**MAMAHOOD**

Ijedi managed to fetch enough thistle to properly bundle the firewood she had gathered. The noonday sun had caught up with her early morning farming routine.

A little past dawn every day, she, accompanied by her son, Enyinna, would head for the farm. Those were one of the many moments that rooted an abiding connection between the young mother and her child. They would tend the crops in the only but disputed piece of land her late husband bequeathed to them upon his early departure from among the living, fetch firewood for cooking, and hay for the goats, then sell some food items at a popular evening market by the village entrance. Though they barely had enough to eat, their lives were quiet and happy. Her only surviving brother-in-law, Ejike, in alliance with her mother-in-law had succeeded in grasping all that she inherited from the deceased husband, and their sticky claws were still unceasingly itching for the little farmland, the one thing that was a source of living for her and her child.

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| Male Female | | | | |
| Emeka | Matthew |  |  |  |
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Presently, as she was concluding the day’s routine and getting set for home in the accustomed company of her son, there approached some young men armed with cutlasses. They looked aggressive and introduced themselves as a syndicate affiliated with Ejike. They came with an order to seal off the farmland. She saw no need for a dispute, after all, a woman of her sort was very incapable of physically engaging such hefty creatures. Ejike had taken his malevolent battle right into the bedrock of her survival, and she was not strong enough to fight back. She was only strong enough to be a woman. Issues concerning the farmland had lingered so long in deliberations among the Council of Elders, and she had felt nearly resolute that the good and honourable elders before whom her daily plights of widowhood was unhidden would let her retain ownership of what rightfully belonged to her. A little anxiety however was bred when some leading voices among the elders surreptitiously offered to help her only if she was willing to offer her body. She felt disgusted, not at the vile desires of these old and expiring men, but at the inordinate possibility that she was expected to bask in immoral undertakings in order to secure what was known to be hers. She nevertheless tried to assure herself that there were still good fellows among the Council who would not be influenced to rob her of her inheritance.