



# Dhegdheer the Witch

- A Somali folktale



Once upon a time two children set out to walk through a large, magical forest in Somalia.



‘Watch out for Dhegdheer, the witch who has long ears!’ warned the adults. ‘Yes, we will watch out for Dhegdheer,’ said the children.



Holding hands, they walked deep into the woods.



Suddenly they came upon a clearing in the woods. There was a bonfire there. A tall lady wearing a shawl over her head sat by the fire.



The children sat down,  
and the lady started  
telling a story:



She said: 'Sheko skeko! Sheko harir!'

Yes, we want a story, said the children. 'Listen, my children,' said the lady. There were once a mum and a dad who lived together with their beloved little boy. But one day, mum and dad got into a fight ....



'No!' said the mum, 'No, no, no!' shouted the mum. 'No, never and no way!'







'Is dad going to leave us?' asked the boy.



‘Yes, and if he leaves, so shall we.

This game can be played by two!’ said the mum.

She grabbed the little boy by the hand and left home.



They walked and walked, until the sun started to set. The boy said: 'Mum, I cannot walk any more.'



An old lady came towards them.  
She said: 'Hello, hello!' and she invited  
them into a magnificent room.



Inside there was a big platter of sweet and delicious food.



The boy stared out of the window, all wide-eyed.



The old lady removed her shawl from her head, revealing two long, long ears that reached all the way down to her shoulders.

She skipped around the bonfire and sang:





'The scared ones do not taste. The happy ones are great on plate!'



'Oh no, look at her long ears, it's the witch, it's Dhegdheer!'



‘Come, my dear!’ said the mum and carried the little boy on her back, she tied him to herself and ran out in the dark.



She heard Dhegdheer behind her, who was singing 'The scared ones do not taste. The happy ones are great on plate!' The mum ran as fast as never before.



Suddenly, she came upon a river but she did not know how to swim.

Right there, in the moonlight, she heard a voice, a voice so very familiar to her: 'Fatima, throw the boy over here!'



She threw the boy across the river, and as soon as she felt Dhegdheer breathing right behind her, she leapt and jumped over the river, right in the arms of her beloved husband.



As the two held each other in their arms, she asked:  
'Dear husband, is it true that Dhegdheer cannot cross over water? Well... thank God for that!'



‘Indeed!’ said the lady and removed the shawl from her head. Two long, long ears were dangling there.

The lady sang ‘The scared ones do not taste. The happy ones are great on plate!’

And that is how the story ends!





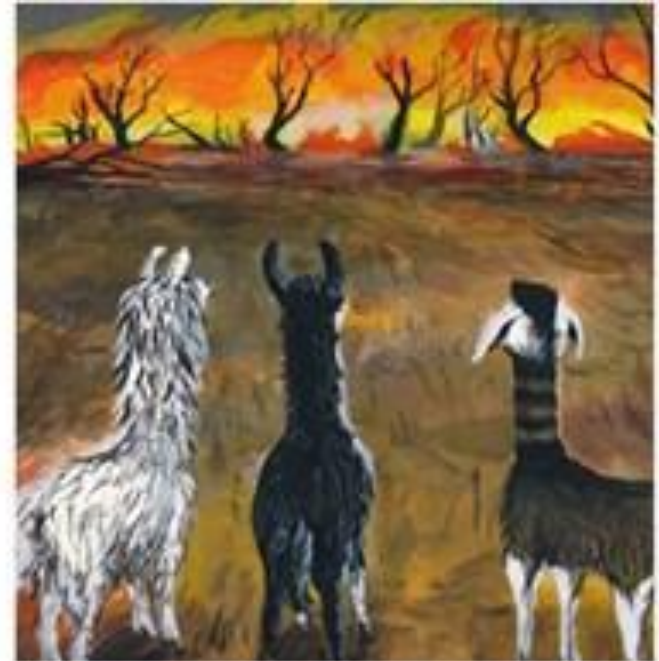
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