

Story 10: Mami Wata



Story shared by: *Aminata*

Representing: *Senegalese*

The Story:

Once upon a time, on a warm summer evening, two children sat eagerly at the foot of their grandmother's bed, excitedly discussing their plans for the next day. "Maam," said the eldest child, "we're so excited! We want to go to the lake tomorrow!" Their grandmother, a wise old woman, looked at them with concern. "To the lake? Oh, my dear grandchildren, you mustn't go too close to the water," she warned, her voice serious. "Don't you know what happened to your aunty?" The younger child frowned in confusion. "Our aunty? What happened to her, Maam?" "Yes," said the older child, eyes wide. "Tell us, Maam! What happened to her?" The grandmother sighed. "It happened many years ago, when I was a young girl just like you two. My sister and I were eager to visit the river, just as you are now. But that day, our plans did not go as expected." The children glanced at each other with worry in their eyes as the grandmother began her story...

Long ago, in a small village nestled by the river, two young girls played in the heat of the afternoon sun. One of them was their aunty, a lively, adventurous girl with bright eyes and a love for exploring. Beside her stood her sister, their grandmother as a young girl, more cautious but equally curious. "It's so hot today," said their aunty. "Let's go to the river and play!" The young version of their grandmother hesitated. "But we're not supposed to go near the water," she said, looking nervously towards the river. "It's dangerous..." "Don't worry," said her sister, brushing off the concern. "We're just going to cool off. What could be dangerous about that?" After a moment's hesitation, young Maam nodded. "Alright. You always seem to know best. Let's go." So the two girls made their way through the village. The sound of rushing water grew louder as they neared the river. When they arrived, the girls wasted no time, splashing around in the shallow water, laughing and playing as the coolness of the river washed over them.

After a while, a flash of movement under the water caught their eye. "Did you see that?" their aunty asked, "It looked like a huge fish! I want to get a closer look." But young Maam wasn't so sure. "I don't know," she said, her voice uneasy. "What if it's dangerous? I'd rather stay here in the shallow water." But her sister paid no mind to the thought. Without another word, she waded deeper into the river.



When she reached the point that was too deep to stand, something magical happened: a figure began to rise from the depths of the water. Mami Wata, the water spirit, emerged with shimmering skin and flowing hair, her beauty beyond anything the girls had ever seen.

Mami Wata stood tall and graceful, her presence both enchanting and dangerous. Young Maam watched, her heart racing with fear, as her sister froze in shock. Next, Young Maam watched in horror as the water spirit's tentacles reached out, creating a whirlpool in the water. "Sister! No!" young Maam cried. "Come back!" But it was too late. The whirlpool spun faster and faster, pulling her sister deeper into the river's depths. Her body disappeared beneath the waves, swallowed by the water as Mami Wata took her away to her watery realm. The river was calm once again, but Maam's sister was gone, lost forever to the mysterious spirit.

Upon finishing the story, the grandmother's eyes were sad as she looked at her grandchildren. "And that is how your aunty was lost to Mami Wata. The children sat in silence, the tale of their lost aunty settling heavily in their minds. They now understood the danger their grandmother had warned them about, and knew they would never forget her words.

Story Moral: *Be very careful around water.*