

Buried in the Garden

Papa was very proud of his garden. Even though he lived in Limpopo Province where it rained very little, he had a beautiful garden. He knew exactly what trees and flowers to plant.

He did not put in plants from other countries that need a lot of water. He planted only indigenous trees and flowers that need very little water.

His neat, attractive garden was green all year round. But there was one spot in the garden where nothing would grow. Papa tried many ways to get something to grow there.

He turned over the soil, bought fertilizer, planted the toughest plants but nothing would grow there.

'Papa,' Khazamula said, 'that spot is bewitched.

Some evil witch has planted something in that spot.

That is why nothing will grow there.'

'Where did you learn such nonsense?' his father asked. 'There are no such things as witches. Stop thinking like a fool.'

Khazamula felt very angry. His friend, Themba, had told him about a witch who had planted something in a neighbour's garden and bad luck had come to that family.

Khazamula decided to ask Themba to help him dig up that spot when Papa was not at home.

He wanted to get rid of the evil thing that was planted there.

Themba was afraid. 'Only an Inyanga can do that. If we try, the evil witch will come for us and terrible things will happen.'

Khazamula became even angrier. 'I am not a coward. If you won't help me, I will do it alone.'

That night, when everyone was asleep, Khazamula crept out of the house, went into the garden shed, found a spade and began to dig in the dead spot. He dug and dug and dug. He grew tired and sweaty. He was on the point of giving up when he suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder.

He jumped and shrieked in terror. He thought the witch had got him. But it was Papa.

'Khazamula, what are you doing here at this time of night?'

‘Papa, you gave me such a fright. I thought you were a witch.’

‘I told you, there are no such things as witches,’ his father said.

‘Now I am going to prove it to you. You think something evil is buried here. I’ll help you to dig and show you that you are quite wrong.’

Papa began digging and the hole grew bigger and bigger and began to look like a grave. Khazamula became very frightened.

After a while the spade hit something hard.

It made a clinking sound.

‘You see,’ Khazamula yelled, ‘there is something bad there. Come on, Papa, let’s leave it. Something terrible will happen to us.’

But Papa continued digging

‘Papa, Papa! Stop!’ cried Khazamula. Papa did not. Suddenly, it seemed as if the hole

had swallowed him up.
fell back in fear.

Khazamula

Then he crawled to the edge of the hole.

He looked in and saw his father struggling with something.

Then Papa emerged from the hole dragging an old iron box.

It was very rusty.

‘You see, Khazamula, this is the cause of our problem. Now let’s see what’s inside.’

‘No, don’t do that Papa. You will be bewitched,’ Khazamula screamed as he tried to pull his father away from the box.
and broke the lock on the box with his spade. But Papa pushed Khazamula off

When he opened the box, he found some old papers.

He picked them up and began to read.

‘Wonderful,’ he exclaimed. ‘This is wonderful. Do you know what this is, Khazamula? This is the history of the Chauke family.

My father was writing our history and he hid the box a long time ago when we were not safe from the police.

Afterwards, he could not remember where he had hidden it and we have been searching for it ever since.’

He gave Khazamula a big hug.

‘Thanks to you we have found it.

Now we can read the history of our family and understand the proud tradition that we come from.'

Suddenly Papa laughed, 'I wonder what your grandfather will say when I tell him you thought he was a witch.'

'Oh Papa, please forgive me.'

'No, my son, I thank you. If it hadn't been for you, we never would have found this box.'

'Papa, why do people believe in witches?'

'Many people believe in witches because it is an easy way to explain their troubles. Looking for the real cause is too hard.'

'But we know better, don't we, Papa?'

'Yes we do, my son. Now let's go to bed. We've had enough excitement for one night.'

Carrying the box very proudly, Khazamula marched into the house ahead of his father.