

EPISODE 12 — *The Day That Broke Open*

The morning of the wedding arrived with quiet excitement that slowly grew into celebration. The church compound in Lagos was already filled with people before the

"You are a disappointment." The pastor leaned in, said it quietly, then walked away.

service began. It was not a massive cathedral, but it was large enough to hold the joy of the day. The one-story building stood neatly decorated, with white fabrics and flowers arranged carefully along the aisle. Everything reflected purity. Everything reflected expectation. Uche stood in a side room, dressed completely in white. His suit was crisp, his tie perfectly set, and his shoes polished to a shine.

— INSIDE THE EMPTY CHURCH

His best man adjusted his collar. "*Guy,today na your day,*" he said with a grin. Uche forced a smile."*Yes... my day.*"

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THE BRIDE

Outside, Precious was being prepared. She stood before a mirror, dressed in a pure white wedding gown that flowed elegantly to the ground. There was no touch of any other color. Just white. A quiet symbol of everything she had fought to preserve. Her friends surrounded her, adjusting her veil and laughing softly. "*You fine die,*" one of them said. Precious smiled. But her joy was deeper than appearance. Her heart was calm. She believed she was stepping into God's will. "*Today is the day,*" she whispered to herself.

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DOWN THE AISLE

The music began. The congregation stood. The procession started slowly. Uche walked in first with his best man, steady and composed. Then the bridal train followed, each step measured, each movement graceful. Finally, Precious appeared at the entrance. The entire church turned. She walked slowly down the aisle, guided carefully, her eyes fixed ahead. The soft decorations on the floor shimmered under her steps as she moved forward. Everything felt perfect. Everything felt right. Until it did not.

THE MOMENT OF INTERRUPTION

They stood before the altar. The pastor smiled warmly and began the ceremony. The vows were read. They repeated their words to each other, their voices steady. It was beautiful. It was sacred. Then came the moment. The pastor paused and looked at the congregation. "*If there is anyone here,*" he said, "*who has a reason why these two should not be joined in holy matrimony, let that person speak now or forever hold their peace.*" Silence filled the room. Precious stood calm. Uche's heart began to race. He swallowed hard, his eyes moving briefly across the room. Nothing happened. No one stood. The pastor nodded slightly. "*In the absence of any...* "

The sound came suddenly. Goy... goy... goy... goy... The sharp echo of heels against the tiled floor. Every head turned. A woman walked in. She was striking. Dark, smooth skin that carried a natural glow. Her lips were soft and pink, her hair dark and full. There was confidence in her steps, but also something heavier. Something deliberate. She walked forward and stopped some distance from the altar. The pastor looked surprised. "*Yes? Is there a problem?*" he asked. She lifted her head. "*I have a reason,*" she said clearly. The atmosphere changed instantly.

LOVETH

Uche's body went cold. He knew that voice. He looked up fully. Loveth. His hands began to shake. His heart pounded so loudly it felt like everyone could hear it. Beside him, Precious turned quickly. "*Do you know her?*" she whispered urgently. Uche could not speak. "*Uche, I am talking to you. Do you know her?*" He remained silent. His mouth was dry. His mind was scattered.

The pastor stepped forward slightly. "*What is your reason?*" he asked. Loveth looked directly at Uche. Then she spoke. "*Uche and I are in a relationship,*" she said. "*We are courting.*" The words dropped like a stone in water. The church erupted. Voices rose from every corner. "*What?*" "*Is it true?*" "*This is serious!*" People began to stand. Some shook their heads. Some walked out immediately. Parents looked at each other in shock and disappointment. Precious felt the ground beneath her shift. Her chest tightened. Her eyes filled with tears instantly. She turned to Uche again. "*You… you did not tell me?*" she asked, her voice breaking. Uche still could not answer. His silence spoke louder than any words. That was enough.

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SHE RAN

Precious stepped back. The humiliation burned deeply. Tears rolled freely down her face. Without another word, she turned and walked away from the altar. Then she ran. Out of the church. Out of the moment. Out of everything she thought was certain. The ceremony collapsed. Guests continued leaving. Cars started. Voices filled the compound. Inside the church, the pastor stood still for a moment, then walked close to Uche. He leaned in slightly. "*You are a disappointment,*" he said quietly. Uche lowered his head. Shame covered him completely. The pastor stepped back and walked away.

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LEFT BEHIND

Soon, the church was nearly empty. What was meant to be a celebration had turned into a scene of confusion and pain. Uche stood alone. Then he looked up. Loveth was still there. Standing. Waiting. Now it was just the two of them. Facing each other.

"His silence spoke louder than any words. And for Precious,

that was enough."

✦ **Watch Out for the Next Episode** ✦