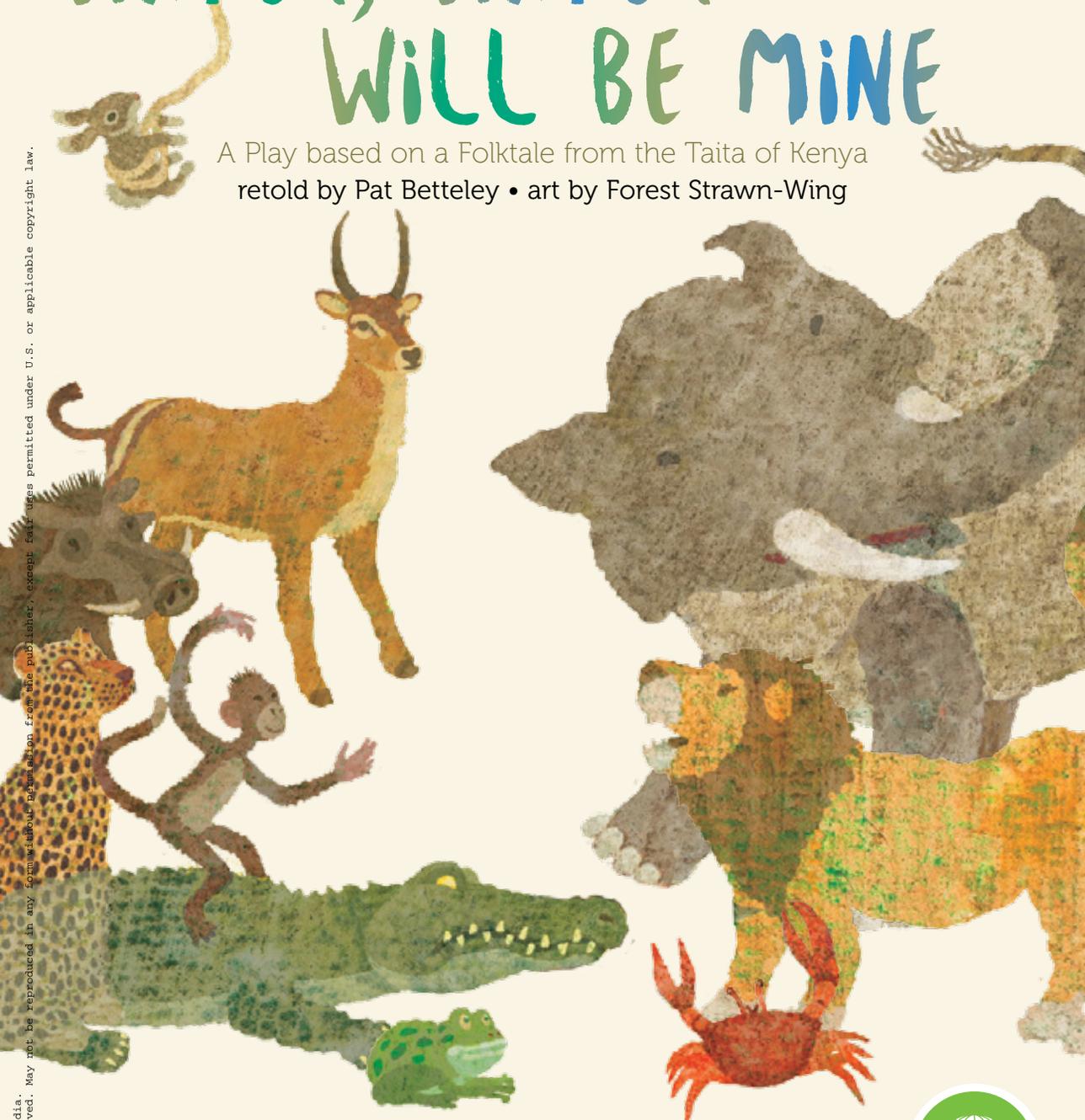


CULTURES AROUND THE WORLD FROM **FACES**

WATER, WATER WILL BE MINE

A Play based on a Folktale from the Taita of Kenya
retold by Pat Betteley • art by Forest Strawn-Wing



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CHARACTERS: **Narrator 1**, **Narrator 2**, **Simba the Lion**, **Sungura the Rabbit**, **Tumbili the Monkey**, **Mamba the Crocodile**, **Chui the Leopard**, **Kuro the Waterbuck**, **Ngiri the Warthog**, **Chura the Frog**, **Kaa the Crab**

Narrator 1: Long ago, there was a time of no rain. Rivers, lakes, and mud holes were all dry and the ground was cracked with lines of death. The animals knew they would soon die, so they all came together in peace to talk about *maji*, water. Simba the Lion asked each animal where the water had gone.

Mamba: There is none to be found. I no longer swim, but crawl on the earth, like Mjusi the lizard.

Chui: There is none to be found. I no longer drink, but eat dust like Muhanga the Aardvark at the termite hill.

Kuro: There is none to be found. I no longer stand with water beside my feet, but paw at the parched ground.

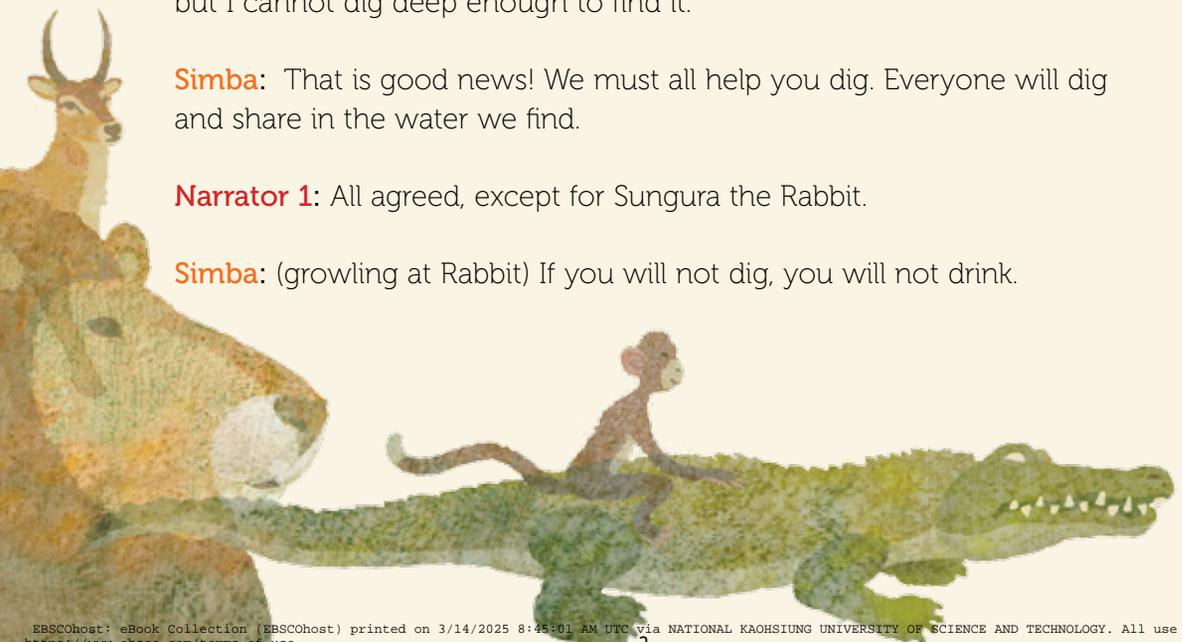
Narrator 1: Then Ngiri the Warthog spoke.

Ngiri: Maji, water, is very deep in the ground. I can smell it in my hole, but I cannot dig deep enough to find it.

Simba: That is good news! We must all help you dig. Everyone will dig and share in the water we find.

Narrator 1: All agreed, except for Sungura the Rabbit.

Simba: (growling at Rabbit) If you will not dig, you will not drink.



Narrator 2: Lazy Rabbit just laughed while all of the animals began to dig with paws and claws, teeth, and tusks. They dug and dug and dug. It was Chura the frog who saw the first trickle of water come out of the earth.

Chura: Water lovely, water fine. Water, water will be mine! Ne-deep! Ne-deep!

Narrator 2: The animals sipped and slurped, licked and lapped, except for lazy Rabbit who just laughed. The next morning, the animals found fresh rabbit footprints in the mud by the water hole. Simba called another meeting.

Simba: Sungura has broken our agreement. He did not dig and he WILL NOT DRINK! Tumbili the Monkey, you guard the water hole tonight.

Narrator 2: Tumbili hid in the grass. Lazy rabbit came down the road just as the sun was ready to sleep for the night, swinging a gourd and singing:

Sungura: Water lovely, water fine. Water, water will be mine!

Tumbili: Go away, Rabbit. You will not be drinking any of this water.

Sungura: And why would I want any of that dirty water, friend, when I have my own sweet water in this gourd?

Tumbili: Sweet water? Where did you get water? All of the water is in this hole.

Sungura: (sipping from his gourd) Mmmm. Not all.

Tumbili: Let me taste. (drinks all of the water from the gourd)



Sungura: You drank every last drop, Tumbili! Now I have nothing to drink.

Tumbili: I am sorry. You may drink all the water from the hole that you want.

Narrator 1: The next morning, Lion's angry roar could be heard across the savanna.

Simba: Tumbili, why is more water gone from our hole?

Narrator 1: The animals all laughed as Monkey tried to explain. Then the animals drank their fill and Lion chose a different monkey to guard the water hole.

Narrator 1: That afternoon, clever Sungura fooled the second monkey, and drank his fill. And each afternoon after that, a different monkey was tricked.

Simba: There are no monkeys left to guard the water hole. Now who will catch Sungura?

Narrator 2: No one volunteered for fear of being tricked by Rabbit. Finally Kaa the Crab agreed. Kaa waited under the water, eyestalks bobbing up and down. Just as the sun was ready to sleep, lazy Rabbit came down the road. Sungura closed his eyes and leaned over the hole, drinking the sweet water. Suddenly, SNAP! CLICK! CLACK! Crab's big claw clamped Rabbit's paw tightly.



Sungura: Please, Kaa. Let me go. I have some sweet, golden liquid in my gourd for you to taste.

Kaa: You will not fool ME with your tricks.

Narrator 2: In the morning, the animals returned to find Rabbit sitting quietly. This time, Lion's roar was one of delight.

Simba: Kaa. You are our *shujaa*, hero. You have caught lazy Rabbit, and now we will end his days. What do you fear most, Sungura?

Sungura: Hmmm. I think *kuruka hewani*, flying.

Simba: But rabbits cannot fly.

Sungura: My point exactly. That is why Python can squeeze me, Crocodile can swallow me, or Elephant can tread on me, but please do NOT throw me up in the air.

Simba: That is exactly what we will do. First I will tie all four of your paws together. Now, Tembo the Elephant, take the end of the rope and swing it around and around and around.

Narrator 2: Faster and faster Sungura flew, until SNAP! The rope broke and Rabbit's paws were freed. He landed on all four feet, and ran away singing:

Sungura: Water lovely, water fine. Water, water will be mine!





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