

# Nana Yaa Asantewaa

By Melz. (Melissa Owusu)

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This song is about the power and strength of black women, in a time and a context far removed from the Western conceptualisation of ‘feminism’. It tells of a woman, Nana Yaa Asantewaa who told the men of her clan that the British had no right to their land or the fruits of their labour, and thus began the final Anglo-Ashanti war also known as The War of the Golden Stool, in 1900. This song explores how the Ashanti people were fighters and not prepared to give up the Golden Stool to Queen Victoria of Britain, as it was the single item that united the whole Ashanti Kingdom. Nana Yaa Asantewaa organised a sustained defence against the British colonisers, in which she held them in a fort and gained full control over them. It was only due to Nana Yaa making a decision to free the women and children from captivity that the defence fell. A letter was carried by a woman to modern-day Nigeria to alert other British colonisers that they were being held in captivity.

I wrote this song as a young Black British person, to reflect on our position in society. We are distinct from many black people in the Americas because our history in the West has been a far shorter one and therefore we have knowledge of the homelands our families came from. Yet, living in Britain, as generation to generation are born into this previously foreign land, we struggle to create an identity for ourselves. This song is the reflection of that identity whilst handling a very important topic of colonial rule, and my use of the South East London colloquial language is the expression of Black Britain for me in this piece. That I am Nana Yaa Asantewaa, as are my sisters, that on these shores, we will continue to fight the ills of neo-colonialism and racism that plague contemporary life. The central theme of this song is that Black women are incredible and have been for a long time, despite narratives and stereotypes that have risen in the West to suggest otherwise.



## References

Fuller, H. (2014). Commemorating an African queen: Ghanaian nationalism, the African diaspora, and the public memory of Nana Yaa Asantewaa, 1952–2009. *African Arts*, 47(4), 58–71. doi:10.1162/AFAR\_a\_00183

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Nana Yaa Asantewaa  
Warrior Queen of the Ashanti Kingdom  
Nana Yaa Asantewaa  
Fought the British when the men didn't  
Nana Yaa Asantewaa  
Our history forgets we Queens like  
Nana Yaa Asantewaa  
Nana Yaa Asantewaa

Imma tell you a story about the Gold Coast  
Britain instated their rule  
Pillar to post  
They took slaves  
Straight from Cape Coast  
To Kingston Virginia  
And who the heck knows  
Anyway the place was formally known  
As the Ashanti Kingdom  
Where the fiercest rose  
Everyone knew our Kente was dope  
Festivals of yam, when the crop grows  
They try tell us our culture was false  
Sent missionaries, to change our moral code  
Soldiers brought Kumasi to a halt  
Searching, searching for all of our Gold

Something for their museums to hold  
Yaa Asantewaa was having none of it though  
She said if the men won't fight  
The women will take these colonial foes

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I'm a Queen like Nana Yaa Asantewaa  
I'm a Queen like women all over Africa  
God bless the Queens like my own mother  
I see a Queen every time that I look in the mirror  
You might say I'm gassed and that  
That black girls shouldn't think like that  
So wait pass me the drink and that  
So I can throw it in your face you pratt  
Anyways, feminism didn't come from white women  
They didn't come and give us the bring in  
Yeah Sojourner came to speak Truth  
To put a few dents in that glass roof  
But we were doing this thing before Western ties  
Western ties were our societies demise  
We were doing this thing before Western ties  
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So much black girl magic

When black girls back it

Fighting beauty standards

We don't inhabit

When we come through best know that we clap it

Black women are beautiful across the plant

Them features, they used to tease us for in school

Have all of a sudden become the look that's cool

You want them big lips

You want that big ass

You want them big thighs

You want to look nice

Ask Saartjie Baartman who paid the price

Exhibited in Zoos

Until she died

All for the features you now fetishize

Right?

Black women are beautiful

Black women are smart

Black women are Queens

Black women are art

She's your mum, your daughter, your friend and your aunt

Love black women, black women are love.

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