# english black

# Package 92, Script 6

November 2010

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**Water is life. Share it.**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Many people fight for the common good. But sometimes, things end up benefiting just a few people who have power in a community. This script tells a story that happened in Tiopaizi village in Malawi. The village came up with an idea on how to end hunger in their community by beginning an irrigation scheme. In the initial years of the project, instead of benefiting the whole community, only a few benefited. However, the village did not give up. They confronted the problems and succeeded.

Apart from Mr. German and Mr. Bimphi, all the names in this script are fictional.

This script is a fictionalized story which is based on actual interviews with villagers. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

**Characters**

German: Wise and good-hearted man in the village

Village headman: Wise but sometimes weak

Eda: Old woman, widow; looking after orphans left by her son who died from hunger

Bimphi: A drunkard, always drunk. Hardworking, but spends much of his money on beer

James: Nephew of the village headman, hard-hearted and selfish

Jacob: Good friend of Bimphi, hardworking but does not drink beer

**Narrator:** Tiopaizi village in the area of Chief Msakambewa lost five people to hunger in 2001. After that, they realized that they had a hidden treasure which was not being used: there was a perennial river in the village. They met with the encouragement of their beloved field assistant. They agreed to start an irrigation scheme to supplement the rainfed harvest.

But the problem was that the best place for the irrigation scheme was part of a government-protected forest reserve. They needed permission from the department of forests through their District Commissioner, the DC. The village headman decided to approach the DC. Will the DC grant them permission to use the land they need?

**FX:** *Crowd of people at the village headman’s court*

**Bimphi:** (*Speaking in low voice under the noise*) Jacob, see how sad the village headman looks…. I told you, the DC cannot accept this.

**Jacob:** Bimphi, let’s just listen and hear what he wants to tell us….

**Bimphi:** But this was our chance to have enough money for beer.

**Jacob:** You are always thinking of beer. Your friends are thinking about food.

**Bimphi:** One person’s poison is another’s food. I am talking about my food…. Didn’t people die of hunger, leaving me – a drunkard – alive?

**Jacob:** Hey, stop that! That is not a good joke.

**Village headman:** Quiet please! Quiet!I have called you together to tell you the results of my discussion with the DC.

**Bimphi:** (*Drunken voice*) Headman, just tell us what you want to tell us.

**James:** (*Shouting at Bimphi*) Keep quiet, you! We want to hear what the village headman is saying.

**Bimphi:** So who does not want to hear …? You always think you are intelligent, James.

**Everyone:** (*Noise*) Aaaa you!

**Voice:** Bimphi is always drunk – where does he get his money?

**Another voice:** It’s true. What fattens pigs is not known, is it?

**Village headman:** Sit down, Bimphi, and keep quiet…. The District Commissioner has … accepted our request.

**All:** Yes, yes.

*The villagers sing a song praising the courage of the village headman*

**One:** Tiopaizi is a lion … yeeees.

**All:** He is a lion.

**One:** He is a lion.

**All:** He is a lion ye … ye … yes, he is a lion ye …e … yes. He is a lion.

**Village headman:** Thank you, thank you. Sit down…. The district commissioner will send the surveyors to mark a new boundary tomorrow.

**All:** Yes, village headman. (*Some whistling*)

**Village headman:** He is happy that we have never encroached into the forest. This is our reward.

**Eda:** (*Cries, sobs*) Oh village headman, look. This is happening when I have already lost my beloved son to hunger. Thank you, village headman!

**Bimphi**: Grandma Eda, this is not a funeral day, woman … we are rejoicing here. Do not spoil our party. We will have enough money for beer now.

**Eda:** (*Speaking**slower like an old person*) Bimphi, it is very sad that this irrigation scheme comes after I lost a child of twenty five years old to hunger…. Look at the orphans and their mother he left me with.

**Village headman:** It is indeed sad that we lost five people to hunger last year…. May their sorrows rest in peace.

**Bimphi:** Yes, village headman, their sorrows should rest in peace indeed.

**Village headman:** I have one announcement to make. The person from the lands office will come tomorrow morning to shift the boundary of the reserve and leave the valley to us…. Let us meet there and work hard to clear the land.

**All:** Yes.

**James:** This will be the end of hunger in our village.

*Scene transition*

**Narrator:** The people ofTiopaizi village worked very hard to clear the land which they were given. They managed to divert a river into this land with the help of their field assistant. People planted maize to supplement their food. The maize germinated. But something unexpected happened. What was it? Will hunger be a thing of the past in the village?

**FX:** *Cock crowing. Knock on the door*

**James:** Who is there?

**German:** Open the door, James. It’s me.

**James:** (*Sleepy*) Who?

**German:** German…. Wake up. Let’s go to water our crops before anyone else wakes up.

**James:** What is the time now?

**German:** It is 4am…. I thought we agreed to wake up at this time?

**FX:** *Door opens and James yawns*

**James:** The sleep was sweet. You know when it is cool in the morning, the sleep is sweet.

**German:** Our gardens are far from the water source, so we are disadvantaged. That’s why we have to get up so early.

**James:**  Yes, I know. We should start with my garden because it is further. Then water yours afterwards.

**German:** No problem, my friend.

*Scene transition*

**FX:** *Water flowing and splashing softly*

**James:** German, look! The water is overflowing that bed. Close that canal …

**German:** Can’t you see that I am trying to close it? But the water is pouring over …

**James:** Okay, open the canal where you want the water to go first to reduce the pressure. Then close where you do not want it to go.

*They both laugh*

**German:** It worked … yes …

**FX:** *The splashing of water stops*

**German:** What is wrong? Look, only a little water is coming. What has happened? … Are we going to be able to finish watering today with this little water reaching us? Ten minutes to finish watering one bed – it’s too much!

**James:** I think something has blocked the main canal.

**German:** I think you are right. That could be the cause.… So what are we going to do?

**James:** Let me go and check what is happening…. Keep watering – I will come back.

**German:** Let me join you. If it’s a big stone blocking the canal, it may need two people to move it.

*Scene transition*

**FX:** *Splashing water*

**German:** There is nothing blocking this river. Everything is normal.

**James:**  Ok, now I know. I can see that Bimphi, Jacob and Grandma Eda are all watering, and their gardens are close to the source of water.

**German:** You are right. So what are we going to do?

**Bimphi:** (*Drunk already*) Good morning, German and James. Why do you look worried? What is wrong?

**James:** Bimphi, when did you all start watering?

**Jacob:** James, what sort of question is that? You mean you cannot see that we have just started?

**Bimphi:** Jacob, I do not answer foolish questions. Would my answer to that question make any difference?

**James:** Bimphi, you already know me. Jacob, let’s not fight. We were the first to come here. You found us here and you can water when we have finished.

**Bimphi:** Why should we wait for you to finish first? This irrigation project is for us all.

**German:** The problem is the water has stopped going into our gardens because you are using it. Very little is reaching us.

**Jacob:** Doesthat concern us? Do what you want, but we will not stop watering our crops.

**James:** This is how the scheme works: First come first serve. I order you to stop. If you do not stop, I will hit you.

**Bimphi:** Ok! Ok, Jacob, let’s stop. The village headman’s nephew should water first … a person who can beat anyone at will.

**James:** Do not talk, just stop. Go home and come back later, because we do not want you to interfere with us again.

**Bimphi:** Yes, Chief.

**James:** Old woman, stop watering and go home.

**German:** She can water. Let her water.

**James:** What’s the difference? (*To Eda*) Stop, go home and come again later.

*Scene transition*

**Narrator:** The scramble for water has started. Willthis problem come to an end? Will the villagers achieve their goal?

**FX:** *Natural bush sounds of night*

**James:** Look at the beauty of the maize which we have this year. It is not starving for water like these other maize fields.

**German:** Yes, it is indeed very good maize. But is it because we wake up early to water our crops?

**James:** Of course! Don’t you know that the early bird catches the worm?

**German:** I know. But people are complaining that we are not giving them a chance to water their crops.

**James:** Do you agree with them? German, do you?

**German:** I have been thinking of the best solution for this. I cannot think of any better idea yet. However, I do not like the idea of first come first serve when we have children and elderly people among the members.

**James:** Do not think like a pastor. We are all just doing the right thing. Do we stop those we find in the garden…? Look, the water has stopped reaching us. Is this fair? They have come again. Do you want this, German?

**German:** What are you going to do? It’s the old woman, Bimphi and Jacob again. What should we do?

**James:** I will stop them. They did not hear us clearly yesterday when we stopped them.

**German:** No, leave the old woman to water. But the gentlemen can stop.

**James:** What are you doing again today, Bimphi, Jacob, and you, the old woman?

**Bimphi:** Why are you asking us such a question when you can see that we are watering? And why are you asking when we’re watering? You did not ask us such questions when we were making canals and clearing the land.

**FX:** *Sound of slap*

**Bimphi:** (*Angry*) You slapped me! You slapped me … why? Why? … I will not leave!

**James:** (*Angry*) Why are you always rude? That is why I slapped you…. Now leave the garden.

**Jacob:** James, no, don’t beat us – we will leave immediately. We know you know how to fight.

**Bimphi:** I will not leave.

**FX:** *Sound of several more slaps.*

**Bimphi:** Stop it! Stop it! We are leaving.

**James:** You can report this to the village headman – I don’t care. If we are the first to come here, and you find us watering, never again start watering. Or I will teach you another lesson.

**German:** What is wrong, James?

**James:** German, quiet … I might forget that you are my friend. (*To Eda*) Eda, go! (*Pause*) You think I am joking? Go and come again later. Do you want a slap?

**Eda:** Please allow me to water my maize only today. Look, it is withering.

**James:**  We told you yesterday that it’s first come first serve. Where were you? Did you oversleep because you are a witch?

**Eda:** (*Cries*) Do not talk like that, my children.

**James:** I am not your child.

**Eda:** You are not the same age as me. You should respect me. You are the age of my grandchild.

**James:** I am not saying don’t come again. I am saying, wait for me to finish. I have rights too.

**Eda:** (*Sobs*) Yesterday you stopped me, and today the same. You even slapped Bimphi today. Oh, my child, do not do that.

**German:** James, let her water. We will continue later.

**Eda:** Yes, my son. Please, German, talk to your friend. You know I wake up late because my body hurts; you know I am old.

**James:** No, I have other things to do, German …. So Eda, you know when I say stop, I mean stop! I do not want any violence here.

**Eda:** (*Sobs*) My child, why did you die so early, leaving me behind? Why did you give me food and die yourself, instead of leaving me, the old, to die with hunger?

**German:** Granny, go. I will water your garden after finishing mine.

**Eda:** Thank you, my son.

*Scene transition*

**FX:** *Eda sobs*

**Village headman:** Why are you crying, Eda?

**Eda:** Chief, your nephew James stopped me from watering my crops, both yesterday and today. He even slapped Bimphi.

**Village headman:** James? Why?

**Eda:** He says he came first. When we water our garden together with him, the water doesn’t reach his garden.

**Village headman:** Do not worry. My nephew is crazy. Just go again later to water your crops.... Didn’t German help you?

**Eda:** He has helped already. He will water my garden.

**Chief:** I see.

*Scene transition*

**Bimphi:** Village headman, why are the very same people watering their crops every day, yet we all participated in digging the canals and clearing the land?

**Village headman:** Tell me the whole story. What happened?

**Bimphi:** James says he wakes up early and he is always the first to go to the garden every day. That is why he always wants us to wait for him before we water.

**Village headman:** I see. If that is the case, he is right. Why can’t you wake up early enough, even before him?

**Bimphi:** I can manage, but what about Eda, an old woman who is being stopped from watering because of the same reason of first come first serve?

**Village headman:** What can I do if they wake up early every morning?

**Bimphi:** Why dothey need to water their maize every day anyway? Can’t they give us a chance to water sometimes?

**Village headman:** Why don’t you ask him?

**Bimphi:** Why can’t you ask him for us? We have already been slapped and you say … (*very upset and unable to speak clearly*) a…a…sss…kkk him? Remember, we all participated in digging that canal and clearing the land. When did the first come first serve issue start?

**Village headman:** I do not answer silly questions.

**Bimphi:** (*Angry*) If this is not sorted out by the weekend, I will do something. I will damage the canal and you will have to start all over again. I was a participant in the whole project. First come, first come what?

**Village headman:** Do not damage the canal! If you do, I will chase you away from my village.

**Bimphi:** You will not. I will report you to the same District Commissioner who gave us the land.

**Village headman:** No, don’t go that far. What do you think I can do to stop James from monopolizing the water when he wakes up earlier than anybody?

**Bimphi:** Call for a meeting of the whole village. You called on us to establish the irrigation project. Why not call on everyone again now? The DC will certainly hear about this.

*Scene transition song*

**Narrator:** The village headman knows that the DC may fire him from his position as village head. What will the village headman do to stop Bimphi from destroying the canals and reporting him to the DC?

**FX:** *Sound of a bell*

**Boy:** (*Shouting*) The village headman is calling you all. Let us meet at the irrigation scheme tomorrow morning. Be patient.

*Sound of the bell*

*Scene transition song*

**Narrator:** What will the village headman tell the people? How will he do it?Is there an easy solution here?

**FX:** *Crowd of people talking*

**German:** Silence please! Silence! Let’s listen to the village headman Tiopaizi, our hero.

**Village headman:** Hey, my people. I want the chairman of this irrigation scheme to come to stand with me here.

**Bimphi:** We thought you were the chairman.

**Village headman:** Me! Did I say that?

**All:** No, no.

**Village headman:** So I want the leader of this irrigation scheme. German, who is the chair?

**German:** No one, sir.

**Village headman:** How can a thing without a head move? I will be the presiding officer. Let’s select a chairperson today. Give me four names, please, for the chair.

**All:** German. German Banda, please.

**Village headman:** Do you all agree?

**All:** Yes.

**Village headman:** German, you are now the leader of this irrigation scheme. Before we select other office bearers, tell me how you will share the water fairly to all, including children and the elderly.

**German:** I am going to make suggestions, but you can advise me otherwise. If you are not comfortable with my suggestions, tell me.

**All:** Yes.

**Bimphi:** German, we know you love us all and you can’t do us harm. What do you think?

**German:** First, let me say I am sorry to all whom I may have offended.

**Bimphi:** Just tell us what you think is a solution.

**German:** The issue of our grandmother, Miss Eda, bothers me…. But I think we should divide ourselves into groups and we can use the water on alternate days.

**All:** Yes! German! German!

**Village headman:** That is my boy. Now, let’s select the other office bearers to help you implement that plan.

*Scene transition*

**Narrator:**  Do you think the problems of greed in using water continued? No, the problem of water sharing ended there. Everyone benefited and became food secure. Divided we fall, but united we stand. Do not wait for the drunkards to put sense in you to act and share water equitably. Water is life.

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## Information sources

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