

CONFIDENCE

SELF APPRECIATION



AWOYEMI ABISOLA STELLA

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A short story.

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DEDICATION.

I would like to dedicate this book to a young woman out there who feels less confident about her looks (physical appearance) and feels the pressure to want to be and look like others.

You were perfectly designed and created by a God who loves you enough to sacrifice his son's life for you, start by appreciating God's work in you and see how the confidence builds up. Remember, everybody is a work in progress. SMILE MORE 😊

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CONFIDENCE

University days, just like yesterday; Lectures, fellowships, course mates, dinners, I know you're expecting parties but I wasn't really a party person (a quick pause), okay fine! You got me, I only attended one party, just one but don't judge me, I was in my first year and I needed to fit in and make new friends, but it didn't work out, that's a story for another day.

This story happened when I was in my third year studying accounting hoping to work as an accountant in a big firm, it didn't work out either so it's a story for another day. I had made friends with three amazing girls and we met on different occasions, like Mary. Mary and I met in a practical class and we connected so well, it may have been because we both use recommended glasses or because we both have virgin hairs but it didn't really matter. She was the first friend I made on campus and we are still pretty close till today.

Next is Kim, not Kim Kardashian but Kimberley Houston. I know her name doesn't really sound Nigerian, well, that's because she's not Nigerian, she's a Ghanaian who decided to leave every amazing institution in Ghana and come study here in Nigeria, people make weird decisions. But I'm glad she did, otherwise I wouldn't have met her in a public bus trying to converse with the driver in Yoruba, it was hilarious. Luckily, I came to her rescue and became her official Yoruba teacher, LOL.

The third and the most wonderful is Joke or as I like to call her, Adejoke. We met at a fellowship Kim and I got invited to, she was the fresher of the week and she led prayers on that day, I was amazed and wanted to build my spiritual life because my mum won't stop reminding me of how my dad was her spiritual guardian in school, so I reached out to her and that's how we became friends. On my birthday, they all came visiting and we had an amazing time connecting together, so we formed a friend circle

right there in my room, on my birthday! and later on we all started attending Adejoke's fellowship.

That was how I met the three most amazing women in my life. But this story isn't about me, it's about one of us who had identity issues, it's about Adejoke.

We were all in our third year and had one more year to go. On a fateful night, we were on our way back from prayer meeting and bible study accompanied by three guys from the fellowship. The pastor had just taught us about the God kind of love, it's my favorite topic of discussion. The guys paired up with Mary, Kim and I as we walked to our hostel, Adejoke walked slowly behind us with earpiece plugged in her ears, we were half way to our hostel when I noticed she's far behind us.

"Adejoke!" I called on her and she met up with me.

"Why are you walking slowly?" I asked

"Nothing, I'm just trying to mediate on this song." She replied.

I introduced her to the guy who paired up with me, his name is Wale.

“Oh, okay. Well, Wale, meet Adejoke my baby girl.”

“Oh, Joke. The fourth member of the group.” Wale said.

“Stop jor, Adejoke is actually the only serious one out of the four of us, if not for her, I wouldn’t have been a good girl.”

“Really? Well, it’s nice to meet you Adejoke.”

“Nice to meet you too Wale.”

We were close to the hostel gate when Wale suggested we get Suya from the Hausa man near the gate.

“Adejoke, are you coming?” I asked.

“No, I’ll just wait for you guys at the gate.” She replied

“Okay, we won’t be long.”

We all went to get Suya while Adejoke waited for us at the hostel gate. Ten minutes later and we were not

back, Adejoke called to get our attentions but we were so carried away and totally forgot she was waiting for us. Thirty minutes of waiting and we were not yet back, so she went into the hostel frustrated.

An hour later, Kim Mary and I came into the hostel and started a non-stop conversation about the guys we just met.

“I still like that John guy better, he’s actually cool, Wale is too loud jare.” Mary said.

“Really? Did you even speak with Ebube at all, that guy sounds so intelligent?” Kim said.

“I think they are all the same jare, just that Wale is taller and cuter.” I said with the intention of sparking an argument and it worked.

Our argument was cut short by a voice that said, *“Please guys, I’m trying to sleep.”* It was Adejoke speaking from the upper bunk.

“Babe, I didn’t know when you entered the hostel, I thought I said you should wait for us now.” I said.

“I should wait for you inside that cold weather while you guys play with your new boyfriends abi?”

We all laughed except for Adejoke.

“Babe are you now jealous? When you too you used to talk to all those fine boys in fellowship nko? Did we complain?” Mary said

“Which fine boys? Mtcheew! Abeg leave me, I want to sleep.”

She plugged in her ear piece while we continued our argument. It seemed like a normal night but it wasn’t for Adejoke, she cried herself to sleep, don’t ask me why because she didn’t tell us until weeks later.

A few days later, Adejoke and I were on our way to a conference at our school hall, it’s just a few distance to our hostel. We were approached by two

fine young-looking guys who were also heading to the hall, one was tall, the other wasn't so tall.

"Hey ladies." They said

"Can I talk with you for some seconds?" The tall one asked.

"Me?" Adejoke asked.

"No, her." He replied referring to me.

Adejoke and the other Guy excused us and stood a few steps away. While I was busy giggling and smiling, Adejoke and the other guy stood there without interacting. Few minutes later, the second guy interrupted our conversation.

"Guy how far now? We're going to be late." He said

We wrapped up our conversation and he left with his friend. Adejoke overheard their conversation just before they walked far.

"Omo, that girl fine o, why you no hook the other girl?" asked the tall guy.

“That one is not my spec jare, you know I prefer light skinned tall girls, she’s just too normal.” Replied the second guy.

“Guy! You and these your preferences sha.”

I noticed a change in Adejoke’s look as soon as they left.

“Hey babe, I’m so sorry for keeping you waiting, let’s go.” I said

“Uhm... I think I’ll go back to hostel, I’m not feeling too good.” She said.

“Babe, but I told you to take that pain reliever this morning, you know how bad your menstrual pain is. So, I’m going to be attending the conference alone abi?”

“I know, I’m sorry, we’ll attend the next one together, I promise.” She said.

“Okay o, just take care of yourself.”

she went back to hostel while I headed for the conference hall.

Some days later, I started noticing some reluctant attitudes from Adejoke, she stopped engaging in most of our conversations in the room, she hardly goes out with us and she's more moody than usual. I was yet to finalize my observations, it could be due to menstrual cramps, so I thought.

On a Saturday evening, the girls and I were preparing to attend a birthday hangout when I noticed Adejoke wasn't preparing.

"Adejoke, are you not going with us?" I asked

"I don't feel like, besides, I don't have anything to wear."

"Ah ah, what happen to all your clothes, are they rags?" Mary asked sarcastically.

"I think she just doesn't want to go, maybe she's shy."

Kim added.

"I'm not shy, I'm just not interested."

"Come on now, it's going to be fun, you might even find a cute guy there." I said this meaning no harm but she kind of took in personal.

"I said I'm not going! Kilode gan!" she yelled and walked out of the room.

There was an awkward moment of silence as we were all shocked at how a regular conversation vexed her.

"What just happened?" Kim asked.

"I think she hasn't recovered from her period mood swing." Mary said.

"No guys, don't you notice that she has been distancing herself from us for a while. The Adejoke we know doesn't keep things from us, she's always the first to dress up anytime we're going out. I feel something is wrong." I said

"If something is wrong, she would tell us, Afterall, we're are friends." Said Kim.

She went back to the room immediately we left and turned on one of her favorite podcasts titled “Confidence.” Along the line, the podcaster mentioned something that thrilled Adejoke and brightened her mood.

“So, what if nobody likes you? You are beautiful and you should get a little makeup done on that face of yours once in a while baby girl.”

Luckily for her, Kim’s make up box was right on the table by the window side, she got up from her bed and started applying makeup on her face. Does she know how to? She doesn’t but she’s trying. Her little make up fun tutorial was interrupted when we entered the room, Mary had forgotten her phone.

“Oh, you’re back? That’s so soon.” She said

“What are you doing? Why are you with my make up brush?” Kim asked.

“Nothing, I was just uhm... I was just packing it up.”
She replied with a shaky voice

Kim moved closer to her and realized she used the little pink blush she had left.

“Oh my God! Joke you used the little pink blush left, I was saving it for Sunday what were you...” she paused a little. *“What is that on your face? Is that how to apply make up? You look like a clown.”* She said and busted into laughter, Mary joined her, I tried not to but you know how contagious a laugh can be.

Adejoke felt embarrassed and I saw tears rolling down her eyes before she walked out.

“Guys stop! Adejoke is not happy.” I said.

“We shouldn’t have laughed.” Mary added.

“I feel really bad. Let’s go look for her.” Kim said

We searched everywhere in the hostel but she was nowhere to be found, she couldn’t have left the hostel in her underwear, so we kept looking. After a while, I got an instinct to check the room again, so I went

back and met her packing her clothes. I called Kim and Mary and told them what I met so they hurried back.

“Adejoke, where are you going?” Mary asked.

“I’m going home.” She answered with a cloudy voice

“Home? Why? I mean, tests are in few days’ time.”

“I know, I just need a place to go and rest and feel free.”

“But we are your friends, you can always feel free with us, right girls?” I said

She stopped packing and said. *“If you guys are really my friends, you would act like one.”*

“What do you mean? Of course, we are, we care about you babe.” Mary said

“No, you don’t, if you do, you would know I cry myself to sleep almost every night knowing I’ll probably remain lonely for the rest of my miserable life.”

There was silence in the room for a moment. We moved closer to her, sat her down and I asked.

“Adejoke, please tell us, what is going on.”

She sighed and started.

“Lately I’ve been feeling alone, I know it may sound embarrassing but I’m the only one in this group who doesn’t get noticed by people, especially men. They don’t see me, they don’t hear me, am I not beautiful enough? I mean look at you Kim, you’re a beautiful light skinned girl and probably every guys spec, and Mary, you have such beautiful sonorous voice every man will want to get lost in. And you, Lola, you have a perfectly shaped body figure, every man would want you as a wife. But look at me, nobody sees me, I’m just a log of wood carved into a much slimmer log of wood.”

“No no no, don’t say that babe. You are beautiful, the one with the kindest heart and the most reasonable amongst us. You have a cute face any guy would get lost staring at, you are beautifully made.” I said.

“Yes, she’s right, and we’re sorry if we ever made you feel less of yourself. We love you and God loves you even more.” Kim added

“And who cares what the other gender thinks or say, the one who created you has made it clear that you are good and perfect, and that he loves you enough to die for you. Don’t let the validation of men make you question God’s good work babe.” Mary said.

“Wow, I never thought of this, you guys are right. Thank you so much.”

We gave her a warm hug and Kim suggested we have a makeup tutorial.

“But what about the birthday hangout?” Adejoke asked.

“Forget about it, this is more important.” I said.

We had fun for the rest of the night and Adejoke found her long lost smile. Before I slept, I prayed to God to help Adejoke see herself through his eyes,

and if there's one thing I know about God, it's that he hears us every time.

Now this part of the story is exactly how Adejoke narrated it to me. That night she had the strangest dream ever. She was woken up by a young handsome looking man sitting at the edge of her bed, she freaked out a little and asked.

"Who are you? What do you want?"

"Do not be afraid, your father sent me to you." The man said.

"My father? My father died 8 years ago."

"You will understand later, but now, we have a date."

"A date? You and I? But I'm not prepared."

"I don't need you to." He said with a huge smile.

The young man held her hand as she got up from the bed making her feel like a princess. They got into this huge jeep made entirely out of Gold.

"So, where are we going?" she asked.

“Where it all started dear.” He answered

The next thing she remembers was them walking into a silversmith shop.

“What are we doing here?” She asked

“Just look ahead, what do you see?”

“Well, I see a man sweating... is that furnace? I mean fire, what is he doing?”

“He’s refining silver, making it into something beautiful.” He replied.

“Wow, and he’s sweating like this? Won’t he take a rest and get some fresh air?” she asked again.

“He can’t, a blink off the silver will ruin it’s beauty, he has to be there till it’s finally ready, till he can see himself through it.”

“Even if he’s tired?” Adejoke asked.

“Yes, come along.”

They walked farther and arrived at a clay potter’s shop.

“Now tell me, what do you see?” He asked.

*“A clay potter making a vase I guess.” She replied
“Good, I want you to move close and tap him.”*

She moved closer to the potter, tapped him but he didn't respond.

“He's not responding, why?”

“A simple distraction will make him loose focus and once he takes his hands off the clay, it becomes a mess and he'll have to start all over again.”

“Wow, what if something tickles him?” Adejoke asked.

“He wouldn't stop until it's done.”

*“So why this? I mean why did you bring me here?”
she asked.*

“Adejoke, this is what your father went through making you, he wanted a perfect daughter and he got one, just like the silver smith, he mustn't take his eye off you and just like the potter, he mustn't take his hands off you. He made you with all he had and when he was done, he saw you were good and perfect, he could see himself through the silver he

refined, you. There was no need to add anything else, just his breathe. He looks at you everyday and he couldn't be more proud of his work, then he gave me a job to always keep an eye on you, never to let you off my sight."

"Wow, my father did all these just to make me?"

"Yes. Come, the silver smith is done."

They returned back to the silversmith shop and he handed a silver mirror to Adejoke.

"Wow, this is so beautiful and perfect, and it's even pure silver. This man really did an amazing job, we should pay him."

"You just did." The silversmith said.

"How?" Adejoke asked.

"You complimented his work, that's all he needed, he has all the silvers in the world, your money won't make any difference."

"I guess it won't."

“Look into the silver mirror, who do you see?” the young man asked.

She took a long stare into the mirror and a huge smile appeared on her face.

“I see me.”

She looked around and everyone was gone, then she woke up and realized it was all a dream.

We were dressed up for church except for Adejoke, she woke up late so we had to leave without her, we were all serving in our fellowship, Mary is a part of the choir while Kim, Adejoke and I serve in the protocol unit, it's quite necessary for us to get to church early.

“I'll meet you guys at church.” Adejoke said as we departed.

On our way, I couldn't get my mind over how I saw Adejoke waking up with a smile this morning.

“Guys, didn't you see how happy Adejoke looked?” I asked.

“Yeah, I think our prep talk worked.” Mary said.

*“You’re right, I just pray she sees herself just the way
God sees her every day.”* Kim added.

*“This was exactly what I prayed about yesterday
night.”* I said.

Ten minutes into the service, Adejoke arrived and literally everyone was distracted, including me.

Adejoke was wearing a gown I’ve never seen before, a well fitted pencil gown with pleated ends that brought out the entire body shape she has been hiding for years now. For the first time in along time, she wore heels and actually had a beautiful neck piece on, she was looking beautiful. She caught everyone’s attention for a moment until she was ushered to her seat.

I did notice a little smile on my pastor’s face when he saw her.

After the service, I went to meet her.

“Oh, my goodness, Adejoke, you look fantabulous, where has this Adejoke I’m seeing here been?”

“Well, I guess she has been hiding under the lies the devil was feeding her mind with but alas! God came to her rescue.” She said.

The pastor, pastor Peter approached us and interrupted our conversation.

“Sister Joke, I didn’t see you protocol today.” He said. I knew where this was going.

“Yes sir, I woke up late so there was no way I could meet up.”

“Oh, okay, I guess you took your time to bring out the beauty in you, you look ravishing.” He said.

“Thank you, sir.” She said with a blush on her face.

Wait a minute, did my pastor just compliment a fellowship member? I mean that’s not right, right? Or is it? Maybe he just saw the need to commend a member, that’s what leaders do.

He was about leaving when I said, “Pastor I’m here too o, just in case you didn’t see me sha.”

He smiled and said,” You this girl, you will never change.”

Kim and Mary came around and complimented her too and so did a few fellowship members.

I really love the new Adejoke I saw, lively, smiling and beautiful, definitely God was involved in it and I’m glad he came through.

Adejoke started feeling more confident in herself, she would make jokes about how she’s the only one her husband would successfully carry her on her wedding day, she dug up some abandoned clothes and shoes I never knew she had. Our friendship bond grew stronger and it is still growing.

So, what’s the moral lesson here? You need to appreciate yourself first before people can, see yourself the way God sees you, you do not need the approval of men, you need God’s approval and

everything he made is good and perfect, this mindset brings confidence.

THE END.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Awoyemi Abisola is an enthusiastic lady who loves to write based on her experiences with certain life issues and how she overcame them by using fictional characters in her stories. She is always ready to help people overcome challenges through talking, writing and praying.

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