

***The Wife who Gave Her Mother-in-Law Fish Scales to Eat***  
**Margaret Dabira, 1/3/83 Book 18:76-77; Tape: 32 Story 130**

A man and his wife were staying in the village. He would go out and catch fish. But when he brought them back his wife wouldn't give any to his mother. One day the husband went out fishing. He got plenty of fish. Later he asked his wife, "Did you give fish to my mother." "No, but I'm doing it right now." So she took a basket and filled it up with fish scales and took it to the mother. "Rawa, come out for your fish." The old woman took the basket but when she opened it inside the house there were only scales." The husband asked his wife, "Did you give her fish." "Yes, she is eating them now."

The next morning, the husband went out and caught lots of fish. While they ate the wife did the same thing - gave fish scales to the mother. She was really upset. The husband didn't know what was going on. He would go to the garden and then go fishing. The wife kept doing the same thing. Her mother in law said, "Why are you doing this to me? If you don't want to give me fish then don't; but don't give me these fish scales."

The mother in law kept all the scales. One day her son came up to see her. He knocked, "Who is that?" "Me, I've come to see you." So she invited him in and he went up into the door. When he sat down his mother said, "Your wife is always giving me fish scales. You eat fish and do this to me. Look at this." She threw him a basket; when he opened it he saw that it was full of fish scales. When he saw that he was really cross. He went past his house without speaking to his wife. He pulled down his canoe. Then he went up and brought down his mother and her things.

Then he sailed out. He paddled until it was dark. And then he paddled all night till the morning when they called on the way. He pulled the canoe up. He said to his mother, "You stay here. I'll go fishing and come back." He got his spear and daibi. He said, "I won't come back this evening. I'll come back tomorrow." Tomorrow morning as the sun comes up you must call out to your cousin."

So the next morning as the sun came up the old woman cried out, "Rukan - oi!" Her cousin lived up in the mountains. She was making a new stringbag. When she heard the call she left the bag and ran and ran down to the coast. When she saw her cousin she said, "Climb on my back. We will go back to my place in the mountains." So she carried and carried and carried. She put her down beside a river. Then the cousin went to her house to get the things. She brought them and then decorated the old lady at the river.

While the old woman sat by the river, the water came and washed over her head and body. She became a young girl. After she was decorated the two cousins walked towards the village. They came up to the house. The cousin put the mat and tapa cloth. The mother sat there.

The son came up with all the fish. They cooked them and ate them up. That man didn't return to his village. He stayed at that place and married a girl there.

Recorded by John Barker  
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