**THE STORY OF THE TWO BROTHERS**

There were once two brothers, Anpu was the older, Bata was the younger. Anpu had a wife, and owned a farm. Bata came to live with Anpu and his wife. Bata worked hard for his brother, plowing the fields, and harvesting the grain, and doing many other tasks. He was very good at his work. The animals would even speak to him.

One day Anpu announced that it was time to plow the fields and sow the seeds. And he instructed his brother to take sacks of seed out to the fields. They spent the next few days plowing and sowing seeds.

Then Anpu sent Bata back for more seeds. At Anpu's house, Bata found Anpu's wife fixing her hair. Bata said, "Get up and get me some seed, Anpu is waiting."

Anpu's wife replied, "Get the seed yourself. I'm busy with my hair."

Bata found a large basket, and filled it with seed. And, he carried the basket through the house.

Anpu's wife said, "What is the weight of that basket you carry."

Bata replied, "There are three sacks of wheat and two of barley."

She said, "How strong you are, and handsome. Stay with me and let us make love. And Anpu will never know."

Bata replied in horror, "Anpu is like a father to me, and you are like a mother to me. I won't tell anyone of the evil words that you have said. And never let me hear them again." He picked up his basket, and rushed out into the fields.

When Anpu got back home, he realized that something was wrong. No fire had been lit, no food had been cooked, and his wife was in bed moaning and weeping. Her clothes were torn, and she seemed to be bruised. Anpu demanded that she tell him what had happened.

She replied, "When your brother came to fetch the seed, he saw me fixing my hair. He tried to make love to me. And I refused, saying, 'Is not Anpu like a father to you? And am I not like a mother to you?' And he became angry, and beat me. And he said that he would hurt me more if I told you what had happened. Oh Anpu, kill him for me, or I will surely die."

Anpu was angry like a leopard. He took a spear, and hid behind the door of the cattle pen, waiting to kill his brother.

When the sun had gone down, Bata returned with the cattle. The first cow said to Bata, "Your brother hides with a spear, behind the door. And he plans to kill you. Run away while you can."

Bata would not believe the cow. But the second cow gave him the same warning. Then he saw his brother's feet behind the door. And he was afraid and ran away. Anpu chased him in great anger. As he ran, Bata called out to Ra, "O my good lord, who judges between the bad and the good, save me."

And Ra heard Bata's prayer, and caused a river to flow between them. The river was wide and full of crocodiles. The two brothers stood on opposite banks of the river. Bata shouted to Anpu, "Ra delivers the wicked to the just. But I must leave you. Why did you try to kill me, without giving me a chance to explain?" And Bata told his side of the story.

Then Bata took out his knife and cut himself, and he fell to the ground. And Anpu believed him, and was sick at heart. And he longed to be on the other side of the river, with his brother.

Bata spoke again, "I must go to the valley of cedars, to be healed. And I shall hide my heart in a cedar tree. And when the cedar tree is cut down, I will be in danger of dying. If your beer turns sour, you will know that I need your help. Come to the valley of cedars and search for my heart. Put my heart in a bowl of water. And I will come back to life again.

Anpu promised to obey his brother, and went home. He killed his wife, and threw her body to the dogs.

Bata traveled to the valley of cedars, and rested until his wound had healed. He hunted wild beasts and built a house for himself. And he hid his heart in the branches of a tree.

One day, the nine gods were walking in the valley. And they saw that Bata was lonely. And Ra ordered Khnum to make a wife for Bata, on his potters wheel. And when the gods breathed life into her, they saw that she was the most beautiful woman who ever lived. The seven Hathors gathered to declare her fate, and said that she would die a sudden death.

Bata loved her. And he knew that whoever saw her would desire her. Every day, as he left to hunt wild animals, he warned her, "Stay in the house, or the sea may try to carry you away. And there is little I could do to save you."

One day, when Bata had gone out to hunt, his wife grew bored and went out for a walk. And, as she stood beneath the tree, the sea saw her, and surged up the valley to get her. She tried to flee. But the tree caught her by the hair. She escaped, leaving a lock of her hair in the tree.

The sea took the lock of hair, and carried it to Egypt, where the Nile took it. And the hair floated to where the washermen of the King were washing the King's clothes. And the sweet-smelling hair caused the King's clothes to smell like perfume. And the King complained of this. This happened every day.

One day the overseer of the washermen saw the lock of hair caught in the reeds. He ordered that it be brought to him. And he smelled its sweet smell.

And he took the lock of hair to the King. And the King's advisers said, "This is a lock of hair from a daughter of Ra." And the King wanted to make this woman his Queen.

The King sent many messengers to all lands. All returned to say that they had failed to find the woman. But one returned from the valley of the cedars to say that his companions had been killed by Bata, and that Bata's wife was the woman that he sought.

The King sent many soldiers to fetch Bata's wife. And with the soldiers, he sent a woman to give jewels to Bata's wife, and to tell her that the King wanted to make her a queen. Bata's wife told this woman that Bata's heart was hidden in the tree, and that if the tree were cut down, Bata would die. And the soldiers cut down the tree. As the tree fell, Bata fell down dead. And the soldiers chopped up the tree and dispersed the pieces.

At the same moment that Bata died, Anpu's beer began to bubble and turn sour. And he immediately put on his sandals, and grabbed his spear and his staff, and hastened to the valley of cedars.

There he found his brother dead, and he wept. But he remembered his brother's instruction and searched for his heart. He searched in vain for three years. And he longed to return to Egypt. At the beginning of the fourth year, he said to himself, "If I don't find my brother's heart tomorrow, I will go back home."

The next day, he searched again. And near the end of the day, he found what he thought was a seed. But it was Bata's dried up heart. And he put it in a bowl of water, and sat down to wait. The heart grew as it absorbed water. Bata came back to life, but was very weak. Then Anpu held the bowl to Bata's lips, and he swallowed the remaining water, and then swallowed his own heart. And his strength returned to him. And the two brothers embraced.

Bata said, "Tomorrow, I will change myself into a sacred bull. And you will ride me back to Egypt. Lead me before the King. And he will reward you. Then return to your house."

The next day, Bata changed into a bull. And Anpu rode him to Egypt, and led him before the King. The King rewarded Anpu with gold, and silver, and land, and slaves. And there was rejoicing throughout the land. And Anpu returned to his house.

Eventually, Bata encountered his wife, who was now the Queen. And he said, "Look upon me, for I am alive."

She asked, "And who are you?"

He replied, "I am Bata. And it was you who caused the tree to be cut down, so that I would be destroyed. But I am alive." And she trembled in fear, and left the room.

That evening, the King sat at a feast, with his Queen. And she said to him, "Will you swear by the gods that you will give me anything that I want?" The King promised that he would. The Queen said, "I desire to eat the liver of the sacred bull, for he is nothing to you."

The king was upset at her request. But the next day, he commanded that the bull be sacrificed. And the bull was sacrificed. And its blood splattered on each side the gate of the palace.

That night, two persea trees sprang up next to the palace gate. The King was told of this miracle, and there was much rejoicing.

One day the King and Queen were standing in the shade of one of the trees. And the tree spoke to the Queen, "False woman, you are the one who caused the cedar tree to be cut down, and you made the King slaughter the bull. But, I am Bata, I am still alive." And the Queen was afraid.

Later, when the King and Queen were feasting, the Queen said, "Will you swear by the gods that you will give me anything that I want?" The King promised that he would. The Queen said, "It is my desire that those two persea trees be chopped down, to make furniture for me."

The King was troubled by her request. But the next day the King and Queen watched as the trees were cut down. As the Queen stood watching, a chip of wood flew from one of the trees, and flew into her mouth, and she swallowed it. And it made the Queen become pregnant.

After many days, the Queen gave birth to a son. The King loved him, and made him heir to the throne.

In time the King died, and rejoined the gods. And his son succeeded him as King.

The new King (who was Bata) summoned his court, and told everyone the story of his life. And he judged that his wife, who had become his mother, should die for her crimes. And the court agreed. And she was led away to be killed.

Bata ruled Egypt for thirty years. Then he died. And his brother Anpu then ruled Egypt.