

Seated across from her son, their quiet conversation is a beacon of wisdom in their old house. She spoke with the grace of a woman who had weathered life's storms and learned its lessons "In your life, never lay your hand on a woman," she advised, her voice firm but filled with a mother's tenderness.

A dimly lit room, a man's rage filled the room. He raised his hand against a defenseless woman, and her pleas for help hung heavily in the air. Hidden in the shadows, a young boy watched, his wide eyes reflecting the violence he witnessed. A single tear fell as he realized the truth of his mother's words. The world, it seemed, was not always kind.

The boy's dark pupils swallowed the scene, and lessons of life etched across his innocence.

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Thirty five years later, a new generation formed on old foundations, an open area filled with chatter, the university campus. Students gathered in clusters, forming their own worlds amidst the chaos. Among them, Fatimah Abdul stood out, known for her unrelenting pursuit of excellence.

Dr. James Adekunle, a professor renowned for his stern demeanor, walked through the bustling corridor in his signature white long sleeved shirt, his thick lenses reflecting his no-nonsense attitude. Fatimah approached him, heart pounding, to address her concerns.

"Dr. Adekunle," she called out hesitantly, the weight of her worries evident in her voice.

Dr. Adekunle turned, his expression unyielding, "Iru rubbish wo leleyi?"

Undeterred, Fatimah continued, "Good afternoon, sir. I apologize for disturbing your peace, but I have a complaint about a course."

She stuttered, trying to gather her thoughts as she spoke.

"I r-read for your course, sir, but..." she started but was quickly cut off.

"Do you want an upgrade in the course score?" Dr. Adekunle interrupted, his voice sharp with impatience.

"That's what you all want; you don't read and expect to pass..." he continued.

Fatimah tried to explain herself, but her words were met with a harsh rebuke.

"Are you interrupting me, young lady?" Dr. Adekunle's voice thundered. "O ma rude, your parents didn't train you well."

Tears welled up in Fatimah's eyes as she stammered, "I am sorry, sir. I apologize for my rudeness."

Dr. Adekunle's stern face showed no mercy. "Shut up your mouth; how do you expect to pass when you don't have manners? What department are you from again?"

Fatimah, trying to hold back her tears, whispered, "Zoology, sir."

Dr. Adekunle's disapproving gaze never wavered. He clicked his tongue in annoyance and said, "Even your top students failed that course, let alone you. Coming here to beg for marks? I'm sure if I check your scripts, you probably failed more, and perhaps someone else wrote your exam."

"I'm truly sorry, sir," Fatimah managed, her voice barely audible through her quivering lips.

Dr. Adekunle didn't offer any comfort. "Leave my presence. I have more important matters to handle," he declared, entering his office and slamming the door behind him.

Fatimah left, shoulders heavy with disappointment, and met her friends Chidera and Tola. Tears streamed down her face as she recounted the humiliating encounter.

Chidera asked, "What happened, Fatimah?" Her voice carried genuine concern.

Tola, ever outspoken, chimed in, "I told you that man is impossible. He derives pleasure from belittling people. I told you, but you didn't listen."

Chidera hushed Tola and turned to Fatimah, "Fatimah, don't worry; it's Friday. Let's use the weekend to help you recover from this ordeal."

Fatimah nodded, her heart heavy but determined to face the challenges ahead.

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As the sun dipped below the horizon, casting a warm golden hue on the Adekunle family home, the day's frustrations and resentments simmered within its walls.

Dr. James Adekunle, weary from a day filled with the strains of academia and the relentless Lagos traffic, sank into the plush embrace of a living room couch. His favorite news channel played on the television, the familiar anchor's voice offering a semblance of normalcy. His wife, Mrs. Catherine Adekunle, approached him with a concerned expression, her delicate features softening the tension in the room.

"Welcome, oko mi; how was your day?" she inquired, her voice gentle.

He grunted in response, his fatigue apparent in every line etched on his face.

"As you can see, I look tired, and I don't want to be disturbed. Where is my food?" he replied, his voice tinged with irritation.

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle maintained her composure, her voice unwavering. "Sorry, oko mi. Let me get your coat and bag to the room."

But her attempt to assist her husband was met with impatience. His voice cut through the air sharply, "Woman! Did I ask you to carry my bag? I just want to eat and get back to work. Is that too much to ask?"

She apologized again, her head bowed, "I-I-I am sorry. I will bring it for you."

Dr. James Adekunle's annoyance continued to fester as he pressed on, "By the way, where is Michael? Those planks I asked him to clear out are still sitting at the front of the house."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle explained, "You told him to do that this morning. He's not back from his lesson; he called and said he's having extra class today."

But her husband's temper flared once more. "You told him to do that this morning" Mimicking her "Are you telling me I have Alzheimer's? Have I become senile? I can't remember when I told him."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle tried to defuse the situation, saying, "Argh... celie kè nó o! Rara o, oko mi."

"Senile not..." Dr. James Adekunle muttered, shaking his head.

"You are too soft on that boy," he continued, his voice growing louder. "It's because of how much you've pampered him that he can't think for himself. He can't even pass to get into the university."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle didn't back down. "But oko mi, omo yi o de n try o! The boy is trying; he needs a little encouragement."

Dr. James Adekunle, not one to back down either, retorted, "Shut up! What do you know? If only you finished school, you would know what it means to be trying. I'm even surprised you know the word 'encouragement,' illiterate like you."

A tense silence hung in the room as Mrs. Catherine Adekunle contemplated her response. Finally, she chose not to go down without a fight.

"You can't call me that," she asserted, her voice steady. "You know my background, and just because you have a chance to go to the university—"

Dr. James Adekunle cut her off, raising his voice again, "You are mad, woman. You are a very mad woman. I don't know what made me marry you. I bet you charmed my mother because of my money."

Just then, Michael Adekunle, their teenage son, entered the house, having heard the argument from outside. He bowed his head as he entered, sensing the storm that awaited him.

Dr. James Adekunle wasted no time in scolding him, "Ahh, your nuisance child finally decides to come home. Look at the time. Where have you been?"

Michael stammered, trying to explain, "Da-Da-Daddy I-I erm- erm."

"Can't you talk again? Come here," his father demanded. "Have you started smoking and drinking? Look at the imbecile you call my child."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle intervened, "James, stop it. This is your child, mo ti so fun e tele now; I called his teacher, and she confirmed it."

Dr. James Adekunle's frustration seemed endless. "I don't know why I'm wasting money on you. Three attempts at JAMB, and you failed. Your mates are working and supporting their parents. All you do is waste my money. Get out of my sight."

Michael turned to leave, shoulders slumped, but his father called him back. "Ess-Ess, come here, come back here. What happened to the planks I asked you to clear? Go out there and remove them, my friend."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle continued to advocate for her son, "James, ko da be, you shouldn't be talking to him like that. Ko wa encouraging."

Dr. James Adekunle countered, "Ko wa encouraging? Shut up your dirty mouth. What do you know? You just sit at home every day, eating my money, getting fat. You spoil that boy, pampering him too much. He's too attached to you. I won't be surprised if deep down, he doesn't want to go to school anymore. Like mother, like son."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle held her ground, her eyes welling with tears, as she defended her son. "James, you are not perfect either. Sho mo? You act grumpy in the house. The boy might be afraid to come home because you behave like a monster."

Dr. James Adekunle approached her, his temper flaring, his hand raised as if to strike her. But then he paused, gripping her left hand instead.

"You are stupid for saying that," he seethed. "I swore never to lay my hands on a woman. If this attitude continues, I might break that promise."

Leaving his wife, he stormed out of the house, slamming the door behind him, leaving behind a heavy silence in his wake.

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Sunlight streams through dusty windows onto rows of silent students engrossed in their books, creating an atmosphere of quiet concentration.

Tola whispered to Abdul Fatimah, concern etched on her face, "Fatimah, why are you packing your books? Where are you going?"

Abdul Fatimah replied, her voice heavy with exhaustion, "Back to my hostel. I am tired of reading."

Chidera chimed in, perplexed, "But we just got here, Fatimah. How can you be tired already?"

Ignoring her friends' remarks, Abdul Fatimah left the library abruptly.

Chidera turned to Tola, puzzled. "Tola, do you think she's okay? Did she tell you anything?"

Tola shook her head, replying, "No, she didn't. It's unlike her to leave after only 30 minutes, especially with exams approaching. Or maybe she could be pregnant."

Chidera rolled her eyes playfully, saying, "You always think of the most outrageous things."

Tola countered, "It could be true, you know."

Chidera conceded, "Yes, it could, but I doubt it. We're friends, and if something were wrong, she should be able to confide in us. Do you think we should go after her?"

Tola pondered for a moment before responding, "She seemed like someone who would want to be left alone. Let's give her some time."

Chidera worriedly questioned, "But what if we're too late?"

Tola asked, "Too late for what?"

Just then, the librarian approached and silenced them with a sharp "Shh."

"If you're not reading, please leave the library." the librarian said

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Mrs. Catherine Adekunle called out to her son repeatedly, her voice echoing through their home.

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle: "Michael! Ki nlo se? Have you done everything your father asked you to do?"

Michael Adekunle emerged from his room, responding obediently, "Reading, ma. No, I haven't finished yet, ma."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle sighed and advised, "Argh... se bi o mo baba e. You know your father now. You know how he behaves. If you want peace today, just go and do it. Don't forget to prepare for church as well."

Michael nodded, grateful for the reminder. As he worked diligently in the backyard, tidying up the tasks his father had assigned him, his phone rang.

Michael picked up the call and greeted, "Jamiu, how far now?"

After a short pause, his tone shifted.

Michael continued, "Argh, sorry, I can't make it. I texted you earlier, didn't I?"

Another short pause.

"Yes, I know I promised you, but my hands are tied at the moment."

Longer pause.

"What am I doing? I'm busy, that's all you need to know."

A profound silence followed.

"Don't talk about my father. I'm just trying to make him proud."

Michael sighed and returned to his chores, the weight of his family's expectations heavy on his shoulders.

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Sunday after church, Chidera decided to visit Abdul Fatimah at her hostel. It was a warm afternoon, and the sun cast dappled shadows through the trees onto the quiet hostel courtyard.

Chidera knocked on Fatimah's door, her voice filled with genuine concern, "Fatimah, are you okay? Tola and I tried reaching you throughout yesterday, but you didn't pick up your calls or text us back."

Fatimah opened the door, her eyes slightly puffy as if she had been crying. She forced a smile and replied, "I am fine, Dera. I was sleeping, I guess."

Chidera wasn't entirely convinced but decided not to press further. "Are you sure, because we are really concerned about you. I mean yesterday at the library, you were not acting like yourself, and I am sorry, but I spoke to Tawakat, she told me you haven't been praying like you used to."

Fatimah's smile faded, and her eyes welled up with tears. "What is the need to pray, Dera? When none of your prayers get answered."

Chidera was taken aback by Fatimah's words. She stepped into the room and gently placed a hand on her friend's shoulder. "What are you talking about, Fatimah? You can speak to me; I am here for you."

Fatimah hesitated for a moment, then whispered, "Dr. Adekunle... The test."

Chidera's eyes narrowed in understanding. "Is that what has been bothering you, Fatimah? Come on, come off it."

Fatimah wiped away a tear and replied, "No, Dera, you were not there when he talked to me; I felt like I did not prepare at all, like I didn't complete my salat."

Chidera tried to console her, "It is just one of those days, Fatimah. Lecturers and their ego; we know how much you prepared for it."

Fatimah shook her head, her voice trembling, "His words tore me apart, Dera. He made me feel worthless, like my efforts can't amount to anything. What does it matter if the end result is the same, no matter how much I prepare and knowing I deserve more?"

Chidera took Fatimah's hands in hers, "But you did not fail."

Fatimah's gaze was distant, haunted by Dr. Adekunle's words. "He made me feel like I was a failure."

Chidera, determined to help her friend, suggested, "Then take it up with the department, the faculty if need be."

Fatimah sighed, "And make more enemies for me? I have no choice but to settle for what I got."

Chidera understood the difficult position Fatimah was in. "Then you have to get over this; exams are fast approaching."

Fatimah's shoulders slumped, and she looked lost. "How... how do I get over this?"

Chidera reassured her, "I am sorry you feel this way, Fatimah. I promise I will be here to cheer you up always. I don't know about Tola; thank God she is not here. She would have made a joke of this situation. She even believed you were pregnant."

Both girls laughed, the tension in the room dissipating, and they hugged each other tightly, finding solace in their friendship.

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Catherine who is overseeing the post-church activity with Mama Emma, meanwhile, at the end of the church two members gossiped

"Your skirt is not covering your knee; if holier than thou see you, you are in for it."

"I am tired of all this spiritual abuse; why would you be telling me because I don't attend all the church activities? I am heading for destruction." Bimpe Replied

"I am not even surprised; Madam saw my friend, the boy I invited to church last two weeks, and she was already asking him about his sex life, whether both of us have been consummating; he told me he is not coming back to church."

"Rumors even have it that she calls Mariam a harlot because of her pregnancy." Bimpe said

"Ahan-Ahan, that is too much now"

"That is what I heard o! That mama Emma sef her own too much"

At the other side of the church, Mrs. Catherine Adekunle is discussing with mama emma .

"Mummy Michael, How is everything? Daddy Michael did not come to church today." Mama emma asked

"He has been busy; you know exams are coming up, so he is very busy." Catherine replied

"Is that why he can't come and serve his God? Is it not God that is giving him the power to do all he is doing" Mama emma said

"I know my sister; you will see him next week" Catherine replied

"Next week is far, this week nkan" mama Emma pushed she takes a short pause before continuing "The eyes wey I dey take look you, hope all is well"

Catherine says nothing, but Mama Emma kept talking

"Is he abusing you again? No tell me sey e dey beat you o!"

"He is a gentleman" Catherine broke her silence

"I have told you not to accept his abuse anymore, if you keep quiet he will start beating you, me I no dey gree for papa Emma when we dey together O! Na gidigbo anytime e wan start." Mama emma said

Catherine says nothing again, but Mama Emma continued

"The bible says in Heb 11 vs. 34 "- put out fierce fires, escaped being killed by the sword. They were weak but become strong; they were mighty in battle and defeated the armies of foreigners-" My sister the Lord of Israel is your strength, you are not alone."

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The Adekunle's residence was cast in the warm hues of a late afternoon sun, where Dr. James Adekunle stood in a hushed conversation with the HOD of his department.

"Si-sir-sir," he stammered, a palpable tension in his voice.

A short pause ensued as Dr. James Adekunle continued, "I am sorry, sir, it was a minor mistake, sir."

His voice trembled as he persisted, "I am very sorry sir b-but prof."

And then, desperation crept in, "N-No sir, please don't take the class away from me."

Another pause weighed heavy before he pleaded, "S-sir, sir Dr.- Dr. Uzo told me..."

His words faltered, "N-No sir, I take full responsibility sir but si..."

Dr. James's voice quivered, "N-No sir i- i- I am very sorry sir. Hello prof- prof, hello-hello prof -prof."

As he hung up, he muttered under his breath, "Iru wahala wo leleyi now, why is this man doing like this now? This man is an idiot o, what is our age difference gan, little power and they will be doing like..."

Just as his vexation simmered, Michael Adekunle entered from a church meeting, finding his father seated.

"Eyin ma npe ni Church yin ni? Your church doesn't end? Where is your mother?" Dr. James inquired with an undertone of annoyance.

"Still in church, sir," Michael replied respectfully, "she says I should tell you she will be coming back late because of a meeting."

Dr. James sighed, "Se ko ni wa da na ni? Lunchtime is running o, and it is almost evening."

"Erm... Erm, daddy, I am going to the next street to see a friend," Michael hesitated.

"Eh? Ore lo wa kan bayi?" Dr. James exclaimed, his patience waning, "You are carrying friends now eh? Your mates are bringing home salary, you; you are going about with friends gallivanting. Your younger sister is in SS3; she is coming to meet you. I don't know why I waste my money on you. I should have taken you to a carpenter or mechanic workshop, ko lo ko ise, blockhead."

Michael stammered, "Da-Daddy, I am sorry, but I am putting my best into this; I am not trying to let you down."

Dr. James' anger flared, "Shut up; I am not trying to let you down, yen yen yen. You can't enter school eh; three JAMB exams went, and I wasted my money. Or do you think it is from a tree I pluck money, da mi nlo now?"

"I-I-I am sorry, sir," Michael whispered.

"Sorry for yourself," Dr. James retorted sternly. "See; let me just make it clear. After this exam you are about to write, if you come back with one stupid grade, you are leaving my house. Get out of my sight, omo iranu."

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In a tranquil church setting, Mrs. Catherine Adekunle remained in a pew, deeply engrossed in her thoughts. After the meeting, the pastor asked to see her privately.

"Mrs. Adekunle," he began with concern etched on his face, "I asked for you to see me because I have noticed you have been looking dull and tired during our weekly activity for a couple of months now."

The Pastor's gaze bore into her, urging her to open up. Mrs. Catherine, however, hesitated before responding, "Pastor, all is well, sir."

The pastor leaned in, his voice gentle yet persistent, "Rumors have been going around that all is not well at home; although I have spoken to people instigating so-called rumors and reprimanded their actions, I am still responsible for finding out if I can help in any way."

Mrs. Catherine maintained her guarded stance, "My home is fine, sir. Thank you, pastor."

Concerned, the pastor probed further, "It's been a while since I've seen Doctor, your husband. Is everything okay with him?"

She replied with a forced smile, "Yes, sir, he is very fine. He is busy with schoolwork, sir."

The pastor wasn't easily dissuaded, "Can I call him, to pray for - with him, talk to him? I want to speak with him, please."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle hesitated, then responded, "Sir, argh! He is busy O! Exams are coming, so he is preparing questions and looking after so many things."

"Three to five minutes won't hurt anyone," the pastor insisted, "I just want to pray with him for strength."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle's voice quivered, "Sir, please, sir, don't, sir."

"Mrs. Adekunle, is there something you want to talk to me about?" the pastor inquired gently.

She replied softly, "Pastor, I just don't want his wahala."

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Dr. James Adekunle returned home from work that evening, his footsteps heavy with exhaustion. His wife greeted him warmly.

"Oko mi, kaabo, o de sa siko," she said. "Your food is ready; I will set the table."

As she left to prepare his meal, Dr. Adekunle's face bore a heavy frown.

Dr. James Adekunle couldn't contain his curiosity any longer. "Wa n bi bayi, wa n bi bayi," he probed, "what did you tell your pastor, ehn?"

His wife, Mrs. Catherine Adekunle, hesitated before replying, "Se ko si oko mi?"

An accusatory tone filled the room as he retorted, "O wa! O wa o! Elejo wewe, you have carried your problems outside, abi? Because it is not our problem; it is your problem."

Mrs. Adekunle struggled to explain, "Ahhh... No... It is not like that, James."

Dr. Adekunle's anger simmered as he warned her, "It is not like what! If I touch you now, the neighbors would not know that you are at fault. See, let me warn you, and this is the last warning, never ever in your life, your next lie pa pa discuss about my children or me to anyone."

Desperation filled Mrs. Adekunle's voice as she pleaded, "Ma binu, sorry ko ni sele mo."

Dr. James Adekunle continued his tirade, "Because I don't know what else you want. I provide for the family; I do my duty as the head of the house. But you and your stupid son won't give me peace when I come home."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle, tears streaming down her face, uttered a trembling "Ma binu."

Undeterred, Dr. Adekunle's anger boiled over, "I don't know what you mean; you are trying to tell me I don't know how to run my family? Your pastor should come and run this family now, or you should kuku ma marry your pastor. See; if it is divorce you want, let me know now o! Ko ma kori buruku e lo."

Mrs. Catherine Adekunle, now on her knees, begged through her sobs, "No.. No.. No.. Oko mi jo, ma binu, jo dari ji mi, ko ni sele mo, it will never happen again."

Dr. James Adekunle issued a final warning, "See; last warning ni moti fu e niyen. Go and bring my food joor. You will tell me if it is the pastor that paid your bride price."

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Fatimah Abdul sat with her friends, Tola and Chidera, discussing their recent practical exam.

Chidera asked, "Fatimah, what did you score in your practical?"

Tola chimed in, "That practical is a scam; I couldn't finish it."

Chidera, with a knowing smile, teased Tola, "Who are you lying to? You were part of the highest scorers."

Tola defended herself, "Highest ke? Who are you whining? The person with the highest score is sitting right by your side."

Chidera pressed Fatimah for an answer, "Fatimah, you did not even answer me; what did you score?"

Fatimah replied hesitantly, "I don't know."

Tola probed further, "What do you mean? Where is your lab manual?"

Fatimah's voice quivered as she admitted, "I- I don't have it."

Chidera and Tola exchanged puzzled glances. "Why?" they asked in unison.

Fatimah explained, "The course rep said some of the manuals are still in Dr. Adekunle's office."

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On a Tuesday afternoon, Mrs. Catherine Adekunle finished preparing Michael Adekunle's food. She called out his name repeatedly.

"Michael, ounje ti ready o! ko wa l'ogun eh, ti baba e ba mo pe oo lo si lesson leni, ija ni," she called out, growing increasingly worried.

As she approached his room with his meal, she continued, "Michael, to ba ti jeun tan, to l'ogun e ara e to weak yen o ma ja fa fa"

She opened the door to his room; what she saw made her drop the plate of food as she gasps for air.

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The sun dipped low in the afternoon sky, casting long shadows across the university campus. In a quiet corner of the open area, Fatimah Abdul and her friends, Tola and Chidera, gathered to share their burdens.

Fatimah Abdul's voice carried a note of determination as she spoke, "You know what, girls; I won't let this thing bother me anymore."

Tola, ever the practical one, raised an eyebrow, "What thing?"

Fatimah sighed, her eyes reflecting the pain she had been hiding, "The thing with Dr. Adekunle now."

Tola's tone softened, realizing the weight of the situation, "The insults? It has been bothering you; I didn't know, oh."

Chidera, always empathetic, interjected, "Tola, you are so insensitive, Fatimah. I think it is better you did; what other means can we survive by in this school?"

Fatimah nodded, her resolve unwavering, "I know it will happen again, if not him, someone else; it is just sad that we are all suppressed with the idea that every student is less intelligent, doesn't know their rights, and is out to beg for marks."

Tola, never one to mince words, chimed in, "Well, eighty percent of students are, it is the narrative all students don't want to read, all Nigerian youths are lazy."

Chidera's eyes flashed with determination, "It still doesn't make it right; there are hardworking people out there who are being bullied or abused for their rights."

Fatimah took a deep breath, her voice quivering with suppressed emotion, "I know I deserved more than what I scored; I wasn't going to beg for a mark, just a chance for my script to be re-checked; I understand mistakes happen."

Tola's frustration boiled over, "Mistakes? These lecturers are gods, if you don't know. You were verbally abused; do you know the amount of sexual abuse that goes on in this school? Nobody cares."

Chidera nodded in agreement, her voice filled with concern, "Yeah, it still doesn't shift the fact that she was wronged.. abused. Tola, like I said, you are insensitive. If you were not, you would notice how dejected she has been since the incident; I mean sometimes these things lead to suicide."

Tola's face paled as she realized the gravity of the situation, "Okay, I apologize; I didn't mean it like that; it is a terrible thing when someone makes you feel worthless."

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As the sun dipped below the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the Adekunle residence, an eerie silence settled in the house. In the dimly lit living room, Pastor Williams sat with Dr. James Adekunle, their faces etched with sorrow.

Pastor Williams broke the silence, his voice filled with compassion, "Have you read your son's farewell note?"

Dr. James Adekunle stared into the distance, his mind a tumultuous storm of regret and grief. He didn't respond.

Pastor Williams continued, his words heavy with the weight of the situation, "Ten lines dedicated to your wife asking for her forgiveness, and two lines dedicated to you. It says, 'Daddy, I am sorry I failed you. I am sorry I wasn't the son you asked for. I hope my action brings you joy and peace.'"

Dr. James Adekunle's breathing quickened, and his fingers trembled as guilt gnawed at his conscience.

Pastor Williams leaned in, his eyes filled with compassion and reproach, "In a court of law, you killed your own son. The last time we spoke, you said you were going through a lot, and how your HOD has been raining insults on you for incompetence. I remember telling you no excuse on this earth justifies the attitude you dish out to your family."

Dr. James Adekunle covered his face with his palm, unable to bear the weight of his actions any longer.

Pastor Williams continued, his voice unwavering, "You might think your actions were subtle, but they were not, Dr. Adekunle. You told me you promised yourself, your mother made you promise not to be like your father. Dr. Adekunle, your father is your past. Yes, he beat you down, made you feel powerless, and portrayed that as love to you."

The room felt heavy with the unspoken truth as Pastor Williams' words sank in.

"But," Pastor Williams continued, "you were given a chance to change the narrative with a beautiful family, and you failed. You tried so hard not to be like your father; you became an upgraded version of him. Your father never killed your mother, but you killed your own son with your words."

As the realization of his actions fully dawned upon him, tears streamed down Dr. James Adekunle's face.

Pastor Williams concluded, his voice filled with urgency, "I hope this is more than a wake-up call to you, to everyone, that verbal abuse is a poison dished out on a platter, and you need to amend your ways fast."

"You killed him.. He killed him.. He killed him.. He killed him.. You killed my boy!" The scene faded into the mournful wailing of Mrs. Catherine Adekunle, a poignant reminder of the tragic consequences of unspoken sorrows.