

1

00:00:00,752 --> 00:00:07,748

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:07,748 --> 00:00:18,742

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:18,742 --> 00:00:23,739

It is dumping day at a tuna cannery in the Solomon Islands.

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00:00:23,739 --> 00:00:29,736

Hundreds of hungry sharks surround a canoe devouring bushels of fish scraps.

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00:00:30,735 --> 00:00:34,733

To fall overboard now would mean certain death.

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00:00:50,724 --> 00:00:57,720

While photographing this awesome feeding frenzy, the in search of camera boat is attacked by several huge sharks.

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00:00:57,720 --> 00:01:00,718

A wooden paddle is bitten in half.

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00:01:11,712 --> 00:01:17,708

Whoever enters the sea risks the remote yet ever present possibility of shark attack.

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00:01:27,703 --> 00:01:30,701

The sharks are in the water.

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00:01:37,697 --> 00:01:46,692

Armed with sharp teeth, abrasive skin and powerful jaws, sharks can strike anyone at any time and in any waters.

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00:01:46,692 --> 00:01:56,686

The lucky few escape with only cuts and bruises.

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00:01:56,686 --> 00:02:00,684

Survivors of a close encounter with a curious predator.

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00:02:00,684 --> 00:02:05,681

But the unlucky majority suffer ghastly injuries.

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00:02:05,681 --> 00:02:10,678

In these tragic cases, man becomes the helpless prey of a wild animal.

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00:02:10,678 --> 00:02:16,675

A killer that sometimes attacks from hunger but more often from pure aggression.

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00:02:18,674 --> 00:02:24,671

If so inclined, they will attack groups of swimmers, even boats with sudden fury.

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00:02:27,669 --> 00:02:30,667

Mimmy Massara spotted a shark circling her children.

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00:02:30,667 --> 00:02:34,665

Armed with only a piece of driftwood, she managed to rescue them.

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00:02:34,665 --> 00:02:38,663

Spear fisherman Floyd Pear nearly lost his leg.

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00:02:39,662 --> 00:02:42,660

Pearl diver Iona Asai nearly lost his head.

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00:02:42,660 --> 00:02:48,657

Without any warning, something hit me with tremendous force, recalled cameraman Henri Bourse.

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00:02:48,657 --> 00:02:50,656

The shark had taken his leg.

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00:02:50,656 --> 00:02:56,652

Swimmer Albert Cogler lost an arm, a shoulder and his life.

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00:02:56,652 --> 00:03:02,649

These tattered remains were all that was found of Navy Lieutenant James Neal.

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00:03:03,648 --> 00:03:08,646

Whoever searches for the shark must realize that he places his life in great jeopardy

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00:03:08,646 --> 00:03:12,643

and cannot predict the outcome of a confrontation.

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00:03:12,643 --> 00:03:16,641

To the untrained eye, this shark might appear to be retreating.

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00:03:16,641 --> 00:03:21,638

Just moments after these pictures were taken, however, it suddenly attacked.

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00:03:21,638 --> 00:03:27,635

Marine biologist Dr. Walter Stark managed to escape, but his submarine was severely damaged.

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00:03:27,635 --> 00:03:34,631

Whoever plays with wild sharks soon learns that they have been known to bite the hand that feeds them.

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00:03:37,629 --> 00:03:42,626

In dangerous waters, survival means protection.

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00:03:44,625 --> 00:03:46,624

The shark caged.

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00:03:46,624 --> 00:03:48,623

The shark was killed.

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00:03:48,623 --> 00:03:50,622

The shark was killed.

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00:03:50,622 --> 00:03:52,621

The shark was killed.

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00:03:52,621 --> 00:03:55,619

The shark was protected.

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00:03:57,618 --> 00:04:01,616

The shark cage, standard equipment for divers.

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00:04:03,615 --> 00:04:07,612

The shark bubble, underwater observation in comfort and safety.

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00:04:10,611 --> 00:04:15,608

The shark bag, effective camouflage for victims of air and sea disasters.

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00:04:15,608 --> 00:04:22,604

It has replaced old-fashioned shark repellent, which was distributed more for morale purposes

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00:04:22,604 --> 00:04:27,601

than in any realistic hope of thwarting an attack.

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00:04:27,601 --> 00:04:33,598

Imaginative inventors have even gone so far as to propose striped wetsuits to confuse sharks,

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00:04:33,598 --> 00:04:39,594

electric wetsuits to shock them,

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00:04:39,594 --> 00:04:47,590

and underwater parachutes to slow them down.

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00:04:47,590 --> 00:04:52,587

The most widely used protective device is the simplest, a stick.

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00:04:52,587 --> 00:05:06,579

A cloud on the nose or a poke at the body is often sufficient to discourage an overly curious shark from getting too close.

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00:05:06,579 --> 00:05:17,573

If a shotgun shell is attached to the end of the stick, it becomes a lethal weapon called a bangstick.

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00:05:17,573 --> 00:05:25,568

Even the bravest diver armed with a bangstick is in mortal danger, however, when a shark signals it is about to attack.

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00:05:25,568 --> 00:05:33,564

Arched back, downward pointed fins, erratic swimming, it means that the animal's territorial borders have been violated.

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00:05:33,564 --> 00:05:42,559

It is shark body language for attack.

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00:05:42,559 --> 00:05:46,556

The trigger that unleashes a shark attack is a mystery.

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00:05:46,556 --> 00:05:53,552

Scientists are only beginning to understand how a shark finds its target.

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00:05:53,552 --> 00:06:01,548

All living creatures radiate minute electromagnetic fields, usually detectable only with the most sensitive instruments.

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00:06:01,548 --> 00:06:09,543

Even a small electric current passed through water in which a shark is swimming is sensed by the animal.

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00:06:09,543 --> 00:06:17,539

Thus, the shark may be able to navigate by the earth's gravity and stalk its victims electronically.

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00:06:17,539 --> 00:06:21,536

The shark's eye is a highly sensitive organ.

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00:06:21,536 --> 00:06:33,530

In the dimmest light, it enhances contrast and detects fast movement, an ideal adaptation for locating prey in dark murky waters.

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00:06:33,530 --> 00:06:39,526

Sharks are also able to detect vibrations very quickly and from a great distance.

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00:06:39,526 --> 00:06:50,520

Marine biologist Dr. Donald Nelson lowers a loudspeaker into the water, over which he broadcasts a tape recording of struggling fish.

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00:06:50,520 --> 00:07:01,514

The low frequency intermittent sound soon attracts a horde of excited sharks.

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00:07:01,514 --> 00:07:11,508

The men in this canoe are dumping bushels of fish scraps, the waste of a tuna cannery.

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00:07:11,508 --> 00:07:16,505

Called by some, the swimming nose, the shark is the bloodhound of the sea.

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00:07:16,505 --> 00:07:19,504

Its sense of smell is legendary.

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00:07:19,504 --> 00:07:24,501

A large part of a shark's brain is devoted purely to interpreting odors.

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00:07:24,501 --> 00:07:28,499

Sharks are able to detect even minute quantities of blood.

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00:07:28,499 --> 00:07:37,493

Soon the word churns, the giant fins of hundreds of hunger-maddened sharks, ranging in size from 5 to 12 feet.

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00:07:37,493 --> 00:07:41,491

At times like this, sharks will strike at anything.

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00:07:48,487 --> 00:07:52,485

If a man fell overboard, he would be ripped to shreds in seconds.

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00:08:08,476 --> 00:08:15,472

This is the savage spectacle of shark frenzy, the image of certain death.

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00:08:26,466 --> 00:08:30,463

The ancient Hawaiians knew him as Kama Hoa Li.

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00:08:30,463 --> 00:08:33,462

In the Gilbert Islands, he was Bakoa.

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00:08:33,462 --> 00:08:35,461

In Fiji, Dacoanga.

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00:08:35,461 --> 00:08:38,459

In the Solomon's, Bekwa.

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00:08:38,459 --> 00:08:44,456

Throughout the South Pacific, the shark was worshiped as the greatest god.

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00:08:46,454 --> 00:08:54,450

Less than 50 years ago, sacrificial victims were strangled on coral stone altars and thrown to the sharks.

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00:08:54,450 --> 00:09:02,445

But the missionaries who filmed these headhunters in 1900 waged all-out war on the pagan shark god.

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00:09:05,444 --> 00:09:09,441

Countless human lives have been sacrificed to the shark god.

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00:09:09,441 --> 00:09:13,439

His followers have dwindled to a handful of true believers.

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00:09:13,439 --> 00:09:20,435

The shark worshipers, however, can still be found by those who search beyond the frontiers of civilization.

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00:09:21,435 --> 00:09:29,430

The shark god Dacoanga, if properly appeased, is the benevolent protector of shipwrecked sailors, ally of fishermen.

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00:09:29,430 --> 00:09:33,428

His name is still remembered with reverence in modern-day Fiji.

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00:09:33,428 --> 00:09:39,424

Tradition says Tuvu Harbor is the sacred ancestral home of Dacoanga.

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00:09:39,424 --> 00:09:42,423

Now, it is an exclusive resort.

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00:09:42,423 --> 00:09:45,421

Tourists, however, never see the shark god.

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00:09:46,420 --> 00:09:51,418

But the women of the Anuda Island claim that the spirit of Dacoanga still lives.

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00:09:51,418 --> 00:09:55,415

It is said that he protects the villagers from attack in this coastal river.

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00:09:55,415 --> 00:10:04,410

The only person ever killed by a shark here was a visitor from another town, a woman who did not believe in the shark god.

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00:10:04,410 --> 00:10:10,407

On another island, a tourist fell overboard and was immediately attacked by a huge shark.

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00:10:10,407 --> 00:10:16,403

A policeman prayed to Dacoanga before jumping bravely into the bloody water to attempt a rescue.

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00:10:16,403 --> 00:10:22,400

Miraculously, it seemed the shark released its victim and swam peacefully away.

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00:10:22,400 --> 00:10:29,396

Rather than relying on the shark god's mercy in the future, authorities are building guardrails.

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00:10:29,396 --> 00:10:38,391

In still another village, a bricklayer claims he was saved by the shark god when his boat sank far out of sea.

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00:10:39,390 --> 00:10:48,385

He says for two days and two nights, he rode on the back of a huge shark which carried him to shore with an escort of smaller sharks.

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00:10:49,385 --> 00:10:54,382

A few witch doctors occasionally include the shark god in their incantations.

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00:10:54,382 --> 00:11:02,377

Condroia, one of the most powerful witch doctors, regularly toasts Dacoanga as he drinks a native potion.

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00:11:02,377 --> 00:11:08,374

Twice a year, he and his apprentice perform the ritual of the sacred tooth.

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00:11:08,374 --> 00:11:14,371

They believe the shark god appears at midnight to accept the offering.

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00:11:14,371 --> 00:11:22,366

Fables and symbolic ceremonies are all that remain of what was once the all-powerful religion of Fiji.

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00:11:23,366 --> 00:11:30,362

Missionaries and other newcomers have toppled Dacoanga from his throne in most of the South Pacific islands.

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00:11:30,362 --> 00:11:36,358

In the tiny village of Laulasi, however, the shark god still reigns supreme.

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00:11:42,355 --> 00:11:47,352

In the Solomon Islands, the people of Laulasi cling precariously to the Stone Age.

102

00:11:53,349 --> 00:11:59,345

Adventurer Terry Hannigan is returning to the mysterious island where pagan priests once accepted him as a brother.

103

00:12:01,344 --> 00:12:18,334

The first time I visited Laulasi in 1973, I was lucky enough to witness a lot of occurrences that frankly defied my ability of explanation.

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00:12:18,334 --> 00:12:26,330

Shark calling, particularly the totemic shark, which they were able to call with the performance of a certain rubric.

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00:12:27,329 --> 00:12:33,326

Now, on two occasions, Bosque and Nonne the shark priest was able to call these in virtually on order.

106

00:12:33,326 --> 00:12:41,321

This was quite amazing to me because the animals came from down current where they couldn't have centered the blood from the sacrifice that was put in the water.

107

00:12:42,321 --> 00:12:47,318

And it was just one of those things where you say to yourself, there certainly are some new things under the sun.

108

00:12:48,317 --> 00:13:02,310

Here, the people who see the main cultural backbones have been the worship of their ancestors through the spirit shark and through the making of shell money.

109

00:13:05,308 --> 00:13:12,304

Now that I've come back, I notice a lot of the old ways changing. A lot of the familiar faces are no longer here, a lot of the people have moved away.

110

00:13:12,304 --> 00:13:20,299

For the general tenor of village life is missing. The young people all seem to be drawn to the capital where dollars and bright lights seem to beckon them.

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00:13:20,299 --> 00:13:24,297

And it's really saddening for me to have to witness it.

112

00:13:25,297 --> 00:13:32,293

So, Ron, what kind of something can happen to a village man since the time before we told him?

113

00:13:32,293 --> 00:13:35,291

We had a story known to someone, some fellow white diva.

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00:13:35,291 --> 00:13:43,286

The Australian has a talk in Pigeon English with the villagers. His friend Ramos tells him that the people are bitter and confused.

115

00:13:43,286 --> 00:13:57,278

A group of unscrupulous businessmen and corrupt officials from the capital persuaded them to deposit all their worldly wealth in a bank and then embezzled the money, leaving La Lasi destitute.

116

00:13:58,278 --> 00:14:07,273

Sios tells another sad story. The young people are moving away for jobs on the mainland. Even worse, they are abandoning the shark god Bekwa.

117

00:14:08,272 --> 00:14:16,268

Sios fears a terrible curse has been put upon La Lasi by enemies. Only the strongest magic can save them.

118

00:14:17,267 --> 00:14:26,262

Moshe Kurunone feels that he should make a special sacrifice to summon the shark god. If Bekwa answers, the curse will be broken.

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00:14:26,262 --> 00:14:31,259

If not, the people must assume their shark god has deserted them.

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00:14:33,258 --> 00:14:38,255

Before the sacrifice can take place, the living dead must be consulted.

121

00:14:39,255 --> 00:14:43,252

A 90-year-old holy man who calls himself Moses will play a key role.

122

00:14:43,252 --> 00:14:51,248

He lives alone in a hut, tabooed to all but a few lesser priests. His days are spent talking to the ghosts of the dead.

123

00:14:52,247 --> 00:14:58,244

He will pray to the shark spirit for the blessing of his ancestors for what is about to occur.

124

00:15:01,242 --> 00:15:09,238

If a loved one dies in La Lasi, the body is fed to the sacred sharks. Only the head is preserved, wrapped in leaves.

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00:15:10,237 --> 00:15:18,233

When Moses chants to the skulls, he believes he is talking to the dead, whose spirit lives on in the body of the shark.

126

00:15:24,229 --> 00:15:35,223

In a sacred glen behind the taboo hut, a pit 20 feet deep has been dug to hold 17 generations of La Lasi skulls, ready to be consulted in times of crisis.

127

00:15:40,220 --> 00:15:46,217

The spirits have given Moses approval to proceed with the ceremony.

128

00:15:54,212 --> 00:16:03,207

Men dance in honor of Bekwa. He who helps them to find fish and shells. He who guides their boats to safety.

129

00:16:09,204 --> 00:16:17,199

The shark priests prepare the offering according to the secret ways of the offering.

130

00:16:20,198 --> 00:16:27,194

Osikoro delivers the ceremonial pig. A few generations ago, the sacrifice would have been human.

131

00:16:28,193 --> 00:16:39,187

The shark priests prepare the offering according to the secret ways of their faith.

132

00:16:40,186 --> 00:16:48,182

Women call on Bekwa to protect their men and children, to keep any renegade sharks from attacking them.

133

00:16:51,180 --> 00:16:59,175

This is a village where everyone spends at least several hours a day, as well as a few days a week.

134

00:16:59,175 --> 00:17:09,170

Yet, the La Lasi claim that no villager has ever been attacked by a shark, except one man who denied the power of Bekwa.

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00:17:12,168 --> 00:17:15,166

The sacrifice is about to begin.

136

00:17:15,166 --> 00:17:22,162

Mysteriously, sharks are the only ones who have ever been attacked by a shark.

137

00:17:23,162 --> 00:17:26,160

The sacrifice is about to begin.

138

00:17:26,160 --> 00:17:34,156

Mysteriously, sharks have gathered in the waters near the Taboo hut just moments before the shark priests appear.

139

00:17:36,155 --> 00:17:46,149

Terry, Ramo and the male villagers are now participants in a religious communion which has been shared by the La Lasi people in the sharks for hundreds of years.

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00:17:53,145 --> 00:18:05,138

The sacrifice is placed in the water by Osikoro with a prayer to the spirit shark.

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00:18:06,138 --> 00:18:10,135

Twenty yards away, children play unafraid.

142

00:18:11,135 --> 00:18:21,129

The great spirit shark, a man who has never been attacked by a shark, is now a member of the La Lasi.

143

00:18:22,129 --> 00:18:26,126

The shark appears, an awesome ten footer.

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00:18:26,126 --> 00:18:32,123

According to Osikoro, it is essential that this shark be the first to take the offering.

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00:18:32,123 --> 00:18:36,121

Only then, may the lesser sharks follow.

146

00:18:39,119 --> 00:18:44,116

The spirit shark circles the bait, but does not bite.

147

00:18:45,116 --> 00:18:52,112

Through age-old secret prayers, Osikoro calls to the sharks.

148

00:19:02,106 --> 00:19:09,102

Other sharks move in, expectantly, ready for their part in the drama.

149

00:19:14,099 --> 00:19:21,095

Now, Osikoro must pray to Bekwa. Let the spirit shark be the first to strike.

150

00:19:21,095 --> 00:19:30,090

Suddenly, Bekwa takes the sacrifice. Faith has been rewarded. The devil has been defeated.

151

00:19:37,086 --> 00:19:42,083

The others move in quickly, finishing off the sacrifice in a sudden frenzy.

152

00:19:43,083 --> 00:19:49,079

The ancient bond between man and shark has been kept alive. But for how long?

153

00:19:54,076 --> 00:20:01,073

Songs of praise to Bekwa now ring throughout La Lasi. The shark god has answered.

154

00:20:02,072 --> 00:20:09,068

These people will always have a special corner of my heart, all to their own.

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00:20:13,066 --> 00:20:18,063

I've got a lot of good friends here, people who'll still be friends of mine in a lot of years to come,

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00:20:18,063 --> 00:20:24,060

even though their way of life may not outlive the friendship.

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00:20:25,059 --> 00:20:31,056

Luckily enough, Bosgrunone, the shark priest, is still able to call sharks,

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00:20:31,056 --> 00:20:34,054

and still able to call the particular shark they worship.

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00:20:34,054 --> 00:20:39,051

But one wonders that with his passing, will this continue?

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00:20:40,050 --> 00:20:45,048

It saddens me to think that this centuries-old way of life may very soon shudder to a halt.

161

00:20:48,046 --> 00:20:53,043

The La Lasi people represent the final spiritual link between man and shark.

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00:20:53,043 --> 00:21:00,039

They alone swim in dangerous waters unafraid. They alone call on the shark god and have their prayers answered.

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00:21:00,039 --> 00:21:08,035

If they possess mystical powers over the sea monster we fear, their secret will be lost forever with the passing of the ancient religion.

164

00:21:08,035 --> 00:21:13,032

When their culture dies out, there will be nobody left to love the shark.

165

00:21:23,026 --> 00:21:28,023

The La Lasi people are the only ones left to love the shark.

166

00:21:28,023 --> 00:21:33,020

They are the only ones left to love the shark.

167

00:21:33,020 --> 00:21:38,018

They are the only ones left to love the shark.

168

00:21:38,018 --> 00:21:43,015

They are the only ones left to love the shark.

169

00:21:43,015 --> 00:21:48,012

They are the only ones left to love the shark.

170

00:21:48,012 --> 00:21:53,009

The La Lasi people are the only ones left to love the shark.