

THE 18TH TIDE

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Based on Nigerian folklore

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGERIAN VILLAGE - NIGHT

Fog hangs low. The river is black and still. Crickets stop chirping all at once.

ADA (17, wears a faded dress, eyes too old for her age) kneels at the water's edge. She drags her finger through mud, counting ripples.

ADA
One. Two. Three...

She counts to SEVENTEEN. The last ripple fades.

Beat. The river holds its breath.

ADA (CONT'D)
Where's eighteen?

The water pulls back fast, like someone inhaled. Mud, bones, old coins glint in the moonlight.

Then the EIGHTEENTH WAVE crashes in. Higher than the rest.

From the mist rises the RIVER SPIRIT - 8 feet tall, skin like flowing water, eyes glowing blue. It doesn't blink.

Ada doesn't scream. She pulls a rusted KNIFE from her dress.

ADA (CONT'D)
My mother paid you. Why me?

The Spirit tilts its head. Water drips from its hair onto Ada's face.

RIVER SPIRIT (V.O.)

The pact is not paid. The pact is owed.

LIGHTNING flashes. The tide rises.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: THE 18TH TIDE