

WAKAYIMA OF TROPICAL ACADEMY episode 1

WAKAYIMA NEEDS A SODA

By Ernest Bazanye



Now, once upon a very recent time, not too long ago, just the other week in fact, the hare, Wakayima, was sitting in Physics class, nibbling at his pencil, staring at the window and dreaming up a plot to steal someone's soda at lunch time.

What was a hare doing nibbling pencils in Physics class, and not nibbling at grass in the forest? Well, we all know that the hare is the most cunning animal in the forest, but what us humans don't know is that a lot of the time, the hare is also the most cunning animal in the city, town or village.

This is because hares like Wakayima had learned a trick— they could pull down their faces, stretch their noses, twist their backs and bend their ears until they looked just like humans.

Then they would sneak into our schools or our streets or our neighbourhoods and we would not even realise it.

Why did Wakayima sneak into this Physics class?

The same reason he had been sneaking into that school all year long. To steal the children's delicious lunch.

It was four o'clock now, though, and he had already had his lunch. Well, it was Akello's lunch but he had tricked her into handing it over to him and he had enjoyed it immensely.

Akello's father was a lazy cook. He didn't want to go through the trouble of frying and boiling and chopping and such, so when it was his turn to make the kids' lunch he would just throw crisps, biscuits and simsim balls into their lunch boxes when their mother wasn't looking.

This was not good for Akello, of course, because humans need to have a healthy, balanced diet, and not sweets and junk food for lunch.

So, Wakayima thought, he was actually doing her a favour by sneaking the snacks out of her bag and replacing them with some raw tomatoes and he had plucked out of someone's shamba on his way to school that morning.

The problem was that simsim makes you thirsty. He wished he had stolen a soda as well. If only he had thought about it then.

Just at that moment, the bell rang.

The teacher, Mr Kafuddu, said, “Okay, everyone jon’t forget. Homework is jat you joo the problem in page fatty-two of your chexbooks. Chapter free, part free on page fatty-two. Class jismissed.”

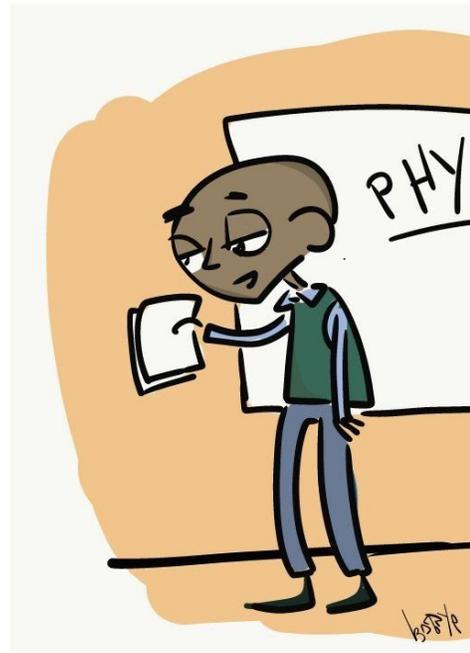
Wakayima had been so lost in his own thoughts that he had almost forgotten that he was in class and that being in class meant you had to listen and learn things so that you can manage to do your homework.

“Nti what? Don’t forget to do your whatwork?” he gasped out loud.

“Jon’t forget to joo your homework, schujent,” said Mr Kafuddu. “What I have written on the board. And just tolj you chwice. Wakayima, if you jon’t use your ears, one day they will fall of and you will not notice.”

Wakayima is cunning, but he is not clever. If he was clever he would have paid attention in class instead of thinking about stealing Roger’s sodas.

Oh, by the way, he had decided that he was going to take Roger’s soda tomorrow. Roger was an easy person to trick, Wakayima had decided.





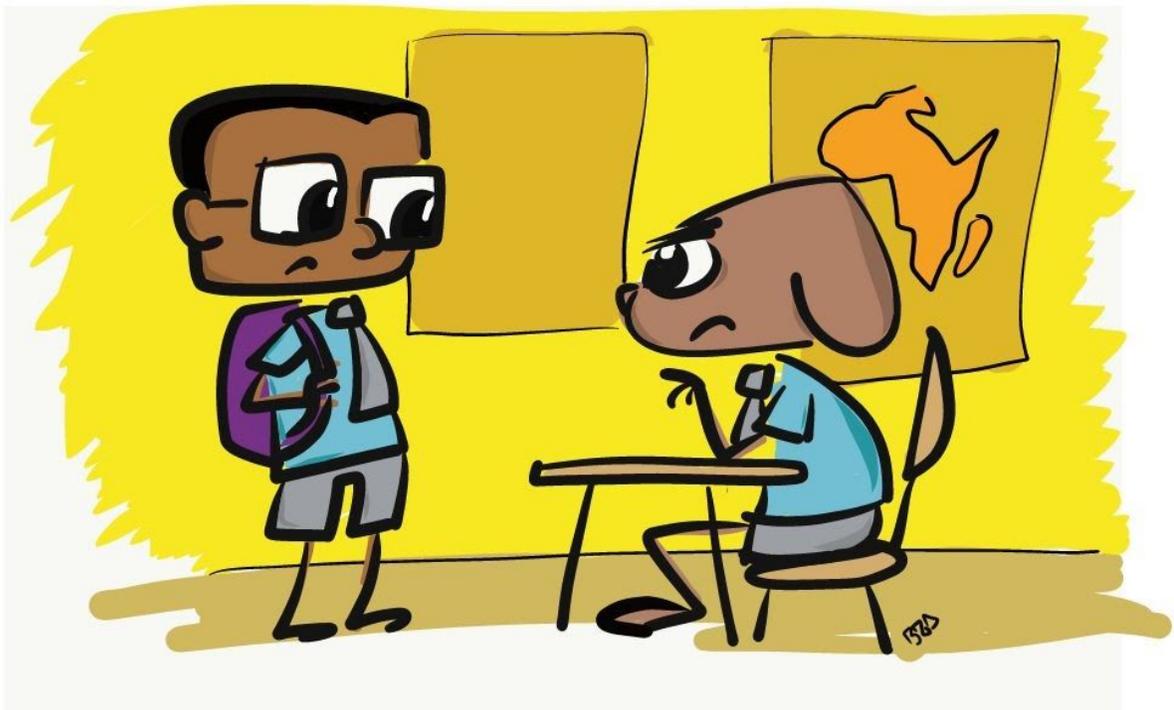
Roger was a short, very clean, rather shy boy. He was kind of a nerd and had a very clever brain. With that brain of his, he had probably understood the whole lesson. He would be able to do that homework quite easily, Wakayima thought. And he had an idea.

The next morning, when Roger walked into class it was to find Wakayima already waiting at his desk.

“Hi, Wakayima,” Roger said.

“Don’t bother me, dude. I’m busy. I don’t come to school to chat and gossip. Go to your desk and quit bothering me. I have got work to do. Education is not something I take lightly.”

“Um...” Roger tried to reply, but Wakayima cut him off.



“Go to your desk, Roger. Leave me alone and find your desk. Wherever it is!”

Roger tried again: “But the problem is...”

“The problem is that you are still here bothering me. I am busy!”

“The problem is this is *my* desk,” Roger finally managed to say.

Wakayima looked surprised. “What? Wait. Oh. You are right. I came to the wrong desk. Imagine that. I was so eager to learn today that I didn’t even notice that I had sat at the wrong desk, let alone that I had sat at the desk of the second most hardworking student in the class. Roger, I don’t mean this as an insult, but I can’t stay at your desk. You are not hardworking enough for me and some of your laziness might affect me. I need to get up and leave this desk.”

Now it started again, Roger’s struggle to get a word into the conversation while Wakayima just yapped on and on.

Roger tried to ask, “But what is...”

“You are the second most hardworking student, Roger. Second most. You are not good enough for me. Second best? Ptuuuuptu!”

There is this thing hares do, even when they have disguised themselves into human form, where they can spit without causing a mess but while causing even more offense than if they had actually spat. It is something to do with their front teeth.

“Second best! Ptuuuuptu!” Wakayima hare-spat-not- quite-spitting. “Lazy, lazy, good for nothing but second-ness. You might as well drop out of school now, go back home and wait until you are old enough to be called unemployed, you lazy, lazy second-bester.”

“Wakayima what are you talking about? I am not lazy!” protested Roger.

“Really? Look at you. You can’t even see yourself so you can’t see how lazy you look! Did you even put on enough bizigo lotion on today?”

“Of course I did. Mummy always says put on your bizigo.”

“Did you put any onto the back of your ears and the skin under the tips of your fingernails?”

“Who puts bizigo under...” Roger tried to ask, but Wakayima cut him off.

“Did you or did you not!” He didn’t even make it a question. He made it an order.

“I didn’t know you were supposed to put it behind your ears!”

“Lazy!” sneered Wakayima. “Too lazy to even put bizigo where it is supposed to go. You lazy second-best improperly-bizigolated person, who is too lazy for simple hygiene.”

Roger looked at his fingernails to check the skin under their tips. He then rubbed his thumb over his earlobes.

Wakayima sneered, “I hope you at least did your homework this time.”

Roger was looking square at Wakayima now.

“Of course I did my homework,” he said. “I always do my homework.”

“Humph,” went Wakayima. That is another thing hares do. They snort with their mouth so it sounds like “humph”, but feels like “snort”.

“I always do my homework,” Roger insisted. “Ask the teacher, if you want.”

“Let’s see it then,” Wakayima humphed.

“What?”

“If you did your homework as you say, let’s see it. If you did so much of your homework that you are not lazy crazy like maizey, let’s see it.”

Roger laid out the pages of his exercise book. They were covered in formulas, equations and numbers.

Wakayima went “humph” again and said, “So what? You did your homework one time. Lazy! So lazy! Why do we even bother educating people like you who are just so lazy?”

Roger was really upset by now. “Why do you keep calling me lazy?”

“You call this doing homework? All you did was answer the questions. That is literally the least you could do. Where is the extra effort? Where is the extra mile? Where? Where, Roger?”



Roger was confused now as well as upset. “Where do you want it to be?”

Wakayima paused. “Okay, so you did your homework. Anyone can do their homework. If you want to show that you mean business...”

Roger was keenly staring into Wakayima’s face.

And Wakayima said, “...Do it again.”

“What?”

“Anyone, in fact, everyone does their homework once. Do it twice. Let’s see you do it twice. Lazy guy says how...”

“How am I going to do that?”

“You see?”

Roger folded his arms now. “Okay. I will show you. I’ll do it again.”

Wakayima opened his school bag and put his notebook on the desk in front of Roger.

“Go ahead, then. Let’s see you do it,” he dared.

Roger gave Wakayima a strange look. Then he looked at the empty pages of Wakayima’s exercise books and began to write. In no time, they were full of completely done homework.

And half an hour later, Wakayima was sitting at his desk with his Physics book full of complete homework done, moreover, by one of the cleverest kids in the class and thinking, “Maybe I will let the boy keep his soda after all.”

The adventures of the cheeky, cunning hare that sneaks into the human school continue with a fresh story each week. Visit bazanye.com/wakayima for the latest every Friday. Stay tuned. This project is supported by Kuonyesha Art Fund.