

**Koi and the Kola Nuts**  
Script by Holly Adams  
with assistance from Greta Perl and Hannah Wilhelm  
Based on a story by Brian Gleeson

*The stage is dark. In the darkness, the constellations and trees enter. The constellations turn on their lights. An African flute calls out, joyously and long. It pauses and calls again. During the second call, the lights slowly begin to come up, preferably hinting at dusk turning to sunrise. African instruments add in, mimicking the sound of animals, birds and insects awakening. The actors playing the stars and moon begin to shimmer or quiver as the music continues. Animals enter quietly. The moon and stars begin to move across the sky as the sun enters.*

**SUN:** Come, sit down. I will tell you a story that comes from Africa.

*(Gazelle bounds across stage)*

It is dawn in the west of Africa.

*(Trees sway lightly)*

Feel the warm breeze that blows. The rains have come, and the earth is full of promise. Flowers bloom, the banana tree bears fruit, and the yams and rice grow well in the fields. Can you smell the beautiful fragrances?

*(Animals behind hill)*

The jungle is alive!!

*(Drums begin; animals look up)*

Wait! Do you hear? The drums tell of a death in the village. For miles around, all the animals and people hear the message of the drums: Chief Sadaka is dead!

*(Enter the people of the village)*

Everyone on this side of the mountain knows it. . . except Koi.

*Koi appears on the hillside. The animals scatter; the monkey clinging for a moment. As the jungle trees are exiting and journeying through the audience, the kola tree of the village enters, a very sorry looking specimen, followed almost immediately by the excited entrance of the villagers of various ages. The people straggle in, loudly gossiping about the Chief's death to the audience. The oldest of the elders is trying to get every one's attention. They continue to drift in, bolt on, etc., during the following so that all are present when the Eldest Elder begins the official proclamation.*

**First group of villagers:** Can you believe it? Never thought I'd see the day. What do you think will happen? It's a sad, sad thing.

**Sun:** In the village, a palaver is called.

**Villagers:**

*(continuing talking until interrupted by the Eldest Elder)*

What did I tell you?

Is this dress okay for a palaver?

Now that is a sorry bunch of children he has.

What will we do now?

Isn't this exciting?

It's just sad, that's all I'm saying. It's just sad.

**Eldest Elder:**

People, people! Quiet please.

*(Villagers continue to talk.)*

Elders, hear me! Who now shall tend Chief Sadaka's cows? How shall his goats be divided?

**Elder 2:**

And his gold pieces! We must be fair about the gold pieces!

**Elder 3:**

So much trouble. He had more than a few possessions!

**Elder 4:**

And he had more than a few sons. I say this is too great a problem for us to decide. Let the wisest man make the decision for all of us. He will know what to do! Why else would he be the wisest man?

**Eldest:**

Do we agree? (*Murmurs of assent*) It is settled then. (*Calls loudly*) Summon the sage! Listen! (*Drums*) He arrives! (*All bow very low. Nothing happens.*) He arrives! (*All bow low again, and again nothing happens. The people begin to shift around and look at each other. They straighten making smart remarks about back pain and a certain wise man who is also a pain. A child spots him.*)

**Child:**

He arrives!

*The adults mutter and make "Oh, sure" comments, then scramble into a low bow as they spot him. Mamadou enters, backwards. He looks around, then notices the audience and quickly reorients. He walks majestically forward, trips and regains his balance. He recovers, ends with a flourish, bringing his arms up so that his people rise. They applaud.*

**Eldest:**

Mamadou! You are the wisest among us. You divide up Chief Sadaka's possessions amongst his children.

**Wise Man:**

As the wisest amongst you, I believe I should divide up the chief's possessions.

*(Adults marvel at his wisdom while the children laugh.)*

**Adults:**

Wow, what a great idea!

Such command!

He surely knows what he is about. (*and so on*)

**Elder 2:**

*(Offhand)* Where are the Chief's sons? (*They enter and line up behind the wise man*)

**Wise Man:**

*(Proclamatory)* Where are the Chief sons? (*They wave*).

**Wise Man:**

I knew that! I was just testing you. (*Villagers all nod and agree*)

**Villagers:**

That was certainly an excellent test.

How wise!

I never would have thought of that.

No, you wouldn't!

**Another Elder:**

Maybe we should get started.

**Wise Man:**

We.... should get started. We all came here today to come here, together.

**Youngest son:**

Brilliant.

**Wise Man:**

We will now do ... what we all came here to do. So, let's do it! *(cheers from the admiring crowd)*

**Youngest son:**

We're all behind you, Sir. *(Middle son bonks him on the head. Eldest son glares at them then hisses to a nearby Elder.)*

**Eldest son (to elder 3) :**

We should send someone to bring the Chief's things.

**Wise Man (proclamatory) :**

Bring me the belongings of the great Chief Sadaka!

*(Three people enter dragging a heavy sack, straining, and taking a lot of time. The following dialogue happens during the sack dragging as the brothers jockey for the best "present receiving" position.)*

**Eldest Bro:**

Yo, man, quit shovin'! I'm first.

**Youngest Bro:**

Hey, best was saved for last.

**Eldest Bro (As the middle son is trying to break in.):**

I am the eldest, I am the leader, I deserve the best. I go FIRST.

**Youngest Bro:**

You were just the trial product. I'm new and improved.

*(They glance at each other, then turn to the middle son.)*

**Both:**

What do you think?

**Middle Bro:**

What?

**Eldest Bro:**

Never mind.

*(By this time, the sack and wise man are both ready. The three sons stand on either side of the wise man as he begins taking things out of the sack: gold, stuffed cows, cloth, fish, rubber chicken, funny things, etc. )*

**Eldest Bro:**

Hush! It is time.

*(They stand up straight and formally. With large sweeping gestures, the WM silences the crowd.)*