

Caught In a Sack
(Hikkukuri--Matasaburo Version)

Man
Wife

MAN I am a native of another land. Since I moved to this place, ten years have passed, in spite of which I have accomplished nothing, I am not accepted into the community, and my wife despises me and insists on her own way in everything. And recently she has gotten into the habit of spending all her time wandering about drinking tea and gossiping with the neighbors. I can put up with her no longer. I have decided to call her here and order her to go back to her parent's village. (Facing the lift curtain.) I say, I say, dear Wife! Are you there?

WIFE It appears that I am being called. (Approaching the MAN.) Did you call to me? What is it you want?

MAN I have a small matter to discuss with you. First come all the way in here.

WIFE With all my heart. (They enter the main stage and face each other.) You've got me worried, what is it you want?

MAN The matter I have called you here about is of no great import. I just wish to consult with you about my affairs.

WIFE How troublesome you are! What is it you want?

MAN While there are those in the world who enjoy great fortune, I am convinced that there is no one as lacking in property and as unable to make a living as I am. What do you think?

WIFE What nonsense! How can a man of your standing let such things bother you? It is just the way of the world. You must not let such things concern you in the least.

MAN I am not concerned for myself. My concern is for you who are forced to suffer such hardship from morning to night.

WIFE All you need do is avoid letting others know about how you feel. As for me, I suffer no hardship of any kind.

MAN In any case, I feel sorry for you to be seen in such a state. I beg you to go to your parent's village for a brief holiday.

WIFE Taking off on holiday for one or two days would give me very little pleasure.

MAN If one or two days would give you no pleasure, then go for twenty or thirty days.

WIFE As you always insist that you can not manage with me out of the house for even a single day, what would happen if I were to be gone for twenty or thirty days?!

MAN You say that now, but I am quite convinced that it would give you at least a little pleasure.

WIFE Indeed, that would likely give me at least a little pleasure.

MAN If you will not go for twenty or thirty days, then go for five or ten years.

WIFE Hey, you rascal!

MAN What is it?

WIFE You almost convinced me that you were sincere about what you have just been saying, but now I see you want to leave me. Don't you!

MAN How can you say that I want to leave you just because I offer you a holiday?

WIFE Hey, hey! It gives me no pleasure to be thought of in such a manner. I will indeed leave you, just give me a divorce!

MAN Spoken to in such a manner, no man could refuse to give you a divorce. I do indeed divorce you, leave me and be gone!

WIFE I will indeed leave you. Give me some token.

MAN Saying I divorce you is sufficient token.

WIFE No, no. Since a woman must remarry, I beg you to give me a token of my divorce.

MAN Then what shall I give you. While there is nothing that I regret your taking, as you as well aware, I possess nothing.

WIFE Just give me anything thing at all.

MAN I regret you nothing at all. Oh, I just remembered something. Wait right there for a moment. (He goes and gets a huge sack.)

WIFE With all my heart.

MAN Here, here. While there is nothing that I regret your taking, as you as well aware, I possess nothing. This is the sack that you are always using. I will give this to you.

WIFE I am not satisfied with this sack alone. Give me something or other to put inside it.

MAN As I just said, while there is nothing that I regret your taking, as you well aware, I possess nothing. So as things have come to this pass, take what ever thing you like and be gone.

WIFE What's that? You say I am to take whatever thing I like and be gone?

MAN Most certainly.

WIFE Do you speak truly?

MAN I speak truly.

WIFE Are you certain?

MAN That goes without saying.

WIFE Well, then, I know what I will do.

MAN What are you going to take?

(The WIFE goes to center stage and very slowly and deliberately begins spreading the huge sack out on the floor with the draw-string mouth facing upward.)

MAN (Observing her actions.) Oh, she is spreading it out, she is spreading it out. Are you going to take the washtub, or it is the kitchen cabinet?

WIFE No. no. It is nothing like that.

MAN Then what is it you are going to take? Oh, she is spreading it, she is spreading it. Is it the bathtub or the step ladder?

WIFE It is nothing like that.

MAN What are you going to take? Here, here. You are wrong not to tell me. You cannot have anything like my short sword, I tell you!

WIFE Oh, no. It is nothing at all like that.

MAN Then what it is you are going to take?

WIFE (She finishes spreading her sack out, moves away, and points to it.) Here now. You get inside it.

MAN What do you mean by that?

WIFE Did you not say that I could take whatever thing I like with me?

MAN Most certainly.

WIFE The thing I want is you. Get into the sack and I will take you away with me.

MAN (Laughing heartily.) Hey, you rascal! If I was willing to go with you, I would not have given you a divorce!

WIFE No matter what you say, I will take you away with me. (She picks up the sack and tries to throw it over the MAN's head.)

MAN What is this? Oh, you rascal. (He throws his WIFE to the ground and returns to his former position.) If I was willing to go with you, I would not have given you a divorce!

WIFE I will take you away with me no matter what! (She begins chasing him about, trying to catch him with her sack.)

MAN What are you up to?!

WIFE I will take you away with me no matter what!

MAN What is this?!

WIFE I will take you away with me no matter what!

MAN What are you up to? (The WIFE finally succeeds in catching the MAN.) I cannot see, I cannot see!

WIFE (She slings the MAN in the sack onto her back in such a manner that they are back to back and drags him off.) Ei-to, ei-to.

MAN I cannot see, I cannot see!

WIFE Ei-to, ei-to.

MAN This is dangerous, this is dangerous.

WIFE Eito, ei-to.

(Source: Matasaburo Nomura Family Archives)