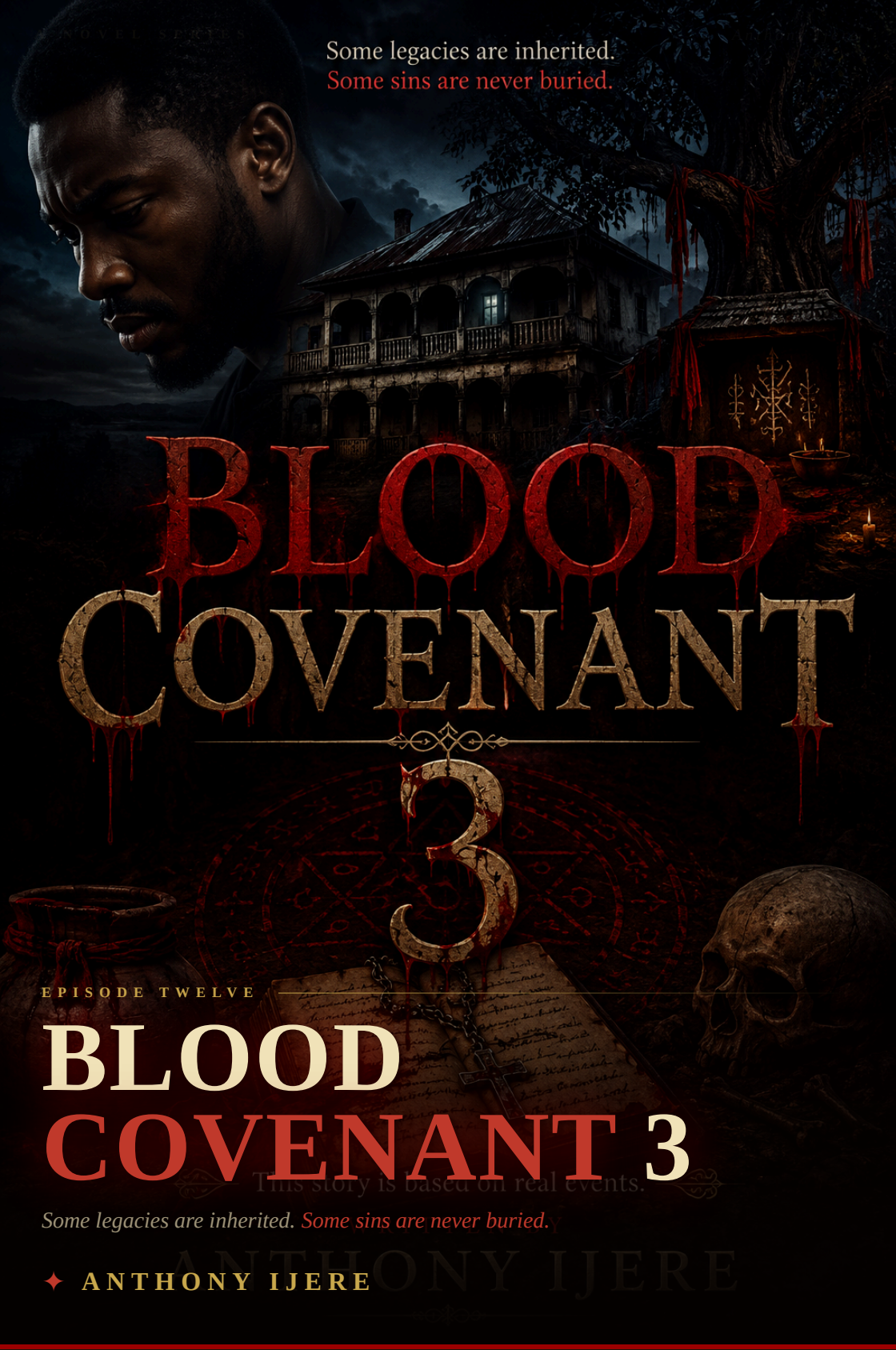


EPISODE TWELVE

BLOOD COVENANT 3

This story is based on real events.

Some legacies are inherited. Some sins are never buried.

✦ ANTHONY IJERE

EPISODE 12 — *The Woman at the Staircase*

The room froze completely. Nobody moved. Nobody

> *"The dead do not remain silent forever when*

spoke. The woman stood at the top of the staircase with unnatural stillness while pale afternoon light from the upper hallway fell softly around her figure.

> *injustice covers their grave."*
>
> — PA WENIKE

Her white wrapper hung loosely around her body, and long dark hair rested against her shoulders like wet strands of shadow. Daniel felt the blood drain slowly from his face. This was no dream. Not imagination. Every person in the room could see her clearly. Memi tightened her grip around the children immediately while Pa Wenike slowly lowered his eyes as though he had expected this moment for many years. Pastor Akuro remained calm, though his expression became grave.

The woman's face carried no rage. Only sorrow. Deep and unbearable sorrow. For several endless seconds she simply stood there looking down at them. Then slowly she lifted one trembling hand and pointed toward the hidden upstairs hallway leading to the underground chamber. A cold wind

moved suddenly through the house. The lantern flame flickered violently. The atmosphere inside the room became heavy and suffocating as though invisible pressure had settled over the compound itself.

HER VOICE — FAINT, DISTANT, LIKE SOMEONE SPEAKING THROUGH WATER

"Tell them…"

"Tell them what was buried."

The wind grew stronger. The curtains lifted sharply. And within the next moment — she was gone.

Not gradually. Instantly. Leaving only the empty staircase behind. Silence swallowed the house. Nyenke buried his face against his mother while his younger sister began crying openly. Even Daniel struggled to steady himself after what they had all witnessed. Pa Wenike crossed himself slowly beneath his breath.

✦ WHAT MUST BE DONE ✦

Pastor Akuro rose carefully from his chair and looked toward the staircase for several moments before speaking. "This matter is no longer hidden."

Daniel turned toward him. "What exactly are we dealing with?" His voice carried frustration now alongside fear. "Is this truly her spirit? Is this some demonic manifestation? What is happening inside this compound?"

Pastor Akuro remained thoughtful before answering. "There are spiritual realities human beings do not fully understand. But one thing is clear. Something connected to this place is demanding truth." Pa Wenike nodded weakly. "The dead do not remain silent forever when injustice covers their grave."

Daniel ran both hands across his face. His thoughts had become tangled with fear, anger, confusion, and growing horror over his grandfather's actions. Every new revelation made the compound feel darker than before. "What do we do now?" Memi asked. The pastor sat down again slowly. "We need to know everything that happened here. Partial truth cannot bring freedom." "How?" Pa Wenike hesitated briefly before speaking again. "There is one man still alive who may know the full story."

✦ CHIEF BARASUA ✦

"Chief Barasua." Pastor Akuro's expression changed slightly. "I thought he left Rivers State years ago." "He returned recently," Pa Wenike replied quietly. "He was one of the shrine attendants who served under the priests during Chief Ike's covenant years."

> *"And nobody reported this man to the police?" Daniel asked in disbelief. Pa Wenike gave a weary sigh. "You are thinking like a modern man, Daniel. Those days were different. Fear ruled many communities during the war years. People protected powerful men because they feared them. Besides, many who knew the truth remained silent to protect themselves."*

✦ ONE BURIED TRUTH ✦

Daniel walked slowly toward the entrance and stood staring at the courtyard. The udala tree swayed gently beneath the grey afternoon sky while the old shrine remained motionless beneath it. Everything around the compound now carried a terrible meaning.

EVERY SIGN — POINTING TOWARD ONE BURIED TRUTH

- The chalk symbols on the shrine and hidden door
- The hidden underground chamber beneath the house
- The human bones beside the ancient altar
- The whispers that called Nyenke by name
- The woman in white — demanding to be heard

Behind him, Pastor Akuro spoke again. "We should speak with Chief Barasua before nightfall." Pa Wenike nodded immediately. "That is wise." Daniel turned back slowly. "You believe he will talk?" The old man gave a faint humourless smile. "At his age, fear begins losing power over men. Death forces people to remember God."

THROUGH THE TOWN

Within the next hour, Daniel prepared to leave with Pastor Akuro and Pa Wenike. Memi disliked the idea strongly, but Pastor Akuro assured her they would return before dark. "You should remain with

the children and keep praying," he told her gently. Before leaving, Daniel paused beside her. "If anything happens, lock every door immediately." Fear remained visible in her eyes, but she managed a small nod. "Please come back quickly."

As they walked through the narrow roads of Odhiokwu Town, Daniel noticed how normal everything appeared outside the compound walls. Women sold vegetables beneath roadside umbrellas. Children chased one another near small kiosks. Men gathered around motorcycles discussing politics and fuel prices. Ordinary life continued peacefully. Yet beneath that ordinary life, Daniel now sensed hidden layers of silence running through the community like buried roots.

Several villagers watched them pass quietly. Some lowered their eyes the moment they noticed Pa Wenike.

Eventually they reached the far edge of the town where an old bungalow stood partly hidden behind thick mango trees. Pa Wenike stopped walking. "This is his house." The compound looked

neglected and unusually quiet. Daniel immediately felt uneasiness settle inside him again. Pastor Akuro stepped forward first and knocked slowly at the gate. No answer came. He knocked again. Still silence.

Then gradually the small entrance gate

creaked open by itself.

Nobody stood there. A cold breeze drifted outward.

The front door of the house stood wide open.

And from somewhere deep inside the dark building

—

> *"Help me…"*

✦ ✦ ✦

✦ WATCH OUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE ✦

If this book has blessed your life, remember to say a prayer for the author. Pray that the fire of God will continually burn on his altar. As a free gift of love to him and the ministry, your contributions in cash or in kind are warmly welcomed.

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ACCOUNT NAME	**Macanthony Ijere**
BANK NAME	**Sterling Bank**
ACCOUNT NO.	**0138431203**
SWIFT/BIC	**NAMENGLA**
BANK ADDRESS	**Lagos, Nigeria**

ACCOUNT DETAILS — UNITED STATES

ACCOUNT NAME	**Macanthony Meniye Ijere**
BANK NAME	**Wells Fargo**
ACCOUNT NO.	**406302318512941 96**
ROUTING NO.	**121000248**
ACCOUNT TYPE	**Checking**
SWIFT/BIC	**WFBIUS6SXXX**
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