

Kester Onuigbo

The Deity of Umudike Kingdom

Nigeria (2018)

TAGS: [African Traditions](#) [Prophecy](#)



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	The Deity of Umudike Kingdom
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<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Nigeria
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<i>First Edition Details</i>	<i>The Deity of Umudike Kingdom</i> . Directed by Kester Onuigbo, Don Single Ndubuisi Studio « DGN », 2018.
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<i>Target Audience</i>	Crossover
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Creators



Kester Onuigbo (Director)

Kester Onuigbo studied at Delta state university, Abraka and lives in Asaba, Nigeria. He is director of photography at the Nigerian society of cinema photographers.

Source:

[IMDb.com](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0654218/) (accessed: August 5, 2021).

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Additional information

Summary

The story is about the King of Umudike, a man who preferred female children and was destined to attract evil visitors to his land. One evening, the King was musing over the fate of his kingdom when his son, the Prince, entered and offered him palm wine. That same night, many different sources, including the Deity (Merima), would prophesize the visit of evil strangers to the village who intended to destroy the King and the villagers. When the villagers learned about this, they were gripped with fear because whatever the Deity said came to pass. The King instantly called a meeting with his elders that night, during which he apprised them of the impending misfortune. The King equally urged the youths to mobilize the very next day. They resolved to encircle the village to prevent any stranger from visiting Umudike. When the Prince revisited Merima, she reiterated the same warning, only this time, in a very short parable: "The cock had a hen and decided to add another hen for her to have female chicks. As she had these female chicks, they brought chaos and calamities to the village. They went further to kill their parents until a little boy finally saved the village".

At a meeting with the elders, the suspicion that the evil could be related to the banishment of Ikenga, a veritable chief priest, is raised. This suspicion leads them to conclude that the visitors might be from Amamere or Uynumowago, where Ikenga was most likely residing. Before the meeting is over, the Prince rushes in to announce that the visitors were already in Umudike. The King and the guards surge to the border to stop them but discover that, although these visitors were from Amamere and Uynumowago, they were not the evil visitors they had been expecting. Soon after the visitors leave the palace, a maiden rushes in to announce that one of the King's wives is in labour. The queen immediately comes in and assists in the birthing process. Though Ikechi warned that the King's wife would give birth to twin girls, who were the evil visitors, the birthing process was successful, and the announcement was greeted with celebration. When Ikechi suggests that the children be thrown into the evil forest, where they rightly belonged, the King, in response, orders his arrest and plans his assassination, though he does not follow through with this threat. Later, Obierika, the chief priest, arrives and reveals that the twins were indeed the evil visitors and that all pregnant women must be taken to a secret river for purification. As feared, the twins grew up and started terrifying the whole village by transforming into snakes



and crocodiles.

Some seasons after, Obierika goes to the secret river for purification. Ikenga transforms into a little boy to remind him that the evil visitors were still in the royal household. Prompted by the death of the twins' mother, the Prince visits Merima to inquire about the parable in which the chicks killed their parents. Unfortunately, Merima tells him that he is not well-placed to be informed of anything. The following day, the twins transform into snakes, go hunting, and return with bush meat which they happily share with their brothers. In the night, the twins transform into snakes and poison the King's palm wine. He falls ill after drinking it. The Prince quickly summons Obierika to heal the King, but he cannot. His verdict is that the King has been poisoned by his wine keeper, who must now be beheaded.

The day the wine keeper is to be executed, Ikechi and Merima arrive and declare that the wine keeper is innocent and that the twins were responsible for the King's illness. Meanwhile, Ikechi is given fourteen market days to prove his claim, but the very next day, Ikenga transforms again into a young boy and urges Ikechi to seek the face of the gods before undertaking his task. Ikechi tells him that he is strong enough and that the gods are already with him. Merima similarly visits Ikechi, encourages him and wishes him a safe journey. As Ikechi embarks on this adventure, the twins transform into crocodiles and attack him, but Ikenga intervenes by changing into a crocodile, too, to protect Ikechi. After saving Ikechi's life, Ikenga instructs him not to inform the Prince and villagers about what had occurred. Continuing his journey, Ikechi again meets the twins, who transform into snakes and crocodiles to annihilate him. This time, they fight, and Ikechi sustains an injury but luckily for him, Ikenga sends thunder to obliterate the twins. Again, Ikenga changes into a young boy, heals Ikechi's wounds and gives him an egg for security if the twins appear again. On his way back, Ikechi reenounters the twins, and when they transform into snakes this time, he smashes the egg, producing a flame that scares them off.

Back in the village, some women are at the stream doing laundry when two crocodiles attack them, and Merima's sister dies. She rushes to the palace to recount the incident to the Prince, and the Prince immediately dashes to the stream to challenge the crocodiles, but he cannot see anything. Gripped by fear, he begins to cry. Meanwhile, on his sickbed in the palace, the King dreams that the twins have dethroned him and turned into snakes to kill him. Later

that day, the Prince is surprised by his stepbrothers, who run in with the news that two maidens have been transformed into crocodiles. Before the Prince could listen to the details, the twins attack and kill one of the Prince's stepbrothers, Uso.

Ultimately, Ikechi comes back after fourteen market days with no proof that the twins were the cause of the troubles in the land. For his fruitless adventure, he is beaten and tied up. That night, the Prince dreams that the twins transformed into crocodiles and attacked him. In shock, he rushes to Merima, who urges him to locate Obierika for fortification. Obierika tells the Prince to look for Ikenga, the most powerful chief priest, because he was the only saviour of the village. Unfortunately, the twins appear in Obierika's shrine and kill him for advising the Prince. Subsequently, the Prince mounts a search for Ikenga, who had been banned by the King, though he had promised to come back. While the Prince was addressing the villagers in the village square, Ikenga appears and proclaims that the twins are the evil visitors. As the most famous chief priest of Umudike, he delivers and neutralizes the twins' powers. The king recovers and Ikenga is reinstated as the village chief priest. From then onward, the villagers lived happily and enjoyed lasting peace and prosperity.

Analysis

As it is the case with many other civilizations, many traditional communities in Nigeria have gods ruling their land and ensuring their protection. These gods foresee whatever may befall the land, whether positively or negatively, and then warn the people through different media. They use chief priests, omens or physically appear. This can be seen in the movie when Umudike is warned of the impending arrival of evil visitors to the village. The King, however, disobeys the instructions of the gods by refusing to get rid of his twins.

The emphasis in this story is equally put on shapeshifting. The twins shapeshift to cause havoc in the community. This reveals the view that many African tribes in general, and the Igbo community particularly, have concerning twins. Twins are generally regarded as dual in nature; they can either be evil or good. When evil, they ought to be killed or sacrificed. In both cases, they are believed to have supernatural powers which permit them to shapeshift. Contrary to the twins in the story, Ikenga, the chief priest, uses the same method to protect the people.

In a nutshell, this movie shows the protective role of gods in the traditional African community. Nevertheless, this protection can only be effective if the people cooperate. But even in case of disobedience, the gods are always merciful and still leave room for redemption.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

Further Reading

Onyeji Nnaji, *The Rise and Fall of Ikenga*, available at Ajuede.com, March 14, 2018 (accessed: August 5, 2021).

Orji Sunday, "'They ensure each twin baby dies': the secret killings in central Nigeria", *The Guardian* online, January 19, 2018 (accessed: August 5, 2021).

Peek, Philip M., ed., *Twins in African and Diaspora Cultures: Double Trouble, Twice Blessed*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011.

The Lake That Travelled With the Undesirable Twins (accessed: August 5, 2021).

Addenda

List of Characters:

Obierika: Chief priest of Umudike kingdom,

Merima: Deity,

Majesty: King of Umudike kingdom,

Ikenga: Former chief priest of Umudike kingdom,

Ikechi: Saviour of Umudike kingdom,

Agatha: King's second wife.

