**FATES UNCHAINED**

## A Play

**BOLAJI AKINRINDE**

**DEDICATION**

*T*

his play is dedicated to every debut author, who constantly feels the need to share a

story with the whole world.

A head houses so many scenarios, but the words keep flying around.

Persevere!

iv

v

**CHARACTERS**

**Olapeju Akinloye** Wife of Mr. Olatunde Akinloye

**Olatunde Akinloye** Husband of Mrs. Olapeju

#### Akinloye

**Peju** Female twin child of Mr. and Mrs. Akinloye. Later Digi, then Mrs. Adetutu

**Tunde** Male twin child of Mr. and Mrs.

Akinloye

**Mr. Olalere Thomas** Husband of Mrs. Suzan Thomas,

#### and Tunde’s foster father

**Mrs. Suzan Thomas** Wife of Mr. Olalere Thomas, and

#### Tunde’s foster mother

**Mr. Olaniyonu Ajisafe** Husband of Mrs. Ifeloju Ajisafe,

#### and Peju’s foster father

**Mrs. Ifeloju Ajisafe** Wife of Mr. Olaniyonu Ajisafe,

#### and Peju’s foster mother

**Iya Eko** Food seller

**Ajike** Iya Eko’s best friend.

**Vendor** Iya Eko’s stall neighbour

**Doctor Jide** The Akinloyes’ doctor

vi

**Big Mummy** Caregiver in Tunde’s orphanage

**Big Mummy 2** Imaginary Big Mummy figure in Digi’s dream.

**Mr Adekunle Adetutu** Husband of Peju (later also named

#### Digi or Mrs. Adetutu)

**Vicky** Master of Ceremonies (Alaga Iduro)

**Dele** Tunde’s best friend

**Ola** Wife of Dele

#### **Kike** Secretary in the bank Mrs.

Adetutu works

**Rili** Hospital patient

**Officers Nat and Uche** Investigators

**Moshood** Class bully

**Social Workers, Judge, Clerk, Woman, Girls, Nurses**

vii

**PROLOGUE**

*S*urrounded by wise loved ones led by traditions and inspired by deep

cultural norms, the entire family must

now set their own free from the deadly claws of death - a cause that perishes long before it sets sail. He may have been a reincarnation of his grandfather, but he stands no chance competing in matters that concern worlds halfway away from earth, as the old man would have done.

He has found the wrong rib for his cage. The rib cannot be broken or lost and rather than giving it back the way it came, ignorance, nonchalance, laziness push him into trying times. At least there are the ill-timed, supposedly mature witticisms to show for being man enough.

Fate gets sealed after a date for the big day is set, against the elders’ wish. Hearts of extended family members are blocked by the announcement, after no one gets invited to the wedding.

Needless to say, life is what happens while man makes his own plans. He becomes low on savings as he loses his job due to slight incompetence and loses his house to loan sharks only a week before marriage. He had collected a loan to fund his fiancée’s business, in a bid to survive after he gets fired.

viii

“In our own culture, these things happen to only men with wives who have opposite feet,” says the family head with his croaky voice and a heavy Oyo accent.

When worry reaches its peak, diabolism takes over judgment.

What the future dishes, no one really knows. To what length?

Must the iron be bent?

A mother delivers several blows to her own Leaving Venus; Mars to drown

When she gets lonely

She seldom delivers with such cruelty Where she equals life,

Remember easy does it;

Like fingers, with a full stop, She is the same as those five

If our loved ones must die, Why do we really cry?

When the storm gathers from the innermost part of the body

Angels hovering above you: spiritual pickup and delivery Goosebumps shake up the skin

Head swelling profusely

The heart shakes from its space

But it is a phase only the source can face.

ix

**ACT ONE SCENE ONE**

# I

t is a happy atmosphere. Scene opens on an open ground, right in front of a gloomy, old-looking bungalow. A dirty, shiny blue small canopy has been set for Olatunde and Olapeju’s traditional wedding. Vicky, the **alaga iduro** keeps pouring jokes. Iya Eko, the renowned food seller, has set up her stand in one corner, with her **gele** reaching

for the moon.

**Vicky:** *(Clears her throat)* Important announcement, everyone. It came to my notice that someone lost twenty thousand naira, wrapped with a dirty rubber band. *(He looks up keeping the seriousness.)* Well, the rubber has just been found *(Everyone laughs.) (Attention is drawn to two overly happy young men seated at the back. Soon, everyone focuses on her again.)*

*(Still in the mood)* Without wasting any more time, we shall now call on the couple to cut the beautiful cake which local people like us know as **akara oyinbo** *(Everyone laughs as she signals the band to lead everybody. Soon as the couple stands, everywhere goes silent, including drums and songs. Cue for Iya Eko)*

**Iya Eko:** (Her expression changes as she walks downstage right)

#### Hmm…Of all the things the Almighty created,

1

2 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

the human life is what fascinates me the most. *(Facing the crowd and pausing at interval)* They have so much fun; they never bother what tomorrow holds. *(Looking at the couple)* Beautiful people! (*Back to the crowd)* All shapes and sizes of teeth flying across the air. The sweet fried rice rose from the bottom to the top of the cooler, but the food is cold. It must be refried in the same fire.

(Soon as she finishes her delivery, voices are heard again.)

Singing, dancing, laughing and teasing accompany Olatunde and his new bride, as they walk into the dark bungalow with a white handkerchief.

**Ladies 1&2:** (In chorus, from different angles, as if planned.) **Ore mi**, my money is on you o (Everyone laughs.) Moments after they disappear into the building, Olatunde throws out the now-stained white handkerchief through the tiny window.

**Everybody:** (In chorus, everyone jumps up to praise Olapeju.)

#### Ehhhhhhh!!!

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 3

# I

t is the same bungalow from the wedding scene – Olatunde and Olapeju’s house. The atmosphere is not one to joke around. Olatunde and Olapeju are in the parlour, where there is only one single-looking double sofa. Looking very rough, Olatunde tries to manage the little good part of the chair, while Olapeju just stands beside him, hoping he would just get up to get anything, so she would sit. They are both sad. Olatunde has just lost his job. Olatunde’s phone rings. As Olatunde rushes to his phone, Olapeju quickly replaces him on the sofa.

**Olatunde:** *(There is a look of disappointment as he sees it is not the call he is expecting. With the irritating ringtone still on)* It isn’t the HR. *(Looking at his wife)* After all the time and resources I devoted to them at the company?

*(Olatunde picks the call)* Hello! Hello! Yes, I’m with you. *(Pauses)* The hospital? *(Olapeju rises immediately she gets the message.)* What do you mean they were involved in an accident? *(Now aggressive)* I sincerely hope you know what you’re saying, or you’re going to make me rich. *(He hangs up angrily, throws the phone on the plastic dining table.)*

### 3

4 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Olapeju:** *(Worried and holding her husband from behind)* **Oko mi**, who is at the hospital?

**Olatunde:** *(Still worried but trying to act a man)* Don’t get yourself worked up yet, love. *(Slightly touching her belly)* Let our babies arrive in peace. It is probably just a mix up. The call was from the General Hospital. They said my parents and my siblings have been in an accident on Ibadan- Eruwa Road. I still spoke with them this morning and they never told me they were coming.

**Olapeju:** *(With creases on her face)* That better not be true.

#### Let us get going quickly, please.

(As Olapeju scrambles for her scarf, Olatunde attempts a silly joke.)

**Olatunde:** *(He looks under the chair and sarcastically under the plastic table, which is already widely clear.)* Sweetheart, have you seen my car keys? *(Keeping a straight face)*

**Olapeju:** *(Giving him a dirty look)* You had better cease your silly jokes and grab your slippers. *(Olatunde grins, as they both storm out of the house)*

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 5

*S*

cene is set in Doctor Jide’s hospital. Patients are everywhere, waiting to meet the doctor. Mr. and Mrs. Olatunde Akinloye

are seen in one corner at the back of the crowd. Hospital condition is bad as heat cooks everyone. Olapeju is heavily pregnant and they have visited the doctor for enquiries. While they wait,…)

**Patient 1:** *(Scratching his body profusely as he faces a nurse)* Hey! You! Na when ***gangan*** I go see the doctor? You want make I scratch body reach bone before you pity me?

(Nurse 1 looks at him, hisses and just walks away and out of the room. Everyone in the room fixes their gaze on her.)

**Patient 2:** *(Hissing as if replying to the nurse’s hiss)* You sef! We have been here since 6AM and that is the best that you can do?

(Soon as everyone begins to murmur, another nurse calls out from Doctor Jide’s waiting room.)

**Nurse 2:** Number 13! *(Pauses as some patients help her call out. She screams louder than the first time.)* ***Nomba Taatiiiiin!*** Mr. Olatunde Akinloye and Mrs. Olapeju Akinloye, respond if you’re here. I don’t want stories later, please!

### 5

6 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Olatunde quickly collects the tally from his wife and responds to the nurse’s call.)

**Olatunde:** *(Jumping from his seat)* Present, Ma. *(With low tone, with a sign of relief)* Finally!

**(**As he heads towards the doctor’s office, another patient who has been there earlier than the couple speaks up.)

**Patient 3: *(****On her feet)* ***Ehn Ehn Ehn Ehn****…* From where? *(Blocking the couple with her hand)* Where do you think you’re going? I was here overnight, so don’t even tell me you got here before me *(She hisses.)*

**Nurse 2:** *(Sternly as she slowly guides the couple in****) Rili***, let them through now! I have warned you never to stand in other patients’ ways.

*(Rili walks away mimicking a baby’s cry. Nurse 2 faces Mr. and Mrs. Akinloye.)* Sorry about that. *Rili* is mentally sick and has been here since she was born. Her mother left and abandoned her here with us. *(The nurse opens Doctor Jide’s door and steps back as the couple walks in.)*

(Doctor Jide is seated across the table when they walk in. He immediately looks up, clears his desk as they talk.)

**Doctor Jide:** Sorry for delaying you, Mr. and Mrs. Akinloye. *(Couple responds.)* Have you run the tests? How are the twins?

#### **Olapeju:** *(Softly)* Nurses say they’re healthy. I know they are healthy, but I don’t feel good carrying them. These past eight months have been the real deal.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Showing sympathy)* I am sorry that you feel that

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 7

#### way, Mrs. Akinloye. Some of the first-time mothers here went through the same pain. Hang in there, okay? You’re almost…

**Olapeju**: *(Cuts in)* I can’t wait. The pain is unbearable*.*

**Doctor Jide:** (*Smiling)* It’s all right. You will be fine. *(Pauses while checking through her file.)*

#### **(***Looking at them)* Based on the test we ran on both of you the last time, we discovered a hike in your blood pressure**.** Mrs. Akinloye, I would advise you steer clear of activities that would stress you. We want you in your best shape for delivery, okay?

**Olapeju:** (*Looking down to her belly)* I know, doctor. I’m doing the best I can. *(Teary and speaking to the babies)* My beautiful children, please, make this easy for mommy.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Facing the husband)* Same goes to you, Sir. You do not need to overwork yourself based on your current situation. Time heals everything, okay?

**Olatunde:** *(Feigning soberness)* I have heard, doctor*. (Looks at wife and tries to mimic her last statement*) My darling wife, you heard what the doctor said. Please, make it easy for me, too. *(Everyone laughs.)*

**Olapeju:** *(Jokingly but truthfully)* Not like you ever do anything.

(As the couple rise to leave the office, Doctor Jide also stands, shakes Mr. Olatunde and walks them to the door.)

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FOUR

8 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

*U*

sing stage lights to cast shadows behind the flats, birth surgery activities are seen in white and shadow, as main stage represents

the waiting room. Doctor Jide and three staff nurses walk on stage while trying to calm Olatunde.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Distracted)* Mr. Akinloye, would you like to join in the theatre as your wife requests? *(Immediately shifting focus to the nurses behind him, Olatunde nods in agreement, but the doctor does not act like he sees him.)*

Nurse Sayo, please, monitor the student nurses as they set up IV fluid for the patient. *(As Nurse Sayo walks backstage, he calls again)* Prep the patient, too. Wash her abdomen and trim her pubic hair. *(He walks downstage left where a messenger helps him and Olatunde wear protective gears.)*

Come with me, Sir (They both walk backstage.) (Shortly after they enter, the main stage is silent. Nurses walk in and out of the theatre, creating a mood of worry. Soon, Olapeju’s voice is heard from backstage)

**Olapeju:** *(Crying out really loud)* **Ife mi**, come to my help.

This pain is much *(Cries even louder)*

### 8

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 9

**Olatunde:** *(Stuttering)* I’m…I’m sorry, love. I really wish I could take some pain for you, but I am sure that is not possible *(he makes funny noises as though he is also crying)*

**Olapeju:** *(Rather slow recitation to set mood)* Dear babies*,* please, come out. I promise to be a great mom. I promise to go back to school and get a good job after. Please, come out now.

#### **Olatunde:** Mummy is right, babies. Please come now. She’ll take care of you.

(There is a complication. A nurse guides Olatunde back to the main stage. She makes gestures telling him to remain there and she rushes back in. There is tense suspense as the Doctor tries to save the mother and babies. Soon, only the doctor’s voice is heard)

**Doctor Jide**: *(Shadows show him turning left, addressing a nurse.)* Pass the scalpel. *(Turning right)* Nurse Sayo, I need you to administer the spinal anaesthesia to the patient real quick. I‘ll make incisions any moment from now.

**Nurse**: *(Hurriedly)* Right away, Doc.

(Shortly after, baby cries are heard. Doctor Jide comes out of the theatre, with a straight face. Immediately Olatunde sees him, he rushes to him.)

**Olatunde**: *(Obviously now worried)* Doctor, how is my wife?

#### Can I see her now?

**Doctor Jide**: *(Holding Olatunde by the shoulder and looking straight into his eyes.)* Mr. Akinloye, I need you to be a man now. (Pauses) Your babies are safe.

**Olatunde**: *(Showing some signs of relief as he faces the other side to laugh.)* Oh! Thank God! *(Faces the doctor)* Thank

10 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### you very much, Doctor. God bless you. *(Happily)*

Can I see my wife now?

**Doctor Jide**: *(With a sad face)* I’m sorry, Mr. Akinloye. We couldn’t save her.

**Olatunde**: (Screaming) Whaaaat? (He grabs the doctor’s coat by the two sleeves, his breathe ceases as he falls to the ground.)

(Nurses join the Doctor as they try Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, CPR, to resuscitate him. It is too late. Olatunde is pronounced dead on the spot.)

**Doctor Jide**: *(Looking over Olatunde’s body)* Patient’s name: Akinloye Olatunde. Time of death: 1313hrs. *(To nurse collecting details)* Pack the body and notify social workers of the twins. In the meantime, for record purposes, tag them after their parents’ first names respectively.

Same day at about 1600hrs, two social workers arrive the doctor’s office to conclude arrangements for the babies. Scene is set in Doctor Jide’s office. There are two social workers, male and female, seated across the table from the doctor. Doctor gathers the twins’ files to hand over all rights.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Stretching to hand the files over.)* Thank you for coming on such short notice.

**S. Workers**: *(In chorus)* It’s all right. We were in the area.

#### **S. Worker 1**: We know how important it is to get these babies to safe orphanages, so their lives can really begin.

**S. Worker 2**: *(Gesticulating with her hands as she speaks.)* We came as soon as they got the fax at the headquarters. We have also contacted the

#### orphanage that will house the twins and give

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 11

them the good life they truly deserve.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Looking impressed)* Thank you very much.

(The trio all rise at the same time. Doctor Jide walks both of them to the door**)**

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FIVE

12 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



*I*

t is around 1500hrs at Iya Eko’s stall. Food is almost finished, but customers keep pouring in. She is with her best friend and two teenage girls who helped her serve. As Iya Eko commends her girls for good work so far, a newspaper vendor rushes in with a pile of unidentified newspapers in a big black bag. Tired, he scrambles for a

seat.

**Iya Eko:** *(Surprised as the man staggers over one chair to sit on another.)* **Ahnahn**, young man! You better take it easy. Abi na my soup dey make you lose bearing? *(She faces her best friend to continue gossiping.)*

(The vendor does not respond. He looks pitiful but seems to be more concerned about eating first.)

**Vendor:** *(Gesturing at a sales girl)* **Ehs! Ehs!** *(Iya Eko looks his way. With an accent, he speaks.)* Not you, **mo**. I am call the sell girl. Gimme **tiri amala**, one **ponmo**, one **ara eran** and one “ekk”.

**Girl 1:** *(Repeating the vendor’s order. She tries to describe with her hand.)* Three wraps of amala, one ponmo, one beef and an egg, right?

**Vendor:** (Happy that she gets his order on first attempt.)

Ehnehnn*.. (Throwing a thumbs up)* That e coret.

### 12

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 13

(Moments later, his food is brought to him. Everyone watches him as he eats uncontrollably.)

**Vendor: (**With a stuffed mouth and food flying everywhere)

Water o! *(Coughs slightly.)* Water!

**(**Immediately, the same girl rushes down with water in her hand. Everyone continues watching, including Iya Eko and her best friend. The vendor finishes, lazily cleans his mouth and picks his bag to exit when the sales girl blocks him.)

**Girl 1:** *(Jumping in his front)* Where do you think you’re going? Me that I have been waiting for you to finish. *(Calls on Iya Eko, while dragging the vendor by his shirt.)* Iya Eko! Iya Eko! They have come again o. *(Reporting to Iya Eko who is now close.)* Ma, this man here has refused to pay my money. ***(****Through the dragging process, the vendor does not*

say anything but pleads with signs to let him off this one time)

**Iya Eko**: *(Angry)* See? Na from clap dem take dey enter dance*.* From forcefully looking for free food, you’ll start to steal, then start carrying guns, **abi**? *(Moving closer to the vendor)* You really want to become an armed robber?

**Vendor:** *(Scared****,*** *he responds first by shaking his head)* No,

#### **Mo**. I wan work.

**Iya Eko:** Are you sure you can work? *(Looks at her best friend.)* Ajike, what do you think? I’m thinking I should just let him set up his stall right here *(Points at an empty space.)* We fit use one neighbour for here. He can do his business while I do mine.

14 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Ajike:** *(Now smiling)* **Ore mi***,* that’s a good idea.

**Vendor: *(****Immediately falling to his knees)* Thank you **fery fery** much*,* Mo*.* My head go pray for you and your family.

**Iya Eko: *(****Cutting in) Ehs! Ehs! Ehs!* Don’t even go there. My family stays out of your mouth. *(Mimicking him)* Yan Yan Yan Yan Yan*…*which head? *(She hisses and walks off.)*

**(**Everyone laughs it off as scene fades.)

**ACT TWO SCENE ONE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 15

# S

cene opens in a market. It is quite busy, as traders are everywhere trying to find space for their goods. Young Tunde is backing the audience, conversing with a market woman who sells foodstuffs. They are audible, but noisy. Tunde is established by his well ink-decorated customized shirt. The lettering is bad, but readable. As he walks towards downstage left, market conversations become inaudible and only

Tunde’s tiny voice comes up.

**Tunde:** *(Soliloquizing while counting the change given him)* I promised mummy and daddy to take care of my only sister, Peju. *(He gesticulates as he slowly moves offstage)* This one is fifty naira. I will use it to buy **sisi pelebe,** one **ekanna Gowon** and one fine dress for her. You see this twenty naira; I will use it to pay her school fee. *(He puts the fifty and twenty naira notes in his right pocket and holds the ten naira and five naira notes up to the audience, as if checking its authenticity.)* These ones are small small money. I will save them up for her marriage. *(He grins.)*

(Moments after, a tall middle-aged woman is seen dragging a little girl and trying to stop a moving bus far away.)

### 15

16 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

*(Now singing Peju’s name incoherently and obviously distracted)* Peju, even though I have not met you yet, I love you, my sister.

Tunde and the girl collide and the polythene in his hand tears. He is not bothered about who hit him; he immediately starts packing the biscuits scattered across the floor.)

**Girl:** (Looking back at Tunde as though she heard him)

#### Ma…

**Woman:** (Dragging the little girl with one hand and a travel bag in the other, she tries to stop the moving bus) Ehs! Ehs! Abeokuta! Siiiiiiiiii… (They pick up pace, hoping to join the filled bus.)

**Tunde:** (Now realising someone had hit him, he looks back to take a glance. Almost forced to tears.) But Ma… (Shortly, he continues his journey.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 17



# B

ack at the orphanage, as Tunde walks through the gate, Big Mummy, the head caregiver, grabs Tunde by his wrist and takes

him inside her room. The stage is divided by sets and light. On downstage left is Big Mummy’s room. Not heavily decorated. Wall looking bleached and with only one mattress of size four by six ft. carefully set in one corner of the room. Room is neatly arranged, but with the ‘50s sauce. In the room, the left wall has compartments roughly created to keep Big Mummy’s everyday properties. Tags like “Shoes,” “Glasses,” “Handset” and Chargers” are seen on respective compartments.

**Big Mummy:***(Attempting to hide the sad look while staring into Tunde’s eyes)* How are you, Tunde? Did you get what I asked you? *(She slowly collects the polythene as Tunde starts to wonder why Big Mummy’s countenance is strange.)*

**Tunde:** *(Slightly childishly reading Big Mummy’s pulse in the wrist region)* Big Mummy, are you okay?

**Big Mummy:***(Gently stealing a laugh.)* Do you still want to be a doctor when you grow up?

**Tunde:** *(Nodding)* Yes, Ma. I want to treat people like Doctor Jide does.

**Big Mummy:***(Smiling)* That’s my boy. But do you know to

### 17

18 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### be a doctor, you need to be a strong man? *(Tunde nods in the affirmative.)* Good! I want to tell you something, and I need you to be strong. There was a big fire at your sister’s home, Tunde.

**Tunde:** *(Covering his mouth with his two hands and after pausing for a moment)* Big Mummy, where is Peju? I want to see my sister.

**Big Mummy:***(Quickly holding Tunde close to her, she hugs him.)* Tunde, don’t feel bad. Peju is fine. We only have to make sure she stays fine. So, we found a family to take care of her. They have taken her away.

**Tunde:** But Ma, I want to follow her. I want to see my sister *(Now slowly starting to cry)*

**Big Mummy:***(Still holding him)* It isn’t that easy, Tunde. I know you feel bad. I feel bad that she had to leave, too. But it will only be for a while. You will see your sister as soon as you become a big man. She sent a last letter. *(She makes a move to grab the letter under her pillow.)* Would you like me to read it to you?

**Tunde:** *(Reluctantly)* Yes, Big Mummy.

**Big Mummy:**Okay. It’s what I thought.

(She makes a move to get her prescription eyeglasses. She seems lost trying to remember where she has dropped them. She faces Tunde.)

**Big Mummy:**Do you know where my eyeglasses are?

**Tunde:** *(Forcing a smile and walking towards the compartments)* Big Mummy, we made these boxes for you so that you can put your things and

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 19

#### remember on your own. This blue one is for your drugs. The brown one …

**Big Mummy:***(Cuts in)* …is for my shoes, I know. Just get my glasses from the red box, please. *(As Tunde walks towards the box, she soliloquizes.)* Children!

**Tunde:** *(Innocently)* This is it, Ma.

**Big Mummy:**Thank you. Now, grab a seat. *(She wears her eyeglasses and begins to read.)*

#### My Twin,

I begged Big Mummy to write this to you

I feel very sorry for leaving without seeing you

Because you’re special, I hope you always win.

I will not forget all the promises

They remain new inside me, with chassis Also warning me to keep my head up Till success drives me to the top.

I love you, Tunde. Peju.

**Tunde:** Peju, my sister, I miss you. *(He cries uncontrollably.)*

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

20 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



*S*

cene opens in Iya Eko’s stall. It looks like a public holiday at the store. Iya Eko and her best friend are in one corner obviously bothered about something. The two salesgirls are seated across each other, playing the Ludo game loudly. The Vendor mans his stall, there are three young men with him – customers. Stage is divided into two, to separate Iya Eko’s big space from the Vendor’s little

space.

**Ajike:** *(Facing Iya Eko)* Iya Eko, I have told you to let me take you somewhere. *(Iya Eko looks at her and hisses silently.)* Ohhh… It’s okay if this is how you want your beautiful career to end. *(Beating her chest)* **Se o ri emi,** I won’t just sit somewhere and watch you go back to how you started. If not for anything, I invested my two **congos** of rice to the half bag you had to make your first sales. *(Her voice gets increasingly loud.)* I’m leaving. *(She rises to pick a small polythene she came with.)*

**Iya Eko:** *(Attempting to open her purse to give Ajike some money for transport)* Ore*,* at least take this for transport. *(Ajike does not look back. Iya Eko stands.)* Ajike! Ajike! *(Now talking to the audience)* Help me, people. How does one take another person’s issue so personally? Ahahnnn…

### 20

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 21

(As Iya Eko makes a move to return to her seat, the salesgirls start to argue over the game. This gets to Iya Eko.)

**Iya Eko:** *(Screaming at the girls}* Will you get up from there before I throw this hot pot of soup at you? *(The girls stand to rush oƒƒ, almost breaking the Ludo board.)* Ehssss! Stop there! *(Pointing at one oƒ the girls.)* You!

**Girl 1:** (Looks at the other girl and points back at herselƒ)

#### Me?

**Iya Eko:** *(Obviously angry but making ƒunny ƒaces as she speaks and points at herselƒ)* No o, me. Your eyes like the owl that landed on the roof last night. *(She hisses and points at her again)* Yes, you! Have you warmed the **egusi** soup again?

**Girl 1**: *(Pointing at the second girl)* Ma, she warmed it about thirty minutes ago.

**Iya Eko**: *(Realising there is nothing the girls have not done)* So? Why can’t you warm it again? *(As the girl attempts to move again, Iya Eko stops her.)* And if you like, while it is on fire, take one wrap of **fufu** and use it to taste my soup o. Let me catch you. Go! (*Iya Eko, thinking the two girls leƒt, starts to look ƒor her phone.)*

*(Looking around aimlessly)* Where is this phone? *(She coincidentally looks up and sees the second girl just standing. Sarcastically,…)* Ehnehn, how much have you recorded? *(Girl 2 now startled and is walking oƒƒ. Iya Eko looks around and drags her ƒeet across the ground to check ƒor sand.)* You people will not frustrate me! *(She looks at the girl.)* Why

22 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### is there sand here? Get a broom here and come and sweep this whole place.

**Girl 2:** *(Kneeling halfway)* Okay, Ma.

**Iya Eko:** *(Watching the girl as she wanders off. She looks back at the floor and soliloquizes.)* I don’t even know why this place is so clean today. *(Looking around and speaking silently)* Not even one customer *(Raising her index finger to reach her nose level)* **Eyo kan pere!**

**(**Iya Eko is lost in thought when the Vendor strolls into her space. In his hand is Iya Eko’s phone.)

**Vendor:** *(Playfully)* Iya Eko, is you sleeping?

**Iya Eko:** *(Mocking him, first, she eyes him from head to toe. Looking disgusted)* Is me not sleepy. What do you want? I have enough on my plate now.

**Vendor:** *(Now confused, looking around Iya Eko)* Plate? But no food now. You hunger?

**Iya Eko:** *(Clearly frustrated)* What do you want?

#### **Vendor:** Sorry, Mo. I see this phone for where I dey sell, so I say make I brought it.

**Iya Eko:** (Immediately stretching her hand to receive the phone)

#### Yes, it is mine. Thank you.

**Vendor:** *(He turns around to walk away when he remembers something)* I say make I ask, Mo*.* Market dey one kind today o. Anybody wey enter here, you can tell am to buy paper?

**Iya Eko:** *(Pointing directly at him)* You are mad! So, a customer will enter my shop and you will not know. I don’t sell to ghosts here. *(She picks up her slippers to throw at the Vendor).* You better disappear before I stone you the way David

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 23

killed Goliath. *(The Vendor scrambles to safety)* See the tiny thing. *(She looks around to see if anyone is listening, then speaks as if addressing the Vendor who has now left)* He has three hefty young men over there. If each of them eats five wraps of **fufu** and only two meats **pere*,*** I’m made for today. *(She stands to leave.)* You people have succeeded, I’m going home.

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FOUR

24 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

*S*

cene opens in Doctor Jide’s office. In the seat facing the doctor’s is Big Mummy from Tunde’s orphanage. She has been alone in

the room and now growing impatient. She keeps looking at her watch at short intervals.

**Big Mummy:***(Looking like she has had enough, she makes a move to pick her bag on the seat beside her. As she stands, door opens and Doctor Jide walks in, looking 10 years older.)* Oh! You’re here, Doctor Jide. *(She sits.)* I almost waited my patience out.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Stopping right next to her)* Please, forgive me. I’m sorry for wasting a deal of your time. It has been a crazy day here. *(He walks towards his seat while maintaining eye contact with Big Mummy.)* Did you hear about the fatal car accident on Kunle Epe Street? *(He removes his coat and hangs it as he looks back at Big Mummy almost immediately.)*

**Big Mummy:***(Trying to think and finally decides)* No, I didn’t.

*(Sarcastically)* Or maybe I did. *(They both smile.)* **Doctor Jide:** *(Now seated)* Okay. Well, a couple was taking their children to school and they were involved

in an accident. *(Doctor Jide continues talking to*

### 24

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 25

*Big Mummy, whose face now shows concern.)* The father passed away, as well as one child. The mother and the second child are in a critical condition and we are still trying to save them. That’s confidential info I just gave to you. *(He grins.)*

**Big Mummy:***(Sarcastically)* Don’t worry, that is why you can do business with people like us. I will forget before I walk out that door. *(They both laugh.)*

**Doctor Jide:** It’s why I’ve been away. *(He starts to search for Tunde’s file from the heap before him.)* I hope my apology is accepted.

**Big Mummy:***(Gesticulating with her hands)* Absolutely! We know you’re always for the good cause. More power to your elbow, doctor.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Slightly smiling)* Thank you for the kind words, Big Mummy. *(Immediately changing the topic as he brings out a brown file)* I presume you’re here to discuss Tunde’s condition.

#### **Big Mummy:***(Looking agitated)* Oh, yes, doctor. No one has had a good time since that boy was admitted. We all miss him and those back home expect some good news, at least.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Slowly perusing the file content)* Hmm… I am aware of how much everyone misses him. *(Pauses for a moment)* He is a happy boy, too, but I feel there is a more significant reason that makes him still want to live. It is a mystery that someone his age can handle stress of that level.

**Big Mummy:***(Showing signs of relief)* Thank God.

**Doctor Jide:** Here is what I think. Let the management find

26 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### the best family possible for the poor boy. I think if he feels the kind of love he would have gotten from his parents, there will be that continuous necessary encouragement to stay alive.

**Big Mummy:***(Agreeing)* That might be true, Doctor Jide. Arrangements are being made as we speak, to get him the best foster parents he could have. We have invited an eligible couple for briefing, and possible transfer of parental rights.

**Doctor Jide:** *(Now excited)* I can’t even begin to express how happy that makes me. I will tell a nurse to gather every report and every prescription ever administered to Tunde. *(Big Mummy nods in accordance.)* The file will reach the orphanage by morning, latest by 1000hrs.

#### **Big Mummy:**Thank you very much, Doctor Jide. Your help means a lot.

(Big Mummy rises to leave the room. Doctor Jide stands almost simultaneously to walk her to the reception. They both leave the office.)

Same day, at the orphanage, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas are in an office with Big Mummy and two other female caregivers. The couple is dressed in glaringly expensive matching Yoruba traditional attire and is guarded by two unarmed guards. This makes the women feel quite uneasy.

**Big Mummy:***(Nervous, she clears her throat as if still calling for attention.)* You’re welcome, Sir. *(Facing Mrs. Thomas)* You, too, Ma.

**Mr. Thomas:** (In his deep baritone voice, he speaks to the guards.)

#### Can you give us a minute, guys?

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 27

**Guards:** *(In unison)* Yes, Sir. *(They both walk out.)*

**Mr. Thomas:** *(Smiling. To Big Mummy.)* Do you feel better?

(Everyone gives a quiet laugh.)

**Big Mummy:***(Nodding in agreement)* Actually. Thank you very much. *(Mr. Thomas replies by nodding once, but gently.)*

**Mr. Thomas:** *(Looking at his wife and back at Big Mummy as he speaks)* My wife and I should be the ones to thank you for reaching out. *(Pointing at Mrs. Thomas and now smiling)* Left to my cupcake here, we would have been here last night, immediately after reading the mail together. *(Everyone laughs and he continues briefly.)*

**Big Mummy:**We know how much doing this means to you. *(Looking at the other women beside her)* If we could, we would have delayed this process. But for the sake of Tunde’s health, I beg to proceed.

**Mrs. Thomas:** We can’t thank you enough for choosing us to be his parents. *(Looking at her husband)* Something about Tunde reminds my husband of his days as a kid and who should raise that beautiful personality if not me? *(Now emotional, and quietly)* Who knows? God might just give me mine now that I have the chance to take care of him.

(Immediately she finishes her delivery, Mr. Thomas holds her by the shoulder to stop the tears from rolling. Big Mummy hands her a piece of tissue paper.)

**Mr. Thomas:** *(In low tone)* It’s all right, sweetheart. The time to laugh is now. *(Mrs. Thomas nods in agreement while attempting to clean the invisible tears).*

28 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### **Big Mummy:***(Facing Mrs. Thomas)* Your husband has said it all. Now is the time to be joyous, for someone great is about to join your family. One you can really call yours.

**Mr. Thomas:** Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

**Mrs. Thomas:** *(Finally catching her breath)* Thank you, Ma. We have made arrangements to prepare his travel documents. We believe he needs a change of atmosphere, while we find him the best doctor to get him back on his feet. *(Everyone nods continuously as she talks)* He became our priority the moment you agreed to give him to us. *(She puts her palms together as she expresses her appreciation to each person.)* Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

**Big Mummy:***(Gathering the files already scattered across the table between the two parties)* Here are the necessary documents. *(Pointing at the blank spaces)* Please, sign here aaannnd… *(Skipping few pages)*…here! *(The joy on the couple’s faces cannot be contained as they sign the documents. Moments after, deal is done and everyone stands to offer final greetings. Mr. and*

Mrs. Thomas are the first to leave the room, and they are met by four guards at the door, while Big Mummy and the two other women follow by the side.)

(Scene fades.)

**ACT THREE SCENE ONE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 29

# I

t is dawn at the Akinloyes’ residence. It is a dirty, uncompleted master bedroom, built on a wide, abandoned piece of land. There

is vast space to the four sides of the building. Mr. Olaniyonu Ajisafe has cleared a large portion to the front so they could cook and have fun at spare times. On this space is Peju and Big Mummy 2, from Peju’s orphanage. They are not heard for some time, but Big Mummy 2 continues making Peju’s hair. Soon as she is through, they become audible. The girl rushes inside.

**Big Mummy 2:** *(Calling out with a loud voice)* Peju! When you’re through admiring yourself in the mirror, come and pack these things inside. *(Soliloquizing)* Cream, combs, brush will all remain here if I don’t remind her. Children like to look fine! Chei!

(Soon, Peju comes out and sits on a low stool beside Big Mummy 2. Big Mummy 2 dresses her hair and starts to sing silently. Only mime is seen. Peju keeps smiling and playing drums, continuously hitting the combs in her hands against her thighs rhythmically.)

**Peju:** *(Looking back at Big Mummy 2)* Big Mummy, it has been a long time you told stories to me *(Big Mummy 2 smiles.)*

### 29

30 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Big Mummy 2:** I know. I know you have missed listening to my stories. *(Pauses and pokes Peju’s nose before continuing.)* But that will not be this morning. You know you have chores to attend to. *(Peju nods as she looks forward..* Today, the gift I have for you is this.

(Peju looks excited again and immediately stands, gets the stool and faces Big Mummy 2 to listen)

#### **Big Mummy 2:** Elders say “when a food is properly done, it reaches the ant”. Do you know what that means?

**Peju:** *(Looking confused)* Hmmm… I think it is when somebody is trying to rush hot food because it is delicious and he is full. He now says the ant should come and collect the remaining. *(They both laugh out loud.)*

**Big Mummy 2:** *(Giving Peju one clap)* That clap is for answering me even though it is the first time I’m asking you. Good of you, my daughter. That is another lesson. Don’t ever stop trying, okay? *(Peju responds by nodding in the affirmative.)*

#### **Big Mummy 2:** The meaning of my proverb is that if something good reaches you… *(Slightly poking her nose again)* …it will reach others close you. You must endure everything you pass through and make sure you become successful. That way, we will be proud of you always.

(As Big Mummy ends her explanation, Peju immediately hugs her.)

#### **Peju:** I promise to be successful, Big Mummy. I will take care of my brother and you very well.

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 31

#### **Big Mummy 2 :**Good girl. That reminds me. Let’s write a letter to Tunde.

(As Peju rises to go get pen and paper from Big Mummy’s room, she freezes. Stage goes dark for a few seconds and back on to reveal Mrs. Ifeloju Ajisafe beside Digi’s mat. She has been trying to wake her and is becoming worried. Suddenly, Digi wakes up.)

**Digi:** *(Quickly going on her knees)* Good morning, Ma. **Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Holding Peju to herself)* How are you, my daughter? I was worry before when you are

#### not wake up. Are you okay?

**Digi:** I slept really late yesterday, Ma. I was arranging the firewood in front of the house.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Nodding)* Yes, I saw it. *(She continuously pats Digi in the back.)* You are indeed my Morenikeji, the partner send from heaven. Digiola mi, your children take care of you, too.

**Digi:** Amen, Ma. *(She excuses herself almost immediately after sighting a broom in the corner.)* I want to sweep the place where I worked yesterday night and fetch water from the river before I prepare for school.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Still smiling)* That is good. But be careful on your way o. I will cook food for you before you come back.

Peju immediately excuses herself. As she walks away, Mrs. Ajisafe stares at her and cannot seem to contain the joy of having Digi.

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

32 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



# I

n an arena theatre, Digi and her friends are seen walking in from backstage. They have just closed from school and they are walking home. Soon as they appear, a group of boys led by the class bully,

Moshood, show up behind them, trailing them. Digi notices and calls her friends’ attention to them.

**Digi:** *(Whispering to her friends)* I think these boys are following us again.

**Girls:** (In unison, as each person tries to look back over her own shoulder, scared) Yes.

#### **Digi:** Okay, girls. I think we should tell them to stop following us every day.

**Girls**: Yes, we should.

(Quietly, Digi starts to count to three with her fingers. On the last count, all three girls turn around at once, almost bumping into the boys, who get agitated immediately.)

**Moshood:** *(Poking one of the girls)* Are you going to say you did not know that your hand just hit me? Are you blind?

**Girl 1:** *(Cuts in)* You are the one that is blind. *(She immediately runs behind Digi as Moshood makes a move to hit her. Digi stands between them.)*

32

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 33

#### **Digi:** If you touch her, ehn, I will make sure I report you in school tomorrow.

**Moshood:** *(Laughing hysterically)* So? Will they give me more than six cane strokes? *(Puts fingers in the sky as though he is counting, then looks at the tiny boys who are his supposed guards.)* Or maybe twelve? You know I will dust it.

**Girl 2:** *(Silently)* Let’s see if you can dust twenty-four strokes.

**Moshood:** *(Shifting focus to Girl 2)* You! What are you saying there? *(He moves closer to hit her.)* If I handle you, ehn…

(As Digi tries to block the slap, she is hit and falls completely to the ground. Immediately, the two girls rush to assist her. Sighting a tall figure from afar, Girl 1 screams)

**Girl 1:** *(Holding Digi’s hand up while still trying to run)* Thank God! Mr. Jiboku is coming. I will report you today.

(Hearing that, the boys flee without even looking back to confirm. The girls help Digi up, clean her uniform, as Girl 2 hands her bag to her.)

#### **Girl 2:** Sorry, Digi. Let us go home. We will report them tomorrow.

(The girls continue on the journey home. They are seen as they walk away. Soon, the girls split to go their different ways. The stage is redecorated to reveal Mrs. Ajisafe in front of their house, cooking. Digi walks in.)

**Digi:** Good afternoon, Mother.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Smiling before looking back)* How are you, my

34 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### daughter? How was school today?

**Digi:** Fine, Ma.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Notices Digi trying to hide her face)* What are you hide from me, Digi? *(Gently shifting Digi’s face to meet hers)* Oh my God! Come here. *(She drags a seat for Digi.)* Come! Sit! What happen to your face? *(While waiting for Digi to respond, she immediately stands up to get hot water from fire.)*

**Digi:** *(Evasive)* It’s nothing, Mother. I’m fine. It is just a minor bruise.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Cuts in from afar)* Minor **kinni**? See blood on your face and you’re there speaking grammar. You better talk now, before I follow you to school tomorrow.

**(**As Mrs. Ajisafe begins cleaning Digi’s face, Digi starts talking.)

**Digi:** *(Childishly)* Is it not that stupid Moshood that…

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Cuts in)* Shhhh…Now, start again. This time, no cursing. Okay? *(Digi nods in agreement.)*

#### **Digi:** Moshood used to follow me and my friends every day. So, today we told him to stop following us. He wanted to beat my friends, so I stopped him.

**Mrs. Ajisafe**: *(Catching a smile as she continues checking Digi’s injury)* My good daughter. You have done well to protect your friends. But you cannot save everybody all the time, okay? Sometimes, report to your teacher, okay?

**Digi**: *(Looking into her mother’s eyes)* I wanted to, Mother, but it was closing time and we were on our way home already.

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 35

#### **Mrs**. **Ajisafe:** It’s okay, Digiola. I understand. Hope you don’t feel pain anywhere on your body?

**Digi**: No, Mother. I’m okay.

**(**As Mrs. Ajisafe rounds off, Digi sights the empty buckets in front of the house.)

**Digi:** Mother, I’m fine now. Let me go and fetch some water for you and Daddy to have your bath at night. *(She stands up immediately, cleans where her mother just treated her and dashes off into the house to remove her school uniform.)*

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(She watches Digi go in)* If I tell her not to worry now, she won’t answer me.

**(**Immediately, she rises to check the food she is cooking.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

36 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



*S*

cene opens at Iya Eko’s stall. She, her best friend and her salesgirls are everywhere. They are trying to get the whole place tidy for

the day’s sales. Ajike, Iya Eko’s bestfriend, is seen sprinkling water from a bottle over the whole place. Iya Eko looks indifferent about this, but simply goes on with making her special dish.

**Iya Eko:** *(Looking around until she sights Ajike in one corner. She approaches her.)* Ore, what is this one you’re burning again? I’ve told you to leave the battle for Christ.

**Ajike:** (Looking unbothered, she hisses) Mschewww…

#### **Iya Eko:** I have told you I don’t want overnight success. I started small. Though I have not arrived yet o, I’m fine with the process.

**Ajike:** *(She stands to face Iya Eko.)* You see that arrival, ehn, it is what I want for you. This time last year, you bought that land for Mama. Am I right?

**Iya Eko:** *(Ignorantly)* Yes?

**Ajike:** *(Sealing her response with a tongue click)* Good! *(She continues.)* Very early this year, do you remember how much you gave that boy whose parents couldn’t pay his school fees?

36

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 37

**Iya Eko:** *(Ignorantly trying to remember)* Yes na. The first time he came, I gave him twenty thousand naira. Then I gave his parents fifty thousand naira to start a business, too.

**Ajike:** *(Clicks tongue again)* Very good! Do you remember…

**Iya Eko:** (Now frustrated, she raises her hand to stop Ajike.)

#### Okay! Okay! Okay! Ajike, what is your point?

**Ajike:** *(Satisfied.)* Good! My point is that if you don’t want to go back and beg for your money back from those people, you must listen to me and let me help you out.

**Iya Eko:** *(Looking uninterested, but sober)* Okay, please, do what you must. I’m even tired of all the annoying speeches I get from you. Just don’t do something that will backfire. Else, you won’t hear the end of it from me. *(She immediately turns around and back to the stove.)*

(While Iya Eko speaks, Ajike stands akimbo, listening to her like she’s talking gibberish. Then, when Iya Eko looks away, she speaks.)

**Ajike:** *(Rolling her eyes as if to fall off)* See her! **A n gba orom’adie l’owo iku, oniwon ko je ki ohun lo akintan lo je.** *(Looking around as if talking to other people present.)* All of you will thank me later na. *(There is silence for a moment, while Ajike finishes up. She walks towards the Vendor’s stall. She carefully avoids being caught looking, and faces the audience*

to speak.

#### Just look at all of them. *(Pauses)* Abi, could it be that this foolish newspaper boy is the one using

38 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### my friend’s destiny? See how he is surrounded by people. He must have made triple of usual sales by now. Chai! He cannot even tell the boys to come and eat here. The boy must leave that place. That’s the next thing I want to do. I can’t let him spoil this place for us. *(She packs up her bag and leaves)*

(Moments later at the Vendor’s stall, there are so many youths reading newspaper. They all look happy and are discussing football. The Vendor is also with them in the argument. Soon, all the boys stand up to leave one after the other, dropping the newspaper they have been reading. The vendor notices after the third person begs to use the toilet.)

**Youth 1: Wo**! Excuse me, **oga** vendor *(He stands up, dropping the newspaper with him on the bench.)* I want to go and piss. Keep this paper for me, I’ll pay when I get back.

**Vendor:** *(Eyeing him from head to toe)* You and who? *(He grabs him by the belt.)* Pay my money now now, before I send **sango** to you and your househole.

**Youth 1:** *(Obviously feigning ignorance)* Ahnahn. But why? Just to go and piss and come back to pay you now is a problem?

**Vendor:** No o. No go and come. *(His voice now shaky.)* Pay now now, oga. I go shange am for you o. *(Soon as they start dragging, other boys begin to stand up more quickly than planned. The Vendor mistakenly lets go of his debtor and starts chasing the other ones.*

He looks confused as to whom to grab, until everyone escapes. He bursts into tears)

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 39

**Vendor:** Ahhhh… **Gbese re** oo. *(Running towards Iya Eko’s stall)* Iya Eko, help me oo!

**Iya Eko**: *(Stopping him before coming closer)* See, if I see your dirty feet around this place, all these hot egusi, na your head customers go dey chop am. Enjoy alone, suffer alone.

(Hearing Iya Eko’s voice, the Vendor screeches and returns to his stall, almost crying.)

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FOUR

40 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



*L*

ights come on to reveal the Ajisafes’ sitting room. The sitting room looks very empty, though small. Mr. Olaniyonu Ajisafe is

seen on a dirty single-looking double sofa, positioned in the center of the room. He is holding a newspaper, as if reading the images therein. There is a glass of dry gin beside him. Mrs. Ajisafe is seen going back and forth, trying to clean and make lunch almost simultaneously. She notices her husband holding the newspaper, but she knows he cannot read.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Laughing loud as she walks behind him)* See this man! Who is fooling whom?

**Mr. Ajisafe:** *(Ignorantly pointing at a caricature in the paper)* This man here, abi? *(He also laughs.)* Fery funny man.

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Stops and looks at him.)* Which funny man? *(As Mr. Ajisafe attempts to answer that again, she continues.)* Who are you fooling? It is only the two of us here, and you are holding a newspaper as if you know what is inside. Even we that read SS3 are not reading paper. *(She grabs the newspaper, flips few pages and hands it over to him.)* **Oya,** read this heading.

**Mr. Ajisafe:** *(Determined.)* Today, I will embrass you.

*(Collecting the newspaper)* Give me!

### 40

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 41

(Mrs. Ajisafe folds her arms, ready to burst into laughter)

(Clears his throat) Fery easy! (Starts reading) M..MA..MAN S..STA WIF WI...WIT K-NIFE IN

IBADAN. (Immediately he finishes, he looks up to brag to his wife and sees her rolling on the floor, laughing.) What funny?

**Mrs. Ajisafe:** *(Finally getting herself but still smiling)* Nothing oo. MAN STAB WIFE WITH A KNIFE IN

#### IBADAN is what you cannot read.

(In the process, Digi walks in from school, says her greetings to them. She immediately removes her bag to bring out her homework)

#### **Digi:** Daddy, our teacher gave us this maths homework to do and I don’t know it. He said we can give our parents to help us.

(Mr. Ajisafe reluctantly collects her book and flips to the page of the homework. Immediately, to cover up for her husband, Mrs. Ajisafe orders Digi to go remove her uniform. She obeys.)

**Mr. Ajisafe:** *(Jokingly)* It has happen. *(He stretches Digi’s notebook out to his wife)* **Sebi** you know book na. Take! Do it for him.

#### **Mrs. Ajisafe:** Ehnehn? If I say I know book, did I say I know mathematics?

**(**As they struggle with the book, Digi walks in on them. They immediately assume composure, with the notebook still with Mr. Ajisafe)

#### **Mr. Ajisafe:** Digi, come and take. You are a big geh now. Sit here and do your homework yourself.

42 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Mrs. Ajisafe swells with laughter and rushes out before embarrassing her husband before their child.)

(Scene fades.)

**ACT FOUR SCENE ONE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 43

# S

cene is set in Mr. and Mrs. Thomas’ house. There is an establishment shot of how big the house is, giving a feel of being

in a royal palace. Coated in a very bright cream color, the house extends to fill about four of the six acres of land. It is guarded by a well-trimmed lawn, and an Olympic-size swimming pool, white as crystal. It is night, so all security lights are on, creating a special beauty in the dark. Mr. Thomas and his wife are having an argument over Tunde’s misconduct in school. Their voices are loud and audible from miles away. Immediately voice is heard, scene changes to the couple’s room.

**Mrs. Thomas:** *(Pacing the room aimlessly and looking away)* Please, ‘Lere, I’ve heard enough of this. *(Facing him)* If you knew you wouldn’t be able to handle a little boy, why did you make us go through the hassle of adopting him? *(Moving closer to Mr. Thomas, who is now preparing to lay in bed)* Why did you make me love him so much and now want to take him from me? *(Starts sobbing.)*

#### **Mr. Thomas:** Look, woman, I don’t have time for all of these. You know how much I have tried to get him help. He is just not ready to help himself, and that’s what I’m sick of.

43

44 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Mrs. Thomas:** *(Standing akimbo right in front of her husband’s nose)* So, if you were Tunde’s biological father, and you knew that he hasn’t been serious with school or his life outside school, you’d disown him?

**Mr. Thomas:** *(Now frustrated.)* Why are women like this? Why does your thinking have to be shallow when it gets to discussing matters of the heart? *(Sits up to explain further.)* See, Suz, come have a seat here beside me.

*(Mrs. Thomas reluctantly walks over to her husband’s side of the bed, but refuses to sit. Mr. Thomas uses slight force to pull her to himself, then starts talking.)* Babe, I’m sorry if I sent the wrong signal. It isn’t as if I hate Tunde. I want the best of everything for him. I’m just saying if he isn’t making us happy, we can return him to the

#### orphanage and file to adopt another happy child. Someone who would give us the peace and the true joy we deserve and seek.

(Mrs. Thomas seems to have finally had enough. She eyes her husband and delivers a long hiss before standing.)

**Mrs. Thomas:** Good night, Olalere. *(She dashes to her side of the bed, covers herself up with her duvet and turns off her bedside lamp.)*

(As light goes off on the couple, a faint spotlight reveals Tunde standing at the door, obviously eavesdropping the whole time. He looks sad as he walks down to his room. Scene switches to Tunde in his room, with his diary in his hands.)

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 45

**Tunde:** *(Sobbing quietly in bed and speaking to himself while gazing at the stars)* Peju, where are you? I need you, my sister. I hope you’re fine wherever you are. Please, let’s meet soon. I miss you.

(He opens his diary to fill the remaining lines of the first page, as established by a close shot. There is a sad tune as he fills it slowly. Soon, he falls asleep with his head on the diary. Light goes completely off.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

46 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



spot light comes on to reveal Tunde’s diary, now looking old and almost filled up. Tunde is in the same position. As the

*A*

light shines brighter, it is established that it is morning and the head on the diary is not a little boy’s, though faced down. A loud honk from the parking lot wakes him.

**FIFTEEN YEARS LATER**

**Tunde:** *(Startled, but reluctantly jumping out of bed. He looks at the time)* 7:30am already? Holy Moses! That must be Dele. I’m late again.

**Dele:** *(Screaming from Tunde’s window)* Get up, lazy man! You have 10minutes to get dressed, else we’d be late. In fact, I’m coming in.

**Tunde:** *(Not bothered.)* Suit yourself, young man. I’m not rushing to work today. Adetutu better do her worst today.

#### **Dele:** Shut up! That’s your boss you just disrespected.

*(Pointing at the door)* Open up.

**Tunde:** *(As he heads for the bathroom)* Have you tried it?

#### **Dele:** Why do you have to be like that all the time? You really need to be better. Or do you think you need to see a doctor?

(Tunde does not answer. As the door opens and Dele

46

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 47

comes in, shower is heard running from backstage. Dele turns on the news while he waits for Tunde. Soon after, Tunde appears all dressed, but without his shoes.)

**Dele:** *(Making funny noises to get Tunde’s attention)* Just now?

**Tunde:** *(Being sarcastic, as he gets his shoes)* Did you not tell me to rush things up, so you can run to your darling boss?

(Dele does not respond. Rather, he faces the screen before him. Tunde finishes up and signals Dele. They turn off appliances and exit the room shortly after.) Scene switches to Tunde’s workplace. He is a teller with a bank. Tunde has his workstation to himself, separating him from other tellers. Everyone has a computer system in front of him. Tunde looks all

serious, focusing on his computer screen. There are paper tags all over the place. Shortly, his boss – the managing director, Mrs. Adetutu – is seen walking down towards Tunde’s workstation. She is a beautiful lady, about six feet tall, with a model body. She attempts to startle him.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** Morning, Tunde. *(She gets no response, notices that and goes back to him. She calls again.)* Tunde, how are you today? *(Getting no response again, she taps his shoulder.)* Tunde!

**Tunde:** (Almost jumping up from his seat and scaring Mrs.

*Adetutu a bit)* Yes, Ma. Good morning, Ma.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** Please, meet me in my office right away. *(She walks away without waiting for Tunde’s response.)*

**Tunde:** Okay, Ma.

48 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Immediately, Tunde picks some folders and heads to Mrs. Adetutu’s office. Before knocking, he is seen doing the sign of the Cross. There is a faint response from behind the door. Tunde enters.)

#### **Tunde:** Good morning, Ma. These are the treated files from yesterday, Ma.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Not looking up at Tunde)* Drop them over there.

**Tunde:** Okay, Ma. (He ignorantly turns around to leave Mrs. Adetutu’s office when she calls him back..)

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(With eyes fixed on Tunde)* Please, pick up your letter from the secretary’s desk.

**Tunde:** *(Confused about whether to be happy or sad.)* My promotion letter, Ma?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Now busy with her computer.)* What do you think?

**Tunde:** *(Smiling gently)* Okay, Ma. Thank you very much.

(He exits the office and heads straight for the secretary’s table.)

#### **Tunde:** Hi, Kike. The boss just told me to pick up my letter from your table. What is it about?

**Secretary:** *(Hands over a white envelope.)* I’m really sorry, Tunde.

**Tunde:** *(Giggling)* You are sorry that I’m being promoted? How funny! *(On the spot, Tunde opens the letter. His countenance changes almost immediately, but he is calm to read a few lines of the letter.)*

**Tunde:** Sacked? Why? *(Still reading)* Me? *(Facing the secretary)* When have I ever not done my job,

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 49

#### Kike? Except that last week that I was sick and last month that I was not around for a week?

**Secretary:** *(Pauses her work for a while to address Tunde.)* As said in the letter, Tunde. It’s the management decision to lay you off for a while due to the incompetence from your workstation.

**Tunde:** *(Puffs as his voice goes louder.)* Incompetence?

#### Seriously?

**Secretary:** *(Sounding and looking more serious)* Do you need me to pull security on you?

(Tunde stays silent for a while, obviously gathering momentum, then moves towards his workstation. There, he meets two security guards who watch him as he clears his table and escort him out humbly, but disgracefully.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

50 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

*S*

cene is set in Tunde’s apartment. Small and tidy as usual, his sitting room holds a hammock in one corner close to the window.

It is night. Light reveals Tunde in the hammock, swinging left to right, with a glass of whiskey in his right arm as he looks into the starry sky. He is obviously pondering on an important issue, established by irrational movements of his fingers. His voice is soon heard.

**Tunde:** *(Laughs neurotically).* After five years of my life with that bank? I will make you pay for this. I will make everyone pay for this. Each and every member of staff of that useless bank. *(Pauses for a minute.)* Should I burn it down? *(Shaking his head in disagreement)* No! That will be too easy on those idiots. Maybe I should hack into the system and withdraw every saved dime. *(Shakes his head again, then pauses for a drink. He suddenly realizes what to do)* I will start with her. *(He squeezes on the glass cup till it breaks and injures him. Shortly, he steps out of the hammock and heads straight for his closet. He dresses up in all black, flashes his knife and sets out.)*

Scene immediately switches to the bank’s parking lot. A masked figure is seen from behind scouting Mrs.

### 50

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 51

Adetutu, who has just gotten off an elevator. As she moves towards her car, she hears footsteps approaching.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** (Abruptly looking back to see who is behind her) Who’s there? (Now very scared and looking everywhere to see if there is anyone.) Is anyone there? (Suddenly, she is grabbed from behind and stabbed in the stomach three times. While this goes on, there is an elevator ding, signaling someone was coming. The masked figure flees as he sees Kike, the bank secretary.)

**Kike:** *(On the phone)* I told you I am on my way already. I had to wait for my boss to leave before signing out. *(She starts laughing and making some sexual sounds until she sees Mrs. Adetutu lying helpless on the floor and bleeding.)*

**Kike:** *(Quickly rushing to pick her up)* Ma, are you okay? What happened to you? *(Speaking to the person on the phone)* Listen, babe, I’d have to call you back. *(She drops the call and dials emergency response.)* Hello! Please, we need help here at the National Bank along Federal Housing. Someone has been attacked and bleeding seriously. *(Pauses to listen, then answers.)* Yes, she’s breathing. *(Pauses again.)* I’m not sure if it’s a bullet wound or a knife wound. She is bleeding all over. Please rush down. *(Pauses.)* Okay, I’ll do that. *(She stays on the line with the operator but drops the phone and puts it on speaker as she faces Mrs. Adetutu, who is now losing consciousness.)* Hold on, I’ll be back soon. *(She rushes to her car, picks a clean towel and rushes back. She applies pressure*

52 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

on the wound as she waits for the emergency response team to arrive.)

**Operator:** *(Obviously composed.)* Please, hold on a while longer. They’ll be with you shortly.

**Kike:** *(Forcing a smile as she comforts Mrs. Adetutu)* Did you hear that? Help is almost here.

(Soon, an ambulance siren is heard from afar. Kike tries to look around to see where the van is coming from. She sights the blue and red light from behind.) Do you hear that? They’re here. Thank God. (As the van approaches, she screams to direct them to where they are.) Here! We are here! (She flashes her bright phone screen and the van heads straight to

them.)

(Soon as Mrs. Adetutu is put on a stretcher and inside the ambulance, the driver speeds off with the sirens blaring as loud as possible. Kike follows them in her own car.)

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FOUR

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 53



*S*

cene reveals Iya Eko’s stall. Everyone is busy running around to make sure the influx of customers is controlled and that each person is attended to. Iya Eko appears to be very happy. She keeps laughing and hugging Ajike. She now has two more salesgirls to help her sell and clean. She goes to her table with her best friend to calculate how much has been made, but some cash has been stolen. This changes

her mood.

**Iya Eko:** *(Worried as she counts.)* …forty-nine, fifty, fifty- one, fifty-two. *(She looks up at Ajike.)* Ajike, can you imagine? Someone has robbed me.

**Ajike:** *(Joking around)* Hmm hmm, Eko. What are you talking about? Which money? Quit playing.

#### **Iya Eko:** I’m serious, Ajike. I counted fifty thousand naira three hours ago. And we made that in only two hours. From one o’clock till now, are you saying we’ve only made two thousand naira?

**Ajike:** *(Now unsettled.)* I don’t believe this. Please, recount the money. In fact *(She snatches the bundle from Iya Eko, puts water on the tips of her fingers and begins to count very fast.)* One, two, three… *(She continues counting.)* …fifty-two, fifty-two thousand naira? This is unbelievable.

53

54 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Iya Eko:** *(She starts up immediately.)* I’m about to kill these girls.

**Ajike:** *(Standing up to stop her)* **Ni suuru,** Eko. *(Pointing at the busy salesgirls)* Look at these girls. See how busy they are. Do you think these ones have the time to steal an amount that much and stash it without getting caught?

#### **Iya Eko:** Well, they seem to be the only ones who know where I keep my money. I will make sure they provide my complete cash. Else, their salaries will…

**Ajike:** *(Cuts in.)* Don’t you trust me? Hold on now. We’ll find the money today. *(She pulls Iya Eko to one side.)* Look at that Vendor boy. Do you trust him? If you ask me, he is my first suspect. And thank goodness: he hasn’t left this area since he resumed this morning.

**Iya Eko:** *(Seeing reasons with her)* Hmmm That’s true o.

I have never really trusted that boy since I took him in. I should search him *(Ajike nods in agreement as Iya Eko calls the Vendor.)* Ehs…ehs… Vendor! Come closer.

**Vendor:** *(Playfully)* Oga madam, well done o. *(Looking around sarcastically)* Market don sell today o. You no go tell dem make dem bought paper?

#### **Ajike:** Will you shut up there? You thief! You think I did not see you when you were taking money from my friend’s drawer?

**Vendor:** *(Looking confused)* Ah! Madam, I no steal Iya Eko money o.

#### **Ajike:** So who stole it? Empty your pockets, let’s see.

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 55

**Vendor:** (Struggling to pull his four pockets one after another)

#### I tell you say I no steal your money.

**Iya Eko:** *(Holds the Vendor by the wrist and speaks to him silently.)* Did you see anyone at my table when I was not looking?

**Ajike:** *(Interrupting)* Let him confess his sins, Eko. I’m sure he stole the money.

**Iya Eko:** *(Facing Ajike)* Ajike, please, hold on. Let me talk to him. *(Faces the Vendor.)* You were saying what? Who did you see?

#### **Vendor:** *(Quietly)* Madam, no say na me tell you o. Na your friend I see dey put your money for her purse. I think say she dey helep you count am ni.

**Iya Eko:** Are you sure about what you just said?

**Vendor:** I no go lie on top your friend na.

**Iya Eko:** Shut up! You cannot even lie on her before. Now, go! Thank you.

(As he leaves, Iya Eko stylishly snatches Ajike’s purse, opens it almost immediately and finds her money. While they struggled, everybody fixes gaze on the two.)

#### **Iya Eko:** Ajike, please, leave my shop this instant.

**Ajike:** Ore mi…

#### **Iya Eko:** Don’t “ore mi!” Please, leave my shop and never come back.

(Ajike, ashamed, picks her purse and leaves Iya Eko’s stall. Everyone gives her a dirty look as she leaves the stall.)

(Scene fades,)

**ACT FIVE SCENE ONE**

# S

cene opens in a hospital. Mrs. Adetutu has been in coma for ten days. She has undergone several surgeries to the stomach and doctors are hopeful that she wakes up any time soon. She is put on life support machine, which keeps beeping every five seconds, indicating life still in the living corpse. There are flowers of different colors and cards everywhere in the room, as if to be in a grave yard. Mr. Adetutu, her husband, has been beside her through the night. Seated on a low chair, he falls asleep with his head on the side of Mrs. Adetutu’s bed, holding her hand. Shortly after, she wakes up and the first person she sees is her husband. She smiles before shaking her

husband’s stuck fingers.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Smiling, she attempts to speak but is almost inaudible.)* **Ife mi!** Hey! Baby!

**Mr. Adetutu:***(Slowly waking up and looking around as if being called from the afterworld. He realizes the voice is his wife’s. He immediately stands to move even closer.)* Hey, love. *(Constantly caressing her cheeks)* You look beautiful. How do you feel? Wait, let me get the doctor.

(Mr. Adetutu nods with little strength as her husband rushes out of the room. Soon, two nurses come back into the room with him. One of the nurses checks

### 57

58 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

Mrs. Adetutu’s pulse and also reads her heart with the monitor by the bed.)

#### **Nurse 1:** *(Facing Mr. Adetutu)* She looks normal for now. Please, do everything possible not to agitate her, so we don’t trigger an irreversible trauma. Let her rest for a while, while we examine how she does without the oxygen mask.

**Mr. Adetutu:** Oh, thank God! Is she better now?

#### **Nurse 1:** Yes, she is. We noticed progress last night, but had to leave her to fully wake on her own. Now that she’s up, we can take off the machines while she fully recovers. That would cut some cost on the bill already on ground.

**Mr. Adetutu:**Okay, thank you. That’s thoughtful.

**Nurse 1:** *(Now facing Mrs. Adetutu)* Try to be strong, okay? We are here, if you ever have to need us. *(Attempting a joke)* We hope you don’t *(Everyone laughs, except Mrs. Adetutu, who holds her stomach while trying to catch one.)*

**Mr. Adetutu:***(As he watches the nurses exit the room)* Thank you for your help. *(He pulls his chair closer to his wife, then sits hastily, holding her hand.)*

**Mr. Adetutu:***(Grabbing a card)* How about I read you some cards you got while you were away? *(They both smile.)*

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Faintly)* Okay, love. *(She holds on to her husband even more tightly.)*

#### **Mr. Adetutu:***(Opening the first card)* This is from Kike. It’s signed by other members at the bank, too. It reads, “We are all thinking about you and wishing you a speedy recovery. Hang in there, better days are here.”

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 59

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Looking very emotional)* Awwwnnn…

**Mr. Adetutu:** *(Dropping the first card)* I know, right? It isn’t so hard to know why they all love you. *(He smiles.)* This one here is…*(Trying to look for a name, but finds none)* It reads “From T.” Message reads “I hope you feel a little better every day. I hope you do. I’m about to send vibes your way, and you won’t even see it coming.”

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Looking confused)* T? Who could that be?

#### **Mr. Adetutu:** Try to remember, darling. This message sure gives me a funny feeling. Looks more like a threat to me.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Suddenly remembering something, she attempts to sit up but her husband calms her down)* Tunde! I remember! Tunde! It’s Tunde! He tried to kill me. *(She starts crying profusely and struggles to get up from bed.)*

(Mr. Adetutu gets really worried and starts calling the nurses while holding her down. Soon, the two nurses rush in. They attempt to calm her, but to no avail.)

**Nurse 1:** *(Facing Nurse 2)* Please, make arrangements for conscious sedation. *(Facing Mr. Adetutu)* Please, wait outside, Sir.

(Mrs. Adetutu keeps on mentioning “Tunde” until she is sedated. Her voice fades slowly till she sleeps.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

60 *Fates Unchained - A Play*



# A

t the hospital, the management has invited police officers to investigate Mrs. Adetutu’s story. Three police officers are seen

standing outside Mrs. Adetutu’s room, while her husband tries to introduce her to the presence of the officers, to avoid any outburst.

**Mr. Adetutu:** *(Gently, as he seats beside her.)* Hey, love. *(Pointing at the officers)* See those men outside? *(Mrs. Adetutu nods)* They’re here to help us.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Looking confused)* How?

**Mr. Adetutu:** You don’t remember what happened last night? *(She shows no response.)* While I was reading the cards?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Still confused.)* Last night? I thought I just woke up.

#### **Mr. Adetutu:** It’s all right. I understand. You had to be sedated after you couldn’t stop mentioning some Tunde guy for as long as fifteen minutes. Do you remember that?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Holding her forehead with her two hands)* I remember now. *(Now worried.)* Did I cause a scene last night?

#### **Mr. Adetutu:** Not exactly one. At least, we have a lead on who did this to you.

60

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 61

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Giving a heavy sigh, followed by a long pause)*

#### Okay. I understand. Let them in.

**Mr. Adetutu:** All right, love. (He signals the police officers and a staff nurse, supposed to monitor Mrs. Adetutu through the process. They all come in and stand by Mrs. Adetutu’s bed.)

**Officer 1:** *(Pulls out his ID from his breast pocket)* I am Officer Nat, from the Lagos State CID. *(Points at his partner.)* With me are my colleagues, Officer Williams and Officer Ola. *(Both officers flash their IDs.)*

**Officer 1:** *(As all three officers put their IDs away)* We are here in relation to the incident that occurred on the 24th of March, 2009. *(Facing Mrs. Adetutu)* Do you recall anything from that night, madam? Anything at all.

**Mrs: Adetutu:** *(As if trying to remember)* It’s all faint in my head. My head feels light. I really can’t recall anything.

#### **Officer 2:** Please, try, Ma. It is important that we catch the perpetuators of such a heinous crime.

**Officer 3:** Yes, that’s very true. The law does not support such a treatment from individuals to others,especially women who are trying to make a living out there. So, please…

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Cuts in)* Oh! I think I remember something. I was going to my car when someone caught me from behind and stabbed me.

**Officer 1:** Okay. We are making progress. Do you know anyone who would want to hurt you?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** Actually, only one person comes to mind.

#### Tunde is his name.

62 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### **Officer 1:** Please, give us brief details of what happened between you two.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** He was laid off by the management for being incompetent and I think he was not happy with the decision. *(Now getting agitated)* I did not sack him, so I don’t know why he is angry with…

**Nurse:** *(Cuts in)* Officers, don’t you think we’ve had enough? We don’t want to upset her with too much details of the incident.

**Officer 1:** All right. We have enough, Ma. Thank you very much. We’ll update you on further developments from this point.

**Mr. Adetutu:** *(Stretching his hand to shake the police officers)* Thank you, officers. Please, keep us abreast of the situation.

(The nurse walks the three police officers out of the room, leaving Mrs. Adetutu and her husband.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 63



*I*

t is about 0600hrs in the morning. Everywhere is incredibly silent. Police officers, led by Officer Nat, have cleared the area and surrounded Tunde’s apartment. They have pulled a full squad to arrest him in connection with the attempted homicide on Mrs. Adetutu. As they move stealthily, they use fingers to make signals to one another. An officer sees Tunde through a window still sleeping

and he signals the rest. Soon, they burst in.

**Officer Nat:** *(Screaming at the top of his lungs)* Grab him! Grab him!

**Tunde:** *(Struggling to wake up)* What’s going on here?

**Officer Nat:** *(Responding immediately with a slap)* What do you think, idiot? *(He faces Officer Uche)* Arrest this idiot, please.

#### **Tunde:** What have I done? You can’t just come into…

**Officer Uche:** *(Delivering another slap)* Will you shut up and put your hands behind your back? You foolish woman killer.

**Tunde:** Woman killer? What do you mean? Okay, who did I kill? *(He struggles as they try to force him out of the room.)* I won’t follow you people o!

**Officer Nat:** You won’t do what? *(He grabs his gun and hits Tunde on the back to move him painfully, but easily)* Today, you’ll see hell.

63

64 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(While this is on, Tunde keeps screaming at the top of his voice. Neighbours gather in groups, all spread across the main entrance of the building. Some gossip him, spiting while the police continue to beat him. Only a few people feel pity for him but they cannot even move close to him to save him. Soon, two of his neighbours are heard conversing in a corner.)

**Neighbour 1:** Eh ehhh… *(Silently)* Officers, make una take am easy now. This poor boy wey no even get friends?

**Neighbour 2:** *(Eyeing her friend and hissing)* How you take know? Person wey go comot house for seven o’clock, come back for ten o’clock for night, no be somewhere e dey go?

#### **Neighbour 1:** Ehnehn. You nko? If you go carry **ewedu** for farm, no be five o’clock you dey go carry am? When you don reach market, which time you dey close?

**Neighbour 2:** *(Trying to think)* Sometimes, I dey close early and some times, nine o’clock.

**Neighbour 1:** *(Satisfied.)* So shut up! No judge am.

(Soon as they stop talking, a group of young university “slay queens” pass by and notice the police brutality going on. They bring out their phones to take pictures and record videos, while they laugh and withdraw as the officers force Tunde to the van.)

**Officer Nat:** *(Looking at Tunde, who is already bleeding)* Shey you say you stubborn, we go tell you say we stubborn pass you. *(Looking at Officer Uche)* Uche, what are you doing? Drag him, if you can. If he does not move, shoot his ankle, then dump him in the van.

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 65

**Officer Uche:** *(Immediately pointing his gun at Tunde)* You don hear am. I obey only the last order. As you don too big to drag, make I scatter your leg. *(Tunde hears this and immediately starts cooperating. He gets into the borrowed* ***danfo*** *the police have come to pick him with and all officers squeeze themselves in to guard Tunde from escaping. Everyone watches as the driver zooms off.)*

Same day, at the police station, Officer Nat presides over Tunde’s interrogation, helped by Officer Uche. The room has been carefully lit with one spotlight, creating a feel of horror. Tunde has been undressed to his underwear, revealing burn marks on his chest. On the table between Tunde and the officers are a plugged electric iron, stained all over with the blood of Tunde and other victim; a black baton; a car’s fan belt; scissors and a gun, left close to Officer Nat’s reach..

**Tunde:** *(Looking pitiful and crying profusely)* But officers, what have I done? You have beaten me this much and I don’t even know who I have killed. I have rights, too, you know?

**Officer Uche:** *(Picking up the baton)* If I knack this thing for your head, you go remember who you kill. Rights **kee** you there.

**Officer Nat:** *(From his seat)* You really don’t know why you were arrested?

**Tunde:** *(Pausing for a while)* No, Officer. It’s what I’ve been saying. I don’t know.

#### **Officer Nat:** Okay. Let’s assume you don’t. Where were you on the 24th day of March, 2009?

66 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Hearing this, Tunde goes silent and bows his head in guilt.)

**Officer Nat:** *(Confirming his suspicion)* It’s what I thought. You can explain yourself to the judge tomorrow. *(Facing Officer Uche)* Book him!

(Officer Nat exits the room, leaving Officer Uche, who brings out a form for Tunde to fill. Soon, light goes off.)

(Scene fades.)

## SCENE FOUR

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 67



*S*

cene opens in a courtroom. The session has been on for some time, while lawyers – prosecution and defence – battle it out blood

and water. Prosecution supports putting Tunde away forever, locked up in a correctional facility far out of town. Defense pushes for a reinvestigation, claiming the allegations were baseless and outrageous, describing his client as very peaceful and humane. Light comes on when the presiding Judge starts to speak. Tunde is revealed in a corner, handcuffed in the dock. Mrs. Adetutu is also present. Officer Nat and Officer Uche are also seen in another witness stand.

#### **Judge:** *(Facing the lawyers)* I have heard you both. Thank you. *(Facing Tunde)* You, Tunde, have been charged with two counts. Stalking without legal backing and attempted murder. But before I proceed with your judgment, addressing these officers of the law is very important. *(He faces the officers)* You, Officer Nat and Officer Uche, have arrested a suspect without reading him his rights.

(Soon as the Judge mentions this, the court goes berserk. Everyone suddenly feels the need to share their views with other people present. The court clerk rises up to restore peace.)

67

68 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Clerk:** Orderrrrr!

#### **Judge:** *(Facing the audience)* Or, who here does not know about the Miranda Rule? *(Faces the officers.)* These little things officers don’t know speak volume on how significant your job is to you. A suspect is only a suspect until he is convicted of a crime. *(Looking down at the typed judgment)* Obviously, some of you still need to be schooled on arresting suspects. Also, the media has picked special interest in this case, because you two decided to brutalise this man before so many witnesses covering evidences now available on online blogs who uploaded videos. *(Pauses)* One thing is certain: the law will not condone indiscipline and will punish anyone who flouts its rules. Here is my judgment. *(Court goes silent.)*

**Judge:** *(Facing the officers)* This court has ordered that you two pay a fine of fifty thousand naira each, to cover hospital expenses and damages caused to the suspect.

(Everyone starts murmuring aloud again, causing the judge to pause for a moment.)

**Clerk:** *(Stands up.)* Orderrrr! *(Court immediately goes completely silent.)*

#### **Judge:** *(Facing Tunde)* Back to you, Tunde Thomas. You have taken the laws into your own hands, wanting to punish this innocent lady because you think she sacked you. How unfortunate! A young man like you should learn how not to back down, no matter what. Even if you were sacked baselessly, the right thing to do would

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 69

be to seek other jobs or redress on that particular one. However, on the 24th of March, 2009, in the parking lot of the bank where you once worked, you, Tunde Thomas attempted to take the life of Mrs. Digiola Adetutu. This is against the law. Hence, this is my judgment. *(The court is silently unsettled. Some of Tunde’s lovers are worried that they may not let Tunde walk, while others pray for a light sentence. Words are not heard, but expressions are read. The judge continues.)*

#### **Judge:** This court has sentenced you, Tunde Thomas, to fifteen years in prison, with hard labour. I rise!

(Tunde bursts into uncontrollable tears.)

**Clerk:** (Standing up almost immediately) Courrrrrt! (There is pandemonium in the court, as Tunde gets dragged away by prison wardens. Some curse him as they take him away, and only their voices are heard.)

(Scene fades.)

**ACT SIX SCENE ONE**

**10 YEARS LATER**

*S*

cene opens in the same police station Tunde was taken to. On one side of the table are Officer Nat and Officer Uche. However, on

the other side of the table is Mr. Adetutu. He has been arrested in connection with another attempt on the life of his wife, Mrs. Digiola Adetutu. His shirt is off and his trousers worn inside out. Keeping a distance and without torture tools, the two officers interrogate Mr. Adetutu.

**Officer Nat:** *(Standing directly under the spotlight and leaning over the table before Mr. Adetutu)* Are you ready to confess? And before you start lying, you should know that we have Mamba and Stylus, the boys you sent to kill your wife. They are currently giving their accounts in the other room and so far, the details have been true. So choose your words wisely, mister.

**Mr. Adetutu:** *(Looking sorry)* Yes, officer. I’ll confess to everything I’ve done.

**Officer Nat:** (Facing the translucent glass to the side, he signals another officer to enter. Soon, a female police officer walks in with a report form and a pen. She sits next to Officer Nat, facing Mr. Adetutu.) He says he is

### 71

72 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### ready to confess. Please, note every detail in whatever statement he gives.

**F. Officer:** *(Nods.)* Okay, Sir. I’ll do just that.

**Officer Nat:** All right, then. *(Facing Mr. Adetutu, he turns on a recorder on his phone and drops the phone on the table, close to Mr. Adetutu.)* Repeat after me. I, mention your name, am giving this confession today, the 15th day of April, 2019. I have not been tortured. This is my true account of the incident.

(Mr. Adetutu repeats after him, inserting his own name where appropriate.)

#### All right. Now, go ahead.

**Mr. Adetutu:** I was the one who hired Mamba and Stylus to kill my wife. I know it is wrong, and I apologise.

**Officer Nat:** *(Cuts in)* Leave the apologies till you get to court. Give us details of how you are involved. Why you hired assassins to kill the wife you’ve been married to for over fifteen years and how much you paid them to get the job done.

**Mr. Adetutu:** *(Now sobbing)* Officer, my wife changed only about a year after we got married. She never had time for me and the kids. She got so busy with her job and it started affecting us. She would come back late at night and just go to sleep, not asking how I fared or how the children did.

**Officer Nat:** Ehnehn? So?

#### **Mr. Adetutu:**So, one day, two years into the marriage, I saw a document in her bag. It read that her life assurance had reached ten million dollars. *(Pauses.)* I began to think to myself that if she

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 73

#### could just die, all the money would be given to the children and me.

**Officer Nat:** Okay. If I heard right, that happened thirteen years ago. Why did you wait until now before hiring assassins?

**Mr. Adetutu:**Officer, this is not the first time I’ve tried to kill my wife.

**Officer Nat:** *(Facing the female officer)* Did you get that? I want every detail.

**F. Officer:** I’m on it, Sir.

**Officer Nat:** Good! *(Faces the suspect.)* When was the first time you attempted to kill your wife?

#### **Mr. Adetutu:**Ten years ago, someone was arrested and jailed for stabbing my wife. *(Looking up at the officers)* He did not do it. I did! *(Now crying really loudly)* I tried to kill my wife, officer. I did it! I watched my wife as she came down from the elevator and as she walked down to her car. I dodged when she almost caught me, and I took her from behind. I stabbed her three times. I’m sorry. I really am.

**Officer Nat:** My God! Wonders shall never cease. So when she survived, that was not enough reason for you to think God loved her? Why didn’t you stop? Why did you have to wait for another ten years?

**Mr. Adetutu:** Officer, after I stabbed her, I pitied her. She could not work for another one year after that. She was home with the kids and playing her wifely and motherly roles like she should have been doing. Then two…yes, two years down the line, the bank calls her back. She did not

74 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### even think it twice. She took it, and then became distant again. I thought I could endure it. I thought wrong. She became distant again, and this time, it became worse...much worse. So I hired Mamba and Stylus to finish the job.

**Officer Nate:** How much did you pay?

#### **Mr. Adetutu:**I wired one hundred thousand naira to them and bought drinks for the other boys in their area.

**Officer Nat:** *(He sighs as he picks up his phone and turns off the recorder. He smiles as he looks at the officers present.)* I think we’ve had enough. Uche, book him and put him in that cell with the notorious boys. Put him in cell number six.

**Officer Uche:** *(To Mr. Adetutu)* Bad man like you, you no even deserve to live.

(The female officer packs up and leaves the room after Officer Nat. Almost immediately, Officer Uche drags Mr. Adetutu out of the interrogation room.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE TWO**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 75



# L

ight comes on to reveal Tunde in Dele’s sitting room. He looks really unkempt and Dele’s children seem not to be able to stand

his sight. They all hide and peep from one corner, wondering whom their father has brought home. There is a glass of water in front of Tunde, but he does not drink, staring at a television set that has been turned off. Soon, everywhere goes silent. Tunde’s voice is heard, as he thinks to himself. His mouth does not move, but his voice is heard.

#### **Tunde:** What kind of life is this, Lord? After fifteen years of my life, I am back to square one. Where do I go from here? What do I do? The future is bleak. No savings, no job, no family. Even my twin is nowhere to be found. What should I do? *(He pauses for a while and continues.)* I can’t let this pass like this. That woman has caused me the better part of my life. If this were the only reason God created me, I would end it. I swear on the life of my twin, wherever she is, I will kill you, Mrs. Adetutu.

(Dele startles Tunde as he walks in from behind. His wife has prepared a meal for Tunde and Dele comes bearing it in his hands. Tunde is distracted.)

**Dele:** Tunde, **bawo ni?** *(He sits beside Tunde.)* How do you feel?

75

76 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**Tunde:** *(Giving a fake laugh)* How do I feel? I believe the right question should be to know what I feel. Not “how!” *(He grabs the plate of food from Dele and places it on the table before him.)*

#### **Dele:** Tunde, I know you must feel terrible right now. No one wishes to go through any of what you have faced. I’m sorry I doubted you all along. You gave me no choice. You were always so angry about not being with your twin.

**Tunde:** *(Rushing his food and without looking up)* It’s…it’s not your fault.

(Dele notices he is enjoying the meal, then decides to let him have a moment.)

**Dele:** When you’re through, we should go get some things at the store. You should clean up a little. *(Dele walks back to his wife, Ola, in the kitchen, looking at Tunde every step of the way. In the kitchen, Dele’s wife expresses discomfort at Tunde’s presence.)*

#### **Ola:** Darling, what do you plan to do with your friend?

**Dele:** I don’t understand.

#### **Ola:** What do you mean you don’t understand? Look at your children. Don’t you see how scared they are?

**Dele:** Don’t worry, they’ll cope. He won’t be here forever. You know he just got out. He needs a place to stay and I’m his only friend. Please, bear with him for a little while, okay?

**Ola:** Only a while o. Not more. Please. *(Silently)* I don’t even know if I should be scared or not.

**Dele:** *(No longer paying attention)* Excuse me?

**Ola:** Not you **jare**, my husband. *(Quickly switching*

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 77

#### *the topic)* Can you get some diapers for Sade on your way home?

**Dele:** All right.

(Delel walks out of the kitchen. Ola continues to express more disgust, but does not speak to avoid being heard.)

(Scene fades.)

**SCENE THREE**

78 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

*L*

ight comes on to reveal Iya Eko’s stall. She is looking not so young. She has expanded her business and built walls to house

her business. She has now hired a manager to help her run the affairs. She is seen at her table, looking through her bank account history on the computer system on her table. She keeps smiling at intervals. She soon speaks.

**Iya Eko:** *(Calling on the manager)* **Sisi** manager, please, come close. *(Points at the screen)* Look, between 1st of May and the third, there is a deduction in the balance. Why is that?

#### **Manager:** Yes, that’s correct, Ma. That was the day you went for an event in the UK and the cooks needed to buy more ingredients. I gave Iya Kayode five thousand naira to buy everything she needed.

**Iya Eko:** *(Smiling)* Hmm… It’s kuku not like I don’t trust you, manager. It is just that money matter ehn, e dey worry me sometimes. *(They both laugh.)* Thank you for the hard work.

(As the manager turns to leave, Iya Eko calls her again.)\

#### Sorry, my sister. One more thing. See this twenty-five naira they remove every month,

78

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 79

#### where do they keep it?

**Manager:** *(Smiling)* Twenty-five naira? The bank receives that as alert charges for every month.

#### **Iya Eko:** *(Surprised.)* Every month? So because I can no longer use my **kolo**, they must now charge me for telling me what is in my account, too, abi? It’s okay. Thank you, manager. I understand.

**Manager:** Yes, Ma. Can I go now?

**Iya Eko:** Yes, please. Monitor the girls o.

(All the while, the vendor keeps his stare on Iya Eko. His stall is once again the way it was when he first opened. He wonders how and when she became so rich and proud.)

**Vendor:** *(Looking disgusted as he soliloquizes)* Look am. See as she proud. Dey call everybody like say na she born them. *(He pauses for a while to think.)* Or, this woman thief my glory? *(Counting with his fingers)* Fifteen years for here, nothing nothing to show. She don build house finish, come buy car join. Na me she take do juju. And before I kee myself, I go spoil her life first. Make I go meet aunty nurse. She go give me oyinbo juju, make I put for the food wey she dey cook. *(Angrily, he collects his newspapers from everyone at his stall and packs them in a bag.)*

#### All of you is mad. Na so you go dey read paper for free every day. Comot my shop now now before I borrow knife from that shop o.

(He carries the bag of papers and storms out. Iya Eko, ignorant of the development, keeps conducting her business.)

(Scene fades.)

**ACT SEVEN SCENE ONE**

# I

t is a cold night. Tunde is seen parading the premises of Mrs.

Adetutu’s house. No one is around, except security, who only patrols once in a few hours. This avails Tunde the opportunity to scout the area. He finally finds a way in through the back door. Silently, he walks around the house, inspecting, to be sure no one is around. He moves through the ground floor to the first floor, where Mrs. Adetutu’s room is. He scatters the room, looking for nothing in particular. He checks the baby’s cot too, flips everything over, then approaches the second floor. On the lobby, he finds frames spread across the wall. He begins to break them one after the other. As he smashes the fourth, he notices his handwriting in one of the frames.

**Tunde:** *(Looking confused)* Why does this look familiar? *(He moves even closer and is shocked at the discovery.)* The letter! My letter! I wrote this. Why does this witch have it framed on her wall? *(He skips that and moves to the next.)* This is the first letter I wrote to Peju. Why does she have them?

(He removes every other frame on the wall, packs them together, and takes them downstairs to the main entrance. He puts the frames on the centre table, then sits across the table, on Mrs. Adetutu’s special rocky chair. He awaits her arrival.)

### 81

82 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Soon, a car’s headlamp reflects and a honk is heard. The gateman opens for Mrs. Adetutu. She, her last child, who is still a baby and his nanny all come down from the car and head towards the entrance.) (Tunde, already armed with a gun, switches off the light sand sits, facing the door. The nanny is the first to enter, with the baby in her hands. Soon as Mrs. Adetutu enters, the nanny notices a figure in the chair in front of them.)

**Nanny:** *(Scared.)* Who’s there? *(She looks back at Mrs.*

*Adetutu.)* Madam, someone is in the house.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(She scrambles to turn on the light.)* What do you mean, “someone is in the house”?

(As light comes on, Tunde is revealed, pointing the gun at the nanny and the baby.)

#### **Tunde:** If you make the tiniest noise, kiss that little being goodbye.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(She steps in front of the nanny and the baby.)* Please, don’t hurt my child. He has nothing to do with any of this?

#### **Tunde:** Why not let me be the judge of that? If you control what happens to other people, why do you think others can’t do what they please to your child?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** Only people who do evil deserve to be judged. I have not done anything you have not deserved. But, please, save my child. I’ll pay for everything.

**Tunde:** I choose the terms from this point.

(Shortly, Mrs. Adetutu recognizes the pile of broken frames on the centre table. She rushes to confirm, leaving the nanny and her child vulnerable.)

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 83

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Picking up the letters and cleaning them one after another. They seem precious to her.)* What have you done? Why did you touch these? *(She starts sobbing.)* Oh, God!

**Tunde:** What do they mean to you?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Cuts in)* Everything! They mean everything to me.

**Tunde:** I won’t ask you more than once. *(He redirects the gun to face Mrs. Adetutu.)* Why do you have the letters?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Reluctantly and still busy cleaning the letters, she looks up at Tunde.)* These are what I have left of late my twin. His name is Tunde too. We got separated when we were ten years and these letters represent the only memories I have of him.

(Tunde immediately looks struck, as he freezes and his hand begins to shake. He immediately drops the gun and rushes to hold Mrs. Adetutu. The nanny sees this as a chance, then escapes with the baby.)

**Tunde:** *(He grabs her purse, empties it and brings out her set of IDs)* What is your full name? *(He does not wait for her to respond.)*

**Mrs. Adetutu:** Digiola Olapeju Adetutu

**Tunde:** *(Bursts into tears and loses control.)* Peju! Peju! *(Immediately, he kneels before her, crying at her feet.)* Why, Peju? Why? Why does it have to be you?

**Mrs. Adetutu:** *(Looking like she just saw a ghost)* What? Tunde? This can’t be. They said you were dead. This is just not possible.

**Tunde:** *(Still crying)* I had to stage my death to look for you.

84 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

(Mrs. Adetutu finally sees some honesty in Tunde’s eyes. Tears start to roll down her cheeks and she hugs him closely.)

#### **Mrs. Adetutu:** I tried, Tunde. I looked everywhere. When I got my admission into the University of Lagos, I saved a lot of money and went back to the orphanage. They gave me your address, but I did not find anyone when I got to the address. The neighbours told me your foster parents moved out after the news of your death.

**Tunde:** Oh, Lord! Why? I cannot believe you’ve been right there in front of me. Everything I am today, good or bad, is a result of your not being in my life. All I wanted was to take care of you, as I promised dad and mum.

**Mrs. Adetutu:** I’m sorry, Tunde. I made a huge mistake. I don’t even know if I’d ever forgive myself for everything I did to you. I’m sorry, Tunde. Please, forgive me.

**Tunde:** *(Wiping his tears and trying to catch a smile)* I have no choice now, do I?

(Both of them shed tears of joy as they hold each other closely. Light goes out on them, as scene fades.)

THE END.

**EPILOGUE**

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 85



*A*

fter a brief sad tune to create a bitter sweet atmosphere symbolizing the twins’ complicated reunion, Iya Eko is seen, walking in

from downstage left towards the centre stage. She has not been active for several years since the Vendor poisons her pot of soup. She had a stroke and so now uses crutches. As she walks in slowly, her voice is heard.

**Iya Eko:** *(Smiling as she walks in, she switches countenance to a sad look as she reaches centre stage. She pauses, allowing the low sad tune lead her.)* Life! Everyone is a judge until she happens. Everyone thinks they know everything, when actually we know nothing. Do tribulations end with one breakthrough? *(Pauses.)* As humans, we often avoid adventures that come as challenges. Little do we know that these challenges are only tests by the universe to see how we attempt to get back up.

*(She pauses, and then walks down the ramp into the audience. She continues.)* Tunde has finally reunited with his sister. Does that wash away his gloomy past? Does he finally find redemption and just enjoy the missed company of his twin? Peju may be happy as well, who

### 85

86 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

#### knows? But does anyone think staying buried in her memories might have been the best for Tunde? How does one transfer a huge amount of love to someone who once dared to hurt them? Ask yourself all of these, and then come back to hear what I think.

*(She turns around to exit, climbs the ramp but faces the audience again.)* If you feel separated or lost, it’s only temporary.

(She walks off the same way she came on stage.)

(Scene fades.)

## GLOSSARY

*Fates Unchained - A Play* 87



#### **Alaga Iduro** Master of ceremonies presiding over Yoruba traditional weddings (Act 1, Scene 1)

**Gele** Yoruba headgear (Act 1, Scene 1)

**Akara Oyinbo** “Cake” (Act 1, Scene )

#### **Ore mi** “My friend” (Act 1, Scene 1; Act 1, Scene 5;

Act 4, Scene 4)

**Oko mi** “My husband” (Act 1, Scene 2)

**Gangan** “Exactly” (Act 1, Scene 3)

**Nomba Tatin** “Number Thirteen” (Act 1, Scene 3)

#### **Ife mi** “My love” (Act 1, Scene 4; Act 5, Scene 1)

**Abi** “Or” (Act 1, Scene 5; Act 3, Scene 3)

**Tiri** “Three” (Act 1, Scene 5)

**Amala** Flour made from sun-dried yam (Act 1, Scene 5)

**Ponmo** Edible cow hide (Act 1, Scene 5)

**Mo** Yoruba translation of “Ma” (Act 1, Scene 5)

**Fery Fery** “Very very” (Act 1, Scene 5)

#### **Ekanna Gowon** Local Yoruba candy popular among children in the 90s (Act 2, Scene 1)

**Sisi Pelebe** Local Yoruba candy popular among children in the 90s (Act 2, Scene 1)

**Kinni** “What?” (Act 3, Scene 2)

87

88 *Fates Unchained - A Play*

**A n gba orom’adie l’owo iku,** “We are trying to save a chick

**o ni won ko je ki ohun lo** from danger, she is

#### **akitan lo je** complaining of not being allowed to go eat on a dumpster.” (Act 3, Scene 3)

**Wo** “Look” (Act 3, Scene 3.)

**Oga** “Boss” (Act 3, Scene 3)

**Gbese re o** “This is trouble.”

#### **Sango** Yoruba god of thunder and lightning

(Act 3, Scene 3)

**Oya** To mean “okay” (Act 3, Scene 4; Act 4, Scene 4)

**Ni suuru** “Be patient” (Act 4, Scene 4)

#### **Ewedu** A vegetable eaten by the Yorubas

**Danfo** Popular yellow-and-black Lagos bus