

Hi Adims

Adedamola, Happy 30th dude.

I can't get over the fact that you're now an old man, wasn't it just yesterday at Grandmas backyard that you gave me a note, inviting me to your 15th birthday. Despite having only recently met, you insisted that I attend, saying, "Hey, you must come tonight." I smiled and replied, "Even if there's a thunderstorm and heavy rain, I'll be there." Your laughter filled the air, and I was delighted to have brought joy to such a fine young man. However, I couldn't attend the party as we had both desired—not because I didn't want to, but because I wasn't allowed to. How would your guests be served if I had joined the celebration?

That night, your grandma scolded me for letting you take the tray from my hands and making me dance. We reminisced about that moment during the last time we met, at her remembrance ceremony. You were grieving and seeking therapy then, after losing your twin sister. I felt a sense of happiness knowing that my little embarrassing moment had brought a smile back to your face. As we sat together on the church's pew, listening to you speak about the benefits of therapy and how your friends called you crazy for seeking help, I could feel a piercing glare upon my skin. Your mother's eyes were fixed on me, still filled with animosity. She couldn't let go of what had transpired at your 18th birthday party. Ah, what legendary times those were! You were already in your third year of studying medicine, and your parents were debating whether to allow me to attend university or not. Posi, your twin, had suggested that we wear matching outfits, including me in the ensemble. Your mother nearly caused a scene that day, exclaiming that she would never allow this "riff-raff" to wear the same attire as her children. God forbid!

Hey, Mum, calling Temi a riff-raff is not fair! She's our cousin, for heaven's sake! I can't believe you used such a derogatory term. Posi stood up for me that day. She had always supported me, which is heartwarming to witness. Sure, she never allowed me to touch her belongings and would send me on kitchen errands whenever her friends were around, but she never spoke ill of me—except for that one time when she stole money from your mother to give to that Abayomi boy she was seeing and then pinned the blame on me. Still, I'll always admire her, which helps me understand why you can't let her go.

Sadly, I didn't get to wear matching outfits with you on your 18th birthday. Instead, I was locked up for three days without food because you publicly professed your love for me, and let's be honest, there was a hint of lust in there too, considering you had seen me running naked into the house at 4:00 AM. I almost lost my chance to attend university, but thanks to your father's contract getting canceled and him coming home early to save me, I managed to escape that fate. It's thanks to your father that I now have a bestselling novel here in America.

My room at university was our secret meeting spot, where we created countless memories and almost a baby too. Thank God we weren't actually cousins; that would have been incest, man.

I was fortunate to have been discovered by your grandmother and subsequently passed down to your father—a kind-hearted man, much like yourself. I'm grateful that you didn't inherit any negative traits from your mother, and I'm deeply sorry for your loss due to her battle with breast cancer three years ago.

Without you, my book launch would never have taken place. In fact, I wouldn't have written a book at all if it hadn't been for you and the time we lived together, making your mother's blood boil more. Those times were beautiful, encouraging each other to do our best at the life we had chosen, you'll come home and talk about how stressful work was and how the government needs to do better for our health care workers and I would share stories about the characters I was crafting and how my publisher was on my neck. It was a wonderful four years together, until it happened.

I know you loved her, but I didn't know it was that deep enough for you to have considered taking your life and I had uttered the most hurtful words then which I now deeply regret.

Our relationship began to deteriorate as I rose to fame with my debut novel and continued writing another. You transformed into a different person altogether, no longer the fine young man I met at 15 or the one who asked me to be his girlfriend at 23. I noticed you would often gaze out the window for long periods whenever you had a break from work. My patience wore thin, and I sought therapy for myself as well. It was during this time that I found solace in Christianity, and our values ceased to align. I made the decision to move out, despite knowing that it was precisely when you needed me the most.

I am sorry and I'm ashamed to admit that I haven't reached out to you in the past three years—I've been consumed by my own self-centeredness.

Damola, I want to express my gratitude to you for enduring all of these hardships. You possess a kind and gentle heart, a rarity in men, and I understand that these losses have not been easy for you. Thank you for embracing therapy and finding solace in Jesus. I was terrified that we would have lost you that year, when you were found in our bathroom, covered in blood, following the devastating news of your mother's passing. But you handled it all with strength, and I'm overjoyed that you have made it to your 30th birthday.

So, on this special occasion, I wish you a very happy 30th birthday, Damola. Please give my regards to your wife.