

Awongalema

It hadn't rained for a long time and there was very little to eat. The animals of the savannah gathered around an old acacia tree that was known to be magic. The tree would give bountiful fruit if only someone could remember its magic name. The animals decide to send one animal to visit the mountain spirits that lived within Kilimanjaro to remind them of the name. They thought Duma the cheetah should go because she was the fastest but Simba the lion king got his way and off he went.

He ran and he ran and he ran like the wind.

Haraka haraka, haraka haraka; he ran like the wind

[Note: Haraka, haraka, haina haraka is an East African saying which means, 'More haste, less speed.' or, 'Take it easy. The job will get done in the end.']

He reached the mountain, ran to the top, found an opening into the heart of the mountain and called, "Mountain spirits talk to me, tell me the name of the magic tree."

"Awongalema," called the spirits.

"Awongalema!" roared the lion and charged back home

He ran and he ran and he ran like the wind

Haraka haraka, haraka haraka he ran like the wind

But Simba ran so fast he didn't notice where he was going and ran straight into a termite mound, and by the time he flicked off the last termite, Simba couldn't remember the name of the magic tree.

Next, the animals sent Duma, the cheetah.

She ran and she ran... [repeat]

But Duma ran so fast she didn't notice where she was going and fell into an ant's nest, and by the time she had flicked off the last ant, Duma couldn't remember the name of the magic tree.

So in the end, the animals decided that perhaps a slower animal might be better and voted to send Mkondo the tortoise. Now Mkondo could not run haraka haraka and could only plod, *pole pole*, so off he went, *pole pole, pole pole* across the African plain. It took the tortoise a week to reach the mountain and another to get to the top.

He found an opening into the heart of the mountain and called, "Mountain spirits talk to me, tell me the name of the magic tree." "Awongalema," called the spirits.

"Awongalema, Awongalema, Awongalema," Mkondo repeated again and again as he plodded home, carefully passing the termite's mound and the ant's nest until he got home to where the hungry animals were waiting. 'What's the name of the magic tree?' asked the animals.

"Awongalema!" Mkondo announced.

And the magic tree was filled with bountiful fruit.

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