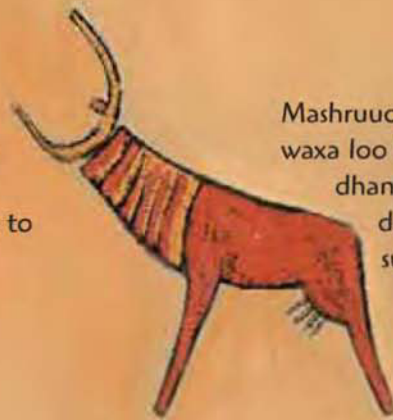


MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER

SOMALI BILINGUAL BOOK PROJECT

The Somali Bilingual Book Project is dedicated to all refugee children and their families. Many thanks to those who shared stories to make this project possible.



Mashruuca Buuggaga af-Soomaaliga ee labada-af ah, waxa loo hibeyey dhamaan carruurta qaxootiga ah oo dhan iyo qoysaskooda. Way ku mahadsan yihiin dadkii sheekooyinkooda noo soo bandhigay ee suurta galiyey hirgelinta mashruucan.

*In honor of Barbara Knutson  
and her love of the stories of the world. — BB*

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*Buuggaan waxa ku qoran qaybna dib looma daabaci karo marnaba iyada oo aan ogoaasho qoraal ah laga helin soo saaraha.*

Minnesota Humanities Commission / Somali Bilingual Book Project  
987 East Ivy Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106  
[www.minnesotahumanities.org](http://www.minnesotahumanities.org)

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The illustrations are painted in gouache on black gesso.

The Somali Bilingual Book Project is a component of the Minnesota Humanities Commission's Bilingual and Heritage Language Programs. These programs strengthen families' English literacy skills while recognizing and supporting the role of families' home languages in early literacy development. Through these programs, MHC reaches out to K-6 teachers, parent educators, early childhood educators, librarians, social service providers, and other literacy professionals. Bilingual and Heritage Language programs: connect educators to existing resources that enhance language development; offer professional development on oral traditions and the connection between language and culture; and collaborate with community representatives to develop new culturally and linguistically appropriate resources. The Somali Bilingual Book Project initially includes the publication of four traditional Somali folktales — *The Lion's Share*, *Dhegdheer*, *The Travels of Igal Shidad*, and *Wii Waal* — in hardcover and paperback editions and a dual-language audio recording of all four stories.

Visit [www.minnesotahumanities.org](http://www.minnesotahumanities.org) to download free online resources for use in educational settings.

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*Waxaa lagu daabayay United States of America.*

## Author's Note

A favorite Somali folktale, Dhegdheer has been passed down through many generations. Like the "boogey man" from European folklore, Dhegdheer is used to "scare" children into good behavior. Families caution their children: *Don't wander out alone or Dhegdheer is going to get you.* The story of Dhegdheer imparts the very important message of good and evil. Essentially, it illustrates the idea that we are protected by universal justice, which is at work all the time.

Dhegdheer is told in many versions throughout the different regions of Somalia. In the most common version, Dhegdheer dies at the hand of her daughter. In this retelling, that ending has been changed to one in which a greater force intervenes.

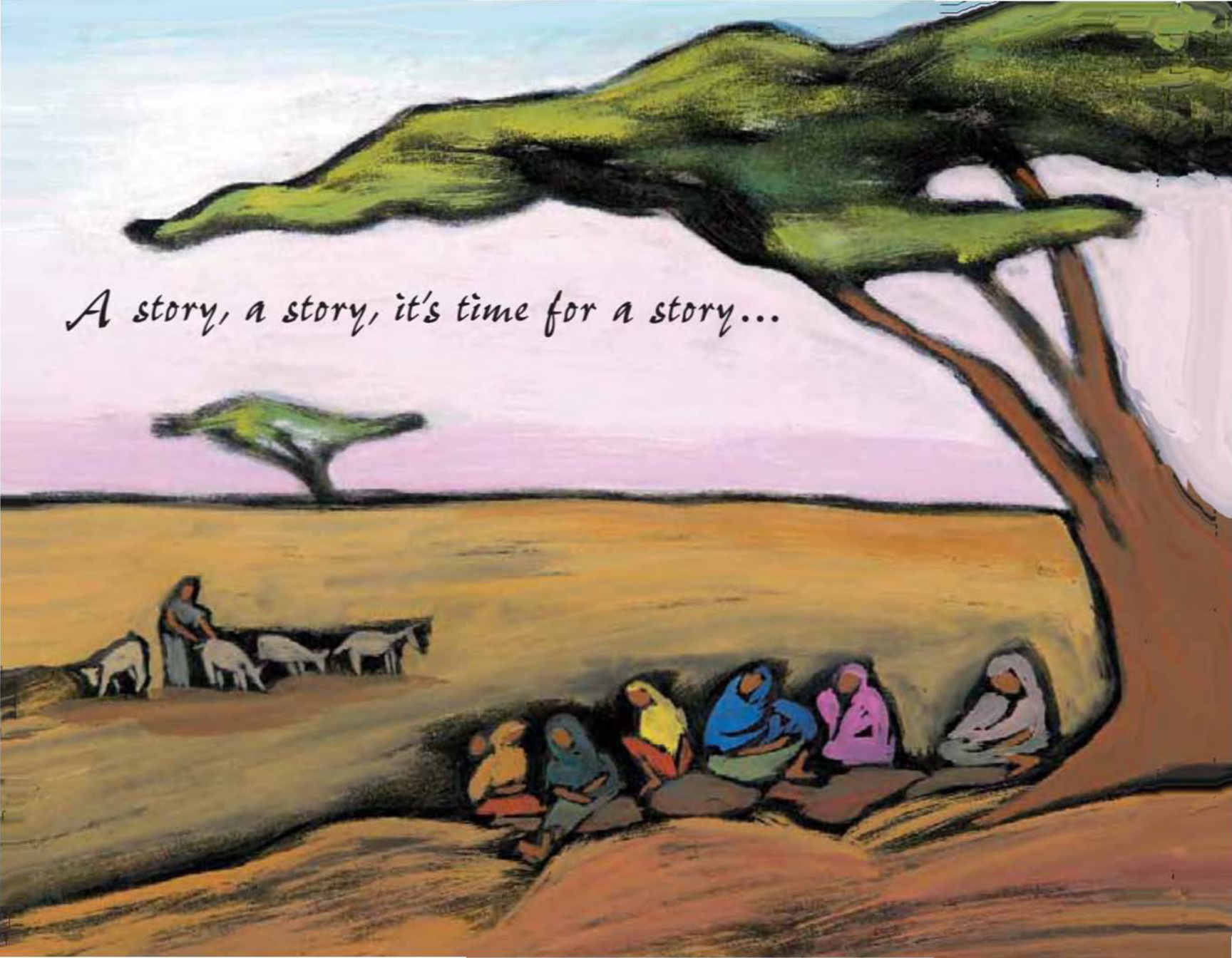
## Ereyga Qoraaga

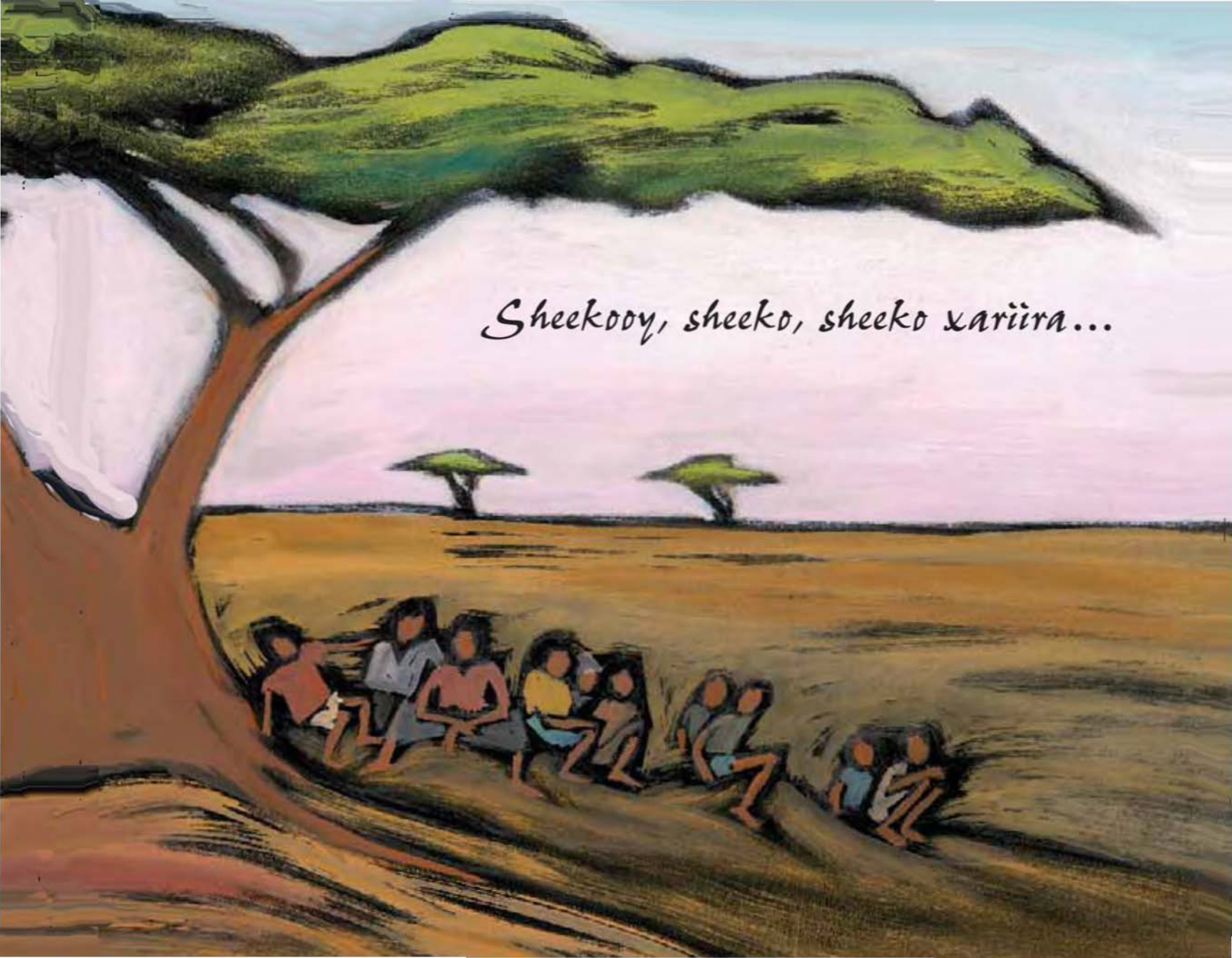
Dhegdheer waa mid ka mid ah kuwa loogu jecel yahay sheeko xariirooyinka Soomaalida. Waa sheeko qarniyo badan jiiiba jiil u gudbinayey, sida sheeka-xariirta reer Yurub ee "boogey man" oo ku saabsan nin lago baqo. Dhegdheer waxaa loo adeegsadaa in carruurta lagu "cabsiiyo" si ay uga haraan dhaqammada xun-xun. Waalidiintu carruurta yaryar bay uga digaan: *Keligaa dibadda ha aadin ama Dhegdheer baa ku qaadan doonta.* Sheekada Dhegdheer waxaa lagu fasiran karaa inaan magan u nahay awoodda dhabta ah oo kala wadda dunida, mar walbana garsoorka leh.

Dhegdheer waxaa sheekadeeda gobollada Soomaalida looga sheekeeyaa siyaabo kala duwan, tan ugu caansanna waa midda Dhegdheer ay gabadheedu aakhirka dilayso. Sida halkan looga soo tebinayo, Dhegdheer dhimashadeeda waxaa sabab looga dhigay musiibo xagga rabbi looga soo diray.

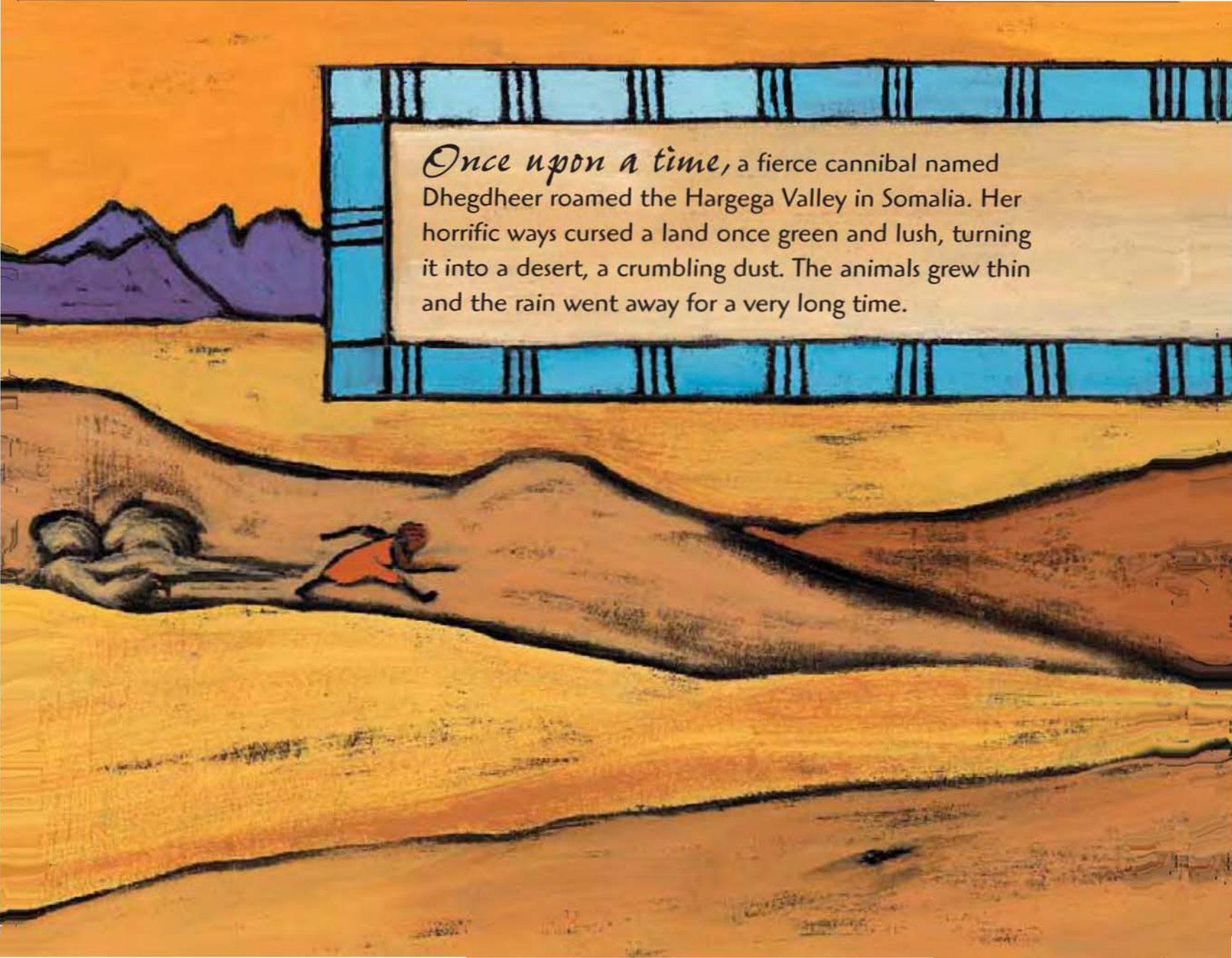


*A story, a story, it's time for a story...*

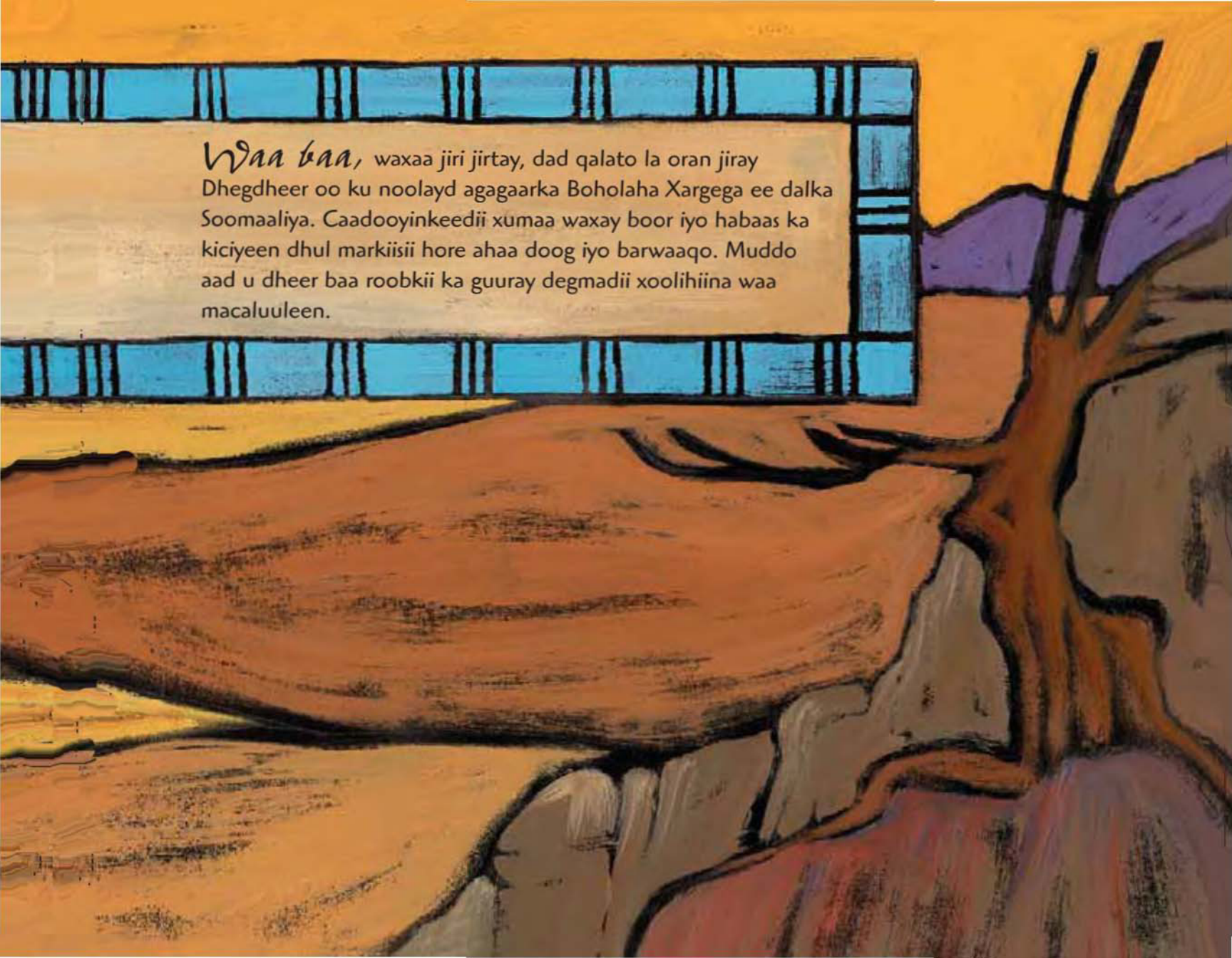




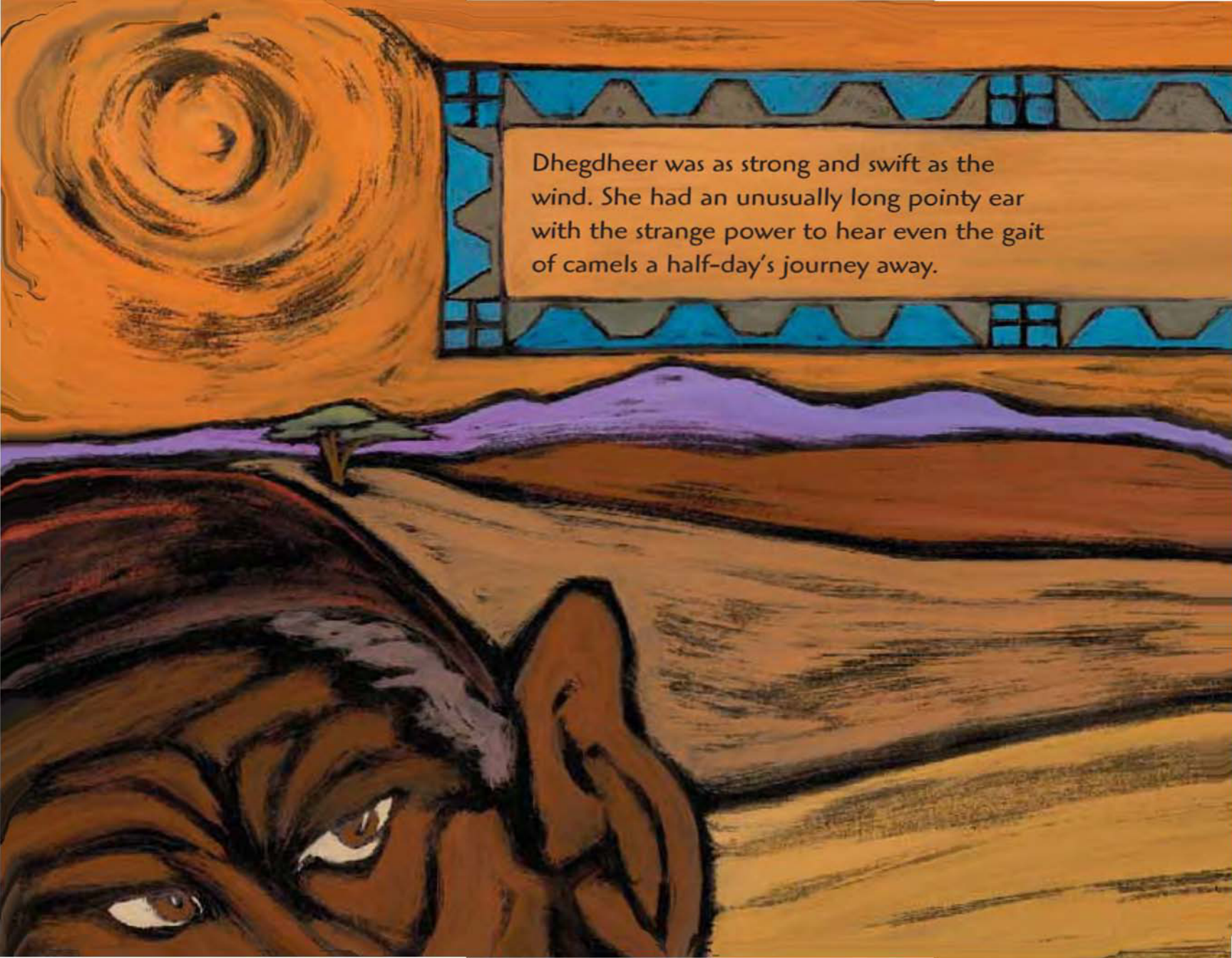
*Sheekooy, sheeko, sheeko xariira...*

The illustration depicts a vast, arid desert landscape. The ground is rendered in shades of yellow and orange, with dark, wavy lines suggesting dunes or ridges. In the distance, a range of jagged mountains is colored in a deep purple. A small figure, a person wearing a red tunic and a brown hat, is shown running across the middle ground from left to right. To the left of the runner, there are some dark, rounded shapes that could be rocks or small shrubs. The sky is a solid, bright orange. A large, white rectangular text box with a blue border is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image.

*Once upon a time,* a fierce cannibal named Dhegdheer roamed the Hargega Valley in Somalia. Her horrific ways cursed a land once green and lush, turning it into a desert, a crumbling dust. The animals grew thin and the rain went away for a very long time.



*Waa baa*, waxaa jiri jirtay, dad qalato la oran jiray  
Dhegdheer oo ku noolayd agagaarka Boholaha Xargega ee dalka  
Soomaaliya. Caadooyinkeedii xumaa waxay boor iyo habaas ka  
kiciyeen dhul markiisii hore ahaa doog iyo barwaaqo. Muddo  
aad u dheer baa roobkii ka guuray degmadii xoolihiina waa  
macaluuleen.



Dhegdheer was as strong and swift as the wind. She had an unusually long pointy ear with the strange power to hear even the gait of camels a half-day's journey away.

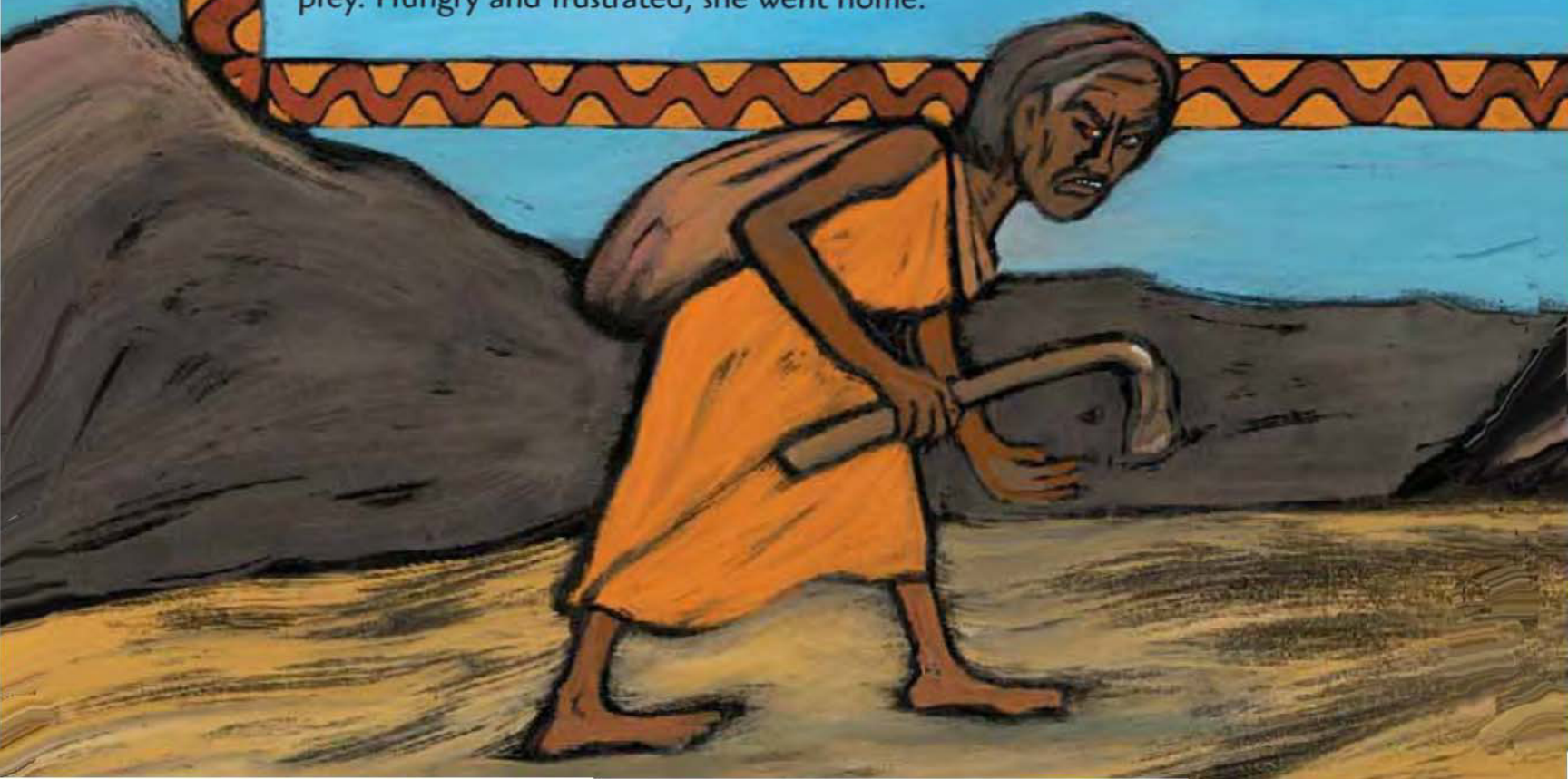


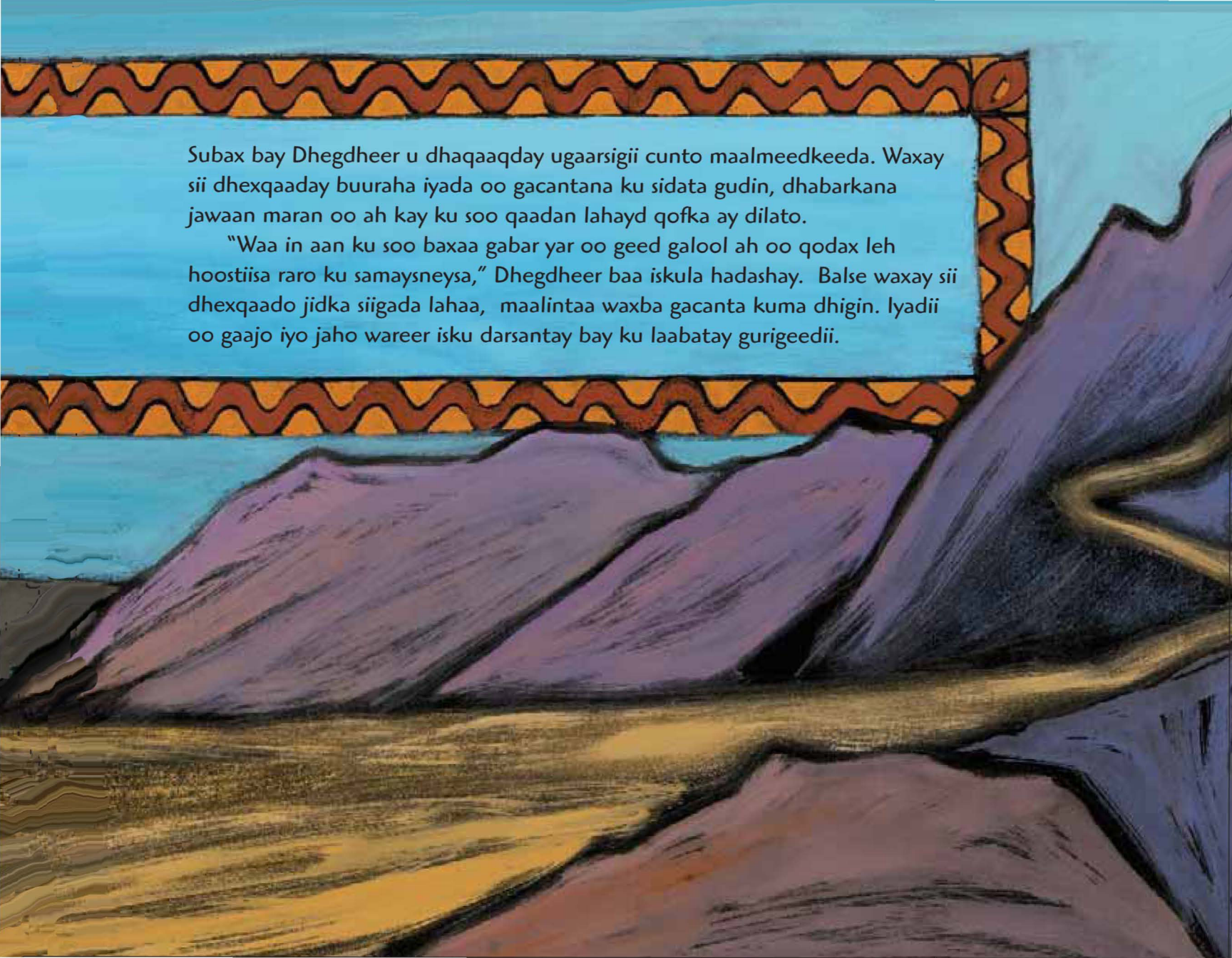
Dhegdheer aad bay u xoog weynayd una lali jirtay sida dabaysha xagaa. Waxay lahayd Dheg si layaab leh u dheer, lehna awoodda cajiibka ah oo ay ku maqasho shanqarta saanta geel daaqaya meel jirta maalin barkeed.



One morning, Dhegdheer set out on her daily hunt for her next meal. She rummaged anxiously through the steep hills, a hatchet in her hand and an empty sack on her back to bring home her finds.

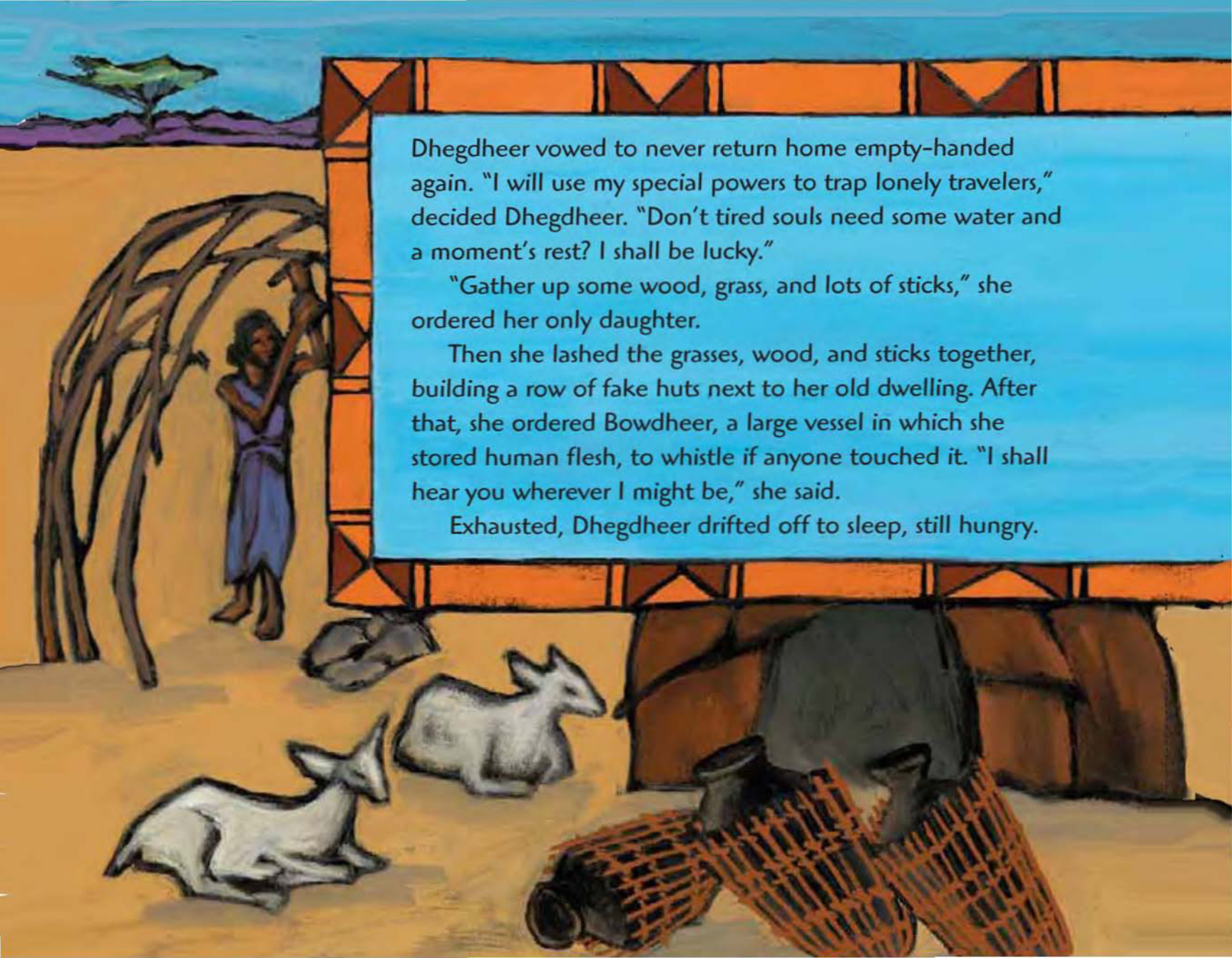
"I shall come upon a young woman weaving mats under a thorn tree," she told herself. But throughout the dusty roads, Dhegdheer found no prey. Hungry and frustrated, she went home.





Subax bay Dhegdheer u dhaqaaqday ugaarsigii cunto maalmeedkeeda. Waxay sii dhexqaaday buuraha iyada oo gacantana ku sidata gudin, dhabarkana jawaan maran oo ah kay ku soo qaadan lahayd qofka ay dilato.

“Waa in aan ku soo baxaa gabar yar oo geed galool ah oo qodax leh hoostiisa raro ku samaysneysa,” Dhegdheer baa iskula hadashay. Balse waxay sii dhexqaado jidka siigada lahaa, maalintaa waxba gacanta kuma dhigin. Iyadii oo gaajo iyo jaho wareer isku darsantay bay ku laabatay gurigeedii.

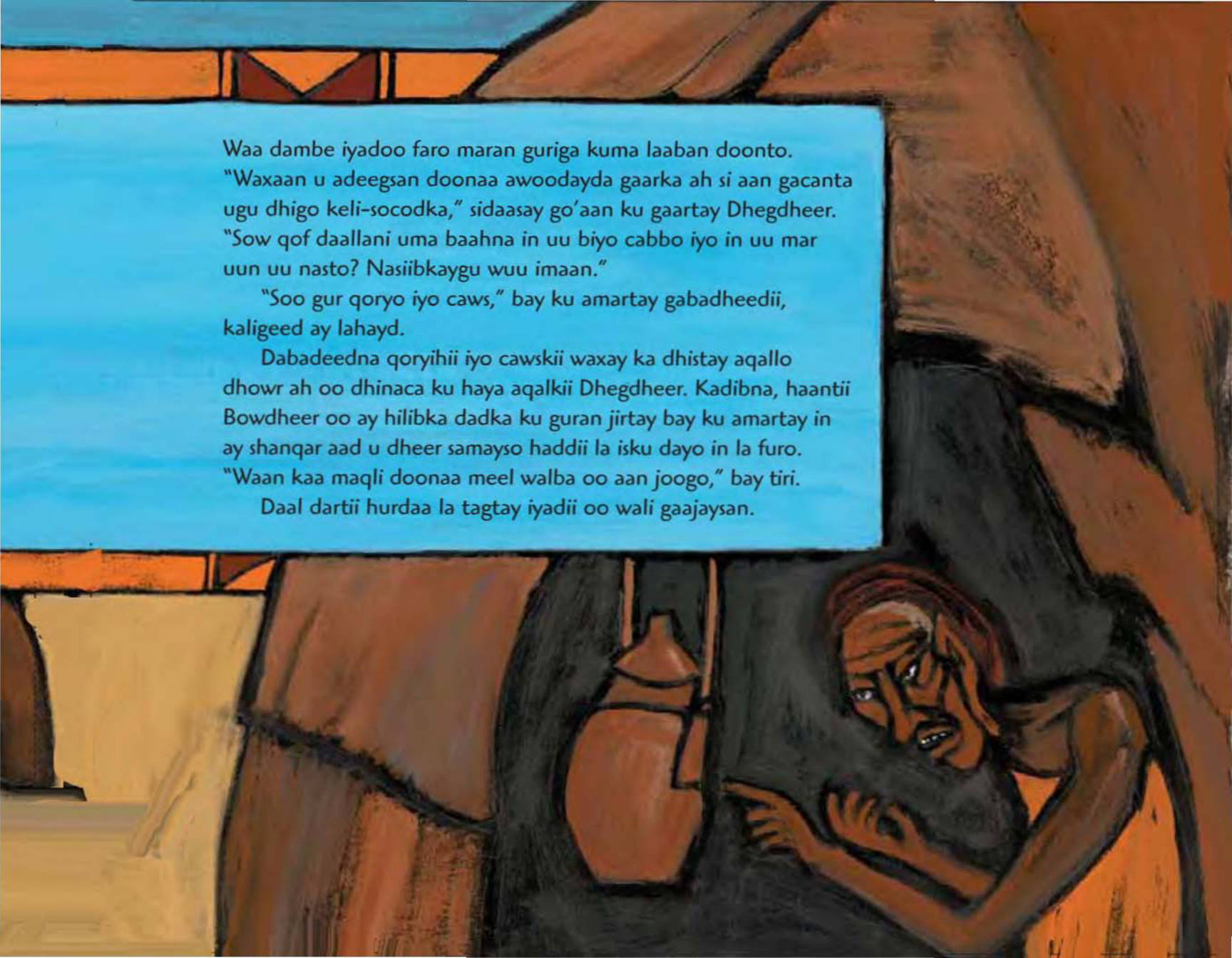
A woman in a purple dress is building a structure of sticks in a desert landscape. The structure is made of many long, thin sticks and is partially completed. In the background, there is a small tree and a blue sky. The woman is standing next to the structure, holding a stick. The ground is sandy and yellow. There are some animals, including a goat and a dog, in the foreground. There are also some woven baskets or traps on the ground. The scene is set in a desert environment with a blue sky and a small tree in the distance.

Dhegdheer vowed to never return home empty-handed again. "I will use my special powers to trap lonely travelers," decided Dhegdheer. "Don't tired souls need some water and a moment's rest? I shall be lucky."

"Gather up some wood, grass, and lots of sticks," she ordered her only daughter.

Then she lashed the grasses, wood, and sticks together, building a row of fake huts next to her old dwelling. After that, she ordered Bowdheer, a large vessel in which she stored human flesh, to whistle if anyone touched it. "I shall hear you wherever I might be," she said.

Exhausted, Dhegdheer drifted off to sleep, still hungry.



Waa dambe iyadoo faro maran guriga kuma laaban doonto.  
"Waxaan u adeegsan doonaa awoodayda gaarka ah si aan gacanta ugu dhigo keli-socodka," sidaasay go'aan ku gaartay Dhegdheer.  
"Sow qof daallani uma baahna in uu biyo cabbo iyo in uu mar uun uu nasto? Nasiibkaygu wuu imaan."

"Soo gur qoryo iyo caws," bay ku amartay gabadheedii, kaligeed ay lahayd.

Dabadeedna qoryihii iyo cawskii waxay ka dhistay aqallo dhowr ah oo dhinaca ku haya aqalkii Dhegdheer. Kadibna, haantii Bowdheer oo ay hilibka dadka ku guran jirtay bay ku amartay in ay shanqar aad u dheer samayso haddii la isku dayo in la furo.  
"Waan kaa maqli doonaa meel walba oo aan joogo," bay tiri.

Daal dartii hurdaa la tagtay iyadii oo wali gaajaysan.



That evening, along the dirt road near Dhegdheer's home came a grieving widow with a chubby child on her back. The woman was determined not to rest until she returned to her family's home. But she and her child were hungry and tired. They were thrilled to come upon the huts.

"Please give us some water so you might someday be spared of thirst?" the woman asked in the traditional way.

Dhegdheer's daughter quickly responded to the woman. "Here, drink this," she said, handing the woman a cup.

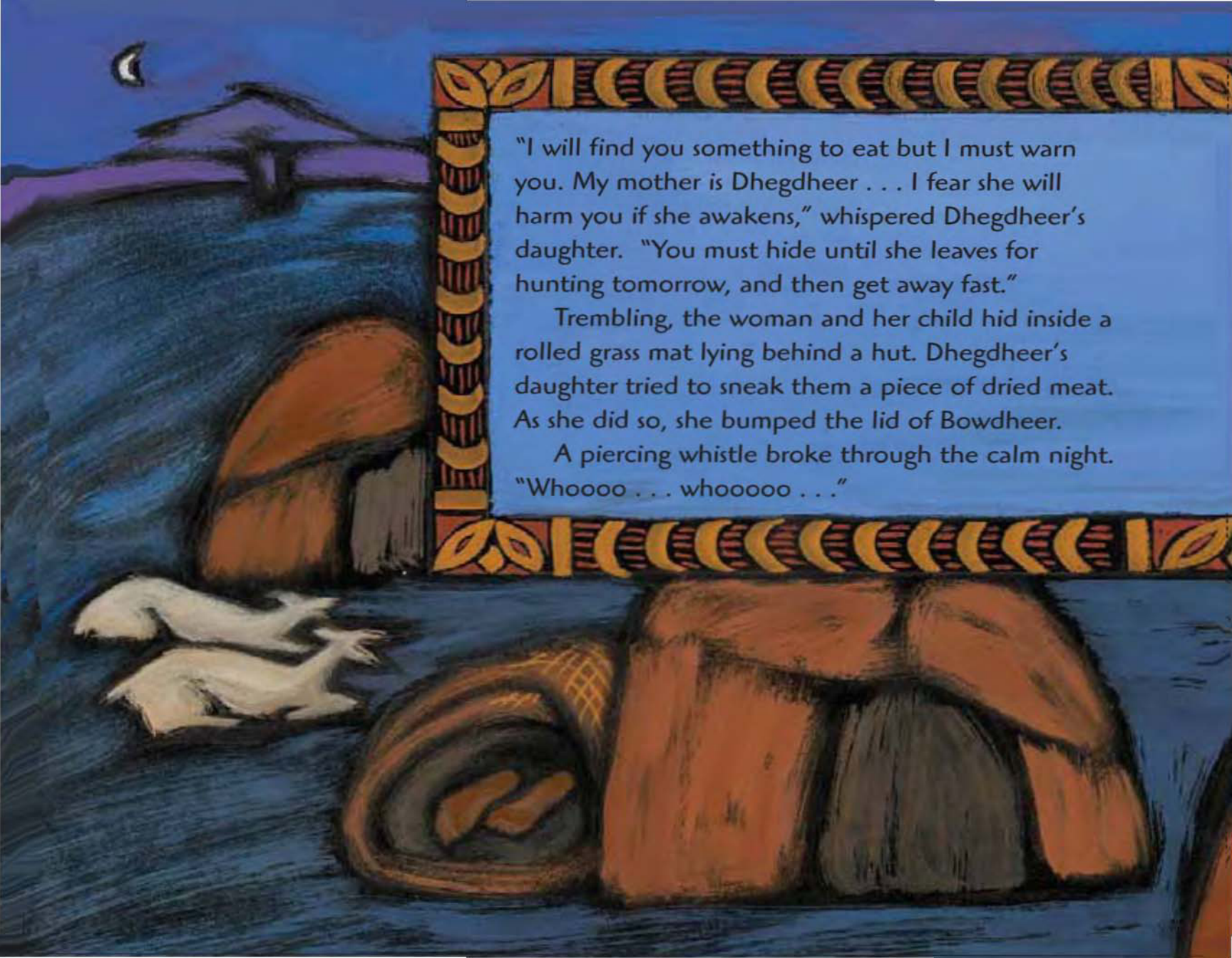


Habeenkaas, waxaa waddada soo martay haweeney ninkee dii dhintay, ilmo yarna xambaarsan. Nasasho ma aysan rabin ilaa ay ka gaadho gurigii reerkooda. Hase yeeshee, iyada iyo ilmaha yari way daallanaayeen, wayna gaajaysnaayeen. Aad bay ugu farxeen markay indhaha ka qaadeen deegaan-lamoodkii Dhegdheer.

"Gabadhooy, na waraabi, in aan Ilaahay ku oomin?" ayey haweenaydii u wediisatey gabadhii Dhegdheer siduu dhaqanku ahaa.

Gabadhu si dhaqso ah bay ugu jawaabtay. "Hooya biyahan cabba," iyada oo u dhiibaysa aagaan biyo ah.






"I will find you something to eat but I must warn you. My mother is Dhegdheer . . . I fear she will harm you if she awakens," whispered Dhegdheer's daughter. "You must hide until she leaves for hunting tomorrow, and then get away fast."

Trembling, the woman and her child hid inside a rolled grass mat lying behind a hut. Dhegdheer's daughter tried to sneak them a piece of dried meat. As she did so, she bumped the lid of Bowdheer.

A piercing whistle broke through the calm night. "Whoooo . . . whooooo . . ."





Waxayna raacisay, “Waan idin marti gelin lahaa, oo idin haraad iyo gaajo tiri lahaa, laakiin gurigaad timaadeen waa kii Dhegdheer.” Iyada oo hadalka hoos u dhigaysa ayey uga digtay, “Ogsoonaada, hooyaday Dhegdheer in aydaan ka badbaadi doonin hadday hurdada ka toosto. Waa in aad ka dhuumataan ilaa ay ugaarsi u jarmaadayso, dabadeedna si dhaqso ah aad naftiina u badbaadisaan,” ayey tiri.

Baqdin ayey la gariirtay haweenaydii. Waxayse naf ka raadiyeen inay iyada iyo ilmaheedii yaraa ku gabbadaan raro duuduuban aqalka gadaashiisa. Ina Dhegdheerna waxay u dhaqaaqday sidii ay ugu soo qarin lahayd martida, waxay cunaan. Markii ay dhaqaaqdayba yartii way kuftay. Furkii baa haantii Bowdheer ka duulay.

Qaylo dhego jabis ah ayaa hal mara xasiloonidii habeenka burburisay.  
“Bow . . . Bow . . .”



Dhegdheer leaped out of her sleep. "Oh! My Alla! Who touched my vessel?"

"I tried to find my dried goat meat inside the clay jar but I mistakenly bumped Bowdheer," said Dhegdheer's daughter.

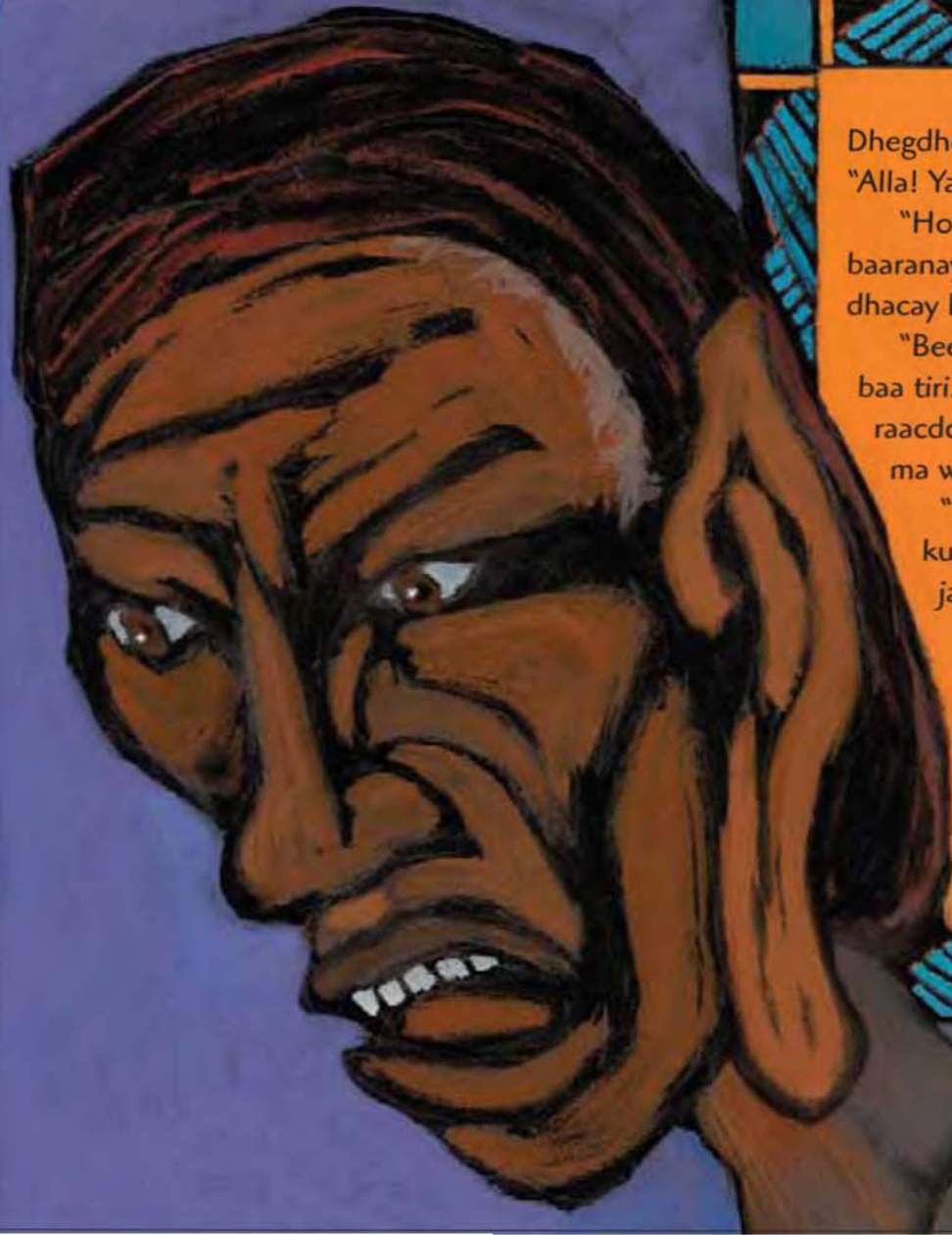
"You are lying to me!" Dhegdheer said. She started to sniff and snuffle. "Is it a fat little boy I smell?"

"Do you smell the creases of my own fat, mother?" asked the daughter.

"I smell the flesh of a young woman," Dhegdheer yelled, growing impatient and angry.

"It's my own flesh, mother," replied her daughter.





Dhegdheer hurddadii ayey ka toostay!  
"Alla! Yaa taabtay haantayda?"

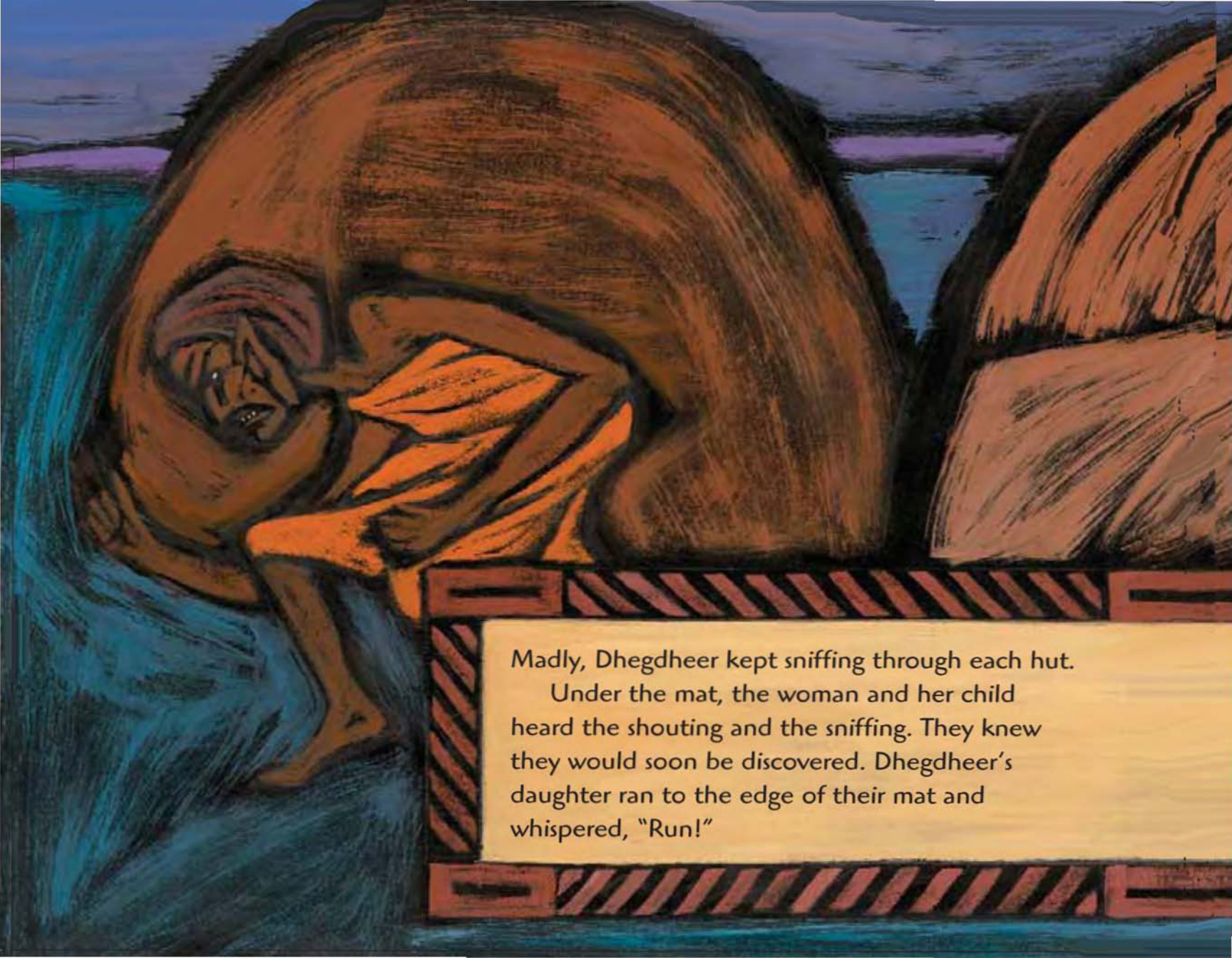
"Hooyo aniga oo hilib solay ah ka baaranaya saabka dusha suran, ayaan ku dhacay Bowdheer," bay tiri gabadhii.

"Been baad ii sheegi!" Dhegdheer baa tiri. Waxay bilowday inay sanko la raacdo hadba jaho. "Waxa ii soo uraya ma wiil yaroo buuran baa?"

"Ma baruurtaydaa hooyo waxa kuu uray?" ayey gabadhii ku jawaabtey.

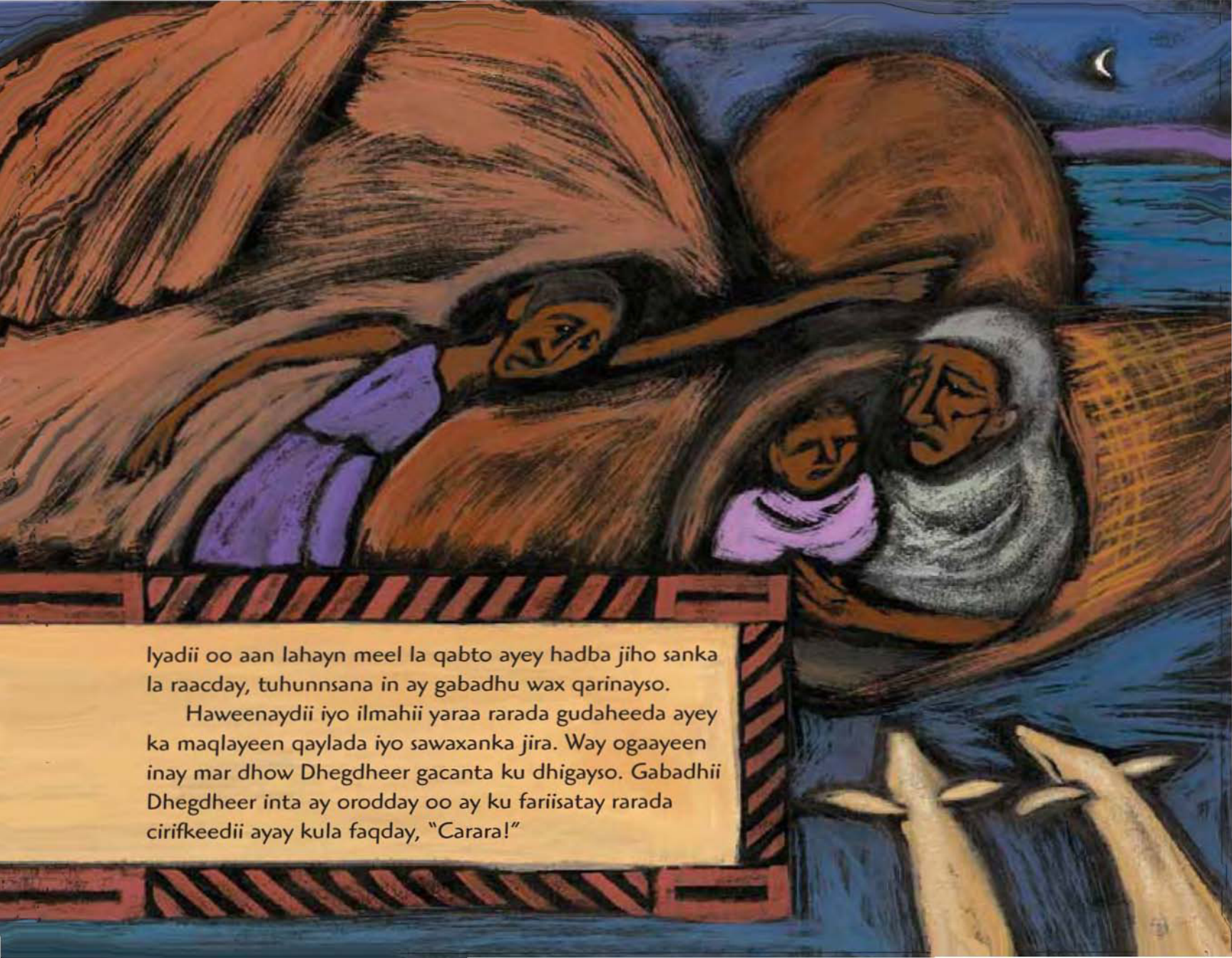
"Waxa ii uraya hilbo gabar yar," ayey si cadho ah u tiri Dhegdheer.

"Hooyo waa jidhkayga," ayey mar kale, gabadhii Dhegdheer ku celisey.



Madly, Dhegdheer kept sniffing through each hut.

Under the mat, the woman and her child heard the shouting and the sniffing. They knew they would soon be discovered. Dhegdheer's daughter ran to the edge of their mat and whispered, "Run!"



Iyadii oo aan lahayn meel la qabto ayey hadba jiho sanka la raacday, tuhunnsana in ay gabadhu wax qaridayso.

Haweenaydii iyo ilmahii yaraa rarada gudaheeda ayey ka maqlayeen qaylada iyo sawaxanka jira. Way ogaayeen inay mar dhow Dhegdheer gacanta ku dhigayso. Gabadhii Dhegdheer inta ay orodday oo ay ku fariisatay rarada cirifkeedii ayay kula faqday, "Carara!"



The woman stood with the child on her back. Trembling with fear, she could hardly move.

She called upon Allah, "May we be spared from the troubles of Dhegdheer." With her prayers, came the courage to run.

She knew Dhegdheer could run as swiftly as the wind.



Haweenaydii sare ayay isu taagtay, ilmihii oo weli dhabarkeeda saaran, baqdin ayayse la dhaqaaqi waydey.

"Ilaahow naga badbaadi belada Dhegdheer," ducadeedii waxaa loogu bedalay karti ay ku oroddo.

Haweenaydu waa ay ogsoonayd in Dhegdheer dabaysha la orod tahay.





*Dhegdheer will eat us alive, for no one can outrun Dhegdheer,* thought the woman. But she kept running and she kept praying. Faster and faster she ran, until she came to the edge of the Hargega Valley. "An enemy is after us, make way for us to escape," she cried to the valley.

The valley spoke: "If you are free of sin, I will allow you to cross. If not, I will eat you up." Because of their innocence, the woman and her child crossed the valley safely.





*Dhegdheer noloshay nagu cuni, ilayn naf ka dheeraysaa ma jirto eh, ayey istiri haweenaydu. Alle-barigeedii orod bay u kordhisey. Orod aan hakis lahayn ayey oroday, . . . oo oroday ilaa ay ka soo gaadhey qarkii Boholaha Xargega. "Jid aan ku baxsano noo bixi, cadow baa na eryanayee," ayey waydiisatay toggii.*

*"Haddii aadan dembi isku ogeyn, waan oggolahay inaad i gudubto, haddii kalese waan ku liqayaa," ayaa waxaa ugu jawaabey toggii. Daacadnimadeedii awgeed, haweentii iyo ilmihii si nabad ah ayey ku dhaafeen Boholaha Xargega.*





Dhegdheer stood on the edge of the valley, staring at the woman and the flesh of the little boy far on the other side. Restless and crying, she chanted her mournful song:

“Oh, Hargega Valley,  
It traps the wings of one flying,  
It closes the way of a fast-running man,  
Look at the plumpness of the woman,  
Look, look at the little boy she is carrying.”

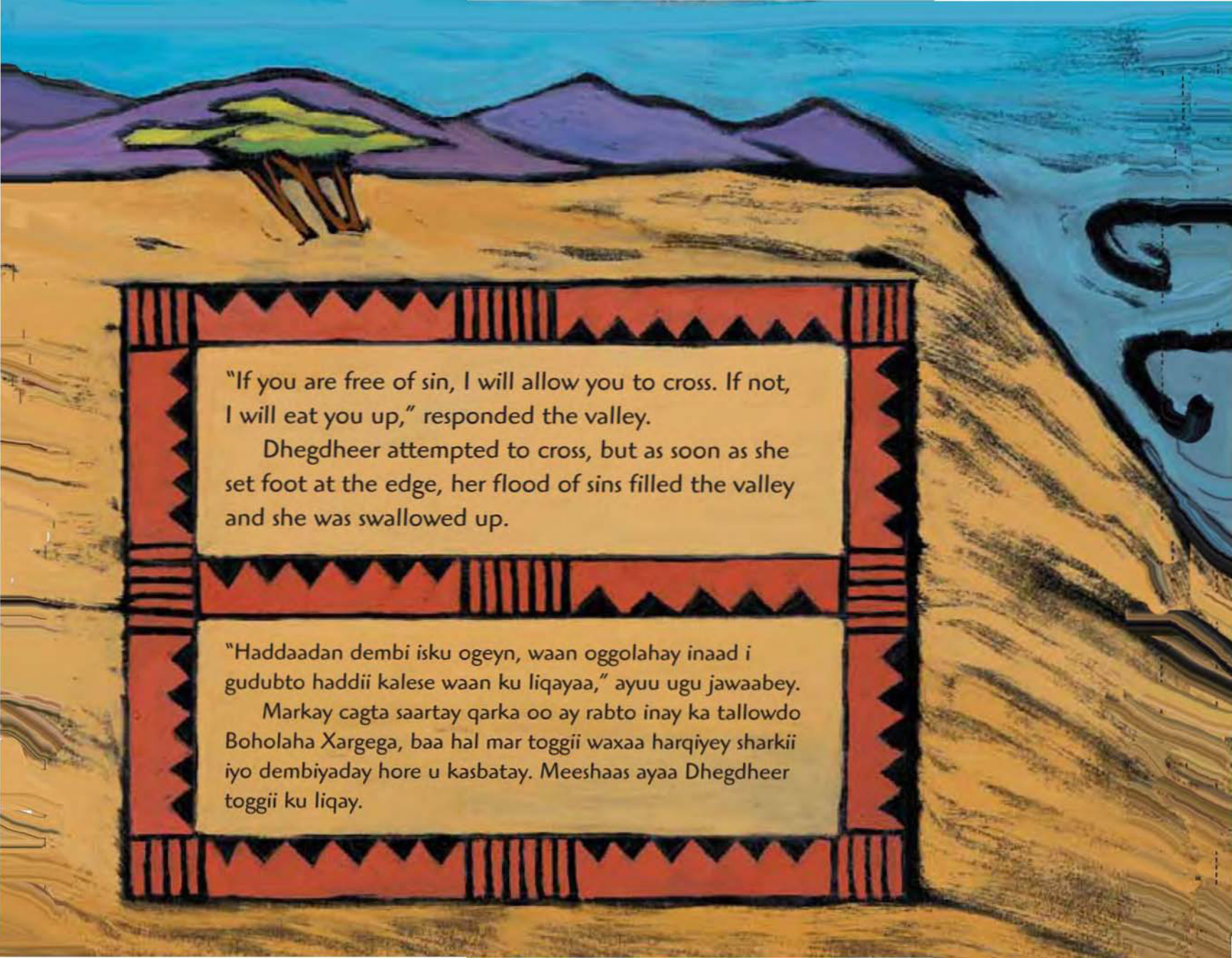
Then she made a desperate request of the valley:  
“Make way for me too, for I am after a chubby child and a woman who have tantalized my appetite.”

Dhegdheer shallaay ayay isla dul taagtey toggi, iyada oo ku sii dhaygagsan haweenaydii iyo wiilka cayilkiisa. Markaasay ku barooratay heesteedii shallaayga ahayd:

“Cakuye Boholaha Xargega,  
Nin Duulaayeey Dabraan,  
Nin xiimaayeey Xiraan,  
Bal naagtaa barida daya,  
Bal wiilkay sidato daya,  
Bal bowdada cadaanta daya,  
Bal buluq buluqdeeda daya.”

Kadibna, Dhegdheer waxay dhiibatey codsi quusasha ah:  
“Anna jid ii fur waxaan eryanayaa cunug yar oo buuran iyo hooyadiis oo gaajo igu kiciyey,” ayey tiri.



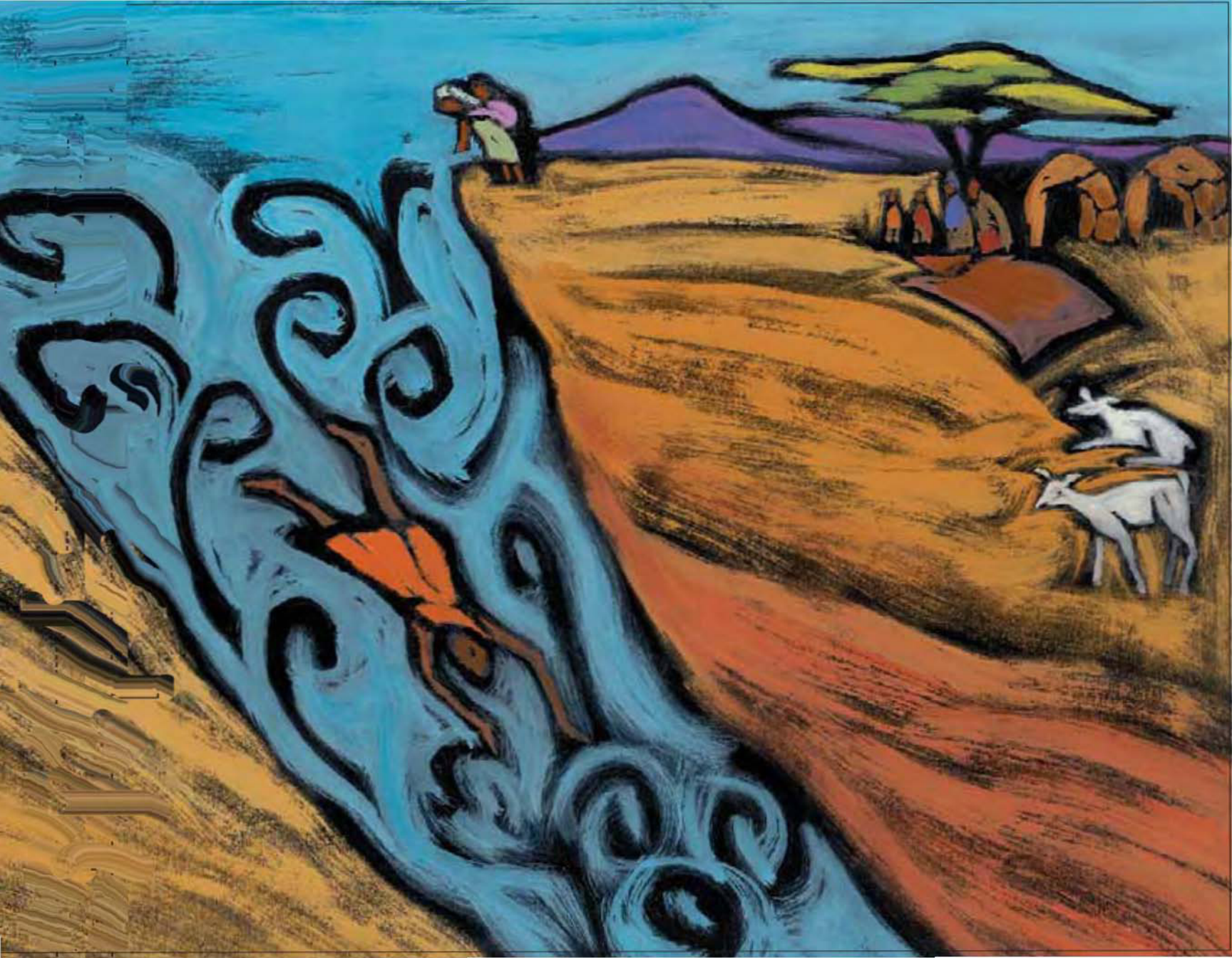


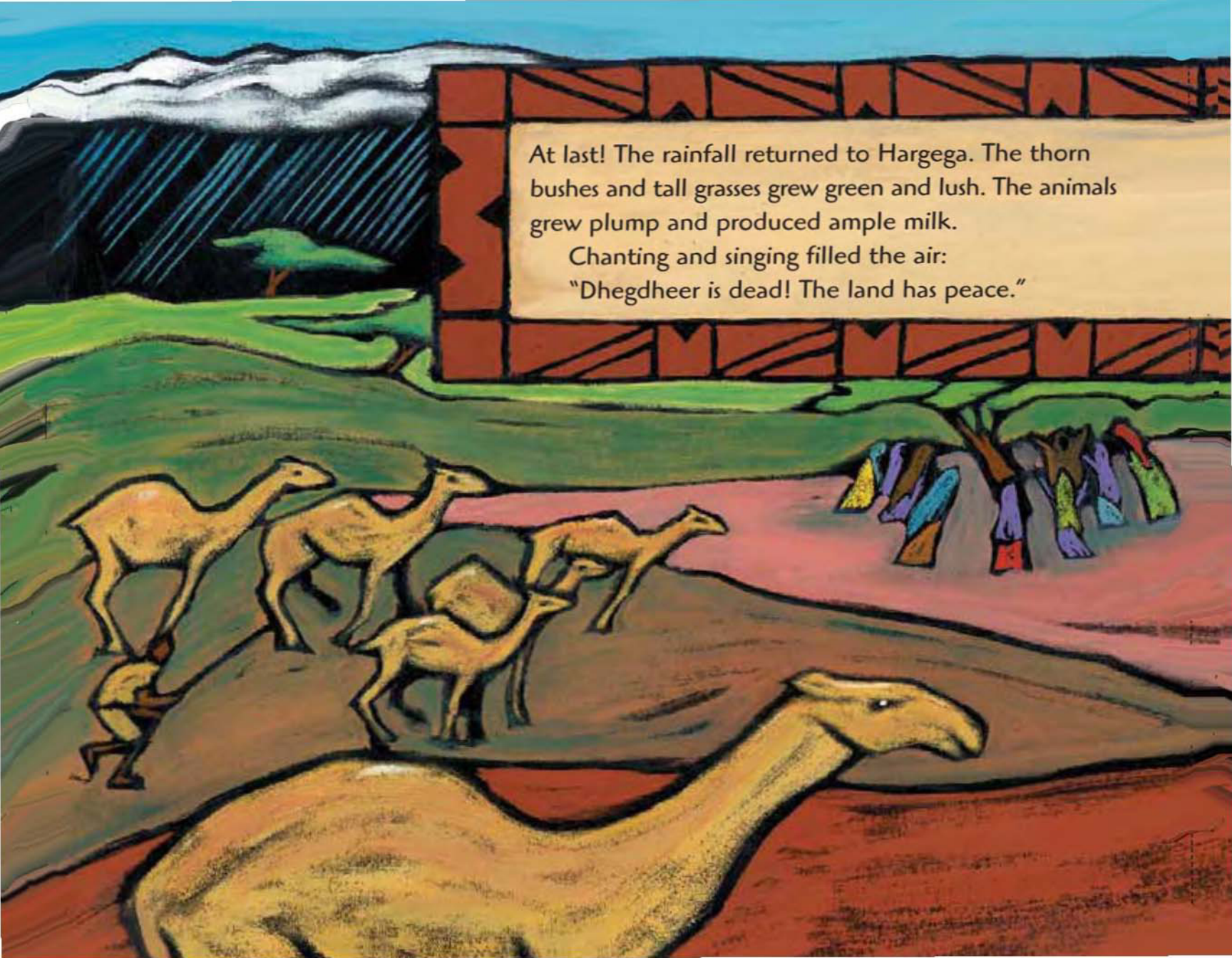
"If you are free of sin, I will allow you to cross. If not, I will eat you up," responded the valley.

Dhegdheer attempted to cross, but as soon as she set foot at the edge, her flood of sins filled the valley and she was swallowed up.

"Haddaadan dembi isku ogeyn, waan oggolahay inaad i gudubto haddii kalese waan ku liqayaa," ayuu ugu jawaabey.

Markay cagta saartay qarka oo ay rabto inay ka tallowdo Boholaha Xargega, baa hal mar toggii waxaa harqiyey sharkii iyo dembiyaday hore u kasbatay. Meeshaas ayaa Dhegdheer toggii ku liqay.





At last! The rainfall returned to Hargega. The thorn bushes and tall grasses grew green and lush. The animals grew plump and produced ample milk.

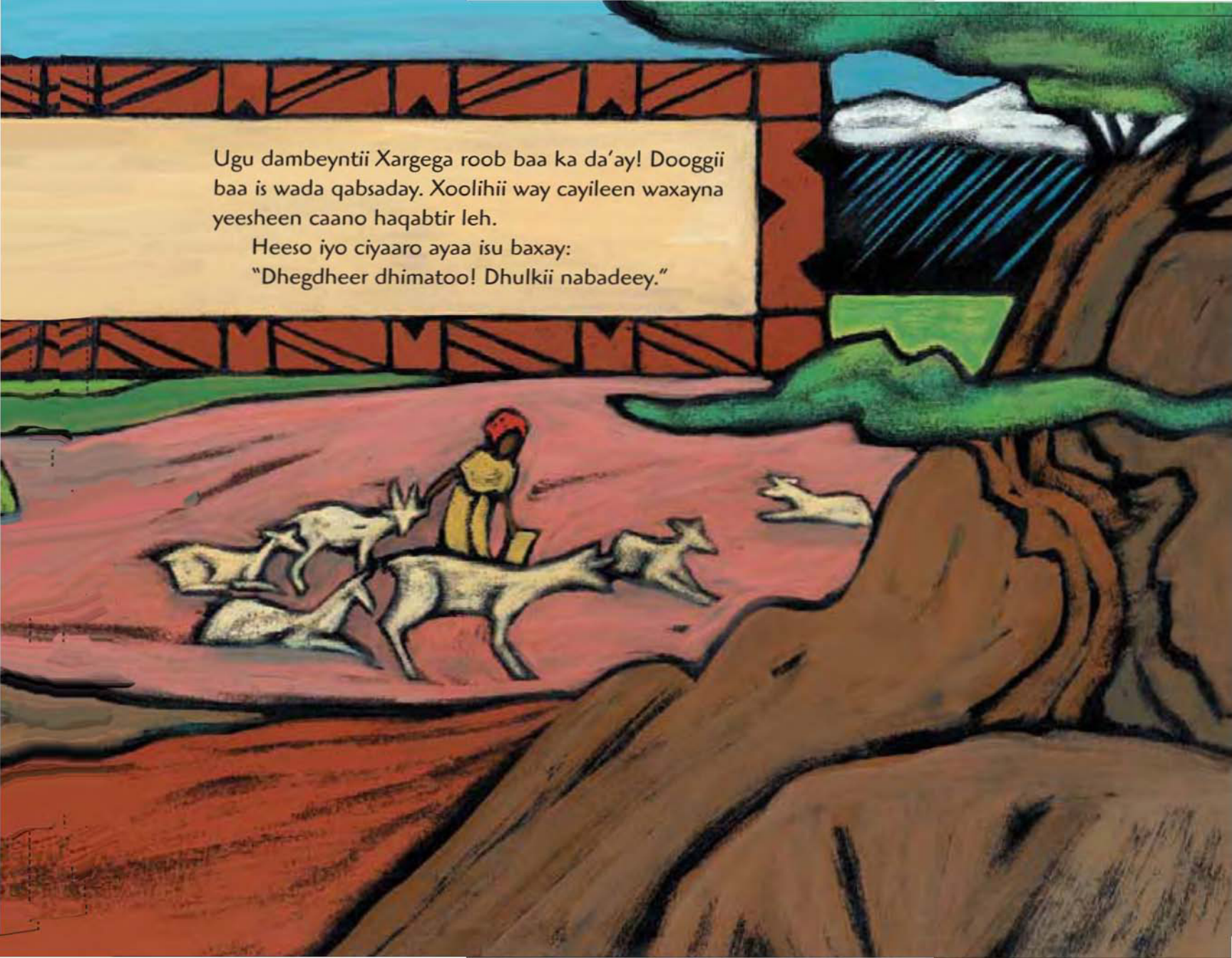
Chanting and singing filled the air:

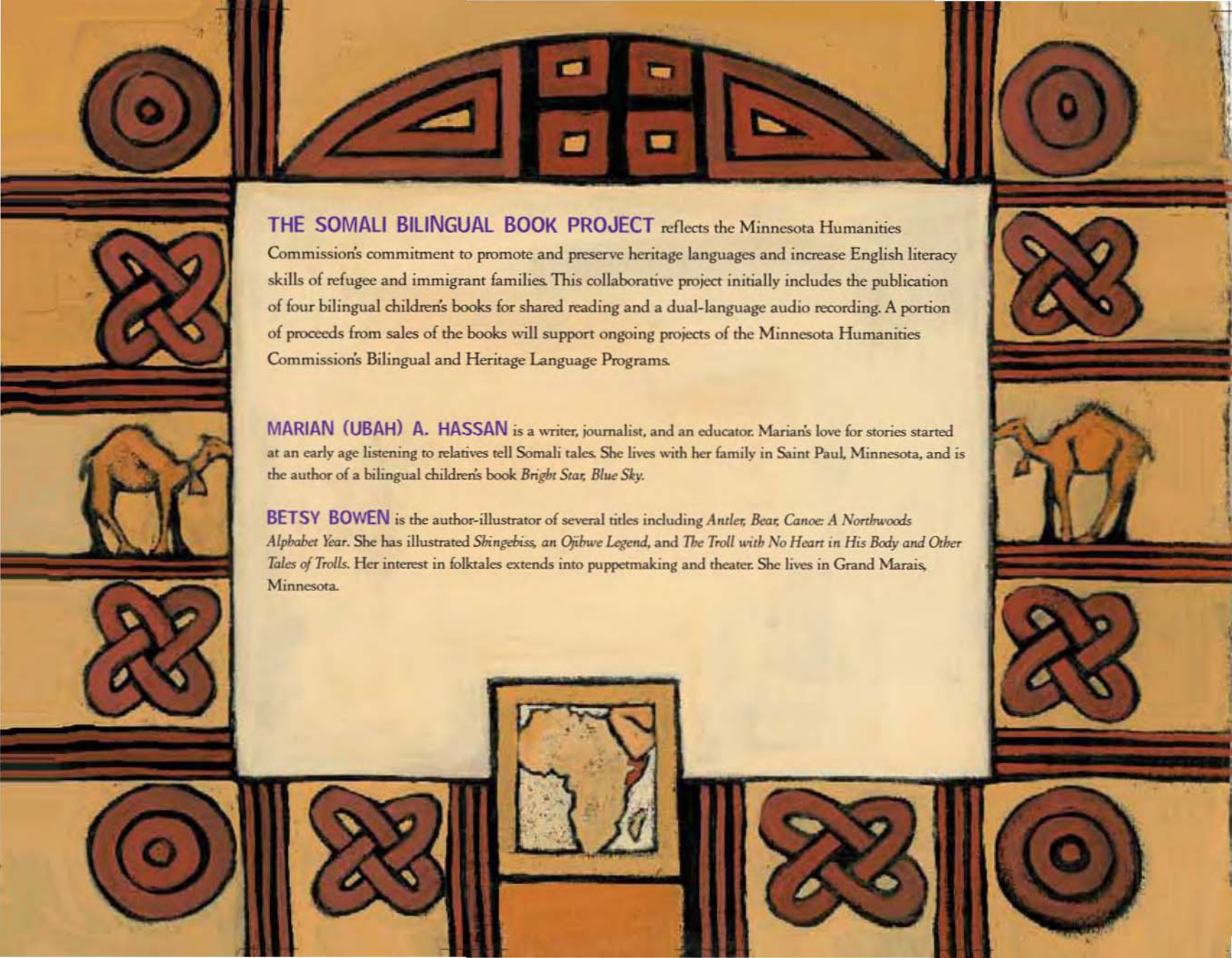
"Dheddheer is dead! The land has peace."

Ugu dambeyntii Xargega roob baa ka da'ay! Dooggii  
baa is wada qabsaday. Xoolihii way cayileen waxayna  
yeesheen caano haqabtir leh.

Heeso iyo ciyaaro ayaa isu baxay:

"Dhegdheer dhimatoo! Dhulkii nabadeey."





**THE SOMALI BILINGUAL BOOK PROJECT** reflects the Minnesota Humanities Commission's commitment to promote and preserve heritage languages and increase English literacy skills of refugee and immigrant families. This collaborative project initially includes the publication of four bilingual children's books for shared reading and a dual-language audio recording. A portion of proceeds from sales of the books will support ongoing projects of the Minnesota Humanities Commission's Bilingual and Heritage Language Programs.

**MARIAN (UBAH) A. HASSAN** is a writer, journalist, and an educator. Marian's love for stories started at an early age listening to relatives tell Somali tales. She lives with her family in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and is the author of a bilingual children's book *Bright Star, Blue Sky*.

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