

People lived in a big village. There were two girls who were cousins (rukaman). One night one cousin went to the other's house and said, "Cousin, tomorrow both of us will go and look for giu (shell-fish)." The other cousin said, "That's a good idea. We will both go early in the morning." While they were talking a spirit girl (waaa morobi) came out. She listened to what they were saying and then went back. The one cousin said as she was leaving, "Early in the morning I will come and wake you up."

They were sleeping. Early in the morning that spirit girl came along and called out, "Rukan! Rukan! Wake up. I am here." She thought that it was really her rukan, so she took down her stringbag and went to the canoe. They paddled and paddled and paddled until they came to the place where they catch shell-fish. They paddled until they went around one point; around another point; paddled and paddled around another point. There they saw a big river coming down. The spirit girl said, "Rukan, this is the place; we will follow that river right up." "O.k. let's go." said the cousin. They followed that river right up to the top. The spirit girl said, "Rukan, there are plenty of shellfish here so let's stop." Then they got out of the canoe and began to fill up their stringbags with the shellfish. The girl filled up her stringbags and put them on the canoe. meanwhile the spirit girl would take her shells into the bush and throw them into her mouth, shells and all. When she finished eating them she returned to collect more. The girl filled one and then another stringbag and carried them to the canoe. But the spirit girl kept eating up her shellfish and then collecting more. The girl brought up the last stringbag and was sitting on the canoe. "This might not be my cousin," she thought to herself, "perhaps it is a spirit girl."

She was sitting on the canoe when the spirit girl called out, "Rukan, where are you." The girl lied and said, "I'm still here collecting shellfish." Really she was thinking to herself, "I must get out of here. This is a spirit and she might kill me." So she got ready to go. She took the flowers out of her armlets and said to them, "If that spirit girl calls out 'Are you there?' you say, 'I am still here looking for shellfish.'" So she left. She was going down while the spirit girl called out, "Rukan, are you there?" The flowers replied, "I'm staying, looking for shellfish." Meanwhile the girl was making her way down the river. The spirit girl kept on eating when she called out, "Rukan, have you finished collecting shellfish?" The flowers replied, "I have already finished and I am taking them down to the canoe." The spirit girl called again, "I'm filling my last stringbag." She was telling lies; she ate every shellfish that she found.

The girl paddled and paddled and paddled. Still she did not hear the waves of the ocean. "Aree!," she thought, "when she finishes the shellfish she will be coming after me." She was still paddling on when the spirit girl called out, "Rukan, are you there?" The flowers replied, "I am sitting on the canoe." "I am filling my last stringbag," the spirit girl lied, "and will soon be there." She was still eating the shellfish when she saw that the sun was sinking. She thought, "I have been eating all of the shellfish and that girl might get away. I must go and kill her." So she went down to the river but when she got there she saw that the canoe and the girl were no longer there. She ran down and saw the girl paddling down the river. She said, "Aha! You can't get away from me. I will kill you here."

The spirit girl ran up close to the canoe. "Ah," she said, "I will kill you here." But the girl climbed out to the platform and threw out a bag of shellfish. The spirit stopped to eat these up. The spirit girl said, "That's good. You go and I'll eat these shellfish." After she finished she ran again after the canoe. She saw it sailing away and ran up to it. "Where will you go? I'm going to kill you." She was holding on to the canoe when the girl threw down another stringbag of shellfish.

Then the spirit said the same words, "You can go. I'll eat my shellfish." After she was finished she began to run again. She ran down to the girl again, "Aha! Where will you go. I will kill you here." As that spirit held on to the canoe the girl again threw out a stringbag of shellfish and the spirit stopped to eat them. This time the girl came out to the beach. There were three more points to go around.

When she finished the shellfish she ran after the girl. She came close and again the girl threw down a bag and the spirit stopped to eat them. While the spirit was eating, the canoe went around the first point. The spirit girl came up again, "Where will you go? You won't get to your village. I will kill you here." But the girl threw down a stringbag and the spirit said, "It's o.k. You can go while I eat my shellfish." She came until she had gone around the second point. There was only one point to go around but only 2 bags of shellfish left. The spirit came close again and so the girl threw out one of the two bags. She had only one left. The canoe came around the last point. The spirit came up again and so the girl threw down the last stringbag.

While the spirit was eating the girl thought to herself, "If I try to get back to my village, she will kill me." So she went in there and climbed up into a tree. It was in the night. The spirit girl finished that last shellfish and raced around the point. She didn't see the canoe and said, "Oh, she has gone in somewhere." So she turned back and came to where the canoe was pulled in. She started looking around the bush. "I can smell her body, but where is she?" When she went into the bush, she couldn't smell the body. So she circled around and around the tree; but she didn't know the girl was up there. She kept on looking until the morning was coming. At that time the spirit girl went away. The girl came out of a hole in the tree. She left the canoe there and made her way up the beach.

She walked all the way until she came to a big river. "I won't go to my village. I'll follow this river and see what lies at the very top." Up on the river there was an old man and an old woman who would work together. They had lips but they were sealed. So they ate no food, drank no water and never spoke to each other. They would cook taro and when it was ready take it down to the river and pour it out. The husband would go and shoot pigs; they would butcher and cook them and then take the food down and dump it in the river. The girl followed up the river until she saw all of the taro and pig floating down. She thought to herself, "There must be a village up there at the top." At that time the husband shot a pig, butchered it, cooked it with the help of his wife and threw the food down the river. The girl saw the floating pig and taro and said, "Why are they throwing all of this food away? I must be coming close to the village now." She was really hungry so she swam out and got pig and taro. They were still very hot. She sat down and ate them. At that time the husband went hunting.

After eating she came to the village. She saw the house and the old woman who was sitting on the verandah. So she went up to see her. She went in and said, "Grandmother! Staying!" The old lady said, "Come up and sit down." \*\* She put down a mat and the girl went up and sat down there. She stayed while the old lady went and cooked some food, gave it to the girl and she ate again. After eating the girl told the story of what had happened to her. The woman sat there making actions but without saying anything. That day the man shot a very big pig. He brought it back in the afternoon. His wife cooked it up and they gave it to the girl to eat. The next morning they cooked food again. They signalled to the girl to eat. She asked them, "What about you? Why don't you try to eat?" But they made actions showing that they could not eat. So she ate up all of the food. They kept on feeding her until she grew up and was a big girl.

One day the girl sat down and thought to herself, "What will I do to make these people open their mouths." So she said to the old woman, "Grannie I'm going to the toilet." She went and found two large black ants (afaoafongi). She returned to the house with these, went up and sat down. The grandmother brought food. She said, "Put all of the food in front of me." They did this and then she said, "Come and eat." But they made actions to show that they couldn't eat because their lips were closed. So the girl said, "Both of you sit nearby while I eat." So they sat by her and she began to eat the food. While she was eating she took out the ant and cried out, "Grandmother!" and put it on her lips. The grandmother screamed out, opening her mouth. Then the girl did the same thing to the grandfather. From there they sat together and ate all of the food. They started talking. So she didn't go back to her village. They stayed there together, making garden, spearing pigs and eating together. While she was staying she went up to the house and her grandmother put on her tattoo (buwa). They decorated her and she stayed.

Across the river was a big village. They sent a message to the coast and the parents of the girl came up there to dance. They didn't know that their daughter was nearby; they thought that she was dead. They had looked for her but couldn't find her -- so they were kaati - kafo (parents who have lost a child). So the people went up to the village and were dancing there. The girl heard the drum and said, "Grandmother, let's go across. You sit and I'll dance." Her grandparents said, "That's good We'll go and sit while you dance." So they decorated their daughter and together they went to the village. The girl didn't dance with the coastal people, but with the bush people. They were all dancing at different ends of the village clearing (varo). The headman told the people to stop dancing and they would give food to the guests. So the girl stopped dancing and joined the coastal people. She was dancing there. The old man and woman sat in front of her. Her parents saw her and watched. They said, "She is like our daughter." They didn't know that it really was their daughter, and they started to cry. After dancing they took all of the food down to the canoes. Then the coastal people made their way back home. The old couple and the girl returned to their place.

When the people came down to the coast they shared the food and made a big party. The girl's parents said to the people, "We will not eat. We will go to the garden." But actually they made their way up the river. They said to each other, "We must be sure. She may be our daughter." They followed the river until they came to the old people's house. The old woman was sitting on the verandah. She got out the mat and they sat down and chewed betelnut with her. The old woman asked, "Where are you going?" "We came to see the girl." The old woman knew that they must be the parents so she went into the house and woke the girl up, saying, "Wake up. Your parents are here." When the girl came down her parents started crying. Together they cooked food. After they ate they said, "She doesn't need to come to our place. We were really sad so we came up to see her. Now she can stay here." So they left their daughter and returned to their village.

After her parents left, she stayed and worked with the old man and woman. First the old man died and she stayed on with the old woman. Later she died. Then the parents came up and brought their daughter back down to their own village.

(\*\* made actions, not words)