

# FATHERS OF NATIONS

## EPISODIC NOTES BY AKELLO WAUDI

### *CHAPTER 1*

#### **Guests at Seamount Hotel**

Four strangers who don't know each other are booked in at the Seamount Hotel in Gambia in different rooms on different floors in different wings:

- Professor Karanja Kimani, sixty-year old man whose hairline retreated all the way back to his crown, checked in the room on the fourth floor of its East Wing. He was professor in the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, Kenya.
- Ngobile Melusi, a seventy-year-old comrade and Citizen of Zimbabwe was allocated a room on the fifth floor of the South Wing.
- Chineke Chiamaka, a younger Nigerian man of about fifty years, who served as a pastor the Church Inside Africa-CIA, Nigeria. He took a room in the sixth floor of the West Wing.
- Seif Tahir, Engineer, formerly employed by the Ministry of Defense in Tripoli, Libya. He got a room on the third floor of the North Wing.

#### **The guests receive calls from their tour guide**

- Prof. Karanja receives a call from a Nigerian man sent by AGDA-agency for Governance and Development in Africa
- He asks him to accept him as his guide.
- He asks him if he has received a briefcase and tells him the key-combination lock.
- He also instruct him to ensure that it contains all the items listed on the sheet inside the briefcase.
- He then hangs up without revealing his name to Prof. Karanja Kimani.

The other three-Comrade Melusi, Pastor Chiamaka and Eng. Seif Tahir- also receive a similar call.

They had all failed to open their briefcases.

### **Fiona McKenzie interviews Dr. Abiola Afolabi**

- Fiona McKenzie, a reporter with the Gambian News, calls Dr. Abiola Afolabi, a lecturer at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, to interview him about his book, *Failure of States*
- As a news reporter, she will be covering the African heads of state debate at the Pinnacle Hotel. Being the advisor to the heads of state during the debate, she would like Dr. Afolabi to give her the background of the debate.
- He informs her that the heads of state will be debating a document entitled *Way Omega*, which was published by twenty Nobel laureates on how to develop Africa.
- Having been liked by Africa's ministers for planning, the heads of state are in Banjul to adopt it as a common development strategy for all of Africa.
- She also asks him about his expectations of the summit to which he says that he expects it to be a historic moment adding that the adoption of *Way Omega* will change African politics dramatically, putting Africa in a new course, free from the obstacles that have defeated its past efforts to rid it off military coups, civil wars, rigging of elections and foul play.
- Fiona feels that not all African heads of state will adopt *Omega Way* arguing that not all of them are fair players as a few are out-and-out foul players since they rose to power through military coups or rigged election.
- Dr. Afolabi is confident that the opponents won't fight so hard to win.
- Fiona then questions Dr. Afolabi's optimism on Africa's future which flies against the pessimism he had registered in his book: *Failure of States*.
- This sparks of conflict between the two. Dr. Afolabi considers her one of those fire eaters who confuse journalism with bad manners; rude to her interviewees.
- She insists that he explains what makes him an optimist now when he was a pessimist and why he came to the summit.
- He tells her that he didn't come but was invited by presidents who saw merit in his book that she dismisses as pessimist and wanted him to assure them that *Way Omega* agrees with it.
- He stops the defensiveness and tells her that he doesn't have to defend his book before anyone, least of all before a third-rate reporter.
- Fiona doesn't give up, however. She asks him to give her a specific example on which *Way Omega* agrees with his book.
- She, however, receives a call from her boss urgently calling her to the office. She requests him if she can see her interviewee again.
- The latter retorts and asks her to read his book beyond the cover.

### **Hosting The summit**

- Free from troublemakers in the home countries, forty-nine foreign heads of state are happy to be in Banjul for the summit.

### **The hosting cost**

The Gambians find this summit a huge inconvenience, and the publicity that that comes with it expensive:

- Bulldozers were dispatched at night in the slum-clearance exercises demolish roadside kiosks which was a livelihood for whole families, to create sidewalks for the dignitaries.
- Roads get layers of tarmac at times of maximum traffic, so motorists have to wait longer as the exercise continues.
- Checkpoints sprout everywhere and guards get more opportunities to extort bribes from passers-by.
- At the arrival of the dignitaries, water taps that whole neighbourhoods queue to get just buckets of water dry up because all water has to go to new water fountains built to mesmerize the visitors.

### **Safety of the guests**

- The Ministry of Internal Security and the Ministry of Defense decided that all the forty-nine heads of state and the host head of state would stay in one place (the Pinnacle Hotel) to give the police easy time to keep them safe.
- The police were given the intelligence role.
- Secret agents were to comb every hideout in Banjul to investigate all rumours about plans to storm the Pinnacle and harm its new guests.
- Soldiers on the hand, would engage in combat-battle with any unauthorized person who came near the Pinnacle. Cleverly the perimeter fence was ringed, encircling the Pinnacle with a thousand armed soldiers, and a hundred armed commandos inside the fence.

### **Reception and hosting**

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of International Co-operation was tasked with the duty of seating the heads of state at State House from arrival, accommodation at the Pinnacle Hotel up to departure.
- The guests were seated according to the first alphabetical letters of their name. So Angola and Algeria sat next to the host as Zambia and Zimbabwe came last.
- It was assumed that the delegation were equal hence they allocated equal number of rooms to each of them; four per delegation.

## **SAMPLE EXCERPT**

**Read the following excerpt and answer the questions that follow.**

She slapped herself on one cheek as if to punish herself.

“I was beginning to ramble on, wasn’t I? enough! Now then, Africa’s heads of state will soon start a debate at the Pinnacle Hotel, two streets from here, and I’ll be covering the debate for the Gambian News. I understand you will be an advisor to the heads of state during the debate. Could you give me some background? What will be the heart of their debate?”

“They will be debating a document titled Way Omega. You see not long ago, twenty Nobel laureates discovered a way to develop Africa and then published that discovery in a document with that title. Africa’s ministers for planning had a look at it. They liked it. Now Africa’s heads of state are in Banjul to adopt it as a common development strategy for all of Africa. That is the background, Ms McKenzie. Or did you want actual content?”

She shook her head. “What are your expectations of the summit, Dr. Afolabi?”

“What are my expectations? Please don’t get me started! I expect the summit to be a historic moment. If adopted, Way Omega will change African politics dramatically. Just think: no more military coup; no more rigged elections; well, no more foul play, period.”

“Dr. Afolabi, no all heads of state assembled here are fair players. In fact, a few are out-and-out foul players- they rose to power through military coups or rigged elections. Those won’t be walking along Way Omega any time soon, will they?”

“Change is always like that, Ms McKenzie. One side of it has defenders of existing arrangements. These, sure about their loss if those arrangements end, fight tooth and nail to keep them. The other side has challengers of existing arrangements. These, not yet sure about the gain if new arrangements replace old arrangements, do not fight so hard to win them.”

“Huh? What did you say, Dr. Afolabi?”

“You are not listening to me anymore, are you, Ms McKenzie? Anyway, I was saying Way Omega will put Africa on a new course, free from the obstacles that have defeated its past efforts. Imagine this, Ms McKenzie: Africa without coups, without civil wars, without...” He stopped himself. “Look who is rambling on now, Ms McKenzie? Yet can you blame me? I told you not to get me started, remember?”

“Yes, I remember, and yet we have your book: Failure of States. Dr. Afolabi, may I ask you something/ what makes you this optimistic about Africa’s future now, when in that book you were very pessimistic? Is it the content of Way Omega or the prestige of its authors?”

## Questions

- a) Place this excerpt in its immediate context. (4 marks)
- b) Describe two character traits of Dr. Afolabi as brought out in this excerpt. (4 marks)
- c) What role will Dr. Afolabi be doing in the summit? (2 marks)
- d) Explain any one issue brought out in this excerpt. (2 marks)
- e) From elsewhere in the novel, how many visiting heads of state are attending the summit? (1 mark)
- f) Explain the background of the summit as brought out in this excerpt. (2 marks)
- g) Explain the effectiveness of any one style used in this excerpt. (3 marks)
- h) Explain how Way Omega is a development strategy. (2 marks)
- i) What is Dr. Afolabi’s attitude towards Way Omega. (2 marks)
- j) Explain the meaning of the following expressions as used in the passage. (3 marks)
  - i. Laureates
  - ii. Coups
  - iii. Out-and-out foul players

## CHAPTER 2

### *The AGDA Call*

- Pastor Chiamaka's guide calls again at 9.00 p.m.
- He wants to confirm if he looked at the contents of the briefcase.
- He affirms that he saw the letter from AGDA(Agency for Governance and Development of Africa)a copy of *way Omega*(the development strategy that Nobel laureates have crafted to end Africa's misery, and that heads of state are now expected to adopt at their summit), a copy of *Path Alpha*(the development strategy that AGDA believes is a superior alternative to *Way Omega* which it hopes to slip in to replace *Way Omega*)
- The caller tells him that AGDA wants him to be fully familiar with both documents.
- Pastor Chiamaka goes ahead to confirm that he also saw leaflets, pamphlets and brochures from AGDA, the mobile phone he is using.
- He is told to keep the phone on at all times and that he will be calling him more often, even unexpectedly, but only through that number, hence he will talk freely.
- The caller angrily retorts when Pastor Chiamaka requests to know his name. Instead, he tells him he does need to know him as he will be the one calling/initiating the call when there is need to do so.
- He shocks Pastor Chiamaka by ordering to shut up, obey him and not argue or talk back to him again.
- Pastor Chiamaka submits to him.
- He tells him that they are supposed to be working together as they are on the same mission.
- Because their mission is still at a delicate stage, he asks him to refer to him as his guide and that he will hear his voice but won't let him see his face.
- Asking him why he should trust him, Pastor Chiamaka is told to refer to the letter from AGDA which tells him that he is not supposed to have any less faith in even if he identifies himself by his alias, your guide.
- He emphasizes that Pastor Chiamaka has to be fully familiar with both documents.
- He informs him that he saw at the bar where he had gone to drink a bottle of *Pepsi*.
- Despite his angry birthed his suspicions that the caller may be an invisible executioner, Pastor Chiamaka is forced to apologize for having been at the bar and promises that he won't repeat.

- Comrade Melusi, Prof. Kimani and Eng. Tahir also received and speaks with the caller.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The rise of Prof. Kimani**

- Pastor Kimani “was already flying even before taking off.
- He filled a vacancy of senior lecturer at the University of Nairobi that was created after the disbandment of University of East Africa.
- Having just complete his studies at University of Oxford, he applied for the vacancy, so the University of Nairobi raised his entry point from that of lecturer to that of senior lecturer.
- Only a month after his arrival, he launched a noisy debate in which he demanded that the University of Nairobi hence strives for relevance to the society rather than simply excellence of its work. . He won and the university’s official motto became *Relevance to the Society*.
- He started and won another noisier war, deemed too radical and ridiculed as simple-minded and bound to fail, when he wanted the University to be an agent of change, not a mere spectator of it.
- He also won the heart of and married Asiya Omondi, a campus beauty queen.
- He would later earn a professorship after which he felt fulfilled, his persona was now complete .
- He never knew what was in store for him.

### **The Vagaries of global economic recession(change)**

- The global economic recession wreaked havoc on Africa: jobs were lost and incomes vanished.
- To get out the crisis and prompted by **donor pressure**, Africa had to make economically annihilating changes.
- The donors ganged up on Africa: “You Africa, you will get no more aid from us unless you change this, that and the other.”
- Africa did as told more so because “...the donors did well to hang tough”

- Prof. Kimani is so critical of African leadership that he believes that without foreign aid, we would “still be reciting foolish clichés about home-grown our own development strategies instead of importing foreign models...”
- Late changes catalyse excess. This excess was more evident in parliaments, the very institutions that epitomize change.
- **“Nowhere was excess more revolting than in a coup that parliamentary staged.” P23**
- **They amended the existing constitution by inserting in it one tiny clause that legalized their salary raise and exempted them from taxation.**
- Consequently, unlike before (when Prof. Kimani started teaching) when MPs earned less than professors, an MP now rakes in up to a hundred times the income of a professor. This is because a professor’s earnings still consist of taxable salaries.
- It’s unfortunate that elections don’t wash out the parliamentary excesses: “just as the rains come, water washes off the spots of a leopard/*Msitu mpya, nyani wale wale*”- new parliaments are more like the old: they raise their salaries more than did the old.
- Ironically, change does not change anything in Africa. **The more things change, the more they stay the same.**

### Question

According to Prof. Kimani, how are law makers coup more lethal than military coups?

### *Government abdication of its security/guarding role*

- **Guarding** had matured into a fully-fledged industry. There is home protection, vehicles are fitted with touch-me- not anti-theft gadgetry in the transport sector, tour operators warn foreigners against showing valuables in public (In the tourism sector) and provision of seminars on personal safety at workplaces.
- Prof. Kimani is however disapproving of this growth in guarding as he considers it a **symptom of failure by the state to ensure the safety of its citizens. For him, safety isn’t a clever thing we do by attending seminars. It’s a necessity the state should provide to us.**
- Tuni and Asiya, her mother argue that **in the absence of state support, it becomes a private arrangement that we have to make for ourselves.**
- Prof. Kimani insists that “...**all that any private arrangement would do is to exempt the state from even trying to render the services that our taxes oblige it to give us.**”p.26
- Women are alive to the reality of **violence against them by men** (over two-thirds of women in this country witness it on other women or themselves).
- Tuni has learnt about three reasons why women are easy prey: they lack awareness of where they are, the look of weakness and helplessness and temptation to stray. Tuni’s trainer has taught her all these.
- Tuni has to know all these because. “It is about women protecting themselves against male criminals.

- Some of the safety measures Tuni has been taught by her trainer include: after doing errands or shopping, women should not sit in their car, but get in, lock the doors and drive off at once, run away when cornered with a gun before entering your car, crash the car hard when driving with a pedestrian seated beside you in order to immobilize with surprise and escape.
- Prof. Kimani's **poor salary heralds his fall**. Tuni cannot use their car because it is down again and only hopes to fix it when he gets his next salary.
- **Asiya, his wife who had seen him as a young man going places, now only saw an old man going nowhere. His very car had become a metaphor about him: it was going nowhere as well. P29**
- She advised him to leave the university and go to greener pastures somewhere, like Newborn Walomu who did left, became an MP and now has four cars. Before going to parliament, he was a rowdy junior colleague of Prof. Kimani at the university, who came from a minor tribe without roads and school.
- This hurts Prof. Kimani but unlike Hon. Walomu, he was a born teacher and a teacher he would die. He would explain that losers like Walomu swam in money only because even failed states have a few mansions and since losers like to reward fellow losers, losers invariably end up occupying some of those mansions. Still they remained losers.
- Tuni consequently uses a public minibuss and **dies** in an accident which involves the minibuss and a trailer that sits on it. The minibuss is weakened by the axe of a 'male giant' and collapses. Amid groans of yielding metal, it compressed to the ground the poor woman trapped inside, squeezing out her final breath.
- **Ironically**, Tuni Kimani dies not in an act of male violence, but in a freak road accident in a minibuss under a trailer.

### Separation

- Tuni's death shatter both husband and wife.
- The latter, dejected beyond redemption, loathes her husband and avoids him for months.
- One evening, she tells her husband that she was leaving him the following day for Newborn Walomu who she says has asked her to marry him.
- He cautions her that money doesn't guarantee happiness and that the rich also have a share of trouble.
- Asiya defends herself that she has lived with Prof. Kimani for thirty years in poverty so he has not right to accuse her of leaving him because of Walomu's money.
- She also tells him that having never had money, he cannot know that money doesn't guarantee happiness.
- In addition, she tells her husband that he has never known happiness himself, since "... he couldn't tell what happiness was if it fell on your lap and cried out its name..."P.33
- She accuses his poverty on the death of Tuni whom she claims would still be alive if he had a real car.
- The marriage ends at sixty when Asiya leaves the following morning.

Comprehension Questions

- a) What causes Tuni's death? Could Prof. Kimani have prevented her death had he money? Debate.
- b) Currently, most couples divorce as a result of poverty. Couples no longer age together gracefully.
- c) Does wealth guarantee happiness/bliss.

**Prof. Kimani confronts MP Newborn Walomu**

- a) What consequences does Prof. Kimani face for attacking an MP?
- b) How did Newborn Walomu become a member of parliament?
- c) Comment on Prof. Kimani's predicament. Does he really deserve what he is going through? Explain your answer.
- d) Describe that character of MP Walomu and Prof. Kimani.

**Prof. Kimani joins Path Alpha**

- a) Who is Tad Longway and why does he visit Prof. Kimani?
  - Tad Longway is the director of special projects at AGDA.
  - To recruit him as Path Alpha traveller
- b) What atrocity is Mark Thatcher accused of having committed? How does he suffer for this?
  - He hired mercenaries to go and stage a coup in equatorial guinea.
  - He hauled into South Africa and fined one million dollars.
  - Given a four-year jail sentence
- c) Name the problems that he accuses African presidents for having failed to solve/created.
  - Corruption
  - impunity
- d) What is AGDA' mission? (4 marks)
  - To question Africa's status
  - Interrogate what it will take to develop Africa
  - Ask if human effort is up to the task
- e) Why does AGDA want to work with Prof. Kimani yet he is not an activist? How similar is a teacher and an active is Path Alpha's motto?
  - Mobilizing civic discontent (in presidents who keep messing up things, riding on our backs and wrecking our lives) will to change.
- f) What two conditions qualify one as a Path Alpha traveller?
  - Believe in Path Alpha.

- Have the drive to pursue goals and the tenacity to stick with them.
- g) What two things are Prof. Kimani expected to do if he decides to join Path Alpha?,
  - Come to the headquarters in South Africa for orientation
  - Attend next summit of heads of state in Banjul, Gambia.
- h) Does Prof. Kimani join Path Alpha? What reasons drive him to do so(quit his teaching career)?
  - Loss of daughter
  - Desertion by wife
  - Mistreatment by his university

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### **Comprehension Questions**

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- e) Currently, most couples divorce as a result of poverty. Couples no longer age together gracefully. Discuss.
- f) Does wealth guarantee happiness/bliss.

### **Prof. Kimani confronts MP Newborn Walomu**

- e) How did Newborn Walomu become a member of parliament?
  - He left his lecturing job at the university of Nairobi and vied for MP in a by-election.
  - He won the seat in a by-election after the death of his predecessor, Kazi-Kubwa Pesa-Dogo, while he was wobbling drunkenly out of a bar.
- f) What consequences does Prof. Kimani face for attacking an MP?
  - He was charged with assaulting a Member of Parliament and sentenced for six months.
  - His career was doomed beyond revival when his university demoted him from his role as a professor back to his starting rank as senior lecturer, for disgracing the university in the eye of the public.
- g) Comment on Prof. Kimani's predicament. Does he really deserve what he is going through? Explain your answer.
- h) Describe that character of MP Walomu and Prof. Kimani.
- i) Is Newborn Walomu justified in stealing Prof. Kimani's wife? Explain.
- j) Explain the following style used in the episode:
  - Vivid description
  - Saying
  - Simile

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  - To question Africa's status
  - Interrogate what it will take to develop Africa
  - Ask if human effort is up to the task
- m) Why does AGDA want to work with Prof. Kimani yet he is not an activist?
- n) How similar is a teacher and an activist to Path Alpha's motto?
  - Mobilizing civic discontent (in presidents who keep messing up things, riding on our backs and wrecking our lives) will to change.
- o) What two conditions qualify one as a Path Alpha traveller?
  - Believe in Path Alpha.
  - Having the drive to pursue goals and the tenacity to stick with them.

- p) What two things are Prof. Kimani expected to do if he decides to join Path Alpha?,
- Come to the headquarters in South Africa for orientation
  - Attend next summit of heads of state in Banjul, Gambia.
- q) Does Prof. Kimani join Path Alpha? What reasons drive him to do so(quit his teaching career)? Yes, he does.
- Loss of daughter
  - Desertion by wife
  - Mistreatment by his university

## CHAPTER 4

### **Traffic inconvenience**

- Ms. Fiona McKenzie leaves Seamount Hotel to see her boss who needs her in the office. She takes two hours instead of one **because motorists and pedestrians are stopped at roadblocks everywhere for inspection.**
- At Arch Number 22 (christened by the successor of the coup on July 22, 1994 that saw the legitimate and undisputed president of the Gambia being ousted)
- A guard orders Fiona to get out of her taxi and join a queue of pedestrians. It's a blessing to find out that the requirements for clearance of pedestrians are minimal. She therefore sails through without difficult.
- Her taxi driver however, **disappeared behind a wall, where the guards/bullies turned him upside down and shook loose change (something small/bribe) out of his loose robes because "faulty brakes" before leaving him after two eternities, looking wary, watchful and angry. P.47-48**
- Fiona's taxi driver **was part of a growing African phenomenon: taxi drivers with university degrees whom the local job market had failed to absorb in the professions that they had trained for... p. 47**
- Fiona is assigned immediately to the VOA on a tow-year loan from the Gambia News.

### Fiona's New Assignment

- The US policy that stopped VOA from broadcasting in foreign countries is lifted since it gave VOA a bad image/struck international audiences as odd.
- So it was employing non-Americans in senior VOA positions, and Ms. McKenzie, a Gambian was joining the VOA bureau in Banjul, under Mr. Robert Manley, the Chief of the Bureau.
- The new VOA policy now requires field offices to use local professionals whenever conditions favour their use over that of Americans.
- **The VOA are not selfish. They would be paying her a salary totally dwarfing the two beans the Gambian News had been paying her. P. 49**
- When the contract expires in two years, she will **“start eating boiled dirt for breakfast, lunch and supper again. P.65.**
- She meets her colleague, Nicholas Sentinel, a twenty-five-year old American deployed as the communications-technician-in residence. He monitors private dialogue by harvesting the sky using the *Silent Listener*. He has been able to tap into conversations between a nameless man and with the four men.
- Ms. Fiona is to cover the summit of African heads of state at the Pinnacle Hotel.
- Her boss, Mr. Robert Manley tells her that she has been picked on account of her much needed professional expertise and her African background.
- She promises to do her best.

#### **Dr. Afolabi saves Ms. Fiona McKenzie**

- Dr. Afolabi has hardly dozed of when Ms. McKenzie calls him asking him to see her at reception.
- She however hears her screaming, having been abducted by Leo aka Liberian Mauler, who takes her for Joy, local slang for a streetwalker,
- Dr. saves her from the randy bully who leaves her a state of disarray: hair stuck from her head in tufts, as straw from a sloppy bird’s nest.
- He takes her to his room and gives her his bed and she sleeps after nursing the scrape on Dr. Afolabi’s face.
- Ms. Fiona tells him about her colleague at the VOA who about a man who talks to four other men who cannot know his name. he fears that Nick must have uncovered him.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

**(Dr. Afolabi ( lecturer at Ibadan University, Nigeria)**

### **Key note address at The Foundation for Democratic Rule in Washington**

- Dr. Afolabi was invited to Washington by The Foundation for Democratic Rule to give a keynote address at an annual conference.

### **The plight of old people (p.66-68,70)**

- Pamela pays for her husband's travel and accompanies her husband in order to see her father, a widower who lived alone in Boston (whom she had not seen for six years)
- While out to loosen up/revel, Dr. Afolabi notices that American citizens were living longer, with old now living (not in the care of kith and kin until they died) alone in their homes, empty of relatives, or joined contemporaries in old people's homes.
- Lining to buy a shaving razor, Dr. Afolabi meets his lonely father-in-law who brags about his "Baby" to the girl at the cash register (a Christmas gift from Josh)- a watch-like-gadget strapped to his wrist, that can monitor blood pressure and traces his movement.
- Old people are desperate for attention. The girl at the cash register says *that told people abound who want to touch and be touched, listen and be listened to instead of watching TV at home alone. (P.68-69,70)*

### **Dr. Afolabi's childlessness**

- Seeing a biracial toddler wobble away, he remembers the cause of their child-bearing impasse. He wanted two children of his own while Pamela, his wife wanted to adopt two. *She thought Africa already had too many children. So why not take theirs from the pool that was already there? Why add yet more? (P.70)*

### **Dr. Afolabi meets Mr. Tad Longway**

- Tad Longway insists on travelling next to Dr. Afolabi and Pamela is forced to trade seats with him in economy class.
- Tad Longway introduces himself as a Director of Special Projects at the Agency for Governance and Development in Africa (AGDA), compliments Dr. Afolabi for an excellent keynote address.
- Focusing on the man who accused Dr. Afolabi of looking for answers where he shouldn't look, he informs him about Africans unhappiness with the present state; corruption and impunity (corruption being a crime that impunity protects from punishment, while impunity is a crime that corruption rewards with kickbacks), Mr. Longway tells him that change can only be realized when there is will to do so. He tells him about AGDA whose focus is mobilizing discontent with Africa's present state into will to change it. P.73.
- Dr. Afolabi confirms that heads of state have invited him to Banjul to give them his views (that the summit should adopt Way Omega because it will change our style of doing business; without military coups or rigged elections, civil wars or ethnic clashes) Way Omega.
- Mr. Longway tells him that Path Alpha is the better alternative because unlike Way Omega which is top-driven and lacks the will for its implementation, Path Alpha is bottom-led and has the will.
- He then tells him that AGDA would like him to guide four Path Alpha travellers AGDA is sending as observers to the summit.
- He advises him not to defect from Way Omega as his being there is AGDA's entry point at the summit.
- Mr. Tad Longway hands Dr. Afolabi Path Alpha documents to read it before making his decision, assuring him that they will cover all attendant costs.

### **Pamela leaves Dr. Afolabi.**

- When she arrives home from America, Issa, her house boy restrains and pleads with her not to get into her bedroom because there is a person therein that she won't like.
- Dr. Afolabi arrives and threatens to break the boy's arm if he doesn't reveal the identity of the person inside his madam's bedroom.
- Femi, Abiola's cousin shows up and say that he had brought Dr. Afolabi a second wife, alleging that Pamela hates children, and can't have children of her own.
- Dr. Afolabi protests that he doesn't need a second wife.
- Pamela storm out of the room furiously and reappears with a broomstick, chasing Nimbo, a young girl she had found in her bed. She only stops when Femi glowers at her.

- She tells her husband to order the two out of the house starting with his cousin.
- Abiola explains that Femi and the girl are not to blame, but the people back home had come up with the idea of getting him a second wife.
- Pamela insists that they must leave immediately and when her husband protests that it's almost midnight, and suggests they leave tomorrow, she decides to leave immediately with her suitcase
- A week later, she calls her husband from Boston informing him that she had filed for a divorce.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Comrade Melusi's story**

On the day the summit was opened, cloudless sky, very hot sun and the Atlantic Ocean usher in heat, humidity and sweat.

#### **The essence of security clearance**

- Security is tightened because the principal participants were fifty head of state.
- Comrade Melusi muses on the logic behind security clearance and concludes it meant to cover both detection and deterrence. By harassing everyone, bad or good, it does not only detect actual danger; it also steps potential crime.  
Detection spots actual danger at specific points and punishes it there.
- So he understands and willing to co-operate when a young security officer denies him entry on account of his cellophane pouch containing his a needle and his diabetes medicine.
- While joining Path Alpha, Comrade Melusi discovered he had diabetes during a medical check-up AGDA asked him to take.
- He refuses to allow him in arguing that he could hurt other people with the needle.

### **The plight of diabetic patients.**

- *Comrade Melusi explains that thirty percent of one hundred people aged between 70-75 are diabetic.*
- *They are unable to regulate the sugar level in their blood and that kills most of them.*
- *It is the medicine that keeps the survivors alive. So he can't do without his cellphone pouch- his life.*
- The officer however insists that he cannot take it in. He should leave it with him and come for his shot when it's time.
- On insistence, the young man threatens to bring armed guards to take care of him.
- Obliging, Comrade Melusi tells him that *he is forcing him to climb a steep mountain of risk which ends in blindness, kidney failure, foot ulcers, leg amputations and so on.*
- The officer believes Comrade Melusi and lets him in.

### **Lunch at Chaminuka Restaurant, Harare**

#### **Flashback**

- Comrade Melusi tells Tad Longway that after defeating Smith, Zimbabwe had one urgent objective: ensuring a peaceful passage to an elected government. So a transition government was hurriedly put up with the commander of their group as head of government.
- Comrade Melusi and their leader had fought Smith side by side for years. So he called him Comrade.
- 

#### **Crashed economy**

- The hotel is empty at 1.30 p.m. when there should be more diners.
- Only Comrade Melusi and his visitor are the only customers.
- People in Zimbabwe did not eat out anymore unless someone foreign was footing the bill.
- Their economy crashed.
- Tad Longway, the Director of Special Projects at AGDA pays Comrade Melusi' bill.
- Hungry Comrade Melusi looked blacker than usual. Hunger does have a darker side.
- Comrade Melusi's hand crosses the table for the pepper steak and mashed potatoes that his white visitor had rejected. *The visitor saw Comrade Melusi's scavenging hand steal his lunch.*
- He offers to get him dessert. He readily accepts to try chocolate cake. The pepper steak and mashed potatoes previously rejected were quickly disappearing.
- Looking around the restaurant, the visitor noted a mournful look of a funeral parlour.
- At Muponda Restaurant, the female waiter speaks to Tad Longway and ignores Comrade Melusi, presuming correctly that the visitor was her real debtor. (P.98)

#### **After independence – tribal and divisive politics**

- A new national anthem was sung in English, Shona and Ndebele; Blessed be the land of Zimbabwe with the national motto; Unity, Freedom and Work.
- However, Zimbabwe did not take the three objectives seriously from the start because they were overwhelmed by new leadership- they had a new ruler.
- The ruler embarked on strengthening his supporters and weakening opponents. So he did not appoint Comrade Melusi minister in a bid to regain power.
- Being Shona, presumed Comrade Melusi guilty and threw him out of government when he discovered that he was Ndebele.
- The leader of Comrade Melusi's group stayed on but not for long. He was kicked out of government after a cache of firearms materialized at his home, proof enough that he was plotting a coup.
- This sparked off anti- government unrest erupted in southern Zimbabwe where the Ndebele live. The man's humiliation made people go on rampage and attacked every government supporter foolish enough to come to their sight.
- This was meted by retribution in the form of Gukurahundi, Shona for the first year's first rainstorm that washes off fields so soil tilling can start.
- It washed off Ndebele insurgents like chaff.
- Tearfully, Comrade Melusi narrates that Gukurahundi started while he was at his business office in Bulawayo, Ndebele capital.
- With a faltering voice, he says that he arrived home in fifty minutes when the slaughter had already run its course, found the front door open.
- Ziliza, his wife did not answer to his call. With his heart pounding he frantically searched for her.
- He finally found her in the kitchen, her eyes, bulges of a dead stare, strangled by Gukurahundi and displayed on the kitchen floor to taunt him.
- He dissolves in his tears.
- After the Ndebele insurgency, the ruler only trusted his Shona tribesmen. Ndebele tribesmen, including well meaning ones became rivals, foes to be eliminated.
- Thereafter, Comrade Melusi says that ruler's mission was to become a life president.
- When his voice begins to falter again. Afraid of another meltdown, Tad Longway suggests that proceed with the discussion the following day.

### **Muponda Restaurant- rigged elections, disunited opposition and political intolerance**

The visitor was brought here to savour traditional food.

- Comrade Melusi decided to annoy "the bomber" (called so because he was bombing the Zimbabwean economy back to the Stone Age) by forming an opposition party: the New Independence Party- NIP and ran for president.
- The bomber won by 99% as the opposition shares 1%.
- The opposition lost terribly because they didn't fight their enemy together. They fought each other instead of fighting together because they each wanted to be the next president.

- They refused to lay personal ambitions aside and combine efforts and fight the bomber together.
- Consequently, each party went alone by fielding its own presidential candidate.
- RUFF(The Reformed Union of Freedom Fighters) like NIP had urged unity but not for long. His leader had to quit since young members thought him useless because he did not have a university degree. It fielded its own candidate and lost.
- It would have been easy to defeat the ruler because the odds were against what with the worst drought that hit Zimbabwe to the extent that it was declared a national disaster. Second the international community clamped on Zimbabwe SAP- Structural Adjustment Programme in order to help revive the economy.
- Another reason for the loss was that the ruler rigged the elections.
- They were only united for the half hour to declare the elections a sham.
- Comrade Melusi went into business thereafter. However, inflation was eroding incomes faster than they could grow. He could not afford rent in Harare so he relocated to a suburb that wasn't clean.
- Then came "Murambastvina" Shona for expelling the trash. In the guise of preventing disease and curbing crime, Murambastvina was sent to punish the urban poor for supporting opposition parties.
- Bulldozers went from slum to slum evicting residents by tearing their homes to the ground, without advance warning or alternative accommodation after.
- Nobody cared whether they lived or died.
- Feeling pity for him, Tad Longway gives Comrade Melusi a stack of American dollars. He accepts it gratefully.
- He also gives him the Path Alpha document and asks him if he would be interested in joining Path Alpha project. He adds that money won't be a problem.
- He joined Path Alpha.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Breaking the ice before the summit opened.**

The host engaged in friendly banter with heads of state in order of poles of influence (political hierarchy) in a bid to humour them.

- Based on population pole of influence, the host exchanged pleasantries with the Nigerian president first whom he regards as brother president since *they were born presidents*. He is ripe seventy year-old retired general. (**Presidential birthright**). Mr. Chiamaka wished that the president ruled Nigeria well.
- Technology was another pool of Influence. South African president spoke next.
- Kenyan president spoke next on account of Kenya's strong alliance with America. Prof. Kimani had a huge grudge against the Kenyan president for the loss of his daughter in a

road accident; and his wife to a member of parliament, something he feels the government could have prevented.

- Zimbabwean president spoke next on account of his sheer obstinacy, habit of engaging in needless fights with enemies and friends alike. This was after he rebuked America and Britain in a United Nations General Assembly with reckless abandon. Comrade Melusi scowls at his president whom he hated intensely for having unleashed the 5<sup>th</sup> brigade that murdered hundreds of people including his wife and sending bulldozers to drive Zimbabweans out of their homes into wild lands besides taking Zimbabwe back to the Stone Age.
- Next to speak was the Libyan president on account his simple refusal to abide by agreed rules. When his followers planted the bomb that blew up a Pan American world airlines plane over Scotland killing 300, the agreed rules required him to surrender the bomb planters for trial and to pay compensation to the families of their victims. However, he refused to do so. Engineer Tahir hated the Libyan president because he felt he had sold himself out to the West and became its servant. The man used to snap at the West's heels like a terrier, but now he was poodle happiest when seated on the West's lap. He had also abolished Libya's nuclear weapons program throwing away the country's only insurance against future western attacks and signing his own death warrant in the bargain.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Chineke Chiamaka, the reckless driver**

- Pastor Chiamaka always drove dangerously with an elbow sticking out of a window and a radio blaring out the latest hit songs.
- He never cared about other drivers. He would change his mind in mid-traffic and decide to drive to this destination instead of that.
- He would swerve out of his initial lane and keep cutting into other lanes until he reached the lane to his new destination, driving against all motorists on that side who would have to get out of his way.

- *He liked the traffic jams and the detonations of human temper that were Lagos and he was thrilled by complicating the physics of driving.*
- His brother Obinna enjoyed his reckless driving. Danger lurked on every mile the elder drove and the boy liked the thrill of danger.
- This day, he drove his younger brother who was an evening student at the University of Lagos. Later, he took Highway 69 (God’s Highway) on his way to his office- Earth Movers Limited.
- It was a bad route to take on Friday, because it was throbbing with born-again Lagosians driving out of Lagos to Holy Camp. Born-again Lagosians choked all routes to this destination which was the most popular place of worship.
- Lanes heading in the opposite direction, however, had sparse traffic. He crossed over to lanes going to Lagos in the opposite direction and kept going in his initial direction (against the flow), hoping to return to the correct lanes.
- Fellow motorists had to either break to stop or swerve aside to let him pass.
- However, he ran into a mean machine – a fire engine, massive and unstoppable. It hit his Mercedes which flew off the road and spun in the air several times before landing on the road again, mangled out of shape, but still moving.
- He counted his miracles. He escaped without injuries, the fire engine had vanished with his offense, no single motorist stopped (for fear armed robbery trap), disqualifying themselves from testifying against him.
- This Miracles made him turn into a preacher.

### **Pastor Chiamaka**

- To become a pastor, Chiamaka did attend any seminary. He started by nodding in agreement with points made in church and later shaking hands with preachers who made them.
- He then perfected the actual techniques: flourishes of speech and rhythms of gesture.
- He plunged into preaching when he was sure he possessed the courage to face a congregation, the authority to lecture and the audacity to reprimand it.
- Blessed with the requisite gifts (a strong physical presence, a knack for dramatic gesture, a reverberating rumble of voice and a very rich sense of humour), he preached everywhere; indoors and outdoors.
- “...No sooner was he a pastor with a church of his own than he proved he was the real thing. Disappointing few, he surprised many. Turned hanger and flogger all of a sudden, he lashed his congregation into feverish frenzied, using only sermons but leaving no doubt that he would have preferred real lashes. His approach to moral correctness was usually coercive, but it could be persuasive...”
- This Sunday, he reminded them to do good because *God is watching them* all the time.
- The next sermons was a brazen attack on the president for making public a memo he wrote to advise his staff about an ongoing problem instead of finding a solution/taking action. In the memo, he advises his officers to treat the recent fires consuming Nigerian cities with caution.

- He cited recent riots that broke out and brought havoc to a region in Nigeria and blames a neighbouring region.
- Such inciting remarks had already sparked rebellions in three cities.
- He lashes at his congregation for lacking courage.
- He was arrested the following day at dawn and remanded for two weeks in a rat-infested cell with smelly inmates.
- He was set free on the third week and banned from preaching.
- He met Tad Longway two years later inviting him to join Path Alpha to spur development in Africa by mobilising discontent with Africa in its present state, into a will to change.
- Pastor Chiamaka readily joined Path Alpha.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **Engineer Tahir's love for the Libyan leader**

- Engineer Tahir left Libya to study weapons development at the University of Paris after graduating from Abdelaziz Academy.
- He told skeptics who scoffed at his course that time would come when he would use his skills to build real weapons for Libya
- The Libyan leader was celebrating his twenty year in power when Engineer Tahir returns.
- The opposition expected the leader to announce when he would be stepping down.

- Engineer Tahir dismissed them as crackpots that should be ignored. He believed the Libyan leader had the right vision for Libya and was the right leader to rule.
- He echoed his achievements: closed down all foreign military bases in Libya, nationalized all foreign businesses in the country, discovered petroleum reserves to prove that Libya had oil in addition to sand and launched and gave full financial support to the *Fist of Allah*- a nuclear Programme that would produce ultimate weapons to defeat and deter offense.
- He was optimistic that man who got steely guts would help Libya recapture the prestige it had on its heyday.
- Engineer Tahir joined the Fist of Allah after his return from overseas to use the skills he had acquired to build real weapons for Libya, exactly as he had dreamed while he was still a child.
- However, the Libyan leader dismantled the Fist of Allah to shield Libya from America's revenge after Al-Qaeda struck on American soil.
- The dismantling of the Fist of Allah was a blow too big for Engineer Tahir to come to terms with.

### **The accident**

- The dismantling of the Fist of Allah happened at a time when Tahir fell in love with Rahmah Mahmoud, a female colleague, whom he wrongly thought had put him down or rejected him by saying no to his outing.
- Rahmah had said "No" since she felt she, being a proper Libyan woman, had to do this thing right, by letting him fill in the blanks that she left blank for him.
- Engineer Tahir misinterpreted a sweet no as a sour no and reacted violently to retaliate.
- He slapped her in the pretext that she removed her veil (she was readying for laboratory work it would have impeded).
- The assault seemed reasonable because it happened during the 'Heritage Week' a period the leader set aside to give his people time to celebrate their renowned history.
- So it appeared that Tahir had slapped Ms. Mahmoud to administer discipline on a female subordinate for shedding her head veil in public, in violation of Libyan culture.
- In a reflex reaction, she struck back and unluckily, a letter opener landed and slit open Engineer Tahir's left eye.
- She pleaded innocent citing a temporary insanity caused by extreme provocation, but the court, invoking the Hammurabic verdict – *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth* - ruled that her left eye had to go.
- The court was not moved by her crying and protestations. She lost her left eye one early morning, by surgery.
- Vengeance didn't, however, buy engineer Tahir peace. He said he had sacrificed his left eye to punish head veil removal in public and would not hesitate to offer his remaining eye as sacrifice.
- Indeed, like philosopher George Santayana said, he was a fanatic who would redouble their effort after they have forgotten their aim. Engineer Tahir's aim was for Libya to

regain the glory it enjoyed. That dream having been punctured, he exploded beyond control.

- Out popped the emotional boil that had been festering inside him since the eye accident. He screamed and shouted, calmed down eventually, only to sink into a deep gloom he refused to shake off, despite his friends' persistent help.
- He left Tripoli to live a lonely life in Benghazi.
- He suffered gloom because of the 'object', a lifeless foreign implant in the eye and 'effect, a removable convex shell of glass cupping over the implant snugly like a contact lens.
- The finished product matched with a good eye and hid the hole in his face quite well, but he hated it because it reminded him of the hole it had hidden and a permanent freak of nature that he had become.
- He loathed/hated himself and air of sorrow always lingered on like an unwanted guest who might leave or might not.
- So he readily joined Path Alpha when Mr. Tad Longway invited him.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Nick Sentinel the Seamount Gang of Five

- Nick Sentinel phones Ms. Fiona McKenzie to go meet the Silent Listener which has three parts:
- The receiver which he describes as a goddess that she ought to only worship, not pet. It collects all sound transmissions.
- The processor, which is programmed by a computer to sift through all transmissions caught by the receiver, saves those it decides to keep and discarding the rest.

- The exhibitor which also runs the programs, by presenting transmissions chosen for play or display in the preferred audio or video format.
- He then takes her to a chart, feeling offended that she isn't interested by what he has even showing her.
- He grabs a pointer and faced his chart and says that the Silent Listener has listened in on the conversation sent from mobile phones.
- He concludes that something fishy is going on at the summit: people working in a network of five nodes. An anonymous person is working alongside four others; Prof. Kimani, Comrade Melusi, Pastor Chiamaka and Engineer Tahir at the Seamount Hotel.
- The four others are not in communication with each other, but only with an unknown person, their guide/leader who is checked in on the Second Floor, Centreville Wing and unknown room number.
- Fiona asks him if the five guests lodged at The Seamount Hotel as observers have a hidden motive.
- Nick Sentinel affirms her question and refers to the five as The Seamount Gang of Five.
- He tells her to move with speed and find the mysterious man and not forget to tell him about *The Trick*.

### **Fiona McKenzie meets Mr. Tad Longway**

- At the Seamount Hotel, idle guests with nowhere to go, are out in search for ways of whiling away time.
- As she made her way across the hall, Ms. McKenzie could feel male eyes burning her back with the same red-hot question: Might she be the answer they were looking for?
- To convince them that she was not, she hurried towards her destination and cuts the queue.
- The woman at the desk tells her to wait for her turn, after Mr. Tad Longway. She obliges.
- Mr. Longway is here to remind the receptionist about the complaint he had launched about the air- conditioning system which is not working in his room.
- The lady tells him that they have found a new room for him in the same wing and floor: Second floor, Centre Wing.
- Fiona becomes interested. Second floor, Centre Wing is the where the VOA youth had said the guide was staying.
- The receptionist, however, gives him an envelope with a key card to his new room.
- Before the receptionist could respond to her inquiry about Dr. Afolabi, Tad Longway comes back furious for having been given the wrong key.
- Apologetic, she gives him the right key in a small envelope labelled Centre Wing 2059. Fiona reads it.
- Angered by Ms. McKenzie's rudeness, she directs her to the phone booths to go and call her friend there.
- Fiona meekly heads for the booths inside which was a command with instructions for users to carefully read before proceeding. She smiles for her assignment was now easy. She dialed 152059 and a deep voice, Longway's answered.

- Fiona lies that she had picked Mr. Longway's valuable article and insisted that he has to come down and pick it himself.
- When he shows up, she hands him a key card to her VOA office instead.
- Mr. Tad Longway gives back the card denying any connections with VOA and offers to buy her a drink for her “trouble.” She says its late and on his insistence, she accepts Coke.

Preparing to go over his notes on the presidents' debate one more time before turning in, Dr. Afolabi is visited by Ms. McKenzie.

She asks him if he still thinks that the summit will adopt Way Omega.

He answers that they will get the answer after twelve hours.

She tells him that she ran into Mr. Tad Longway while tracking the guide.

Dr. Afolabi confirms that he knows Mr. Tad Longway whom he works with that he is a guiding four other people to see the summit adopt Path Alpha instead of Way Omega.

Fiona is shocked, but Dr. Afolabi makes her promise that she will keep it to herself.

He says that the problem is that Path Alpha isn't even on the summit's agenda and that is why Mr. Longway and company want him to help put it there.

He came to advocate for Way Omega and in doing so he will draw the heads of state to another alternative, Path Alpha.

Fiona is shocked and cannot understand why Dr. Afolabi made her promise to keep his identity to herself.

He tells her that she has to because he is hiding from Way Omega his links with Path Alpha, because some heads of state who believe he should focus exclusively on Way Omega would demand his scalp.

Fiona informs him that Nick has revealed to her not only the identity of the four men he is guiding but also The Trick.

She is impressed by Nick Sentinel and would like to meet him one day.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

**Pastor Chiamaka** goes through the Pinnacle's security clearance formalities into the dining room without difficulty. He is on a mission to frustrate his president:

- Keep shaking the president's hand until the latter gets tired.
- Ask the president if he would adopt or reject Way Omega were it to come down to a vote at the following day's summit.
- Then tell off the president by feigning oblivion about knowing him.

His scheme failed (because the small dinner was cancelled) and he was smouldering in a bad mood he was nursing on purpose, as in a self-indulgent act of slow suicide over a fire he had set at minimum.

He received a call from his guide reminding about a meeting coming in an hour at Central Wing Room 2059.

Still rueing the nasty experiences in the hands of the police for statements he thought were well within the bounds of permissible political expression, he tells the caller that he doesn't need reminding.

In bed flat on his back, **Comrade Melusi** daydreams about his wife, Ziliza. He mourns her and promises to kill the man responsible for her death the following day.

His guide calls him ordering him to attend a meeting in an hour in Room 2059, Centre Wing without fail.

**Prof. Kimani**, brushing his teeth in readiness to sleep, looks at himself in the mirror and sees how old he had become:

- His belly hang over his belt like a half-empty sack.
- His face had wrinkles like a dry prune.
- Two folds of skin ran on the left and right sides of his nose down to the left and right corners of his mouth. They refused to leave when he tried to smile.
- The flesh under his chin hung and shook.

He receives a call from his guide asking him if his hotel has delivered his note to him.

Feeling that it has not, the guide tells him that they are meeting in an hour in Room 2059, Centre Wing.

**Engineer Tahir** is set to sleep but is disturbed about something (he didn't know) he feels he must have done but has not. He keeps thinking that he must do it.

He later remembers that it was his 'eye' that he had not taken out (removing it) for the night.

Before he did so, he receives a call asking if he received his note an hour ago. He confirms that he did.

He is reminded that they are meeting in Room 2059, Centre Wing in an hour.

Engineer Tahir goes back to the filled-in hole in his face.

**Mr. Longway** wanted to broach the meeting with Dr. Afolabi before it began. So, Dr. Afolabi arrived before the meeting began. The other four came later: Prof. Kimani, Comrade Melusi, Pastor Chiamaka and Engineer Tahir.

Mr. Longway rose to do the introductions as he knew all of them.

After introducing the five to each other, he reminds the four about their four serious reasons at the summit as observers:

- They see that Africa has problems whose solutions its present heads of state are simply not up to.
- They believe Path Alpha will solve those problems, not Way Omega.
- They have suffered ugly state abuse they don't want to suffer ever again.
- They want to address each of the above issues by making their heads of state adopt Path Alpha, not Way Omega.

He gives a chance to **Dr. Afolabi** who shocks them when he reveals that he is their guide.

He explains to them that as an advisor for Way Omega he could not openly work with them,, advocates of Path Alpha, a rival of Way Omega, without appearing to undermine his official role at the summit.

Having studied both documents, he says, he is now duty-bound to balance his views on each of them in the advice he will give to the summit.

He apologizes to them.

On his main message, he tells them that nations don't host summit just to amused foreign visitors but out of self- interest and their present often accept the honour of serving as summit chair.

The Zambian president, expecting the summit to turn bitter,, and he, the chair ending up pleasing some heads of state and displeasing others.

He feels that he can serve his county' interest best only if he pleases all and displease none. So he has sidestepped the honour of serving as Chair.

The new chair has up his sleeve a ploy he calls The Trick, which is good for them- Path Alpha proponents. He will certainly fail to lead the summit to a consensus, in which case he will let another head of state propose that a committee convenes to devise a method of eliminating the need for a consensus. He wants a win-win result where he wins when he wins and wins when he loses. That is The Trick which will also open the door for Path Alpha.

Dr. Afolabi them that they will get a one minute or less opportunity at the speaker's microphone, to directly tell Africa's heads of state the most important thing they ought to hear.

That would be a *golden opportunity to mold the hurt of your past into your wishes for a better future.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

The summit began with Gambia's national anthem: *For the Gambia, our homeland.*

The Gambian president, an imposing figure even while seated and seemed a gigantic statue that had got up for a strolling his feet, echoes the task of the summit: to adopt a common growth

strategy for our people. He is grateful that they have Way Omega strategy invented by the cleverest twenty of the world's best and brightest Nobel Prize laureates.

He suggests they look at it or better adopt. He then declares the summit formally open.

His Excellency President Miniko Menkiti became chair when the host declines for personal reasons. On his right sat Mr. Tiku Zinto, Minister of Development Planning in an island country, who had served as convener of the committee that previewed Way Omega ahead of the summit. On his left was Dr. Afolabi, an advisor to help the summit along, if asked to.

The chair called, Minister Zinto the first speaker who praises speaks of a cyclone of change whirling across the continent and was so strong that even the most stubborn African leaders are yielding to it.

He lies by giving credit to the African Union, which was more incompetent than the individual nations it united to make less incompetent.

The credit should go to the donors who had pushed the change by threatening to cut off all aids unless Africa adopted growth strategies.

His other blunder was to adopt a wrong tone and method of delivery. Unaccustomed to hearing a subordinate lecture them, the Heads-of-State began to suspect they were hearing a subordinate lecture them. A few stopped listening and started yawning.

Minister Zinto concluded by begging the leaders to adopt Way Omega saying that if they did so, Africa will start developing tomorrow.

The Chair then gave Dr. Afolabi seven minutes instead of fifteen to share with five friends and put before them for perusal Path Alpha document.

Minister Zinto's protestations that Path Alpha was not on the summit's agenda, his proposition totally breaks summit rules and that he needs the approval of other heads of state to change the agenda, fell on deaf ears. The chair tells him that he wouldn't have added the agenda if it was already there, warns the minister that he will have guards escort him out the hall and orders him to sit down.

Dr. Afolabi called Mr. Thaddeus Longway to greet the heads of state. Mr. Longway praises Path Alpha document for it contains action, concrete action and adds that while Way Omega offers them a bird in the bush, Path Alpha presses that bird into their hands, and a bird in hand is worth two in the bush.

Pastor Chiamaka comes next, praises the Lord and forces the leaders to say amen, and begs them to choose Path Alpha over Way Omega.

Prof. Kimani greets the heads of state with a tearful cry of the aggrieved and tells them that teachers deserved respect, and only Path Alpha would see that they got it. He wails and moves to his seat, but a president intercepts him and refuses to let him pass.

Engineer Tahir beseeched the heads of state to adopt Path Alpha as it will give Africa its own modern weapons with which to not only defend but also deter, adding that deterrence is better than defense as nobody gets killed.

Comrade Melusi walks towards the microphone but turns around and walks away from the microphone. Instead of returning to his seat, he veers off course and hurtles towards the ruler of Zimbabwe with the intention of avenging his wife, Ziliza. However, he is seized by guards and whisked away. Everyone is shocked and pandemonium reigns in the hall.

The chair gives Dr. Afolabi one minute. He says that he has read both documents carefully, and opines that *Way Omega is big on ideas and Path Alpha small, on the other hand, Way Omega is weak on implementation of those ideas and Path Alpha strong.*

The heads of state requested to stand and stretch first before the debate get going. They, however, come after an hour.

The chair started by giving the first chance to the most senior president: Didier Bangoura.

### **President Didier Bangoura**

- He had led his country out of colonial bondage to independence, and ruled it ever since.
- He had fathered his nation before any other heads of state at the summit had fathered theirs. He was an old man who did not stand and go to the speaker's microphone. He remained in his seat and used the microphone at his desk.
- He praises the Gambians for their hospitality and requested the host president to convey his gratitude to the people of Gambia.
- He then confesses that he has not and will not read Path Alpha and Way Omega documents, because at his age he lacks the energy to do so.
- He however, makes two opinions based on what Minister Zinto and Dr. Afolabi said: he can't understand why Minister Zinto is asking them to adopt Way Omega yet it echoes resolutions they had adopted before adopted before. He also argues that Dr. Afolabi did not give straight answers as to which document is big, small, strong or weak.
- The secretary gives the chair a list of speaker and he tells the summit that he will call them in the order of the list.

### **President Simba Ibarosa**

- He speaks next.
- He is feared and revered because he had never taken the floor to make friends or make amends.
- He has been voted out five times since first becoming president and each time, he flatly refused to step down, claiming he had won.
- His face round, shiny and as smooth as a baby's- testimony to a lazy tropical life spent in cool shades, daydreaming idly about imaginary accomplishments.
- He lies that Way Omega proposes that the presidential tenure be limited to two terms.

### **King Jemba-Jemba**

He is royalty, King for life and no one could take it away from him. **His reign was a clean birthright not a dirty favour won with bought votes, or a prize stolen in a bloody coup. He didn't have to slay opponents to rise to power or maim rivals to stay in it. (P.163)**

He is a product of the strange practice that allows even ugly kings to marry beautiful women.

As a permanent inheritance, it was immune to the limits of tenure that president Ibarosa was shouting about.

He is shocked by the ill-bred windbag that man was shouting limit on presidential tenure.

Were it possible, he would walk away instead of listening to a president shouting excitedly about an imaginary proposal that was threatening to end his career.

He therefore reconsiders speaking and gives the next speaker, President Dibonso the floor.

Silently, the chair, dismisses him as a callow youth with milk still on his breath.

### **President Bibo Dibonso**

He was a force to reckon with what with forty years of supremacy in which he had turned power into a habit then into a toy, and himself into a permanent bully.

Too old, he slept like a log and woke up stiff like a log often. This morning he worked out by standing up the bending down and straightening up again, once. This had caused his new anger.

Owing to old age, has lost control of his bowels- an internal valve had gone haywire and *something warm trickled down between his legs. So he spoke with anger, terror to make up for the loss of self-worth.*

He refers to the chair as for having lost control of the summit by letting someone (President Ibarosa) raise an imaginary issue not in either of the two documents.

### **President Wasiwasi Wesiga**

He was an old hand who had anticipated many coups and nipped them in the bud before they got off the ground.

He spotted the brewing trouble and moved a point of order on the Chairman. He reminded him about The Trick. Given the floor he observes that their nerves and tempers were starting to fray and flare respectively. He therefore suggested two measures: a move to *adjourn and ask a small group consisting of President Simba Ibarosa and President Didier Bangoura to see how best to proceed.*

The chair rules that both motions are accepted. For lack of a consensus on Way Omega or Path Alpha, The Trick came to his rescue. It would eliminate the need for a consensus.

The chair declares that the action is taken to find a method of choosing between Way Omega and Path Alpha, the task of the group will be to find such a method, that they call the group

'Method Committee' and that it will work this evening and report to the summit first thing the following morning.

The chair then declares the meeting adjourned.

Dr. Abiola follows Ms. Fiona McKenzie's directions to her house.

Fiona shares a drink with her guest and they in a jovial mood

Another knock at the door and Nick Sentinel is ushered in and asked to say hello to Dr. Afolabi, a big fan of his who was dying to see him.

Fiona serves him wine.

Dr. Afolabi is glad that Fiona made it possible for him to meet Nick.

He appreciates him for his tip about The Trick that enabled him to put Path Alpha on the summit's agenda.

He says that the chair would have treated The Trick as confidential for fear of some presidents who condemn trouble makers but they are themselves trouble makers. Early knowledge of The Trick would enable them to plant mischief. By keeping it confidential, the chair has cut them out of the loop and blocked them off.

Dr. Afolabi asks Nick if the Silent Lister told him whether the method for choosing between Way Omega and Path Alpha has been found.

Nick tells him that the method is named *The Choice Matrix*, but he doesn't know yet what it entails.

Dr. Afolabi tells Nick that he has arranged observer status for Fiona and can do the same for him if he wants to come to learn about a thing or two about the African trickery.

He says he would like to come and even ask his boss, Mr. Manley, Chief of the local VOA bureau to tag along. He then takes his leave followed by Abiola.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The summit reconvene in an expectant yet jittery mood. Expectant because all heads of state hoped The Method Committee had done its work and found a method to be used to choose between Way Omega and Path Alpha.

Jittery, because they feared that their choice of committee leader might have killed this prospect before it was born.

Given that President Bangoura was unpredictable and probably senile. He had also said that he had not and would not read the two documents. They feared that he wasn't the a good choice to do a good job.

Minister Zinto's place had been taken by President Bangoura. Dr. Afolabi regained his place. Other observers included Mr. Manley, Chief of the local VOA bureau, Ms. McKenzie, the VOA youth. Comrade Melusi was absent since he had been arrested the evening before.

The chair called the meeting room order and asks President Bangoura, the chair if the method they had found would the job.

He says yes and confirms that he was ready to present the method. He pays tribute to President Gamlozi for his fluency in both English and French and his give and take participatory approach to dialogue. He also thanks President Ibarosa. With the two they had finished their job in only half an hour. This surprised other heads of state.

He then explains the coin tossing method (The Choice Matrix) to the summit using the following mathematics equation to the chagrin of the heads of state.

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| H=Omega   | T=Alpha   |
| H=Approve | T= Reject |

That he will toss the coin twice. If the coin lands on head on first toss, you approve Way Omega and reject Path Alpha(first row, first column). However, if the coin lands on tail, you approve Path Alpha and reject Way Omega (first row, second column).

The second column indicates that whether the document is approved or rejected depends on the outcome of the second toss.

Minister Zinto squashes the method as total nonsense, arguing that real summits don't decide by flipping coins. The chair calls for order and instructs Minister Zinto to sit down.

Dr. Afolabi attempts to support Minister Zinto in vain. He is also ordered to sit.

The summit takes a break for fifteen minutes when trouble looms.

The breather rejuvenates the old man with a fresh verve on his voice.

He executes the method. He requests the chair to help as well as Dr. Afolabi and Minister Zinto to serve as witnesses.

He tosses the coin it lands on the floor tails up, suggesting that Path Alpha progresses to the second toss.

Tad Longway and Prof. Kimani interrupts him with a shout of joy. They are both hushed and reminded that they are observers and not participants.

Minister Zinto attempts another protest in vain.

President Bangoura tosses the coin again and it lands with a heads up, which means the summit must approve Path Alpha.

Pastor Chiamaka hollers, praising the Lord followed by murmurs of men from a few heads of state. The chair calls for order.

The old men then says that it is decides that Path Alpha is their choice. Engineer Tahir praises the Lord with an Alhamdulillah! The moment of victory is therapeutic moment for the Path Alpha crew. In Path Alpha, there was a chance that action, concrete action would be taken to right the wrongs they had suffered.

The chair then wraps up the summit, smiles that The Trick has come through to eliminate consensus when it could not be achieved. He wishes them safe trips back home but asks them to wait for supper that has been organized for a closing ceremony. He then declares the summit officially closed. .

President Dibonso springs up, rejects the matrix and tells the chair not to insult them with that rubbish, questioning him if he expects some of them who are not senile to buy into the madness. He says he rejects the matrix.

The chair reiterate that the summit stands closed. Brandishing a pistol, president Dibonso declares that the summit is open again.

The chair presses a panic button and commandos armed with machine gins burst into the summit hall. President Dibonso disables his gun, hides and slips away through an emergency exit.

Everybody rush to the exit, swearing not to return for the summit's closing ceremony.

Mr. Manley tells Nick that it's time to leave as Dr. Afolabi and Fiona McKenzie leave together speaking about the crazy summit.

Mr. Longway and his four men are last to leave as they hug and cheer because against all odds, their Path Alpha had carried the day.