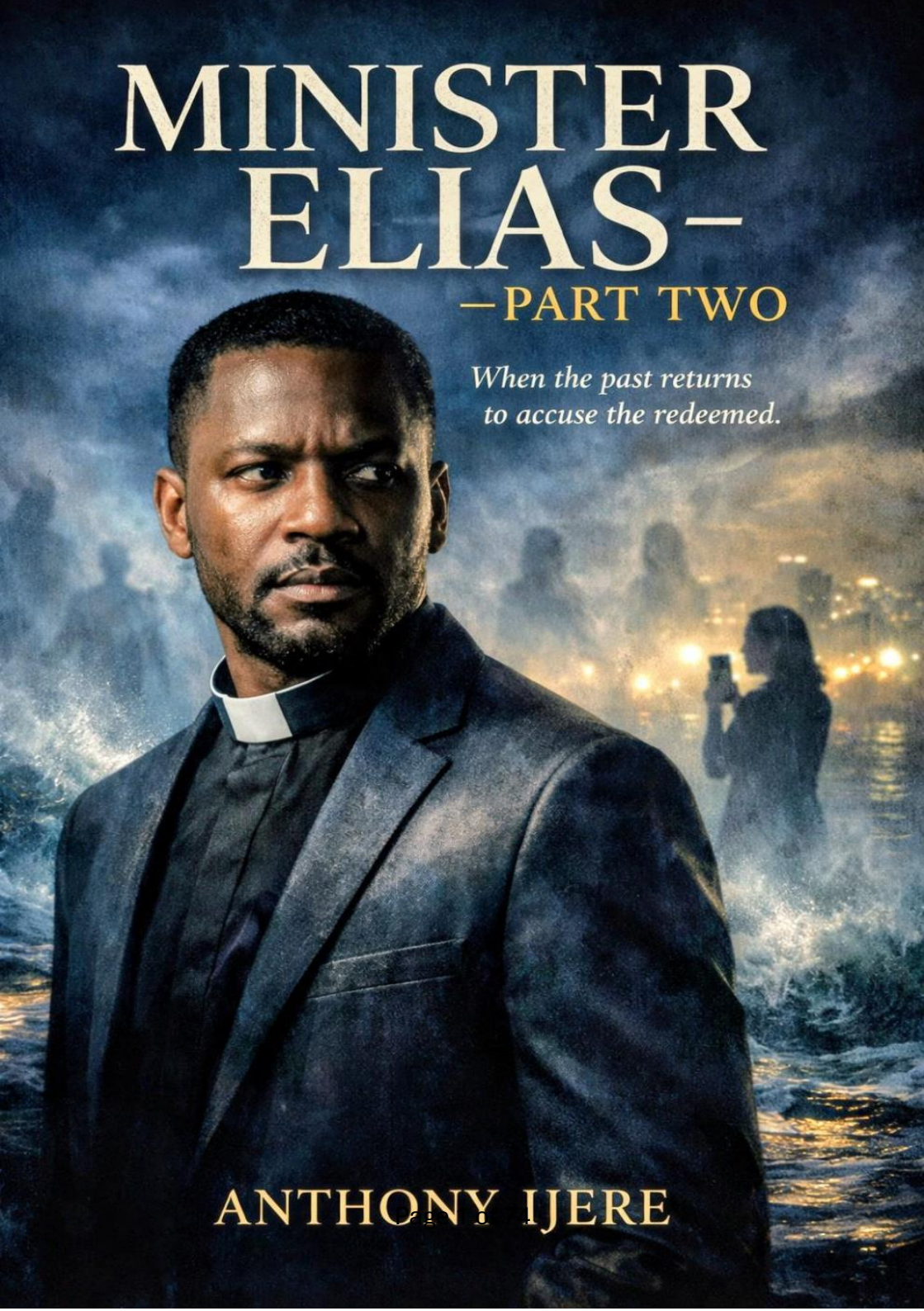
MINISTER ELIAS–
–PART TWO
When the past returns to accuse the redeemed.
ANTHONY IJERE

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY:
ANTHONY IJERE

AHOADA , RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA
TEL: +234 913 3400 801

COPYRIGHT 2025 © Anthony Ijere
Anthonyijere@yahoo.com
Facebook: Anthony Ijere
Instagram: @anthony.ijere

NO PART OF THIS BOOK
IS TO BE REPRODUCED OR REPRINTED
WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to every man and woman who has ever struggled in secret, to those who smiled in public but cried alone in private, to those who loved God sincerely yet found themselves trapped by hidden battles.

It is for the broken who think they have gone too far, for the wounded who believe their past has disqualified them, and for the silent sufferers who are afraid to speak because of shame. This story is for you.

May these pages remind you that failure is not the end, that darkness does not have the final word, and that no matter how deep the fall, mercy is deeper still.

Above all, this book is dedicated to the God who restores, and who turns ashes into purpose.

Acknowledgement

I give all glory, honor, and praise to God Almighty, the giver of life, wisdom, and redemption. Without His mercy, grace, and patience, this story would not exist. He is the God who restores broken men, heals wounded hearts, and turns failures into vessels of purpose.

My sincere gratitude goes to everyone who believes in the power of truth and transformation. To the men and women who have shared their stories, struggles, and testimonies openly or in silence, thank you. Your lives inspired the depth, realism, and honesty found in these pages.

I acknowledge spiritual fathers, mentors, and teachers who labor tirelessly to raise men of integrity and purity, especially those who confront difficult subjects with love and courage. Your teachings and examples continue to light the path for many who are searching for freedom.

To families who pray behind the scenes, who intercede through tears, and who never give up on their loved ones, this work honors you. The prayers of a mother, the discipline of a father, and the covering of family are powerful forces that shape destinies.

I also appreciate every reader who dares to journey through this story with an open heart. May this book challenge, heal, warn, and restore you. May it remind you

that no chain is too strong, no pit is too deep, and no soul is beyond redemption.

Finally, I acknowledge the grace to write, to tell hard truths, and to point broken lives toward hope. May this work serve as a mirror, a warning, and a testimony that light always has the final word.

Prologue

The sun in Port Harcourt was merciless that morning, baking the stalls and streets of Mile One Market like an oven. Hawkers shouted prices, women balanced baskets on their heads, and the smell of roasted plantains mixed with fried fish in the air. Amidst the chaos, Elias Clinton stood on a small wooden platform near the entrance, a microphone in hand, calling people to hear the word of God.

“Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls!” he shouted, his voice cutting through the clamor. “God has power to heal the sick, set the oppressed free, and lift you from every trouble!”

Some people paused, curious. Others rolled their eyes and continued bargaining for tomatoes. Elias didn’t mind. He had learned that the market was a place where the unexpected happened. And today, it would.

A man stumbled toward the platform, his clothes torn and eyes wild. He muttered to himself, talking to voices only he could hear. People backed away, whispering, “Madman… he’s here again.”

Elias didn’t hesitate. He raised his hands and shouted, “In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you, spirit of confusion, leave this man now!”

The madman froze. His breathing stuttered. Then, in a moment that seemed impossible, he fell to his knees, tears streaming down his face. “I… I am free!” he screamed, his voice shaking but lucid. “The voices… they are gone!”

The crowd gasped. A few women fainted, some men dropped their goods in shock, and children stared wide-eyed. The market that had been noisy, chaotic, and ordinary became alive with awe and whispers.

“Did you see that?” one man muttered to his friend. “The preacher just healed him right here!”

Elias stepped down from the platform, walking toward the man, gently placing a hand on his shoulder. “You are free in Christ. Walk in His light and never return to that darkness,” he said softly.

The man nodded, trembling, and then ran off into the streets, shouting praises.

Word spread like wildfire. By the end of the day, more people crowded around Elias’ small church. Some came for healing, some out of curiosity, and some simply drawn to the man whose prayers could make the impossible happen in the middle of a market.

Even Elias chuckled to himself. He had never expected a day at the market to turn into a revival.

Episode 1

The Emergency Meeting

Far below the restless waters off the Nigerian coast, the air was thick with plotting. It smelled faintly of salt, smoke, and frustration. A long table carved from coral sat in the center of the room. Around it, creatures that looked like nightmares in human disguise fidgeted in their chairs, muttering complaints, rolling their eyes, and glaring at each other like coworkers stuck in eternal office politics. At the head of the table sat the Queen of the Coast, her long hair floating like black silk in the dim light. Her gaze alone could calm a hurricane or summon one at will. She tapped a long fingernail against her throne slowly, deliberately, as if measuring patience against the ticking of the ocean itself.

“Explain to me again why this man is still alive?” she asked softly, and yet the sound made the room go quiet. A creature with scales along its neck spoke first, sounding exhausted. “Ma’am, he… he keeps surviving. We tried shame. Worked for a while. Temptation? Brief victories. Fear? Short-lived. Even when he was physically sick, he came back stronger.”

Another leaned forward, annoyed. “He is married, queen. He preaches, he prays, he even smiles through it all. His popularity is like a shield. It’s infuriating.”

“You call him a shield?” the Queen said, raising one eyebrow. “He is supposed to be our target! Not a walking fortress!”

“I know, I know,” said a timid voice at the end of the table. “But he… he has peace now. Boring peace. Quiet, ordinary peace. It doesn’t make sense, but it’s working.”
The Queen’s lips curved slightly. “Boring?”
“Yes,” muttered a deep-voiced creature. “He is boring. He does not run around shouting his struggles anymore. He smiles too much. He prays too well. He even cooks for his wife sometimes. Can you imagine?”

There was a ripple of laughter around the table. Some nervous, some genuine.
“Boring can be dangerous,” said another voice, more serious this time. “Because no one suspects a boring man. That’s when he hits hardest.”
The Queen leaned forward. “Enough talking. We adapt. He is too strong for temptation alone, too wise for shame, and too popular to ignore. We strike at his image. His reputation. His human connections. And if we must… his emotions.”

Heads nodded eagerly.

A faint shadow at the back of the room stirred. A woman emerged, walking like she belonged in the human world instead of this watery fortress. Ordinary, forgettable at

first glance, but the air around her hummed with intention.
“I volunteer,” she said, bowing. “I know how to make people doubt what they see, hear, and even feel. I can bring his world crashing down without touching a hair on his head.”

The Queen studied her, then nodded slowly. “Use what must be used. Twist only enough to make humans panic. Collateral emotions can be… useful.”

The woman smiled faintly and vanished into the mist, already halfway to the land above.

Above, far from the plotting, Elias slept in quiet peace. The hum of the city outside his window could not reach him. His heart was full, his mind at rest. His wife Sarah slept beside him.

His ministry was growing steadily. He had no idea a plan had already been set in motion, not through darkness or temptation this time, but through human voices, media, and lies.

A storm was coming. And it had his name written all over it.

Episode 2

The Calm before the Chaos

Elias Clinton woke up with the kind of optimism reserved for people who had no idea their lives were about to get messy. The sun had barely stretched over Port Harcourt, but the city was already sweating. Horns blared, generators groaned, and the scent of grilled fish mixed with fumes made the air feel alive.

He yawned, stretched, and reached for his phone. Five missed calls. Ten notifications. Three messages from people who wanted prayers, blessings, or both. He groaned. Even in his pajamas, Elias had become a public spectacle.

“Good morning, world,” he muttered, rubbing his eyes. “Let’s see who needs saving today.”

His first call was from the church secretary.

“Pastor Elias! Please, can you attend the leadership meeting today? It’s urgent.”

He forced a chuckle. “Sure. What’s urgent this time?”

“Just… everything,” she said vaguely. “People are talking.”

Elias hung up and stared at the ceiling fan. His life had become a mixture of prayer points and push notifications,

and no amount of fasting or coffee seemed capable of slowing it down.

Downstairs, Sarah was already awake, humming softly as she prepared breakfast. She glanced at him.

“You look like someone fought traffic and lost,” she said, carrying a plate of eggs.

“I didn’t fight traffic,” he replied, reaching for his phone again. “Traffic fought me. And won.”

She laughed, but there was a sparkle in her eye that said she knew exactly how crazy his life had become.

By mid-morning, Elias was back at church. He tried to sit quietly, thinking maybe today he could just breathe. He was immediately spotted by three different groups, each waving frantically.

“Pastor Elias! Bless this handkerchief!”

“Sir! Can we take a photo quickly?”

“Man of God, my aunt is on video call. Can you pray for her?”

He smiled weakly, waving one hand like a tired general at a parade.

During service, he tried to focus on the sermon, but every flash from a phone in the crowd felt like a small sting to his peace. Somewhere in the back, a woman whispered,

“I saw him online yesterday. He is glowing. Like, literally glowing.”

He forced a smile and mouthed a silent, Please, Lord… help me survive today.

After service, the chaos only intensified. People wanted personal advice, photos, blessings, and sometimes, unsolicited confessions. One young man insisted Elias sign a notebook labeled “Life Secrets.”

“Why?” Elias asked, eyebrows raised.

“Because, sir, your life is like a movie. And I need the behind-the-scenes version.”

Elias laughed out loud, which startled him more than anyone else.

Back at home, Sarah had already prepared lunch and noticed something peculiar. He was eating but scrolling.

“Elias,” she said calmly, “you just swallowed the stew.”

“What do you mean?”

“You didn’t chew. You ministered it.”

He looked at her, blinking. “Ministered it?”

“Yes. You prayed silently over the food with your teeth.”

Elias groaned dramatically. “I think I need a sabbatical. Or at least a mute button.”

Sarah smiled, shaking her head. “I think the mute button is called marriage. You already have it, you just refuse to press it sometimes.”

By evening, Elias tried to retreat to his study. He needed quiet, but it was impossible. His phone buzzed continuously. News outlets wanted interviews, church members needed guidance, and random strangers were sending messages that started with, Man of God, help me.

He dropped the phone with a sigh. “Even silence is loud.”

Sarah appeared behind him, arms crossed but smiling. “Maybe today you can just… breathe. At least for five minutes.”

He looked at her, realizing she was right. He turned off the notifications, leaned back in his chair, and for the first time in hours, felt like he could hear his own thoughts.

But far above, in the city, a plan had already started unfolding. Cameras would flash, whispers would spread, and someone would use everything they knew about him to stir trouble.

And Elias, blissfully unaware, thought the day was simply busy.

* * *

By Wednesday morning, Elias was already tired from yesterday. He had preached, prayed, counseled, and tried in vain to escape notifications. Even Sarah had begun to roll her eyes each time his phone buzzed.

“It’s like your phone has a personal vendetta,” she said, handing him a cup of tea.

“Maybe it does,” he muttered, taking a sip. “Maybe it knows my secrets.”

He laughed, though his chest tightened slightly. The memories of his past, long buried under years of ministry and prayer, sometimes nudged the edges of his mind. And then came the knock.

It was soft, hesitant, but deliberate. Elias frowned. No one came to his door unannounced.

“Coming!” he called, wiping his hands on a towel.

The door opened to reveal a woman. Not flashy, not imposing, but her presence made the room feel… colder. She wore a light blouse and skirt, and a calm smile that didn’t reach her eyes. She introduced herself simply.

“I’m here to… speak with you,” she said, voice gentle, yet layered with intention.

Elias felt a tiny warning bell. “Okay… come in,” he said, gesturing.

She stepped inside and carefully set her bag on the table. Her eyes scanned the room as if noting every detail, but lingered a little too long on his Bible and the photos on his wall.

“You have a beautiful home,” she said. “And a beautiful family. Lucky man.”

Elias smiled politely, feeling a slight unease. “Thank you. Can I get you tea or water?”

“No, thank you. I came for conversation,” she replied, tilting her head slightly.

He gestured for her to sit. “Alright. Conversation it is.”

For a while, she spoke about seemingly ordinary things such as the weather, the city, how crowded Port Harcourt could be. But Elias noticed a pattern. Every story subtly twisted into something about human weakness, mistakes, or reputations.

Then she leaned in slightly. “Pastor Elias,” she said softly, “do you think people can truly forgive and forget?”

He frowned. “Of course. With God, yes. Humans… sometimes it’s harder.”

She smiled faintly, almost like she was savoring the words. “And what about mistakes… long ago? Things people never knew about? Can the world forget them?”

Elias shifted uncomfortably. Her eyes were too calm, too deliberate. “It depends on the person,” he said cautiously.

She laughed softly. “I suppose it does. You’re very careful, aren’t you?”

He tried to brush it off. “Careful keeps trouble away.”

She tilted her head. “Trouble… sometimes finds you anyway. Even when you think you are safe.”

Elias’ heart began to beat a little faster. Something about her voice, her timing, her calm presence, reminded him of storms he had survived in his youth. Something dark, persistent, and patient.

She leaned closer. “I’ve seen things… things that could destroy a man like you. Things he hoped were buried forever. But everyone has ears. And eyes. And some are waiting.”

Elias swallowed. “I… I don’t know what you mean.”

“Oh, you will,” she said softly, standing. “I’m only here to… remind you. The world is smaller than you think. And secrets… well, they are excellent leverage.”

Before he could respond, she turned and left as quietly as she had come.

Elias leaned against the wall, heart racing. The room felt suddenly heavier.

“Sarah…” he called, but she didn’t answer. She was upstairs. He sank into the chair and dozed off.

Episode 3

Rumors Everywhere

Elias Clinton woke up Wednesday morning feeling like the universe had it out for him. He reached for his shoes, stepped into one, and thud! He tripped over the other. The dog barked like someone had insulted its mother, and Sarah rushed in, barely containing laughter.

“Pastor Elias! You fell over your own feet again?” she said, shaking her head. “Honestly, sometimes I wonder how God lets you survive!”

“I… I was… testing gravity,” Elias said, still on the floor. “It works perfectly, see? No bones broken.”

“Works perfectly?” Sarah asked, folding her arms. “Your knees don’t agree.”

He groaned and rolled his eyes. Life had a way of keeping him humble, and apparently, slapstick humor was part of God’s plan.

By mid-morning, his phone started buzzing non-stop. A quick glance at the headlines made him want to throw it across the room:

“Pastor Elias: Secrets from the Past Resurface”

He groaned. “Secrets? I thought we buried those years ago!”

“Apparently, someone remembered them for us,” shouted a young church member who had dropped by.

Sarah appeared behind him, arms crossed, trying not to laugh. “Well, at least the media remembered you. I was beginning to think you were forgettable.”

Elias grabbed a pillow and threw it at her. She caught it easily and tossed it back. “I am not forgettable!” he shouted, though a laugh escaped him.

The morning quickly turned into chaos. Church members called nonstop. One elderly woman asked if they needed to bring an exorcist.

“Exorcist?” Elias groaned. “The only thing possessed here is my peace!”

Another deacon whispered, “Pastor, maybe you should take a sabbatical… or move to another planet.”

“I’m thinking Mars,” Elias muttered. “Do you think they have Wi-Fi there?”

By noon, Elias was sitting in front of a line of journalists for a live interview. A cameraman tripped over a cord,

nearly landing on the sound technician, who screamed in a pitch so high it would have cracked glass.

“Pastor Elias,” a reporter asked, waving a microphone like a sword. “There are rumors about your past. How do you respond?”

Elias leaned back, hands behind his head, and grinned. “Well, if my past were a movie, it would be a mix of action, comedy, and a little horror. And spoiler alert! it has a plot twist no one saw coming: redemption!”

The reporter blinked. “Redemption?”

“Yes,” Elias said, nodding earnestly. “It’s like baking jollof rice. You make mistakes along the way, the neighbors complain, the fire is too high, but in the end, it turns out perfect if God is chef.”

Another journalist chimed in. “People are saying you’re hiding things. Are they true?”

Elias pointed to the camera with mock seriousness. “I assure you, the only thing I’m hiding is my secret recipe for pepper soup. And maybe where I keep my slippers.”

The reporters laughed nervously, unsure if he was joking or serious. “Pastor,” a young reporter asked, “are you worried about your reputation?”

Elias shrugged. “My reputation is like my old shoes worn out, sometimes smelly, but still walking with me.”
During the interview, chaos erupted. Someone tried to take a selfie with him. A cameraman tripped over wires. Another reporter shouted something in Pidgin that Elias barely understood. Through it all, he kept his cool, cracking jokes and making everyone laugh, even as sweat poured down his face.

Meanwhile, the lady sent from the waters watched from the shadows, smiling. Her whispers were working, subtly stirring curiosity and doubt. She didn’t need to shout. People were starting to bite.

After the interview, Elias returned home, exhausted. Sarah handed him a plate of jollof rice and a soft drink.

“You survived the media circus today,” she said, trying not to laugh. “Barely. But somehow, you made everyone laugh at themselves and at you.”

Elias chewed thoughtfully. “Laughter is my secret weapon. If they want scandal, I’ll give them slapstick. And prayers, lots and lots of prayers.”

Sarah shook her head. “Just make sure the prayers are for real this time.
Elias raised his glass. “Every prayer counts, my dear. And every laugh too. One day, God will have the last laugh… and maybe, just maybe, I will too.”

Little did he know, the storm was just beginning. The lady from the waters had planted her first seed. Rumors were spreading. Church members whispered in corners. Media headlines kept flashing. And the next move would be louder, meaner, and even more chaotic than today.

* * *

If trouble was a person, it would not knock on the door. It would enter Elias Clinton's house, sit on his chair, and ask for water.

That Thursday morning, Elias woke up feeling strangely calm. That was how he knew something was wrong. His phone was quiet. No calls. No messages. No breaking news. Nothing.

He sat up on the bed and looked at Sarah. "Why is everywhere quiet like this?"

Sarah opened one eye. "Because you are not online yet. Once you touch that phone, chaos will wake up."

Elias laughed. "You talk as if trouble has my number saved."

"Saved?" Sarah said. "It has your name under 'Favorite Contact.'"

As if on cue, his phone began to ring. Then another call. Then another. Messages poured in like rain in June.

He picked one and read it aloud. “Pastor, we are praying for you.”

He read another. “Sir, should we cancel Sunday service?”

Another one came. “Daddy, media people are outside the church gate.”

Elias dropped the phone on the bed. “Sarah, they are multiplying.”

Sarah stood up and tied her wrapper. “Well, if they are coming, let them meet breakfast first. No battle is fought on empty stomach.”

By the time Elias arrived at the church, it looked like a market. Cameras. Tripods. Journalists. Even people who had never attended church in their life were standing around, pretending to be concerned.

One reporter saw Elias and shouted, “Pastor! Over here!”

Another one shouted, “Sir, did you really do those things in your past?”

Elias raised his hand. “Please, one at a time. I only have one mouth.”

The journalists laughed, but they did not stop. Microphones were pushed into his face like he was selling gala.

“Pastor Elias,” one lady asked, “do you believe your past disqualifies you from ministry?”

Elias scratched his head. “Madam, if past mistakes disqualify people, then half of us will be jobless. Even NEPA will close down.”

The crowd burst into laughter.

Another reporter asked, “Are you saying the allegations are false?”

Elias smiled. “I am saying my life has chapters. Some were bad. Some were worse. But God did not stop reading.”

A young man shouted from the back, “Pastor, are you under spiritual attack?”

Elias looked at him and nodded seriously. “Yes. Especially from hunger. I have not eaten since morning.”

Even the camera men laughed.

Inside the church office, the elders were not laughing. One of them wiped his forehead with a handkerchief.

“Pastor,” he said, “this is getting serious.”

Elias nodded. “I know.”

Another elder cleared his throat. “Some members are confused. Others are angry. One woman said she will

only come back to church if you explain everything from nursery school till now."

Elias sighed. "If I start that explanation, Sunday service will end on Wednesday."

As they were talking, a young lady entered quietly and dropped a brown envelope on the table. No greeting. No smile. Just the envelope.

Elias picked it up. Inside were printed pictures and a short note.

"You cannot laugh your way out of this. Call me."

There was a number at the bottom.

Elias's heart skipped. The jokes stopped making sense. The room felt heavy.

Sarah, who had been standing quietly, moved closer. "What is it?"

Elias forced a smile. "It looks like my past has decided to apply for a job in my present."

Outside, the journalists were still shouting. Inside, fear was beginning to whisper. Elias looked at the envelope again.

Episode 4

The Covenant by the River

By the second week, jokes stopped saving Elias. What started as online talk entered the church compound and sat comfortably on the front pew. Church members no longer asked, “How are you, Pastor?” They now asked, “Pastor, is it true?” and waited without blinking.

One Tuesday evening, Elias received a formal message.

“Emergency elders’ meeting. Attendance compulsory.”

There was no greeting. No prayer emoji.

When he arrived at the church hall, the elders were already seated. Six men. Different ages. Same serious faces. A long table separated them from him like a court barrier.

The oldest elder cleared his throat.

“Pastor Elias Clinton,” he began, adjusting his glasses, “this meeting has been convened to address allegations of grave moral magnitude.”

Elias blinked. “Sir?”

Another elder continued immediately, enjoying himself.

“These allegations are not hypothetical assumptions nor satanic imaginations. They are empirical concerns supported by circumstantial narratives and digital evidence.”

Elias swallowed.

A third elder leaned forward. “In simple English, Pastor, the stories are many, and they are not smiling stories.”

One elder shook his head slowly. “We defended you at first. We said, ‘Touch not the anointed.’ But now even the anointing is asking questions.”

Silence filled the room.

The chairman spoke again. “After extensive deliberation and spiritual consultation, we have reached a provisional conclusion.”

Elias felt his heart beat louder.

“You are hereby advised,” the elder said carefully, “to step aside from ministerial functions with immediate effect, pending further investigations, clarifications, explanations, revelations, and if necessary, manifestations.”

Elias almost laughed, but fear blocked it.

“So,” another elder added, “this is not a punishment. It is a strategic withdrawal.”

“In other words,” the youngest elder said, “please go and rest. Far.”

“How far?” Elias asked quietly.

“As far as your shadow cannot attend church meetings,” the elder replied.

That one hurt, but it was funny. Elias nodded slowly.

“Hand over the pulpit,” the chairman concluded. “Hand over leadership. Hand over microphone. Hand over everything except your Bible. You will need that one.”

Elias stood up on weak legs. “I understand.”

As he walked out, one elder muttered, “This thing that is following you is not small.”

Another replied, “Yes. It has PhD.”

That night, Elias returned home tired in his bones.

Sarah was sitting on the sofa with her Bible closed on her lap. That alone was a sermon.

“Welcome,” she said calmly.

Elias dropped his keys. “The elders have removed me.”

She nodded, as though she already knew. “People have been calling me.”

He sat down slowly.

“Women,” she continued. “Men. Some defending you. Some insulting you. One asked if I am pretending to be strong or if I am also confused.”

Elias rubbed his face.

“Elias,” Sarah said gently, “I married your testimony, not your title. But tell me the truth. Is your past visiting us, or has it moved back in?”

He opened his mouth but no words came out.

That night, prayer did not flow. He knelt, stood, paced, knelt again. The room felt crowded though he was alone.

Then his phone vibrated.

Unknown Number.

“You cannot escape what you buried in water.”

His chest tightened.

Another message followed.

“Meet me tomorrow at the old riverside road. Come alone.”

Elias stared at the screen. His hands shook. This did not feel like ordinary blackmail. It felt ancient. Intentional.

The next morning, he told Sarah he had to travel.

“Where?” she asked.

“Abuja,” he said softly. “A ministers’ meeting.”

She looked at him for a long time. “You are going somewhere your spirit does not want to go.”

Elias forced a smile. “Ministry will do that to you.”

She hugged him tightly. “Please come back with truth. Not grammar.”

That sentence followed him on the road.

The drive was long and quiet. Trees stood like silent judges. The closer he got to the riverside, the heavier his chest became. Even the air felt wet and watchful.

Even the sound of the water ahead felt intentional, as though it had been waiting.

When he arrived, he stepped out of the car slowly.

She was already there, standing close to the riverbank, her back turned toward him.

“You came,” she said without looking back.

Elias swallowed. “Why are you doing this?”

She laughed softly. “Because you are standing where it started. And what begins in water must answer water.”

Cold fear climbed his spine.

This was no longer about rumours.

This was spiritual.

And Elias understood, too late, that the journey he told his wife was a lie, but the journey he had entered was a dangerous one.

* * *

Elias stood by the river longer than he planned. The woman had already walked a few steps away when the atmosphere changed. The air grew heavy, and the sound

of the water became louder, as though the river was breathing.

He felt it before he saw it.

A sharp pain struck his chest, throwing him backward. He fell hard on the sand, gasping for breath. When he looked up, the woman was no longer smiling.

“So you sensed it,” she said calmly. “Good. At least you will not die ignorant.”

Elias tried to stand, but his legs felt weak. “What did you do to me?”

She did not answer. Instead, she lifted her hand slightly, and the ground beneath Elias shook. He was dragged across the sand as though invisible hands were pulling him.

Fear rose inside him, but instinct kicked in. He shouted the name of Jesus and pushed himself to his feet. The moment he stood, power surged through him. He stretched out his hand, and the force between them exploded like a collision of winds.

The woman staggered back.

Elias did not wait. He charged forward, shouting prayers mixed with anger and desperation. The riverbank lit up with flashes of unseen energy as they clashed. She moved fast, too fast, striking him with blows that felt like iron. Elias countered, pushing back with everything he had learned in prayer and fasting.

For a moment, it looked like he could win.

Then she laughed.

“You are fighting with borrowed strength,” she said. “I was born in this.”

Her body began to change. Her bones shifted. Her skin stretched. In seconds, the woman was gone. In her place stood a massive lion, its eyes glowing with dark intelligence.

Elias froze.

The lion roared, and the sound knocked him off his feet. It pounced on him with crushing weight, claws tearing through his clothes and skin. Elias screamed in pain as he rolled on the ground, blood staining the sand.

He tried to rise, but the lion slammed him down again, pressing its paw against his chest. His ribs felt like they were cracking. His breath came in short, painful gasps.

“You are weak,” the lion said, its voice still hers. “Your fasting did not erase your contracts.”

The lion stepped back and shifted again. The woman stood over him, untouched, calm.

She pulled out a document that looked old and wet at the same time, as though it had lived in water.

“This is your choice,” she said. “Join us, or die here and let your name rot.”

Elias shook his head weakly. “God will not allow this.”

She bent closer. “God respects laws. You broke them first.”

Pain flooded his body. His vision blurred. He felt himself slipping.

“Sign,” she said softly. “Or bleed until your breath finishes.”

With trembling hands and tears in his eyes, Elias signed.

The moment he did, a sharp burning sensation ran through his arm. He screamed as a mark appeared briefly on his skin, then disappeared.

The woman smiled in satisfaction.

As she turned away, Elias noticed something.

A mark on her neck.

It was faint, but he recognized it. His heart skipped.

“Wait,” he whispered. “Who are you?”

She stopped and turned slowly. Her voice changed.

“You really do not remember,” she said. “After all we shared.”

Fear filled his eyes.

“Who are you?” he asked again.

She smiled.

“Cynthia.” She said. (Cynthia was his girlfriend back then in secondary school days who lured him into Fornication)

Episode 5

Beneath the Waters

Pastor Gabriel woke up with a sharp gasp, as though someone had poured cold water on his face. His heart was racing. His room was dark, but the dream was still fresh in his mind. He had seen a river. He had seen blood on sand. He had seen a man kneeling, signing something with shaking hands.

He reached for his phone immediately.

“Elias,” he said the moment the call connected, “listen to me carefully. Pride has opened a door in your life. That is the loophole. You are standing on dangerous ground.”

There was a pause on the other end.

Then Elias laughed.

It was not his normal laugh. It was loud, careless, and strange.

“Pastor Gabriel,” Elias said mockingly, “where was your God when I needed Him yesterday? I called. I shouted. Nothing happened.”

Pastor Gabriel sat up straight. “Elias, watch your words.”

“Watch what?” Elias replied, his voice thick with arrogance.

Pastor Gabriel felt cold. “You are not alone on that phone,” he said quietly.

Elias laughed again. “You worry too much. God is overrated.”

The line went dead.

Pastor Gabriel dropped the phone slowly. “Lord, have mercy,” he whispered.

At the riverside, night had fully fallen. The moon reflected on the water like broken glass. Cynthia stood beside Elias, her eyes glowing with satisfaction.

“You are learning fast,” she said. “You spoke like one of us.”

She touched him.

And then lust took over Elias once again. He gave himself fully, not just his body but his will. He made love with Cynthia beside the river. Every moment pulled him deeper, binding him emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

When it was over, Elias stood quietly, breathing heavily, feeling both alive and empty.

Cynthia smiled.

“Now you are ready,” she said.

She held his hand and stepped into the river.

The water opened.

The river was dark and deep, but it no longer felt threatening. When Elias followed Cynthia into the water,

he was surprised to find himself breathing freely. It was as though the water itself had paused to witness what was about to happen. The currents swirled around them, alive and purposeful.

Cynthia turned to him, her eyes serious, almost cold. “You wanted power. You wanted knowledge. You wanted influence. But to belong here, to be part of this realm, you must submit fully. Each of them will claim a piece of your authority. You will not resist.”

Elias’s heart sank. He wanted to scream, to say no. But pride and curiosity had already opened the door, and he had signed the covenant of submission.

One by one, the marine spirits approached him. Their presence pressed on him like weight he could not lift. It was not a game. It was a ritual. Each spirit demanded that he made love with them. He obeyed, not out of pleasure, but out of fear, desperation, and the need to survive.

With each act, the spirits whispered over him, binding him further. He felt strength flowing into him, knowledge, skills, visions of things he could never explain to anyone above the water. But alongside it came chains and spiritual ties that tied his very essence to this kingdom. Every promise he made was etched into his soul.

When the Queen of the Coast finally appeared, the atmosphere shifted. Everything else faded. Her eyes held centuries of judgment and power. “Now it is your final covenant,” she said. “Refuse, and your life ends

here. Agree, and your soul belongs to the waters, but power will flow through you unlike anything above."

Elias was trembling. The weight of all he had done before, the sin, the pride, the secret rebellion against God, all pressed down on him. But he had no choice. He knelt, head bowed, voice trembling. "I submit," he said.

The Queen traced her hand over his head. She turned into a large serpent and also demanded sexual affair with Elias. He finally had sexual intercourse with the serpent while the other spirit beings sang the ritual song while the sexual intercourse was going on. A mark of light burned briefly on his skin. In that moment, Elias understood the depth of what he had done. He had exchanged his freedom for authority, his soul for influence, and his future for knowledge.

He was left alone in the deep waters, surrounded by the spirits, for seven days. Time flowed differently there. Each moment stretched into hours of vision and learning. He saw technologies and ideas that did not exist on the surface. He witnessed minds of scientists and inventors, famous and long dead, exchanging knowledge in ways no human university could teach. Machines moved and thought on their own. Cities floated with energy that pulsed like a heartbeat. It was a new world, beautiful, terrifying, and entirely under the control of the marine kingdom.

And every evening, Elias felt the weight of the covenants pressing down on him. Each spirit he had submitted to

had claimed a part of him. By the end of the seventh day, he was stronger, wiser, and more powerful than before, but he was no longer free. His soul was bound by the chains of slavery to the powers that be!

Episode 6

The Price for Power

Elias surfaced from the river just before dawn, gasping softly as cool air rushed into his lungs. Water ran down his face, soaked through his clothes, and pooled on the seat of his car as he sat there for a long moment, unable to start the engine. His hands trembled, not from cold, but from the memory of where he had just been.

His phone buzzed nonstop.

Calls stacked on each other, messages flashing across the screen faster than he could read them. Elders, church workers, and members who had once avoided his gaze now called with urgency.

He had not preached yet but something had shifted in the unseen.

The covenant had started working.

When the call from the elders finally came through clearly, the voice on the other end sounded almost cheerful.

“Pastor Elias, we have met and prayed,” the elder said, clearing his throat. “We believe you should return. The church needs you.”

Elias smiled faintly, not out of gratitude, but out of understanding. He simply replied, “I will come.”

That Sunday, the church overflowed.

The church was buzzing when Elias arrived. Word had spread fast that he was back. Some members whispered excitedly. Others gawked, wondering if this was real. The elders sat stiffly at the front, arms crossed, eyes flicking between him and the pulpit.

Elias stepped onto the platform, adjusting his tie, trying to look calm, though inside his heart raced. He cleared his throat and smiled, glancing at the congregation. “Good morning, saints,” he said, voice steady, though his mind was still tingling from the river. “I hear there’s a lot of expectation today… let’s see if God can keep up with us.”

A murmur of laughter rippled through the crowd. Even the elders frowned at the humor, but there was something magnetic about him. The moment felt charged.

He opened the service with a short prayer, asking God to move. But before he could continue, something strange happened.

A woman in the second row, paralyzed for ten years, suddenly lifted her hands. She tried to speak but could only squeak. Then, like a switch flipped, she shouted, “I can move! Glory!” She jumped from her wheelchair. The congregation gasped. People rushed forward, touching her, confirming the miracle.

Elias blinked, half in shock, half trying to hide his grin. “Well,” he whispered under his breath, “the river is definitely sending backup.”

Then a man at the back, blind since birth, gasped and rubbed his eyes. “I… I can see!” he shouted, tears streaming down his face. A few others followed, healed of ailments Elias had not even known existed. Feverish children sat up from benches. Crutches fell to the floor. People were dancing, shouting, and hugging each other.

Elias raised his hands, walking slowly through the aisles. “Calm down,” he joked lightly, “or we’ll need another pulpit just for the miracles.” The crowd laughed nervously, but the awe remained.

Even the elders, seated stiffly, were now whispering among themselves. “This… this is… unprecedented,” one muttered. Another shook his head. “We called him back thinking it was a good move. But I didn’t think—”

Elias returned to the pulpit, glancing at Pastor Gabriel in the back row. Gabriel gave him a sharp, meaningful look. Elias winked, whispering under his breath, “Yes, yes, I know, pride. Don’t worry, I’ll try to keep it minimal.”

By the end of the service, the congregation was on their feet. People were laughing, crying, shouting, and testifying. Cameras flashed. Phones recorded everything. The first service back had become an unplanned revival.

And through it all, Elias knew the river was still calling. Every midnight, it would drag him back under, reminding him that even as miracles flowed through him, he was still bound by unseen chains, still under the covenant he

had signed, still answering to powers above human comprehension.

The service ended, but the world outside seemed changed. News would travel fast. Social media would explode.

“Elias, what has happened? We felt a shift in the service yesterday. There is something different!” one elder exclaimed over the line, voice shaking.

Another elder interrupted. “Brother Clinton, the healing last night… how did that happen? People are testifying like never before!”

Elias leaned against the hood of his car, smirking. “Funny thing,” he said aloud, though no one could hear him. “The river seems to like me more than I thought.”

By evening, Elias was fully restored to ministry.

By midnight, the river called again. His spirit arose, leave his sleeping body, and descended into the depths of the marine kingdom.

When Elias entered the water, his body did not sink, it transitioned. The pressure of the river vanished, replaced by a vast open space glowing with blue and silver light. The marine world unfolded before him like a city built by minds far older and far sharper than humanity.

Structures rose from the depths, smooth and intelligent, shaped without sharp edges, as though they had grown instead of being built. Robots moved through the

pathways, not clumsy machines, but elegant beings of light and metal, floating, scanning, communicating without sound. Screens hovered in the air, displaying symbols, maps, and moving images that looked like advanced science far beyond anything on earth.

Elias saw vehicles that moved without wheels, powered by flowing energy. He saw laboratories where knowledge was transferred directly into the mind. He recognized faces, famous scientists from the human world, men whose discoveries had changed history. They were calm, focused, learning things that had not yet reached the surface world.

Then a guide approached him, silent and tall, and gestured toward the waterway ahead.

A boat waited.

It was long and narrow, glowing faintly from within, floating on a calm, endless sea. Elias stepped in, and the boat moved on its own, cutting smoothly through the water. As they traveled, he saw islands rising from the marine world, lush and structured, each with its own purpose.

They arrived at one island larger than the rest.

At its center stood a vast hall, built from pearl colored stone and shimmering glass. This was where meetings were held, where decisions were made, and where covenants were sealed.

Inside, the Queen of the Coast waited.

She sat calmly, surrounded by elders of the marine kingdom, their forms shifting gently like water in motion. Her presence commanded silence without effort.

“You have returned,” she said, her voice steady.

“I was called back to ministry,” Elias replied.

She smiled slightly. “Of course you were.”

“Power” she said, “must be sustained through sexual Immorality.”

* * *

Back on earth, it unfolded quietly.

Counseling sessions extended late into the night. Conversations became personal. Touches lingered longer than they should. Elias spoke of loneliness, of leadership pressure, of how ministry isolates a man. He intentionally said these things to get his clients emotional so that boundaries would fade and then he could have his way with them. He destroyed many lives through sexual Immorality. He deflowered many young ladies as this was part of his agreement with the marine kingdom in other to sustain his power with the devil and also initiate many into the kingdom of darkness.

Episode 7

The Visit and the Sacrifice

Elias returned home one evening with the kind of confidence that made doors open before he touched them. Even the gate seemed to cooperate. His wife, Sarah, was in the kitchen stirring soup when he walked2looked at him once and frowned.

“Elias,” she said slowly, “since when did you start walking like this?”

“Like what?” he asked, dropping his car key on the table.

“Like somebody that knows the governor personally,” she replied. “See swag.”

Elias laughed and loosened his tie. “My dear, it is grace. When grace comes, even your footsteps changes.”

Sarah turned and looked at him properly. “Grace that made elders beg you to come back? Grace that makes people fall down once you clear your throat?”

Elias smiled proudly. “You know the Bible says the gift of a man makes room for him. My gifts made room for these things to happen”

Sarah shook her head. “Gifts do not normally come with midnight swimming, Elias.”

Elias froze for half a second, then laughed loudly. “Swimming? Which swimming? So a man cannot bathe again?”

“Bathe?” Sarah dropped the spoon. “Since when did bathing require leaving the house at midnight and coming back smelling like river and perfume?”

Elias waved his hand. “You women overthink. That’s the smell of the anointing”

Sarah stared at him. “Elias, do not use grammar to insult my intelligence.”

He grinned. “My love, when power increases, misunderstanding also increases. That is the way of destiny.”

Sarah sighed heavily. “This destiny of yours will soon start answering police questions.”

They went back and forth like that until Sarah became tired. She sat on the couch and crossed her arms.

“One day,” she said, “I will understand this your sudden fire. Until then, I am watching.”

That night, the house was quiet until the air changed.

The lights flickered gently, not violently, just enough to be noticed. A cold breeze passed through the living room even though the windows were closed. Sarah sat up from the couch.

“Elias,” she whispered, “did you feel that?

Before he could answer, the door opened.

It opened like the house recognized the visitor.

A tall woman walked in calmly, dressed in flowing clothes that shimmered faintly. She smiled like someone visiting her own home.

“Good evening, Elias,” she said warmly.

Sarah jumped up. “Who is this woman and why is she entering my house like landlord?”

The woman laughed softly and walked closer to Elias. “You look stronger,” she said, touching his shoulder. “Power suits you.”

Sarah stepped forward immediately. “Madam, remove your hand. This is my husband.”

The woman turned slowly and looked at Sarah, still smiling. “Your husband? How interesting.”

Elias began to panic. “Please, both of you, let us calm down. This is not what it looks like.”

Sarah shouted, “Then what is it looking like? Because I am seeing romance in my own sitting room.”

The woman laughed again, and in the next moment, her body shifted.

Her form elongated. Her skin hardened. In seconds, a large python filled the room, coiled and hissing.

Sarah screamed.

Elias dropped to his knees. “Please. Please. Do not touch her.”

The python raised its head, eyes glowing faintly. “You have enjoyed the power,” the voice said, now echoing from everywhere. “But the next level demands sacrifice.”

Sarah backed away slowly, shaking. “Elias, what is this? What have you done?”

The python turned toward Elias. “If you want international influence, you must give her.”

Elias cried out, shaking his head. “No. Not my wife.”

The python hissed louder, knocking over a chair. Sarah did not wait again. She ran out of the house screaming for help.

Silence followed.

The python shrank, transforming back into the woman. She adjusted her clothes calmly.

“Think about it,” she said. “Power does not beg.”

Then she disappeared, leaving the room cold and empty.

Elias remained on the floor, breathing heavily, knowing that the river had asked for something he was not sure he could give.

* * *

Elias was alone, sitting on the edge of the bed, phone in his hand, staring at the screen. He had called Sarah more than ten times. No answer. He sent messages. No

reply. Even the blue ticks refused to appear, as if the phone itself had joined the silence.

He stood up and walked around the room.

“Sarah?” he called softly, forgetting she was not there.

Only the sound of the wall clock answered him. Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. Each sound felt louder than the last.

Then the voices returned.

Not from the river this time. Not from outside.

They came from everywhere.

From the walls. From the floor. From inside his chest.

“There is no time to waste,” one voice said, calm but heavy.

“Power is not sustained by fear,” another added. “It is sustained by obedience.”

Elias shook his head. “Please, not tonight,” he said aloud. “Just give me small break.”

A soft laugh filled the room.

“Midnight is the deadline.”

His heart skipped.

“Before the cock crows,” the voice continued, “what was agreed must be fulfilled.”

Elias wiped sweat from his face. The air felt thick. His suit jacket lay on the chair, but even in a singlet he felt hot, as if fire was under his skin.

He tried to pray.

“Father Lord”

The words refused to arrange themselves.

Another voice interrupted him, sharp and mocking. “Which father? Choose your language properly.”

Elias stood up suddenly. “Leave me alone,” he shouted.

Silence followed.

For three seconds.

Then the room grew cold.

“You wanted speed,” the voice said slowly. “You wanted reach. You wanted fame without waiting. Now you are negotiating with time.”

Elias laughed nervously. “All these miracles, all these signs, you people should be patient small.”

“Miracles without sacrifice expire,” the voice replied.

He checked the time.

10:47 pm.

His legs felt weak. He sat down again, holding his head. Images flashed in his mind. The Queen’s eyes. The

promise of international platforms, Crowds and Power flowing like water.

And then Sarah's face.

Her scream.

Her fear.

Elias groaned and covered his ears. "Stop it. Stop showing me that."

"Midnight is coming," the voices said together.

Far away, in another house, Sarah lay on the floor.

Her eyes were red from crying. Her body was tired, but sleep refused to come. She did not understand what she had seen, but she knew it was not from God.

She whispered prayers that broke in the middle.

"God, I don't know what is happening… but please… save my husband… or save me from him."

She hugged her knees and cried again.

Back in the house, Elias looked at the clock once more.

11:23 pm.

The voices grew louder.

"No time to waste."

"No delay."

"Choose."

For the first time since power entered his life, Elias was not laughing.

He was afraid.

And midnight was walking closer.

Episode 8

The Battle of the Clock

The voices did not stop. They shouted so hard that Elias held his head with both hands and bent over like a wounded man.

“Stop,” he cried. “Please stop.”

But the sounds only grew louder.

He began to hear screams, not from outside, but from inside his mind. Faces from his past appeared before him like moving pictures. People he had hurt. People he had used. People he had deceived with prayer and oil.

His breathing became heavy. His chest felt tight.

Then the room changed.

The lights flickered and went off by themselves. A cold wind passed through the room, even though the windows were shut.

She appeared.

The Queen of the Coast stood before him, calm and beautiful, as if she had come for a friendly visit. Her voice was soft, but every word carried weight.

“You are running out of time,” she said. “If your wife is not sacrificed before midnight, you will die by midnight on the dot.”

Elias screamed. “No. I cannot kill my wife. I cannot.”

She looked at him without emotion.

“Then you will die,” she replied. “There is no negotiation.”

The pain in his head increased. It felt as if something was tearing him apart from inside. He fell to his knees.

“Tell me how,” he shouted, more out of pain than agreement.

Her eyes narrowed.

“Find her,” she said. “Kill her. Take her to the riverside. Perform the words I will give you. Then throw her into the water.”

Elias shook his head violently. “I cannot. I will not.”

She stepped closer.

Then she did something worse than shouting.

She entered him.

Elias screamed as his body stiffened. His eyes turned blood red. His face changed. The fear left him. His heart hardened like stone. The voice inside him was no longer many.

It was one.

And it was hers.

At once, he knew where Sarah was.

Across town, Sarah’s phone rang.

She was still crying when she picked it up.

“Sarah,” Pastor Gabriel said urgently. “You must leave that place now. Do not ask questions. Run to the junction near the old filling station. I am coming to pick you.”

She did not argue. She did not ask why. Fear had already prepared her to obey.

She grabbed her bag and ran.

Back in the house, Elias picked his car keys. There was no struggle in his face anymore. No hesitation. Only focus.

He drove fast.

Too fast.

But while he drove, Pastor Gabriel was praying.

“Lord, frustrate the devices of the enemy. Let their plans fail. Let their feet slip.”

On the expressway, Elias pressed the accelerator harder.

Then the steering locked.

The car swerved violently and hit the divider. Smoke rose from the bonnet. The engine died.

Elias stepped out of the car, furious. He kicked the tyre.

But the time was moving so fast.

* * *

Elias stood by the broken car, breathing heavily.

Smoke curled into the night like mockery. He tried the engine again. Nothing. He hit the steering wheel and shouted words that did not sound like prayers.

Inside him, the Queen's voice roared.

"Get up. Walk. There is still time."

He began to walk along the expressway, shoes scraping the tar, eyes burning red, heart cold and focused. Every step felt guided by something stronger than his will.

Across the city, Sarah ran.

Her legs hurt, her breath came in short gasps, and her phone kept vibrating with messages she was too afraid to read. She reached the old filling station and stopped, shaking, looking around like a hunted animal.

She whispered, "God, I do not understand what is happening, but please do not let me die like this."

At that same moment, Pastor Gabriel slammed awake in his room.

He checked the time.

11:41 pm.

He jumped up, grabbed his car keys, and spoke out loud, not to the room, but to the unseen.

“You have gone far enough.”

As he drove, Elias felt something strange.

The rage inside him began to fight itself.

His hands shook. His steps slowed. Memories of Sarah flooded his mind. Her laughter. Her prayers. The nights she stayed awake interceding when his ministry was struggling.

For the first time that night, he cried.

Inside him, the Queen screamed.

“Do not weaken now. Kill her or die.”

Elias fell to his knees on the roadside, holding his head again.

“I am tired,” he whispered. “I am tired of blood. I am tired of lies.”

The voice laughed.

“You chose this.”

Suddenly, bright headlights cut through the darkness.

Pastor Gabriel’s car screeched to a stop near the filling station. Sarah ran toward it, crying his name. He pulled her in quickly.

“Do not look back,” he said. “Get in.”

As they drove off, Elias stood up slowly.

He felt it.

The connection was breaking.

Inside him, something tore loose and screamed in rage.

He collapsed on the ground, clutching his chest as the Queen’s voice faded into distant echoes.

Far away, Sarah began to pray out loud in the car.

Episode 9

The Final Battle

Midnight was still hanging in the future like a loaded gun that had not yet fired.

Far behind the moving car, something shifted on the roadside where Elias had fallen. His body did not stand up the normal way. It folded inward, bones cracking softly, skin tightening, until feathers pushed through flesh. Within seconds, an owl rose into the night sky, large, dark, and silent.

Its eyes glowed red.

Through the Queen living inside him, Elias saw everything from above. He saw the road ahead. He saw the car lights cutting through the darkness. He heard Pastor Gabriel praying loudly inside the vehicle, his voice steady but urgent.

“Father, scatter every gathering of darkness tonight.”

The owl tilted its wings and followed.

The car moved fast at first, tyres biting the road. Sarah sat stiffly, hands shaking, whispering prayers that came out broken and confused. Her heart was beating so hard she could hear it in her ears.

As they approached the old marine river road, the air changed.

The breeze became cold. The trees leaned inward. Even the headlights seemed weaker.

Then they saw them.

Six women stood across the road.

They were dressed too neatly for that hour of the night. Heavy makeup. Bright lips. Shiny clothes that reflected the headlights. They smiled without warmth, without blinking.

Sarah gasped. “Pastor… who are those people?”

Pastor Gabriel slowed the car. His grip tightened on the steering wheel.

“These are not people,” he said calmly. “Do not look into their eyes.”

The women began to wave, laughing softly, stepping closer.

“Please help us,” one of them said sweetly. “Our car broke down.”

Before Pastor Gabriel could respond, the engine coughed twice then it died.

The dashboard lights flickered and went off.

Silence swallowed the road.

The women stopped smiling.

At the same moment, high above, the owl dropped from the sky like a stone.

Pastor Gabriel opened the door. “Run,” he said. “Now.”

They ran into the bush, branches tearing at clothes, thorns biting into skin. Behind them, something heavy landed on the road. Feathers vanished. Scales replaced them.

A massive snake slid into the bushes, fast, silent, unstoppable.

Sarah screamed as she tripped, her leg scraping against a hidden rock. Blood flowed, warm and fast. She tried to stand but pain shot through her ankle.

“I cannot run anymore,” she cried.

Pastor Gabriel lifted her with strength that did not feel human.

“Do not stop,” he said. “We are close.”

The snake moved faster, crashing through shrubs, knocking down small trees. Its eyes burned red. Its body brushed past leaves without slowing.

Suddenly, the trees opened.

They were at the river.

The water moved gently, innocent on the surface, dark underneath. Mist rose from it, curling around their legs like hands.

Behind them, the bushes shook.

The snake emerged, then rose and twisted, reshaping itself again.

Elias stood there, breathing hard, eyes bloodshot, face no longer fully his own.

The Queen's voice burst out of his mouth with a cold, devilish laugh that echoed across the river.

"This is the river," she said mockingly. "Sacrifice her now."

The water rippled violently, as if responding to the command, and the night itself seemed to freeze, holding its breath in dreadful anticipation.

* * *

Elias lifted both hands toward the river and shouted words that did not sound like prayer. The air reacted at once. The sky darkened as though someone had dragged a heavy cloth across it. Thunder rolled without warning, and rain began to fall hard, not gently, but with force, like stones beating the earth.

A mighty wind rose from the river and rushed toward Pastor Gabriel and Sarah. It pushed them backward, dragging their feet through mud and water. The river surged forward as if it wanted to swallow them. Waves splashed over Sarah's waist, then her chest. She screamed as the water pulled at her legs.

Pastor Gabriel held her tightly, shouting prayers that were almost lost in the storm. “Lord, remember mercy. Lord, save us.”

Elias stood firm, his clothes whipping wildly in the wind. Anger burned on his face. The voices inside him cheered. The rain grew heavier. The river roared louder.

Then something changed.

The wind slowed. The rain softened. The river calmed just enough for them to notice a figure walking on the water.

At first, Pastor Gabriel thought his eyes were failing him. Then the figure came closer. The rain did not touch Him. The water did not sink under His feet. Light surrounded Him, not sharp, not blinding, but steady and full of peace.

Sarah gasped. “Jesus.”

He reached them without haste. He lifted them both, one after the other, as though they weighed nothing. In a blink, they were standing on dry land. Their clothes were soaked, their bodies shaking, but the river was no longer pulling them.

They turned to look again, but He was gone.

It felt like a trance. Like a moment that existed outside time.

Elias screamed in rage. He struck the ground with his fist. “No,” he shouted. “This is not fair.”

Pastor Gabriel and Sarah dropped to their knees. They prayed louder now, not with fear, but with urgency. They thanked God. They pleaded for mercy. They called on the name of Jesus again and again.

The storm paused.

The wind slowed.

Then the sound of a clock echoed, not from the earth, but from everywhere at once.

Midnight struck.

The river went still.

The rain stopped.

And the night waited to see what would happen next.

* * *

The moment the last echo of midnight faded into the air, Elias screamed and fell flat on the ground.

It was not a normal fall. His body slammed hard, as if something heavy had been ripped out of him by force. His hands clawed at the wet sand. His back arched. His mouth opened, but no words came out at first, only a dry choking sound.

Then it happened.

A violent wind burst out of him.

It did not blow like ordinary wind. It tore through the air with rage, twisting like smoke and fire at the same time. The trees around the river bent low. The water rose and splashed wildly. A sharp scream followed the wind, loud and furious, not human, not gentle.

The Queen of the Coast flew out of Elias.

Her form appeared for a brief moment in the air, tall and terrifying, her eyes burning with anger and shame. Her voice echoed across the river.

“This is not finished,” she hissed. “Blood was demanded.”

And then she vanished into the darkness of the water, leaving the night suddenly quiet.

Elias lay still.

For a moment, Pastor Gabriel thought he was dead.

Sarah held her breath, her hands trembling as she clutched her torn dress. Her body was weak from fear and injury, but her eyes never left Elias.

“Let us pray,” Pastor Gabriel said softly, though his voice shook.

They moved closer, slowly, carefully, as if approaching a wounded animal. Elias’ body began to tremble again, but this time it was not violent. His chest rose and fell heavily. Tears streamed from his eyes even though they were closed.

He groaned. “What… what have I done?”

His voice sounded empty, stripped of pride, stripped of power.

Memories rushed back to him like a flood. The river. The voices. The promises. The nights he disappeared. The things he did in secret. The moment he agreed to the covenant. It all hit him at once.

He rolled onto his side and vomited. It was bitter and dark, as though his body was rejecting everything it had carried.

Sarah covered her mouth and cried.

Pastor Gabriel knelt beside him and placed a hand on his chest. “Breathe. You are still alive. God has not finished with you.”

Elias laughed weakly, then cried harder. “I almost killed her. I almost killed my own wife.”

Before Pastor Gabriel could respond, the river reacted again.

The water began to glow faintly, not with light, but with movement. Shapes stirred beneath the surface. Whispers rose, angry and confused, as if a meeting had been interrupted.

Pastor Gabriel stood up quickly. “We must leave now. This place is not safe.”

As if on cue, Elias’ phone buzzed loudly in his pocket.

The sound startled all of them.

Pastor Gabriel frowned. “At this hour?”

Elias struggled to sit up and pulled out the phone. His hands shook as he looked at the screen.

Unknown number.

Before he could think, the call ended, and a message followed.

“You escaped the sacrifice, but the consequences remain.”

Elias dropped the phone like it burned his hand.

Far across the river, a loud splash sounded, followed by mocking laughter that faded into the night.

Pastor Gabriel grabbed Elias firmly. “Stand up. Whatever power left you has not forgiven you. But if God spared you tonight, then your story is not over.”

Sarah looked at Elias, fear and pity fighting in her eyes. “You almost lost everything,” she whispered. “Including your soul.”

Elias struggled to his feet, weak, broken, soaked, and shaking. The power he once felt was gone. The confidence was gone. The voices were silent for the first time in a long while. As they began to walk away from the river, none of them noticed the ripple behind them, slow and deliberate, as if something was watching and waiting for the next mistake.

Episode 10

The Last Sermon

The church was packed that Sunday morning. Sunlight poured through the stained-glass windows, scattering colors across the pews. Elias Clinton stood at the pulpit, his hands gripping the edges tightly. He looked older, heavier, but his eyes burned with clarity. The weight of the past months had left scars on him, but his voice was steady.

“My brothers and sisters,” he began, voice echoing across the sanctuary, “there is a fire that lives in all of us. The fire of pride, of power, of fame. It whispers in our ears and tells us we are greater than we are, stronger than we are, smarter than God made us. I have lived under that fire, and it almost consumed me.”

He paused, letting the words sink. His eyes scanned the congregation. Tears glistened in faces young and old. Some clasped hands to their mouths. Some bowed their heads. Sarah sat in the front row, her face wet with tears, her hand gripping the pulpit rail as though holding onto him would keep him safe.

Elias’ voice grew softer, more personal. “I have sinned against God, against my family, and against this church. I have abused trust. I have acted wickedly. I have allowed darkness to guide my hands, my mind, and my heart. I confess it here, before you all, so that the power of truth may heal, and not destroy, what remains.”

He lifted his hands, trembling slightly. “I have done things I am not proud of. I have led souls into confusion. I have harmed those who looked to me for guidance. But the Lord has shown me mercy. And now, I confess, I repent, and I lay everything bare before you. My life is no longer mine; it belongs to Him.”

The church was silent, then slowly, softly, a few sobs began. One turned into a flood. Tears rolled down faces. Women clutched their husbands. Children buried their faces in mothers’ laps. The presence of God seemed to fill the building. Elias began to sing, a hymn of repentance and hope, his voice breaking, yet full of authority. The congregation joined, their voices raw and full of emotion.

Sarah wept openly, burying her face in her hands. Pastor Gabriel stood beside her, hand on her shoulder, silently thanking God for mercy, for life, for second chances even amidst chaos.

Then the doors burst open. Policemen rushed in, their uniforms bright under the church lights. Before anyone could move, they were at the pulpit. “Elias Clinton, you are under arrest,” one shouted.

The congregation gasped. Some stood in disbelief. Others fell to their knees.

Elias did not resist. He looked at the officers with steady eyes, though tears ran freely down his face. His voice rose above the murmurs, full of clarity, conviction, and love.

“Church,” he said, hand cupped over the bars as the officers held him, “unity is your strength. Do not let pride, envy, or fear divide you. Stay together. Love one another. Serve one another. And Pastor Gabriel,” his voice cracked, “take care of Sarah. Protect her. Guide her. She is more precious than any crown or honor I have ever known.”

The officers handcuffed him, leading him past the pews, past the crying congregation, past Sarah who reached out desperately for him. He raised his hand one last time, a silent blessing, a final benediction.

“God is greater than any kingdom, greater than any temptation, and greater than any power. Follow Him. Serve Him faithfully. And remember… love is the only victory that lasts.”

He was taken out of the church, past the gates, into the waiting vehicles. The congregation knelt in silent prayer, the echoes of his last words still ringing in their hearts.

As the car doors slammed, Pastor Gabriel leaned down to Sarah and whispered, “He fought the fight, Sarah. Now we must continue it in prayer and in action.”

The sun rose higher in the sky. Clouds broke apart. Light fell on the church like a promise, soft yet unshakable. And in the hearts of the people, a fire burned.

Elias’ journey had ended in captivity, but his message, his life, and his legacy would continue to inspire.

THE END

If this story has blessed and touched your life, remember to say a prayer for the author, Anthony Ijere, that the fire of God will continually burn on his altar.

Also, as a free gift of love to him and the ministry, to help publish or produce more of these life-changing stories, your contributions in cash or in kind are warmly welcomed.

Account Details

MACANTHONY IJERE

0138431203

STERLING BANK

SWIFT CODE: NAMENGLA

Contact Him on:

- *WhatsApp: +2349133400801*
- *Email: anthonyijere@yahoo.com*
- *Facebook: Anthony Ijere*
- *Instagram: @anthony.ijere*

OTHER BOOKS BY ANTHONY IJERE

- **SHADOWS AT MIDNIGHT**
- **TWELVE HOURS**
- **ALTARS IN THE DUST**
- **SHOW ME MERCY**
- **QUENCH THE FIRE**
- **MINISTER ELIAS PART 1**
- **SPIRITUAL SENSATIONS etc.**

Please feel free to send testimonies of how any of these books have helped your life to anthonyijere@yahoo.com or WhatsApp +2349133400801

Most importantly: Please feel free to continue sharing these free books as a tool of evangelism. We have been receiving testimonies of how lives are being touched, and we give all glory to God.

About the Author

Anthony Ijere stands as a voice calling out for a return to the Ancient Paths of consecration and spiritual power.

His life and ministry are characterized by a relentless pursuit of the Glory of God and a burden to see the Body of Christ transition from religious activities into the true apostolic path. As an author and a teacher of the Word, his work is birthed from the place of deep encounters and a life surrendered to the refining fire of the Holy Spirit. His teachings delve into the mysteries of the Kingdom, bridging the gap between profound scriptural study and practical transformative living.

Having seen the devastation of sexual sins in the lives of many, he writes with a heart of mercy, yet with the uncompromising authority.

His life is a testament to the truth that “The pure in heart shall see God.” He remains committed to raising a generation of men and women who have traded the strange fires of this world for the eternal fire of the Presence of the Living God.