

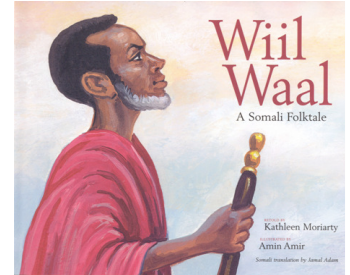
Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *Wiil Waal: A Somali Folktale*

Author: Kathleen Moriarty

Illustrator: Amin Amir

Translator: Jamal Adam



Publisher and Copyright Date: Minnesota Humanities Center, 2007

Connection to Minnesota: Minnesota author, Minnesota translator, Minnesota publisher

Summary: This is a retelling of a traditional Somali folktale. A sultan poses a riddle that the men of the land must solve. One poor man's daughter advises her father and has astonishing results. This is one of four Somali folktales published as bilingual children's picture books through the Minnesota Humanities Center's Somali Bilingual Book Project.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- 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, produced by the Minnesota Humanities Center, to play the story in the additional language. For more information, visit: www.minnesotahumanities.org

Questions before reading:

- What do you think life was like in Somali long ago? What kind of houses did people live in? What kind of clothes did people wear? What foods did people eat? Are any of these things still true in Somalia today?
- This story has a riddle in it. What riddles do you know?
- What do you think is the answer to this riddle: Which part of a sheep is a symbol for what makes people friends or enemies?

To Introduce this story say: This is a story about a Somali sultan who is looking for a wise man. He asks men to answer the riddle we just discussed. Whoever can answer it will be named a wise man. Let's listen to how the riddle is solved in this story...

Questions After Reading:

- What happened at the end of the story – on the last page?
- Why did the girl choose the gullet as a symbol of what can unite people or divide them – make people friends or enemies?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Art:**
- Write up riddles on small cards. Draw the answer to the riddle on the other side. Use these to share in small group, taking turns to guess the answers.
 - Cut out pictures from magazines to make a collage that shows greed. Make another collage that shows generosity. Talk about the differences in the images.
- Dramatization:**
- Small groups of students identify the main points in the story and then (setting the book aside) retell the story. Several groups present to the whole group. Discuss the variations that appear in each retelling from a book and from an oral tale.
- Language:**
- Identify language within the story that indicates that it takes place long ago.
- Culture:**
- For general information about Somali culture, visit: <http://www.cal.org/co/somali/index.html>
 - Have students page through the book again to talk about what they learned about Somali culture from the text and/or illustrations.
- Writing:**
- Find the definition for the nickname, Wiil Waal, in the author's note. Students can compile a chart of nicknames that they have. Each student can talk about why or how they received their nickname, who gave it to them, and how they feel about their nickname.
- Other:**
- For more ideas on using folktales/fables, visit: http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=240
 - For more information about the Somali books, visit: www.minnesotahumanities.org
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- Use a story map to assist students in identifying the setting, characters, conflict, plot and theme of the story.
 - For Somali ESL students, play the Somali version on the dual language CD.
- Related Books:**
- ***Mama Panya/s Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya*** by Mary and Rich Chamberlin, illustrated by Julia Cairns (Barefoot Books, 2005)
 - ***The Serpent Slayer and Other Stories of Strong Women*** by Katrina Tchana, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2000)
 - ***The Lion's Share/Qayb Libaax*** by Said Salah Ahmed, illustrated by Kelly Dupre (Minnesota Humanities Center, 2007)
 - ***Dhegdheer, A Scary Somali Folktale*** by Marian A. Hassan, illustrated by Betsy Bowen (Minnesota Humanities Center, 2007)
 - ***The Travels of Igal Shidad*** by Kelly Dupre, illustrated by Amin Amir (Minnesota Humanities Center, 2008)

