

## **Student Writing Sample from Motoko's Creative Writing Residency Our Own Folktales**

### **Zara Learns a Lesson**

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"I want more blackberries!" shouted Zara. Zara couldn't stand sharing the delicious berries anymore. So she snuck into the woods and picked all the blackberries so the village children couldn't have any.

Zara was a very beautiful woman on the outside, but inside she was very greedy. She was greedy because at night she had very scary dreams. Zara lived in a huge wetu and she was twenty-two years old.

One sunny, summer day while Zara was picking all the blackberries, she heard a mysterious noise. Then as she ate the last berry in the forest to be seen, everything went black and she fainted.

Soon she woke up and found herself in a deep and dark cave. When she opened her eyes and looked up, she saw a great and mysterious monster from above. Zara was so frightened that she tried to get away, but then she noticed that she was in chains. The monster explained that Zara was in there because she wouldn't let the children have any blackberries.

After a while, Zara still couldn't think of a plan to escape. Then something popped into her head. Maybe she could ask the monster if he was tired. Then Zara could sing him a song to help him fall asleep. As he fell asleep she could snatch the keys and escape. Zara knew that she had to tiptoe away out of the cave. She was so excited! However, she thought it would not be fair if she got out like she wanted, but the monster didn't get what he wanted. Zara knew what he wanted her to do. She agreed to share the blackberries with all the children in the village. So Zara started to sing to the monster, but it took a while for the monster to fall asleep. Then she sang to the monster in a soft, sweet voice: "Oh creature, oh creature, oh fall asleep my creature. Oh creature, Oh creature, Good Night my little creature."

Zara kept on singing until the monster finally fell asleep. Next she wondered how she would get the monster close enough to her to reach the keys. Luckily the monster ended up rolling right beside her! Then she snatched the keys, slowly tiptoed outside, and breathed in the fresh summer air. Suddenly, Zara remembered her promise to the monster and yelled, "Oh no! I promised to feed the children blackberries."

So Zara traveled home quickly. When she got home, there were two Indians guarding the huge wetu. Zara asked, "Can I please come in?" The guards were confused because they thought Zara was a thief. The Indians said, "No! You're the one who stole all the blackberries and only ate one."

Zara replied, "I'm sorry, but I couldn't take it anymore. But if you let me in, I will apologize to the children and share the blackberries." The Indians agreed to let Zara come into the wetu again. Zara called the children out for a surprise. Zara couldn't believe her eyes. Zara's daughter, Shalana, stood with the other children. Shalana was so proud of her mother. Zara was proud of herself too. Then Zara threw all the blackberries in the air! She learned that everyone should share and be kind to one another. Zara said, "From now on, for the rest of my life, I will be a sharing and very kind person to all the people who live in my village."