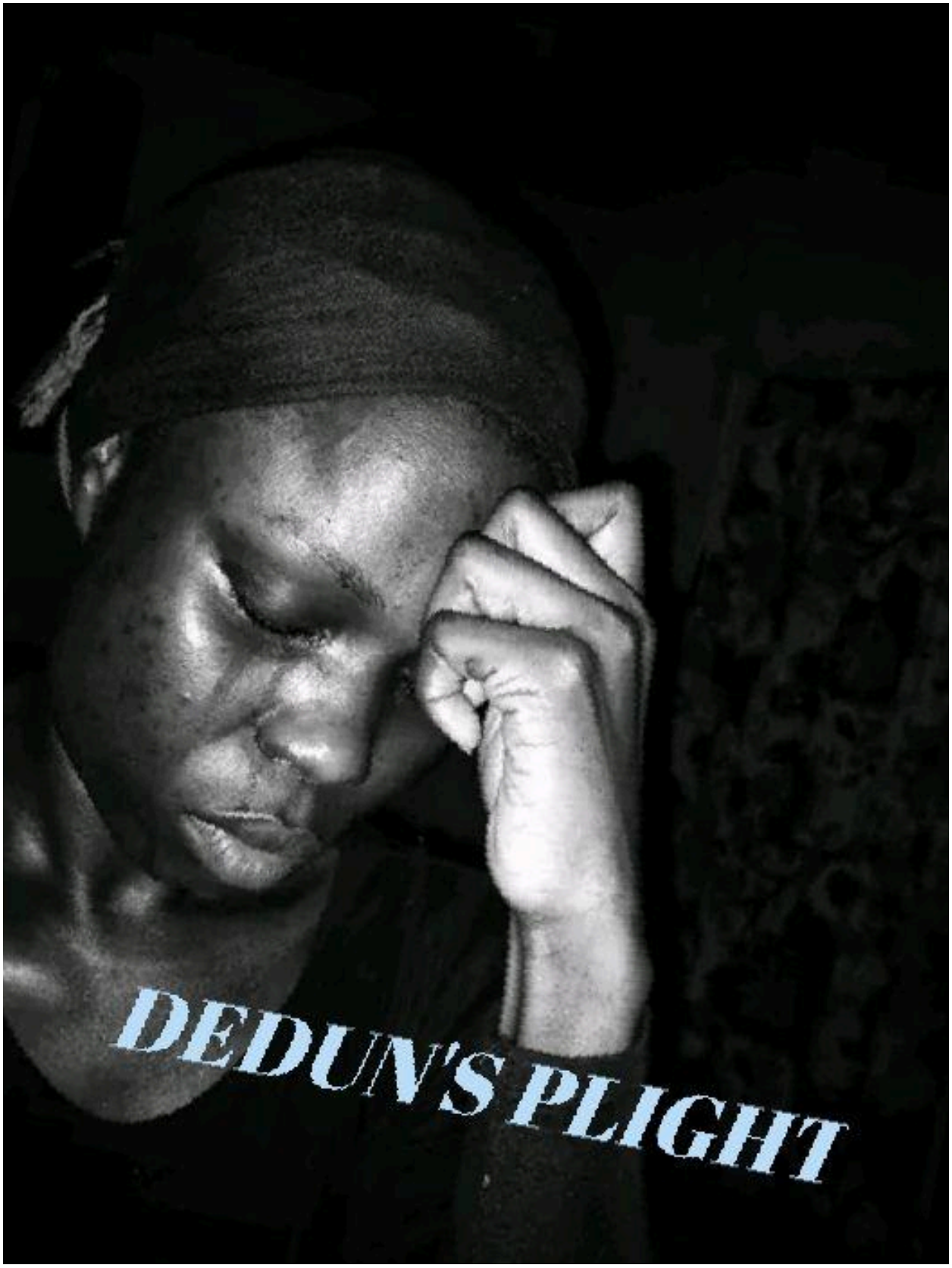

DEDUN'S PLIGHT

DEDUN'S PLIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by JOSEPH RUTH OLUWADARASIMI

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to every teenage girl out there. I pray we all find our way back to to where we've missed it.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT.

EPISODE ONE.

*

“It's morning oo, Madam. You can leave now.” I heard his voice from the tiny kitchen and opened the door more widely to see the fight that would ensue.

The pretty damsel lying on the bed was just so naive or shy. If this was not her first time, it'd be the second and I pitied her for she looked like a church girl with the turban cap on her head. one that has no choice but to use what she has to get what she wants out of hopelessness.

“My money?” She simply asked, bypassing his hungry eyes looking lustfully at her again.

“Here!” He handed the shining notes to her and picked his shirt from the bed walking out to God-knows-where. The girl jumped from the bed and ran after him holding the tip of hisshirt from behind.

“You promised me 20k, not this. This can barely make up for my handouts not to talk of feeding. Why are you so heartless? You're a beast!” She screamed almost forcing

her lungs out and the heartless brother of mine simply hissed and stormed out leaving her with the miserable 5k now lying on the floor.

She dropped on the floor sobbing loudly with her pleating skirt filling the whole place.

“It is well. Just get up, Ma'am.” The moment my legs stepped into the sitting room, I couldn't tell, but I guess my merciful heart couldn't bear seeing a poor lady like me being used by my brother, Stephen. I won't blame him much. The girl came to him and not the other way round. What am I even thinking?

“God I've failed you. I fell so sheepishly just because of five thousand naira. Ha! How did I get here?” She continued to lament and I helped her up to sit on the sofa nearby. I ran to turn off the gas and rushed back after waking Folake, my younger sister, to go have her bath.

“I wish you waited a little longer for God. He has great plans for us but the devil always deceives us with a facade and prevents God's promised blessings from reaching us. I know this is not the end of the road. God still loves you, Ma'am.”

The lady stared at me in wonder. I look so young to her yet brilliant and act like an adult. I gave a a luminous smile and encouraged her some more before she left now cozy.

*

“So you mean Brother Stephen did that to the lady? He's becoming more heart-hardened. My God! What's the special thing about sex after all?” Emmanuel asked that morning as we walked side by side to school with my sister ahead.

He furiously tilted his head to the back a bit and ruffled his hair filled with rage. He's always this angry and filled with nostalgic feelings when he hears a thing about assault because his elder sister used to be a victim.

“Same question on my lips. You needed to see the way she was crying. I pity her a great deal. I pray God answers my prayer and save Brother Steve.”

“Maybe something should be used to punish them that'll sound like a warning to the rest. Something like cutting off that thing between their legs.” He said.

“Haaaaaaa!” We both laughed as we walked to the assembly ground jam-packed with students. It's the first day of resumption and I've really missed school.

*

“Hey, pretty. It'd been a while since I'd seen your pretty face. You look prettier now. No kidding. Always remember I love you so much and having the key to your heart won't be a bad idea, right? Heart you. Wilfred’

The letter I found under my desk read.

“So quick? This guy can never be serious.” Emmanuel asked no one in particular and hissed. We read the letter together since we sit together too. We've been friends since childhood. His parents are family friends to mine and they even share a boundary in their farm land.

Our parents live back there in the village while we stay in town to get quality education though it's still a public school. They do visit every weekend and meet our needs with no issues.

Our parents have always been committed Christians so our roots in Christ can't be far traced. They raised us in the way of the Lord and only Brother Stephen is a pain in the neck.

“I hope that is not for me?” Wilfred, who unknowingly was behind us, asked from behind him and spat on his face without getting his response.

“You no get sense oo. Shey you know?” He said with so much anger already in front of us. I shifted in my seat with fear of the unknown. This guy can do and undo.

“That's not what my Bible tells me.” I tried stopping Emmy from giving a response but he wouldn't burgle. His response infuriated Wilfred the more and he pounced him severally with his fist on his face.

The class turned into a marketplace with everyone pleading to let him go but it seemed he was just starting. His “guys” even came to give him support and tears started flowing down my cheek as the only name that could escape my mouth was “JESUS” seeing him already pleading.

Just as the teacher who had been alerted by the class prefect stepped in, he gave him a final kick in the tummy and Emmanuel passed out.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT.

EPISODE TWO.

*

“How are you feeling now?” I asked, staring keenly at him as we strolled to church that evening.

His look was a focused one and with his hands in his trouser pocket, he bit his lower lips and finally opened his mouth.

“Very fine. I now realize my mistake. There's no point replying thim since I know its result already. Sorry for not heeding the signals.”

“It's fine. Thanks for trying to protect me. Let's fight him next time on our knees.” I said and he sighed. I know he was struggling to say something and it's not far-fetched.

“I apologize once again for what almost happened yesterday. I promise it won't repeat itself.” He looked at me shyly for the first time with a pleading look.

I smiled and was also tense.

I went to visit him at the sick bar in school where he was rushed to and because we were alone, and of course humans, we almost kissed and thanked God for grace and a slim distraction that came our way. That would have been a story I would never forget in a hurry.

“It's not your fault. At least we're humans and we've learned our lessons from it. First, we are not above mistakes and we should learn to accept them and not bring up excuses also, we should avoid staying in secluded places alone. It's very dangerous.” I clarified as we walked faster because the evening prayer meeting had started already.

“You're right. Thanks for being a friend I can rely on. And I love the fruit juice you got me. It's so tasty. You'll never buy me a gift unless I'm sick.” He chuckled when he searched my face for a reaction and I frowned.

“The truth is bitter but it must be told.” He added having fun.

“Na you kuku Sabi. Ehn en, guess what?”

“What?”

“Oga, guess. Don't tell me you're not good at guessing oo.”

*Okay… You've… I can't even think of anything. Just spill the milk.” He said already nervous.

“Calm down, MOG. Can you believe that those four girls that call themselves HARM came to propose friendship to me? They were like, Emmanuel is not a good friend like he professed and you'll soon notice that. They said a lot of things and you needed to see the way I just hissed and walked out of their sights. So annoying!” I explained playing with the tip of my tote black bag.

“I trust you. Don't mind them at all. They're just constituting nuisance.” He finally admonished and we stepped into the church building seizing the remaining gists for later.

*

I was sweating profusely as the moderator asked us to take our seats after the tremendous praise session. I brought out my handkerchief from my bag and before I could use it to wipe my face with it, Emmy dragged it from me smiling mischievously.

“I'm sorry, Ma'am.” He pretended to be remorseful. I just hissed, pretending to be angry and listened to the announcement.

“Let's not forget that Friday is our final vigil for this month and it's not something you should miss. We can now share the grace but all workers should wait for a brief meeting.”

We all chorused the grace and members proceeded to leave to their various destinations while Emmy and I moved forward to the first two roles where others were waiting.

I work in the choir department as a chorister and I also play the keyboard, while Emmy is an usher and we work together in the teenager's department.

I noticed the sad smile on the pastor's face, and not just him, but the entire leaders in the church.

“It has come to our notice that the teenager's Treasurer has not been able to give a record for the 500, 000 naira that has been missing from the church fund. Where's Bro Elias?”

Brother Elias stood up from the far end he was sitting his eyes on Emmanuel and I wondered why.

“We discovered that the money went missing the day before yesterday and we've chosen to let you all know about this. So, over to you brother Elias. Where is the money that was in your care?” The pastor asked calmly.

“You all know I've been very faithful both to Christ and to His body. And you also know I live in the same area as Brother Emmanuel. I traveled that day and kept the money in his care, only for me to come back and he said he was robbed and can't find the money again.”

My mouth was wide open and so was Emmy too.

The whole church was in shock and while some believed, some did not and some even blamed him for trusting a teenager with such an amount of money.

As I walked home dejectedly alone that night, my mind wandered far and wide and evidence began to flow in.

Why did Emmanuel decide to go back to his past?

DEDUN'S PLIGHT.

EPISODE THREE.

“He went out but I'm sure he'll soon be back.” I shifted my gaze from his mum to the alarming voice coming nearer and nearer.

“That's him. That's my son.” The poor woman screamed, alarmed.

“Go and get fuel. He'll die today. Thief.”

“Kill him. He stole my goat.”

“Make sure he roast to ashes. He is a pretender.”

My mouth opened wide in shock as I saw the huge crowd trooping after Emmanuel who was looking tattered and unkempt. His Gucci shirt was in a messy state, stained with blood.

His mouth dripped blood flowing endlessly like river Jordan. His right eye was thrice its normal size.

“Leave my son alone. He's not a thief. He's innocent.” The poor woman screamed and it was then I remembered to close my mouth that was shaking terribly.

“You don't know your son, ma. He's a known thief in the market. And today, he stole this woman's goat and has been caught.” A fair woman amidst the angry crowd said with haste.

After several interventions and pleas from neighbors and the oldest man in the village who happens to live nearby, they left with a warning to burn him to ashes next time he's caught stealing.

*

“Ogbeni, get up and prepare breakfast joor. I don't why you're crying this early morning.” Bro's Stephen voice broke into my thoughts and I sniffered and got up reluctantly. My back ached greatly and I'm dying of migraine but who am I to complain?

I managed to prepare spaghetti for breakfast and prepare my sister for school.

Soon, we were done having breakfast and out to start the journey down the street where we could board a cab that'd take us to school.

It was unusually cold that morning and guilt stunged my chest as I looked back the umpteenth time to make sure Emmanuel was not behind me.

I've made a very big decision. One that brings tears down my face. One that makes me sad and it's too caught up with him. My childhood friend. I don't want to be associated with a thief

Just as I stopped a cab, I heard his panting voice calling out for me to wait for him. I hardened my heart and jumped in holding my sister's hand.

“You can move,” I ordered with my heartbeat racing.

*

“Good afternoon, Girl.” The Rachel in the HARM group greeted stopping me from entering the cafeteria.

I hissed quietly and raised my head to face them.

“What do you want now? I've told you I don't want to be a part of…”

“Shhhh… that's not why we're here. You're becoming too lousy though, I guess it's as a result of the heartbreak your

so-called 'bestie’ the known thief caused you.” She emphasized the word 'bestie’ ridiculously and on a normal day, I wouldn't have taken that from anybody but my heart sank in anger again.

“That is none of your business. Get out of my way.”

“Not so quickly baby.” Happiness, the supposed leader said calmly.

“See, we're not asking you to be one of us now. Just have lunch with us, and we will be fine.” She said compassionately. I stood still for a while considering the pros and cons.

I finally agreed. It's just lunch anyway.

“Okay. Promise you will no longer disturb me after this.”

“We promise.” Abigail, the third girl said on behalf of all of them.

“Not like we've been disturbing anyways.” Mercy howled as we walked in. They took the lead and I moved a bit backward already getting suspicious looks from people in my class and the fellowship.

“So, what do you think of Emmanuel now? Do you still think he's a darling and saint-like he pretended to be?” Happiness questioned as I dug my spoon into the meal. We were having Fried rice and turkey and it was my first time eating such food in school. All thanks to the HARM who are from rich homes.

I was expecting the question and I've prepared the expected answer.

“Ermm. I can't think of anything right now, but I think I need to stay away from him so that people won't see me as a thief.” I said childishly and they laughed.

“But, who told you?”

“Your pastor there is my Dad and I got firsthand news at home,” Mercy said and sipped from her drink.

“Your father? How? I can't even connect the dots. I have never seen you in church.”
I confessed.

“Yes. That's because the services there are extremely too boring. Gosh! I choose the church I attend and my dad has no right to object.”

“Go baby.” The others hailed and I just shook my head in pity and looked on with disdain.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT
EPISODE FOUR

"You're really not avoiding me, right?" I turned back with a brief smile and a stressed expression plastered on my face. I held the three science textbooks more firmly and removed my lab coat, sighing. "Of course not. What do you think?" I replied with raised nose, and he drew closer, making my heartbeat skyrocket with quick speed. Each step he took reminded me of the dream. His ugly past. And I also noticed the bags under his eyes. He must have skipped night rest lately.

"You have been snubbing me since yesterday. See, we need to make things right." He voiced again, still calm with his hands in his trouser pocket. He looked so brave and undaunting in his white long-sleeve shirt and light blue trousers.

"Okay."

"I'm really disappointed in you, honestly." He furrowed his brows, lowering his voice. I pressed the textbooks to my chest and hissed, looking sideways. "Dedun, we have been friends since like forever, and you couldn't trust me to explain things to you before ignoring me? Do you think I still steal? Do you think I still do things of the past? Come

on. You know me better than this. If anyone should turn their back against me right now, it shouldn't be you."

I watched him closely, even his lips as they moved. All I felt was anger spurring deep from within me.

"I need my space, Emmanuel. If that's why you stopped you, then I'll have to leave. I have other important things to attend to." I replied, sighting the HARM girls staring keenly at us from afar. I need to prove to them that I don't follow a thief about.

"You really want to do this?"

"I really want you to stay away from me for a while." I emphasized on the "YOU" and "ME" with my fingers in the air in a quote-like manner.

"Okay, then. Be good." He brought out his right hand from his pocket and stretched it for a handshake. I looked past the hand and walked away, somehow dejected. I couldn't bear to see that horrible look on his face for just one more second.

*

"I love you, Baby. I can't wait to see you tomorrow." Steve said into the phone, whistling like a teenager boy in love.

I'm sure his captive must have been captured with his sweet talk. I wish she could just run for her life, as far as her legs would take her.

"Don't worry. I'll send money for your T-fare. You'll be spending the night with me." He responded again, and I just looked on with disgust, staring at the man who I called my brother, who despite his intelligence, can't just get a decent life.

A gentle knock on the door reminded me of Tope's visit. Her mum is a neighbor and had begged me to help with her child's assignment.

"Hold on. I'm coming." I dropped the inspirational non-fiction book I was reading and strolled to the door, my eyes fixed on the knob.

"Baby girl." I almost doubted my sight as I came face to face with the HARM girls. They wore the same dress, which comprised a yellow crop top and baggy jeans. They had perfect smiles plastered on their faces that made me relax.

"What are you girls doing here, and who gave you my address?" I gave them a firm look, standing in between the door and the wall. "I don't appreciate people coming to my

house unannounced." Especially females; trust Steve to always flirt with them. He doesn't care if they're beautiful or not, just throw a few sweet words and find a way to get them to his bed.

"Girl, relax. We just came to check up on you." Happiness replied, grinning. "Life is not that hard, jhare."

"Let us in. We are not ghosts." Mercy cracked, and I had no choice but to open the door widely and wait for the four to step in before shutting the door.

"You can sit here." I pointed at the only two available sofas in the sitting room, picking the book I was reading from the one I sat on earlier.

"Wow! This place is beautiful. I love the interior designs." Abigail commented, looking around.

"Thank you so much."

"The outside view is not that nice. No one would think it's this beautiful inside." Mercy added.

"You have come again oo. You must always say something off about everything. Well, that's why we were taught not to judge a book by its cover." Happiness threw,

adjusting her jeans. She placed her handbag on her lap, bringing out a card and handing it over to me.

My eyes rolled over and over, and just as I was about to say a word, you-know-who came out of the room.

“Hello, beautiful ladies.” He greeted with a hint of fantasy in his voice. “Good afternoon, Sir.” They greeted, and I noticed how Mercy's eyes glued to his masculine, shirtless chest. She smiled seductively, opening her teeth in a ridiculous manner.

“Dedun, I'm going out. I'm not sure I'll be coming back home. I'll stay at a friend's place.” He spoke sensibly to me for the first time in many weeks. I knew he was trying to get one or two of the girls to like him.

He readjusted his clothes on his shoulders and winked at the girls before stepping out.

“Oh my! Girl, you never told us you have a brother this cute.” Mercy confessed, and I hissed, not expecting her to act so cheap and uncultured.

“Is that how you run after men?”

“Hey! That I like your brother doesn't mean you should insult me. Not like he's that fine, though.”

“It's okay. That's not why we are here.” Abigail intervened.

“So, why are you here?” I asked, suspicious.

“Check the invitation card I just gave you.” Happiness ordered. It was then I remembered I was still holding the card. I glimpsed through and rolled my eyes for the umpteenth time.

“A birthday party?” I asked for confirmation, raising an eyebrow.

“Yeah!” Rachel replied, glittering.

“I'm not interested.” I replied bluntly.

“Come off it. You think we would just walk to your house and present something that won't benefit you? See, the birthday celebrant is actually my boyfriend, and we need someone to pray and preach to the audience. He is a serious child of God and wants it done that way. You're the best person that fits this role.” Happiness explained, staring at my face.

“I can't do it.”

“You can. Just go in there and change. We will be back before you know it. God's word says we should go out into the world and preach the gospel. This is a very big avenue, D.”

I smiled, blinking my eyes rapidly before lowering my head to think it through.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT

EPISODE 5

I opened my mouth widely, taking in the beauty of the magnificent building before me. It's a storey building that is painted in white and dark blue with many artistic designs on the walls. On the far end of the building was a swimming pool where some people, I guess, came in for the party, crowded, having fun. The center reflects light that shines on everyone. The opposite end has a small but beautiful building where I saw the gateman who opened the gate for us go in through. If all gatemen have the privilege of staying in that kind of house, I'm sure they'll spend more than 50 decades there.

“You're stunned, right?” Well, come on in. More surprises await you.” Happiness grabbed my hand and dragged me along with her to the main building. I held on to my Bible so tightly, with my neck still turning back to admire the pool.

“You’re welcome.” A lady dressed in a plain blue gown and an apron covering her front view greeted with a warm smile and ushered us in. My jaw dropped, and again, my lips couldn't help but separate. The sitting room was painted in plain white, and drawings, African designs, and

portraits were hung on the wall. The light produced different colours, and the TV was larger than the one we use in our headquarter church. The sofa and glinting table speak wealth. I turned to study the dining and just then, I saw him smiling at me. I mean Wilfred. His huge frame stood still and gallant, and my knees fumbled as he started walking closer, grinning.

I looked around for the HARM girls but found them already lost in the crowd, dancing and drinking with other friends.

“Hey, beautiful lady.”

“Good evening.” I tried not to stutter as he spoke, his gaze too much for comfort.

“Wow! I'm most honoured to have a damsel greet me this evening. I'm delighted to see you at my birthday party.” He said, still smiling, and I wondered what was funny.

“Your birthday? The girls didn't tell me that.”

“If they told you, would you come?” He asked, folding his hands and still staring at me.

“Well, I don't know. Happiness told me you are her boyfriend and that you're a serious child of God. She said you want me to preach in your party. How true is that?”

“0% true.” He revealed and tried to make me sit on a chair nearby, but I refused, suddenly feeling shy. I was the only one holding a Bible in the midst of over 30 persons. What I had in mind was totally different from what I was seeing. I had prepared to see a crowd hungry for God and yearning to hear God. I had hoped the party wouldn't be too extravagant, but I could bet there's no difference between Sodom and Gomorrah and what I'm seeing here.

“What do you mean?” I stepped back after presenting my question, aiming to flee if what I'm thinking is what it really was.

"I'm sorry, but the whole thing was just a plan so you could come.” He joined his hands together in a pleading manner, his eyes filled with guilt.

“Wow! Impressive! What a fool you all have made of me. I don't blame you.” I took another step backward and tried to walk away, but he pulled me back gently, almost on his knees.

“Baby, sorry we lied to you. I just couldn't think of another way to bring you here. Fred loves you badly; he's dying to have you.” I looked around and saw the HARM girls with their hands akimbo, all staring at me. I lowered my gaze to his hands holding mine with a warning signal to let me be, but he refused.

“You almost killed Emmanuel.” I blurted with anger.

“It was all a mistake. I didn't know I'd go that far. I'm sorry.” He apologized swiftly, leaving my hands to kneel with one knee on the tiles floor that held back my reflection.

“Forgive him. He's just a guy madly in love with you.” I turned to see all eyes on us, including a lady who seemed more like his mother.

“Okay. Fine.” I rolled my eyes with shame.

“It's time to dance. Let's welcome the birthday boy with his girlfriend to come on stage.” Wilfred got up and held my hand. I tightened my fist and stared at him, but he smiled back reassuringly, leading me to the stage.

“I'm not your girlfriend. What's going on?”

“Just dance with me.”

-

I walked hand in hand with Wilfred, smiling as if my life depended on it. The events that took place at his party had circulated round and round, feeding all students with lies that he proposed to me. My classmates started calling me his girlfriend, even though some still had that look of disappointment on their faces. I tried to explain, but couldn't change everyone's mind from what they believed.

Wilfred came in at that stage as a friend, and I've since accepted him, since Emmanuel is no longer in the picture.

“I'm so happy we finally ended up as friends. This was one of my major goals this year.” Wilfred said as we got closer to his dad's car, where little sis was already seated. He has made his driver always stop by our house to pick us up in the morning and take us back at noon before proceeding to his house, just a stone's throw from mine.

“Me…” I stopped talking as Emmanuel blocked our path, coming to stand in front of us.

“What do you want?” I asked with fury in my voice.

“Can I speak with you for a moment?”

He tried to make contact with me, but I looked away.

“No, Sir. Now can you let us go?” Wilfred brushed him out of the way before he could give a prompt response.

“Bye.” His voice echoed behind us and soon became far away.

We sank into the back seat of the car, and the driver drove away with less speed, following Fred's order. He parked at a safe spot when he got to my house, and I made to come down, but was withheld by still fuming Fred.

“Can I kiss you?” My lips vibrated as his eyes bored mine in lust.

He drew nearer and nearer, making my breath go farther and farther.

He pecked my right cheek and pulled back with satisfaction.

I walked back home with lust consuming my entire being, craving for more.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT.

EPISODE 6

My eyes widened in shock and my mouth opened ajar as the round lady seated on the chair gave the command with no trace of guilt or pity on her face. She had a remorseless look and that made me more shocked.

“Your first assignment is to bring the heart of your English teacher.” She repeated again, to drive the point home.

I glanced back, staring at the multitude behind me clapping excitedly. I wondered what was funny about wasting a life. I wonder why the HARM girls were also grinning and jumping in excitement.

Am I the only odd one here?

“I….I have never hurt a fly not to talk of…killing a soul and bringing his heart.” The more I thought about it, the more terrifying it seemed.

“Agents HARM”

The four ran forward with their heads buried on the floor. History remains the same and it's that no member has the right to have eye contact with the one on top, unless you're planning to end your life ultimately.

“Tell her what to do. You are all dismissed.” The meeting ended with songs and cheerings and dancing. I came down from the made-up stage with other newbies who were probably shaking visibly like me.

Tears threatened to roll down the walls of my cheeks, but I held back, completely traumatized and distraught.

“Is this how things would continue to go on?” I questioned immediately we got out of the building, heading to the car parked nearby by Happiness's driver.

Things happened so fast. Just like a flash.

I started dating Wilfred after several weeks of persuasion from the girls and even my inner mind that has now proclaimed a war in my mind and I agreed for just one reason….

His kiss that day left me hungering for more. It's the same feeling of being starved. I can't even remember the last time I stepped my foot in church.

And now…

I'm stuck with the HARM girls again. They deceived me yet again. Brought me to a human consuming house they called their refuge and had me initiated in the club.

“I'm tired of this whole thing, Girls. How can I rip off someone's heart from their body?”

“Relax, Girl. You can ask your boyfriend for help. It'll go a long way.”

“Wilfred?”

“No, Williams. Be asking nonsense questions there.” Mercy replied sarcastically while rolling her large eyes. My head swells in anger and fury as spiteful words threaten to spill from my mouth.

The gentle part of them I've always seen is all gone. It's now replaced with who they really are. Destroyers. Killers.

“You girls aren't even helping matters. I thought you said we're going there to just have fun.” I had wanted to stay back but they talked me out of it, saying it's something I won't want to miss.

“Of course. Didn't you have fun?”

“Fun? What fun is there in wasting lives? Gosh! I can't even imagine myself doing that inhuman act.”

“Then expect to have your head on the plate in our next meeting. We took you somewhere you don't know and you went all lousy eating anything and everything you saw.” Abigail replied, matching my fury.

“You told me to feel at home. I did just that “

“Nice one.” They all laughed, clapping their hands together in a wonderful manner.

“You ate people's flesh and drank their blood disguised as wine.”

“No. God forbid!” I held my throat tightly, spitting severally on the floor. I'm sure my ears have a funny way of playing tricks on me.

“Why do you think you felt no pain during the initiation process? It's because you're now part of us. And don't worry, we will help you accomplish this task smoothly.”

I remained motionless even as the driver stopped at my place and honked twice. My mind was far away, thinking how I got trapped in the midst of these beasts.

“Go on, girl. We've got you covered. See you on Monday.” I climbed down climbing, taking one step at a time till I got to my house to meet the shock of my life.

My mum and dad sat on the bench outside. That's not the shocking thing because they do visit from time to time, but to see Emmanuel discussing with them almost ripped my heart out.

My fears heightened as they responded coldly to my greeting. I swear Emmanuel is not going to flee from my wrath. He has just been a pain in the neck.

“Where are you coming from?”

“I went out with some friends from school, Mum.” I answered surprised I couldn't even hold my mum's gaze that still has the cold and deadly stare.

“Daughter, who have you been walking with lately?” Dad asked as I bent respectfully with the aim to go inside and just think about the mess I'm in right now.

I rolled my eyes for the umpeenth time and it landed on Emmanuel who was barely looking at my side. He had a Faraway look in his eyes that angered me more.

“Dad. Just some girls from school and in my class. Nothing more.” I tried so well to stop my body from shaking, and fortunately, I did. Just that I couldn't stop my voice from sounding so terrible.

“Okay. Who is Wilfred then?” Dad asked again, more calmly this time.

Mum hissed in annoyance and impatient. “Her supposed boyfriend. God! What happened to my daughter?”

I looked past my dramatic mum to Emmanuel who stared back at me now with a somewhat lost look. I felt like skinning him alive.

Now that my dirty linen is out, what next?

DEDUN'S PLIGHT
EPISODE 7

“Sir, I need your help. My spiritual life is drained. I'm losing my stand spiritually. I don't want to end up in hell.” I buried my face in my palms and sobbed, my words hitting me like arrows even when I never meant it. Master Ben, the English teacher who is also the fellowship coordinator, sat back on his chair, totally discombobulated. He sighed over and over again.

“It's okay. God is still in the business of helping sinners and backsliders. You only need to trace your way back to God.” “I've tried severally, but I still go back to my past, to my sin.” I replied, dropping my hand slowly on my lap after wiping my face with the handkerchief he offered me.

“But, Dedun, how did you get here? When did you start walking and dining with the unrighteous? How did you get here?” His brows were furrowed, and his arms were folded. I struggled on my seat, not knowing what to say next. This is not as easy as explained.

“I'm sorry, Sir. I was just caught up in the web.” I rolled my eyes as he adjusted the watch on his wrist to check the time. “It's okay. You should not say sorry to me. You owe

God an apology instead. I have a class by 1 P.M. Let's meet tomorrow to talk about this.” He said, arranging the books on his table.

“Sir, about that…”

“What about that?”

“Can I be coming to your lodge every evening for more mentorship? I really need this, Sir. And maybe a little help here and there in English language too.” I twisted my fingers, very nervous and anxious about his response.

“Corpers' lodge? No. That won't be possible.” He uttered coldly and stood up before I could say another word, walking towards the door.

“If I'm to be your sister and I'm in this mess, will you leave me to fend for myself? Sir, do you think it's easy to come here and ask for your help? It's not. It took me days of pain and tries to gather boldness before I could come here.” The tears threatened to fall again.

He stood still as I got up from the chair and walked towards him dejectedly. “Sir, just know that my blood will be upon your head if I die and go to hell.” He stared right into my eyes and replied, “It's not like that, Dedun. We can

meet in school, not in the lodge. Okay… fine… you can come, but just Tuesdays and Wednesdays."

"Thank you, Sir." I smiled and stepped out of his office, my heart leaping for joy. One goal smashed.

*

The day couldn't get any duller as the HARM girls were busy with their phones while I had my head bent, groaning in pain from dysmenorrhea and also executing the great project. Almost instantly, I felt someone's presence beside me. Thinking it was Wilfred, I lifted my head quickly to take a glance.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm here to say sorry." Emmanuel replied, his eyes on my hands holding my abdomen. "What's wrong with your stomach? Cramps?" he asked with concern, lowering his voice.

"None of your business. What are you here to say sorry for?" I asked again with a curious and knowing look. "For telling your parents everything. It was never my intention. They asked so many questions." His hands settled on the desk while mine held my head, which seemed to be falling apart.

“Emmanuel, I want you to go as far as possible away from me. I don't want to see you. I don't want to have anything to do with you. And I don't want my boyfriend to meet you here. You know what he's capable of doing.”

“Like giving me heavy blows and slaps like he did the last time?”

I could feel the sarcasm in his voice. “Like reaping your heart off.” This very word reminded me of what is to come.

“Ha ha ha…” He laughed lightly, pissing me off.

“Please leave. I don't want to shout.”

“I'll leave. I just want to say this: that we stopped being friends doesn't mean you should stop your friendship with Jesus. He's the best friend we can ever have. Sometimes, I wonder if this is really the best friend I used to know. You now say yes to a lot of things you once said no to, like dating and keeping bad friends. You're drowning, Dedun. You need to come back and allow Christ to restructure and remold you for His use.” He gave me a cute smile, stood up, and left for his new seat with his hands in his trouser pocket “Whatever!” I muttered loud enough for him to hear and for me to reflect. How time flies!

DEDUN'S PLIGHT

EPISODE EIGHT

How time flies!

I waved those words aside as they strongly resonated with my mum's words as I hurried down the stairs to the old science lab where we usually meet.

“My daughter, I know I may not be as modernized as other mothers out there, but I can tell when a daughter is going astray. This is not the definition of a sound Christian that you claimed to be.” My mother said that night, filled with rage.

Stephen added more salt to the injury as he filled their ears with the story of how I was following some Jezebels around.

In his voice, I knew he was only speaking out of frustration and anger because none of the girls accepted to date him.

The painful thing is, I agree with them. I'm lost but…

“Hey!” My hands dropped from the door knob as I turned to see Wilfred leaning close with a curious look.

“You're good? I've been calling you.” I ruffled my hair and held back my breath for a while, speechless.

“Ye…yeah. I'm fine. Just stressed. Let's go.” I stuttered, opened the door, and gently stepped in after a thorough search with my eyes for any invaders.

“We've been waiting for you guys. Especially you, Dedun. We've got no time.” Mercy said.

“We're here now.” I replied with a hint of disgust and settled into a dusty chair close to the large table in the heart of the room.

“Good. What's the feedback?”

“He agreed that I can come to the lodge sometimes. You guys will handle the rest, right?”

“Handle the rest? Like taking your place? You're really funny.” Abigail replied, and I just hissed and turned to the rest, neglecting Wilfred, who stood arms akimbo, following the conversation.

“Your job is to capture him. Ours is to kill him and bring out his heart.” She demonstrated the kill with her hands sliding past her neck. I almost puked from irritation and how carelessly she could discuss something vital with less concern.

“See, babe, I know it's your first time and you're probably scared. Just do it as if you're acting and don't put in emotion. Okay? Las Las, we will still die one day.” Wilfred admonished, now behind me, playing with the ends of my hair.

“You know about this too?” I raised my eyes, turning back to give him a deadly stare.

“This one… he's the boss. Forget all this packaging. He's just working behind the scenes.” They all laughed again, hitting one another's shoulder playfully.

“Okay, then. I'm going back to class.”

“So quick?”

“Yeah.” And off I went, not giving them a chance to say one more word.

This is the beginning of the end.

DEDUN'S PLIGHT

EPISODE NINE

“Who sent you, Dedun?” I shivered in fear with my brows furrowed in a frown. Who sent me? That was entirely out of line.

“I… I don't understand. I came on my own to seek help.” I replied, and he smiled sadly and, for the first time since I came in, he sank into one of the sofas and stared at nothing in particular.

“I've been your teacher for over 4 years, and I know you a lot, perhaps even more than you know yourself. I know how hot and vibrant you used to be for God; you never joked with the school fellowship. You were even the leader of the mass choir. Hmmmm….”

“You think I don’t know you were pretending the other day in my office? I knew. And I know you've been sent on a mission to destroy me. Guess what? Christ has gone before you and revealed this mystery to me. Dedun, for

how long will you allow the devil to be manipulating your life?”

I itched my hair briskly; his fierce words caused me to have pangs. I could hardly breathe as the heat of his words hit directly. The HARM girls' method failed this time. Now I'm caught. What next?

“Jesus is next. He's your only sure and guaranteed refuge.” I flipped my lashes in fear and surprise.

Did he just read my mind?

“I'm sorry, Sir.” I replied instead, suddenly noticing how short my gown was. It was far from my knee, just the curvy type that exposes my laps.

"Say that to Jesus. You've hurt Him a lot.”

Jesus talk again. Oh, not now!

“Sir, I understand what you're saying. But I've gone too far, too deep in sin. Jesus cannot save a wretched girl like me. It's a do or die thing.”

I picked up my green handbag on the couch, stood up, gestured, and walked out.

*

“That was what happened, Priestess. I'm sorry. He caught me.” I trembled my knees on the cold floor and buried my face in the ground.

“You're silly. Where are the HARM girls? Come forward.” She ordered, and the four came out from the crowd, their heels making a concrete sound.

“Why didn't you instruct her like I ordered?”

“They did, and I….”

“Shut up your mouth! The question is not passed to your court.” Happiness cautioned her tone, mixed with hatred and anger.

I swallowed back my saliva and straightened, still on my kneeling position, with my hands akimbo, prepared for the worst.

“We did instruct her, Ma'am. She threw it right back into our faces and told us she would handle it in her own way.” Mercy said, and my mouth opened wide in shock.

“In addition, Ma'am, she bluntly refused our help and assistance and asked us to go and look for jobs since we all, including you, are jobless.” Abigail added.

My heart tore into a million pieces as the Priestess stared at me for a while.

She laughed out loud, and others joined in, almost acting insane.

"Since you could think of disobeying me and toiling with my work, you'll henceforth be avoided like a plague and discarded by men. You can leave.”

DEDUN'S PLIGHT.

EPISODE TEN

I unwrapped the towel from my frail body and quickly applied my body lotion and hurriedly put on my school uniform from the drawer.

I was late for school, and that was because I spent 1 hour and 30 minutes in the bathroom washing off the smell from my body.

Do you think you read right? Yes, you did! After my return from the meeting with the Priestess yesterday, my brother and little sister noted that I smelled strangely and differently in an offensive manner.

I made sure I applied different perfumes on my body, with roll-on almost emptying the container.

Now, I'm good to go. I grabbed my snapback and came out to the dining room where Kid Sis was already waiting with her lunch bag beside her.

“Hmmm... what's that smell? You smell so bad. Even worse than yesterday.” Bro Stephen remarked, covering his nose, and I simply smiled.

“You and this your jokes. We're late for school already, jare.” I waved it aside and took my sister's hand, helping out with the lunch bag.

I saw how she stylishly covered her nose and hoped all these was because of the silly joke that clown just said.

*

Tears poured down willingly from my eyes. I had no strength to push them back.

I sat at the far back of the class, my heart almost ripping off.

“It seems she's decaying.”

“She smells like a dead goat.” Mercy cracked, and the whole class burst into laughter.

“Maybe she is suffering from an STD or something. Gosh! The smell is making me wanna puke.”

I covered my ears with my hands to stop the heartbreaking remarks from penetrating. It yielded little result.

“He loves you, Dearly.” I heard the familiar voice beside me and lifted my head slowly, not hiding the tears on my face.

“What do you want, Emmanuel? Everyone says I stink. I'm smelling. Go away!”

“No. I'm here to stay.” He replied and sat down beside me.

“You don't hate me for all I've done?”

“Hate? Far from it. I love you with the love of the Lord.” He sang the last part with a smile.

“I'm smelling. Are you not perceiving it?” I asked again, curiously. The whole class now has their eyes on us.

“What I perceive is the saving hands of Christ radiating around you. Jesus still loves you, Dedun. I know you've made mistakes. No one is perfect. Just open your heart to Him. He can heal you.”

I sobbed more quietly this time, holding my locker.

“You mean He can heal me of this plague? Oh God! I'm sorry.”

“Yes. Jesus is ever willing and ready to heal and save His own if only you can retrace your way back to Him. He's God, and there's none like me.”

“Why do you still care about me? I betrayed you?” I asked.

“Because I have God inside of me, and He is Love.” He smiled and took my hands, already speaking in tongues.

*

After the short prayer section of forgiveness, restoration, and healing, I felt so much peace within me. One that flows unendingly.

I found Christ again.

I found joy again.

The offensive smell that scares everyone away is gone.

And I found my best friend again. He's a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

No sin is too big for God to forgive, and I, Dedunke, can testify.

THE END.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Joseph Ruth Oluwadarasimi is a young writer whose aim is to reach out to others through God's word.

She was born in Osun state, Ifetedo. She's currently residing in Edo state with her family. She hails from Kogi state, Olamaboro LGA.

She has made huge and remarkable progress in her career as a creative writer and coach.

As a teenager, she's committed to making a change in the world, inspiring her fellow teenagers, and broadcasting the message of Christ.

She's the author of from my heart to your, dear Teen.
This is her second book and first fiction work.

Connect with her on her social media handles;
Facebook:Joseph Ruth Oluwadarasimi
WhatsApp:09156592762