

A COLLECTION OF  
**STORIES**  
FROM  
**WEST AFRICA**

Compiled and Illustrated by  
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# SPIDER AND BEORGAW



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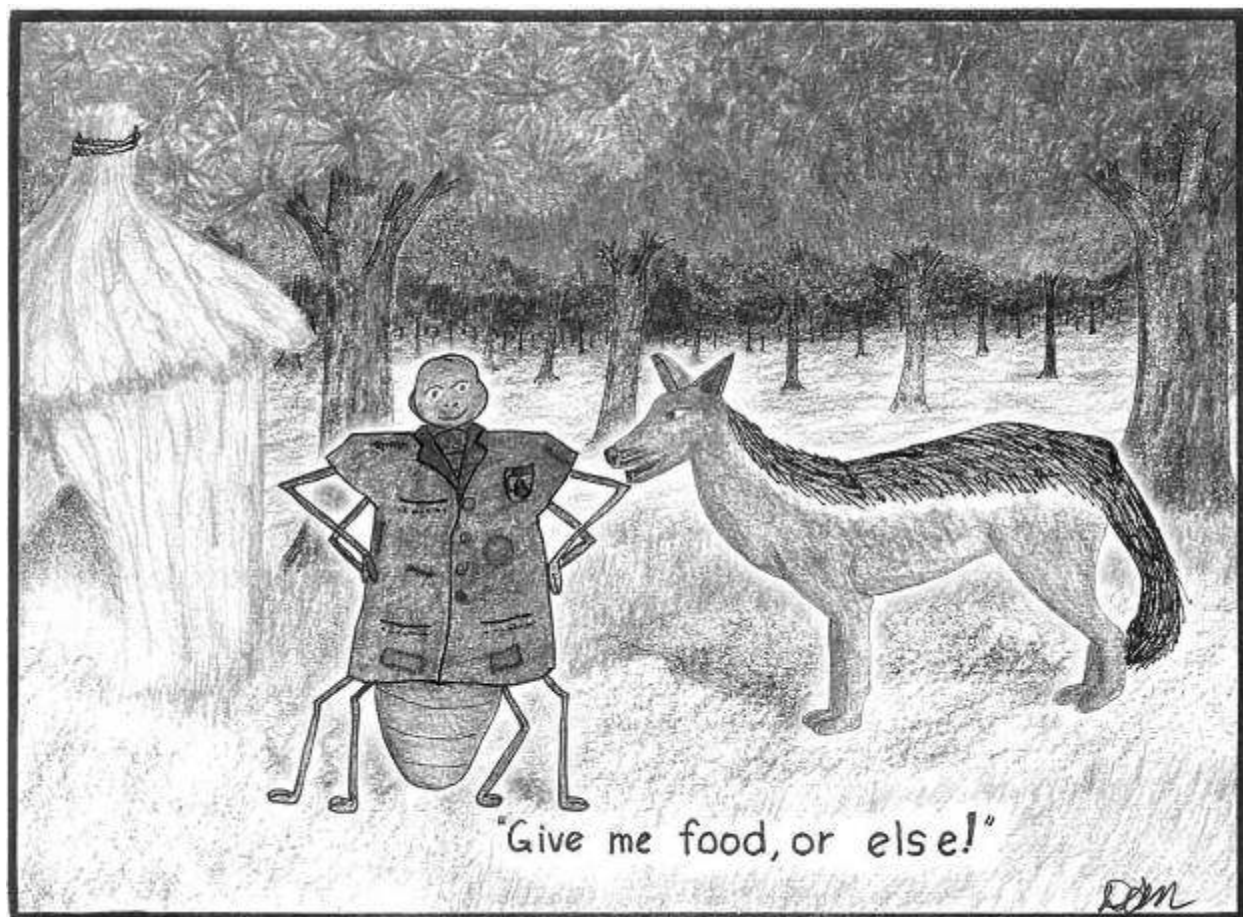
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**By Spark Team**



## SPIDER AND BEORGAW

From a tract by Aunt Clara.

Notes to the reader: Words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics. Beorgaw is likely the black back jackal found mostly in southern and western Africa.

Once there was *hungry time* in the country. Everyone was hungry. There was no rice, no cassava, no eddoes, no potatoes--it was *hungry time for true-o!*

Beorgaw was hungry--no joke! As he walked through the bush, he was so hungry that his tongue was hanging out. To keep it from getting too dry, he would stop to rest, draw his tongue in and close his mouth with a click!

He did not know how long he had been walking. He did not know how far he had walked. He was tired and hungry and that made him cross.

"The first animal that I meet I will force him to give me something to eat, or else!" he said to himself as he walked along. "I am weak, but my claws are sharp."

Well he walked and walked. He could not move fast, but he kept going. Making a turn around a thick cluster of bush, he saw a small house. He recognized it at once. It was the house of Mr. Doe Spider.

"Oho," he said to himself, "Spider is so clever, he'll get me some food or I'll know the reason why not." So up to the door he went.

Beorgaw called out in a loud voice, "Oho, Mr. Spider, I am a tired hungry traveler. Will you let me rest and give me something to eat? I have not eaten for three days." Then he had to stop talking for he was too tired and weak.

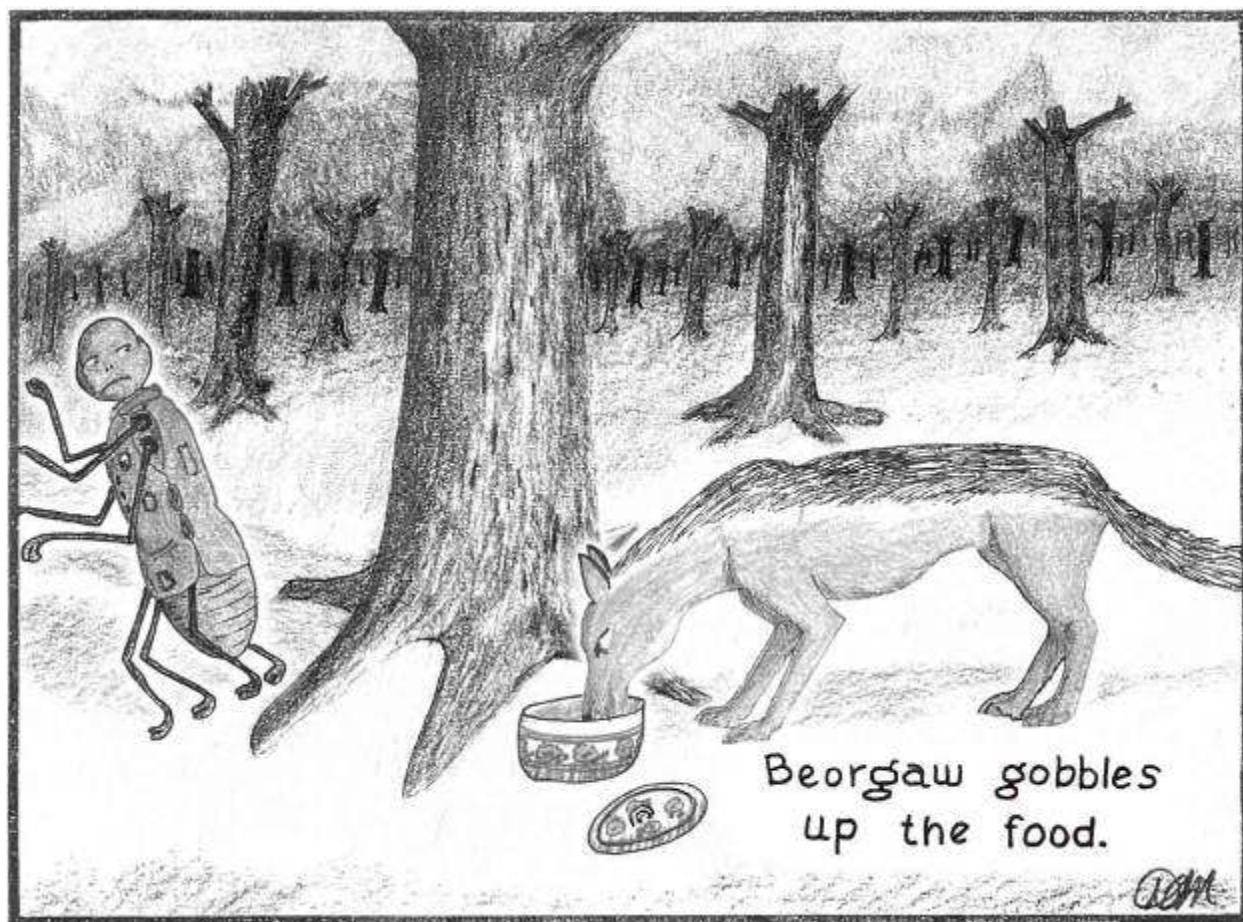
But Spider did not welcome Beorgaw. He yelled in a loud voice, "*No room here-o! No food here-o!*"

"Oho," said Beorgaw, "I'll fix you. You will not even show me the usual kindness shown to strangers? A stranger at your door? A poor tired hungry stranger?"

"*Move from here!*" yelled Spider in a high pitched voice. "*Move from here* and leave me alone. Go!"

"Oh no," answered Beorgaw, "I'll give you *small time* to come out here and give me some *chop* or I'll eat up all your children."

Spider pretended to be frightened. "My children are so poor and dry, that all of them together would not make you a good mouthful," he said in a timid voice. "*Wait small* and I'll show you where you can find good *chop* for a *big man* like you. *Wait small. Wait small.*" As Doe Spider was talking, he was looking for his most ragged and dirtiest *swear-in suit*.



Finally Spider came to the door. "Follow me," he said to Beorgaw.

"Where are you taking me," Beorgaw asked.

"Where you want to go," answered Spider in a friendly manner.

"I say I want to eat. I am hungry. So, where are you taking me?" Beorgaw insisted rather crossly.

But Spider was not angry at all. He answered calmly, "To eat, *good friend*. Time is so hard. But come on let us go where we can eat."

Beorgaw was annoyed. He felt like grinding Spider into dust. But look at him! Even through the holes in his clothes, he was nothing but rags. "I will follow him. I am so hungry. But if he is planning one of his tricks on me--I'll fix him."

They walked and walked. Beorgaw was boiling with anger inside; but he was hungry also; very hungry. So he patiently followed Spider.

Spider was dirty and ragged, but worse than that, was the odor that came from--well he was not sure, so he did not talk about it. He remembered that he, Beorgaw, had not had a bath for more than six months. Aloud he said, "HMMMM, well let it be so. I just want to eat."

"Yes, yes," answered Doe Spider, "we'll soon be there. *In front small.*"

What Spider called '*in front small*' seemed to stretch into miles. At a little distance ahead he saw a bend in the road. "As soon as I get around that bend, I'll tear up this old ragged, smelly fellow. I'll finish him one time."

When they reached the bend, there on the ground was a large covered pot of food. It was behind a tree near the road.

"The people have gone to the waterside to wash clothes. You eat your stomach full before they come back," Doe Spider said.

"You must *open the pot*," ordered Beorgaw. "*Open the pot* and let me see."

"No, no, the one who lifts the top must eat the food." Doe Spider said in a serious tone.

"Very well, I will *open the pot* myself," growled Beorgaw.

Beorgaw stepped behind the tree and knocked the lid off with his paw. Immediately Spider was gone into the bush. But Beorgaw did not even notice that Spider was gone.

Ahhhh, the palm butter and rice was so good that he forgot everything. He had been very very hungry, and so he ate and ate and ate. The more he ate the more he wanted to eat. His belly stretched and stretched as he kept on eating. He was still eating when the women who had left the food came back. They made a lot



of noise, but he was so heavy he could not run. He could barely move. The women saw him eating their food and quickly picked up some sticks and began to beat Beorgaw. They beat him 'soft', and left him dead.

**REMEMBER:** Never let your appetite get the better of you.

Always control it.

I Corinthians 9:27 says, "I keep working over my body. I make it obey me. I do this because I am afraid that after I have preached the Good News to others, I myself might be put aside."

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