

## **Lisa, the stream goddess-sample chapters**

### *The Formation of a Village*

**O**dogbagede was a Community of about three thousand eight hundred inhabitants of farmers, petty traders, hunters, fisher men and women.

The village was founded by one Ago-Iye prince with his wife and two sons, the prince was a farmer and a blacksmith, and his name was Adebowale. This man along with his wife and their two grown up sons migrated from Ago-Iye town, in the South western part of Nigeria. They left their home town about two Centuries ago, his wife's name was Olayemi, his first son's name was Adegboyega, and his second son's name was Omobolaji. Adebowale and his family trekked through the forest for two days and settled at a spot they felt was good enough for farming, and a place in which to form a Community.

The spot they chose to settle at was about sixty kilometers from their home town of Ago-Iye. Adebowale knew the importance of water, and if they must survive in their newly found environment, he must find water very quickly; his instinct told him there was a clean river nearby. "Olayemi," Adebowale called his wife, "I am going into the forest, in search of a stream or river;" "Okay! Be very careful of where you put your legs as you search for water my dear husband." Adebowale smiled at his wife as he walked away.

Adebowale was a good looking and strongly built man, tall and dark in complexion; he picked up a big clay pot which they brought with them from their former house, the clay pot was for water storage, but he decided to use it to fetch water that day. "My husband, try and return back to us soon even if you can't find water," Olayemi pleaded with her husband.

"Don't worry, I can sense a flowing stream not very far from here, the gods will direct me," Adebowale assured his wife and left them around noon.

Adegboyega, Adebowale's first son was a handsome twenty two years old skilful hunter of rats and rabbits, shortly after his father left in search of water; he also decided to go hunting. "Mother," he called his mother's attention, "I want to go and hunt for bush meat we could cook for dinner this evening." His mother looked at him with a smile of approval on her face, "Try to kill two fat rabbits to celebrate our newly found home; I sincerely hope your father will be able to find a stream, or river around here that is good enough for drinking."

Adegboyega left his forty years old mother in the care of his Nineteen years old younger brother Omobolaji who was a crafty potter. Omobolaji the potter, also decided to look around their new settlement for red soil or clay soil to enable him produce pots for water containers and cooking utensils.

To his surprise, all the soil around their home was rich in clay deposits. As Omobolaji was returning to give his mother the good news, his father was also returning with a clay pot of water on his head; Omobolaji quickly ran to meet his father and collected the clay pot of water from his father's head. Both of them happily headed back to their new settlement.

Adebowale cheerfully sat on the floor and announced to his wife and son; "I found a flowing stream of clean water, the best drinking water I have ever seen, and the distance is about one kilometer from here, the only problem is the high hill before the small river, it will be difficult for anyone to fetch water from the stream three times in a day without breaking one's back bone because of the high hill," he said as he smiled at his wife.

Omobalaji the potter shared his new discovery of high clay soil in their environment with his parents. Adebowale looked into the sky, to check the position of the sun, and said; "We still have enough time before dark to build a small hut in which we can sleep this night." Adebowale sighted his first son, Adegboyega the hunter as he was returning to them with a big rabbit in his right hand which he had shot dead with his Dane gun.

The boys and their father went into the nearby forest to cut some bamboo poles to form the pillars for their new hut; they also cut down some palm tree leaves for the roofing and to form the emergency walls for their hut.

The small hut was built before the sunset that day, they already discovered water for drinking, and there was plenty of clay soil with which to build their beds, make clay pots for cooking, for water storage and to build a mud-house later. All the above was achieved within a week of coming to that location.

Adebowale started farming on the virgin land around their new settlement; he planted cassava, coco yams, yams, corn maize, vegetables, Pepper and tomatoes, and he even planted kola nuts on the land farther away from their home.

Adebowale became prosperous with the big yams he harvested some months later, buyers came from the nearby villages to buy his farm products, and that made some farmers to start relocating to Adebowale's village, the settlement was called "Bowale's village in the beginning.

A year after Adebowale and his family came into their fertile land; and on one particular morning; Adebowale's wife noticed they were short of water from the big clay water container at the corner of their four room's mud-house that was built with clay soil. "Boys," their mother shouted, "The two of you should carry a clay pot of water container each, to fetch water from the stream, and take your bath there," their mother further instructed. In those days, people usually took their bath once a week despite their dirty works as farmers. "Mother, we took our bath two days ago at the stream," Adegboyega protested. "Moreover, the water would be too cold for swimming this morning;" Omobolaji said in support of his older brother. "Alright, but if you see some fishes in the stream; catch some of them from the stream for lunch," their mother finally said.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Strange Fishes Transformed into Mermaids*

**W**hen the two boys arrived at the stream, they both filled up their clay pots with water and put the two pots in a safe place to prevent them from breaking.

In obedience to what their mother told them that morning, the two young men went back into the stream to search for fishes. The two men made a basket with flexible sticks they found around the bank of the stream, and put the basket deep down in the flowing stream. One of the young men went up the stream with a long stick in his hand, and started chasing some fishes towards the basket.

They discovered that the fishes lacked experience because no one has ever fished in that stream before; the fishes were rushing into the basket without fear, they caught many fishes alive.

Lisa, the stream goddess watched the two young men as they went back home with her daughters through the window in her underwater chambers; and she was very angry with the intruders.

The two young men met their parents in front of their house, Adegboyega dropped the basket of fishes at the feet of his mother, and the two brothers went into the house to pour their water into the big water container in one corner of the house.

The multi-colors of the fishes, and the fact that the strange fishes were still alive and jumping around in the basket attracted their father and he looked into the basket with horror on his face. "What kind of fish did you boys brought back home from the stream? Green, yellow, gold, these are multi-colored fishes, we can't possibly eat these strange looking fishes," their father shouted.

"I suggest you put them all in a water container, and make sure the container is full of water to keep the strange fishes alive just to amuse ourselves and our visitors," their father calmly instructed his sons.

The two brothers could not understand their father's reason for rejecting the fine fishes from the stream, Adegboyega asked his mother; "Mother, why can't we eat those fishes from our stream?"

Their mother looked perplexed as she took another look at the fishes again; "They are strange fishes, there is something strange about those fishes; they are not ordinary fishes," their mother calmly replied.

That night, as they all slept peacefully in their house, Adebowale had a terrible dream, a stunningly beautiful woman in white shining gown appeared to him, "I am Lisa, the stream goddess of the water you and your family are drinking;" the beautiful woman in his dream said proudly.

"I allowed you and your family to settle down here, you are drinking my water and doing well with your farming because I allowed you to do so in my territory," the goddess further said.

“Why then did you instruct your sons to come and capture my daughters in my house, and to worsen the situation, you put them in a container prison for the sake of amusement,” the goddess said furiously.

“Return all my daughters back into my stream first thing in the morning, otherwise, your two sons shall die within twenty four hours,” the goddess finally threatened.

Adebowale did not disturb any member of his family with his strange dream. However, he wondered about what the goddess told him, who were the daughters his sons arrested from the stream of the goddess?

She even accused him of putting those daughters in a prison. Adebowale could not understand the riddles surrounding the whole issue, as he was still thinking about the worrisome matter, he fell asleep again.

Adebowale had another dream before the day break, the goddess appeared to him in the dream again; “I came back because you did not seem to get my message, your two sons came to fetch water in my stream, I saw them through my window when they caught some of my daughters in a basket because they looked like fishes to human’s eyes, they brought my children to this house as fishes, and you put them in a clay pot of water, limiting their movement; you must return all of them back to my stream this morning if you don’t want to cry over the death of your two sons,” the goddess declared angrily, and she practically disappeared from his view in the dream.

Adebowale woke up very scared and he was sweating profusely even when the air was cool that early morning.

And before any members of his household could notice him, Adebowale quietly went to where the fishes were kept; he reduced the water in that pot containing the strange fishes, and carried the big pot gently on his head and walked out of the house unnoticed.

When Adebowale descended down from the hill and walked briskly towards the stream, he was shocked when he saw the same beautiful woman who had appeared to him in the dream standing at the bank of the stream waiting for him; he almost ran back up the hill again out of fear, but the goddess stopped him as he was about to turn around.

“Don’t move!” The goddess shouted. Adebowale was rooted to the spot; and he managed to say; “Good morning goddess,” Adebowale spoke with shaking voice, “Please, forgive me and my family, we are new in this area and we are not aware about the true identity of your children.”

Lisa looked scornfully at the scared man shaking in front of her; and she said: “I saw you when you and your family arrived in my territory through my magic mirror in my underwater chambers, I influenced your coming to this place in order to bless you and your family, however, go and drop my children back into the stream and come back to me here,” the goddess commanded.

Adebowale did as he was told, and to his horror; the multi-colored fishes just transformed themselves into seven beautiful mermaids; and they all greeted the man cheerfully and told him not to be afraid, and that he was welcome to settle down in their territory.

Adebowale was too shocked to respond to their soothing words of assurance, and he walked slowly back to where the goddess was still standing still looking scared. “Count yourself lucky because my adorable daughters are not angry with you for what your sons did to them; rather, they are happy to receive you and your family.” The stream goddess looked triumphantly at the still shaking man with pride on her face.

“I also welcome you and your family, but I want you to build a shrine where you can offer annual sacrifice to me by the bank of this stream, you must build the shrine within seven

days, and then bring two white cocks and a pot of palm oil; drop the items at the shrine which you will build for me, and if you obey me, I will influence more people to relocate to your settlement.” The goddess finally concluded her statement, she looked at Adebowale once again; and then disappeared with all the smiling mermaids before his eyes. Adebowale ran out of the stream like a mad man, he even fell down twice when he hurriedly climbed the hill; he came back to his house panting like a dog. The forty-five years old Adebowale suddenly looked like a seventy years old man; looking very scared. “What is chasing you my husband; and when did you leave this house?” His wife asked, looking worried at her fearful looking husband.

The alarming voice of their mother brought their two sons out of their rooms.

Adebowale pointed at his two sons and said; “You these boys will not kill me before my time, the gods will not allow you.” “What did we do wrong Daddy?” Adegboyega asked his father. Adebowale looked at his wife and his two sons looking like a man who had just seen a ghost.

“The goddess of our stream appeared to me twice in my dream last night and early this morning, her name is Lisa, that stream is Lisa’s stream, the fishes you brought home yesterday were her daughters; they are mermaids in fish forms,” Adebowale informed his family still looking horrified.

His wife looked confused about the whole story; she looked at her sons and then looked back at her scared husband; “Whose daughters are you talking about?” His wife asked, looking very troubled. Adebowale looked at his wife with pleading eyes.

“The strange multi-colored fishes our sons brought from the stream are the children of the goddess, as I returned them back into the stream as instructed by the goddess; those fishes transformed into seven beautiful mermaids before my eyes.” His wife looked horrified.

“Thank the gods we did not harm any of the fishes; otherwise, the goddess would have killed our two sons in retaliation,” Adebowale declared, almost shouting.

The two boys were so surprised, they could not even close their mouths as they pondered on what their father had said about the stream, and the fishes they brought home which later transformed into mermaids when they were put back in the stream; and the goddess physical appearance in front of their father at the stream.

The whole matter shocked them beyond words; and the fact that the goddess watched them through the window in her underwater chambers scared them greatly.

Adebowale built the shrine and offered the sacrifice as Lisa, the stream goddess commanded him. Lisa appeared to him again in the dream, the goddess instructed him to name his settlement as Odogbagede (stream’s area Community), and the stream to be identified as Odo-Lisa (Lisa’s stream).

Few months after Adebowale offered the sacrifice to Lisa, he observed that other families started coming into the new Community, and within the space of seven years, Odogbagede had eight hundred and ninety-eight people living permanently in the Community.

And Lisa, the stream goddess influenced the elders of Odogbagede to enthrone Adebowale as the Leader of the community through her telepathic power.

Adebowale was thereafter, installed as the Baale (High Chief) of Odogbagede at the age of fifty-two; he was installed without any opposition because every community must have a Leader; and Adebowale’s family were the first settlers in that locality.

However, the goddess demanded for an elaborate Lisa’s festival and a special sacrifice must be offered during the festival at the stream shrine every year.

Odogbagede continued to grow every year both in commerce and in population after each festival of worshipping the stream goddess. All the people living permanently in Odogbagede were financially comfortable.

Lisa's Annual Festival was done in a grand style; by singing, drumming with talking drums and dancing from the Community down to the stream; and various types of foods were cooked and shared amongst the people.

Lisa's festival attracted people from other villages far and near every year, and the occasional sacrifices offered to the goddess was the only religion known to the people of Odogbagede in the early history of that community.