

KARUPET THE SON OF A MERMAID
Karupet si Anak Ikan Duyung

Property of the State
Not for Commercial Use

**Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture
Republic of Indonesia
2018**

KARUPET THE SON OF A MERMAID

Translated from
Karupet si Anak Ikan Duyung
written by Purwaningsih
published by
Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture
in 2016

This translation has been published as the result of the translation program organized
by The Center for Language Strategy and Diplomacy Development,
Language Development and Cultivation Agency, Ministry of Education and Culture
in 2018

Advisory Board	Dadang Sunendar Emi Emilia
Project Supervisor	Dony Setiawan
Translator	Nita Novianti
Reviewer	Raden Safrina
Editor-in-chief	Theya Wulan Primasari
Editorial team	Andi Maytendri M., Ayu Dwi N., Didiek Hardadi, Ferry Yun, Hardina Artating, Herfin A., Lale Li Datil, Larasati, Meili Sanny S., Putriasari, R. Bambang Eko, Rizky Akbar, Roslia, Saprudin Padlil, Syukron Ramadloni, Toni Gunawan, Yolanda

All rights reserved.

Copyrights of the original book and the translation belong to
Language Development and Cultivation Agency,
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia.

Language Development and Cultivation Agency
Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia
Jalan Daksinapati Barat IV, Ramangun, Jakarta
Telepon (021) 4706287, 4706288, 4896558, 4894546
Pos-el: badan.bahasa@kemdikbud.go.id
www.badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id

KARUPET THE SON OF A MERMAID

1. The Stranded Mermaid

It is told that once there was a mermaid who got stranded in Amza, Sorong, West Papua. The people of Sorong called the mermaid *karupet*.

Amza area in Sorong, West Papua, was famous for its beautiful and clean sea. Various types of fish thrived in the region, ranging from ornamental fish to edible ones.

One day, a pregnant female mermaid was stranded on the beach near the settlement. The pregnant mermaid was saved by a villager named Samawa. Samawa was an old widow who relied solely on seafood for life. Samawa worked by helping fishermen sell their fish. Samawa's husband had since long died of leprosy. She and her late husband had no children.

That morning, when Samawa was on her way to the fish shelter, from a distance she saw a mermaid stranded on the beach. Samawa then approached the fish. Suddenly, the mermaid could be heard moaning.

“Help me!” the mermaid moaned.

Samawa stepped back. She was amazed to learn that the fish could speak.

“Help me!” the voice was heard again.

Frightened, Samawa ventured herself to ask the fish. “Who are you? What are you doing here?” Samawa asked with a sense of curiosity.

“Don’t be afraid! I’m a mermaid, and I have been stranded on this island,” replied the mermaid. “Please help me. I’m so helpless, and I’m going to give birth to my child anytime soon,” continued the mermaid.

“Alright!” Samawa approached the mermaid again.

The mermaid was in pain because she was slightly injured by a coral reef. Her big belly made the mermaid stumble and difficult to move. Out of pity, Samawa brought the mermaid to her house. She placed the mermaid on a large pond next to her house.

Not long after, the mermaid felt a strong pain in her stomach. It looked like she would soon give birth to her child.

Seeing the condition of the mermaid, Samawa grabbed some tools and medicines to help the mermaid deliver her baby.

With simple tools at hand, Samawa helped the mermaid. Finally, the baby mermaid was born safely. A loud cry was heard from its mouth.

“Oh, your baby is coming!” Samawa exclaimed at the mermaid.

“Thank goodness, thank you,” said the mermaid to Samawa.

“Look! Your son is amazing. He’s got a healthy human body,” Samawa explained the state of the baby mermaid.

Samawa immediately gave the baby mermaid to his mother. The mermaid saw her son with joy. She did not at the very least expect her son to have a human-like body, although almost all his baby boy’s body was scaled like a fish. She then threw the baby closer to her and hugged him.

The mermaid looked at the baby affectionately. She could not stay long with her son, though, because she ought to return to the sea. With a heavy heart, the mermaid entrusted her baby to Samawa.

“Tbu¹ Samawa, I will leave my baby with you. Please take care and teach him to be a good boy.”

“Where are you going?” Samawa asked. “Just stay with us!”

¹ An honorific address for older women

“I have to get back to where I come from. The sea is my place. I will not last long in the land. My body will get weak, and I will die slowly,” said the mermaid.

“Well if that’s the best for you, I will take care of your son with pleasure. God has listened to my prayer for a life companion. Your son will live to accompany me in my old age,” exclaimed Samawa with tears in her eyes.

Then, the mermaid embraced her son for the last time. “Oh my son, now that you have been born to this world, please forgive your mother who cannot look after you properly. Your mother must go back to her place. Be a good, respectful, and devoted boy to Ibu Samawa,” the mermaid told her son. Then, she handed the baby to Samawa.

Not long after that, the mermaid went back to her natural habitat. She threw herself into the sea and soon disappeared into the waves.

Days went by, and the baby mermaid had grown into a cute toddler. The baby was named Karupet after her mermaid mother.

2. Karupet the Son of a Mermaid

Time went by and Karupet grew into a healthy child, even though his skin was scaly like a fish. Ibu Samawa often taught Karupet to

always protect the sea. One of them is by not throwing trash into the sea and not catching fish using poison or explosives.

At an early age, Karupet had already worked hard to help Samawa sell fish in the market. Karupet also liked to catch fish in the sea with other fishermen.

Because of his scaly skin, many of Karupet's friends were reluctant to play with him. The same was true with the adults in Amza; they were reluctant to be around Karupet. However, that did not make Karupet insecure.

There was a particular event that made Karupet very sad. When he was walking by himself, he saw a bunch of kids chasing a passing snake. Seeing that, Karupet immediately stopped the children from killing the snake.

“Don't! Stop it!” shouted Karupet from a distance.

The children immediately stopped what they were doing and searched for the source of the voice.

“Oh, it was you apparently,” said one of the children.

“Why did you stop us from chasing the snake? Look, the snake is now gone because it heard your scream,” said another child, very upset.

“Forgive me if I have offended you. I stopped you because it was wrong of you guys to hunt a snake. The snake didn’t bother you, did it? Why should it be hunted? Let the snake live. As long as it does not bother us, let the animal enjoy its life. We must love animals because they are also God’s creations,” said Karupet.

“Well, well, well, apparently this kid talks a lot, just like a priest lecturing us.”

“Yes, we should give this child a lesson,” said one of the other children. Karupet ignored the threat, though.

“Never mind, we don’t have to care about him,” said another child. “Maybe he’s defending his scaly brother. Look at his scaly skin. It’s just like the snake’s. Maybe he’s also the son of a snake,” one of the boys laughed.

Hearing that, Karupet became sad. He then left the children and continued his walk.

Along the way, he kept thinking about what the children had said about him having scales on his skin, which made him different from the other kids. Why was he born like that?

He needed to find the answer to the question.

“Only Ibu Samawa can answer my question,” thought Karupet.

Arriving at home, Karupet asked Ibu Samawa about his scaly skin with a sad face. “Why is my skin scaly like this, Bu²? My skin is different from my friends’. That’s why they don’t want to play with me,” said Karupet.

“Oh, my dear child, you were indeed born with imperfect skin. However, you must not let yourself down because of this. Love your friends, even though they are now hostile to you. I’m sure one day they will be kind to you,” replied Ibu Samawa while caressing Karupet’s hair gently.

Samawa did not want to cover up Karupet’s identity. After careful consideration, she decided to tell about his true identity. She revealed to him that he was born from a mermaid.

“I’d better be honest with you,” Samawa said. “I don’t want to cover up your true identity, son.”

“Tell me, Ibu. What’s the secret that you’ve been keeping from me all this while? Who am I really?” Karupet asked firmly.

“But please don’t be angry and sad when you hear this fact. Promise your mother!” Samawa continued.

“All right, Ibu. I promise I will not be sad or cry.”

² Shortened form of *Ibu*. In this case, the word “*Ibu*” means mother.

“The truth is I’m not your real mother. Your mother is a mermaid,” Samawa told him in a stuttering voice.

Karupet was astonished at his mother’s words. “How could that be? Go on, Ibu, I want to hear about where I come from,” cried Karupet.

“Your mother is a mermaid that I found stranded on the beach. At that time, your mother was pregnant. So, I took care of her until she gave birth to you. However, after that your mother must return to her place. Therefore, she entrusted you to me.”

Karupet shed tears at his life story. “Now I know why my skin is scaly like this. It turns out I’m the son of a fish.”

Samawa tried to calm Karupet down so as not to let him drown in sadness. “Don’t be sad, you will always be my most handsome child. Though I didn’t give birth to you, I love you very much. I do love you with all my heart. You’re like my own son,” Samawa exclaimed.

“Your mother wanted you to be a good and useful child for the community. You have to take care of the sea, and you should not damage the sea where your mother lives. You also should not hunt mermaids,” continued Samawa.

“All right, I’ll remember my mother’s message,” answered Karupet.

Samawa embraced Karupet tightly, showing her great affection. Karupet hugged her back tightly while saying thank you for having taken care and cared for him all this time. They continued hugging each other for some time.

Karupet was very fond of Ibu Samawa. For him, Ibu Samawa was his protector and guardian. He promised to be devoted to and to obey Ibu Samawa. He hoped one day he could repay Ibu Samawa's kindness in caring for him all this time.

3. Karupet Falling in Love

Reaching adulthood, Karupet fell in love with a girl named Ajolo. Ajolo was the daughter of a wealthy fisherman. She was a sweet girl. Her skin was crisp black combined with thick eyebrows, curly hair, round eyes, and a pointy nose. This girl's beauty truly captivated Karupet.

Karupet first met Ajolo when there was a party at the village. It was the habit of the inhabitants of this island to hold a party to welcome the coming of dry season. The party was held as an expression of gratitude and a form of prayer to seek for blessings from the Goddess of the Sea to give abundant fish for the Amza people. The ritual was like a small party held at Amza Beach. The people prepared food and fruits that were stacked like a cone. They also prepared several buffaloes to be slaughtered and then thrown into the sea as a sacrifice for the Goddess of the Sea. In

the evening, a party was held with dance and music. Men and women would mingle there. They would dance and sing together. Some people even took advantage of the event to find a mate.

In the party, Karupet played a typical Papuan musical instrument called *tifa*. Karupet was so good at playing that musical instrument that Amza people were entertained with his music. Men and women joyfully danced in pair to the music played by Karupet.

While playing the musical instrument, Karupet cast a glance at a particular girl who was dancing cheerfully with her friends. The girl was named Ajolo. Karupet was fascinated with the girl's beautiful face. At that time, a spark of romance enveloped him. He could only look at the girl from a distance, though. So, once the dance ended, Karupet ventured to get acquainted with the girl.

"Hi, may I know your name?" Karupet asked Ajolo.

"Yes," replied Ajolo.

"My name is Karupet. I live north of this village."

"My name is Ajolo." Ajolo shook Karupet's hand after he introduced himself. "I live in this village," continued Ajolo.

Since the encounter with the girl, Karupet had changed. He became quiet and, he often got caught daydreaming. Ibu Samawa

was confused to see the change in her son. She then asked Karupet.

“What’s wrong with you, son?” asked Ibu Samawa.

“I have been thinking about the girl I met at the party last night,” said Karupet.

“Which girl?”

“The girl that goes by the name of Ajolo, Ibu.”

“Oh, that rich merchant’s son!” Samawa exclaimed. “Did you get acquainted with her?” she continued.

“Yes, Ibu. She’s a pretty girl.”

“Looks like you have fallen in love with her.” Karupet blushed when his mother knew his feelings.

“Oh, my dear boy, it’s not that I don’t like it if you love a girl. I’m just afraid later you will be disappointed. She’s a daughter of a wealthy family, while you know, our family is poor.”

Hearing what his mother said, Karupet grew sad. However, he also realized that he was indeed not worthy of the girl. He was also not sure if Ajolo would like him once she found out about his scaly skin.

One day, when Ajolo was walking home back from the market, she was confronted by a group of young men. Seeing a beautiful girl like Ajolo walking by herself, the young men tried to tease her. Evil thoughts crossed their minds.

Ajolo was so scared when the young men approached her. One of the young men even seized Ajolo's handbag. She then screamed for help.

"Help, help, help!" Ajolo shouted.

Not far from the scene, Karupet was carrying fish for sale to the market. He could see Ajolo was in trouble, so he hurried to rescue her.

It didn't take a long time for Karupet to save Ajolo from the attack of these young men. Having martial arts skills, he could quite easily chase away the young men who were no match for him.

Ajolo then thanked Karupet. Because of his assistance, she was safe from the young men who wanted to do evil to her. After that incident, Karupet and Ajolo often met and talked. It seemed that Karupet's love was reciprocated, because Ajolo shared the same feeling for him. She saw him as a good-hearted man. She did not care about his physical state. Finally, the two decided to make it official.

After making their relationship official, Karupet tried to show Ajolo that he was serious with her. So, he ventured to come to her house with the intention of proposing to her.

“I will come to your house to meet both your parents and at the same time propose to marry you!” exclaimed Karupet.

How happy Ajolo to hear the words of Karupet. “All right, I'll wait for you at home,” she said.

Not long after, Karupet along with Ibu Samawa went to visit Ajolo's parents' home.

As the traditional customs of Papuan people, they brought betel nuts as a gift for Ajolo's family. The nuts also served as a symbol of kinship.

Arriving at the home of Ajolo's parents, Karupet and Ibu Samawa explained the purpose of their visit. “We apologize if our visit disturbs you, Sir, Ma'am. Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Karupet and this is my mother, Ibu Samawa. I came here wishing to marry your daughter named Ajolo. Ajolo and I have long met and fallen in love,” said Karupet firmly and confidently.

Ajolo's parents looked at each other with a hint of dislike with the proposal in their eyes. They had often heard rumors about Ajolo's close relationship with Karupet. However, they ignored the rumors because they assumed that Ajolo and Karupet's

relationship was not serious. So, to decline Karupet's proposal, the father made up a story.

"We are sorry, Ibu Samawa and Karupet, we have had Ajolo engaged to the son of our relatives. Therefore, we regretfully have to decline this proposal," said Ajolo's father.

Ajolo was surprised to hear that. All this time, she did not know about her parents' plan to match her with another man. She could sense that this was her parents' tricks to decline Karupet's proposal.

Karupet also could sense that his visit was not warmly welcomed by Ajolo's parents. Her parents seemed to have learned about his plan to come to their home. The betel nuts he brought were not even touched by Ajolo's parents. This gesture denoted that their visit was undesirable.

Finally, Karupet bid goodbye with disappointment and heartbreak for his rejected application. Looking at her dejected son, Ibu Samawa then tried to cheer him up.

"You must be strong, son. Don't be too sad over this. I hope you will find a way to solve this problem."

"Alright, mother! I will not be dissolved in this sadness," promised Karupet to Ibu Samawa.

Their romance was not approved by Ajolo's parents. Her parents strongly disagreed if their daughter married Karupet because Karupet's mother was a mermaid. "My parents do not approve of our relationship," exclaimed Ajolo, crying.

"I understand why your parents will not let us be together. I am the son of a mermaid. Your parents will be ashamed to have a son-in-law like me. Don't cry," Karupet persuaded. "Now, everything is up to you. I will not be angry if you choose to obey your parents. Indeed, you have to be devoted to your parents. We will just remain friends forever," said Karupet.

"No, Karupet. I've fallen in love with you. I don't care where you are from or how you have an imperfect physique. I know you're a good, loving man. I'll go with you wherever you go."

"Are you serious with that? Will you not regret your decision later?"

"No. I am determined."

"Well, if that's your decision. We're leaving this village."

Karupet bid goodbye to Ibu Samawa after revealing his intention to elope with Ajolo. Ibu Samawa was surprised by her son's plans. However, she was very fond of her son that she approved of her son's decision to leave. Despite the heavy heart of having

to part, Ibu Samawa wanted to see her son happy. She only advised her son to always take care of himself and Ajolo.

Karupet and Ajolo then left the village. When people were fast asleep, they departed in a boat made by Karupet.

The next morning, Ajolo's parents found a letter left by Ajolo. The letter informed them about her elopement with Karupet.

After reading the letter, Ajolo's parents cried incessantly because their daughter eloped with Karupet. They also regretted having opposed Ajolo's relationship with Karupet which had made their daughter leave their home. But, there is no use in crying over spilt milk. Their daughter had already run away with Karupet. Her parents could only grieve now and pray for Ajolo to return to their arms.

4. Crashed by the Waves

In their journey, Karupet and Ajolo encountered many obstacles. They were stranded from one island to another. West Papua was indeed surrounded by many islands, so boats became the only means of transportation to travel.

The outrigger boat made by Karupet could not resist the power of the crashing waves that finally a disaster befell them. The boat boarded by Karupet and Ajolo was crashed by the waves.

Here is how the incident took place.

It was the first time for Ajolo to travel by boat, so she got nauseated and became seasick. She was also afraid of the big waves.

“I’m so scared, Karupet,” Ajolo said. “I’m going to throw up,” she continued.

“You’re seasick!” said Karupet. “I have rubbing oil in my *noken*³, take it! Rub it into your stomach. Hopefully it will relieve your nausea.”

“Ok.”

Ajolo then took the oil Karupet referred to. When she was about to use it, suddenly she screamed out loud. Without any premonition, the waves hit their boat. Their boat was turned upside down in an instant. It was shattered by the powerful waves. The waves then rolled them up. Shortly thereafter, Karupet could be heard calling Ajolo. Karupet was safe, as he managed to hold on to a piece of wood from the broken boat.

“Ajolo, where are you?” cried Karupet. Ajolo was nowhere in sight in the great oceans.

³ A traditional bag from Papua made from wood fiber

“Ajolo, where are you? Oh, Ajolo don’t die. Don’t leave me.” Karupet kept calling out his beloved’s name in grief. However, there was no answer from Ajolo.

Karupet continued to swim along the endless sea. Everything on the boat had been washed away by the waves. He thought probably Ajolo had died of being dragged down by the waves or because of drowning. He knew that Ajolo could not swim.

It turned out that Karupet’s conjectures were wrong. Ajolo who lost her consciousness when getting knocked out by the waves was helped by a mermaid. When the incident happened, a mermaid was passing by. Then, the mermaid approached Ajolo and rescued her. It was with great effort that the mermaid took Ajolo to the shore.

After successfully bringing Ajolo to the beach, the mermaid left her there and returned to the sea. That mermaid was Karupet’s mother. Meanwhile, Karupet managed to swim up to the beach. He expressed his gratitude to God for saving him from the disaster. He then lay himself down near a coconut tree on the beach to relieve his fatigue after swimming for days.

Being extremely exhausted, Karupet fell asleep. In his sleep, he dreamed of meeting his lover, Ajolo. Ajolo was waving her hand asking for his help. He tried to help her. However, she suddenly

vanished from before him. Karupet jerked and woke from his sleep.

“Oh, I was dreaming,” Karupet cried silently.

He did not know what to do now. So, he wandered around the beach while thinking about what to do next.

In his wandering, Karupet saw something that looked conspicuous. He approached the object, and it turned out that the object he saw from afar was actually a human body. Upon closer examination, he became even more surprised to learn that apparently the object he saw earlier was Ajolo, his lost lover.

“Ajolo, Ajolo, wake up! This is me, Karupet,” Karupet shook Ajolo’s body incessantly.

However, Ajolo remained unmoved. Karupet sat limply looking at his lover’s face. He was so sad that he did not realize his tears were dripping down onto Ajolo’s helpless face.

Thinking that his lover had died, Karupet stood and turned around, when he suddenly heard a groan. Ajolo had gained her consciousness. How happy he was to see Ajolo awake. He immediately embraced his lover’s body.

“Oh, thank goodness. You’re safe,” cried Karupet.

“Yeah, I’m glad you’re safe, too. I was saved by a mermaid who brought me to this shore,” exclaimed Ajolo. “I think had the fish not saved me, I would have been dead,” Ajolo continued.

Hearing Ajolo’s story, Karupet was reminded of his mother who was a mermaid. In his heart he said, “Thank you, Mother, for helping us.”

They also thanked God for saving and reuniting them.

Karupet and Ajolo were then married. They finally decided to settle on the island where they got stranded. The island is called Waigeo Island. It is one of the islands in West Papua.

5. Karupet and Ajolo Building a New Life

Waigeo Island was a large mountainous region high above the sea. The island was so arid and barren that no crops grew here. This barrenness made the island very unlikely to be inhabited by humans.

Nevertheless, Karupet and Ajolo tried to build a new life in this barren region. With compassion, Karupet always sought to please his wife. He built a small shack to shelter his wife from heat and rain. Every day, Karupet went down the mountain to fetch water. He also grew some plants suitable for barren areas, such as taro, sweet potatoes, and nuts.

After nearly five years into their marriage, Karupet's wife, Ajolo, still had not conceived. However, Karupet still loved his wife because Ajolo was a good wife. Early in the morning, even before the sun rose, Ajolo was already busy in the kitchen to cook sweet potatoes or taro. She also never forgot to take out her cattle, like pigs and chickens, to the fields to feed. As was the habit of Papuan women, Ajolo also helped her husband in the fields by cleaning them up.

Each day, Karupet and Ajolo spent their time in the fields to grow tubers, such as sweet potatoes.

Wen yawu is a term referring to sweet potato fields located on the slopes of a mountain. To meet their need for food, Karupet also tilled sago. After tilling the sago, he tapped *nira*⁴ water with bamboo to make *tuak*⁵.

One afternoon, Karupet as usual went to check his *nira*. How surprised he was to find the bamboo used to tap his *nira* was empty. "Who took my *nira*?" he wondered. "Could it be my wife? But, it is unlikely that my wife would take some *nira* without my permission. Surely this is a thief's work," he thought. "I must find out who stole my *nira*." When the night came, Karupet sat himself on a coconut leaf midrib to catch the *nira* thieves. The

⁴ Fresh juice obtained from the blossom of the coconut, palm, or sugar-palm trees

⁵ Palm wine

night grew late, but the thieves still had not shown up. This made Karupet upset, and he soon fell asleep under the coconut tree.

When morning came, Karupet was stunned by a shining creature that was approaching the coconut tree where he was waiting. Not long afterwards, that creature drank Karupet's *nira*.

Karupet then moved quickly to capture the creature. "Who are you?" demanded Karupet.

"I am Sampan, the morning beast," replied the creature. "Let go of me. The sun is almost rising, I must leave immediately," begged Sampan. But, Karupet refused to release the animal.

"Why did you drink the *nira* that I have painstakingly collected?" asked Karupet.

Sampan then apologized for drinking Karupet's *nira*. In order to replace the *nira*, Sampan gave him a magical potion.

"Take this," cried the Sampan. "This medicine will make your wife get pregnant quickly, and you will get an offspring." Karupet took the potion. "May you soon be given an offspring," prayed Sampan. Shortly afterwards, Sampan the beast flew somewhere and disappeared.

Not long after Ajolo drank the potion given by Sampan the beast, she conceived the seed of love with Karupet. Karupet was so happy waiting for the birth of his son. However, at the same time

he was haunted by the fear that his son would be born with scaly skin just like he was.

The day of the delivery finally came. In the tradition of Sorong, West Papua, the process of childbirth was done by splitting the stomach using sharp objects. After the baby was born, the mother's stomach would be smeared with medicinal herbs made from several plants in West Papua for healing. So, Karupet went to look for a sharp object and the herbs needed for the delivery of his wife. While he was busy looking for the items, he heard strange noises from behind. Turning around, how astonished Karupet was when he saw a giant crocodile standing in front of him that he almost fainted. The giant crocodile slowly moved toward Karupet.

Karupet was really frightened. However, as he was about to flee, the crocodile greeted him politely and asked what he was doing.

“Don't be afraid!” cried the crocodile.

“Who are you?” asked Karupet.

Karupet was amazed at how the crocodile could speak like a human.

“I am the guardian of this forest,” replied the crocodile. “What are you looking for in this dense forest?” asked the crocodile again.

Because of the hospitality of the crocodile, Karupet finally got rid of his fear and explained to the crocodile about what he was doing and also about his wife who was going to give birth.

“My wife is going to give birth, so I have to find potion of medicine that will help my wife in her delivery.”

The magical crocodile then said that he would help Karupet’s wife to give birth. “I will help your wife give birth.”

Karupet could not believe the crocodile just said that.

“Can the crocodile really help someone give birth? That’s impossible,” thought Karupet.

“Believe me. I can help your wife deliver her baby. I am a magical crocodile,” the crocodile tried to convince Karupet.

“Now go home! I’ll catch up with you later,” said the crocodile.

Karupet then returned home and told his wife about his meeting with a magical crocodile. Hearing her husband’s story, Ajolo grew worried. That night, as promised, the magical crocodile entered Karupet’s house. With his miraculous power, the crocodile helped Ajolo give birth to her baby. Then, a baby boy was born safely.

“Thank you for your help,” said Karupet when he learned his son was born safely.

The crocodile then said, “Someday your son will grow into a great young man and a reliable hunter.” The crocodile also told Karupet, “I would only remind you not to kill or eat crocodile meat. If you break this agreement, a doom will befall your family.”

“All right, my lord. I will remember your message,” answered Karupet.

6. Meles Changing into a Stone

Time passed. Karupet and his wife and their son lived happily. Their son was named Meles. Karupet was very happy to learn that his son did not have a scaly body like his. Meles also grew into a healthy child. Turning into a teenager, he often got invited by his father to hunt in the forest. Meles secretly developed good hunting skills. Every time he went hunting, Meles always successfully caught his game.

One day, Meles asked his parents’ permission to go to the forest for hunting. His mother, though, sensed something strange. It was so unusual for her to feel so heavy to let her son go hunting. Hence, Ajolo forbade her son to hunt. Unfortunately, Meles did not heed his mother’s advice. He insisted in going hunting that day.

“Mother, let me go to the forest to hunt. Hopefully today I can hunt many beasts,” Meles said.

“Oh, my son, I seem to have a bad feeling today. Can you not go to the jungle today?” said Ajolo as she stroked her son’s head.

“Oh, don’t worry, Mother. That’s just your feeling. Take it easy, Mother. I’ll be fine,” smiled Meles, trying to convince his mother not to worry about him.

“Why aren’t you listening to your mother’s words? I want you not to go,” Ajolo pleaded.

“I’m sorry, Mother, but I have to go. I promised Father to get him a rabbit today.”

“Alright, then. I will let you go hunting. But you have to take care of yourself and get home soon.”

Meles went off hunting with his hunting equipment. He walked happily as he fantasized about a rabbit he was about to catch. His mother gave him a little food, so he would not starve in the forest.

Soon, Meles arrived in the forest. He had been waiting for his game for hours, but none of the animals passed or appeared before him. This made Meles very annoyed.

The day was getting late. The sun dimmed its light, and twilight would soon arrive. Meles finally went home empty-handed. On the way home, he crossed a rippling river. He decided to rest for a moment and wash his face to cool it down with the clear, fresh water. When Meles was washing his face, he could see from a

distance a pair of crocodiles swimming in the river. A bad intention flashed through his mind. He did not want to go home empty-handed.

“Well, there are two crocodiles there. I want to try my luck to hunt them,” Meles said to himself. “If I succeed, my father will be very happy to see his son successfully hunt a crocodile.”

Then, Meles took an arrow from his back. He released the poisoned arrow, and it hit the female crocodile in the river.

The crocodile hit by the arrow was struggling in pain.

“Argh, argh, argh!” the female crocodile screamed with pain because of Meles’s poisoned arrow.

“Oh, my wife,” said the male crocodile. “What happened to you?” The male crocodile then noticed that his wife’s back was pierced by an arrow. “Who did this?”

“My husband, I can’t take it anymore. I’m going to die. This poison is killing me. Take care of yourself,” said the female crocodile to her husband.

The female crocodile died. Her death made the male crocodile turn wrathful. He was angry out of control. His cry of anger made the whole forest frightened. It scattered the flocks of birds away. The scattering birds were like an omen of an impending disaster.

“I’ll find out who had the heart to do this to my wife,” said the male crocodile. From a distance, the male crocodile saw Meles holding an arrow.

“Apparently he’s the one who killed my wife. I will get revenge on him.” With a raging heart, the male crocodile disappeared among the swift currents.

Frightened, Meles quickly ran home. He felt guilty, and he regretted killing the crocodile. Arriving at home, he immediately locked himself in his bedroom. He would not eat or drink. Karupet and Ajolo were puzzled by their son’s behavior.

“What’s wrong with you, son?” Ajolo asked.

“Why did you come back after the hunting like this? You refused to eat. You seemed to be scared. Tell your mother what you’ve been through.”

Meles embraced his mother and told her what he had done. He felt frightened and guilty about what he had done to the crocodile. “I have killed a crocodile in the river, Mother,” Meles said with a frightened expression.

“There were two crocodiles in the river. I have killed one of them. The other crocodile was so angry at me, and he made a very frightening sound. Mother, Father, I’m so scared,” Meles continued.

His father and mother were shocked to hear the story. They remembered the message of the magical crocodile. His father had been heeding to the magical crocodile's advice by always reminding the people in his community not to kill the crocodiles in Warsamsung River. However, it turned out that the rules he had strictly upheld and guarded were broken by his very own son.

“Meles, why did you do that?” asked the father. “Didn't I tell you not to hunt the crocodiles or other animals in that river?” His father could not hold his anger at Meles.

“I'm sorry, Father, I was wrong. I made a mistake. I'm sorry, Father. Please forgive me,” Meles hugged his father, crying.

“This morning I didn't allow you to leave because I had a bad feeling. Why didn't you listen to your mother's words?” regretted his mother.

“Yes, Mother. I regret not following your advice. Please forgive me.”

“We're doomed. The crocodile will take revenge on us,” said Karupet, helplessly.

Karupet was so angry at Meles, and Ajolo could only cry. While they were still working out their feelings, a strong wind blew near Karupet's house.

They were staggered and instantly thought that this was a bad sign. The wind grew stronger. Out of nowhere, suddenly there stood a tall and large creature before them. He was the incarnation of the magical crocodile that once helped the birth of Meles. The crocodile came to teach Meles a lesson for what he had done to his wife.

“Hey, you, Karupet. Do you know that your son killed my wife?”

“Yes, Mr. Crocodile. I just learned that my son has made a big mistake. Please forgive him. I beg you, please!” asked Karupet to the magical crocodile.

“Didn’t I tell you not to hunt down the animals in the river? How come now it is your own son who did exactly what I told you not to?”

“Please forgive me, Sir. It was my fault for not educating my son properly.”

“All your son’s deeds must be accounted for. As compensation, I have to take him to serve the crocodile kingdom of Warsamsung River. ”

“Please, don’t, Sir. Please, don’t take my child. Let me replace him to receive the punishment. Take me instead,” Karupet pleaded with the magical crocodile, kneeling for forgiveness.

“No,” replied the crocodile. “Whoever is guilty must be punished.”

“But he’s my son, Sir. I can’t see my son die,” said Karupet.

“No, can’t do. I know you will definitely suffer from the loss of your child. However, this is the fate of your child,” said the magical crocodile.

In a flash, the magical crocodile took Meles away and both disappeared in the midst of the blasting winds. Karupet and Ajolo could not do anything. They could only cry seeing that their son had vanished. What was done could not be undone. They could only accept and surrender to the destiny of the Almighty. They also ought to accept the fact that their child had been taken away by the crocodile.

After the incident, the couple were constantly in grief, especially Ajolo who was devastated to lose her son. One day passed, followed by a week, and then a month passed, but Ajolo remained staying inside the house because she still mourned her son’s death. She had no appetite, and her body was emaciated.

It made Karupet so sad and confused. He did not want to lose his wife, too, because of the protracted sadness. “Don’t let your sadness make you suffer like this. You have to accept his departure. You must be rest assured that our child is already in heaven with God.”

The incident also made Karupet and Ajolo feel they had to leave that place. Finally, they decided to return to their place of origin, Amza, to heal the wounds of having lost their only child.

“We will return to Amza,” said Karupet to his wife.

“Why should we go back? Besides, are they willing to accept us?” asked Ajolo. She was anxious. She was especially afraid of and still feeling guilty with her parents. Although on the other hand, she really longed to see her mother and father.

“Meles’s departure is a punishment for us. We will apologize to your parents because I have taken you away from them. Our marriage must also have the blessing of your parents. We will strive tirelessly to melt your parents’ hearts so that we can live our life properly. I’m sure one day your parents will forgive us.”

“Yes, hopefully what you said will come true. I also really miss my parents. I hope they can forgive us,” Ajolo replied as she hugged her husband.

Once decided, they started making some preparation for their return to Amza. Their son’s death had taught them a valuable lesson.

Elsewhere, Ajolo’s parents still eagerly awaited their daughter’s return. All the time they prayed that their daughter would eventually come home.

Arriving at Amza, Karupet and Ajolo headed to Ajolo's parents' house. From a distance, Ajolo saw her father drying fish on the porch. Overcome with fear and happiness simultaneously, Ajolo dared herself to call her father.

"Father!" hearing the familiar voice, Ajolo's father immediately turned toward her. When their eyes met, they felt a mix of disbelief, happiness, pity at the same time.

"My daughter!"

"Father!"

They hugged each other and cried, very touched by the reunion. The mother heard what was going on from inside the house, so she went out to see her returning daughter herself.

"Oh, my daughter! Finally you come back to us, dear."

"Forgive me, Father, Mother, for I have been a rebellious daughter all this time."

Karupet and Ajolo prostrated in front of Ajolo's parents to beg for forgiveness and at the same time ask for blessing on their marriage.

"I already forgave you. What's important now is that your father and mother can see you again. Well, if you cannot be separated anymore, I will bless you. But remember my message! You,

Karupet, should not hurt my daughter,” Ajolo’s father said, as he led his daughter and son-in-law to their feet.

“All right, Father, I promise not to hurt my wife.”

End of story, Karupet and Ajolo lived happily in Amza. Not long after moving there, they were blessed with a beautiful daughter. This child became the happiness and solace to their sadness. As time went by, Ajolo could finally accept the death of her first child, Meles.

In another place, in the middle of Warsamsung River, stood a stone whose shape resembled a human body. The local people believed the stone was the incarnation of Meles. Therefore, they named the stone Meles Stone. Since then, the people who live around Warsamsung River do not dare to hunt crocodiles for food or for their skin. The people believe that crocodiles are protected animals. Therefore, it is highly forbidden to kill or eat crocodile’s meat.

Males’s death becomes a lesson for the Amza people not to kill animals inconsiderately. This story provides a valuable lesson that fellow creatures of God should care for and love each other.