

The Selfish Chief

Once upon a time, there was a drought in a village in Africa. The chief was a very selfish chief, who one day found water and dug himself a well.

NO ONE SHALL DRINK
FROM THIS WELL EXCEPT
FOR MY FAMILY. IF
ANYONE ELSE DARE TO
DRINK FROM THESE
WATERS, THEY SHALL DIE.

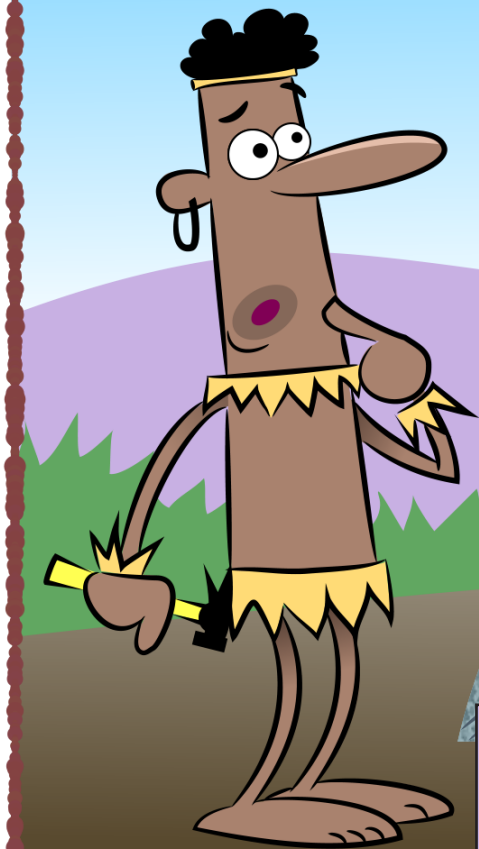
"Well, at last my well is finished. Now I will post my sign. Monaku, bring my hammer and put it up immediately."

"Yes, your majesty."

The servant hammered up a wooden sign over the well, which read:

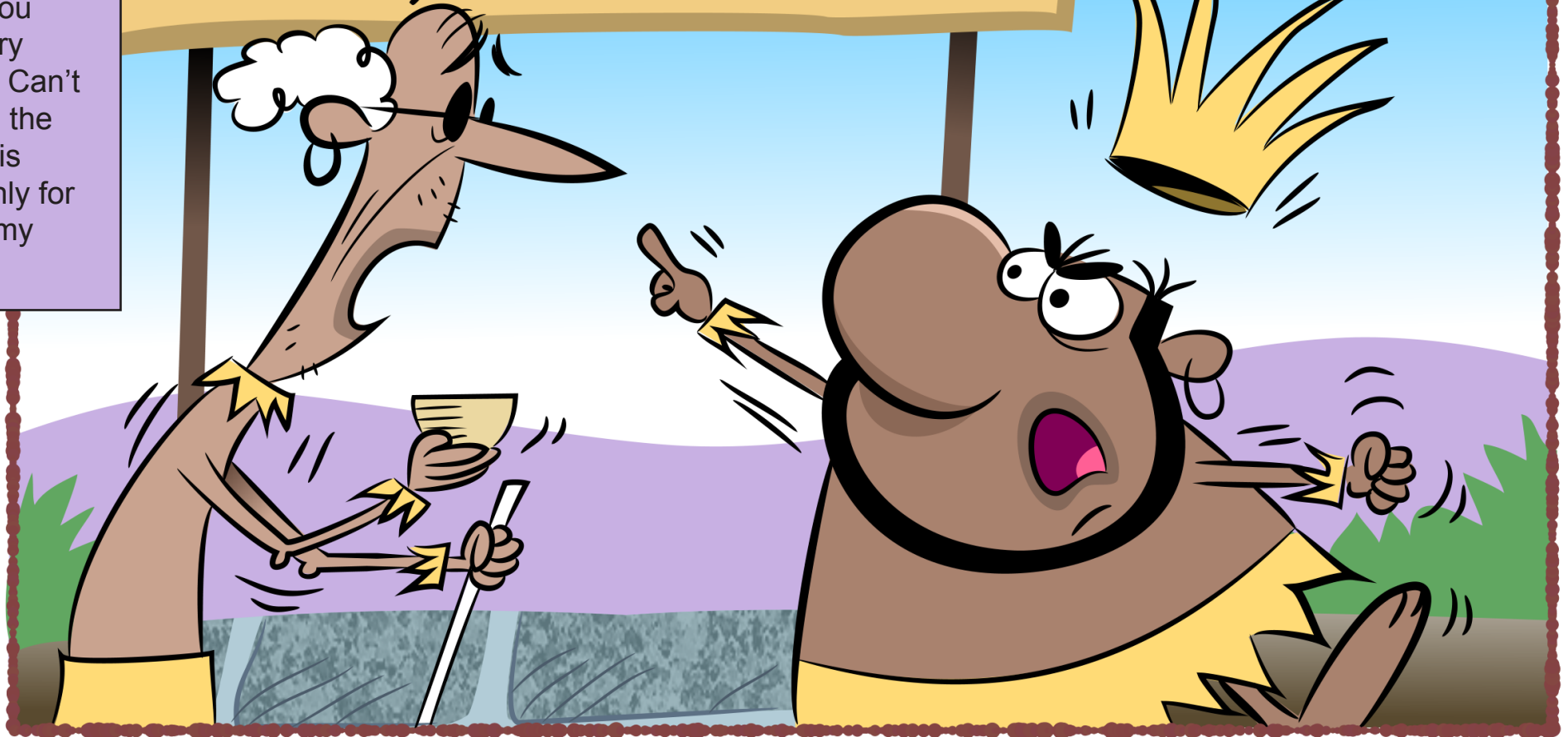
"Excellent! Now I will have all the water I need."

Just then an old man stumbled down the path, tapping his stick, and bumped into the chief. He held out his cup and cried, "Water. Water. Please, may I have some water?"



“Go away, old man, before I throw you into a very deep pit. Can’t you read the sign? This well is only for me and my family.”

WATERS, THEY SHALL DIE.



“Forgive me, your great one, for I am blind.”

“That is no excuse. I will forgive you this time, but do not ever come back here again begging for my water.”

“Yes, of course. Thank you for your mercy, O great one.”

The next day, the chief and his servant came back to the well to collect a bucket of water.

“Monaku, throw that bucket inside the well, now.”

“Yes, your majesty.”

The bucket hit the bottom with a clunking noise. The chief looked inside his new well in disappointed surprise.

“W-w-what? There is no water in my well?”

“Why not?”

“Oh well, maybe the water will come in a few days.”
But every day he came to his well, it was always dry.

“Hmm, why does the water not come, for heaven’s sake?”
At last he called his wise man and asked him.
“Mogizi, if you value your life, show me the reason why my well remains empty.”

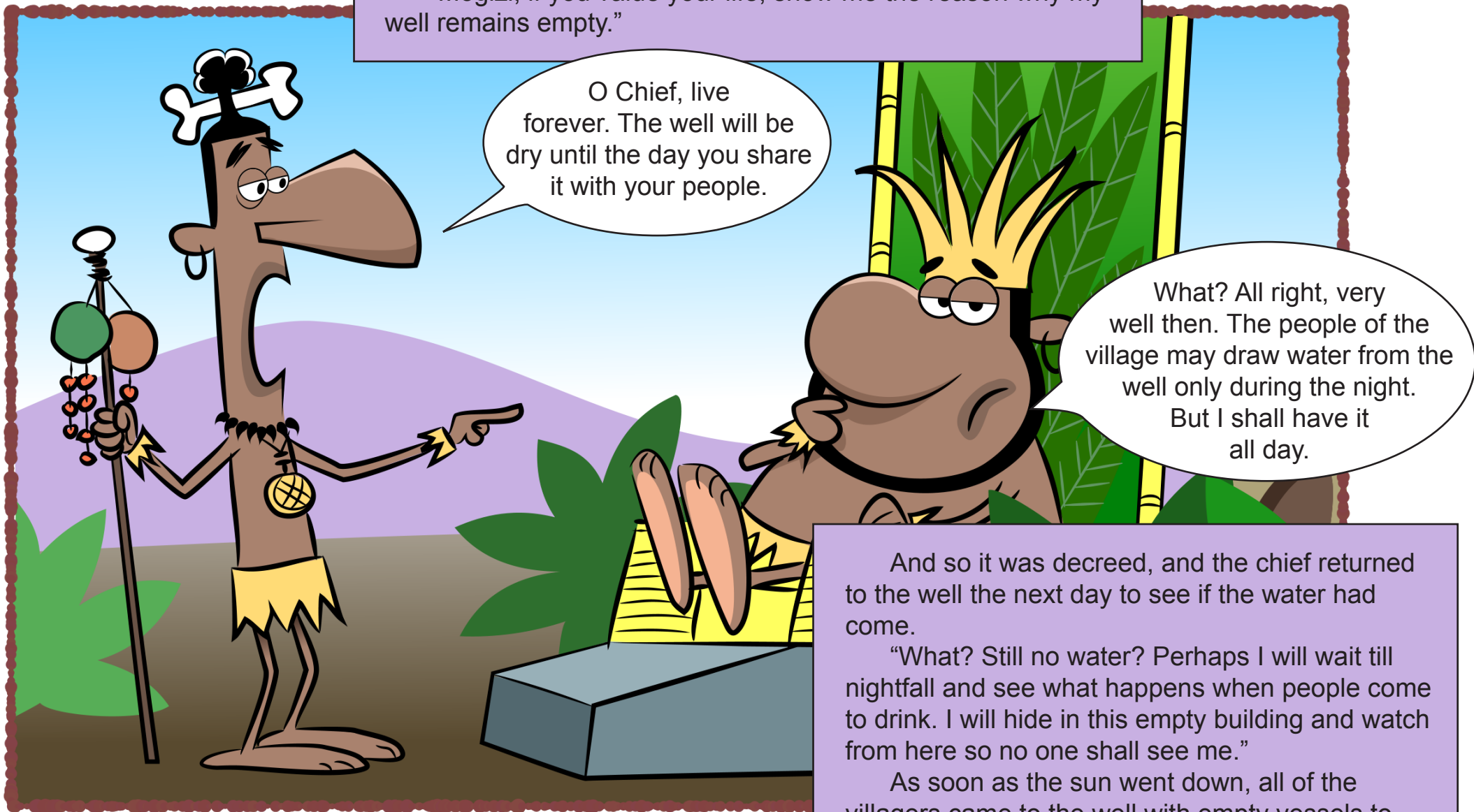
O Chief, live forever. The well will be dry until the day you share it with your people.

What? All right, very well then. The people of the village may draw water from the well only during the night. But I shall have it all day.

And so it was decreed, and the chief returned to the well the next day to see if the water had come.

“What? Still no water? Perhaps I will wait till nightfall and see what happens when people come to drink. I will hide in this empty building and watch from here so no one shall see me.”

As soon as the sun went down, all of the villagers came to the well with empty vessels to draw water.



“Praise be to God.
Water!”

“It is cold and fresh
and plentiful. Come,
children. There is
enough to bathe in.”

Everyone drank
and filled their pitchers
to their heart’s content.
All of the village
children had a fun
time splashing and
throwing water at each
other until everyone
was thoroughly wet.
The chief went home
quite puzzled and
quite thirsty, for he was
ashamed to ask the
villagers for water after
he had been so selfish.



The following day, as soon as the sun rose, the chief called to his servant. “Come, Monaku, and paint what I command. Umm, please?”

“Yes, O great one. It shall be written even as you have commanded.”

“Oh, yes. That is good! That is very good.” The chief looked on in pleasure as his servant painted the new sign, which read, “Come, whomever is thirsty. Drink of these waters freely!”

Almost before the paint was dry, the chief could hear the pleasant sound of water gurgling and bubbling up from below.

“Look, look, Monaku! Soon the well will be full to the top.”

“Yes, yes, O great one! And look! All the villagers are coming out to drink.”



Everyone was surprised to see the formerly grumpy, mean, and selfish chief drinking and laughing and joking with all of the villagers. From that day on, the well continued to give an abundance of fresh, clean, sweet water, even throughout the drought. It became known throughout the land as the well that never runs dry.

And thus was fulfilled the scripture, “For the liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Proverbs 11:25 KJV).