

THE BEST OF THE RACONTEUR
COLLECTIONS AWARD WINNER
2019

A young girl with dark braided hair tied back in a ponytail with a blue hair tie. She is wearing black-rimmed glasses and a light blue long-sleeved shirt. She is sitting at a wooden desk, looking down intently at an open book. Her right hand is resting on the pages of the book. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a classroom or library, with a white wall and a wooden shelf.

PRESSED

FAITH ENAYEH

PRESSED!

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**THIS WORK BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED BY FAITH ENAYEH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF A DIPLOMA AWARD IN
CHRISTIAN CREATIVE WRITING TO THE DE-RACONTEUR
WRITER'S COLLEGE HAS WON AN AWARD:**

THE BEST OF THE RACONTEURS' COLLECTIONS AWARD, 2019.

ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL WORK AND MESSAGE!

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FIRST EPISODE

I am called Precious Kayeh. I am a passionate and addicted school lover, but I unfortunately can't go to school anymore!

“... thank You for the wonderful prayer session we had this morning with the kids. Please be with us all as we go out and bring us back home safely. In Your mercy, grant us success in all You lead us to do according to the counsel of Your will...” That was Papa rounding off our one-hour family morning devotion at 6am. When he was done, we all ‘thundered’ “Amen!”

The fresh and gentle breeze of the morning hugged my average-height body when I opened the door after prayers. The dark clouds were quickly disappearing, as the moon made way for the sun to shine its light.

I could hear birds chirping on the trees, while others whistled some beautiful melody into my ears. Children, some in their teens and others as little as seven could be seen with pails and gallons heading to fetch water from the spring for the morning's use.

It wasn't up to two minutes of standing on my veranda that my fresh air was corrupted by the smell of chocolate. Oh! It was from the Cocoa Company not far from our house. I lifted my arms, stretched my body and began sniffing the chocolate smell.

Then I said to myself. “Stop it Precious! You are fasting girl. Don't let this smell distract you.” I smiled and went back in to do my chores and leave for school.

Yes, I was the only one of four children fasting with my parents. Did I mention I was the second born and only girl too? Hahaha... This would be the eighth week into the school year since we started fasting every Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, seeking God's intervention in the restoration of my health.

I was so ready and eager to resume classes. My uniform was all neat and well ironed; you could see the sharp lines I made with the help of the pressing iron on my sky-blue shirt and navy-blue skirt. I laid the edges of my hair with a brush, thereby revealing the six plaited cornrows on it.

Aged sixteen, I was in my final year in High School (Upper-sixth) and was getting ready for my Advanced Level General Certificate of Education (GCE A/L). Holding my tote with both hands, I walked to the veranda where my mom was calmly seated reading her bible.

As usual, I gave her a goodbye peck. In response she said- "Pre-Pre, (nickname for Precious) don't forget to pray during your break time. Remember to rely on the Spirit of God to keep you strong and focused. My daughter, always remember you are healed. Victory is yours in Jesus' name! Go with God and I'll see you when you come back."

"Amen! Thank you so much Mama, I love you" I replied.

I headed for school which was only about two miles from home. Thinking of my mother, I asked myself - "How would I have survived all my health afflictions if Mama were not there to pray for me?" I was jumping over a medium pothole of water when I felt a sharp, but shock-like pain from the front left side of my head down to the back of my neck.

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“Oh Jesus! Not again! Please don’t let this pain start now!” I screamed.

I landed in the pothole instead of dry ground due to the sudden pain. The road I took was a back road. I couldn’t find anyone to help me. “Will I be able to go to school in this condition?” I asked myself, while struggling to sit on a low stack of bricks.

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SECOND

EPISODE

Yaay! Glory to Jesus, I finally made it to school. God in His mercy sent a neighbor who for some unusual reason took the same road I used to get to school that day. She helped carry my bag and walked with me to school. She made sure I was comfortably seated before going to her class.

Fortunately for me, none of my classmates was in class yet when we walked in. If they were present when we did, they would have discouraged me from staying for classes that day. They could not stand seeing me go through pains, not after the five nerve crisis episodes they had witnessed since the school year started.

It's been four weeks since I was last seen in school. I had abruptly taken some time off to recover from the serious nerve pains that almost crippled me.

Most of the time, my classmates walked into class only when the teacher was coming. Surprised to see me, they unanimously exclaimed. "OMG! Precious Kayeh is back!" "It's been a month girl, welcome back on board". Nicole mentioned. "Look at you already with your book on the desk, the 'Mary-Book' of our class is back". Favor said jokingly.

It felt so good to be back among them, I had definitely missed all the fun while away. Always in touch with my friends, I had all previous class notes, did my assignments and got them submitted so I was up to date with everything. This made it easy for me to flow with everyone during the English Literature and Cameroon History classes we had that morning.

The pains I felt earlier had calmed down. All seemed to be going on well until HYSACAM's (waste disposal) truck started honking: pom..pom..pom..pom..pom..pom.. It did so to alert

everyone that it was around to pick up garbage. Those who hadn't put their garbage bins on the side of the road used the noise it made as a reminder to do so.

All you needed to do was make five steps from the road and you'd find yourself in my school. My class wall was directly backing the road, so the closer the truck got to my school, the louder the noise became. POM...POM..POM!!! Even the teacher had to wait for it to move far away before continuing the class.

At that moment, the noise resounded in my head like several people hitting an old church bell with heavy iron hammers in a disorganized manner, thereby producing vibrating, yet stingy and achy pain in my head. My classmates Nicole and Favor with whom I shared the same desk noticed something was wrong. I had my hands on both the left and right front sides of my head massaging my nerves. It felt as though they were being pulled apart.

Trying to run away from the noise that caused me excruciating pains, I left the classroom in tears not knowing where I was going. Some of my classmates followed me to ensure my safety.

"Precious!!!" Nicole screamed. "Lord please give Precious a break from all these attacks and pains." Favor prayed. I buried my head in-between my thighs while stooping, but it didn't help. While trying to stand in order to run further away from the noise, I slumped.

I woke up in tears to my mother's face. Standing next to me were my loving bench mates. They had informed my parents of what had happened to me and where I was taken to. It was when I saw a lady walk into the room with a white jacket and a stethoscope around her neck that I figured out I was in a hospital (Deido District Hospital).

She walked to my bed, introduced herself as Dr. Patricia and said: “Hi Ms. Precious, you definitely need much rest. Don’t do anything that stresses you up a lot and most importantly, avoid noisy areas. I know you’re a student and you’re preparing for your A/L, but you need to take it easy my dear. This is the fourth time you’ve been rushed into this hospital, I recommend you see a neurologist to further unveil what is really wrong.”

I struggled to mumble “Thank you ma’am”. The doctor wasn’t out of the room when hot tears started dripping down my cheeks again.

“What’s happening to my education this year Mama? Why will such pains come upon me only this year that I’m about to write my A/L? Haven’t I been in this school for five years and never had issues with noise before? How do I study if they say I need more rest Mama? I’ve been resting for four weeks...four long weeks, isn’t that enough? Mama I need to go back to school, I can’t stay home all the time, please help me?” I poured out my heart to my mother.

Fighting back her own tears, she wiped mine with her hanky, held my hands and comforted me saying: “My Precious Baby, we won’t stop praying. God is in control.”

THIRD EPISODE

I was discharged from the hospital after two days. My mother encouraged me to take heed to the doctor's advice, so I stayed home resting while studying at a slow pace.

I loved school so much that, even if it meant walking under the rain without an umbrella to go to school on a rainy day, I would. It felt sad coming to terms with myself that I had to stay home, but there was nothing I could do. My health needed to be stable first.

We visited a neurologist who prescribed medications after some tests, but the nerve pains still didn't go away. The most the medications did was make me fall asleep and once I woke up, the pains came right back.

My parents devoted their time to praying for me, especially my mother who was the prayer warrior of our home. She prayed for two more hours after morning devotion, two after cooking for the day and two more after evening prayers. She always woke up at midnight to pray for an hour or two, then at 4am for her quiet time with God till she woke us up at 5am to pray together. I remember she always said "Prayer is what I know to do best."

The more we prayed, the more the pains increased. I became kind of allergic to noise. I couldn't stand loud sounds from the music our neighbors often played on loud volumes anymore.

To ensure my full recovery, I had to relocate for some time to my Aunt's place. She lived in Bafoussam, in the West Region of Cameroon. Her big house of five bedrooms was located in a calm neighborhood. Everyone thought it would be better I went there for some time, so I agreed to do so.

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“First, I couldn’t go to school, then I had to stay home and now I am going over to my aunt’s house in another region, far away from my classmates and school. Does it mean I won’t take my final exam this year?” I couldn’t help but think out loud as I sat on my bed, while packing my luggage for the upcoming journey to my Aunt’s.



FOURTH

EPISODE

Three days later, we were on the road for six long hours. Papa drove smoothly, but the noises from cars on the road had no mercy on my aching nerves. The earplugs I used to minimize the noise weren't the best. At some point of the journey, Mama had to sit with me in the back to help calm my nerves.

We finally arrived Bafoussam safely. Familiar with the house, I headed straight into the bathroom where I took my shower and got some rest in my Grandma's bedroom.

There were no loud noises from neighbors' music, no one yelling at their kids from the backyard and no screams from kids playing right in front of the gate. The absence of all these noises made way for an uninterrupted five good hours of sleep for me. That would be the first time in four months since I slept that well.

I woke up at some minutes past 8pm, then I headed for the living room to greet my Aunt and her husband. My mother was actually telling them what had been going on with me. They were willing to have me stay there till I recovered, but they suggested I do one thing that made my countenance fall during our conversation.

"Precious, why don't you take off the whole school year to fully recover and go back next academic year?" Mr. Sony asked.

"I believe she will be able to make it this year by God's grace. She is a smart girl and up to the task. She might have missed lot of classes, but I believe after she recovers she will catch up." My mother replied.

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Mama's reply sparked a ray of hope within me that took away the sadness of what Mr. Sony, my Aunt's husband suggested. Yes, I had missed a whole term but was resolved to write my A/L exam that year despite all odds.

My health was gradually getting better. I personally decided to stop taking the medication prescribed by the neurologist and depended totally on prayers. Mama returned to Douala with dad, but we always kept in touch.

My Aunt organized prayer sessions for me at home which helped as well. Unlike her husband, she believed I could still make it that year in spite of being away from school for so long.

I had managed to pack some books which I studied while there. Usually, I went to bed at 5pm so I could sleep enough to be awake by 11pm to start studying. It wasn't easy to do so but God saw me through. I had to rest for thirty minutes after every one hour of studying, in order not to stress my nerves.

MTN had a promotion that enabled unlimited texts from 11pm-5am. I subscribed to it for fcfa 100 and was able to chat through SMS with my friends. They shared with me the topics I needed to read and questions to work on.

I remember Mr. Sony walked up to me one night when I was resting with my head on the table after an hour of studies. "Haven't I advised you not to do this to yourself? The second term is over and you haven't been in class all these months. How will you cope with all the materials to cover for your exams? You won't be the first person to miss a school year, stop hurting yourself. Stop it!! In fact, stop what you are doing and go sleep!" He ordered.

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I wasn't raised to argue with adults, so I stayed quiet and simply obeyed what he said. He watched me pack my books, switched off the lights and we both headed to our various rooms.

I couldn't turn on the light to continue reading in the bedroom because my grandmother was asleep. I tried reading in the bathroom, but I didn't want to hinder anyone from easing themselves in case they needed to.

I then returned to the room, laid in bed and quietly thought of all Mr. Sony said. Indeed, it was April already and I had missed both first and second terms of school. Who would have thought that a girl like me who enjoyed going to school would one day not be able to do so, no matter how much she longed to?

I did not let his words discourage me but chose to be encouraged by God's Word. Bible passages from Exodus 14:13 and Deuteronomy 31:6 reassured me that all would be fine. "This situation is only a temporary one and God will give me victory in due time." I whispered to myself.

I kept studying and prayed even more as the days went by. I did my best to observe my fasting days with my parents, although far away from them and that strengthened me spiritually. My health got tremendously better and I returned to Douala by mid May.

FIFTH
EPISODE

Moving to live with my Aunt and her family really provided a suitable environment for my health to improve. I did my best to stay away from noises upon my return to Douala, although they didn't disturb me that much like before.

I continued my routine of taking it easy on myself with studying, while praying and trusting in God to work things out for my good.

My parents remained supportive as always. Papa drove me to and from school to pick up my writing slip, then to the bookshop to buy writing materials I needed for the two-week examination.

Two days to the examination, I stopped studying and focused mostly on praying and reading my bible. Then a passage of scriptures came to my spirit. It was from 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 - "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed." I wrote it down in my journal and kept meditating on it.

The D-day finally arrived. Mama prayed for me every morning before I left to write, while Papa drove me to the examination center. I wrote in Lycée Deido. The classrooms we wrote in depended on the alphabetical orders of our names. As a result, most of the time I sat in classrooms with faces I had never seen before.

All kept going well until the Thursday I had to write my final examination paper, French Literature. Contrary to previous days, my classroom was closer to the road. I was happily answering my questions when suddenly something happened.

Several motorbikes, (probably fancy, bulky ones and not the regular type used for daily transportation by 'okada men') raced on the road producing a deep, heavy, yet sharp noise that literally tore my nerves apart.

The noise sounded like angry, loud thunders that, even the earplugs I had on couldn't help me. In no time I dropped my pen, held my head which was on fire with both hands, screamed and passed out.

My invigilators quickly came to my aide. I was taken out of the room so the other students could keep writing. Fortunately for me, one of the supervising invigilators who was my Vice-Principal understood my situation.

He quickly made arrangements for me to be taken to a room far into the school, away from the road. He called my parents who came, prayed a short prayer of faith for me and I was revived.

Thirty minutes later, I resumed writing in that special room. My body was weak. I could hardly sit upright to complete the exam, but God's Word of His strength made perfect in my weakness saw me through.

Four invigilators were sent to be with me in the room; two fanned me while one supported me to sit upright, then the other assisted when needed. (They didn't tell me answers though... I wasn't that kind of student...Hahahaha).

My parents stood out of the room praying for me while I wrote. Seeing my mother through the window encouraged me even more to give in my best. I could hear her say through her looks- "Don't give up my baby, you can make it!"

God being kind, I was given an extra hour to balance up for the time I had lost earlier. It was challenging, but I gave it my best and answered all the questions as required. My classmates who had heard what happened located where I was and sympathized with me when I was done writing.

It was our last examination day and the last day we would be seen in our uniforms (because after high school was the university). We took pictures, signed on each other's uniforms, gave warm hugs, promised to stay in touch and parted our ways.

Favor and Nicole my beloved bench mates who always stood by me through thick and thin were dropped off at their homes by my dad.

The next stop was our home. Ouuuu! What a day!

SIXTH
EPISODE

I went about my daily activities but rested even more than usual. I spent three good weeks without touching my books. My spirit felt light and relaxed. There was this feeling of inner peace that I enjoyed everyday. Everything was going on just fine, but we still had one more bridge to cross - the results!

Two months were gone since we wrote. Usually, the results were first read on the National Radio Station and published the next day on newspapers. Students had to either listen carefully to hear their names or wait patiently to read from newspapers to know if they had passed or not.

Those who were fortunate to live in Buea where the GCE Board's headquarter was located, could go read their results from the notice board and not have to wait for the radio or newspaper.

The day they started reading the results I was at a neighbor's home braiding my hair. Suddenly I heard my phone ringing...crinnnnnnnnnnnnnggggggg... It was an unknown number. Reluctant to pick it up I let it ring. The caller persisted, leaving me with no choice but to answer. "Hello, Precious on t..."

The caller didn't even let me answer when she said "Precious! Precious! It's Nicole. We made it girl! We all in our class and you my dear are the first of our center. You passed all your papers in flying colors. You beat us all girl!" She spoke with great excitement.

"How do you know this gurl? Are you sure of what you're saying?" I asked calmly, but with a concerned voice.

“My dear, I’m right in front of the notice board at the GCE headquarter in Buea, serving you firsthand infor...” The call ended before she completed her sentence.

I hadn’t reached our home when I received three messages from Favor and two of my teachers, confirming what Nicole said about our results. It was true, I passed in flying colors. I didn’t know whether to cry, scream, shout, jump or laugh.

I ran straight into our living room where my mother was sitting, spread my arms around her and delivered the good news in between sobs and tears.

“Mama... God has done it for me. God has done it for me oh!! I made it Mama... I passed my exams in flying colors”

“Thank You Jesus! Thank You Jesus!” Mama happily replied while gently rubbing my back with her caring hands. She helped me sit on her thighs, then called out my brothers and father to come hear the latest news.

“God has answered our prayers oh! Pre Pre has passed her exams. God has defeated our enemies and put them to shame. My sleepless nights were not in vain. My daughter has made it.” She told my father and brothers who had joined us in the living room.

Knowing the challenges I had been through that academic year, everyone was moved to tears by my great success. We all got on our knees, worshipped God and gave Him thanks for being faithful.

I later learned from my Vice-Principal that my results were the best the school had ever recorded since its existence. Till date, I am being used as an example by teachers to encourage many students.

Who but God could have done such a thing for me?

Indeed, I was pressed on every side by afflictions but not crushed. I was struck down by the pains but not destroyed. My light affliction was but for a moment which worked in me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In all these I have learned to be patient and trust in God alone. Yes, I missed almost a whole year of school, but my Super Teacher and Healer handled my case and delivered the verdict of victory beyond human understanding.

“Thank You Jesus for blessing me beyond every curse!”

Faith Enayeh| THE END