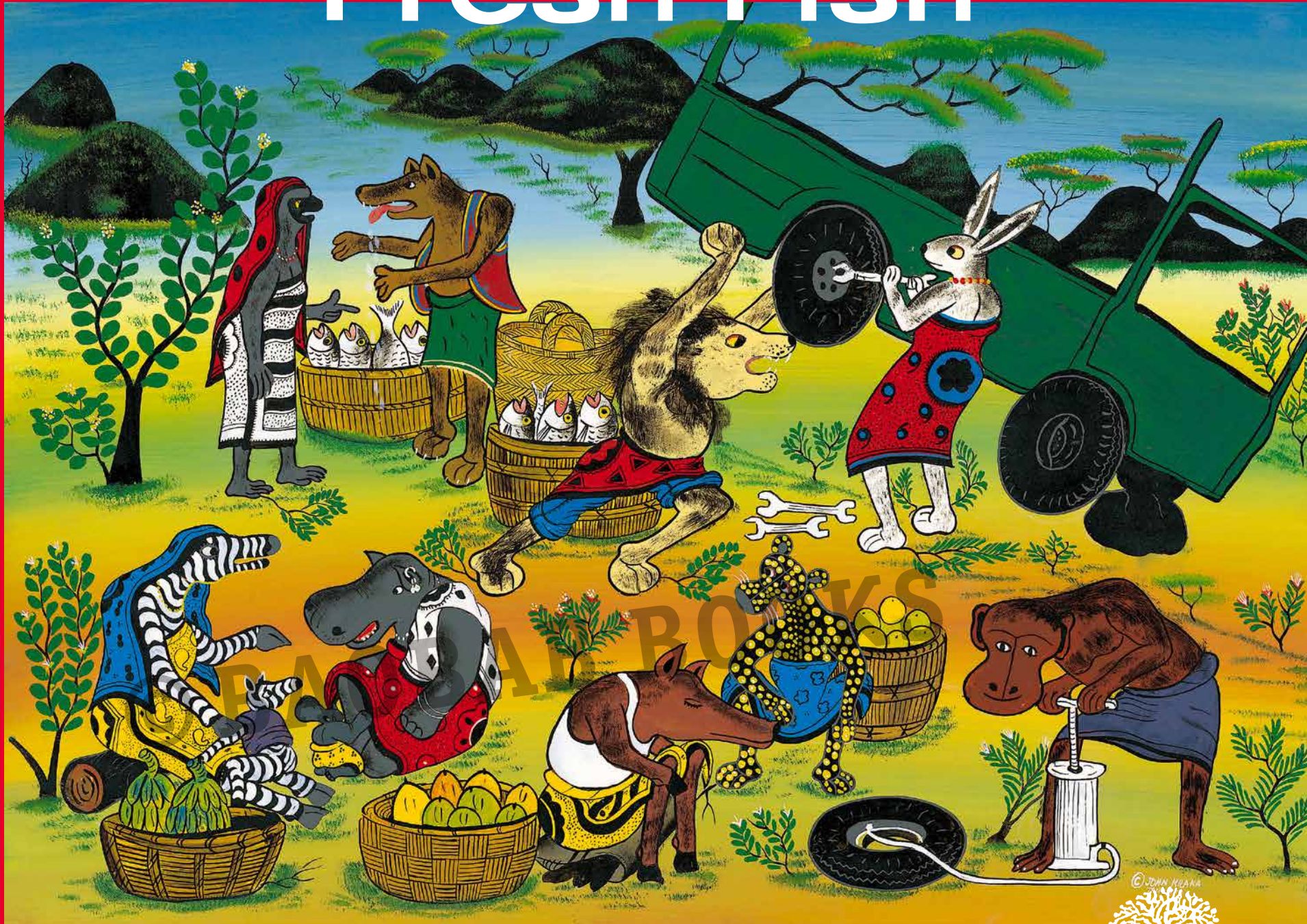


John Kilaka

# Fresh Fish



A picture book from Tanzania





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**B BOOKS**





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# Fresh Fish

Translated from Kishuaheli by Christine Hatz

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**S**okwe Chimpanzee was rowing home with a boat full of fish. He dreamed about how much money he would make selling his catch at the market the next day. But as he drew near the shore, he began to hear music. His friends were having a party. The music was irresistible. Sokwe just had to join in and dance. The boat almost tipped over as he dropped his rudder into the lake.

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**A**fter a little dance with his friends he gathered up the fish, attach them to a pole and set off toward his house. On the way, Sokwe ran into his friends Dog, Zebra and Leopard. They carried their drums and were hurrying off to play with the others.

When Dog saw the fresh fish, he stopped though: "Oh, Sokwe, what a wonderful catch! But you are carrying far too much. Let me help you with that nice big fat one," he said in a sugary voice. But Sokwe knew perfectly well what was going on. "Thanks anyway. But just take this fat one and keep it," he said to his friend Dog.

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B BOOKS

**S**okwe and his friends set off to the market early the next morning. Dog, Zebra and Ms. Hippopotamus, Pig, Leopard, Ms. Monkey and Lion hitched a ride in the back of the truck. Ms. Hare sat in front. All but Dog were laden with things to sell.

On the way, they saw cats and mice having a party of their own. Sokwe stopped the truck so that everyone could watch.

But Dog took advantage of the situation and stuck his paw into the fish basket. It was clever Ms. Hare who had been keeping an eye on him. "Shame on you," she called out. "Stealing from your friend."

"Is this how you thank me for giving you a fish yesterday?" grumbled Sokwe. Dog mumbled and promised to be good.

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**S**oon after everyone heard a loud bang. "Oh no! A flat tire!"

"Don't worry," Ms.Hare said. "I can fix it. I just need a jack to lift the truck."

"No problem," answered Lion. "Unload everything and I will hold it up."

So everyone pitched in and in no time the tire was removed, patched, filled with air and replaced.

Instead of helping, Dog was soon caught sniffing around the baskets again. Ms.Monkey shook her finger at him and warned him to watch himself. But when he snuck behind the truck with a sharp nail he had found, no one was paying attention ...

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**V**ery soon they were at the market. Bananas, melons and oranges were piled high. Sokwe immediately set up his table and began to play his mbira to attract customers. The other animals were so busy buying and selling that almost no one noticed when Dog snuck up to the fish basket and helped himself.

Suddenly a loud roar filled the market. "Stop, thief!" bellowed Lion. But as he ran to catch Dog, he slid into Ms. Monkey and tripped over Ms. Hippopotamus's basket of oranges.

"OW, my leg!" he cried.

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R BOOKS

**T**he animals bustled around poor Lion, who was moaning on the ground. No one saw Dog run off into the mountains with his prize. "It's a good thing we've got the truck," sad Sokwe. "You need to get to the hospital."

Ms. Monkey cut down some branches, and helpful Ms. Hare explained how to make a stretcher. All the animals were needed to carry Lion to the truck, but when they arrived, they found two flat tires. A rusty nail was sticking out of one of them. Ms. Monkey remembered that she had seen Dog carrying a nail just like it when she'd caught him sniffing around the fish before ...

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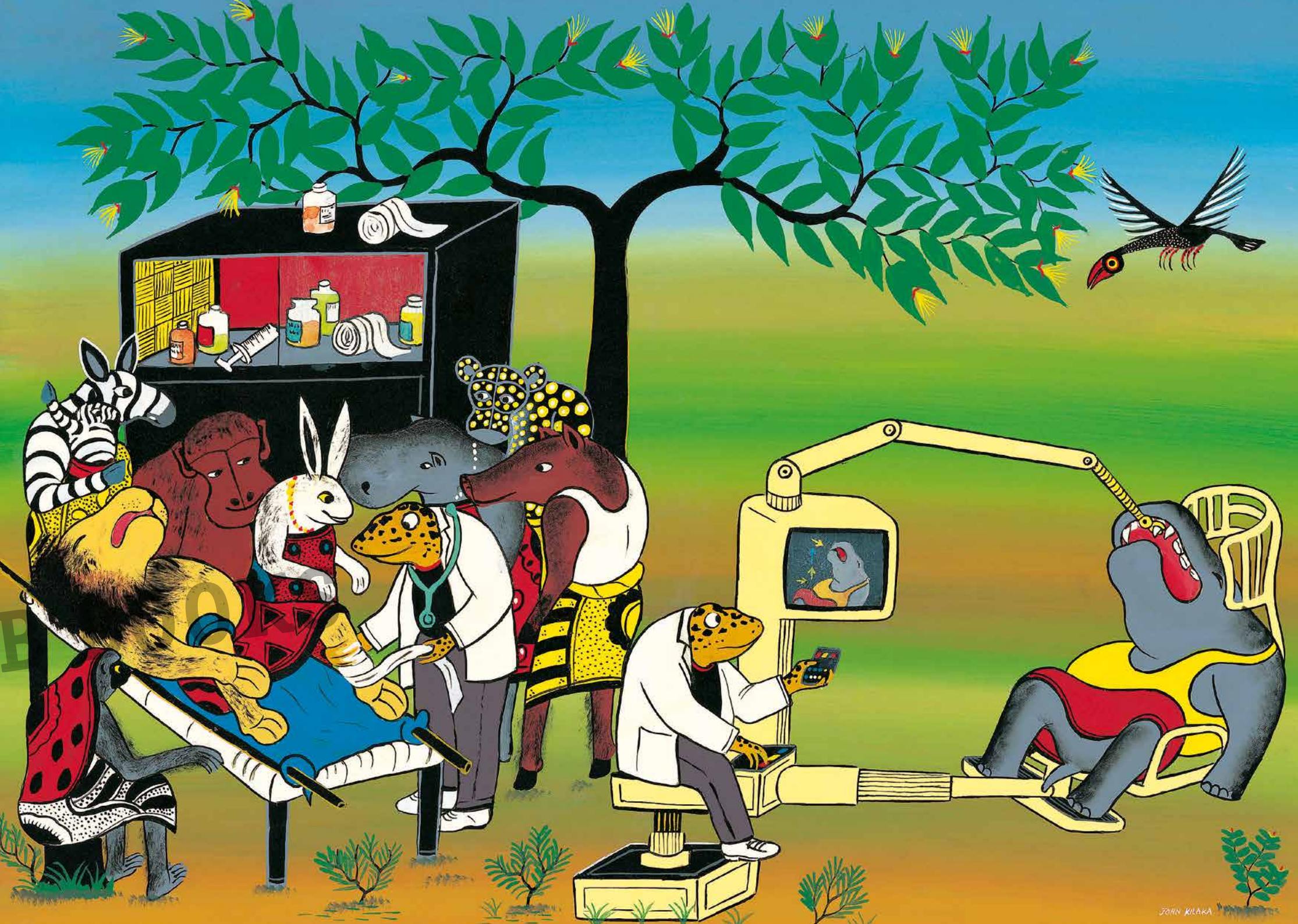




It was a long way to the hospital, and many of the animals were cursing Dog by the time they staggered in under Lion's weight. Luckily it was a very modern place. Ms. Hippopotamus even decided to have her teeth fixed while she was there. Bone doctor Frog examined Lion's leg. "Broken, I see," he said. "I'm afraid this will have to come off."

The animals shrieked. How would they ever carry a three-legged animal all the way home? Dr. Frog hemmed and hawed. "all right, I'll try." After giving Lion an injection, he wrapped his leg so it wouldn't bend. A crutch completed the cure. The animals thanked Dr. Frog and set off on the long trip home by foot.

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**T**he animals in the village had been waiting for them. All had gathered for the Junior Soccer Championship, except Dog.

The game began. Sokwe was the referee. He had made himself a special whistle. The young lions stormed down the field and scored almost immediately. Then the other young animals came back with a goal of their own, to which the Lions responded with a fierce advance.

But they were taken by surprise by the weaker animals. Young Hare caught a pass and forwarded it to young Tortoise. Young Sokwe received it next and gave a mighty kick. The Lion's goalkeeper ducked as the ball flew past him and hit Ms. Hippopotamus right smack on her new teeth, then bounced off and broke a goal post.

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**T**he game came to a halt and Sokwe and some of the other parents went off to look for a new goal post. As they were walking along, their eyes caught a flash of red. Was this Dog's waistcoat? When they ran over to investigate, they found the fish thief himself, sleeping off his feast in the hollow trunk of a baobab tree, surrounded by evidence of his crime!

They woke him up and tied his paws together before taking him back to the village. The animals were decided to build a prison for Dog at once. Even though the young Lions complained bitterly, the soccer game was over for this day.

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**A** few days later, there was a trial. Elephant as village elder, read out the very serious charges. First, Dog had punctured the back tires of the truck. Second, he had stolen and eaten his friend Sokwe's fish. Third, because of Dog's actions, Lion had broken his leg.

Dog immediately pled guilty to everything. So Elephant pronounced the sentence. "The accused is guilty of all three charges. Now he must work extra hard for the village on Tree Planting Day. He and his family will have to plant twice as many trees as the rest of us.

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**E**arly in the morning Lion limped to the Tree Planting area and staked out an enormous field. Dog and his family worked so hard and so fast that they finished before the others.

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BOOKS

**W**hen the trees had all been planted, some animals went back to the market to fix the truck and bring it home. Meanwhile, those who stayed behind cooked a huge feast, and that evening there was much joyous eating and celebrating.

Sokwe danced with his old friend Sog. All was forgiven. And when the party drew to a close, hands were shaken all around. "Sleep well. See you tomorrow," the animals called out to each other as they headed home to their peaceful beds.

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B BOOKS



It has been a long time since chimpanzee Sokwe has caught so many fish. He's already excited about the money he will earn selling his catch. But Dog puts paid to all that. He wants to eat Sokwe's fish himself. The animals track down the fish thief and he must atone for his misdeed.

A comic but profound story in the tradition of Tanzanian Tingatinga painting – illustrated by outstanding artist John Kilaka.



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