



The Golden Prank of Zola the Slick

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Zola strolled through the sun-drenched marketplace of Ouidah, his colorful kente cloth flowing behind him like a king's cape. With a wink and a silver tongue, he could convince a fisherman to buy water, making everyone laugh even as their pockets felt suspiciously light.



At the center of the village square sat the Chief's legendary Golden Stool, gleaming under the afternoon sun like a fallen star. Zola leaned against a massive baobab tree, his eyes twinkling with a mischievous plan that would surely be the talk of the savanna for generations.



"I bet three goats and a basket of the finest yams that I can sit on that stool before the moon rises," Zola declared to his skeptical friends. They roared with laughter, knowing the palace guards were as fierce as lions and twice as stubborn when it came to their duties.



Zola disappeared into his small hut and emerged wearing a towering turban and a fake beard made of fluffy goat hair. He carried a tray of exotic Spirit Peppers that he claimed held the power to make a man speak the secret language of the wind.



He approached the palace gates, spinning tales of distant lands where the rivers flowed with honey and the birds sang in three-part harmony. The guards were so entranced by his rhythmic storytelling and animated gestures that they didn't notice him slipping through the heavy wooden doors.



Inside the cool, dim palace, Zola found the Chief napping peacefully near the Golden Stool. He carefully placed a small, polished bronze mirror on the floor at a specific angle so the Chief would see a distorted reflection of himself upon waking.



When the Chief stirred, Zola whispered from behind a silk curtain, "Great Chief, look! Your shadow has grown a second head!" As the confused leader scrambled to check the mirror in a panic, Zola swiftly swapped the heavy gold stool for a perfectly painted wooden replica.



Zola moved through the village square with a massive, lumpy bundle balanced perfectly on his head, whistling a jaunty tune. No one suspected that beneath the dusty burlap sat the most famous treasure in the kingdom, being carried right under the noses of the villagers.



Back at the palace, the Chief realized the stool felt unusually light and found a small note tucked into the intricate carvings. It read, "Even a Golden Stool needs a walk in the fresh air to keep its shine," signed with a tiny drawing of a smiling fox.



Zola returned the stool during the evening feast, bowing low and claiming he had simply polished it with the magic of the moonlight. The Chief couldn't help but chuckle at the man's sheer audacity, and the village celebrated the slickest, funniest trickster they had ever known.