MOVEMENT I

MORNING: MR KINA’S HOUSE

The house is sparsely furnished. A bed occupies a corner of the room. Four chairs and a small centre table take up the remaining space. A side stool is positioned near the bed. A bottler of gin otherwise called ogogoro is place on the stool. Mr kina is still in bed sleeping and snoring heavily. The wife sits on a chair sorting various items. She looks up scornfully at intervals. (Her looks show that she is not enjoying the sound of her husband’s snores).

MRS. KINA (looks at her husband and raises her hand and face to the sky)

God please save me from the hand of this human locomotion train. When will he stop snoring like those old train that ply the Port Harcourt-Lokoja rail way (pause).

Every night he comes home drunk and sleeps like a log of wood until noon the following day (shakes her head) I am definitely marries to trouble.

MR. KINA (wakes up with blood-shot eyes) yes, you are definitely married to trouble. Have you just realised it? If I come home drunk, who caused it? Was I born with palm wine gourd in my mouth? What do you expect a man to do when his house has been turned into hell? Wake up with a smile on my face?

MRS. KINA: Am I to blame for your drunken habits? You have made your ogogoro bottle your first love while I sit at home playing the faithful housewife.

MR. KINA: (laughs scornfully) faithful house wife indeed! (advancing on her) Are all my friends not happy fathers of children now? How long will I wait to hear the sound of a baby’s cry in this house? When will the laughter of children fill this home? Tell me, when will your faithful womb brighten the gloomy atmosphere of this house with a child? (goes to take a lot of gin and sit on bed)

MRS. KINA: As soon as the other partner is ready. Remember it takes two to play netball.

MR KINA: what if the net is blocked?

MRS KINA: the net is always open maybe the attackers hand are weak

MR KINA: or the net is leaking so it cannot hold the ball

MRS KINA: Maybe the scorer’s hand has gone limp so that it cannot even kill a dead fly.

MR KINA: (jumps up and goes towards her) I don’t blame you. When I was buying you into this house little did I know that I was paying for a barren old witch.

MRS KINA: (jumps up too) so it has come to that now. When I was leaving my father’s house, little did I know that I was moving into the house of an impotent old wizard.

MR KINA: (very furious ) look here woman, the potency of my manhood is not in doubt. If I had need all the money I have spent trying to solve this problem in marrying another wife into this house, I would have had enough children to form a football team.

MRS KINA: (paces the floor meditatively) what native doctor have I not met? What herb have I not tasted? What insult have I not received from one native doctor or the other? (to kina) you always blame me for our childlessness but have you ever submitted yourself for any form of examination? Whenever a marriage is fruitless, it is always the woman who takes the whole blame.

MR KINA: you want me to absolve you of all the blame. Alright woman, congratulations (advances towards her with outstretched hand for a handshake but drops it when she does not respond)

MRS KINA: I have had enough of this blame. You should be ashamed of yourself for not being able to perform your manly duties or do you still call yourself a man? (signs and turns exit into the backyard)

MR KINA: (stops her) listen carefully let this be the last time you will ever insult me in this house. You have ruined my life enough. My father and grandfather had eight and thirteen children respectively before their deaths. You can see that I come from a race health strong and vivile men. (shouts) I AM A MAN.

MRS KINA: (scornfully) man indeed! (laughs and tries to move away but kina grips her with strong hands. She struggles to free herself) you are hurting me. Will you leave me before I raise an alarm (just then a knock sounds on the door and a man enters)

MR KINA: (confronts the new comer) what do you want at this time of the morning. I am not running a refugee camp here. (Mrs. Kina signs and exits)

MR SARO: (Ignoring Kina’s remarks) Good morning, my dear friend. This is certainly no way to welcome a kinsman into your house. At least, answer my greetings.

MR KINA: what is good about this morning? What exactly do you want in my house. I hope you have not come for food because my wife prepared breakfast for just two of us.

MR SARO: please let us leave all jokes. I have come to see you about a very serious matter. My son has been struck by a strange ailment. We know you to be a very good herbalist. Please come and see what you can do about it.

MR KINA: well, our people say that a good pot of soup costs good money. The treatment will cost you some money.

MR SARO: Please come and treat him first and I assure you that your money will be paid before sunset today.

MR KINA: what did you say? You must be joking. You must pay me the sum of two thousand naira before I ever step out of this house

MR SARO: Please help me (brings out some money). This is five hundred. I promise to pay the rest before noon today.

MR KINA: you must be mad. If you do not have all the money, get out of my house (Mrs Kina overhears the dialogue and she enters)

MRS KINA: (coming in) what is happening here?

MR KINA: (to his wife) Do you know this man? He wants me to go and treat his sick child but he forgot to bring money from home

MR SARO: That is not true. He demanded two thousand naira but I gave him five hundred with a firm promise to pay the rest before noon today. Here is the money (brings the money)

MRS KINA: (to her husband) please accept the money and go and treat his son. He will surely pay you later.

MR KINA: I thought as much. Woman with their silly ideas. You want me to treat his son without full payment of his bill yet when he is unable to pay the rest, you will be first to say (mimic her) “please give him more time to look for the money because things are very tough now”

MRS KINA: so you value money more than human life?

MR KINA: you don’t like money yet you will be demanding money to purchase wrappers and expensive blouses.

(To save) stop wasting your time go home and get the money.

MR SARO: Please do not forget that tragedy does not befall only one man. It can happen to anybody.

MR KINA: thank you Mr. Prophet. Wait till I come to you for help. Wait you carry your coconut head out of this house?

SARO please do not insult me again.

MR. KINA: (Angry) so you have come to my house to threaten me – because I refuse to go and treat that bag of bones you call a child. Now wait for me (storms into the backyard)

MRS KINA: (To Saro) please go before he comes back. Go and report the matter to the village chief. (a knock sounds on the door and Saro’s wife comes in crying)

MRS SARO: Our son is almost dead. What do we do now?

MR. SARO (Shouts) Oh, my God (Kina reappears from the backyard with a long matched. Mr. and Mrs. Saro run out of the house)

MR KINA: Why have you run, foolish poor man. (he laughs devilishly).

LIGHT FADES

MOVEMENT TWO

MORNING: THE VILLAGE SQAURE

(The meeting of the council of elders is in progress. Four of them are in subdued divisions while the Chief sits in a central position. One elder is busy with his snuff box. Kina sits alone, not communicating with anyone. Other villagers are standing in the backyard exchanging pleasantries. After a while, the chief called for attention)

CHIEF (Rises): (Esi) three times

All: (Iya)

CHIEF: My people, I welcome you all to this gathering today. Our people say that when are slave is thrown into the fire, the other slaves will know that their own turn will soon come. No man can hold our community to ransom while we all keep quiet and behave as if all is well. One of us here thinks he has the power of life and death over.

OTHERS: That is why we must draw his ears and call him to order before he ruins us (Kina cast hostile glances people while others nod in approval of the chiefs comments. I will call on Saro to tell us what transpired between him and Kina earlier today.)

SARO: My people, I thank you all. I don’t know why any enemies will not allow me to rest. They have tried various means to kill me but my God will not allow them. It act started last year when they sent big termites to eat all my yam in the farm. This year they have sent flood to destroy my cassava farm.

NWINE: What is this man talking about?

SARO: I am sorry but I have to give you some background information on the handwork of my enemies. As I was saying, just last week, they sent big rats to harass me at night. Those rats will not let me sleep peacefully every night. They even share the bed with me and my wife. Infact they …

TANEE (Interrupts him) look here, stop wasting our time and get to the point

SARO: My people, again I am sorry but you will permit me to tell you more of how these wicked people are tormenting me every day.

ALL: (Shouting him down) will you stop wasting our time and tell us exactly what happened this morning.

SARO: My Chief and Elders, I am really sorry. It is the head that carries the load that actually feels the weight. This morning I went to Kina’s house to invite him to treat my sick child. After insulting me, he demanded payment of five thousand with a firm promise that I will pay him the remaining two thousand naira later today. My peoples Kina vehemently refused insisting that I pay the full amount. I begged him but he chased me away with a cutlass (general noise of surprise and disapproval)

CHIEF: Kina, is that true?

KINA: Yes, has he come with the money now? It is either full payment or no treatment period. (People express negative comment and disapproval)

LESSON: No wonder you are childless

KINA: Do you call that child of yours a human being?

LESSON: I do not blame you. A poor man will always say the he prefers a thatched house to the house built with zinc because of the head lf latter generates. The simple truth is that he has no money to build one.

KINA: (Laugh sarcastically) Are you very sure that child is yours? Why did your wife give birth to a boy with big bow legs and a hunch back when both of you are healthy

SARO: At least, I have a child, where is yours?

KINA: (Gets up to demonstrated) How can a human being walk with such bow legs like this. I am sure two trailers can pass between his legs. My fried, go and ask your wife the real father of that imbecile because she definitely played an away match.

LESSON: (Jump up) Insult! You must prove that wicked allegation else I will kill you, advances towards Kina and hits him with his walking stick.

MR KINA: you hit me? (in one swift movement), kina lifts saro shoulder high (shout from the crowd).

CHIEF: Enough! Will you two sit down?

LESOR (still pointing) He is a coward. He attacked me suddenly. If he did not put me down, I would have shown him what a native doctor does with the ear if a goat.

KINA: (smiling mischievously) you are lucky. Next time, I will break your stupid head.

TANFE: will the two of you keep quiet. We have come to discuss a very serious matter and not to watch a stupid wrestling match.

KINA: you people should have allowed me to teach him a lesson he will never forget.

CHIEF: Kina, one more word from you and you will pay the fine of a live goat.

KINA: thank you my chief I will not say anything again.

LESOR: Because you cannot afford to pay a goat poor man.

CHIEF: now listen everybody, kina has behaved badly. Money cannot buy human life. Remember that God, in his infinite wisdom, has given you the power to treat particular ailment. You must reconsider your stand and proceed immediately to treat saro’s sick child.

KINA: nothing on earth except the money will make me change my mind. You are free to consult another herbalist in our neighboring village.

TANEE: Do not ever say that again. We cannot behave like the fort that hunts chicken in the town when there are many birds in the bush. The firewood from one’s village is the best for cooking of the new yam. So you must go and treat saro’s son and stop referring us to other villages.

KINA: all these talk will not take us anywhere. Is Lesor ready to pay the money now?

BARINE: Kina, in whatever you are doing, you must not forget that you will need another person’s help one day.

KINA: my helper, wait until I come to you for help. Get it into your head that I will never need help from any of you here. (General disapproval)

CHIEF: Kina, are you still bent on collecting full payment before you commence treatment of saru’s son?

KINA: (stands up) my chief and elders, I thank you all for wasting my time. I am going home. Whenever he is ready with the money, he knows where to find me. (about to leave when he is called back).

CHIEF: kina, come back here! Sit down now. (he obeys). I ask you for the final time: are you still bent on taking all the money before treatment?

KINA: yes.

CHIEF: Saro, did you bring the money?

SARO: yes

CHIEF: Give it to me (Saro gives him the money). Listen everybody, when saro brought this matter to my attention, I asked him to bring the money to this meeting. I just want to let kina know that the treatment of ailment is not his exclusive right. God has made it impossible for only one man to have total monopoly of anything. For instance, while kina can cure all physical ailments, Lesor is blessed with the special gift of handling mental sickness. So we all need each other at various point of our existence.

KINA: (to Saro) so you brought the money but you wanted me to beg you before giving it to me. Look at his coconut head. Like father like son.

CHIEF: You are all witness to this act of wickedness by a son of this land. Kina, take the money (gives kina five thousand naira).

KINA: (laugh while counting the money). Anyone who does not like the position of the moon should try climbing up there to change it. If you are unhappy with what I have done,then go and jump into the opobo river.

LESOR: (To kina) look at him smiling foolishly at the sight of money. You barren wife now have enough money to her dues for the witches union. Impotent old wizard.

KINA: (picks an Elder’s walking stick and advances towards Lesor) let me break hi coconut head. Now I have enough money to bury him.

SARO: (jumps up) just come near me and I will teach you a lesson you will not forget. This time I am ready for you.

CHIEF: Kina, will you drop that stick now and sit down. (just the , TemiI, the village drunkard comes in singing a song)

TEMII: (Carrying a sound of palm wine and singing) palm wine is my best friend. Only reasonable people drink palm wine. Come and join me. (he addresses the poeple) look at their faces, you are all useless people.

TANFE: (Jumps up) you brought this palm wine bee here.

TEMII: Your father is a palmwine bee. Look at him. He heats his wife everyday. Is he not the mad man yet he calls me a palmwine bee. Only a bee stings people. My people judge between the two of us who is real bee.

LESOR: Please someone should take thai stupid drunkard away to that we can conclude this matter.

TEMMI: (laughs drunkenly as he takes another sip from his gourd) look at this one calling me a drunkard. I slept with your wife last night and that is why your son resembles me. Did I say resemble? God forbid. (to the audience) Do I resemble like his son? Or do I look like a drunkard? Politicians are the drunkard because they tell us a lot of lies.

CHIEF: Cinard, take this drunkard away. (Temii is led out of the town square, still raining insults at people)

SARO: Thank you my chief and elders I sincerely appreciate your efforts at resolving this issue. I hope kina will follow me to my house now to treat my son.

CHIEF: Kina, you must accompany saro to his house now to commence treatment of his son. (to everyone), I thank you all for coming. (takes his leave while they all arise)

TANEE: (To saro) my friend, I did not know you were such a bicycle rider. Look at the way your legs were moving in the air (they all laugh as they exit).

LIGHT FADES

MOVEMENT THREE

(SAME DAY: EVENING): ON THE WAY TO THE VILLAGE STREAM

(Nene, a village woman is on her back from the stream. She is carrying a pot of water, dressed in traditional blouse and wrapper. Kawa, the village gossip enters from the opposite direction. She is carrying a bundle of firewood, dressed like Nene but in different colour. As they meet, they put down their wares an a conversation starts)

KAWA: My sister, how are you? i can see that your husband is taking good care of you.

NENE: We thank God. Your husband is equally doing a good job judging by your pretty looks. We all know that he is the best hunter in this village.

KAWA: Is it only need that we shall eat? (lowers her voice) Have you heard the latest gossip in this village?

NENE: (shows interest) kawa, the radio in house battery, no network failure. Tell me latest gist.

KAWA: Do you know that saro’s son almost died this afternoon. In fact, they are still battling to save his wife.

NENE: was the boy ill?

KAWA: He fell ill yesterday. Do not say I told you but do you know kina?

NENE: Who does not know kina, the herbalist? What has he done again?

KAWA: They said that his wife asked him to kill saro’s son so that she will use his blood for a certain ritual.

NENE: Ehe! That woman again! Please tell me more.

KAWA: They said that kina accompanied saro to his house after the elders meeting. He then brought out a bottle containing some liquid and poured it into the boy’s mouth.

NENE: And he drank it?

KAWA: No, he took his both with it (fiegriry annoyance). Don’t you want to hear more?

NENE: Sorry, I will not interrupt you again. Please continue

KAWA: They said that after drinking the liquid, the boy slept and kina left instructing that nobody should wake him up. After about two hours, the boy’s mother noticed that her son had stopped breathing.

NENE: My God, this is very serious.

KAWA: she raised an alarm and the neighbours cane to her rescue. They poured a bucket of water on the boy and after a few minutes he sneezed.

NENE: Oh thank God

KAWA: Right now, they are still keeping a close watch on him. Even his eyes have suddenly become big as that of a owl.

NENE: we pray he survives (getting ready to go)

KAWA: Don’t be in hurry because I have not told you the real gist.

NENE: please continue.

KAWA: Can you keep a secret?

NENE: Trust me. What is it?

KAWA: They also said that kina is planning to marry Tanee’s daughter. I learnt that they have been meeting everyday on the way to the water side.

NENE: But kina is old enough to be her grand father.

KAWA: They said that she loves him so much that she takes cooked food to him everyday of their secret place of meeting.

NENE: Are you sure?

KAWA: Do not say I told you.

NENE: Trust me . nobody will hear of it.

KAWA: Let me tell you another hot gist. They said that …… (just then she sees another woman, sorbari coming towards them). Please let me go before my husband comes back from the market (she leaves).

NENE: (alone). This woman and her tougue. Only God will deliver her (the new entrant, sorbari approaches her and puts her firewood on the ground) welcome my sister.

SORBARI: thank you, my sister. Who left here just now?

NENE: It is the radio without battery herself.

SORBARI: Radio? What do you mean?

NENE: Who else but kawa

SORBARI: What else did she say?

NENE: she said so many things but let us talk about serious issues.

SORBARI: Tell me what she told you

NENE: she said that kina almost killed saro’s son today.

SORBARI: That stale news. I have already heard that. Any new thing?

NENE: Can you keep a secret because she asked me not to tell anybody.

SOBARI: Trust me, nobody will ever hear of it.

NENE: she said that kina has impregnated Tanee’s daughter.

SORBARI: This is serious

NENE: Infact, she said that kina plans to elope with her to his mother’s village. Please do not anybody

SORBARY: I promise. Tell me more.

NENE: she also said that your husband is a very lazy man.

SORBARY: What! She must be mad.

NENE: She said that kina picked up your husband today like a piece of paper and hit him on the ground at the village square.

SORBARI: You mean she said all that abut my husband. Look at the wife of man with calabash between his legs. I will deal with her.

NENE: Anyhow, accept my sympathy. I hope your husband was not badly injured.

SORBARI: Have you also join them. Oh whose side are you?

NENE: sorry, I did not mean any harm. I am on your side.

(just then, they hear the song Temii the drunkard who is definitely coming in their direction)

SORBARY: You better be very sorry. As for kawa, I am going to deal with her today (she picks her bundle of firewood and prepares to exit)

NENE: Let us go before this stupid man meets us here (she also picks up her own firewood)

TEMII: (In his usual drunken manner calls the attention of the woman). Hey woman, wht are people doing in this bush. (they ignore him and exit sorbari still visibly annoyed) look at them. Gossips and prostitutes (To the audience). You must beware of women whose eyes are sharper than razor blade. Anyhow, is anyone looking for a partner tonight? I am available. (sings as he takes his exit).

(LIGHT FADES) MOVEMENT IV

KINA’S HOUSE: NIGHT

(Mrs kina is in her house sweeping the floor and humming a tune when a hard knock sound on the door. Before she realizes, the door has been violently swung open by saro’s wife)

MRS SARO: (very furious. Stares widely at mrs kina. Removes her headtie and ties it around her waist, in readiness for a fight) where is that old wizard? Will you call him out immediately before I set fire on your head.

MRS KINA: What exactly do you want?

MRS SARO: You barren old witch. You and your husband have conspired to kill my son.

MRS KINA: (Surprised) is your child dead? I am so sorry.

MRS SARO: I do not want your sympathy, you pretender. Will you go and call that old wizard you call a husband. You cheap prostitute.

MRS. KINA: Look woman, I have tried to be friendly with you but you keep abusing my hospitality. I will be very happy if quietly leave my house before I break your head.

MRS SARO: You are now talking like the witch that you are. No wonder the devil has eaten all the fruits in your womb and rendered you barren.

MRS. KINA: I can see that you have really come for trouble. After poisoning and killing your child, you are now looking for who to blame.

MRS. SARO: your job is to kill other peoples children, you dirty old witch.

MRS. KINA: your mother is a witch

MRS. SARO: who does not know your family history. Your grandmother was the head of witches in this village and your mother took over from her. Who will you hand over to now that your womb has been eaten up by your fellow witches.

MRS. KINA: I will not stand here while you come to my house to insult me. Now get out of this house! (Tries to push her out and a fight ensues. Mrs. Saro is getting the upper hand when the door opens and kina comes in. He is surprised at the scene)

MR. KINA: (shouts from the doorway) what exactly is happening here. (to Mrs. Saro) Now get out of this house before I kill you. (the fight stops and Mrs. Saro pants and addresses Mr. Kina)

MRS. SARO: You are the one I really came to see you dirty old wizard

MR. KINA: (Pushes her out of the house) Get out of this house now. (she leaves still cursing kina)

MR KINA: (Turns to his wife) Now tell me what happened.

MRS. KINA: it is all your fault. I advised you to go and treat her sick son but you refused. Look at all the trouble you have brought upon my head.

MR. KINA: will you keep your mouth shut if you don’t want to tell me exactly what happened.

MRS. KINA: That woman came and accused us of being responsible for her son’s death and she started calling me names.

MR. KINA: And you fought her and she almost stripped you naked.

MRS. KINA: if you were not so greedy for money, that boy should not have died. You made that useless woman to come here to insult my mother.

MR. KINA: Listen, I will not take any insults from you. One more word from you and you will be thrown out of this house.

MRS. KINA: Don’t shout at me anymore. Do you think I am carpenter-made to be receiving abuses from everyone without saying a word.

MR. KINA: will you keep quiet before I will be forced to believe what people are saying about you. Ever since I bought you into this house, I have been having one problem or the other.

MRS. KINA: And ever since I came to this your wretched house, I have always courting trouble for the whole family.

MR. KINA: if you feel so disappointed, you know what to do. Nobody is stopping you from giving back to your father house.

MRS. KINA: I don’t blame you. Men are all the same. When you want to marry a woman, you will shower praises on her but as soon as she moves in, she will be treated like a piece of rag. So you can go and say whatever you like.

MR. KINA: Enough of this rubbish, when am I going to have my supper or is there no food for me tonight?

MRS. KINA: I thought you will feed on quarrels. So angry men get hungry too.

MR. KINA: Will you get my food immediately (she exits to the kitchen)

MRS. KINA (Alone, paces the floor thoughtfully) This woman is definitely the cause of my misfortune (just then a knock sound on the door) come in (two men come in) you are welcome (they are mr. kina’s uncles, Mr, Nwine and Mr. Tambar)

MR NWINE: (Sits down) kina, we have come to see you.

MR KINA: (Worried) I hope there is no problem

MR NWINE: We are sorry to have come of this time of the night our people say that the tongue cannot rest until the particle of food struck between the teeth is removed. Tambari will tell you why we are here.

TAMBARI: Kina, you are our son.. we therefore cannot keep quiet and allow you suffer alone. What affects you also concern us. Now tell us the truth, do you like your present situation?

MR KINA: I don’t understand.

MR NWINE: What don’t you understand, When we came in here did any child come to greet us?

MR KINA: is that what you mean? I want to assure you the everything is under control.

MR TAMBARI: From the look of things, that may not be true. Kina, stop pretending. I am sure you have heard what people are saying concerning your role in the death of Mr. Saro’s child.

MR KINA: Let people say what they like , I know that my hands are clean.

MR TAMBARI: Well, we don’t want to belief that you had a hand in that boy’s death because you have a name.

MR KINA: How can you say a thing like that? Have you join them too?

NWINE: Look kina, we don’t mean any harm. We are only concerned about your childlessness. Have you considered taking another wife?

(just then, Mrs. Kina comes in and overhears the last statement. A cup drops from her hand. She however pulls herself together and greets them)

MRS KINA: You are welcome my elders. (no reply) I am greeting you.

BOTH MEN: We have heard you. ( There is silence and Mrs. Kina exit into the inneryard to continue her cooking)

MR. NWINE: (Goes to backdoor to peep to ensure that Mrs. Kina is not eaves dropping)

As I was saying, the only solution to this problem is your marrying a second wife who will give you children.

MR KINA: My Elders, thank you so much. What you are asking me to do is a very difficult task because I love my wife.

MR TAMBARI: Kina, there is nothing strange in our suggestion. A lot of people have been saved the agony of childlessness through the process.

MR. NWINE: Exactly, we also gave Tekurn the same advice and today he is a proud father of children.

MR KINA: I want to thank you for that advice but I sincerely love my wife and will not want to do anything that will hurt her.

MR TAMBARI: Nobody is asking you to send her away. I am sure she will understand the situation and learn to accommodate your second wife.

MR. NWINE: Kina, do not worry, we have made arrangement to set you a very good girl who will bring sunshine into your home again (just the Mrs. Kina enters with some drinking water and cups).

MRS KINA: My Elders, I have brought you some water.

BOTH ELDERS: (in a show of rejection) thank you but we are not thirsty.

MRS KINA: Please just give me a few minutes and the food will be ready.

TAMBARI: Woman we have told you that we do not want anything. Must you force us to eat or drink in this house?

MRS KINA: Please do not be annoyed because I will be failing in my duty if I do not offer you something in my husband’s house.

NWINE: woman we have told you that we are not hungry. In the first instance, you are not even the one who is supposed to serve us water. That is a task for children. Please we have come to discuss on important issue with your husband.

MRS KINA: (Very down cast) I have heard you. I am sorry (she exits into the room).

MR KINA: My elders, why did you have to address my wife that way?

NWINE: What I said is not wrong . her son is the one who should serve us water and possibly palmwine.

MR KINA: I think we are taking this issue too far.

TAMBARI: How far? We cannot sit down and watch you live the same house with your fellow man.

MR KINA: How do you mean?

BARINE: If she is not a man, then let her do what makes a woman.

MR KINA: What is that?

TAMBARI: Bear children for you.

MR KINA: Must the success of a marriage be judge by the number of children a couple has? There are many couples who have children but they are unhappy.

TAMBARI: Anyhow that is not the point. In Africa, if a woman does not bear children, then she has no right to be called a woman.

MR KINA: (Gets up) I think this meeting is over. May the day break.

NWINE: (Also getup) Barine, let us go (To kina) we are going but we shall be back soon with beautiful flowers. Greet your man sorry your wife.

MR KINA: (Trying to control his temper) Good night (the two Elders exit)

MRS KINA: (Enters) Have they gone? What was the cause of their hot temper and rudeness

MR KINA: Woman, stop asking senseless question and bring my food.

MRS KINA: Is that why you are shouting? I asked a simple question.

MR KINA: Stop asking questions and get my food immediately. (she exits to the kitchen as kina is alone. He paces the floor and talks to himself) I think there is some sense in the advice of the Elders. But should I really take a second wife? Can the two of them live under one roof? No, I know my wife too well. She will never agree.

MRS KINA: (comes in with a plate of food) I want to go and get some water from the drum of the back of the house. (she leaves)

MR KINA: (Alone again. Continue pacing the floor and soliloquises). This woman is definitely the cause of all my misfortune. She will not give me a child yet she is so possessive. (to the audience) what do I do? She is like a boil on a man scrotum that must be handled carefully. Do I send her away? What if she comes back to cause a lot of trouble. Do I make her blind so that she does not see my proposed second wife? (Goes to peep as he hears some sounds. Continues when he is sure that she is not back). I cant take this lying low any longer. She must die. (Brings out a small bottle under the bed). The moment has come at last. It is either tonight or never. (He examines the content) This will put her to permanent sleep and my jodb will be quite easy. By this time tomorrow, I will be a free man – free to plan my life again; to get a now wife; to enjoy the good things of life again (smiles mischievously. He puts the bottle back when he hears footsteps)

MRS KINA: (Brings in bowl of water) your food is ready or don’t you want to eat again?

MR KINA: (Sits down to eat. He became surprisingly cheerful) My wife, the food is quite delicious. I am sure you prepared it specially for me.

MRS KINA: (Very surprised) What is happening? Are you referring to me?

MR KINA: Who else but my loving wife.

MRS KINA: Please stop teasing me.

MR KINA: I am not teasing you. I mean every word I have said. I am really sorry for all the trouble you have been through.

MRS KINA: I am really surprised at this sudden change of attitude. Wonders will not end.

MR KINA: Do not be surprised. I have just realized how badly I have treated you all these years. I think I owe my lovely wife a duty to make life comfortable for you.

MRS KINA: (smiles) We thank God for his mercies. Now, will you tell me why you refused to treat saro’s son?

MR KINA: (finishes food and paces the floor) How long will I continue to take care of other people’s children while I have none. It is very painful to treat these children who will go and brighten the atmosphere of their families with their pretty smiles.

MRS KINA: But I am sure you are not responsible for the death of that boy.

MR KINA: God forbid. You know that I will never contemplate such a wicked deed. If saro had produced the money early, the stay may have been different.

MRS KINA: well, God knows why all these things are happening (packs the plates and goes to the kitchen. In one swift movement, kina pours the content of the bottle into his wife’s glass of water and goes back to sit down. She comes back moment later and picks up the glass of water. She is about drinking it when the tumbler falls from her hand. Kina is very unhappy)

MR KINA: (screaming) I have often warned you to be very careful. Why do you always spill water on the floor?

MRS KINA: You do not need to shout. I am very tired and I need some rest. Will you still accompany me to see my parents tomorrow?

MR KINA: Let us not talk about tomorrow, let the day break first. Why not go and sleep and we can talk about it tomorrow. Mrs. Kina goes to sleep on the bed while Mr. Kina sits on the chair brooding for a while. After about two hours, he gets up and tip toes to the room. He energies with a cutlass and makes sure that his wife is fast asleep. He waves his hands over her eyes to ensure that she is not awake. He raises the cutlass to strike her when a voice suddenly stops him.

VOICE: Stop! THOU SHALL NOT KILL AN INNOCENT WOMAN. YOU WILL BE STRIKE WITH MADNESS UNTIL UNTILL YOU MEET YOUR SHAMEFUL END. Kina fall down and clutches his head. His wife wakes up and raises an alarm. Her shouts attract the attention of neighbours who knock on the door violently. She rushes to open the door, their neighbours, Mr. Mene and his wife. They demand on explanation. At that moment, Kina gets up and utters incoherent words like one who has gone out of his mind.

MR. MENE I think he has been strike with madness.

MRS KINA (Streams): That is impossible what do we do now?

MR. MENE Only Lesson can cure this type of ailment

MRS KINA (Shocked) Lesson? Oh no. that cannot be true! (She collapses on the ground while the neighbours rush to her rescue)

LIGHT FADES.

KINA’S: HOUSE (MORNING)

(KINA is lying on the bed talking to himself. His wards are incoherent. He is obviously cut of his mind. His looks are very fierce. His wife sits n a child brooding. She is evidently in a very sad mood)

MRS. KINA: God help me. What do I do? Where will I go now?

MR. KINA: (Overhead her and laughs devilishly) who is talking in my empire. You don’t know that I am king Adam. This empire was given to me by my ancestors. Yes, I can see them now. You are all welcome. I said sit down or do you want to disobey the Emperor. I will dethrone you now. I command you to sit down now!

MRS. KINA: Please my husband; what do you want to eat? I prepare your favourite food.

MR. KINA: Woman, can see! Am having a meeting with my council of Chiefs. Women are not allowed in my palace. Or do you want to take over my throne? Along come and join the royal dance (she gets u and walks towards her. Mrs. Kina retreats).

MR. KINA: (Advancing towards her) I just want you to join the royal dance. All the chiefs are waiting for you. This is kingdom of happiness (he laugh willingly)

MRS. KINA: (very frightened) I don’t know what you are talking about. Please leave me alone. I will not disturb you again. I am begging to go and sleep.

Mr. KINA: (laughs as he chases her) I just want you to dance with my chiefs. Today is our day of joy, my ancestors are al happy. Come and join us (He chases her around and laugh wildly. She raises an alarm and two neighbours run in. they are Mr. and Mrs Nene).

MR. MENE (Shocked at the sight) what is going on here? Something must be done immediately

MR. KINA: (see them and stops chasing his wife. He abuses them) who are these people? Have you come to join in the royal dance? He takes a few dance steps as he laughs.

MR. MENE: don’t you remember us again? We are your neighbours. You will be alright

MR. KINA: Are you the father of the boy? I did not kill him. He has only travelled. I can see him crying now. Can you see him too? Such a fine boy

MENE: who is he talking about? Can it be Saro’s son? Did he have a hand in the boy’s death?

MRS. KINA: I do not think so. He only referred to treat the boy fully because of money who knows if the boy would have survive if he attended to him. But that is in the past now. What do we do?

MENE: (Walks cautiously to kina but runs back when Mene talks and look at him fiercely). Have you consulted Saro? I heard he is the only one who cures madness.

MRS. KINA: the elders sent for him but he has refused to come. They will soon be here

MRS. MENE: my sister, why cant you consult another person who can treat him?

MRS. KINA: they all declined claiming that he has to make amends will Saro. Infact, one of them said he must make an important confession. Before he will be delivered. The chiefs have gone to the neighbouring village to seek help

MR. MENE: (He approaches Kina again who now talking to unseen people. He courageously leads him back to the bed) we pray the Elders come as soon as possible. We must explore all available means fo curing him. What a pity that a man’s greed for money can ruin him.

MRS. MENE: How can you say a thing like that? Are you sure that there is any like between the death of Saro’s son and Kina’s present ailment?

MENE: well, our people say that when an owls cried at night and a child died at dawn, one does not need a soothsayer to well him who is responsible for the person’s death. It is not from my mouth you hear that the king’s wife give birth to a monkey

MRS. KINA: Why are you talking like that? I know my husband is innocent and cannot hurt a fly. Anyhow! Persuaded him to go and treat the boy but he refused.

MR. MENE: I think the best thing is for him to go and beg Lessor so that mercy will prevail.

MRS. KINA: Beg who? I know my husband will do no such thing. (At that point, Kina wakes up again and laughs devilishly)

MR. KINA: All of you are mad. Look at them mad people. Beg? (stars dancing) beggars, beggar, beggar (dances towards them and they run to a corner) look at all their heads, beggars. Let me continue with the council meeting in my Empire. My chiefs, please ignore these beggar and let us dance (sing a song and dances)

MR. MENE: (To others) so he overhead what we said. About going to bed Lessor. If he can only do that and I am sure Lessor will have a charge of heart.

MR. KINA: (turn violently on him) in one Empire you are commanding me in my own kingdom. (he runs after him all round the house). A knock on the door, they all turn to see who the new entrants are. An elder, Tanee and herbalist come in.

All: You are welcome elder

TANEE: (Shouts at him) Kina, will you behave yourself. What is wrong with you?

KINA: (turn at him) you are the problem you forced yourself into my kingdom and you are asking me useless questions

TANEE: It is alright king; we have not come to fight you but to help you

KINA: (Laughs) Help me? Look at this mad man. And who is this your fellow mad man, you have brought to my Empire

TANEE: He is not a madman

KINA: So I am the madman (recognizes him) is this not Tekuna from Keani? What do you want here?

TEKUNA: I am happy you have recognized me. My people it means that there is hope

TANEE: Leave all these pleasantries and get down to walk.

MRS. KINA: (Very relieved) Thank God, the end is definitely in sight

TEKUNA: Please keep quite woman and allow the mad to concentrate. I wonder why you are not tired of talking.

MRS. KINA: People forgive me. It is the head that carries the load that feel the weight

TEKUNA: (Stares at him intensely for a while) I am not a native doctor but a herbalist we are in the same profession. I have studied him closely and spirit has given me a solution.

MRS. KINA: (Again she exactly runs to him) what is it? Thank God. What is solution?

TEKUNA: Please can someone hold woman so that we can make progress (Mrs. Mene goes to pull her away)

TEKUNA: As I was saying, the solution problem is very simple (He stares into space as if he is communicating with spirits)

TANEE: (Very anxiously) Please do not keep us in suspense again, what exactly the solution you have not even examined over touched him since you came in here.

TEKUNA: There is no need. I have examined him and have listened to my spirit. The solution is very simple.

TANEE: I did not bring you here to play gammer with us. My patience is running out. Go straight to the point man.

TEKUNA: i will tell you (he stares again at him without saying a word. The atmosphere is fully charged now). The solution is simple. What you are seeking abroad is here now.

TANEE: Will you stop torturing us and tell us what is on your mind before I will be forced to do something. I will regret all this while Kina is laughing at him.

TEKUNA: (In a note of finality) He must personally apologies and beg Lessor and make an important confession.

MRS. KINA: (Shouts) No. I am finished.

TANEE: How is that possible?

TEKUNA: It is very possible and he knows his pride and stubbornness is his problem

KINA: (Laughs devilishly and goes wild) Beg? Beg? See the mad man (start dancing) beg, beg, beggar. Now leave my Empire. (He chases them away as the wife runs into the kitchen).

THE WAYSIDE: AFTERNOON

(Two village girls are walking along the road discussion. They are both carrying baskets containing assorted food items. They are Kawa and Nene)

NENE: Thank God that useless woman has finally left us. Look at the way she was following us as if we are mates

KAWA: Some people do not know their size. Imagine that woman trying to be friends with us. That public toilet

NENE: Kawa, the local radio, what has Sira done again?

KAWA: They said that she slept with more than ten men in week. She does not know the word “no” in her dictionary

NENE: (Puts her basket down) kawa do you know that you are talking about married woman?

KAWA: married woman? They said her so-called husband could not complete payment of her dowry and that is why. She has decided to sleep around with men to help him raise money to pay the balance.

NENE: Kawa, how can you say a thing like that to your fellow woman? It is not true that the husband is owing any money.

KAWA: Then why is she bleaching her skin so that she can look at those Oyinbo women. She has over ten colour on her body.

NENE: You are only being jealous because of her beauty

KAWA: Beautify? (puts her basket down) with those bow legs like two bends on are expressway. Just watch me walk like her (she demonstrates the movement of a bow-legged woman doing a catwalk)

NENE: (Laughs) Kawa,that is enough. You need not told me the latest girl in the village

KAWA: That reminds me of the secret often between Kina and Sira

NENE: I have told you to leave that woman alone and tell me the hottest girls in town

KAWA: Exactly what I was trying to tell you moments ago. They said Kina was planning to elope with Sira when that madness started. Maybe, he is love-sick

NENE: Why do you always want o make fun even very serious situations. Who told you that?

KAWA: They said that even now that Kina is sick in the head, he wakes up at night to cry that he wants to see Sira

NENE: You are just nuts. How can you say such a thing about a man in a very terrible condition like Kina.

KAWA: Infact, they said that wife is almost going mad too as she is psychological affected by Kina’s constant call that he wants to see Sira. My reliable information said that she peeped through their window last night and witnessed the scene. Now watch how she demonstrated what she saw (she mimics Kina telling the wife Sira please come closer I connot do without you, my wife has mad. Please do not run away. She moves towards Nene to hold but the letter avoids her)

NENE: (turn between amusement and annoyance). Now I know that you are a very unserious person. Please let us go (as they are about to carry their baskets, another woman, Biaka in)

BIAKA: I overhead all your discussions. Kawa, how can you make fun with such as serious issue as Kina’s ill-health

KAWA: Who called you into our discussion, we are know that you are a very true, then tell us the truth.

BIAKA: Look at the one calling another person a gossip. You don’t know what Mrs Kina has suffered because of her husband and you stand here making jest of the situation.

KAWA: You are a very bad woman so you were eavesdropping to our discussion. We have heard you; please you may leave us alone

BIAKA: I want to let you know that your mouth will one day put you into trouble. Leave Kina and his family alone. Go and take care of your husband who needs help. I am sure you know what I am talking about

NENE: There is no need for a quarrel. We are all concerned about Kina and his family. I am sure Kawa does not mean only harm

BIAKA: Thank you, my sister. I am going before this people will see me with this radio. Kina deserves own prayers. We all hope there will be quick solution to the problem (she departs after talking a long careful look of Kawa)

KAWA: What is biting that one? They said she has a horn on her heed and that is why she is always wearing a head tie.

NENE: Kawa that is enough

KAWA: Let us go before a monkey will meet us. Thank God that small she-goat with harms has gone. Lest I forget, they also said that (she discover that Nene has already turned her back on her. She pick her basket, turns to the evidence and says “I have hot gist for you” she finally runs after Nene)

MOVEMENT VII

THE VILLAGE SQUARE, EVENING

(The Council of Chiefs meeting is in full session. The Elders are seated on both sides of the King’s throne. Kina is conspicuously missing. His wife Mrs. Kina is standing behind one of the chiefs. There are discussion among the Elders) Attention

CHIEF: My people, I welcome you all to this emergency meeting. I thank you for leaving all what you were during to attend this meeting I do not hope that the meeting will last long.

SARO: Long may you reign my chief. This meeting is very usual. I hope it is about a war because …….

NENE: Are you afraid of a war? That is the bad effect of heavy such many concubines, you are always afraid of death.

SARO: (Supprised) why are you attacking me now. I only expressed an opinion ion and you have magnified it now. Don’t we know those who take other peoples wives? They are always afraid that their sins will catch up with them.

TANEE: I help you are not referring to me. Since the calabash has broken, we must spill the contents now. Can you deny your secret affair with here loos wife?

SARO: (Jumps up) you must prove that allegation or there will trouble

LESSOR: that is enough

TANEE: How can it be enough when you all heard that wild allegation

SARO: Have you not heard that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones? My thunder strike you (raises his walking stick to strike Tanee but other quickly intervene)