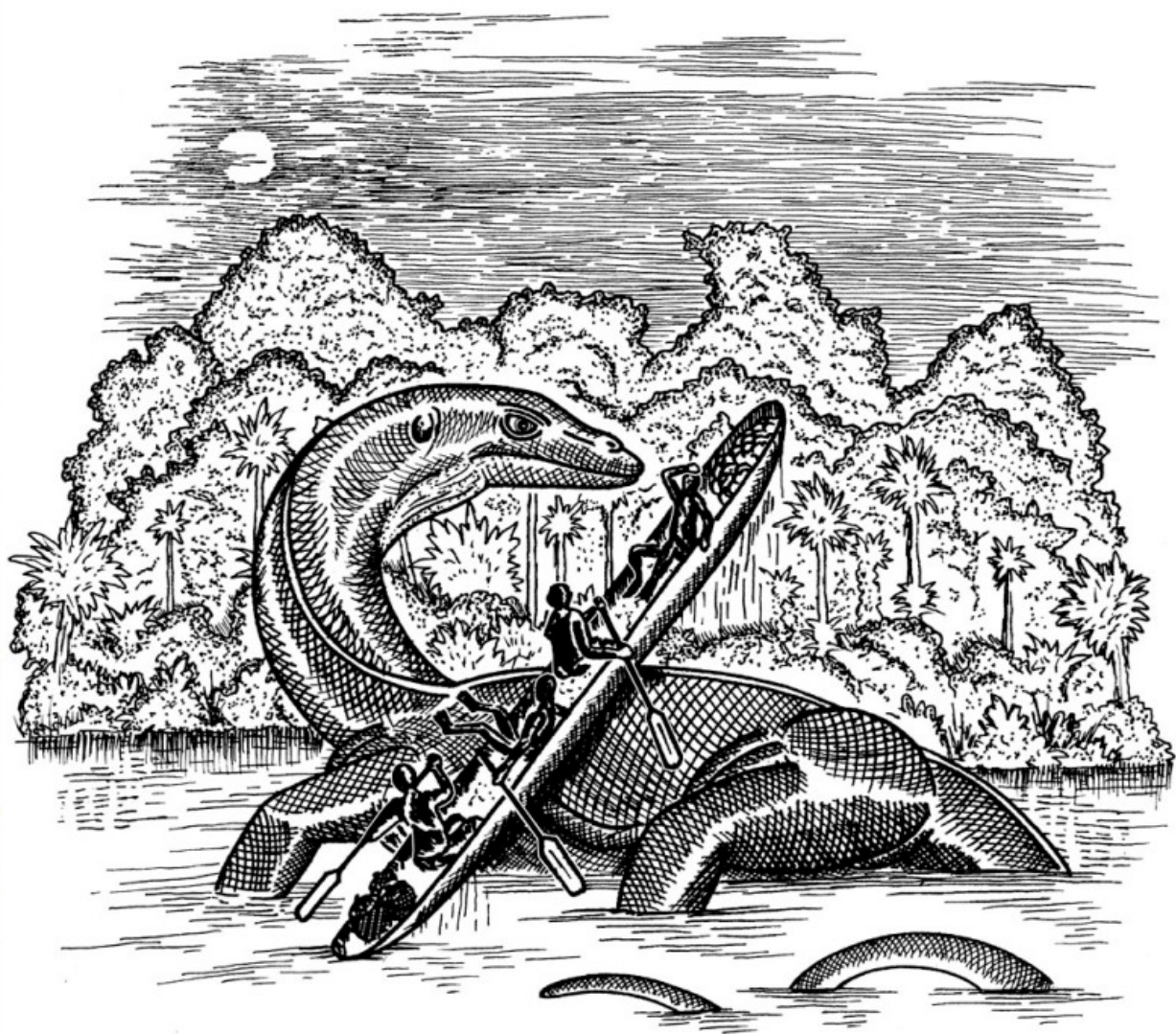




· N I N K I N A N K A ·



The swamps of West Africa are home to an elusive reptile, which few people have been able to see. The Mandinga call it Ninki-Nanka, and describe it as a huge reptile, with the body of a crocodile, the head of a three-horned horse, and the long neck like a giraffe. Although it has no wings, it is very fast both on land and in the water. While it does not seek contact with humans, and in fact has managed to elude even expeditions in its quest, the Ninki-Nanka is very dangerous for people, whom it devours without leaving a trace. The preferred victims are children who dare to go into the swamps alone, disobeying their parents. But adults who approach their territory alone or in small groups can also become prey to this creature.



Ninki-Nanka is a **MANDINGA** creature

Current population: 45.000.000



The Mandinga people's origins date back to the collapse of the Ghanaian empire in the 11th century. They formed small communities scattered in a territory of mountains, forests and savannah, ideal for their way of life based on hunting. Over time the cities grew and gave rise to the Empire of Mali in the thirteenth century, one of the largest in West

Africa. This empire, which lasted until the 16th century, favoured the spread of the Mandingo language and culture throughout the region. But this spread reached even more territory since the fall of

the empire, when large numbers of the population emigrated to other nearby areas.

The Mandinga, a people of oral culture, are mostly Muslims despite remnants of their pre-Islamic animism. Their society is divided into castes, with nobles and vassals, and previously there were also slaves (prisoners of war). They have a very warlike history, with frequent struggles with other ethnic groups to conquer territories and build empires.

One of the most famous social aspects is the existence of brotherhoods of men (Poro) and women (Sande), mutual aid institutions of great importance and power.

They generally live in small, self-sufficient rural villages, under the command of a council of elders and engaged in laborious agriculture on poorly fertile land.

The European colonization had a great impact on the Mandinga and the other peoples of the region. The territory was divided with artificial frontiers that still persist today, without corresponding to the distribution of the peoples. On a smaller scale, the slave trade intensified, resulting in millions of Africans being sent to America. The Mandinga were one of the main ethnic groups among the slaves of Brazil, the Caribbean and the United States.

Today, the Mandinga are one of the four largest ethnic groups in Africa, with a significant presence in Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana and Benin.