Eleanor A. Dasi, "Entry on: The Magic Coconut Tree [Le Cocotier magique] by Onabel Edjecka [Edji Onabel] , Aude Perralta Excoffier", peer-reviewed by Divine Che Neba, Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1447. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Onabel Edjecka [Edji Onabel] , Aude Perralta Excoffier

The Magic Coconut Tree [Le Cocotier magique]

Cameroon (2021)

TAGS: African Storytelling African Traditions



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Magic Coconut Tree [Le Cocotier magique]
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Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon, France
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Creators



Onabel Edjecka [Edji Onabel] (Illustrator)

He was born Lazare Onabel Edjecka in the seaside town of Kribi, Cameroon. He studied visual arts at the University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon and holds a professional qualification diploma in Webmaster. Edji Onabel has a passion for cartooning, art and graphic design and is building a career in these areas.

Source:

Frankfurtrights.com (accessed: June 7, 2022).

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé I, wandasi5@yahoo.com



Aude Perralta Excoffier , b. 1980 (Author)

Aude Peralta Excoffier is a French debut writer. The Magic Coconut Tree is her first published work. She came to Cameroon from France at the age of eight and lived in Edea for three years. While in Cameroon, she got attached to the people and their cultures which inspired and sourced the writing of this short story.

Source:

Author Biography at frankfurtrights.com (accessed: June 7, 2022).

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Additional information

Translation

English: *The Magic Coconut Tree*, trans. Eleanor A. Dasi, Yaoundé: Akoma Mba, 2021.

Summary

There once lived a king near Kumba known as King Tabot who ruled his people with a heavy hand. One day, he visited Eseck and Muslimah and asked to marry their daughter Yaoddan. The couple complained that he was far older than their daughter, and the daughter herself refused to be his wife but that did not stop King Tabot. Tabot always got what he wanted. He declared the marriage contracted and fixed a day for the celebration. Yoaddan was broken hearted as she went to Tabot's palace as his eleventh wife. She was so grieved that she locked herself up in her room and wept day and night, praying to be freed from Tabot someday. Then one day, Tabot asked Yoaddan to accompany one of his wives, Enjeck, to Kumba market to sell some goods. When they got there, a young man robbed them of their goods and another, called Enow, went in pursuit of him. But Enow could not catch the thief and so offered to pay for the stolen items. The following week, Enow came round to Enjeck and Yoaddan's stall to find out how they were doing. Then he and Yoaddan stepped aside to talk. Yoaddan opened-up to him about her situation as Tabots's wife, and feeling pity for her, Enow promised to free her though he did not yet know how.

In the meantime, King Tabot and King Ayuk of the neighbouring village were disputing over a piece of land. Ayuk wanted the land to build a school for orphans and poor children while Tabot wanted it for a luxurious hotel. Tabot sent his henchman, Awa, to Ayuk's palace to book an appointment in Tabot's palace so they could talk on the land issue. On his way back from Ayuk's palace, Awa stopped at Kumba market to shop for his wife and behold, he saw Enow and Yoaddan flirting with each other. He reported this to King Tabot who locked Yoaddan and Enjeck in the palace prison upon their return, and swore to take revenge on Enow for stabbing him in the back. After consulting with his sorcerer, Onong, they agreed to transform Enow and his father king Ayuk into goats which they would use as sacrifices to the gods. Onong prepared the potion which was administered on the day they came for discussion on the land issue. But before that, Enow had taken a tour around the palace where he discovered where

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Tabot's two wives were locked up and even spoke with Yoaddan.

When Ayuk and Enow did not return to their kingdom, Ketzia, Ayuk's wife and Enow's mother became worried and alerted Djal, the magician of their village. They inquired from Tabot but he said the two left his palace already.

When Tabot had successfully transformed Ayuk and Enow into goats, he released Enjeck and Yoaddan, though he secretly reserved the same fate for Enjeck. As for Yoaddan, he inscribed his mark and signature on her body so that everyone should see that he belonged to her. This ritual was performed by Onong, dressed in fur, a necklace of teeth and a gorilla mask, the animal totem of Tabot. After the ritual, Yoaddan went to visit her parents to brief them of the situation. After her story, the dots were connected, and they knew what had happened to Ayuk and Enow. Djal said their only hope was a pearl that is in the coconuts from the magic coconut tree that grew on the summit of mount Cameroon, and only Yoaddan can get if her love for Enow is sincere. She embarked on the journey to mount Cameroon. On the way, she was offered companionship by a young boy, Babila, who is actually Kluh, the genie of Epassa Moto, god of the mountain, When they got to the summit, the coconut tree appeared amid thunder and lengthening bolts and a flake of flames. Babila became Kluh, dived into the flames and picked one of the green coconuts for Yoaddan. Then they took the downward trip. On the way, some men attempted to rob them of the coconut, which if they got, would make them rich for life, but Kluh used his mystical power and frightened them away. They got to Tabot's kingdom on the eve of the festival of offerings to the gods. Djal quickly prepared the antidote and Kluh helped in administering it to the three goats. Onong saw him but Kluh's powers were far stronger than his so he could not stop him. The villagers rose the next morning to find Ayuk, Enow and Enjeck in place of the three goats. Knowing how evil King Tabot was, they asked for an explanation. Awa tried to lie to them, but Eseck came out and told the whole truth. Meanwhile, the curse had backfired and fallen on Tabot. He was now a goat. Awa tried to convince the villagers to look for a way for him to regain his human form but they refused. His son was made successor and Yoaddan and Enow were free to marry.

Analysis

The story evokes some cultural practices of some African communities whereby the head of a village is entitled to as many women as he

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wants. Sometimes such privileges are abused as is the case with king Tabot, who forcefully takes any woman he wishes as wife. Though polygamy is a cultural practice, women were forced into it on rare occasions. Contrasted with Tabot is king Ayuk who has just one wife. Furthermore, Tabot is ruthless and selfish while Ayuk is compassionate and selfless. In cases where a ruler is cruel, the gods find a way of punishing him. Tabot faces retributive justice because he inflicted evil on innocent people.

Furthermore, many kings of African tribes have totem animals, whose form they use either for good or evil. Tabot uses it for evil as he inscribes his mark on Yoaddan to indicate that she is his property.

Apart from rewarding and punishing rulers, the gods also exercise this role on members of the community. Djal makes it clear that the magic coconut tree only appears to those who possess such virtues as purity of heart and sincerity. In her desperate moments, Epassa Moto sends his genie in human form to help Yoaddan because her motives and those of Ayuk and Enow are pure and sincere thus confirming that the gods have a way of helping those who are desperately in need, and who are on the side of justice.

Finally, the story turns on the strength of love which conquers evil.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Good vs evil Justice Love Magic
Further Reading	Mbongaya Ivo Arrey, “Will Epasamoto always be there?” available at http://www.mtnforum.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/epasamoto_beliefsrisk-management_cameroun.pdf (no longer available).

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