

ROUND TICKET

A DRAMA SCRIPT BY WINNIEFRED F. GBEMUOTOR

SCENE ONE: (In the living room of a mansion, two people are seated on sofas adjacent to each other, they are drinking and conversing)

BLACKIE: cheers!

DREY: Cheers! To a beautiful life and amazing achievements!

(They drink)

BLACKIE: I love your personality, your work in people's lives is impressive. You are such a strong person and I've admired that about you for a long time.

DREY: Those are such kind words, thank you.

BLACKIE: You're welcome.

DREY: You know, people judge and mock me because of the kind of person I used to be. I am not proud of my past either so I understand them. The only thing that surprises me is how their disgust vanishes when I offer them money.

BLACKIE: That's what humans are like.

DREY: Well, that's not a problem for me. In fact, these days I look back and smile at how far I've come. My story is interesting and unlike before I am not ashamed of it.

BLACKIE: Exactly! Many critics out there have stacks of skeletons in their wardrobes which they are not bold enough to talk about.

While we're at it, I would love to use this opportunity to hear your story if you don't mind. It is better to hear the story from the horse's mouth than to feed on rumours.

DREY: Of course.

BLACKIE: yay! Thank you!

DREY: Don't mention it. Andy! Please bring us more drinks and check the bottom drawer on your right for some groundnuts.

ANDY: (from the kitchen) Yes, please.

DREY: Good stories go with good drinks.

ANDY: There you go. (places the drinks on the table)

DREY: Thanks, princess. Go and help your sisters with their homework now.

ANDY: Okay.

BLACKIE: You have beautiful children.

DREY: Thank you, now let's focus on the story.

BLACKIE: Yes, please.

DREY: Years ago, I used to be a taxi driver at Circle.

BLACKIE: Wow! For real?

DREY: Yes. Due to my father's illness, my family was bankrupt so I quit school and took over his taxi business in his stead. I used

to do anything I wanted and no one could stop me. Drey Mensah was a respected name in town. I was taller than all my peers, I was stout and good looking and I think carrying my mother's maize bags every day made me muscular too, so when you saw me walking at Circle that time you would see a 25-year-old man instead of a 17-year-old.

BLACKIE: It looks like you're describing someone else.

DREY: I know. Even I get amazed thinking about it. Thankfully, the driving business was lucrative at the time so I used some of the money I made to fuel my other life - girls, parties, clothes and enjoyment galore. After a long week of work, what I loved the most was partying on weekends; my favourite place was called 'Republic Bar'. It was some sort of hideout where I could be myself. I was very famous there. The bouncers, waiters, everybody knew me even the one who sold *chichinga*. Although I loved partying, I was very careful, I never went there with anyone and I loved the place because none of my school folk lived around or would go there. I could not risk any of them seeing me. They wouldn't even recognize me if they saw me anyway. *Hwe* if they saw me at a party I would be in serious trouble.

BLACKIE: Why would you be in trouble?

DREY: Oh, you *dier* wait you will understand along the line. All they knew was that I was the calm student who sat in front and blocked everyone's view.

BLACKIE: Interesting, what happened next?

DREY: You know that idiom 'every day for the thief one day for the owner'.

BLACKIE: Yes.

DREY: That happened.

BLACKIE: I am all ears.

DREY: One Saturday, I was supposed to have my party routine. It was a special party, so I wanted to close early, go home to cook and rest so that I could go to the party later.

SCENE TWO (Several years ago, Kwame Nkrumah Circle, communal taxi station Accra. Drey has just arrived from dropping off customers at Madina.)

MASA: Mensah, you no go close? *Anaa* today market make good?

DREY: Oh, *daabi masa*. Today *dier noko noko* for the market inside (comes out of the car and closes the door), *e be* like even the market women have bought cars *sef*. I've gone like two rounds plus one dropping since morning. I thought say I go come meet some people here to load.

MASA: *Asem oo* I think say we for make sharp and register with those new ride companies *oo*. Because people request rides a lot these days.

DREY: You are right. Maybe we should raise the issue at the next association meeting, *me dier* I am done for today. God willing Monday.

MASA: *yoo* my child. Take care of yourself.

SCENE THREE (Sodom and Gomorrah, an old wooden house. Drey has just arrived and parks the taxi at a junction some walks away from the house.)

DREY: Ma I'm back oo, please good evening!

MA: Welcome back, come and help me pack the remaining things and send them to the junction I am getting late for work, the Kenkey balls are in the basin at the corner beside the table.

DREY: Yes ma.

MA: Today your siblings said they want *kantomire* so I made it myself so that you don't have to cook, it's in the kitchen. Oh, and don't forget to give your dad his medicine.

DREY: yoo. (soliloquising) Every day 'give your dad medicine', but the man is not healing. What kind of stroke leaves someone bedridden after two years? I will stop wasting my time on him. (To Ma) Ma, the things are in the car, are you ready?

MA: Yes, I'm coming. Wait, it seems I've forgotten something.

DREY: Ma everything is here, come let's go.

MA: I am coming.

MA: (at the stand) Put the basin on the table for me.

DREY: All done. I am leaving now.

MA: Thank you, dear, see you later.

DREY: Okay, bye. (drives off)

(At home)

DREY: Esi!

ESI: Yes?

DREY: There is food in the kitchen, serve yourself when you want to eat. I am going to sleep.

ESI: Okay.

DREY: Gosh I'm late, it's 10:27 already. Perfume covers everything, let me just wear my clothes and go. Esi! Lock the door!

SCENE FOUR (Republic bar, there is loud music, a lot of people are trying to go in the bar. Drey just arrived, he goes to talk with Sule, the meat seller)

DREY: Sule good evening oo. What's up?

SULE: Boss (shakes hands with Drey) I'm fine oo, I think say today you no go come oo.

DREY: Oh, *no* I couldn't have afforded to miss today's party. It's sleep that took me. You dier I make late so later wai.

SULE: you no go order *chichinga*?

DREY: I *dey* come, make I go drink small.

SULE: No yawa.

DREY: (To the bouncer at the gate) Scorpion my man, what's up? I come oo.

SCORPION: Doctor, welcome. *Abeg* make way for the doctor to come.

(people mumble)

DREY: (takes some money from his pocket) This is for you.

SCORPION: *bossu nie!*

(Inside)

DREY: (soliloquising) Look at all these beautiful ladies, this is heaven man. (approaches the counter) Babe give me *kpokeke* two tots.

BARTENDER: Speak a little louder, the music is too loud.

DREY: I SAID I WANT KPOKEKE TWO TOTS!

BARTENDER: Okay. I thought you weren't coming.

DREY: Like you should change my name. I couldn't have missed today for anything.

BARTENDER: I'm not surprised, (brings the drink) There you go.

DREY: Thank you. (places the glass down) Do you know the girl in the red dress over there?

BARTENDER: What?

DREY: DO YOU KNOW THE GIRL IN THE RED DRESS? THE ONE DANCING THERE.

Bartender: No, I don't know her. She must be new in the area.

DREY: Okay, I'm going to speak to her. Wish me luck.

(To the lady) Hello, dear, you look like someone I know, can we talk?

LADY: Don't you think that this approach is old? Sorry, I'm not interested in talking to you.

DREY: Please give me a chance, I just want to talk to you.

Lady: What do you want? A one-night stand?

DREY: No not at all, I just want to know who this pretty girl is.
Can I buy you a drink?

Lady: No, thank you.

DREY: You leave me no choice. WAITER! Give me two glasses of your special cocktail. They will bring us the drinks, I am Dr. Drey by the way. What is your name?

LADY: I am Linda. How does a doctor get time to chill?

DREY: Well, when you are your own boss, you control your time.
(takes the drinks) Here is your drink. Can we sit and talk?

LINDA: Okay. You said you are your own boss, tell me about it.

DREY: Yeah, I own a clinic and I am a doctor there too.

LINDA: It's safe to say I've landed the jackpot.

DREY: Oh come on, I am sure you do something even more important than I do.

LINDA: Stop playing, how can you possibly compare being a make-up artist to being the owner of a clinic?

DREY: Don't say that. Being a make-up artist is nice, no wonder you are looking so beautiful.

LINDA: Stop, you are flattering me.

DREY: Oh no I am just being honest and I think I like you a lot already.

LINDA: I like you too.

DREY: You know what? let me order more drinks. Waiter, more drinks for us.

LINDA: Babe, I came with some friends; can they join in?

DREY: (soliloquy) friends? (to Linda) Of course, they can.

LINDA: Guys join in, drinks are on Dr. Drey.

DREY: (soliloquy) How do I handle this? (to Linda) Babe, I just remembered I forgot my wallet in the car I came with so I don't have enough physical cash.

LINDA: What?

DREY: I lost my wallet.

LINDA: That's disappointing, but no problem. They can take care of themselves.

DREY: You are an angel. Let's party everyone! Babe, what do you say we spice things up and get a room for some privacy?

LINDA: I think it's a great idea.

DREY: (aside) Bartender, is my room ready?

BARTENDER: Just as you like it.

DREY: Perfect. (to Linda) They have a room available.

LINDA: Let's go.

(in the room)

DREY: You are so beautiful; I feel like this should last forever.
Can I kiss you?

LINDA: Are you a kid? Kiss me and stop talking.

DREY: Yes ma'am. (kisses her) (soliloquy) Her body is hard *papa*,
there is something wrong here. (to Linda) Take off your clothes
babe.

LINDA: (takes off her clothes) Do you like what you see?

DREY: What? No, this can't be happening. Linda, you are a man?

LINDA: (takes a gun and a phone from his underpants) Yes, I am a
man, now shut up and kneel. Guys tell the boss that I have someone,
you can come in now.

DREY: (soliloquy) What have I gotten myself into?

(door opens)

DREY: Please don't hurt me, I have done nothing wrong.

MAN 1: (slaps him) Shut your beak. Where is your wallet?

DREY: Take it, take whatever you want. Please don't hurt me.

MAN 2: Where is your ATM card?

DREY: Please I don't have. I beg just leave me alone this is all I have.

MAN 1: Linda, I thought you said he is a doctor.

LINDA: That's what he told me, unless, of course, he lied to impress me. And hey stop calling me Linda, I've told you severally that for you, my name is Akwesi.

MAN 2: Whatever. (to Drey) Hey stupid where is your ATM card?

DREY: Please I am not a doctor, I am just a taxi driver I don't have an ATM card, please check my wallet you will see my license.

MAN 1: Give me that. He is not lying. Shit, he is just a shitbag from the slums. Let's beat him up.

DREY: Please! Stop! Don't touch me! Ahhh I beg you, make it stop.

AKWESI: Enough! Now get out, take the money and jewellery and leave him with me.

MAN 1: hahaha, poor guy. By the time you leave this room, you will be sore as hell. Let's get out of here.

AKWESI: hahaha (lock the door). Hey get on the bed and take off your clothes.

DREY: What are you doing? What do you want to do to me?

AKWESI: Why did you get the room? For privacy, right? Let's continue from where we stopped.

DREY: But you are a man! Please don't do this, I beg you!

AKWESI: With this job I can have sex with men for free. You brought yourself so let me do you the honours.

DREY: Help! Help! Help!

AKWESI: (slaps Drey) Shut up before I kill you! Now take off your freaking clothes.

DREY: Ahhhhh! Somebody, please help me!

AKWESI: No one can help you here, the music is too loud outside. Stop shouting like a girl and take off your clothes!

DREY: (crying) Please no, do not do this.

AKWESI: What the heck is happening tonight? You are a girl?

(Today)

BLACKIE: then what happened?

DREY: A couple wanted to use our room when they heard me screaming, they alerted security and that is how I was saved. When they got in, they got hold of Akwesi and gave him the beating of his life. The part that shocked me the most was when Akwesi later confessed to the police that Sule was their boss.

BLACKIE: Sule? The *chichinga* seller? No this is insane. What happened to you?

DREY: Yes, that Sule. He had been doing that for a long time in many bars, the meat selling was just a cover-up. When the staff came in, those who knew me had their mouths open. Bro Drey was actually Audrey a stud from Sodom and Gomorrah. I just stood there, half-naked and traumatized by the incident.

BLACKIE: I am sure instead of helping you, people took pictures and videos.

AUDREY: Of course, they did, I was in so much trouble after this! The issue was everywhere. People just couldn't wrap their heads around it: 'Twist of fate: attempted rape by a homosexual turns into chaos, as the guy he wanted to rape turns out to be a girl'.