



Publisher and

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Summary:

This is a retelling of a traditional Somali folktale. The monstrous Dhegdheer is looking for her next meal. She chases a mother and her son, trying to capture them to be her food. A story of good versus evil, good triumphs in the end. This is one of four Somali folktales published as bilingual children's picture books through the Minnesota Humanities Center's Somali Bilingual Book Project.

(Visit www.mnhum.org/somalibooks to learn more.)

Suggested Ages: 4-6, 7-10

Reading Tips:

Show children a globe or world map to point out the country of Somalia.

Share this story when reading tales with similar monstrous characters such as *Hansel & Gretel* or *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Compare and contrast the tales. Use these tales to compare fact and fiction.

The Somali words in the English text of the story are pronounced:
Dhegdheer (Deg/Dur); Bowdheer (Bo/dare).

Read the author's note before you read this story to children.

Read the story all the way through in one language at a time for easier comprehension. If the reader is not bilingual, use the dual-language audio recording (www.mnhum.org/somalibooks), published by the Minnesota Humanities Center, to play the story in the additional language.

Before Reading:

Can you describe the character, Dhegdheer, based on the picture shown on the cover of the book?

Dhegdheer is also called a scary Somali folktale. Do you like scary stories? Do you have a favorite scary story?

Introduction:

"This is a story about a scary woman named Dhegdheer. She is trying to catch a woman and her son to gobble them up. Let's see if the woman and her son get away..."

After Reading:

Are you afraid of Dhegdheer? Do you think she is real or not? Why or why not?

How did the woman and her son escape from Dhegdheer?
Why couldn't Dhegdheer do the same thing?

Look at the illustrations of the land at the beginning of the book and the final page of the book. What happened to the land after Dhegdheer died?

Related Activities

Art: Make a bookmark by copying one of the designs found in the book's art. (author's note page, or final page are good examples). Use crayons, cray-pas, or paint.

Dramatization: Have children dress up as the characters in the story and act it out.

Create a flannelboard for this story and have children retell the story through the use of flannel characters. Children can make up their own ending to the story.

Language: Have children identify an opposite for descriptive words that you name from the story (thin – fat, strong – weak, long – short, hungry – full, old – new, large – small, whisper – shout, etc.)

This is an oral tale and each telling is a bit different. Have children practice telling this story by flipping through the illustrations and recalling what they can. Children can add details, change the events in the story, or alter the ending. Have children share their “retelling” orally with the class or in small groups.

Writing: Have children select an illustration from the story and write their own description of that picture. Have children read the descriptions to the class to see if others can identify which illustration it matches.

Other: For more ideas on using folktales and fables, visit:

edsitement.neh.gov/subject/literature-language-arts, then click *Aesop and Ananse*.

Suggestions for English

Language Learners: Have children summarize the story. Write simple summary sentences on large sentence strips to use in “re-telling” the story as a group.

Invite Somali children to share different versions of this story, or invite Somali parents to come share different versions that they may know.

Related Books

The Lion's Share/Qayb Libaax* by Said Salah Ahmed, illustrated by Kelly Dupre (2007)

Wiil Waal: A Somali Folktale* by Kathleen Moriarty, illustrated by Amin Amir (2007)

The Travels of Igal Shidad* by Kelly Dupre, illustrated by Amin Amir (2007)

Hansel & Gretel by Rika Lesser, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky (1999)

Jack and the Beanstalk by Stephen Kellogg (1991)

*Also published by the Minnesota Humanities Center.