

A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
David A. Naff



**THE GOO-GOO MAN &
THE HUNTER**



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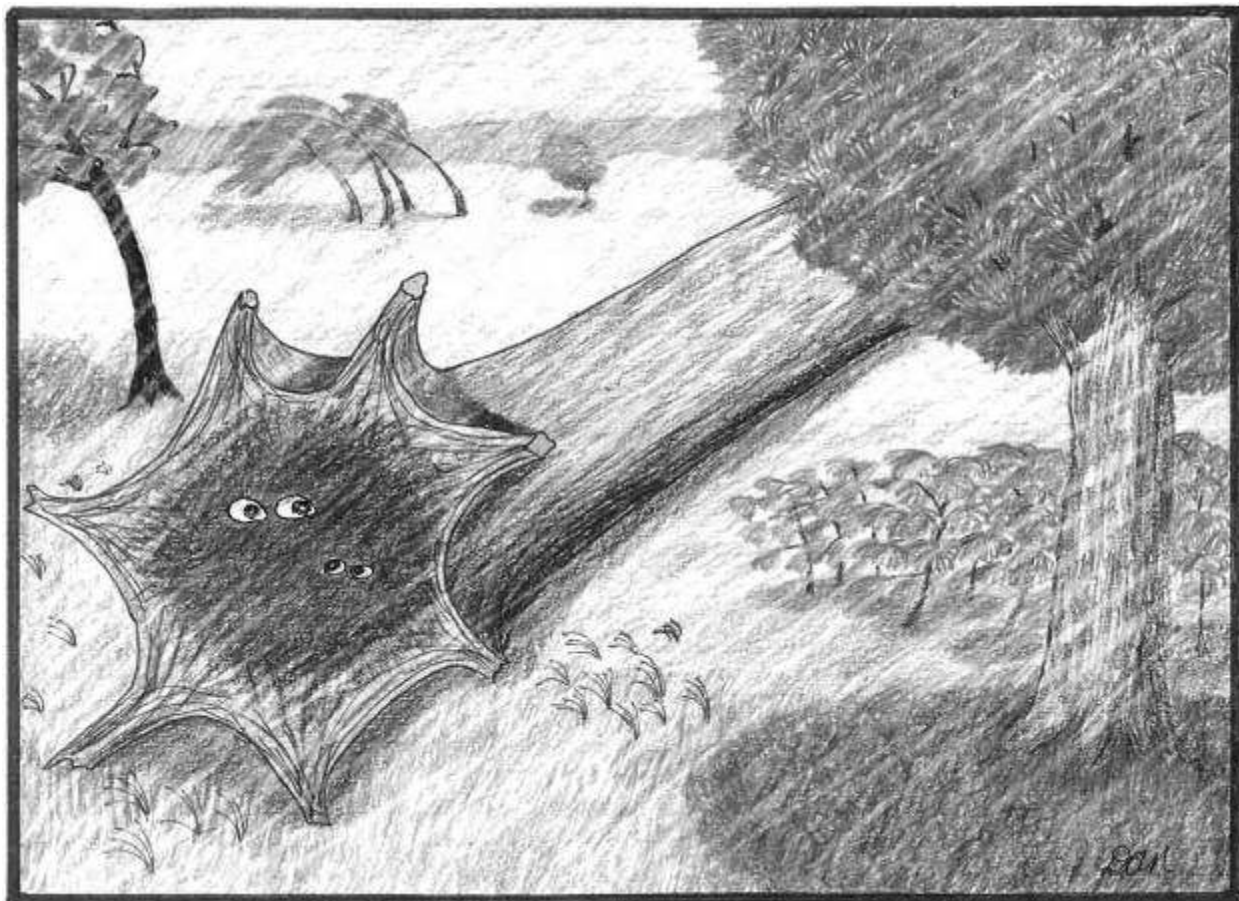
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By Spark Team



THE GOO-GOO MAN* & THE HUNTER

Note to the reader. Words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics.

“Even enemies should be friends in hard times.”

There was once a hunter who always brought home plenty of good red meat. After his wife had eaten red meat day after day for many days, she grew tired of it. She thought she would like some fish for a change.

So, as the hunter was leaving the house early one morning, just as he was calling his dog, she said, "Today you must catch fish. I would like fish for dinner tonight for a change."

"Well," he replied, "You *can* tire for my meat, eh? But I agree. Today I will catch fish."

So the hunter went to the river to catch fish. He was a very good fisherman as well as a good hunter. He soon caught many fish. He had a couple of small fresh water barracuda, some crappy and quite a few butternose. He caught so many fish that he made a big kinjah** so he could carry them.

Still, he was too embarrassed to go home without any red meat. Besides, his dog had been rather impatient with the fishing business. He was anxious to do some real hunting with his master.

So, the hunter carefully put the kinjah of fish in a safe place. Then he went to hunt for some good red meat.

While he was hunting a big storm came up. The trees twisted and swayed in the heavy wind. Then the rain came pouring down. Huge limbs broke from many trees. By now he was soaked to the skin. He crouched down and tried to run, but couldn't go very fast because of the strong wind. He kept looking for a safe place as the lightning cracked and the thunder rolled. When almost out of breath he spied a huge hollow tree and crept into it to hide from the storm.

Now he didn't know it, but a goo-goo man was also hiding in the tree from the storm. The hunter being much shorter and much smaller, felt only the goo-goo man's hand. It felt like a great spider, maybe a hairy tarantula. He wanted to kill it, so he *juked* (pricked or stabbed) it with a sharp stick.

The goo-goo man spoke in a deep gruff voice, "We *all two* are hiding from the storm. Why do you abuse me so? I *no want* hurt you."

That scared the hunter *too much*. He thought it was the enemy tribe. Forgetting where he was he jumped up and scraped his face on the inside of the trunk. Then he crawled quickly out of the tree trunk and ran all the way home in the rain. He was so frightened he forgot all about his kinjah of fish. He forgot all about his dog. He forgot all about his gun and fishing lines.

When he got home he was so very wet and cold that, even with a hot bath he still caught a *fresh cold*. He was so ill he could not hunt for several days.

If that hunter had been kind to the stranger he would have had a big kinjah of fish to carry home to his wife. He probably would not have gotten sick. And maybe he would have made a friend.

The Bible teaches that you should "... respect and give thanks for those who say bad things to you. Do good to those who do bad things to you and who make it hard for you. Then you may be the sons of your Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:44,45a).

Original story from John Eddy.

*goo-goo man - fictitious giant

**kinjah - An oblong basket quickly woven of palm branches, to carry things like cassava, firecoal, fish, meat

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