



Tipingee (Haiti)

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Retold Fairy Tales

During a time in the not so distant past, a not so blushing bride's husband died. Death snatched her husband but forgot his kid.

Household tyranny over the minor offered the former bride little revenge. Tipingee scoured floors, scrubbed dishes, skinned onions, ripped weeds, chopped wood, and hammered fences. Her stepmother, the former bride, having perfected the art of selfishness kept everything they earned she kept for herself.

Trays of sweetmeats met easy money at the market. Alone in the kitchen, her stepmother bustled around, tending to the pot above the fire. Only as the day progressed, the fire dwindled. The flames heaved into sparkless ash. The cooking stopped.

“Dreaded drats! Wood! Wood! I demand wood!” The louder she shrieked, the quieter the house remained, for Tipingee was at school.

Her voice waned under the shrill of her demands. Enraged, she grabbed her coat and cracked the door frame slamming the door behind her. She stomped the desolate pathways behind the house searching for wood. Snipped twigs and starved sticks cluttered the walkways, yet each was vacant of robust logs and stout branches.

She trudged on until she entered what appeared to be a vacant field. Her feet celebrated. Mounds of pre-cut logs almost stubbed them. Having entered firewood paradise, she wanted all of it. Only firewood paradise offered more wood than she could carry. Even more, than Tipingee could carry. She searched for a new plan.

The road cutting across the North end of the field met traffic and un-hired help. Well, if it had travelers but it didn't so she returned to the field. Not knowing what else to do, yet doing what she did best, she tightened her fists. She yelled and screamed. "Help! Now! I mean it!"

A man appearing more ancient than old appeared before her. "You called."

"You!" she exclaimed. "How can someone older than time itself have the strength or capacity to carry such a load?"

He tapped the wood three times.

Mounds of strewn wood turned into piles of stacked wood. Again, he raised his walking stick. The stick struck the ground once. The piles of wood leaped to his back.

The payment he asked, striding towards her house.

Hired help she hadn't considered. She thought about her deceased husband's belongings and her secret money stash. Then, she thought about Tipingee.

An eerie smile cracked her face. "Follow me. We will settle at the house."

As agreed, behind her house stood giant mounds of stacked wood.

The problem of snoozing during class had gotten Tipingee kicked out for the rest of the day. Home early, she heard a stranger's voice in the yard. She listened by the edge of the window.

"Payment," the old man asked again.

"Yes, payment." Pausing, the stepmother continued. "Tipingee is your payment. She is young, strong and industrious. Take her. She is yours."

The man agreed.

“Tomorrow morning you will find her by the well. She will be the one wearing a red dress. Her name is Tipingee. Call her and she will come.”

“Our business is almost complete,” replied the old man.

Tipingee froze. Tears spilled from her eyes. “This can’t be true!” she said inside herself. “This won’t be true!” she declared out loud.

After dark, Tipingee crawled out her bedroom window and raced through town. Tick -Tick -Trap. Her fingers rapped against the window pane. “Tomorrow is a red dress day. Your name is now Tipingee too.” Then she told them of all that had happened.

Early the next morning, the old man arrived at the well. Spotting a young girl in a red dress he called, “Tipingee!” Another girl in a red dress walked up to the well. Again he called, “Tipingee!” Then seeing yet another girl in a red dress he yet again called, “Tipingee!”

There was no response. More and more little girls wearing red dresses appeared. The more girls in red dresses he saw the angrier he became until his body turned red and he looked more like a tulip than a man.

He stomped his feet and screamed, “Tipingee! Who here is Tipingee!”

“Hello, I’m Tipingee!” cried one girl.

“Yes, and hello! I am Tipingee!” cried another girl.

“It’s nice to meet you, I am Tipingee too!” cried yet another girl.

Gathering around, the girls danced and sang;

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

Laughing they continued dancing long after he disappeared.

Tipingee fell asleep at school and got sent home early. She heard voices and listened by the side of her bedroom window.

“You! Old woman, you tricked me! Our contract is not yet complete,” raged the old man’s voice. He told her all that had happened.

“Oh! No problem” cried the stepmother. “Things happen. Tomorrow she will be dressed black just like the day we mourned my dear husband’s loss. Black is for funerals, not for school or play.”

They agreed.

Later that night Tipingee again went to each of her schoolmates’ homes. Tick -Tick -Trap. Her fingers rapped against the window pane. “Tomorrow is black dress day. Your name is now Tipingee too.” Then she told them of all that had happened.

Early the next morning, the old man arrived at the well. Seeing a young girl all dressed in black an eerie smile crossed his face, for he was sure this was the one. His eyes met hers, he cried, “Tipingee!”

Silence.

Thinking she had not heard him, he cried louder, “Tipingee!” Running up behind her more girls dressed in black appeared. Screaming, he cried, “Tipingee!” Pointing he cried, “Tipingee!” Chasing after one, then another, he cried, “Tipingee!” The more he chased and the more he cried, the angrier he became.

The young girls circled around him dancing and singing;

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

Bursting into laughter they continued dancing long after he disappeared.

All the late-night hours running around town made Tipingee extra tired at school. During the day Tipingee

yawned. When Tipingee yawned, her classmates yawned. When her classmates yawned, her teacher yawned. Having yawned way too much, the teacher stopped teaching. Looking at Tipingee, she cried, "Go home. You are too tired to be here!"

Tipingee went home. Not wanting her stepmother to know what happened, she hid in her room. Listening by the side of the window, Tipingee heard the too familiar voice.

"Old woman, you tricked me again! This entire town is like a funeral on tap. Somehow, I missed who or what died.

He paused. He continued. "Moving beyond the past two disasters, our contract is still not complete," bellowed the old man.

"No problem!" cried the stepmother. "Tomorrow she'll wear her dance clothes and shoes. Her hair will be fashioned up in colorful ribbons and ties. When you stop by the well, call Tipingee's name and she will come to you."

"I've got this covered too. If she's not there, I'll settle for you. Either way, our business will be complete," replied the old man.

She shuddered and said nothing.

Later that night, Tipingee again raced to each of her schoolmates' homes. Tick -Tick -Trap. Her fingers rapped against the window pane. "Tomorrow at the well its dance clothes and dance shoes with your hair fashioned in different colorful ribbons and ties. Remember, your name is Tipingee too." Then she told them of all that had happened.

At dawn, the old man arrived at the well. Seeing a young girl wearing dance clothes and dance shoes with her hair tied up in colorful ribbons and ties, he cried, "Tipingee!"

Pausing, he looked around. Satisfied, an eerie smile crossed his face, he cried, "Tipingee! Your stepmother is looking for you. Come now."

“Come? Where?” asked another girl dressed in dancewear with her hair fashioned in colorful ribbons and ties.

“Yes, come here?” asked another girl dressed in dancewear with her hair fashioned up in colorful ribbons and ties.

“Did some say come and ask where?” inquired yet another girl dressed in dancewear with her hair fashioned up in colorful ribbons and ties.

They sprung up around the well. More and more girls appeared until young girls dressed in dancewear with their hair fashioned up in colorful ribbons and ties surrounded him.

“Listen, all of you,” he screamed, “Tipingee! Who here is Tipingee!”

Smiling, the young girls danced and sang,

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

“I’m Tipingee! You’re Tipingee! We’re Tipingee too!”

They laughed and danced long after he disappeared.

He returned to Tipingee’s house. An eerie smile crossed his face. His walking stick hit the ground once.

Stacked and packed, her stepmother landed on his back. They disappeared. No one ever saw either one of them again.

From that day on, Tipingee and all her friends got a much longer night’s sleep. Tipingee never got sent home from school early because she never yawned in class again. Every night, Tipingee came home to her father’s house, to her father’s belongings, and to her stepmother’s savings. She lived there happily as long as anyone can remember.

Thank You . . . Until the next story!

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