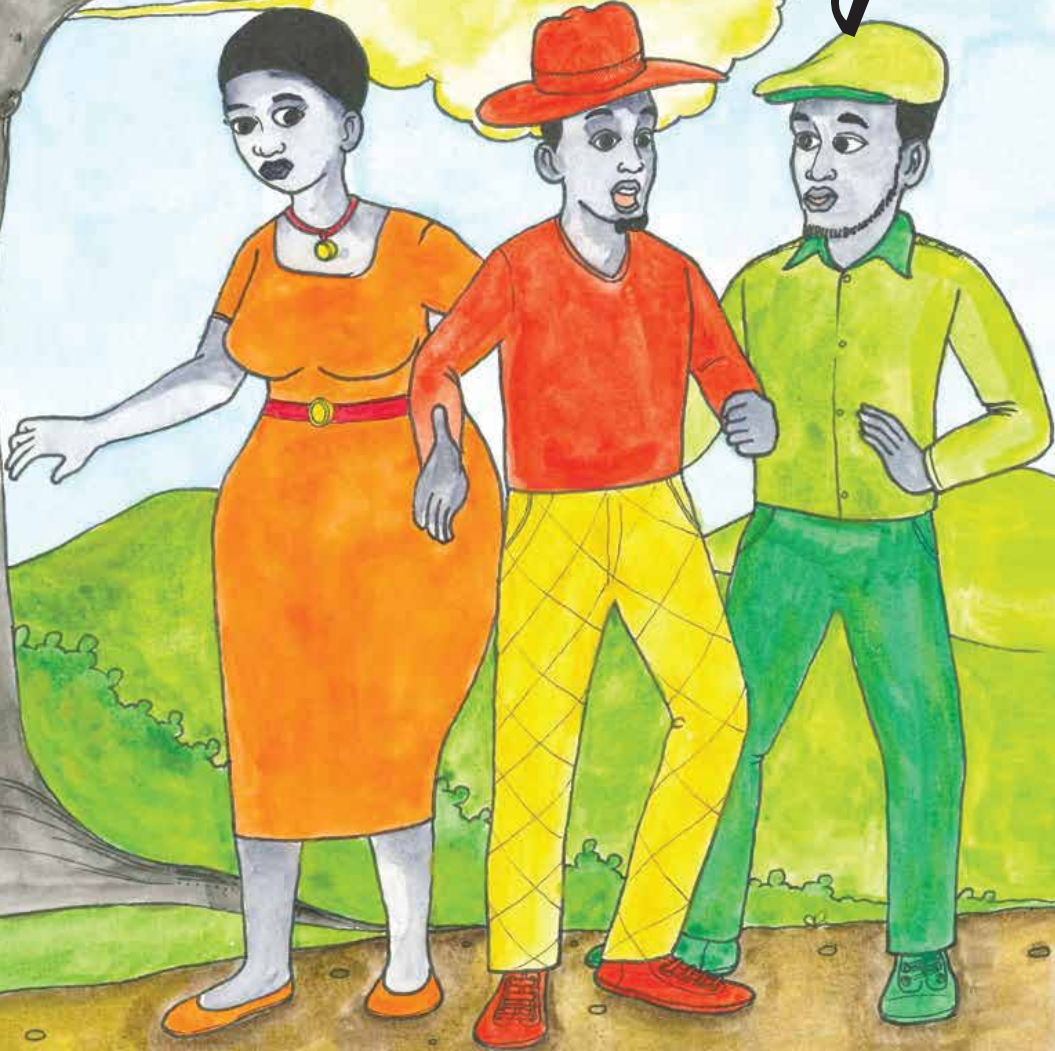


Kofi's Story



A Story of love that stood the test of time

Written and illustrated by:

Dr. Thomas MUYOMBO

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H.E. MADAM REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO Message

As the First Lady of Ghana and ambassador of “Merck more than a Mother” campaign, I am very happy to share with you this inspiring story of Kofi and Ama.

As you all know, in many cultures, childless women still suffer discrimination, stigma and ostracism. It is sad to know that women are blamed for infertility, although 50% of infertility are due to men. We need to encourage men to speak up and discuss their infertility issues openly and know that fertility is a shared responsibility.

One in every four couples in developing countries suffer infertility. This prevalence rate is high indeed. Majority of infertility cases can be due to untreated infectious disease, such as Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Genital mutilation, unsafe abortion, and unsafe delivery, hence prevention is very important and this is one of the main objectives of the campaign.

Therefore I am very happy to work closely with Merck Foundation to empower women and raise awareness among our communities, with special focus on the youth (girls and boys) through this story, to know how to prevent infertility, how to protect themselves and also how to value themselves whether they are mothers or not. Women are more than just mothers, they are productive members in society and should be respected.

This story is part of the ‘Merck More Than a Mother’ campaign which is very close to my heart. I hope you will understand the message behind it. I believe we must prepare our children for tomorrow with the right family values of love and respect.

Having a child, takes both a man and a woman, every woman is more than a mother, every man is more than a father.

H.E. MADAM REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO
The First Lady of the Republic of Ghana



Dr. RASHA KELEJ Message

As an African woman and the CEO of Merck Foundation, I am very proud to introduce this inspiring story of Kofi and Ama.

In many cultures, childless women still suffer discrimination, stigma and ostracism. An inability to have a child or to become pregnant can result in being greatly isolated, disinherited or assaulted. This often results in divorce or physical and psychological violence. Therefore we have created “Merck More Than a Mother” campaign with the aim to define many interventions to empower infertile women through access to information, health and change of mind-set.

This story is one of these interventions to break the stigma around infertile women and raises awareness about infertility prevention and male infertility.

It’s important for parents and caregivers to start teaching respect and nurturing empathy from a very young age. We should teach boys these qualities at their schools and through media. I believe both boys and girls need the same kind of guidance.

Just like girls, young boys gradually learn how to control their behavior during their pre-school and elementary school years. This story is our way to empower our boys to develop true respect for women and know few facts about Infertility prevention and how it affects both men and women equally.

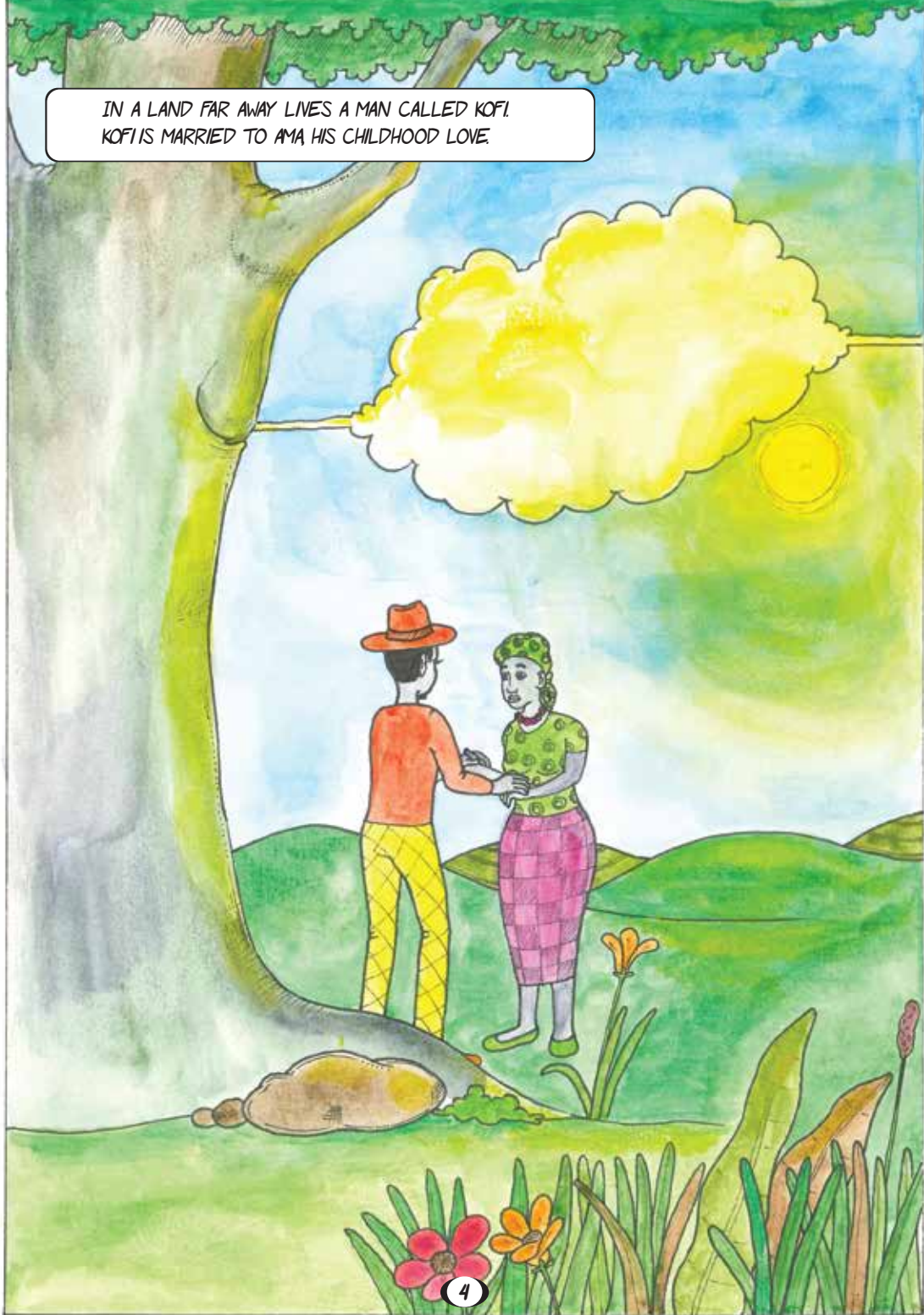
Reading Kofi’s story will teach our children to respect and value all people Regardless of being parents or not. It will also help preparing our children for tomorrow with the right family values of love and respect. Everyone deserves respect and love, and should never ever be overlooked or, worse, abused — even if they are childless.

I hope you will understand the story’s message “Having a child, takes both a man and a woman, every woman is more than a Mother, Every man is more than a Father “.

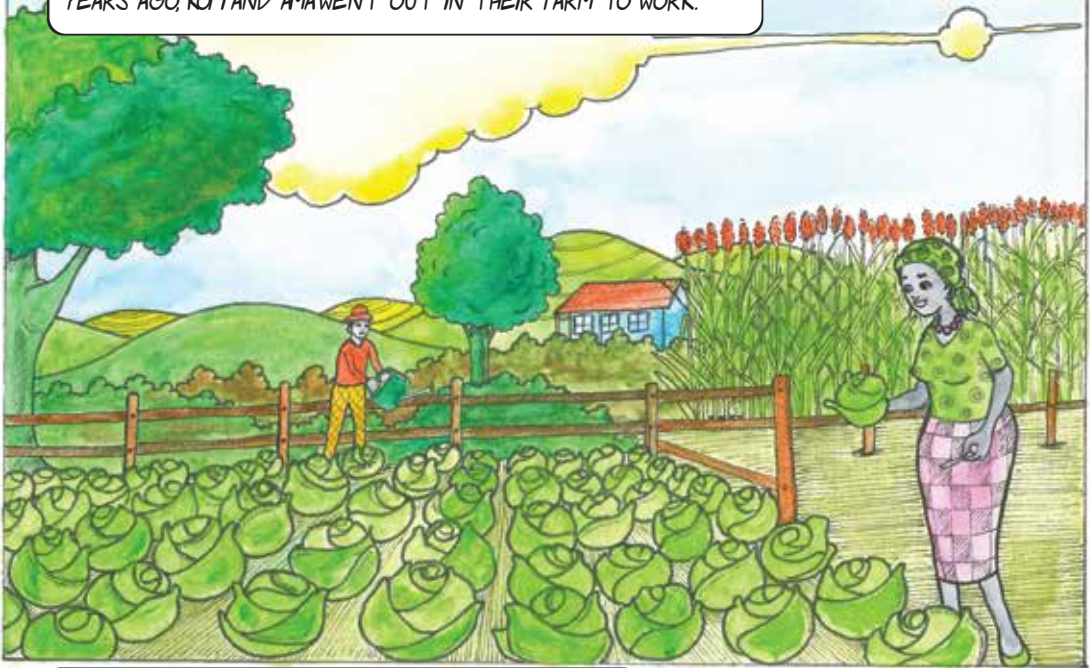
Enjoy reading Kofi’s story.....

Dr. Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation
President of Merck more than a Mother

IN A LAND FAR AWAY LIVES A MAN CALLED KOFI.
KOFI IS MARRIED TO AMA HIS CHILDHOOD LOVE.



KOFI AND AMA ARE WEALTHY DUE TO THEIR HARD WORK. TWO YEARS AGO, KOFI AND AMA WENT OUT IN THEIR FARM TO WORK.



THEY WERE SAYING LOVELY WORDS TO ONE ANOTHER.



YOU ARE THE BEST HUSBAND IN THE WORLD KOFI.

MY LOVE AMA, I LOVE YOU LIKE I NEVER LOVED BEFORE.



A LADY CALLED DEDE AND HER SON NII TEI PASSED BY KOFI AND AMA'S FARM.

NII TEI, LET US SAY A GOOD HELLO TO KOFI AND AMA I THINK YOU KNOW THEM, DON'T YOU?

YES I DO, MOTHER

I WONDER HOW THEY CAN BE HAPPY LIKE THAT WHEN THEY CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN. THE WOMAN IS INFERTILE.

I NEED TO LET THEM KNOW HOW MISERABLE THEY SHOULD FEEL.

HELLO LOVEBIRDS!

HELLO DEDE.

AND THEN...

HOW CAN SOMEONE
BARREN LIKE YOU
AMA PRETEND
TO BE HAPPY?
YOU SHOULD BE
MOURNING AND
HIDING YOUR FACE.

ARE YOU
SERIOUS?

NO!



DEDE WENT ON...

YOU SHOULD GIVE YOUR
HUSBAND A CHILD OR
ELSE RETURN TO
YOUR PARENTS. KOFI
DONES'T DESERVE THIS,
HE IS A KIND MAN.

AND AMA STARTED CRYING

DEDE, HOW CAN YOU BE
SO CRUEL LIKE THAT?
WHAT DID WE DO TO
YOU?

KOFI WAS SHOCKED

AMAMY LOVE, PLEASE
DON'T CRY. YOU KNOW HOW
I LOVE YOU, DON'T MIND
ANYTHING SHE SAYS.



AND, KOFI WENT AWAY

SHE JUST SAID THAT I AM BARREN! YOU KNOW I ALSO LOVE CHILDREN LIKE EVERY WOMAN.

DON'T THINK ABOUT WHAT SHE SAID I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART AND I DON'T MIND NOT HAVING CHILDREN



KOFI AND AMA WENT BACK HOME

AMA PEOPLE LOVE TO TALK BUT THEIR TALK WILL NOT STOP OUR LOVE



KOFI AND AMA WERE HAPPY ONCE AGAIN.



ONE WEEK AFTER, AMA WENT TO THEIR FARM TO HARVEST ORANGES

I SHOULD HURRY, MY HUSBAND HAS A BUSINESS MEETING TO ATTEND



AMA WENT HOME FAST



KOFI WAS STANDING IN FRONT OF THEIR HOUSE WAITING FOR AMA TO COME. HE DIDN'T WANT TO GO AND LEAVE NO ONE AT HOME.



AMA GOT THERE ON TIME

HERE SHE COMES. SHE IS NEVER LATE

AMA SWEETHEART, LET ME RUN TO THE BUSINESS MEETING I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE.

ON HIS WAY TO THE MEETING, KOFI WAS WONDERING WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS HIS FRIENDS WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM.

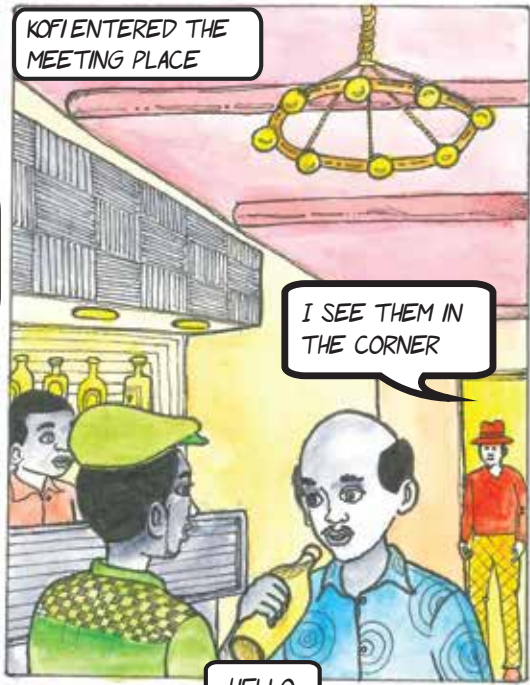
HE WONDERED IF HIS FRIENDS WANTED TO BUY ALL THE YIELD HE GETS FROM HIS FARM,

OR IF THEY WANTED TO OFFER HIM SOME MONEY TO INVEST IN HIS FARMING BUSINESS.



FINALLY,

KOFI ENTERED THE MEETING PLACE



I SEE THEM IN THE CORNER



HELLO KOFI

HELLO



LONG TIME MY FRIENDS! WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?

AND THEN,

YOU SEE KOFI, ABU AND I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU. WE KNOW YOU ARE SAD BECAUSE YOUR WIFE IS INFERTILE. LET'S HELP YOU AND FIND YOU A FERTILE YOUNG WIFE.

WHAT?

ATSU IS RIGHT. WE THINK YOU SHOULD LEAVE THAT MISERABLE WOMAN YOU HAVE AS A WIFE.

OKAY!!! NOW I SEE THE KIND OF BUSINESS YOU CALLED ME FOR!

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, I CAN NEVER LEAVE MY WIFE. INFERTILE OR NOT, I LOVE HER.

NOT ALL WOMEN ARE BARREN, LEAVE HER.

LET'S LEAVE THIS DISCUSSION HERE.

THE NEXT MORNING, KOFI DECIDED TO TAKE HIS WIFE AMA TO THE HOSPITAL TO SEEK SOME MEDICAL HELP.

AMA MY LOVE,
I PROMISE TO
DO EVERYTHING
FOR YOU TO BE
TREATED.

THANK YOU
KOFI MY
EVERYTHING.



AT THE HOSPITAL



THEY ASKED TO TALK TO A REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PHYSICIAN



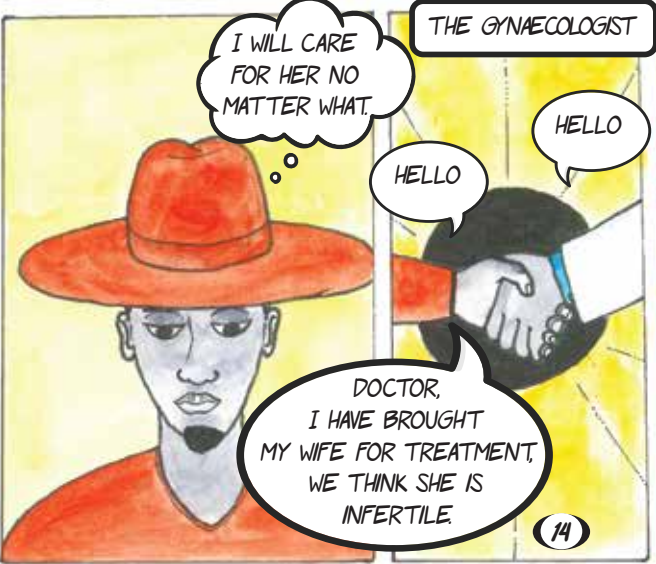
LET US SEE IF THE GYNAECOLOGIST IS AROUND, HE WILL HELP



I HOPE THIS IS NOT SERIOUS



DON'T WORRY MY LOVE



THE GYNAECOLOGIST

I WILL CARE FOR HER NO MATTER WHAT.

HELLO

HELLO

DOCTOR, I HAVE BROUGHT MY WIFE FOR TREATMENT, WE THINK SHE IS INFERTILE.



THAT'S OKAY, BUT YOU CANNOT TELL BEFORE WE DO TESTS. IT MIGHT BE YOU WHO HAS INFERTILITY.



WHAT? ME?
NO WAY.
A MAN IS NEVER
INFERTILE.



I HAVE NEVER
SEEN ONE
INFERTILE
MAN IN MY
LIFE.



MEN TOO CAN BE
INFERTILE... LET US
HOPE YOU TWO ARE
JUST FINE.



LET US
HOPE SO.



I DID NOT
KNOW THIS.

AFTER DOING ALL THE REQUIRED TESTS, IT WAS KOFI WHO HAD THE PROBLEM THAT WAS CAUSING THE INFERTILITY. KOFI HAD A LOW SPERM COUNT. THE DOCTOR TOLD THEM THAT INTRAUTERINE INSEMINATION (IUI) PROCEDURE IS REQUIRED TO BE DONE. KOFI AND AMA AGREED TO THE PROCEDURE. THE DOCTOR TOLD THEM THAT MANY CASES OF INFERTILITY ARE TREATABLE ONCE THEY ARE DIAGNOSED EARLY.

HE MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING AS THE MAJOR CAUSES OF INFERTILITY;

- POOR NUTRITION
- UNTREATED SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES SUCH AS CHLAMYDIA AND GONORRHOEA,
- CONSEQUENCE OF INFECTIONS CAUSED BY PRACTICE OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILTION, UNSAFE ABORTION OR UNSAFE DELIVERY.
- THE USE OF HERBAL DOUCHES AND ENEMAS WHICH LED TO PELVIC INFECTIONS AND TUBAL BLOCKAGE.
- EXPOSURE TO SMOKING, LEADED PETROL AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS.

HE TOLD THEM THAT ONCE YOU GO FOR REGULAR CHECK UP AND CONSULT EVERY TIME YOU ARE SICK, YOU CAN EASILY PREVENT YOURSELF FROM HAVING INFERTILITY.

KOFI AND AMA THANKED THE DOCTOR AND WENT HOME.

KOFI AND AMA AGREED TO UNDERGO THE INTRAUTERINE INSEMINATION (IUI) PROCEDURE



AT THE HOSPITAL, THEY MET WITH THE DOCTOR WHO WAS GOING TO PERFORM THE INTRAUTERINE PROCEDURE



KOFI WAITED PATIENTLY.



THE DOCTOR PLACED KOFI'S SPERM INSIDE AMA'S UTERUS TO FACILITATE FERTILIZATION.



AMA TOOK A PREGNANCY TEST AFTER FOURTEEN DAYS AND SHE WAS PREGNANT.

NINE MONTHS AFTER THE INTRAUTERINE (UI) PROCEDURE, IT WAS TIME TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL TO GIVE BIRTH.



KOFI AND AMA WERE HAPPY TO FINALLY HAVE A BABY.

I AM HAPPY NOW I AM A FATHER.

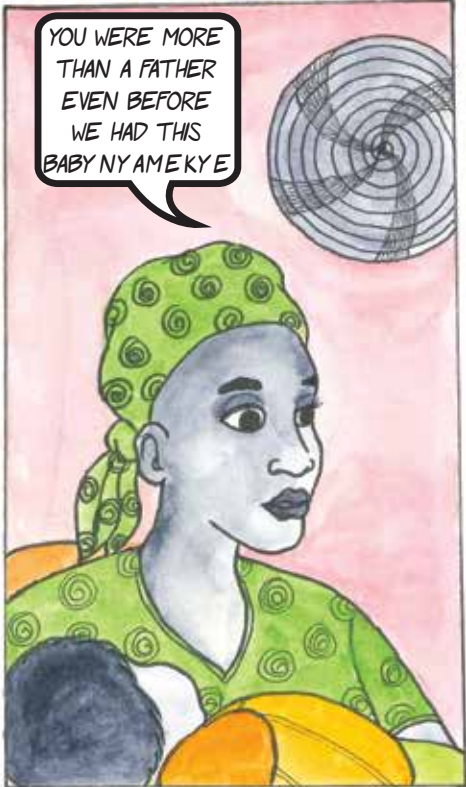
NO KOFI, YOU ARE MORE THAN A FATHER



YOU WERE MORE THAN A FATHER EVEN BEFORE WE HAD THIS BABY NYAMEKYE

KOFI SMILED

YES, AMA MY LOVE YOU ARE ALSO MORE THAN A MOTHER.



ONE DAY KOFI MET DEDE AND ATSU ON THE WAY TO THE MARKET...

MY FRIENDS, I HAVE LEARNT THAT INFERTILITY IS NOT A CURSE, IT'S A CONDITION THAT AFFECTS BOTH MEN AND WOMEN AND CAN BE TREATED ONCE SOMEONE SEEKS TREATMENT EARLY. NO ONE SHOULD BE STIGMATIZED BECAUSE THEY ARE INFERTILE.

I APOLOGIZE FOR THE BAD WORDS AND FOUL MOUTH.

NOW I HAVE LEARNT MY LESSON. WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS RIGHT.

THE END



Spread the word to the world with us. Say no for infertility stigma

OUR HASHTAGS

#NoForInfertilyStigma

#MoreThanAMother

#MoreThanAFather

Share your story with us on social media and use the above hashtags and let the world know that infertility affects both men and women equally. No woman or man should suffer stigmatisation due to infertility.

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Kofi's Story

*How love withstands and conquers all.
You will discover how love is
everything.”*

the author

This book is a property of

