

# Achan

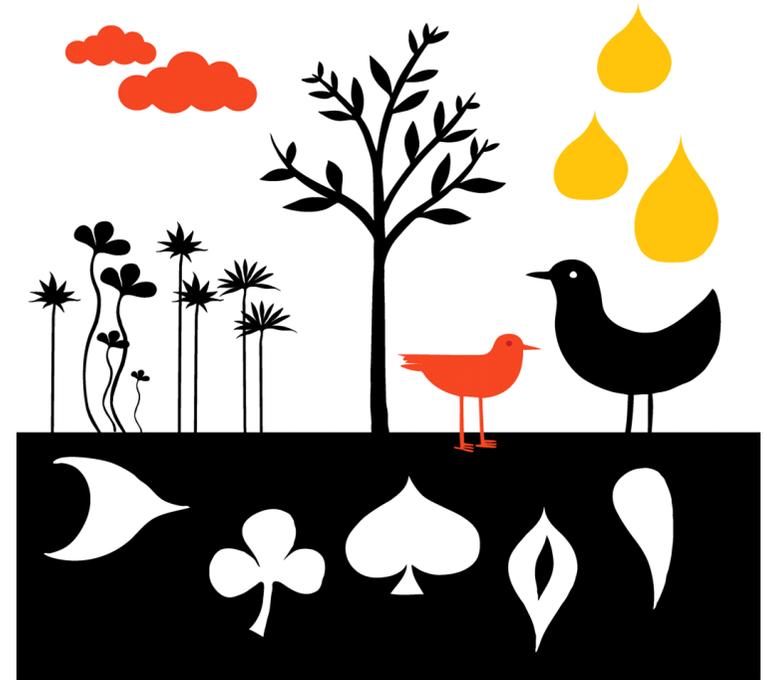
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By Jackson Okello

## Achan's Childhood

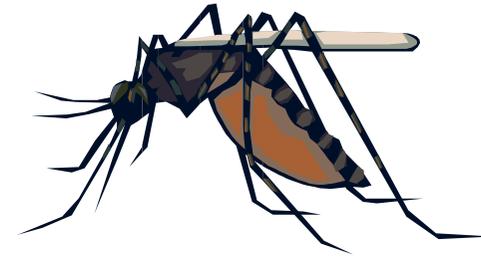


Achan was a girl child who was born in a village. Her mother's name was Teresa Lalum. Later Achan, together with her parents, moved to live in a town where her father worked as a driver.

Achan began her primary one at the age of seven. She was a hard working and determined school girl, obedient and disciplined in school.

She gave respect to her teachers and was liked by her fellow school mates. Achan was always top of her class.

## The death of Achan's mother



Town life brought ill health to Achan's mother. She was attacked by chronic malaria and later developed typhoid and yellow fever; she eventually died leaving Achan motherless.

Achan's father was a busy man who was first to get out of the house in the morning and the last to come home at night, when all the other family members were already in bed. Achan's father didn't have time to check on the welfare of his family.

## **Achan lived with a step mother**



After the death of Achan's mother, her father got engaged to a woman and eventually married her. Achan had no choice, but to live with her new stepmother.

This was the beginning of a new life under the care of this stepmother. Achan was stopped from attending school and spent all her time doing housework. Her stepmother sat around all day giving her harsh instructions.

Finally the prince arrived at Achan's family. Her step sisters rushed in trying on the shoe but they could not make it fit. Fortunately the prince glanced towards the kitchen and saw Achan. He requested her to try the shoe but her step mother sent her back saying that she was only a house girl. The prince insisted until Achan was brought, she tried the shoe and it fitted her. The prince said that Achan was the girl he was looking for and that he would marry her.



Achan was married to prince. She moved from a home of misery to a home full of joy and happiness.

## **Achan life was a kitchen life**



In time the stepmother had two daughters, they attended school every morning and came back home in the evening hours. Achan had to wake up early in the morning, go to the river and fetch water for the two sisters to bath and prepare for them breakfast, lunch and supper.

Achan's bed was in the kitchen. She cooked in the kitchen, slept in the kitchen, kept her belongings in the kitchen while the other daughters lived in a comfortable well furnished house. Achan was not allowed in the house unless she had permission. Achan's life had turned from a daughter of the house to a house slave. She was even referred to as a kitchen girl not a daughter. Achan spent most of her time weeping, miserable, in pain, missing her mother and isolated from her own family.

## Achan a wife of a prince

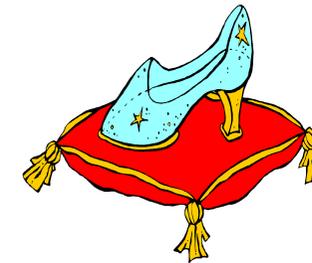


Years later, the king organised a party for his son the prince to choose who to marry. All the girls in the village were invited. Achan's sisters were permitted to attend the party, while Achan was told to remain working at home in the kitchen. Even if Achan had had a chance of attending the party, she had nothing to wear other than the kitchen attire that she washed at night and wore during the day.

Achan was more miserable than she had ever been. She went to the graveyard and knelt by the grave of her mother praying and cursing the day she was born. Achan's mother appeared in a vision and spirited a dress for Achan to wear, telling her to go to the party but to get back to the grave by the first cock crow.

Achan appeared in the party looking majestic, she was the most beautiful girl there.

The prince saw her and was drawn to dance only with her. No one recognised Achan and she spent the whole evening dancing in the arms of the prince. By the first cock crow Achan slipped from the hand of the prince and ran to the graveyard. The prince was on his toes following Achan; fortunately Achan's shoe slipped from her foot and the prince collected it. Achan arrived at the graveyard as instructed by her mother's spirit. She knelt down by the grave and was back to her kitchen life.



The prince carried with him Achan's shoe that he had discovered and was determined to find out who this shoe fitted. He knew that he would marry its owner. He visited all the local villages trying to find who this shoe would fit but it was all in vein.