

Story 19: The Story of the Simb

Story shared by: *Mariama*

Representing: *Senegalese*

The Story:

Long ago, when Senegal was covered by thick forests and wild animals roamed free, there lived a brave hunter. One day, deep in the forest, the hunter came face-to-face with a fierce lion. Before he could react, the lion roared and pounced at him. In that terrifying moment, something strange happened—the hunter let out a roar just as powerful as the lion's. His body began to change. Fur sprouted on his skin, his teeth sharpened, and his hands turned into claws. The hunter was becoming more like the lion with each passing second.

Shocked and afraid, the hunter ran through the forest, faster and wilder than ever before. He no longer felt like a man but like a beast, driven by instincts and hunger. Days passed, and the hunter, now half-lion, wandered the woods. He no longer thought like a human, living like the wild animals he used to hunt.

When the hunter didn't return to the village, his people grew worried. They knew something terrible had happened. The village elders gathered and remembered an ancient spell called Jat, special words accompanied by the beat of drums which could heal those trapped between two worlds. They believed this was the only way to save the hunter.

The villagers prepared for the Jat. Drummers gathered around a large fire in the village center, and as night fell, the rhythm of the drums began to fill the air. The steady beat echoed through the forest, reaching the hunter's ears. Even in his lion-like state, he was drawn to the sound of the drums and returned to the village.

When he arrived, the villagers gasped at his appearance. The drums grew louder, and the hunter began to move, his feet tapping to the rhythm. Slowly, the Jat took over and he began to dance. With each step, the lion spirit inside him weakened. His fur began to disappear, his claws turned back into hands, and his roar softened.

By the end of the night, the hunter had returned to his human form. The villagers rejoiced, knowing the power of the Jat had saved him.

Story Moral: *unknown/unspecified, the story accompanies an actual Senegalese practice.*



