

A girl called Buoro Wato lost her parents. She lived with her brother and their house was at the end of a big village. The brother had plenty of sores over his body. He couldn't walk but stayed up in the house. She stayed with her brother. In another village people were dancing in their *varo*. She heard the drums and thought, "I'll go to that village and join them." So she went down from the house, climbed the betelnut palm and got mustard leaves. She went and scraped coconut and rubbed it on. Then she went back into the house and put on her decorations. When she finished she wasn't wearing an *embobi*; she put on a *koefi*. She got a *sambia* and *ya:ti* and went down from the house. She was a girl but decorated herself to look like a boy. When the sun was setting she went.

She walked along the beach, around the point, and came to the village. The boys were all dancing in good moonlight and having a fine time. She stood beside the dancers as they went up and down. They saw her and thought that she was a boy. So they asked, "Where did this handsome boy come from — the one who stands here? We don't see boys like this around here. This boy must have come from far away."

She stood and then went in and they all danced together. When she danced, all the people came and watched. They said, "Oh, a fine boy, a handsome man!" They were all talking about her good decorations, from head to toe. Her *tapa* and *sore* were very good. When she stood among the boys, the others thought she was a boy from far away. So they danced and made fun together.

They danced until the middle of the night. Then the boys said, "We must go and sleep." The chief's daughter stood there and felt that she wanted to marry Buoro Wato. So when they were all trying to leave, the chief's daughter went to Buoro Wato and told "him" of her desire.

"You are a handsome boy. Where is your village?" she asked.

"It is far away. I heard this *manguvia* going on, so I came here to dance."

She said, "Don't go to your place. It is far away and now dark. Let me take you to my place and you can leave in the morning."

So they went up to her house and slept together. The chief's daughter thought that it was a boy, so they slept together until the next morning. Early in the morning Buoro Wato awoke, got up and went to her place.

She was staying when people in that village started dancing again. She put feathers in her hair and a new *koefi*. When she came in the people said, "Where does this boy come from? The way he is decorated is very good." When she went up all the people talked amongst themselves.

"What is that boy's name?"

The chief's daughter answered, "Buoro Wato. That is the boy who has come."

She went in and joined the boys who were dancing. They went until the middle of the night and the boys said, "It is late and we must go in and sleep." So all the boys went to girls' houses and slept with the girls. When Buoro Wato was trying to go the chief's daughter came and took her by the hand and said, "We'll sleep together at my house." So they went up together. They were lying down when the chief's daughter said, "This is the second time we have slept together. When you go, I'll not stay behind — I will go with you."

"That's all right. We will go together."

So that *kawo morobi* got up and put all of her things into a stringbag without her parents knowing. She and Buoro Wato set out. They walked and walked. They came around the point and entered the village.

The chief's daughter didn't know that Buoro Wato was a girl. As they came up to the house the brother was sleeping by the fire. When they came to the door, Buoro Wato said, "Stay here and I'll get a mat." So she went in and spread a mat beside her brother. She put out an *embobi* to cover themselves. She then called out, "Come up here and we will sleep." So the girl came up. She lay

down beside the brother. Buoro Wato climbed down quietly and went to the place she herself lived — a hole in a big tree.

Buoro Wato knew that the brother was crippled and had too many sores. No girl would marry him. So she tricked the chief's daughter into coming and marrying him.

When the girl lay down, she thought she was beside Buoro Wato and so she slept. Early in the morning, she got a broom, went down and began to sweep around the house. When all the people woke up, they smelled something good coming from the sick boy's house and they asked, "What is this good smell coming from that man's house?" All the people wondered. Small boys saw the girl. They ran back to their parents.

"A young girl came and is staying in that 'old man's' house. She is the one sweeping his *varo*. The smell is not from flowers in the village but from the ones that she is wearing. She came from a different place and is staying there."

When she finished sweeping she called out, "Buoro Wato, come out." But after waiting for a long time, no one came. "Aga! What is happening that he sleeps so much? I'll go and see." So she slowly went up and opened the door. She looked in and saw a man covered with sores and dirt lying by the fire. She said, "Aga! Who is this man lying down here? Is this the man who bought me here — who told lies? It could be that in the dark I didn't see him properly. But I thought he was young and handsome. What will I do — stay here or return to my mother and father?"

She said that and then remained in thought. "What will I do? I can't go away. I shall stay here and chop his firewood and fetch his water." She was *kawo morobi* and she was married, so it would not be good if she went back. "My parents would say, 'Why did you come?' I would feel embarrassed. My friends would say, 'Why did you come back? You are married. You are not a chief's daughter.' They would ridicule the *kawo* man's name." So she stayed back and helped the man who was sick and covered with many sores.

At night when they went up to sleep, the sick man got his *be:si*, walked slowly to the beach, put his *be:si* down and called to the fish, "*Ye:sike, Ore, Bobotura.*" When he calls out those names all those fish swim in with a great noise in schools. They leap up and down. They jumped on the shore and he got all of the them. When there was plenty, he would tell the rest of the fish to go back to their homes. Then he would tie them together and carry the fish up to his house. Early in the morning the woman would cook the fish. Day and night she did this until they finished the fish. Then the husband would go back to the sea and do the same thing. He got his *be:si* and called to the fish. He took what he wanted and let the rest swim back to the deep water.

When he takes them up, they cook them. They begin their mornings eating those fish.

They stayed together. The *kawo morobi* wasn't scared of the man with sores. Every morning she boils water and bathes the sores. She chops firewood and builds a big fire for him to lie beside.

They stayed and she began pregnant. She gave birth to a girl. Every night, the father went to the sea to get fish. The wife needed these to feed her baby girl. The man kept doing that every night. The girl grew up until she could stand, fall and crawl along. At night when they are fast asleep, Buoro Wato comes out of the tree, goes to the garden, fills a stringbag with food, and leaves it in the brother's house without the chief's daughter knowing. They cooked and ate that food every morning with their fish.<sup>1</sup>

They stayed. When the chief's daughter went to the garden, she left the girl with the father. But the father couldn't get around so the baby only lay there and cried. In the afternoon, the wife came back, carried the girl around and fed her. The wife was very sad because no one could look after the baby when she was away. One day, while the mother was out, Buoro Wato came out of

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<sup>1</sup>The tape was accidentally erased after this point. The remaining text is Mac's summary. I recall my amazement with the detail he could recall.

her tree and carried the baby around singing songs. So she quietens the baby. When the sun goes down, Buoro Wato knows the mother will return, so she takes the baby and leaves her in her place.]

The mother put on a stringbag and carried her. When she did this she could smell the *si'si*. She was puzzled. "What is this smell? Only this man and myself carry this girl around." So this kept happening and the mother always smelled the flowers. One day she said, "This time I will hide and see who looks after my baby."

So in the morning she cooked and they ate. She told the husband, "I'm going to the garden. Look after the baby." When she went down the garden road, she turned off and hid herself behind the house where the coconuts were. She watched as Buoro Wato decorated herself and jumped out of the tree to carry the baby.

"Oh, this is the one who told lies and tricked me into marrying this man!", thought the chief's daughter.

So she quickly went to the garden, filled up a stringbag with food and returned to the village while the sun was still up. Buoro Wato carried the baby to the garden road. As she walked back to the house, the chief's daughter followed her. She looked back and saw her. She felt embarrassed and put her head down.

The chief's daughter went to the house, put down the stringbag and put out a mat. "Come and we will sit." But Buoro Wato was shamed, and she stood with bowed head as the baby started crying. "Bring your daughter here. She is hungry. I did not feed her." But Buoro Wato didn't answer. She dug her toes into the *varo*. The daughter kept talking but still Buoro Wato said nothing. She dug down until the ground was around her knees. "Why are you doing this? Come up! The baby is hungry. Don't be ashamed." But Buoro Wato kept digging until she was up to her waist. "Doing this is not good. I'm not scolding you!" But the girl continued going down. "Don't take your daughter down with you." As the mother tried to take her baby, the ground covered both of them.

So she went up to her house, got her things and returned to her own place. After that the brother died.

People should do this today. When boys are crippled their sisters should get spouses for them. But this girl found out and so Buoro Wato killed herself. So now no one can do this.

