

# Nangobe waMtutu

## Namibian Tale

*Written down by Ester Nakale, who knew the story from her grandmother*

*Illustrated by Lundululeni Mtileni*



**L**ong long time ago, in a village far away, there lived a man. This man lived in a well-built house that had different huts made of clay and thatched with grass. The huts kept everyone cool during the hot sun in summer and kept everyone warm during cold winter nights. The women and girls did the house duties such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water from the river as well as collect firewood, while the men and boys looked after cattle, goats and horses, milked the cows and made butter from milk.

The clothes that people wore were made of animal skin. And a mother used a soft skin of a calf to make "Onghanda", which she used as a blanket for her baby. When the woman passed away, she was wrapped around in that Onghanda before burying her.

As it was the custom that time, this man had two wives who both had daughters. The daughters were Nehova, whose mother was Nangobe waMtutu and the youngest daughter was Nanghelo. Sadly, Nanghelo's mother had passed away, and her "Onghanda" was very old, so Nanghelo's mother was buried with Nangobe waMtutu's Onghanda.

Nangobe waMtutu was very mean to Nanghelo. She did not feed her very well and made her do all the hard work around the house. Nangobe waMtutu shouted at Nanghelo a lot and she would often say "get away from me, your mother was even buried with my onghanda...go away from my sight". This made Nanghelo very sad, so much so that she often went to her mother's grave crying and asking: "Oh mother, why did you have to be buried with Nangobe waMtutu's onghanda?" How I wish you were here mother!"

This went on for a while where Nangobe waMtutu shouted and treated Nanghelo very badly and she would go off crying at her mother's grave. Until one day, a neighbor found her and asked Nanghelo what she was doing. So she said: "I am asking my mother

to return Nangobe waMtutu's onghand." The man said: "Go child, do not disturb your mother's spirit." Nanghelo went home, little did she know that her mother watched what was happening. Her mother's spirit was indeed disturbed and angry that Nangobe waMtutu has been mistreating her child.

One night, when everyone had gone to bed, Nangobe waMtutu could hear a deep voice in a distance, at the edge of the village. The voice was far it sounded like humming. Bit by bit, the voice got closer until Nangobe waMtutu could hear what the voice was actually saying. It said: "Nangobe waMtutu, ame onda eta onghanda yoye, Nangobe waMtutu, here I am, I brought your onghanda back." On and on the voice sang in a deep voice, getting closer to the house, and then to Nangobe waMtutu's hut. She tried to wake the children up and asked if they could hear what she was hearing, but the children were protected from the spirit, so they could not hear anything. Finally, the door of the hut squeaked as it opened, and the voice sang one last time: "Nangobe waMtutu, ame onda eta onghanda yoye. Nangobe waMtutu, here I am, I brought your onghanda back." Nangobe waMtutu was overcome by fear, she froze to death with fear. Everyone knew that such death can only be caused by a sad spirit of a mother whose child was treated badly.



**The story comes from the Waldorf School Windhoek, Namibia.**

*The Waldorf School Windhoek was founded in 2000 as the first Waldorf School in Namibia. Since the country's independence ten years ago, efforts have been made to build bridges between the many ethnic groups. The diversity is also reflected in the school: Students from seven different cultural backgrounds come here to learn together.*



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