

Critical Thinking Questions:
Women and Folktales in Sudanese Culture

“How the Woman and Rat Came to Stay in the Same House” and
“A Wife Demands the Death of her Mother-in-Law”

As you read, please think about how you would answer these questions.

1. Both stories show women doing hard, often invisible work (giving birth, cleaning children, carrying house materials). Why do you think the stories focus so much on this?
2. What roles do women occupy in each story, and what do those roles say about women in Sudanese culture.
3. What kinds of power or choices do the women appear to have in each story, and where do you see limits on that power?
4. When decisions about the household are made, who decides, and what does that suggest about women?
5. How does each story treat the presence—or absence—of a mother?
6. Taken together, what do these stories suggest Sudanese culture values most about women?
7. What moral or lesson about women and family life might Sudanese children take away from these stories?