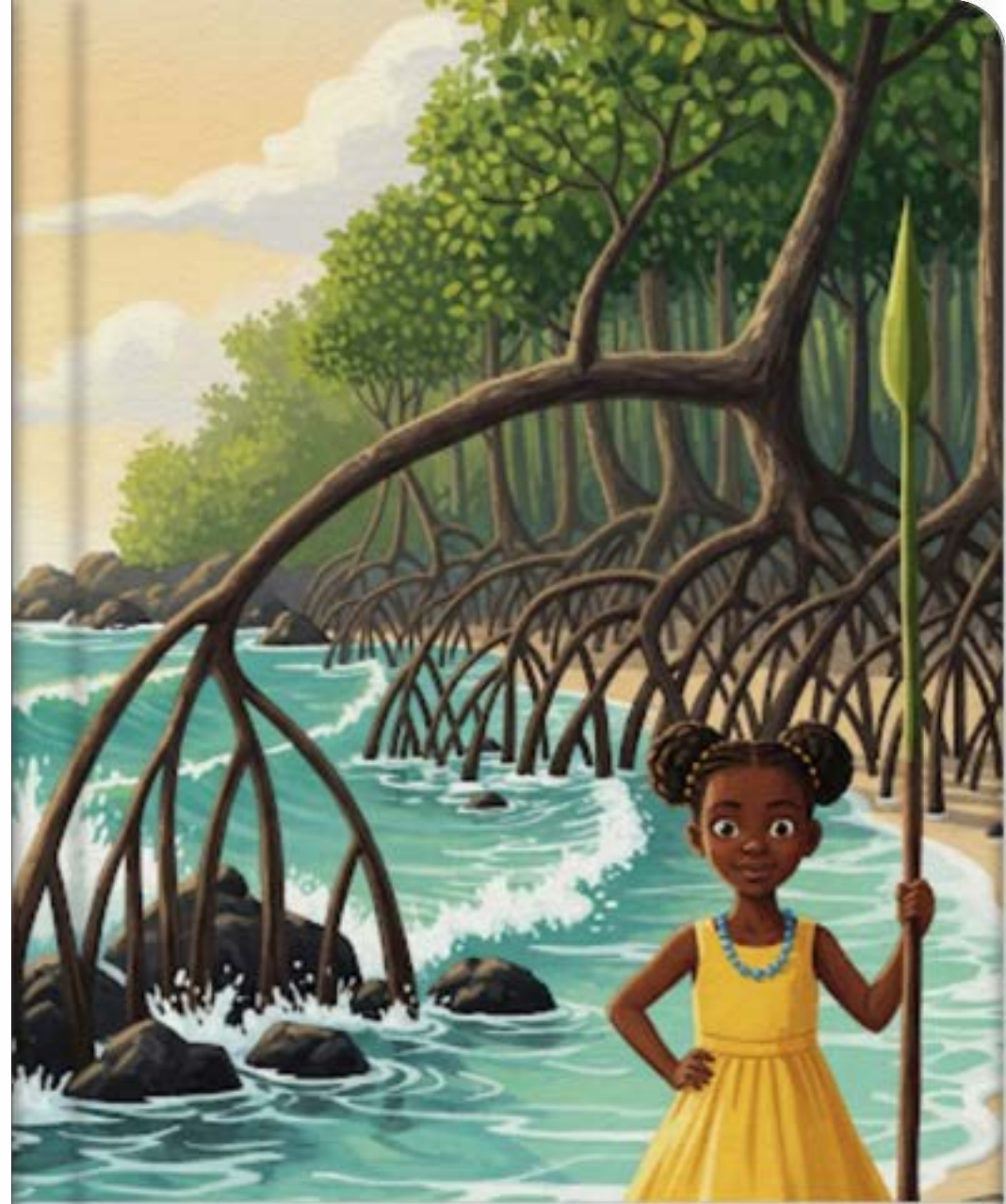




The Forest with Legs

By abeh anya



In the village of Bimbria,
where the sky meets the
Atlantic, the air always
smelled of salt and
ancient stories. Young
Enanga loved to walk
along the shore,
watching the waves
dance against the
volcanic rocks. She
listened to the sea, but
lately, the sea sounded



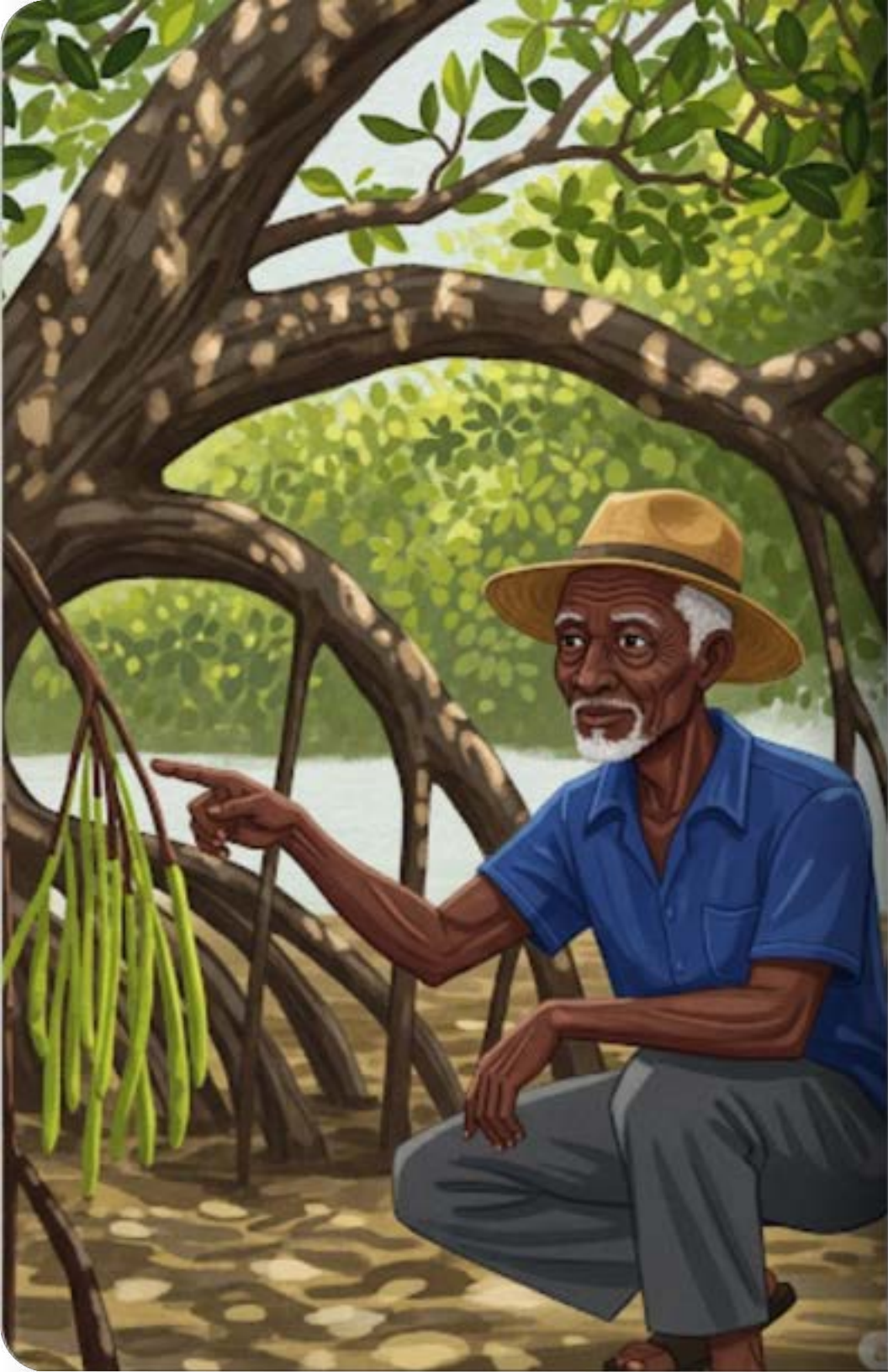
Mola sat by his old wooden canoe, his eyes reflecting the grey stumps that lined the muddy banks. Once, these banks were thick with trees that stood on long, arched legs. "The mangroves are tired, Enanga," he whispered. "We took too much wood for our fires, and





Enanga walked over to Mola and sat beside him. She looked at the empty spaces where the forest used to be. "If the trees are tired, can we help them rest?" she asked. Mola smiled, his face creasing like the maps of the coast. "They don't need rest, little one. They need a family."





Mola led Enanga to a hidden corner of the bay where a few grand mangroves still thrived. Their roots were like tangled fingers reaching into the tide. "Look closely," Mola said, pointing to the branches. "The forest produces its own spears of life. These are the





Enanga reached up and plucked a long, slender green pod. It was heavy and smooth. This was a propagule, a tiny tree waiting to find its place in the mud. She held it like a precious treasure. "I will find a place for you," she promised the little spear.





Soon, Enanga wasn't alone. She told her friend Kojo about the "forest with legs," and together they searched the remaining groves. They filled woven baskets with the green spears, laughing as they splashed through the shallow tide. The mission to save Bimbia's



The mud was thick and black, squelching between their toes. Mola showed Enanga how to plant. "Not too deep, and not too shallow," he instructed. Enanga pushed the seedling into the soft earth until it stood firm. It looked small against the vast ocean, but it stood tall.





The village began to notice. Ma Bessem, the oldest weaver, came down to the shore to help. She and Mola worked in a rhythm, passing seedlings back and forth. "The mud is good for the soul," she laughed, her hands stained dark with the earth of Bimbria. One by





Years later, the wall was strong again. Enanga and Mola sat in the shade of the tall mangroves. Between the tangled roots, tiny silver fish darted in the calm water, safe from the crashing waves. Bimbia was protected, its stories held fast by the roots of the trees that the people

