ATO THE GIANT SLAYER
And
THE VIOIOUS PACK

By Ernest Antwi
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DEDICATION

To the memory of my father, Rev. Peter Attah-Antwi
WITH LOVE TO:

Laydi,
Judah Saint-Michael,
Eli Saint-Gabriel, and
Noah Saint-Raphael.

I appreciate your encouragement.
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MEET THE CHARACTERS
MEET ATō

Ato is timid, frightened of almost everything, and is still struggling to come to terms with the death of his father. To make matters worse, his schoolmates think he is very weird and keep away from him. He has no friends, except for an old abandoned telephone booth he plays in sometimes. However, one day, everything changes when he meets Sunshine the Angel, and Mr Ringo. A hero is born.
MEET SUNSHINE

Sunshine is short and plump with rosy cheeks, big bright eyes, a little nose, and a wide white smile. She is very funny but a bit whacky for an angel, and certainly doesn’t look like one in her pink dress. She is Ato’s guardian angel and his handler. She introduces him to a world of amazing possibilities and to The League of Giant Slayers.
MEET MR. BRR RINGO

Mr. Ringo is an old abandoned telephone booth that is magically brought to life by Sunshine to be Ato’s friend. Like Sunshine, he is funny, whacky and a boatload of fun. He always gets his tenses and idiomatic expressions all mixed but thinks he is quite smart. He has amazing abilities and becomes a perfect sidekick to Ato.
MEET THE PACK

The pack is made up of a trio of siblings who are vicious, cruel and conniving as a team, despite their extreme individual differences. They are called The Pack because of their nicknames as The Shark, The Hyena and The Cat. As business owners, they use every trick in the book to get their way. They use bribery, intimidation and blackmail to win contracts and strike shady business deals.
THE SHARK

The Shark is the leader of the Pack. She is thin and grey with her hair always done in a neat tight bun. Her most remarkable features are her rows of vicious looking little white teeth that make her mouth appear longer than it actually is.
THE HYENA

The Hyena is short and fat. He is always stuffing himself with pies, cakes and fatty meats. He is also a bully and a coward, and his clothes are always too tight. He is a man who wants everything and gives nothing back.
THE CAT

The Cat is always clean-shaven, neat, and properly dressed with nothing out of place. He only wears suits made of the finest fabric he can find. He is fussy, a worrier, and a hypochondriac who is always afraid of catching something and dying of it.
PROLOGUE: BEFORE THE BEGINNING
Not so long ago, the Master, the great maker of all things, sent an angel to Earth to perform a special task for Him. There were a lot of other angels in heaven, but He did not send any of them, because He knew their hearts.

Most of them did not like to get their wings dirty, though they would not have complained if the Master had sent any of them. They were also very prim and proper, like the English knights and lords you find in old storybooks, but The Maker of all things needed a unique character for this particular assignment.

The angel The Master sent was a short and plump woman with rosy cheeks, big bright eyes that looked like pools of love, a little nose, and a wide white smile. She was called Sunshine, and she made God laugh so. She was always laughing and smiling and was
full of nice and funny tricks. She had never been very clean because she was forever playing with the animals in the meadows, trying new recipes for all kinds of foods, and rolling on the golden floor with the children in the nursery.

The other angels thought she was not a proper angel and kept telling her so, but she kept saying, “Don’t take life too seriously, or you will miss the little things that bring you joy. Besides, what is eternity without some sunshine?”

Sunshine’s special task was to descend to a little town – hardly a town, almost a village – called Adiebeba, which was a suburb of Kumasi in Ghana, West Africa. She was to save a little girl whose mother had died and who, unable to take the pain, had sadly run away from home and was hopelessly lost.
Sunshine kissed all the children in the nursery goodbye several times and even tried to kiss the other angels, but they just turned away and grunted, “Humph” which made her laugh. She put on her best pink dress, the one with a thousand pockets; she tied her bright blue headscarf around her short, messy hair; and she put on her favourite pair of wings that carried tiny pictures of all the children in the nursery, as well as green shoes with bright yellow bows on the toes. She then went to the transport yard, jumped on a cloud, and rode it down to Earth.

Down on Earth, Sunshine found the little girl, Araba Ketewa, in a grove that formed the backdrop of Adiebeba. She brought her back to her grieving father and stayed with her for weeks until the little girl was strong enough in her body and mind and
had come to terms with the loss of so dear a mother.

Sunshine made Araba laugh with tricks and treats she fished out from her pockets until the tears rolled down both their cheeks. She also told stories about the pictures of the lovely children she carried on her wings. Of course, Araba Ketewa’s father could not see the angel because he just wasn’t Sunshine’s assignment.

When it was time for Sunshine to leave, she told the little girl that if she lived a good life, she would see her again in Heaven one day, but until then she should always pray whenever she needed divine help.

Araba Ketewa, to show her appreciation and affection, gave Sunshine her favourite chocolate-stained hat, which thrilled the angel so much so that she quickly slipped on the hat over her headscarf. She
Sunshine comforts Araba Ketewa
kissed Araba Ketewa good-bye and flew away.

However, all was not well yet. A gust of wind from goodness-knows-where blew Sunshine’s new hat off. It was no ordinary wind because it blew the hat across cities, oceans, and mountains, where the hat finally came to rest in a little village called Destiny, hundreds of miles from London in England.

Sunshine swooped down after it and found it trapped in a pane of broken glass in the door of an old and abandoned telephone booth, which stood behind a hedge and under a huge aged and gnarled oak tree that had not seen leaves in centuries.

Sunshine said to the telephone booth, “Thank you very much, sir. The next time I come to these parts, I will bring you a special present.” She then took off her headscarf, put on the hat, draped the scarf over the
An abandoned telephone booth under an old gnarled leafless oak tree
hat, and tied the two ends under her chin. With the hat secure, she flew away to heaven.

Araba Ketewa and her father migrated to England exactly a year after her mother’s death. The pair, not quite fond of city life, settled in a village called Destiny, where Araba grew up into a most beautiful woman and where her father taught at the local school until his death several years later.

She got married to a local police officer, an orphan and another Ghanaian who had lived in England since he was ten. “The kindest soul around,” people would say about him. “The two make such a beautiful couple,” the old ladies would say.

Araba and her husband, Krapa, had a little son, whom they named Ato Krapa Ajeman. Ato did not have many friends. In fact, his best friend was an old and
abandoned telephone booth, which stood under an old, gnarled, leafless oak tree behind a hedge. On the other side of the hedge was a wooded field with an overgrown footpath seldom used by anyone, and beyond the woods lay a beautiful green field. To get to the booth, Ato pushed through a gap in the hedge that he had carefully concealed with loose twigs and leaves. He called the gap the Fox Hole, and whenever he went through it, he believed he was in another place, a different world. Ato would play with the phone every day after school and on weekends and holidays.

The other children at his school thought Ato was weird because he was so quiet and never joined in their play. The truth was that Ato was shy and a little frightened of, well, almost everything. With
the old phone booth, he could pretend to be anything he wanted to be.

One day, he was the captain of a ship; the next, he was a king in his castle. For some reason he could not explain, he had never felt afraid being by himself in the woods or in the phone booth without a soul nearby.

The day Ato turned seven, a terrible incident occurred: his father intervened in a street fight in a nearby town and was fatally stabbed. He died on the streets, alone, long before the police and the ambulance reached him.

For days on end, Ato would hide away in his special place whenever he had the chance and cry himself hoarse. Then one afternoon, his mother came to fetch him, took him home, and smiling through her own tears, told him about the angel called
Sunshine, who had become her friend when she lost her mother a long, long time ago...