

FRIEND OR FOE?

BREATH OF LIFE NOVELS



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this novel to every friend of God.

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CHAPTER 1

"Josephine... Josephine..." That was my mum's voice ringing in my head.

"Don't go out, it's late." I heard her voice again despite the fact that I was far from the house. I had walked out on my mum after an argument.

You are not surprised, are you?

I used to argue with my mum about any little thing she told me. I felt she knew nothing about life.

"Mum, everything you are saying only worked for you then. Our own eyes are now opened and you don't expect whatever your parents told you to work for us." That was my usual response to her whenever she tried to correct me.

"Josephine..." My head was filled with her voice. I lost focus on where I was going with my roommate, Hannah.

I was jolted out of my thoughts as Hannah nudged me angrily.

"Josie! Focus! Why are you absent minded?" Hannah was angry. She had probably been talking to me.

"Were you saying anything?" I asked her.

Hannah stopped walking. She stared at me in silence for some seconds. The croaking of the frogs was the only sound that could be heard. I was barely able to see her face as it was very dark.

"Haven't you made up your mind?" She asked me.

"About what?" I asked her, pretending not to know what she was talking about.

"Is this a joke? Where are we going to?" She screamed at me.

I gave her a confused look.

She sighed in frustration with her hands akimbo. "You know what? Go back home and make up your mind. I don't want you to get there and start fumbling as if you're being forced. Remember you don't have any alternative. It's either you join or you join. You've been marked."

I flinched at the word 'marked'. I watched as Hannah walked away, leaving me in the dark. I checked my watch and it was quarter past eleven.

"Am I really going to walk back home alone this night?" I asked myself as tears streamed down my face.

"What have you gotten yourself into, Josephine?" I could not stop asking myself questions as I walked slowly to the house.

I really wished something evil could befall me on the way.

"God, take my life." I sobbed.

I couldn't believe I was calling on God. I felt I needed to die but I wasn't bold enough to take my life.

I finally got to the entrance of the house after what seemed like forever.

I stood at the door and tried to wipe my tears. I didn't want to get my mum worried about me.

I took a deep breath before I reached for the key in my bag. I opened the door and I was not surprised to see my mum in the living room.

She sprang to her feet immediately she saw me.

"Josephine! Where are you coming from?" She re-tied her wrapper as she walked towards me.

I ignored her and went into my room. My mum rushed inside my room before I could lock the door.

"Josephine, you've not answered my question." My mum stood at the door, fixing her gaze on me.

I didn't respond to her. I wanted to be alone. I needed to think. Turning off my phone which had been my source of light seemed to be the best option and that was exactly what I did.

My mum sighed as she understood that I was trying to tell her to leave my room.

"Josephine, the devil will not have any reason to rejoice over your life. You are for Jesus." She turned on her own torch and walked out of my room.

"The devil is already rejoicing over my life, mum." I screamed after her.

The word 'marked' came back to my memory. I sincerely hoped Hannah didn't mean what she said.

"If I don't have an alternative, why does she want me to make up my mind?" I wept.

"It's either I join them or I join them. I never planned to live this kind of life. How on earth did I get to this point?"

CHAPTER 2

Some years back...

"You this girl! What's your problem?" My mum was at it again.

"Where were you yesterday?"

I rolled my eyes as I pretended to rack my brain.

"Mummy Toyin's place," I replied, avoiding my mum's piercing look.

"That was where you asked me to spend the night."

"Lie!" My mum screamed. "How come you were missing yesterday around 9 PM?"

"Missing? Mum, I'm not a pin." I stole a glance at my mum who was fuming in anger.

"Will you shut up and answer my question! Toyin's mother called me yesterday and told me you were yet to get to her house around some minutes past 9 PM."

"And she didn't deem it fit to call you back when I eventually got to her house?" I mustered up courage and questioned my mum.

"What time did you eventually get to her house?"

"Some minutes to ten." I lied. I actually got to Toyin's house some minutes past 11 PM.

"Josephine, why can't you be like Toyin?"

Folding my arms, I raised my brow at her question.

"Have you ever seen Toyin giving her mother any reason to shout?"

I lost my temper. "Mum! That's because Toyin's mother is cool headed. I've told you to stop comparing me with Toyin. I am Josephine!"

"Really? Josephine? You are just fifteen and you are talking back at me. By the time you are twenty, no, eighteen, you would be exchanging punches with me, right?"

"I don't know about that one oo. You didn't ask me why I got to her house late and you are already comparing me with Toyin." I murmured as I walked to my room.

Who was Toyin for my mum to make her a yardstick for me?

"That hypocrite!" I hissed as I plopped into my bed.

My mum was the regional women coordinator in my Church. Due to her position in the Church, she had series of meetings lined up for her. Whenever she was not around, she used to instruct me to stay the night at Toyin's house because she did not want me to stay alone in the house at night. I didn't like Toyin and her mother for anything. They were members of the Church we used to attend.

Toyin knew how to act like a good child in the public. All the parents in the Church would always ask their children, "why can't you be like Toyin?" What they didn't understand was that Toyin was a green snake under green grass. I got to know because I was very regular in her house due to my mum's insistence. Toyin was the only girl my mum liked in the Church because the former knew how to play her game.

I hissed as I picked up my phone. "It's not mummy's fault. I blame Toyin's mum. Let her not mind her business and find something to do about her daughter's fake life."

My phone rang.

"Speak of the devil." I said under my breath as I stared at the caller ID, contemplating whether to pick the call or not.

I opted for the former and tried to listen to whatever she had to say.

She actually said the usual. Each time I had any issue with my mum, she would call Toyin's mum and report me to her. Toyin's mum

would end up calling me and she would command me to come over to her house.

I hissed as I barged into my mum's bedroom.

"Mum! When will this stop?"

My mum looked up from her Bible without lifting her head. She looked out of her glasses and fixed her gaze on me.

"Why must Toyin's mum always call me? Must you always report me to her?"

My mum shifted her attention back to her Bible for some seconds before she looked back at me. "This will stop when you start acting responsibly like Toyin."

"There she goes again!" I stormed out of her room.

I left the house for Toyin's house to hear whatever her mum had to say even though I knew that not a word from her would count.

CHAPTER 3

I pretended to pay attention to Toyin's mum as she tongue lashed me.

"Josephine, you're being rude to your mother because you feel you know more than her, right? She told me that you were exchanging words with her. Let me assume it's because you are fifteen, teenagers tend to misbehave. By the time you are twenty, your eyes will be opened. I just pray you wouldn't have killed your mother before then..."

She kept talking and talking. I didn't bother to listen to whatever she was saying because she repeated those lines whenever she called me.

"It's high time you got serious with your life. You're already in your final year in Secondary school and you will be writing your final exam in two weeks' time. You've seen your time table, right?"

"Yes, ma." I replied coldly, staring into space.

"Hope you're studying?"

I mumbled a "yes".

"You're always free to come and study with Toyin, okay?"

I smiled dryly. She probably took my smile for a 'yes' because she didn't ask any further question.

"Let me get you a copy of Toyin's personal time table."

I watched as she went inside Toyin's room. She came back some seconds later with the nonsense she called time table.

I took it from her and announced that I wanted to take my leave.

"My regards to your mum." She said.

"Alright, ma." I replied as I walked out of the house.

"The God my mother is serving will not allow me to have anything to do with Toyin." I said to myself as I squeezed the nonsense she gave me and disposed it.

I got home and met my mum's absence.

"She must have gone for one of her meetings again." I thought to myself.

"Thank God I'm leaving this house next year. I can't wait to gain admission and be free." I said to myself as I gazed at the exam time table.

My dream of leaving the house the following year did not come to pass as I failed the exam. I became a shadow of my self as I imagined Toyin gaining admission before me.

My mum didn't help matters. Immediately she saw my result, she told me something that made me to lose interest in my academics.

"Josephine, I'm really disappointed in you," she began.

"You know what? I'm doing my best to be a good mother to you but since you don't want to be a good daughter, you are free to do whatever you like with your life. Look at Toyin, I'm very sure she will gain admission this year. Did you see her result?"

I expected the question to be a rhetorical one but my mum was expecting an answer from me. I kept staring at her without responding to her and this got her infuriated.

"Your stubbornness will land you somewhere you won't like. In fact, it has started punishing you already. I told you to study with Toyin but you refused. Let's see who will be ashamed when she's the only one left in the teens' church with Secondary school children."

I didn't say a word to my mum. She hissed before she continued.

"Remember Toyin doesn't have two heads. If your dad was alive, would you be behaving like this? Toyin's dad is also not alive, yet

she's not giving her mum any head ache. Anyway, I don't have much to tell you. The only thing I will say is that when you are ready to retake the exam, let me know. I'm not going to beg you. By the time you spend up to ten years at home, you will know what is best for you."

True to my mum's words, she said nothing to me about my academics. She was so tired of me and I was also tired of her.

She faced her ministry squarely and didn't even act as if she had a daughter.

I was also less concerned because I wanted to be independent.

CHAPTER 4

I made up my mind not to re-take any exam and that was exactly what I did. Toyin's mother and some of my mum's other friends spoke to me but I was angry with my mum.

I stumbled on Toyin's WhatsApp status one afternoon.

"200 level, first semester done and dusted."

I sighed. "Toyin will be in 300 level before I know it." I told myself.

As at then, registrations for different examinations were ongoing. I spoke to my mum about my decision to re-take my papers and she agreed.

I wasn't really prepared for the exam, so I was not surprised when I saw my result.

I failed woefully!

That was when it dawned on me that I had to be serious.

I was tired of virtually everything at home. I picked up my books as I was very serious about gaining admission the following year. I informed my mother that I'd like to take my papers one more time.

“One last time.” My mother told me.

I didn’t understand what she meant by that statement but whatever she meant made me to be very serious.

My seriousness wasn’t in vain as I ended up gaining admission.

My joy knew no bounds the minute I printed out my admission letter. I rushed home with the hope of sharing the good news with my mum but I met her absence.

“As usual.” I muttered.

I was on my way to the dining room when I saw a piece of paper on one of the chairs. My mum left a note for me.

“I have to rush to Mummy Aworin’s house. I was told that Bridget is bleeding. I will be back tomorrow. Take care of the house.”

I began to wonder when my mother became a nurse that took care of bleeding ladies.

Bridget was one of the ‘holier than thou’ girls in the Church. Her mother, Mummy Aworin was one of the women coordinators.

“Whatever caused her bleeding is none of my business.” I said to myself.

I smiled as I remembered that I had eventually gained admission.

My mother returned home the following day and would not stop talking about the ‘children of nowadays’.

“Josephine, listen to me and listen very carefully,” my mother began.

“I told you that Bridget was bleeding, right?”

“Yes, ma.”

“Do you know why?” She asked.

To me, my mum was only being dramatic.

“No, ma.” I replied.

“She got pregnant and tried to abort.”

My mum expected me to say something but I said nothing because I was not surprised.

“Do you know she has put her parents to shame? The daughter of a group pastor!”

She clapped sarcastically before she continued.

“Josephine, please in all your unseriousness and waywardness, don’t go to the extent of bringing me an unwanted baby. Can you hear me?”

I rolled my eyes.

“Don’t give me any reason to wash blood filled clothes. If you like, try what Bridget did. By the time you get well, you will wash your blood filled clothes by yourself”.

I watched my mum as she stood up.

“I don’t know the problem with the children of nowadays. Being wayward is now the order of the day.” She murmured as she walked into her room.

She was about to open the door to her room when I decided to speak.

“Mummy, I have something to tell you.”

“About what? You can see I just returned.”

“It’s about admission.”

She was instantly interested in what I wanted to tell her. She sat on the chair that was very close to her and paid attention to me.

“I hope it’s good news this time around?” My mother asked, glaring at me.

CHAPTER 5

"I hope it's good news this time around?" My mother asked, glaring at me.

"Yes, ma. I've gained admission."

"Into Toyin's school?"

"Yes, ma." I replied.

My mother had insisted that I should study in the same school with Toyin. We had argued back and forth about it but she had insisted that it was either Toyin's school or no other school.

"I want you to be in the same school with someone I trust." She had told me.

"So you trust Toyin?" I questioned her.

"Of course! Isn't it obvious that she is a good girl?"

"Good girl indeed." I mumbled. "Mummy, Toyin is not who you think she is. That girl is a pretender."

"I know you don't like Toyin. I don't expect you to like her."

"Toyin does very bad things. Things I'm even ashamed to say with my mouth."

"How come her mother has never complained about her?" My mum had asked me.

I didn't answer her question that day and that was the end of that conversation.

She was excited when she heard that I would study in the same school with Toyin.

"Have you told Toyin?" She asked me.

"Why should I tell Toyin?" Her question got me irritated.

My mother glared at me as she reached for her phone. I guessed she was about to call Toyin.

My guess was right!

She asked Toyin about how I would get my room and how I would go about course registration.

The wolf in sheep's clothing answered my mum and even offered to take me round the school. My mum appreciated her and ended the call.

"Josephine, Toyin is three levels ahead of you. I want you to listen to whatever she tells you. She attends a very good fellowship on campus. See her as your big sister at school."

"Mum! Toyin is my age mate." I protested.

"She's not your level mate. Josephine, position is superior to age. As far as your education is concerned, Toyin is not your mate. The earlier you accept that fact, the better for you."

I could not find my tongue. It was glaring that my mother preferred Toyin to me.

Whatever!

The most important thing at that moment was that I was leaving my mother's house. I'd be able to breathe in fresh air.

No one would be there to tell me to go to Church, no one would be there to dictate to me the type of friends to keep or the type of clothes to wear. I would be as free as a bird!

"When you get to school, make sure you locate Toyin's fellowship centre. You must attend the same fellowship with her. Meet with her

friends at Church and make them your very best friends." My mother spoke as if she was reading my mind.

"Mum, let me make myself clear to you. Toyin is not a member of any fellowship."

"Says who?"

"I know. Remember I stayed in her room when I went to write Post UTME?"

"Eeh ehn?"

"She didn't do anything related to Church. You need to see the type of friends that girl keeps..."

"Hold it right here. I don't expect you to see anything good in Toyin. That's your cup of tea. I know you want to go to school and become something else. The God I'm serving will not allow you to put me to shame." My mum hissed before she continued.

"I couldn't sleep throughout last night because of Bridget. I have to rest." She yawned as she walked into her room.

I could not stop wondering why she would not believe anything I said about Toyin. To her, Toyin was the saint and I was the filthy sinner.

CHAPTER 6

Before I continue my story, I would like to say that I'm not trying to blame my mother for what befell me. I admit that I was stubborn and disobedient. Although, my mother had her faults, I had mine too and I really suffered for it.

I went to school as an excited fresher whose main reason for going to school was to be free from home.

On getting to school, I went straight to the hostel that had been allocated to me. I had reluctantly agreed with my mother to live in the school hostel.

I met a lady in the room, whose name I later found out to be Brittany. I later found out that she was already in her third year in the University.

She smiled at me immediately I entered the room and I could not help but reciprocate the smile.

"Any other bag?" She asked me as she put on her slippers.

"Yes, I still have some bags downstairs." I replied.

We went for the other bags and she helped me to settle in. There were two other empty bed spaces in the room. I assumed they were yet to be allocated to anyone.

“You’re a fresher, right?” Brittany asked me.

“Yes”

“Welcome to Supreme University.”

“Thank you.” I smiled.

“You are...?”

“Josephine.” I yawned.

“I should leave you to rest.” She said as she got up from my bed.

With that little conversation with Brittany, I liked her. She had an aura of peace.

I had barely fallen asleep when I heard a knock at the door.

Brittany went to get the door and I heard a familiar voice asking if Josephine was around.

“That should be Toyin.” I said to myself.

I wondered how she located my room.

“Mummy at work.” I thought.

I had to suspend my rest to listen to whatever she had to say. I hated her guts for the fact that my mother preferred her to me.

“Good evening, Josie.” Toyin said as she sat on Brittany’s chair.

I managed to mumble a “good evening”.

“Welcome to school.”

I nodded.

“I just came to see how well you’re doing.”

It was obvious that Toyin was not comfortable with my reaction towards her.

“Your mum said I should take you to my fellowship centre.”

“What!” I screamed in disbelief. “My mum told you to...” I smiled knowingly for few seconds before I could find my tongue.

“You know what? Just describe the way to the place. I’ll locate it myself.” I finally spoke.

“I’m not attending any fellowship,” she blurted out, “but I can recommend one, some of my friends go there.”

She gave me a piece of paper that contained the description of the way to the fellowship centre.

“You can always call me if you need anything.” She said as she stood up to take her leave.

“Nonsense!” I hissed immediately she was out of my room.

Brittany cast me a questioning look. I ignored her and disposed the piece of paper Toyin gave me before I went back to sleep.

CHAPTER 7

My hope of doing whatever I liked in school was dashed as Brittany would not let me be. She was too spiritual for my liking.

She spoke to me about Christ some days after I got to school.

“Brittany, I’m a Christian and I know everything you are telling me.” I told her when she asked if I was ready to accept Christ.

“Jesus died on the cross, abi? Then he rose again on the third day. Yes, I know. Why is my mum the women coordinator of a whole region if I don’t know what salvation means?”

Brittany was quiet as she listened to me. I wondered what was running through her mind. I needed to make her understand that I was very familiar with the Bible. Why was I one of the Sunday school teachers before I finally gained admission?”

Brittany smiled at me.

Why was she smiling at me?

Didn’t she get the message I was trying to pass across?

I didn’t want anybody to disturb me with evangelism. Most times, when anyone tried to preach to me, I made sure I proved that I was

very conversant with the Bible. The preacher would get tired after some time of argument and would conclude that I was born again.

I expected the same from Brittany but her smile showed me that she was not deceived.

“Josie... It’s very beautiful that you know what I’m talking about but I’m not talking about the knowledge. Remember that if you know these things...”

I cut her short. “Happy are ye if you do them.”

“Thank God you know that too. Have you accepted God’s gift of salvation? Are you living the life of Christ? Do you want to go to hell despite the fact that...”

“Brittany!” I snapped. “It’s okay. I’ve heard you.” She was getting on my nerves.

Just then, my phone rang.

“Mummy, good afternoon, ma.”

“Josephine, how have you been?”

“I’ve been fine, ma.”

“Did Toyin deliver my message?”

I rolled my eyes. “She did, ma”

“Good! Make sure you don’t forget God on campus.”

“Did I know Him when I was at home?” I wondered.

“... how is your roommate?”

“She’s fine, ma.”

“Alright, dear. Don’t forget Jesus loves you.”

“Yes, ma.”

“My regards to Toyin.”

I sighed in frustration. “Okay, ma.”

“Alright, bye.”

“Yes, ma.”

I flung my phone to the bed.

“What’s up, Josie?” Brittany must have noticed my frustration.

“Must it always be about Toyin?”

“Who is Toyin?”

“The lady that came here the other day.”

“Okay, what about her?”

“I don’t like her.”

“It’s glaring. I saw what happened in the morning.”

That morning, we ran into Toyin on our way to our different lecture halls but I pretended as if I didn’t see her. Brittany had to severally nudge me before I responded coldly to Toyin’s “good morning”.

“I also saw the piece of paper Toyin gave you on the floor this morning. It’s obvious you don’t want to have anything to do with her.”

“I’m not interested in the fellowship she came to tell me about. If I see the need to attend any fellowship, I’ll sort myself out.”

“If you see the need?” Brittany was surprised.

“Yes. If I don’t see the need, there’s nothing anyone can do about it.”

“Josie, you can’t do without God. You know, right?”

I didn’t respond to Brittany. My mind was made up. I didn’t have a sincere reason for running away from God. I only wanted to prove to my mother that I had the right to do whatever I liked with my life.

CHAPTER 8

“I’m going to Church with you today.” I announced to Brittany one Sunday morning.

“Alright.” She simply replied.

I had not stepped my feet into any fellowship centre since I got to school. It was not as if I really wanted to attend Church service that morning.

My mother had been pestering me. She was not really my problem as it was so easy to lie to her. Brittany was my problem.

“Josephine, lying won’t take you anywhere.” She would say whenever I told my mum that I went to Church.

“I know.”

“So why do you keep lying?”

“Brittany, lying saves me the energy of explaining my reasons for not doing what my mum wants me to do.”

“Then why can’t you do what she wants you to do instead of lying?”

I was tired of repeating that conversation with Brittany, so I decided to do what my mother wanted.

“At least, I won’t lie today.” I told myself.

I sat at the posterior end of the Church, operating my phone. I knew the service would get boring at some point so I got bubble gums which I chewed noisily, distracting those sitting close to me.

I was like that horse that was forced to the riverside but blatantly refused to drink.

“The choir.” I heard the moderator of the service.

I watched as the choristers filed out.

“Hypocrites!” I hissed.

Was Bridget not a member of the choir before she got pregnant and tried to abort?

Was I not a chorister before I gained admission?

“Let them sing whatever they want to sing and let the service come to an end.” I thought as I directed my attention back to my phone.

I was forced to redirect my attention to the choir immediately the soloist began to sing.

I wanted to see the owner of such euphonious voice. I could not take my eyes off the singer.

A beautiful lady with such well pitched voice!

I wasn't even paying attention to the lyrics of the song. I was only interested in the voice of the singer!

I immediately clicked on the sound recorder app icon on my phone.
"This voice is too good to be listened to just once."

Right there on my seat, I had already decided that I would never step my feet into that fellowship centre again. Brittany could say whatever she liked. The service was just too long.

"I don't know what exactly her problem is. Can't she just let me be? I might have to change my hostel next session." I thought.

I nodded satisfactorily as my favorite singer sang the last part of the song ad lib.

Her voice was just so perfect!

Immediately the choir piece got to an end, I shifted my attention back to my phone. I was not interested in whatever the Pastor had to preach.

I leaned against the wall outside the Church, stamping my right foot impatiently. Brittany was really getting on my nerves.

After it took ages for the 'boring' service to come to an end, Brittany passed a note to me, telling me she had to see some people. She was in the evangelism unit of the fellowship.

I was so furious.

Why on earth would she wait to see people when she was fully aware that I didn't know the way back to the hostel?

"What is the meaning of this nonsense?" I questioned as I stared at my phone's lock screen.

"1:10 PM!" I announced to myself.

I had been standing there under the scorching sun, waiting for her for the past twenty minutes. With the hope of sighting Brittany close for me to beckon to her, I decided to enter the Church.

I was about to step into the gate when a lady who was talking to someone behind her bumped into me. My phone slipped from my hand and dropped to the ground.

What nonsense!

"Look where you're going!" I wanted to scream at her but the words got stuck in my throat when I saw who she was.

CHAPTER 9

"Look where you're going! I wanted to scream at her but those words got stuck in my throat when I saw who she was.

The beautiful singer!

My anger suddenly got vaporized.

"I'm so sorry" She said as she picked up my phone. She examined the screen before she handed my phone to me.

"I'm so sorry" She repeated.

I nodded.

"You're waiting for someone?" She asked.

"Yes, I'm waiting for my roommate."

"Her name?"

"Brittany"

"Sister Brittany?"

She peeped into the church.

"She's presently in a meeting. I don't think she would be through anytime soon"

I sighed as I also peeped into the church.

"You look so tired. Do you really need to wait for her?"

"Yes, I don't know the way back to the hostel."

"It's your first time here?"

I nodded

"Wow! Welcome, Sister..?"

"Josephine" I said.

She peeped into the Church again.

"Where do you stay?" She asked.

"Becky hall" I replied.

"I can take you there if you don't mind. Sister Brittany is still very busy."

"I don't mind, sis. Thank you so much."

I was really grateful. I could not wait to step my feet out of that Church for good. I already had more than enough for one Sunday.

"Hope you enjoyed fellowship with us today?" She asked on our way to the hostel.

I smiled dryly before I replied.

"Yes I enjoyed the choir piece. Your voice is really not from here, I must say." I tried to sincerely answer the question.

"Thank you." She flashed her well set dentition at me. "Should we expect you tomorrow evening?"

I cast a sharp glance at her.

"For what?"

"Evening Service." She replied.

"I'll think about it."

She shrugged.

She must have noticed I was not interested in the fellowship. I was pleased with the fact that she didn't force me to promise her that I would go for the evening service.

There was silence afterwards.

"What's your name?" I asked some minutes later, not because I really wanted to know. I was getting uncomfortable with the awkward silence.

"I'm Hannah." She simply replied.

We were already very close to my hostel.

"You also stay around here?" I asked.

"No, I stay off campus. I can't cope with the school hostel life. I prefer to live alone."

"Wow! And your parents agreed?"

"Why not?"

"Lucky you! I never wanted to live in the school hostel but my mum would not hear of it. I'm here based on her insistence."

"My parents also didn't agree at first but they ended up giving in when I didn't allow them to rest."

"Thank you so much, Hannah." I told her when we got to my hostel.

"Don't mention, Josephine."

We exchanged contacts before we parted ways.

"Josie! Josie!" Someone was tapping me impatiently.

I opened my heavy eyes and saw Brittany staring at me. I was about to close my eyes again when I perceived something.

Something had gotten burnt!

"Jeet!" I screamed as I jumped out of bed and rushed to the gas cooker in a corner in the room.

I found out that the cooker was already turned off. I checked the pot and the content was totally burnt.

"White rice turned black." I mouthed as I walked back to my bed and sat as I yawned tiredly.

Immediately Hannah and I parted ways earlier, I turned on my gas cooker and set a pot of rice on it. I could not explain how I slept off.

"Lunch is ruined. All thanks to you." I blamed Brittany.

"I don't understand." Brittany finally found her tongue.

"What says the time by your watch?" I questioned her.

CHAPTER 10

“What says the time by your watch?” I questioned her.

She hesitated before she replied. “Quarter past three.”

I folded my arms as I fixed a stern gaze on her, saying nothing.

“What has that got to do with the burnt food?” She asked.

I flared up.

“Everything, Brittany!”

Brittany was taken aback.

“You knew fully well that I would not find my way back to the hostel on my own yet, you deemed it fit to attend to other people in the Church till quarter past three? Is Sunday not supposed to be a day of rest?” I could not conceal the fact that I was very annoyed with Brittany.

“I’m sorry.” She simply said.

I instantly felt bad. That was the first time I screamed at Brittany. I watched as she quietly walked to her bedside.

“Brittany?”

She looked back at me and creased her left brow.

“I didn’t mean to shout at you. I’m not just happy with the fact that you kept me waiting at Church.”

“No problem, Josie. I’m sorry I kept you waiting. How did you find your way back to the hostel?”

“Someone helped me.”

“Who?”

I racked my brain to remember her name.

“The lead singer at Church today.” I eventually replied.

“Sister Hannah?” Brittany asked.

“Yes” I confirmed.

“Thank God for her.”

“Yes, you really need to thank her on my behalf when next you see her in Church.”

“On your behalf?”

“Yes, because I won’t be going with you to Church anymore.”

“I already apologized. Josie, I’m...”

“Brittany, it’s not about you. The service was too boring. I can’t even pinpoint something I learnt. I just went there to waste my time.”

“Really?” Brittany seemed not to understand me.

“I only enjoyed the choir piece. Hannah’s voice is topnotch. I even recorded the song.”

“Hmm... It is well,” was all Brittany could say.

Later that night, I chatted Hannah up to appreciate her for helping me. I didn’t hear from her after that night until many weeks later.

HANNAH

I woke up with a start. Beads of sweat dropped from my face as I panted heavily.

“This terrible nightmare again!” I mouthed in between gasps.

I felt my bedspread with my palms.

It was drenched with sweat!

“God, I’m tired!” I screamed.

My name is Hannah, the lady who Josephine met at the fellowship. I might no longer be alive by the time you would be reading my own part of the story.

Waking up feeling used and miserable was the routine every Wednesday morning for the past two years.

I would dream that I was being enslaved on a land filled with blood. A huge lady would command some men to fill very big containers with blood while I would be forced to carry those containers to a particular spot on the field. The containers were as big as a 500 litre capacity Storex tank.

After carrying about four of these containers, I would suddenly be awake.

I was always trying never to fall asleep every Tuesday night but I would always be forcefully drawn into the arms of sleep and wake up on Wednesday morning feeling drained.

CHAPTER 11

HANNAH

I managed to drag myself out of bed. I sat on the floor and stared into the space with a lot running through my mind.

My phone vibrated.

Tee Boss!

I sighed before I picked the call.

“Hannah?” That scary voice travelled from my phone speaker into my left ear.

“Boss” I replied.

“It’s eighteen hours to the first meet and greet for this month.” She said.

“Yes, boss. I remember.”

“Very good! On no account should you be late. Get in touch with your girls and remind them.” Her voice screamed influence.

“Yes, boss.”

“How about your new wolf?”

“Eerhm... Boss, I’m...” I stuttered as I racked my brain for the right words to say.

“Hannah!” Her voice screamed fury this time.

“Boss, I’m still working on it.”

“How many days will it take you to bring... You know what? I give you seven days, yes! Seven days for you to do the needful.”

I trembled as I dropped the call.

“Tee Boss doesn’t make empty threats.” I said to myself as tears streamed down my face.

“This morning is a disaster!”

Why would Tee Boss choose to call me after that terrible dream?

The nightmare began immediately I was initiated into “The Wolves” sisterhood. Being a two year old wolf, I had introduced only one new wolf. The sisterhood was already expecting another wolf from me.

“Just seven days!” I screamed.

“Hannah, to the work!”

I stared forlornly at Tee Boss as she addressed the sisterhood. She seemed to be pleased because most of the wolves were with their new wolves.

“I want to say welcome to the newbies here. We are sisters who love each other. We back each other up and we walk and work in the dark.” She picked her words one after the other as she walked to and fro in the hall.

“Darkness here doesn’t necessarily mean night. I mean we are coded here. We walk and work in codes...”

I looked around and I saw the apprehensive faces of the new wolves.

Innocent girls!

I was also once innocent until I met Tee Boss. My innocence was snatched away from me when I got initiated.

I sighed as I remembered that terrible day, the day I became an innocent, helpless monster.

“I’m lost forever.” I said to myself.

“What?”

I heard a voice beside me.

Tee Boss!

I looked around and saw an empty hall.

Everyone had gone!

“We’re done?” I knew I asked an annoying question.

“I was waiting for you to come back from the mind journey you embarked on. Now that you’re back, welcome.” Her words were sarcastic.

“I’m sorry, Tee Boss.”

She ignored my apology as she scrolled through her phone, searching for something.

“Get ready for the initiation of those new wolves next week Wednesday. I believe you should have also gotten yours before then.”

As she kept scrolling, my eyes caught a glimpse of an image on her phone and I didn’t know when I screamed.

“Josephine!”

CHAPTER 12

HANNAH

As she kept scrolling, my eyes caught a glimpse of an image on her phone and I didn't know when I screamed.

"Josephine!"

"What?" Tee Boss gave me a questioning glare. "You know Josephine?"

"Not really... I've only seen her once." I tried to explain.

"Where?" She asked impatiently.

"She attended the fellowship I..."

Tee Boss suddenly stood up and began to pace to and fro.

"Wow! Wow! Wow!" She kept exclaiming as she clapped.

"That's why I love planting agents in different fellowship centers." She was still pacing.

"Hannah?" She suddenly sat beside me. "I need you to track her down. She's the best girl to be a new wolf."

“Boss, she attended the fellowship only once and I don’t really know much about her. Besides...” I was trying to protest but Tee Boss cut me short.

“No excuse, Hannah!”

“You gave me only seven days to get a wolf. How do you want me to get her before then?”

“Josephine is worth my patience for thousands of days. She has all the qualities I need. She’s stubborn and secretive. If we are patient, we will get her.”

“Where do I begin the tracking from? It’s been long I heard from her.”

“You can send her a text.”

“Won’t that be weird?”

“Just do as I say!” She screamed at me.

She walked towards the door and suddenly turned back.

“Why do I have this feeling that you will not carry out this task as well as you should?”

I stared at her.

“For your information, Josephine is a hard nut. You have to be wise if you want to crack her with your hand. If you are not careful, your head will be used to crack the hard nut and you know what that means.”

“Make sure you record every conversation you have with her.” She said as she eventually walked out of the hall.

JOSEPHINE

I was busy with an assignment that needed to be urgently attended to when my phone vibrated.

It was a message from someone I was not interested in knowing. I ignored the message and concentrated on my assignment.

I made a mental note to check the message when I was ready.

I totally forgot about the message until the next morning. I immediately clicked on the message icon.

“09158...” The number didn’t seem familiar.

“Hello, Josephine. How have you been? It’s been a while. You’ve not been attending the fellowship. Is all well?” I read the message aloud.

“Who could have sent me this message?” I wondered.

“Did the person just notice my absence from Church?”

Right on that spot, I concluded that Brittany was at work.

CHAPTER 13

JOSEPHINE

“Who could have sent me this message?” I wondered.

“Did the person just notice my absence from Church?”

Right on that spot, I concluded that Brittany was at work.

I walked to her bedside and handed the phone to her.

“What’s up?” She asked me as she collected the phone.

“What’s that?” I asked her, referring to the text.

“A text.” She replied.

“From who?” I asked again.

“How am I supposed to know?” She handed my phone back to me.

I was confused.

If not Brittany, then who?

I didn't fill the new comer's form at Church when I went.

"Who then...?"

Just then, my phone rang.

The same number!

I reluctantly picked up the call.

"Hello" The voice was familiar but I couldn't place it.

"Good morning." I replied.

"Good morning, Josephine. This is Hannah."

"Ooh... Hannah, good morning."

"Yeah... How have you been. It's been a long while."

"I've... been okay..." I intentionally slurred to show that I was not interested in the conversation.

I felt she called to say something that had to do with the text she earlier sent.

“How is preparation for exam?”

“Fine.”

“Okay... I just called to remind you that it’s your first examination in this institution, so you have to put in your very best effort. You’re also starting on Monday, right?”

“Yes.”

“Make sure you...”

She went on and on, advising me as if I was a fresher. She eventually ended the call after she prayed for me.

“This is serious!” I stared at my phone in shock.

“What’s up?” Brittany asked.

“Wait... Let me confirm something.”

I checked the phone number that was used to text me and the one Hannah used to reach me.

“Hannah sent that text.” I announced to Brittany as I stared into the space.

“Are you surprised?” Brittany asked.

“I’m surprised plus confused.”

“Why?”

“I’m surprised she texted me after many weeks to ask me why I’ve not been attending fellowship. Did she just notice my absence? Then she called this morning and said nothing about the text she sent. Instead, she asked about my academics and prayed for me. Isn’t that confusing?”

Brittany shrugged.

“You aren’t saying anything?”

“I honestly don’t know what to say. I’d just say be careful.”

“Careful? Of what?” I was more confused.

“I don’t know but I smell something fishy. I’m having this premonition that something not making sense might happen.”

“There you go being spiritual again.”

Brittany ignored my statement.

“Why did you think I had something to do with the text.” She asked.

“Who should be my first suspect?” I questioned her. “Who brought the whole evangelism unit to the room to persuade me to attend fellowship?”

“You screamed at me when they left and sternly warned me to mind my business, didn’t you?”

I couldn’t say anything. I could vividly remember that day.

It was after the evening service that Hannah told me about. I didn’t attend the service just as I said and the next thing I saw was that some sisters came with Brittany to the room to check on me.

They asked me questions as to why I was absent from the fellowship that evening. I was very furious but I suppressed my anger till they left.

The volcano of my angry mind got erupted the minute they stepped out of the room.

“Brittany! You’re overstepping your boundary.” I said quietly but sternly as I was trying to control my anger.

“What did I do?” She asked innocently.

I flared up at her question.

“Why are you acting like you know nothing about the sisters that left just now? I can’t remember announcing my presence in your fellowship yesterday, so I see no reason for anyone to notice my absence today. I’m mature enough to know exactly what I want for myself. Please, let me be!”

“I don’t understand, Josephine.”

“I will explain. I don’t want anyone from your fellowship to come looking for me. Have I made myself clear?”

“Alright.” Brittany had simply replied.

Brittany’s gaze was still fixed on me, expecting an answer.

“Didn’t you tell me to mind my business?” She asked again.

"I did." I replied.

"Yes, you did. At this juncture, I'd just tell you to be careful. Though, I know you don't want to hear this, I'll still tell you. You need Jesus. If you keep rejecting Him, you will get into trouble very soon."

"Are you cursing me?"

"Why should I?"

Brittany said no more.

I went to bed that night really confused. Normally, Hannah's call and text should have been seen as 'she only called to check on me', but Brittany's premonition and my unsettled mind would not let me sleep.

"What exactly does Hannah want?"

CHAPTER 14

Hannah didn't stop checking up on me. She made sure she called me everyday after each exam. We were always chatting together about different issues. She never brought up any issue relating to 'fellowship' in our conversations.

"I should visit you before you go back home." She told me one evening.

I had written my last paper that day and I told her that my mother was already expecting me at home. She promised to visit me the following day.

"Hannah is coming to visit us tomorrow." I informed Brittany.

"Us? You and who?" Brittany asked.

"How many of us are in the room?"

"There are two empty bed spaces. You might be expecting new roommates." Brittany replied.

I didn't push the conversation because I was aware that Brittany knew what I was talking about.

"I'm at the door." Hannah said over the phone.

"Alright." I ended the call before I turned to Brittany.

"Hannah is around." I told her.

"Why didn't she knock?" Brittany queried.

I ignored her and went to get the door.

"Good afternoon, Hannah." I said as I led her into the room.

"Josie, good afternoon. Nice to see your face again." She replied as she made herself comfortable on the only chair in the room.

"Good afternoon, Hannah." Brittany said.

"Hey, Brittany, good afternoon." Hannah smiled briefly at Brittany before she turned to me.

"Josie, I'm so sure you are annoyed with me."

"Annoyed? What is she talking about?" I wondered.

"I don't get you." I sincerely replied.

"I'm so sorry, Josie. I actually forgot about you. I was scrolling on Facebook one evening when your image popped up, then I remembered you."

"No problem, Hannah."

"So how has everything been with you?"

"Everything has been okay. You know, just the normal student life."

"Normal student life, how?" Hannah asked.

"Attending classes plus tutorials, compiling assignments and later sorting them out." I tried to explain.

"Wow! No extra stuff? Just academics?"

"I don't know what you mean by extra stuff but yes, just academics."

"Any reason for that?"

"No reason in particular. I just love sticking to my corner. I'm not the loud type and I don't have many friends."

"Even at home?"

"I don't have friends even at home but my mum is forcing one lady on me."

I felt so relaxed speaking with Hannah. She was asking unnecessary questions and I found myself giving her answers.

Hannah didn't say much about herself. She only told me that she was in her third year and I got to know that we were in the same department. She didn't say a word about the text she sent.

When she was ready to leave, she bade Brittany goodbye and I saw her off.

I got back to the room to face Brittany's interrogatory gaze.

"Are you aware that Hannah recorded your conversation?" She asked me.

"No, why would she do that? How did you know?"

"I saw what she was doing on her phone through the mirror." Brittany said, pointing at the mirror.

I turned to see what she was talking about. Hannah actually repositioned the chair to face me when she entered the room. The chair was normally in front of the mirror. Hannah facing me meant her phone screen was facing the mirror.

I turned back at Brittany.

“Immediately she repositioned the chair, she picked up her phone and something caught my attention in the mirror – her click on the record button.” Brittany explained.

I didn’t even notice Hannah making use of her phone when she was around despite the fact that she was right in front of me. I was spiritually blind yet, I couldn’t make proper use of my physical eyes.

I shrugged. “Brittany, there’s no cause for alarm. I didn’t say anything implicating.”

“So you think, my dear Josephine. Hannah knows what she wants from what she recorded.”

I didn’t have anything else to say. I could not take my eyes off Brittany who was already doing something else.

“Brittany and her own perspective on issues. But really, why did Hannah record our conversation?” I wondered.

CHAPTER 15

I waved Brittany's premonition aside and I found myself telling my mother that I had found someone I could look up to in my department.

I had travelled home the day after Hannah visited me. The journey was not stressful as my school was in the same city I lived.

My mum was happy to see me and for the first time in many years, we sat to talk as mother and daughter.

"How did your first semester at school go?" My mum asked, smiling at me.

"Hmm... Mummy" I shifted uneasily in my seat. "We are talking today? It's weird."

My mum said nothing. She kept smiling.

"Mummy, you're not going out today?" I asked.

"My daughter, I know that you feel bad towards me. You feel I hate you but my dear, I want the best for you. I'm sorry I didn't create time for you. I wasn't happy that my own daughter was rude to me. I didn't like the fact that my daughter didn't appreciate me."

My mum was right. I was always proving stubborn.

I left my seat to sit beside my mum. I hugged her and apologized for being a naughty daughter.

“Josephine, it has been my fault. I was always too busy to take care of you. I’m very sorry.”

My mum did not tell me what brought about her change of mind but I was happy. I told my mum how the semester went. I also told her about Brittany and Hannah.

“I don’t know why Brittany is not comfortable with Hannah. It’s like she can always see what I can’t see.”

“Hmm... She must be very sensitive.” My mum said.

I shrugged. “Spiritual things are not for me. I have a confession to make. I was always lying to you about going to Church.”

My mum was not surprised. She was even smiling.

“You knew I was lying?” I asked her.

“Toyin told me. She said you were not nice to her the first day she came to your room. She also told me that you attended fellowship only once at school.”

I was shocked.

“What! How did she know I attended fellowship only once? Mum, did you give her a monitoring assignment on me?”

“No, I didn’t.” She replied.

What guts did Toyin have to report me to my mother?

I was furious!

“Calm down, Josephine. Let’s leave Toyin out of our discussion.” My mum said.

My mum asked us to leave Toyin out of our discussion. I was surprised she was not comparing me with Toyin again.

“Mum, you are not interested in what Toyin said?”

“There’s no need to be interested in what Toyin said. Let’s talk about what you said.”

It was unbelievable!

“You said spiritual things are not for you.”

“Mummy, I can’t be spiritual for now. I will consider God when I graduate.”

“Why?”

“Spirituality won’t take me anywhere in the University. It will limit me.”

“How?”

“I won’t be able to mingle with people that will help me. I won’t be able to bribe lecturers. Mum, reading alone can’t help. We have wicked set of lecturers at school.”

“Josephine, so you think God won’t be faithful if you are His daughter?”

I burst into laughter.

“Mum, will God come down and help me? You and Brittany sha with how you talk about God.” I laughed again before I changed the topic.

“But mum, I still want to know how Toyin got to know that I attended fellowship only once. This lady does not even attend any fellowship on campus.”

CHAPTER 16

“Mum, I want to know how Toyin got to know that I attended fellowship only once.” I insisted.

“She obviously has informants. Who is your own informant?” My mum asked me.

Informant?

What was she talking about?

“Why do you think Brittany is not comfortable with Hannah? Brittany also has her own informant. That is why she sees what you don’t see.”

“Who is Brittany’s informant?” I really wanted to know.

“Josephine, when you walk with God, you can never be caught unawares.”

I rolled my eyes.

Mum had slotted God in again.

“Is Toyin also walking with God?” I asked.

“I can’t say. She knows who her informants are. The point is having the right informant.”

“Hmm...” I sighed.

The break was going very smooth as my mum became my best friend. I was still naughty, but my mum kept correcting and preaching to me. In all her corrections, she never mentioned Toyin.

I was assisting my mother in the kitchen one evening when someone knocked at the door.

“Mum, are we expecting anyone?”

“No”

I dropped the onion I was slicing and rinsed my hands before I went to get the door.

I saw who I was least expecting when I opened the door.

Who?

Hannah!

It would be an understatement to say I was flabbergasted.

“Surprised?” Hannah smiled as she walked into the house.

I closed the door before I faced her.

“Hannah, I don’t remember describing the way to my house to you.”

Hannah smiled mischievously. “I have my ways, baby girl. Will you please take me in?”

I looked at her suspiciously before I led her inside.

My mother was already in the living room.

“Good afternoon, ma.” Hannah greeted her.

“Good afternoon.” My mother replied carefully, expecting the stranger to introduce herself.

“Mummy, meet Hannah.” I said.

“Hannah... Ooh ooh... The lady you told me you...” She turned to Hannah.

“Have your seat, my dear.”

“Thank you, ma.”

“How are you doing?” My mum didn’t hide the fact that I already told her about Hannah.

“I bless God, ma.” Hannah replied.

“How is your study?”

“We thank God, ma”

“You came to see Josephine?”

“Yes, ma.”

“Alright, then. Thank you so much.”

“Thank God, ma.”

My mum left us and went back to the kitchen.

“Hmm... You must have told your mum a lot about me.” Hannah spoke immediately my mum was out of sight.

I ignored her statement.

“Hannah, how did you find your way here?” I really wanted to know.

The mischievous smile was still on her face.

“Josephine, the answer is not for today. You will understand by and by.”

“What is this lady up to?” I wondered.

“Hannah, you just added to my confusion.”

“How? You’ve been confused?”

“Yes... To start with, why did you record our conversation the day you came to my room?” I fixed my gaze on her.

CHAPTER 17

“Yes... To start with, why did you record our conversation the day you came to my room?” I fixed my gaze on her.

Hannah frowned briefly and smiled almost immediately. If my gaze was not fixed on her face, I might have missed the frown.

“Josie, it’s already part of me. I record my conversations with people I like. I listen to them over and over again when I’m bored.”

Her explanation did not make sense to me but I tried to believe her.

“Brittany told you, right?” She asked.

“Did she lie?” I glared at her. “How did you find your way here?” I asked again.

“I will tell you at the right time.”

I shrugged.

“Josephine, I’m here to discuss something very important with you.”

I stared at her as I wondered what was so important that she had to suddenly appear in my house.

“Josephine, how is your relationship with God?”

I was taken aback by her question.

When did Hannah begin to care about my relationship with God?

I sincerely didn't have an answer to her question so I kept staring at her.

"I noticed that you attended fellowship only once last semester. Josephine, that was wrong."

"Hannah, did you come here to judge me?"

"Josie, I'm not here to judge you. I just want you to know that to thrive anywhere you are, you need a Supernatural being in your life. You need Him to guide you."

Hannah suddenly teared up. She reached for her phone and clicked on something I did not see. She dropped the phone on the stool close to her and held my hands.

"Josie," she whispered as she sniffed. "You really need this being at this point in your life. If I had been serious with Him earlier, I might not be in this mess."

"What mess?" I was totally lost.

Instead of responding, Hannah broke down and wept. She was still holding my hands.

“Josephine... It’s not something you can understand. Just listen to what I’m about to tell you.” She vigorously shook my hands as she spoke.

“A lot of things might begin to happen very soon. I don’t want you to be caught unprepared. You urgently need God in your life. You need to be sincere with Him and allow Him to guide you. Beyond attending Church services, know God for yourself.”

“Have I been attending Church services?” I wondered.

She eventually let go of my hands and wiped her tears. She picked up her phone again and double tapped her screen.

What was that meant for?

She had stopped crying but she looked very unhappy.

Hannah interrupted me. “You may not understand now. Just make sure you don’t miss any Church service this semester. You should even join the work force.” She suddenly sounded firm.

“Okay, Hannah. I’ve heard you.”

“You should...” Hannah abruptly stopped. It was glaring she had a lot to say but she seemed not to have the boldness to speak.

“I should what?” I asked her.

“Never mind... How is preparation for resumption?”

“Fine.” I replied.

“I brought some manuals for you.” She reached for her bag and brought out the manuals. She handed them over to me and instructed me on how to study them.

“Thank you so much, Hannah.” I was really grateful.

Left to me, that was the only important thing she came to see me for. I did not understand the mumbo-jumbo she earlier spewed.

“Josephine, do things differently this semester.” Hannah said as she prepared to take her leave. “Please, don’t forget everything I told you.” Her eyes glistened with tears as she spoke.

I could not even ask her any question because each answer she gave got me more confused.

She eventually left the house and I went back to the kitchen with my head filled with so many questions.

CHAPTER 18

“Mum, I’m so tired and frustrated. Why is Hannah not going straight to the point? How on earth did she find her way here?” I lamented bitterly to my mother.

“Why are the people in my life agents of confusion? Brittany is also there with her premonition. What exact point should I pick from everything?”

I kept lamenting while my mum listened as she stirred the soup she was preparing. She turned off the cooker and gently pulled me out of the kitchen.

“Josephine...” My mother sat me down in the dining room.

“What did Hannah say?”

“She said she’s in a mess that could have been avoided if she was serious with God.” I tried to explain.

“Okay...” My mum wanted to hear more.

“Then she advised me to start being sincere with God and that I should know God for myself.”

“So what don’t you understand? She already spoke in clear terms.”

“It’s not about what she said. It is about how she said it.”

I really wished my mum could get my point.

“Since Hannah came to preach to me today, I don’t understand why Brittany is not comfortable with her. Why exactly is Brittany not comfortable with Hannah?”

“I don’t have an answer to that question. You really need to know God for yourself, Josephine. I can see you’re really confused because you’re relying on Brittany’s words and Hannah’s words when you should be relying on the Word of God.”

“Mummy has started again.” I thought.

Must she always talk to me about God at the slightest opportunity?

“Instead of being confused by your friends’ perspectives, why can’t you be clarified by seeing in God’s perspective?

I didn’t like the turn the conversation was taking.

“Mummy...” I slurred.

“I’ve heard you.” I yawned. “Let’s go back to the kitchen. I’m famished.” I said as I stood up.

Before my mum could say any other word, I was already out of the dining room.

My mother joined me in the kitchen and I handed two plates over to her.

“Josephine... Josephine...” My mum called my name as she collected the plates from me.

“Mummy, don’t you get tired of calling my name?”

She smiled.

“Josephine...” She called my name again. “This semester will be different, right?”

I sighed.

“Mummy, let’s see how it goes.”

I went back to school the following week. My mum showered me with a lot of prayers and different sermons. She made me to promise her that I would not forget all she told me.

In all my nineteen years on earth, that semester break was the first time I enjoyed my mother. She was still the regional women coordinator but she made sure she spent quality time with me. I

could ask her any question and she would always answer no matter how annoying the question was. She also corrected my flaws without referring to Toyin.

I was not really happy that I was leaving for school but I had to resume.

“It’s another semester.” I thought aloud as I alighted from the bus that conveyed me to school.

I stood in front of the school gate with my hands akimbo. Students walked in and out of the gate, minding their business.

“What does this new semester hold?” I asked no one in particular.

CHAPTER 19

There was nothing really special about the semester. It was just normal to me. The only difference was that I became a full member of Brittany's fellowship.

"I'm happy you didn't disappoint me, Josie." Hannah told me after service one Sunday.

"Disappoint you?" I did not understand what she said.

"Hmm... Josie, I'd have felt very bad if you didn't take to my advice."

I chuckled.

"Hannah, don't feel so happy. I'm not here because you advised me. I'm here because of my mum."

"Hmm... When are you planning to join the work force?"

"Next month" I replied.

"Choir, right?"

"Yes. I told the choir master and he said there would be an audition next month."

“Wow! That’s beautiful. Start getting prepared for the audition so that you will be chosen.”

I nodded.

“I’ll send some songs to you. Learn any of them very well so that you can present it.”

“Okay, Hannah. Thank you so much.”

Hannah sent the songs as promised and I immediately began to work on them. Of all the songs she sent, I really liked ‘All for love’ by Hillsong.

I suddenly felt excited.

“Them go take!” I thought aloud as I listened to the song.

“Hey... Josie, what’s up?” Brittany must have noticed my over excitement.

I giggled before I responded to her. “Your roommate will soon be a chorister.”

“Eehn?” Brittany sat up from her bed to understand my point.

"I'm getting prepared for the audition." I added.

"Is audition not meant to be after pre-workers' training?" Brittany questioned me.

"Yes?" I raised my brow.

"Have you undergone the training?"

"Brittany, calm down. For the record, I'm not a pre-worker. I've already told the choir master that I was a worker back at home before I gained admission."

"And he agreed that you should be auditioned without the training?"

"Of course! Wait, why are you the only one carrying the training on your head? Even Hannah said once you've been a worker, you don't need the training and the choir master did not insist that I should undergo the training."

"He didn't insist but he said you should undergo the training, right?"

I didn't respond. I picked up my phone and began to operate it, ignoring Brittany.

"Josephine, you know this is wrong, right?"

I dropped my phone and flared up.

“I don’t know oo. I’m tired of the way you see things. That was the same way you were not comfortable with Hannah. It is this same Hannah that has been encouraging me in the Lord. What has the innocent lady done wrong?”

Brittany stared at me in disbelief. She was short of words.

“No problem, Josephine. It’s just that it would be the best if you can undergo the training.”

I raised my nose at her.

“Alright, Brittany. I have heard you.”

“Brittany and unnecessary protocol.” I mumbled as I tapped my phone to play the song:

All for love the Father gave
For only love could make a way
All for love, the Heavens cried
For love was crucified
Oh, how many times
Have I broken your heart?

Still you forgive

If only I ask

Or how many times

Have you heard me pray?

Draw me to You

Everything I need is in You

My Beginning, my Forever

“Josie?” Brittany called me.

I paused the music and I paid attention to her.

“You really want to sing this song at the audition?”

CHAPTER 20

“Josie?” Brittany called me.

I paused the music and I paid attention to her.

“You really want to sing this song at the audition?”

“Yes. Is there anything wrong with the song?”

“Wow! That’s one of my best songs. Hillsong, right?”

“Hmm...” I eyed her. “Must you distract me because it’s your best song?”

“Josephine, can you do me a favour?”

She didn’t wait to hear my response.

“I don’t want you to sing the song just for the fun of it.”

I raised my brow.

“I know the song is interesting but please, can you listen to the lyrics and accept the love you’re singing about?” Brittany looked very concerned.

I burst into a fit of sarcastic laughter.

“Alright, darling roomie. I’ve heard you.”

I tapped my phone screen and the song continued.

Let me sing all for love

I will join the angels song

Ever holy is the Lord

King of glory, King of all

Oh how many times

Have I broken your heart

Still you forgive

If only I ask

And how many times

Have you heard me pray?

Draw me to You

And everything I need

Is in You

My Beginning, my Forever

All for love, a Saviour prayed
Abba Father, have Your way
Though they know not what they do
Let the cross draw men to You
To You, to You, to You...

I kept listening to the song until I could sing it offhand. I also watched the video to check the singer's expression. It suddenly occurred to me that I should act like I was being auditioned.

I giggled at the idea.

"Brittany, please can you watch me sing?" I asked her, expecting a positive reply.

She kept quiet for some seconds before she gave me a reluctant 'yes'.

"You will rate my performance oo." I told her as I stood before her, acting like there was a microphone stand in front of me.

Brittany's gaze was fixed on me as I sang. I took the song perfectly and I successfully gave the right expression like the singer.

“Wow!” Brittany exclaimed.

I smiled broadly as I plopped into my bed.

“Can you now see that I should really be a choir member?”

“Josephine, why not...”

I didn’t allow her to complete her statement. I knew she was about to counter me.

“Brittany, you will be at the audition, right?”

She nodded.

It was not as if the question was necessary. I wasn’t just interested in whatever she had to say.

I smiled satisfactorily as I picked up my phone. I sent an offline message to Hannah to get her informed that was one hundred percent ready for the audition.

I cared less about whatever Brittany felt was right. I was satisfied with the fact that I was supported by Hannah.

I had to practise everyday but I could not do that in the room because I was avoiding Brittany's sermon. I spent most of my time in Hannah's room in the name of getting prepared for the audition.

Throughout that week, I went to Hannah's room for my early morning voice training. From there, I would rush to class, try to put down something and rush back to Hannah's room for evening training.

It was just three days to the audition and I planned to give it all it would take to be a member of the choir.

CHAPTER 21

I shifted uneasily in my seat as I watched different people presenting their songs. My heart thumped against my chest and my palms suddenly went wet.

Three judges were seated and they were writing only God knows what as they watched each performance. From my seat, I looked around the hall for Brittany and Hannah. I caught Brittany staring at me.

I shrugged.

“What can I ever do that will please her?” I wondered as I looked around for Hannah.

Hannah was quietly singing along with the person on stage. She looked towards my direction and our eyes met.

She winked at me.

I sighed as I tried to pull myself together. I tried to sing ‘All for love’ but I couldn’t. My lips were quivering.

“Josephine Smith” I suddenly heard my name.

It was my turn!

I took some gulps of water as I smiled to myself. Brittany's gaze was fixed on me. I dropped the bottle of water and stared back at her with my left fist supporting my chin.

Since she wanted a staring competition, she would get just that!

After some minutes of staring, she sighed and looked away from me.

I chuckled.

I knew a lot was running through her mind but I was not ready to have any form of discussion with her.

I relaxed in my bed as I turned on my data connection.

"Hey, Josie."

Hannah's message popped up.

"Congratulations, dear."

"Thank you so much." I said aloud as I typed.

I was so happy. At least, I would attend Church services henceforth and I would even sing in the choir. My mum would be so proud.

“To think that I was nervous before it was my turn! Thank you so much for assisting throughout my preparation for the audition. I’m so grateful.”

“You’re always welcome, Josie. Were you able to see the Choir master before you left Church?” Hannah asked.

“No”

“He asked the new choristers to wait behind.”

“Yeah... I was so tired that I could not wait.”

“Hmm... You are now a worker, start getting used to after service meetings.”

“I’ll try to.” I replied.

“How’s Brittany?”

“That one? I don’t understand her oo. I don’t know the exact thing she wants from me. Is it not to be attending Church services? I’ve even joined the workforce and she’s still acting strange to me.”

“Acting strange? How?”

“I don’t think she’s happy that I’m now a chorister. She thinks I’m not born again.”

Immediately Hannah saw my last message, she went offline.

HANNAH

Josephine’s last message drew tears from my lacrimal gland. I turned off my data connection and wept.

Brittany was right!

It is not just about attending Church services.

Brittany was right but I wouldn’t want to try to tell Josephine the truth while we were chatting.

Tee Boss made sure she read my chats with Josephine.

“My God!” I screamed as I fell on my knees.

“I’m unworthy to speak to You right now. I know I’ve gone far but I don’t want Josephine to end up like me.”

It suddenly occurred to me that I could tell Josephine the truth and delete the message immediately.

I reached for my phone which was on the floor as I wiped my tears with my right palm.

With shivering hands, I turned on my data connection.

CHAPTER 22

JOSEPHINE

I was going through my departmental group chat when Hannah's message popped up again.

"Hmm..." was what she simply sent.

"Hannah?"

"Yes, Josephine. I'm sorry I suddenly went off. I had to urgently attend to something."

"Okay."

"About Brittany... Josie, I want you to listen to whatever she tells you."

I rolled my eyes at the sight of the message.

"Why?" I asked.

"For obvious reasons, my dear. She's your roommate plus she was the one that brought you into the fellowship."

"Hannah, I don't want to do that."

“You need to do it, Josephine. In fact, I’m going offline right now. Say something to her and do whatever she tells you to do.”

True to her words, she went offline.

I sat up on my bed and looked towards Brittany. She was praying.

I decided to speak with her later. I was about to relax again when I heard her voice.

“Josephine, you want to speak with me?” She asked with her eyes still closed.

“Eerhm...” I suddenly ran out of words.

She opened her eyes and came to sit beside me.

“What do you want to tell me?” She asked.

“Are you a witch?” I blurted out even to my own surprise.

“What?” She squinted.

“You’ve been staring at me for some days now like I offended you. You’ve been making me to feel so uncomfortable.”

She smiled.

Brittany and her smile!

“Your eyes were closed and you were still able to know that I wanted to speak with you. How on earth...” I became short of words again.

She was still smiling.

“Even this smile of yours is already making me uncomfortable.” I got up from my bed and sat on the chair.

“Stop that, Josie. You’re already being dramatic.” Brittany stood after me and sat on the table.

Her gaze was fixed on me.

I avoided her gaze.

“Josephine, what is it?”

“You’ve not answered my question.”

“The question again, please?”

“Are you a witch?” I asked again as I mustered the courage to stare back at her.

“Do I look like one?”

“You act like one.”

“What?” Brittany was taken aback.

“Yes, because you are the only one that is always seeing things. You were the one that saw Hannah recording our conversation despite the fact that she was sitting very close to me. What exactly is your issue with Hannah? I’ve noticed that you’re never comfortable with whatever she tells me to do.”

I suddenly became the talkative while Brittany quietly listened, her gaze still fixed on me.

“You’re not comfortable with me being a chorister because Hannah is involved. One thing you don’t understand is that Hannah is not who you think she is.”

“Who do I think she is?” Brittany questioned me.

“I don’t know. That is up to you... but left to me, Hannah is an angel. If not for her, do you think I would be attending your fellowship? She visited me at home when we were on break and she spoke to me.

She even asked me to join the choir. Shouldn't you be happy that I've improved?"

I was finally done talking and I was surprised at my outburst.

Brittany smiled at me and reached for my hands.

"Josephine, I don't have any problem with Hannah. Why should I? I'm only watching out for you because I don't want you to get into trouble."

"Why will I suddenly get into trouble without trespassing? I didn't offend anyone so I should not get into any trouble." I murmured loud enough for Brittany to hear.

"What if you're trespassing or what if you've even trespassed?"

"Trespassed... Trespassed... Who do you think I've trespassed against?" I asked Brittany.

CHAPTER 23

“Trespass... Trespass... Who do you think I’m trespassing against?”

“I don’t know... That is up to you... Josephine, forget about whatever you feel right now. I don’t have any problem with anyone.”

“But you think I’m not born again?” I blurted out again.

“Who am I to judge you? But Josie, are you born again?”

Her question caught me unawares.

I fumbled with the edge of my blouse as I searched for words but found none.

“Josephine, God doesn’t want you to render an unacceptable service to Him. He does not want you to serve in deceit. Imagine you are leading choruses in Church and the rapture takes place.”

I sharply looked up at her.

“Imagine you were even singing, ‘when we get to Heaven, at the marriage supper’ or even ‘on the last day, only few believers shall be raptured...”

“Aaah!” I exclaimed.

Brittany didn’t need to say more. I already got her point.

The imagination of the scenario she had painted pushed me to my knees.

“Brittany!” I held her legs.

“I feel so ashamed of myself right now. I didn’t join the choir with the right intention. I joined because I wanted to announce my presence and voice in the Church. Hannah’s voice attracted me to her and I also felt the need to be announced.”

Brittany sighed.

“Aah! Brittany! Imagine the rapture took place when I was singing at the audition...and to think that I was even singing about God’s love.”

I burst into tears.

“Jesus Christ! I’ve been taking your love for granted. I’ve never really been saved. I’ve just been gambling with the devil..”

I cried my eyes out and sincerely, I was sorry. I promised God that I would serve Him wholeheartedly without seeking for irrelevance.

Brittany smiled at me and I didn't feel guilt from that smile this time.

I felt peace.

HANNAH

I was almost asleep when my phone vibrated.

Tee Boss!

"Oooh..." I mumbled before I picked the call.

"Come online, now!" She ordered and ended the call.

"What have I done this time?" I wondered as I turned on my data connection.

A voice note from Josephine was already waiting for me. I made a mental note to listen to it later.

"Good evening, Tee B."

"What's the update about Josephine?"

"I'm still on it." I replied.

“On what? Is that supposed to be the answer to my question?”

I heaved a sigh of frustration.

“I’m asking if the job is going easy on your part.”

I pondered on the question before I replied.

“No, it is not going easy.”

“Why?”

“Her roommate is sensitive.”

“Is that supposed to be an excuse?”

I didn’t know what reply to give.

“Can’t you make sure Josephine leaves that room? She must change her room next semester. I would even prefer that she moves into your room.”

“Alright, boss.”

“She’s already a Church goer, right?”

“Yes. She has even joined the choir.”

“Very good! Make sure she does the right things in the wrong way. Ensure that she’s carried away with whatever she feels is right. Then we can strike. If you need any assistance, some wolves will assist you.”

“What should I do about her roommate for now?”

“Nothing much, just keep Josephine beyond her reach. Make sure Josephine is not always in her room . It’s so nice that you are in the same department. Keep her busy.”

“Alright, Tee B.”

That was the end of that conversation.

I heaved a sigh of what seemed like temporary relief as I made to listen to Josephine’s voice note.

CHAPTER 24

HANNAH

At this point, you might be wondering why I was being double minded. It was totally not my fault. Anytime I tried to disobey Tee Boss, her words would always walk into my head.

“...you have to be wise if you want to crack her with your hand. If you are not careful, your head will be used to crack the hard nut, and you know what that means.”

I knew Tee Boss was wrong but I was trying to protect my head and at the same time, I was trying to tell Josephine the truth.

When I visited Josephine during the semester break, I had to pause the voice recorder to tell her the truth. I begged her in tears to know God for herself because I didn't want her to always obey me.

I was already assigned to make her do the right things in the wrong way. Knowing God for herself would make her to always obey Him and not me.

I also told her to always listen to Brittany because I knew that Brittany was genuinely born again.

“Hannah, thank you for asking me to talk to Brittany. I now understand what you were trying to tell me the other day. You said I

should know God for myself even as I attend Church services. Thank you so much, Hannah.”

I was satisfied with Josephine’s voice note. I was happy with the fact that I had already told her to allow God to guide her.

“I’ve told her the truth and she has accepted it. Now, whatever she does with the truth with her is totally up to her. I also have to save my head.” I told myself.

BRITTANY

Our Father, who art in Heaven

Hallowed be thy name

Thy Kingdom come

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil

For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory

Forever and ever

Amen

“Can we repeat it?” I asked again.

That morning, we were observing our devotion; Josephine and I.

As I was flipping through the devotional guide...

“The Lord’s prayer.”

I closed the devotional guide and dropped it on my bed.

Josephine gave me a quizzical look.

“Josephine, the Lord’s prayer.” I whispered.

“Brittany?” Josephine wondered what I was up to.

“The Lord’s prayer.” I affirmed.

We recited it again and again because I kept saying we should repeat it.

“But deliver us from all evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, forever and ever.”

“Amen.” Josephine responded.

“Good morning, Josie.”

I did not wait for her response before I rushed into the bathroom. I had a quick bath and jumped out only to meet Josephine’s questioning look.

“What’s up, Brittany?” She asked.

“I’m running late. I have an early morning class.”

“Okay... Why were we repeating the Lord’s prayer?”

“Josie... I’m late... When I get back from class...”

I checked out myself in the mirror before I rushed to the door.

“Best of luck today, Josie.”

“You too.” My ears picked her reply as I rushed out.

CHAPTER 25

JOSEPHINE

I was still trying to wrap my head around the drama Brittany earlier displayed when my phone rang.

It was Hannah.

Why was she calling me as early as 7 AM?

“Hannah?”

“Good morning, Josie.”

“Yeah, good morning.”

“Did you sleep well?”

“Yes, I did. You?”

“Hmm... I also did.”

Silence.

“Can you come to my hostel now?” She asked.

“Right away?”

“Yes.”

“That might not be possible. I have classes today.”

“Throughout today?”

“No. From 9 PM to 1 PM.”

“Okay, then. See you by 1:30 PM.

I began to feel uncomfortable with Hannah’s tone. She was sounding domineering which was unlike her.

“1:30 PM?” I asked to be sure.

“Yes. Come with your choir note too so that you can attend choir practice from here.”

“I’ll be spending the whole of today in your room?”

“Yeah. See ya by 1:30.”

The call dropped.

BRITTANY

I glanced at my watch for the umpteenth time. It was 10:30 PM and Josephine was not in the hostel. I had tried all her lines but none was reachable.

I shrugged as I tried to pay attention to the course manual that I was studying. After studying for about an hour, I remembered that Josephine was yet to be back.

I racked my brain for who I could reach out to.

Hannah!

As I was about to pick up my phone, someone knocked.

“Josephine?”

“Yes, Brittany.” She sounded exhausted.

She walked past me immediately the door was opened. I watched as she knelt beside her bed to pray.

She got up after few minutes.

“Good evening, Brittany.” She yawned.

“Good evening, Josephine.” I replied.

“I’m sorry I didn’t inform you that I would be coming back late. I was with Hannah.”

“Throughout the day?”

“Yes, I was in her room before the choir practice and we took a prayer walk after the choir practice.”

I honestly did not know what to say.

Josephine yawned again.

“I need to sleep, Brittany.”

“Okay...” I replied. “Have a nice night rest.”

“You too.” Josephine replied.

To be honest, any time Josephine mentioned ‘Hannah’, an alarm screaming CAUTION would ring in my head.

I did not want Josephine to feel that I disliked Hannah so I decided to stop complaining about her.

Josephine kept keeping late nights. If she was not having a prayer meeting with Hannah's friends, Hannah would be explaining a difficult topic to her or she should be undergoing a voice training in Hannah's room.

There was nothing much I could say because at the 'surface level', there seemed to be nothing wrong in what she was doing.

I was trying to take a nap one afternoon when Josephine rushed into the room.

"Hey, Brittany." She walked hurriedly to her bedside.

"Josie... Good afternoon." I replied as I checked the time.

3 PM!

"Josephine came to the hostel early today, so unusual!" I thought.

I watched as she checked through her bags in search of something.

"You're looking for something?" I asked her.

"Yes, I'm looking for one of my manuals. I was meant to take it along with me in the morning but I forgot it."

She left her bedside for the table and continued the search.

“Finally found it!”

She picked up the book and sat on the chair as she flipped through the pages.

“Brittany, there’s a difficult topic in this manual. Even Hannah doesn’t understand it.”

“Have you asked any of the tutors at Church?”

“No, I’ve not been attending the Church tutorial.”

“What do you intend to do about it?”

“Hannah has gotten someone to explain to me. He is in his fourth year.”

“Do I know him?”

“No. He doesn’t attend our fellowship.”

Just then, Josephine’s phone rang.

“Hello... Yes, I’ve seen it... The guy is waiting already? Ooh... I’m sorry... I’ll be there in a jiffy...”

“Brittany, see you later. I’ll come back late today. I have a Bible study session with Hannah and her friends.”

“Do I know the friends?” I asked.

“No, they should be Hannah’s course mates.” She replied before she dashed out of the room.

CHAPTER 26

BRITTANY

True to Josephine's words, she came late that night, around some minutes past midnight. I shrugged as she tiredly staggered to her bed.

"She's doing what she thinks is best for her." I thought as I also prepared to sleep.

I was about to close my eyes when a picture flashed through my mind.

Josephine in a garden!

I racked my brain, thinking about what that meant.

Then I remembered!

I had a dream the previous night.

Josephine was strolling in a floral garden, briefly admiring each flower. A particular flower suddenly caught her attention and she moved towards it. Immediately the horticulturist in charge noticed her move, he went to whisper some words to her. She nodded and smiled at the man but she continued to admire the flower. The man

was staring at her, sadness written on his face as she kept touching the flower.

"What has a garden got to do with Josephine?"

I had waved the dream aside, thinking it was one of those dreams.

The dream kept flickering in my mind as I tried to close my eyes.

I sat up.

"Josephine?"

"Yes... Brittany..." She slurred. She was almost asleep.

"I want to..."

She interrupted me.

"Brittany, we can talk tomorrow morning... yes... let's talk before I go out... I will..."

She slept off before she could complete her statement.

"Dear Lord Jesus, what is this?" I thought aloud.

The next morning, by the time I was awake around 5 AM, Josephine was still asleep. She eventually woke up around past 8 AM and rushed into the bathroom.

"Good morning, Josephine." I greeted her immediately she stepped out of the bathroom.

"Good morning." She replied.

"Did you sleep well?"

"Yes."

She hurriedly ransacked her wardrobe for what to wear.

"Rushing out today again?"

"Yes."

"I was trying to speak with you last night but you slept off."

"Really? I must have been exhausted."

"Yes, you were. I wanted to tell you..."

"Brittany... Let's do it this way, tomorrow morning, I mean first thing before I enter the bathroom, we will talk, okay?"

I was shocked!

"Josephine?"

"Yes, I have to catch up with something very important now."

I totally lost my tongue. I began to wonder when my roommate became someone I had to fix an appointment with before we could speak.

JOSEPHINE

I was stirred from my sleep as someone tapped me.

"Oooh... Why is Brittany like this?" I mumbled.

"Josephine, get up." Brittany kept tapping me impatiently.

"What is it?" I yawned.

"I should be asking you that question, Josephine."

"Asking me what?" I was confused. "Brittany, it's too early for this. I need to rest."

I made to resume my sleeping spree but Brittany tapped me again.

"Josephine!" She screamed.

"Do you realize it's yet to be 6 AM?" I was getting annoyed.

"Exactly! Get up! We need to talk."

Brittany was sounding so stern.

So unusual!

I had to reluctantly get up to listen to what she had to say.

CHAPTER 27

Brittany was sounding so stern.

So unusual!

I had to reluctantly get up to hear what she had to say.

“I can hear you.” I mumbled as I stared into space.

Brittany sighed.

“Josephine, what’s going on?”

“As how?” I blurted out.

“You don’t feel strange?”

“Oooh... Brittany...” I mumbled as I hit my bed with my fists. “Go straight to the point and let me go back to sleep.”

Brittany shook her head before she sighed.

“Josephine, can we pray together?”

“Ooh...” I kept grumbling. “I came late last night because I was in a meeting and we prayed...”

“Josephine, just a word of prayer.”

I hissed as I reluctantly agreed.

“Lord Jesus, we pray that you open our eyes that we may see. Amen.”

“Amen.” I mumbled.

“Josephine, for some days now, some things have been coming to my notice. You’ve not been...” She suddenly paused.

“Have you been involved in any garden activity of late?” She asked.

“Garden? No.” I replied.

“Lord Jesus, we need light.” She closed her eyes as she muttered.

She opened her eyes and fixed her gaze on me.

“There was one morning that we were repeating the Lord’s prayer. Can you remember?”

“Yes.”

“You were wondering why it had to be repeated, right?”

I nodded.

“That was what the Holy Spirit wanted that morning, especially the ‘deliver us from evil’ part.”

“What exactly is your point, Brittany?” I was getting fed up.

“The point is that do you really want to be delivered from evil?”

“What!” I screamed. “Who wants to be a victim of evil?”

“Josephine, calm down. I feel you should read and understand the Bible verse that says...” She reached for my Bible.

She flipped through it and handed it over to me.

Psalm 1!

“I’ll be praying for you, Josephine. Good morning.” She got up from my bed and began her activity for the day.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

I looked up from my Bible and watched as Brittany quietly swept the room.”

“What has this got to do with me?” I wondered.

I sat with Hannah under our departmental shed, narrating what Brittany did earlier that day.

“She even told me to read Psalm 1.” I told Hannah.

“Psalm 1? Isn’t that blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly?” She asked.

“Yes, that’s the verse. I wonder why she would wake me with such verse.”

Hannah pondered for a while before she threw a question at me.

CHAPTER 28

Hannah pondered for a while before she threw a question at me.

“Have you done what she said you should do?”

“I’ve read it but I don’t know how it applies to me. I want us to study it together after the prayer meeting this evening.”

HANNAH

Josephine’s response made no sense to me.

“Josephine, she said ‘read and understand’. She did not say study it after prayer meeting with some people.”

“What’s the difference? I’ve read it and since I don’t understand, I think it’s best to study it with our friends. Yeah, right?”

I stared at Josephine with a lot running through my mind. She just called Tee Boss’ agents ‘her friends’.

Tee Boss sent some of the wolves to assist me. The Bible verse Josephine was asked to study had a lot to say to her. She was really walking in the counsel of the ungodly and standing in the way of sinners.

‘Hannah!’ Josephine screamed as I stared blankly at her.

“What are you thinking about? I’ve been talking to you and you’ve been staring at me.”

“I’m sorry, Josie. I have to leave now. I have to get some things sorted out.” I got up and prepared to leave.

“What about the guy that is meant to explain...”

I cut her short. “That could be later. Go to your room and do the right thing.”

“Which is?” Josephine asked.

I rolled my eyes as Josephine’s question got me infuriated.

Must she always be spoon-fed?

“I don’t know. Go and do whatever you think is right. Thank God you have a room where you can talk to God alone.”

I left her with the hope that she would allow her ears to hear from God or she would ask Brittany why she told her to read the verse.

I was still brooding on Josephine's insensitivity when my phone rang.

I shrieked in fear when I saw the caller I.D. My hands trembled as I picked the call.

"Hannah, what are you doing?" Her voice was as cold as ice.

Her question was the least I was expecting.

"Boss, I don't get you."

"Of course, you don't get me!" She scoffed.

"Make sure whatever you are doing will land Josephine into this sisterhood, otherwise..." She scoffed again and dropped the call.

I was already close to my room. I hastened my steps and rushed into my room.

I paced for some time, trying to wrap my head around what Tee Boss said.

"Could she be suspecting that I'm trying to save Josephine?" I wondered.

I racked my brain as I wondered why Tee Boss was suspecting a foul play.

I could not pinpoint any reason!

“If Tee Boss could sense my double mindedness, I see no reason for Josephine who claims to be born again to be so insensitive.” I thought aloud.

“Hannah!” I screamed out my name as I took a very deep breath.

I walked to the mirror and began to speak to my reflection.

“Let Josephine make her own choice. She already has all it takes to make the right choice but she can decide to keep walking in the counsel of the ungodly. She can also choose to keep standing in the way of sinners. It is up to her to decide whether she will hear from the throne of Heaven or she will hear from the seat of the scornful. Stop trying to save her at the detriment of your own life. To the work, O Hannah!”

CHAPTER 29

JOSEPHINE

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

I read it for the umpteenth time but I didn’t understand.

“Josephine, calm down. Who are those you’ve been moving with?” I questioned myself.

“Hannah and her friends. They’ve been my prayer partners.” I replied.

“Any other person?” I tried to think.

“Brittany is the other person and she was the one that gave me the verse.”

I looked towards Britany’s direction. She was studying.

“Lord Jesus, what sort of confusion is this?”

It suddenly occurred to me to pray.

I chuckled at the idea. It had really been long I prayed alone. It had always been with Hannah and her friends.

“I can’t even remember the last time I observed my quiet time. I’ve also been too busy to pray with Brittany.” I thought.

After praying with Hannah and her friends, I would get so drained that I would not be able to study my Bible the next morning.

“Should you get drained after praying?” Someone asked.

I looked towards Brittany’s direction again. She was still studying. She was not the one that asked the question.

I pushed the question aside as I closed my Bible.

“I believe in praying together with God’s people and that is what I will do.” I concluded.

I made up my mind to table the verse before my prayer partners later in the evening.

HANNAH

I flipped through one of my course manuals as I tried to understand what I was studying. The lecturer in charge of the course fixed the test for the following day and I had not read more than four pages.

I sighed in frustration and placed my head on my table. I checked my phone for the time.

6:00 PM!

It was an hour to the 'prayer meeting' with the wolves and the intending wolf.

"How will I consume this manual within an hour?" I wondered.

To be honest, Josephine's project had been very time consuming but I had no alternative as far as Tee Boss was concerned.

I closed my book and flung it across the room. I had to reach out to one of the wolves to put some things in place before the 'prayer meeting'.

I dialed her line and she picked up almost immediately.

"Sarah, you don't expect my call?" I asked her.

“Mama H, yes oo. Tee boss spoke with me just now. I talk say make I shaperly call you make you no forget this evening.”

“Tee Boss called you?”

“Yes oo!”

“What did she say?”

“Hmmm... Mama H, Tee boss dey para oo. She said she’s not feeling the effectiveness of the agents. She was threatening to change us and give you better agents.”

“Hmm.” I sighed.

“Mama H, you tell her say we dey play?”

“No, Sarah. You people have always been of great help.”

“Does she think it’s easy to pretend to be what you’re not? Imagine praying with Josephine for four hours, wasting my time! Do we appear to be playing?”

Sarah was sounding sad and angry at the same time. I was short of words but I had to say something to pacify her.

“Babe, chill...chill...”

“Mama H, I’m tired... I want to opt out. Make she look for another agent... I...”

“Sarah, calm down. It’s not up to that, eh? Calm down.”

Sarah hissed. “What’s the plan for this evening?”

“Hmm. The plan...” I did a quick mind search of how I would tell Sarah about the verse Josephine was asked to read.

“Sarah, study Psalms 1 before the prayer meeting. Understand it indepthly and look for counter verses for it in the Bible.”

“Imagine such ridiculous assignment!” Sarah screamed.

CHAPTER 30

“Sarah, study Psalm 1 before the prayer meeting. Understand it indepthly and look for counter verses for it in the Bible.”

“Imagine such ridiculous assignment!” Sarah screamed.

I lost my tongue.

“I don’t understand how on earth I found myself in this sisterhood in the first place.” She hissed.

“What has Psalm 1 got to do with Josephine?” She asked.

“A lot, Sarah. It’s most likely she brings it up this evening and I want you to get answers prepared.”

“Why on earth should Tee Boss expose us to the risk of studying the Word of God?”

“What do you mean?”

“Hmm.. Mama H, if at all I don’t remember anything in the Bible, I can never forget my dad’s best bible verse. The verse that says God’s Word is sharper than any two edged sword. What if God arrests me as I’m studying Psalms 1?”

“Sarah, what trash are you spewing?”

Sarah was getting on my nerves.

“Mama H, it seems you are not aware that my dad is praying for me. If God decides to answer his prayer through Psalm 1, it’s not my fault oo.”

“Tell that to Tee Boss when you see her. See you in the next few minutes.”

I dropped the call before she could say any other thing.

“In Jesus’ mighty name have we prayed!” Sarah said as she rounded off the prayer.

“Amen.” We all replied.

We were four- Josephine, Sarah, Susan and I. Sarah and Susan were the one year old wolves Tee Boss sent to assist me.

Susan led us in prayer that evening while Sarah rounded off.

“We bless God for this evening. I believe He has answered our prayers.” I said, in a bid to bring the meeting to a close.

“Can we share the grace?”

“The grace...”

“Before we share the grace...” Josephine cut in.

“There’s this Bible verse that...” She picked up her Bible and began to flip through.

“Can we check out Psalm 1 before we go?”

I was not surprised that Josephine brought up the Bible issue but I was disappointed in her.

I shook my head in pity for her as I also opened to Psalm 1.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Susan read aloud.

“I’ve read it times without count and I still don’t get it.” Josephine said.

Someone told you to read it?" Sarah asked.

"Yes, my roommate told me to study it."

Sarah was quiet for a while as she fixed her eyes on the verse.

"Hmm..." she suddenly sighed. Can we turn our Bibles to the book of Matthew... Matthew chapter nine... ten to twelve.

As I flipped through my Bible, I watched as Josephine also flipped through hers before she read aloud.

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Sarah suddenly cut in.

"That is it! That is the New Testament! From what you read, we can see Jesus' emphasis on mercy as opposed to the Pharisee's self righteous judgement."

I screamed WOW in my head.

Josephine's reaction was annoying. She stared at the verse and was nodding gullibly as she sighed severally.

Sarah continued when she observed that Josephine was buying her lies.

"I guess David wrote the book of Psalms, right?"

Josephine nodded.

"He was just being self righteous! If Jesus could sit with sinners, aah aah!"

Josephine kept nodding and 'humming'.

"So what should I do about the verse? I mean Psalm 1." She asked to my dismay.

CHAPTER 31

HANNAH

“Silly question!” I muttered as I hissed quietly.

I watched as Sarah kept dispensing error.

“Simply disregard the verse. Jesus is our perfect example and He sat with sinners. Besides, Psalm one was David’s first Psalm, he was probably inexperienced when he wrote it. Inexperienced plus self righteous! Just disregard Psalm one!” Sarah replied.

Josephine was still nodding. I felt like slapping sense into her head but my hands were tied.

“It’s not even like you know the sinners your roommate is talking about, or do you?” Susan asked.

“No, I don’t.”

Sarah hissed.

“Imagine that! At this point in your life, never listen to anyone who speaks in parables. If she cannot speak in clear terms, don’t take her serious.”

“Exactly!” Josephine agreed. “That’s exactly how things should go.”

“Whether you know the sinners or not, remember Jesus is our perfect example.” Sarah said.

“Alright.”

I yawned. It was 11:20PM already.

“We thank God for the in-depth understanding of His Word. More grace, Sarah.” I said.

“Thank you very much, sisters. I’m grateful. I think we should have more of this sort of discussion... You know... Comparing the Old testament to the New testament. It’s like the people in the Old testament took life too serious.”

Josephine’s words were like bile but I had to swallow them. She even planted another idea into my head and I was very sure that Sarah also caught the idea.

I was right!

Sarah didn’t only catch the idea. She also bought the idea!

She called me immediately she got to her room after the ‘prayer meeting’. I was about to open the door to my room when she called me.

“Sarah, I hail oo.” I said immediately I picked the call.

I locked my door and walked straight to my bed. I plopped into it as I heard Sarah’s sarcastic chuckle.

“Mama H, it is not easy to misinterpret God’s Word oo but I had to do it, sha. Tee Boss no dey shine teeth.”

“That is it oo, my sister.” I agreed.

“You heard what Josephine said about comparing the Old Testament...”

Sarah cut in. “I did oo. Mama H, and that exactly shall we do.”

“Anything not to get into trouble with Tee Boss. I don’t want trouble.”

Sarah chuckled. “It’s like the “T” in Tee Boss means trouble. That lady is really a bunch of trouble.”

“I didn’t say that oo, Sarah. You won’t be implicated.”

“Mama H, you too dey fear. Tee Boss is not even here.”

“Good night, Sarah. I have a test to write tomorrow.”

“Ooh... That’s true. What will you do since you’re not prepared?”

“I’ll try to read the little I can before I sleep.”

“Okay, then. Good night, Mama H.”

“Good night.”

I dropped my phone and rushed to the corner of the room where I had earlier flung my course manual. I picked it up and sat there on the floor, my eyes trying hard to pick few points before they finally got closed in sleep.

CHAPTER 32

JOSEPHINE

I walked back to my room with the satisfaction that my question had been answered. Brittany was only looking for who she would throw into mental stress. I smiled as I pondered on Sarah's response.

"David was being self righteous."

I took a quick glance at my watch and I hastened my steps.

It was 11:35PM!

I was used to walking back to my hostel from my meeting point with Hannah and the others in the middle of the night. Thank God for the street lights within the school premises.

Brittany would not be in the room. She would have left for the vigil the Church organized. I decided to miss the vigil because of my meeting with Hannah that evening. I would never miss any meeting with Hannah for anything. Not even for the vigil the fellowship organized!

I had earlier switched off my phone so that Brittany would not be able to reach me. I reached for the bunch of keys in my bag, opened the door and walked into the room.

“Brittany should be with her key.” I assumed as I locked the door with my key.

I walked straight to the table and began to meditate on everything Sarah said about Psalm One.

As I ‘meditated’, it occurred to me that I should write down something about the Old and New Testament in my quiet time journal.

“When last did I use the journal?” I wondered as I searched for it.

I finally found it under my bed.

According to the journal, the last time I personally observed my quiet time was on July 10.

“Today is August 3.” I sighed.

I suddenly felt guilty but I shrugged off the feeling of guilt almost immediately.

“It’s not as if I’ve not been talking to God since then. Thank God for Hannah and her friends.” I thought.

“David’s self righteousness.” I wrote.

I wrote what Sarah earlier explained and I also added some other examples of people in the Old Testament that were self righteous according to Sarah's explanation.

"Thank God for Hannah and co. The meeting with them this evening was really eye-opening." I yawned severally as I wrote.

BRITTANY

I checked round the Church in search of Josephine after the vigil but I didn't see her. As I walked alone to my room, the only thing I could think about was sleep. I got to the room and met Josephine already fast asleep. I was about to land on my bed when my eyes caught an opened book on the table.

I got prompted to check out the book but I desperately needed to sleep. I eventually landed on my bed with the hope of sleeping but the prompting did not stop.

With my half closed eyes, I dragged my feet to the table. My eyes were suddenly snatched from the grip of sleep and they were wide opened immediately I saw what was written in the book.

"David's self righteousness." I whispered.

"David in the Bible abi David in Josephine's department?" I wondered.

I picked up the book and read further.

“I need to understand what is going on here.” I said to myself.

What my eyes beheld in the book threw me off balance and I had to immediately pull out the chair so that I could sit.

“David was not the only self righteous one. Mordecai, Elijah, Samuel, Daniel, the four Hebrew children...”

I was confused. “This is arrant nonsense.” I muttered.

I kept reading and I realized that she even explained why she felt they were self righteous.

The explanation did not make any sense to me!

“I want to believe Josephine did not write this.” I said to myself.

“But who could have written it?” I wondered.

“Thank God for Hannah and co...” I read the last part of the page and I was disappointed.

Josephine actually wrote it!

I could not contain my confusion and I needed Josephine to explain what she wrote.

I marched straight to her bedside with the intention of tapping her out of sleep.

“Josephine! Josephine!” I screamed.

CHAPTER 33

BRITTANY

I marched straight to her bedside with the intention of tapping her out of sleep.

“Josephine! Josephine!” I screamed.

She jerked out of sleep.

“Is the house on fire?” She asked as she fearfully looked around.

Instead of replying, I threw the book at her before I could stop myself.

“I’ve been trying so hard to process what is in that book. I need you to start explaining what you wrote.”

Josephine stared at the book in anger and closed her eyes, trying to suppress her anger.

“Brittany, what is the meaning of the nonsense you just performed with me this morning?” She opened her eyes.

“You want me to start explaining what to you? As my what? My mum or my guardian?” She fumed.

I instantly regretted my action. I had acted on impulse.

She pointed at me. "This is the second time you would unnecessarily wake me. The next time you try it, in fact you won't even want to try it. When next you try it..." She eyed me before she hissed.

"If not that you are also self righteous... I don't understand why on earth you would try to read my journal." She mumbled as she wrapped up herself.

I felt terrible!

I didn't know it was her journal. I never liked to pry into anyone's privacy.

"I'm sorry." I tried to apologize.

"Keep your sorry to yourself and stay off my lane." She replied without opening her eyes.

I returned to my bed and pondered on what I saw.

Hannah and co!

'Hannah and co' must have really confused Josephine.

I sighed as I understood the alarm in my head anytime Josephine talked about Hannah.

“What have they been praying about if they’ve been misinterpreting God’s Word?” I wondered.

I looked towards Josephine. “She’s really mad at me right now.”

I sighed as I promised myself to keep apologizing to her.

My alarm rang.

It was noon already! I had slept off while thinking about Josephine the other time.

I sat up and looked towards Josephine’s bed. She was not there!

“She must have gone out.” I concluded.

I sincerely hoped she was not with ‘Hannah and co’.

“Only God knows what they are discussing this time around.” I sighed.

“Lord Jesus, please save Josephine. Save ‘Hannah and co’ too.”

Since I did not know the ‘co’, I decided to keep calling all of them ‘Hannah and co’. I did not plan to go out throughout the day so I was alone in the room. I decided to study but after each line I read, I would remember Josephine, Hannah and co.

“Lord Jesus, please bring Josephine to the right path. Teach me to act right because I really overreacted the other time.” I kept praying each time I remembered them.

It was getting dark and as usual, Josephine was yet to be back. I was not surprised when she eventually walked into the room around past 11 PM.

“Welcome, Josephine.”

No response.

I assumed she did not hear.

“Josephine, good evening.” I spoke louder.

She glared at me and hissed.

“Josie... I’m sorry for...”

She raised her right hand, indicating that I should keep quiet.

I sighed as I stared at her in frustration.

JOSEPHINE

I had reported Brittany to Hannah and her friends and they advised me to put her in her place.

“Who does she think she is?” Susan had asked, stamping her feet on the floor in annoyance.

“At this juncture, you have to leave that room.” Sarah said.

“I don’t know how you’ve been coping with someone who cannot mind her business.” Susan added.

“If it’s about where to stay, I live alone.” Hannah said.

On my way back to the room, I pondered on what we discussed.

“That’s just the best! I’m moving out of that room next semester.” I concluded.

I had the intention of totally ignoring Brittany in the room but when she would not stop talking, I decided to non-verbally tell her to keep her mouth shut.

CHAPTER 34

JOSEPHINE

I totally ignored Brittany for the rest of the semester. Whenever she tried to greet me, I would hiss at her. My plan was to move out of the room immediately after my last paper for the semester. I had not told my mother about my plan. I knew she would not agree that I should move out of the campus to live off campus but I cared less about that.

“With or without her consent, I’m moving out of this room. I can no longer cope with Brittany.” My mind was made up.

It was one week to my second examination as an undergraduate. I was studying when my phone vibrated. I smiled when I saw the caller ID.

My mum!

“Josephine, how are you?”

“Mummy, good evening. I’m fine, ma.”

“It’s been a while, oo.”

I smiled.

“How is your roommate?”

“She’s fine, ma.”

“And Hannah too?”

“She’s also fine.”

My mum kept asking about my welfare as a typical mother would. In the course of our discussion, I decided to tell her about my decision.

“Eerhm... Mummy?”

“Yes, dear.”

“I want to...”

My mum cut in.

“Eeh ehn! Josephine, I remembered something just now. Hmm... I had a terrible dream about you some days ago. I’ve prayed for you but I still want you to be careful.”

“What’s the dream about?” I asked.

“I saw a sheep walking away from the flock. It was led out of the flock by some strange looking animals. It eventually fell into a ditch of more of those strange animals.”

I wondered how the dream applied to me.

“Mum, what has that dream got to do with me?”

“Hmm... In the dream, immediately the sheep fell, I heard your voice from nowhere. You were screaming in anguish. I searched around but I could not find you. I eventually moved towards the ditch and you were there with some faces I didn’t clearly see.”

I burst into laughter. “Josephine’s mother!” I said. “How can a sheep suddenly transform into Josephine?” I questioned.

“Josephine!” My mum screamed.

I immediately stopped laughing. “Sorry, ma. What should I do, mummy? How can I be careful?”

“We will talk more when you get home. Immediately after your last paper, find your way home.”

“Okay, ma.” I reluctantly replied.

“What were you saying the other time?”

“What was I saying?” I feigned ignorance.

I changed my mind about telling her because with the nasty dream she had, she would definitely not allow me to live off campus.

“You were telling me about a plan of yours before I cut in.” My mum tried to remind me.

I racked my brain for another story to tell her but I found none.

“Josephine, are you there?”

I did not respond.

“Okay oo. It seems network has started again. I can no longer hear you. I’ll call you later.”

The call dropped.

BRITTANY

Throughout the examination period, Josephine kept the silent war rolling. Probably because of the peculiarity of the examination

period, I did not notice anything unusual until the night before the last day of the semester.

I was trying to pick the necessary things I would need at home for the semester break when Josephine dragged her heavy travel bags to her bedside one after the other.

I was confused and I asked her why she emptied her wardrobe into her bags. She glared at me and hissed.

“Do you want to pack all your clothes home?”

“None of your business!” She snapped.

That was the first sentence I would get from her after many days of silence.

I watched as she kept packing everything including her books. I didn’t understand what she was up to until she began to pack all her kitchen utensils.

“Lord Jesus, let it not be what I’m thinking.”

She kept walking here and there in the room, picking everything that belonged to her. After some minutes, her load was by her bedside. She finally plopped into her bed and took some gulps of water. She picked up her phone and put a call through to someone.

CHAPTER 35

JOSEPHINE

After some days of contemplation, I finally decided to tell my mum about my plan. As far as I was concerned, everything about me was ready to relocate including my load. I knew Brittany would be wondering what I was up to. I picked up my phone to speak to my mum about my plan.

“She should have forgotten about her dream by now.” I thought.

Immediately she picked up the call, I went straight to the point, trying as much as possible to convince her.

“Who did you say you want to move in with?” She asked after listening to my story.

“Hannah.” I replied.

I looked towards Brittany to see her reaction. She turned sharply at me immediately I mentioned ‘Hannah’. She then shook her head.

“The girl that came visiting the other day?”

“Yes, ma” I was glad that my mum remembered Hannah.

"I have packed my load and first thing immediately after my last paper, I'll be moving in with her."

My mum sighed.

"What have you done about our last discussion?" She asked.

I rolled my eyes.

"I told you about a very nasty dream the last time we spoke. What have you done about it?"

"Mummy..." I grumbled. "What on earth should I have done about it?"

"Josephine!" My mum screamed. "You mean you didn't even pray about it?"

"Aren't there better things to pray about?" I grumbled.

"I can't hear you, Josephine. Speak up!"

I kept quiet.

"Josephine? Josephine!"

My mum had to drop the call since I was no longer responding.

“I don’t think I’ll go home.” I said to myself.

Going home would mean that I was ready to listen to mummy’s several sermons.

I retired to bed that night with mixed feelings. I was happy that I was done with my first year and I’d be leaving Brittany’s room but I was sad that my mum did not agree.

“Jesus!”

I suddenly jerked out of sleep and looked towards Brittany who was breathing heavily.

“Jesus!” She screamed again before she jumped out of her bed. She picked up her Bible and began to pray.

I hissed.

“Imagine screaming out of sleep and disturbing someone else! It’s my last night here, anyway.” I murmured before I slept off again.

BRITTANY

“Dear Lord Jesus, please save Josephine.” I kept muttering.

I had a scary dream about Josephine and it seemed so real. The dream was similar to the last one I had about her.

The last time, I woke up when Josephine kept admiring and touching the flower even after the horticulturist had spoken to her.

This time around, the dream did not stop there.

While admiring the flower, she did not notice the thorns in the internodes. The horticulturist tried to whisper to her again but she shunned him. He also sent some of his workers but she insulted them. Everyone watched her in pity. Not too long after, she suddenly screamed. Her right index finger was trapped in one of the internodes of the flower. The thorns in the internode got her injured and her finger bled profusely.

She burst into tears and instead of calling for help, she picked up a pair of shears very close to her and made an attempt to cut off the finger.

I did not really understand the dream but to the best of my knowledge, Josephine was getting into trouble very soon.

CHAPTER 36

BRITTANY

Josephine walked in and out of the room as she took her load outside the hostel one after the other. I had planned to speak with her but I was not bold enough to even call her name.

When she walked into the room to pick her last sack, I summoned up courage to speak with her.

“Eerhm... Josephine?”

She cast a sharp glance at me and moved towards the door. I rushed after her and held her left hand.

“Josephine, please listen to me.” I sincerely pleaded.

She snatched her hand from me and folded her arms across her chest.

I sighed.

“Josephine, did I do anything wrong?”

No response.

“Do you really want to move out?”

She suddenly flared up.

“What does it look like I want to do? Are you keeping me standing here for questions?”

She was glaring at me.

“I’m sorry. I’m really sorry if you are annoyed with me. Please, can you give me another chance to right my wrong?”

“No, I can’t! My mind is made up. Do you realize you’re wasting my time?”

She moved towards the door again and this time around, I stood in her way.

I was not planning to let her leave in anger.

“What exactly is your problem?” She was infuriated.

With my hands akimbo, I fixed my gaze on her.

“Brittany, get out of my way before I do something we are both going to regret.”

“You are going nowhere until you sit down and listen to me.” I said calmly but sternly.

I decided to stop pleading with her since it was glaring that all my pleas would keep falling on her deaf ears.

She glared at me in such a way that if the eyes could kill, I would have instantly died on that spot.

“Nonsense!” She hissed.

Staring into the atmosphere with her arms folded and her legs crossed, she leaned on the table. I sat on the chair in front of her and sighed heavily.

“It’s obvious there’s nothing I can do to stop you from leaving. Sitting here with you makes me remember a particular day in this year, precisely June 3. The only difference between today and that day is that you were the one sitting on this chair and I was sitting on the table. Does that ring a bell?”

Josephine’s shoulders dropped. She remembered that day.

“I wrote down the date because I was happy that Heaven rejoiced.”

Teardrops cascaded down Josephine's face.

"Have you really been God's friend or you feel you can be in-between. Josephine, the opposite of friend is foe. It is either you are His friend or you are His foe. You can't be..."

She suddenly cut in.

"That's part of it! I can't cope with you anymore, Brittany. You're always judging me and that's one thing Hannah will never do." She screamed.

I was taken aback. "Judging you?"

"Yes! You always want me to dance to your tune. How exactly does it look like I'm in-between? I'm very sure this is about my friendship with Hannah but guess what, there's nothing you can say that will convince me not to move out of this room."

She wiped her tears, hissed and picked up her sack.

"She's always the only one having premonitions every now and then. I'm done sharing my space with a pessimist." She grumbled.

I shrugged in resignation.

“Alright, Josephine. I’ll always be available just in case... And don’t forget never to live according to the dictate of men. Live by the Word of God.”

Without any response, she stormed out of the room.

I heaved a heavy sigh of frustration as I collapsed into my bed. I suddenly sat up and stared into space.

“Wait...” I thought aloud. “Why am I this bothered?” I wondered.

I tried so hard to pinpoint a reason but all I could remember was that I was having premonitions which ended up in scary dreams about Josephine.

“Josephine might have been right. I didn’t even give her breathing space in her own room and now I’ve sent her right into the hands of... Oh my God! What if I’ve been the one imagining negative things?”

I shrugged off my ‘negativity’ and concluded that all would be well with Josephine.

CHAPTER 37

HANNAH

As I assisted Josephine with settling into my room, I tried to process the level of her gullibility.

Imagine walking right into a ditch with the eyes widely opened in broad daylight!

If I had a mum like Josephine's, I wouldn't have fallen into Tee Boss' trap. Josephine's mum must have been a witch! Who on earth dreams so precisely?

Josephine told me about her mum's dream some days before she moved into my room. I tried so hard to be calm as she spoke because the dream was too precise for anyone not to understand.

"Dreams could be so funny, Hannah. Imagine a sheep transforming into Josephine. I wonder when on earth my mum became Joseph the dreamer." She chuckled.

I stared at Josephine, surprised that she could utter such words about her mother. If...

"Hannah..." Josephine jolted me out of my world of thought.

I stared at her.

“Are you fine? You’ve been absentminded.”

“I’m okay.” I mumbled.

She stared closely at me before she shrugged.

“I’m famished. Is there anything I can eat?”

“Go to the kitchen.” I replied.

Josephine left for the kitchen and returned almost immediately with a plate of rice. Fixing my gaze on Josephine as she hungrily dug into her meal, I remembered how I got entangled with Tee Boss.

I never lived with my parents. In fact, I’ve never seen them!

My mother is late and I don’t know anything about my father. I used to live with my mother’s only sister who lived from hand to mouth. My mother was an orphan who had her ten year old younger sister in her care. She ventured into prostitution at the age of fifteen just to make ends meet. As expected, she aborted each time she took in.

After five years of prostitution and abortion, she was sternly warned to stay away from abortion. She could not stop prostitution because she felt she could not survive without it. She conceived again and decided to give birth to the child who turned out to be me.

According to my aunt, my mum met Christ on the day she gave birth to me. She was on her way to the hospital in a cab when one of the passengers began to preach.

“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

In her intense labour pain, she accepted Christ. My aunt told me that my mum even promised God that she would raise the child in the way of the Lord.

My mum entered the labour room and never returned!

Immediately she gave birth, she bled till she kicked the bucket. Devastated by the loss of her sister, my aunt took me home and took the responsibility of taking care of me. She trusted God to help her.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusted in thee.”

That was the Bible verse she brought me up with.

She struggled to make sure that I got my secondary school leaving certificate.

She sat me down one evening and informed me that I would have to join in her small-scale business so that we could gather enough money for me to further my studies.

“My dear, you have to assist me for two years. With God’s help, I know we should be able to gather enough so that you can...” She was trying to explain but I cut in.

“Aunty! With God’s help? What if we are not able to get enough before then?” I broke down in tears.

“I’m not ready to put my life on hold for two years oo.” I murmured as I sniffed.

My aunt sighed. “Hannah, I need you to trust God with me. It’s not as if there’s nothing on ground but what is on ground is not enough. I don’t want you to get stranded.”

“Let me start with whatever is on ground first. I can’t get stranded.” I insisted.

Like a protesting little child, I gave my aunt the silent treatment for many days which made her to eventually agree with me.

“Hannah, it’s fine if that is what you want. Just make sure you don’t get involved in whatever will make God displeased.”

I eventually gained admission and true to my aunt's words, I got myself stranded!

I wouldn't have gotten stranded but I was not satisfied with the little my aunt had and I began to long for more. I made friends with high-class ladies and pretended to be high-class too. I began to mount pressure on my aunt to give me more. When I realized that she could not give me as much as I wanted, I began to follow my friends to see their 'big daddies'.

I was severally pricked by my conscience anytime I remembered 'when sinners entice thee, consent thou not' but I got my conscience seared.

The love of money is indeed the root of evil!

CHAPTER 38

HANNAH

In the process of running from pillar to post in search of that which was not lost, I met Tee Boss.

I had gone out with my ‘friends’ as usual. I did not have much on me that day because I had spent all I had on my course manuals. I went out with my friends with the hope that one of them would sort out my bills. I was shocked to my bone marrow when they all screamed “bills on Hannah!”

What was the bill?

Seventy two thousand naira!

My account balance was not even up to five thousand naira.

Distraught, I tried to explain my plight to my ‘friends’ but they would hear none of it. They reminded me that I was always the one benefitting from them. They screamed at me, calling me a parasite and a gold digger. They made sure that I was publicly embarrassed.

I noticed that a lady was watching us from her seat. She came to my rescue, settled my friends and took me to her hostel. I narrated my story to her and she consoled me.

“Those girls were never meant to be your friends in the first place. Friends should stand by each other no matter what.” She had said.

She introduced herself as ‘Tee Boss’ and promised to be my friend. She also promised me that I would never lack anything throughout my stay on campus. She even got me an apartment off campus.

In excitement, I informed my aunt that I was enjoying God’s favour. My aunt didn’t say much in response. “Just don’t get involved in whatever will make God displeased” was all she said.

One month after Tee Boss lavished care and money on me, she introduced me to what she called a ‘sisterhood’. I did not think it was anything out of the ordinary until I was initiated.

Every morning, I would sit in front of the mirror and helplessly stare at the injury inflicted on my back in the process of the initiation. As if the physical injury was not enough, affliction became the order of the night every Tuesday. Tee Boss also changed from the ‘good Samaritan’ I used to know to a tyrant.

When I summoned up the courage to complain to her, she cackled with laughter.

“Nothing goes for nothing, baby girl.” She replied.

I knew I was done for but I had no one to run to for help. My aunt would be so disappointed. I could not even run to God because I was so ashamed of myself.

Tee Boss planted me in a fellowship centre on campus with the assignment of confusing careless so called Christians.

I was not happy with the task but I was left with no alternative. I even joined the choir and...

JOSEPHINE

Hannah's fixed gazes on me made me feel so uncomfortable that I had to go to the kitchen to eat.

I returned from the kitchen after eating and I was surprised to see Hannah on the same spot as she stared into space, obviously lost in thought.

"Hannah!" I screamed.

She was startled.

"What has been on your mind? You've been acting strange since I got here. What's wrong with you?" I questioned her.

No response.

She simply stared at me, averted her gaze and picked up a book.

Hannah did not act strange for too long.

“Josie, I’m sorry for yesterday. I had a lot on my mind but I’m fine now.” She apologized the following day.

I wondered what on earth could have been on her mind that made her to act as weird as she did.

I sincerely hoped that she would not always act so weird.

CHAPTER 39

JOSEPHINE

Hannah stopped acting strange but there were some things about her that I did not understand.

She would never get dressed in my presence. Once she entered the bathroom to take her bath, she would come out all dressed. This did not happen once or twice. It became her regular practice.

“Hey Hannah, I’m not a guy. What are you hiding?” I would ask her jokingly and she would laugh off my question.

I concluded that she was the type that loved privacy and I tried as much as possible to also mind my business.

One morning, she came out of the bathroom all dressed as usual. She picked her sandals from the shoe rack and was about to put them on when I noticed a movement on the sleeve of her blouse. I moved closer to check what it was and it turned out to be a scorpion.

“Hannah! Scorpion!” I screamed as I pointed at her blouse.

Alarmed, she took off her blouse on impulse and flung it across the room.

“You didn’t notice it in the blouse before you put it on.” I said.

I sighted a broom in a corner in the room and I was about to pick it up when I caught a glimpse of several prominent scars on Hannah's back.

I took a closer look at it and it looked like her back was severally pressed with a red hot iron.

I gasped!

Hannah hurriedly reached for a scarf on her bed to cover herself but it was already too late. I had already seen her back.

"Hannah, who did this to you?" I questioned her.

Rubbing her palms, she avoided eye contact with me.

"Is this what you've been hiding?"

She didn't answer any of my questions. I could not wrap my head around why Hannah kept such a thing from me. I concluded that she was highly secretive and again, I minded my business.

I also noticed that she chewed bubble gums and paced from one end of the room to the other every Tuesday night. By the time I would be awake the next morning, she would be seated on the floor, weeping uncontrollably.

There was a particular Wednesday morning that she screamed out of her sleep.

“Hannah, what’s going on? You had a night mare?” I asked as I rushed to her side.

She didn’t reply. She was sweating profusely and gulping back her tears.

“Hannah, I really care about you and I’m...”

She gently cut in. “I appreciate your care. I’ll be fine.” She simply replied as she wiped her tears.

She never said anything about her scars and her reason for always being depressed every Wednesday morning and I didn’t bother to ask any further question. I got used to her usual Wednesday morning screams and tears and I could only say “sorry, Hannah. It is well with you.”

We lived together peacefully as roommates who respected each individual’s privacy. We attended Church services together and I made sure I always said ‘hi’ to Brittany after every service just to let her know that her ‘premonitions’ were her own imaginations.

HANNAH

“Well done, Hannah. You can proceed to the next phase which is the first stage of her initiation.”

The message was from Tee Boss. What was the next phase?

CHAPTER 40

HANNAH

Tee Boss had predicted that it would not be easy to present a 'sisterhood tale' to Josephine.

"She's too smart to be tricked with the word 'sisterhood'. She might get suspicious and we would end up losing her." Tee Boss had once told me.

Another plan which made more sense was then devised. Josephine would be impregnated by Steve, the only male member of the sisterhood. She would be made to believe that a property of the sisterhood was growing in her therefore, she would have to be a member whether she liked it or not.

I had already introduced the guy to her. He was sent to disguise as a tutor that could put her through a particular course of hers.

She was already very close to him, so it would be easy for the guy to carry out his assignment.

Steve was a regular visitor in our room because he always helped Josephine with most of her assignments. Even when he was not in the room with us, he would always be on the phone with Josephine.

It was so glaring that Josephine had grown fond of him. She would always say something about Steve. It was always; “Steve said that... Steve didn’t allow me to... I asked Steve if...”

One evening, Josephine was chatting with someone I knew would surely be Steve while I was trying to take a nap. She suddenly screamed in excitement.

“Awwwn... Hannah... I was never expecting this.” She blushed as she held her phone very close to her chest.

“What is it?” I asked her.

“It’s Steve oo... Awwwn...”

I rolled my eyes. “It’s always about Steve.” I mouthed.

“What’s up with Steve?” I asked.

“You won’t believe this, Hannah...” She squealed.

I hissed. “When you’re ready to talk, let me know.”

“Aah aah, Hannah. Don’t be mean.”

She cleared her throat.

“Steve just asked me out.”

I was not surprised and I didn’t pretend to be. “As expected!” I exclaimed.

“What should I tell him?” She asked me.

“Aah aah, wetin be my own?” I questioned her.

JOSEPHINE

I knew I was meant to give Steve a big NO but I didn’t want to. I wanted someone to give me reasons why I should say NO.

“Hannah, now... Should I say yes or no?” I asked Hannah again.

“Follow your heart, baby girl. You know the right thing.”

“My heart says yes.”

“Then tell him yes.”

I picked up my phone to reply to Steve.

“Yes, I would love to be your girl. I’d be the proudest...” I suddenly felt I was giving the wrong answer.

I dropped my phone on the bed and turned to Hannah.

“Hannah... This is wrong...”

“How is it wrong?”

“God won’t be happy with me.”

“Is it written anywhere in the Bible that it’s wrong to date?” Hannah asked me.

“God hates fornication.” I replied.

“Who said you will be fornicating?”

“That’s true, tho.”

I picked up my phone again and I began to compose a message to Steve.

CHAPTER 41

HANNAH

As expected, Steve came to our room two days after his discussion with Josephine. Before he arrived, Josephine kept pestering me, asking me if she should accept Steve's proposal or not.

"Josephine, I've told you to follow your heart."

"I don't know what my heart wants."

"Then tell him whatever you like. I'm going out immediately Steve gets here. I need to see one of my course mates."

"So you will leave me in the room all alone with Steve?"

"So? Is this the first time you people would be alone in this room?"

"Today is different, Hannah. Today is not really about the tutorial. I can't be comfortable being alone with Steve today."

"I'd have loved to stay back with you people but..."

Josephine cut in.

"I'd just tell him not to bother to come here, I'll see him at school."
She reached for her phone and dialed his line.

"Steve... Ooh... You're already at the door? Jeet! I was about to..."

I went to get the door and Steve bounced in. The fragrance of his concentrated perfume wafted into my nostrils.

"Hey... Are you here for tutorial or you're here for something else?" I eyed him suspiciously.

"It depends on your definition of something else." He winked at me before he turned to Josephine.

"Hey... Josie, what's up? You look tensed."

"Eerhm... I was about to tell you that we should meet somewhere on campus." She replied.

"Well, I'm here already." Steve smiled broadly.

I was ready to take my leave but Josephine was making a face at me. I ignored her, picked up my bag and walked to the door.

"I'll see you guys later." I said as I walked out of the room.

I was not going to see anybody. Tee Boss already had everything planned out and the simple instruction she gave me was; “leave the room once Steve gets there.”

After hours of roaming around with no particular destination in mind, I decided to go back to my room. I was already very close to my room when I got a text from the Choir Master.

“Good afternoon, Sis Hannah. I’ve been trying to reach Sister Josephine but her lines have not been reachable. I also tried to reach you but you didn’t pick your calls. I hope all is well with the two of you?”

“I’ve not been picking my calls?” I wondered.

I checked my call log and I had missed thirteen calls. Eight from Josephine, two from the Choir Master, two from Steve and one from Tee Boss.

“How come?” I wondered.

I was about to return Tee Boss’ call when my phone rang again. It was the Choir Master.

“Good afternoon, sir.”

“Sister Hannah?”

“Yes, sir. I’m sorry I missed your calls.”

“No problem, ma. How are you doing? How is Sister Josephine?”

“We are fine. Thank God, sir.”

“Thank God. Is Sister Josephine with you?”

“No, sir.”

“Okay... I just want to remind her that she’s representing the alto sisters at the regional practice this evening.”

“Alright, sir. I’ll deliver your message.”

“Thank you so much, ma. Have a nice day.”

“You too, sir.”

I finally got to my hostel and met the door unlocked. Wondering what was going on with my heart palpitating, I walked into the room.

CHAPTER 42

HANNAH

Wondering what was going on with my heart palpitating, I walked into the room. Josephine was seated on the bed, weeping bitterly. Immediately she saw me, she glared at me and hissed. She got up from the bed, put on her slippers and walked out of the room.

I had an idea of what could have happened in my absence but I did not want to jump into conclusion.

“Not this early, no! Not this early.” I said as I picked up my phone.

With sweaty palms and quivering fingers, I put a call through to Steve.

“Hey... Hannah.”

“”What did you do to Josephine?” I screamed.

“What do you mean?” He casually replied.

“You were here with Josephine, weren’t you?”

“So...?”

His casual response got me infuriated and I had to hang up on him.

“I really hope it’s not what I think it is.”

I suddenly remembered that I earlier missed Tee Boss’ call. As I was about to pick up my phone, Josephine staggered into the room. I rushed towards her and the offensive odour of alcohol greeted my nostrils.

The ‘Josephine’ I knew never liked the sight of alcohol not to talk of liking the taste. Whatever made her to drink really...

She suddenly threw up!

I tried to hold her but she fell into my arms and the two of us landed on the floor, almost into the pool of her vomit!

I got up almost immediately and tried to pull Josephine up but I could not. She eventually slept off on the floor.

JOSEPHINE

I tried so hard to get my eyes opened as I rolled on my tummy. I had to severally rub my face with the back of my palm before I could finally open my eyes. I did not realize that I was on the floor until I tried to get up.

“Why in the world would I have slept on the floor?” I wondered.

As I struggled to get up, I felt a sharp pain in between my thighs. I tried to take a step but I felt the pain again and it was even sharper.

Then I remembered!

The memories of the previous day rushed into my head in torrents and I instantly developed a throbbing headache.

My head was literally pounding!

I had to lean against the wall because I could not stand on my own.

“If Hannah had stayed in the room with us, I might not be in this mess. If I didn’t allow Steve into this room, if I didn’t move in with Hannah, if I didn’t even meet Hannah at all...”

A lot of ‘ifs’ crossed my mind as I whimpered. As it dawned on me that I was in a very hot soup, I placed my hands on my head and screamed. The scream jerked Hannah out of sleep.

“Josephine, you’re awake?” She jumped out of the bed and rushed towards me.

“Don’t touch me.” I said in-between sobs.

“Josephine, what happened to you?” She placed her left hand on my shoulder but I shrugged it off.

“Josephine, you should not keep me in the dark. We are roommates. A problem shared is half solved.”

I flared up.

“Tell me what to do, then. Listen to yourself speak as if it was not your plan all along. Why did you insist on leaving the room if indeed you know nothing about this?”

“About what?” Hannah screamed back at me.

I was shocked.

I did not know if I should scream at Hannah and tell her how wicked she was or I should laugh at how stupid she was to think I would believe her.

To my surprise, I found myself laughing and shedding tears at the same time.

“Hannah, you’re so unbelievable right now.” I hissed as I limped to the bathroom. I locked the door, sat on the WC and cried my eyes out.

CHAPTER 43

JOSEPHINE

I could not believe that I was a victim of what I dreaded most.

Steve raped me!

I wouldn't totally blame him. I admit that I was also at fault. Even before I moved out of Brittany's room, I used to meet Steve in Hannah's room. Her room was our 'tutorial center'. Initially, Steve related with me with pure intentions, or maybe so I thought. We would meet in Hannah's room, go straight to the tutorial and part ways but as time went by, I noticed that Steve would tactfully slot in unnecessarily comments in the course of his explanation.

He could be explaining something about blood and he would suddenly talk about menstrual cramps. Sometimes, he would utter statements like; "you girls can never be trusted. The rate at which you people double date now, ehn..."

From there, he began to ask me personal questions that I would just laugh off. And then, he began to make funny advances towards me. I reported him to Hannah and she told me not to take him seriously, that he was just being a free guy.

I got used to Steve's words and actions and I even contributed to whatever nonsense he talked about. The day he asked me out, I did not have enough resisting power to say NO.

“Maybe if Brittany was around, she would have even snatched the phone from me to compose a very nice message of proposal decline.” I thought.

From the bathroom where I sat, I heard the sound of the opening and closing of the door. Hannah had gone out.

I got up from the WC, dragged my feet to the wash hand basin and rinsed my face. I limped out of the bathroom, ensured I locked the door to the room and collapsed on the bed.

“Hmm... Hannah...” I hissed.

I was highly disappointed in her. I was very sure that she intentionally left the room when Steve arrived. Immediately she left, Steve reminded me that I promised that I promised to give him a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ that morning.

“Honestly Steve, I don’t know what reply to give you. I’m confused.”

“Josie... You’re not confused. It’s all over you that your answer is yes.”

In the process of explaining to Steve that I was not ready for a relationship, he raped me. After his dirty act, he apologized.

"I'm really sorry for what just happened, Josie. I don't know what came over me. I don't regret it, tho. It was just what I had to do."

With tears streaming down my face, I glared at him.

What nonsense!

Who does something as dirty as that and is still confident with no iota of remorse?

I did not have the strength to shout at him. I simply averted my gaze from him.

He tried to hold me to himself but I withdrew from him and wiped my tears.

"Just leave, Steve. At least, you've gotten what you want." I told him as I tried to gulp back my tears.

"I should not cry in the presence of a wicked guy." I thought.

"Alright, then. I'll give you time to think about what we discussed. I love you, Josie."

He walked out of the room, leaving me shattered.

“Love indeed!” I broke down in hot tears.

I reached for my phone and dialed Hannah’s line but she didn’t pick up my call. I kept dialing and dialing. I concluded that she intentionally ignored my calls.

“Steve!” I screamed.

I urgently needed someone to wake me from the ‘nightmare’. I needed someone to tell me that I had not lost what I valued most to Steve but where was Hannah?

She was nowhere to be found!

I got jolted out of my thoughts as my phone vibrated.

It was the CM!

I did a quick mind search, wondering why he could be calling me.

I declined the call as I was not in the mood for any religious or musical chit-chat. Few minutes later, he texted me. I reluctantly decided to read his message.

“Blessed morning to you, Sister Josephine...”

I hissed. Nothing was blessed about that morning.

“How have you really been? I’ve been trying to reach you since yesterday but I could not. Is all well with you? I told Sister Hannah about yesterday’s choir practice...”

Jeet! I totally forgot about the practice.

“... We were expecting you but you didn’t turn up, which is very unusual of you. I don’t know why you were not around but I pray that God sees you through whatever you are going through. He has promised that even when we walk through the fire, we shall not be burnt...”

“Hmm... CM, I’m already burnt and there’s nothing anyone can do about it.”

I stopped reading his message and switched off my phone. I decided that what happened would remain between the rapist and the victim. I would tell no one. Not even Hannah! Not even my mum!

CHAPTER 44

JOSEPHINE

The deed was already done.

“Stop crying over spilt milk, Josie.” I told myself.

I sat up on the bed and stared into space.

“So what now?” I wondered.

“There’s no need to get annoyed with Steve. I’d be the loser if I tell him no. I’d just say yes. About God, I don’t think I have what it takes to be His friend.”

I decided to visit Steve later in the evening.

“I can’t be depressed forever.” I said to myself as I jumped out of bed.

“Ouch!” I felt that pain again plus a splitting headache.

I reached for a sachet of paracetamol and I threw two tablets into my mouth. I rushed into the kitchen, grabbed a bottle of water and swallowed the tablets, not minding the fact that I had not eaten anything.

I walked out of the kitchen, flung my wardrobe open and began to search for what to wear out later in the evening.

BRITTANY

“Oh Jesus!” I heaved a heavy sigh as I plopped into my bed. It was a hectic day despite the fact that it was a Saturday. My course mates had insisted that we should discuss a particular topic that day. We were seated on a spot, discussing and brainstorming for hours.

“Thank God for them.” I thought aloud.

I yawned and rolled on my tummy. I was trying so hard to catch sleep but I couldn’t. I kept rolling from edge to edge on the bed for close to forty minutes. I eventually had to sit up and I stared blankly into space. For some reasons I did not understand, I caught myself staring at Josephine’s bed space.

“Josie...”

I had really missed her. We used to see at Church but relating with someone from afar is different from having such person as a roommate. I picked up my phone with the intention of saying ‘hi’ to her but my fingers kept on typing.

“Good evening, Josie. How have you been? It’s really been a while, dear. I’ve really missed you. Can I visit you one of these days? I’m not

happy with the state you left. You were hurt. I'm really sorry for whatever wrong I did. Friends should apologize, you know. I can't claim to be your friend if I hurt you and I feel too ashamed to say 'sorry'. I should still apologize no matter how hurt you are."

I sent the message and dropped my phone. Not too long after, I fell asleep.

JOSEPHINE

"Oh no!"

I wept as I dragged my feet to my room. I had gone to see Steve with the intention of saying 'yes' to him but I ended up in his bed again. I thought I would be able to make it clear to him that we had to wait till we got 'married' but he had his way with me again. This time around, he did not rape me, he coaxed me into it.

I entered the room and met Hannah preparing for the song we would take at Church the next morning. We were meant to take the song together as a duet.

"Good evening, Josie." Hannah greeted me.

I murmured in response.

"Where have you been?" She asked.

I ignored her question and I began to undress.

“You still won’t tell me what’s up with you?”

I ignored her question again.

“Alright, then. The choir master sent his regards. He said you should not forget to prepare for the choir piece.”

I rolled my eyes as I reluctantly sat beside her.

“We’re taking Yahweh by Hillsong.”

“Hmm... Imagine holding the mic tomorrow morning with this filthy hands of mine.” I thought.

“Our God, He lives forever... He reigns with power and love...” I sang absentmindedly with Hannah.

“We look to Yahweh, Yahweh. Our Hope is Yahweh, Yahweh. And He shall reign forever... He shall reign forever and ever more...” We sang on.

Am I really God’s friend or foe? I don’t know anymore.

CHAPTER 45

JOSEPHINE

"This is really not happening to me."

After rehearsing the song with Hannah, I crawled into bed with guilt. I knew I had offended God. I remembered the verse; 'if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...' but I was so ashamed of my own sin that I could not confess.

It is written that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved, right?

I did not have the courage to even call upon His name.

"The deed has been done, Josie." I mouthed between sobs.

I wiped my tears with my pillow case and picked up my phone. I turned on my data connection and different messages instantly popped in. I went through some of the messages and replied to those ones I felt I should not ignore. Steve also sent me a message.

"Hey, baby girl. Thank you for saying yes to me. I can't wait for us to..." I hissed and I decided to ignore his message.

I checked out other messages and I was surprised that Brittany also sent me a message. I was more surprised when I saw the length of

the message. Tears gathered in my eyes as I read the message. I read it over and over again and the part that stood out for me was;

"... friends should apologize, you know. I can't claim to be your friend if I hurt you and I feel too ashamed to say sorry. I should still apologize no matter how hurt you are."

It was as if she was telling me to find the way back to God. Her message was just so timely! I buried my head into my pillow and had a very good cry.

Oh, Brittany!

I began to wish that I could turn back the hands of time. I remembered the aura of peace I felt the first time I saw Brittany. I also remembered how Brittany was always looking out for me. I even told her to her face that she was a pessimist.

"It's too late, Brittany. It's too late." I wept on.

HANNAH

I knew Josephine was hurt but there was nothing I could do about it. Her head was covered with her pillow but I could hear that she was whimpering. I stole glances at her from time to time, wondering if I should say something to her. What would I even say to someone

who refused to talk to me. I had tried all I could to get her to speak but she would not say a word.

It was not like I was ignorant of everything that was going on. I had already gotten the full gist from Tee Boss. Everything was going as planned. I could not continue to persuade Josephine to talk neither could I act like I knew what was going on. I still did not want her to suspect me in any way.

"Once she suspects you, we might lose her. Keep being the Hannah she knows for now." Tee Boss had told me.

I felt guilty for pretending to Josephine but there was nothing I could do about it.

The next day was a Sunday and for the first time since Josephine moved in with me, she left me behind and walked to the Church alone. We didn't even exchange a 'good morning'.

To think that we would sing a song together at Church that same morning. On my way to Church, I wondered if Josephine was beginning to suspect me. I shrugged off the feeling immediately I took my seat beside Josephine in the Church. I stole glances at her at intervals as she stared blankly at the Pastor. She dabbed her face with her handkerchief at intervals.

She was shedding tears!

When it was time for choir piece, we took the song together as if nothing was wrong and as usual, the congregation applauded us after the ministration.

Immediately after the service, Josephine picked up her bag and walked out of the Church. I was not happy with the silent treatment she was dishing out to me. I decided to force words out of her mouth later in the evening. I walked back to my room alone with the hope that Josephine would be in the room but to my utmost surprise, she was not in the room. I stood akimbo as I stared into space, wondering where she could have gone to. My phone vibrated and I reached for it. It was a message from Steve.

"Josephine is here with me."

I sighed as I pushed Josephine's issue aside. To me, Josephine was like a goat that was about to be burnt and yet was still roaming around the fireplace.

CHAPTER 46

JOSEPHINE

As time went by, I became used to my new way of life. Steve became my world. I did not care about what anyone felt about my relationship with him. I still sang in the choir and people were still looking up to me. Some one hundred level sisters would always seek my counsel.

Despite the fact that I stayed in the same room with Hannah, we were far apart. I stopped talking to her and I also warned Steve to stop relating with her. Each time Brittany asked if all was well with me, I would put on a plastic smile and say 'yes'. I made sure she had no opportunity to ask me any further question. I was satisfied with the mess I was in.

I yawned lazily as I stretched my body on the bed. I reached for my phone to check the time. It was 7:30 AM already and I was still in bed! I hissed as I remembered that I was meant to be in the lecture hall by 8 AM.

I was so fatigued that morning. Throughout the night, I was awake at intervals to ease myself. I tried to force my body out of bed but a splitting headache pushed me back to bed. I suddenly developed fever and all I could do throughout that day was to sleep.

I did not suspect anything out of the ordinary until it dawned on me that I had missed my period. I decided to get a pregnancy test strip. I

got it and kept it from Hannah. I did not have enough courage to use it until three days after I got it.

That fateful morning, with my heart almost jumping out of my chest, I made use of it. My heart jumped into my tummy as my fear got confirmed.

I was pregnant!

I rushed out of the bathroom with the strip and met Hannah at the door. I shoved her aside, picked my phone and rushed out of the room. I urgently needed to speak with Steve. I stopped running and looked around for where I could sit alone. I sighted a mango tree nearby and ran towards it.

Panting to catch my breath, I dialed Steve's line. I burst into tears immediately he picked the call.

"Josie? What's up, Josie?"

"It has happened oo, Steve." I wailed.

"Josie, will you calm down and talk to me?"

I wept for almost five minutes before I could find my tongue.

"I'm pregnant." I blurted out.

"Okay... And...?" Steve replied casually.

"Steve!" I screamed. "Didn't you hear what I said?"

Steve chuckled. "You said we are expecting a baby. Isn't that good news?"

"What?" I stopped crying immediately. I was not expecting such response from him. I was expecting something like; "what has that got to do with me?" or "get rid of that thing."

"Steve, it's like you don't understand what I'm talking about."

He chuckled again. "Make me understand, baby girl."

"Is this the right time for this?" I screamed in frustration.

"When is the right time? Are children no longer gifts from God?"

I lost my temper.

"Don't even try to bring God into this. Don't! This is a product of our sin."

"Really? So what do you intend to do?"

"Are you really asking me this question? You know what, Steve? We will talk later."

"Hey, wait! Don't try anything funny. Remember that murder is a sin."

I hissed angrily and dropped the call. My phone vibrated almost immediately.

Steve!

I picked the call and kept quiet.

"Hello... Josie...?"

No response!

"Josie...? Can you hear me?"

Silence!

"I know you can hear me, Josie. Don't try anything funny. I'm not complaining about the fact that you're pregnant so why are you bothered?"

"Tell me why I should not be bothered, Steve. I really need to understand why I should not be bothered. I don't blame you. Who will go through the pain of explaining why her tummy is protruded without being married? Who will be emotionally traumatized? Whose mother will be a laughing stock in the society? Whose reputation will be...?"

Steve interrupted me. "Josie..."

"Steve, listen to me! This has to remain between us till I come up with something, okay?"

I didn't wait to hear his response before I dropped the call.

Right there under the mango tree, I fell on my knees and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER 47

HANNAH

“What’s up with this babe?” I wondered as Josephine dashed out of the room.

It was just some minutes past 6AM. I was about to tell her to hurry up in the bathroom because I had a class by 7:30AM when she suddenly pushed me aside and ran out of the room. I could not wrap my head around why she did that. There was no need to rack my brain for too long; I knew I would later get to know her reason.

I whistled as I picked up my toothbrush and towel and walked into the bathroom. I took my bath in few minutes and expected Josephine to be in the room but she was yet to be back. As I was getting dressed, my phone vibrated.

Tee Boss!

“Congratulations to us!” She screamed in excitement immediately I picked the call.

That was the first time Tee Boss expressed her excitement in a very long while. I said nothing as I was short of words.

“Steve has successfully done his part.”

“His part?”

“Yeah! He called me now and told me that Josephine is pregnant.”

“Wow” I replied absentmindedly.

“She now has our seed growing in her. Remember that is our mark. This is the beginning of the main show. Make sure she doesn’t terminate our seed. Make sure she’s not free from our mark.”

“That might be a bit difficult oo.”

“Why?”

“We are not on talking terms. We’ve been in our different individual lanes. She definitely won’t tell me that she’s pregnant.”

“Why?” Tee Boss’ voice was gradually screaming fury.

“She suspects that I had a hand in the rape.”

“How come?” Tee Boss thundered.

“I guess... I... I think...” I stuttered.

“Keep quiet, Hannah! Just admit that you were careless. What if she decides to move out of your room? The simple instruction was that you should disguise to be a friend and gain her trust but what did you do? You made it obvious that you had an assignment, right?”

“No, that was not...”

“Shut up! Wait... Why am I screaming? Listen to me and listen carefully, whether you people are talking or not is none of my business. Just make sure that Josephine doesn't terminate our seed. Hope I'm speaking in English?”

Josephine barged into the room before I could find my tongue.

“Yes, ma'am.” I tried to compose myself.

“Remember that your life is at stake once that girl escapes.”

She dropped the call.

I cast a sharp glance at Josephine, put on my sandals and dashed out of the room.

“This is not the time to gain trust. It's time to sit down and watch.” I thought.

I was no longer in the right frame of mind to attend any class. I decided to call Sarah to find out if she was in her hostel. She replied in the positive and in a jiffy, I got to her room.

“Sarah, I’m in soup.” I announced immediately she opened the door.

“What’s up?” She asked as she led me inside.

We sat on her bed and I explained my predicament to her.

She sighed. “You’re in soup for real, Mama. Hot one!”

“Wait, why must Josephine be a member of ‘The wolves’? Why not any other girl? This girl’s wahala is getting too much. Why on earth is Tee Boss so much interested in her?” Sarah questioned me.

“Sarah, that’s not the issue right now. The problem is that my life is on the line. You know Tee Boss can do and undo.”

“What should we do?” Sarah fixed her gaze on me. She was always ready to help.

“I really don’t know. I need us to come up with a plan.”

“Should I kidnap her?” She asked.

I gasped. “No!”

“Should we implant a tracking device on her?”

“No!” I replied.

After hours of discussing without coming up with something meaningful, Hannah got up from the bed. She picked up a stick of cigarette from her table and lit it up.

“Mama H, you know what?” She asked as she puffed out smoke from her mouth.

“Eeh ehn?” I paid rapt attention to her, hoping that whatever she was about to say would help.

“Susan and I will handle the girl. Put your mind at rest.”

“Are you sure you won’t harm her?”

“Mama, trust us. She no fit commot that belle after we don... In fact, don’t worry. Just keep your fingers crossed. The initiation process might be even faster.”

“Just make sure you don’t harm her.”

“We won’t.” Sarah assured me.

I heaved a heavy sigh of relief. Sarah was someone I could trust with some specific assignments. I eventually left for my room with the assurance that Sarah would be of great help.

CHAPTER 48

JOSEPHINE

I could not bring myself to tell my mum or any other person about my predicament. I visited the hospital and I was confirmed to be four weeks pregnant. Right there, I decided to abort the pregnancy.

“Steve doesn’t know what he’s talking about.” I said to myself as I walked out of the hospital premises.

Instead of going to my hostel, I went into an empty lecture hall because I was avoiding Hannah. I did not want her to know anything about me. That was my routine for the past few days. I would sneak out of the house very early in the morning before Hannah was awake and I would sneak into the room very late in the night when she was fast asleep.

It was already two weeks to exam period. I studied in the lecture hall till around 10PM and left for my room, hoping that Hannah would be fast asleep. As usual, I took the bush path. I was already a stone’s throw from my hostel when two masked people suddenly jumped in front of me from nowhere.

I was startled!

I wanted to turn back and take to my heels but one of them gripped my left hand firmly. The grip sent cold shivers down my spine and I almost peed right on that spot.

Because they were covered from head to toe, I could not tell if they were ladies or guys until they spoke. They were ladies!

They spoke like drunk ladies!

“You can’t always run away, dear Josie.”

My eyeballs almost fell out of their sockets as I panted heavily.

“You’ve been running for a very long time.”

The other lady sharply cut in. “You can run as far as you like from the truth but guess what baby girl, you can’t run from the consequence of running into lies.”

“Yes! Josephine, don’t try to terminate our baby.”

What!

My heart flew into my mouth.

Our baby ke?

“If you try it, you will die!”

“Our eyes are on you. You’ve been marked!” The one with my hand screamed into my right ear before she let go of my hand.

Before I knew it, they were gone!

With my hands on my head, I screamed as I ran all the way to my room, not minding what the passers-by would think of me. I ran into my room and met Hannah awake. She was the least of my worries at that point. I ran into the bathroom and threw up immediately. I splashed water on my face and leaned on the wall.

I screamed again as I remembered what had earlier happened. Hannah rushed into the bathroom almost immediately.

“Josephine... Did you see a ghost?”

No response!

“You’re shivering...” She touched my neck with the back of her palm. “And you’re even... Are you fine?”

“Some people are after my life.” I replied with quivering lips as I dragged my feet out of the bathroom with Hannah closely behind me.

“Why?”

"I don't know..." I slurred. "They said something like running from..." I decided to stop talking.

Hannah should not know much about me. I did not trust her.

"Running from what?"

"Never mind... It's not like you care."

I plopped into the bed and covered my face with my pillow. I wondered if Steve told anyone about the pregnancy. I made a mental note to visit him the following day.

Sleep eluded me as I could not bring myself to forget what happened. The most painful part was that there was no one I could confide in.

My mum would hear none of a pregnancy tale. Brittany would feel her premonition was confirmed and God?

I didn't want to pull God into my misfortune.

"After I terminate this thing, I can involve God." I told myself.

Those ladies said I ran into lies.

How?

CHAPTER 49

HANNAH

I giggled as I turned on my data connection. I needed to appreciate Sarah for a job well done. Luckily for me, she was online.

"Hey... Sarah, I don't even know what to call you right now. You need to see Josie. She's as scared as a trapped fish."

"She has to be scared, Mama."

"I can't thank you enough, Sarah. Thank you so much. You and Susan are the best."

"Anything for you, Mama. The next meet and greet will hold in the next two weeks, remember?"

"That's true. Josephine has to be there."

"Exactly! Let's scare her one more time. She will be bundled to the meeting on Wednesday. Is that okay?"

"That's superb, Sarah. Finally, I'm free from Tee Boss."

"I'm still curious as to why Tee Boss is so interested in Josephine."

"We will get to understand at the meet and greet."

"Alright, Mama."

"Thank you so much, Sarah. Thanks a lot."

"You're always welcome. Anything for you."

I smiled. "Good night, Sarah."

I went offline and for the first time in so many weeks, I had a peaceful night rest.

JOSEPHINE

First thing the next morning, I was at Steve's door knocking... No! Scratch that... I was hitting the door furiously.

"Who the hell is there?" A lady screamed from inside.

A lady in Steve's room by this time of the day?

It was just 6:30 AM!

Instead of replying, I clenched my fist and kept hitting the door. The door was suddenly opened and I almost fell inside the room. I regained my balance and looked up to see who opened the door. My heart flew into my heart immediately I saw the person.

It was Toyin!

She was clad in a pink tube and a pair of bum shorts.

"Wow! What an early morning surprise!" She blocked the entrance with her body and flashed a smile at me.

"Eeh!" I snapped. "Close up! Close up! I'm not here to see your dirty set of teeth."

She chuckled to my dismay. "Don't be rude, Josie. This is not the right way to say good morning to someone you haven't seen in a long while."

Her words got me infuriated. "Toyin, what are you doing here?"

She kept smiling mischievously at me. "What am I doing in my room? What a question!"

I was confused. "Isn't this Steve's..." I looked around as I wondered if I was really in the wrong place.

I hissed and tried to push her out of the way. "Get your miserable self out of my way!" I screamed at her.

She didn't move an inch. "Sorry dear, you can't go inside."

Furious, I frantically searched for my phone in my bag and dialed Steve's line but it was not reachable.

"I shouldn't be fighting with a low-life who slept over in a guy's room. You should be ashamed of yourself, Toyin. To think that you deceived everyone back at home, including your mum!" I eyed her angrily and hissed. "May our paths never cross again!"

I stormed out of the compound and jumped on a bike that would convey me to my room. Throughout that day, I kept dialing Steve's line but it was not reachable.

I concluded that Steve was behind the threat.

"I shouldn't have told him in the first place." I thought.

I moved on with Church activities even in my condition. I was on my way from a vigil that was organized mainly for the choir when I heard footsteps closely behind me. Before I knew it, I was surrounded by four fierce looking ladies. They were armed!

I went on my knees instantly. My bag slipped off my trembling hand and the content— my Bible, jotter and phone were scattered on the floor. The ladies burst into a fit of sarcastic laughter.

"She no even get mind." One of them said.

"Josephine, you know once thing I like about you?" Another asked.

Aah!

Like about me bawo?

"I like the fact that you are very stubborn and stony hearted. Once you hate someone, you hate the person with a passion and you don't hide it."

"Upon all her stony heart, she's now on her knees." Another said as she brandished the cutlass with her."

"Her heart no strong reach this level." They burst into laughter again.

I was sweating profusely. They all had their gazes fixed on me and I was so intimidated that I had to stare at the ground.

"Look up, girl." The most lanky one lifted my chin. "We have just one very simple instruction for you." I nodded fearfully.

"Make sure nothing goes wrong with our mark that is on you." She pointed her cutlass at my tummy as she spoke.

Another cut in. "If anything should go wrong with this baby," she pointed her gun at my head, "I'll personally arrange bullets into your skull."

"Is that understood?" The shortest one asked as she pulled one of her ears.

"Yes... Yes." I replied.

"She's even stuttering!"

"And she will be forming strong girl."

"Now, get up!"

My knees wobbled as I tried to be on my feet.

"Run to your room and don't try to look back. I want to see your heels touching the back of your head."

Trembling, I bent to pick up my things on the ground.

"She even has a Bible and yet, she fell into lies."

"Run!"

Eeh!

I picked race!

I collapsed immediately I entered the room. Before I passed out, I caught Hannah smiling mischievously.

CHAPTER 50

JOSEPHINE

Hmm!

"The past few days have been hell!" I wrote in my journal.

I was seated under the same mango tree I stood the morning I told Steve about the pregnancy tale.

The last threat really took a toll on my health. When I regained consciousness that day, I found myself still on the floor. Hannah didn't even try to help me.

"I'm living with an enemy." I heaved a sigh of regret.

I burst into hot tears, picked up my phone and dialed my mum's line. I sniffed as I expected her to pick up but I was disappointed.

"Mummy, pick up!" I screamed as I dialed her line again.

"Hello... Josephine, you remembered me today."

I burst into tears immediately.

"Josephine... Josephine... Are you crying?"

"Mummy, I'm suffering."

"Suffering bawo? Suffering will never be your portion. What are you talking about?"

"My life was threatened two times in less than a week, mummy. Two times!"

"What is this girl saying? Pull yourself together and talk to me."

"Mummy, just be praying for me oo. Hmm... Just be praying for me."

"Josephine... Josephine?"

I ended the call.

My mum called back immediately but I ignored the call and switched off my phone.

"I can't wait for this semester to come to an end. Two hundred level, first semester had shown me more than enough. Immediately after my last paper, I'm going home! Once school resumes again, I'm moving out of Hannah's room. Enough is enough!" I thought as I wept.

HANNAH

"Aargh!" I screamed from my sleep. It was another Wednesday and as usual, I was afflicted in my sleep. I was sluggishly getting out of bed when my phone vibrated. It was a message from Tee Boss.

"Don't forget to unfailingly bring Josephine to the meet and greet this evening. Don't try anything stupid."

I heaved a heavy sigh as I cast a glance at Josephine who was still fast asleep. My phone vibrated again. I checked the caller ID and it was Sarah.

I slipped into a simple gown and a pair of flip flops and sneaked out of the room. I walked very far away from the compound and dialed Sarah's line.

"Mama H, today is the day."

"Yeah..." Fear laced my voice.

"Don't get bothered. I've got everything mapped out. Your own is just to monitor her and keep me up-to-date about her movement."

"I'll send my girls and they will bundle her to the meet and greet."

"Alright, thank you so much."

I went back to my room and made sure that all my sense organs were functioning properly. I took note of Josephine's every little action.

When it was almost 3PM, I noticed that she was putting some books into her bag.

"She's going out very soon." I thought.

I instantly sent a message to Sarah.

"She's getting prepared to go out and I have no idea of where she's going to."

"Alright, I'll send my girls to wait for her at your gate." She replied.

I heaved a sigh of relief with the hope that Josephine would leave the room very soon but to my dismay, she sat on the bed and was operating her phone.

Sarah sent me a text. "My girls are there."

"They might have to wait for some minutes. She's not ready to go out." I replied.

Thankfully, Madam Josephine finally picked up her bag and left the room at exactly 5 PM.

CHAPTER 51

JOSEPHINE

The final exam time table was out. I was to write two papers the following Wednesday and I was yet to cover half of my study materials. I decided to read in one of the lecture halls in school . As I was about to step out of the gate, four huge ladies appeared from nowhere.

"Not again." I muttered.

One of them covered my nostrils with a white handkerchief and I lost consciousness.

I woke up to find myself seated in a dimly lit room. I looked around fearfully and to my surprise, I was not tied up. My bag was also on the floor. I searched for my phone and found it. It was 7:00 PM.

The door was flung open and two ladies walked in.

"Tee Boss is expecting you in the main hall." One of them said.

Tee Boss?

Who is Tee Boss?

Where am I?

The other lady moved close to me and pulled me to my feet. She picked up my bag and handed it over to me. Together, we walked out of the room through a door that led to a big hall. I saw many ladies already seated. Some of them had their faces masked. I was led to the right hand side of the hall. I scanned through the hall with my weary eyes, wondering who I could speak with.

"What's going on here?" I asked the lady beside me.

"I don't know. I'm new here." She replied apprehensively.

I heaved a sigh of panic.

Few minutes later, a masked lady mounted the podium to address us.

"Good evening, sisters. I'm Tee Boss. I say a very big welcome to the newbies here. We are sisters who love and support each other." She paused to clear her throat.

The voice was familiar to me but I couldn't place it.

She continued. "We back each other up and we walk and work in the dark. Darkness here doesn't necessarily mean in the night. I mean we are coded here. We walk and work in codes. As a newbie, you are

not here by mistake. You should be happy that you've been counted worthy to be a member of this sisterhood. We have only one male member and he helps with the only assignment a female is not capable of. Are we together?"

"Yes." Everyone replied.

"Let me not get you guys bored with too much talk. Today is not the D-Day. Today is just a meet and greet session. Next week Wednesday is the D-Day. You will be bonafide members of this sisterhood by next week Wednesday. Have it at the back of your mind that since you are here today, you must be present next week. You all have been marked. Trying to escape means you are ready to die."

Eeh! It finally dawned on me that I was in the wrong place.

Sisterhood? Never!

"Among the newbies, there is a special person here. It took us a whole year before we could get her to be here. She has really proved to be a hard nut. But guess what, everyone... She's here today. I'm speaking of none other than the one and only Josephine Smith. Let's put our hands together for her as she steps forward."

What!

Who exactly is this Tee Boss?

What exactly is she talking about?

CHAPTER 52

JOSEPHINE

I did not step out because I thought there might be another Josephine Smith in the hall.

"If your name is Josephine Smith, please step out."

I timidly stepped out and stood beside her. She cleared her throat and continued.

"We are here today only to meet and greet each other. If you are new, feel free. Walk up to any of the sisters seated at your left hand side..."

Some minutes later, the meeting was brought to a close and everyone was released to go except me. I was led back into the dimly lit room and five masked people joined me few minutes later.

I shifted uneasily in my seat as the lady who had introduced herself to be Tee Boss squatted in front of me.

"Good evening, dear Josie." She chuckled.

"Good e... evening."

She cast a glance at the others and laughed.

"Awww... She's scared."

She turned to me. "This is not you, Josie. I've always known Josephine to be daring. Who is this timid Josie?"

I totally lost my tongue.

She got up on her feet and began to pace around the room.

"Okay... Without further ado, I want to introduce some people that you already know to you."

My heart began to race.

"Ginger!" She called.

The 'ginger' immediately took off his mask and I screamed.

Steve!

She burst into a fit of hysterical laughter.

"You're shocked, aren't you?"

"Scarlet and Sudan!"

My eyes almost dropped to the ground!

Sarah and Susan!

My prayer partners!

Deep down in my almost shredded heart, I sincerely hoped that the fourth masked person was not Hannah.

"Hawk!" Tee Boss called out.

My fear was confirmed as Hannah took off her mask. My whole body went numb for a second then I burst into tears.

"You all deceived me... Even you, Steve..."

Tee Boss feigned pity and squatted in front of me. "Aww... My strong lady is in tears." She suddenly burst into laughter.

"You've not seen anything, my dear. It's better you stop those crocodile tears of yours."

She got up and began to pace again.

"Now, it's time for you to know me."

She pulled off her mask and I put my hands on my head.

"Toyin!" I screamed.

"Shh... Don't call me that here. I'm Tee Boss." She smirked. "And now, our paths have crossed again. You know why I'm so much interested in you? Your heart is like a rock. Once you make a decision, no one can change it. Not even God! If Psalm 1 could not minister to you, then your heart is a rock. You effortlessly hate people. You hate me and you make it obvious. There was a time you disliked your mother too. You also hate Brittany because she tells you the truth and now, you hate Hannah. You live in the same room yet, you don't talk to her. Don't you think you have the root of hatred in your life? No... It's the tree you have and by your fruit, I've recognized you to be a potential wolf. By their fruits, you shall know them, isn't it? Wolves don't love, they hate. We are the wolves. Welcome to our sisterhood, baby girl."

I fell on my knees. "Toyin, please... Forget about whatever happened between us in the past. I really don't want to be a member of any sisterhood. I never planned to be a cultist..."

"None of us planned it, girl. Life happened to us just as it's happening to you."

"Toyin, please..."

She ignored me. "Hawk, make sure she's here next week Wednesday."

She walked out of the hall and Steve followed her. Still on my knees, I pointed at Hannah and my 'prayer partners'.

"You! I trusted you! To think I was warned. What did I ever do to you people?"

Hannah stared into space.

Sarah shrugged. "Josephine, stop pointing accusing fingers. You had the power of choice. Remember no one forced any decision on you."

"Really? Is that all you have to say?" I questioned her.

Susan cut in. "What else do you want her to say? You are the most gullible person I know. It's too late to cry, okay? Get ready to be initiated. By this time next week Wednesday, you are already a member of this sisterhood."

"Mama H, are you ready to go?" Sarah asked.

Hannah walked to me and pulled me up. With a lot on my mind, I dragged my feet out of the hall with them.

CHAPTER 53

JOSEPHINE

Immediately we got to the room, I began to think of a route of escape. Running to Brittany's room was not an option. I decided to watch out for the slightest opportunity to escape. I tried to keep being myself because I did not want Hannah to suspect any of my moves.

I was seated in Church, staring forlornly at the Pastor as he preached. I could only see his lips moving. I was not listening to what he was saying. I was to be initiated on Wednesday, it was Sunday already and I had not come up with any escape plan.

Right there on my seat, it suddenly occurred to me to pretend as if I wanted to make use of the restroom and from there, I would sneak out of the Church premises. I would pick one or two things from the room and run home.

I stole a glance at Hannah. She was also lost in her own world of thoughts. I picked up my phone and went to the restroom. As planned, I sneaked out of the Church premises. Immediately I stepped my feet out of the gate, I ran as fast as my legs could carry me. I needed to be fast so that in case Hannah noticed my empty seat, she would not catch up with me.

I got to the room in few minutes and locked the door. I picked up a tote bag and packed few books. I decided that I would go back to

school whenever I had any exam and return to my mother's house immediately after the paper.

I picked my purse and bunch of keys, dashed out of the room and locked the door. I flagged down a cab that would convey me to the bus stop close to my house.

In few minutes, I was already in my mother's house. As expected, she was not around. I unlocked the door with my key and entered the house. I went straight to the dining room, opened the fridge and took out a bottle of water. I gulped down the whole content at once.

"Aah! Didn't I lock the door before I went out?"

Mum had returned.

"What is going on? Did anyone break into the house?"

She kept asking questions until she entered and saw me. She was taken aback.

"Josephine!"

"Good morning, mummy." I sluggishly walked towards her.

She dropped her bag and rushed towards me. I hugged her tightly and burst into tears.

"Josephine, what is it?" My mum suddenly withdrew from the hug and looked into my face. She held my palms and stared at them for some seconds. She led me into her room and sat me down.

"What's wrong, Josephine? You're getting me scared. Why are you at home?"

My mum bombarded me with questions but I did not respond to her. She walked out of the room and returned with a cup of water.

"Josephine, calm down."

I reluctantly took the cup from her. As I drank, she patted my back.

"It is well with you, my daughter."

Later that evening, I was seated with my mum in the dining room. I kept stirring my food with my spoon. I had a lot to say but where was I meant to start from? I stole a glance at my mum and I caught her gaze fixed on me.

"Josie..." My mum broke the silence.

"The last time we spoke, you said something about a threat. Does that have anything to do with why you are at home?"

I dropped my spoon and stared into space. Tears gathered in my eyes immediately I opened my mouth to speak.

"Mum, I've disappointed you and I've disappointed God. I don't think God can ever forgive me. Mum, can you forgive me?"

CHAPTER 54

JOSEPHINE

My mum sighed before she spoke.

"What did you do, Josephine? Who are you trying to run from?"

"Mum, I can't really go into details for now. Just find a place in your heart to forgive me." I got up from my chair and walked out of the dining room.

My mum shouted after me. "Josephine, you've lost your peace. Instead of running helter skelter, why can't you run to the Prince of Peace?"

I smiled sadly as I entered my room and locked the door.

"Innocent mum, she doesn't understand." I thought.

HANNAH

"Where's Josephine?"

It was already getting dark and she was nowhere to be found. I saw her bag on her seat in Church and I took it to the room for her. I began to imagine how the Tiger in Tee Boss would emerge if

Josephine had succeeded in escaping. I tried to be optimistic till around 10PM. When it dawned on me that she had escaped, I dialed Sarah's line with my heart almost falling out of my chest.

"Sarah, the worst has happened." I was jumping on a spot and hitting my laps.

"What happened?"

"I can't find Josephine."

"What! How come?"

"We were ...at ...at ... church together this ... evening ...in the morning." I could not properly place my words. I was sweating profusely.

"Mama, calm down, chill... Where do you think she could have gone to? Is it possible to leave the school when exams start tomorrow?"

"Hmm... I don't know ooo." I was already rolling on the floor.

"Mama, let's check Brittany's place tomorrow. She might be there."

"Okay oo."

"Let's hope..."

Sarah kept talking but all that was on my mind was how I would face Tee Boss if we did not end up finding Josephine.

BRITTANY

I sat on the floor with my plate of food before me. I was famished. I would write my first paper the following day and I was kind of nervous. As I ate, I tried to remember what I had earlier studied.

Suddenly, I heard heavy knocks at the door.

Who could that be?

It was 8 PM already.

"Who is there" I asked.

"It's Sarah."

"Sarah... Sarah..." I did a quick mind search, wondering who this Sarah could be.

When I eventually opened the door, two ladies shoved me aside and entered the room. I pointed my flashlight at their faces and I recognized Hannah.

"Good evening, Hannah. You're Sarah, right?" I asked the other lady.

"Yes! There's nothing good about this evening, aunty." She replied.

"Josephine is missing." Hannah announced.

I was taken aback.

"Josephine? She was in Church yesterday."

"Yes but she left her bag on her chair and left and till now, I've not found her."

"Aah! This is serious." I was already scared.

Hannah and Sarah exchanged glances.

"Are you saying she's not here?" Hannah asked.

"Josie is not here. She has not been here ever since she moved in with you."

I noticed that their shoulders dropped.

"In case you hear from her, please get us informed."

"Alright, there should be no cause for alarm. Josephine could sometimes be like this. She's probably somewhere..."

"Who prefers to be just somewhere during exam period?" Sarah asked.

"Hmm... Don't worry. Josephine is fine wherever she is." I tried to assure them.

"Thank you so much. Don't forget to reach out to her." Hannah said.

"And reach out to us once you hear from her." Sarah added.

They took their leave and I locked my door. I suddenly felt uneasy. I picked up my phone and chatted up Josephine.

"Good evening, Josephine."

Luckily for me, she was online and she replied almost immediately.

CHAPTER 55

BRITTANY

"Good evening, Brittany. " She replied.

"How have you been? How is preparation for exam?"

"I've been okay. Prep is okay too. How are you doing?"

"I'm fine. When is your next paper?"

"On Wednesday."

"Okay, Josie. God's best."

"Amen. Thank you so much."

I was about to conclude that everything was okay with her until she sent an unusual message.

"Brittany, you are the only one I can trust right now. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you earlier. I'm in trouble."

I was thinking about the right words to say when her message popped in again.

"First, I'm pregnant."

I gasped.

"And I'm about to be initiated into a sisterhood."

"Blood of Jesus!" I screamed.

"I'm presently at home. The initiation is to hold on Wednesday night. I can't be initiated, Brittany. I'd rather die."

She went offline immediately.

Instantly, I remembered the dream I had about Josephine's stuck finger in the beautiful flower of thorns. I remembered that in the dream, Josephine tried to cut off that finger.

I jumped to my feet. "Josephine! That dream is not coming to pass in your life."

I picked up my phone again. "Josephine, you will not die. God is not tired of you." I sent the message and dropped my phone.

"Lord Jesus, Josephine is stubborn. She does exactly what she has decided to do. Please, reveal yourself to her."

HANNAH

It was Tuesday already and Josephine was still missing. I didn't try to call or chat her up because Sarah advised me not to do so.

"Let her breathe for now. She must be in her house. You know the way to her house, right?"

I nodded.

"You will drag her out of the house on Wednesday night."

Her plan made sense to me.

"How far is her house from here?" She asked.

"Not too far. It's just two cabs from here."

"Really? That's easy, then. I'll kick out a driver from his car so that we can use it. Josephine must be dragged back to school. She must suffer for putting us through this stress."

As planned, Sarah and I prepared to leave for Josephine's house on Wednesday night. We flagged down a cab and jumped into it. Two minutes into the journey, Sarah pointed a gun at the driver's right

temple. He almost lost control of the steering wheel immediately he saw the gun.

"Calm down, old man." Sarah whispered. "We don't want much from you."

"O ...okay..." The man stuttered.

"Just obey our simple instruction and you won't have any problem."

The man nodded.

"Keep to the slow lane and pull over." Sarah instructed.

"You mean I should park my car?" The driver asked.

"Yes!"

The man did exactly as he was told.

"Now, get out! If you try to raise any alarm, I will blow off your head."

The man jumped out of his car.

Innocent man!

"Josephine will really pay dearly for this." I thought.

Sarah offered to take the wheel and I nodded. We sped off immediately.

"That was risky." I told Hannah.

"We had to do it." Sarah replied.

I directed Hannah as she drove.

"It's already 10:30PM and the initiation starts by 1AM." I said.

"Are we close to her house?" Sarah asked.

"Yes"

"Can you trek there from here?"

"Yes"

"Go and get her. I'll wait for you people here."

CHAPTER 56

JOSEPHINE

"Josie... Come out of that room." My mum shouted from the living room.

I reluctantly obeyed her.

"You've been in that room since you got back from school. Wait... Why did you decide to be leaving for the exam hall from home? You were almost late this morning."

I rolled my eyes. "Mum, I need to be at home for now. Nowhere is safe at school."

My mum shrugged. "When is your next paper?"

"Tomorrow... 9AM."

"Okay. You have to leave very early tomorrow."

I nodded.

"Josephine..."

"Mummy, I want to prepare for tomorrow. Good night, ma."

"You've not eaten since you returned."

"I'm not hungry. I'll eat tomorrow morning before I leave."

Immediately I entered my room, I picked up my course manual and continued from where I had stopped.

"Josephine... Josephine..." My mum tapped me. I had dozed off while studying.

"Mum?" I mouthed as I yawned.

"Hannah is at the door."

My eyes got opened immediately!

"Hannah?" I jumped out of bed.

"She said she has something very important to tell you."

I put on my head warmer and went out of the room with my mum. I met Hannah seated in the living room. Without minding my mum's presence, she fixed her gaze on me.

"It's time." She simply said.

My heart skipped a beat.

"A minute, please." I replied.

I pulled my mum into her room and wept on her shoulder.

"Mummy, pray for me. I know I've offended God but can this cup just pass..."

"Josephine... Josephine..."

I held her hands and looked into her eyes.

"Mum, whatever happens tonight... Just remember that I love you..."

My mum burst into tears.

"Josephine, what is happening? Please, talk to me."

"Mum, God willing... I mean... If you pray to God to deliver me from this and He answers, I will tell you everything but if not mum, I love you."

I was about to walk out of the room but my mum pulled me back.

"Josephine..." Tears streamed down her face.

"Mum, I have to go somewhere with Hannah right now. God willing, I'll come back tomorrow morning. Remember to pray for me."

"Josephine... Don't go out with her. It's late."

"Mum, I'm sorry but I have to go."

"You are going nowhere." She insisted.

"Mum!" I screamed.

"If you love me, let me go out in peace and pray that I don't return in pieces. Simple!"

I walked out of the room and joined Hannah in the living room.

"Let's go." I told Hannah.

We stepped out into the dark street.

"Where are we going to?" I asked.

"We are going to where you've landed yourself into." Hannah replied coldly.

She suddenly teared up.

"To think that I warned you, Josephine. I did! I came to your house and spoke to you in parables that even a baby would understand. Josie, what don't you have? Is it a mother? Is it money? Is it a friend like Brittany? Is it the gift of salvation? Tell me, Josie! Is it the Bible that you don't have?"

I flinched.

"Josephine, I can vividly remember my words the very day I came to your house. I told you that you need a Supernatural being in your life. I told you that if I was serious with God, I wouldn't be in this mess, didn't I? If you were very observant, you would have noticed that I was recording our conversation. I stopped recording at a point and told you to be sincere with God. I even told you to know God for yourself."

I sniffed. "Why are you telling me all these tonight, Hannah?"

"Keep quiet and listen to me! You know your problem? You know your problem? You effortlessly buy lies. You cheaply sell the truth

easily! You have your Bible yet, you were asking me if you should say yes to Steve or not. What did the Bible say about your relationship with Steve?"

I was mute.

"You don't know because you never read your Bible. You were never meant to look unto me. Never! Yes, I disguised to be a saint but that was the simple instruction from Tee Boss. I was instructed to make you to do the right things in the wrong way."

She paused and pointed her flashlight at my face before she continued.

"You attended Church services but your heart was never right with God. You even sang in the choir but you were playing with sin, thinking it did not matter. You were meant to read your Bible and trust the Holy Spirit to guide you. That aside, you will be a member of 'The wolves' by 1 AM.

"The wolves?"

"Yes!"

"You've been a wolf, Hannah?"

"That's not the point. The point right now is that..."

Hannah kept talking but I had stopped listening.

It finally dawned on me that I would be a wolf too.

"Is there a way out of this?" I wondered.

"Josie... Josie..."

CHAPTER 57

JOSEPHINE

"Josephine... Josephine..." That was my mum's voice ringing in my head.

"Don't go out, it's late." I heard her voice again despite the fact that I was far from the house.

"Josephine ..." My head was filled with her voice. I could not even think of where I was going with my roommate, Hannah.

I was jolted out of my thoughts as Hannah nudged me angrily.

"Josie! Focus! Why are you absent minded?" Hannah was angry. She had probably been talking to me.

"Were you saying anything?" I asked her.

Hannah stopped walking. She stared at me in silence for some seconds. The croaking of the frogs was the only sound that could be heard. I was barely able to see her face as it was very dark.

"Haven't you made up your mind?" She asked me.

"About what?" I asked her, pretending not to know what she was talking about.

"Is this a joke? Where are we going to?"

I gave her a confused look.

She sighed in frustration with her hands akimbo. "You know what? Go back home and make up your mind. I don't want you to get there and start fumbling as if you're being forced. Remember you don't have any alternative. It's either you join or you join. You've been marked."

I flinched at the word 'marked'. I watched as Hannah walked away, leaving me in the dark. I checked my watch and it was quarter past eleven.

"Am I really going to walk back home alone this night?" I asked myself as tears streamed down my face.

"What have you gotten yourself into, Josephine?" I could not stop asking myself questions as I walked slowly to the house.

I really wished something evil could happen to me on the way.

"God, take my life." I sobbed.

I couldn't believe I was calling on God. I felt I needed to die but I wasn't bold enough to take my life.

I finally got to the entrance of the house after what seemed like forever.

I stood at the door and tried to wipe my tears. I didn't want to get my mum worried about me.

I took a deep breath before I reached for the key in my bag. I opened the door and I was not surprised to see my mum in the living room.

She sprang to her feet immediately she saw me.

"Thank you, Jesus! Josephine! Where are you coming from?" She re-tied her wrapper as she walked towards me.

I ignored her and went into my room. My mum rushed inside my room before I could lock the door.

"Josephine, you've not answered my question." My mum stood at the door, fixing her gaze on me.

I didn't respond to her. I wanted to be alone, I needed to think. Turning off my phone which had been my source of light seemed to be the best option and that was exactly what I did.

My mum sighed as she understood that I was trying to tell her to leave my room.

"Josephine, the devil will not have any reason to rejoice over your life. You are for Jesus." She turned on her own torch and walked out of my room.

"The devil is already rejoicing over my life, mum." I screamed after her.

The word 'marked' came back to my memory. I sincerely hoped Hannah didn't mean what she said.

"If I don't have an alternative, why does she want me to make up my mind?" I wept.

"It's either I join them or I join them. I never planned to live this kind of life." I wept.

CHAPTER 58

HANNAH

Josephine could be funny sometimes.

"Why on earth was she acting surprised about the initiation?" I thought as I walked back alone.

I hastened my steps because I knew that Sarah would have been running out of patience. In few minutes, I was already seated in the car with her.

"Where's she?" Sarah asked.

"Who?"

Sarah was dumbfounded.

"Mama, what is the meaning of this? Didn't you see Josephine?"

"That's true oo. We were already on our way here oo."

It was as if a veil fell off my eyes.

"How come she's not here with me?"

Sarah glared at me angrily.

"I told her to go back home." The words had dropped out of my mouth before I understood what was going on.

"What came over me?"

Aghast, Sarah speechlessly stared at me.

"Sarah, I honestly don't understand what came over me. It's 11:30PM already." Stamping my feet in regret, I placed my hands on my head.

"Mama, tell me this is a prank. You mean after the risk, the time, the effort, we even almost wasted a life! And now... Oh! This is not happening."

"I'm in trouble."

"Thank God you are aware."

"Can we go back to her house?"

She scoffed. "By what time? By this time? I'm driving straight to the initiation spot right now. You've got a lot of explanation to make to Tee Boss."

Sarah was furious. She didn't say a word to me throughout the journey. I knew I was already a dead meat.

We finally got to the initiation spot and I sighted Tee Boss in her usual scary outfit. She was dressed in red and black and she had the mask of a wolf on her face.

"Let the initiation process start now!" She thundered. "Let the old wolves step out with their new wolves."

Aah!

I watched as people stepped out. Tee Boss scanned through the wolves and noticed that I was not among them.

"Where's Hawk?" She screamed.

I scurried out.

"Where's your wolf?" She asked with fire blazing in her eyes.

I lost my tongue.

Tee Boss lost her temper.

"Scarlet! Sudan!"

They ran forward.

"Lock her up!" She ordered.

I was led into the guard room. I was there till the initiation was over. After three hours, I was led out of the guard room to face Tee Boss.

"Once it's 9 AM, lead some of the wolves to Josephine's house and bring her here unfailingly. She must be initiated tonight."

I could literally see smoke oozing out of her head as she spoke.

She was furious!

JOSEPHINE

I wept like no man's business. I never planned to be a wolf.

"No!" I screamed as I began to scatter my room.

I was not in my right mind. I was in a dilemma.

My mum must have heard my scream but because I had literally sent her out of my room, she didn't bother to return to check on me.

An idea suddenly struck my mind.

Death!

Yes!

That seemed to be the the best option. I had begged God to take my life but since He refused, I didn't mind taking my life and going to Hell.

What else could be hotter than what I was facing?

I began to think of how to terminate my own life.

"Stab myself?"

"No, that would be too brutal."

I went to the bathroom with the intention of taking sniper.

"The baby in my womb should not partake in this." I thought as I was about to pour the liquid into my mouth.

Something suddenly occurred to me.

Yes!

I walked straight to the kitchen with tears streaming down my face.

"I'm tired of crying. Let it just end." I told myself.

I looked into the kitchen sink as I thought about what I was about to do. I sighed hopelessly as I turned on the tap. I blocked the sink's water outlet and made sure that the sink was filled to the brim.

I turned off the tap and wept for some time before I eventually fully immersed my head into the sink.

CHAPTER 59

JOSEPHINE

I suddenly heard footsteps approaching the kitchen.

That must be mum!

"Nothing must stop me from leaving this wicked and deceitful world." I thought.

"Yeesh! Josephine!"

Suddenly, a stinging slap landed on my back.

"Josephine!"

I ignored her.

She tried to lift my head from the kitchen sink but I resisted her.

With all her strength, she pushed me I fell. She knelt beside me and placed my head on her laps.

"Eeh! Josephine! Why are you doing this to me? Where is the suicidal thought coming from?"

"Josephine! Josephine!"

My eyes gradually reduced to a slit and I passed out.

I woke up to the noise of the patient monitor beside me. My eyes flickered as they finally got opened. I squinted and I saw my mum beside me. I coughed.

My mum rushed to the nurses' station immediately she knew that I was awake. She returned in a jiffy with two nurses.

"Thank you, Jesus." My mum raised her hands as she danced on a spot.

The nurses smiled at me before they took note of whatever was on the patient monitor. One of them rubbed my shoulder. I felt something in my nostrils and tried to pull it out

"It's oxygen, dear." The nice nurse told me and adjusted it.

The nurses returned to their station with my mum and I dozed off.

"Josie..." My mum tapped me.

"I need to get home now. I want to get some things for you."

Her phone vibrated.

"Who is that?" I asked her.

"Toyin's mother ." She replied and was about to pick the call when I screamed.

"Mum! Please, don't pick that call. Toyin will kill me."

My mum was shocked. "Why?"

I burst into tears as I narrated my predicament to my mum.

She sighed. "That's not enough reason for you to try to commit suicide. Do you want to kill me? You're my only child, Josephine."

"I'm so sorry, mum. Please, forgive me."

"Immediately I saw you the Sunday you ran home, I knew you were pregnant. The doctor confirmed it again this morning. When you left with Hannah yesterday, I asked God for mercy. He answered me and confused Hannah. Hmm... Josephine, you're pregnant?"

My mum dabbed her face with her handkerchief.

"Mummy..."

"I've forgiven you, Josephine. God can also forgive you. Go back to Calvary." My mum stood up. "I want to be on my way."

I stared at my mum as she walked out of the ward.

I had disappointed her, big time!

"Mummy!" I wept.

The nice nurse walked up to me.

"Josephine..."

I sniffed.

"You're crying?"

No response.

She sighed. "I don't know why you tried suicide but you know it's not the way out, right?"

I nodded.

"Why did you try it?"

I tried to sit up and she assisted me by raising the bed.

"Are you comfortable like this?" She asked.

"Yes, ma. Thank you." I replied.

"Why did you try to kill yourself?"

"I'm tired! This world is deceitful, you know? My carelessness made me fall victim of deceit. I was careless with my relationship with God. Will He ever forgive me?"

"Josephine, confess to God. He is faithful."

I burst into tears. "But I've been unfaithful. I was trying to be God's friend and foe at the same time."

"It never works that way." The nurse said.

"I understood this very late, ma." I replied.

"Confess... Josephine... When the Bible is your blueprint, you can't be deceived. Tell God to help you to make His Word a lamp to your feet. Let Him write His Word on the table of your heart. Tell Him to..."

A woman suddenly screamed. "Nurse... My son... He's gasping..."

"I'll see you later, Josephine." She rushed to the patient's bedside.

I teared up again. I went back to God in total surrender, confessing my fault to Him and asking Him to wash me clean.

CHAPTER 60

HANNAH

It was some minutes to 9 AM and I was on my way to Josephine's house with the assigned wolves. On getting there, we met her mum almost stepping out of the house. We shoved her aside and rushed into the house. We frantically searched each room but we did not find Josephine. We went out of the house and Josephine's mother still on that spot.

"Mama!" One of the wolves kicked her. "Where is your daughter?"

She didn't respond.

"Hawk, let's scatter one of her legs with bullet if she's not ready to talk." Another wolf said.

Before I could agree or disagree, the wolf shot Josephine's mother.

"Mama, this is just warning. If you don't send Josephine back to school, we will come for your life."

We left the innocent woman on the floor in the pool of her own blood.

JOSEPHINE

Immediately I prayed, I was filled with hope that God would save me from the wolves. I could not wait for my mum to return so that I could tell her to thank God and Nurse Johnson on my behalf. I kept expecting my mum but she did not show up.

It was 1 PM already!

"Has she abandoned me here?" I wondered.

I was already stable to a great extent. I reached for my phone and dialed her line. She picked up almost immediately.

"Hello... This is Life Crown hospital."

I was disappointed.

"Yes? Where's my mum?"

"She's here. Your attention is needed at the Accident and Emergency unit. Your mother was rushed here few hours ago."

I screamed and rushed to the nurses' station.

"My mum is in the A and E unit." I announced.

"What!" Nurse Johnson exclaimed. "How come?"

We rushed down there together and met Toyin's mother and other women at the entrance of the unit. I ignored them and rushed inside. I met my mum in a critical condition.

"They must have gone to the house to look for me." I told Nurse Johnson.

"My mum should not be dragged into my mess." I wailed.

"Mummy..." I kept screaming.

I was led out of the unit and I returned to my ward with Nurse Johnson.

"Will mum's leg be amputated?" I wondered.

HANNAH

As we returned to the initiation spot, I wondered what Tee Boss' verdict would be.

I could vividly remember her words; "For your information, Josephine is a hard nut. You have to be wise if you want to crack her

with your hand. If you're not careful, your head will be used to break the hard nut and you know what that means."

I sighed.

"It's game over for me. My head will be used to crack this nut. That is even if it can be cracked." I thought.

I remembered my aunt and the story she told me about my mum. I remembered how I got born again when I lived happily with my aunt. I remembered my admission saga and how I got entangled with Tee Boss.

Immediately I became a member of the sisterhood, I stopped communicating with my aunt because I knew I had disappointed her. Each time she tried to reach out to me, I ignored her calls and messages.

I heaved a heavy sigh of despair as we got to the initiation spot. Tee Boss fixed her gaze on me for some seconds before she spoke.

"Hawk! We lost her, didn't we? A whole year! I invested so much in you yet, you are so unproductive. You are a waste of resources. I don't know where you got it wrong in this assignment and I don't care to know. You deserve to be punished." She fumed.

"K.T! Get the blue keg for me."

I cringed at the sight of the keg. It contained slow poison!

After taking the poison, I would develop a strange illness, get hospitalized and my health would keep deteriorating till I kissed the dust.

K.T poured the poison into a cup and handed it over to me.

"Tee Boss, please... I promise to do anything to make things right."

"Hawk! Drink it now!"

She pointed a gun at my chest.

"Tee Boss..." I kept pleading with her.

She became furious. "K.T! Feed her!"

I was kicked and I lost my balance. Immediately I fell, K.T held my nose and forced the bitter liquid down my throat.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" Tee Boss spat.

CHAPTER 61

HANNAH

Immediately I got to my room, I knew it was high time I returned to God. I knew the end was almost near.

I had to urgently speak with someone.

Brittany!

Yes!

I picked up my phone and dialed her line.

"Hello... Brittany..."

"Good afternoon, Hannah."

"Please, I need to see you urgently."

"Really? Can we meet in the evening? I have a paper this afternoon."

"Okay."

"Yes, let's meet after my paper."

"I'll come to your room."

"Alright."

The call dropped.

Talking about examination, I was meant to have a paper in the morning but I missed it because of Tee Boss' assignment.

"The devil is indeed wicked! After running around for Tee Boss for almost three years, my reward is slow poison." I thought.

I looked around my room. I remembered how Tee Boss financially helped me.

"She rendered her help and she now wants my life in return." I thought.

I came to understand what my aunt meant by always saying; "the devil can give you a cap but when he's ready to come for his cap, he can decide to take your head along."

BRITTANY

"Hannah wants to see me." I thought aloud as I walked out of the exam hall.

"I'm already on the way to my room." I texted her.

I wondered if she was still concerned about Josephine's whereabouts. It suddenly occurred to me to reach out to Josephine.

I dialed her line but she did not respond. I kept dialing till I got to my room. I sighed in disappointment and dropped my phone on the table.

I plopped into my bed and stared into space.

My phone vibrated.

Josephine!

"Josephine?"

"Brittany, it's obvious that the devil really has plans for me." She blurted out.

"What?" I was confused.

"I'm presently in the hospital right now. My mum and I are patients."

"Aah! How?"

"My mum was shot this morning."

"Josephine, what is...?"

I heard a knock at the door.

"Eerhm... Josie... Let me call you later, okay?"

"Alright "

I dropped my phone and went to get the door.

Hannah stood there with her hair scattered and her eyes red.

I gently pulled her into the room and sat her down.

"Good evening, Brittany." Tears gathered in her eyes. "Thanks for agreeing to see me."

"Why are you thanking me?" I asked her.

She sniffed. "You should see me as a terrible person by now. I mean... Josephine must have said a lot of nasty things about me." She stared at her fingers as she spoke.

I sighed.

"Hannah, Josephine didn't tell me anything about you."

She raised her head sharply before she smiled sadly. "Josephine likes to suffer in silence. It is well with her."

I stared at Hannah in silence.

"Brittany, I don't really know how to start... I have a lot to tell you. I need help, urgent one."

"Hannah, just start anyhow. I'll understand."

"You don't have any paper tomorrow?"

"No... Till Monday." I replied.

Hannah stared into space.

"Brittany, I'm a cultist." She blurted out.

I tried not to scream so that she would not feel uncomfortable. I shifted uneasily on the bed.

"I was initiated by Toyin. Josephine knows her... Has she ever told you about her?"

"No... She once came here to see Josephine."

Hannah sighed.

"My mum was a struggling orphan who had a younger sister in her care..."

I listened attentively as Hannah narrated her story. I shed tears when she got to the point of her mother's death.

CHAPTER 62

BRITTANY

"... After mum's demise, my aunt took me as her child. She tried to raise me in the way of the Lord. I got born again when I was in the Secondary school. The problem started when it was time for me to gain admission..."

Hannah kept narrating. Her story was really pathetic.

"... and that was how I met Tee Boss. I thought meeting her was a blessing until she forced initiation on me. Just like a baptism name, Hawk was my initiation name."

"Hawk?"

She nodded.

"Immediately after the initiation, I began to be afflicted."

I screamed in horror as Hannah narrated her every Wednesday morning plight.

She shrugged as tears streamed down her face. "The bottom line is that I've been poisoned."

"What!" I screamed. "By who? Why?"

She wiped her tears with her palms. "Toyin sees me as a waste of resources because Josephine escaped initiation." She burst into tears again.

I did not understand her last statement but I didn't want to force words out of her mouth.

"Brittany, I'm a walking dead lady."

"What about your aunt?" I asked.

"I've not heard from her since I got initiated."

I sighed.

"I really don't understand what came over me. I gained admission and forgot about God. I threw all my morals into the bin. I loved the world and now, I have to dance to the music I composed."

I stared at Hannah with tears in my eyes.

"I've taken the poison, Brittany..." She burst into tears and held my hands.

"Brittany, I don't want to die twice. Even if I die now, I want eternal life but I don't know... I don't think I know where to start from with God. I've really gone far. I started with disobeying my aunt and I went deeper and deeper."

"Hannah, God still loves you. He wants you to get up from this seat of darkness and walk into His marvelous light."

"Lord Jesus, have mercy... I'm terrible...but I believe in your power to save me from darkness..."

I knew she had learnt her lesson but it was painful that it was rather too late.

JOSEPHINE

I assisted my mum as she tried to sit up. I was already discharged and my mum was gradually recovering. Nurse Johnson had been of great help.

"Mum, how do you feel?" I asked.

She nodded.

I sighed.

"Mum, I'm sorry for putting you through something like this."

"It's okay, Josephine. The deed is done already."

Silence.

"You've been missing your papers, right?"

I nodded.

"Josephine..."

"Ma?"

"What next?"

I shifted uneasily in my seat.

"Mum, I'm not going back to that school. Those people might still be on the lookout for me."

"Hmm... You want to start all over?"

"Yes, ma. On a clean slate."

"Why do I feel like speaking with Toyin?"

I flinched.

"Mum?"

"She also deserves to know the truth. I don't know how she got herself into being what she is but... God will take control."

I sighed.

After my mum got discharged, she tried to reach out to Toyin but the latter was never available to see my mum.

CHAPTER 63

BRITTANY

I was preparing for my final paper for the semester when I received a text from Josephine.

"Brittany, Brittany... I write to you with pain wishing that there was never a day like this. I know better now and I wish I could turn back the hands of time. She was called 'hawk' and what does the hawk do? It preys on the chicks that are far from the mother hen. I've come to realize that if I was abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, if I had dwelt in the secret place, I wouldn't have been a victim of any hawk. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you. I'm glad that I've returned to God. I'm not coming back to school. I'll start all over somewhere else. Please, check on Hannah. I'm not sure she's fine. Tell her not to blame herself for what befell me. I will never forget you, Brittany. I promise to keep in touch."

Tears welled up in my eyes.

Josephine...

I dropped my phone and began to get dressed for my last paper. I made a mental note to reach out to her after the exam.

HANNAH

Brittany had advised me to reach out to my aunt. I knew it was the right thing to do but I was scared.

It had been ages!

I summoned up courage, picked up my phone and began to compose a text.

"Good afternoon, Aunty. It's Hannah, your lost Hannah. Like the prodigal son, I'm back to plead for your forgiveness. I strayed due to my lack of contentment. I had the form of godliness but I allowed the devil to fool me. I'd have loved to make things right but my days are numbered. The good news is that I've found light and I'm going to be in a better place. God willing, I'll come home to see you. Find a place in your heart to forgive me, ma."

I sent the message. I suddenly felt like vomiting. I ran into the bathroom and threw up. Sweating profusely, I returned to the room and turned on the fan. I felt really strange!

I knew the poison was at work.

"The end is near." I thought.

BRITTANY

I was finally done with my papers. I went straight to my room and plopped into my bed. I didn't feel the usual excitement I used to feel after each last paper.

I felt sad for Hannah and Josephine. I picked up my phone and dialed Josephine's line. She picked up almost immediately.

"Josephine, how are you?" I asked.

"I'm okay."

"How is mummy's leg?"

"It's healing up. She has been discharged. How is Hannah?"

"Hannah... Hannah... Josephine..." I didn't know how best to construct my sentence.

"Brittany, is Hannah okay?"

I sobbed.

"Hannah has been poisoned." I blurted out.

"What! Because of me? Is she dead?"

I sniffed.

"No, it's a slow poison."

Josephine burst into tears.

"It's a pity I dragged everyone into trouble."

She sniffed. "You know what, Brittany? I wouldn't want this whole saga to end like this. I want people to learn from my story."

"Okay..." I replied.

CHAPTER 64

BRITTANY

"I want you to inform Hannah too. I want her part of the story."

"Okay..."

"And Brittany, I also need your part of the story. The whole story should be titled 'Friend or Foe?' I want people to understand that it doesn't pay to be double minded with God."

"Okay. I pray Hannah has the strength to write."

Just then, Hannah sent a text.

"I've fallen sick, Brittany. This is just the beginning."

I sighed.

After Josephine and I rounded off our conversation, I rushed down to Hannah's room. She was in a critical condition!

She was wrapped up on her bed and at the same time she was running temperature.

I began to mutter words of prayer.

"Brittany..." Her lips quivered.

I turned to her.

"Have you spoken with Josephine?"

I nodded.

"How's she?"

"Hannah, Josephine is fine. Don't you think we should go to the hospital?"

"Not yet... I have a feeling that you want to tell me something."

"Hannah, that could be later. Let's pay attention to your health for now."

"The next minute might be too late, Brittany. My time is limited. Let's talk about it now."

I held her right hand.

"Hannah, please let's trust God. You will not die. I personally believe that God will heal you."

"I believe too. What do you want to tell me?"

I sighed.

"I was speaking with Josephine when I saw your text."

"Okay..."

"She said that you should not blame yourself for everything that happened."

Hannah smiled sadly.

"She also said we should have everything written as a story."

Hannah turned sharply at me.

"Really?"

I nodded.

"Has she gotten a title. I can suggest one. Friend or Foe... Is that okay?"

"What!" I was dazed.

"What?"

"Josephine mentioned the same title."

"Wow!" She smiled. "The title really talks about me because I claimed to be God's friend yet, I loved the world. I forgot that loving the world means being God's foe. Toyin pretended to be my friend but she had an ulterior motive. She was a foe. I also disguised to be Josephine's friend..."

"Wow! Wow!" I could not contain my surprise.

"Yeah! Yeah!" Hannah laughed.

It was surprising that she could say so much even in her condition.

"You look happy." I told her.

"I'm happy. There's a clear cut difference between being God's friend and being somewhere in the middle. Brittany, I am a friend of God."

"I am a friend of God." I mouthed.

CHAPTER 65

HANNAH

Throughout that week, I was with my book and pen. As I wrote, it dawned on me again and again that the devil has nothing to offer. I remembered how I used to live happily with my aunt.

Indeed, godliness with contentment is great gain!

As I wrote, I noticed that my fingers were white. I smiled sadly.

“You have to dance to the music you composed.” I thought.

I suddenly noticed something like pimples on my skin.

“Hmm...”

I kept on writing. After few minutes, I felt dizzy. I picked up my phone and texted Brittany.

BRITTANY

I was so engrossed in writing my part of the story that I did not know that my phone vibrated. I saw Hannah’s text two hours after it was sent.

“I feel weak. I think it’s time.” I read it aloud.

Time for what? God forbid!

I got dressed and literally ran to her room. I met her sprawled on the floor.

“Hannah! Hannah!” I tapped her impatiently.

I jumped out of the room and screamed for help.

With the help of neighbors, I rushed Hannah to a nearby hospital.

I returned to her room to pick her phone and some clothes for her. My eyes caught a book and a pen on her bed. I threw the book into my bag and returned to the hospital.

Two hours later, Hannah regained consciousness.

“Thank you, Jesus!”

I could not contain my excitement. She still looked pale but I was grateful she was alive.

“Where am I?” She asked.

“You passed out.” I replied.

“So you brought me here?”

“Yes. You scared me.”

She smiled. “I can’t die now. I’m not done with my part of the story. I want to go back to my room.”

“We can’t leave now. The doctor said you need medical attention. Your eyes are yellow.” I told her.

She sighed.

Her phone vibrated.

“My aunt.” She whispered.

“Good evening, ma... Aunty, I’m sorry... God has changed me... I’m in the hospital... I’m not feeling so well... Alright, ma.”

She dropped her phone before she turned to me.

“She said I should send the address of my present location.”

“I can help with that “

She handed her phone over to me and I sent the hospital address to her aunt.

CHAPTER 66

HANNAH

I was shocked when I saw my aunt at my bedside the following morning. She was not there alone. She was with a man and a baby girl.

I burst into tears immediately I saw them. I buried my face in my palms in guilt.

"Hannah... Hannah..."

I could tell that her gaze was fixed on me.

"It's okay... Stop crying... I'm glad you are back."

"Aunty, I know I don't deserve to be forgiven..."

She sighed. "What really happened?"

"I wasn't satisfied with the little we had. I felt inferior when I saw other ladies wearing what we could not afford. I eventually met Tee Boss. She promised to take care of me throughout my stay on campus. She eventually got me initiated into a sisterhood."

My aunt's eyes widened in shock.

"Hannah, I begged you to be patient. You're now in your fourth year, right?"

I nodded.

"If you had waited for two years, you would have been in your second year now, right?"

I nodded again.

It dawned on me that I wouldn't have met Tee Boss if I had obeyed my aunt.

"Aunty, the bad news now is that I have been poisoned." I announced.

"What!" She screamed.

"Why?"

"The task master feels I'm useless and she wants to discard me."

"Discard?"

I shrugged. "Discard... Eliminate... I don't know what to call it. The bottom line is that my days are numbered."

My aunt was speechless.

I wish I retraced my steps earlier. I wish I didn't have to learn in the hard way.

"Hannah..." My aunt broke the silence.

"I trust God to heal you. You are not dying young. I trust God to flush the poison out of your system."

I sighed.

"Welcome back, Hannah."

She hugged me.

"You have a beautiful baby girl." I told my aunt later that evening.

To my surprise, the little girl replied. "Thank you."

"Aww... How old is she?"

"She's three."

"Wow! She's smart. What's your name?" I asked her.

"I'm Ava." She flashed her white set of teeth at me.

"Aww..."

I was happy that my aunt had forgiven me. I was glad that God had also forgiven me.

"If I die, I won't die again. I'll live eternally."

BRITTANY

"I'm through with my part of friend or foe." Hannah told me one evening.

We were still in the hospital. The doctors said she would not be discharged any time soon. Despite the fact that Hannah's health was deteriorating, she was always writing.

"Brittany?"

"Hmm... Hmm?"

"Did you hear what I said? I'm through with Hannah's side of the story. I'll give you the book tomorrow."

Just then, my phone vibrated.

"It's Josephine." I told Hannah.

"Aww... I'd love to speak with her. It's been a while."

CHAPTER 67

BRITTANY

"Hello... Brittany?"

"Josie... Good evening. How are you? How is the baby?"

"The baby is fine oo. I'm fine too. How is Hannah?"

"She's here with me. She wants to speak with you."

I handed the phone to Hannah and the latter put the phone on speaker.

"Hannah?"

"Josie..."

"How is your health? I feel so bad that you have to go through this because of me."

Hannah smiled. "Don't feel bad. You've also been through a lot."

"Hannah, I've missed the whole of you. I've missed your voice, your teeth, your smile... everything!"

"Aww..."

"The first time I saw you, it was your voice I noticed first. I even recorded the song you sang. It was the choir piece for my first service on campus."

"Really?"

"Grace to grace by Hillsong. I listen to your recorded voice everyday and it reminds me of you."

Hannah smiled.

"I trust God to heal you. You are not dying now, okay?"

Hannah nodded. Tears streamed down her face.

"Hannah... You're not saying anything."

She wiped her tears. "Josie, I'm short of words. I didn't expect you to forgive me this soon."

"Hmm... It's not your fault, Hannah. You warned me. Let's not talk about it."

Hannah sighed.

"Let's pray together." Josephine said.

"Okay..."

"Lord Jesus, thank you for bringing us out of darkness. Thank you for Your love. Thank you because healing is the children's bread. We believe in Your healing power, Lord Jesus. Hannah will live."

"Amen" I responded.

"Let Your name be glorified, Lord Jesus. In Jesus' name we've prayed."

"Amen"

"Thank you so much, Josie. Thank you." Hannah was still shedding tears.

"Thank God." Josephine replied.

"Please, take care of our baby. I name him or her Love because at this point in time, I know what God's love really means. If they are twins, I name them Love and Grace."

"Aww..."

I smiled.

"Thank care of yourself, Hannah. I trust God to take care of you."

Hannah smiled.

"Bye, Hannah."

Hannah sniffed. "Good bye, Josephine."

She returned my phone to me.

"Brittany..." she left my left hand.

"I can't thank you enough for being here for me. God bless you."

I smiled.

CHAPTER 68

BRITTANY

Throughout the night, I noticed that Hannah did not sleep. She kept flipping through the book in which she wrote her story.

When the day broke, I noticed that her eyelids were three times bigger.

"Hannah!" I screamed.

"What?"

"Your eyes..."

She rubbed her face. "I was in pain throughout the night... It's okay sha. I should expect this."

"Hannah..." I sobbed.

She handed her book over to me. "Brittany, I'm done."

I collected the book and hugged her.

I turned to the last page of the book and read the last paragraph.

"I was happy that my aunt had forgiven me. I was glad that God had also forgiven me. If I die, I won't die again. I'll live eternally."

I closed the book and wept.

Hannah wrapped up herself and smiled at me.

"Brittany, don't cry. I'm going to a better place."

She stared into space.

"Josephine... Grace to Grace by Hillsong..." She whispered.

She began to sing.

"If love endured that ancient cross
How precious is my Saviour's blood
The beauty of Heaven wrapped in my shame
The image of love upon death's frame

If having my heart was worth the pain
What joy could you see beyond the grave
If love found my soul worth dying for..."

I noticed that her face shone brightly as she sang.

"If Heaven now owns that vacant tomb
How great is the hope that lives in You
The passion that tore through hell like a rose
The promise that rolled back death and his stone

If freedom is worth the life you raised
Where is my sin? Where is my shame?
If love paid it all to have my heart

How wonderful, how glorious
My Saviour's scars, victorious
My chains are gone, my debt is paid
From death to life and grace to grace

When I see the cross, I see freedom
When I see the grave, I see Jesus
And from death to life, I will sing Your praise
In the wonder of your grace

...my chains are gone, my debt is paid
From death to life and grace to grace..."

Hannah was suddenly quiet. Her pupils became fixed and she had stopped breathing.

I screamed in horror.

The medical team swung into action but all effort made to resuscitate her proved abortive.

I informed Hannah's aunt and Josephine about her demise. It dawned on me that I would never see Hannah again.

I wept for days, no! Months!

I wept throughout my fourth year in the University. Hannah would indeed forever be in my heart.

CHAPTER 69

JOSEPHINE

Hannah's demise was a heavy blow to me. I thought God had forgiven us. I thought God would grant Hannah another chance to make things right. I felt guilty that Hannah died because I refused to be initiated. I wished there was something I could have done. I refused to be consoled by my mum. It was hard to believe that Hannah was gone.

I gradually pulled myself together as I had to concentrate on my admission process. To the glory of God, I eventually gained admission into one of the Universities in the outskirts of my city.

Two weeks after I received my admission letter, I gave birth to twins; a boy and a girl. I named them Love and Grace just as Hannah wanted.

I was feeding my twins one afternoon when I heard a knock at the door. My mum went to get the door and to my surprise, Brittany was led into the house.

I screamed and jumped at her.

"Brittany! What a surprise! I didn't know you would get the description so easily."

Brittany chuckled.

"It's nice to see you again after eight months." I screamed.

We settled down and Brittany fed Love while I fed Grace.

"Congratulations, Josephine."

"On what?" I asked her.

"Your admission into the University."

I sighed. "It's a pity that I'm a mother of two at this stage of my life."

Brittany held my right hand. "It's okay, Josie."

"I believe that henceforth, God will help me never to replace His Word with ungodly counsel. I believe that He will help me never to allow anyone to take the place of the Holy Spirit in my life."

"Amen... Amen... Josephine, God will help you. The devil wanted the twins to be his instruments but he made a mistake because these ones will shake the kingdom of darkness."

"Amen!"

"You will stand for Jesus even as a fresher in your new school."

“Amen!”

“You will hold onto God even till you graduate.”

“Amen!”

“And forever, God will be glorified in our lives.”

“Amen!”

I hugged Brittany tightly.

She returned to school as a finalist while I was going to be a fresher in a new school.

“It is well.” I consoled myself.

My mum agreed to take care of my twins. I never heard from Toyin. Her mum suffered a heart attack for reasons I did not know.

Brittany kept in touch with me. We remained friends and I can say that God is being glorified in our lives.

CHAPTER 70

JOSEPHINE'S MUM

I'm glad that I did not weep over my daughter. I'm grateful that I did not allow carnal comparison to ruin my daughter. I'm thankful to God that I became my daughter's friend. I thought Toyin was the best of children but I later learnt that no matter what, Jesus is the perfect example.

Today, Josephine was inducted into the Science Laboratory Technology profession. Her twins also clocked five today.

Josephine was called upon to render the vote of thanks at the end of the induction ceremony.

She gracefully mounted the podium amidst applause.

"Thank you so much, everyone... Thank you. I want to appreciate God for a day like this. I'm grateful to Him for putting the devil to shame in my life. I thank Him for being my friend. I also appreciate my mum for not giving up on me even when I had given up on myself. I'm grateful to her for being a mother who loves and looks out for me. Thank you, mummy for being my friend." She blew a kiss at me.

"I'm also saying a very big thank you to Brittany. She has been a friend for the past seven years. Thank you for standing by me. You will not lose your reward. My thanks to you all for making it here today. Before I drop the mic, I want to implore everyone here today,

especially the freshers... In life, make the Bible your blueprint. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. The Holy Spirit should be your best friend. Don't try to play games with the devil by being a frenemy to God. Know God for yourself. Be a friend of God. Thank you so much."

She dropped the microphone and walked back to her seat.

I fixed my gaze on the twins and I prayed that they would not pass through what Josephine went through.

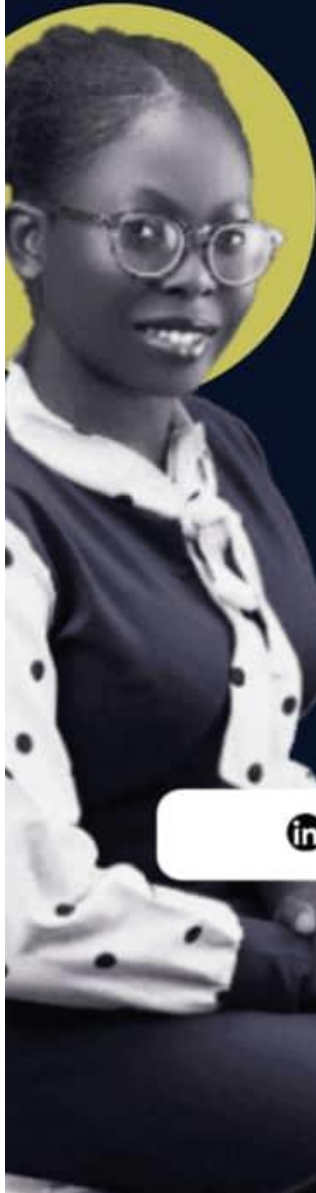
I looked back at Josephine and I saw a friend of God who was basking in the love and grace of God.

THE END

ABOUT THE BOOK

We all wish to have sincere friends right? Have we also been sincere friends? Josephine had the gift of choice but she chose the path that she deemed fit. What did her choice land her into? Can one be a friend and a foe?

Delve into the intriguing pages of this book, get the answers to the questions above and be blessed.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

OLUWAFUNBI OLANIYI is a christian writer, an author and an ardent believer of the Gospel. She has a burning passion for the girl child. She presently studies in one of the Universities in Nigeria.

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