

Cultural Humor

by Nellie Shani



The life-time ambition of many Africans (I am one) is to one day travel to the land of plenty. This land is a "pie in the sky" that could be Australia, Singapore, Ireland or America. What does it matter? As long as you are escorted to the airport by ten or so relatives who with emotion say "Don't forget us when you get 'there'!", your dreams have come true. One such African was Owino. He was my father's youngest brother. He got to go "there" with his wife. I think they landed in England. He had been advised that when he was invited to a British home for a meal, all he would need to do was copy what all the other people at table were doing.

Sure enough the Owinos were invited to dinner by Hilary O'Brien who lived in Yorkshire. As they sat at table, Owino's ever watching eye took in everything that happened with unrivaled precision.

The man on his left wanted some sugar and said to his wife, "Could you pass me the sugar, my sugar?" She passed the sugar. The bearded man across from him wanted some honey and said to his beautiful wife, "Could you pass me some honey, my honey?" His wife passed him the honey. Owino was not going to be left out of this wonderful way of communicating lovingly with his wife. "Could you pass me some bacon, my bacon?"

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