind is recovered by the Genius of reincarnation to be at his service with the related advantages, or the soul is helped to quickly find another body to reincarnate it with privileges greater than those of the previous life.

Tugna observed a brief silence which rhymed with that observed by the mass before saying:

* If there are no more questions, I will let you go while thanking you for your patience. I wish you peace and tranquillity in your families, villages and towns. You know that it takes peace to wake up on preferred time, to work, to worship gods, even to eat. That's why I leave you these words of the Genius.

Peace, I love peace

I want peace

When I sleep

It stays by my bedside,

It doesn't fall asleep

Simply because I love it

Wherever people dance and sing.

It surrounds them

It doesn't get tired

Because, they love it.

I love peace,

Because when it is present,

It gives us all the happiness.

But when it abandons us,

It gives way to the tribulation.

Then we look for it everywhere, in vain,

Whereas it is near.

Because it is in us, in our hearts,

That's where we have to look for it.

I love peace

Two things can't live together

Hatred is extinguished by tolerance.

Tolerance is extinguished by contempt.

Contempt by fear,

Fear by the affront,

The affront by reasoning.

Certain things go hand in hand

Reasoning creates tolerance.

Tolerance creates confidence.

Confidence creates love.

Love favours respect.

Peace goes with respect

Respect is acquired by justice

Justice by truth.

Remember that justice is founded by two things:

The knowledge of the facts

And the good will to judge.

Justice is subtract of peace

To preserve peace we need tolerance.

Always tolerance.

If we are not tolerant.

We all perish.

Every time Tugna was saying "in us", he was putting his hand on his heart. After these incantations, Wuria got up instinctively to go and kiss the Prince, saying:

* I served in your father's courtyard. I felled victim to the machinations of Mamakany, the king's favourite wife.
* I know that. She is also my mother. However it has to take what had happened for what happened to happen. Head to the top of Dawanian for my final setup.
* It's for when? Wuria asked.
* Let's wait for the time.

People got up to go back to their different places of origin with many things to tell. News of Tugna settling on top of Mont Bignan spread throughout Farafina's world as quickly as possible. Of the whole ceremony, the events that most marked people were the incident with the army of Damaro and its subsequent surrender. And what interested them the least was the name of the child, because his name Prince of Wisdom suited them well.

The revelation about the identity of his paternity was not considered necessary to be brought to the attention of the ruler of Simandu, certainly for two reasons: first, no one could take the risk of telling him that he knew that he had had sexual affair with the maidservant of his favourite wife; second, some did not want him to know his relationship with the Prince so as not to benefit from the privileges associated with that.

In Damaro, the news of the surrender of those thousands of combatants was received with indignation by the authorities, and amazement by the common people. Immediately, a message was sent to the allied countries to define a common strategy to overcome what they called the "defiler rebel." Simandu and Turu were the first to acclaim the initiative.

At the end of this meeting, which was held under the chairmanship of the all-powerful Emperor Makim, it was decided that an army of several thousand fighters should be put in place to attack the headquarters of Tugna in order to overthrow his power.

It is how the largest coalition army in all of human history was formed. At the same time a formal ban on interpreting the Prince's thoughts was enacted throughout the territories covered by the alliance. On the other hand, certain monarchies, of course, of a smaller size, had understood the meaning of history, and allied themselves with the Prince. They were: Sansamba, Bambadu, Salaba, Macra and Sanfan. It should be remembered that the last three had long been in Makim's crosshairs for their audacity vis-à-vis his regime.

Thus all Farafina was divided between the allies of Makim including Simandu and Turu, and the supporters of Tugna with the exception of a few seculars. This polarization was not to the liking of Makim and his allies who wanted to remain the absolute masters of the world.

At the same time, Tugna was multiplying meetings and the debates at the top of Mont Bignan and his popularity was growing day by day.

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Tugna announced a few months after his enthronement, the day of the transfer of his headquarters from Mont Bignan to the top of Dawanian. He had already structured his regime. All the allied monarchs were invited there in order to be enthroned in their turn under the auspices of Tugna himself. At the same time, those who were in a dynamic of hostility had to be replaced. This exercise was intended to establish a link between them and the Genius in order to benefit from its protection for them and their subjects.

Meanwhile, people were continuing in flock to the Prince's headquarters for consultations about the various issues they were facing. It should be noticed that a public audience was organized every first day of the moon. On these occasions, everyone had the opportunity to expose his internal problems to the Prince. And the answers were given instantly. He was giving his answers in the form of fables, proverbs or parables.

For example, a village chief came to explain to him a concern which was, moreover, that of his entire population:

* We have a rich man, a foreigner whose provenance is not actually known. This stranger, despite the enormity of his fortune, he is very unhelpful. Everyone's wish is to get rid of him one way or the other. This is why I have come to consult you on the follow-up that I must give to the wish of my people. Said the old man.
* Thank you for your confidence in my modest person. You will find your answer in this fable. Said Tugna to begin. There was a lake in an arid region. The lake was nicknamed, 'Lake of Happiness' because of peace and tranquillity enjoyed by the aquatic animals that were living in there. Not far from there, an unprecedented drought was raging all around causing several deaths among the animals of the locality. Because of the quietness in the lake, other animals in search of happiness have taken an interest in the area. Among the immigrants there was a crocodile. The latter had managed to be accepted with the possibility of going out of the lake for other destinations and coming back whenever he had wished. One day, a fish who misjudged this double life that the crocodile was living, complained to the other inhabitants with great emotion: ''I don't understand why this crocodile is continues to live with us in the lake of happiness at the same time with those outside. He lives in two different worlds and with the same advantage. When he's here he enjoys the same benefits of the lake as the rest of us, and I'm sure when he's elsewhere he is enjoying their situation too." All the fish shared their friend's indignation. Thus, they decided together with their associates in the lake to put an end to this double game that the crocodile was ostentatiously playing. But they didn't know exactly how to go about it. To get them out of the impasse, one of the most eloquent of the group said to them: “Look, if you see that he is attached to us, it is because we have water in the lake. We just have to empty the lake of its water and it won't come back here again." This fantastic-looking idea was unanimously accepted by the others. The water of this lake, despite its vastness, was held back by a piece of stone which was blocking a small hole. To empty it, one just had to remove this stone. This is how that lake, built with all the ingenuity required and maintained by their ancestors, was emptied of its water, the source of this legendary happiness. It was created to save lives during difficult times like the current one. As soon as the lake was completely emptied, the cumbersome crocodile majestically climbed the wall of the lake bed to join his other world where he was welcome. The fish and other unfortunate inhabitants suffered miserably under the unforgiving rays of the desert sun. This situation, aggravated by the other inclement weather of this hostile environment, worsened their torture and accelerated their death by hundreds, even by thousands per hour. What the fish did not understand or pretended not to know was the fact that they too were there because of this water. As we can already guess, with the first rains this reptile returned to the lake after blocking the water outlet to live there quietly with its family.
* This means, His Majesty, that wanting stubbornly to get rid of a neighbour deemed to be inconvenient; one runs the risk of destroying oneself, doesn't it? Said the village Chief very edified.

This kind of consultation was the daily life of Tugna at the top of the mountain. He always found answers to all the questions. Something that spread his notoriety across the four corners of the globe, which was not to everyone's pleasure in the field of wisdom.

Towards the end of his stay at the top of Mont Bignan, Tugna was to have the biggest debate of his life. It was with the old wise Rasth, the man who was considered to be the greatest thinker in the world. He was from Damaro and was enjoying an unfailing reputation among his fellow citizens on the one hand and nationals of other countries on the other.

When he heard the echoes of the debates that Tugna had been holding since the day of his installation at the top of Mont Bignan, he decided to go and confront this man described as providential. An invitation was made to Tugna in this sense. He accepted the challenge with humility and poise.

The date was fixed and announced to everyone. The arrival of this great thinker at the top of Mont Bignan was awaited with great anxiety by both his supporters and his detractors. It was the greatest meeting of men of thought in Farafina's history and the greatest challenge the Prince of Wisdom had to face.

Several people made the trip to attend this duel of ideas. People were waiting for the event with great interest. On D-Day, the man arrived with his disciples. After the traditional greeting and the desired rest, the visitor went to meet Tugna in the square reserved for debate and events of that kind, where everything was already arranged.

This high-level test-like debate for the Prince of Wisdom has been dubbed the clash of the titans. It started on a wheel cap:

* **I learned that you hate killing people, even your worst enemies, can we know why? Introduced the wise Rasth, the brawl.**
* Yes, it's true, because by killing your enemy you sow hatred in the hearts of his partners rather than the spirit of submission that you seek to provoke in them. As a result, not only will they cherish the spirit of revenge at the slightest opportunity, but also they will move further away from their possible executioner for fear of not suffering the same fate. You know unlike the deities, when we are afraid of humans, we move away from them. Whereas if we save his life, the most precious thing for a living being, we can easily succeed in winning his heart, but also those of his partners.
* **You say, unlike the deities. What does that mean?**
* Yes, the deities, the more one is afraid of them, the more one approaches them.
* **Why do you think life is the most precious thing in the world?**
* You know very well that life is the most precious thing for living beings in general, and human beings in particular. I just want to say that nothing in life is worth more than living.
* **Can you tell us more?**
* Yes. There are two things we cherish most in life, material wealth and power. However, no man will tell you that he is tired of living because of the excessive accumulation of wealth or the immensity of the power at his disposal, even if he loses them with the conviction that he could no longer recover them. Otherwise, after having ruled a country as powerful as yours for a long time, and the wealth that it entails, one should no longer wish to continue living at certain advanced age. Can you tell me the contrary? Said Tugna smiling.
* **Don’t make mistake, Prince of Wisdom, I know of several cases of suicide and for various reasons. Certainly your young age has not yet allowed you to understand this phenomenon, has it, my child. Said the wise old man disdainfully.**
* I know you’ve come to test me; otherwise you wouldn't be able to ignore this dialectic. Tugna replied in a measured tone.
* I trust your teaching. Said Rasth with a much more serious air this time.
* Thanks! You know that the mind of man feeds on hope like his body on food.
* **I know that.**
* But in reality, what is hope from which the mind feed itself? Tugna wondered before getting up.
* **I'm listening to you.**

Tugna, strolling majestically through his exedra with an air worthy of an oracle continued speaking.

* It is a desired situation that one imagines to occur in the future. That is to say, an imaginary desired situation the advent of which may seem to be sure and certain for him. However, for this hope to seem plausible enough there must be a minimum degree of feasibility relationship between this situation and the realities in the present. And the stronger this relative feasibility, the more attainable or at least explicable the hope becomes. What does that mean, he wondered thoughtfully, biting his bottom lip, pausing for a moment, then spoke again with orderly hand gestures. This means that for hope to be well-founded, it must be rooted in the real conditions or situations of the present. So, to have hope, you have to be able to rationally imagine a future situation in your favour from your present situation. It is not rare that we make mistake in the calculations or in the suppositions relating to this relationship. And as soon as we discover this error, disappointment supplants hope. If the failure is due to a case of *force majeure*, or to a fortuitous event, the disappointment is less, but if the error comes from the author himself, he discovers his own weaknesses, his own limits, and his incapacity to create a better situation for his future. One must immediately resume the exercise in order to develop another hope that is at least attainable to allow him to continue feeding his mind. Such is life. If the mind fails to create new hope, despair takes hold of it. Whereas despair is a poison for the mind, if one can say so. Since the mind finds no nourishment, needless to say that it will be forced to feed on despair which is actually a poison for it, as already said. This is the environment of suicide, because the mind which guides the soul and the body will urge its soul to leave its body because it can no longer provide itself with food. Talking about influence, the mind of human is made up of two parts, one of which inspires good and the other, evil. If the latter dominates, the body under the influence of that part will be induced to get rid of the soul that can go to seek another body for its incarnation, because it does not die. That is another debate. Needless to say that it is in this circumstance that suicide occurs. That is to say, when the mind pushes the body to get rid of the soul due to despair. I mean for lack of hope.
* **Can someone be prevented from committing suicide and how? Asked Rasth, carried away by the argument of his interlocutor.**
* Of course, one can. You have to be able to give him hope. You start trivializing the scope of his failure by giving him more illustrating examples. Then you must help his mind to create another hope or source of hope. But this is only possible if the mind works normally. It should be pointed out that all of this is difficult insofar as the candidate for suicide is not easily recognized. In fact, more often, before taking action, he often adopts an autistic, even hermit attitude. And not everyone has time to take interest in others in distress. To be cautious, you should trivialize, not with persiflage, the scope of all disappointment when the person becomes too afflicted.
* **I want to know now what you mean by the current reality of the person concerned.**
* Yes! This means that it is necessary to be able to make a connection between the situation of the one who hopes and that which he wishes. That is to say, to see how from his situation in the present he can use his means to lead to the realization of his dream. Let this connection be explicable, comprehensible by its rationality. For example, for a poor person to convince himself of becoming rich in the near future, he must be able, in a logical way, to imagine possibilities allowing him to transcend his situation of being poor to become rich, even if this possibility is utopic, even chimerical. This can be justified by examples taken from similar cases. For example, an unemployed person who says he can become rich in less than a month can base this hope on the games of chance he continues to play. This dream is relatively justified. But this other who thinks he can one day pick up a bag full of money and become rich through it, the probability is relatively lower for the latter. However, the third who says he can get rich because he thinks he was born to be rich even by doing nothing. You see, for the first two cases, there is more or less a rational relationship between the hope of getting rich and their life in the present. But the third can have false ideas, the consequences of which can be dramatic. Wealth is a simple example any other goal that we set can be the subject of the same analysis. It should be added that hope is maintained by the confidence that one places in it as to its realization.
* **Otherwise?**
* Otherwise, there are two tendencies that emerge: obstinate optimism and degrading pessimism. The partisan of the first tendency can delight in a pride with a conceited connotation while refusing to question himself and continuing to do nothing. The second, not having foreseen other alternatives, and knowing that any possibility of achieving his goal, which was his reason for being, is absent, may think that the life he is living no longer has any sense for him, therefore no longer worth living. The rest, anyone can imagine.
* **It's suicide. Said the man from Damaro, shaking his head.**
* However, the reasons for suicide that you qualify as diverse should not be compared to each other. They have the same preponderance on the conscience of suicide candidates whatever may be their background.
* **To continue our talk on the life of man, what can you tell me about it in terms of duration, is it short or long?**
* In reality, the life of a man is relatively long when we compare it to those of some animals. But this lifespan remains infinitely short in view of our ambitions which seem disproportionate. Let's see, if someone dies at the age of 35, it is often said that he did not have a long life. While few animals can reach this age. It is in relation to our ambitions that we find our life short, because usually we always die with projects in mind.
* **Still relating to life, how do you find it? Simple or complicated?**
* I find it simple, I would even say very simple. But remember that life is for one what he wants it to be, because what complicates life is our own ambition. The greater our ambition, the more we are predisposed to have problems if their solutions are not available to us. Now, it is the means at our disposal to satisfy our ambition that influences the relationship between ambitions and the problem that arises from our concern to satisfy them. Let's follow! If we have more ambitions than the means to satisfy them, the problem is great. This is the case of a poor men who have too much of ambition. They can be called poor-poor. They are dishonest, crooks, and criminals. But also can be hard workingmen. If one has little ambition and little means, he has little problem. This is the case of the poor who are satisfied with the little they have. They can be called poor-rich. These people are often lazy and vain. But they can also be honest people. One who has less ambition than means, can be considered as having no problem, or having little problem. We can call them the rich-rich. There are people of great liberality and are altruists. If someone has a lot of ambitions and a lot of means, he has problems. He can be called a rich-poor, because they do not consider what they get but what they want to get. There are stingy and greedy people. That is the case of certain major investors or economic operators as well as managers. In short, our problem is the difference between our ambitions and our means of satisfying them. Often, our ambition reflects the environment in which we live, but they can expand quickly or slowly depending on our physical and moral capacity. The race for happiness enchants us to such an extent that sometimes we can get the happiness to which we were aspiring without knowing it. That is why we do not realize that we had happiness until when we lose it.
* **And then, how to find solution to our problems when we don’t get means of our ambition?**
* By applying my mom’s maxim according to which any problem of which you have no solution shouldn’t constitute one for you. That means that you must eliminate the problem either by renouncing to your ambition or by bringing it to the level of your means. That cancels the relevance of the means as determinant of the degree of the problem of a person. It makes the capacity of adapting the ambitions of a person to his means a new order in defining the degree of the problems. The anticipation of the occurrence of those pitfalls becomes the real reason of the living, but not the mere attaining an ambition which may be fanciful. This change of paradigm explains the reduction of cases of suicide in certain communities. The fate will be at stake.
* **I accept and by the way I salute your greatness of mind. Now, about the time? Sometimes a time can seem long and the same time can seem short, why?**
* What I think of the time is simple. The time has a subjective content. It is relative to the circumstances that underlie its relevance. That is to say, everything depends on the condition in which the interested party finds himself. It is short or seems to be short when one is on the good side. That is to say, when one is in a good situation. But, it is long and can seem endless when one is on the wrong side. For example, if your finger is put in the fire for a time, be it short, that time may seem to be long; while a whole day can be short when one is in the company of a person he loves. A month may seem very short for a death row inmate whose execution is scheduled for the end of the month and the opposite is for the other prisoner whose freedom is set for the end of the same month.
* **Still with regard to time. What about the present, does it really exist? And what is its duration, if it exists?**
* As time, the present does not exist, because it juxtaposes the past and the future. But as a fact, a deed or action, yes it exists and its duration is relative to the fact to which it relates. At this moment it extends from the beginning of a fact or an event until its end. As soon as one starts an action, the present begins, and as soon as one finishes it, the action will enter in the past. For example, from the time we started our chat, we are in the present, because the chat is going on. But as soon as we finish it, it will go into the past. Therefore, the present will last as long as the talk lasts. It is the same as the tenure of a leader. As soon as it begins, the present begins in relation to that mandate. It can last for years. But as soon as he finishes it, we will enter in the past. However, compared to other events during that tenure, there can be a present and a past without questioning the present and the past which relate to the mandate. It is understood here that the time is relevant if the beginning of a situation can be estimated and its end foreseeable. Otherwise it has no importance.
* **Absolutely. Coming back to ambitions, I want to know if they have a limit. That is to say, a point beyond which one has no more ambition.**
* No! Of human nature, ambition has no limit, at least if there must be a limit, it must be to become like the demiurge, the Genius Ninginangan, that is to say, to be able to be or to do everything, everywhere, at all times and at the same time. As long as this is not possible, which is the case, the ambition of man will always remain beyond his means.
* **In relation to the object of our ambitions, that’s to say to which ambition is linked, on what basis do we determine it before trying to achieve it?**
* No. The object of ambition is never clearly defined before seeking to attain it, because often we do not know it well. It’s after getting the means or after imagining them that the object is portrait. That object is most often the result of haphazard, trial and error. It all depends on the possibility in the present. For example, if you have an ox, you don't tell yourself right away that you are going to build a building from this ox; it is when you succeed in breeding that you will define the object that you want to get thanks to the means that breeding gives you. That's normal. It is the same in the field of science. It is by groping that we discover a reality. From that reality we fix an objective under the influence of the ambition. Any other ambition outside of this mechanism looks like a utopia.
* **Is there an area where human being shows no ambition: that is to say where he is satisfied with what he gets?**
* Yes. I know you know that better than I. That is the common sense. It seems that those who have less are the most satisfied with theirs. The contrary is the happiness. Nobody is satisfied with it to the point of giving it up. In fact, the more one gets, the more he becomes attached to it for fear of falling back into an inferior previous situation. Only opposite situations are reminiscent of happiness, because it is considered natural. This is why we only recognize true happiness when it is lost. This is the basis of the unlimited ambition of man.
* **I agree.**
* Thanks!
* **The soul and the mind, let's talk about them as basis for differentiation between individuals.**
* Every soul is equal to another soul, but every mind as common sense is complementary to another. It means that there is no complete mind. However, the more an individual is endowed with a great mind, the more he seeks because he has the inclination to complete it because he believes that that is possible. But the less a person is endowed with mind, the less he seeks for it, because he has the unacknowledged complex of not being able to complete his own as the need is great. That's why he pretends to be satisfied with what he gets.
* **We have talked about the life of the human and his ambition; I want to talk now about himself. What is a human being?**
* In general, as you know, human being is an animal. The animal endowed with a conscience. That is why he considers himself, rightly, as the most advanced animal, the undisputed master of other animals.
* **Do you accept that he is the most advantaged of the animals, as he considers himself to be?**
* I think that in terms of comparative natural advantages, all animals are equally endowed with them one way or the other.
* **I don't understand. Said the old man with a surprised look.**

Tugna came and sat down near Rasth.

* I mean that if some animals have the ability to live in water, others have the ability to fly in the air; others on the contrary are very adept at climbing trees, while others have their advantage in the race. In short, every one of them gets what helps it to live or survive. It is true that of all the advantages mentioned above, human being is the least endowed by nature. He can't fly, can’t run enough; nor swim as much as fish. But he has a particular advantage; it is his brain, that is to say, his capacity for imagination. That capacity allows him to obtain artificial means to overcome his natural disadvantages, even to surpass others to become their master. In addition, it helps him to perpetually penetrate the mysteries of nature and constantly push out the limits of the impossible. So, if human being is naturally disadvantaged, he is artificially the most favoured. I would like to add that this domination of human over nature and other animals does not solve his problems so much; on the contrary, it multiplies and diversifies them in line with his progress. The ambition of human being is in the image of his shadow, when he follows it, it flees him; when he flees it; it follows him. In other words, each progress creates the subtle desire to reach another, even out of simple curiosity. So this progress becomes a problem the solution of which is to take up this new challenge. He is on an eternal front without knowing the outcome that awaits him. Ambition seems elastic preceding the means. This elasticity depends on the speed of the progress that human being is registering vis-à-vis the nature as well as his fellow humans. Therefore, the limits of the ambition are eternally pushed out by the progress as much on economic, scientific field as social field,
* **Is this race perpetual or is there a solution?**
* Solution? I do not know any; but beginning of solution, yes.
* **What is it about?**
* It is about knowing and believing that there is no solution. This will create despair in human beings. The search for hope will become a challenge; anything that will divert people's attention from a goal that will never be achieved. So the challenge will change its name. No, it will change its object. The solution can be found at the end of this effort.
* **To continue I would like to ask you a simple question before going to the one I have at heart. What do you about good and bad? What is good and what is bad?**
* I cannot be categorical in my answer, at the same time I consider any categorical answer as sophistical. For me, nothing is absolutely good, and nothing is absolutely bad. Nothing is absolutely inferior, and nothing is absolutely superior. All is relative; relating to the preference, the desire or the need of the appreciator. As an illustration, the big height of a person is preferred when the hand must reach some levels, such as the fruit of certain trees, while the small height suits better when one is in a small place like a cramped cell.
* **Very good. Now, considering human and his ambitions, human and his artifices, what do you say of himself, is he good or bad?**
* The quality of a human is assessed through the prism of selfishness. You should know that selfishness is the instinct of giving priority to oneself in everything. It is about wanting to attract all happiness to oneself first; to wish all happiness for oneself and misfortune for others. Especially, when there is an alternative. People like to say that charity begins at home. This instinct is present in every human being. Therefore, to categorize humans in relation to the criterion 'good' or 'bad', one must use selfishness as the benchmark. The difference between human beings lies in the degree of selfishness naturally present in each of them. It is the same between animals. Those who have a too high degree of selfishness are considered very bad and harmful by their collaborators. They can kill, steal, hijack, and lie to achieve whatever goals they care about when opposed. They do not only care about what they have, they also want to get what other people get. Worst of all, they don't like others having theirs. They’re bitter. The bitterness comes out of a fear, sometime unfounded, which make of any progress of others a source of threat to their situation. As for those who have an average degree of it, they are often considered by others as jealous and emulators. They engage in emulations to be able to get the same as what others have. They do everything in moderation and parsimony. They are thrifty and helpful in the sense that they serve others after being satisfied with their parts. They are often proud and smug. They are considered good in their collaborations. Finally, those who have a lower degree of it, they are idlers, amorphous, social parasites and unhelpful in their communities.
* **And a total lack of selfishness? Rasth asked.**
* This is not possible in a normal person. In this case, there will be no ambitions, there will be no emulation, no struggle, no racism, no nationalism, and who knows? No progress, no humanity.
* **For the rest, I agree, but as far as racism or similar phenomena are concerned, I await explanations.**
* These phenomena are eloquent expressions of the natural selfishness of the human being. Let's see, when the child is born, his first contacts are with his parents (generally, his mother first, then his father), then the other members of the family. Then, people close to the family such as boy-cousins ​​and girl-cousins ​​etc. The love he shows towards them is the price he pays for the care they give him. This inclination, this love has no biological explanation. Thus, the child begins to speak the language of his parents which he thinks is the only language in the world. He develops unlimited confidence in his parents, whom he thinks are the strongest in the world. A world that is, in fact, limited to its immediate vicinity. Confident of the physical security he enjoys in their company, a feeling of pride and happiness is created in him. It generates the desire to maintain that situation. With the evolution, the child discovers the existence of other children, then other families. And realizes with disappointment that his family is not the only one in the world. So he understands that his safety was not as guaranteed as he had thought. He senses a latent threat around him. The protective instinct leads him to consider his own safety in a hostile world. This is the beginning of selfishness in children. This selfishness extends to his parents who are part of his first and foremost security devices. Then to his immediate social environment, his community for the same reason. Any attempt to prove the opposite of the feeling that the child has always harboured in relation to his parents and his community meets with resistance on his part. This resistance, struggle or conflict is the beginning of the sense of ethnocentrism, racism and the like that are its manifestations. But this phenomenon is not bad in itself when it is limited to the defensive form. That can be called positive racism. But if it is manifested at the expense of other individuals or communities in offensive form. That is what is bad. This appears when one manifests in the presence of the victim what is said or done in his absence. At this time, the racism and the like are intended to undermine his morale in order to create in him the sense of inferiority. Because if that is done, it facilitates the struggle between egos, in the way that it makes the victim revolt against himself instead of the racist and the like. Hence the acceptance of situations likes slavery. That’s why it is preferable not to say what everybody knows or sees in terms of difference if not necessary, when one is in a position of domination.
* **So, with regard to racism and similar phenomena, what must be done to put an end to it? A ban by means of public authority can be enough?**
* In my opinion, no. Rather, it is necessary to strengthen the victim's capacity for resilience. First morally, by giving oneself or giving him the necessary arguments to make him proud of his nature. So that he shouldn’t give in to provocations until the racist renounces his actions knowing that they do not produce the expected effects. Then materially, by giving oneself or giving him the economic, scientific, technical and technological means to fill the imbalance of which he is victimized. It should be noted that it is primarily up to the victim to show that he deserves respect. To focus only on prohibition of racist actions and the like by a public authority is to infantilize the victim. It creates a sense of pity or favour; rather than a right. The way one appears is the way people consider him. Remember that this consideration is manifested in the absence of the concerned individual before being produced in his presence. Whereas one defends himself in his absence from his presence. Remember that nothing is bad as long as those who are victim consider it as normal.
* **Let’s go back to the issue of love and friendship with regard to the chid.**
* With regard to love or friendship between individuals outside their families or community, they certainly have the same genesis but do not manifest themselves in the same way. As already mentioned above with regard to the child, when he will have discovered that his parents are not the strongest as he had previously thought he will realize his own vulnerability in the face of the selfishness of others. For his own solution, he looks for personal partners outside of his family or community. These are his friends. If it happens between a boy and a girl, there are two basic reasons: biological and societal. The biological reason is the satisfaction of a natural need. The societal reason it's about the child proving that there is at least someone who loves his or her ego. Note that loving with the hope of being loved one day in return is a source of hope, therefore, of joy of living. At that moment, it is better to love than to be loved if he or she does not love the one who loves him or her. Since hoping to love one day the person one does not love today gives a feeling of failure, therefore, a source of despair, even if the latter loves him. It is true that others may know more than you what is in one’s interest, but they cannot know more than you what you like. At the beginning the child has no personal ambition. All what he does is limited to what his parents set up for him. He rightfully thinks that all what is to make his parents feel proud, so therefore, it is in their interest. However, the child, discovering himself and seeking his own means of security, gradually frees himself from the grip of his parents. In the normal situation, the decrease in the influence of the parents on the child is inversely proportional to his awareness and the development of his own ambitions which may not be in conformity with those of the parents for him. Then, he begins to understand that what he is doing is not only in the interest of his parents but of his own. The achievement of his own ambition is often considered in collaboration with his friends rather than his family. That is the rational of friendship. This Friendship, unlike family or community, is an everyday effort in the image of life. As soon as this effort ceases, the friendship crumbles, withers and dies, while family remains even if the constitutive elements become enemies.
* **In what does this effort consist?**
* It is about tolerance, understanding, trust and respect. But for trust, the effort comes from the partner, because it is earned. Initially, trust is a risk that one takes. The person who benefits from the trust has to prove himself trust worthy.
* **Before closing the debate on the human being, can you tell me what is the best thing in human life is?**
* That’s very important as question. The best thing in human life is the good luck. The worst is the bad luck. Good luck can change the bad to good. Bad luck does the contrary.
* **I’ve understood it. About the animals? Cut the visitor like a good student.**
* The selfishness of animals, compared to that of human, is negative, that is to say, being limited to the satisfaction of natural needs, namely, survival and procreation. For example, the lion kills to feed itself (natural need), the other defends itself so as not to die by using its physical strength to fight or to flee. They certainly have an attitude towards their little ones that can be described as love, but this is not with an ulterior motive to perpetuate their communities nor to be of useful to them in the future. It is simply their instinct for defence and survival that extends to their young and sometimes to their kind. So, like humans, the selfishness of animals also has varying degrees. But this time the degrees are much more noticeable between species than between individuals. For example, there are animals that form pairs, such as gibbons, badgers. Most often, if one of the couple dies, the survivor lives alone. They are more selfish, while others are less attached to individual bonds, such as oxen, dogs etc. These are less selfish.
* **Can we talk about jealousy in that case?**
* Okay, but it is the instinct that guides animals, whereas in humans, it's more thoughtful. In both humans and animals, jealousy is a reaction to a threat that can be real or imaginary. Then, we can talk about positive jealousy, because it means that one is satisfied with what he gets and that he intends to preserve it. For animals, everything is limited there. Beyond that, jealousy becomes offensive, therefore, negative. It is only in certain humans that this manifests itself.
* This means that if in animals can be found jealousy or natural selfishness, they have no ambition compared to humans?
* Selfishness manifests itself in present facts in reaction to the real or imaginary attitudes of fellow human beings, while ambition aims for the future outside of any influence on the part of his fellow human beings. It pushes man to elaborate visions for the future. It is this vision that generates hope as already discussed. The power of decision-making under the impulse of ambition makes the difference between animal and human.
* **We see that everything begins with the family and ends up in the nation through the community. This means that as much as antagonism in the family can weaken it, it can also weaken communities and even nations. How can antagonism in the family be brought under control?**
* It's simple; there are three categories of people in families, each of them has a crucial role to play for the cohesion of the family: the rich, the poor and the elders. Everyone must play his role so that the family remains united. Let the rich be indulgent. That is, not to react swiftly to the negative attitudes of the poor. He must not be too nervous. That can be considered as arrogance that repulses the people. The elder must be truthful. He must tell the truth in all circumstances, regardless of the material means of the young brothers and sisters, but with the good manner. That can create confidence and force the respect from the younger brothers and sisters. The poor can be demanding. That is to say, he can claim openly what he wants from the rich without being too resentful and suspicious. That can create the sentiment of community around the riches of the brothers and sisters, and diminish the feeling of animosity. Everyone must remember that you should not decide under the influence of anger, nor promise under the influence of euphoria, nor announce the use of your money before it is gotten unless the source is usual and foreseeable. Money comes with its program. Emotion overcomes wisdom. It is like envy or love.
* **Still about jealousy, what about intra-family jealousy, that is to say, jealousy between elements of the same family?**
* This jealousy is also of two kinds: positive jealousy and negative jealousy. The one that is positive generates a healthy emulation between the elements and pushes them to make efforts so as not to be the object of contempt. When the elements are from the same father and the same mother, it can manifest itself in favour of the parents, often favouring the mother. For the negative jealousy, it often manifests itself between the children of one father but of different mothers. It engenders more animosity than emulation. It does not often lead to real progress insofar as the benchmark is limited to the small circle of the family. The battlefield is almost reduced to the immediate environment of the family. The parties are satisfied with little progress compared to the other elements of the family who constitute the target to be surpassed. Often they do not look beyond the small family circle where emulation is bolder and more progressive. It is better if one does not engage in it, because no one wins definitively insofar as any misfortune of one side, be it insignificant, is a source of joy for the other, even if it does not obtain any material benefit from it. As mentioned above, in a fight, as long as the weak side does not accept defeat, the fight continues. So that's how it is.
* **What should be done in order to put an end to it?**
* To put an end to it, everyone has to be afraid of everyone, or sham to be afraid of every one. That is auto limitation. Everyone has to love everyone, or sham to love everyone. Everyone has to act in the interest of everyone, or sham to act in the interest of everyone. That will reverberate on the community, on the nation afterwards. Then, the nation will become a reality. Durable peace results from there.
* **I understand. You truly deserve your name Prince of Wisdom. Tell me, what makes someone wise? Others think it is the age and yet you are very young.**

Tugna flashed a visibly involuntary smile before speaking.

* With us, you are right; wisdom is often linked to age. It is believed to result from the experiences accumulated during life. You can't easily separate them. In this context wisdom obeys certain criteria which are in the order of three: first, one must be close to deities. It is difficult to understand an elderly person who has no knowledge of the deities whatsoever. Or, at least, believe in them with some deference. This is why old people are often accused of witchcraft; the wise man must have self-control both in happiness and in misfortune, even in the face of danger he is supposed to be preponderant. For example, it would be hard to understand an old person crying for food, etc. Finally, the wise man must be a conciliator and not a troublemaker. It is difficult to understand an elderly person in front of a violent confrontation. So therefore anyone who demonstrates these qualities is deemed to be wise regardless of his age. But you agree with me that is usually the elderly persons that have these qualities. That’s why wisdom is linked to age.
* **About the intellectuals, compared to the wise men, how should they behave?**
* The intellectual, the scholar and the people of this category must control their belly, that is to say, not to eat everything, anywhere. They must control their mouths, that is to say, not talk about everything, everywhere. They must control their sexes, that is to say, not fall in love with everybody, everywhere. With this attitude, they will deserve all the respect of those around them.
* **According to you, what is the best attitude of a human being?**
* For me the best of the human attitude is to be able to know and believe that others have quality too. For example, to be intelligent is to know and believe that others are intelligent too. To be smart is to know and believe that others are smart too, etc.; and act accordingly.
* **What is the best behaviour of a human being?**
* It is to be able to tell the truth everywhere and at all time in good manner. It is the truth that feeds the confidence. And the confidence is the foundation of the good neighbourliness. Of course, it should be said in a good manner, for there are some truths one would like to avoid. For instance someone who tells the sick person that his healer is incompetent without suggesting him a competent one. The worst is the lie. It feeds the doubt, therefore, the distrust. Therefore, one should never lie unnecessary. Even having the duty and being able to say something and say nothing is also lying.
* **About the best manner?**
* It is humility. The contrary is arrogance. Likewise humility attracts the admiration of the collaborator; arrogance repulses it, as mentioned above.
* **All right! After talking about human being on an objective basis, I want to know if you think that it's normal to make any other distinction between humans on a basis other than merit.**
* No, there should be no other distinction between human beings apart from those abovementioned objective criteria.
* **Thank you. Then, I want you to go back a bit to the phenomenon of racism or ethnocentrism or discrimination, what originates racism? What engenders these attitudes in human beings in our communities or in our nations? I want to talk about its genesis or its dialectics?**
* You know, as already explained above, human beings are engaged in a perpetual struggle both collectively and individually between egos. In this conflict, they invent instruments that help them to have an ascendancy over others or to maintain their egos on the social chessboard. Among these instruments some are material such as wealth, talent and power. But also there is a psychological or mental instrument. The latter seems to be the most effective. It consists in creating in the subconscious of the individual or an entire community a conviction of inferiority or superiority on purely subjective basis, like colour of the skin. This simplifies the conflict, because it puts the individual face to face with himself, as said before. It manages to convince him of the naturalness or normality of his situation, thus dissuading him from any basis for conflict. This is called inferiority or superiority complex. In the context of racism or ethnocentrism and the like, the two opposing sides only come into open conflict when the lower side refuses to consider its status as a reality. Otherwise, as long as it accepts this situation as normal or natural, there is no conflict. Discrimination is no longer perceived. So, we no longer talk about racism or ethnocentrism etc… except seen by the outside world. But until that point is reached, the conflict remains. I repeat that in any conflict there is no victory until the weakest side accept defeat as a reality. But, as soon as one considers his adversary as stronger than him, there is no more fight. So it's in the head that everything is conceived, victory or defeat. As I said before this is the case of those that were made slaves after a war. It's the same thing in children's fighting play; the joke ceases as soon as all the parties stop running away from each other. What was at the beginning a joke becomes a serious fight.
* **You mean that slavery is a complex with no objective basis?**
* Yes. I am talking about the slave who is practiced against the will of the victim. This is cowardice, except those who have been forced to do so by circumstances beyond their control, such as wars or famine. For the rest, it is cowardice otherwise it is enough to decide that one is no longer a slave, and to assume this position.
* **Is there a slavery that’s voluntary?**
* Yes. A person can enslave himself. That can be through gratitude. As such, every good person is a slave for six reasons: one is a slave of one's creator (any deity for that matter). It is recognition due to a superior being, whatsoever it may be. One is slave of his parents. It is recognition due to them for having brought him into the world and taken care of him. One is slave to his creditor. It is an acknowledgment of his obligation to repay the debt. One is a slave of those who respect him. It is recognition of the good treatment he receives from him, and which obliges him to do the same. One is slave of his honour bright. It is an obligation vis-à-vis oneself with regards to one’s own words. One is slave of his community. It is recognition intended to continue to deserve the protection that that community provides him. It is about the obligation to conform to the habits and customs of his community in order to continue to benefit from its protection. One of the most palpable examples of the constrain we put on ourselves in order to continue benefitting from the protection of our community is the clothing. That’s why as soon as we enter our rooms we take off the clothes we were wearing, because in reality these clothes encumber us. But we wear them to respect the obligation imposed on us by our community to continue to benefit from its protection. So, it's a self-limitation to one’s desire to do what he wants to do. Anyone who breaks free from their community while living within it is deemed to be insane. This is the basis of everyone's belonging and attachment to a community. It should be noticed that in reality the phenomenon like racism as a complex can encompass the simple fear of a threat which can be real or imaginary from other people for reasons of ideology. This is the case with religious denominations. That is why one can see people of the same race or ethnicity massacring each other. All this on the basis of mere suspicion of threat; therefore, everything is created in the minds of people.
* **About between men and women, are they equal?**
* It's the same thing. In reality, it is nature itself that has created the difference between man and woman. But in terms of comparative advantages, they are equal, because everything that the man acquires in life, he acquires it thanks to the woman, vice versa. There must be no unjustified discrimination on the basis of this natural difference. Justice would be to treat everyone taking into account their natural differences, their specificities, which are, in fact, complementary. With this practice equality in respect and consideration will be achieved, and a stable and prosperous world will be achieved.
* **Good! About between white and black, are they equal?**
* Remember this maxim: societal inferiority is never consummated as long as the victim does not consider his situation as normal. Otherwise, the struggle continues. But with regard to the comparison between the black person and the white person, it must be recognized that in the recent history of humanity, the black person or the old race has always been a victim in his relations with the white person. On the one side by his own complicity and his own naivety on the other. The situation ended up giving rise to an inferiority complex in one and a superiority complex in the other. Today this complex has taken on a form of fatality accepted as normal in fact by the black person and maintained by the white person. For having accepted this situation, the black person ignores all his achievements of the past, because he thinks that such a fact is too perfect to be the work of his ancestors. Or even believing that such facts, be them real, no longer matter for him today, even for his pride. That’s why, for lack of reference, the black person accepts his inferiority as reality. He accepts that the pharaohs were white, even if the contrary is defendable. The black person ignores the charter of Kouroukan Fouga as the ancestor of the charters which govern the relations of human beings in nations. The black person forgets that the richest man in history is one of his ancestors. The black person is unaware that the pyramids are the work of his ancestors. The black person has forgotten the Bronzes of Benin; Aksun Obelisks; the libraries of Timbuktu which were the oldest in the history; the Stone Fortress of Monomotapa; the Ancient Rock in the southern part of Farafina. The whites trivialize the languages ​​of the blacks; blacks reject them. You can continue to quote. So blacks are no longer fighting for their own emancipation. How can the black person fight for his emancipation if he ignores his own history? If he does not know why Pliny the Elder said: *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi* (From Africa, there is always something new.)
* **So, what should be done for the emancipation of the black person? Or is there no more hope?**
* Not necessarily. Just restart the fight. Not a physical struggle, but a moral struggle, a mental struggle. Not against others but against oneself. He has to force himself to believe in himself. To believe in his past. In all those achievements to which we have just referred. To believe that all these are true, because when blacks believe enough in themselves, in their past, the others will know that blacks believe in themselves and in their past. When others believe enough that blacks believe in themselves and their past; they too will start believing in black people and in their past. You know, to be respected, one has to respect oneself first. This supposes respecting one's values, respecting one's word given to others. This is how he can prove that he respects them. When others know that he respects them by respecting himself, they will respect him. So as soon as black people believe in their past and respect that past, they can see their future in light of that past. This is renaissance. We need the Renaissance. The racism of which blacks are victims is the expression of a contempt that blacks themselves have attracted, consciously or unconsciously, by their lack of solidarity, their lack of respect for their past, their lack of love for a work well done, and lack of self-confidence, as already pointed out. It's not about the colour, but rather what the colour makes you think of. Otherwise, black isn't really black, and white isn't as white as the word. If it were a question of colour of the skin, albinos would be the most pampered of blacks since they are closer to whites in terms of colour.
* **Thanks. I want to go back a bit. You said that the causal relationship between human's ambitions and the means to achieve those ambitions determines the problem one may have. Speaking of yourself, I want to know if you suffer because you have ambitions the solution of which out of reach for you for lack of means. Isn’t it?**
* Yes, it is true that I suffer. I even suffer a lot.
* **So you admit to having more ambition than means, a weakness certainly?**
* No, I don't suffer because I am what I am, but because others are not what I am.
* **About the others?**
* Others? Many people suffer because they think they are not what others, whom they consider privileged, are. Whereas if everyone was like everyone else, there would certainly be no problem, because no one would need anyone. There would be no room for happiness, because it is measured in the light of unhappiness. For others, their suffering has a material content while mine has a moral content.
* **About happiness then, as you talked about it?**
* Happiness is not having what you are looking for, then we would talk about achievements, of which success is the expression. But happiness is being satisfied with what one gets or to be able to adapt one's life to what one gets or what one can get. That is why I do not suffer materially.
* **If you have a quality which you recognize about yourself, what is it?**
* If I have to recognize a quality of myself, it should be the fact that I have no former friends. All my friends of yesterday are my friends today and they will be tomorrow. I think that if a friend of yesterday had become an enemy today it would be the evidence that I had made a mistake of considering him yesterday as a friend but he had never been a friend in reality.
* **And if I had asked you about an imperfection in you, what it would be?**
* The imperfection I recognise in me is my ambition to please everybody. I have always held on to it, in vain.
* **And how do you think to correct it?**
* By believing that it’s impossible to please everyone because sometimes our quality can be considered as an imperfection for others. Therefore, I want to renounce it seeing that it’s impossible. However, I don’t want to be deliberately the source of the animosity of others towards me, knowing that if my enemy made himself an enemy on his own he will judge his own attitude one day as a weakness and then come back to a better sentiment. Then, I will have transformed an enemy into friend. Which is strength, as my mother said?
* **What can exasperate you very often?**
* What annoys me very often is when I tell the truth and one doubts about it while I have no mean to prove my sincerity.
* **What afflicts you very often?**
* It is when I see a child crying.
* **Let's talk about the relationship between the rulers and the governed. What about the respect for the law, is it in the interest of the rulers or the governed?**
* Respect for the law is in everyone’s interest. This means that breaking the law is in no one's interest. Since if everyone does what no one should do, ultimately no one will be able to do neither what everybody should do nor what no one should do. Therefore, it is in the interest of everybody not to do what nobody should do in order to be able to do what everybody should do.
* **Perfect! About the relationship between freedom and security, should one be prioritized over the other?**
* This is the greatest challenge facing all the systems of governance: rulers are responsible for ensuring security, while citizens want to enjoy their freedoms. The more a regime manages to reconcile the two, the closer it comes to the will of its subjects.
* **How to achieve it?**
* By a system of balancing in which freedom is limited only for security, and security is limited for freedom, because if freedom dominates, the lives of citizens and their property may be in danger. And if security dominates, citizens can be limited in their initiatives, and therefore in their desire to emancipate.
* **What makes freedom so important?**
* It is important insofar as it allows the individual to measure his own values ​​by comparing himself to others. In this emulation, the individual can establish his self-esteem and discover his own limits. Freedom is so important that it has no other limit than the security, because it is about being able to do whatever you want to do everywhere and at every time. Security intervenes to ensure that the freedom of one does not collide with that of the other. First, you should know that there are two categories of freedom: one that allows the person to do whatever they want to do without demanding anything from others except abstention and the other that allows the human beings to take part in decision-making process of their communities. This category is larger and more varied, because even animals need part of it, like freedom to go and come. That's why when you tie up your dog, it shows its displeasure because it can no longer do all what it wants to do. The other category is exercised in the field of determining decisions that are in the interest of the community, including that of the individual himself. But both, like all other fundamental values, are directly linked to the human dignity.
* **What are these other values ​​apart from freedoms?**
* These are all other advantages without which the person cannot live with dignity. They are rights. For their definition, I will tell you that no one can define them better than those that are in need of them, for its real value depends on the degree of the need felt.
* **Yes I see. So, dignity is essential to human nature? If I understand correctly, comparing the person to other animals, is it the dignity that makes the difference? I want more explanation.**
* Together we will make a practical comparison between human person and animals. Take the children; for example, if you share things among them, anything, it is not uncommon to see, in their reactions, that those who are not satisfied with their shares frowning. There are some who show that by rejecting their shares outright. Do you know why they do that?
* **You have already said, it is because they are not satisfied with their shares compared to those of others.**
* But the animals without exception, when the food is shared among them, whatever the share given to one of them, even if this share is minimal, they do not refuse it even if it means continuing to beg through familiar gestures. For the child, he refuses because he has the feeling of being, rightly or wrongly victim of unjustified discrimination. The animal does not have this ability to feel discrimination. In reality, discrimination hurts the child; that is why he may even shed tears as if feeling physical pain. But no, he feels a moral pain instead. The treatment he thinks he has suffered offends his dignity. That's the word! Dignity is the main difference between human beings and all other animals. Every positive thing that is constructed around human beings is to enhance their dignity. Every negative thing that he suffers hurts above all his dignity.
* **So dignity is a value recognized only to human beings?**
* Yes, any act that encroaches on his dignity erodes his quality as a human being. Any act that values ​​the dignity of the human person is a respect for his quality of human being.
* **Tell me about good and evil?**
* Let me tell you that a good deed, if done in payment for another is still called good deed. It does not change the name regardless of the disproportion between the two, whereas evil can become justice when it is equivalent to the evil for which it is done. But when it goes beyond the evil in return for which it is done or when it is gratuitous that it is considered as an evil.
* **Is human being a good judge about himself?**
* Well. Let’s say that human being is a judge about himself, but often not a good judge. You know, everyone knows his own behaviour. Everyone knows whether what he is doing is a vice or virtue. But what is difficult for human being is to distinguish evil from justice in his actions. The thief knows that stealing is not good, but he does it. It is the same for the liar, the traitor or the criminal. The problem is that he always wants to find an explanation or a justification for the act he commits. This is to be in accordance with one's own conscience, because as long as one is not in accordance with his conscience he does not act freely. Conscience is the judge. It is the one that commands everything we do. Therefore, the action reflects what the conscience finds right or legitimate. This is why, the thief, in order to be able to steal he must prove that his victim deserves the fate he is inflicting on him to be in line with his conscience. So, it must be demonstrated that his victim is a bad person, vis-à-vis, him, the thief, or other people. At this moment the theft appears as a justice and not an evil deed in front of his conscience.
* **Finally, I want to know in our individual relationships, what should guide us in this world of hypocrisy? In one word, how can one know true friends or a good person?**
* You can only know the real nature of a human being until he gets means or power, because to be a giver, one must be able not to give. To be tolerant, one must be able not to tolerate. To be non-violent, one must be able to be violent. To be a forgiver, one must be able not to forgive. **It is by not doing what we can do that we prove to be what we really are**. **And it is by not doing what we ought to do that we prove not to be what we may claim to be**. That is to say, we do not say what we say by just saying it but by doing it. In simple words, doing says better what we want to say than saying. We say better what we don’t want to do by not doing it than saying, no! Just remember that everyone's friend is nobody's friend. No one's friend is everyone's enemy. Therefore, everyone's friend is everyone's enemy. According to my mother, falsehood, betrayal, ingratitude and such characters constitute the strength of the weak. Truth, honesty, gratitude, and such characters are the strength of the strong. In summary, vice is the strength of the weak and virtue is the strength of the strong. True friends are people of virtue. It's up to you to be careful.
* **Further explanation, please.**
* No problem. You must know that for the liar; the weakness he’s hiding is in the truth that he refuses to say. For the betrayer, knowing that due to his weakness he cannot withstand an open confrontation, he prefers surprising his opponent or making a reckless bluff. For the ungrateful, recognizing the benefaction he had received would reveal the weak state he had once been in. However, one should not always be adamant about gratitude from the people, because, expecting steadily the gratitude for his benefaction, is to acknowledge that he did not do his duty. Whereas, the benefaction should be seen as a duty in the society by one who does it and a favour by one who receives it. Then, life will good. And above all don’t do good deed without necessity. People appreciate better what they acquire by themselves than what is offered to them; simply because it’s a mark of freedom.
* **No, I know that. Please let’s go back a bit to talk about the friendship; you say that one should avoid being friend of two enemies. I want some explanations.**
* Well. You should know that the best friend is the friend of two friends; the worst friend is the friend of two enemies. The best enemy is the enemy of two enemies; and he worst enemy is the enemy of two friends. The friend of one side in a conflict is party to that conflict until he shows himself available to take part in the efforts of the resolution of the conflict.
* **How can we easily know other people?**
* To know other people you have, first of all, know yourself. To know yourself means to know your own imperfections and your own qualities, for one is the benchmark for oneself in evaluating other people. The best people are those who know themselves really.
* **Your last words?**
* My last words are the following: Avoid making open quarrel with the following people: your neighbours, your healers and your seers. Avoid speaking badly to people, for one remembers for long time what he hears than what he sees. Avoid doing evil to people for nothing, for one remembers for long time the evil than good. Don’t even do evil in reaction to an evil if one knows that it’s the consequence of his reaction that is sought by the one who did the evil. Avoid violence as much as you can, for all that is obtained by violence must be preserved by it otherwise it will be lost by it. Avoid talking too much to a stranger or someone you just met. He might reveal himself to be the contrary of what you thought. Never lie unless by necessity; above all not successively three times to the same person. The next truth might rue it if your interlocutor is not naïf. Be careful with the talkative; what he says to you, he might say it to others. Just listen to him as much as you can, for more he talks more he can expose himself. And as you are listening to him you can be reading in his mind and make your own idea on his nature. Surely, nobody speak better than the one who tells the truth. Surely, nobody speaks too much than the one liar.

After this interview, which took a whole day and half the night, under the watchful and amazed gaze of the thousands of people who had made the trip for this occasion, Rasth took leave of his host.

* I leave convinced of your greatness of mind and I promise you allegiance, he said by way of oath. I will come to Dawanian to seek my submission to the Genius. He concluded.
* Thank you for coming. We are all learning, because there is no limit to the quest for knowledge. It is not bad not to know, but not to know that one does not know. He who does not know that he does not know will not know, because he does not know what he does not know. The day we convince ourselves that we know everything, we begin to unlearn, because we stop learning and give way to oblivion.

Arrived in Damaro where his return was impatiently awaited, Rasth gathered his disciples under the watchful eye of the authorities who were fearing a subversive threat.

* I went to meet the Prince of Wisdom to test his ability to understand life and its vagaries. I was afraid of the arrival of an impostor. I questioned him for a day and a good part of the night on several subjects. I admit here that contrary to what I thought, he appeared to be morally a man above the ordinary. He revealed things on which I had no clear idea. Convinced of his moral and spiritual strength, I swore allegiance to him. As for you who have always followed me with deference, I cannot lead you on a bad path or ask you to follow a path against your will. If you can follow me in this direction, so much the better. Otherwise I release you with all my blessing and all the respect for your moral integrity; and I leave to join Tugna at the top of Dawanian where he will settle in the near future. I intend to follow him to benefit from his wisdom, and become a servant of Genius.

After a brief aside, the spokesman for the disciples of the old wise man spoke on behalf of his colleagues, in a measured tone:

* We have been following you for a very long time; we obeyed you, you never deceived us one day. That's why everything you say we accept without hesitation because we are sure that you will never lead us on a wrong path, that's why you have the title of the most respected man of our country. Confident that you will always guide us towards the truth, we are resolved today more than yesterday to follow you wherever you decide to lead us in the name of the oath we have already taken before you.

When Emperor Makim heard the news of the allegiance of his wisest and most respected man, he flew into a violent rage, because this allegiance, which he described as surrender, did not bode well for his authority. He saw it as a bad start. For his reaction, he immediately summoned all his allies to a big meeting. Thousands of dignitaries and supporters of his regime responded. It was an opportunity for him to hold forth for hours, just to stigmatize the Prince of Wisdom. He called him a miracle worker, a magician, an impostor, an iconoclast and an apostate. Finally, he promises:

* And he, and his followers who let themselves be fooled by his cynical lies, must suffer the consequences of their abjurations. We have put in place a joint army of several thousand men, armed with the latest generation of equipment to annihilate this intrepid gravedigger. The command camp will be here, in our Capital city. Let him not mistake our ability and our determination to put this adventurer out of harm's way. In fact, we are not going to let him pass for his seat. Unless it goes through the air or under the ground. He'll find us here with his men.

Rasth, who knew he had become a privileged target, fled with his men and sympathizers who were becoming more and more numerous since his allegiance to the famous Prince of Wisdom, of whom they only knew by name. They took an unknown destination.

The Third riddle of the Genius was being awaited.

THE CROCODILE EMERGING FROM THE URINE CHASED THE URINATOR

A month in advance, Tugna announced the date of his move to the top of Dawanian. The information was disseminated through the four corners of Farafina, and elsewhere. Comments abounded on the greatness of the event to come; and no one wanted to be told the story. Several thousand people decided to make the trip with him, others out of sympathy, and others out of curiosity. As Tugna's popularity was growing, his enemies were hardening their stance and perfecting their plan to prevent him from achieving, what they were calling his evil and malevolent goal.

In Damaro, the destination of Rasth and his followers mattered less than the arrangements to be made to prevent Tugna from passing.

The day of departure finally arrived. The route was known to everyone. Tugna never wanted to move on the sly. In fact, he was obliged to do so, because the number of followers was very important.

Damaro's allies, too, were getting into battle order. An army composed of tens of thousands of well-equipped and well-trained men and placed under the command of the great general by the name of Zarr was put in place. This officer was highly feared because of his mastery of warfare tactics and his attachment to troop discipline. He was literally obeyed by his men.

As a prelude to the arrival of Tugna and his men, he deployed thousands of Soffah at all levels of the path that the Prince and his retinue had to take, for the first phase. Other Soffah were waiting to come as reinforcements if needed. The other way which would be the shortest road to go to Dawanian was blocked by a chain of very high mountains. It was unimaginable to think of this option.

However, the men of Tugna were not armed, although there were among them great fighters ready to battle with the enemies; military means would not be lacking either. But Tugna's order was clear. His men were not to use the instruments of violence against the enemies.

Early in the morning, the Prince ordered his partisans to follow him in line with discipline, without saying a word. He took the direction of Dawanian taking directly the path that was leading to the range of mountain without worrying about this pitfall the nature of which had been explained to him for a long time. This massif had to be circumvented, because it was impassable for human beings. That's what Zarr's men had thought. Many people from Tugna side also knew this reality, but the order was to say nothing.

Informed very lately and surprised by the direction taken by Tugna and his retinue, the enemy army immediately followed Tugna’s men, being convinced to catch up with them due to the impassable obstacle that was this mountain range.

Tugna and his men were going without any fear or hesitation. When they reached at the foot of the mountain, Tugna took out his sword, pointed it at the mountain, and then asked everyone to close their eyes. That was done immediately. He then let out a powerful cry, so powerful that the echoes resounded in all the sides of the mountain range. Everyone felt a shiver at the height of the Prince's cry. A moment later, he asked them to open their eyes. It was with surprise that people found themselves on the other side of the mountain range. Nobody knew what had happened. But one had to say nothing.

Meanwhile Zarr's men were coming at full speed with the certainty of getting their hands on the Prince and his followers at the foot of the mountain. When they arrived there, great was their surprise to find no trace of these thousands of souls who were following Tugna on foot. “How can they all disappear at the same time?” they were wondering in amazement. Some climbed up to an accessible height of the mountain to look from afar for any hint of the presence of human life; only to be disappointed. It was at that moment that an emissary was dispatched to Zarr to announce the bad news.

While the men of Zarr who were pursuing Tugna were vegetating at the foot of the mountain searching for the slightest sign, the other group that was in the waiting position saw a large group of people arriving. The group was so large that they couldn't stay unconcerned.

Without caring about the fate that should have been reserved for their comrades, Zarr gave order to intercept this group to see what it was about. After certain time, to their great astonishment, they saw old Rasth coming with his followers leaving their sanctuary to join Dawanian in order to take part in the installation of their mentor there.

* Where are you going? Zarr asked haggardly.
* We are going to Dawanian to join the Prince of Wisdom. Answered the old wise man curtly, before asking in turn. About you, where are you going? He said pretending not to understand anything.
* We are pursuing your Prince of Wisdom. We're not going to let him pass here. There is already a group on his trail. We are here to reinforce them whenever necessary. He cannot escape us with these thousands of supporters.
* Look! If you knew what I know, you would have given up this adventure. It's a waste of time. You will tell me one day. Said the wise old man.
* We are not like you. We have taken all necessary measures to prevent him from achieving his objective of destabilization.

It was during this heated debate between Zarr and the old wise man that the emissary of the Soffah at the front arrived on a panting horse. He wasted no time in delivering his message:

* My chief, we chased these people who were in a very big number and were heading straight for the mountain. Knowing that there was no way out for them, because the mountain is impassable, we were hoping to have a stranglehold on them at the foot of this barrier. We followed them within a relatively close range. What was not our surprise to find none of these people at the foot of the mountain? Not knowing what to do, I am sent to get your instructions.
* So they all disappeared without a trace? The soldier asked, and then turned to Rasth. What! He exclaimed. He shook his head without saying anything. Then turned to the fighters with a dazed look. They were all standing stunned. What shall we do now? Addressing his deputy.
* I also wonder. Someone who can make a whole world disappear in a small range, he must have an argument.
* Listen my children, you are following someone who has more arguments, more spiritual power than you and me; someone with a big and strong soul. A soul capable of moving that entire mountain that seems impassable for you and me. Make no mistake; you can't do anything against him. Remember one thing, if you see a group of people following a single individual who gives them neither food nor drink, you should know that he gives them hope. And this is the most important.
* Yes, an argument that deserves to be heard. Approved Zarr in a soft tone, before speaking again: Without imposing anything on you, I inform you that I want to go and listen to this man. All those who want to continue the fight I encourage you and thank you for your loyalty. Addressing his deputy, you lead the troops; I am leaving.
* Without disobeying you, I want to listen to him too. All the Soffah said the same thing.

But fearing the risk of being prosecuted for treason when the news would have reached the authorities, it was decided that Zarr should return to the camp to try to demobilize the rest of the army.

* Go with the troop, I'm going to the barrack. I will meet you there.

The other fighters who were waiting at the foot of the mountain hoping for the return of the missionary with new instructions from their leader, finally decided to return to the base. There, they weren't surprised to learn that their colleagues had joined the Prince of Wisdom at his new headquarter. Without asking permission, they did the same.

They all decided to abandon their weapons on the spot to take the path of Dawanian following the old wise man and his men.

Zarr, at the barrack, found no difficulty to rally behind him the majority of the Soffah of Damaro. The command camp as well as those of the other monarchies including Simandu, literally emptied. This coalition was thus defeated and disarmed without a single shot. The path was taken for Dawanian.

Meanwhile, the Prince and his thousands of supporters were approaching the peak of Dawanian. The relief was clearly visible, and many people were admiring it for the first time. After few days of walk, they arrived at the top of Dawanian. Then, the Prince was immediately led alone into the cave. A room worthy of his status had been arranged for him. He was to stay there until the beginning of the ceremony.

Emissaries had been dispatched to bring his mothers, Suwo and Mamakany, as well as Famoro, his father, Dankabaly his hunting master, his adoptive mother, and his stepmother, the youngest wife of Famoro after Mamakany. They were all lodged with dignity before the day of the ceremony.

The whole peak of Dawanian was stormed. No need to go into the details of the Dawanian relief already described above. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the two steppes namely Kolonfoua and Dianfoua were literally overwhelmed by people who were flocking from all sides. They all wanted to attend the event of their lives. These steppes served as the setting for this gigantic ceremony.

The ceremony of occupying the throne which had been intended for the Prince of wisdom for centuries or even millennia was exceptional. The whole side of the mountain was completely occupied. This statement is enough to say that the event was the biggest gathering in the history of Farafina. There were all the griots, the singers and the instrumentalists of the region. They were playing and singing at the top of their voices. Dawanian's ambient temperature which was usually chilly became scorching with human warmth.

On the main day of the throne occupation, at sunset, as soon as the new moon disappeared and when the influx of people subsided, the laudator of the sacred places invited the assistance to silence. All this human tide which extended over several kilometres around, obeyed at once. There was a total silence like when a pebble falls among frogs croaking in a pond.

Few minutes later the cave opened and everyone saw twenty two-headed giants with impressive musculature coming out, carrying a gigantic throne on their heads. This throne, as mentioned before, which was essentially made of diamond, was radiating a profusion of light. It was shining in the darkness with unimaginable brilliance. There is nothing so brilliant imaginable for human being as this throne. They went to place it at the top of Dawanian from where everyone could observe it without difficulty. The brilliance of the throne illuminated as in broad daylight the entire perimeter across which the crowd was spread out. It could be seen from miles away the site where it was placed.

After the throne was adjusted on the top of Dawanian under people's dumbfounded eyes, the laudator spoke up. The silence grew deeper, even the birds seemed to be watching.

* May the man who embodies Niginangan, the demiurge of reincarnation, the overseer and protector of worthy human beings, the punisher of corrupted souls, advance, please, to occupy the throne which has always been exclusively reserved for him. He said, looking at the door of the Genius' residence where Tugna had been since his arrival.

Then he continued to speak with an eloquence of which he was the sole keeper of the secret, flattering the merits of the Prince. He congratulated the child's parents, this time speaking of his mothers, instead of his mother. Despite the fact that he had no device to amplify his voice, everyone could hear him as if he was right near them.

Tugna majestically came out of the cave, his sword in hand, dressed in an all-white boubou, then headed for the throne with muffled steps. An orgy of heavenly light spread over the entire region, allowing the four corners of the globe to be seen. He paused for a moment to wait to be told to sit down.

* May the prince sit down, please. Tugna sat down with the same care and put his sword on his knees.

The laudator put an entirely diamond made crown on his head.

* May the prince please get up and speak to his people. The prince rose with an orderly gesture, raised his sword without taking it out of its sheath and held it on his side.

By this occupation of the sacred throne he became the all-powerful Faama (Emperor) of Farafina and Damaro. He spoke after getting up with the same pace.

* I invite my mother Suwo to come and sit on my right in the seat. I invite my mother Mamakany to come and sit on my left in the seat. My father as well as all his wives, my foster father and my foster mother come to take their places just in front of the seat. He said.

Suwo moved forward with a humble gait and sat on his right as recommended by his son. Mamakany followed and sat on the left. The others came orderly to sit in a place that was arranged there to receive them. The prince resumed speaking again, addressing the crowd.

* Do not be surprised, exactly the iron came out of the stone. It was the will of the Genius. No one could do anything about it. Thank you for having defied the threats from your rulers and the bad weather to be here. By your presence here tonight, you enter into an alliance with the Genius that I embody here. Here is the proof. Out of nowhere everyone saw this immaculately white giant standing at the horizon, and then disappeared after a short while.

After that he ordered the liberation of his uncles as well their transfer near with the rank of special Advisers. In his speech of the occasion, he proceeded to the organisation of his regime. That was called the great the refoundation.

THE GREAT REFOUNDATION

Thus, Tougna made the deepest reorganisation of the world geopolitics of the time. He started by merging the empires of Farafina and Damaro to become the most powerful State on the earth. At the same time, he proceeded to appointing the kings of the different kingdoms that were composing that State.

The first appointees were the following:

Jumey, Mansa of Simandu;

Kassim, Mansa of Turu;

Cece, Mansa Sansamba,

Konkonba, maintained in Bambadou;

Rasth, Mansa of Damaro;

Dankabaly, Mansa of Kedugu

The kings of Salaba, Macra and Sanfan were maintained as *Mansa* of their respective territories.

He thus appointed a *Mansa* in each of the monarchies of Farafina and Damaro. And this nomination consequently took the place of Act of dismissal of the unconfirmed kings. Then, it laid the groundwork for the laws that were to govern the lives of the peoples in the different territories of Farafina and Damaro, both in political, economic and social realms. And this milestone of the laws thus laid down consequently repealed all other contrary previous provisions.

The first steps taken were as follows:

1. APPOINTED MANSA AND ELECTED MANSA

The Mansa or leaders who were to administer the different territories under the magisterium of the Prince were of two kinds. Those appointed by him during the ceremony and those elected by the citizens themselves.

A- **Appointed Mansa**

The Mansa appointed during this installation ceremony in Dawanian were to remain in power until death or physical or moral incapacity. This time would allow them to inculcate the guidelines decreed by the Prince, the supreme commander of all the souls of Farafina and Damaro, in their subjects. All the Mansa were assisted by a deputy Mansa chosen during the same ceremony among the women known for their moral probity. She was in charge of managing the administration under the control of the Mansa and his special Advisers. She should not be related to the Mansa himself in terms of family. It was the Deputy who was to replace the Mansa in the event of a power vacuum. The deputy of that one was chosen according to the same criteria by the men and women of more than seventy years old who constituting the first electoral college. By family it was meant here any criterion of distinction between citizens when it is relevant at the time of the choice of the Mansa. It is ethnicity, region or religion. The Deputy-Mansa chosen should exercise power under the same conditions as the Mansa he had replaced.

After the chosen Mansa, the elected Mansa should enter in the political games, but this time by way of election. The candidacy was reserved, for the beginning, to men between the ages of thirty and seventy. The men and women over the age of seventy were responsible for organizing the processes of choosing.

The elders should constitute a committee for consultation on matters of general interest.

After them came the elected Mansa.

B- **The elected Mansa**

It is a second electoral college composed of wise men aged from forty to sixty-nine that each territory put in place on the occasion of the election of a Mansa and his Deputy. Only citizens of both sexes between the ages of twenty and forty and demonstrating moral probity were to take part in the choice of elders that could be part of this Electoral College. Each territory, in accordance with its specificity, freely determined the number of years for a mandate, taking into account the number and importance of the families that made up the territories. The number of mandates was fixed as follows:

1. In territories made up of several families of varying size in terms of number, these families were classified into three categories: the majority, the average and the minority. The Mansa from these different families were to exercise power in turn. The family that had the turn of exercising power would present several candidates among whom the elders were making a choice. The Mansa thus elected would rule the country for a mandate renewable once for the majority families. Non-renewable for medium and minority. For the renewal of a mandate, all families could present a candidate. If the elected official came from a minority family, this mandate would constitute his only tenure, but for the average, a second tenure was possible.
2. In territories with two families of equal size in terms of number of people. The mandate was renewable once. For the renewal, the candidacy was free. And if a family failed to get a second term, it could try another time to complete their term count during the next ballot. If it had lost that time, it would wait for its normal turn, but could no longer claim that lost turn.
3. The territories of more than two groups which were equal in terms of number of members, the rules provided for in n°2 would apply.
4. In the territories of a single family, the Mansa are elected for one mandate renewable once.
5. In case of power vacuum, the rule provided at paragraph 2 A would apply.

After those precepts, he determined the number of Mandates and the powers of the Mansa.

II- POWERS OF THE MANSA AND NUMBERS OFTHEIR MANDATES

1. The Mansa appointed by the Prince of Wisdom were invested, under his magisterium, with the three powers: Legislative, Executive and Judicial.
2. The elected Mansa had only legislative and executive powers. Judicial power being entrusted to elders of both sexes over seventy years of age that constituted the provincial committee.
3. Provincial committees composed of elders in the provinces of their jurisdictions were set up. Each committee was exclusively headed by a woman known for her wisdom and chastity. She was to ensure strict compliance with laws and mores of the province, and applied the appropriate penalties in the event of violation.

After the first two generations of Mansa, the third generation came in.

III-THIRD GOVERNANCE GENERATION

In the third generation of governance, the powers would be completely separated. Families no longer mattered in choosing the candidates, giving way to candidates’ programs. However, the possible terms of office remained limited to two.

All those aspiring for the position of Mansa were supposed to be able to speak at least three languages in countries in the territories of more than three languages. They should speak all two languages in a country of two languages. In case of equality after an election, the candidate whose wife or at least one of whose wives is from another ethnic group would be elected. Otherwise, the electoral process would continue.

To conclude, the prince exposed the different rights and duties guaranteed in the territories under his command.

IV- RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF CITIZENS

Citizens should enjoy rights that were inalienable, imprescriptible, inseparable, and interdependent. They were as follow:

1. Everyone is free to express himslef
2. Everyone is free to practice the religious belief of his choice and in the manner of his choice, or not to have any religious belief at all
3. Everyone is free to dispose of the fruit of his labour
4. Everyone is free to go and come.
5. Everyone is free to associate with whoever he wants
6. The freedom of every individual must cohabitate with that of the other.
7. Everyone must be protected against fear, hunger and disease.
8. Any murder resulting from a deliberate act with an ambush, after having exhausted all avenues of appeal, is punished by poisoning the culprit without himself being informed of the sentence much less the date of execution. However, his relatives are informed of the sentence but not of the date.
9. Each State is responsible for defining the other offenses as well as providing for the applicable penalties.
10. The slavery was abolished
11. Statute labor was abolished
12. As consequence of equality between all the human beings, marriage was authorized between the people of castes and other members of the community.
13. The rich should contribute to the cost of the public expenditure by payment.
14. Le poor would contribute by participating to labor of the general interest
15. Forced marriage is prohibited
16. Early marriage is prohibited.
17. Arbitrary and fanciful divorces are prohibited or pronounced to the detriment of the wrongdoer.
18. The baby belongs to the birth bed except in the event of a legitimate opposition.
19. A child born out of wedlock acquires the same right as the others after an official recognition ceremony which may take place at any age.
20. A legitimate child cannot be illegitimated unless in the interest of the child.
21. The father of an incestuous child could not be officially recognized and the consenting genitors were prohibited to take part in all social and economic activities of the community for five consecutive years.
22. The recidivists were sentenced to life imprisonment
23. One becomes the owner of any land that he has occupied for thirty successive years without being disturbed.
24. Nobody was authorized to sell all his property before death in presence of at least one child. Any sale in this circumstance was null and void.
25. The man is the authorizing officer of the expenses of the family whose funds are managed by the woman.
26. Polygamy is only permitted with the unequivocal consent of the spouse or the spouses. In case of refusal, that should be motivated.
27. When the wife is declared sterile by the healers, the marriage of a second wife is celebrated only after informing the first wife in front of at least a witness from her family.
28. The age of marriage for women is set at seventeen years and that of men at nineteen years.
29. Women, children, the sick of all sides were given priority in protection during wars.
30. During the division of the estate, the heirs, including the surviving spouses, receive the same share.
31. Discrimination is prohibited in all its forms, except in the interest of the weak.
32. The age of recruitment in the army was set from seventeen years old
33. The child must be educated, cared for, protected by the parents, in default of them, by the society at large.
34. No child should be disinherited.
35. Any sale of real estate the consequence of which would disinherit a child of the seller was null and void.
36. No woman should be divorced while in pregnancy or breast feeding
37. No man could be abandoned by his wife while he is ill unless in case of incapacity declared a healer under oath.
38. Any marred person that would violate these provisions would lose all the advantages of the divorce.
39. The elders should be respected and protected.
40. People with disabilities should be respected and protected.
41. The women should be respected and protected against all form of discrimination.
42. There should be equality between man and woman in respect and consideration.
43. Wild fire was forbidden.
44. Excessive hunt was prohibited
45. Excessive fishing was prohibited
46. Excessive wood cutting was prohibited.
47. The young of the animals and the females in parturition or in visible pregnancy are protected during the hunts.
48. Small fish should not be cut.

After laying down all the precepts that should be the substrate of relationship between the citizens of all the territories, on the one hand, and between the citizens and the leaders on the other, the session was closed, and the people had the honor to an exceptional feast with all the dishes that made up the gastronomy of Dawanian.

Under the reign of Tugna, all the farafings and the Damarois (the inhabitants of Farafina and Damaro), found peace and tranquility as a reality. An era of justice, equality and equity among all men and all peoples has dawned. The tree of love and solidarity covered everyone with its shade, and its flowers, filling the atmosphere with a delight of joy, brought a smile to everyone's lips. The world finally became beautiful, and life good.

**Mandigo words used in the novel**

**Danfany** : (Etymologically, woven cloth) : Locally woven textile by Mandingo weavers

**Dissa** : Sash, a ribbon band serving sometimes as belt, symbol of nobility.

**Faama** : Emperor that rules over numbers of kingdoms.

**Farafing** : (Literally, black skin) generic noun for the black persons in Mandingo

**Harajaba:** seventh month of lunar calendar.

**jely** : The griot, knower of the history of the communities, that serves as Adviser of kings..

**jombede:** First month of lunar calendar.

**Jon: Slave**

**Dunya** : Word of Arabic origin meaning, this present world

**Garanke** : Craftsman practicing the tannery.

**Kirini** : Device made of woven stalks used as door in rural areas in Manden

Mangana : Fetish of Mandingo mythology believed to have strong protective virtue.

**Neirei**: A tree in the savannah region the almond of which is used to make the sumbara which is much appreciated condiment in the Mandingo dish

**Ninguinangan** : A giant be in the Mandingo mythology that gets enormous powers of doing both good and bad.

**Numu** : Blacksmith

**Nyamakala** : Generic noun for the people of the caste

**Sanaku**: A sort of traditional relationship between families which oblige them mutual assistance and ban between them any misunderstanding.

**Soffah** : (Literally, father of the horse) Warriors in Manden.

**Sukono** : (Literally, bird of witchcraft). It’s a giant bird in Mandingo mythology that serves as means of transportation in the witchcraft.

**Toh**: Meal made of cassava powder in Mandingo regions.