

Three brothers lived in a village with their young sister. Their parents died and there was no one to help them. Those three brothers used to take care of their sister. They took her out to the garden, worked there and came back. Then they would go out fishing. At that that no one would cook for them, so those three brothers did the cooking. One would peel taro, the other fetched water, and the other chopped firewood. They worked together and ate together. They stayed by themselves. No one looked after them and no one gave them food. The people in the village made their big gardens, but they never gave food to these children when they returned home. These brothers and sister never went when the villagers held feasts and dances. they just stayed in their house. One morning after they got up, the elder brother told his younger, "It is just us. Our parents died and these people never help us. When they go fishing they never give us fish. So we must cut *basowi* string and make our fishing net. Then we will go out and throw it." So after eating food, the three brothers went to the bush and cut *basowi*. They cut the *basowi* down and came back to the village. They started to peel and take the strings out of the *basowi*. When they finished this, they ate and slept. The next morning they got up and continued working at pulling out the fibres. As they were doing that, the youngest brother told the others, "You work on this *basowi*. I'll go with our young sister to the garden and get some food." They went to the garden. The boy quickly collected taro and cut banana. They carried them back to the village. When they came back they cooked food and ate together. Those three brothers went nowhere, every morning they sat there and worked on that fishing net. When they finished they went into the bush and cut kifa. They cut out the middle part for the float (goato). They tied them on and then collected gorago shells and tied them on for the weights. When they finished it was getting dark, so the three brothers cooked food again and ate. When they finished, the elder brother told the youngest one, "In the morning, you and I will go out to catch fish. The second born will go with our young sister to the garden." So the next morning the eldest and the youngest brothers went out fishing while the second born and the sister went to the garden. In the garden, the second born cleaned the place, planted new taro and weeded. When it was afternoon, the brother got taro and bananas, put them in a string bag, put it over his shoulder and told the sister, "It is time to go back." So they started back to the village. When he came to the village, he went up into the house and started cooking food. At that time, his brothers came back with plenty of fish and began to cook them. After eating they slept. They kept doing that -- two brothers would go out fishing while the other would go to the garden with their sister. Then they would cook and eat together. They were doing that when the village boys and girls put on a big party. They were all dancing. The girl was big enough and so said to her brothers, "I'll just go and watch." The boys agreed but said, "You must come home early." When she went the big girls saw her and said, "Every time we perform *manguvia* here your three brothers do not join us. Why is that? They always stay put catching fish and making gardens -- looking after and feeding you. Why is that? When you are big are they going to marry you? Is that why they don't come to *manguvia*?" But some other girls said, "Don't say that to her. They do not have a father or a mother to look after them. They have to make the garden, hunt and fish to look after their small sister. Don't say that." When the small girls heard that she ran all the way to the house and called out, "Yeiye, when I went to that place all those girls asked me, "Why do your brothers never come to *manguvia*? They always stay and make gardens, hunt and fish. When you grow big are they going to marry you? That's what they said to me. After they said that, other girls said, 'Why are you saying that? They have no father and mother and so they have to do all this work to look after their sister.'" The brothers got up and said, "If you want to dance you can dance. You

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<sup>1</sup>Kifi is a type of fruit tree – the fruit has to be cooked. Found in village and bush.

know how. But we have no father and mother and so we have to make the garden, hunt and fish in order to look after you. When you are big enough we will go to the *manguvia*. Why did they say that to you?"

That afternoon the brothers cooked the food and ate. The next morning the elder and younger brother went fishing and the other brother went to the garden for food. He brought back the food and began cooking. At that time the other brothers came back from fishing. They quickly cooked food. All the people in the village were dancing *manguvia*. So they got the girl's *bo:sa*. They said, "We'll go there to dance with all of the girls while you sit and watch." So they went down to the village. When they came to where the boys and girls were dancing they said to their sister, "You sit here and watch while we dance." While they danced the sister sat and talked with the other girls. The girls said, "Tomorrow we will go and collect *kifi*." It was the middle of the night, so the girl told her brother, "I want to go now, I'm getting sleepy." So the eldest brother told the others, "You keep on dancing while I take our sister back to the house." So he took her there, built up the fire and spread her mat and she lay down to sleep. When the brother was getting ready to return to the dance, the girl said, "*Yeiy*e, I was sitting watching you dance when some of the girls said that tomorrow they were going to collect *kifi*. I want to go with them." But the brother said, "You are not going; you'll stay back. We don't eat and drink with these people. They won't look after you. They will hit you." The girl replied, "They'll look after me. They won't hit me." So the elder brother said, "*Nene*, tomorrow morning you will go with your friends." Then the elder brother went and rejoined his younger brothers. They danced and danced. When it was getting towards morning they finished and the three brothers went back up to the house.

When they came back the sister woke up and said, "I'm going." They said, "If you go, you must look after yourself and come back early." The girl said, "I will look after myself and come back early." So she went out but the village empty because all of the girls had left very early in the morning. So she began walking, walking, walking and walking. She looked and she saw those other girls going. The girls looked back and saw her. "Who is this girl coming?" When they recognised her, they said, "It is the sister of those three brothers. She heard that we were going to collect *kifi* and is coming with us." All of them went and they found a *kifi* tree. There were plenty of *kifi* lying around. They said to her, "You stay here and collect *kifi*. We'll go around that point and get more there." So they left all their things, took their stringbags and set out. She began to collect the *kifi* lying about the place. The girls said, "When you finish collecting the *kifi* don't try to go back or anywhere. Wait here for us." The girl said, "I won't leave the place." Then she began gathering the *kifi*. She collected *kifi* and started playing with them by throwing them up into the air. She was not paying attention and wandered off into the bush. When she looked there she saw a bush *kifi*. The fruits were small and she began playing with them, saying, "Oh, these fruits are very good." When it was getting late in the afternoon, the girls got their *kifi* and came back. When they came to the *kifi* tree they didn't see the girl, her stringbag or her *bo:sa*. They said, "Where did this girl go? She must have become tired while waiting for us and went back to the village." So they picked up their things and walked back to the village.

She was still playing with the *kifi* when she looked up and saw that the sun was going down. She said, "I am playing with these *kifi* and it is getting dark." So she quickly filled her stringbag and ran down to the beach. When she got there she could find no things or *bo:sa*. When she saw that no one was there, she began to cry, "These girls told lies. They said they would wait for me but they have gone back." So she cried and she ran down the beach. As she did that all of the *kifi* in her stringbag called out, "Why are you crying? Start walking and do not cry. We are with you. You are not alone." But she kept running and crying even as those *kifi* were calling out.

Those three brothers were staying as the sun began to go down. They started to argue amongst themselves. "Why did you tell her to go with her friends?" They stopped their argument and said, "We will walk along the beach and see if we can find her." So they started walking along the beach. They saw their sister running, so when she came up they all walked together back to the house.

They put down the mat and all sat together. They put out food and ate together. When they finished eating, the small sister said, "I am very tired. I just came back so I want to sleep now." So the elder brother took the mat up, made the fire and she lay down to sleep. As she lay there, she took out the *kifi* and started to play with them. When she finished playing, she put all those *kifi* to the side and said, "We must sleep." Then they went to sleep. After that the three brothers went to sleep.

Early in the morning, the sister woke up and took all of the *kifi* out and started to play with them. She threw them up and down, kissed them, and talked to them. "When the sun is up, I'm going to the garden with one of my brothers and the other two will go to fish." When the sun came up, the brothers cooked food and called out to their sister, "Come down and eat your food." So she said to the *kifi*, "I'm going to eat food with my brothers now." The two brothers then got out the fishing net and set out to fish while the other brother took the sister to their garden. In the afternoon, when they returned, they cooked their food and ate it with the fish they had caught. Every day they did this. And that girl never cooked the *kifi*. She told her brothers, "When I am away don't cook and eat them." And her brothers said, "Why would we cook and eat them? They are yours."

Early one morning, two brothers went out fishing and the other went to the garden with their sister. When they had left, the *kifi* all came down, chopped firewood, swept the house, cooked food and left it. When they finished they went up to the room, lay down and became *kifi* again. When the sister and brother came back from the garden they saw that the house had been swept underneath and that there was firewood. Inside they looked and saw water and cooked food. They said, "Who did this?" The two brothers came back from fishing and the sister told them what had happened. They didn't know who had done it. So they got the food down, baked the fish and ate it with that food. The next morning the eldest brother went fishing with the youngest while the second went with the sister to the garden. When they got there, the sister said to her brother, "Yeiyi, I feel sick, so we must go back to the village." The brother asked the sister, "Who will you go with? I didn't get the taro yet and now you are sick." "I am big enough. I will run back to the village by myself." So she ran and ran and ran all the way back to the village by herself.

The girl told lies. When she came back she hid herself behind the house and watched those girls working. They fetched water and firewood and then cooked food. When they finished, they made *kafefi* balls out of the coconut leaves and played with them in the *varo*. The girl said, "Oh, these are the girls who clean our house, sweep the *varo*, chop firewood and fetch water." When the girls had finished playing, they went up into the house to the room and became *kifi* again. The girl went up into the house and lay down to sleep. Her brother returned from the garden at the same time as the other brothers came back from fishing. They saw the cooked food, so they said, "We'll cook only the fish." So they did that and then lay down to sleep.

The next morning, the two brothers went back to their fishing. The second brother went to the garden. The sister asked, "Are you going to plant taro?" "I will plant taro." "I don't want you to do that. Just get the taro and we will return quickly to the village." The brother listened and so only collected taro and cut bananas. Then they returned to the village. They came. When they were going into the village, the sister said to the brother, "We must not go in. We will go and stand behind the house." So they went there and the girl said, "Can you hear the girls laughing in the house?" The brother said, "Yes, I can hear them." When they finished cooking, the eldest *kifi susuki* said, "We must stop doing what we have done previously: When they come up to the house, we won't get frightened and turn back into *kifi*." So when they finished cooking this time they placed a big mat on the verandah. The eldest girl took down the eldest brother's *ya:ti*. Then they went and sat down while the other girls stayed in the house.

The small sister said to her brother, "We must go in and see what they will do." As she came up, the girls on the verandah greeted them. "Orokaiva!" They took the girl and brother's stringbags and took them up to the house. Then the other two brothers came home from fishing. When the brothers came back and saw those girls they didn't say anything. They went up into the house and

left the fish there. Then they came back. The eldest brother sat beside the eldest sister; the middle beside the middle sister; and the youngest beside the youngest sister. They married them. They continued to going out fishing and to make gardens. And these girls all helped their *wi:vi*, that little girl.

They were staying together with their wives. From that big village a *rukan* of theirs came out and said, "I want to marry one of these *kifi susuki*." The three brothers said, "We are not looking after these girls. This small girl is looking after them, so talk to her." This *rukaman* really wanted to marry one of these girls and kept talking about it. So the little girl said, "It is all right. You can marry her." Then they decorated her. When they gave her to the *rukaman* they said, "When you marry her don't hit or scold her, look after her properly." So the boy built a house next to their's. But he was not a good husband; he always scolded and hit his wife. Sometimes he cut her with his knife.

It was dry season time so all the people said, "Tomorrow we will burn the kunai grass." The three brothers said to their wives, "You must cook food, for tomorrow we will burn the *ra*." So early in the morning, the three wives cooked food and gave it to the brothers and they went off hunting. But their cousin didn't do that. Early in the morning he scolded and struck his wife. He then took down his spear and went out to go hunting. When the husbands were all out the *rukaman's* wife came across and told the sisters, "I'm going back to our place. This husband is no good and my body is always in pain." But the three sisters said, "Oh, don't say that. You are already married." When the three sisters said that, all the younger ones called out and said, "We will not say back. We will go to our place. You married and so you must stay. But their *rukaman* is no good so we will go back to our place." The elder sister said, "I'm married and my husband is a very good man. He looks after me properly, doesn't scold or hit me, and looks after me when I'm sick, so I won't go back." The sisters agreed, "The *rukaman* is bad so we will go back. But you three are married so you must stay here."

At that time the eldest one gave birth to a son who they called *Kifi Jiwo*. She said, "I gave birth to this son and so I won't go back." Her sisters agreed, "You are married so you must stay." But they kept talking and talking until eventually the oldest sister said, "All right, we must all go back together." When all of them were going back, the young girls said, "One of you must stay. It is not good that we all go back." The eldest said, "It is all right. I gave birth to a boy so I will leave him here." Then they began going. The young sister came home and saw the boy. She picked him up and set off after the girls. When she caught up with them, she tried to talk them into going back, but the girls said, "Your *rukan* is no good so we are going." But the girl said, "But why are you three going? Your husbands are good. You should go back." But they said, "The life is not good with our youngest sister. So we must all go back. We cannot stay here." Then they said, "You can take your small son back, but we will not stay." Then they left and went into the bush where the bush *kifi* was. When they came to the trunk, all the sisters went up but the three sisters lagged behind. Their inlaw said, "You must all come back to the village. It is no good that you go back." But they replied, "Your *rukan* was cruel to our sister, so we cannot go back. Our husbands went out to burn the kunai grass, so you can take their son back for them to see." After the eldest one spoke, they all climbed up into the tree and turned into *kifi*.

The sister carrying the son said, "I won't go back." And so she too climbed up the tree and became a *kifi*. Today she is the one that we get the big *kifi* from. The sisters are the ones we get the small *kifi* from. All those first sisters went up and became small *kifi*, but the little girl is the one that people pick the big *kifi* from today.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The large village type are the only ones used today. They must be baked. They are yellow. They are round and about 1 1/2" in diameter. Cut across and the inside is cooked. Inside is full of seeds. Eaten with squeezed

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coconut. Used more on the eastern side than here. Mervyn's old 'mother' cooked them once and Mac tried them. Can also be baked over the fire.