



A chocolate bar

A story by Vamba Sherif





On Christmas Day, while young Max is eating his favourite chocolate spread for breakfast in his home in Amsterdam, another boy named Kollie is staring at a cocoa fruit. Kollie is ten years old. He lives with his parents and sister in a village in Northern Liberia. His life, and that of his family, depends on the cocoa harvest of that season. A good harvest of the cocoa fruit is not guaranteed as it has a lot of enemies: worms, drought, and animals that enjoy the juiciness of the fruit.

Kollie keeps staring at that one, particular fruit, like it's a challenge to chop it off the tree. He remembers when his dad brought him to their farm just outside of the village for the first time, and how it felt to hold the cocoa fruit: the raw, yellow-greenish fruit felt nice in his hands.

With a quick movement of his machete, his dad chopped the fruit in half. He took out a bean, which was embedded in a white, juicy, liquid, and he gave it to his young boy. Kollie tasted it. The taste was good, so he enjoyed it as it was his breakfast as well. On that first day on the farm Kollie helped his parents and his sister to remove the beans.

Now, Kollie was old enough to chop the beans himself. Kollie grabs the long, slender pole with a sharp bended hook on the end and tries to chop that one cocoa pod from the tree. No luck. Beads of sweat covered his body. His sweaty scent attracted ants, whom bites can be life threatening. The task is hard. But his father was very clear about this. The cocoa pods needed to be chopped and prepped before the rain came, otherwise it would be an impossible thing to keep them in good condition. The work needed to be finished. With the produce from the harvest, his father promised him a new shirt to replace his old worn out shirt. There is no Christmas feast for Kollie.

Meanwhile,
in a mansion along the canals of Amsterdam where Max lives, everybody was gathered around the fireplace. The family: Grandpa, grandma, his sister and all the rest are together for the festivities. As soon as Max finishes the chocolate bar, there is a cup of hot coco with whipped cream. Kollie will probably never know that the cocoa pods he chops are transformed into delicious treats for Max. Unless Max has parents whom school him on global circumstances, Max will never know the origin of his delicious chocolate bars. He will remain an ignorant consumer. And Max a poor farmer's child.

