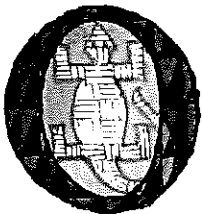
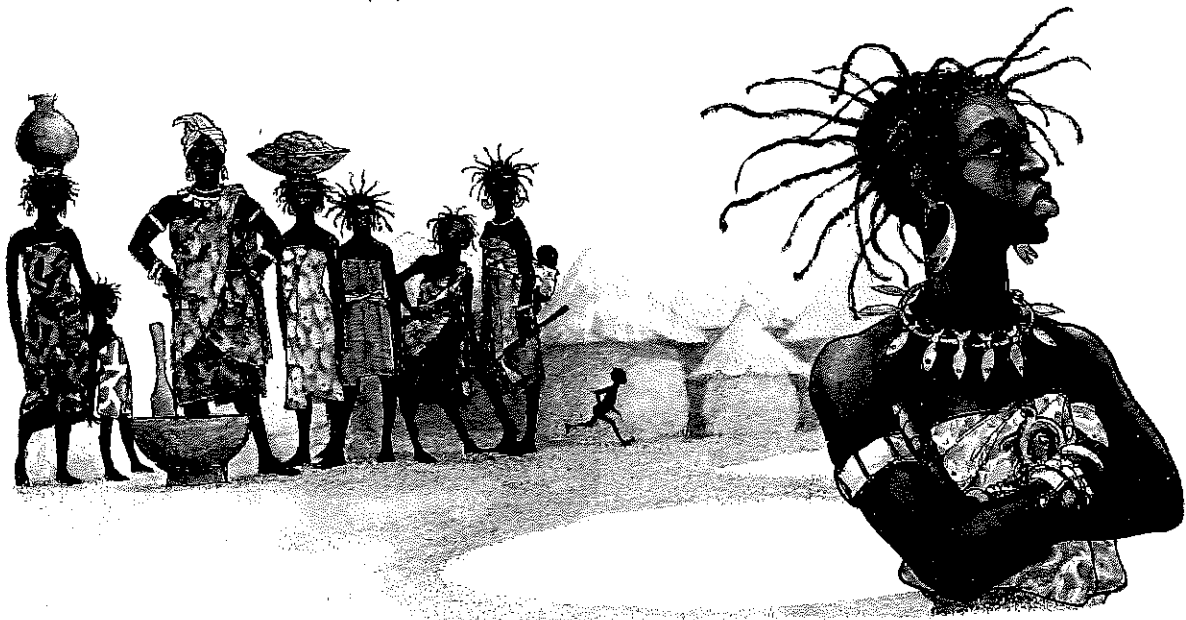


BEEBYEEBYEE AND THE WATER GOD



nce there was a chief who had many, many wives, and each of his wives had children. He was a lucky man, because all of his children were well behaved. All, that is, except one, and her name was Beebyeebyee.

Beebyeebyee was very stubborn. She never wanted to go to the farm with her sisters. She never wanted to help her mother pound corn *fufu* or help with the washing, and she always wanted fish and meat to eat. Every day her mother said to her, "Beebyeebyee, you're a bad girl. You're lazy and disobedient, and I'll never be able to find a husband for you."

But Beebyeebyee would just shrug. "Then I'll find my own husband," she answered each time.

Now, Beebyeebyee's village was near the river, and all of Beebyeebyee's brothers were fishermen. Every day her brothers brought fish home to their mother, and she cooked it for them. The frying fish smelled so good, it made Beebyeebyee's mouth water. But whenever she asked her mother to give her some, her mother would just laugh at her.

"Why should I give fish to a little girl like you? If you want some fish, go catch your own," she scolded.

One day Beebyeebyee got tired of hearing this. "All right, I *will* go catch some of my own," she said. She went to her canoe and paddled far down the river, looking for a good place to start fishing. At last she came to a sandy island and pulled her boat onto the beach to rest for a bit. As she was relaxing on the sand, she saw someone coming out of the river. She was frightened because it was a water god. She could tell because although he came out of the water, he wasn't wet at all.

"Hello, Beebyeebyee," the water god greeted her. Beebyeebyee stopped being frightened, for he sounded nice. Besides, he was extremely handsome.

"What do you want?" she asked him.

"I want you to marry me," he said. Beebyeebyee thought about it for a while, and finally she decided this was a good idea. So Beebyeebyee and the water god got married then and there. Then he asked her why she had come out to this island, and Beebyeebyee told him how her mother and brothers never gave her any fish.

"They were very selfish," the water god cried. "I'll give you plenty of fish." With those words he dove into the water, and he soon came back with so many fish that they filled Beebyeebyee's entire boat, until there was hardly room for her to sit down.

Before Beebyeebyee left that day, the water god taught her a song. "If ever you want more fish," he said, "just come to this spot and sing:

Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
 Beebyeebyee
Bena bela jimi jolo
Bena bela jimi jolo.

Then I'll come to see you."

When Beebyeebyee got back to her village, everyone was very surprised to see how many fish she had. There was enough for everyone in the village. Beebyeebyee gave all her fish away, and no one went to bed hungry that night.

The next day, the girl set out again for the little island in the river. When she arrived, she sang:

"Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
 Beebyeebyee
Bena bela jimi jolo
Bena bela jimi jolo."

Her husband the water god came out of the river, and he and his wife spent the whole day playing on the sandy beach. When it came time for Beebyeebyee to go back home, the water god filled her boat with fish again. Beebyeebyee went home and shared her fish with the rest of the village.

For many months, this continued. Almost every day Beebyeebyee set out in her canoe and paddled to the island to meet her husband. They passed the days together happily,

and when it came time for Beebyeebyee to go home at night, the water god filled her boat with enough fish to feed the whole village.

You would think the villagers would be happy to have Beebyeebyee bring them fish every day. But all the experienced fishermen, who were used to being the most important people in the village, became jealous of Beebyeebyee. They couldn't understand how this young girl could get so many fish, while they worked hard all day and couldn't catch half as much as she brought home.

"She must be using magic," the fishermen grumbled. "Nobody can catch that many fish without magic."

"She's a bad witch," some of the young men said. "She'll bring ruin on us all." You see, they were worried, because now that everyone had enough fish to eat, no one gave the fishermen the same respect anymore. So the men started whispering bad things about Beebyeebyee, and soon everyone had heard the rumors.

One day some of the young men decided to follow Beebyeebyee and see where she was getting all her fish. While she paddled her canoe down the river, they walked quietly on the bank far enough away so that she couldn't see them. After she came to the island, they hid behind some bushes and watched her. She sang the song to call her husband:

*"Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Beebyeebyee
Bena bela jimi jolo
Bena bela jimi jolo."*

Then the water god came out of the river. The young men hiding behind the bushes saw everything. They saw the water god give Beebyeebyee all her fish. When they got back to the village, they told everybody, "Beebyeebyee is meeting a terrible monster on the island in the river. He's the one who gives her all the fish. He probably wants to make us all fat so he can come and eat us." Now everyone thought Beebyeebyee was bad, and they stopped trusting her. But they didn't tell her anything.

The next day Beebyeebyee couldn't go fishing because it was time to harvest the yams and she had to go and work in her yam field. After she left, the young men stole her canoe and quickly paddled to the island. One of the men sang in a high voice that sounded just like Beebyeebyee's:

*"Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Beebyeebyee"*

Beebyeebyee and the Water God

*Bena bela jimi jolo
Bena bela jimi jolo."*

Soon the water god came out of the river, thinking Beebyeebyee was calling him. As soon as he came out, the young men seized him and killed him. Then they threw his body in the bushes.

The young fishermen went back to the village and told the people that they had killed the terrible water monster. They told everyone except Beebyeebyee. The villagers were happy and laughed to think how the fishermen had tricked Beebyeebyee.

After a few days, Beebyeebyee decided to visit her husband again. She paddled her canoe down the river to the island. Soon she was singing:

*"Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Ayun jimi jolo
Beebyeebyee
Bena bela jimi jolo
Bena bela jimi jolo."*

She sang her song twice, but the water god didn't come out of the river. She sang and sang until she was hoarse, but still he didn't come. Beebyeebyee sat crying and crying on the sandy beach. She cried so much that finally the water god's brother came out of the river and talked to her. He told her how the young men had killed her husband. "Don't worry," he told her. "The people of your village will pay for what they did to my brother." Then he loaded her boat with fish.

Beebyeebyee went back home and shared her catch as she had always done. The people of the village took their fish, but that was the last time. In the night the river rose and flooded every house in the village except for Beebyeebyee's.