

Story 8: The River of Truth



Story shared by: *Godwyn*

Representing: *Cameroon*

The Story:

Many, many years ago, in a small village in Africa, there lived a family with two kids. One of the kids was named John, and the other was named Mary. One particular day, their mother told them, "When you come back, you'll have something special in your dish. Eat it and then join me on the farm."

When John and Mary came back from school, they ate the food - it was nice - and then they went to join their mother at the farm. The mother had prepared a special meal and kept some for dinner in the pot. But surprisingly, when they came back and she opened the pot to prepare dinner, there was no food left. She called John and Mary and asked them, "Did anyone eat the food from the pot?" John said, "No, I didn't touch it." Mary also said, "No, I didn't touch it either."

Since no one admitted to eating the food, it seemed as if some spirit had entered the house. At that time, in the village, there was a river called the River of Truth. So, they took John and Mary to this river. The belief was that if you told a lie, the water would rise. There was also a spirit known as "Mami Wata," the queen mother of the water, who would swallow you if you lied.

They put Mary in the river first and asked her, "Mary, did you eat the rice?" She replied, "No." They then asked her to sing a song: "If na me chop this rice, if na me chop this rice, oh cover, cover, cover me, oh Mami Wata, go swallow me, cha chu, cha chu..." As she sang, the water rose from her ankle to her knee, then to her waist. But when she sang again, the water returned to its normal level, showing she had not eaten the rice.



Next, they called John to step into the water. He was asked the same question and sang the same song: "If na me chop this rice, if na me chop this rice, oh cover, cover, co, co, co cover me, oh Mami Wata, go swallow me, cha chu, cha chu." The water rose to his waist and then to his chest as he kept singing. They asked him again if he ate the rice, and he continued to deny it. But with the final song, the water rose above his head and swallowed him, taking him away.

Story Moral: *The moral of the story is to always tell the truth, no matter how bad or difficult the situation may seem. The truth is slow, but it eventually comes out. It may take time, but it cannot be hidden forever. Nothing hides under the sun.*