

A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
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BIG ROOSTER'S COMB



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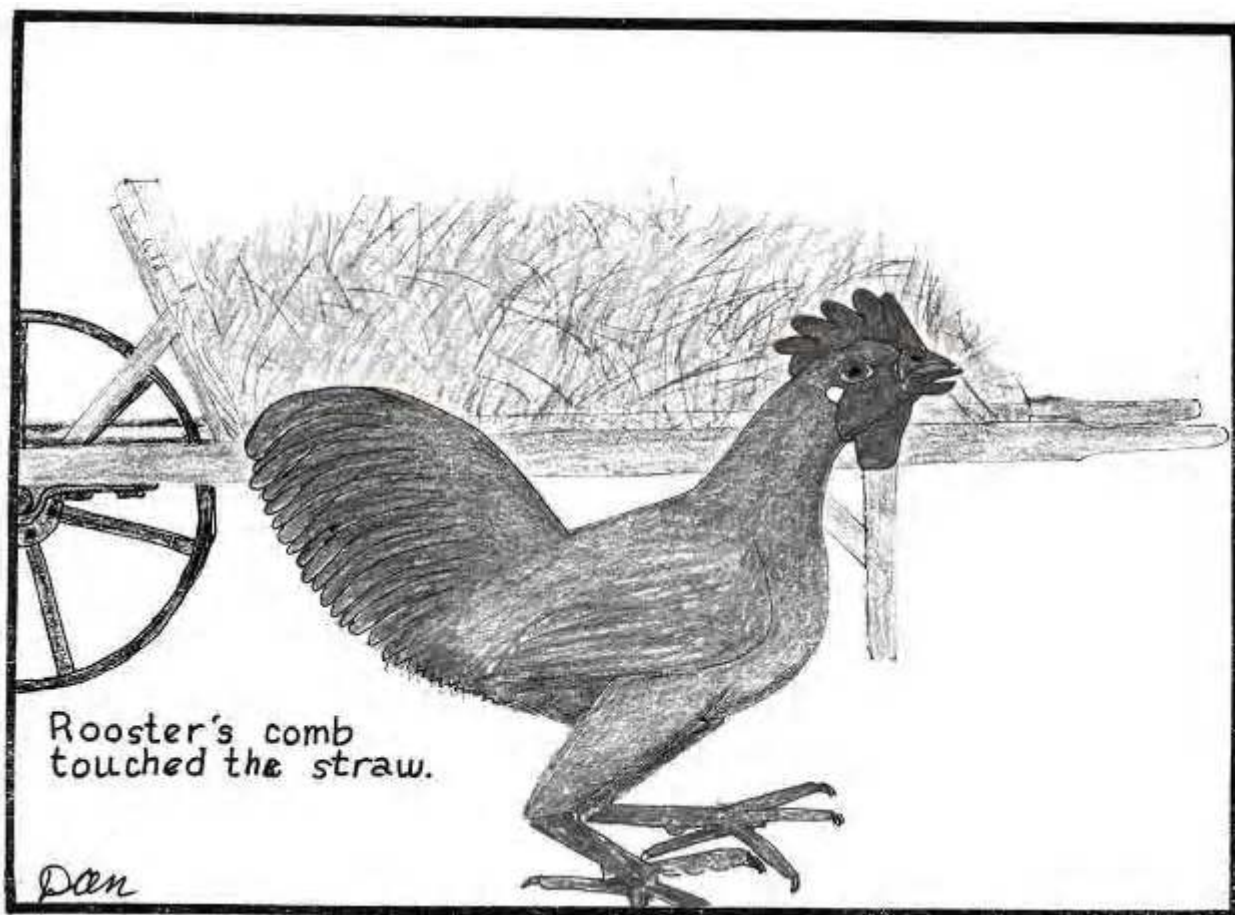
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By Spark Team



BIG ROOSTER'S COMB

Note to the reader. Words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics.

“Do not boast about yourself of that which you do not have.”

Big Rooster had a big beautiful bright red comb. He was the talk of the farm yard. This made him very proud. He would strut around and act like the whole farmyard was his. He expected all of the hens and the other roosters to look up to him and respect him.

One day he called all the hens and roosters together. “I am the biggest rooster and I am the head rooster,” he boasted. “Now all you hens and roosters need to show me the proper respect. Be careful to keep your distance from me. You see the

fire that is on my head? It is very hot. If I have to come and peck you to get my due respect I may burn you. Then all your feathers will catch fire. You may die. So do what I say.”

After that long speech everyone *was scary too much* of Big Rooster. They were afraid to get too close for fear he might touch them with his comb. Then they would get their feathers burned. And maybe they would die.

They would say to each other, “Watch out for Big Rooster.”

“He thinks he is the *big man* around here.”

“He is a mean one and very proud. Keep away from him.”

“Do what he says. If you don’t you may get your feathers burned from his comb of fire when he comes to peck you.”

Big Rooster was pleased with the respect he was getting. He crowed long and loud so everyone would notice him. He held his head up proudly and stepped very high as he strutted around the compound.

One day Big Rooster was scratching for bugs and grain beside a small wheelbarrow piled high with dry straw. As he strutted back and forth, looking this way and that to make sure all the hens were watching and respecting him, his comb happened to touch the straw in the wheelbarrow. Nothing happened. The straw did not start to burn.

“Look at that,” one of the smaller roosters said. “Big Rooster’s comb just touched that dry straw and nothing happened. The straw did not catch fire. I think Big Rooster is lying to us.”

And sure enough, as they watched carefully for several days when Big Rooster’s bright red comb touched the dry straw nothing happened. Nothing at all! Now they all knew that Big

Rooster had not told them the truth. He was lying. He wanted to be the *big man* over all

"Big Rooster is a *so-so* liar," the hens cackled to each other.

"Yes," said one of the older hens, who had known the truth all along, "Big Rooster can lie *too much*. He is too proud. He wants to be *big past all*."

When he heard this Big Rooster was *shame too much*. The others were not afraid of his fire comb any more. Neither did they have any more respect for Big Rooster. They looked down upon him as one who could not be trusted.

The other smaller roosters even dared to push him with their shoulder. They would say, "Stay away from me. You can lie *too much!*"

He just hung his head. Soon his bright red comb was all dusty and dirty.

Big Rooster got himself in *plenty big trouble* because he thought he was better than others. He lost their respect and he lost their friendship.

I guess he didn't know about James 3:5. We read there that, "The tongue is also a small part of the body, but it can speak big things ... "

And he certainly had not read James 4:16. It says, "But ... you are proud. You talk loud and big about yourselves. All such pride is sin."

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