

An illustration in a warm, golden-brown color palette. It depicts three people of diverse backgrounds and ages. In the foreground, a young boy with dark hair is smiling broadly, holding an open book. Behind him, two adults, a man with glasses and curly hair on the left, and a woman with glasses on the right, are looking down at the book with joyful expressions. The overall mood is one of shared learning and happiness.

RISEN HOPES

if your days be

**WINNER OF THE DE-RACONTEUR YOUNG
CREATIVE WRITERS AWARD 2019**

A R E O R U T H

RISEN HOPES

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RISEN HOPE

**THIS WORK BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED BY AREO RUTH IN PARTIAL
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THE YOUNGEST CREATIVE WRITER AWARD, 2019.

ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL WORK AND MESSAGE

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THE FAMILY

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Mr. Irene and his wife, Adeola had three wonderful children. The first, Damilola, the second, Damilare and the last, Darasimi.

Darasimi was the only daughter and the baby of the house. Her parents and brothers, Damilola and Damilare, thought the world of her.

Though Mr. Irene and his wife were not really rich and educated, they could afford the basic needs of the family.

To make ends meet, Mr. Irene and his wife belonged to two separate cooperative societies where they saved money on monthly basis. Mr. Irene belonged to the Palm wine Tappers Cooperative Society while his wife belonged to the Traders Cooperative Society.

In each cooperative society, the money saved by the members would be given to a particular member every month. The cooperative societies had a roaster each to determine whose turn it was to receive the savings. That would continue until the money had gone round each of the members.

The money from the cooperative societies made it easy for them to feed the family and pave their children's ways through school. They always worked hard to pay their monthly dues so that they could get their own share of the money whenever it was their turn.

“Since we are not educated, we must do every possible thing to ensure that our children get the best of western education.” Mr. Irene said to his wife one day.

His wife, Adeola shared in his opinion “I agree with you my husband, because education is a very important key to opening the door of success and self-fulfillment. Imagine how better our lives would have been if we were both educated.” She lamented.

“Well that is correct, and what we have to do now is ensure that our three children go to school up to the university level, and we can achieve this if we work hard and pray.” Mr. Irene said, supporting his wife.

“However, as much as we labor to send these children to school, if they do not cooperate with us, all our wishes will be in vain and they may end up as failures.” He said, pessimistically.

“Stop the negative talks my husband! My own children will never be failures!” Adeola protested.

“Let’s be realistic, mama Dara. You know very well that all our efforts will be meaningless if the children are not serious with their studies.” Mr. Irene said.

“You speak like a father who is not wishing his children well.” Adeola said.

“How can I do such a thing? Only an unwise man will not wish his children well. It is the joy of every father to see his children doing well. But I will still say what I have to say, because it is the truth.” Mr. Irene said defending himself.

“Well okay, I will make sure I talk to them especially the boys.” Adeola said so as to save any upcoming quarrel.

“Tell them o. Tell them to be very serious! If they are not serious, they will end up as failures o. They them...” He was saying when Adeola jumped up from the bed, moved to the corner of the house where she kept her sack of goods and dragged it out. She kept mumbling words inaudibly while her husband would stop telling her to warn their children.

THE CHILDREN

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Damilola, Damilare and Darasimi were three different personalities. Damilola the eldest, was a quiet and obedient boy, but wasn't very smart at school. He was always struggling to pass his examinations. Throughout his stay in the primary school, Damilola failed most of his examinations and was always only lucky to be promoted on trial. He believed since then that he was not fit for school.

Damilare, on the other hand, was a perfect example of a stubborn boy. Everywhere he went to, he was always given a common nickname- 'he-goat!'. His parents and teachers would always complain about his lackadaisical behavior. Damilare repeated two sessions and had to be in the same class with his younger sister.

Of the three, Darasimi was the most promising. She never failed any examination. It was not that she was exceptionally brilliant, but she would always be among the first five pupils in her class every session.

On the last day of a particular session, Damilola who was in Primary six then accompanied his younger ones to school to get their report cards. He went with them because he could not stand the loneliness at home.

Fortunately, both Damilare and Darasimi passed their examination. Damilare came twenty-first out of forty pupils while Darasimi, came fourth. Therefore, they were both promoted to primary six.

A month later, when the primary six school leaving certificate results were released, Damilola managed to pass the examination and got himself a place at the prestigious Federal Government College- Lucky again!

THE HURDLES

A new lease of life began for the family immediately Damilare and Darasimi also found their ways into the Federal Government College, a year after Damilola got admission into the same school.

The Federal Government College was a decent school with high moral standard and a good reputation because it produced most of the best brains in the country. Every student of Federal Government College, knew that anyone who dared disobeyed the school rules and regulations, stood the risk of been expelled and no one was willing to be a scapegoat. So, all the students behaved and studied well since any student who repeated a class three times would be advised to withdraw from the school.

For this cause, Mr. Irene was worried that Damilare would find it difficult to cope with the school standard. Damilare struggled to pass his promotional examination to JSS two on trial while his sister passed excellently.

Damilola struggled until he made it to JSS three, and that was where his educational journey stopped since he had been promoted on two times and had failed his JSSCE. His three-time chance had elapsed. No school was ready to accept him. Those who wanted to accept him, suggested that he should start all over from JSS 1.

“Where is the money?” Mr. Irene asked dejectedly. Damilola therefore had to accept his fate and decided to learn a trade.

Damilare soon joined his brother, Damilola as he could not make it beyond JSS 2.

“I am not surprised. I am not” The father moaned the day Damilare presented his expulsion letter to him.

At the end, it was only Darasimi that managed to remain in school. So became the flag bearer of the family. Darasimi never thought of herself as a failure.

She always said, “I will do anything to keep the ball of success rolling by kicking and pushing the hot stone till I have the best of both worlds.

FROM GRACE TO GRASS

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After failing to succeed at school, Damilola wisely decided to learn a trade and his father supported his idea. He then went to learn Carpentry and Furniture making.

Damilare on the other hand refused to learn any trade. Instead, he ran away from home. His unceremonious escape from home however, coincided with a very important occurrence in the family circle.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Irene had just obtained a loan each from their cooperative society which they had planned to use to attend to some very important and basic family needs. The whole house was in disarray as soon as the theft was realized. When Damilare didn't come back home the next day, and the next and the next, it was concluded that he had stolen the money and vanished into thin air.

“This son is a source of grief to my life, ugh!” The pained father lamented one day.

“You never liked him. Even when he didn't steal, you never liked him” Adeola, his wife retorted.

“You can still say something like this Adeola? See the boy you call a son. People call him a goat and a goat he is! Now, he steals! I am so ashamed right now”

“Maybe it’s even all these negative words you sow into his life that have germinated now. See.”

“Don’t even bring that one close to me. I would always warn you, talk to your son, talk to your son but you wouldn’t do it. You kept pampering him till he is as rotten as a pit latrine now. Good for you!”

“So, he is my son now, no more your son, right?”

“Leave me, my dear. I am angry right now. I am sad. I have to think of a way to make money. Just leave me.” He said and left the room. Adeola stood, arms akimbo.

“Oh is that really my fault? He is at fault too. If I don’t talk to him, then, why can’t he talk to him too?” She hissed silently, shrugged and started folding the clothes on the bed.

Mr. Irene had to sell the house and land which he had inherited from his father. He settled the cooperative societies and used part of the money to rent another apartment.

“Oh God, what have we done to deserve all these misfortunes?” Adeola lamented. “We were once house owners and in the twinkling of an eye, we are now tenants” She wailed.

“Cry no more, woman, we must thank God that we had the capacity to pay up the debts. Although we fell from the position of a houseowner to that of a tenant, I’m sure our lost hopes will be revived one day.” Said Mr. Irene.

Darasimi gained admission to study French at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-iwoye, Ogun State. She arrived at school and wasted no time settling down.

Darasimi faced her studies squarely as she knew she was the hope of the family. She therefore left no stone unturned in her continuous struggle for academic excellence.

She became popular in the whole Department of French. And because of her popularity, Darasimi was eventually appointed as the financial secretary of the Association of French Language Students in her third year. As the financial secretary of the association, Darasimi met a lot of important people within and outside the institution, and she also won herself a lot of respect and recognition.

After the expiration of her tenure, Darasimi contested for the same position in her final year, which many people kicked strongly against. Some complained that she had held the post for a whole year and the best thing for her to do was to allow someone else occupy that position, but Darasimi blatantly refused.

After a while, an allegation was roped round her. Rumors had it that she had embezzled a huge amount of money and therefore, she was no longer fit for the position. She was invited by a special panel set by the department to investigate the allegation leveled against her. If she was found guilty of the allegation, she stood the risk of being rusticated from the school, thereby destroying both her dreams and that of her family.

She however still went ahead to contest and unfortunately lost to her opponent. She also lost some of her friends who complained that she was over ambitious and greedy.

Darasimi regretted all her action. “If I had known” She thought. “I would have left the stage when the ovation was the loudest. Oh what a shame!” Nothing was so painful to her than the social disharmony the contest brought between her and her friends. The matters got worse after the election that her friends began to make mockery of her and called her a thief.

Eventually the panel of inquiry released its report and found out that Darasimi was wrongly accused due to some incorrect records by those she succeeded. That cleared the coast of rumors a bit.

Against all odds, Darasimi eventually graduated with a second class upper division and the joy of her parent knew no bounds.

Damilola started his own carpentry workshop after graduation from the technical school. The income from the business was used to cater for the family. Little by little, the lost glory of the family started getting revived.

The boy who was once a dullard had become a smart, rich, handsome, godly guy.

RISEN HOPES

Three months after Darasimi left to serve her country, Nigeria under the National Youth Service Corps, the runaway boy Damilare returned home with lots of story to tell.

He apologized first to his parent about the stolen money. He then narrated that, on getting to Lagos, he roamed the street for four good years without any meaning to his life. Just like a prodigal son, he wasted the money stolen and when there was no longer any money on him, he resulted to doing menial jobs.

After series of menial jobs, he got a job as a security officer at a construction company, where he learnt his lesson and turned a new leaf. His devotion to work and bravery made him earn the love of his boss who decided to help him. His boss recruited him as one of his apprentices to learn the art of building block making and laying.

Working with his boss after his apprenticeship earned him a lot of money, and so he decided to return home to make his ways right with his family members.

“I’m deeply sorry mom and dad for running away from home. I am so sorry for being a black goat indeed! I am so sorry for not accepting any of the moral you tried to inject into me. I regret it. I suffered out there. Forgive me mum, forgive me dad. Please pardon me.” He pleaded.

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Mr. Irene was very happy to see that his son Damilare had turned a new leaf.

“I am the most grateful to God that you are back home. Thank God your mum and I didn’t die of hypertension before your came back. I thank God that the lessons which we tried to teach you softly, the world taught you roughly. My faith in God is renewed today that when I have committed something in His hands, I should keep it there because no matter how long it takes, it will always be turn out good. Welcome home my son!”

“He is now your son right?” Adeola teased and they laughed together.

“Please don’t start o. Don’t start” He said, laughing hysterically.

Darasimi eventually secured a lecturing job at the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-ife after she completed her master’s degree at the same university.

Three years into working at the university, she was able to buy her parent a decent house and she also helped her mother to open a big supermarket in Akure, Ondo State.

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No matter how long it took them, the family's dead hope was eventually revived more than they ever expected!