

The Youth Minister

1994 London

Moradehun Davies, a tall willowy woman was looking at herself in the mirror of the ladies in the Buzzard Hotel where she works in London, Dehun clocked 40 the year before, there could be no celebration of the day, only a couple of months to that date she had lost her one and only child Funsho Davies, a 12 year old boy, to the ravaging craze of bullying in the UK high schools. Upon hearing the news, Dehun had fallen into a coma, and she remained so for a whole 29 days. She eventually awoken into a severe depression, not even the the ever presence pillar of her husband Waleola could lighten her mood. She remained in the London sanatorium for another 6 weeks before she could be discharged to become an outpatient. She is head of management at the Buzzard, and she's seen the organization to a phenomenal growth, so the management was more than willing to have her back on her desk, not out of pity or sobriety for the loss of her son, after 6 months of grieving. What the management of the hotel could not have guessed was that Mrs Davies, after serving the organization for 15 solid years and after a stay in the United Kingdom for 19 years would resign her plush position as a top manager in a 5 - star hotel and return to Africa. But there was no going back, the Davies' were done for good in the UK, and back home they set their face.

Moradehun inspected herself well in the mirror, she looked good for a 41 year old, she has accepted her fate and she decides she was going to to look beautiful for her husband for as long as she breathed. She remembered the drama that ensued after she suggested to Waleola that she could no longer stay in the UK because of the bad memories it wrought, Waleola had been crestfallen, he loved his job as a lecturer in Queen Mary University where he taught World history and it's arts. The students were to him an extended family, even becoming nuclear now with the passing of their son Funsho. Some students have camped at the Davies' home on the excuse of wanting to have an in depth knowledge of the history of African arts, and only Dr Davies could make it clear, better than any text they could lay their hands on in the library.

Moradehun understood this, she knew she would be severing Waleola from a pseudo family he had built with his students, but she was past caring, how could a nation she and her husband had slaved all their adult lives for just repay them with such hostility, taking away their joy, and their future. Moradehun has made up her mind, she was returning home and if Waleola cared enough, he would come with her. They were people of color, and the last time she checked, no eraser for melanin has been made, and so Africa was their home.

But the Buzzard was not going to allow Moradehun off their tentacles just like that, at 41, she still had up to 24 years of active service before retirement, and so they suggested they expand their hotel chains to Lagos, Nigeria and she would run the hotel from Africa. This was the joy Moradehun never anticipated, and she embraced the offer with utter and undiluted enthusiasm.

A site was selected for the building of the hotel in Lagos, along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, it's been a busy year for Moradehun and she would be leaving, thankfully with Waleola, by the end of August, as he had secured a new job with the University of Lagos.

At the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Ikeja, Lagos, a plane touched down and grinds to a halt. The air hostess welcomed the passengers to the heat of Lagos and shortly after embarkation from the plane, a woman slumped on the tarmac. It was Moradehun, and Waleola was with her, alarmed, the airport security guards rushed to her aid, and wheeled her away on a stretcher, amidst commotion, out of the tarmac and to the airport clinic. Waleola, at 45 half walked, and half jogged with their hand luggage as his wife was carted away, confusion written all over his face.

At the clinic, the resident doctor on duty tried his utmost to resuscitate Moradehun and asked Waleola a few questions while Moradehun remained unconscious. Her vitals and blood sample were taken and the doctor assured Waleola that she would be fine and they should only wait an hour for the blood test to return. It was the longest one hour Waleola has ever spent in his life, he soliloquyed, as he paced the floor, jerking upon any opening or closing of a door. Finally, it was 3 minutes and an hour and the doctor came out and bid him to his office. He walked into the office with unsure feet and the doctor motioned him to a seat which he took without taking his eyes away from the doctor. The doctor also sat and told him that his wife was fine but that he has a few questions to ask.

"How many kids does your wife have?" the doctor asked gently

"One, one child, we had only one child." Waleola spurred

"... had?" the doctor asked interrogatively

"Yes, doc, we lost him to a bullying fight in the UK, it's why we are returning home..."

"I'm sorry to hear that"

"No worries doc, I hope my wife is fine"

Oh, as if I could forget, poor woman, how would you feel if I tell you your wife chose an old fashioned way to announce her latest pregnancy in the presence of the whole city...?"

Waleola jumped up and clapped, once, and asked" my wife, she's pregnant? Is that what is wrong with her?"

" Yes, answered the doctor, the heat also was to blame"

"Ah, thank you doctor, when can I see her?"

"She's sleeping now, she's taking intravenous fluids with some mild tranquilizer, I will ask the nurse to take you to her bed, but you cannot stay with her, just peep and go shop for baby things in the airport till she awoke...?"

The two men burst into laughter

"You will do one favor for me doc, just one"

"What would that be sir?"

"Let me be the one to break the news to her, please"

"Hmmm, fair enough, only on one condition"

"Why doc, what condition would that be?"

"On the condition that I am there when you break the news to her"

"Ah ha ha ha," Waleola laughed, "it's a condition I cannot refuse doc, but what if she sleeps past your closing time?" Waleola asked, sounding concerned

"I've thought of that sir, I will hang around, I want to see happiness in the eyes of the woman who believes in this country..."

Waleola extended her hands to the doctor and shook their hands vigorously, patting each other on the back, more understood than could be said.

14 years later

At the garden of the Davies' home

There is a book launch, authored by Miss Wuraola Davies which occasion also marks her 13th birthday and initiation into adulthood. The book was titled "The Model Child"

In attendance at the party were men and women from varied walks of life, from nannies to heads of schools and legislators, all recounting how Wuraola had positively inspired them. One thing they unanimously agree to was that Wuraola was league beyond her age.

Then it was time for Moradehun to talk.

"Me and my husband" she began "feel honored to have every single one of you grace this wonderful occasion to initiate our daughter into adulthood, and the launching of her work as the icing on the cake. While I carried Wuraola in my womb, I had dared to fantasize this day that I would be able to call her a friend and not a child, but Wuraola, she didn't make me wait for long, as she had become a friend since she could say da-da. People ask me how I raised my daughter to become the model child, to which I replied that I became a virtuous book for my daughter, and my husband did the same. We loved every single person within our circle of influence, we helped our unskilled domestic staff attain professionalism. We pay livable wages and we don't overwork our staff. We yield when an argument ensues with friends, we yield for the sake of friendship,... " and she ranted on while Wuraola roams the crowd and saw a boy standing by the gate watching the event. Wuraola walked to him.

"Hello young man, my name is Wuraola Davies, I am the celebrant, do you want to come in?"

Ah no, I got carried away by the beauty of the fanfare, it's late for me and my dog won't fit in the crowd" the boy explained

Wuraola looked down at the dog. "Oh poor darling, let me get you guys something to eat, wait." It was a command, and without waiting for his response, Wuraola waddled through the crowd which enveloped her. She went to the serving table and asked for takeaway food for 2. It was immediately parked for her and she made her way, amidst hugs, kisses and greetings back to the gate. She handed the food to the boy whose surprise showed distinctly on his face.

"Hero," he called the dog, "have you seen an angel before? Wuraola is one, a girl behind a gated fence, caring for a local dog, and a tattered boy."

He faced Wuraola, "If I belong to your class Wura, I would go on my feet right now and ask that you marry me"

"Don't let that dogma about class stop you from going for what you truly want, you must go after your heart, that is what makes life worth living..."

"Easier said angel, but I bet you social class clash exist monstrously"

Wuraola put her tongue in her cheek and looked at the boy as he spoke, he was lean, tall, dark, with sharp facial features sitting on his square shoulders. I think he might get away being called handsome. Wuraola doesn't want him to go, she thought of what could make him stay a little longer

"I think you have a point there, but I'd tackled that issue in my book, if you can wait, I'll autograph a free copy for you." Wuraola submitted

"Isn't this our lucky day Hero,..."

"I'll take that to be a yes, hold on let me get the book" Wuraola said and disappeared into the crowd a second time.

She was quick returning this time and she scrawled on the book, To the boy, and his dog, Hero of the day. Dream big. She signed beneath and handed the book to the boy.

Almost immediately Wuraola's name started blaring from the megaphone, and everyone was looking at her, she bid the boy bye and went to read a portion of the book to the awaiting audience

8 years later

Preye got a house in Lekki, bought a Lamborghini Urus and went in search of Wuraola, he found her at the Buzzard Hotel and walked up to her.

"Hello pretty angel, can I steal a minute of your time?" Preye asked seductively

"Sorry sir, I really do not have a moment to spare, but I assure you they'll answer your questions at the reception desk." Wuraola said dismissively.

But Preye would not be put away like a troublesome toddler, he tried his luck again

"Wuraola it's me Preye, remember me?"

Wuraola paused to take in the youth, but she still could not remember him.

"Young man, I don't know anybody by the name Preye, and if you are considerate you would release me now, I have a zoom meeting to catch up with." Wuraola said, irritation evident in her voice

"Wuraola I was the boy at your gate on your 13th birthday, I was with my dog, you gave me food, and a copy of your book."

"Oh, oh, oh I remember you, how is Hero. You are looking well, I'm impressed"

"I never knew your name, and you never came back, sorry Preye but I'm late for my meeting now."

"How can I see you again pretty?" Preye brought himself to ask

"I'll be free 7pm today, you can meet me at the lobby"

Preye could not believe his luck, he has a date with his dream girl tonight, he could sit still to wait for her to come. Instead he said, "Alright pretty I'll come around by then"

At exactly 7pm, Preye was at the lobby

He looked for a nice spot for two and sat waiting for Wuraola. She didn't keep him waiting for long. He got up to shake her hand. And they took their seats.

"You have done well for yourself, I'm glad for you, how's Hero?" Wuraola started

"Hero died, it was an accident, he crossed the road."

"Oh sorry about that."

"No worries, I didn't see it happen, I was away on campus when it happened, the poor thing has gone to where there was no longer hunger." Preye concluded soberly.

Wuraola cocked her head to one side, looked at Preye for a moment, then shrugged. "Then she said, tell me, what do you do now?" Changing the topic, it's her happy day, and nothing was going to steal her joy, not even Hero, yes especially Hero.

"Well I graduated 2 months ago, I studied accounting, and I'm waiting for the call up to service this year."

"You don't mean it, you don't look like a student, you look made already, did your parents come into money?" Wuraola asked excitedly,

"Oh, not my parents, it's a deal I made recently, things guys do"

"Oh tell me about it, I'd love to hear what guys do for money"

"No Wuraola, you don't want to hear about that", he paused, then continued. "It's not something I'm particularly proud about."

"But I insist, trust me it won't change anything."

"Well it's awkward but it's a shady deal, oil and yahoo scam"

"I'm all ears Preye", Wuraola sat upright, with piercing eyes boring into Preye's pupils.

"Well, we look for foreigners who just got pension and we prey on them to buy illegal oil blocs, we show them all evidences, but we tell them we are fronting for the minister of petroleum and he would not be formally involved in the deal because of his position." Preye explained shamefully.

" But that's whacked, I wouldn't buy into that."

"You don't know how gullible these foreigners can be, anyway, I got lucky 6 months ago when a retired executive lady paid \$2million to me"

"You don't mean it, that's a lot"

"Yes, they pay the size of their greed, that's how guys from Niger Delta roll, I only tried once and I made 2M, now isn't that cool." Preye explained, a third of his gaiety returning.

Wuraola buried her head in her palms and was silent for a while, when she raised her head, her eyes were red and she asked, "why did you do it"

The look of her eyes and tone of her voice told him not to fuck with her, and only the truth could set him free, if he could dream of freedom.

"it was the only thing I could do to impress a girl from your background to marry a poor boy like me." Preye explained, as a corpse on a coroner's table.

"My parents washed dishes abroad to obtain their degree," Wuraola began in a deeply controlled voice, "they worked to become financially independent, they would not allow an overnight success to marry their daughter." She paused

"She continued, "I like you Preye, but I cannot see you again unless you are willing to turn yourself in, and pay every single penny of the money you spent. And if you must do a time for the crime, I will be with you. You had first class in accounting, that is no mean feat, we can work together here after your time. That is the only condition I could take you for a spouse."

5 years later

Wuraola was sworn in as the Minister of Youth, and right at her side was her husband of one year, Preye.

The End