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ONOMEN

Holding my call to bar certificate seemed like a dream, a sweet one need I add . All those long nights studying at John Harris library in the university of Benin , beaten by mosquitoes and some really weird insects, to the anxiety and uncertainty of the outcome of my bar examinations , this beautiful sheet of paper with my name Onomen Iyore, called to bar on this day 13th of July 2017 made everything worth it .

I was happy and so thankful to God because I knew it wouldn't have been possible without his grace and mercy, as I perused the room I couldn't help but smile seeing the excitement of parents and new lawyers in the room, every body beaming with joy and excitement .

My mum wasn't taking any chill pills at all in these moment , me being a lawyer was such a big deal to her as it was like a tribute to my late dad Judge Osas Iyore , "oh your daddy will be so proud of you Onos" , she would say at every given chance. First when I got 267 for my jamb and 72% in post UTME , then getting law at Uniben , then calling her to say I had passed my bars was the most emotional I had ever seen my mum , she cried , jumped, shouted, prayed , and kept on saying those words "I am proud of you and I know your daddy would have been prouder".

I didn't miss the solitary tear that trickled her cheeks as I was handed over my certificate , if I'm being honest I am also so proud of my self. I was headed to go meet my mum where she was serving her guest food when my phone rang

"Hello smallie"

My brother's deep voice came through

"the latest lawyer of the Iyore's household, how far ?"

blushing I answered "yes oo , that's how I want to be addressed from now on , the one and only Barrister Onomen Iyore"

"Ha ha ha oshey baddest barrister, but really congratulations on being called to bar I'm proud of you ,well done"

“thanks bro , how is our wife?” I asked referring to his wife Selena , the Mexican beauty my brother married.

“she’s fine, she also sends her regards... hold on let me hand over the phone to her”

“Hi!! Onos”came her sonorous voice , sounding so excited .

“Selena, hi”

“Congratulations on your call to bar ,IT was just telling me it was today”

“Yes it was just minutes ago actually, we are currently in jubilatiing mode, you know how mummy can be she brought coolers of rice and swallows, enough food to go round”

in between giggles she said “awwww that must be nice , I can imagine her excitement”

“Trust me it’s worse that than you imagine , it’s almost like she is the lawyer, anyway how are you and the baby in the oven”

“Well thank you” she answered in the most British way . “ I’ve actually commenced my maternity leave, anytime now our little mister will be here ... , I’m both nervous and thrilled”

“You will be an amazing mum Selena , I’m sure of that and don’t worry my mum will come for Omugwo , to make the transition easy for you”

“I sure am counting on that, my sister who schools here in London will also be around often to ,so ..”

“Let’s not forget, the man that put you in that condition” I quickly added

as if waiting for the perfect timing to jump into our conversation, my brother said “ehh I have heard you Mrs Lawyer, don’t worry she will almost be suffocated with the love and support I will render to her and the baby... ah ah Smallie don’t you trust your brother again”

grining I answered “bro I trust you , but Abeg stop calling me smallie I thought we have agreed that my nickname will not be that anymore”

in attempt to tease me more he replied “sorry smallie I can’t hear you , he.. he... hello, smallie can you hear me”

“Ha Ha Ha .. very funny. Selena dear?”

“Yes I am here, just waiting for you two , to round up ”, she answered laughing.

“ I am done , but that husband of yours is something else entirely,why isn’t he at work or has he also taken paternity leave”

“No he is working from home today, his boss actually said he could alternate between working home and at the office ,a way of thanking him for his **hard-work** all these years”

“Oh that’s fresh , hope it comes with extra cash and promotion” I asked rhetorically “anyways I should go , mummy is beckoning on me to come greet some of dads old friends talk to you all later , and Selena please take care of yourself ok?

“Definitely, thanks love .. bye”

“byeeee”

It was always nice talking to my brother and his wife , giving the fact that the last time I saw them was when they came to Nigeria after their white wedding in London almost three years ago , and he brought her down to show her to his relatives and those of us who could not attend their wedding.

I had never imagined having a white sister in-law ,I remember Itohan had just started his IT job at SAP Uk , and was suddenly gisting me of this Mexican girl he met at the supermarket, few weeks later they were in a relationship and on their one year anniversary he proposed. I was really happy for him , because I had never seen my brother so into any girl before and I could tell he really loved her , the first day I spoke with Selena we clicked immediately and I saw reasons why he adored her so much.

My mum was initially against it , her reasons being white women will make African men forget their family **of** if the man die they will not let the family know, where she heard that tale I had no idea, then she became indifferent , but currently her love for Selena is conspicuous , she calls her almost more than she calls my brother, even has a nickname for her “SeSe”.

The remaining of the day was fun filled, pictures taking here and there with friends , eating and mostly my mum introducing me to all her friends that came , most of whom i didn't even know, and also trying to get me acquainted with my dad's old colleagues, the big men in law.

“I am soo tired ehheh”, my mum said as she threw her self on bed as soon as we got to the hotel room.

“this abuja still have traffic oo , I been think say na only Benin, **u** still have in Lagos Abi ?

“Yes lagos has na mummy , everyone in Nigeria knows that no state has traffic jam like lagos, it's a terrible scene , this one here is nothing sef”.

“Onos this your bed is small”, my mum said while using her hands to straighten the bed sheets. I could not help but roll my eyes at her comment , my mum can be a little exhausting. I had no idea why she decided to come spend the night at my hotel room with me , she had been staying at my aunts who has a place at Apo , since she came to abuja . She had been so enthusiastic

about the ceremony that she came to Abuja four days earlier to prepare everything needed ,and by everything I mean catering service and drinks for her guests.

“mummy why did you not go to aunty Precious house ? I didn’t even know you brought your luggage with you to the venue .”

“are we not going back to Benin tomorrow again? You said you will come and stay few days in Benin before going back to Lagos na Abi?

“Yes, but I thought we will meet at the park .Big joe”

“Is that one not stress,plus you know me Onos i don’t like overstaying at someone’s house, if I had slept there this night that will make it five days oo”

“Ah mummy you know aunty precious won’t mind, plus I don’t know why you had to come four days earlier”

“Ah wa ge meh~”she spoke in our native language

“ so it’s my fault for wanting to make sure your guests had enough food and drinks Abi , eh madam lawyer”

“mami.... , sweetie, obim, the love of my life , thank you very much God bless you and replenish your pockets” , I said teasing my mum . That was a method that had worked for years now , to make her smile anytime she was getting annoyed by me.

“see this one ,thank God you are now a lawyer , you will be the one to replenish my pocket and please , I am not love of your life oo.. go and bring husband, make him love of your life , after all you are now done with school I married two years younger than you”

“Kai mummy, how did we Jump to husband talk just within seconds” I asked wiping makeup of my face , at the dressing table .

“na you sabi go and put hot water for me to bath”

After bathing my mum slept like a baby , and I proceeded to doing same when my best friend and flat mate Tracy called, we spoke for a while she gave me all the latest gist on our infamous neighbor Stanley and his latest girl scuffle . We spoke for length as though we hadn’t spoken some hours back , I really missed her .

“Babes Kunle is giving me ‘I’m about to propose ’vibes oo like he has been acting weird , but good weird, I don’t know if you understand what I’m saying”

smiling i said “ yes i understand awww, anyways you know that I had always been a kunle supporter, from the get go”

“ha ha ha , true. Speaking of boy to the friends I.e boyfriends , how is your boo”

“Fine”, I answered dismissively

“Okay.... , please do and come back Lag is boring without you, I miss your wahala”

“I miss you to , don’t worry next week you will see me , sha cook ofensala for me when I’m about to come” .

How I have missed my bestie’s cooking , I used to think I was a good cook , but Tracy was on a whole different level, she cooks almost all Nigerian soups and cooks them well , she makes all them orishirishi for us to eat , meals that I had never tasted before, snacks, pastries . I have been urging her to open a food business along side her 9- 5 but she has refused to bulge.

“don’t worry naaa , don’t you trust me again , chef extraordinaire just let me know when you’re ready to come so I can go shopping, and cook bombastic , sumptuous meal food for you ” she replied proudly, at that moment I could picture that her proud smile, she always has when she is praising her cooking skills.

Laughing I said “ok madam chef , thank you.”

“you are welcome in advance. Alright lawyer,good night, and tell mumsy I called”

“Alright love good night, she will hear”.

Our call ended, and I immediately went through my contacts and clicked on Franks name contemplating whether or not to press the dial button .

He had not called me through out the day . Not like it was **the** out of the ordinary ,he could get really swamped with work i know, but today was a special day for me, I had sent him a text this morning after being unable to reach him but he had not responded till now. What was the time again, 10:55pm.

So much for having a boyfriend. Suddenly I heard a notification from WhatsApp, think of the devil.

Frank❤️😘

hey love , got your message

Sorry it took a while to respond, had a busy day at work

How was the ceremony?, make sure to send me your cute cute pictures oo❤️, my own personal woman of the law. Have a good night rest will call you tomorrow.

Before I could send a response he was offline . Well atleast he replied. I was tempted to send a long voice note of how annoyed I was that he didn’t call through out the day but was honestly to fatigued to even begin , and I also didn’t want my mum to mistakenly here anything I was in no mood for long talk this night. Guess we will revisit that matter tomorrow or another day , I only had two things on my mind sleep and the fact that I’ll need

to start looking for job , at least before NYSC.

2

My time in Benin may have been Short, but it was fun . Visiting family and catching up with old friends, the only annoying part was the constant reminder from relatives that I'm now very fit for marriage, and my mum trying to play match maker between me and some of her friends sons, despite me telling her I had a boyfriend.

“You want to marry yoruba man” , was always her response, and I didn't quite know if to place it as a question or statement.Regardless of her excesses, I would really miss my mother, she was already preparing to go visit my brother and his wife in the Uk , and I know she would be there for a while.

Living in Lagos can be fun, with its bubbly night life, amazing beaches, many beautiful eateries, and so many fun places to explore, however it's traffic can be very ANNOYING.

I got to Lagos at about 1:36pm , but the traffic from Awoyaya to Shoprite was exasperating , we spent 3 excruciating hours at Sangotedo alone I thank God I used God is good motors at-least their air conditioner, works great.

I finally got home , and before even taking a shower had a good well needed nap.

“wake up” , I heard faintly from my sleep, “i said wake up!!!”I heard again, but this time louder and sat up abruptly , looking confused while scratching my eyes.

“So because you said you will come today, you could not call to tell me you have reached home Abi?”

Tracy said .

“ohhhh, why did you shout like that”, I asked grumbling , with a scowl on my face.

“Who are you squeezing face for? She asked me while pushing my head backwards In a bit to annoy me more .

Smiling with eyes closed I replied “welcome”.

Then we hugged, and she pushed my head again.

“Fish like you, you can’t even say ‘my love thank you for arranging my room for me , and cooking the soup you promised , wait’ She said as if suddenly realizing something , and then studying me head to toe she added ‘ Have you had your bath at all, you never even pull cloth you carry come from airport ”

“park”, I corrected

“Eh? “She asked

“Which airport , it’s GIG motors I used”

Laughing she said “sorry park . Your mates , lawyers are catching flights you are riding bus”

“I don’t blame you, so this is the warm welcome I’m receiving abi . Oya come and be going to your room let me change and go and eat the meal set before kings you have made”.

“Ok I’m kidding, as if you did not miss my trouble, let me also go and shower , then make poundo yam for us to eat , we have catching up to do”. With that she left and I got up from bed , had a warm bath and went to our cozy living room to eat .

We lived in Liberty estate in Sangotedo, a nice estate on the Lagos island close to Lagos business school. Our house wasn’t super big but it was lovely, a two bedroom apartment with a kitchen and a living room. We had two neighbors, the infamous Stanley , who said He is in tech and works from home , but we all knew he did yahoo .

Then the lovely newly weds , Bright and Dorathy or as the love to introduce themselves the ‘Nzes’. I don’t even know what they do, and have not really probed them Into knowing , because I honestly don’t care to know but they leave home early and come back late , and are always together .

Stanley would say “it’s fresh marriage that is sweetening them , give them 2years, all these things will stop” . He has always been a pessimist, so it wasn’t something we took seriously.

Anyways, we had our dinner and as usual Tracy did not disappoint. The food was correct.

“tomorrow is last Sunday of the month oo , what are your department people wearing”. Tracy

asked me

“I don’t know oo , I haven’t even opened our group chat since I traveled”.

“oh , why though that’s not good. Our unit sewed one native like that . Me I made a top, if you see it eh very fine , when I stand and say ‘ sir please sit here or ma here please, they will obey the servant of the lord , because my beauty alone will direct them”

We both burst out laughing. I remember when we both decided to be workers in church and I went to media unit , and Tracy ushering unit with her aim being to confuse congregation with her beauty, serving the Lord was also a pivotal reason but the former was a driving force .

She had said ‘if I don’t find man from this unit , I will change unit’ , and as she predicted she met Kunle in church. Their first encounter was when she ushered him to sit on a chair, but he refused that it was too forward and sat somewhere completely different. After service he had gone to apologize to her and that was how their beautiful relationship began.

Tracy and I were polar opposite, she was very social, had lots of friends and could blend at any social scene with ease, a typical extrovert . I on the other hand was quiet, had a handful of friends and would usually study my environs before interacting , an introvert. Although I like to say I am a introvert with a sprinkle of extrovert.

“I will just wear, that my white silk gown”I said.

“Oh that fine gown , niceeee”her phone started ringing, looking at the caller ID she said smiling

“Oh my dad is calling” , but didn’t pick up .

“I am vexing with him small , he promised me cash but didn’t send it , saying he will send it on Monday”

rolling my braids into a bun , I looked at her

“Seriously, that why you won’t pick his call, Monday is just next tomorrow ” , with a shrug she said

“I will , let it ring the third time”

On her cells third ring, she finally picked and formed a sad voice as she spoke , to her dad .
“hello daddy , I’m not fine ooo.....”

Sunday was upon us , and we woke up early so not to meet any traffic, we attended Living Waters which was at Chevron , quite a distance from Sangotedo especially if there is traffic.

I grew up in a typical Nigerian Christian household ,we had to go to church on Sunday whether we liked it or not , and had to do morning devotion whenever we were on holiday and weekends.My dad was a deacon in church,and my mom the women leader.

As a young girl, I knew I had to behave my self, don't tell lies , don't steal, obey my parents, basically the Ten Commandments of the Bible , and I prayed occasionally that was it . But in my university days , after I lost one of my dear friends, and was crying and praying to God I had a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit , and the desire to know God more was built In my heart.

I rededicated my life to Christ, and made a promise to myself and God that I will be a true Christian. It certainly hasn't been an easy journey, but I'm glad nonetheless.

Service was amazing, I sat amongst the congregation and not where I usually sit with my unit members. Pastor Tayo ,sermon was titled "You're not a mistake" . He was a brilliant man of God , I like to refer him as a teacher of the gospel, because he never sugarcoated the Bible to fit people's needs, he dished it as it should be , but in a loving way.

"Moses said, Lord I have a problem with my speech I will not be able to talk , but the lord said to him who has made man's mouth? Who made the dumb or deaf , or the seeing or blind ,go I will be with you"Pastor Tayo said quoting Exodus 4:11-12 "your lack of eloquence will be used for my glory... said the Lord . We complain God why am I not this , why am I not that . Why am I not as tall as Seyi . Stephanie is because seyi is meant to excel as a super model and you are supposed to be an investment banker, do you need height in investment bankinggggg" , he said , not really asking the church, but people still shouted

"No!!" ,

Some said . "Stephanie to the No", and began laughing .

He continued "as Christians ,representative of Christ here on earth, do you have any idea whom you are and the person backing you? , God the creator of the world, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob , the God that walked on water , that raised the dead , that made the sun stand still , ohhhh shabayeba" ,

"Ride on PT" , the guy sitting beside me said , nodding his head simultaneously. I've now adjusted to the Lagos lifestyle of abbreviating Pastors name, because back home in Edo state it wasn't common at all . I remember when I had just moved down to Lagos to begin law school and at the close of church service one day ,some lady whom I'm guessing is part of follow up unit , met me when I was waiting amidst first timers and asked if I enjoyed PT's teaching, I was so

confused I began to think of what PT could mean. Physio therapist? .. Until she clarified herself and said Pastor Tayo ,that was when it hit me .

Anyways service was beautiful, I particularly enjoyed praise and worship, and went home with this word from PT “ we may not see it now , but God has created us for something big”.

As I swayed my way through the crowd out of church , admiring one ladies Ankara dress , I felt a nudge on my shoulders and was stunned to see Frank when i turned . Yep Frank ,my boyfriend.

“hi” , he said holding my hands and pulling me towards the exit.

finally coming to a halt by his Toyota Camry .

“Ok..... this is a surprise”, i said.

smiling and showing that his beautiful set of teeth he said “ that was the plan”, planting a kiss on my forehead , which made me look around as if trying to avoid paparazzi from capturing the moment .

“How did you know I was going to be in church, plus didn’t you say you didn’t fancy Pentecostal church”

“Nope . I never said that . I only said I prefer my Catholic Church, i mean I grew up there , soooo”, he said while arranging my hair bun. “ I really missed you”

I’m certain I was blushing a little, I had missed him too but wasn’t in the mood to admit it yet , because I was supposed to be mad at him , so I scoffed .

“Why... na babe, I’m serious”

“You’re serious. Frank I’m not going to smile and pretend as if I’m happy with you . You’ve literally been ignoring my calls ever since I traveled , and rarely called back . Just some texts you send at the end of the day with excuses. I get it that you may be busy, honestly I do . But... make the efforts.I was literally missing you and thinking about you . That was why I made those calls, but you.. you..” I noticed him looking down at me , grinning.

“What ?” I asked, wondering what was amusing.

“so you missed me and thought about me...”

God... his smile . I loved it .

“Go joor” , this time I couldn’t help but smile.

“So, I wanted to take you to lunch”.he said looking at his watch, the beautiful Rolex I saved up to buy him for his birthday . ‘it’s just past 11 am ,but knowing you , I am pretty sure you have not eaten anything”.

That last statement he made was facts, I was actually really hungry, and girl does not play with her food.

“I was looking for you , lover girl” Tracy said as she approaches us .

“not knowing you were with man. Frank Frank how far” , she said giving Frank a side hug.

“I Dey.... ,longest time” , Frank replied

“Why e no go long . We Dey see you ?”

“ it’s not like that at all , it’s work”

“Norma tori. Anyways it nice seeing you again”,

Facing me she said “ok babes , I was looking for you so we can go home together, because Mrs Onoma wants to follow me oo , with her children!!, you know what that means”

“Ayaa dont worry you will survive”, i said to reassure her.

The whole church knew Mrs Onoma as the talkative . She could talk for hours nonstop. And it was as if she past the traits to her offspring. Whenever Tracy , drove us to church, during closing hours we usually elude her , just for peace and quiet. So I completely understand my friends frustration.

“I will in the name of the God of living Waters and Ushering unit. Ok bye” , she said giving me a quick hug and then left .

“Bye Bye” Frank said to her , but she completely ignored him. She probably didn’t hear though.

“she didn’t hear” , I quickly said noticing his face

“yeah sure . Ok so enter the car let me take you to celebrate. lawyer ma”, he added with a little bow .

We both entered the car and he drove off . He said we were going close , I mean my church was at the heart of lekki where all the nice restaurants were so I got it .

I silently prayed it wasn’t going to be Friezies kitchen. I really do love the place , couples had ‘their spot’ all the time and I wasn’t against that idea but we have visited there one to many times, the rate at which we went , all the staffs were beginning to know us , and it was almost as if he didn’t want us going anywhere else on purpose, as though he was hiding us . I am a lawyer soo , maybe I’m just over analyzing like I typically do.

Though there was this restaurant that newly opened at admiralty way , that I had hinted to him on multiple occasions that I was dying to try . I pray we go there .

But opps , as his car took a turn the road became familiar, the GTBank , the suya place ,and those beautiful yellow trumpets flowers by the road , we soon arrived at Friezies.

“Oh good day , we missed your faces oo”

Favour, the bubbly waiter received us warmly ,while ushering us to now our usual sitting spot .

“it’s really nice seeing you both , it’s been a while I was even thinking maybe you people

have abandoned us , or God forbid breakup” , she continued as we sat down.

“Ah no is just ...” , Frank was saying, but Favour wasn’t done talking.

“because even my colleagues noticed it , we were like that fine miss Onomen and her boyfriend don’t come here again ... so I was low key worried, because two of you are so adorable, It would have really pained me like how Selena Gomez and the weekend break up Pained me.... , ok sorry I don’t want to start talking to much. Before you order food what drink should I bring”.she asked looking at i and Frank , smiling.

As if trying to confirm that she was really done talking we both just looked at her eyes wide open, without answering her question.

“ Smoothie, fruit juice.... Wine ... anything?”

she asked again .

“Ok .. I will have margarita ... two please” Frank said.

“No babes it has tequila, you know I don’t...”I was trying to remind him that I don’t consume any form of alcohol.

“Baby, is just little alcohol na”he said

“I know,but ..”

“ or sir , madam I can go and come back If you like or should i bring your usual smoothie ma” she asked facing me

“Yes please, thank you”

With that she left to go bring our orders . Franks demeanor suddenly changed, he picked his phone and was scrolling through, not paying me any attention.We sat in silence, not the usual comfortable silence, this was rather unsettling, so I had to break it .

“Frank”, I called .

“Yeah ..” he answered, not looking away from his phone.

“Are you good?”

“of course why not, don’t I look good?”he added this time looking at me .

“actually no, you ..”

We were suddenly distracted by another waiter , who brought our drinks and gave us a menu for om which we chose what we wanted.

I chose their delicious Schezwan rice , which was basically fried rice , with vegetables and some special sauce , while Frank chose spaghetti carbonara , also just another elegant name for creamy spaghetti , eggs, bacon and parmigiana. Ok maybe his own was actually really worth it’s fancy name , because I had no idea what parmigiana was .

“Soo...” , I said in a bid to continue our conversation, after the waiter left .

“So ... what?”

“common Frank ... you clearly seemed upset after favour left , you know I don't take alcohol”

“Why would you assume that I was upset”

“Your facial expression, gave it away”

“well.. I wasn't upset, I just forgot that you don't consume alcohol , of which I still do not understand why . But really I'm not upset, it's just...., never mind” . He paused and look towards the elderly couple that passed, whom were followed by the waiter with our food order .

“Frank , I mind so go on” i said

“Babes , there's no need ok let's just eat and catch up . No need to argue”

“This is us having a conversation, you know ..catching up”

“Well I hate this type of catching up... so how was ,abuja, Benin,your mum , everything just gist me”

As much as I wanted to settle whatever thought he had , I knew Frank, once he pushed an issue that was it . I was only scared that one day all this piled up issues with lead to a tornado.Well not the literal sense, but the picture should be clear.

He succeeded, we forgot about it and just had beautiful conversations. Frank wasn't a typical conversationalist but I was , it was kind of a love language.So whenever he engaged In my long talks I was always happy.

I remember our first encounter, I had come visiting Tracy during her NYSC days in Lagos , August 15th 2015 to be exact , being new to Lagos she gave me her work address to come meet up with her . Tracy's dad pulled some strings and got her to work at an advertising agency as an intern, which happened to be the same office where Frank worked.

I was casually sitting in the waiting area when he came in . He noticed the TV was off and decided to put it on , “what channel would you prefer?” He had asked, I told him any was fine , and wasn't really bothered about it being turned off.

“you seemed bored , sooo that's why I'm asking. You're not pressing your phone or anything”

“Yes my phone got stolen” I had answered.

“Oh sorry..in this Lagos one has to be careful” . That was how we got talking, we spoke at length and later said byes as Tracy came .I was surprised when Tracy came from work few days later to say that he had been asking her for my number.

Some days after I finally let her give him , we had our first date at Santa Cruz beach, which was really cool, and about a month and some dates later he asked me to be his girlfriend and I agreed. He was good looking, not Shemar Moore kind of handsome , more like Tyrese Gibson just not as tall .He was slender, darkskinned , bald, he had a goatee and dark manly stubble on his

cheeks . He had this debonair character, that was quite admirable , and is so career driven which I also loved at first but it's beginning to be worrisome.

Overall we had a good time, after we left Frezies we stopped at the suya place , which was close by and got some to take home. The drive home was peaceful and long , as usual Lagos traffic doesn't disappoint. He dropped me and drove off .

I entered to see Tracy watching My Suspicious partner on Netflix.

“Traitor like you”, i said

She just laughed and said “how was your date”

“Good, I had really missed him”

“Oh nice”, she said casually and continued watching ‘our’ movie, while eating groundnut and biscuit.

Perching on the arm side of the sofa , which she sat while flinging bags to the floor, and grabbing the bottle of groundnut to munch on I noticed her side gaze.

“What.. ?” I asked inquisitively

“so did he apologize?”, she Asked

“yeah , he did”

“And you've forgiven him?”

“Yessss , shouldn't I have?”

she doesn't answer.

“He apologized, he was busy with work..., so I understood him” I said

“He was busy with work? , he said that to you?”she asked almost as though I was in an interrogation room.

“Yes he did . Why ?”

“Nothing, just wanted to be sure . So long as he now knows how to prioritize you .”

“Well .. I guess we will see . So see ,I said handing her the bag of suya. ‘I brought meat’ , I added with a double wink .

“ ahh correct girl, it's plenty oo . I guess na to use the remaining ones run noodles tomorrow. Breakfast ready”

“ ahhhh chef ma , anything you say” i said hailing her , while raising both my hand.

“ see you , me that Is going to work in the morning, you will be the one to cook it”

“Thank you for reminding me that I don't have job o”

“Aww my love , sorry you know you will get soon . I'm sure one of those mails you sent while in Benin will have a good response”

“Amen oo , at least before NYSC , which may be like next year ending. I need a job to sustain me in these Lagos . I can't call my bro to be supporting me again naaa , someone that is expecting a

baby . His family is expanding.”

“True” ,

“It’s not like my jewelry business is moving set”, I said gloomy.

“Babes be positive, ah ah you that had always been the optimistic one”. Tracy said “what that Bible verse you usually quote, Phillipians what set”

“1:16” in said

“Yesss recite it ..,”she urged like a school teacher

Smiling I said “being confident of this , that he who began a good work in you will carry it onto completion , until the day of Christ Jesus”

“Ok and that your other lovely very verse in Luke...”, again urging me to go on

I just couldn’t help but smile , so cheerfully i went on “ 1 : 45 , blessed is she who the lord has blessed , for he will do all that he promised her”

“And he will .ok so stop whining like the Israelites and please pass me holandia from Fridge, let me use and top down this suya”

After , passing her the drink i went in to freshen up and noticed a message notification from my church department. Which read

LW MediaFamily 

Pst ISI

Good day house this is to remind us of our . Prison outreach tomorrow By 12pm , pls let’s all endeavor to be at church premises, before then because a bus will convey us there . Thank you and have a good .

I had totally forgotten about this outreach, I remember it was first discussed at one of our unit meetings last month. Thank God I opened the group chat , I would have been upset if I had missed this . I couldn’t wait to see an actual prison .

3

I was woken up by the sound of plates clattering in the kitchen, it was like they were having a wrestling match amongst themselves . Stepping in to understand what was going on I saw Tracy , the architect of the noise .

“What are you doing, this early morning, I’m sure the Nzes must have woken up before their usual time , and they are never late ”I said

“wetin consine me ... if they wake up now and prepare early is it a bad . You sef , do you know what the time is ?”, without letting me answer she went on

“6:15 am. It’s Monday Onomen. I’m just praying the road is clear, thank God Kunle is coming to pick me up”

“awwwn really,that’s so nice . He’s moved to Ikota right? Awwwwn so he will drive down to Sangotedo to pick you up . How cute”I said , in sincere admiration for their love .

visibly blushing, my friend said “well..... what can I say his in love and so am I . Who won’t be in love with all of this”, she made a twirl , and touched her curves, giving what I assume to be waacking dance moves.

She was right though my friend was really pretty, she was a size 12 , light skinned, tall , had killer curves that most women would go under the knife for . I’ve always told her she has a resemblance with American musician Ciara square shaped face , pointed nose, full wide lips and all just with more curves , but above all she was an amazing being.

I on the other hand well I think, (scratch that) i know I’m good looking , I am told I categorize under the skin shade of milk chocolate , a typical size eight, somewhat petite, because I refused to be called short. I have really small full lips , oval face and a wide forehead, which I’ve come to love . I may not have killer curves but I love my figure nonetheless. People gym to have the kind of body I happened to be blessed naturally with by God ,so yeah I’m good.

“ok I need to be on my way , Kunle just texted . He’s in the estate , I left noodles for you ”

Tracy said , while buckling her Zara flats .

“Awwn you really made the noodles. This girl the way I will spoil you with good things in this life eh”

I teased, but was actually really serious.

“well”she said while picking up her hand bag and lunch box . ‘We still have forever baby..... so better make that kudi fast. Hello....” miming some words which I guess was , Kunle is around. She waved and left the house .

Of course the first thing I did was rush to the kitchen to devour the food , I then proceeded to doing some chores and my morning devotion. Afterwards I quickly showered and dressed up in a pair of jeans and a beautiful polo top I got from one of my favorites Christian clothing brand which had a part of Mark 9 : 22 written on it ‘all things are possible for the one who believes’. I topped up my dressing with my black and white vans sneakers and a cute bag pack , then packed my braids in a high ponytail. Satisfied with my looks , I contemplated using an Uber of commercial vehicles and decided on the latter at least It will save me money I don’t have.

After about an hour I got to church, checked the time and it was 11:29am.

Entering the premises I couldn’t help but notice the buffet set up how nice, but I was too full to swallow anything down. I made my way to where my colleagues were.

“See who we have here ...” Danielle said as she approached me ,

“Onomen , our lawyer Congratulations. I called you the day of you call to bar you didn’t respond” our head of media unit Mr Kingsley said , as he gulped his tea.

“ oh I’m so sorry I must have missed your call , but I saw how I was celebrated my so many of you’ ‘this time I spoke to all who cared to listen , because most persons seem to be enjoying their brunch way to much.

“thank you”

“You’re welcome” came like a mini echo from my little family. I really do appreciate my people in media unit , I came to meet a unit that love what they do, love and genuinely care for its members and above all love the lord . I may not be a very social person, but I’ve always loved editing and seeing myself talk behind a camera, I’ve so procrastinated on setting up my own YouTube channel, but I knew I had to use my skills for God .That was one of the reasons I joined media unit.

Now holding onto my hands , Danielle dragged me to where she and another of my favorite person Tobi were sitting.

“My guy how far na?” Tobi asked as I sat down .

“I Dey.. how you , how is married life treating you”, I asked smiling, on seeing his ring remembering that just a month ago this dude tied the knot with his college sweetheart Mariam.

“Fineee, she just traveled back to calabar to conclude on her transfer to Lagos”, he said excitement written all over his face.

“Oh yeah , you did mention the transfer” Danielle said.

“Aww I’m happy for you two . Mr married man”, we all paused and all eyes went to the bus , after hearing the loud horn , followed by Mr Kingsley voice “ok please we should all be done eating now , the bus is leaving in 10 minutes so anyone done eating Can enter”.

“ you will use your car ba .”

Danielle asked Tobi

“Yeah I think so, I wasn’t so sure if I should before but seeing that so many people showed up for the outreach I may as well use my car na , more space for others in the bus”

“Ok in that case we will ride with you , right Onome?”, she said , more like a suggestion than a question, of which I had no problem with, being in a less congested space is what I need after my stressful journey down here, so I answered

“Yes we will , shey your AC is working because with the way I was compressed inside that bus ehh and this hot weather, I need better air conditioner”

Smiling Tobi said “yes it’s working’ looking at the direction of the now almost full bus, he added ‘alright let’s go so I can trail the bus, I’m not so familiar with the road to prison”

“No be only trail na trailer” Danielle said In pidgin language, all we all burst out laughing.

Soon we all headed to Tobi’s car and followed the bus as it went to the prison, Kirikiri female prison to be precise.

I had heard so much of the famous kirikiri especially the maximum prison that ,housed some big names in Nigeria like Shehu Yar’adua , Obasanjo , Adela Kuti and so many others, so I was a little psyched to see how it was . I thank God it wasn’t such a dreadful ride,I had thought it will be a two or three hours trip but it was just approximately an hour.

“God thank you for preventing traffic for us” I had said under my breath as we arrived.

Our supervisor had already informed the prison staffs of our visit, so as soon as we arrived we were ushered in to the waiting area where we were searched, which is a normal routine done ,

was then escorted by a female prison warden to different sections on the prison. One of the first things I noticed was how serene the environment was ,maybe it was because it occupied just female inmates, but I had expected it to be a little chaotic , to much watching of Prison break may be responsible for my thinking.

It had good looking structures and carefully landscaped garden within its vicinity ,Lovely quotes from renowned philosophers and world leaders adorn it's walls .Without being told I knew we were approaching the catering unit as , we were hit by an amazing aroma .

We had met most of the female inmates busy , in their various vocational workshops , some reading, some tailoring and making beads. The warden gave us a brief history of the prison , how it was built in the year 1963 and was the only female prison in Nigeria for the longest time , and some other things which i didn't bother to pay much attention to .

After our tour, we headed to an open area where inmates were then called to assemble . Toyosi one of our organisers introduced us to the women with her posh accent, then called Mr Kingsley to the podium to begin worship.

“I for like take praise and worship oo” came a voice from amongst the women.

“yes she sabi sing well well , she be choir mistress for church, before she go steal church money” her sit mate said and they all started laughing.

Mr Kingsley asked her to come , to the front to lead and she did after introducing herself as Mrs Ignatius .

“Wow” , Danielle said as Mrs Ignatius sang further.

I could relate to her , because the praise session was electrifying, the women were sang with so much energy and joy i could imagine the host of heavens jubilating and singing along. After that Tobi shared a sermon with them , and some of the inmates even rededicated their lives to God , it was a beautiful site .

We gave them gifts and was dispersed in groups to talk to some of them one on one .

Myself and of course Danielle were paired together. to speak to some young ladies and encourage them . I couldn't help but notice that about 70 percent of the women there were young ladies, and they looked well . They had just few elderly women, one of whom I had observed being awfully quiet as she wrote in a book .

After our discussion with the ladies I couldn't help but ask Yiwande one of the ladies I was assigned to about her .

“ Oh that woman.... Her name is Ada, that's how she is oo very quiet , and she can like to advice us ehh as if it's not all of us that is in this prison” , she said so nonchalantly

“ me it has not been long I came to this prison ooo , and soon sef by the grace of God I will go , it's because I put poison inside my boyfriend girlfriend food, and they catch me that's why I'm

here” she added,

“Ehhh you” I was saying but she interrupted

“Ahh it’s ok I know it’s wrong, I will not do it again, ta ni pke they have even marry sef . But Femi broke my heart shaaaaa men are scum , eheee as we were saying sef . That madam Ada don Dey here reach almost thirty years. People say she kill her whole family because no body don come visit her since , me Dey even pity her self, see how she fine as she old”

“ oh really..” I said

“ yes oo , she don to stay for this prison , her , Mama Bode .. that one na witch, Mama Chukwuna , Mrs Ojo , Mrs Felix , Abeg them plenty small But her I pity pass nobody don come see her , and she be like pure person, she get pure heart” she said that last part with a very serious face .

My eyes went to her direction and at the moment and we locked eyes for a while before she looked away and stood up to leave the gathering. Something in me was moved by her story and as soon as she made to leave I went to her .

“Good afternoon Ma”, I said in the most polite way possible

“Hi” , she said and turned to face me . “Good afternoon” she added smiling, and It was one of the most genuine smiles I had ever seen.

“Thank you all for the gift and your coming to visit us” she said further

“Of course ma , it’s our little way of demonstrating Gods love”, i said

“Which is really commendable, i like to see young people doing Gods work”

“Thank you ma , I hope you are good”I asked

“I am ,not every time one get to have visitors, so when I do have some people around I feel really happy”

“Awww , we will try visiting more , or rather I will even if it’s to say hi to you specifically”

“Would you?, that will be nice but you really don’t have to time is not on

“ I would love to , and you don’t have to worry about time I will make the time”, I said not knowing why I just said that , but a part of me felt like i really needed to do something for her even if it’s just visiting.

After some more talks with Mrs Ada and some other ladies we called it a day and went home .

“Danielle you and Onomen , didn’t want to leave again Abi” Tobi said as we drove back

“ I noticed it , they were gisting with the inmates like they want to join them” , Mike another member of media unit said as he now carpoled with us back home .

“Guy some of their stories will make you laugh , I tell you. Very funny reasons as to why they are in prison. Most of the girls below 27 are there because they caught them doing ashawo

work. It's just some that really committed terrible crime , Danielle said

Like that woman you were talking to Onomen , I heard she killed her husband”

“Killed her husband?”i had asked ,

“Yes , the was what some inmates said. They said even though she had been convicted , she still insists that she did not kill him . But she really has this innocent look to her oo , then again you can't judge a book by it's cover ” Danielle said

“Yeah....” I said and went quiet as I thought of how true it could be that she really did kill her husband. The ride home was quiet on my part, although my friends kept talking about whom they spoke with and what they thought of one case of the other .

Soon we got to , Tobis estate at Ikate , and all entered separate vehicles to take us to our various homes. After freshening up on reaching home , I made eba to eat , and put some for Tracy to eat when she got back from work, I checked my emails to see if I had gotten any emails from some of the companies I sent my resume to , but still nothing not even a rejection email, at-least then I will know that my email was even read . Exhausted from the day I retired early , but my head kept going back to Mrs Ada, something about her imprisonment felt wrong.

4

A week had past since our visit to the prison, and almost three weeks since I began applying to jobs , and i finally got a response from one of the biggest law firm in Lagos .Timeyi and associates law firm . The notification was a lot scary to open than I imagined, after saying a silent prayer to God i braced myself and opened the email.

Wednesday,3rd August at 8:57am

From : HR Timeyi and associates

To : Onomen Iyore

Subject: Application for position of legal officer

Dear Onomen ,

We sincerely thank you for taking the time to apply for the position of legal Officer at our firm , but unfortunately we won't be moving forward with your candidacy . We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

kind regards

T . Jenkins(HR T&A)

Sighing I closed my laptop and fell on my back on the bed .

“ kind regards my foot, you people will break someone's heart and add kind regards, as if it will make everything feel better, ” , I muttered to myself.

“Mchewwww”

I was jolted from my self loathing by the sound of my ringtone, checked the caller ID to see Kunle Tracy's boo calling . Was her phone switched off was the first thought that popped up in my head , as I swiped the green call banner on my cellphone.

“Hi Kunle” , I said , trying to feign excitement.

“Hello Onomen , hope you are doing well?”he asked

“yes I am . Good morning”

“Good morning” he replied , and after a little pause continued

“Ok , I'm sure you must be wondering why I am calling you at this early, well I have a favor to ask of you”

“Ok shoot”

“well I'm planning on proposing to Tracy ...”

I literally squealed in excitement. Sorry to his eardrums .

“Oh my God Kunle.... really?” I asked , for him to reiterate what he just said .

“Yes’ he answered ,I knew he was smiling through the phone . ‘But I'll need your help , to distract her and get her to wear a red gown . She had casually mentioned that she will love to wear red when getting proposed to , and there's this store on ig that she loves to shop from , but I want to go there in person to pick something really nice for her , so I want us to meet up so we can go there together ”

“ awww Kunle that's so thoughtful. I think I know the store you're talking of it's at VI right, MisTee boutique”

“Yes , that's it”

“Ok no problem, I’m actually very free at the moment so when would you like to meet up?”

“Perfect, I can send an Uber to your place to pick you up anytime you are ready . It’s that fine ?”

“oh no , no worries I can use bus to get there don’t worry about me.”

“please I insist Onomen, I’m the one taking your time so this is the least I can do . You have no option now apart from saying yes , so just let me know when you’re ready so I can book a ride” he said .

Hmm if only he knew how my initial refusal was just courtesy. Deep down I was dancing with joy, I am really low on cash this period so anything to cut cost goes a long way ,plus it’s raining and what better way to convey oneself than in a private car and not Lagos bus so, thank you Kunle .

The call ended and I try to do a few things , from my morning devotionals and prayer , then I had few clients orders for jewelries that needed to be sent out , so I packaged them and called a dispatch rider to help disperse them to be the respective customers.

Afterwards I got ready and in no time I was on my way to meet up with Kunle . To think Tracy was right to be suspicious of Kunle proposing anytime soon , I can’t help but wonder if Frank even plan on proposing anytime soon , he had mentioned getting married and I specifically told him I get into any relationship with the endpoint of getting married, so I guess we are kinda on the same boat, big emphasis on KINDA because he has really withdrawn of recent. I may pay him a surprise visit after I’m done with Kunle , after all he was working from home today so perfect.

The Uber came to a halt at the entranceway to MisTee’s boutique. This was actually my first time here so I was just admiring the surroundings, it seemed really nice had this Disney princess slash Barbie kind of appearance with all the pinkness and flowers displayed at almost every corner .

I was about walking towards the building when out of nowhere a car splashed water on me , it took a minute register what had happened , I was to stunned to even move as if time was paused and I was frozen in one spot just staring at my shoes.

I didn’t even realize that the driver had come out of the vehicle until he spoke .

“I am so sorry”,

Hmmm thank you for ruining my finesse, was the thought I had as he spoke and just continued wiping my jeans with my hands. How embarrassing and in this posh side of VI .

“ here” he added giving me a small towel .

without bothering to look up, I took it from him and cleaned my self.

“ next time please be more careful” , the oga said again. Careful !!, I thought as I paused to register what he just said, ok now I need to see who this prick is . Lord forgive me for that thought.

“careful?” I asked looking him dead in the eyes

“Mister , you were the person that splashed water on me if anyone needs to be careful here it’s you. Next time yeah , try carefully studying your surroundings before you drive just an advice.Thanks for your towel”

I added and walked away.

All this Lagos big boys , instead of him to apologize... oh wait, did he ?. Well, whatever but he should go and read and learn to use the word careful in the right context, because this clearly wasn’t.

Entering into the boutique, I approached the reception and asked for the restroom because I needed to wash my hands, after that I then called Kunle to let him know I was here , of which he directed me to where he was seated.

On seeing him I couldn’t help but laugh, he was seated on a heap of red outfits , well not literally but clothes where littered everywhere.

“It’s not funny oo, I should have just waited for you , but for some reason my friend said we should try looking for an outfit for her ourselves as men , but ehhe Tracy I’m tired . Now the Oga has left me here ...”

still laughing I added “ but you seem to be doing well na , at-least you got the color right... Infact you got it right in so many shades”

His death glare was even more hilarious, he seemed like an angry teddy bear. Tracy usually tease him of how he looked like a panda, he was not exactly fat , fat but he was so chubby. If I’m being honest his body type was difficult to explain , and I’m not saying this in a bad way , but it was just fact ..Kunle was a cute Teddy Panda but about 6 ft 2.

Ok I had to be serious. “Alright I’m sorry...” I said trying to be put a poker face .

“Let’s dig into this heap of redness shall we” I added, which made him giggle, and digging we did .

After a while we settled on the most beautiful silk dress I had ever had the pleasure of holding. And the most annoying part was out of the thousand dresses Mr Kunle picked he didn’t see this gorgeousness just laying on a mannequin .

I may be exaggerating but touching the dress alone was magical. It was completely smooth to touch, with a soft almost waxy feeling, it was a below mid calf Emma silk dress, with a just above mid calf but not really tight high slit and a deep cowl neckline. It was the perfect size, the perfect gown most girls would love to be proposed to in, and most importantly it was just perfect for my bestie. With our proposal gown we happily left the boutique.

After shopping we made plans on how to get Tracy to the proposal site without suspecting us as he drove, thank God she was a girl that never plays with her manicure and pedicure, so her nails were already nicely done if not telling her to do them would have been a major sellout.

The plan was already in motion as Kunle had already met up with some of her colleagues at work to say they will be having a work dinner this weekend, and they had to wear red. Dude went as far as printing out flyers that he intends dropping off at her work, in disguise of coming to see her.

“God when” was my thought as he broke down his plans, and I studied the flyers

“Ok but you are definitely not giving everyone flyers yeah” I asked

“No just her team members, I met up with her boss Mrs IJeoma very nice woman. She said not to worry that she will share it amongst other team members but let them know the reason why and that’s it fake and in case people from other departments ask they should say it’s a team private dinner”

“Oh wow you’ve really planned this thing oo” I said proudly oo

“Yes oo, you know Tracy can be so observant, if I casually say babe I got a dress for you so we can have dinner together and she sees it red ... ah ti pari.... it’s finished. Plus a friend of mine was also really involved in this planning oo, he even came up with this whole office dinner idea”

“awww really that so nice of him”

“Yeah ... really great guy. Emm..... so where did you say you were stopping, so I don’t pass the bus stop you know how this LASMAN can be”, he said.

“that’s true, I will drop opposite Freedom way, you’re going to ikate now right, Tracy workplace?”

“Yeah”

In no time we were at my bus stop and I came down from his vehicle, I had sincerely missed my boo and I hope he will be as thrilled to see me.

‘Or should I call him’, I muttered to myself. Thank God the security guards at his estate know me so I won’t need to call him, before they let me in. I quickly got some fruits for him, and a parfait which I’ve made him love. I would always ask him to buy one for me anytime he was coming to see me at law school ever since I discovered Kem’s fruities so close to his estate, from there he got to love it too.

This man has really experienced the good things of life thanks to me .

As I entered his compound, the first thing I looked for and thankfully saw was his car . He was definitely at home , but Saheed wasn't. It was so unusual not to see Saheed his guard at his security post , If it was a Friday that was normal but today a Wednesday was weird. I made a mental note to ask Frank about him , and I bought him parfait too .

I've always loved how serene Franks compound was , it was almost like his didn't have a neighbor even though he did , and they had children.

If it was in Benin a compound that had children must identify as a compound with children, especially where we stayed before my mother completed my dad's house. It was wild , a typical example of Fuji house of commotion, just that in this case it was Fuji compound of commotion. Fights here and there , shouts of mothers , quarrels between husband and wife , cries of babies it definitely was an experience .

I meant to knock on his door but surprisingly it was opened. Ok.... that to was not typical of Frank , Mr security conscious.

I carefully opened the door, and shut it just as quietly, and tiptoed into the living room, his TV was on but no one was there .

'ah ah where is this man' I said to my self as I walked to his kitchen, saw empty wraps of noodles , and plates in the sink , dropping the items I had bought I left there .

As I did more search i went to his room, and I could hear his voice, or wait actually I could hear voices. It didn't seem like he was on the phone and it was his voice and a lady's.

Ok now someone may have explaining to do , or it could be Mrs Emem , she usually come to clean his house ; I checked my watch and it was past almost three , she's usually done by 1pm .

As I approached the door, and placed my ears to eavesdrop I heard what I praying not to , it definitely wasn't Mrs Emem , she didn't sound so high pitched and cacophonous .

“ oh babes stop nowwww i need to go before the security comes back” the lady said

“ no stay a little longer, just spend the night” Frank said .

“ I can't stay over this night oo , what if your so called 'GF' comes over , or Saheed sees me”, the lady said, clearly making a mockery of his GF , which I assume to be girlfriend, whom is of course me , or at least I hope I'm actually the girlfriend she's referring to .

“It's Saheed babes , and you Know Onomen can't even compare to you , I've been meaning to break up with her it's just not that easy”

Yep , I'm the girlfriend.

“ really Frank , a girl that i don't even know why you're with , she doesn't have sex with you or take care of you as much as I do”

“ I will break up with her I promise, she's soft and”

Okay, I have heard enough . Me Edo girl that they are calling soft , this guy never see craze , I pushed the door open and entered. I didn't even know when I started clapping and when I reached his dressing table and sat on it . They were both dazed.

"I ... I.., should go" the lady said stuttering

"Oh now you stutter eh , when you were listing all your accomplishments as babe of the year, you didn't stutter."

" oh please I'm not going to be here for this", she said

"Yeah you should go , I will just be here a minute anyways, I just need to break up with your new boyfriend then you can come back , but for now get your bags and get out".

Such a good girl. She did take her bags , and moved with almost the speed of light. Now is just me and dear Frank.

"I can explain" he said starting with the famous line created by douchebags .

"Yeah go on ..." i said, waiting to hear the lies he was about to spew.

"It's not how it seems ok , My love. You know I love you. Angel means nothing to me I was just tired"

Oh Angel, what a sweet name.

"You were tired . You should have said so .. you could have said you didn't want to be in a relationship with me anymore, than cheating on me and telling the person you cheated on me with that I mean nothing to you . When In my head you're my love. What where you tired of?" I asked

" I wasn't, Onomen. And you know I love you . Tega means nothing to me ..."

"Oh there's a Tega too . So there's an Angel , Tega , who else , Funke , Hauwa, Chioma ... eh tell me since we are going full geopolitical"

" Onomen ... stop"

"No you tell me Frank , i really cared for you why.,"

"just stop ok" he said trying to hug me, and boy.. was i trying real hard not to cry , because I can be hysterical , so I pushed him away .

"ok enough!!" He said suddenly turning into someone else.

" what is it , no tell me what were we even doing. You are my problem . You're no fun , the only idea of fun you know is spending time together watching movies, reading books, going to cinema , beach restaurants, calls , unending conversations and from one church program to the other , it's exhausting "

Where is these coming from , I thought , he had never complained about it not even when I asked.

"but .. you didn't say anything , and i always tried to do other things with you" I said

" other things like what , pray , follow me to work outings , how about sex , how about going

clubbing together, drinking and occasionally smoking ...”

“Occasionally smoking?”

“yes .. do you know what my guys do with their babes , some of them even bring more girls for their boyfriends to sleep with , THAT IS FUN” . He made emphasis on the last bit and hit the table I was sitting on , and inch more and he would have hit me”

The man I was looking at wasn't the Frank I knew, it seemed like an alter ego. To think he had been bottling all these emotions, i actually felt pity for him .

“well Frank , I'm sorry that your definition and my definition of fun is totally different”. With that I picked my bags and left. I had reached the living room when I remembered the fruits and parfait i bought, there is no way I'm going to leave them for that idiot.

Approaching the gate I saw Mr Saheed

“ah madam, senu da zuwa” Saheed said

“Thank you Saheed,how work?”

“ fine, fine”

“ I been bring this thing come for you” i said handing over the bags of fruits and parfait.

“ ahhh na Göde so sai fa , thank you well well , na oga say make I comot for house , sometimes if him Dey e go say make I comot go gist”

“ ohh really, aww that nice now at-least you go rest small”

“ yes oo , thank you madam . Allah bless you”

“Amen . Ok bye bye”

“ ok madam , till you come again”he said

“ hmmm , bye”i said and left , if only he knew we won't be seeing anymore , atleast not anywhere close to this house.

As i made my way Towards the gate i quickly booked a bolt, thank God it was three minutes away, and in no time the driver arrived. Through out the ride my head kept going back to the whole incident at Franks house , it seemed to unreal never in a million years would I have even suspected that he was cheating or that he would say what he did .

As i drifted in thoughts , i didn't realize when I slept off until my phone chimed and i got a notification from linked in . Some recruiter asking to send my CV for a job : it read

Afolabi Idowu

Senior recruiter | Talent Acquisition

————— AUG 3 —————

Afolabi Idowu

Paralegal Needed at leading law firm

Hello Onomen,

I am reaching out to you because I see you have the required degree and professional skills needed to work as a paralegal for a distinguished law firm here in Lagos .

Our recruiter is offering a competitive salary, as well as an amazing work environment to grow in your profession. If you are Interested in applying please send your CV to Afolabi.Idowu@pearlsrecruitment.co

Thank you

(/ **Yes interested ...**) (/ **No thanks...**)

A paralegal,so Mr Idowu this reputable company doesn't have openings for actual lawyers because I happen to be a fully qualified lawyer .

I immediately checked my emails to see if I had gotten any mails preferably a good news with job offer or scheduled interviews, but none whatsoever.

tissue from the ground and disposed them in my dirt bin.

Sitting back on my bed she continued. "And you've barely eaten to. Do you want me to make you anything special, hmmm" she said patting my back .I was indeed hungry but to tired to eat , i wasn't even sure what I wanted.

"Snacks perhaps? , I could order your Fav Krispy's Kreme doughnuts" she added. Okay that I could not resist, even though my heart was broken.

"Yes please.." I said, with my head buried in my pillows.

Smiling she said " see your mouth like yes please, so you want to eat now Abi , I thought your mouth was broken alongside your heart. Come here joor...". Lying close to me she gave me the tightest hug , although a little suffocating was definitely what I needed.

"You know I love you plenty right?" She asked

"hmmm" , was the only sound I could manage to mutter.

"I know you really liked Frank , and you weren't wrong for liking him. But honestly he's not worth this sulking. Should I be very honest with you...?" She asked looking me in my eyes , and i nodded in approval .

"You've always been too good for him, he thinks he's a catch but I know deep down he knows that you are the real deal. My friend you are the most beautiful person both in and out , you're one of the most selfless people I know, you're smart, caring, loving and your love for God inspires me to be a better Christian. If a man doesn't respect your values and beliefs then he's not worth it ...Onomen , FRANK IS NOT WORTH IT , At all..... , not even one bit. You hear"

And I nodded yes .

"Nope !! nodding doesn't do it for me , say yes" , she said

smiling I say " yeah.."

" what's yeah, that's oyibo slang . Say YES!"

"yes"

Now shaking me , she shouted "yesssssss!!!, now that's what I'm talking about, ah ah edo gals no Dey slack for man normally "

I couldn't help but laugh. God I love this girl.

Getting up from my bed , and picking up her phone From my dressing table she asked

" so do you want pouno yam or should i still order doughnuts"

" doughnuts and ice cream, mango flavor", I answered

" ok then doughnuts and ice cream it is"

After waiting for almost an hour the order came and we both ate it , while talking about life , boys and hope.

"That reminds me , we are meant to have a dinner at work tomorrow dress code red . Can you

imagine” Tracy said .

“Imagine what ? The dinner, that will be nice now Abi?” I asked

“No not the dinner joor , the dress code . How can we all wear red , do you know weird we will look”

“Red is a beautiful color now , and it will look great on you. And... the other people of course”

“I’m not disputing that but guy , imagine you enter a room everyone is putting on red , we will look like cult members, as if it’s an initiation program”

Ok how does this girl even think. But as she said it I did picture the scenario and it would have looked like a cult initiation if it was real, but it’s not it’s her proposal.

“So do you have an outfit?” I asked

“ no not yet , although I mentioned it to Kunle while we were gisting over the phone and he said he saw one red gown some where and thought of me , so he will send it over today”

“Aww really”

“ yeah ... it was suspicious though. You know I told you his giving me proposal vibes yeah , the other day he was just hold my hands as if trying to determine my ring size , but then again his traveling to abuja today for work soooo”

“Oh. I know he loves you and one day it will happen” I said

“ yeah I know... but you know this men you can’t trust them” Tracy said

“ not Kunle . You had better look nice oo”

“ def nowww , ah ah Bestie you don't trust me , you know i don't disappoint. Funny thing it’s because of the dinner that Mrs IJeoma suddenly called and said there’s no need to come to work today , that we get ready well saying she wants all of us to look great Tomorrow. Me I have booked Tammy to do my makeup, it just to see the gown that Oga has picked”

“ I’m sure you will love it” I said

“I had better. I can bring a plus one , would you like to come?” she asked

“ no , I’ll prefer to chill at home”

“ or I can call my boss and say I can’t go so I can be home with you , we have to finish our movie sef sooo what do you say”

Scoffing I said “ see you better go for your dinner, I’ll be fine . I have to go buy more jewelries at Balogun sef so I’ll go tomorrow”

“alright , let me go do my laundry and wait for my gown , for these our very impromptu dinner, all of a sudden three days to prepare for ‘team celebratory dinner’.

“ maybe it’s cause of that deal you guys closed recently...” I said , just so she doesn’t think to much of it .

“ oh trueeeee... , she did say if we get that deal there will be a celebration. Kai this my smart

friend”

she said to tease me as usual.

chuckling I said “ oya go and wash clothes”.

After Tracy left i decided to brace myself. I arranged my room , cleaned the living area and washed our dishes. After going back to the room i showered and laid on my Bed , suddenly remembering the linked in in-mail I got . And I sent my CV to the email address attached. It suddenly dawned on me that I had not done my daily devotional then I did , following my regular pattern of PRAY , praise , repent , ask and yield.

For my Bible study I was in the book of psalm and I read a verse that for some reason stuck with me . Psalm 32:8 ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you’.AMEN I said and asked the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Afterwards I checked my business page on ig to see some more requests for items. I replied to dms , agreed on sales and delivery price etc . I called my brother whose wife had now put to bed to congratulate them and also to sort my mum’s traveling details . My talk with Tracy , and God made me feel better, I felt peace and calm , after my unexpected break up with my boyfriend the day before yesterday I had been feeling really down , it may just be two days back but for now I know I felt a lot better.

I suddenly recalled the prison visit and Mrs Ada , it was still morning and I don’t really have much to do now other than sleep , watch movies or go back to my grief state, and the latter I wasn’t ready to do . So I got ready, to go visit her in the prison.

“Wait really, when did you decide to go to the prison?” Tracy asked , surprised after I informed her .

“ honestly the thought just came . And it’s not like I’m really doing anything at home , so I might as well just go visit them “

“ how about visiting hours, don’t prisons have visiting hours?”she asked

“ true sha.... See babe let me just go if they don’t let me in then fine . At least i know I tried”

“ ok... , I’m actually glad you are going out though ”

“Yeah Alright see ya”

“Bye.... Kisses ”. Tracy the cheerer said

The warden was really trying to study my face after I had told her I was here with my church members for an outreach.

“But I can’t remember your face o” the woman said putting her glasses to take a better look at my face ,

“and you get fine face eh my Pikin ,why I no come remember you ”. She said , now leaning on her chair

“ wetin be the name of your church again?” She added

“Emm living waters” i answered

Scanning the room as though looking for someone she then excused herself and shortly came back with another warden . Oh I could remember this face well

She was the person that took us round the prison the last time we came .

On approaching the counter where I was waiting she asked

“ Philo You remember any church wey come here last week” .

Philo which I’m guessing to be Philomena , looked at the roof trying to remember if we had in-fact been here .

“ good afternoon ma” I said trying to get her attention away from the opened ceiling .

“ma you even took us round. Living waters” I added

“ ohhhh , true una plenty that time , why be say na only you come today?” Mrs Philo asked

“ emmm , I just want to see somebody, i brought food and sweater for her”. I answered . I had stopped on my way to get food from KFC and I saw a store where they sold sweaters, and decided to get one for her since it was usually cold this period especially because of the rain .

“ who you wan see ?” The other warden asked

“Mrs Ada”

Both of them where physically clearly taken aback, as they stared at each other in shock .

“ you want to see Mrs Ada . Ada what ?”, the warden whose name I didn’t know asked further

“eh ?”I asked confused

“ surname?” She probed

“ I don’t know her surname , but she’s a little advanced, light Skinned, not to tall ..”

“ NO be only one Ada we get.....” , Philomena said to her colleague.

“ ahhh .. you blame me . Since I don Dey work here E no get day wey person come say na Ada him Dey find . I shock” . She answered

“ why do you want to see Ada” Philo asked

“ because of what you people just said , no body comes to see her and the last time we were here I said I will come visit her again” I answered

“but now no be visiting time oo”, Philo said

“ohh I didn’t know, but God will bless you if you let me see her . Abeg ma”

“ok . But you no even bring small thing come for us , your mothers” the other warden said , and then laughed casually.

I knew what they were asking for , and reached for my wallet. Thank God I had just withdrawn some cash . I had just two thousand five hundred naira , thankfully two five hundred naira notes . And I handed it to them .

“please manage this , I don't have much” I said

“no wahala” the warden whose name i didn’t know said .

I was led to the same place where we had our fellowship the last time we were here , this time it was completely empty. From where I sat I could see some women pass with buckets of water on their heads some where sweeping, and some cutting grasses . They mostly seemed busy.

“Hello” came that her lovely, welcoming voice.

“Good afternoon ma” I said smiling as I got up to enter into her embrace.

“How are you doing ma” I asked after we sat down on opposite sides of the table.

“I’m great . How are you?”, she asked

“I’m good, it’s so nice to see you again ma , you look good”

“oh thanks dear , and you great , although your eyes seem puffy...”she said ,

“emm yes ...I cried a little, broke up with my boyfriend” . i replied, shocked at how open I just was to someone i didn’t really know.

“oh dear ... so sorry”

“thank you”

After a little silence she said “ I’ve not had a personal visitor in over 20 years, after my cousin travelled abroad. I don’t know why you decided to come visit but before I do, I want to say thank you sooo much, and God bless you dear”

I couldn’t help but smile, felt a little teary too .

“you are welcome ma , I did say I would come visit you again”

“yes you did” she said smiling

Moving the items I had gotten towards her I said .

“I brought you food , and sweater . It’s a little cold this period”

Looking through the bag , she brought out the sweater and placed in on her upper trunk, the typical way of testing clothes without actually wearing it . The color was just perfect on her .

“You know God works in mysterious ways” she said suddenly.

“ I had just one cardigan, that I had just washed. So I prayed to God , just this morning that he should provide me with another one, and here you are . God bless you” she said smiling

“ you are welcome ma , and I’m pleased that God used me to answer your prayer”

“I’m not sure I asked you what your name was” she asked looking at me with a squinted eyes

“ oh true I’m Onomen. Onomen Iyore”

“ Edo right”

“Yes” I answered

“ how lovely, I knew just a handful of edo people back in the day, and they were all amazing people”

“ aww , how nice. Well we are good people soo...”I said proudly

Laughing she said “ but you know what they say about edo and the sky..”

“ ohhhh ma , not you too. That is an accusation on my people that I will never agree on. Most people say it as if other tribes don’t have witches and bad people...”

“ witches. Who said anything about witches, i only said edo and sky i could mean anything, for instance edo people and manufacturing planes ...” she added clearly being sarcastic, which made me laugh even more .

“ ok fine , thank you ma . It’s true.. I do know some edo people that have manufactured planes”

We had a very long conversation, mostly about faith , and her stay here in the prison . For some reason she didn’t want to say anything about her life before coming here , and that I could understand.. We talked about my failed relationship, and job search and how frustrating it has become.

But she just encouraged me , I was honestly amazed by how smart and how much she clearly loved God

“ Onomen , do you know one thing I have come to realize, is that God doesn’t like complainers . If you have read the book of exodus, Leviticus and numbers you will know This , but then again he loved them so much that even after all their repeated complaints he still showed up for them . He still parted the Red Sea , still gave them water , still made them conquer nations and still gave them the land He promised them .”

I just stayed nodding

“ your ex boyfriend, clearly wasn’t Gods plan for you , and for a job you will get one . Do you want to know one of my best Bible verses. It’s the famous Jeremiah 29:11 . I know the thoughts I have towards you says the lord , thoughts of peace and not evil to give you an expected end . It may be a commonly used verse but it give me a sense of peace and hope ... that one day....” She suddenly stopped and looked towards the exit .

“ But you know being here , hasn’t been that bad. I’ve helped lots of women dedicate their lives to God , and that for me is very important , winning souls for Christ” she said purposefully not going back to what she was saying.

But I had to know, something in me wanted to know so badly...

“Yes , I’ve heard God doesn’t let bad things happen to us but sometimes he lets it happen. Like you being here” I paused to study her but she didn’t flinch so I continued .

“ I don’t know why you are here , but I feel God let it happen to help save lost souls”

“Hmmmm” she said and let out a long sigh and opened her plate of rice, and took one bite of the chicken.

“ this is yummy , thank you.”she said as she munched on her meal. After a while she set the food aside and we continued having small talks, until Mrs Philomena signaled that I had to hurry up.

“ ohh i have to go”

“ really.. , time went by really fast” she said

“ yes it did , but I’m really glad I came here”

“ I’m ecstatic, and I just pray this will not be the last time I get to see you”

“ Definitely not ma , thank you so much for all the kind words and encouragement” i said , meaning every single word.

“Ma if I may ask , what is your full name , so I can just let the warden know next time I’m here ”

“Oh It’s Adaeze Ihuoma”

“ ok ma , see you soon , and hopefully with good next job wise” I had said

“ definitely. I will keep you in my prayer dear”

On the bus home , I felt like I just left a therapy session. Mrs Adaeze Ihuoma was amazing. I loved how she had the perfect response to everything thing , and backed it with scriptures . Some people really had a gift of winning souls, if I was a nonbeliever and she spoke to me about God I’m a hundred percent sure i would have converted.

Now my curiosity as to why she was in there without any help from family only heightened . On my next visit we will talk about her life.

Today was the day my darling Tracy will get to be proposed to , and i was psyched to see her reaction , honestly i also wondered how i would react, yeah I know it wasn't my proposal but I know me .

I am so glad my friend was someone who took her appearance rather seriously, because by the time I got back from visiting Mrs Ada yesterday she had already had a frontal wig installed and nails redone, so she was pretty much set for the day .Kunle had also informed me that he was set on his part although nervous. I could imagine how he felt, I wasn't the one proposing or even being proposed to but I was equally nervous.

The venue was at Lekki , Antonio's . One of the fancy Italian restaurants. I had never been

there personally but I had done a little research, and boy.... that place looked real nice. But I just hope it what you see is what you get , because sometimes this Lagos restaurant can be deceiving, they have the most beautiful pictures on their instagram page but real life it's nothing to write home about. I trust Kunle sha , he will deliver.

So the plan was to leave the house before Tracy does, so we could surprise her . But now knowing the venue, my initial plan of going to Balogun market won't really sell , because I had to atleast look presentable and it will be suspicious if I get all glammed up simply to go to the market, so I had to improvise. Firstly the proposal will be in the evening, and i usually leave for the market early , but this time I told her I will be leaving in the afternoon at 3pm , because I had already ordered my items so I just had to go pick them up at the wholesaler's store , which she believed .

However;a mutual friend of ours Danielle was also invited for the proposal so it was just perfect, i dressed casually at 3pm telling Tracy I was off to the market , but I took change of clothes so I could wear at Danielle's place . I know, SMART MOVES!.

Getting to Danielle's place wasn't difficult as it was just about 15minutes ride from our place.On arriving we both started preparing as I had left Tracy having her bath at home, she still had to dress and do her makeup of which a professional makeup artist will be handling, but we still had to be there before her .

“oh wow i really like your cloth o” Danielle said .

“ really? Aww thank you” i said smiling

“yeah it's simple, but still chique” she added

“Thanks”

Actually that was my goal i didn't wanted to do much , not like i really could though. I picked a two piece top and short , emerald green which was typically my style. I'm typically a two set piece , Jean and top kinda girl , pared with snickers or canvas you would hardly catch me wearing gowns or heels , I did wear them just once in a blue moon, like today I decided to go for my two inches Zara heels. Don't let the name Zara deceive you, this one's are the very affordable ones. I'm always thankful to companies that consider the average salary earners when making items , they have the luxury ones and the budget friendly ones.

Danielle wasn't looking bad at all either. For someone considered chubby or fat , she sure knew how to pull almost any outfit. She was wearing a high waisted jeans and a corset Ankara top , paired with a six inches Gucci heels a simple purse , and a twelve inch fringe wig .

Danielle was a hard worker and that was something I admired about her , she had a fashion house which was doing amazingly well. She had so many celebrity clients, and her brand was quite popular on social media. Twenty three thousand followers was really impressive to me . Being a

hard worker she was equally benevolent in spending, especially where her looks mattered .

In no time we were done dressing, we both did nude makeup once satisfied with the outcome of our unprofessional makeup we ordered a ride .

As soon as we arrived I called Tracy just to be sure of where she was and if she had arrived at her supposed group dinner but she hadn't ,She was still about 25 minutes away .We were ushered in by the door man , and as we entered the main space I was impressed, Antonio's definitely did not disappoint, the place was beautiful, it had a great decor and ambiance , it was like I walked into an actual restaurant in Italy , the typical vintage fixtures , traditional furnitures and soft lighting . Dark wood floors , decorative wall frames which contrasted well with the table cloths. I felt like I was in an Italian movie.

We however didn't settle in the main space as there seemed to be a private dining area which a waiter ushered us to , and this site was though smaller was more beautiful Probably because it was the site of the proposal . The decorations, from flowers, balloons , candles and pictures of both Kunle and Tracy with held their memories made me so emotional .

Suddenly I heard my name from the corner where most invitees where, as i turned I was both shocked and excited.

"Onomen dear" Mrs Martins Tracy mum called me , and just right behind her was her husband and their eldest daughter who I knew to be based in USA .Mrs Martins has always taken me as a daughter, not just a friend to her daughter, she will always call and we will gist about everything and nothing . And I had not seen her since she traveled to Australia to visit one of her sons. So I was really happy to see her.

"Ohh you look so pretty my daughter" she said after we broke our embrace. I always loved how her mother spoke, with so much eloquence and love.

"Good evening ma , good evening sir ..."i said half squatting as I greeted her husband and daughter.

" Good evening" they both answered smiling

" how have you been?" Emily , Tracy elder sister asked.

" I'm fine thank you .. and you how is your husband and children" I asked her

" they are fine , although my kids were about throwing a tantrum when I told them they couldn't come with me over to Nigeria, saying they want to be around for their aunts proposal..." She

answered

“aww really? How adorable” i said

“is it a bad thing? I want to even see my grandchildren” Tracy’s dad said

“daddy you will see them soon, you know they like rubbing your bald head ” Emily said , and we all burst out laughing.

Emily’s Kids were really adorable, I had seen pictures of them on Tracy’s phone , she was married to a white man so her children were biracial and In my opinion all biracial are good looking.

“I didn’t even know you were all informed of the proposal” i said

“yes . Kunle wanted it that way , such a good man . I’m so happy for my darling daughter, he informed us of his plans to marry her four months ago and said he would love us to be there , so we all put our heads together to fix a date when we will be around. Tracy will be dumbfounded...” Mr Martins , Tracy’s dad said

“ she will be For sure...”

“Hi Onos...” Kunle said , coming from what I guess was the balcony.

“ Mr Planner..” i said teasing him , which made him blush ‘you did amazing, this place looks beautiful”

“ yes it does” Emily said

“thank you.” He said still blushing

“I didn’t know you were here” he said referring to me

“ yeah we just came not long ago, myself and Danielle.... Where is she sef” I said looking around, only to see her coming with a little frown , while wiping her shirt with one hand and a glass of wine in the other hand.

“ what happened ?” Kunle asked her

“ someone bumped into me and I spilled a little of my drink..... his just lucky that he is good looking , if not....” She said , and suddenly noticing Tracy’s family she added “ ohh ! Ahh ! Good evening sir , good evening ma , I honestly didn’t see you all , aww Sis Emily Good evening”she said ,giving Emily a side hug .

“ so if you had noticed us you wouldn’t say the man was fine abi ?” Mr Martins teased

“ ahhhh sir...” she said coyly

Checking his phone, Kunle suddenly appeared nervous and said “ she’s here”

“ oh” Mrs Martins said

“ alright so let’s us all go back to the balcony” Emily said aloud, so every other person can hear

“ how do you know for sure?” Danielle asked Kunle

“ my guy is downstairs keeping an eye out for her” he replied

“ok !!!! Balcony!!” Danielle shouted

And we all made our way to the balcony, Myself, Danielle, Tracy’s family, and two of Kunles friends. suddenly the lights at the private dining area became dim , oh My God !! I was so excited.

“So Tracy will soon be a whole fiancé...” Danielle squealed

“ shhhhh” Mrs Martins said , which made us giggle , suddenly the door to the balcony opened and another man entered, back facing us . I’m guessing his one of Kunles friends.

Whispering to me Danielle said “ that’s the fine man that bumped into me , see his fine head shape he’s lucky I’m not looking for man this period... me and God have to settle somethings first”

looking at the man ,he sure had a nice physique from behind. Suddenly from the balcony’s glass doors we saw a cameraman come in closely followed by my dear bestie , she was still looking confused until she looked up and saw Kunle , standing just in front of the ‘ WILL YOU MARRY ME’ sign . That was when realization hit her.

“ oh my God” We heard her say slowly,

“ wait Kunle you..... Oh ! My! God !” She said this time louder , and we couldn’t help but laugh but in hushed tones.

“ you said you were in Abuja...” she said calmer now, all teary. And we watched as Kunle brought her closer to him and she just followed his lead . They looked perfect, Kunle in his black suits and my friend in her red gown and long wavy wig which she let fall on her back.

Getting on one knee Kunle began to give his speech, sounding straight from his heart.

“Tracy Ejiro Martins. My dream come true, the woman which I fasted and prayed to God for . Sometimes I look at you and still can’t believe how lucky I am that you decided to be with me . And for that I am always thankful to God for the blessing of you.

You are kind, beautiful both in and out, caring ,sometimes to caring that even if you have things bothering you or is dealing with your own issues, you still go out of your way to make sure your friends are doing ok . My biggest cheerer and best friend. I love you soo much , words can’t comprehend.em ... emmI” He stuttered abit , and Tracy said now crying

“ You still have more to say ? I’m already all teary.... What will you now say on our wedding” which made Kunle giggle, I am sure he was blushing real hard , he blushed easily.

“ Well what I want to say is . Will you Tracy ,marry me?”he asked bringing out a ring box from his side pocket, which he struggled with a bit .

“ is that question even necessary?” She said and brought out her finger of which he placed a ring on it , and pulled him up for a kiss and hug . The sight was heartwarming

“ so is that a yes ?” He asked, oga needed to be sure .

“ yes of course”, she said , and we were given a cue by Kunles friend who came in last to come out , it was then I noticed his face , he looked awfully familiar. But I had no time to think as we all

came rushing out ,cameras brought forth to capture the moment, and congratulate the newly engaged.

“ ahhhhhh” Tracy screams as she saw us

“ ahhhhhhhhh!!!! she screamed louder , as she saw her family, my friend was beyond thrilled. She was a bubble of joy, accompanied by tears as she embraced them . And they stood locked in an embrace for a moment . We shook hands with Kunle one by one , and when Tracy left her family’s embrace, we locked eyes and both screamed as we usually do Whenever we were to excited , holding hands and jumping as we made a twirl.

“ girlfriend,... I’m a whole fiancé” she said

“ I know”

“ ahhhhhhhhhh” we both screamed at the same time and then hugged each other briefly , I was so happy for them.

I soon left her for others to congratulate her , as people came flocking around her the whole room was filled with excitement and laughter , reminding me of my call to bar ceremony. One could literally smell the joy in the air , and it was a lovely sight.Soon we all gathered at the dinning area , and had dinner while each saying lovely things about the couple , the brides to be parents spoke firsts each having both funny embarrassing things to say , after they had spoken we the friends went ahead and each said sweet words and prayers for them.

In all our fiasco I couldn’t help but notice Kunles friend whose identity I still wasn’t sure of being absent from the table , For some reason I Found myself looking around for him . After we were done eating we all began having small talks , and I decided to go to the balcony for some fresh air .

The view from the balcony was refreshing, I watched as the cars passed, how the traffic lights went from red , to yellow and then green , how the billboard that advertised globacom suddenly turned to MTN . Oh wow’ , I thought to myself and couldn’t help but chuckle.

“ I thought I was the only one who noticed that error in advertising. I mean which network should we use GLO or MTN” , someone said suddenly from behind me . Before I could turn completely the person had already walked to where I was standing.

“ or was it a mini collab between both networks. Urging us to use both” he continued as he stood close to me and looked me directly in the eyes. Now I know where I had seen these face before, the dude that splashed water on me as MissTee’s , so this was how he looked, WOW . I didn’t realize how angular his jaw was, or that he had beards at all ,more so these neatly shaved and carved , it wasn’t so bright outside so I couldn’t see other facial features clearly, but one thing was certain his face was gorgeous, and man was tall .

“I use glo so....” i said casually

“ I use both, just incase” he said,with a smug smile. Hmmmph , show off.

“ so it seems you have a habit of ruining people’s outfit” i said, trying to remind him of what he did to my shoes.

“ people...?” He asked. So this dude has actually forgotten about the incident.

As if suddenly understanding what I’m talking about he said “ oh the other lady today.” Holding on to the railing he added, smiling “ that was a mistake also”

“I like how you casually chipped in the ‘also’ in there” I said

“ oh nooo..... I guess I should re-apologize then. I’m sorry for ruining your outfit, really I am” he said with that same smug on his face and a little bow, which to me seems like mockery.

“ was that supposed to make this apology seem better than the last time.” I said, not really asking a question nor seeking a response, he seemed like he understood that given the fact that he just stood there looking at me as though trying to figure me out , or was something on my face? . I thought to myself consciously touching my nose .

“I..” I began speaking but was interrupted by him.

“ i really am sorry, I would have been mad if anyone had splashed water on me as well , especially if I was looking half as good as you were that day”

Lagos demons, I thought as he said that last bit, but he wasn’t done talking.. “ and what I meant by be more careful that day was the fact that I horned severally before getting closer to you but you didn’t really take note ..”

He horned?, i definitely didn’t hear any horn , i know I was distracted by the exterior of MissTees boutique, and was overly excited about the shopping but i didn’t hear any horns.

“ well.. i didn’t hear any horns”

“ ok”

“ alright...” i said

“ soooo.... am I forgiven?” He asked rather confidently, still with that look on his face , Or was that the way he just smiled.

“ I’ll think about it” i said, probably blushing. And the reason I was , I had no idea.

“ So you were the person I and Kunle was waiting for at the boutique?” He asked

“ yeah. And I’m guessing you’re the friend that picked all the whole red outfit and then left his friend to sink in them when he needed him he most” i said giving him my lawyer interrogation look.

“ oh when you put it that way it makes me sound terrible” he said putting his left hand on his chest, and the giving an innocent look .

“ you should feel terrible” i said , enjoying the little drama

“ ah , my chest . It’s burdened with guilt” he added, and we both couldn’t help but laugh at his

little attempt at Shakespeare.

We were suddenly joined by Danielle , who came out with a glass of sweet wine for me .

“ thanks” I said as she handed it to me

Looking at him she said, “ oh I would have brought an extra glass if I knew you would be out here”

“ oh no it’s fine” he said, . He had a lovely voice as well deep baritone ,with an accent which I’m guessing is American.

“ and again sorry about your shirt” he added

“ oh no , it’s fine” Danielle said , trying to mimic the way he said it , and we all laughed

“ you didn’t grow up in this naija with us Abi?” She asked

“ I did actually, I was here till I was about eleven years old , before we moved”

“ ok..., eh ah you still Japa las las that means you didn’t grow up with us na , i sha sensed your Fone..,” she said in pidgin language. Turning to me she spoke more quietly,trying her best so he doesn’t hear

“ how are you? , I was so worried that you were out here crying or something, not knowing you were gisting with man.” Danielle said.

I knew what she meant, she was worried I may have a mini breakdown, due to my recent breakup. If I say I had not felt a little bad about my own predicament since we got to the venue I would be lying. A part of me misses Frank , but I know it’s not worth it . On our way to the venue I thought about it . I was beginning to feel sorry for myself, but I suddenly remembered what the Bible said about rejoicing with others in their times of happiness, and it helped a lot .

So I just smiled at Danielle and answered “ I’m ok”

“ alright I believe you” she said and hugged me for a brief two seconds

“ alright adios people.... i need to go and eat more, that jellof rice is jellofing.....” she said, emphasis on Jellofing. Just as she was about leaving , Tracy came to call us in so we can take more pictures with the professional photographer, so we all entered the dinning area.

We took so many pictures. After we had taken professional photographs , Tracy made me her personal photographer. I did so many Snapchat videos of her , and took almost a hundred pictures. By the time I was done taking pictures, most guests had already gone.

“ Kunle , said he wanted to take me somewhere else” Tracy said

“ where?” I asked

“ i don’t know. He said it’s a surprise”

“oh more surprises....” I said tickling her

laughing she said “ respect yourself, we are grown women in public”

“ Ah sorry” I said

“ oya let’s go , I’ve ordered Uber” Danielle said as she approached us, where we sat

“oh that was fast....” I said

“ yep . Let’s go”Danielle responded

We said our goodbye to Tracy and left . As we got to the car park I noticed the Uber . It wasn’t the typical ride. I wasn’t familiar with cars but this was one of the big black Jeep , with tinted glasses and all that screamed , ‘don’t dare scratch me , if not OYO is your case’

“ ah is that the Uber ?” I asked surprised

“ yes” she said

“ but it’s..... big . Abeg hope it’s not a ritualist car?” I asked looking at Danielle puzzled.

“ it is , it’s actually the chief babalawo’s car . As soon as we enter, we will doze off because of the charm that is awaiting us” she replied . I hope that was her being sarcastic, because the car itself was a little baffling.

“Come joor..” she said as she dragged my hands, for us to enter the car. Getting in I perceived a scent which seemed familiar but couldn’t place where from exactly.

The ride was one of the best Uber rides ever, the car was high so we hardly felt when we entered a bump, the AC was not too much for the vehicle, but just perfect , and the driver was so professional. I noticed he wasn’t using the typical Uber drivers app though which was usually attached to their dashboard , and Danielle kept giving him directions up-to my house ,I also noticed that he was wearing a uniform.

Anyways I wasn’t bothered, I had payed for our ride to Antonio’s and she was to pay this ride , so once we stopped at my place i just alighted and waved them goodbye.

Two things were on my mind as I entered our flat , shower and sleep , at-least until Tracy came back home to give me details of the other surprise.As I laid down on my bed, I just reminisced on the night events, my Tracy was really engaged. Soon we will have to start getting ready for a wedding. That means she will have to leave the flat. I really need a job, because I will definitely not be able to continue paying rent here.

Suddenly getting the urge to check my mail, I scrolled and refreshed on my email but nothing new came up, not even from the recent paralegal application. Sighing I dropped my phone, and looked at my ceiling, thinking of nothing in particular.

“ that’s true oo, where did that guy suddenly go sef. I don’t even know his name ”

I said to my self, as I continue to stare at the ceiling.

I had picked up an annoying pattern this past few days, usually the first thing I did after waking up was , read my devotionals , study my bible and pray , before anything else. But of late the first instinct that comes to mind is ‘ girl... check the mail’ . And today wasn’t any different, I checked my inbox refreshed and refreshed to see if I had any responses from the top law firm I had applied to and there was nothing.

‘ oooo God what’s all these na . Can’t you make these people see my application and give me a reply, a positive one? Ah ah’ , I murmured.

I was getting really frustrated by the whole situation, I had an amazing result from school and good references from some lecturers so I didn’t really think getting something good to do will be this tedious .

After this early morning heartbreak I didn’t have it in me to read my devotional or study the Bible so I just prayed a simple prayer ‘ lord , thank you for life , thank you for making it possible to see this day. I pray my going out and coming in is blessed, I pray your will be done in my life , ...

that

“ me love” , came Tracy’s voice as she pushed the room door open and flung herself into my bed.

“ I am so bubbly ehh , that you won’t believe I barely had enough sleep” . She added.

“when did you get back ?” I asked, eager to hear her spill every detail of the night.

“ babe ...” she said adjusting herself as she sat up , in full gist mode. ‘ I got home past 2am , you were asleep and I didn’t want to disturb you. Kai Onos. Kunle is the best man in the whole world, you won’t believe where he took me to .’ She paused, visibly blushing at this point.

“ where ?” curious me asked

“ guess.” She said, smiling widely

“ hmmm... i don’t know. Tell me” I said

“ our house” she said,

“ our house?” I asked, confused

“ Yes . OUR HOUSE” she repeated, emphasizing on both words.

“ for me and you ?” I asked still confused , which made her roll her eyes.

“ na you I dey marry?”

And then it finally sunk in for me “ Wait. Wait . Like where you both will stay , after marriage?”

“ yessssss. Onomen , this guy has been giving me clues. Can you imagine I had chosen that house by myself without being aware of the fact that it was for us . He had shown me saying a friend of his was looking to buy a house, and he knows I had a good eye blah blah blah , babe I even went as far I choosing decor and all . HmMMMM just for him to say we had somewhere to go to yesterday and I saw that it was the same place I said was a good spot , it had the designs we chose together and all ... It’s still under construction but babe ...” she said, voice quavering.

I couldn’t help but hug her , as she was becoming tearful, i was usually the emotional one . But I could genuinely understand where all the emotions were coming from.

Hugging her I was so moved in my heart to say a prayer for her.

“ God we thank you for this wonderful news around us . I thank you for my darling friend Tracy and the man you’ve put in her life. All good things come from you lord , and as you know a story before it begins so also you know the end, you that brought them together will continually see them through all their lives .I pray Tracy and Kunles story continue to be filled with joy and happiness, I pray that you remain at the center of their home and their hearts. In Jesus name we’ve prayed.” And in unison we both answered amen .

“ Jeez look at me getting all mushy...,it’s not my style at all” Tracy said as she wiped her eyes.

“ see you that has been crying crying since yesterday .

“ ehhh whatever...omoh I Dey H” Tracy said, rubbing her tummy , as if trying to tame the

hunger.

“ foodie... I thought food will be the last thing on your mind, after you and Kunle...” I was teasing.

“ ah Abeg oo , man shall not leave by Fiancé alone. This time the bread is very important. Hey I wish I can have some of that pasta we had yesterday at the restaurant.... Kai me i know say I sabi cook , but eh I throwaway salute to person wey cook that food, babe it was giving all it should give and more ”

“ A pasta and more. Jinx ” we said in unison and burst out laughing.

My phone buzzed as an alarm went off in my phone. Labeled “ Set Date to see Mrs Ada again”

It was Saturday today , I saw her few days ago , precisely August 4th, I remembered because my darling Frank broke my heart the day before, same day I got my rejection mail from Timeyi and associates. What a week I’ve had.

Right there I made a mental note to see her next week , after confirming what the visiting time will be of course , because I don’t want to be stopped by Mrs Philo and co this time.

I flipped through my photo gallery which captured the events of last night. “ oh my God..., Danielle won’t kill me” , I said giggling as I zoomed in on a picture of Myself and Tracy, with her lolled in her chair, and toothpick in her mouth.

I continued scrolling through my gallery and landed on a picture of myself and Frank . He looked handsome, we looked happy in the picture even though I literally forced him to take it with me . Now looking back on things, for a while now it was almost like i made him do all what he didn’t want to. I made him come with me for church programs , made him take us out for dates, made him listen to gospel songs on my phone when he said he didn’t really like them , saying they were mostly to loud or just to boring. And as he said made him accept the fact that I was keeping myself till marriage, without really asking what he wanted.

I guess if i had asked from the get go , we would know what we want and if our desires align because it clearly didn’t .

I did miss him, but I trust God has better plans for me , and right there I went on my knees and prayed this brief prayer .

“ God , one thing I am not is perfect.. I am far from being one , but I want to live my life for you . I want your hand to be reflective in all that concerns me ..in my family, the friends i keep, the things I say , way I act , my business and my next relationship. I want to be married, but i don’t want him to be just any man , I want a man that loves you more than anything , and have so much love in his heart for others. I want him to be my friend whom I laugh with , and prayer partner whom I spread your good-news with. I want him to embody the love of Christ . And God I pray you make me the woman he also prays for , the wife that loves you and isn’t afraid to let the whole world know, the wife that will support him and stand by him . Even as I wait for that moment, help me fulfil what you desire of me in this very moment .God in heaven take control . Amen”

The way my phone rang after my amen was jittering, it was like being shocked by a defibrillator after going in ventricular fibrillation. ‘ I got that from watching an episode of greys anatomy, a series my course-mate made me watch back in law school’ .

“ ah mammy . Hello “

“ so you this girl, that’s how you’ll just forget your mother eh”

“ how !! , how can I forget you. Never. My sweet mom”

“ shut up you mouth joor , fine girl .. I saw your pictures you people were just looking fine”she said

“ my pictures?” I asked confused

“ yes na .. that Tracy post . You no go ever post. So you cant even call me to say that my Tracy is been engaged , eh ?”

“Oh she has oo , I’m sorry I could have called.. she has oo , I’m so happy for her . If you had seen it eh mummy, it was so beautiful , she didn’t know that we planned it sef ...” I chirped on just giving her all the gist about how magical the Proposal was

“ eh eh eh , that’s so nice oo , I called her to congratulate her sef .., ey thank God oo , now it remaining you . Your bobo did not come for the proposal... your Yoruba bobo ?” Yep , I knew it was coming soon. The husband talk

“ eh?” She asked again after I went mute for a while .

“ what’s that his name again, Ade ..Tunde ...” , she continued

“ no mammy it’s Frank.” I helped her from having to guess all the Yoruba names

“ eh h h e e e I thought it ended with something like ‘e’ , oh no... that one is Tracy Yoruba bobo Kunle . Your own didn’t come abi he came , you know I don’t know his face na since you refused to show me his face...”

“ ah mammy , you and him that even did video call when I was in Benin..”

“ ehee , it’s video call picture...you people did not snap him, or he’s camera shy . Ahh two of you will now be doing camera shy , who will snap who picture when you marry, Abi it’s until your children grow before you people will snap”

“ mummy wait , what are you even saying.. you have already jump to children. He didn’t come that’s why he was not in the picture” I quickly said , before my mother continues to predict a future that will never happen.

“ ohhh ... why na , Abi he is not Tracy and her husband friend?” She asked a little concern in her voice.

“ yeah he’s not really their friend..”

“ ohh , that’s why he didn’t come ? No na he for still come , Tracy is your best friend and last last he Will have to be friends with her and her husband at-least small sef . Will he not come for the wedding? You young people of this generation don’t understand how relationships are formed and kept sef ...”

I had to change the topic because knowing my mum she will keep on talking on relationship matter for as long as she can has call credit.

“ oh mummy did brother send you the plane ticket..” I asked, surprised at the fact that I just called my elderly brother ‘brother’ , the typical edo way .

“ yes oo , I’ll be going this coming Thursday... tomorrow is oregbeni market.., I have to buy crayfish and melon, I didn’t buy it last market day ... , and I also need to buy palm kernel oil to rub the baby ..”

“ ah that black oil, will his wife like that ..” I asked

“ oh she won’t? , if she doesn’t want it I will not force her oo , but it’s good for the baby , it will help the skull close well , I used it for you and her husband na . If i didn’t use it will she see him to marry...”

Laughing I said “ mammy .., so if not for the oil myself and Itohan for don die ??”

“ ah I know? ..” she answered bluntly and immediately realized what she said and started laughing.

“ Abeg anyhow , IT said there’s no cold like that this time , it’s summer” my mum added

“Yes it is ...”

“ yes oo , let me go and enjoy Uk weather and carry my first grandchild” she said sounding proud

“ awww” I said

“ be doing awww , don’t go and marry and bring me my grandchild”

“ mummy....”

“ I’m just saying oo , how is labor market treating you, and you jewelry thing” she asked,

thankfully changing the subject

“ I thank God” I answered casually

“ that’s good , I’m praying for all of you everything will go well in Jesus name”

“ amen”

“ ok bye bye , emmm if you like wait for me to call you first again, I will use eraser to erase you ..”

“ ahh mummy where did you hear that one ..” I asked in between chuckles

“ Na Mama Osakpolor oo , you know how them like to fight her and her husband.. yesterday I heard the husband say it , I just remembered...”

“ Kai ... they are still fighting”

“Yes oo , yesterday she gave him money to pay NEPA bill , he use the money to buy betting ticket , she come back for market meet say fish don Dey spoil, and their Gen he no gree repair... my dear I don’t want to gossip Abeg it’s well..ok good night...”

“ ok , just don’t forget.....”

*Beep*Beep*Beep.

I heard the line cut typical of my mum , once she says good night, anything you have to say must be over another call because that one automatically ends.

I miss her though, and my Benin people’s drama , all my neighbors had very memorable characters, sometimes when I look back at my childhood I couldn’t help but laugh.

Monday

8

“hello , good morning am i speaking to Ms Onomen Iyore “

“yes this is she.....” i answered wondering who could be speaking , because it was an unknown number .

“ yes i am calling from kirikiri Maximum prison” the man said

“oh ... okhope all is fine....” that was unexpected

“ yes .. i am Nurse Adams i work at the prison clinic and you’re enlisted as one of the emergency contact for Mrs Adaeze Ihuoma ...” Mr Adams said

“OH yeah! i did put my name and contact details on her file the last time i came visiting .. wait is she ok ...”

“ yes now she is .. She was rushed to the clinic this morning , she had fainted in the dining hall this during breakfast ,after stabilizing her a bit we had to take her to a proper hospital...”

“oh my God please what hospital is it ...” i asked really concerned, leaving the jewelries i was packing on the sofa and hurrying back to the room to wear something appropriate to leave the house

“ she is at ANU SPECIALIST HOSPITAL IKEJA at the moment ... but the good thing is she is stable they are running further tests ,i just feel like it will be nice for you to know since you’re the only one listed as a contact “

“ oh thank you so much i will be there soon” .

After the call ended i was already done dressing up , thank God we had yam porridge in the fridge , so i just put some in a food flask . It was past 8 am , and a Monday morning so traffic was practically inevitable in lagos , but the good thing was it hadn’t rained for a while and it didn't seem like it will rain today. i quickly checked google map on my phone to see how long it will take to get to the hospital and it was about 2hrs .

“ok.....not so bad” i thought to myself, considering it was a Monday and it could honestly have been worse . Lagos is a very spectacular place to live in , with different unprecedented and really weird things happening at unexpected times . from unexpected traffic jam because of two cattle

fighting on the road or two bus riders fighting because the other stole his passenger, or worse waking up to some random dead body in the centre of the road , it can be really wild . Thankfully today was good , my ride was smooth apart from the agbero's constantly stopping our ride to collect their so called transport levy .

I was both relieved and nervous as i alighted from the bus , ANU SPECIALIST HOSPITAL was just at the side of the road , it was my first time going to any hospital in Lagos it was a three story building built on an acre of land and had this modern hospital structure , with white glazed ceramic brick matched perfectly with glass block , varieties of well groomed flowers in by the walk way .

On entering the hospital , i stopped by the receptionist to state my reason for coming and after confirmation from the nurse station i was directed to where Mrs Ada was , a single room in the second floor , i have always hated hospitals , the smell , the beeping monitors , the health workers in their scrub , all of it .. it just has a way of reminding me about my fathered last days on earth .

After a few knocks i heard a voice telling me to come in

“ hi..” the lady said , she was probably a nurse i thought .

“ Ohhh dear” Mrs Ada beckoned to me .

I thought she was going to look frail , but she looked just as i remember her , good! .

“ how do you feel ma?” I asked taking a sit by her bed side .

“ better than ever .. this people have taken good care of me in this hospital” she said cheerfully , pointing to the lady in the room , it was only then j realised i had lost my manner .

“oh my God i'm so sorry .., i just walked past you , i promise i'm usually not this mannerless , good afternoon”

Smiling the lady said “ good afternoon , and i completely understand . I'm her doctor , or rather one the doctors here..”

“ oh wow that's so nice....’ . I couldn't help but wonder how old she was , she looked so young , . ‘.....how is she?”

“ i'm fine” Mrs Ada responded instead

Sighing the doctor continued “ that has been her respond, she wouldn't let us run further tests ”

“ but why ma? If its because if the cost I'll pay for it, please . If the doctors think you need further test , then they have a reason” i said really concerned

“ oh no .. cost shouldn't be an issue , shes covered. An organisation called DOVES has agreed to pay the cost of all her treatments , we just need her to give us the go ahead...’ facing Mrs Ada the doctor added ‘ ...Just your go ahead ma . I know you feel fine right now , but due to the recent drop in blood sugar you've been experiencing , further blood test will be required just to rule out any

underlying problems..” Aww she seems so caring .

“ Doctor , thank you but i honestly don't think i need it , i'll just be eating on-time and snacking regularly to avoid going into low blood sugar .., what that term you doctors use again?..,”

“Hypoglycaemia”

“ Hypoglycaemia?”

Me and the doctor said simultaneously , although mine was kind of a question because i wasn't really sure if that was the word , these made us laugh though

“ ah look at both of you , that's true doctor you are also from edo state right?” Mrs Ada asked clearly trying to change the topic

“ Ma'am ... i see what you're trying to do , but yes i am”

“ i thought so , shes also from edo state” Mrs Ada replied pointing to me

“ really , aww nice to meet you . I actually haven't properly introduced myself , i'm Nellisa Philip the internal Medicine Physician here .? She said stretching her hand out for a handshake , which i obliged to . It as then i realised her accent as well , American accent . This days i seem to be meeting people with accent , that dude.

“ i'm Onomen Iyore”

“ Shes a lawyer” Mrs Ada chimed in , liked a proud mom, which warmed my heart

“ ahh ,thank God i know more lawyers now incase i commit any crime in this Nija “

“ ha ha ha .. well I'm not practising now . Still looking for a job”

“ ohh , well thats a bummer , I'm sure you will get one soon . Oh yeah that reminds me a friend of my husbands , just opened a firm and is hiring i could give you his contact”

“ i'd really appreciate that , thank you”

“ you're welcome”

We both turned to face Mrs Ada who was just enjoying watching us converse.

“ ok ma , i'll leave you be . You do seem better now , but we wont let you go till tommorow just to keep a better eye on you . yeah if you don't mind me asking how did you know i was Edo, i remember introducing myself as Dr Nellisa Philip ?” Dr Nellisa asked .

“ oh the young man that came to pray for us here , called you by your native name”

“ oh don't mind him, he has has refused to accept the fact that im married , and that my surname has changed”

“ funny thing i used to have a friend by that surname , she lived not so far from us before she traveled with her husband ermmmm , what was that her name Omonigho Igbinoba ..”

“ really?” Dr Nellisa asked stunned

“Yes ..” she lived at the barracks with us , her husband was a doctor .

“ ma , what barracks?”

“Dodan barracks..”

“ oh my God!... really , thats probably my mother . That’s her exact name and we use to live in Dodan barracks staff quarters”, Dr Nellisa said , amusingly .

“ oh wow .. her husband name is Mr Peter , we all called him doctor P” Mrs Ada said , i just sat watching them figure out their relations .

“ oh wow what a small world , my parents wont believe it if i told them this”.

After the whole conversation , Dr Nellisa went to her office to get the card of her husbands friend who was hiring and handed it to me , she excused herself as she had other patients to attend to . I stayed at the hospital for a while with Mrs Ada , a kind nurse called one of the kitchen attendants to help heat up the porridge i brought and she ate . As always she prayed for me and blessed me before my departure, i just couldn't understand how she was always so thankful of God and praying for others even when she look like she needs the prayers most , it’s so heartening .

‘ Mr Idowu’ Why does that name seem so familiar, I thought as I opened the door to Our flat while simultaneously dialling the number on the card , twice with no response .

“ hey you .. welcome” Tracy said holding a plate of rice and beans with beef stew on her hand coming out the kitchen , in her pyjamas .

“ Wait what’s the time” .. i said after noticing her night wear . It was then it came to me that i was clearly calling at way more than office hours.

“Why_ look at time now...’ she said pointing to the clock mounted above out TV .. ‘ its past 7pm”

throwing myself on the sofa and given out the longest yawn ever i said “ i know .. its just time went by so fast . Im tired emphasis on tired”looking at her scrumptious plate i added “and famished”

My self and Tracy suddenly locked eyes , and i knew where it was going , she immediately

entered her 'Zoolander' character mood , giving the eye Ben Stiller who played Derek Zoolander usually gives ,even though i wasn't in the mood for it i kind of promised after she bribed me by cooking for me a whole week to indulge her whenever she was in this space . So I was automatically Hansel .

“excuse me bruh” i said in the most passive way , regardless my friend was already ‘ZOO LANDERLIZED’ aka pumped . A word we formed for whenever this mood comes up since she watched part 1 and 2 of the movie she had been a fan.

“ you’re excused. And I'm not your bruh!” She replied and started to prowl towards me on the couch .

“ogbeni .. shift joor.. ah .” I uttered a bit dismissively.

“Ah ah .. calm down , see you better cosset me before i go to my husbands house oo”

“ ehh ...” i asked , wanting her to repeat herself .

“ i said cosset me gal.....” , she said imitating white Karen .

“ no be only cosset its , waist trainer” i said and we both burst into laughter .

“My dear is at work oo , we have this new team manager , the woman just they speak grammar . She was angry because that annoying calabar woman i told you about Mrs Emem , did not meet ip with her deadline , my sister na so this woman enter Sam Loco mood oo . Grammar upon grammar , i had to even search most of the meaning afterward for future use..”

“ oh that why you decided to show off using me abi..”

“ you know wetin cosset mean abi you no know?” Tracy asked me

“ please professor , go ahead , enlighten me”

“ oh i will . After i finish my gist , so Mrs Emem , was like Ma im sorry , she now said ‘ oh you had better be , i think you guys have been cosseted way to much in this office’ . My dear , i carried phone sharp sharp enter dictionary , it means pampered . So in other words you have better spoil me silly before i leave for my husband’s house” she concluded her speech and proceeded to take a bite off her beef .

“ So how is she, Mrs Ada ?” She asked , with food in her mouth

“ oh according to the doctor better than she came in , which is good.”

“ yeah , thank God . So does she not have a family at all like no one?”

“ to the best of my understanding , no . Shes there because her husband is late . And she has no children , i’m not sure about extended family , she casually did mention a cousin once though”

“Oh i see . Wait was there like police men outside her hospital room or something”

“ None. You know i told you shes a good woman, it just unfortunate , that shes in prison”

After a minute silence from both of us , Tracy said .

“ im sure when you start practising you will help her”

“Hmmm, definitely”

Its been two weeks since Mrs Ada was discharged , two weeks since i have been trying the

number on the card given to me by that doctor but no response , but at-least after almost three weeks since i sent my CV to the LinkedIn recruiter i was finally called for an interview . He finally told me the company i was interviewing with called VERENA . I did some research on them , and with the little i got , was more than impressed . I had prepared so well , went over interview question with my darling Flatmate and my elder brother , now father to the most handsome boy , so i guess I'm ready as i can be .

The day of the interview was finally here , I put on a tailored black high waist drape pant and a multicoloured flowery long sleeved vintage chiffon top , paired with a black d'orsay heels and a black leather tote bag big enough for my files . For my makeup i did my usual nude makeup and put my straightens almost 16 inches natural hair in a sleek bun . I looked good .

I checked the time and it was 6:45am , i work up so early that i got out of my flat same time as the Nzes , my mysterious neighbours whom i hadn't seen in months , from their expression they were equally taken aback at seeing me .

“ ah ah ... fine neighbour . Where are you going to this early in the morning? , i for say church but people no they go church early like that . In fact na church them dey go late to pass” Stanley my ever ready to say his mind neighbour said from his balcony , where he was smoking a cigarette .

“Ah stanley . Good morning” i answered

Taking a long puff of the cigar he continued .

“ Morning oo , see as you fine”

Smiling i said “ thank you”

“ Our darling couple don dey go oo” he said pointing to the Nzes as they drove out of the compound , ‘you for follow them na’ .

Ohh i should have , i thought to myself but then i imagined how awkward the ride would be .

“ maybe next time , how are you been?” I asked

“ i'm good . I know you want talk say you never see me for you church”

I honestly wasn't planning on because my mind was just on the interview, but since he mentioned it i might as well ask . I had invited him a couple of times for sunday services or programmes but he never shows up .

“ no, i just believe that one day God will make you come , even if its not to my church He will give you a reason to worship him again” I said

“ forget that one joor , no be say i no know-say God dey , but i don see shege for this life i tell you. If i begin talk now ehh you go late go where you dey go so .”

“ i understand you Stanley , trust me everybody son see shege for this life . Thats the more

reason why we need God , because he go make us see the reason why the shege happen and las las with him light go dey at the end of the tunel. We will all be fine”

Sighing a bit he then smiled and said “ oshey pastor , abi how those Ghanian people dey call am . Pasta.. . Thank you . ”

After some more chitchat with Stanley , i was on my way , luckily for me i got a taxi early and in no time i was at the location . The office was located on the third floor of BELGIN shopping complex at VGC (Victoria Garden City) .

It was a bit shocked as i entered the office floor , i didn't quite know what to expect but not these aesthetically pleasing and perfectly furnished interior .

It seemed liked i walked into the office in the American movies the intern ,only this is a little smaller but somehow more beautiful . I made my way to the receptionist whom directed me to the lounge where two other people where already seated , it was about 7:35 am when i got there , soon two other people came to join us making us five in total available for the interview.

‘hmmm , i just pray its more than one vacancy’ i thought as we waited . About 7 minutes to 8 :am two smartly dressed men walked passed us and went into a room adjacent to us which i suppose is for the interview and at exactly 8 am , we were each called in .

I silently prayed for grace on my part , i prayed that God distinguished me from the other applicant , because most of them seemed older and looked like people that had experience which i didn't have , so i knew that i genuinely need Gods Favor.

“ Onomen Iyore ?” One of the men came out to call my name .

“ thats me” i said getting up to my feet .

“ hello , please come in” he said , and like a sheep going to be slaughtered i followed .

“So they said , you should hear from them within the week?” Tracy asked after i had arrived home and freshened up .

“ yeah”

“ ahh this one that they added should... , that word is scary because is it should as in , probability or should like definitely .”Danielle said

“ ah ah Danielle , you sef . Instead of you to be encouraging her you are making her worried” Tracy interjected

“ but that ‘should’ that they said is frightening o , babe” i said .

“ i tell you”. Danielle added . “ how was their tone ?”

“Danielle ! regardless lets be positive , remember what the bible say in Phillipians 1:6 , the Lord that started a good work in your life will bring it to completion , so yeah lets have that mindset” Tracy said

“ yeah you are right , but just what if”

Danielle was about saying, but again cut off by Tracy

“ Ah ! Danielle them send you come this evening , we are only talking faith talk here o. But if something do happens for whatever reason and she doesn't get it , then its not for her , are we going to be sad , highly , but , John 13.7 Jesus said ‘ you do not realise what i am doing now but later you will’. So lets let Him do his thing”

“ kai my friend my friend , Pastor Mrs Tracy kunle” Danielle said tickling Tracy who was now laughing .

“ madam , stop it . In fact come and be going home” chucking Tracy said .

“ no oo , i must chop that , beef curry sauce you made . The rice never still dry..” she asked no one in particular , and stood headed straight to the kitchen .

“ its dry oo !!!” She shouted from the kitchen almost burning , should i serve for you both ?”

“ YES !please ..” myself and Tracy echoed simultaneously .

After few minutes she came out of the kitchen with our foods , while i went to the fridge to get apple juice and cups for us .

“So how is the wedding preparations going ?” Danielle asked Tracy, while we were all settled and munching our meals .

“ well .. not so bad , we are mostly talking to event planners . Because honestly i cant die young , i remembered how stressed out my elder sis was for her wedding , so i and Kunle have decided on letting an event planner handle it . Anyways we are mainly talking to them to see who is good and not to expensive , you know how this lagos people can be”

“ asin .. my dear , i know oo i spoke to one event planner and she almost cut my head with the ridiculous price” Danielle said

“ wait . You spoke to an event planner , why? Are you helping someone plan wedding or an event ?” I asked .

“ no for my wedding” Danielle answered nonchalantly .

“ you are getting married and you didn't tell us ? No actually who is the man sef?” Tracy asked as bewildered as i was .

After taking a gulp of her juice , she quickly added

“ Ladies... calm down. I am just planning ahead , because i know i will marry soon . Wait you people don't have a wedding board on Pinterest, or a file titled my dream wedding in your laptops?”

She asked

“ No do you ?” We asked

“Obviously. Ah me that already know my aseobi colour, my wedding decor , song that i will dance to doing my first dance with my boo ..”

“ which song?” I asked

“ thinking out loud , by eddy ed sheeran, at-least for now” she answered

“ what if another song comes out” Tracy asked

“ Fish , that why i said for now . If another jam comes out then i switch .”

“ wow !” Tracy exclaimed

“ yep baby , its called walking in faith with da Holy spirit” Danielle spoke. “ Shebi you just said we only speak faith talks here”

“ no its actually plausible , weird but ... wise” added Tracy

“ but do you even have a boyfriend ?” I asked

“ No . i do have suitors though, and there is this particular guy , but remember when i told you na Onos at Tracy’s engagement that i had to settle somethings with God first before entering into a relationship ?”

“Yeah .”

“ well , I’m serious . I have noticed that when in relationships its usually hard for me to resist sexual temptations , and i am also a bit bossy , maybe to bossy . So i have told God that i want to engage in sexual purity . I gave myself one year purity journey and by the grace of God i have been faithful so far , one year four months going strong . As for my my bossiness i am better , so yeah I’ve told God that when He’s ready , I’m ready to please him .”

That was probably the most vulnerable i have seen Danielle , she spoke further about having an accountability partner who happens to be Mr Kinsley the head of our unit at church , and how He has been so helpful .

“ aww thats so nice , honestly i thank God for Kunle . At the beginning of our relationship He just made me want to respect my self ..”

“ he reminded you of home training...” Danielle said , in the funniest way which made all three of us laugh.

“ my sister he did , and you know in the most loving yet , disciplined way , that doesn’t mean we don't have struggles because we do , but we are determined not to cross set boundaries”

“ yeah i can imagine” Danielle said , concurring

“Hmm .. babes’ Tracy proceeded swerving to me as she spoke.. ‘ i didn’t tell you , the night of our proposal when he took me to the site ... if not for JESUS ... if not for the fear and respect of His word .. things almost occur there . Thats why i came back at the time i did It was harmless at first

we were simply gisting , reminiscing , planing ahead at the balcony of the building , if i tell you i knew when it started to escalate i will be lying , but OMOH He had to come drop me home , i stayed at the back sit of his car while he drove just to avoid stories that touches the heart .”

“ really , why didn't you tell me?” i inquired

“ Honestly i don't know why . I guess i was ashamed ,and didn't feel like you were at a space to process that kind of gist .. with the whole Frank stuff”

She responded

“Please Frank shouldn't be a subject of discussion , more less a reason why you shouldn't talk to me about an issue bothering you , or that bothered you... ok?” I said

“ yes mummy ..” she said childishly and we hugged

“ aww see you two,bestie goals . Wait am i a third wheel in this relationship ?” Danielle said , feigning hurt .

“ see you, come here joor” i said to her , pulling her into our embrace , which broke due to Danielle being Danielle , she said ...

“ OK ... enough , before i'll get mushy add cry , and i'm never, emphasis on never to be caught unfresh”

“ osheyy baddest fashion designer , eheen that remind me, Danielle you are the one sewing my trad clothes oo in-fact anything that will need to be made by a person you will do it .” Tracy said

“ Definitely , and I'm not doing family and friends discount oo . Hold on am i also making your wedding gown ?” Danielle asked

“ no” Tracy replied bluntly

“ hahahahahah ... see how fast you were to respond” i said to Tracy

“ don't mind her”

We spoke well into the night , Danielle decided to stay over as the convo just kept getting more and more interesting . As we all spoke i couldn't hep but think back to Tracy's first encounter with Danielle , for some reason some relationships in her life eg Kunle and Danielle did not exactly start on good terms .

Danielle who had just joined our church at the time , volunteered to make the ankara shirt designed for workers to wear at the upcoming workers convention , and an announcement was made for people to contact her for their measurements on a specific day , or call to let her know if they wouldn't be able to make it that day so they could reschedule .

Tracy , was not able to make the specified date and didn't call either to book another day for

fittings so she simply got the materials and made it else where which wasn't an issue . The issue was , Tracy sewed a completely different style and when asked by her coordinator why , she had anxiously blurted out that she doesn't know why Danielle made her style different . Danielle being completely unaware of a lady lying about her in the house of God , was called to ask why she did so and she unpurposely corroborated to Tracy's lies .

After her little confrontation she had to go look for the lady with the different style and met Tracy . They got into an argument , before Tracy came to her senses and apologised , and gradually from saying hello to me and Danielle being in same unit at church they eventually spoke properly over jellof rice and ever since have been friends . We still laugh about the whole incident .

In the midst of our conversation i got a notification on my business page on ig from an @Stella63 which was private , but on the profile picture was a lady , looking at the beach .

The message read

○

**Hi dear , hope you are well , i would love to get some jewellries from your page .
You have lovely items .**

'Oh nice potential sales' I thought to myself and then replied .

○ **Thank you so much ❤️.**

Hope your evening is going well.

○

Oh , thanks dear its going fine .

**About to be better , if you tell me this particular
jewellery is still available .**



○

yes ma , it is .

○

**Oh great , my evening just got
better.**

○

**Oh I'm glad my
business and i are a
part of that . 😊**

○

**you have no idea, i have
Practically gone to some stores
here in lagos but did not see what
I needed. Please send me your details.
Can i have it tomorrow?**

○

**Sure ma , i can make
arrangements, address pls?**

○

**NO 17, Damson Lane
Hopeview estate ikoyi**

○

**Alright ma , waybill to that
axis ranges from 1500-2000
But today being your first
purchase you can pay 1500.**

○

**Oh how generous , thank you
but you're sure 1500 is sufficient?**

○

**Oh absolutely ..
I just need your name and
phone number.**

○

Ok.

After giving her my account details , she added a few more jewelleries and paid up . The alert made my heart merry , sometimes i get to caught up worried about not getting my dream law job that i forget to be grateful to be grateful for my business.

i may not be have a shop or much following , but i sell frequently which has been helpful in meet t my basic needs . My brother still assist with my rent , but other than that , i was good .

(The next day)

I was already exhausted , i had called my usual dispatch rider but he said he travelled out of the state .All attempts to get another dispatch rider proved abortive , so i made the decision to take it myself, i was already looking at google map to see how to get to the address when a call came in .

“ Hello”

I said answering the unsaved number

“Hi .. is this Raven jewelries” . came a woman's voice

“ yes ... this is she . Good morning”

“ morning dear , i am the person you chatted with on instagram last night . Hope you had a good night rest”

“ i sure did ma , thank You” oh her voice reminds me of Tracy’s mother , its appealing and had a warmth to it .

“ i got your number from your page , my daughter showed me , i don't really understand all this

social media stuff” she said and chuckled . “ Anyways , i need to let you know that , no one will be at home if the rider comes to drop it off , and my estate security will usually call our home line before accepting a parcel...”

“Oh...”

“ yes dear , so i was thinking yeah .. i have to meet up with some people at this restaurant in Lekki phase 1 called RHODE , and i’ll be there by 11am to most probably 2pm. So if its ok by you the driver could bring it there, but if thats not possible i can get it tomorrow i should be home throughout.”

“ No thats fine , i may have to bring it myself because my dispatch rider isn’t around at the moment , but its totally ok ma’am , i already assured you that you’ll be getting it today , so you most certainly will.”

“ oh dear , thank you so much , i’ll send the address of the restaurant to you now . And when you’re there, please give me a call on this number , ok?”

“Sure ma , i will.”

“Ok , see you then . Bye.” She said and hung up .

I was blushing , and i honestly wasn’t sure why . She just seemed really cool , from her voice she sounded like someone in her late 40’s that is classy and elegant.

While dressing up , i realised i did not say anything about the 1500 naira she paid for delivery , since i was not using a rider or going to ikoyi , my transport fare wont be up to 1500 , through and fro will be 1000 naira at most . So , i went ahead to get ready and held extra cash so i could give her back her money , or at- least what is left of the transport .

Getting to the restaurant was quite easy as it wasn't really off the road of inconspicuous , so as soon as i was outside i dialled her number .

“ hey ..., fancy seeing you here” , someone said behind me . Oh and i definitely knew who had that voice , so i wasn't surprised by the face i met as i turned .

“Hi Onomen”

“ Hey Frank..” i responded , for whatever reason my heart was thudding as my eyes met his gaze , he was still him , fine as ever and boy... did he look good in his suit .

“ how have you been ?” He asked , smiling . Why on earth was he smiling , i mean what gives him the right to after breaking my heart. Ok comport yourself Onos .

“ I'm great” i replied , forcing a grin on my face .

“ yeah you look so good ,as always”

hmm mph please , stop with the flatter Mr Frank . I had my hair in a bun and was simply putting on a sleeveless denim jumper with a with cotton top and a white vans . I wasn't looking bad but the way Oga said , ‘ yeah you look so good as always’ , he has never sounded so fake . But right now i cant have this man making me riled up before meeting a customer .

“ thank you” i said and turned to walk away when he grasped my wrist .

“ excuse you ...?” , i blurted out , while trying to understand why this man is still holding my wrist as i gave him a puzzled look , thankfully he got the memo .

“ i’m sorry” he said , before letting go of my hand

“ what? Do you have something to say ?” I asked

After letting out a long sigh he said “ yes i do . I’m sorry Onomen . I genuinely didn't want to hurt you ,i tried calling your number severally , but couldn't get through to you . See i knew you had beliefs , so i did that not to make you break your values, i didn't want to force”

“Wait , what...” i said , my ears and brain couldn't believe what he was saying . Is he actually trying to gaslight me . I cant believe at a point in my life , i found this man attractive .

“ ermmm , Frank , Its Ok . I forgive you , but please when next you see me , please..... don't say hi , and i promise you that i will do same . Lets forget that we knew each other . I hope and pray you find a lady that you need . Have a great day” .

The way i felt after saying all that to him ehh , i felt happy and unburdened , it was long overdue and walked triumphantly toward the restaurant as if i knew where i was going .

I had to stop behind a flower to put a call to my client . It rang twice no response , the third time it showed user busy , and my phone was five percent .

“ ohhh NEPA ..” i said out-loud , i suppose the doorman seemed to have taken note of my frustration and asked .

“ Good afternoon ma are you ok ?”

“ oh good afternoon sir , sorry i didn't see you there . I am supposed to meet up with someone here , but shes not picking up and my phone is about to die”

“ oh i see” .. the man said . “ well you can come in first.....”

He was talking when my phone started ringing ,thank God it was my customer .

“ Hello ma , good afternoon, i was calling to let you know that i am at the restaurant .”

After a little pause and what i assumed was a chuckle a deep baritone came from the other end , a males voice .

“ Hi .. yes i am to get if From you . Ravens jewellerys right?”

“ yeah Ravens , good afternoon” i answered suddenly sounding coy .

“ Good afternoon , i’m in the restaurant , Im guessing you’re at the door i could come get it from

you if you....”

“ no its fine , I'm almost in... i am eemmm putting on a denim jumper , soo when you see me you will know”

“ ok, then . Thank you” he said and i hung up .

The doorman was so patient he let me finish my call , to continue what he as saying .

“ thank you sir , that was the person i was trying to call” i said to him smiling .

“Oh good , good . So you can go in” he responded opening the door for me to pass through

The restaurant was fancy , but thankfully not too fancy , for me to be worried about being underdressed. It was glassy , one can see what is happening outside from inside to a large extent , but you cant really see inside from standing out .

Maybe because it was a Tuesday afternoon that the restaurant was uncrowded , by scanning the room i could see about five people , the restaurant had cut out partitions , which was cute . I walked by sit from sit , trying not to look like a crazy lady just staring into peoples face , until i was halted by a heyy.

“ hey.” I replied turning to face one of the most gorgeous looking men i had seen , whose face i happened to l know , only now i am seeing him better.

What i can say is God dey create .

“ you ?” He said , equally as shocked as i was , difference is i was shocked and nervous, my palms suddenly became sweaty .

“ Hi....,” oops he was coming closer , please don't stretch your hand our for a shake . He was about to so i just had to fold my arms , pretending like i did not see him , so he just rubbed his palms .

“ I'm just here to give a customer her goods” i said , without anyone asking me.

“ yeah , i thought so . You're indeed wearing a denim jumper ..” He said smiling , aww those dimples .

It was then realisation hit me “ oh you're the person i spoke to”

Still smiling , but now with that smug he directed me to sit .

“ how have you been , you look good” he said , now i was suddenly so self aware , i looked to plain compared to him is his black polo , and black pants on his chocolate skin.

“ well, thank you . Same ..”

Still smiling he said “ thanks. i never would have thought that i will run into you this soon”

“ same...” why was i repeating that word . “ ermm , i thought maybe the next time will be at Tracy and Kunle's wedding”

“ ahh really that far ..”

giggling i responded jokingly “ yeah , or where you so eager to see me ?”

“ yes, so desperate that i stole my moms phone to speak to you .”

i gave him the ‘seriously?’ Look . Laughing he said

“ no i’m kidding , my family had brunch here and my mum wanted getting the items from you but had to go some where urgently . so being the good son that i am , i decided to get it for her , so she left her phone , hence the reason why I’m here . But i did hope to see you again , that part was true .”

Maybe it was his accent , but i could listen to him talk all day . His voice was nice .

“ why ?”

“ honestly to get your name , i realised after leaving the engagement that i didn’t know your name”

“ i don’t know yours either”

“ Correct . So i’ll go first” Stretching out his hand again. “ i’m Myles” and this time , i had a minute to wipe my palm on my jean , so shaking his stretched hand , i replied “ Onomen”

“ Onomen?” he asked surprised

“ yeah” i answered affirmingly

“ Ok we would go back to that, first off do you care for anything , drinks , food ?” He asked

“ no I’m good , i just came with intentions of dropping this and going back” it was then i realised i still had the jewellery with me , so i slid it over to him .

“ yeah , but that was before you met a friend.” He said

“Friends... ? Are we friends now ?”

“ well..., i’d really love that .” He said so sweetly , or maybe i was the one thinking he said it that way , I’m a hundred percent sure i was blushing , good thing i’m dark .

“ so , what drink will you have?” He asked again , picking up the menu i glanced through the mocktails , i had no idea what a cinderella was , maybe it will be blue , or strawberry daiquiri or even virgin cohaela , at least i knew what pineapple milk shake was , soo that will do.

“ ok i will have , pineapple milk shake.”

He then signalled for the waiter , and gave my order .

“So Onomen , you’re from edo state ?”

“ yeah i am , proudly?”

“ wow , i wouldn't , have guessed”

“ why ? You thought i was gonna be yoruba like you”

“ hahahahaha no , and I’m not yoruba , hold on. You just labelled me yoruba , why ?”

“ aren't you?”

“ no, i’m from edo state”

Pausing for a second and only God knows why i squinted my eye before saying, “ really ?”

giggling he said “ yes . Do i look yoruba ?”

Nope he didn't , he was one of those people that you cant really place their tribe , but he did give me potential yoruba demon vibes.

“ well , you kind off ooze yoruba demon” i said smiling

“ oh wow.. I'm hurt” he said , making me laugh louder with the way he said it .

“ ok , whats your native name?” I asked , just before the waiter brought my drink .

“ thank you” he said to the waiter before answering me . “ promise you wont laugh?”

“ why would i ? Have you heard my name ? It sounds like just vowels”

“ ok , Its Agbuza”

Maybe it was the intonation he used in calling his name , the oyibo accent or the fact that i had never heard of that name before . I didn't laugh but i couldn't help but chuckle .

“ Agbuza?

“ you promised , no laughing”

I had to cover my mouth for some seconds so i don't break my promise .

Comporting my self, i said “ok , but i sincerely have never heard of that name before . What does it mean?”

“ Great”

“Great?”

Still smiling he said , “ i like the way you're like ‘Great?’ , like ‘thats it’ ? , Well yeah , it means great. My parents are always like, ‘you guys don't know the value of your name. Name can shape a future , dadada . And they are right . It remind me of how God had to change , Saul name to Paul and Jacob's to Isreal to signify his encounter with them , which changed the course of their life .”

“ yeahhh”

“ So yeah , i'm edo , Benin boy . You ?”

“ esan”

He gave me a funny look of wonder mixed with amusement .

“ don't start?” , i said knowing exactly what was in his mind

“ you should take a sip” he said pointing to my drink, in an attempt to make light of the moment .

“ what ? , i'm just concerned , you haven't had a sip , before it gets warm” he added.

“ we are not who the world paints us to be and i say that respectfully.ok...?”

“What do the world say about Esan people ? , i have personally never heard people say they fly at night never!! . On the contrary people say they are really...., Agbuza . see what i did there, Azugba , great” he said and winked , i was hysterical at the moment , what a lame dad joke . But he tried .

“ well , I'm glad people never said that”

“ anyways , regardless of what is said , i do believe that its wrong to judge a person or people in this case base of a single narrative . To know a person you have to experience that person , if that make sense”

“ yeah you're right. I know the esan people in my life are good people , my mom , brother , cousins ..”

“ oh you guys are just two ?”

“ yeah , my Brother who is in the Uk , Itohan and moi. He just had a kid , cutest boy ever . My mom actually just left Nigeria few weeks back to go visit ”

“ oh thats nice , and your dad ?”

“ well.... He's late”

“sorry about that You must miss them , your mum and brother?”

“ oh definitely, especially my bro , haven't seen him ever since he left for work , oh nooo since his wedding three years back. So yeah , i do miss him”

“ I'm sure he misses you to , and he will be proud . I mean you're doing good for yourself.”

“ why do you think so ?”

“ My mother sang praises of your business , after she came across it on ig . How you had range of jewelries that she couldn't find in some high end stores . My sis had to tell her to calm down , reminding her that she had not gotten the necklace yet”

“ awww , that so nice . I really hope she likes it . Although this is just my side business, sort of. Well for now is my main source of income , but I'm a lawyer , just looking for a job”

“ ok...”

“ yeah , i did just do an interview so fingers crossed”

With the most reassuring smile i had ever seen, he said “ well , with God all things are possible”, i just had to smile back and gently took a sip of my drink . Now i know he is not a Yoruba demon , i just hope wasn't an Edo demon , because i feel they could be worse .

‘Why do you care?’ , i thought to myself .

“ i hope i didn't ruin any plans you may have had for today ?” He asked , breaking my intrusive thought

“ No. you didn't”

And i meant it , we had the most interesting conversation speaking for about two more hours, before going our ways . It started to drizzle and i remembered my clothes hanging out, so i had to go , declining his offer to drop me home even after he had insisted .

The last question he asked me before my ride which he forcefully booked for me , of which i was not complaining was . “ are you in a relationship?” , after i said no , he said . “ ok , i pray you

meet the man from whose ribs you were created”.

“ ahhhhh, TRACY !!!, TRACY!!, come ,come, come ooo”. I shouted from my bedroom . My excitement couldn't be contained.

“ what is it” , she answered rushing into my room looking so concerned .

“ i got a message.....”

“ ahhhhh , OH MY GOD finally he messaged you” she said dancing at the spot she stood .

“ yes , they said i should resume work on Monday” i said getting up from my bed to join her in dancing , but immediately I did she paused and went back to her puzzled state .

“ who are we dancing for ? Who message you?” She asked

“ VERENA na , i got the job i just saw the message” i said .

“ Ohhhh Onos , shey you would have just said it from the beginning , instead of giving me high BP”, she said pouting as she sits on my bed .

“ ah ah Tracy , are you not happy for me” i said sitting next to her .

“ are you kidding me ? Me that fast on-top this matter . I'm happy , i sha thought it was Myles , Kunle's friend , our boo” she said the last part smili g and jabbed me with her finger .

“ ouch , madame”

“ sorry.”

“ i told you i didn't give him my number , and its not as if I'm waiting for him to call or message me” i said defensively .

“ why did you say it like that?” Tracy asked

“like how ?” I asked still defensively

“ you see , like how you just did . ‘Like how’.” She said imitating me .

“ Tracy”

“ Onos”

“ oya come and be going , i need to start preparing for work” i said in a bid to dismiss her , because i know how my friend could be . I wasn't about to let **know** that i was upset at the fact that he didn't call that night or even three days later , when i clearly had no right to be .

“ madame , its not today you are going to work its till Monday . So we have time , i will help you prepare . See i'm sure he collected the number from his moms phone ”

“ Tracy , i know what you want .”

“ what do i want ? For you to be happy ?” She replied

“ Ahhh, have we reach that stage , i only met him once”

“ thrice ..” she corrected

“ ok thrice . All times completely by chance ...”

“before unko , how do you meet someone .If not by chance .”

“ if he calls fine , which i doubt will be for any other reason aside from checking up on me . Its not like any call that come in i'm expecting it to be him. Babe do you honestly think a guy like him is not in a relationship ? , probably a serious one”

“ what does that mean ? He's fine soo , does that guarantee that any fine person is in relationship . Look at you for example , are you not single . Anyways ill make sure to ask my guy ..” she said

“ exactly .”

“ what ?”she asked confused

“ Kunle. Obviously he should know that i am friends with you , and with the way you said he's close to Kunle if he liked me small even before we met the last time , he should have at-least asked him for my number .”

“ I'm sure it was because he didn't know your name, or the fact that you are single ...”

“ hmm naso , now at he knows unko . See Tracy i don't want to get my hopes up for some guy that i'm not even sure where he's head is at”

After letting out a sigh , Tracy said “ i get you though . We really don't know where he's head is at , but like i told you earlier , anytime Kunle had spoken about him it was always good things . You know he just moved to Nigeria to set up his own business , and it was around that time that Kunle was preparing for the proposal and even with his busy schedules Myles looked for the event planner and helped Kunle set up the proposal . At one time that Kunle was going through a hard time he said that Myles was literally sending him money monthly until he was able to get a better job . I just like him , funny enough I've only met him once , and that was during the engagement ...we've only ever spoken on phone . And he's really fine” She quickly added sheepishly making the two of us laugh

“ True he's fine”

“ see your mouth , i will sha ask Kunle about his status , you know ...” she said winking

“ why are you winking ? Please don't ask him o...”

Why ...” she said and my phone which was on my lamp table charging immediately started ringing , and without even thinking or hesitating before i could reach for it , Tracy picked it and excitedly started speaking .

“ hello...” she happily said , before her tone became less excited “ I'm fine , its Tracy good afternoon let me give her the phone”

Passing the phone she mouthed ‘ its your brother’.

“ oh . I.T how far ?” I asked

“ I'm good , how your side”

“ I'm ok , yeah i was going to even call , i have good news . I got that job i interviewed for ,

starting on Monday .”

“Ahhhh , baddest Barrister of the law , i hail oo . Please can i send my account number .”

i knew that would be his exact reaction , Itohan never fails to disappoint .

“ congrats, you did well” he then added .

Smiling i said . “ thanks”

My elder brother has been one of my role model , he set the precedence for excellence in my family right from when we were younger . He did so well in school and in any thing he sets his hands on that i knew i wanted to be as good, or even better .

No matter how much he tries to deter from praising me too much or saying sis i love you , i know he does , because he proves it with his action. So whenever he says anything to show that he was proud of me i never take it lightly .

“ eheen Onos , i mistakenly told mummy that you have broken up with your boyfriend” he said

“ habaaaa , why . You see why i don't like discussing my love life with you ...” i said and got the ‘ whats going on’ look from Tracy, which i ignored.

“ no vex , she said i should call you that’s why I'm calling . My wife is sleeping , so mummy was carrying baby but now he’s sleeping so she went to drop him in his crib , i just say make i call you give you update before she comes back”

“ ohhhhh I.T , you know how mummy can be ..”

“ hold on she has come ...” he said to me ,before i heard him say “ ahh mummy , Onomen is on the phone” . After a short while i heard my mums voice on the phone

“ my smalllie , how are you?” My mum asked

“I'm fine ,ehe mammy i just got a job oo, I'm starting on Monday next week .”

i had to take the phone away from my ear to prevent my eardrums from getting damaged from the scream that came through

“ ahh mummy you will wake the baby” , i heard my brother said making me smile as i pictured my nephew’s face , he was literally the cutest kid .

“ ohhh , see what the lord has done.., see what the lord had done ... what we have been waiting for .. , has come to pass , see what the lord has done .’ She sang that song written by one of my favourite gospel musician about three more times .

“ aaaa see God o . I knew it , I know that he is too faithful to fail me . Onomen dear , God will see you through as you start to work in Jesus name..”

“Amen”

“ favour , favour , favour , will be your portion in Jesus name”

“ Amen”

“ Ah thank God . But you , how are you generally ?” She asked

“ I'm fine o mammy , i just need to shop for more office wears because i don't have plenty like that.” i replied

“ ohhhh, okay . How is Tracy and her husband ?”

“ They are fine , Tracy is even here sef , do you want to talk to her ?” . I silently prayed that she will say yes, because with her tone, i knew where she was headed and i honestly wasn't in the mode for

“ eh give her the phone” i heard my mum , ah truly Miracle no deg tire Jesus.

After barely two minutes Tracy handed the phone to me , which was unusual. Typically my mother could converse with her for minutes on end , most time mu Mom spoke with her longer than she did me .

“ hello mammy.” I said

“ Onos... Why don't you want to tell me that you and , Kunle broke up ...”

“ mummy , his name is Frank , Kunle is Tracy's fiancée .”

“ is that what we are saying now . Onos I'm your mother , stop hiding something from me . This are the kind of things we are supposed to be discussing”

“ true . Sorry, i just didn't see the need to tell you at that time . Plus you did not really like him”

“ Did i say that? . Have you heard me open my mouth and say i don't like kun... , i mean Frank ?”

“ not explicitly , but by their fruits we shall know , in this case your fruit.”

“ Wa' geh O'nomon na .” She said in Esan language. ‘ So do you have anyone now?’ She asked further

“ mummy , no” .

“ ok I'm just asking to be sure . Can you remember Mrs Inegbedion?” She asked me

“ no”

“ that huge , fair woman that had a store in New Benin where she sales lace . We normally go to her house sef in Upper Mission extension when you and I.T where younger.”

“ okay....I can't remember . But what happened her .”

“ you sef , how cant you remember, she was driving one blue Peugeot then.”

“ Mummy. My love . What exactly are we getting at , because i cant remember her . Maybe if i see a picture i could , but honestly this description is not helping at all.”

“ Well i met up with her here in London , she moved here years back with her family , while i was at her place her son came to visit . My daughter if you see him , very fine young man and he's a doctor.”

“ okay.....”

“ his mum gave me his number to give you , thank God i didn’t tell them you had a boyfriend then , its as of God knows you two will break up . Anyways , i also gave his mum your number , after your brother told me you’re no longer with Kunle i , sent your number to his mother , and last night she told me she has given it to him . So my dear i’m just letting you know, his name is Ehizoya Inegbedion .”

I couldn't help but sigh “ ok ma , thank you for giving them my number. If he calls i’ll talk”

“ thats good , if he doesn't call i’ll send you his number”she said , sounding pleased

“ what for ?” I asked

“to view it like a photograph . Ah ah what kind of stupid question is that what do they do with peoples number is it not to call”

“Ok ma”

“ or you WhatsApp him” she added , i could feel her smiling through the phone , feeling proud at her attempt at matchmaking

“ ok”

“ all this your , ok ma , ok ma , is suspicious. You are not usually this accepting”

“ mummy..... , if i say no problem , now i’m saying ok in agreement problem , maybe i should have just kept mute”

“ shut up joor , see your mouth. Anyway take care of yourself , let me go and sleep to before that baby will wake up and start crying again . Do and born your own so that i can come and carry , born inside marriage oo , before people will say its your mother that say you should born out of wedlock . And be eating well oo , i don’t want to hear you fall sick because you are not eating as you should , especially now that you are starting work .”

“ i will , talk to you later . Send my love to Bianca when she wakes up .”

“ ok . bye” . As usual after her last bye , i heard the call disconnect .

Hmm Mrs Iyore , i could honestly feel it in my bones that she has been waiting for this opportunity for the longest time . To hitch me up with one of her friends son . In less than a minute after she ended the call a message from her came into my WhatsApp , It was his contact . I saw the **typing** sign appear . It could take a while , my mama was a rather slow typer , even though she has refused to accept that fact . While waiting for whatever she was trying to drop i could literally feel Tracy inquisitive gaze boring through me .

And as i looked up lo and behold she didn’t disappoint .

“ yeah ?”

i was about replying to when my moms message finally came in , it read .. “ **if he does not call you. Then call him . Hope you are hearing me ?**”

And i simply replied “ **yes**”

“ what happened ? Hope shes ok ?”

“she’s more than ok . She is just doing match making with her friends . Apparently she gave her friends son my number . And” showing her the message my mum sent. “look she just sent his number , saying i should call him if he doesn’t”.

laughing Tracy said “ Kai , your mom never ceases to amaze me . Wait is there a profile pic on his whatsApp ?” She said , taking my phone from me .

“let me seee ...” she said as she operated my phone .

“There is one . Oh . Oh He’s cute , if this is him he actually is cute” after which she handed me the phone to see .

She wasn’t lying , he was cute . Looked fair in complexion, clean shave , chiseled jawline . The photo was a headshot ,presumably for work and he was in red suit and had his arms folded smiling . He was appealing to look at pictorially , but he didn’t have dimples like Myles . I wonder why he hasn’t called , i thought we had a connection at-least a friendly connection .

“ true ,his cute” i said out-loud

“ your mama know better thing. Any ways my own is Myles should call , but if Mr Myles decides to remain a slacker , and Mr What his name? She asked

“ Ehi.... Something, I've forgotten”

“ whatever , if He , Ehi something decided to pursue you then my friend we shift course But omoh na you they hot oo fine fine men left , right , centre .”

“Erm bia Tracy calm down . None of those men are my anything , none of them have called me more less say anything ok , so please lets go to your wardrobe so i can rob some clothes”

Getting of my bed headed towards the door, she said

“ ehh even though. But come to think of it , sometimes one has to let go of rocks to get diamond .”

“ what ?” I asked clearly confused .

“ think about it” she added before beckoning on me to follow her , as she exits my room .

“

13

“ Monday ~ work day”

With how excited i was to start work , it would be had to convince anyone that i had looked down on this role .

“ despise not the days of small beginnings”

I couldn't remember what book of the Bible that was but , it came to mind as soon as I sat on my desk, and I sure wasn't going to despise this moment .

I was taken on a mini tour round the office by Mr Dare one of the men whom was present at my Interview. He Introduced himself as the head of HR and a staff attorney . I wonder how he managed but positions effectively , because I believe that are both tedious jobs. I was also introduce to my other colleagues . Most of them where already staff attorneys and associate attorneys, we were just two paralegals . Myself and another guy called Tayo . They all seem pleasant and friendly . The office he about sixteen staffs , including domestic staffs which I think was great for a rising firm.

“ I'm sure you are aware of your duties. We were really impressed with you at the interview” Mr Dare said , as we came to my desk which was adjacent to Tayo's, after the office tour .

“ I am sir , and really thank you for the opportunity”

“ oh no , I'm not to be thanked it was a unanimous decision. If anyone is to be thanked it's our boss .” He said warmly which made me smile.

“ Anyways so this are the some of the files on the VADA litigation case we spoke about earlier, Tayo will help you have better understanding of it since he already reviewed some of the documents.” He paused for a while and looked towards Tayo , who was busy scrutinising a some

files .

“ Tayo..” Mr Dare called , getting his attention

“ yes sir .” Tayo answered

“ please put her through, the VADA case okay”

“ oh sure thing sir” Tayo answered smiling as he glanced my way .

Shortly after Mr Dare left , as promised Tayo helped explain the case, his findings so far and our aim . He had done most of the work , what was left to do was get the interrogatories . Apparently it was a commercial dispute where VADA warehouse was sued for damaged property by a business owner whom had his properties stored in the warehouse.

in no time it was 1:30pm which was lunch time , and most of the staff went out for lunch.

“ how is the work going so far” Tayo asked suddenly as he stood in front of my desk which startled me .

“ oh ... Jesus ...” I blurted out

Noticing my little jump scare, he began laughing.

“ ayaaa sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.”

now smiling I said “ no it's fine. And work is progressing”

“ Progressing. Great word choice. Anyways it's lunchtime, most people go to the restaurant across the road to eat, but omoh it's a bit expensive. There is the buka not to far from here really neat and they sell tasty meals , do you want to come along.” He asked

“ no maybe next time I actually came with food today , I will just eat at the staff lounge”. I said

“ ok sure , I will sha get you their famous roasted yam and pepper sauce. Trust me you will be glad I did” , he said and added a wink

Chuckling i said “ okay... I trust you”

“ ah , for this Lagos them no Dey trust person for first day oo . But anyways on this matter I'm trust worthy . Alright see you later fear fear”

“ really fear fear” I said out loud as he walked away, pretending to be vexed

“ ah me to I shock , I thought it will be like a week before I give you nickname” he said loud as he exited the premises.

“ don't mind Tayo o, he's the clown of this office . And everyone has a nickname by him . Even our boss”

A lady who I couldn't remember her name said as she equally exited the room with her bag ,

clearly also going to have lunch .

“ ok I guess that means I’m really part of the team then” I said smiling

Equally smiling she said “ ok make I go chow , see ya.”

I then proceeded to put my files in order and carried my lunch box to eat at the lounge . Thankfully I was the only one there .

Few minutes into consuming my spaghetti I got a notification on my phone.

“ awww” i said as I read the message. It was from @ **Stella69** on ig , it read

“ **my dear thank you for the jewellery it was so stunning 🥰 I loved it**”

replying I wrote “ **I’m so glad you loved it . Hope you come back to the store**”

“ **oh definitely.**”

“ **my regards to your family.....**” . I was about sending this last five words, before I i deleted it and just sent

“ **have a great week ahead**”

what is wrong with you Onos , I thought to myself. How will she know I know she has a family, I mean almost everyone does have a family but she doesn’t need to o pw I know she has one Or a son that didn’t see it fit to give me a call. Not like I was expecting a call from him or anything. Not like he has my number , because technically he doesn’t .

“ calm down , why are you overthinking things” I said out loud to bring me back to my senses.

“ he can go and hug transformer for all i care, mtcheww”

“ who?” Tayo said appearing suddenly

“ ermmmm... no one important I was on a call with my friend”

“ sha tell the person not to go and hug transformer o, at least not today . With the rain that fell yesterday the person go just die , because i sure say transformer never still dry , if not for my area we for don see light”

okay kudos to Tayo , man was an effortless unpaid comedian. After handing me the yam which I ended up eating more as the food was exactly as Toyo had said it will be , delicious . Casting my food to one side, we chatted more and he cracked me up with almost every sentence.

I got to know he was newly married and could only imagine how lively his family would be. At 2:30pm it was time to resume work and we headed back to our desk , to get things done.

FRIDAY

It was 5pm and everyone at the office was already rounding up their work, so many people had already left, I and Tayo were also doing same before one of the big goons in our office stopped by. Everyone in the office called him Mr P courtesy of Tayo, his name is Peter so the staff thinks P stems from Peter however Tayo being Tayo had a different reason of nicknaming him Mr P. Mr Peter was a chubby man, some people will say fat, but I hate calling people fat it seemed insulting so let's go with Chubby.

Tayo nicknamed him Mr P, short for Mr Plump but he just lets the other think it's Peter, only two of us know that secret. It's funny, that I have only been in this office for barely five days and Tayo is most definitely my work bestie, he's such a vibe.

“Hello guys, how was work today?” Mr P asked

“fine sir” I and Tayo answered simultaneously

Now turning to me, Mr P said “Onomen, hope you are liking it here so far, and bearing with our excesses”

“oh I most definitely am sir” I responded, reciprocating his warm smile.

“that's good to hear. And you both were really helpful with the VADA case. Good work”

“thank you sir” we each replied

“okay.... Ermm I know we are all rushing to go home and beat this Lagos traffic, but I just want to drop this file here myself. It's quite important, you both can look into it tomorrow. It's a new case we will be working on and we will need all the information and facts we can find on it. It's for a good friend of the company ok.”

“sure boss” Tayo answered and I nodded in response.

Now smiling Mr Peter continued “okay guys, we can leave the files here at work, but I'll definitely email you both the details so you can go through it if want to of course, please no one is saying you have to work during the weekend. But this case is quite dicey”

No turning to Tayo he said, very casually “Tayo, Tayo, how is marriage life so far.”

“a joy ride so far, ahhh if I knew marriage was this sweet I would have been married a long time ago.”

laughing now Mr P said “I'm sure you will say so, just continue to make you wife happy and your home will be blissful”

“ coming from you ? I will definitely take that advice. Sir with the way you and your wife tension us on a daily”

“ well, as you rightly said Tayo , marriage is sweet . Okay guys have a great weekend”

“ And you to . Bye sir”

Shortly after, he left . And after chatting for a brief moment I and Tayo equally left the office. Maybe I'm still in my work honeymoon phase but so far I am loving the VERENA , people are usually busy doing their own thing, but if help is needed they readily offer assistance. The work environment is just so peaceful and comfortable. God thank you.

“ I need to get a car” . I thought to Myself as I waited , on the expressway trying to stop a bus . From 5pm upward in Lagos especially on a Friday was definitely the most chaotic time ever . At that time all buses are packed, roads are blocked, thugs are out , sellers are out from does selling hot bread, corn , plantain, caps , portraits, etc practically any and everything .

After standing for almost an hour on the road as my God whom loves me will have it I heard my name, and it was none other than my beloved friend being driven by her boo and they were going to our house!! Yeah !!!

“ I could hug you both right now, you guys are literally heaven sent ” I said as I sat on the backseat and jammed the door

“ hahaha how far , my boo” Tracy said

“ I don tire” I replied after giving out a long sigh

“ Ayaa Kpele” Kunle said , before driving off

“ thank you. Good evening” I said to him

“ Good evening, and congratulations on your new job oo, Tracy gave me the gist”

Managing to give a smile, i said “ thank you.”

“ ah ah , see this man ooo .” Tracy said suddenly , pointing to the taxi driver on the next lane who was trying to sway himself into our lane. We all looked at him, he had gone back to his lane but in less than five seconds was back to struggling with us again.

“ eeee wetin?” Now , rolling down the window by her side she shouted at the driver.

“ oga wetin now , you one scratch my car . See if you hit me e no go funny oo , Abeg Dey your lane”

Now getting the man' s attention. He said “ see who dey talk, na you get car . Una go enter boyfriend car they claim right..”

“ Oga na my husband car be dis . Hit am first then I go show you the right I get”

I looked at Kunle , man was just smiling .

“Abegi ... Dey go” the man said as he saw that there was actually no point of him trying to get in our lane as his taxi will most definitely bump into ours. After we drove past him , she then rolled her window back up .

After a brief silence from all three of us and giving Tracy giving Kunle a coy stare , we all burst out laughing.

“ no but sometimes you have to put this Lagos drivers in their place. They can be so annoying very rough drivers”. She said justifying her actions as if any one was questioning her . In my opinion she was hundred percent accurate , Lagos drivers can make one mental. They make you commit a sin against God unconsciously , not like sin is planned . Well some people do plan to sin , but yeah I hope the picture is clear.

“ how was work na” Tracy asked this time

“ not bad . Not bad at all” I responded , slightly distracted by the suya one Mallam was slicing , the reddish brown colour of the meat was literally beckoning on me , i could only imagine how delicious it would taste and giving how appealing it looked . What can I say I love me some good suya . But with this traffic stoping for suya will be simply foolish .

“ oh Onomen we haven't seen each other since the proposal yeah ?”

Kunle said , disrupting my suya fantasies .

“ we actually haven't”

“ I know I had said thank you over the phone , but really thanks . Una to try.”

“ aww . It was no bother at all . It's high time you people stop this thank you sef , ah ah . I love you both , and anytime you call on me , a'ma show up” I said as a matter of fact.

“ see ya mouth.” Tracy replied “ but his right though it literally surpassed any imagination I had about how my proposal was going to be . So thank you all my dream team... . We also need all hands on deck for the wedding , So y'all be prepared to be suffocated with me ok .” She said in her sheepish way

Smiling Kunle said “ suffocate me babe , I'm ready”

I looked as my friend smiled at him in response to his comment. They look so cute , it was heartwarming.

“ and my guy too , he and I practically brainstormed the whole process” Kunle added

“ oh yeah..... Myles How is he”

“ His good”

My heart started thumping, as soon as the conversation took that turn . I know my friend will want to probe more , giving the change In her tone .

“ it’s like his gone back to the U.S ?” Tracy asked

“ he hasn’t , his just been really busy . You know his one of Lagos big guys na . He just moved because he had an offer here , and is trying to set up his own company. So man is really busy”

“ ohhhh. I see”

“ yeah , we haven’t seen each other or even chatted much since the proposal. Not much after he confirmed that his driver returned his vehicle after dropping , you and Danielle off” Kunle added

“ me and Danielle” Tracy asked confused

“ sorry not you , Onos .”

Me ! I thought, when did he drop me off . Or in this case his driver . I have only had two encounters with him I can’t recall him asking his driver to drop me off , more so myself and my friend.

“ you remember, after the proposal ?”

“no that didn’t happen, after the proposal we called an Uber , or rather Danielle did . It was a really fancyoh , oh .., oh.....”

Laughing Tracy as usual, decided to be Tracy .

“ which one be oh , oh , oh kuma this girl”

“so it was Abguza’s vehicle . no wonder , I knew it was to fancy to be a regular Uber, even the driver looked very posh.”

“ ok . Back up a bit . Agbuza ? How did you know that was his name , he rarely tells anyone” Kunle asked, sounding a bit surprised.

“ yeah he mentioned it , once”

“ okay ...” kunle simply replied

“ oh that was really nice of him though” Tracy said

“ His just like that , willing to forgo for another . You know he then booked a cab for himself that day to go home.”

“ did he ? . Aww , that’s nice” Tracy said

I smiled knowing what she was aiming at , and I had a gut feeling that she was also smiling and I wasn’t wrong. Looking at the interior rear view mirror our gaze met and I gave her don’t do it look . But she did it.

“ Babe is he single ? .” She asked Kunle

“ well he was dating this lady , a while ago...”

“ok , the question is is he single”

“ to my knowledge yes .” Kunle answered.

I was honestly shocked Kunle wasn't decoding the situation at ground but thank God . I didn't want to look as desperate as Tracy was making me look . And again, for Kunle Agbuza's close friend not to have any inclination as to what is going on it means I haven't been mentioned, he never asked for my number from him , meaning he probably doesn't care , and I'm just being delusional. Or rather Tracy was just being delusional, because i never thought of him not calling to be anything really. Right?

14

The Next Day (Saturday)

I just love Saturday's . For some reason this particular day of the week just always seems to be more bubbly, the atmosphere always seems cheerful and energetic. ‘ it's because of Naija Owambe's that takes place on Saturday, plus no work', my bestie will say , but to me that wasn't it I just loved the day . More than most people who loves Friday . **TGIF**.

This Saturday was a lot busy for me , I had some orders to package and deliver .Of course I hadn't shoved my business aside because of my work . I wasn't giving it my utmost attention;however it was still my baby . I had laundries and we had to do our weekly sanitation.

“ babes we will need to change this table o .” Tracy said holding up the table clothe we successfully used in covering a crack on the table In our living room.

Dropping my mop stick I went closer to her to re-examine the extent of the crack. Yep , it was a bit bad .

“ we’ve just been postponing it . But this time around eh , we will get that coffee table I showed you . Our living room is not so big sef , that will just be perfect.”

Recalling the table she was referring to I replied.

“ oh yeah , that table was so pretty. But you said you will get it for you and Kunles place . Infact you shouldn’t even be bothered by this babe , when you will soon live me here.”

“ see this one is it not still our place . But thats true we haven’t really discussed what will happen when I move oo Onomen. Rent ?” Tracy said looking concerned. She was right we really haven’t discussed about it . Her marriage was practically around the corner, even though the month was picked they had mentioned that they wanted to be married at most a year after getting engaged.

“ well as you said you’re still here. And when you move I’ll definitely move out to somewhere cheaper. One bedroom apartment, or I could even ask Danielle if she would love to move here , and if she declines then I will go with the former option”.

“ ok my darling”

We Continued our chores as we discussed more . Mainly about the wedding vision . Tracy and Kunle had decided on using Amies place , one of the best wedding planners from Delta state. Her place of origin.

And it was just perfect, Amies was to plan the traditional wedding in delta state and will plan the white here in Lagos.

They where currently searching for a hall to use for the reception of the white wedding as for the traditional wedding Mr Martins home in Abraka was just big enough.

“ How far ? You don see the File Abi ?

Tayo’s message came through just as I layed In bed to go through some work stuff.

I knew what he was talking about . The file Mr P was to send to us .

“ You put camera for my house? I just Dey open my laptop now now your message just came in”

“ ah Abego o , a whole married man like me . The fear of my wife will not let me construct such thought”

“ 😊, how is she by the way”

“ she’s great .”

“ please send my regards oo”

“ sure” . He replied

I scoffed scrolling through all the LinkedIn emails I had on my Laptop.

‘ 30+ new jobs in Lagos’.

‘ Onomen Iyore , you have a new invitation and update’ .

‘ 10 people noticed you’.

I scrolled down a bit more before finally stumbling on the mail from Mr P.

“ yep , I have seen the mail . The attachment is loading “ . I typed to Tayo

“ ok good. Oya now we go see for work”

“Sure . thanks, have a good weekend”

“ you to . 🙏”

Finally the files attached to the mail opened up . It was a case brief . it showed

Between : **Charge No. R/ XT22/097**

The State ... **COMPLAINANT**

Vs.

Adaeze Ikenna ... **THE ACCUSED**

JUDGEMENT

The accused person is standing trial on the following count.

~

“beep. Beep . Beep”

I heard my phone ring as I was delving into the file more .

It was an unknown number .

‘ who be dis’ I thought to myself just before picking the phone.

I was silent for a while , it was a silly habit I picked up from Tracy . Once she don’t have that number saved in her phone she sure wasn’t speaking first.

After a few seconds a males voice came through.

“ hello?” He said or more like ask .

“ hello” I replied. Oh wait was it ... who I think it is . No that hello didn’t sound Like him .
Calm down Onos !!

“ hi , Onomen hope you’re well”. He asked . He had an accent but it wasn’t American like someone I knew . British.

Okay I definitely didn’t know this person but he seems to know my name .

“ I’m ok Please who is this” . I had to ask , because I will hate being on one end thinking the other person knew whom I was .

“ my bad , I just assumed you had my number it’s Ehizoya Inegbedion . I think your mom might have mentioned that some local dude took your number”

“ hahaha .. well I don’t think she said local , more like agbero”

I was glad he couldn’t help but snicker at my lame attempt at making the situation light.

“ Well , if you think about it being an agbero has more reps than being local . So if that was how i was introduced it’s probably better .”

Chuckling I said “ oh really?”

“ no I’m just kidding it’s equally as terrible, I’ll have you know I’m none of the above .”

“ good to know.” I responded

After a brief pause which seemed like minutes , it was as if we were both waiting for the other person to say something first , he asked .

“ so I was told we kinda grew up together, in Benin?”

“ I was told same , but if I’m being honest I can’t remember”

“ oh that’s sad.” He said sadly, but I wasn’t sure if he was just being sarcastic or not.

“ no...., I honestly have little to no memory about it . I remember my mum and I usually go visit this very nice aunty at her shop , and she will buy us sugar cane and groundnut but that’s it . I can’t recall her having kids , or at least any that I met.” I quickly added .

“ I do remember your brother a bit , sometimes your mother brought him to our house for sleep over and we’d play video games and football together. I think we only met once , briefly when you

came along with your mother to get your brother from our house . You had shuku hairstyle and I think matching jean top and skirt “

I don't know if he was lying or telling the truth but if he was being truthful then I am more than impressed. I tried to force the memory into recollection but it just didn't.

“ oh wow..not the matching jeans .” I said covering my Face in shyness , as if he could see me . “it's either you have a really really good memory and I have a shitty memory or you have an amazing memory and mine is just wack ...” I said sounding very impressed .

Chuckling he said “ well , I just happen to also have a picture of that day .”

“ what !” I heard my self yell , making him crack up more.

“ now I know you're lying.” I said as a matter of fact.

“ I don't lie” He said

“ send the picture” i said daring him

“ I will , it's just not with me here . It's at my moms . In our photo album”

“ nooo , I don't believe you. How , when was it taken?” I asked , now very curious.

“ it was some days past Christmas, and I can't remember for sure but I think your mother had to come pick up your brother because she was taking you guys out. And my family were also going out so we where all dressed up, so a neighbour of ours who happened to be a photographer took the photo.”

“ Ehizoya , I don't believe you. How do you know the detail so much.”

“ my mom gave the gist, plus I wasn't so little then , so I still remember somethings .”

“ wow ...now I'm curious to see the picture. To see how terrible I looked”

On the contrary you looked good,in my opinion better than the rest of us in it” . I could feel him smiling at the other end of the phone .

“ well , thanks for making me feel less terrible that you have my childhood photo.”

“ and it's a pleasure having it , I can at least tease you with it .” He quickly added

“ Kai... You see what I say . You men eh”

Laughing yet again he added “ no you have to believe me , you look good in it . I'm only pulling your legs.whenever I get to go off work and visit my mom I'll send it to you.”

Oh that's true Mr Doctor .

“ oh work , how is that going?” I asked

“ could be better, but you know we're striving. Currently doing my residency.”

“ that nice, I'm sure medical school wasn't easy? , but see you doing doctor stuff” i said smiling

Chuckling he said “ yeah it wasn't, but as you rightly said we're doing the doctors stuff . Funny enough I'm on duty at the moment just relaxing in the doctors lounge before I get a bleep. How is

work?”

“ Good, I only just started working there though . But so far I’m just thankful to God .”

“ yeah . We all have to be grateful don’t we? You’re a lawyer yeah ?”

“ yep .”

“ thank God I now know more lawyers.”

Smiling I replied “ just don’t go committing crimes though”

“ I’ll try my best not to.”

Suddenly I heard a buzz sound from his end .

“ okay , that’s my official cue to go . I just got a bleep . I hope no one’s dying”

“ I hope not” I said , actually meaning it . Who likes to hear any one died , well apart for some really terrible humans that probably deserve it , but generally no one does .

“ ok Onomen , nice talking to you. Will definitely reach out sooner if that’s ok by you ?”

“ sure” .

It’s not like there is a reason for me to decline him wanting to reach out more, i clearly don’t see why not. Right ?

“ ok then , that assuring . Bye” he said before cutting the call . Now that wasn’t a terrible conversation, he wasn’t a terrible conversationist .

After saving his number on my cellphone I immediately reached for my laptop to look into the new case more .

‘ where was I’ I muttered as my laptop screen lit up .

STATEMENT OF OFFENCE

Murder : punishable under section 319 of the criminal code Cap Vol.10 . Laws of Lagos state Nigeria 1976.

PARTICULARS OF OFFENCE 1

ADAEZE IKENNA on or about the 13th of May, 1998 at Dodan Barracks , Obalende , Ikoyi in the Lagos Judicial Division did murder one Chetachi IKENNA (m) by giving him poison in his meal.

As I perused through the case file the name Adaeze was just to hard to ignore, however the Adaeze i know is Adaeze Ihuoma , not Ikenna .

Mrs Ada had not really told me how she ended up in prison but from what I gathered it was because she murmured her husband , and has been in prison for a long time.

Why does this Mrs Adaeze Ikenna also have the same problem and is currently in the same prison Mrs Ada is held at , and if I can remember vividly the prison wardens said they had just one Mrs Ada . And Dodan barracks, I can't quite remember where I heard that address but it definitely sounded familiar.

Was Mrs Adaeze Ihuoma the same as Mrs Adaeze Ikenna? .

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(MONDAY)

In the two weeks of knowing Tayo I had never seen him put up such a poker face before , as he was now staring into the case file . The only sign of emotion whatsoever , if that even sums as one was the occasional hmmm sounds he made as he flips through, page by page .

I was so tempted to go see Mrs Ada yesterday being Sunday after church but got held up due to some departmental meetings , I needed to clarify so many things.

“ there is clearly some lacunas in the case” Tayo finally said.

“ yeah exactly, it’s very evident that the proceedings weren’t handled properly” . I conceded

“ we can attest completely to the ladies innocence , however we certainly can’t ignore the fact that so many lapses were made , for Christ sake she had no witnesses, no one to corroborate her claims. Just her against the system, and who in Gods name was her lawyer sef Ah ah” Tayo added, still looking at the file .

“ and the worst part is she has been imprisoned for almost 20 years”