

Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *Dhegdheer, A Scary Somali Folktale*

Author: Marian A. Hassan

Illustrator: Betsy Bowen

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2007

Connection to Minnesota author, Minnesota publisher

Summary: This is a retelling of a traditional Somali folktale.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

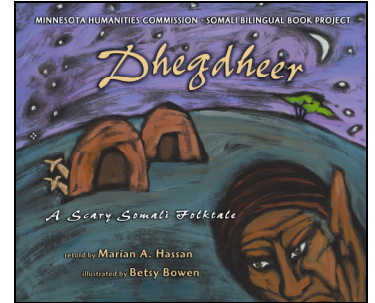
Tips for Reading:

- 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 in *Hansel and 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 CD, published by the Minnesota Humanities Commission, to play the story in the additional language.

**Questions
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?

**To Introduce
this story say:** 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...



**Questions
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?
- 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, craypas, or paint.

Culture:

- Learn more about Somali culture, visit: <http://www.cal.org/co/somali/index.html>
- Look through the illustrations to find examples of items that are part of nomadic life (house, water jugs, mats, animals)
- Discuss what lesson can be learned from this story. Share the author's note with children and discuss.

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/fables visit, http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=240

**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*** by Said Salah Ahmed, illustrated by Kelly Dupre (Minnesota Humanities Commission, 2007)
- ***Hansel and Gretel*** by Rika Lesser, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky (Dutton Juvenile, 1999)
- ***Jack and the Beanstalk*** by Stephen Kellogg (HarperCollins, 1991)

