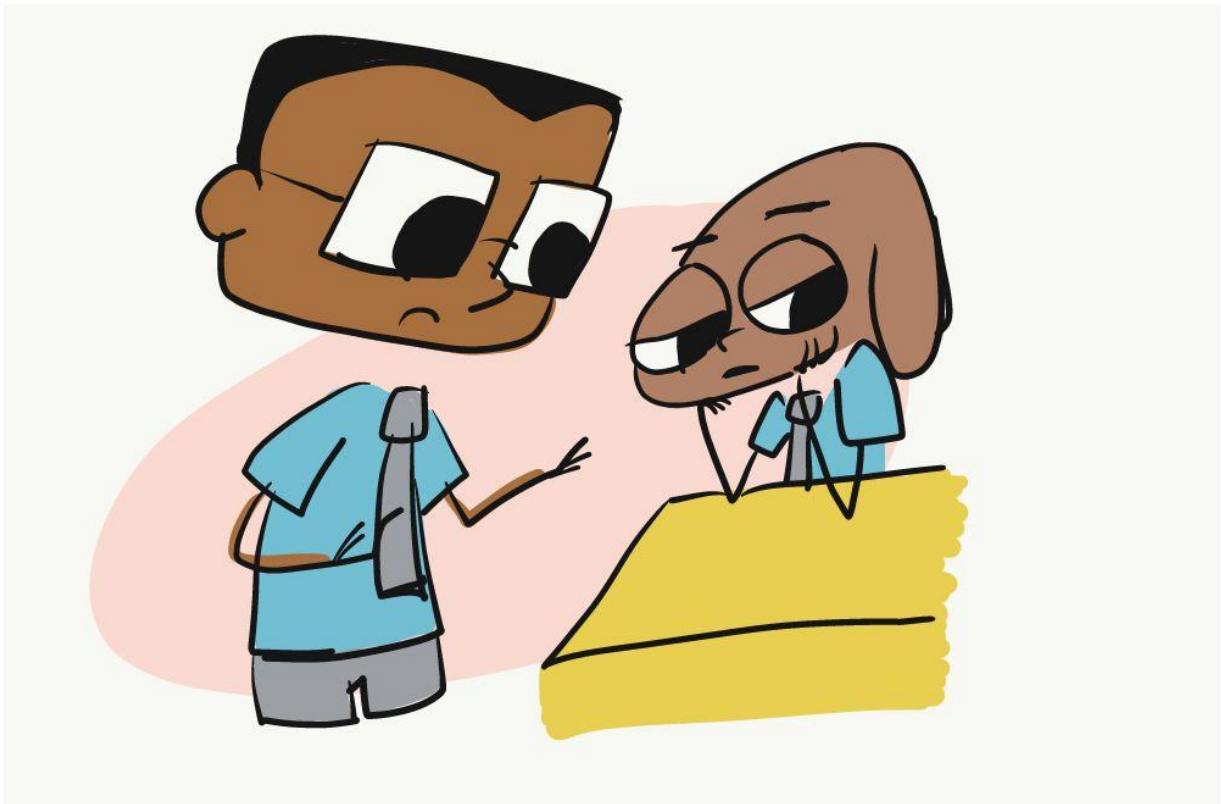


WAKAYIMA NEEDS A PREFECT

By Ernest Bazanye



Wakayima shuffled sadly into the classroom and plopped onto his seat. It was clear that he was not in a great mood. Roger, his best friend, could tell instantly that this was a sign that one of Wakzi's plans had not worked out.

"So, what went wrong?" Roger asked.

"I'm from Mr Kafuddu's office," replied Wakayima. "As you know, I had gone to complain about all you crazy humans... I mean, all you crazy other humans and

how you are so rowdy and noisy and undisciplined and how we need a class prefect because you all refused to allow the king to make you shut up.”

Roger figured it out and asked, “So you went to Mr Kafuddu to ask him to make you prefect? So, how did it go?”

“Instead of just giving me the badge and the special prefect’s hat and the special prefect’s doughnut, can you imagine what he said?”

“Right now I am too busy trying to imagine what an official prefect’s hat looks like,” mused Roger, but Wakayima just continued his story.

“He said he can’t make me prefect. He said your grades have to be very high before you can become a prefect. I told him my grades can’t be low. I know they can’t be low. You also know why my grades can’t be low.”

“Because we do our homework together all the time,” said Roger. “In fact, if anything, you should have the same grades as me, and I have really, really high grades.”

“That is what I told him. But then he said that he knows I copy the work from you so he does not count it as my homework. He said it is Roger’s homework version two.”

“That’s not true. I know you started off by tricking me into doing your homework for you, but then I tricked you back into learning how to do it for yourself while thinking you were tricking me into doing it for you so by now you can easily get your own grades,”

“I tried to explain that to him,” said Wakayima. The truth is that even after Wakayima said that to Mr Kafuddu, who was really Wanfuddu the tortoise, the teacher didn’t change his mind. He knew that Wakayima did not come to school to learn. He just came to eat people’s snacks. That is why Mr Kafuddu never marked Wakayima’s papers and didn’t even bother giving him grades.

“But we still need a prefect, my guy. These kids are out of control,” said Wakayima. “The other day Benedicto drew a cartoon of Nambi, and she was so angry she threw her mandazi at him. Can you imagine that?”

“That must have made you so mad,” said Roger.

“I know. Wasting perfectly good mandazi like that? Why didn’t she just throw a piece of paper or something? She had one right there! She had wrapped the mandazi around it. But instead, she unwrapped the manzadi from the paper, and threw the wrong thing! This is why we need prefects!”

Roger just shook his head and smiled. Wakayima always valued food over everything else.

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking?” Wakayima asked, looking at Roger as if Roger was himself a delicious piece of mandazi that just needed to be unwrapped from the paper.

Roger was worried by that look. “I don’t think so. It looks as if you are thinking that you want me to help you steal Nambi’s mandazi and we already agreed on this. You don’t need to trick people here into giving you food, Wakzi. Most of us don’t mind sharing anyway.”

“No, that is not what I was thinking, dwanzie,” replied Wakayima. “I was thinking, Roger, you have the perfect grades. In fact you have the best grades in class. Why don’t you become the prefect? Then you can tell everyone to shut up when I need them to be quiet and also remind them to throw papers and stop wasting food.”

“First of all, I don’t have the best grades in class. This week Rukia beat me in Maths.”

“Whatever,” Wakayima dismissed this. “Next week you will beat her. You guys are always going back and forth like that. But the thing is, you have to become prefect.”

“Why can’t Rukia become prefect?” Roger asked.

Wakayima smirked. "You know why. Rukia is our friend and we love her, but if she becomes class prefect she will kill us all."

"I think you have really misunderstood the nature of the work of the prefect," Roger said to his friend. "Let me tell you the story of Josiah."

Wakayima asked, "What happened?"

"Josiah had one job as class prefect," Roger began. "When the class was making noise and there was no teacher present, all he had to do was write down the names of the kids who were misbehaving and hand the list over to the teacher. It was as simple as that."

"I can do that," said Wakayima. "I know all your names. And I know all your voices. I can hear very very well, you know?"

"Well, the hearing part isn't the problem. And neither is the writing down names part," said Roger. "Imagine Nambi finds out that you wrote down her name and that you are going to report her to the teacher. Imagine that."

Wakayima didn't have to imagine far. He was already seeing Nandi screeching at the poor boy named Josiah, shouting things like, "When did I talk? What did I say? Show me when I talked. Where is the proof? Who saw me talking? You are lying. You are just being jealous. Remove my name! Remove my name now! No, no, no! I don't have time for jealous people in my life. Mbu I was talking. Did you see me talking? Did you see the words coming out of my mouth? Show me the words I said. Show me when I talked. You have written down my name nti I was talking in class. Show me when I talked. I want to see the things I said. Where are they? If you don't show them to me, rub out my name! Rub out my name. Rub out my

name, now!”



And she was so scary that Josiah had to rub out her name. But once the other kids saw that, they also did the same thing. They all demanded that if Josiah was going to write their names and report them for talking in class, he should show them their words or rub out their names.

Finally the teacher showed up when the class was in pure madness. Kids were screaming and running up and down the aisles. Some were jumping on and off desks. Some were even crawling under the desks because there was no space above the desks. They were all shouting at the tops of their voices.

“What is going on here? Everybody shut up! Everybody shut what?” It was Teacher Jolly who walked in. She shouted to the whole class. “Everybody sit down and be quiet. I want everybody to sit down and be quiet. Sit down and be what?”

In four seconds the entire class was settled and silent.

Teacher Jolly repeated. "I said sit down and be what?"

The kids looked at one another, confused. They did not know whether to answer or be quiet.

"I said sit down and be what?" she repeated.

"And be quiet," replied Josiah. He figured that since he was prefect he should be the one to answer the question.



"Ah yes. Josiah. The class prefect. Who has been making all this noise and all this hullabaloo? I want to know who is responsible. Did you write down their names?"

And all Josiah could do was take out an exercise book and open a page that was filled with names that had been rubbed out.

Roger told Wakayima all that and ended the story by saying, "Yeah. so he was fired from being prefect."

Wakayima asked, "What did Teacher Jolly say after that?"

She said "What,?" said Roger. Then he laughed and laughed and laughed. It was the funniest joke in the world to him because that was all Teacher Jolly ever said was "what".

Things were not going the way Wakayima had planned at all. First he tried to become prefect, and it didn't work. Then he tried to get his best friend to become

prefect and it didn't work. This sort of thing rarely happened to cunning hares and they didn't like it. They hated it when their plans didn't work out, so two plans flopping in a row was extremely annoying.

He was deep in thought that evening as he left school and headed home. He was lost in his mind, trying to come up with an idea. As he walked all the way out of the school to the secret path that he used to get back the forest, as he changed out of his school uniform and stretched his ears and shrunk his body back into the shape of a hare's, as he shook his fur out, he stayed deep in thought. "How can I make sure I decide who the next prefect is, and how can I make sure it is someone who does what I want them to?"

He was so deep in thought as he hopped around the forest that he didn't notice where he had ended up and fell, plop, head first into the burrow in the ground where Wangiri lived.

And just like that, the clouds cleared, and the answer came to him.

Before Wangiri could even finish squinting and frowning and grunting, Wakayima was already talking at full speed.

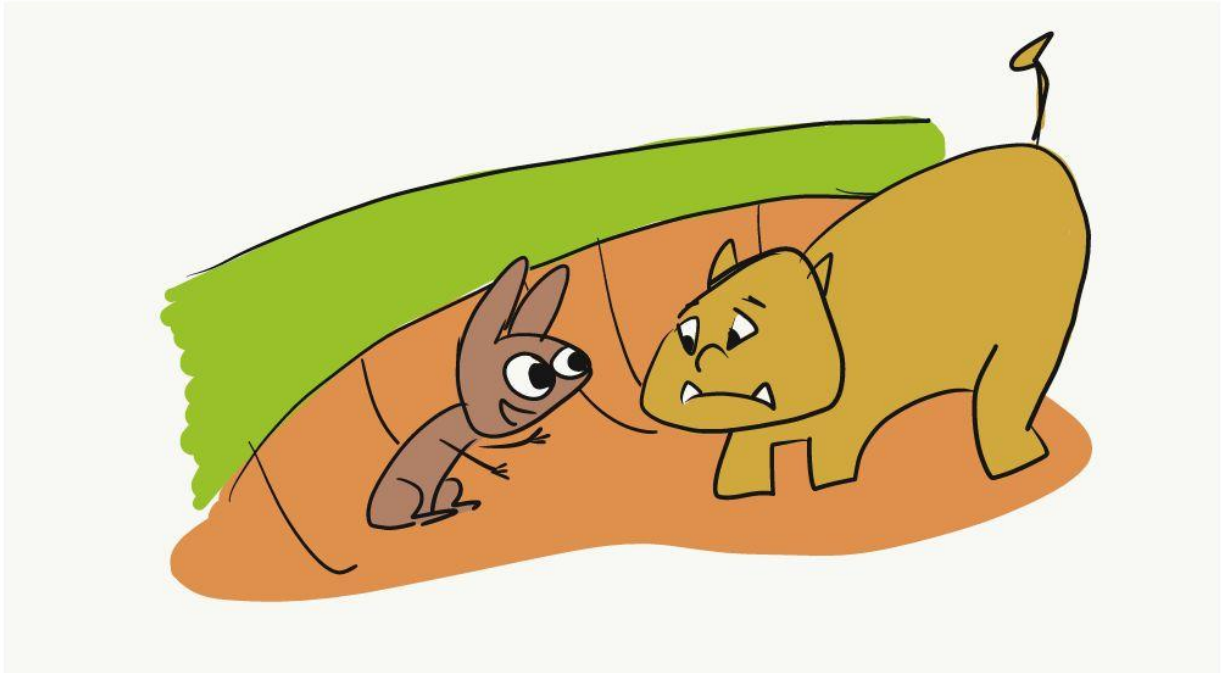
"I know, you want to ask me what I am doing here. What are you doing here? There. I have asked it for you, so you don't need to bother. Now let me get to the part where I answer. Wangiri, I have come to nominate you as prefect of our class at Tropical Hills Academy."

Wangiri squinted, frowned again and grunted. Wakayima, once again, was ahead of him. "I know you want to ask what a prefect is. It's the boss who works for the king of the class, basically. You make the noisy kids shut up."

"Why?" This time Wangiri was able to get the sentence out in full before Wakayima cut in because it was so short and involved only one word.

"If you are asking why in the sense of why there should be a prefect, well, human kids need an education and they can't get an education without discipline," replied Wakayima, "But if you are asking why it should be you, well," and here Wakayima grinned a special hare grin. "Prefects get free doughnuts from the staff

room.”



Wakayima watched the expression on Wangiri’s face. It is not easy for you to imagine it because at that moment it was a warthog face, not the boy face he had when he was disguised as Ngiri the bully, but trust me, warthogs have expressions. These expressions are not easy to notice, but if you ever get to a warthog, ask it something confusing like, “Hey, warthog, why do you have only one tail?” and look closely at its face. Don’t worry, it will understand. Animals understand human languages. They just don’t talk to us because of the shapes of their mouths. You know this if you have a dog.

But if you ask your warthog that confusing question and watch closely, you will see a slight change in its expression. Especially around the nostrils.

Anyway, Wakayima watched the expression on Wangiri’s face and it was one of growing interest. Yes, Wangiri was beginning to like the idea. But Wakayima had to make it even sweeter.

“Besides,” said Wakayima, “As a prefect, you get to tell people what to do. That is what you wanted to do as a bully but it didn’t work. So now you get to do it as a prefect!”

Wangiri grunted with approval.

“Oh, and of course, don’t forget the doughnuts,” added Wakayima.

Wangiri didn’t even have to say much more than just, “Okay.” It meant that he got to have the two things he wanted, so what should he argue for?

Wakayima was pleased. He had found a prefect. As he hopped out of Wangiri’s burrow, however, he heard a voice saying, “You still have a few things to figure out.”

Wakayima knew that voice. It was a familiar voice. He heard it every day. But he had never expected to hear it in the forest. He turned round to see...

We are almost at the end. Catch the next story to find out what Wakayima saw!

The adventures of the cheeky, cunning hare that sneaks into the human school continue with a fresh story each week. Join the mailing list by at >>>>>or visit bazanye.com/wakayima for the latest. Stay tuned!