



# A MENDE STORY

(LISTENERS CAN CHANT AND STOMP)

Two brothers liked to walk for the sake of walking. They came to a village at nightfall. The chief said to them, “You are welcome to stay here. There is a guesthouse in which you may sleep, and there is food. But in this village there is a custom. Strangers may sleep here, but may not snore. If you snore, you will be killed as you sleep.”

The visitors had not been asleep long when one of them began to snore: “Vo, vo, vo” His companion heard him and woke. He also heard “Ta, ta, ta.” This was the sound of villagers sharpening their knives to kill the snorer. How could he save his companion? He began to sing very loudly: “We walked on the road. Vp, vo, vo. We came to this town. Vo, vo, vo. We were welcomed. Vo, vo, vo.”

The people could not hear the snoring over the singing and the pounding of his feet on the ground. They put down their knives and began to dance. They played drums and sang. All night one stranger slept and the other one sang, and the townspeople danced and sang. In the morning the chief gave them a purse of money to thank them. He said, “You gave us music and we sang and danced. We are grateful.”

On the road, the two brothers began to argue about the money. “If I had not snored, you would not have sung. The larger share of the money belongs to me!”

“If I had not sung, you would have been killed for snoring. The larger share belongs to me. The brothers could not decide. Can you?”