

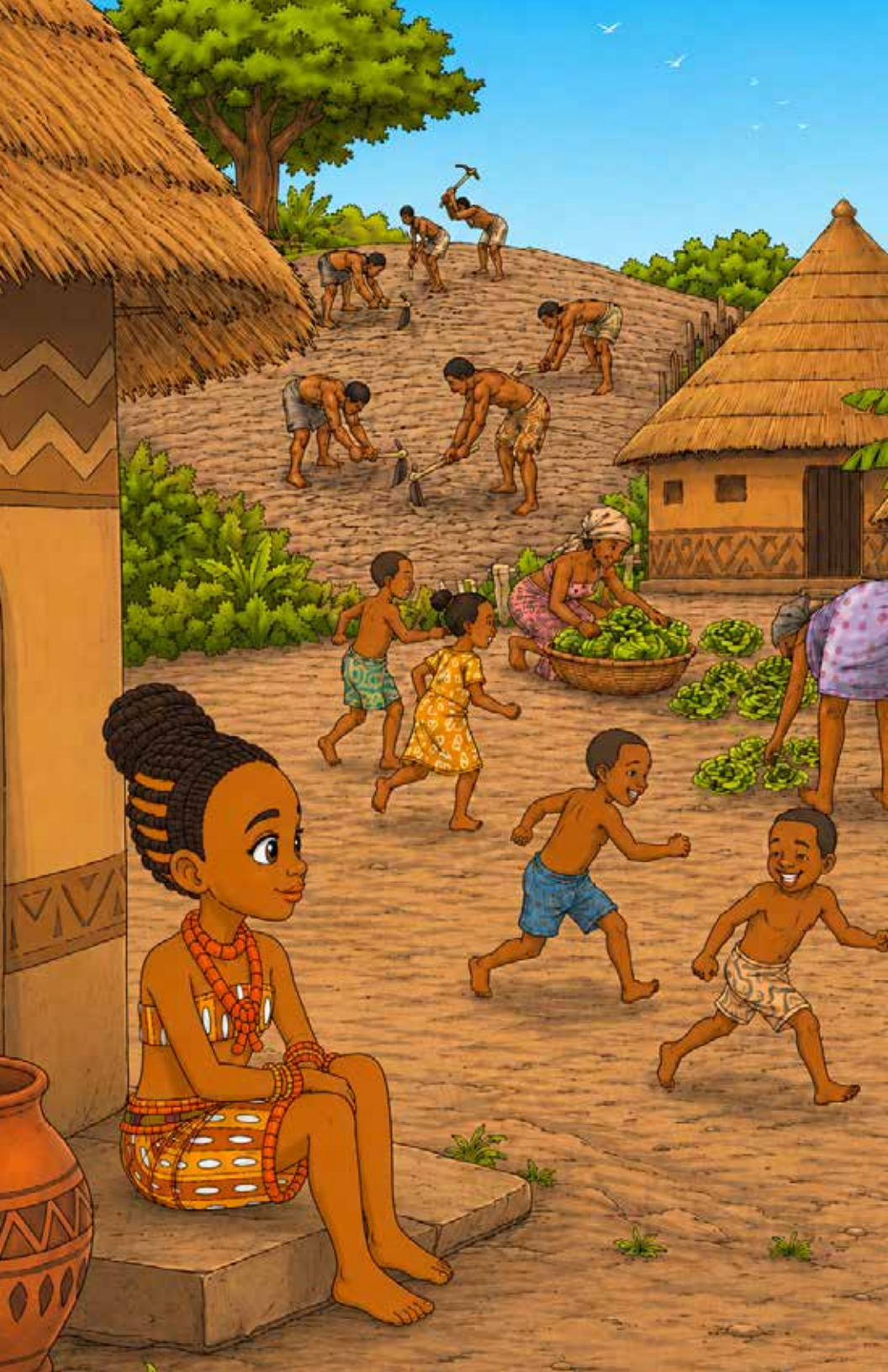


Brother Jossim

In the land of Kabyé, the peasants of the rocks had already been in the field for a long time, when the sun's rays began to brighten the seeded hills. On the flank, men and women were busy unearthing, digging and planting, with singing.

In the royal court, the rooster crowed its first awakening crows. Then began the courtyard to fill out with life. From one of the huts came out Mayi Sirena, curious to see in the light of the sun, the village that had welcomed them on the day before their journey from Bassar.

Now accustomed to taking part in



traditional festivities with her parents, It is always with enthusiasm that the princess of Bassar went to discover a new culture. Her parents Napo, the chief of Bassar, as well as his wife, Gora, were still getting ready in their huts.

Mayi, seated in the frontage, observed; the women sweeping, making the fire, putting their pots on fire, the men very busy, coming and going, sometimes concerting with a woman, or caressing with a hand, a child head who came to them.

The organization of the Kabyès that morning reminded her the awakening in Bassar. Decidedly, she felt like home. A young boy approached the little





mermaid, in front of the hut, smile on the lips. He was followed by his mother, who introduced them to each other.

“Good morning my daughter. Did you sleep well?”

“Yes mum, I slept very well.”

“This is my son Tossim. He knows the village and its people very well. He’ll show you around. After all, he’s grown up now. He will leave soon to study in Sokodé.”

“Good morning Tossim. My name is Mayi Sirena. I came from Bassar to attend the Evala festivities.”

“Welcome Mayi Sirena. I am preparing as the boys of my age, to begin my initiation to become an Evalou. I hope to start this year.”





“What is an Evalou?”

“In the land of Kabyé, it designated a young boy following the rituals of the passage to adulthood. It is a journey that lasts three years, during which he spent in wrestling tests called Evala. At the end of these years, he reaches a new stage of initiations, Kondona. At that time, he is a Kondô, a valiant young man who protects the city.”

Tossim was already arousing the curiosity of little Sirena of Bassar. She got up and followed him through the huts, keenly attentive to his narrative.





The secrets of the chiefs

At lunchtime, Tossim and Mayi had returned from their walk, for the meal. A sweet smell of 'Gnato' welcomed them on their arrival. Mayi was invited to join the gathering of children under the baobab tree.

Hands carefully washed, they waited. A large bowl of Gnato was brought to them, accompanied by sorghum dough. Gnato is a delicious green sauce of hibiscus leaves with pumpkin seeds. During the meal, Mayi Siréna saw her father in the company of the chief Baâkolô. The two patriarchs, elegantly



dressed, walked together in the gardens of Chief Baâkolô. She felt like they were having an important discussion and did not dare to go to her father right away. Indeed, chief Baâkolô was exposing to his guest, a problem which worried his village:

“We can’t let them do it. We are not going to get out of this if it continues.”

“It’s true,” answered Napo, “it’s not a simple as situation. On one side, you need water, but on the other side the Soumdinas are probably afraid of not having any more.”

“We understand well. But they still have resources. We are convinced that we can still share this source of water for a long time before it dries up completely.”

