

THE VISITOR

LIZZY OYEBOLA YAKUBU

A woman in silhouette, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a dark coat, stands on a city street. She is holding a smartphone in her right hand and has a red suitcase at her feet. A brown bag with a metal ring is slung over her shoulder. In the background, a motorcycle is parked on the street, and the sun is setting, creating a warm, golden glow. The scene is framed by a dark blue border.

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A person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a backpack is seen from the side, looking at a smartphone. They are standing in a city street during sunset, with a red suitcase on the ground. In the background, there are buildings and a motorcycle. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun.

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LIZZY OYEBOLA
YAKUBU

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to every child of God who war on their knees in prayer to the Lord God almighty; see with sharpened spiritual eyes things impossible for the natural man and fight the spiritual warfare with faith.

Seek not yet repose, dear brethren! Fight on from the stance of victory!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give all the glory to the name of the Lord who was and is and is to come, who will forever be.

I acknowledge your hand in all I do and the putting together of this great piece is not an exception. You have been so great to me, dear Lord!

To the followers and subscribers of my Christian story blog, de-raconteur.com, of a truth, the impact of your support and loyalty cannot be overemphasized. You have been key to my growing love for God and story writing in general. The Lord bless you greatly. Amen.

Friends and family members who have given in cash and in kind to see this in print, I appreciate you greatly- my darling husband, Michael Yakubu, Mr. And Mrs. A.A. Oyekunle, Esther, Eunice, Elijah, Olajide Oduniyi and so on. I appreciate you all. God bless you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lizzy Oyebola Yakubu is a child of God, a journalist by profession and a teacher by passion. She has a B.Sc. In Mass Communication from Bowen University, Iwo, Nigeria. She has a Master in Journalism also from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

She is a Christian inspiring writer (Read *The Candle in the Wind* written by her here). She is also a Christian blogger (Check out de-raconteur.com to read her writings).

She is the founder and provost of the fast-rising Christian writing institute- De-Raconteur Writer's College. She is also the founder of the online home (The B.U.D. Family International) that houses hundreds of Christian sisters all over the world who have goal-Spiritual growth.

She is a filmmaker and scriptwriter. ([Click this link to see the movie 'The Voice of Faith' written partly by her and produced by The B.U.D. Family](#)) and you can also listen to ['WHO AM I, LORD?'](#) a song written and produced by Lizzy in 2018.

She is graciously married to Michael- A sweet and godly gentleman.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Visitor was written last year, under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This storyline had been impressed upon my heart for years but it was eventually given birth to, few months ago.

It ran for a week and some days on my Facebook wall before I decided to publish the whole episode on my blog (de-raconteur.com) so that it would reach a wider audience.

While going over this story again shortly before it was published, I had tears in my eyes as this work of the Holy Spirit blessed me anew. It felt like I wasn't the one who put the words together.

This is a must read for male and female; old and young- every single person who loves the Lord and desires a great relationship with the Holy Spirit.

THE VISITOR!

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING ABOUT 'THE VISITOR'?

Patrick Debbie: The "Perfect Planner" knows it all. It is He who can save the vilest sinners and it is He who can keep the righteous safe through the storm. So much to be learnt from this story. God bless you more sis Lizzy Oyebola Yakubu.

Hada Ssah: Jesus' blood can make the vilest sinner clean! God bless you Mrs Yaks for blessing my life. I love you.

Victoria Agbo: Wonderful! That's all I can say.

Oluwatoosin Oladejo: What an end! This was worth reading all the way. May God bless you and increase your wisdom. Amen!

Amarachi Olokor: This is superb.

Oniorisan Aderinola: Wow! What a mighty and powerful God we serve!. What a story! Oh! What a blessing you are to our generation ma. Ma, god's grace and anointing will never run dry upon your life.

Ifeoma Mokwunye: Wow wow wow.... What can I say but God bless you Mama Lizzy.

Latunde Akin: This drama nearly happened in a little different dimension to my family. I singlehandedly stood against it, told my wife to just keep mute as I faced the battle. I took 5 long years and

now all the visitors are calm. God silenced them and we praise him forever. Amen!

Oluremi Ajayi: What a beautiful name it is, the name of Jesus... Well-done, Mama Lizzy. God bless you and yours.

Lizzy Ibukun Adebayo: Woooow. Thank Mrs Yaks, I am always blessed reading your story.

Blessing Omovigho Adebo: I am completely amazed by this story. From start to finish. God bless you Lizzy Oyebola Yakubu.

Okoye Grace Adeyemi: God bless you ma, and more ink to your pen... Learnt a whole lot here.

Chidirimma Chokhma Obiarangaonyediyanna

Okechukwunyerem: Wow....thanks... My faith is renewed.

Princess Enyi-Okoro: Wow! Wow! Wow! A story that produces a lot of spiritual awakening. God bless you ma.

CHAPTER 1

LARA...

As I wiped my shoes against the foot mat, the atmosphere smelt really differently.

“What’s that? Is something burning?” I thought as I turned the door knob and entered.

The sitting room was dark so I groped at the walls to find the switch. I flipped the switch when I found it and the lights came on. There was no one in the sitting room.

I looked up at the wall clock.

9.30pm!

“Oh my! I am so late today!” I exclaimed as I dumped my handbag and my lunch box on the dining table and rushed to the kitchen to see if I could get the source of the horrible smell.

The kitchen was very tidy and there was nothing on the gas cooker. I checked the microwave, there was nothing inside. The oven was also empty.

I stood transfixed for a while as the smell I had perceived from outside grew stronger.

“What is that smell, oh Lord?” I asked, very dejected. I was very tired from the day’s work that all I had planned to do was bath, have my husband massage my shoulders and then sleep. I felt so troubled that all wasn’t going as I had planned.

I took off my blazer and hung it on the door. Then, I started the inspection of the whole kitchen. I couldn’t actually place what the smell was but it sure was very offensive.

When I checked the freezer and the fridge and the gas cylinder and couldn’t detect what the problem was, I gave up the search.

“My home is covered with the blood of Jesus! Lord, I give my house and my family over to You anew. Keep us from all harms. Thank You Lord” I prayed shortly.

I sprayed some citrus air cooler and started walking to my children's room. I opened the door and the smell greeted me there again!

"The Blood of Jesus!" I exclaimed. My eyes widened the more as I realized that it was only one child that was on the bed.

I walked to the bed as fast as my leg could carry me, checked the face of the child on the bed and my heart dropped.

"Where is Jemmy?" I asked aloud but Jeddy, her twin sister was sleeping too deeply to give me an answer.

I flew out of their room to start the search for Jemmy.

My first port of call was our room. There, was my husband on the bed, snoring so loudly. I scanned the room and realized that Jeddy was not with him.

I checked every single place in the house and even outside, yet I couldn't find my daughter. Tears were already gathering in my eyes. I didn't know if I should be scared or not. I swallowed hard as I muttered some words of prayers.

'The second sitting room!' A thought came to my mind and I hesitated.

"What would Jeddy be doing in our private sitting room all alone?" I frowned slightly. Only Bode, my husband and I relaxed there to enjoy the oceanic view at times. We met there also every weekend for our couple's fasting and prayer programme.

We often forbid our twins from entering the sitting room because it was our sacred room of prayer, love and power.

On a second thought, I turned the knob on the door and it was dark.

"Of course she can't be here. What was I thinking?" I said and was about closing the door when the strong smell I had perceived at the door wafted to my nose. I flipped the switch on very fast and

there on the couch lay a woman and my Jemmy coiled like a newborn around her chest.

“Who is that?” I asked myself as I walked briskly towards them. I wasn’t expecting any visitor. My mum and my mother-in-law had not told me they would be visiting.

The woman looked very elderly and familiar but I couldn’t place it. The more I went close to her, the more the offensive smell increased.

I gently pulled off my daughter from her chest, pleading the Blood of Jesus. She stirred but resumed her silent snores.

I reversed quietly and shut the door.

I took Jemmy to her room, tucked her in her bed and hung their mosquito nets. I walked to and fro their room, prayerfully before exiting and moving to my own room.

Fuming as I entered the bathroom to shower, I was more furious that Bode wouldn’t even stir at my entrance.

No matter how much I had tried to wake him up, he had been muttering ‘Don’t disturb me, I am tired’ and that was not usual. No matter how tired my husband was, he would usually wait for me to come home before retiring to bed.

I changed into my nightie and adjusted the satin bonnet on my head. The sleep that had gathered in my eyes had disappeared. I picked up my Bible and climbed up into the bed.

My heart was very heavy. Though the smell had subsided, I was not clear what it was and why it grew stronger when I approached the elderly woman!

Who is that woman?

Why didn’t Bode pray with the children and tuck them in bed before sleeping?

Why didn’t he hang their mosquito nets?

Why?

As I tried to calm myself, clinging to my big Bible, I felt so scared. I turned to look at Bode's face but he was far away in the dreamland.

I jumped down the bed again and knelt down, leaning against the bed.

"God have mercy. I do not know why I am feeling this way but have mercy Lord. Have mercy Lord" I kept muttering till sleep wrapped its arms round me.

I woke up to someone fumbling with my nightie. I shuddered all of a sudden as if I had come in contact with naked electricity.

"Who is that?" I slapped off the hand and jumped up suddenly.

"What is wrong with you?" Bode asked loudly, his left hand rubbing his right hand that I had slapped.

“Oh, it’s you. I am so sorry. I thought it was someone else” I said and he frowned.

“Someone else? Who would have the audacity to fumble with your nightie like that if not me?” He asked and when I saw that the waters of jealousy and suspicion were already gathering in his face, I smiled it off.

“I have been feeling somehow since I came in” I said and he nodded.

“Come and sit with me on the bed. You will be fine” He said and I shook my head.

“Bode, who is the woman in our house?” I asked and he frowned.

“That’s my aunt. What is the matter? She can’t come to my house?” He asked and I shook my head.

“But I thought it would have been better if you had told me we were having a visitor” I retorted.

“Why should I do that? Is this your house? Did you build it?” He asked, a strange look on his face.

“Honey, are you for real? Can I suddenly bring a visitor home this way?”

“Anyway, that is my mum’s cousin. Her daughter in the USA just gave birth and she needs to visit her. She is going to be here till her visa is ready” He said and I started feeling uneasy all of a sudden, slapping my thigh and shaking my head all at once.

“That is not nice at all.” I said and he looked at me defiantly. I had not seen such look on his face since meeting my husband. He fixed his eyes at me as if ready to argue.

“Honey” I said calmly, walking close to him. “I feel really troubled about her presence. You know I wouldn’t object to anyone visiting us but I feel somehow about her. Can we just pray about it?” I asked, holding his hand. He gave a long hiss and shook my hand off his.

“So, I should tell her to leave? C’mon woman, use your brain. Use your brain! She is my family member. I have heard that generally, you women detest your husband’s family, so...”

“Bode? I detest my husband’s family? Really? Amongst the visitors we have had in this house, how many of them are my direct family members? I take care of your family as my own. This is a very different case, honey. I do not even know this person! I suddenly feel bad at her presence. And as a wife, I am explaining my feelings to you. I am not even saying you should ask her to leave. How on earth would I say such? I am saying that I am not at peace with this visit and that you should let’s pay about it. Am I wrong?” I asked, my voice quaking. In our five years of staying together as a man and wife, my husband and I had never had a heated argument like that.

“You are o! You are wrong! And you know what, Lara?” He asked, jumping down the bed and picking his pillow. “You will eventually have to leave this house if you are uncomfortable with my aunt here!”

“What!!!” I exclaimed, very shocked.

“You are too spoilt! I have spoilt you! That is why you can actually sit down there and tell me shit!”

“Shit? Bode, shit?” I asked, my lips trembling.

As he was about moving out of the room, I ran after him.

“You can’t go out of the room, Bode. Why would you leave the room for me?” I asked and he shook his head.

“Just leave me please. Go away!” He shouted sternly and pushed me off. As I was regaining my stance, there was a knock at the door. I frowned slightly and looked at the clock.

12.30am!

“Can I come in?” The voice asked and I was shocked.

Come in?

At 12.30am?

Into our bedroom?

“Come...” My husband was saying when I raised my hands in absolute disagreement. He eyed me as if I was an abominable, destestable thing. “Come in” He eventually said and my mouth became suspended. I was too shocked beyond words.

What is happening?

Why is Bode behaving this way, Lord?

Am I overreacting Lord?

What is wrong with me?

CHAPTER 2

LARA...

I couldn't append my signature on any of the documents placed on my desk.

My head was hot, my eyes were sore and my hands were shaky.

The night before was a nightmare for me! I had never in my entire life felt so lost, tired and worn.

"Mama, what is the matter?" My husband had asked as his aunt entered our room. My eyes burnt with red anger as I walked back to the bed and sat.

Our room was meant to be private!

My mother-in-law wouldn't even attempt to enter our room, talk less of barging in at midnight!

“Olabode” The woman said as she entered and sat in one of our cushions.

Gnashing my teeth against one another and tightening my fist into balls, I knew I was turning red. I went even madder when I greeted the woman and she didn’t give me a response.

“Olabode” She called again, nonchalantly, like she was the madam of the house.

“Yes mama” My husband asked, bowing his head slightly.

“Is this the wife?” She asked and I frowned.

The wife?

“I am his wife ma” I quickly corrected her. She eyed me from head to toes and gave a long sigh afterwards.

“Olabode, this thing here doesn’t want me here, right?” She asked and my eyes widened at her words. My husband gave me a knowing look, his brows arched.

“No, she doesn’t mama. She said she is not at peace with you staying in this house” My husband said and I was dumbfounded.

I couldn’t believe my ears.

If someone had predicted that my husband’s response to her question would be that slippery, I would have fought that the person vehemently.

What!

What I had discussed with my husband as a bedroom talk, he could open it all up in public that way?

OH. MY. GOD!

His aunt sighed long and loud.

“But not to worry mama. I have corrected her. And I have told her that if she isn’t comfortable with you here, she should rather leave” He added and my eyes widened so much that one would think they would fall out of their sockets.

“You have done well, Olabode. That is how a man should do. If she cannot love your people, you cannot love her too!” She said and my boiling blood reached the peak as I jumped up from the bed.

I quickly knelt before her, my heart beating really fast.

It all felt like a dream but each time I pinched myself, it felt so real.

“Mama, I am sorry for everything ma...”

“Sorry for yourself o” She cut in but I couldn’t stop. Two wrongs, nay, three, would not make a right. I had to quickly salvage the situation.

“I love my husband and I love my husband’s family as my own. I was surprised to see you around...”

“Why are you surprised? Is this your house?” She asked, her laser-like eyes shooting directly into mine.

I flinched and whispered a word of prayer quickly as fear gripped my heart.

“Yes mama. This is my house. This is my home. This is where the Lord has planted me” I said and she burst out laughing loudly.

“Why are you angry? Is there anybody trying to uproot you from this place? This girl is funny o” She said and laughed some more.

“Mama, this is what I deal with o.” Bode said and I shook my head. Every new statement he made ushered me into a new part of Bode that I had never seen before.

“Ahhhh, Olamibode, if a child does not know his or her place and is busy jumping here and there, a good parent will always have pankere (cane) under their bed.” She said and laughed. Bode joined too. “The fear of pankere is the beginning of wisdom o jare” She completed and I stood up suddenly.

“Pankere? For who?” I asked at once, not believing my ears. “Are you suggesting ma, that my husband should get a cane for me?”

“Yes! For you! For you!” Bode shouted, charging at me. “What is your problem? I know. I know I have spoilt you. That is why you can actually stand there and talk to my mum anyhow.”

“Your mum? I know your mum. She is godly, she is sweet, she is nice, she is a mother indeed. She would never ever want the downfall of her son’s marriage. I know your mum, Bode but I do not know this woman here. I have never met her before so you can’t just call any woman your...” I was going to round off my statement when Bode’s eyes turned red.

His chest rose and fell rhythmically, with his jaws shaking with anger. He pulled me by the collar, filled my face with very hot breaths from his nose. He was about landing a very thick blow on my head when I screamed.

“The Blood of Jesus! The Blood of Jesus!”

As I screamed, I suddenly kicked him off, making him fall against the bed as I jumped out of the room, my heart in my mouth.

Tears poured out of my eyes in quick succession.

Bode?

My Bode?

I ran into my children's room and banged the door against us sharply. I turned the key twice, pushed a very heavy chair behind the door and sat on it, breathing very hard.

“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus have mercy. Jesus have mercy” I cried severally, holding my beating chest with one hand and covering my whimpering mouth with another.

Tears rolled down my face as I tried as much as I could not to wake my children up. My whole world seemed to be crumbling before me.

Bode tried to hit me?

Bode?

I wept and dozed, wept and dozed, wept and dozed.

When I woke up, it was 6am!

I jumped up from the warm rug where I had lay overnight, woke my children up, prayed with them quickly, bathed them and had my own bath too.

After dressing them up for school, opening the door for us to move out of their room became another hurdle.

‘How are we going to go out?’

‘Hope he isn’t waiting anywhere to hurt me’

‘Is it safe to move out?’

I eventually summoned courage, opened the door and we all moved out. My children ran excitedly to the dining room but I walked cautiously, my right index finger bent between my two lips.

“Oh my Jeddy and Jemmy!” Bode exclaimed excitedly as he cupped his kids in his arms, planting a peck each on their cheeks. The kids chuckled excitedly.

“I made you toasts and hot tea” He said.

“Yaaaaayy!” They exclaimed happily.

“Good morning, honey” I said calmly when our eyes met. He nodded.

“Morning”

“How was your night?”

“Thanks”

“Okay” I said inaudibly, moved to our room and quickly changed into a black armless gown. I picked my cream blazer and shoes and moved out briskly as if someone was pursuing me.

“I am already late. I will be on my way now” I announced and he nodded, without looking at my side.

“Bye mummy” The children said and I quickly pecked their tea-stained lips, praying for them silently as I did.

I picked my handbag from the table where I had dropped it the night before and jumped out of the house.

It was when I knew that I had moved out of our compound that I wore my blazer and shoes.

“Have mercy, Lord. I am so sorrowful. Strengthen me oh Lord” I muttered as I drove down to the bank in Lekki where I worked.

Everyone who came in contact with me that day knew that I wasn't the Lara they had seen the day before!

Lost in the thoughts of what had transpired the day before, I didn't know when my boss appeared in front of me.

“Lara!” She shouted and my head cleared up at once. I sat up quickly and reached for the mouse as if I had been working on my computer. “What is the matter with you. Lara?” She asked, somewhat sternly, somewhat concerned.

“It is well boss. I am sorry”

“You should better be. You know very well that to avoid mistakes in your daily activities here, you must leave all worries at home”

“Yes, boss” I said.

“Concentrate, sign all documents that you are to sign and forward them to me immediately” She said and I nodded.

As soon as she had closed the door, I jumped up, picked up the envelope on my table and walked briskly to her office.

“What is it, Lara?”

“I have a letter for you, ma” I said and she squinted as she adjusted her eyeglasses. She stretched her hand and collected the envelope.

After reading it, she shook her head.

“I can’t approve this. You know that I can’t approve this. Two weeks is too much”

“Two weeks is too much?”

“Except you want to lose your job” She said and I nodded. I was expecting her to say that.

“Ma, I must remind you that all my life, I have spent in this bank. I was twenty-two years old when I started working here. I am thirty-five years old now, so you can do the mathematics ma. I have never demanded for a leave like I am doing now. I have never

demanded for anything special from this bank. Everyone can attest to the fact that I have served this bank with all that I have and that I am. If after thirteen years of working here, I still cannot get a two-week leave, then, is this even a job? Ma, you can take the job away, then” I said recklessly, not even knowing what I was saying.

“Lara, what’s the matter with you? Why are your words so strong?” She asked, her eyes widened.

“I apologize. My family is on fire now and I have to quench it. You are a woman, so you can understand” I said calmly.

“Still, two weeks is not something that...” She was saying when I bowed slightly before her.

“I will finish up what I have to do for today ma. Thanks for approving my leave. The Lord will uphold your own home too. Thanks” I said, bowed slightly again and started moving to the door.

“Lara! Lara!” She called after me but I had become intentionally deaf to her voice. I finished all I was going to do, moved to her office to drop some files and waited before her for the approval.

She handed the letter to me.

“A month has been approved, Lara. Go fix your home. The Lord will go with you” She said and I smiled largely as I winked slowly at her.

“Thanks boss”

As I moved towards my car, my stomach rumbling from lack of food, my phone rang. Squinting to look at the screen, I saw the name.

My mother-in-law!

CHAPTER 3

LARA...

By the time I got into my car, my phone had rung three good times.

Still my mother-in-law!

“Is all well?” I muttered as I settled down in my car and gulped down a bottle of water that I had kept in my car which had gone hot from the weather.

I picked up my phone and dialled her number.

It had not even rung at my side when she answered the call.

“Hello Lara”

“Hello mummy, good afternoon ma”

“Afternoon my dear. How are you?”

“I’m okay ma”

“Ki lo sele? (What’s the matter?) You know you can talk to me”

I smiled shortly wondering if her son had gone to report the recent happenings to her.

“Mummy, all is well o”

“Are you sure? Your voice betrays you, my darling” She insisted.

“Just pray for your girl, mummy. It’s fine, though” I said, stubbornly. It felt as if she had heard about the issues from her cousin or my husband and she wanted to confirm from me. I wouldn’t want to be a part of such.

“I was praying for you this morning when I got a disturbing revelation about you. That is why I am calling” She said, totally smashing my thoughts.

No one had reported me to her!

I was glad. I sighed and readjusted myself in the car seat.

“A disturbing revelation about me?”

“Yes. So, feel free to talk to your mum. Is there something going on?” She said, her soothing voice caressing my broken heart.

“Mum, I would have loved to talk to you but you know, Bode and I agreed never to allow the third party in our...”

“Forget that! According to what I saw, there is fire on the mountain. Sometimes when something is about to fall and scatter, it is not in any way bad to let in the third party, girl! Let me in. I am a child of God. I wouldn’t worsen situations. I will salvage it!” She said and I sighed, a rueful smile on my face. I just wasn’t

used to opening my mouth to talk to people about my circumstances.

I knew it was not the best thing to do but I always found myself dying alone, secretly, not allowing anyone into my space.

“Mummy, can you just pray along?”

“Lara! C’mon! What is your problem? What is going on?” She shouted worriedly and paused. “Lara, the Holy Spirit told me that He showed you a vision last week which He instructed you and your husband to take seriously. Is that right?” She asked and my heart dropped as I covered my mouth in absolute shock.

One, I was shocked to know that what the Holy Spirit had revealed to me the week before was a serious issue, relating to my marriage and our peace. I was so sad to find out that I had failed the test because obviously, we were not able to pray about the dream.

Also, the way God would go all the way to Abuja to reveal to my mother-in-law what He had shown me, beat me hands down! That what I had seen in my own room in Lekki, Lagos, God would take all the way to Asokoro in Abuja! Wow!

“Lara, I asked you a question”

“Yes mummy. I had a vision last week and I was led to inform my husband so we could pray together but when I told him, he told me that I worry too much about dreams and visions”

“Ah! Tori Olorun! (For God’s sake!)”

“So, when I pestered him, he said we would pray about it. We kept postponing it till I even forgot”

“So, you didn’t really pray about it too?”

“I did. But I just did it on the surface since my husband said we would do the bigger prayer together later”

“Ah! See these children, ehn! Omodeo’mogun, o n pe l’efo (What an ignoramus couple!). So, what was the vision like?”

“Erm...Bode drove myself, Jeddy and Jemmy in his car. I was seated in front with him while our children were seated at the back seat.”

“Okay?”

“When we got to a bridge, he stopped the car for a very fat woman who waved us down. I thought the woman would sit behind, with the children but Bode asked me to go to the back seat while the woman sat in the front seat.”

“Hmmmmm”

“As the woman entered the car, she became fatter and fatter and fatter till the car started to somersault”

“Oh gracious me!”

“We started crying for help as the car somersaulted. Eventually, the car hit a tree and stopped. When it did, the fat woman helped myself and my daughters out. Jemmy was bleeding.”

“Holy Spirit!”

“Bode came out of the car, checked us if we were fine, saw the bleeding girl and sighed. He walked back into the car with the woman sitting at the driver’s seat. He sat beside her. How they reversed from the tree we had hit, I wouldn’t know but soon, they were on the road with the woman driving fast and ruthlessly.”

“Jesu oooo!”

“Bode kept screaming ‘Stop! Stop! Stop!’ but she kept laughing wickedly as she drove on. I was shocked. When I tried to stand so I would take my baby to the hospital, I realized that my right leg was fractured.”

“Holy Spirit! Ah!”

“As Jeddy went to the road to wave down any of the passing vehicles, a car knocked her down. I sorrowfully wailed like a widow as I saw her blood flowing down the road. That was when I woke up”

“Whaaaaat! You saw something as serious as this and you kept quiet? Lara!”

“Mummy, I was scared too. I ran to my husband but he was...” I had started crying.

“See, this is not even the time to cry or beat about the bush.” She said, urgency in her voice.

“So, what has happened in your home?”

“Ma?” I asked, fidgety.

“Lara, what is happening in your house right now?”

“Erm...ma, I...” I was saying when she hissed shortly.

“You and Bode, are you on good terms?”

“No ma”

“Jesu mi o!” She exclaimed. “Did he hit you?”

“He almost did”

“Did you hit him?”

“No, but in self-defense, I pushed him off me and he landed against the bed”

“Ah! These children ehn!” She exclaimed. “So, do you have a visitor in your house right now?”

“Yes ma”

“A woman?”

“Yes ma”

“A very fat woman?”

“Yes ma”

“Oh my goodness!” She exclaimed and I broke down into more tears as the precision of her questions to the issues on ground rhymed perfectly. “But why did you agree with your husband to bring in a family member after such revelation?”

“Bode didn’t tell me before bringing her home, mummy. That was what I questioned that became an issue”

“This boy ehn! Lord have mercy on my son and his family oooo” She exclaimed in a shaky voice.

“Mummy, what should I do?”

“You should have called me to...never mind, the deed is done. We have to fight now. But, who is this woman? Did you see her during your introduction”

“No ma, I didn’t”

“Ah! And at your wedding?”

“I didn’t see her, ma.”

“Jesus Christ, our King! Is her face familiar?”

“Yes ma. She resembles you a lot!”

“Ah! Asake niyen! (That must be Asake!)” She exclaimed and paused. “She has two tribal marks on each cheek, right?” She asked. I nodded severally.

“Yes ma”

“She calls your husband ‘Olabode’?”

“Yes ma”

“Ahhhhhh! Lara! Ah, Lara, that woman is not ordinary! That woman poisoned Bode when he was four years old!”

“Whaaat!”

“Yes! My husband personally ensured she went to jail for it. We didn’t even know that Bode would survive, only God brought him back to life. And yet, she is back to Bode’s life? In Bode’s house? Oh Jesus!”

“Oh. My. God!” I exclaimed as my hands trembled. I had never heard something like that before. It felt so strange.

“I wonder how she got Bode’s phone number! She is a distant cousin. She is an unbeliever! She has psychiatric issues!”

“Whaaat!” I screamed as my blood started boiling. “Ahh! Mummy, what do I do?”

“See, she is fetish, so be very careful and prayerful. Do not take anything from her. Do not exchange words with her. Try as much as possible to keep Bode and your children from her. I will be on my way to Lagos now. I pray I get a flight to Lagos because it’s raining heavily over here”

“Okay mum” I broke down, wailing and sobbing intermittently.

“You have to be strong now, girl. Don’t panic. Don’t cry! Just get your family out of that house safely”

“I don’t know if Bode will agree with me, mummy”

“He is no longer behaving like his normal self, right?”

“No mum”

“Begin to rebuke and destroy every manipulation from the pit of hell as you go home now. The Lord of hosts will go with you” My mother-in-law said as she dropped the call.

“Amen! Amen o!” I cried as my whole body shook from an instant cold.

My hand wouldn’t agree with me as I tried to turn the ignition key. I was sweating all over.

Just then, there was a knock on my car window and when I looked out, it was my prayer coordinator from the church- Mr. James.

I wound down the glass, still shivering.

“Mrs. Jones, good afternoon. I came to your bank today to make some...” He greeted with a smile. When he saw my face and got no reply to his greetings and talks, he frowned slightly. “Are you okay?” He asked and I shook my head.

“You need to get home, right?” He asked and I nodded, weakly.
“Let me drive you home. You are looking like really blue. You can rest at the back seat, right?” He asked and I nodded.

I struggled to get out of the car, staggered to the back seat, rested my back and held my throbbing head so it wouldn't fall off.

As he drove out of the bank premises, the worms in my stomach protested noisily- and he obviously heard.

“Do you need me to buy something for you?” He asked and I nodded again.

“Will Boli (Roasted plantain) and groundnut do?” He asked and I nodded, yet again.

He drove to the front of a wooden stall.

“Give me fresh boli please.” He said and started searching his pocket for money. I was too weak to even pass the wallet I was holding to him. He paid for the boli, groundnut and bottled water he had bought and passed them to me at the back.

I didn't even say 'thank you' before I started munching at the hot roasted plantain like a starved monkey.

I had not taken anything since morning and looking at the huge task my mother-in-law had prescribed to me, I knew that I just needed to eat!

"I rebuke and destroy every manipulation from the pit of hell against my marriage, my husband, myself, my children, our home, in Jesus Name" I prayed loudly as I munched at the boli.

"I rebuke and destroy every manipulation from the pit of hell against the Jones' family in the matchless Name of Jesus!" Mr. James also started praying silently as we journeyed home.

Mercy, Lord!

CHAPTER 4

I entered into the sitting room and threw my bag on one of the settees, yawning as I did.

“Hello everybody! I’m home!” I announced. The whole atmosphere was eerie and the silence in the house was loud.

Where is everybody?

I walked briskly to my children’s room but they were not there. Their school bags and lunch boxes littered the whole floor.

“Jedidiah!” I called out, walking towards our bedroom. “Jemimah!” I called out again but there was no answer.

Opening the door to our room, nobody was in there. The only sound I could hear was from the TV.

I removed my blazer and dumped it in the laundry basket.

“Honey!” I called out as I checked the bathroom and even the closets!

When I couldn’t find them, I jumped out of the room to go search the other rooms in the house. I was about climbing the stairs to the penthouse when I heard a shrill cry.

From the visitor’s room!

Jeddy?

I ran as fast as my legs could carry me to the entrance of the room. Opening the door suddenly, I found my husband seated in one of the chairs, looking lost. Jeddy was in another chair, sobbing quietly. Jemmy laid on the bed, motionlessly and Bode’s aunt was doing something in her closet.

“What is happening here?” I asked to announce my presence. Jeddy ran to my side and hugged me tightly, weeping as she did.

“Mummy, is Jemmy going to die?” She asked and my hair stood straight as my eyes like laser shot at the bed. I ran to the bed and touched my baby. She was almost lifeless.

“What is happening here?” I screamed as I pulled my gasping baby into my arms.

“Woman, just shut up and let’s concentrate on what we have to do. We have been coping before you came, noisemaker!” Bode said and I frowned angrily at him.

“What have you done to my daughter?”

“She will be fine” Bode’s aunt said as she walked close to my side with a black cup, obviously containing something hot as the steam ascended out the cup. “When she drinks this thing now, she will be fine” She said and my eyes widened.

“Drink what?” I asked suddenly. “What is in this cup?”

“It is herbs. It is just herbal tea. When she takes it, she will be fine” Bode said. I jumped up quickly, trying to lift Jemmy out of the bed.

“My daughter is drinking no herbal tea!” I said firmly. “What have you people done to my ever-vibrant baby girl? What?” I asked as tears laced my eyes.

Jemmy was very hot- hotter than the hottest pressing iron!

She had turned pale- almost white.

And then, she was bleeding from her nose!

And from her ears!

“Jessssuuuuuuuuus!” I screamed loudly.

“Mummmmy!” Jeddy cried too.

“Leave this girl alone, let me treat her” Bode’s aunt said, bringing the cup over. I looked her in the face and smiled ruefully, gently lifting my baby across my shoulder.

“Mama, are you a medical doctor?”

“I am more than a qualified doctor” She said, handing the cup over to me. “Give her to drink now!” She said authoritatively.

“In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I refuse to collect this cup from you and give it to my daughter” I said and started moving to the door.

“What is wrong with you?” Bode’s voice stopped me halfway. “Why are you always ‘overspiritualizing’ things? What is your problem?” He raged on.

“You, Bode are my problem! A girl, our daughter is in such an emergency situation like this and you can still be allowing a woman who...” I stopped in my track as I looked at the floor.

Drops of blood from my baby's nose and ears filled the floor.

“Oluwa gba mi oooo (Lord, save me!)” I screamed as I tried to open the door.

“If you dare take my daughter out of this house, you will pay dearly for it” Bode roared suddenly.

“Bode, do you know what you are doing?” I asked, my chest tightening.

“Question me na! Call me names!” He said and I shook my head.

“Bode, what is happening here? Bode, see me, I am your wife. What is making you to treat me like...” I cried, sincerely desiring his fatherly and loving care at the crucial moment.

“Who are you? Tell me, who are you?” He asked, irritatingly. “You asked me to see you? Who the hell are you?” He asked again and I shook my head in sorrow. “When I see you, I see filth!”

“Whaaat!” I exclaimed, my heart shattering into pieces.

“What did I see in you that even made me marry you? What?” He asked, looking at me with so much disgust in his eyes. My brain went on a break and my vision blurred.

“Bode, you love me! I am your wife! The Lord gave me to you!” I still managed to say.

“Gibberish! That is what you are saying!” He said, so much hate in his eyes.

“Bode, I do not understand what is going on here.” I started, a newer confidence falling upon me. “But on a norm, if any of us is sick or sorrowful or worried, the first thing you would do is pray. What happened to that authority, my husband? What has happened to...”

“How dare you challenge my authority in this house!” He screamed suddenly as if I had touched the most painful part of his sore.

“My consolation is that, I will get my husband back!” I said and shot a look at the woman seated on the bed. She gave me a wry smile, her cup of herbal tea still in her hands.

“You have lost me!” Bode said. “You have lost me, since” He said.

“Never! I cannot lose you! You are mine! None can take you from my hand” I said with authority, my spirit really charged. Bode burst out laughing falling into the chair as he did.

“This girl can like to feel herself!” He laughed on. His aunt joined him.

“Orisirisi! (Wonders shall never end!)” She exclaimed. “Just go. Take your daughter with you and go. Go anywhere you want to go” Bode’s aunt said and I smiled.

“Mama, I will overcome!”

“Ah ah, are you in a battle?”

“Yes ma. Since you entered into this house, things have not been...”

“Ah, so I am the witch now?” She asked and clapped her hands together. “This lady is fearless!”

“Afefetife mama, a tir’idiadiye (Nothing is in the secret anymore mama) That is why I am not fearless. My confidence is in Christ. Jesus who has been placed far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name...”

“Who are you chanting incantation for now?” She cut in and I smiled.

“That is what I have mama. If I cannot use the Word God, what then can I...” I was saying when she raised her nose at me.

“Life has gone out of the child you are holding, Mrs. Principality” She said and my eyes widened. I had forgotten that I was caring a child. Bode sat up.

“Lailai! (Never!) See, arabinrin (Woman) I am warning you now! My daughter must not die o” He screamed, raising his hands at me.

Panicking, I touched the side of Jemmy’s neck and noticed there was still a weak pulse. I opened the door quickly and started running out of the room, Jeddy following me closely.

“Mr. James! Mr. James!” I called out, crying as I ran out of the house. After driving me into our compound, I had asked him to please still stay behind praying for us in case of anything. So, I was hoping and praying that he hadn’t left.

“Mr. James!” I shouted as I opened the front door.

“If anything happens to my daughter, I will kill you with my bare hands o. I am saying my own now o!” Bode shouted after me but I

wasn't going to allow my daughter drink herbal tea that I knew nothing about, especially after my mother-in-law's instructions.

As I approached the garage, I saw Mr. James praying, sweating profusely.

"Mr James, we need to go to the hospital immediately" I announced and he quickly jumped to my side, helped to place my daughter in the car and entered into the driver's seat. Jeddy and I found our ways into the car too.

"Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!" Mr. James muttered as we journeyed to the hospital.

"Jeddy, what happened? What happened?" I cried, holding my baby's hands and looking into her pretty teary eyes.

"It was Jemmy that poured that mama's powder away." She said in her babyish voice.

“Where did she keep her powder that Jemmy’s hands were able to reach there?”

“On the dining table. It was black powder so Jemmy thought that it was the charcoal we were playing with yesterday”

“Black powder?” Mr. James and I exclaimed together.

“Yes.” Jeddy nodded. “Jemmy threw it away so that it will not stain the white sofas”

“So, what happened?” I asked, anxiously.

“That mama was angry when she saw Jemmy’s black hands”

“Okay?”

“And she carried that your white shoe...”

“The one with the heel?”

“Yes”

“Ah! To do what?”

“To beat Jemmy on her head.” She recounted and my heart stopped beating at once.

“Whaat!” Mr. James and I exclaimed. Jeddy burst out crying.

“Jemmy fell down and started crying. ‘Jesus, mummy.’ That was what she was saying. And blood started coming out of her nose and her ear” She cried the more.

“God, just have mercy on us! I don’t even know what to do now. Just have mercy Lord” I cried bitterly.

Jemmy’s hands had become cold as ice, stiff and scaly.

“Who is the woman? Your mother-in-law?” Mr. James and I shook my head.

“My mother-in-law? Never!” I said and suddenly remembered that I was supposed to inform her of the latest development. “Thank you for reminding me. Please lend me your phone sir” I said and he handed it over to me.

I dialed her number.

“Mummy, where are you?”

“I have reached Bariga. What happened?”

“We are on our way to the hospital o” I cried.

“What is the matter?” She asked, sounding very shocked. I explained quickly to her and she asked me to place the phone on

Jemmy's ears. I did. She started to pray. She prayed and spoke in tongues. She wept and quoted the scriptures.

As if the prayer was a poison, Jemmy suddenly coughed out very thick, clotted blood. She started gasping for breath as she gripped my hand weakly. I flung the phone away and started crying.

“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!” I screamed.

“Hello, hello Lara” Mummy called out from the phone.

“Mummy, I am losing her already. Mummmmyyyy! Mummy!” I wept as I pulled at the headrest of the seat.

“Never!” She exclaimed. “Scream it into her ears. You are her mother. Use that authority and the one you have in the Name of Jesus to scream at death. We are not losing Jemimah!”

“Amen!” I shouted vehemently, losing my voice. “Jemmy, I am not losing you! I am not releasing you to death in the Power that is in the Name of Jesus!”

“I will soon be there. You are going to your hospital at Lekki, right?” She asked and I nodded as if she could see me.

“Yes ma” Mr. James replied on my behalf. My mother-in-law sighed.

“This is where we need the father’s authority. Ah! But where is Bode now? Bode, where are you now? Ah! Let me call him” Mummy exclaimed hopelessly, hissed regrettably and dropped the call.

“We are now at the hospital” Mr. James announced as he sped to the front of the reception.

I ran like a mad woman after the stretcher wheeling my daughter to the theatre, tears strolling down my face like a fountain.

Holding my chest firmly with one hand, I held onto the door knob leading to the emergency theatre as the realization that I might get a lifeless Jemmy in few minutes dawned on me.

Noooooooooooo!

I fell to the ground, beating my laps as fear crippled my bones.

CHAPTER 5

BODE'S FATHER

Looking into my wife's face, all I saw was raw, fiery anger!

She looked like she wanted to see Bode quickly to deposit some slaps in his face.

"Honey" I called out, picking her hand.

"Sir?" She answered, trying really hard to act like she was at peace.

"All will be well." I assured and she smiled, nodding like she didn't believe in my 'wellness' talk. The day before, she had called me as I was supervising a work at a client's site, saying that she needed to go to Lagos to quench the fire in Bode's family. With the way she sounded, I was scared that instead of actually 'quenching' the fire, my wife would sentimentally make the fire blow out of proportion.

I told her to go but I was at the airport some hours later on board another plane to Lagos. Therefore, when she called to inform me that she had reached Lagos and was in a holdup at CMS, I told her I had just left Ikeja. She was so shocked.

“Must you always follow me around, honey?” She had joked, chuckling.

“Where the snail goes, the shell follows, my dear.” I had replied her. “Let’s go quench the fire together” I said with a finality and she heaved a sigh of relief, whispering silently but excitedly ‘Thank you, my husband’.

We met at the hospital and seeing the deplorable state of Jemmy, our granddaughter and the fact that she had not come out of coma, my wife was inconsolable!

She was even madder when she learnt that Bode and his aunt had not paid a visit to the hospital since the ‘accident’.

Looking at the way my wife had balled out of the hospital, heading for Bode’s house, I knew I had to intervene. We ordered an Uber

car and soon it was on the way to Bode's house- so my wife thought but I had manipulated the address while ordering for the car.

When we arrived in front of a hotel, therefore, she was shocked. As she began to question the driver, I smiled at her and pulled her out of the car and explained to her that it was too late to go and 'quench' the fire. She reluctantly followed me to the hotel room, fuming all night.

"Let us pray for them, my darling. That will help a great deal" I had told her and as we prayed, she wept. She told God everything, more like dumping a bag full of complaints on the shoulder of God. I saw everything, so I pulled her into a warm embrace and prayed for her. She needed to be calm and I hoped that by morning, she would have peace all over her spirit.

It seemed my prayers were partly answered because by the next morning, she was wearing a different, brighter glow than the day before. Though what I saw was not a full expression of peace, I knew she was good to go.

We knocked at the door of the Jones' house.

“Come in” We heard him say from inside, so we turned the door knob and entered. I held my wife's hand so that my tight grip would be an ‘alert’ whenever she is blown off the cover.

Bode and Alake, his aunt were sitting at the dining table, eating and chatting, smiling at the same time. I turned to look at my shocked wife's face and smiled, reassuringly.

I was shocked to find them ‘feasting’ too but I was determined to suppress my feelings all through my stay at their house- especially for my wife's sake.

“Dad! Mum!” Bode exclaimed, suddenly standing up and walking briskly to our side.

“Unbelievable!” He exclaimed, hugging me tightly and moving to his coldly stiff mother to do the same. She stifled a laughter.

“We decided to pay a visit, you know” I said and he smiled, rubbing his palms together.

“Wow! This is totally shocking!” He said, chewing the residue of whatever he was eating earlier.

“Is that not Alake?” My wife announced when Alake wouldn’t greet us, a forced smile on her face. Alake stood up and smiled.

“I didn’t know you will still recognize me, cousin” She said, walking towards us. She genuflected and greeted us after which we moved to the sitting room to wait for them while they finished up their meal.

“This boy can still eat?” My wife whispered and I smiled, squeezing her hand softly. She sighed.

“Wow! It is now today that my family is not around that you are here, mummy and daddy” Bode said as he sat in one of the sofa, picking his teeth with a tiny floss.

“Where are they? You mean Lara, Jenny and Jemmy are not around?” My wife asked, feigning ignorance.

“No they are not o. Jemmy fell down yesterday and had to be rushed to the hospital. They are with her, now” He said and my wife frowned, sitting up straight, ready to talk. I stepped in.

“Fell down? Where? How? Hope it is not serious.” I asked and he waved his hands.

“It’s not serious, dad. She will be fine” He said and my wife’s jaw dropped as mine did too.

“So, you have not gone to visit her?” She asked and he shook his head.

“No, I will go later in the evening or tomorrow morning”

“Ehn ehn! Bode!” My wife exclaimed. “And what of you, Alake? Have you visited the hospital?”

“I will go in the evening, jare” She said, yawning. “I am expecting a visitor” She said and I frowned.

“A visitor?” My wife asked and Alake nodded. “Who is this visito...” My wife was asking when Bode raised his hands, yawning loudly. After that, he stretched noisily, as if to distract everyone from the question my wife had asked.

“So, dad, to what do we owe this visit?” Bode asked and I smiled.

“We have to write you a mail, informing you of our visit, right?” My wife asked, her voice containing some real ‘action’. Bode frowned.

“That is not it” He said and paused. “Mum, why are you sounding as if you are here to fight me?” He said like a kid and I gave my wife a knowing look.

“Sorry...Ermmm...it’s just that I am not happy that your family is not around you because of a predicament and you are here sitting down in peace, dining and laughing” She said.

“Chai! Auntie Kemi, you have not changed!” Alake said, stepping into the conversation. “What is the predicament in this case now? Children will always fall down and...”

“Alake, but what are you doing here?” My wife asked suddenly, her face growing really long. Alake looked shocked.

“Erm...You know, my daughter is...” She was saying when Bode stepped in to rescue her.

“Her daughter in the US gave birth and she wants to apply for visa to.,.” He was explaining calmly when my wife cut in again, a little, forced smile on her face.

“Is your daughter Titi no longer living in Lagos?” She asked.

“She is” Alake replied, frowning slightly.

“At Victoria Island, right?”

“Yes.”

“I think her place is closer to the embassy, why didn’t you stay with her? Is this place not too far for you? We are almost entering Epe o”

“No it’s not too far. I miss Bode, that is why I am here” She said and I frowned.

“You must really love Bode” I said sarcastically and she smiled, nodding. “When last did you even see him?” I asked and she avoided my face. “Have you seen him since the incidence?” I asked again, intentionally stepping on her conscience.

“No” She replied.

“How can you then miss someone you haven’t seen since he was four years? This guy is now thirty-two fa” I said again.

“What incidence?” Bode asked and my wife eyed him briefly.

“Asake, can you excuse us? We want to discuss with our son” My wife said and Asake shrugged.

“I can’t leave o. I thought I told you I am expecting a visitor” She said firmly and my wife started laughing.

“When your visitor comes, we will let you know. For now, excuse us!” I asked authoritatively on behalf of my sarcastic laughing wife.

“But daddy and mummy, she is also your family member na. Why are you trying to chase her away from...” Bode was saying when my wife removed a slipper from her leg and aimed it at his head. Thank God he dodged it.

“Mum, what is that for?” He asked, obviously bewildered.

“We said we want a personal time with you, don’t we know what we are talking about?” My wife asked angrily.

“Nonetheless honey, this is a family man, not your once, little baby boy, Bode” I said, trying to ease the tension in the room.

“Daddy, please tell her” He said sharply too like a small innocent boy who is trying to be stubborn.

“Sorry, oya, help me throw my slippers. Pele (Sorry)” My wife said, reluctantly. Bode brought the slippers to her leg and she slipped her beautiful foot in it.

“So, Asake...” I was saying when she jumped up suddenly.

“I am leaving already, hmmm, don’t kill me with your boring family matters” Asake said, sighed and started moving out of the sitting room. My wife looked at her disgustingly as she left. When she was out of view, my wife went to the TV, increased the volume so it was blaring loudly and resumed back at her seat.

“What is that for?” I asked and she smiled.

“The walls have ears. But with this noise, even the walls will have to struggle to hear what we have to say” She said and I shook my head, laughing so loudly.

Bode looked so lost.

“What is the matter?” He asked and my wife cleared her throat.

“Bode, why have you not gone to see your child at the hospital?” She asked.

“Nothing” He said, blankly,

“I am highly disappointed in you Bode. If someone had told me that you will become a wife beater, a bad father and all, I would have argued it out” She started and I sighed, shaking my head. My wife was starting on a wrong note.

“Mum, why are you giving me all these bad qualities? Did that godforsaken girl say anything about me to you?” He asked and I was lost for a while.

“Who is the godforsaken girl, if I may ask?” I said and he stuttered for a while.

“Lara of course!” He said eventually and I shook my head.

“How can you call your...” I was saying when my wife stood up.

“What is the definition of a godforsaken person, Mr. Bode?” She asked, walking close to him, anger on her face. “Your wife and your children, all that you have are in the hospital and you are here playing love with your aunt. The aunt that you know nothing about, Bode. What is your...” She raised her voice when Bode stood up at once, looking very fiercely into her face.

“You cannot, I repeat, you cannot come into my own house and command things, mum!” He shouted, wrapping his fists into balls. My wife looked really scared at that. The anger in her face metamorphosed into fear. I saw as her jaws dropped and she began to hit Bode’s chest softly.

“I love you my son. I love you” She began to weep. I covered my face with my right hand, confused. I didn’t know what exactly to do next. “I want your family to be even sweeter than my own

family but I am not happy that..." She kept saying when Bode pushed her hands off his chest. He sat down and placed his two legs on the table.

"You shouldn't just hear something from Lara and judge the whole thing by her words. She is simply a foolish girl and I am done with her for good. Period" He said and I blinked hard, not believing my ears.

"You are done with your wife?" I asked.

"I am done, period!" He shouted and I sighed deeply. My wife fell against him suddenly, beating his laps.

"I didn't raise you this way, Bode?" She wept. "How can you say that you are done with Lara? The Lara that you still surprised with a car last month; the Lara that you still told me about last week, saying she is a wonderful wife to you..."

"That was last week. Things changed this week when she didn't want to see my family member." He said firmly and my wife wailed.

“Something is wrong with my son ooo, ehn! Bode, have you even met this woman before? How did you know that she is a family member?”

“I have heard you talk about Asake many times. I met her on Facebook recently and she sent me an old picture where she was carrying me at one year old”

“And you instantly wanted to connect with her without even informing me?” My wife asked, going all emotional.

“She said it should be a surprise” He said and my wife started to beat her thighs. When I realized that Bode was out of context, I knew it was not something that should be handled slightly, so I pulled my wife out of the sitting room, dragging her outside to calm her down. She was sweating profusely, tears pouring out of her eyes.

“Honey, you can see that there are some manipulations somewhere. You can see that Bode is under an influence.”

“I can see oooo” She wailed. I patted her shoulder.

“Honey, that influence is obviously not an influence from God but from the devil. It is like alcohol, but even higher. Therefore, you cannot fight that devilish influence with the tool of the devil. Anger, fear, agitations, sadness and all you are expressing now are tools from your flesh instead of from your spirit. It will only worsen situations.” I said and watched her weep for a while.

“I am sorry. I guess I actually became too emotional”

“You will do me a favor of going to the hospital now. Go and meet Lara and start to pray. The head of their family is sick and of course, when the head is sick, the body will be not be safe. We must not lose Jemimah and we can’t stop life from going out of her but whining and complaining. We have to swing into the action of serious prayers.”

“Hmmmmmm. But I can’t leave you alone with them in this house. That is like one over three.” She said, fearfully and I started laughing.

“Honey, they that are with me are more than they that are with them. Moreso, you people will be praying for me from the hospital too, right?” I asked and she sighed.

After much reluctance, she agreed and we started moving to the gate as I looked for an available Uber car online for her.

We stayed in front of the gate, waiting for the car to arrive when a taxi stopped in front of the house.

A lady, indecently dressed with a very small top-like gown and a bum shorts with different colours on her face and a waist-long blonde hair on her head jumped down, chewing gum like a call girl.

As she approached the gate, I stopped her.

“Where are you going to?” I asked.

“Excuse me, who are you?” She asked and my wife faced her.

“Who are you? What are you doing in our son’s house?” She asked and the lady smiled shortly, bowing slightly.

“Wow! Mother and father!” She bowed again. “Forgive me. I am a friend to Bode. I am actually here to see him” She said.

“Like this?” My wife asking, pointing at her from head to toe. The lady smiled.

“Hey Niyi!” She called at the gateman. Niyi came out. “Please tell popcy and momcy that I am being expected by Bode” She said and Niyi replied in the affirmative.

My wife looked into my face as the lady bounced inside, shutting the gate behind her.

“Darling, who is that girl? What is she doing in our son’s house? Where did Bode meet that kind of...” She was asking when the Uber car that was to pick her up stopped in front of the house.

I ushered her into the car, despite all her struggles.

“I can’t leave you alone here with these human beings. I am so scared” She started crying.

“I will be fine, honey. All will be well. Go and pray for us” I said with a finality, waved at the driver and he drove off.

I sighed immediately the car was out of sight and turned to look at my son’s house.

“Oh God! Why am I so scared? Why is the situation this scary, Lord?” I muttered.

“Have mercy and take over!” I said as I entered through the gate.

Take over, Lord!

CHAPTER 6

BODE'S MOTHER

I looked into Lara's face but I couldn't decipher what was on her mind.

She looked so sad and far away.

She sighed intermittently, picked up her daughter's weak, almost lifeless hands and sighed again. She hadn't even eaten! No matter what I said to convince her to eat, she wouldn't bulge.

By the time I got to the General Hospital, I learnt they had been referred to an Indian Hospital in Victoria Island after an x-ray had detected a big issue in Jemmy's skull. I had to go down to the hospital.

As soon as the Chief consultant at the Indian Hospital saw the report from the General Hospital, he immediately ordered for a CT scan to be done. He afterwards took it to a medical conference so it would be interpreted. He said he would be joining us after the conference to know the next step to take.

That made her so tensed and she wouldn't even look into my face no matter how hard I tried.

She jumped up immediately the door creaked. The doctor entered with two nurses behind him. He held a white file in his right hand.

"Are you sure it was simply a shoe that was used to hit Jemmy's head?" He asked and Lara nodded. The doctor shook his head. "Why is the effect that deep then? Like a whole mortal was used against her head"

"Ah, doctor!" Lara exclaimed, her eyes widening. She pulled her gown in between her legs and started some uneasy dancing on a spot. "What are we going to do, now?"

"We will need the intervention of a traumatic brain injury specialist to see Jemmy." He said and I jumped up at once, holding my chest in utmost shock. "If you agree and sign this form, we will send the CT scan result to him so we can know what to do"

“But doctor, talk to me. I am a medical doctor too. What exactly is wrong?” I asked and he smiled.

“Well, for now, she will need an intracranial pressure monitoring”

“What! Is her brain swollen?”

“Obviously! That is what the CT Scan says” He replied.

“Jesuuuuuus!” Lara screamed, stamping her legs against the floor.

“Please sign this form so we can employ the help of the specialist.” He said and handed the form over to her. “It is going to be very costly but it is necessary”

“3 million naira?” Lara asked and the doctor nodded. “No problem. I will sign it right away” She said but I collected the form from her and smiled at the doctor.

“We will get back to you sir, as soon as we have consulted with other members of our family” I said and he nodded, smiling too.

“Be fast about it because obviously, if the brain is too pressured, there can be a damage to it” He said and I nodded. “Here is another letter you need to help me fill, please” He said and handed a typed letter to me. “I reported the assault to the police already” He said and my eyes widened.

“What!”

“Yeah! It will be a criminal offense to administer treatment to an assaulted person, especially kids without making the proper reports” He explained. Lara walked up to me and collected the form.

“Give me your pen, doctor” She said and the doctor extended a pen to her.

“Asake... what is her surname, mummy?” She asked and I stood there, glued to a spot.

“My daughter, we have to take this issu...” I was explaining when she faced me squarely.

“When this same woman poisoned your son years back, mum, didn’t your report to the police?” She asked and I nodded. “This is me being a mother too! This is me being the only parent Jemmy has! We need to stop this woman from perpetrating evil” She said and I nodded, smiling shortly and ruefully.

“Adeniran is her surname” I said and she quickly filled the name on the letter, signed and handed it over to the doctor.

“Thank you. Kindly inform me as soon as you are ready for the specialist” He said and I nodded. “And be fast!” He added.

He moved to Jemmy’s bed, adjusted the oxygen cap on her nose, check the IV flow, pecked Jemmy’s forehead and started walking out of the room.

As soon as he had left with the two nurses, Lara ran to my side.

“Mummy, why didn’t you allow me sign the form? I need to do the needf...” She was saying when I smiled.

“One, we have to inform your husband, no matter how sick he is. Two, we shouldn’t be too hasty when we have not even prayed about this issue” I said and she stood up, walked to the wall beside us and started hitting it severally like a boxer. She kept blowing, hitting and punching until her knuckles were bleeding.

I was shocked!

I was more shocked when she started walking to me with her two hands bleeding. She had a sad smile on her face as she looked me in the eyes with tears.

“You see how my hands are bleeding, mummy?” She asked and started laughing in a very sad way. She would laugh and cry and laugh and cry again. I nodded, quite scared. “That is how I will destroy the whole of Bode’s body if anything happens to my daughter” She said as tears strolled down her face. She snatched the form from my hand, signed it and stamped it with her two blood-stained hands.

“I want to go and submit this to the doctor as a deed of agreement.” She said and started moving to the door. I ran after her and knelt before her.

“Lara, please, let us...” I was saying when she pecked my forehead, staining it with tears and sweat from her hot, dripping body.

“This is how I will kiss your forehead the day I get my daughter back hale and hearty” She said, smiling. “But it would be a goodbye kiss because I would be done with your son, finally by then!” She said with a finality, went out of the ward and banged the door behind her.

I held my chest in shock.

“Oh Lord, Jesus! Please intervene! Please Father, take charge of everything! Lord, please take charge of everything” I cried as I walked to Jemmy’s side. I picked my Bible from my bag, knelt beside her bed and picked her hand.

I wanted to pray but seeing her weak face and her shut eyes, I could only weep!

BODE’S DAD

“My son, I really love your house. You are doing a very good job taking care of your family” I said as Bode drove us back home. He smiled and looked into my face.

“But my wife would never see that o, daddy. I am taking a very good care of her but she’s an ingrate!” He replied.

“Why do you say so? She doesn’t thank you?” I asked and he shook his head.

“She does, actually”

“So, why is she an ingrate?” I asked, gently.

“Why wouldn’t she want my family member in our house?” He asked and I smiled.

“But did you inform her before bringing the woman home?”

“No, I didn’t”

“Why? She doesn’t inform you when she wants to bring her own people around?”

“She does, I do too actually but on this case, I decided to keep it from everybody. I wanted it to be a surprise, reuniting with my long-lost aunt” He said and I smiled.

“Your aunt told you to do it that way? To keep it from us all?”

“Yes. And my wife also loves surprises, so I agreed but if you see the way she attacked me the day she saw Mama, ah, she looked like a fierce lion” He said and I started laughing.

“Bode, my son!” I hailed him.

“Daddy, daddy!” He hailed too. I turned to look at the back seat where Jeddy lay, sleeping peacefully.

I had entered the house and was almost asking the young indecently dressed lady who had entered Bode’s house where she was from when my wife’s call came in. She asked me to come over to the hospital to pick Jeddy up as Jemmy had been transferred to another hospital.

I was about going to do the bidding when the Holy Spirit instructed me to ask Bode to tag along. He refused at first but after a while, he obliged, promising his ‘visitor’ that he would be back soon.

Immediately I got to the car, I started to fill the whole place with the Blood of Jesus. I prayed silently as we joked and drove to the hospital. As soon as we had picked Jeddy up and I realized that she was asleep, I knew it was time to fire up my questions.

“But has she done that to any of your family members before?”

“No, dad”

“So, did you ask her why she did so to this aunt?” I asked, still smiling peacefully. He shook his head.

“No I didn’t. I was really furious that she would even question my authority” He said and I nodded.

“You could have asked her, my dear. You see, Lara prays a lot right?”

“A whole lot, dad. She seems like a soldier when she starts praying.” He laughed. “Lara!” He exclaimed and laughed some more. “But I love her for that o. I really do” He added.

“That is it, my dear son. Generally speaking, women are more spiritually sensitive than men. This awareness that something is happening spiritually brings them to pray. That is why, if a man can be humble enough to listen to them as regards some issues before making a final decision, they will never be led astray.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“Yes!” I said and placed my hand prayerfully on his shoulder.

“Hmmm...well, I actually do that. I listen to her. I hear what she has to say before making decisions but on this my aunt’s case, I wasn’t just ready to...”

“Why?” I asked. “Have you thought about it? Why?” I asked and I shook his head.

“No, I don’t even know. We just must have a deep connection, that’s all” He said and I shook my head.

“Do you know what Proverbs 16:28 says? ‘It is honesty and love that build a marriage, not the recommendations of outsiders...and a gossip separates close friends’”

“Oh wow!” He exclaimed.

“Bose has told you so much about your marriage, right?”

“Yes, dad”

“That your wife is rude and spoilt and too proud?” I asked and he looked into my eyes, shocked.

“How do you know that, dad?” He asked and I smiled.

“That she is barren because she has just two kids for you?” I asked and he brought the car to a halt suddenly, looking into my calm face with a lot of shock and questions on his face.

“Yes, dad! She said that!” He exclaimed. I smiled.

“That you need a new wife to give you more children and teach Lara how to be submissive” I added and he scratched at his head suddenly.

“Yes, dad! You are so correct! But, how do you know that?”

“She did the same thing to me when my marriage was five and you were four”

“What? Did what? Told you that mum is proud and spoilt and barren and that you need a new wife to give you children and teach mum a lesson?”

“Yes, my son!”

“But why would she do that? Mum is her cousin!”

“My son!” I smiled, really grateful to God that the Holy Spirit was having serious control over the conversation. “She even poisoned you and was sent to prison for ten years for that” I concluded and sweat broke out on his face.

“It is a lie! Dad, that is a lie!” He exclaimed, holding my knee. “But how am I not able to discern that? Why did I agree to...”

“Son, it is hypnosis! It’s not normal, it’s fetish. Once one is a target for these wicked influences and one is careless, immediately the enemy fires some hypnotic arrows at one, it would work!”

“Wow! How?”

“Did you eat anything from her?”

“Yes dad. She brought vegetables from home as she was com...”

“That is one of the ways they attack. One must watch exactly what one eats. You must sanctify it with the Blood of Jesus! And you must be on guard spiritually every time!”

“Oh my God! So, dad, you were hypnotized too?”

“No, she came with the hypnosis on her tongue to tell me negative things about my wife but I was spiritually alert so I spoke against her with the Word of God on my own tongue too.”

“Oh my goodness! And she got me! She got me!”

“Yes, she got you! You who loved Lara like anything! You almost hit her because of your aunt, the aunt you know nothing about!”

“Oh my God!” He broke down into tears. I brought out my phone and played a short WhatsApp video.

“See the video you sent to me last Friday” He collected it, started seeing it and wept louder. “You made that video for your wife, singing a very loving song for her. You loved her...”

“I love her! Oh my! Laraaaaa...” He wept on, holding the phone to his chest.

“Of course, so, now, can you see that fine, we all need close friends in whom we can confide and who confide in us. But if that drives us away from our spouse, we certainly stepped over the line.”

“Oh my!”

“Your beloved Jemmy is in the hospital suffering from a head injury from the impact of the shoe she had used to hit her head. Now, her brain is being monitored so it doesn’t get damaged!” I said and he held my hands suddenly.

“Dad, you said what???”

“I am telling you! Son, until we know that life is war, we won’t know what prayer is for. Prayer involves battle against spiritual

forces in the heavenlies. We are men, so we feel the bulk of prayers should fall on our wife's shoulders. How wrong we are!"

"Oh my God!"

"How do you feel about sending your mother or wife out to do battle while you sit at home?"

"Foolish"

"Yeah! But isn't that what we've been doing when we have looked at prayer as women's work? It's time to take the place of the warrior, alongside the women, as we do battle together in the Lord's strength and victory as a people of prayer."

"Hmmm...Oh Lord, God!" He broke down further into tears.

"The Lord expects Christian men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes. And the truth is, spiritual leaders pray! If a man is not praying, he is not a spiritual leader. Prayerless men have abdicated their place of spiritual authority and left their families open to attack."

"Oh gracious Father! He raised his hands, shaking with obvious pain and sadness.

“Couples that pray together are forging strong bonds that will not easily break.”

“Hmmm! Hmmm!” He sighed over and over again.

Just as he wept on, Jeddy screamed at once.

“No dad, don’t go!” She screamed, throwing her legs and hands up as she did.

“See the dogs, don’t go!” She screamed again, her eyes firmly shut with tears strolling down her face.

Bode turned to look into my face with fear written all over his face. I sighed as I laid my hands on her head, praying as I did. She became calm.

“Dad, am I safe? I’m scared! Can you pray for me too?” He asked, shivering like a lost puppy that had just been rescued from a pool.

CHAPTER 7

BODE

“Just look at what you have done to your wife. See her over there! Just look at her” My mum cried as I asked her about the whereabouts of my wife. When I looked at where she was pointing at, my heart was shattered!

My own wife, Lara was seated on a staircase not too far from the ward, looking so lean. Her head was buried between her laps and her long, beautiful hair was unkempt.

I couldn’t wait to console my mum since her own husband was beside her, holding and petting her. I walked briskly towards the staircase and slowed down as soon as I almost reached her. I walked sadly towards her, unsure of exactly what to say to her.

“Lara” I called out and she stretched her folded legs first and then raised her head, slowly as if, if she did it any faster, the neck would break off.

When our eyes met, my teeth couldn’t control themselves. They gnashed against one another as I fell on my knees before her. Her eyes were bloody! They were swollen and full of dryness! – as if all

the tears inside of them had been mopped away! Her nose too was sore. Her face had grown so lean and long!

My heart ached. I felt like pulling her into a warm embrace. I felt like pecking her forehead and feeling her heart beat against mine but the look on her face scared me! She was so close, yet, she felt so far away! It felt like she had placed a very strong barricade between us that I couldn't cross over.

“Who are you?” Her sudden husky voice came and I blinked hard, almost shedding tears.

“My wife” Was all I could mutter. She looked into my eyes without blinking, tears rushing to her eyes.

“Your mum didn't tell you?” She asked and I frowned slightly and shook my head afterwards. “I am done with you.” She said and my eyes widened. “I am ending this marriage!” She explained in clear terms but I still didn't understand.

“Lara, can you speak in a language that I understand?” I asked, my heart swelling up within me like the waves of a sea. She stood up but she staggered like a drunk man, her hands dangling. I stood up quickly to assist her but she pushed me away!

I landed on the wall opposite us, holding a side of my head in pain. Despite looking so weak and powerless, I was so shocked to see her exerting so much strength on me.

“Do not touch me!” She screamed fiercely. After a short moment of silence, she started staggering towards me, breathing so fast, yet so weak. “You, I hate you! You are very bad! I will never, ever, I mean, never have anything, just anything to do with you” She said, her voice so weepy.

“Lara, I am so sorry. I was not myself when all these things...” I was saying when she started shaking herself violently. After a while, she stopped and then held her head in obvious pain, panting heavily.

“Don’t you ever say sorry to me! I hate you!” She said very pitifully again. She said it like she was very disappointed in me, not like she really hated me. She seemed so lonely and weak and angry.

“Lara, I love you!” I said and she shook her head.

“I really thought you did! How wrong I was!” She said and started turning away, walking so weakly.

“Lord, have mercy on me” I muttered as I walked behind her very silently. She turned back suddenly.

“Do not follow me! If you do, I will kill myself! I will break your bones and then kill myself” She said and staggered on. I wanted to stop to think about what to do when I suddenly felt the urge in me. The love I had for Lara from the beginning swept me off my feet. I ran after her and hugged her tightly from behind, weeping as I did. She struggled but I couldn’t let her go.

“I am sorry. I am deeply sorry my darling wife. I am sorry.” I wept on and on. She kept struggling, screaming ‘Leave me!’ but I just knew it was a camouflage. I knew she was hurt and needed to be reassured of my love. I knew I had hurt her trust. I knew I had been a very bad husband and protector. I just couldn’t leave her.

“I was careless! I wasn’t watchful! I allowed the devil to find a way in our house. I am so sorry.” I wept, shaking vehemently as I held onto her still. “I forgot that you are my wife. I forgot how much you prayed for me. I forgot how much you saw ahead what I couldn’t even see at all! I allowed a hole in our house and deadly foxes rushed inside to attack us!” I wept on as the understanding of what had happened dawned on me. At that point, she was no

longer struggling with me. She had started weeping from her heart.

“I allowed you to be heartbroken! I allowed my darling daughter to be attacked right before my eyes, under my own roof! I allowed Jeddy to see all these negatives. I was supposed to be a husband, a father, a protector, a head of my family but I left the gate open!” I cried and she burst out crying at that. She wept so much that when she started coughing, it felt like her chest would be ripped out.

I pecked her neck over and over again, staining it with my warm tears.

“I am back for good! I want to be a good husband to you again. I want us to fast and pray together ag. I want us to make decisions together. I want us to love and express our love again. I want us to jump at each other in bed and whisper in each other’s ears...” I said, taking my mouth to her ears. I bit the right lobe. She shivered, chuckled and wept again.

“That tickles” She said and I smiled.

“I want us to fight for Jemmy’s life in prayers. I want us to push the evil visitor out of our home. I want us to assume our place in

Christ Jesus again!” I said and she turned to face me. She sobbed as she looked into my face. Afterwards, she started hitting my chest softly, sobbing as she did.

“I don’t want to forgive you! I don’t!” She cried.

“I know. I know I don’t deserve to be...” I was saying when she pecked my forehead.

“Why do I love you this much? Why can’t I even control my heart for once? How can my many days anger suddenly melt away like this? What is this love?” She asked again and I sighed, smiling heartily.

“You know I love you more than you love me.” I said and she started hitting my shoulders, raising her nose as she did.

“Of course, you do!” She said sarcastically. “My love is a million times greater than yours. That has been proven, time and time again” She argued.

“Well, let’s start our marriage all over to prove that. Deal?” I asked and she smiled, eyeing me.

“Leave me alone!” She said and I smiled.

“Good girl!” I said, pecking her lips softly. She sighed very deeply afterwards.

“Marriage is indeed a union of two forgivers! I can’t believe I just gave in to you. Oh my!” She said and I smiled, holding her hand.

“Thank you so much for forgiving me.” I said “Right now, I need you to come with me to Jemmy’s ward so we can command calmness into her body as her parents in cooperation. Afterwards, you will have a warm bath, eat, study the Word of God and relax. Everything you need to eat, drink, wear, use and all, I have dropped in the ward”

“Wow!” She exclaimed, looking all happy. “Thank so much my darling. Thanks. I suddenly feel so calm! I suddenly feel like there is a cover over me. I suddenly feel protected. Thanks, my husband” She said so lovingly.

BODE

We were about driving into our compound, when Dad's phone rang. He picked it and placed it on loud speaker.

"Hello Honey"

"Hi sir, have you people gotten home?" She asked with some excitement in her voice.

"Yes. But we are yet to drive inside"

"Honey, you won't believe that after Bode's prayers for Jemmy, as soon as you people left this environment, Jemmy's little finger moved" She announced with so much glitters in her voice. My eyes widened as I looked into dad's eyes. He smiled.

"That is what happens, honey. When the head of the husband rises up to rebuke the oppressors, they just must leave. In just few minutes, a praying father and husband would give a total knockout to the powers that had been oppressing his household for a long time. Oh my! Oh my!"

"Hmmmm...I know the place and position that God has put our men but today, I am more awed." Mum said, so glad.

“The Lord will perfect what He has started. It is not just a finger of Jemmy that will move. She will soon be up, bubbling again in the Name of Jesus” Daddy prayed. I whispered a firm ‘Amen’

“Amen o. Lara and I are moving out now to pray” Mum said and I nodded.

“Fantastic!” Dad exclaimed. “You women should remember that your men are out here fighting, so pray for us too” Dad said.

“Sure! Our prayer point for you is that the Holy Ghost Fire should descend upon that house and every occupant in it right now. Let the Fire wash away every evil implantation in the house and let every evil visitor and evil properties be expelled out of that house now in the Name of Jesus!” She said with so much fire in her voice. Dad smiled.

“God bless you, ladies. We move!” Dad said, hung up and faced me.

“Are you ready, son?” He asked and I nodded, stepped on the gas and raced directly to the gate of our compound.

The gateman opened the door and I sped in.

Holding my hand for a while, Dad said a very short fiery prayer, patted me on the shoulder and winked at me to alight from the car.

I knew it was time for battle!

We were about opening the door to the house when the door opened by itself. Asake and the young lady she had recommended to me bounced out, looking so angry.

“Bode, and where have you been?” Asake asked, fuming with anger. She kept walking towards me like she wanted to enter into me.

“What does it matter to you, mama?” I asked and she started laughing loudly.

“You left myself and your wife in the house for a very long time and you are asking for...”

“This is not my wife in Jesus Name!” I shouted, pointing at the young lady. “I am married and I know my wife. I know what...” I was saying when she started moving towards daddy with a very focused eye.

“It is this man, right? This man here is the one that is entering your head and...” He was saying when dad walked towards her, his hands in his pocket.

“Asake, go inside the house, pack your load and go, now!” He said authoritatively.

“Never! This is my own house! I was invited into this house and I will never leave until I am done doing what I want to do!” She said, poking a finger at my dad’s face.

“The Bible says the stranger shall be afraid and they shall with fear run out of their closets! I command all you strangers in this house right now to be roasted! Holy Ghost Fire, descend and destroy every works of the darkness, now!” I prayed with so much gusto.

As the words got out of my mouth, the young lady started itching her body uneasily and started walking very fast out of the compound.

“Sandy, where are you going to?” Asake asked but the lady didn’t answer. She simply kept walking and running at the same time. “Sandy, your bag is in the house” She called after her but she was gone.

“Now Asake, go into the house now, pick your belongings and...” Dad was saying when she rushed at him, pushed him against the fence, breathing heavily.

“You do not tell me what to do and how to do it. I am here to...”

“I do not give room for you to talk, oh woman. The atrocities that you have done in this house is enough. I command you and your belongings to be rooted out of this house by fire now! The Holy Ghost Fire should descend upon you and take away...” I was praying when the gate suddenly opened. Four uniformed men walked towards us, especially towards Asake who was still holding dad to the wall.

The policemen rescued dad from her grip and informed her that she was needed at the station.

“Station for what? Why do I...” She was asking when another policeman picked her two hands and placed them in a cuff.

As she struggled on, the fire alarm in my house suddenly started to blare loudly. I looked into dad’s face questionably.

“Is that fire?” A policeman asked as he walked towards the front door. We followed behind him very smartly. As he opened the front door, thick smoke gushed out like heavy flood, blocking everywhere.

“Whaaaat!” Dad and I exclaimed. I tried to wade in the smoke but it was too thick. Dad tried it too, it was not possible.

I stood afar off and looked at my house being razed down before my very eyes. I couldn’t even guess what the cause of the fire could be.

My dad walked towards me and patted my shoulders. “The firemen will be here soon” He said and I smiled. I didn’t know how

to feel exactly. I didn't know if I should weep or if I should brace up. I felt so calm.

Neighbors had started coming in with various hoses and buckets. The more they tried to put the fire off, the more it increased.

"No, there can't be fire!" Asake screamed suddenly. "There can't be fire oooo" She cried, struggling to be set free.

"Why?" A policeman asked.

"I have so many things in the house that I can't bear to lose. I need to..." She was explaining when I worked towards her.

"Things like what, mama?" I asked her squarely. She had started crying, itching her body like she was having a bad reaction to a drug.

"Let me just go inside and bring them out. Let me go inside and bring them out ooo" She screamed, her face turning red.

“Tell me what they are. Just let me know if...” I intentionally wanted to hear from her. I wanted to know what had been done.

“I will die if those things burn. I will die! Those things must not see fire! Please let me go and bring them out” She screamed again. “My throat oooo. My throat oooo. Water!!” She screamed again. Dad stretched a bottle of water to me which I opened and raised to her mouth.

As soon as the water greeted her tongue, she spat it out.

“Fire! You have fire in your bottle! Why?” She wept, throwing her tongue out for fresh air intermittently. I tried to feel the bottle I was holding and it was very cold! I knew something was fishy and I wanted to get to the roots of the matter.

“Mama, what did you keep in the house?”

“My things. I kept some in your children’s room. Some on your bed. Some in the kitchen. Some in the store. I sprayed it everywhere and it must not see fire! They said I will die if those things see fire!”

“What are the things mama?”

“Seeds?” She said and I looked into dad’s face.

“Seed of what?” I asked but she couldn’t answer me. She kept trying to wriggle out of the police grip, looking at the burning house with her mouth suspended. The policemen started to drag her away like a sack of beans. She wailed aloud as she was being bundled out.

As the firemen drove their big, red water tanker into our compound, I moved to a side of the fence, picked up my phone and tried to call my wife to inform her about the latest. As she picked, all I could hear from afar was ‘Fire! Fire! Fire! Holy Ghost Fire! Burn, Fire of God!’

I looked at dad, placed the phone on speaker and smiled.

“See the main cause of the fire, dad!” I announced, laughing so deeply. I just couldn’t believe it! I knew that so much had gone wrong in my house and all. I had been thinking of how to cleanse the house and restore everything back to how it was. But who on earth would have thought that two ladies, praying in one corner of one hospital miles away would literally set the whole house on fire?

The Holy Ghost Fire!

“Is the house insured?” Dad asked me as we eventually went around the ruins shortly after the firemen had left.

“Yes, it is fully insured” I said, smiling.

“Thank God. I was already worried for you. This is really a very difficult time for you” He said, sighing. I wouldn’t stop smiling.

“But this still feels so surreal to me! Just because a visitor entered our house, my house was taken; my daughter’s health was attacked, one of my cars was destroyed; my marriage was almost destroyed too! Whaaat!”

“Yes! That is the devil for you! He will promise you a thing and take one hundred things from you in return!” Dad said and I nodded.

“Hmmmm...wow!”

“We have different kinds of visitors. Some would come to our house with nothing but will leave with plenty. Some will come and leave as they are. Some people would come and leave us better than they met us. Some would come with very bad intentions and take so many things from us. Each person that comes to visit has a different mission, a different spirit backing him or her, a different aura and touch” He explained on.

“Hmmm”

“That is why my wife and I would always pray that no one will come to our house to inflict pains and afflictions on us! That if the person is planning such visit, the Lord should stop such! Or that even if the person succeeds and comes over, our house should become too hot and not conducive for them. Our house is a habitation of the Presence of the Lord and it should remain so!”

“Hmmm....wow!” I exclaimed as I took pictures of the ruins. “This whole ordeal, rather than break me has even left me very blessed, dad!” I said and he looked into my face. “I have learnt so many lessons in the past few days that I had never known in the past thirty something years of my life!”

“Hmmm...thanks be to God! Being able to see the positive in all negativity is strength, boy! I doff my hat” He said and I started laughing.

“Dad, please stop!” I said, still laughing.

CHAPTER 8

LARA...

“Okay, let us plan towards next month then. I have a whole lot to do this season, plus I have a new baby to nurture.” My husband finally agreed after months of pleading with him to allow us go visit his aunt, Asake who had been released from the prison because of her ill health.

“Which baby? Are you the one feeding him?” I teased and we laughed together.

“Nurturing is not all about feeding, you know?” He said, smiling sheepishly. I raised my nose at me as my baby belched loudly, his eyes shutting up as he fell into the warm arms of sleep.

Few weeks after the Auntie Asake saga, we got to know that I was few weeks pregnant. We were so shocked and happy altogether. We had been looking forward to giving the twins a baby sibling but it had seemed impossible for like two years.

Even though my husband was always saying he didn’t care whatever the sex of the baby was in the first trimester, I could tell he wanted a baby boy. I knew he didn’t want to be ‘the man from

the gods' among three 'ladies'. So, well, God gave him his heart's desire!

The day the scan revealed that it was a boy, he was mad with joy! He almost pecked the radiologist who had presented the result to us out of joy!

The baby served as a bridge of reconciliation between us both. He wouldn't let me do anything! He got me almost everything I needed before I asked. He would pray for me. He would tickle me till I rolled over.

After such storm, especially the battle for Jemmy's life, the pregnancy was such a blessing! A comfort! And the Lord made it a very easy ride for me. There was no spectacular discomfort during the pregnancy. When I named him 'Comfort' and people say its feminine, I would only smile and nod at them. Only I understood exactly why I named him that!- His father named him 'Bliss' though and people prefer that.

But when I heard that Auntie Asake had been released from the prison because of her ill health and that we should go and check on her, my husband wouldn't even answer me.

“With this huge tummy and my precious baby? We should go and greet that woman? Like seriously?” He had come against me strongly. I knew how he felt but I was afraid that even though he said he had forgiven her, he might not have totally let go.

Immediately Bliss turned two months, therefore, I quickly presented my proposition again and I was glad that gradually, the fence he built around his heart was falling apart.

“But honey, next month might be too late” I said, rubbing the back of my baby boy that I had just breastfed. Bode moved towards me and carried him, dancing with him in his huge arms, pecking him intermittently.

“Honey” I called for his attention again but he wouldn’t look at me. I was about calling him again when he looked at me, calmly.

“When do you want us to go?”

“Tomorrow” I said and his jaw dropped.

“Tomorrow? Who are we going to leave the children with?” He asked, obviously disagreeing with my plans.

“We will go with them, obviously” I said and he looked at me in disbelief.

“Nothing is going to happen to us all honey! I have peace in my spirit about it” I said and he sighed.

“We will pray about it tonight. By morning, if God is saying ‘yes’ to this, we take off, then” He said and I smiled heartily, going towards his side and planting a peck on his lips.

“You are such a darling!” I said with glee. I had seriously wanted to see Auntie Asake. I desired to see her and if nothing preach Christ to her. I felt sorry for being a part of her being ‘roasted’ and cast into the prison. I knew it was a divine judgment that Heaven served her, yet, I desired to see her in order to introduce her to light.

I had just finished spinning some clothes when the telephone in the phone rang. I picked it up.

“Yes honey!”

“Can you come downstairs? We have a visitor” He said and I frowned slightly, knitting my brows.

“A visitor?” I asked when the line dropped. I quickly washed my hands in the sink, changed my top and slid into a comfortable pair of slippers.

As I descended the stairs, I saw someone that looked like Abel, my husband’s cousin seated. I smiled as I walked towards them.

“Is this not Abel?” I asked to be really sure. He looked really different from the last time I saw him at our wedding.

After exchanging pleasantries, he cleared his throat and handed a white envelope to my husband. My husband handed Bliss to me and started to unfold the letter.

“What is this? Your WAEC result?” He asked, still unfolding it.

“No sir. Mama Asake wrote you a letter. She asked me to bring it to you” He said and my eyes widened.

“Wow! I exclaimed excitedly.

“Who writes letter in this age?” My husband questioned.

“I asked her to let me type and send via e-mail but she refused. She said I must come to this place to deliver it” He said and my husband cleared his throat.

“I hope it’s not a letter bomb o” He said quite skeptically. Abel chuckled but I simply raised my nose at my husband.

“Let me read it if you are not reading, abeg” I said and he spread the letter widely, placing it before us in a way that we could both read comfortably.

TO MAKE IT IN THIS WORLD, ONE MUST HAVE A POWER! ONE MUST BE CONNECTED TO A POWER! ONE MUST HOLD ON TO A POWER! THERE ARE TWO POWERS IN THE WORLD. THERE ARE TWO WAYS. EITHER THE GOOD OR THE BAD. EITHER THE POSITIVE OR THE NEGATIVE. EITHER THE GENUINE OR THE FAKE! THE CHOICE IS OURS TO MAKE!”

WHILE I CHOSE THE BAD, THE NEGATIVE AND THE FAKE, WHICH LANDED ME A FIERY ATTACK, YOU CHOSE THE GOOD,

THE POSITIVE AND THE GENUINE WHICH INSTEAD OF ATTACKING YOU WAS A FENCE AROUND YOU! A FENCE OF FIRE! IT MAKES YOU UNTOUCHABLE! IT MAKES YOU PROTECTED! YOU ARE SECURE IN IT!

DO I REGRET EVERYTHING? YES, I DID! NO, I DON'T! OH YES! I DID REGRET HAVING TO TOUCH YOU AND RECEIVING SOME FIREBALLS IN MY BODY AS A RESULT BUT I DO NOT REGRET IT NOW BECAUSE I CAN SEE THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED, I WAS JUST NO MATCH FOR THAT POWER IN YOU, AROUND YOU AND ON YOU! THE POWER OF THE MOST HIGH GOD!

I AM GLAD THAT EVEN THOUGH MY MORTAL BODY IS DETERIORATING, I HAVE A HOPE! I HAVE A HOPE OF GETTING A NEW BODY IN ETERNITY! THE BODY OF IMMORTALITY. I AM GLAD THAT THAT ENCOUNTER OF FIRE BROUGHT ME TO THE LORD. EVEN WHEN I DIE NOW, I AM SURE HEAVEN WOULD REJOICE WITH SINGING AND JOY.

I THOUGHT I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW THAT EVEN IF YOU DO NOT MEET LIFE IN ME WHEN YOU EVENTUALLY VISIT, YOU SHOULD REJOICE WITH ME THAT I AM IN A SAFE PLACE FOREVER!

CONTINUE TO HIDE UNDER THAT FIRE! I SAW THAT FIRE! BODE, LARA, BE UNITED! UNITY IN MARRIAGE IS ESSENTIAL FOR VICTORY! THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

ARE SO UNITED! THEY ARE THREE, YET ONE! SUCH UNITY! WHEN YOU ARE DIVIDED, ANYONE CAN COME BETWEEN YOU BUT WHEN YOU STICK TOGETHER UNITEDLY, IT WILL BECOME A HERCULEAN TASK FOR ANY DIVIDER TO BRING YOU APART! WITH UNITY, YOU CAN DO AND UNDO. WITHOUT UNITY, YOU WILL BE DONE AND UNDONE!

HOW IS MY JEMIMAH? I BELIEVE SHE IS NOW BETTER. I BELIEVE SHE CAN NOW MAKE USE OF HER RIGHT HAND. EVEN AS JOB'S DAUGHTER WHOSE NAME YOUR BABY BEARS WAS FAIRER THAN ALL THE LADIES OF THE EARTH, BECAUSE OF THE GLOWING BEAUTY OF THE LORD UPON HER, THE BEAUTY OF YOUR DAUGHTER, NO MAN CAN TOUCH! SHE IS CONTINUALLY HID IN CHRIST JESUS! ALWAYS PUT IN GOOD WORDS FOR ME BEFORE HER. I AM REALLY SORRY.

GREETINGS TO JEDIDIAH, A SISTER WHO IS A TRUE LOVER. MAY THE LORD BIND HER AND HER SISTER TOGETHER IN LOVE. I REALLY ADMIRE HER STRENGTH.

I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH ONE ADMONITION- 'PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!' THE DEVIL LIKE A ROARING LION WALKS ABOUT SEEKING WHOM TO DESTROY! PRAY ON! FIGHT ON! KEEP BEING UNDIVIDEDLY UNITED!

ASAKE.

By the time we were done reading, I was soaked in tears. I wept so vehemently. I was glad that a sinner had come home. I was glad that she had realized what she had done and felt sorry for it! Yet, I was full of gratitude to the Lord!

If she had successfully divided my family, she might have still met with the Lord and my own marriage would have still been in shambles!

I was glad that the best Planner in the world planned it all! He restored our own home graciously and also worked out her salvation!

“Hmmm...Glory be to the Lord” My husband said with a loud sigh, rubbing his hand over his head. “Wow!” He exclaimed again.

“Where is she now? Is she still in Akure?” I asked, tears still flowing down my face.

“Yes, aunty” Abel replied

“We will go and see her tomorrow” My husband said and I smiled at him, rubbing his hand lovingly.

“Thank you so much” I whispered. I felt really glad.

Abel’s phone rang and he smiled at us.

“It’s grandma” He said and I smiled. I loved every talk about my wonderful mother-in-law!

A mother indeed!

A mother who joined forces with my weak army to pull down the strongholds of the enemy. Sweet mother!

He raised the phone to his ears.

“Hello grandma...I am fine ma...My journey was fine ma; I am with my uncle now...Okay ma” He said and brought the phone to my husband who placed it on loudspeaker.

“Hello mummy, ekaale ma”

“Kaale o”

“What’s wrong with you? Your voice sounds so down, mummy” I said and my husband nodded too.

“What’s the matter, mum?”

“Asake just died!” She dropped the bomb that deafened me for a few minutes. My husband collected Bliss from my hands as I stood up in shock. Abel jumped up too, placing his hand on his head.

“Died? How? When? Where?” I scattered the atmosphere with so many questions.

“Just now! She just passed away!” She said and sighed.

“Oh my God! Oh my God!” I exclaimed as I held my chest in shock, tears running down my face.

If only we had gone earlier!

If only my husband had agreed with me!

“Though it’s painful” Mummy started saying again. “I am glad that she went home!” She said and I settled down in a settee again, sobbing. My husband looked into my face and wiped my tears with his hands.

“Before she passed away, she looked much beautiful than she ever was! Her rugged, burnt body looked better and fresher- and she was singing beautifully! She kept singing ‘Oh Lord, my God when I in awesome wonder consider all...” Mummy explained and my head swelled the more as my heart exploded within me.

“Wow! Wow!” My husband exclaimed.

“She smiled all through as she wiped my tears. She looked so hopeful and joyful! She wanted to wait for you people to come and visit her but she said ‘I need to go now. I need to go now. This place is not beautiful! See the beautiful city, see Jerusalem! See, can’t you see?’ That was what she kept saying” Mummy cried.

“Wow! Auntie Asake? Wow!” My husband exclaimed, blinking really fast that I knew he was hiding his tears.

“Forgive her! Please forgive her” Mummy said, sniffing wetly.

“Who are we not to forgive?” My husband asked. “I read her letter few minutes ago and I was like, ah, Lord, if someone who had dug hands with the devil to eat like this can still make it to Heaven, You must keep me Lord. In the Hollow of Your Hands, keep me Lord!” He said, sniffing wetly.

“I will miss her though!” He said again, very emotionally. “Like, very seriously!” He said, handed Bliss back to me and started walking up the stairs, the letter in his hand.

“Mummy, we will discuss the burial arrangements on WhatsApp, right?” I asked and mummy sighed.

“Yes, we will.” She said and we ended the call.

I am glad that even though my mortal body is deteriorating, I have a hope! I have a hope of getting a new body in eternity! The body of

immortality. I am glad that that encounter of fire brought me to the lord. Even when I die now, I am sure heaven would rejoice with songs of joy!

I remembered those words from her letter and sighed.

What a God!

What a Power!

What a testimony!

What an end!

THE END.