

The Peace-Loving Old Woman



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Once upon a time in the village of Jatau, there was a wicked king called Sarki Jatau.

Sarki Jatau had a personal assistant called Adamu who would always seize for him whatever the king wanted.

Because of that, the king loved Adamu and gave him power over many things.

In the village there was an old widow called Mama who struggled to survive every day. She had a little farm and some animals, and this is how she earned her living.



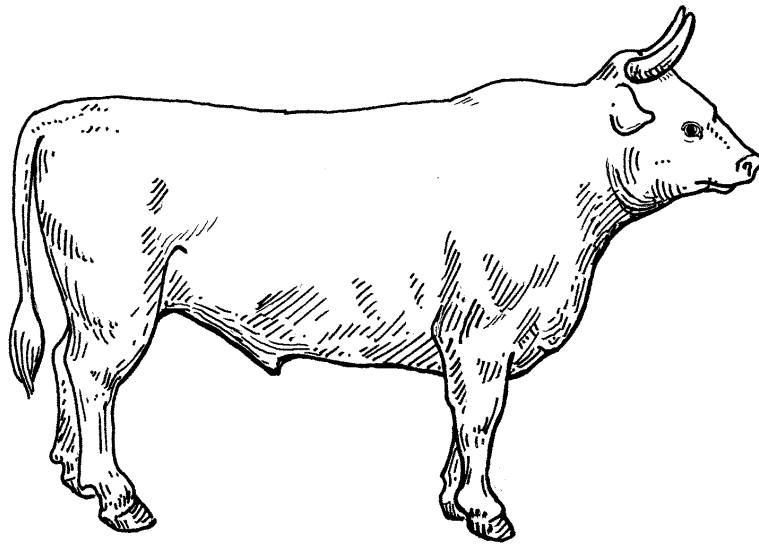
Sarki Jatau wanted to marry one of Mama's beautiful daughters. So he sent Adamu to Mama on his behalf.

Adamu asked Mama for her daughter's hand in marriage to the king. But Mama refused and gave the daughter to someone else.

Adamu was angry because he was unable to obtain Mama's daughter for the king. Above all, he wanted to please the king so that he would continue in his good favor.

Since then, Adamu had been thinking of what to do in order to get revenge on Mama.

One day Adamu was passing by Mama's house and saw a full-grown bull there. Mama had been raising the bull for years, and she used it on her farm.



Adamu had an idea. He was so excited that he ran back to the king's palace. Immediately he told the king's soldiers to go and bring him the bull. So they went straight to Mama's house, tied up the bull, took it to the king's palace, and prepared to slaughter it.

Then Adamu announced to the king, “Tonight we will have a feast, and you will have your revenge.”

So Sarki Jatau was pleased and said, “This I want to see.”

As soon as Mama learned that the king’s soldiers had taken her bull, she started on her way to the palace, for the bull was her main source of livelihood.



Now Mama had a good relationship with all the people in the village. So when they heard the news, they were very angry.

The more they discussed the injustice, the angrier they became.



Some of them even said they were ready to fight if the king insisted on slaughtering Mama's bull, and they prepared their weapons.

The rumors of battle reached the king's palace. As soon as he heard what was afoot, Adamu ordered the king's soldiers to kill anyone who tried to attack them.



When Mama arrived at the king's palace, she saw many villagers gathering with their local weapons. They were shouting:

“Set Mama's bull free!
Set Mama's bull free!
Set Mama's bull free!”

And the king's men were standing by with their spears ready to kill any trouble-makers. Because of the violence that was about to erupt, Mama stood up and addressed her supporters.



of Jatau, violence
to the loss of life
Let us keep away
and obey whatever

Out of respect for Mama, all the
villagers put down their weapons
and stood quietly to listen.

Sarki Jatau called Mama before
him and asked, "What do you
want?"



Mama bowed down and begged,
“Please, my king, you have taken
my only bull, and I depend on it
for my livelihood. I have come to
ask you to set it free.”

Sarki Jatau asked, "Are you not the same woman who refused to give me your daughter in marriage?"

Mama said, "It is I."

So the king replied, "We will slaughter your bull and eat it tonight."

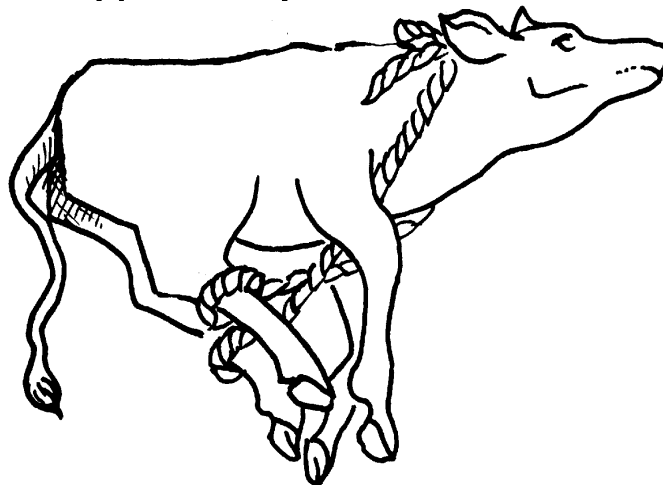
The crowd began to murmur at these words, but Mama just said, "As you wish."

Sarki Jatau said, "And your supporters, they will not attack me?"

Mama replied, "I am a woman of peace; so must be my supporters."

So the king had Mama's bull slaughtered right there in front of them.

Mama turned to the crowd and said, "Please go home peacefully. The king has spoken."





As a reward, Adamu was given the biggest share of the meat. He went home excited and put it on the fire.

Meanwhile, Mama was given the head and the hoof.

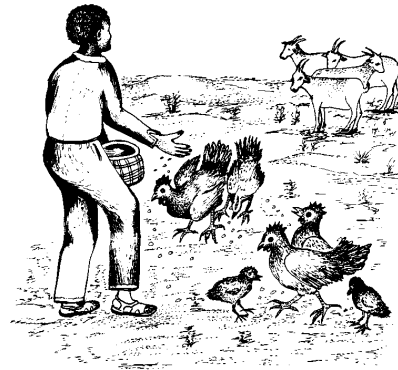


Mama went home and put the head and hoof in a pot on the fire. Then she returned to her fields for she had much work to do.

By the time she returned, a miracle had happened. The head and the hoof had turned into many strong men and women who were there to help her with all her work.



From that they on, the magic men and women plowed her fields and planted and harvested her crops and took care of all her animals for her.



Mama was relieved as now she had magic people to do all the work that her bull used to do for her, and more.

All the people in the village were amazed and said amongst themselves, "See? Mama saved us from a futile battle that we would have surely lost. She loved peace over violence, and peace has rewarded her."

But as for Adamu, the king's assistant, he suffered from diarrhea for the rest of his life.



Check Your Understanding!

1. In the beginning of the story, why was Adamu angry with Mama?
2. What did Adamu want to do for revenge?
3. How did the villagers react when the king's men seized Mama's bull?
4. What did Mama tell the villagers to do?
5. How was Mama rewarded for loving peace?
6. What happened to Adamu in the end?

