



The hat seller

- A folktale from Sri Lanka



Once upon a time, there was a poor hat seller in Sri Lanka. He used to make hats. All types of hats. Caps, cowboy hats, sun hats, and Santa hats.

He kept all his hats in a giant basket which he carried on his head.



Every day, the man walked through the woods. He went from town to town, village to village, market to market and sold his fine hats. One day, the man walked far and sold lots of hats. His legs were tired now, he was hungry and he felt hot in the sun.



He came upon a large shady tree.

He leaned his back against the tree and ate his food in the peaceful shade.



There he fell asleep, with his hand on the basket.



But he was not all by himself there. There were monkeys in the tree above him. A lot of monkeys, curiously watching the snoring man who wore a hat on his head. Carefully, they climbed down the tree. They tiptoed towards the man. 'Hoo-hoo-hoo'

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They sneaked past him, and carefully, without the man noticing, they stole the hats from the basket and put them on their heads. 'Hoo-hoo-hoo'. They exchanged hats with each other, played catch and throw and had heaps of fun. 'Hoo-hoo-hoo, hae-hae-hae ...'



The noise woke up the man, who stood up and looked around.

‘What? My basket’s empty!’



Suddenly, he saw monkeys jumping everywhere, wearing baby hats, ladies' hats, and wool hats. His hats. 'Hey, give me my hats back!' he shouted. But the monkeys quickly climbed up the tree and hid themselves.



‘Stupid monkeys, rascals, thieves!’

He swung his arms and shook fists at them, and the monkeys swung their arms and shook fists at him.



The man was very annoyed; he picked up some dry leaves and threw a fistful at the monkeys. The monkeys snatched leaves from the tree and threw them at the man.



The man broke a twig off the tree and aimed at the monkeys with it.



Daayeeradina inta ay iyana laamo soo jajabsadeen ayay ku soo tuureen ninkii.

Every single monkey broke a twig off the tree and aimed at the man.



"You're just doing whatever I do. Hm! You're aping, mimicking." Then the man had an idea. He carefully took off his hat, and all the monkeys took off their hats. The man waved his hat, and the monkeys waved to the man with their hats.



The man threw his hat down, and just as he had thought, all the monkeys threw their hats down. There was a rain of straw hats, knit caps and men's hats.



The man quickly picked up all hats, put them in the basket, placed the basket on his head, and went away.



The man sold the rest of his hats that day and went home with a funny story to share with his family.



And that is how the story ends.



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