

PRIDE & PREJUDICE: LIFE STORY OF A SOMALI IN EXILE
A translation of Abdi Farah Saeed Juha's *QAB IYO QUURSI*¹
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A note on translation and the translator

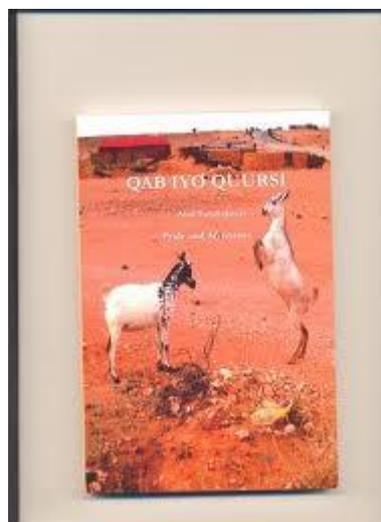
It is important to have a forum where literary written works produced by the Somali authors of our generation, who today write in different languages, including the mother language, get translated and circulated. This is needed both for deeper understanding of each other's work (among the Somali authors) and connecting more widely to their readers who may experience a barrier in one or another language. Not only that Somali authors and their Somali readers need this opportunity but other non-Somali readers of these works or anyone interested have to be considered to have a stake in gaining deeper understanding of the increasingly rich literary production of today's global Somalis.

We are not delving here into the many great things that could be said about the importance of translation in enriching both personal and collective intellect of a nation or people. For this we have no space and time now.

Therefore, if this huge but achievable undertaking is to be at least attempted, there should be talented Somalis who could translate important world literature for their people while at the same time conveying the works produced by the Somali authors to the wider world in many languages.

Another fact is, although potentially great hope exists, there are no considerable professional Somali literary translators in action today. This does not, by any way, mean that talent and training do not exist, but is the tradition of translation, action and forum of delivery that are in great demand today.

I am not a professionally trained literary translator but developed a deep passion and love for languages in an early age, while at the same time have been a literal citizen of the world for a long time. There are two languages among the several I could speak and write more or less fluently that deserve a special mention. They are my mother language, Somali, and my educational or academic language, English. I will never say or claim that I know both languages truly or equally but could state without hesitation that I am confident in bringing the best out these languages, when it comes to literary translation in exchange.



¹ Cabdi Farah "Juxa" (2010) *QAB IYO QUURSI: pride and arrogance*. Stockholm: Scansom Publishers.

To make that a reality, I started experimental but passionate testing of my ability as a translator several years ago. Since then, I have shared some of my works with wardheernews.com readers and have been working continuously to produce many more.

I realize that this field requires patience, discipline, willingness to learn from incremental experience and respect for the power of language and the written word. Therefore, I am not afraid of making mistakes and will learn both languages continuously in order to excel in the field overtime. The aim is to be part of a future larger forum of professional and experienced Somali translators that could serve bridge the gap between the literary wisdom of our people and that of the larger world. I will happily remain a humble amateur until proven otherwise by either a professional training or a hard earned experience along the way.

My attempted works so far include Richard Burton's *First Footsteps in East Africa* (completed - into Somali), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (work in progress - into Somali), Abdi Farah Juha's *Qab iyo Quursi* (completed - into English), Abdi Latif Egga's *Guban* (work in progress - into Somali), Dr. Mohamed Dahir Afrah's [*Somali Drama and Play-making: Historical and Critical Analysis of some Famed Plays*] (partially completed – from Somali / Currently on hold for further direction from the original author) and Ibrahim Yusuf Ahmed Hawd's *Aanadii Negeeye* (work in progress - into English), in addition to two 19th century important Somali autobiographies previously shared with the readers of wardheernews.com (into Somali)².

Now, with the generous permission of the original author, I would like to share with our readers a preview translation of Abdi Farah Juha's *Qab iyo Quursi*. This will come in chapters, so I will not spoil for the reader the gist of this interesting recent autobiography of a global Somali.

Your thoughts, opinions, comments and constructive criticism are all important and appreciated.

Pleasant reading to all.

CHAPTER ONE

Minds apart

I wanted her to provide me with a place to sleep and companionship against loneliness and cold. But, she mistook my intention for hidden perversion instead, assuming that I wanted to just lay with her. A saying was, “*O words, how amazing that one may express you in a way while another perceives you differently.*” It is without doubt that she and I were minds apart.

² *Mahadhadii Maxammad Nuur and Dalmar: taariikh nololeedkii Ibraahin Ismaaciil Uurcad.*
wardheernews.com

I started life of adventure by running away from home at a young age. I got bored with the nomadic life I grew up with at an early age in my life and got interested in another lifestyle of a distant world.

Suddenly one day, I decided to run away from home, so bidding farewell to the nomadic life for uncertain and illusive city life. I escaped to Qardho, a city in northeastern Somalia, not far away from my family's homestead. Not alone though, persuaded along by me was Samatar, my brother of same age but from a different *bah*. We followed after unacquainted commercial caravan on the way to the city.

We knew no body in Qardho and had no relatives there, except *eeddo* Maryan whom we had no idea of which part of the city her house was located. The truth was, we did not even want her to notice us anyway, because we feared she may send us back home and to the countryside. Empty we were also of both money and supplies for sustenance, and never we ever used to such, but our confidence was as high as it gets. For one, we never worried about what will happen in the future.

The main reason for our adventure was *timirdoon*, because I was very fond of city sweetmeats. My father, whom I previously accompanied to the town several times, used to buy me teats of timir or *xalwad*.

My brother and I were separated when we entered the city our first time. We followed separate paths at a time we were busy with staring at the city people and the tall buildings, with complete amazement. I searched for him with no avail, thus loneliness and heartbreak becoming my companions for that first night in city.

My luck delivered well when I immediately found a job as a porter, carrying several water pails for proud native Qardho girls who were avoiding getting their self and elaborate outfits wet.

I also carried a heavy sack of charcoal for another lady and earned a whopping 50 cents that evening. Fifty cents was a considerable sum of money those days. I bought half a kilo of *timir* from an old shopkeeper and fixed my mouth on a public water tap, after devouring the sweat thing in huge chunks. That filled me up well, and then came two hefty belches followed by thanking *Eebbe* who nourishes all beings. *Alxamdu Lillaah*. Finally, I have by that act alone fulfilled the initial aim of my adventure.

Sitting alone on a bench in front of the shop, I felt strong and manly, already admiring the city life and gazing my surroundings with affection. I reserved a curious special wondering eye for the trouser wearing women, children chasing after ball, the music wafting from shops and eateries and the electric signs shining all over the city like ominous ghosts.

But, my moments of joy and confidence did not last longer. Things changed quickly for the worse when the night darkened around me and cold eventually setting in. When people settled

in for the night, every one seeking refuge in own abode, I felt alone in need of warm place and human companionship. I miserably missed *hooyo*'s warmth while shedding tears for wanting to meet my lost brother again.

I sought refuge from the night cold in milk sellers' section of the main market, which I scouted for myself early in the evening. It was a big *Daar* with two huge entries and a cement floor surface. It's midst smelled sour and stinky milk remnants, wet and sticky all over with the spills of the day. I spread a flattened carton found in the building in a far corner, adjoining my two pieces of clothing (loin and shoulder pieces) to cover my body and coiled in a fetal position. Milk sellers woke me up from deep slumber early in the next morning. One of them who specifically desired to erect his milk *dhiil* in the place I was sleeping surprised me with a nasty kick on the backside. "Get up! You sick of a *reer baaddiye*! He shouted angrily.

O Allah, wish I had never slept in the damned comfy building. My shoes were stolen while asleep. Also relieved of me was a small change remaining from my yesterday's evening *xammaali* wages. The hem of my cloth, where I kept the sum in a knot, was completely cut off from the source and I now have no any idea where to start again. Hungry and barefooted, I walked around wishing to just encounter someone to use my services to settle my breakfast. Special emphasis was given to the spots where I got lucky to carry water and charcoal the evening before, but with no avail. No one demanded my services. "Perhaps it is early in the morning and the city people are still asleep", was my thought. I stood around the water well where girls used to draw water and decided to porter for the first girl I see, for any wage she offers.

I have to eat to fend off hunger the rest of the day. Several other boys also loitered around the well; some were the same age as I was and others were slightly older. I knew they were all waiting for the girls, all struggling to secure their daily livelihood. There was no any other reason to hang around the well at that hour of the day. I somehow worried about them hording the work opportunity away from me, so I slowly but surely moved myself in position, as close to the water source as possible.

Two girls, slightly closer in age, carrying two water pails and a cross bar arrived. "Get to work", said the older one. All ran towards them and I kept my side on the foot race alive. I succeeded in catching the brim of one of the pails. Another two held fast on to one at the same time and wiggled each other very hard.

"You and you!" The younger of the two girls shouted, choosing me and one of the other two boys fighting over same bucket for the work. We filled the pails fast, hanged them handles up from the cross bar and carried together away. But, accursed the girls live far away. The water spilled a bit here and a bit there on the way, the patron girls scolding us accordingly all along; to the point of fearing that they will not pay us at all, because we did not negotiate on the wage rate from the beginning. Anyway, they did not send us empty handed. They paid us ten roaring cents after we delivered their water home safely.

We struggled to find change to divide the hard earned ten cents evenly between the two of us. After we unsuccessfully made rounds and not finding anyone to split the ten cents into two fivers, my friend suggested that we should spend the whole amount on *muus*. That morning was my first time ever hearing the name, banana. I suggested we should instead spend the ten cents on buying *timir*, but he insisted on bananas and only that. He persuaded me by narrating how sweet a thing the fruit is and how much people like them, in which I agreed with him at the end. We bought dozens of bananas from a hawker woman selling products out in the open market. But I did not like how the banana tasted. It tasted to me like some sort of delicately awkward sweet things. Akh, akh!, was my immediate reaction, spitting out the first mouthful. He laughed at me and turned away with whole load, sending one banana after the other into his wondrous digestive machine. He donated what he could not finish to some of his friends who did not yet break the morning fast. With all that, I was not disappointed with the boy's acquaintance at all. He instructed me how to take care of own self and get work, in addition to where to seek help when the going gets tough or one could not bag the catch of the day. That was after he realized that I was still a *badow* and a newcomer to the city.

He pointed his finger at an old man by the name Garagoos who owned a restaurant with two entries on the main city thoroughfare. There, if one is unable to pay his meal could skip by secretly slipping away after feeding, without getting noticed.

“One should embed self on a chair on the far end closer to the exit door. Not the one close to the cashier but the other”, he said. One should also aim for when the restaurant is full and people are busy. One should sit confidently like any paying customer and order food like one. After that, one should watch out for the server boys and slip away quietly.” He suggested to test today's lunch hour to prove his advice to me practically. “If we get caught, the punishment is to fetch five buckets of water for the old man”, he encouraged, after he noticed me hesitating.

He was right to the point. We sneaked away from Garagoos's after enjoying a delicious dish of hefty pasta served with fatty lumps of meat without paying a penny or breaking our backs fetching water. Garagoos is a skinny and lanky old man. In the afternoons, he sits on a chair in the shade of his restaurant, a tea thermos and a small radio in a pouch flanking him on each side as he straightens his long handlebar moustaches for hours at a time. He sometimes plays *shax* with other old timers, but he is mostly alone. Observing him deeply, I came into the conclusion that he tolerates the mischief of the hungry street children, though not sure why. Perhaps he is busy with his moustaches and not aware of what is going on in his restaurant. Or he was so rich that he would have not felt losing a cent of his fortune even if every street child and homeless in the city feeds for free at his restaurant?

In the city of Qardho, the *dibjir* or *iskoris*, as they call them, are numerous and found in every age group. Some are youngsters like me, others are little bit older than I was and some others are grownup lads. One notices that each group manages daily life differently. I mean each group manages its livelihood in own way and method. The youngsters mostly shine shoes for

clients. They also sell *furin* for restaurateurs and bakers, making their rounds in the neighborhoods while carrying baskets heavy with the product over their heads and yelling “rootiga, rootiga, rootiga!” Sometimes they trek through the forest and gather *caday*, twigs of a special tree used by the Somalis as toothbrush and sell them in the neighborhoods. They announce them like they do for the bread, shouting “cadayga, cadayga, cadayga!” wishing to encounter anyone interested in fighting *huuro* or taking care of own teeth. Those little older than those fetch water, carrying pails for the stylish Qardho girls and bush-roll *fuusto* drums for restaurants.

The more grownup boys work in the backbreaking hard labor market which requires lean muscles. They mostly stack food stores, load and unload trucks, or do *dillaal* for a commission. All socialize in groups of friendship. Though they share the daily struggle for livelihood, they yet help each other and never ignore each other suffer in hunger. They know for sure that any one of them may be empty handed in any given day.

Presently, I lunched and dined, in addition to even securing to earn the ten cents for tomorrow’s breakfast. I can say, I understood how Qardho’s *dibjir* life woks, to an extent. The only obstacle up to now is that I could not secure a place to sleep. I need a warm and safe place. I can’t return to yesterday’s milk sellers’ hall, for there is a possibility of my two *qayd* being relieved of me and my small change knotted in them robbed. I cannot take another chance on that again.

I got sick of darkness of the night and wished for the sun to never set in and the people to never go their homes, recollecting the old saying, “*what stinks more and crueller for a newcomer than Qardho!*” I think it points out how Qardho folks are known for being merciless to strangers and guests.

I sat on a public bench behind the restaurant and wondered with what the night has in store for me. I nodded helplessly for want of sleep, locking chin and knees, but could not fall sleep out of fear. Suddenly, I heard a commotion while still half asleep on an abandoned bench. It’s a middle aged lady with huge buttocks, reeking strong sort of perfume. She is wearing high-heeled stilettos emitting such noise, qabshax! qabshax! qabshax! A sound resembling horse or donkey hoofs hitting on hard ground. She is holding in one hand a small burse firmly tacked in her armpit, the other holding the lowest hem of her *dirac* slightly raised halfway up. I shouted after her, “eeddo! eeddo!”, raising myself up towards her. I expected compassion and sought help from her. In the Somali culture, *eeddo* and *adeer* are also titles of respect, besides their literal meaning. They are used for any person unacquainted and older than you, without necessarily sharing blood relation, depending on the gender addressed.

“*Waryaa!* What do you want?” she shouted, checking me head to toe. She was clearly surprised by my bare feet and the loin cloth drabbed around my hips, not usual for the city kids who have parents or relatives to take care of them.

“Eeddo, take this money and take me to a good place to sleep. Would you please?” I extended her my right hand laden with the last ten cents remaining from the day’s wages.

“Mannerless *Ciyaala suuq!* Go and sleep with you mother with these ten cents and all”, said she, cracking me with two traversed stinging slaps on the face, whash! whash! She then called two police officers patrolling a nearby street while still shouting insults, twisting my ears and pulling me with her along.

“He is despicably impolite urchin! Who did he think I am? Who sired this long mouthed filth anyway?” She updated the police on my assumed bad deeds, still dolling out insults at me and twisting my ear simultaneously. I shed tears wondering why I deserved such abuse. What has angered the lady I sought help from? I quickly regretted coming to the city, hating the way city people behave.

“Waryaa, is it true that you said such things to the girl?” asked one of the police officers, holding a black baton club in his hand.

“Yes *adeer*, it is true. I was cold and feared the loneliness of the dark night” I answered, looking at him with eyes full of hot tears. The two looked at each other as the other officer let out a long roaring hearty laugh.

“Look at him for once! This filthy urchin still thinks he has done nothing wrong!” said the lady again, severely twisting me by the ear once more. The two police officers looked at each other and laughed concurrently again.

“*Adeer*, you were cold, then what?”, not the one who interrogated me first but the other asked tauntingly.

“Yes *adeer*, it is cold and windy out there”, I replied looking down, assuming he has sympathized with my case.

“So you wanted to exchange the ten cents for a warm place, isn’t so?” he said.

“Yes *adeer*”, I replied, thinking he understood my problematic situation. The policemen laughed together again talking to each other in jargons I could not understand.

They told the lady to mind her own and they took me towards their precinct station. They led me in to a small room furnished with two wooden chairs and a desk. The two of them sat on the chairs and I leaned on the wall. One of them put a file and pen together. The other crossed his legs and backed his chair some distance away from the desk. The one taking notes but the other asked me several quick questions. He wanted to know about my parents, where I came from, when I came into the town, if I know anyone in the city and yet how I got the ten cents? They later realized I was a young runaway child; a child whose intentions and the accusation labeled against are far apart. They somehow sympathized with my situation and turned a compassionate eye towards me.

“Adeer, sleep here and don’t you ever again try ten cents with a woman”, said one of them, spreading for me a simple bedding in a room.

“The Qardho women are expensive. They do not lay with someone for ten cents, you should know that”, said the other, letting his usual guffaws of laughter.

“Ok adeer, ok”, I replied. I stretched myself on my bedding and covered my *qayd* over my body. I did not understand the policemen’s advice and their continuous laughter until a later time, when I grew up. It wasn’t until later, when I learned something about the nature of human female and the power of word games. But what still puzzles me to this day is; why did I deserve a slap on the face and ear twisting? What is the connection between “eeddo, take this ten cents and provide me with a place to sleep” and “may I lay with you”? What could not get into my head so far is; what made the woman whom I sought motherly help from and a place to sleep think of prostitution instead? I still ask myself what she would have done if I upped the wage and stuck a whole one shilling out to her. Would she have twisted me by the ears or what else would have she done? Perhaps I will never know!

The next morning, one of the policemen, the loud laughing one, took me to his house after I had a breakfast of tea and bread.

“ Yes Buto, let this small boy stay with us until his guardians get to him”, he spoke with the lady of the house, sitting haphazardly on a *gambar* and washing clothes in a *baaf* flat on the ground.

“Who is the boy”, she asked, checking me from head to toe, like the lady who abused me last night did.

“He is a runaway youngster...” he replied.

“A runaway youngster?”, she inquired again, momentarily disengaging from squeezing a piece of clothing she was twisting to drain water out.

“Yes, he is a rebellious youngster from the countryside. He is very intelligent man enough to know at this age that life could not be trusted in the *baaddiye*”, he said.

“And who sired him”, she desired to know my ancestral branding, trying to find out how I and she or her husband are related by blood.

“He is the son of an elder of the *Barde* clan from Nugaal region”, he replied, betting me on the head.

“Berde Clan? And what is the relationship between Berde and *Daray* clans?” She shrugged shoulders pouting, provoking wrinkles on her face to make a fuss about it.

“Don’t you realize that both Berde and Daray trees belong to the fruit-bearing plants? Don’t you also know that both are evergreen plants belonging to the same botanical family?” He tried to convince his wife that I deserved to be hosted honorably.

“It is again that time of yours ushering everything in, thinking to be your indispensable dear kin!” She harangued him, using gentler voice as she poured water and detergent in to the laundry basin.

“Buto, children of Adam are all relatives and kin and they cannot do out with one another. Every person will one day be in need of someone. On the other hand, even if the Berde and the Daray trees seem to you as two plants that share nothing but physical appearance, is it fare with us to let go on his own a child of such delicate age?” He reasoned the matter from intellectual and humanistic point of view.

Suddenly, two of their sons emerged from a room when they heard the discussion. One of them leaned on his father while the other stood beside me. The one next to me suddenly started to punch me on the stomach as his father was facing away. His mother did not bother to even scold him. I pushed him away and went a distance from him. Then I received another punch from him. I again pushed him away to put further distance between us.

“Waryaa, what is your name?” asked the woman, looking at me.

“Koombo”, I said, in a low unconfident voice. The younger of the two boys took his turn and punched me on the ribs, briefly making me short of breath.

“Leave him alone you idiot, he is your cousin”, said his father, slapping him slightly.

“Waryaa, how old are you”, asked the woman again.

“Seven springs. No, six springs and some...”, I replied back, after a brief silence.

“When were you born?”, she asked.

“Six spring seasons ago”, I replied again.

“Bush people! May your lives cut short. Look at him! He does not even know when he was born.”

“Lady, even you were born in *Halalow* and *Ha-i-Booqan*. Leave the poor young child alone”, replied her husband, reminding her that each of us came into the city from the countryside, one day or another.

“*Aabbe*, is this what bush people look like?”, a younger son leaning on him asked.

“He is a boy same as you are and your cousin”, replied the father, betting him on the head.

“Go and read your *Qur’aan*”, suddenly said his mother.

“Adeer, stay at home and do not go anywhere until I come back, *yaah!* Just sleep here and don’t you ever try giving ten cents to my wife. I provide her way more than that.” He smiled at me, squeezing me on the cheek.

“Man, what is the ten cents and the crap you are talking about?”, asked the woman, desiring to know further.

“You just leave it alone, we understand each other”. “There you go now. I am going back to work.” He laughed briefly and left.

I went into the boys’ room, not talking to any one and sat alone on a chair in a far corner.

“Waryaa, do you eat pasta?”, one of the boys holding a *loox* asked me.

“Men do not eat pasta”, was my answer, recollecting my first time pasta was on the menu in our nomadic house. I remembered my aunt telling me that it was dried intestines and it should not be served to boys.

“You do not eat pasta with sauce”?

“*I-iih*”, I replied , shaking head.

“What about bananas?” The other boy took his turn questioning.

“Banana is akhas!”, I replied, remembering the one I spitted out after the boy had persuaded me to eat.

“Mom, this boy knows how to eat neither pasta nor banana!”, one of them announced as he sprang away laughing.

“You boys, leave this poor fellow alone and read your Qur’aan lessons”, she shouted, continuing her laundry work.

“What do you eat?”, he followed up questioning, coming back into the room.

“I drink milk”, was my reply to him, in a low voice.

“Only that?” he inquired again.

“And meat”, I replied tiredly.

“Only?” , he continued stubbornly.

“And rice, and occasional dates.” I listed all the food items I knew.

“Did you learn the Qur’aan?”, the other boy asked again.

“My mother knows the Qur’aan, she prays regularly”, was my answer.

“Do you play ball?” he continued questioning.

“I do not play that. What is ball anyway?” I inquired back.

“The ball is kicked around and goals are scored that way. Didn’t you ever play?” he proudly explained.

“I-iih”, I negated by turning head from side to side.

“How about boxing, do you know how?” he asked as he buried one deep on my stomach.

“You idiot, leave me alone”, I said, threatening him with a slap.

“Dare you! Dare you!” he said, turning quickly and thrusting three more successive boxing salvos on my body, one targeting the head.

“Leave me alone, you motherfucker!” I became dizzy and lowered my head.

“Wir! Wir! ”, he quickly dispensed another three successive jabs all targeted at the head, followed by a well placed knee on the stomach.

“Mom, he insulted me!” he bolted out accusing me instead.

“Who insulted you?” she asked.

“This bush people”, he replied.

“What did he say to you?” she asked.

“Motherfucker”, he replied.

“Motherfucker!” she repeated his words as she entered the room running, the hem of her *dirac* held high to her thighs.

“Boy, don’t you influence my children with your filthy mouth, you impolite...”, she scolded, blackening me an eye, retina and all with a powerful slap.

“Who in the world taught him about fucking at such a young age?”, she asked herself, looking at me with an evil eye. I cried profoundly, hands held on the head, but quieted on my own when nobody cared about me to wipe my tears and bet me on the head. I realized that the situation was *aggression sure of a back up!* And that the lady would never question herself about what made me angry to use such strong insulting words that angered her. I realized she would defend her children by all means anyway, sitting down on a *gambar* hanging my head down with anger and angst.

I was also astonished by the mercilessness of the reactionary Qardho women. While I was lost in sea of sorry thoughts, sitting alone, chin locked between knees, came the accursed boy again. He surprising me with yet another round of three sneaky blows delivered from behind

my back, all targeted towards head. I reacted angrily and hanged myself down from one of his cheeks with stinging bite. As he let out a scary scream, I followed him up with two quick slaps and a kick, throwing him on the ground.

“Dare you touch me again; fuck the whore who sired you!” I reprimanded him, standing tall and strong over his struggling body.

“What happened to you boy”, inquired his mother who, after hearing her screaming boy, hurried in, stood over him still crying and rested her hands over hips.

“Hooyo, he bit me”. He put his hand over the bleeding cheek I mauled.

“He bit me?”, she exclaimed, slapping me so hard that she blacked my both eyes without even asking a thing. But that was not all she had in store for me.

“Who brought this homeless urchin to my house?”, she said, grapping a wooden Qur’aan tablet nearby her and hitting me with it five consecutive times on the head and back. “Get out of my house, you foul mouthed devil!” She frog marched me out, holding me by the nape of the neck.

I sat in the *ardaa* and waited, in case she may calm down and call me back into the house. In case she may prove to be a companion against the loneliness or realizing that I did not deserve all such punishment. That did not happen. Buto closed her door shut and never looked back at me. I waited for her husband, positioning myself at the house entrance where he was supposed to ingress. As soon as I heard his commotions coming, I met him halfway crying and told him what has happened in his absence and why I was thrown out of the house. I told him how bad his wife treated me. He entered the house after listening to my report, perhaps preferring to also listen to his wife’s side of the story. I aligned my body on the wall trying to eavesdrop on their argument. I feared she would whitewash him with lies and convince him that I was the aggressor and deserved to be beaten and thrown out of the house. I did not hear their argument, but high pitched were their shouts at each other. He came out sweaty and deep anger clearly discernible on his face. He neither scolded me nor beat me. He didn’t even shrug or look at me with an evil eye.

“Waryaa, let us go” were his only words, taking me back to the police station. He first stopped at a restaurant and fed me with rice served with tasty meat. He then informed me that he sent for my father and he will be keeping me at the precinct station until his arrival. I found food, lodging and security, nursing myself back from the misery and the heavy hand of the evil women. I liked living with the officers who themselves seemed appreciating my presence. I became for them a source of endless amusement and hilarious jokes to pass time. They all related to each other the story between me and the high-heeled infamous Qardho woman. Whoever of them saw my sight laughed with me or at me, I am not sure which.

Everything changed when my parents came and the lost brother was found. My life turned a new direction. My father suggested that we should not be taken back to the countryside. I was already accustomed running away to the city and its sweets and he now realized that I will not quit trying. He sensed the possibility and the danger that we may one day get lost or fall victim in isolation to man-eating carnivores. He decided to take us to a *tuulo* where his cousin lived, in order for us to start learning the Qur'aan and get schooled. My mother did not agree on the idea with my father. She believed that we were safe only around her. She did not see right that her children's upbringing should fall into other hands. But, finally, my father's idea prevailed. He was the head of the family and the last say belonged to him.

“My dear son, wherever you may go, may all people become mother and father to you”, she prayed for me, kissing me on the forehead and wishing me all the best and luck in life.

I quickly adjusted myself to the new life, though the village children laughed at me in the beginning. I quickly made friends and socialized with the kids who were first pushing me aside. I attracted some of them by my especial talent in melodious animal work songs, fairy tales and poetry which most of them were ignorant about. I furiously boxed or bit some of them in neighborhood street fights, so they respected me for being a merciless little nomad not to be messed with.

I quickly started learning the Qur'aan, in addition to writing and reading. I also learned how to play football and score goals. And that was the end of my transitional adventure from the nomadic *miyi* to the settled *magaalo*.

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