

**There was a ritual that took place in my life when I turned 15 years of age called “Rebirth” and that’s an accurate translation from what it is actually called in my mother’s native tongue. (The Igbo Language).**

**The ritual of Rebirth was scheduled and organised for me because I was the first born son of my mother and I happen to by chance or fate bear the same Birthmark of my long deceased grandfather. The former ruler of the village and apparently the spirits had foretold through the village witchdoctor that he would be reincarnated back to life in the body of the firstborn son of his eldest daughter.**

**The day begins with me having breakfast with my family which consisted of fried eggs and plantain with sweet potato on the side, which I ingest greedily with my hot cup of cocoa. I then bathe and dress up in a white traditional trouser and gown like attire that had been prepared and laid out on the bed for me by my Grandmother.**

**At exactly twelve noon my grandmother escorts me to the village centre where all the villagers and invited dignitaries have gathered to witness said event. The air is hot and thick to the taste as I approach. The sight of**

all the people present, the booming loudness of sound generated by everyone present and also largely from the performing village musicians.

I am taken to a stone shrine in the corner of the village square and asked to kneel down on a stone slab that lay directly in front of the shrine. From the corner of my eye I could see a goat like creature being dragged towards the shrine as well, when the animal was in my full view I then noted that the creature was actually a Ram instead of the afore mentioned Goat.

The Ram's throat is cut in front of me and its blood is collected in a shaped hollowed out wood receptacle called a "Calabash". And then handed to the village witchdoctor who was now suddenly and frighteningly standing directly behind me.

The witchdoctor starts chanting words that I can't understand or make out as English or Igbo. Then the surrounding crowd suddenly cease all their noise as if on cue from an invisible conductor.

I stare directly ahead not knowing what was going to happen next but taking an educated guess that the collected ram's blood would have some part to play in it.

The chanting continues on for a while and when the witchdoctor finally stops speaking, he steps in front of

me into my full view and gestures for me to stand up and remove my gown. I obey his silent commanding gestures and disrobe in less than a minute with shaky nervous hands, before being commanded again by hand to kneel back down.

I descend back down to my original position on the stone slab and almost immediately as my knee's touch the stone slab, I am bathed in Ram's blood from top to bottom.

I freeze solid out of shock and stunned surprise and I take a quick downward glance at my body and trousers and quickly note that my once pristine skin was now decorated with crimson red splashes and dripping down with blood. I instinctively shut my eyes to avoid any of it getting into my eyes, the smell was strong and overpowering my nostrils with a scent I can only describe as old rusty metal mixed with hot sweat.

The witchdoctor resumes his indiscernible chanting as he smears and erratically splashes me with the leftover blood from the bowl in his hand, while I knelt there with closed eyes and gritted teeth. This goes on for what I estimate to be about 10 to 12 minutes before he stops chanting and moves away, I am aware of this even with my eyes closed because I could hear his steps moving away from me and my curiosity forces me to slowly open my eyes to survey my surroundings.

I see the witchdoctor with his back turned to me in front of the shrine bowing before the stone idols carved and erected on the shrine, before then placing the calabash with the remnants of the Ram's offerings in amongst them. He then turns around facing me and the crowd gathered and raises both hands over his head towards the sky as if he was a football fan and his team had just scored the winning goal in a match and the crowd responded with a tremendous loud cheer. The noise and music resumed its earlier boisterous status.

I stayed still where I was but then I started to look to my left and right with questioning eyes, which were asking is that it?, are we done? Can I get up now?

Meanwhile in my mind I was silently hoping that I would be able to have a shower soon and wash away all this blood and the god awful smell that came with it. It was then my grandmother suddenly appeared in my view and called me by my grandfather's name and offered her hand to me to assist me in getting up from my penitent position. I only realised later that she had called me by my grandad's name but at that point in time when she showed up I would have answered to any name I was called because I just wanted to get up and leave the village square and be done with the whole ceremony for the day.

The reason why my grandma had called me by my grandad's name at the shrine ceremony was later explained to me by my mother that she had to do that as the final process of the ritual to confirm to gathered crowd that my grandfather had truly been reincarnated back in my body. Her acknowledgment was the final piece of the ceremony before leading me out of the village square and back home to my anxious waiting mother.

So now in the eyes of the village and my grandmother, I am my grandfather reborn and with that comes all the power and respect he is due, I sometimes use this status to get away with misbehaving most times in the village but when it comes to the home front I rarely do because my mother's rule and powers make my newly inherited spiritual reincarnated power and status defunct and obsolete.