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STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
David A. Naff



REMEMBER THE DUCK



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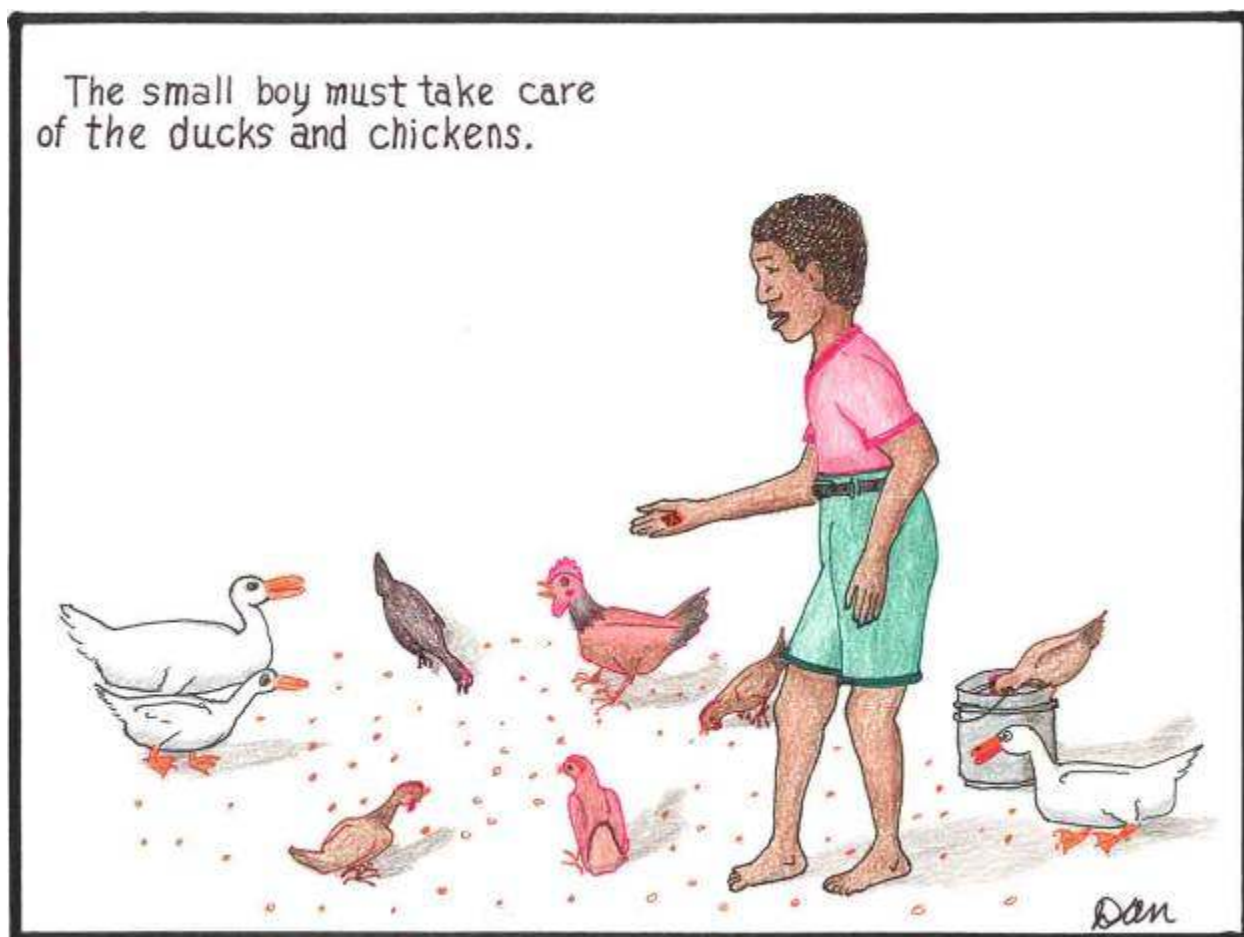
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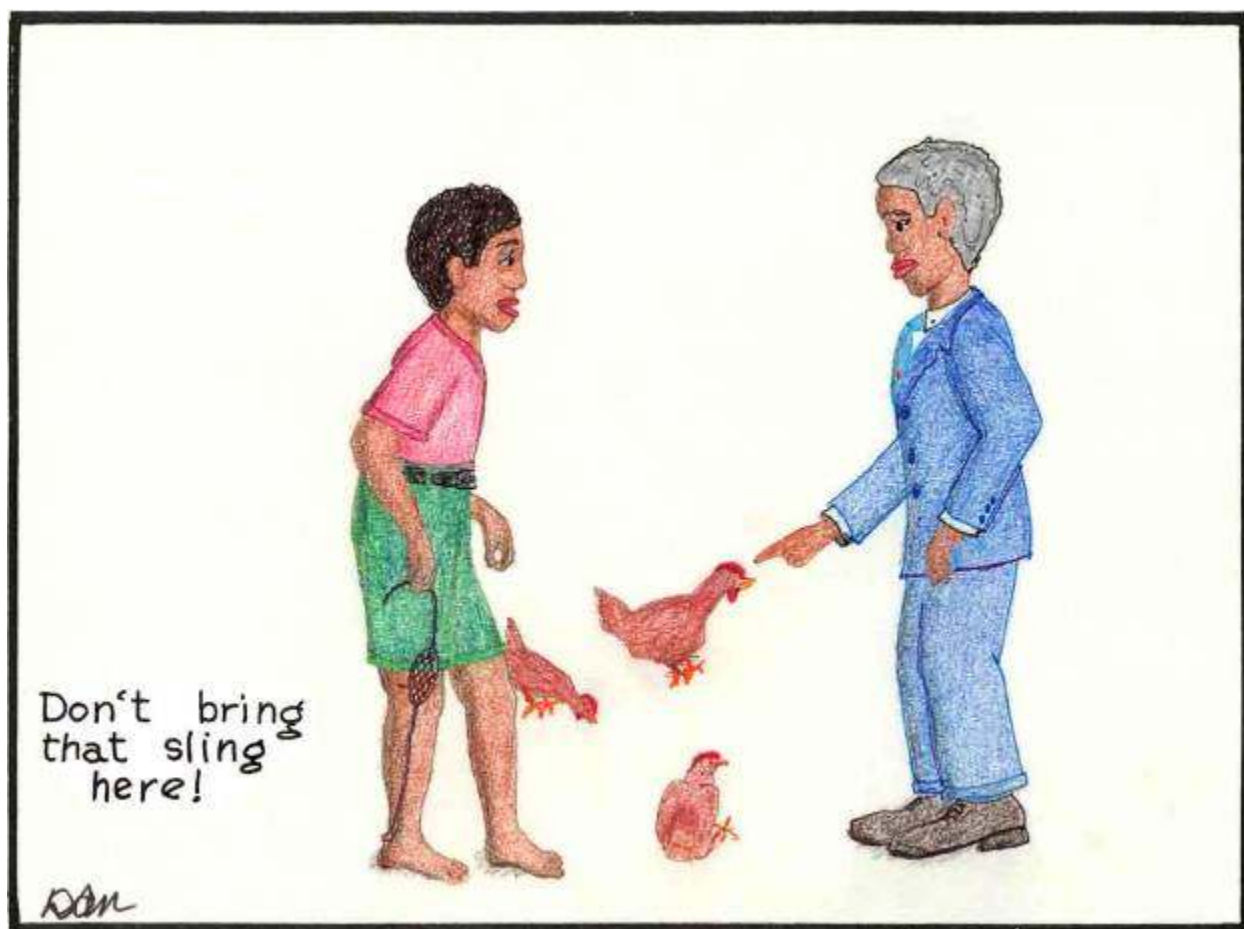
By Spark Team



REMEMBER THE DUCK

“Lizard would like to sit down but his tail will not let him.”

One *big man* (important person) was living in a fine big house. He lived there by himself but there were two people working for him. He had one man who worked in the house. This man cooked for the big man and kept the house clean. Then there was one *small boy* who kept the yard and garden clean. Also there were some chickens and some fine big white ducks that the small boy was supposed to look after and feed. The *big man* was very proud of those ducks.

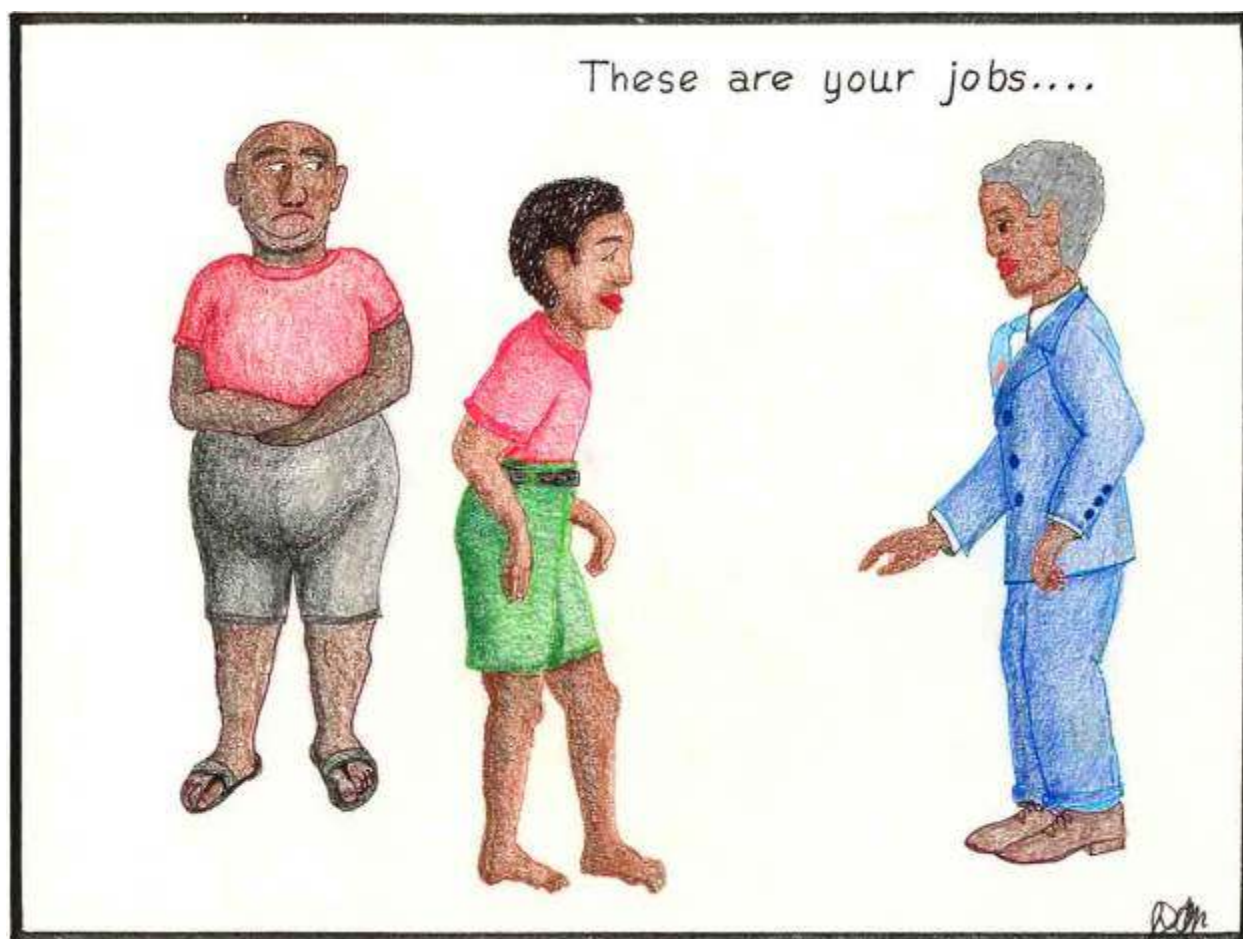


This *small boy* had one fine sling. He did not sling stones very well, but he liked to practice.

The *big man* soon saw that none of the windows in the house were safe while that *small boy* had that sling in his hand. The ducks were not safe either, nor the chickens; and for that matter neither were the people.

So the *big man* told him, "Now, *small boy*, you must never bring that sling with you when you come here. You *hear me good?*"

"*Yah, I hear you old pa* (term of respect)." So the *small boy* would always leave his sling in some bushes nearby when he came to work.

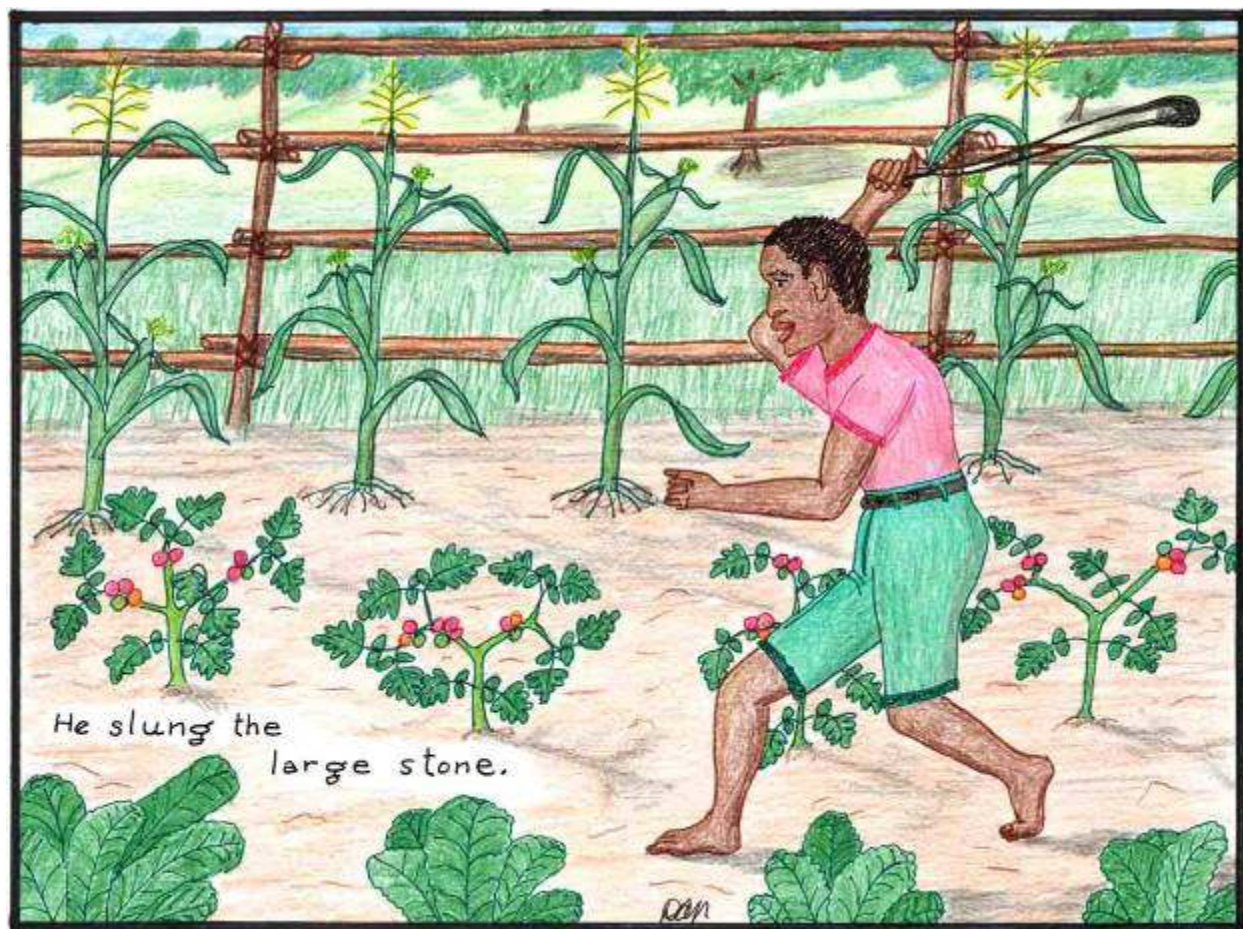


The time came when the *big man* had to go away for a few days. He called the cook and the *small boy* to tell them what to do while he was away.

The cook's face *fell down* when the big man said to him, "I want the whole house *fini clean* from top to bottom when I get back." He did not like to hear about all the work he was supposed to do.

Then he told the *small boy*, "While I am gone I want you to pick all the weeds out of the garden and throw out all the stones also."

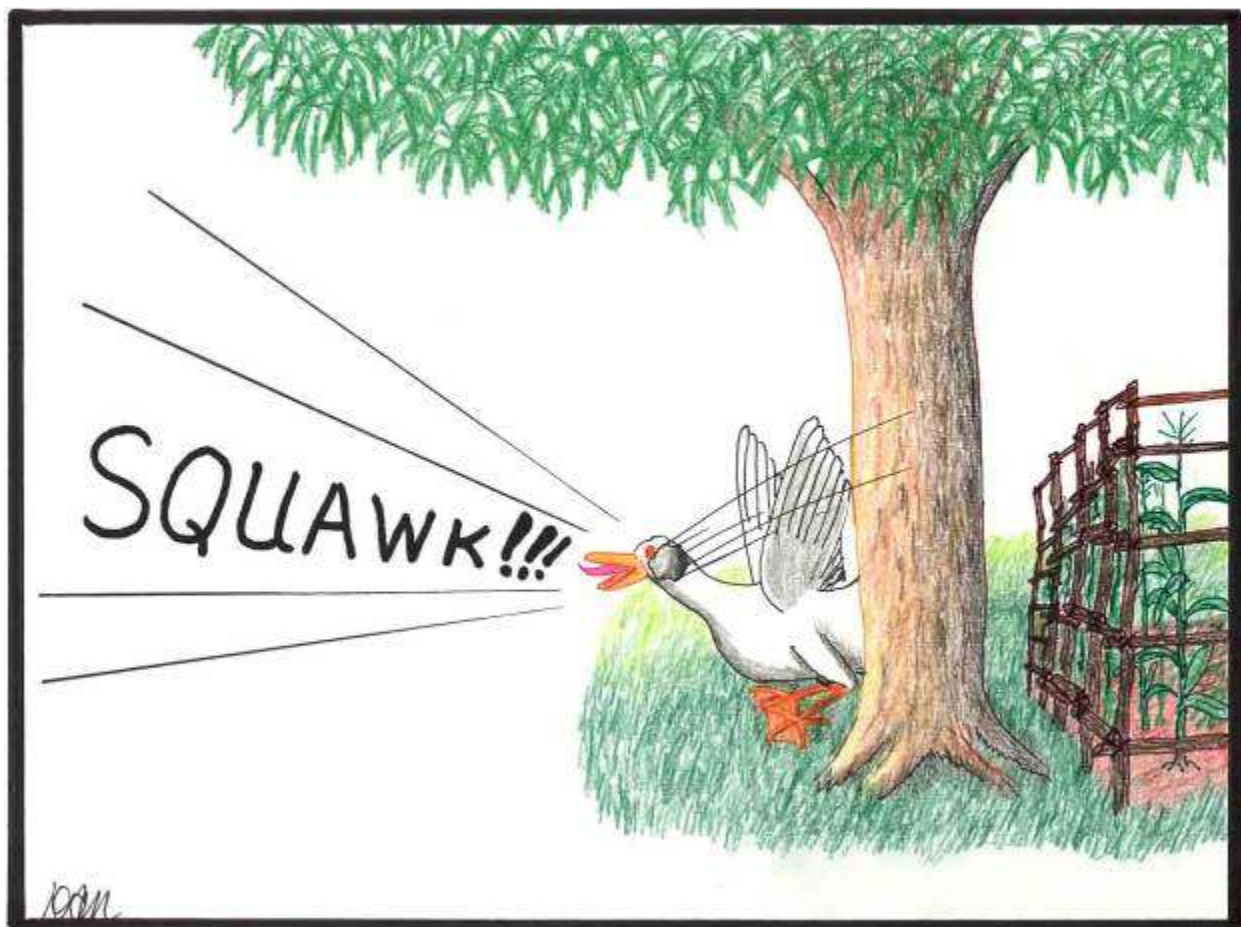
So the big man went away on his trip.



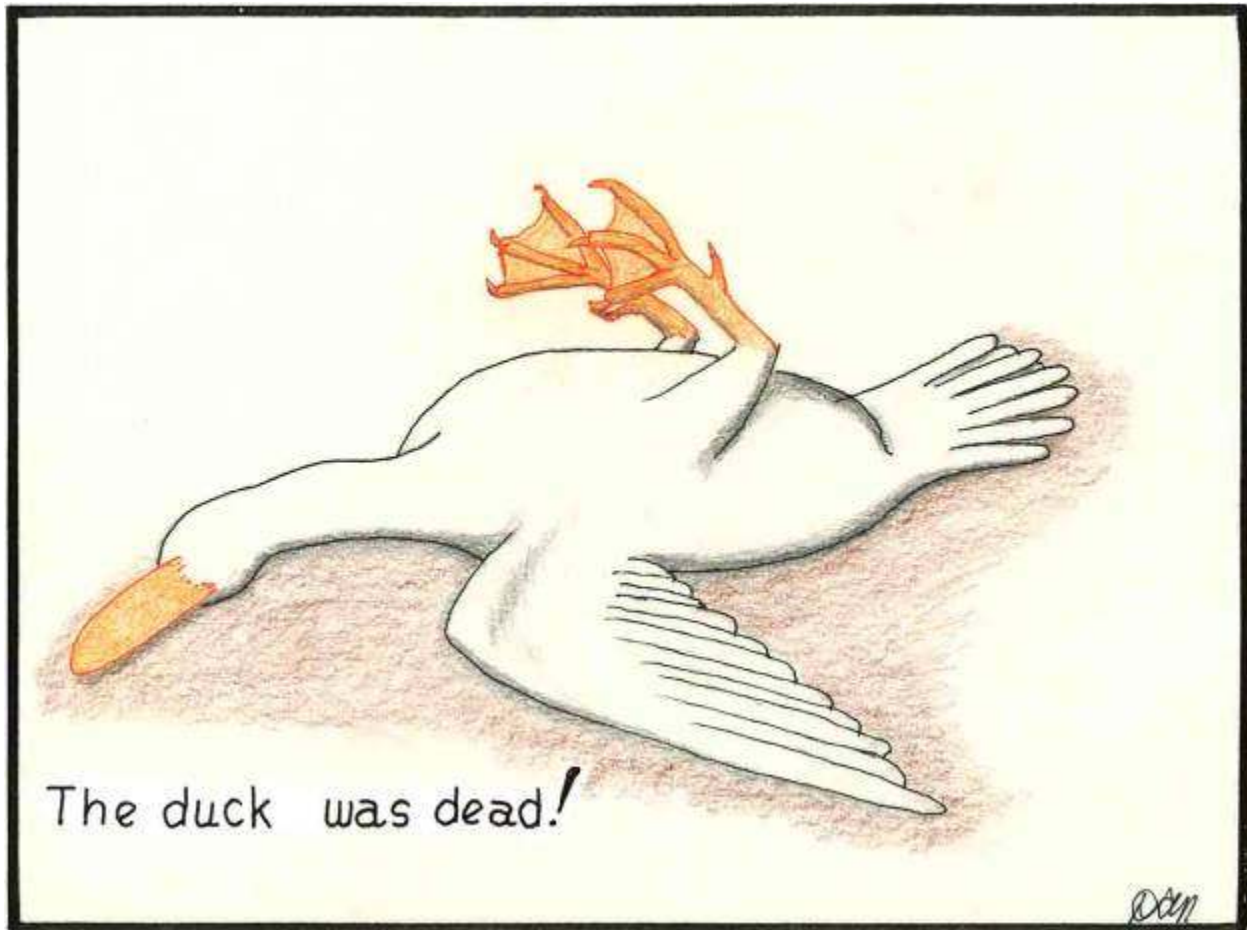
Now all that work in the garden was very hard and the sun was very hot. It was hard to throw those stones all the way over the fence for the garden was large.

So he thought, "I will go and get my sling. I can easily sling the stones over the fence with it. I can practice by trying to hit the fence posts or that plum (mango) tree."

In less than a minute he had the sling and was slinging stones way past the fence. Zing - thunk. "*Too fine*. I hit the tree." Zing - Zing "Aw-w-w, Not so good." Zing - thunk. "Aha, fine *too much*." Soon with all that practice he could hit the big mango tree just past the fence almost every time.



Then he found another stone. It was really too large to be slung. But he would try. It would require much force. He swung the sling around his head several times and gave it an extra hard snap as he released it. It seemed that it was going to hit the tree; but no, it just missed the tree. As the stone whizzed by the tree, the biggest of the white ducks stepped out. And do you know what? The stone hit the duck right in the head.

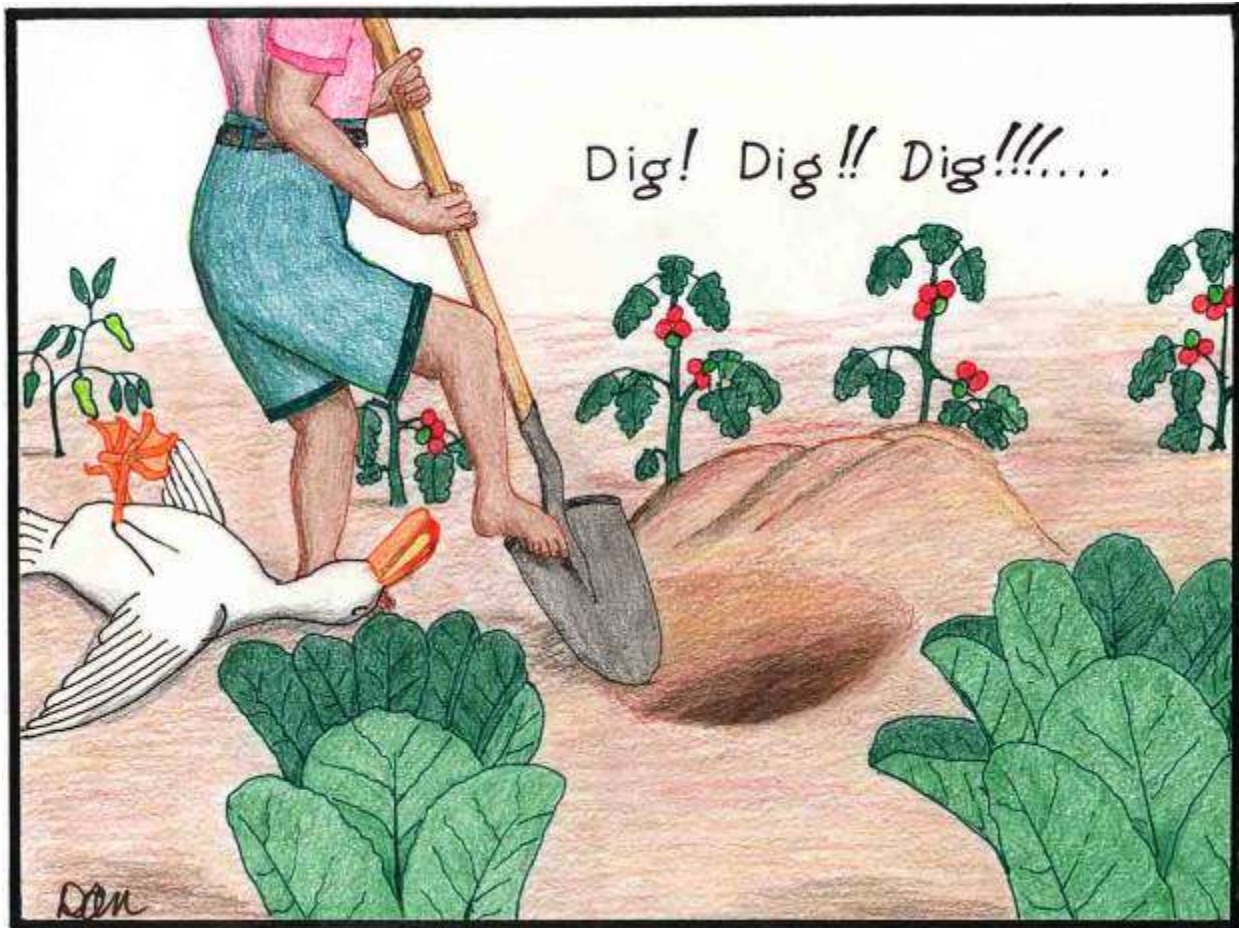


The duck squawked, turned, fell down, and rolled over. Its big feet kicked a few times and then it lay very still.

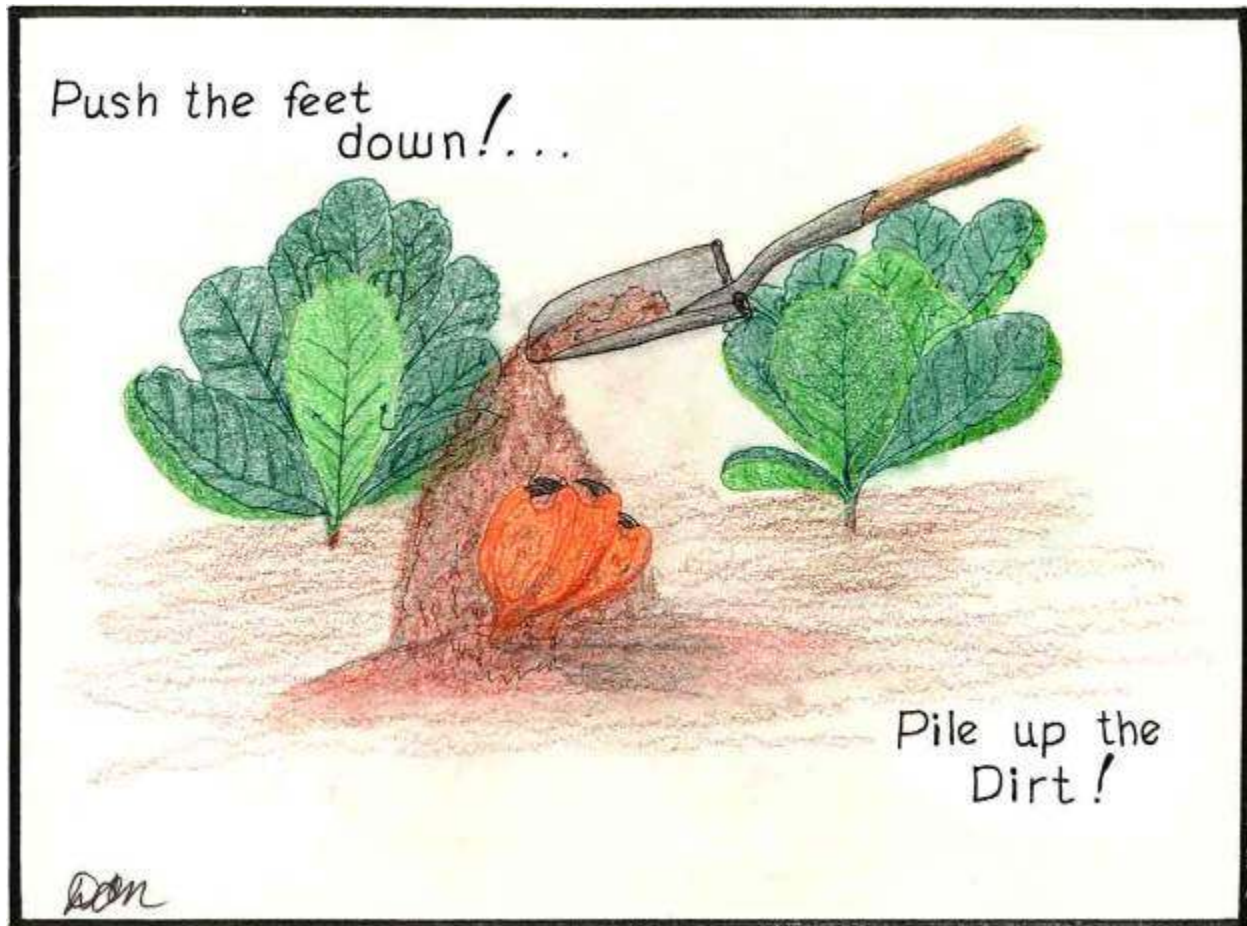
That small *pikin* (child) was plenty scared. He ran to the duck. He picked it up. He tried to make it stand on its feet, but it was no use. It just fell over. The duck was dead.

What to do? Look all around.

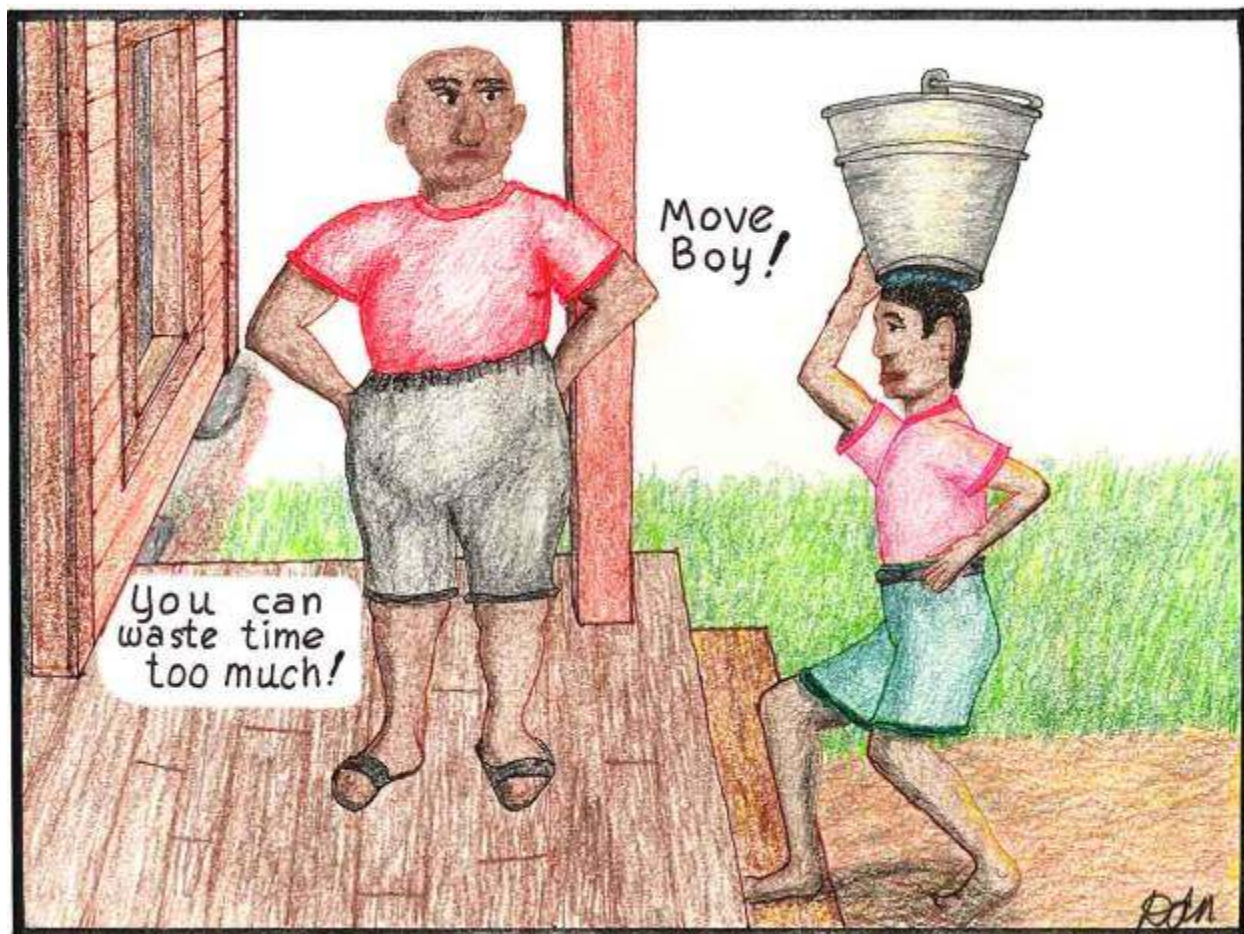
Nobody around.



Quick, bury the duck in the garden.
Get the shovel from the tool shed.
Dig! Dig! Dig! Make a big hole.
Put the duck in the hole.



Oh! the hole is not quite big enough.
Push the feet down.
Pile up the dirt.
All covered up.
Still nobody around. Whew!
Better put the shovel away in the tool shed.
Still nobody around.



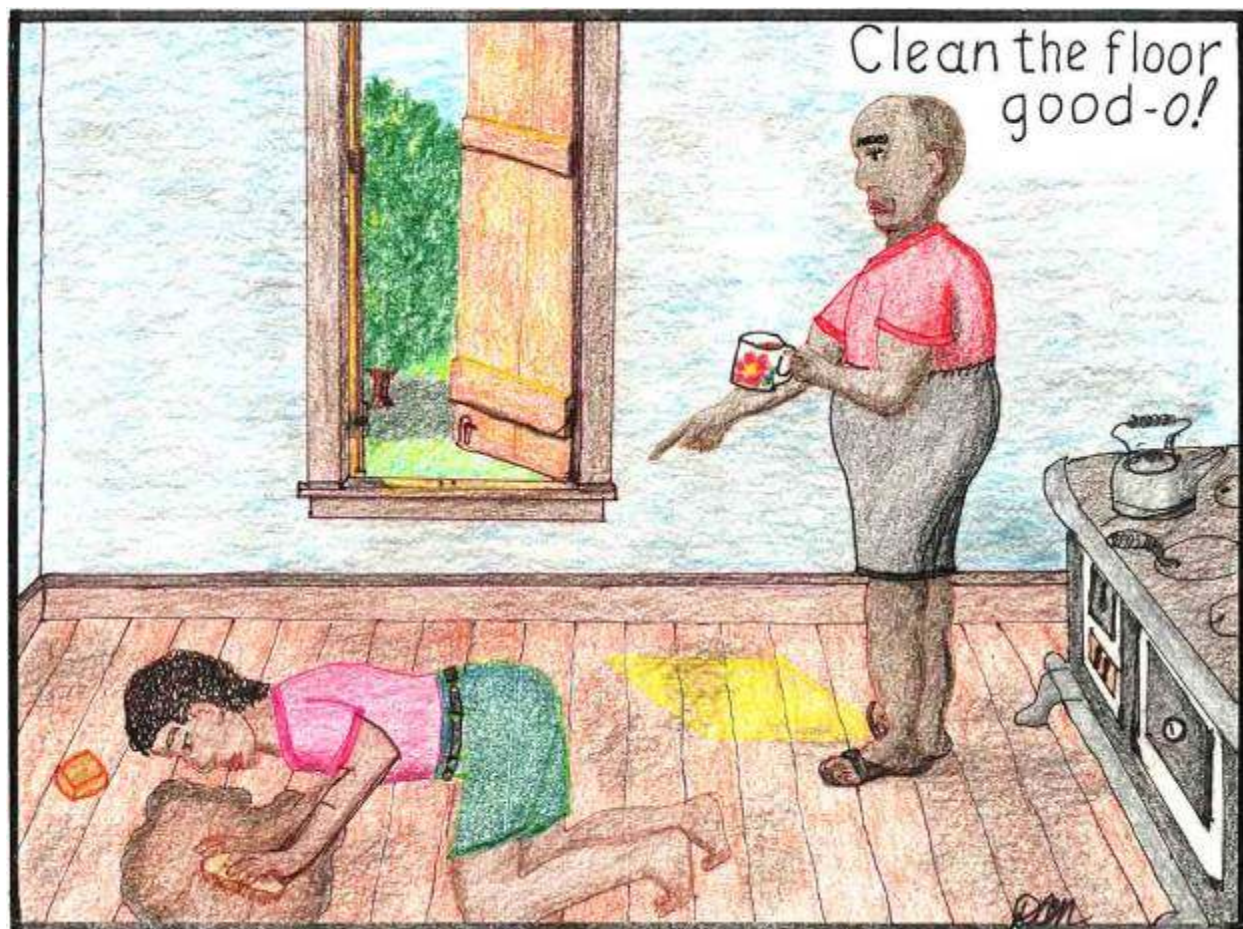
He thought, "I had better go back to work in the garden."
But as he passed the kitchen door the cook came out with a big bucket.

"Go get this bucket full of water for me," said the cook.

"That is your job. Get it yourself," retorted the small boy.

"I say," replied the cook, "that it is your job because I saw what happened to the duck. The *old pa* will be plenty vex if I tell him all about it. Go and get the water!"

So the *small boy* went and got the water. He came staggering back up the hill with the huge bucket full of water on his head.



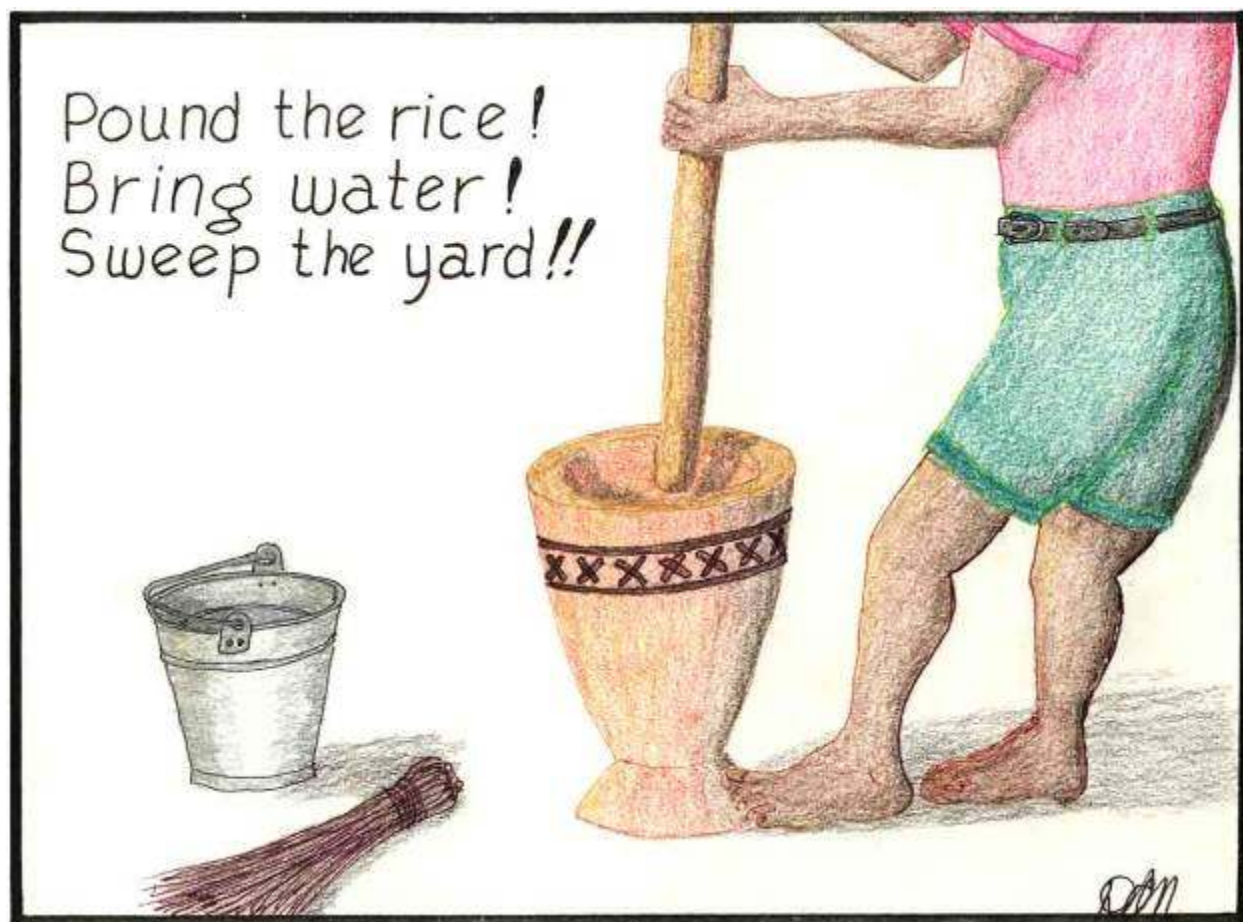
The cook said, "Now get down and scrub that kitchen floor *good-o.*"

"But that is your"

"Remember the duck. I'll tell the *old pa* all about what happened if you do not clean that floor real *good-o.*"

Soon the cook had that small boy doing most of his work. He had to do so much of the cook's work that he could not do all of his own work. But whenever he would refuse the cook would just say, "Remember the duck."

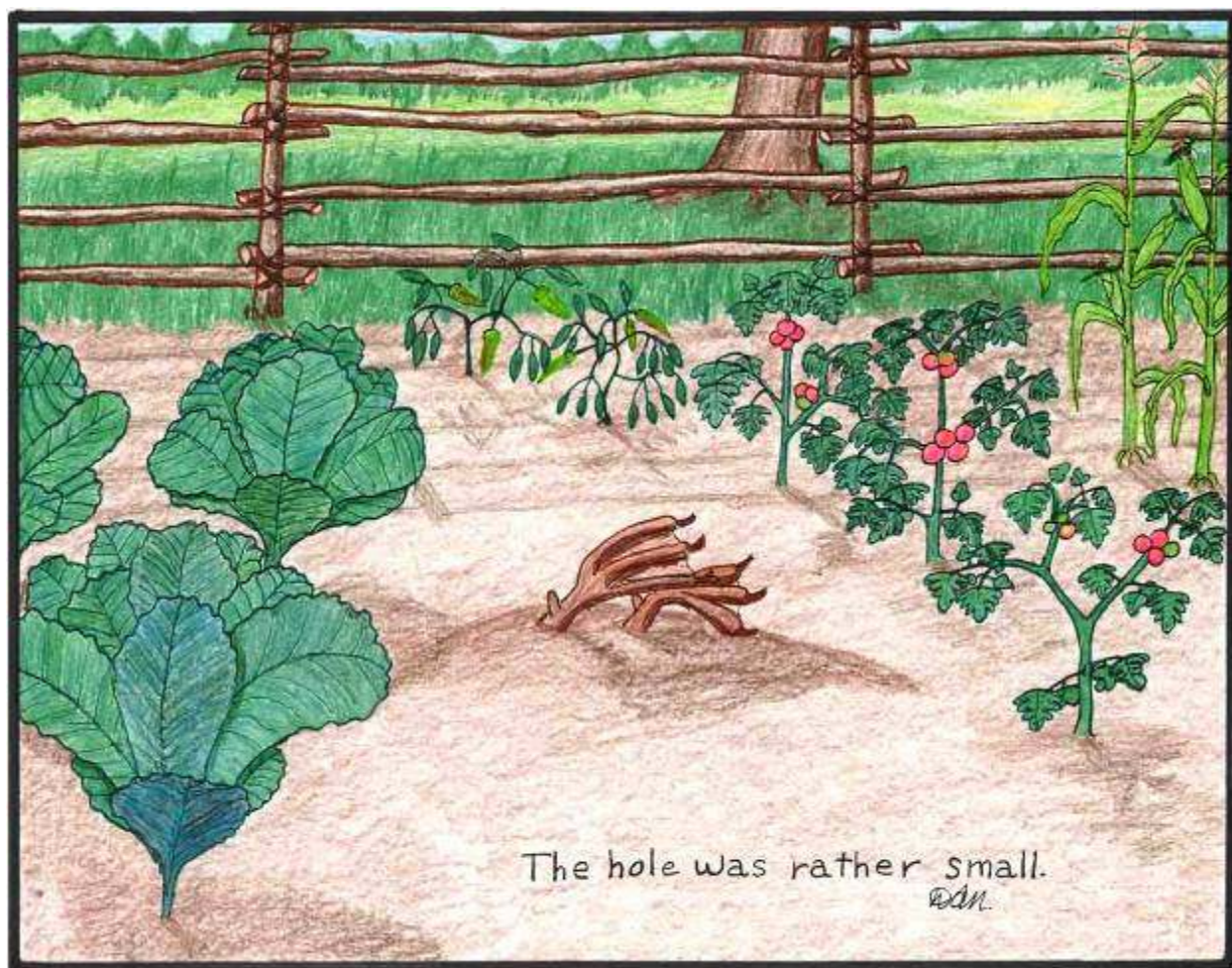
Every day he had to help the cook clean. They cleaned the whole house from the top to the bottom. That is, the small boy



cleaned it, for the cook mostly sat around drinking coffee or tea. He kept scolding the small boy for being slow and lazy.

Remember, sin is a hard taskmaster. Romans 7:14b,c says, "...I am a person who does what is wrong and bad. I am not my own boss. Sin is my boss."

Then one day the *big man* returned from his trip. He was happy to find the whole house *fini clean*. But he wondered why the small boy was so helpful to the cook. He was always carrying water and scrubbing the floor for the cook. He did not even have time to pick weeds or to cut the grass.

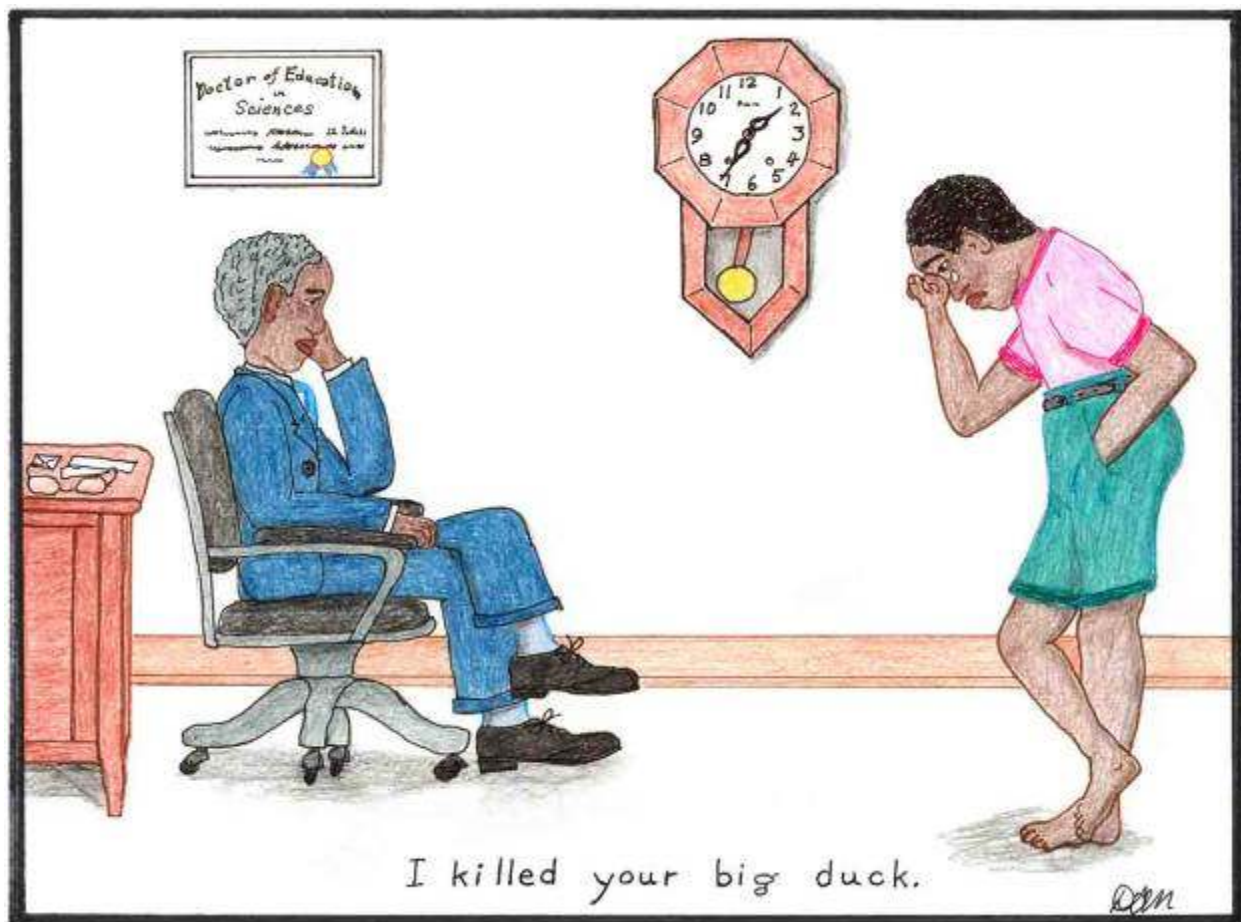


The *big man* went out to see the garden. There were still many weeds in it and stones were all over the garden. “What has that boy been doing while I was gone?” he wondered.

As he looked around he saw something strange. A duck's feet were sticking up out of the ground.

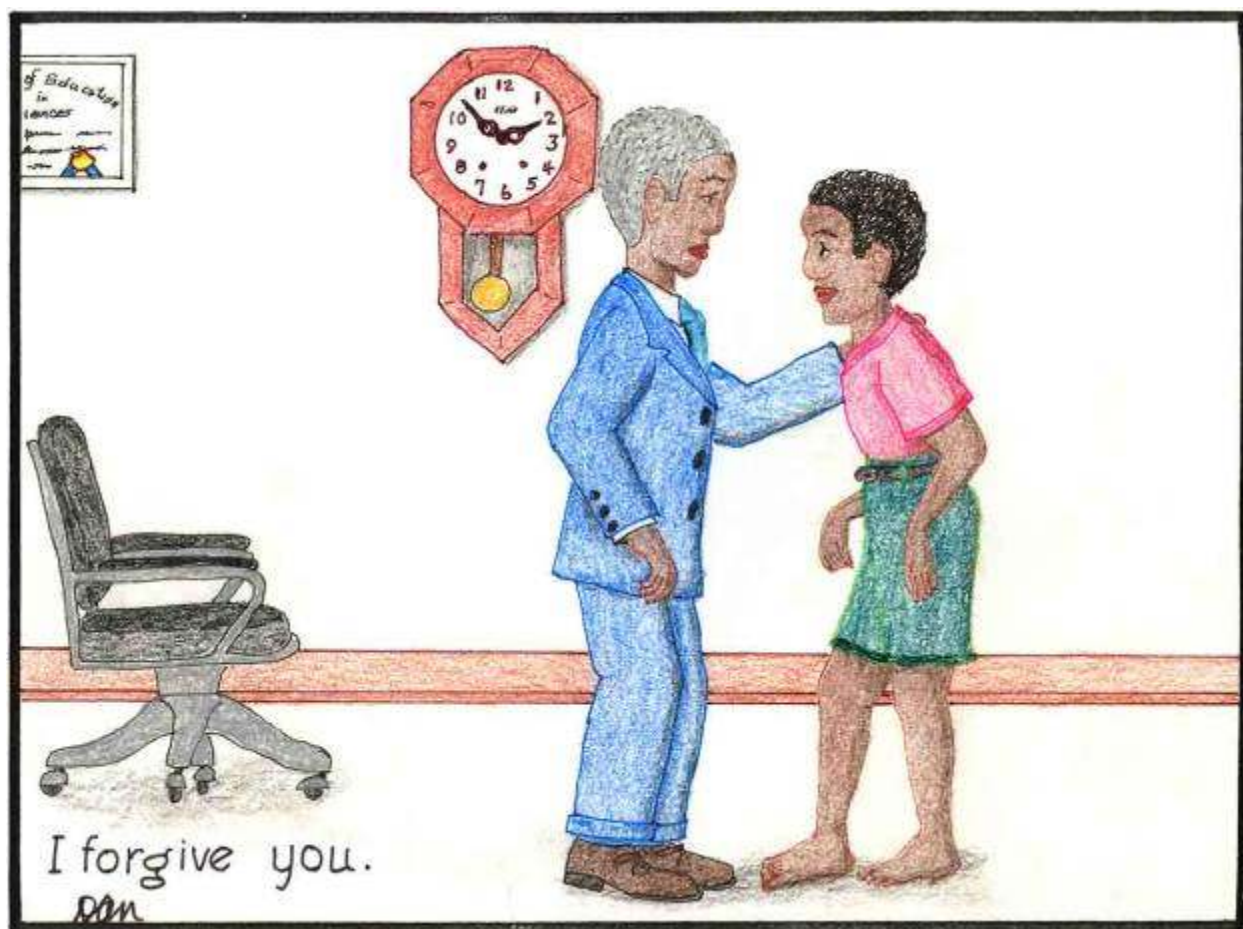
“Aha, I think I am beginning to understand something,” he muttered to himself. “Now I’ll just wait a while and see what will happen.”

Now that *small boy* was really suffering. That cook just kept him running all the time. But one day when he was carrying about the tenth heavy bucket of water, he began to think.



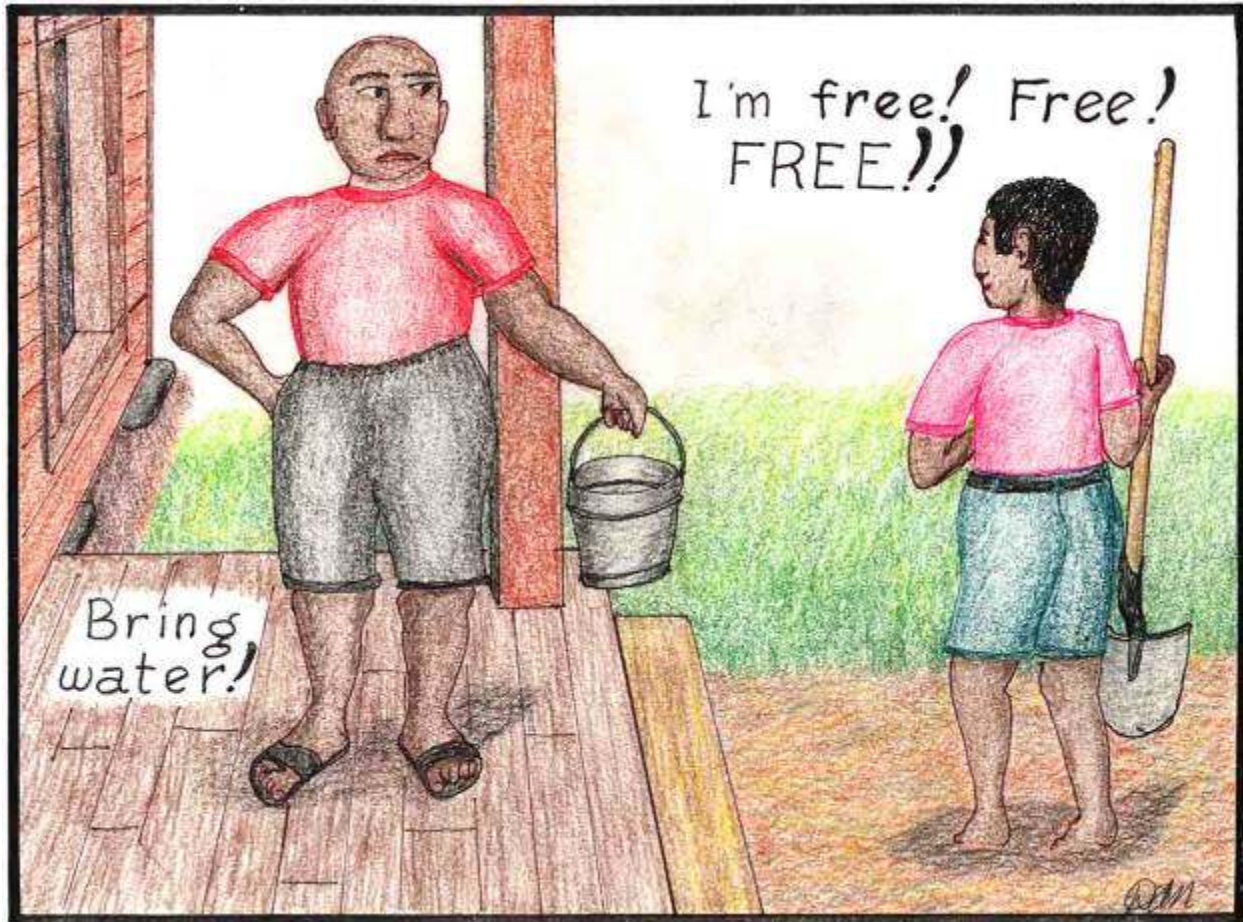
"Why should I let the cook *suffer me so*? I will go and tell the *big man* about the duck. If he *sacks* (fires) me, I will only lose my job, but I will be free from that cook. If he beats me, I already know that one, for my father has beat me many times before. I must be free from that cook!"

So, even though his knees were shaking, he went and told the *big man* everything. It was very hard, but he told all about how hard it was to throw the stones over the fence, about getting the sling, about hitting the mango tree, but then missing the tree and hitting the duck, and how the duck could not stand up again, and burying it in the garden. Finally he had told everything about his big trouble, even how the cook had seen what had happened and made him do all his work.



To his surprise the big man said, "Thank you for telling me the whole thing. I knew the duck was dead, but I wanted you to tell me about it yourself. You disobeyed me, but you have confessed it like a man. Now I forgive you. Go dig a big hole so the duck can be buried properly. Then the *duck business can finish.*"

Happily the small boy ran out to the shed to get the shovel. As he ran by the kitchen the cook called out to him.



"Hey! *small boy*, bring me water."

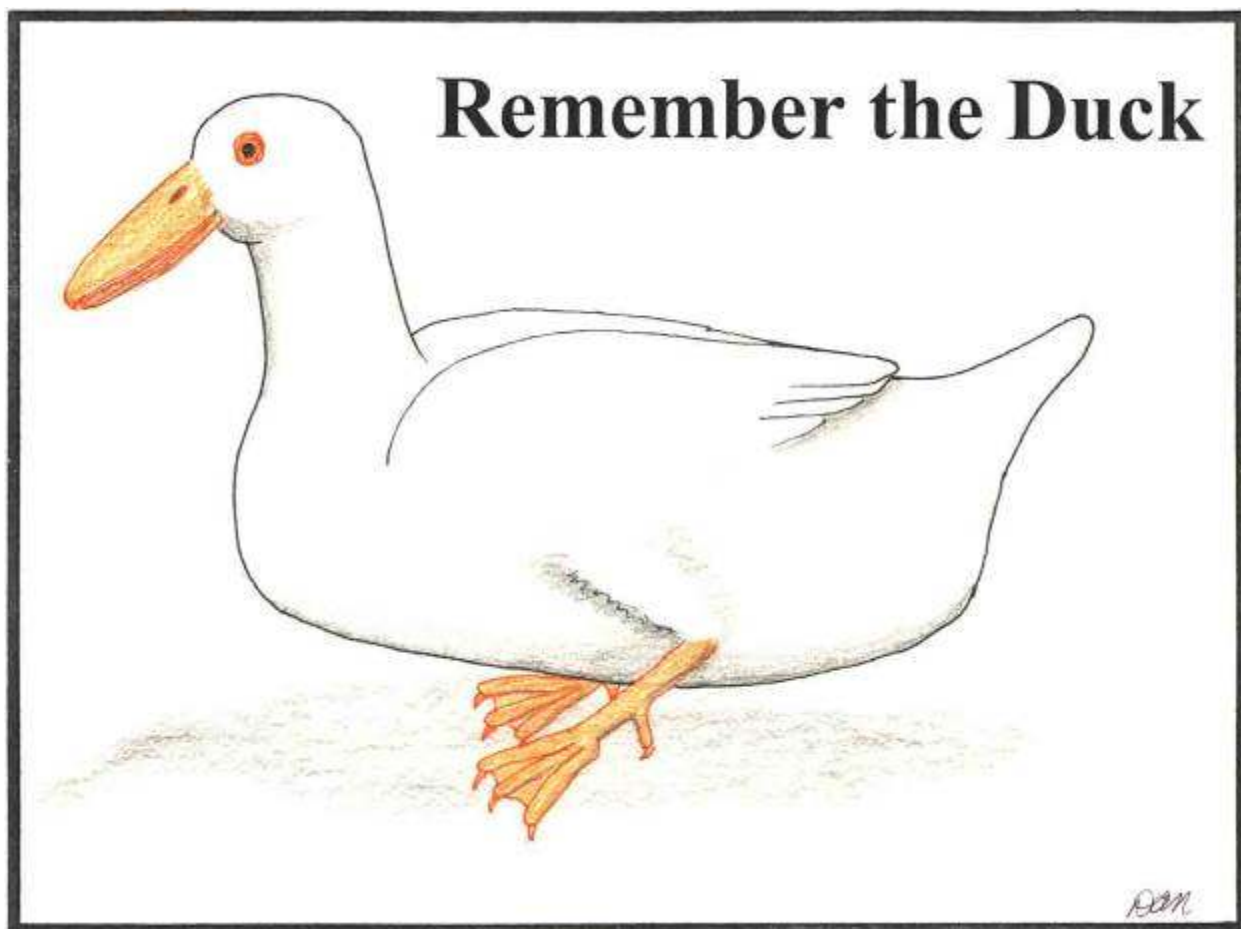
"Bring your own water!"

"Remember the duck."

"The *old pa* knows all about the duck. I told him everything! *The duck business is fini*. I am free from you! Go get your own water!"

And off ran the small boy to *fini bury* the duck. He was FREE! HE WAS FREE!! FREE!!! FREE!!!!

Like the cook in the story the devil is a hard master. Our sins give him power over us. And the small boy learned the hard way that he was not his own boss. Someone else had



power over him because of what he had done. It's just like John 8:34 tells us, "... For sure, I tell you, everyone who sins is the servant of sin because sin has a hold on him."

But, as the small boy discovered, there is a way out. I John 1:9 says, "If we tell Him our sins, He is faithful and we can depend on Him to forgive us of our sins. He will make our lives clean from all sin."

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