

## THE TALE OF THE SON OF THE REPROVERESS

(Translated from a Tigre story by Richard. Sundstrom, Gheleb - Eritrea ca 1897)

A woman had a son and she held a wedding for him: Afterwards she began to reprove the wife of his son. The latter answered the mother reproving too.

Then the man said, because she has blamed my mother I divorce her, and so he did. Now marrying and divorcing as often as his mother reproved the wives, he married nine in all.

After all he conferred with his friend saying, "Perhaps it is my mother who has done wrong: Or how could it be that nine wives have been divorced!"

Conferring they said, "Let us say that thou now hast betrothed a tenth and let us then dress a stub as a woman and let us two only go to the wedding.

Then when we have dressed the stub let us put it up on a mule and bring it into a house and having brought it into the house let us, having locked the door and refused admission, go alone to the river and bathe."

According to the counsel they said, "Betrothal is made and we two only are going to the wedding".

Then in the evening having dressed a stub as a woman (as an African bride) they put it on a mule and brought it into a house and refused admission. And as it was a house where a wedding was celebrated, they spent all the night eating and drinking.

The following morning the man and his friend put the stub on the bed, covered it with cloths, locked the house and went down to the river to bath.

After a while the mother went to the house and sat down at the door and scolded and reproved and summoning witnesses she said to them, that the wife had said so and so to her.

In the evening the pretended bridegroom and his friend returned. Now the mother came and said complaining, "Thou who ever caust me annoyance! Thou marriest whom so ever a reprovress and a scolder. And even now has thy wife whom thou married yesterday, said so and so and blaming so to me".

Then he asked her, “Did people hear, that the bride blamed thee”?  
“All the women of this village” she answered.

He now called all the women and asked them,  
“Ye women, what have you seen and heard (as to my mother and the bride)?”

The women were a hundred. The ninety-nine answered,  
“What thy wife abusing and reproving has said to thy mother that may be said to our enemy and he may hear it”. (It is too bad to tell thee)

But the one answered, “I have heard what thy mother was saying but thy wife I have not heard a single word neither good nor bad”.

Then the young man said to his mother, “O thou the miserable! Now we know that all those women have been divorced because of thee”. And turning to the women he said,

“Ye women, who told that ye have heard my wife reproving! How is it possible that ye have heard this one speaking!”

So saying he brought out to them the dressed stub. The women shook their cloths and went away. The young man having married another wife brought her to a separate house but kept his mother at her place and provided there for her.

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