CHAPTER TEN

The Ooni's task

Six men in long flowing and colorful robes walk slowly towards the palace of the Ooni (King) of Ile-Ife. They are the priests of the Ifa cult, on their way to see the Oba (King) about a serious matter. The head of the cult Chief Fadeyi is a businessman who has a degree in mathematics and business administration. He strides in front of the priests with an urgency that suggests the need for immediate action. They walk into the Palace and head to the Ooni's residence. As they approach, the guards standing in front of the residence stand to their feet. Prostrating they greet the elders of the cult and ask for their mission. The leader responds by letting the guards know that they need to see the Ooni immediately, they have a very important message to pass across. The guards respond by first looking at each other and with a shrug, walk in through the doors to inform the Ooni's assistant. The assistant goes into the Ooni's chambers and comes out with a message from the Ooni asking them to go into his private lounge. The message is relayed to the priests of the cult. They move quickly into the Ooni's private lounge led by one of the guards. Not much longer the doors leading to the Ooni’s chambers open with his entourage preceding him as he walks in. Seeing him the men arise and prostrate before him in honor and respect. The Ooni with his horse-whip (irukere) in his hand waves it in greeting before the priests while seating on his throne. As custodian of the gods of the land, he is the first person they need to inform about this new development. As they seat they inform him the meeting needs to be private. The Ooni wonders aloud when he is advised that the message can only be relayed to him privately.

The Ooni nods, looks at his entourage, and with a slight shake of his head instruct them to leave the room. When the door is closed behind them, Chief Fadeyi quietly and calmly relays the message from their oracle. They watch as horror and dread sweeps across the face of the OOni (King).

CHAPTER TWELVE

Costly decision

The Ooni of Ile-Ife was desperate. He could not believe what the priests had told him.

"How can it be?"

"Right from the time of their fathers it has never been heard off. What they were asking him to do was a taboo. How did they expect him to go along with this request?" He wondered.

As he walked up and down the garden within the palace it was nighttime, the stars were twinkling in the blanket of the night sky. He was lost in thought not noticing the fragrance from the garden or the wonderful sight before him. The Ooni of Ile-Ife had once been a businessman, a politician and a strategist. His businesses were in every part of Nigeria. It ranged from oil companies to dealerships. Oba (King) Adekanbi Oshikola was a rich man. Presently his business thrived under the care of his sons. As a politician he had once been a Senator under the banner of the UPN the party led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a lawyer and one of the statesmen that fought for the independence of Nigeria. This time, his experience completely failed him as he pondered on the next step to take. He had no reason to doubt the priests. They had been with his father when he was on the throne and his father had a lot of good things to say about them. Yet what to do floundered him. If he refused to do as the oracle had directed the repercussions were enormous and if he did his fathers must surely turn in their graves. As custodian of the traditions of the people it was imperative for him to continue what his fathers had always done. However this time it was critical he made the right decision. Solemnly his mind concentrated on the task before him and the decision he needed to make. He makes his decision and with that thought an owl in the distance hoots in the background as a sudden chill goes through his body. He wonders if it’s a coincidence or a foreboding of what this decision would cost.