



## Africa Story 5

### Parrot Fish For a Bible

“Asha, Asha,” called Mother, “go and put your good dress on. We are going to a special meeting. The Christian pastor has come to town, and we are going to hear him speak. Take off your grass skirt, and put on your dress.”

“But Mother,” Asha said, “Father will not like it. He is Muslim and does not like Christians.”

“Father is afraid, but I would like to hear more about Jesus,” said Asha’s mother. “Besides, Father will not be home until dark. He is fishing for a parrot fish. He has gotten many of late, and they bring a good price. He will fish late into the night.”

So Asha went to the meeting with her mother. This was the first time she had heard the pastor.

Asha was a smart girl. Most of the girls had not been to school, but Asha had. Her mother and father sent her because she was an only child. She listened as the pastor told about sin and how Jesus could save them.

That night Asha did not tell Father about the meeting. She loved the stories the man told, but Father might be mad if he knew. How could she learn more about Jesus? Maybe Father would like to hear too, if he only would listen.

In the morning, Asha got up early to go to the market. She put on her special dress. Market was a special place. She put all the bananas in a bowl, and put it on her head the way Mother did. Slowly, she walked down the path to town.

Asha sang a little song as she walked. She thought about Mother and Father. She loved them so much! Mother worked hard in their little garden. Father was a good fisherman.

Asha could see that Father might be mad if Mother kept on going to these meetings. Maybe Father did not pray five times a day, as good Muslims did, but he was Father. How could Asha learn more about Jesus without making Father upset?

The market was a busy, noisy place. Everyone was talking all at once. Asha loved it. Asha did not watch where she was walking. RRRIP! She heard her dress tear on a thornbush.

“Asha, what did you do to your dress?”

“Asha, it is good to see you!”

“Hello Asha, does your mother need some rice?”

So it went. But Asha heard people talking about more than friends and food. Someone new was in the market. There was a man selling and giving away books from the United States.

A boy from her village stopped and looked at her bananas. “Asha, I saw you at the meeting.”

Asha held her breath.

“This man has books about Jesus,” he smiled. “I want to learn more, don’t you?”

In a flash, Asha had an idea. Now she knew how to help Father learn about Jesus. She would not have the money to buy thread for her dress, but that was alright.

Quickly, she traded most of her bananas and got the things Mother asked her to get. Then she made her way over to the man with the books.

“I want to learn about Jesus,” she said shyly. “I can read, but I have only these bananas left. What can I buy?”

“Well,” the man said, “Those bananas will not buy much. They will not pay for a Bible.”

Asha began to turn away. She felt very sad. She wanted to bring Father a book about Jesus.

“Wait!” the man said. “If you want to learn about Jesus, we will give you what you want. Boys and girls in the United States have given money to help children like you. Here, take this picture Bible. No need to pay. When you are done, come back and we will talk.”

Asha was so happy! She could not believe that the children in the United States cared so much for children like her. Now she would have something for Father to read, and she could still buy thread for her dress.

That night Mother told Father, “Asha did well at the market today. She traded our bananas for everything we need. She also came back with a special little book for you to read to her. Some of the words are too big for her.”

“I would be happy to read to my little girl,” Father smiled. Then, by the flame of the lamp, he began to read the new book aloud.

That is how Asha, her mother, and her father all became Christians. Together, they read through the picture Bible that the Bible League had given to them. Now even Asha’s father knows that Jesus is his Savior!

One day, while Asha was in her father’s boat, he said, “Asha, on market day you shall take the parrot fish that I will catch. Maybe we can trade the parrot fish for a Holy Bible. We should have a Bible all of our own.”

Asha just smiled. Who would ever have thought? A parrot fish for a Bible!