

# ERUPTION

SODIQ LAWAL

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## DEDICATION

Mr & Mrs Lawal --- *two wings that keep the flying.*  
Siblings --- *strength that aids soaring higher.*

“A novice might be excused for believing that the day is dying. Clouds are rapidly gaining control of the sky. But I believe that the sun would return in all its vigour, once again, master of the planet, but not again in its eternal innocence.”

**-Femi Ademiluyi, (*The New Man*)**

## **CHARACTERS**

DELANI

CHIBU

FATIMA

ITURA

SUBAIR

HERDSMAN 1

HERDSMAN 2

ARDO

FAITH

IDORENYIN

BAKU

TYEHIMBA

BODEJO



## DOLDRUMS

---

*Our land has started hoofing with mourning again  
The breath of peace is consumed by the violent terror  
With blood, cadavers and flames our street glorifies  
Storm clouds are beginning to darken the sky  
The clamor of corruption engulfs our voice of courage and hope  
And fear become our bosom friend.*

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### DELANI'S HOUSE.

*D*ELANI, his wife and children, together with his friend are seated in their sitting room. The news blasts on the television screen:

*“Armed Fulani herdsmen and militants are carving a blood-soaked path across the country. From the North-Central, Southern Kaduna in the North-West, and Taraba in the North-East, they have stepped up their rapine in the South-East and South-South and raised the stakes in the kidnapping-for-ransom ‘business’ in the South-West. The upsurge in herdsmen impunity is one of the negative enduring features of the present situation of the nation. The herdsmen/militias are shedding innocent blood and destroying property across Nigeria. They are also raking in hundreds of millions of naira in ransom from kidnapping. Ubiquitous, they occupy the forests from where they emerge, cause mayhem, and thereafter retreat to. In the South-West, attacks on farms have resumed*

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*and kidnapping has resurged, reaching the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, where suspected Fulani gunmen snatch victims, and flee with them into the forests. The president has summoned the service chiefs on the urgent security and taking quick action in knocking down the rebellions..."*

**DELANI** (*rabidly*): Can you see?! The raging storm continues to wreck the calmness of our sea. These herdsmen are taking over the Boko Haram boys. They are not giving us a little space to breath and have rest of mind. They are unrelenting. Because our government is not capable. These people are destroying our livelihood and nation gradually. They have held many of our people hostages. They will not stop using them as human shield. They are setting our territories in fear. That is not acceptable. "The government has summoned service chiefs on urgent security.." that is what they always say; full of words without action. All what they can do is sending our youth to the den of death without any ammunition comparing to the bandits'. Is this not buttressing what I'm claiming? A true lion protects its cubs; not devour them.

**CHIBU:** Plugging a hole too tightly may cause a leak elsewhere. We need not violent revolution. My friend, you know, to form a new government requires infinite care, and unbounded attention; for if the foundation is badly laid the superstructure must be bad. We have to take this urgent "change" you are seeking gently.

**DELANI** (*getting a bit worked up*): The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.



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**CHIBU:** Non violence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such, my dear friend, is patience and strategy.

**DELANI:** The road to freedom is a difficult, hard road. It always makes for temporary setbacks. Only in the darkness can you see the stars. Only in the revolution we can have a rebirth nation, full of humanity in the absence of corruption. Yes, we need change!

**CHIBU:** The gravity of your rage is getting over the board and I have never seen someone so blinded by rage.

**DELANI** (*getting impatient*): That is what we need in this present situation!

**CHIBU:** Violent revolution?

**DELANI:** I don't think I have ever said that.

**CHIBU:** But your action does!

**DELANI:** Not at all.

**CHIBU:** It does... my good friend.

**DELANI:** The situation of our country now warrant it. That's...

**FATIMA** (*cuts in calmly but emphatically*): Warrant what, my

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husband?!

**DELANI:** “Revolution”. As you called it.

**CHIBU:** Given the circumstances, your rationality can never win against your desires.

**DELANI:** All revolutions start with the smallest changes. A tint of fury we need add...

**CHIBU:** Not in this country, you know that. Not in this situation. Not at this moment.

**ITURA** (*inventively*): I think father is actually right. Silence can be uncomfortable sometimes.

**FATIMA** (*raises her voice*): Itura! Stop...!

**DELANI:** Let her. Please, let her. After all, she is my blood. Freely my blood runs in her veins. We need change. Enough of slaughtering the innocent. Enough of robbing us of our peaceful spirit.

(*Silence.*)

**DELANI:** See our youth soldiers, without good ammunition, they battle with death. They are nothing but bunch of helpless beings who must obey the last order. They send them to death den not with protection. And, soon enough, the announcement will arrest the air circulating that soldiers have smacked down forty bandits and arrest sixty. Whereas, they are the ones gushing blood on the death’s merciless ground. Every day we lose our family. And our comrades are losing their brave

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and loyal blood at the war front. And after losing them, what will they do? Only consoling words of no strength. (Speaks in a hard, sarcastic voice.) We are here on behalf of the field marshal, and all the personnel task force, we commiserate with you on the loss of your beloved husband/wife, your son/daughter, your father/mother. Our gallant brother warrior who pay the supreme price in service to our father land. Their sacrifice will not be in vain. We shall defeat the bandits and restore peace to all the troubled areas. The entire army's family stand with you in this painful moment. In the main time, please accept this token for immediate expenses as well as we prepare to honour our fallen her. That is all what they will say after the life has been lost. Protection of our lives should be our priority.

**CHIBU:** Our country is sickening!

**DELANI:** This is why we should work on eliminating those corrupt politicians acting loyal before we talk about restoring humanity. I will keep saying, since no method favour us, revolutionary terror is the only way in which the murderous death agonies of the old society and the blood birth throes of the new society can be shattered, simplified and concentrated. It will bring about the total emancipation and liberation of the common man in the hands of looters. Violent revolution against bad people will restore normalcy and humanity to the nation.

**CHIBU:** No change with the absence of proper plan. We need patience. It's not uncertain that this nation has hit us black and blue by the blows of our leaders. However, we have

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to keep suppressing our rage till the knock of the right time if we don't want to be a roast chicken. For we are powerless now.

**DELANI:** We should rather sweat to become free than to remain enslaved and, sweat for another to flourish. They have been using us as our own oppressors. But no more. No more. We are a brave people. And there is power in our minds. In our unity. In our cultures. If we understand that power, we will be limitless.

**FATIMA:** God still has a way of wringing good out of evil. History has proven time and time again that unmerited suffering is redemption.

**DELANI:** Not this era. We create history. We wait not for it.

**CHIBU:** You cannot plan a better tomorrow by planting bombs of destruction.

**DELANI:** You should know we plan for tomorrow today. The harder the conflict the greater the triumph. It is good to result in conflict by jointly demonstrating our rage today to get a beautiful dawn.

**CHIBU:** We don't have to...

**DELANI:** We can only achieve what is important to us if we are stronger.

**CHIBU:** I know what you want. But we must not be aggressive to make it happen.

**ITURA:** They are scums who would not let people like us live

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like descent human beings. It is not because they are evil. It is because to them, we are less than human.

**FATIMA** (*ballistically*): I order you to stop!

**DELANI**: And I said you let her be!

**CHIBU**: A small discrepancy brings a big conflict.

**DELANI**: The best way we predict our future is to create it.

**SUBAIR**: If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.

**FATIMA**: You are right my son. But there are things you could not have understood yet.

**DELANI**: If we fail to set our voices, with upmost might, on the mountain of revolution, we might, not even might, we shall remain slaves forever.

**FATIMA**: The application of non-violent revolution remains a better alternative that might eventually bring about the desired change needed in our nation. Violent revolution is a misfit in our society; it is a quest for laurels that might be for personal self-aggrandizement which makes the society worst. Violent revolutionary method as an alternative to non-violent revolutionary method to achieving socio-political changes in our nation is not only cruel and unacceptable but is fruitlessly unnecessary since it ultimately amounts to a system of vicious cycle. It will ultimately give birth to a vicious cycle of blood thirsty ethnic revolutionaries which will eventually threaten the unification of the society. To effect this change, we must

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be wise. We must put into action, our initiation. We shouldn't forget the chapter one: "Winning Stratagem" of "The Thirty-six Stratagem" - deceive the heavens to cross the sea. That is how we win this war.

**DELANI:** In one way or the other, we are all contributing to this riot in the system because we are afraid. We keep mute in anguish because we fear too much the consequence of our action. But I am afraid our children's generation will wallow in the sea of the same problem we are facing today. Even more than that of today if silence conquer our voice today. For me, we need urgent change.

**CHIBU:** You and I cannot do it alone.

**DELANI:** Only those who have suffered truly understand suffering.

**CHIBU:** We have all suffered. We are suffering. Tell me, am I not suffering? Are you not suffering? As well as every other citizen. We are all suffering. In fact, it is our second name. So we have to endure it...

**DELANI:** Until...?

**CHIBU:** The right time.

**DELANI:** And when will the right time come?

**CHIBU:** It shall be obvious to us all.

**DELANI:** You know we have been living with that illusion for a while. And that caused our set back to point zero always.

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**FATIMA:** Tí ọwọ ẹni ò bá tū tẹ èkù idà, a kì í bèèrè ikú tí ó pa baba ẹni. We need to get hold of the dagger to claim our right.

**CHIBU:** So Mama Itura, you don sabi Yoruba to the level of using proverbs?

**FATIMA:** The leave has been with the soap for enough time.

**CHIBU:** That's true.

**DELANI:** Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dane to do our duty as we understand it.

**CHIBU:** We need peaceful change.

**DELANI:** We were dead the day we were born in a house of poverty. The leaders build a beautiful road for themselves. They leave ours filled with huge potholes. But that is the mistake they make. They teach us how to leap over those potholes. When the time comes you will see the highest jump, the farthest, the longest jump will be ours.

**FATIMA:** This is furious!

**DELANI:** The smaller the gap between ambition and action, the better the result.

**CHIBU:** Not only the government is corrupted. There are many parasites sucking the blood of our nation behind the scene too.

**DELANI:** Our demonstration shall be to wipe away all

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corrupt people.

**CHIBU:** Delani!

**DELANI:** We conquer only if our zeal for change surpasses the fear of it.

**FATIMA:** What have we been seeing since we have been changing the government? Nothing! Still nothing! It is time we know the problem of our nation is not absolutely from the government alone but some other hidden packs of power.

**DELANI:** We need it.

**CHIBU:** It is cruel and it negates the law and constitution in our nation.

**DELANI:** “Law” and “constitution” - are they really breathing here?

**ITURA:** It is sad we can continue crashing into pit.

**SUBAIR:** The situation warrants quick action.

**CHIBU:** Yes, we need change. But not violent revolution. That is the core of my demystification. We are in serious need of good leader. We cannot continue like this. Our government is about crashing. We cannot endanger the life of incoming generation. But...

**DELANI:** Peaceful or violent, we trudge in pain without “change”.



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**CHIBU:** We need Peaceful one!

**DELANI:** The beast in them they have been showing us. Seeing the wolves in us should not claim taboo...

**ITURA:** You mean...?

**FATIMA:** Let him land.

**DELANI:** An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. A con for a con. And show for a show. Yes, that is how the spirit should be burning in all citizens if truly we are sick and tired.

**CHIBU:** It is good you take no rash action.

**DELANI:** Then?

**CHIBU:** The good ones among there are still around.

**DELANI:** I know. Chibu, know this; the numbers of good ones are shivering under the strength of the bad ones. Even the bad overshadow the good. Journey on like this is foggy. Some changes we need. Yes, change. For the benefit of all citizens and our incoming generation. But we should start our revolution, anyway, anyhow. We catch a big fish with a small fish.

**FATIMA:** Baba Subair, I pray you turn me not to a widow.

**DELANI:** God forbid!

**FATIMA:** Then the rhythm of revolutionary song in your mouth should not equate melodious song. Will you say you

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know not you are singing dirge? Song that will put entire nation in annihilation. Forgetting Biafra?

**DELANI:** That is why I...

**CHIBU:** It is dangerous.

**ITURA:** Can there be any answer to how our nation get to this point?

**CHIBU:** It is no question anymore...

**ITURA:** But without knowing the cause of the problem...

**CHIBU:** The source has diverse routes. It is like a multiple cross road. We should avoid going backwards.

**DELANI:** Are you deserting this country in no time?

**CHIBU:** Not at all in my plan.

**DELANI:** Then why?

**CHIBU:** Why what?

**DELANI:** That you are declining the strength of the change.

**CHIBU:** How?

**DELANI:** Your action discourages it.

**CHIBU:** Not at all. But that's the way our plans should be executed.

**DELANI:** The clock is ticking.

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**CHIBU:** Slow and steady wins the race.

**ITURA:** The 21st century marks this wrong. Sometimes, “rough and steady” solves the puzzle.

**CHIBU:** I know change is coming.

**DELANI:** From what direction?

**FATIMA:** Every direction!

**ITURA:** That is what we are saying, no change without action.

**FATIMA:** We must believe. After absolute patience, we will grab the change. The incoming generation will lack no peace.

**DELANI:** Not belief alone...

**FATIMA:** That should be the foundation of this all.

**DELANI:** When will that new generation appear? From which bodies will they emerge? Theirs - looters? Ours - cowards? Who shall be the warrior to fight and hand over them to that safe generation?

**CHIBU:** We disport not from the path.

**ITURA:** Which part, sir?

**FATIMA:** This path we are!

**ITURA:** Without action?

*(Brief silence.)*

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**DELANI:** That is it. That is the problem. That is how we continue wallowing in pain in your so called “path”. Let me tell you, change is sifted through the grind, therefore don’t protest we despise the action now for surely it will be worth it in the end. A dream doesn’t become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.

**FATIMA:** Your rage is started becoming obvious now.

**DELANI:** If it refuses to burn heavily inside us, we fall out in action.

**CHIBU:** But the change you are seeking to attain is violent in nature. It brings no good.

**DELANI:** There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. The situation is getting unbearable.

**CHIBU:** We fight superiors with sense.

**DELANI:** They throw stones, we reply with rocks. That our vision should be.

**FATIMA:** Tell me you have not been planning this long. With who? How?

**DELANI:** All questions have answers, and all answers birth more questions. But not all questions require quick answers. We answer with action sometimes.

**CHIBU:** Are you that desperate?

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**DELANI:** We are. We are all desperate. Only cowards is overshadowing your rage.

**FATIMA:** You don't mean it.

**DELANI:** Rage starts at the peak of frustration.

**CHIBU:** Furious battle count us loser all the time. Try to understand me.

**DELANI:** Shall my voice be a blade of grass and tickle the armpit of the past for you? Have you forgotten how well we have suffered in this country under this corrupt leaders? What those looters on the throne of authority have done to us? I shall sit no more in silence.

**CHIBU:** We have went through a lot. That is why we must not allow another rash action that will somersault us into the pool of nothingness.

**DELANI** (*completely impaled*): The great wars came and went. The little wars came and went; the white slaves come and went. They took away the heart of our race. They bore away the mind and muscle of our race. The city fell and was rebuilt; the city fell and our people trudged through mountain and forest to found a new nation. We found a new nation and start protecting our territory. We blame the enslavers. We waged war against them. After wiping away the dictators, a new era of corruption within us - from our brothers - resurrects and we find our life in cage again. These people are the worst because they have two sides as a coin; their fake outer layers for fixing fake promises in the cloud of looting, the second bears their

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hidden colour of wickedness and solipsism ...

**SUBAIR:** They are devils.

**DELANI:** Is it that the brisk of time has wiped away your memories? Or you are tired and concern not about tomorrow?

**CHIBU:** I know our politicians have done us multiple harm still, we should not usher our destruction. Because it keeps bouncing back on us.

**FATIMA:** When the Boko boys invaded our community, Kurutu, it was a terrible moment for my parents, brother and sisters. I was here. They burnt down everywhere. My brother was forced to swallow his breath in his own pool of blood after he refused to join them. My sister was raped several times. My mother was wounded and could not bear the calamity that befell her. I have not been able to visit them since then. This is something one can not easily forget completely. How I wish it was a dream. Then, why will the government rest their chins on their palms watching the nation collapsing in destruction. I just don't know why!

**DELANI** (*still impaled*): Humanity deserves to be happy. But humanity can never find happiness until it ascertains that all we have is humanity. We struggle to study. After several years of struggle, we failed. We could not get a job as promised by them...

**ITURA:** Them?

**DELANI:** Yes, them - our government. Ah! the story is too

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heavy. The story of how our vigors were nipped in the bud, how our hopes were drained in the passage of youth. Under the shadow of grief my soul losses its strength whenever I get the flash of those memories.

**ITURA:** That is why we must roll up to make the change.

**FATIMA** (*faint smile spreads across her face*): That easy! Even with extreme rage, you'll still sacrifice everything to keep your life.

**ITURA:** Even death shall make run when the time comes.

**FATIMA** (*shakes her head in bafflement*): When your generation talk like this I feel a terrible urge for you not to fall into the same pit as ours - full of rage of no stratagem.

**SUBAIR:** Father, you were saying..?

**DELANI:** Yes. They snatched our youth before we could even sense it. After searching the nook and cranny of the nation to get something that will put food on our table and got nothing, we became droopy. We became inutile. Our common senses of reasoning became senseless. We started seeing rich kids getting good job. Those that were far behind us in school. Those that we taught. By that time, we realized that the words "youth are the leaders of tomorrow" are just flag of fake promises.

**SUBAIR:** HMM...

**DELANI:** I started wandering around looking for things to rescue me from the grip of suffering.

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**ITURA:** Then...?

**DELANI:** Then I promised myself not to truly trust the politicians again. Not to search for any job again. I started looking for a way to set up things. Time was hard!

**SUBAIR:** Couldn't you get any help from your relatives then?

**CHIBU:** Our youth era was like a knife struck in the throat which cannot be easily removed. You couldn't experience that time of ours.

**DELANI:** They would have love to but, my dear, everywhere was down.

**FATIMA:** Life was like hell!

**DELANI:** You know I told you I was planning to set up something. So one day, as usual, as I was having my city tour, searching for something to turn to money and the money to food; that was how the story changed...

**SUBAIR** (*listens with growing resentment*): HOW?!

**DELANI:** Patience! Patience, my boy. I know you are eager to know. And I was coming around to that.

**ITURA** (*whispering*): Keep quiet.

**DELANI:** I eventually saw an advertisement and quickly applied. They received thousands of applications. The interview went well and only ten out of us were selected. "10!", people lamented. It was obvious to us the gravity of



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corruption.

**SUBAIR:** Were you among?

**FATIMA:** QUIET!

**SUBAIR:** Oh, sorry!

**ITURA:** Will you continue, please?

**CHIBU:** Our memories are full of thorns. Thorns that our tears can't even allow its presence or legibility on paper.

**ITURA:** We shall not forget your stories to keep ours pleasant to ears.

**SUBAIR:** We might make monument out of your story someday.

**CHIBU:** Nothing calls for that in our stories.

**DELANI:** We went home after the interview on that day. We were told that they will get in touch with those that are successful. I got the message. The letter of appointment. It was a relief of my burden. I was over joyed. I resumed the job to discover that five of us who were selected didn't take the interview.

**ITURA:** Ahh!

**SUBAIR:** What a country!

**ITURA:** Then where did they descend?

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**DELANI:** From no where.

**SUBAIR:** From no where?!

**DELANI:** Yes, they were kids of higher-ups.

**ITURA:** No wonder!

**DELANI:** I started the job. And the light of things getting better started displaying its ray. I could take care of my family, pay bills and have savings. No high inflation. Itura was 13, Subair was 10, while Idëra was 7. Things started changing for good.

**CHIBU:** Those memories were sad. They should be kept in the shadow of new life.

**FATIMA:** Even now is worse.

**DELANI:** Yes, both past and present are not comedy.

**CHIBU:** At all. They are not.

**DELANI:** That is why trudging on like this endangers our children's generation.

**ITURA** (*indulgently*): The story, father.

**DELANI:** Oh, the story! The blue story. It could be seen how so much you want to root the cause of our downfalls. How we failed to achieve the change we clamoured for. You don't worry, I will tell you as much as possible as I could remember. We shall laugh out our sorrow when you voyage tomorrow on

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the ocean of realizing the change.

**CHIBU:** We can't afford to put our children's life in danger.

**DELANI:** This is not to endanger...

**FATIMA:** What other name fits it?

**DELANI:** Change!

**CHIBU:** Change what?

**DELANI:** The nation.

**CHIBU** (*momentarily baffled*): What situation?

**DELANI:** Of tormenting us in the servants' den. The country continues to be an enigma. A place where the questions far outweigh the answers.

**FATIMA:** We will get more of the torment.

**DELANI:** MORE?!

**FATIMA:** YES.

**DELANI:** What is the 'yes' all about?

**FATIMA:** The situation.

**DELANI:** We are at the right time to strike. The proper time to fight for the change.

**FATIMA:** We are toothless lion. We will suffer more.

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**DELANI:** That was our daily song then.

**FATIMA:** Not averting it might bring us victory.

**DELANI:** Never. Because since then till now we couldn't fathom any change, and could not smell anything called change.

**ITURA:** The story.

**DELANI:** Oh! Not again. I shouldn't get off the track again.

**SUBAIR:** Please, continue.

**DELANI:** I will. You know we have power over our words.

**ITURA** (*gleefully*): We are eager to hear it all, please.

**DELANI:** Lesson of life can't be consumed wholly in a day. It's bit by bit. So I continue the job and everything was going on as planned. All of a sudden, things changed. Females were maltreated. Males were considered as slaves. Slaves that must work non-stop. I started being at loggerhead with my calmness. Top of it, some of us in our division were suspended...

**ITURA** (*nonplussed*): Suspended!

(*Silence.*)

**DELANI:** We were told that the country's inflation has sky rocked. (*Pause.*) And for the company not to melt down, they had no choice than to cut down the numbers of employees. (*Pause.*) Flash of uncountable thoughts ran through my mind.

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I was sad. But at least I got something. Later we found out - though the inflation is real but not to the level of sacking us - that they replaced us with rich kids. I was confused. How would they do that? How would they allow corruption to completely inherit their mind to the level of getting rid of people for another people.

**CHIBU:** That was crazy!

**DELANI:** I was not happy. I went to the company to vent my anger on them!

**FATIMA:** Calm yourself.

**DELANI:** It's of no use!

**CHIBU:** Free your mind.

**DELANI:** For it is impossible!

**CHIBU:** We can't have a good fight today.

**DELANI:** Tomorrow might not even give the chance. Or is it not today the tomorrow we hope to be better yesterday?

**FATIMA:** Today is also too heavy with the pains of yesterday.

**DELANI:** I went to the company.

**SUBAIR:** Really...?

**ITURA:** Please, let him talk - we cut in too often.

**DELANI:** No, Itura. It gladdens you talk. It's joy for us to

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see young generation like you speak up. That was what we were denied of. Perchance your generation will surely work the change. So I went there...

*(Acting out the situation.)*

- Morning, manager.

- Oh! Morning, Mr Delani.

- So you still remember my name.

- Why won't I.

- I was surprised.

- How?!

- To hear you calling my name.

- My memory is not that daft to forget your name.

- It has been a while.

- Sure. It has been life. How have you been?

- Why would I have been good?

- Hope no problem?

- I have no job. That's why I came back to secure my job since the inflation has lifted.

- What job, sir?

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*(Brief silence.)*

- This one.

- If we are to paste any advertisement, it shouldn't jump me.  
So we are not recruiting yet.

- That means you sacked us deliberately as the rumour has it -  
to drag in your rich people.

- What do you mean?

- You calm down and listen carefully! Can you now see how  
you join those politicians we both shouting at in corruption?

- What an effrontery! You barged into my office uttering  
gibberish.

- You took food from our mouth to the ones that are full  
already.

- Are you threatening me?

- Just here to let you know that you have no right to blame the  
government.

- Out of my office, now!

- The government starts from us. We are the government.

- Stop!

- The problems we inflict on one another is more than that of  
the government's.

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- I said STOP!

- Where is your conscience! Where is your trustworthiness?

- You have to leave this moment.

- You should always remember to always be an agent of change. And if that proves difficult, never use your power or money to cast gloom on the faces of people who are really in need of help.

- Enough of this! Get out now. Or I call the security men to drag you out.

- Nemesis shall soon catch up with you. You shall squeeze your eyes and get no tears. The Change shall come to wipe you all out.

**DELANI:** The man pressed some numbers on the landline phone in front of him and stretched its rope to his left ear. The security men entered and carried me, dragged me along and threw me outside.

**CHIBU:** Nothing changed since then.

**DELANI:** Yes. Nothing has changed. But it's better we struggle and die than to keep silent in the sea of corruption. Try and fail is never a disgrace.

**FATIMA** (*looks on; askance.*) We lose at both.

**DELANI:** The former is better than the later.



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**CHIBU:** You can't rush and create history.

**DELANI:** That doesn't mean you can't plan history and create a blueprint for it.

**FATIMA:** Do you think we can bear the aftermath?

**DELANI:** Let the struggle birth reformation.

**CHIBU** (*get suddenly agitated*): Are you saying we fight?

**DELANI:** Precisely.

**CHIBU:** NOW?!

**DELANI:** Exactly.

**CHIBU:** And we?

**DELANI:** I beg your pardon?

**CHIBU:** What will happen to us?

**DELANI:** Freedom!

**FATIMA:** Please, we can't continue chanting revolution in the presence of our children. We can't afford to corrupt their mind and turn them against what is right.

**DELANI:** They are not small anymore. And my children understand me. I am not telling them to stand against the law. Rather I am telling them to always stand for what is right at the right time; never to sell their sense of doing justice for corruption and inequity; to stand not to be enslaved; and to

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always fight their freedom without their mouth being tied with fear. Why won't they understand that? Since I lost my job, I couldn't secure anyone again due to the looters of our country who only focus on their well-being. I managed to go back to farming. Those herdsmen grazed their cattle on it, threatened me, sent me far away from my alternative. I couldn't afford sending my first daughter to one of the best University in the country. I couldn't set up a business for her. I am still struggling with SUBAIR school fees. His 4 years course at the university is now ranking to 6 years. What a country! I couldn't save IDERA from the wrath of illness. Why won't I provide my wife's and children's favourite if not for the country I find myself. It's only revolution that can fix all this!

**CHIBU:** The time will come.

**ITURA:** But what do we do now? Because we have been facing what you had faced.

**CHIBU:** We cuddle little more patience.

**ITURA:** Yes, but while waiting?

**FATIMA:** Let wait till we know exactly how we stand.

**DELANI:** Children, listen, every day is a decision day. You either give up, lie down, and die. Or you get up, face the battle, and march forward. The grind is real. And it only gets harder. But you can press on knowing that it's not the fight on the horizon that defines you, it's the fight inside you. Life will be hard. There will be turmoils. There will be trails. There will be reprisal. There will be betrayer. There will be pain. There will

be loneliness. You will taste victory. You will taste defeat too. Even if death is in front of you, that should only make you stronger as person who risks his life to safeguard his country.

**CHIBU:** Peace can't be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.

**ITURA:** On the other hand, it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes.

**FATIMA** (*apparently trying to recover from the shock*) ITU-RA?!

**DELANI:** As you can see, this generation is unlike ours. And I would be happy seeing them take the step and triumph the darkness.

**CHIBU:** I also suffered after serving the government with nothing to fall back on. I almost lost my family for not being able to cater for them. Two of my children graduated from the University. Yet they are still on the street. The remaining two have no choice than to undergo apprenticeship training. But the reason why I am afraid common people like us can't be succeeded was the experience I had while working. We were being maltreated and, out of rage, we confronted our leaders and complained. We started planning. And later we started protesting against bad leaders. When they sensed the protests might lead to eruption of rage of the youth and mark their downfall, they used our own people against us. That's why it is not the government alone. They started wiping us out one by one till we rested our upper lips on the lower ones. I left my home city, with my family, for this place. These people are wicked, and it's not easy to double cross them.

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**ITURA:** Then it seems we continue like this.

**CHIBU:** We just have to make use of our senses. The time will come. Even the time might be now. But with strategy, not with violence.

**ITURA:** I will rather incline to fighting for change, and whether that be wise or not, it is at least more unusual nowadays to find a woman who can stand for change than to find one who cannot.

**DELANI:** Yes, a dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.

**CHIBU:** We must be wise with it.

**DELANI:** This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave, must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and under a just God can not long retain it.

**ITURA** (*peevishly*): We banish the demons and take away the bad memories. We cleanse the spirit and wipe away the filthiness.

**CHIBU:** Humans who grow accustomed to the darkness will become beings that are neither human nor anything else.

**DELANI:** Not everybody can change a situation but everybody can make a contribution, because change is achieved by the services of determined minds.

**ITURA:** Either we write something worth reading about, or

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do something worth writing about. The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.

**CHIBU:** We are not striking yet, we need to come together and build the nation. Then we'll flush out the oppressors.

**DELANI:** We have no time for that!

**FATIMA:** Time can never be exhausted. We just have to be patient.

**ITURA:** And this people will continue...

**FATIMA:** A bunch of broom kills flies faster than a single broom stick. With cooperation, we can have a national rebirth.

**DELANI:** We have everything a country should possess.

**CHIBU:** We shall have the nation we are dreaming of one day. (*He rises.*)

**DELANI:** That's when we end our complaint. Stab our fear. Rise to our feet. End this conversation and dive to action.

**CHIBU** (*stands*): Dusk is crawling nearer. I have to go.

**DELANI** (*rises*): Yes, my friend. Thank you for your visit.

**CHIBU:** May we find peace in our sleep.

**DELANI:** May the morning rise with new hope.

(*DELANI sees his friend off.*)

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**Same day. Later in the night.**

*FATIMA gathers her children in her room as she always does. DELANI is asleep in his room. The whole house is in alter silence. Only the chirping of crickets can be heard in distance. She gives her children kind of admonition.*

**FATIMA:** Patience can be bitter, but its fruit is always sweet. Embrace the pain to inherit the gain. There are no shortcuts to any place worth going. Nothing in life comes easy. Change is hard work. In all your action for change, your intentions should be for the welfare of people. For the freedom of people. And, remember that violent revolution destroys everything; even the innocent. Everyone thinks that a hero is someone who wins, but I believe a real hero is one who loses. Because he alone knows the value of victory. Life is short, so try your best in life but know to let go when something is too unbearable. When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.

**ITURA:** Is there still hope for this nation?

**SUBAIR:** I wanted to ask the same question.

**FATIMA:** Why not?!

**ITURA** (*buffily*): Because all the rockets of our struggles are losing their strength and busting in the mid air.

**FATIMA:** Adhere to your purpose and you will soon feel as

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well as you ever did. On the contrary, if you falter, and give up, you will lose the power of keeping any resolution, and will regret it all your life. Always be prepared to face any obstacle in life. Remember, fire tests gold, suffering tests a woman.

**ITURA:** And when we lose?

**FATIMA:** Never lose the lesson.

**SUBAIR:** A hero you are indeed!

**FATIMA:** Itura, I don't want you to lose your pride. Never lose your sense of reasoning in quest of change. You are the eldest. Remember your siblings and family in any journey you embark on. A house divided against itself cannot stand.

**ITURA:** You have been teaching us many things which we shall hold important in life.

**FATIMA:** I know you will become a great woman.

**ITURA:** Is it not our culture that renders female unimportant?

**FATIMA** (*looks at her for a while*): It is not true. You should have come across the history of great women in school.

**ITURA:** Yes, we have.

**FATIMA:** It's not even about the look on the face, or the tone of the voice, or the appearance you display. It's about the content of the heart. Then you should know that the argument of superiority is of no use. It is not all about the container but the content. Just be focused.

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*(There is an interruption by a rat in the room. It causes distraction for a while as SUBAIR makes his way to kill it. After some minutes of hide and seek with the rat, it finds its way out of the room.)*

**FATIMA** *(ignores the interruption)*: The real happiness doesn't lie in money or fame. You work hard. You make money. You do it for yourself. That's not life. You go out. You seek for people who need your help. You become that person who can emit beautiful position vibes, and when you realize that you have changed someone's life and because if not you this person can give up. That's the day you live.

**ITURA**: Hmm.

**FATIMA**: Don't compare yourself with anybody. Comparison cloaks one's ability and uniqueness with dejection. It is not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.

**SUBAIR**: I wish I were a soldier and wipe away all the bacteria of corruption in this country.

**FATIMA**: If that is your core reason, you will find it extremely difficult to accomplish it. Your intention shouldn't be to fight corrupt people but to prevent them from corrupting good ones. Many embark on a journey because of desperation. By the time they reach their destination, they find out that there are some plans they should have had. There is some patience they should have taken. There is some knowledge they should have gained. Then they will become helpless. At the end, they won't have any choice than to give up their life or also become a fertilizer of corruption.



**ITURA:** Hmm.

**FATIMA:** Be hard working. Carry not all the burden of this country on your mind. There are still numerous way to change the country and get rid of corrupt politicians. Hard work helps. It has never killed anyone. Hard work keeps the wrinkles out of the mind and spirit. Don't wish it were easier. Wish you were better. If you try and lose then it isn't your fault. But if you don't try and you lose, that is all your fault.

**SUBAIR:** What we call freedom here is like a captivity. Freedom loses its definition when it is cloaked with suffering. What they teach in school stands against what is happening.

**ITURA:** Our politicians are real terrorists. They are the ones we see every day. They are the ones who fix galaxy of lies and hang cloud of fake promises. They will come with smiles, making our heads swell, believing they will never cross out their promises. Yes, they are the ones who never listen to citizens once the handle of sword of power firmly settle in their hands. They are the one who forever chant "youth are the leaders of tomorrow", but keep nipping them in the bud.

**FATIMA:** Take it easy!

**ITURA:** What we need is simple.

**FATIMA:** And that is what?

**ITURA:** I think revolution will bail us out.

**SUBAIR:** And settle us down on a new nation.

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**FATIMA** (*indignantly*): Let me ask you, have you ever witness a revolution before.

(*Silence.*)

**FATIMA:** It shouldn't take you both long to answer.

**ITURA:** No.

**FATIMA:** And you?

**SUBAIR:** Not at all.

**FATIMA:** Then you should listen to me when I tell you revolution brings nothing but destruction. There are other ways, but your rage is not allowing you. Your generation should be wiser. You are in the technological age. You should think of better options. I know the leaders have done so many damages to your generation. But you must not stop believing in God. He has the power of turning events.

**ITURA:** We are sorry, mother.

**FATIMA:** It is not too bad we complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses. When we are in hard situation, it's very bad to get high and plan chaos as the way out. For every action has its own reaction.

**SUBAIR:** We shouldn't act?

**FATIMA:** No. I mean you shouldn't act roughly. For those that stood at our time acted rashly and fell into the pit of nothingness. Let me ask you, Itura, what is your vision.

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**ITURA:** I will just love to cloak myself with words like the famous heavy metal vocalist Rob Halford. I don't want anything great. I want to be like the salt in stew. Not to be in the spotlight like a main ingredient, but still an essential part, quietly making great impact in fighting for great nation that is free of corruption.

**FATIMA:** And that you shall be. We become what we think. If you think you're strong, you will be. And you, Subair.

**SUBAIR:** I just want to be a peace seeker. Someone that replaces cries with smiles, pains with happiness.

**FATIMA:** It is not unachievable if you don't get distracted in the pool of focus.

**ITURA:** Could you please tell [the](#) your story you promised us?

**FATIMA:** Oh! My life as a young lady.

**SUBAIR:** Yes.

**FATIMA:** We will have to talk about it some other time. Time has gone now. We have to allow our mind to be patted by good sleep.

**ITURA:** We would be glad to be more inspired by your story.

**FATIMA:** And I have told you there is nothing in my story to inspire you.

**ITURA:** We are in the position to judge that. Not you.

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**FATIMA:** I thought I've told you already.

**SUBAIR:** Not all.

**FATIMA:** What else do you want to hear?

**ITURA:** Blending your birth culture with your husband's.

**FATIMA:** It was like honey drop in the mouth, its taste salivates for more. I met your father when I was young, at a business seminar center. His first appearance announced his coolness and gentle character. He came, representing his company. Within a short period of time, we became friend. For the one month he used in Kaduna, we enjoyed each other's company. The day he was done with the seminar and had to go back to his city, I cried my eyes out. Like a baby. I felt depressed and lonely. I was hopeless because I couldn't fathom anything to stop him. We departed with my expectation that we will never meet again. We both continued our life on different paths.

**ITURA:** But your hearts would never part on the terrace of memories?

**FATIMA:** Yes, we both thought of each other then. We couldn't hear about nor see each other for long time. I lost hope of him. And I began to start erasing his thoughts from my mind gradually. Not until one day, when we met in Minna. He told me that he also came there on business trip. And he has been trying to get in touch with me. His thoughts in me resurrected. I started feeling it again. I was so fond of him. We wasted no time in planning to get married. We both went to my home town and I introduced him to my parents. They

disagreed with our affection.

**ITURA:** I wonder what might be the reason for that.

**FATIMA:** It was an ethnic stereotype.

**SUBAIR:** Ethnic stereotype?

**FATIMA:** Yes, an ethnic stereotype. Ethnic stereotyping occurs when one assumes that all the people within a culture act, think, and behave the same way. That is what all the ethnic group have towards one another. One ethnic will nurture the belief that another ethnic is bad and none of the people of the group is good. That was how it was circulating around us, and made us to bridge distance from one ethnic group to another. We breed hatred and called one another names. We are created to be different. In fact, if we have the same personality and always come to the same opinion, life will be haggard. Life will not move. People will not have to argue, fight, cry, laugh, disagree and agree to make the boat of their living continue sailing. Beyond ethnic groups, society and nation, we have individual personality that defines everyone.

**ITURA:** So you have to go against your parents will and...

**FATIMA:** Sometimes you don't have to form hatred towards people that find it difficult to accept your idea. It's not that they really disagree with you, perchance they need more clarification from you as an authentication of your idea.

**SUBAIR:** But some will not just want to listen.

**FATIMA:** That's why you must be diligent in relating with

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people. And remember to reverse when people still disagree with you no matter your proof. Certainly, time will come when you will win if you have a valid point. Whether you are there or not, reference will be made to your words to succumb to your idea.

**ITURA:** Then how did you make yours happened?

**FATIMA:** One of the things I learnt at the early stage of my life is that, you don't have to be too desperate to make things happen or achieve something. There is time for everything. And destiny never get denied.

**ITURA:** Some don't or want to believe in destiny. They believe that whatever someone is determined to achieve will be achieved.

**FATIMA:** They might not be wrong. But not totally right. Come to think of it, if there is nothing that defines our lives, no one will be poor. Or do you think poor people are not determined to be rich? Do you think all rich people have a strong determination to be rich? No! Not all that fail don't have a valid plan. Why do we achieve what we don't plan for and fail to achieve what we work hard for? It's quite simple. There is something in control of our lives. And that thing is destiny! But, we work hard to make our destiny comes through.

**SUBAIR:** Hmm...

**FATIMA:** I didn't disagree with my parents. And I wasn't happy either. I believe if it was meant to be, I will surely get a way to prove it to them that we are all human being with

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different trait.

**ITURA:** And you couldn't prove it with the love you have for him?

**FATIMA:** Love ...! You are talking about love in our time. Love doesn't exist like that. You don't love, you create love.

**SUBAIR:** What do you mean by that?

**FATIMA:** You don't choose someone to love. They choose for you. Your parents find you a suitor and you create time to love that person, that is all.

**ITURA:** What a hard time!

**FATIMA:** It was indeed hard. But it is better than today.

**ITURA:** How will that be?

**FATIMA:** That time you don't get involved in indecent dressing which leads to prostitution because you are not trying to seduce anybody.

**SUBAIR:** Are you saying there was none at that time?

**FATIMA:** NO! I didn't say that. It was just that it was minimal. And it was not as wide as it is now.

**SUBAIR:** Oh.

**FAATIMA:** Those time you don't have to suffer from any infection of premarital sex. And if your husband couldn't defile you, you would be sent out and be rendered a promiscuous

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person. You won't attract any respect. You will tarnish the image of your family.

**ITURA:** Things has changed completely now.

**FATIMA:** Civilization has done great harm to our lives and customs. But we couldn't rap our heads to its understanding. Now you can see how people are forced to divorce. Because they both don't have the knowledge of marriage which they are supposed to have acquired before they rush into marriage. But then, your parents will check and double check to make sure they choose you perfect partner. There is more to relationship than rushing it. There are procedures to be followed. But err to civilisation, it has turned everything upside down.

**ITURA:** But there are good things civilisation brings too.

**FATIMA:** Yes, there are. I didn't say there isn't. But there are some things we shouldn't allow it to snatch from us.

**SUBAIR:** Then how did you finally prove it to them.

**FATIMA:** Fate did. Fate proved it to them.

**ITURA:** How?

**FATIMA** (*titillatingly*): After many failed attempt of finding someone for me, they got tired and left me to follow my decision. They thought I had parted way with Delani. Until I was asked to look for a good man that I wish to marry and brought him. I wrote Delani a letter. Fortunately, enough, he got the letter in time and came to Kaduna. I took him to my family. They all got shocked as they set eyes on him. "You



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this boy again!”. My mother gnashed her teeth. They had no choice than to succumb. But another issue came up when Delani was asked where we were going to be living. He replied, his home town. This got my family infuriated that they won’t set their eyes on me again. But later my father asked me if that was what I wanted. I replied him yes. He told me that I had the consequences to bear. We were left alone. And thank Allah I have no cause to regret since then. To my family’s greatest surprise, we do visit them often.

**ITURA:** But what made you choose a Yoruba man over the men of your tribe?

**SUBAIR:** Or no good ones among them at all?

*(Brief silence.)*

**FATIMA:** There were. There are good people everywhere. Life is a choice. You choose to do this or do that. Why would I be forced to choose from my tribe or any particular one. There should be freedom. I have said it. We shouldn’t have any superiority towards any tribe. We shouldn’t have hatred towards one another. What I believe in is strong affection. I saw it in your father’s eyes too. And I saw what I need in a man in him. I had no doubt again. When you look beyond beauty and money in choosing your life partner, you will understand what true love is. Since I saw all this in him, I have no concern about tribe or any other thing.

**ITURA:** True affection!

**FATIMA:** Yes, true affection. Even beyond marriage, true

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affection should exist among family members. Friends should relate with true affection. Neighbors should live with love. One tribe will respect another tribe in the presence of true love.

**ITURA:** Yes. The absence of true love made those filthy herdsmen did what they do to us. They destroyed our farm!

**FATIMA:** It is not certain that a society or nation can have full development without true love of patriotism. In the absence of true love, you see leaders cloaking their followers with the garment of betrayal. Politicians will help you up when you fall during their campaigns solely for the sake of power they want to get hold of. And they know that they can't get it without people. You will see them open their gate wide, inviting you to have dinner with them. They will cuddle you tight, even if you are in rags. They will prostrate to elders, showing that they have respect. But you measure their sincerity when they eventually get the power. That's when they will disappear. They will lock their gate and double their security. And there will be a rhythm put in the mouth of their guard which is "chief is busy". When you go today and hear the same thing, you go tomorrow and hear the same thing, you go the following day you hear the same thing, you will get tired and stop going. They will destroy the bridge of connection between them and their people with flimsy excuse "we are busy working for you". Who?! To hell with that. They will talk arrogantly and off their garment of respect and put on the suit of disrespect.

**SUBAIR:** Those wicked people!

**FATIMA:** No, they are not. We give them the chance to be. After they betray us, we will start cursing them, swearing and promising to turn back on them. But when another time comes, we forget all the pains they have inflicted on us, we forget how they betray us after giving us little thing again. They are so smart. We are fools!

**ITURA:** I don't think we can blame all people. Because some are at the extreme poverty. And they cannot see anything from what they bring than a saviour from the pang of hunger.

**FATIMA:** That's why I said they are smart. They work it in that way to use us. They know that if we are full, they won't be able to fool us again. And this will exterminate them from their power. And sometimes, to save ourselves, we make a lot of sacrifice with determination. If there is no such determination, the game will continue.

**SUBAIR:** If there is true love, father will not be sacked, we would not have to fall back on farming for those herdsmen to graze their cattle; we won't suffer to have our daily meals...

**ITURA:** And father won't find it so difficult to pay Idera's surgery and save her from the claws of death.

**FATIMA:** That's what we are finding so difficult to understand in this country. But I know that we will shed this layer of corruption and have new one of loyalty.

**ITURA:** Is that still possible?

**FATIMA:** Why not. It is very much possible. It might start

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from you and me. If we realize to stand in one voice sooner enough. It will happen in no time. But not with revolution.

**SUBAIR:** Hmm.

**FATIMA:** Don't worry. It will soon be fine. And I pray Idëra will not die. We have spoken with your father's uncle. He told us he will help us to arrange some amounts for her operation and you will go for it very soon.

**SUBAIR:** Thank God.

**ITURA:** This brings a little sense of relief.

**FATIMA:** Yes, it does.

# THRALLDOM

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*Life is unpredictable  
But you choose your own destiny  
No matter how sweet or bitter it may be  
You must taste it yourself  
And swallow it.*

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## **TWO WEEKS LATER.**

**O**n ITURA'S way to her uncle's place, their bus is hijacked by herdsmen, and all the passengers are taken hostages to the middle of unknown bush.

**HERDSMAN 1** (*pushing them with the muzzle of his gun*): Move. If you do yamayama, I go use my bullet scatter you big heads for you now now. Labbo, monitor them well well. (*Turns left.*) Ardo, say make we lock them with others, or make we push them to another separate room?

**ARDO:** Put them together. We get no time. Anyone of them that misbehave or trying to run away, scatter them with the stubborn bullets in your gun. Do you hear me?

**HERDSMAN 2:** We don hear you well well, Ardo.

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*(The two HERDSMEN force them through a tiny door into a large messy dark room. They lock the door and walk away. Immediately, a voice rings out from the corner of the room.)*

**FAITH:** You are welcome to the den of pains and death. We are not glad to see you here, but what can we do. We have no other thing to offer you than to welcome you like this and remind you to wipe your tears and pray silently you are out of here very soon.

*(IDORENYIN, One of the new hostages voice out.)*

**IDORENYIN:** “Out of hear”... “very soon”... how?

**FAITH:** Your people pay the ransom, you get released. But sometimes, even if they pay the ransom, they might not guarantee your release. They might decide to use you, or even kill you. A lot of things you will have to hear and learn here. Just don’t be too rash in your action if you don’t want to get yourself killed. There is a handful of people here. I know names of some, why some don’t even bother to say a word since they have been here.

**ITURA:** It seems you have been here for long?

**FAITH:** Yeah, it seems. As far as I could remember.

**ITURA:** Don’t you have any relative?

**FAITH:** Why?

**ITURA:** That would have paid your ransom.

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**FAITH:** Sometimes, life is good in captivity.

**ITURA:** You should know that a free poor man at sabo is far better than a rich man detained at Banana island. Freedom is essential...

**FAITH:** I have had enough of this.

**ITURA:** Freedom gives life to do things at one's will; it is the greatest grace.

**FAITH:** Freedom offers us nothing. It is when we are in captivity that we remember freedom. Once we have the freedom, we discover that there is nothing we could make of it.

**IDORENYIN:** How?

**FAITH:** We are giving nothing to make use with our freedom.

**IDORENYIN:** By who? I thought we have our own life to control when in freedom.

**FAITH:** Not at all, my young lady. If I may ask, what part of the country are you from?

**IDORENYIN:** South-East.

**ITURA** (*facing Idorenyin*): How did you get here?

**FAITH:** We all have bizarre stories to tell. All of us.

(Silence. They remain still, heads sink and mouths seal as they hear sounds at the door. They are released of tension when

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they discover it's wind that gusts against the door.)

**FAITH** (*to ITURA*): And you?

**ITURA**: South-West.

**FAITH**: I am coming to realizing we have the whole country here already.

**ITURA**: What do you mean?

**FAITH**: I'm also from South-East. And we have some here that are from the North. Can't you see?

**IDORENYIN**: Oh, that!

**FAITH**: Yes, that we have people from all the four parts of the country.

**ITURA**: This is not right.

**FAITH**: What is not right about this?

**ITURA**: Everything!

*(Silence.)*

**FAITH**: Sometimes life tests us in different folds. And if we are too slow to blend with each situation, we get trampled by life and get no alternative than to regret it for the rest of our life.

**ITURA**: Do you know the number of us all here?



**FAITH:** You can't be perceptive enough to know the exact number of the hostages.

**IDORENYIN:** Why?

**FAITH:** Because every day they bring new hostages as you were forcing in today. Same way they take hostages out every day. Perchance to free them, use them, sell them, or kill them. No one could really know. All we just know is that they bring in and take out hostages every present day. But we can't be less than 15 in this room.

**ITURA:** "This room"?

**FAITH:** Different rooms for different hostages.

**IDORENYIN:** Why almost everyone is sleeping?

**ITURA:** Even those that don't sleep are just looking, without saying a single word or move their body; they are just there, motionless.

**FAITH:** After a long day work, it is obvious they are tired. Tired of the situation here. Tired of this country. Tired of life. Tired of everything.

**IDORENYIN** (*perplexed*): "Work!" What work? Where?

**FAITH:** They use us to take care of their cattle, process their stolen farm produce. Most especially the boys.

**ITURA:** Who owns those children? Do they kidnap them with their mothers, or kidnap them separately?

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**FAITH:** They kidnapped some with their mothers. While some were given birth to here.

*(Brief silence.)*

**ITURA:** What?!

**FAITH:** Yes.

**ITURA:** They raped them?

**FAITH:** They never stop doing so.

**IDORENYIN:** What an effrontery!

**FAITH:** It's better you reduce your voice. I have said it. Pray they get in touch with your family very soon and release you. If not so, my dear lady, you will have nothing to chase your mind before it runs helter skelter. You said 'effrontery' because they take us outside without being caught. They do take us out to work and in the course to bath us in the sun and see daylight for all of us not to run blind. They own the jungle. Let me tell you, no one tries to escape here, unless that person has signed a contract with death. They don't work alone. By the time you see how things unfold you will know how this country works.

**ITURA:** When there is life, there is that prescient gleam of hope that lurks around with it. We should not sit quietly and watch our lives ruin. We should strike. We should make a move. Yes, we can free ourselves if we are determined enough.

**FAITH:** Who the hell gives the damn! Not here! Not here at all! Many also came with that kind of burning hope that

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I could see in your eyes now, but they lost it immediately they saw what they have never witnessed in their lives. Some maintained it for a while before it varnished from their teary eyes.

**ITURA:** Even your name explains...

**FAITH** (*chuckles wryly*): That is just a mere name. It has nothing to do with this. But there are two ways to live your life: One is as though everything is a miracle, the other one is as though nothing is a miracle.

**ITURA:** We should have faith in this situation. The smallest seed of faith is better than the largest fruit of happiness.

**FAITH:** What kind of faith will that be?

**ITURA:** Faith in God.

**FAITH:** Which God?!

**ITURA:** The one above.

**IDORENYIN:** Yes, the one that created us.

**FAITH:** “Yes, the one that created us”. If He is the one that created us why will He neglects us like this? Why will he abandon us to be taken hostages when He knows that many of our families cannot feed their mouths not to talk of paying ransom? How will He allow the corrupt politicians to continue sucking the resources we are all entitled to? Why will He neglect our nation to be like this; where the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Why will He give the

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politicians power to swindle us and still come back every four years to wrap the same lies in the envelope of suffering for us? Why will the herdsmen work for those we call our leaders? Why?

**ITURA:** I know so well we are going through a lot. But we shouldn't free our minds to go in disarray. This is how it will continue no matter our lamentations. Change will eventually come if we work for it. Sometimes, the longer the chase the sweeter the mace.

**FAITH:** When?

**ITURA:** Very soon.

**FAITH:** From who? Don't say from God because He has neglected us long time ago.

**ITURA:** God first, then us.

**FAITH:** US?! Let me die in peace. I have seen and heard enough, please.

*(One herdsman rushes to the door, trying to open it. The hostages all zip their mouths and sit calmly. He calls a name and drags the person out impatiently.)*

**FAITH:** Can you see? The show has started. The sounds of the gun will soon pierce your ears if they are to kill him. That is it. That is what exactly my point. We are hapless and helpless in here. We get no power. We lost everything. But still I prefer here. It is good you know the surest thing is death when you are in its premises than to live in freedom without any hope.

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We work for them here. We get no job outside. We eat here, but we starve to death outside. Our leaders dupe us outside; we have nothing to lose here.

**ITURA:** Yet our life is meaningful in freedom.

**FAITH:** Let me tell you, there is nothing meaningful outside there. We said we are practicing democracy. But I call it “de-more- crazy”. And are we not seeing it? It just a game of wise minority using fool majority to claim chair of superiority, render the majority nonentity. We just live fixing fake stars of hope.

**ITURA:** Since when have you been here?

**FAITH:** There is no good point in remembering.

**ITURA:** Just want to know.

*(Silence.)*

**IDORENYIN:** Then tell us your experience here.

**FAITH:** I have gathered handful of experience here and in life generally.

**ITURA:** Share your experience with us, then.

**FAITH** *(sighs)*: I left my home town, Anambra, for Lagos searching for greener pasture after searching the nook and cranny of our city without getting any, small or big. I dropped out of the university because my father was sick. He had an heart attack when his little shop that brought skimpy income

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caught fire and burnt down completely. No one could fathom the cause of the fire till now. We had no alternative than to all depend on my mother's income as a cleaner. I have four siblings. I am the eldest. Everything got hard for my whole family. I couldn't afford my school fees. What I never understood is that it's the government that prints currency notes, right? Why can't they print two extra bundles for people like us?

**ITURA:** That's the peak of the wickedness of our leaders. You have no relatives?

**FAITH:** I have. We have a very rich uncle in our family.

**IDORENYIN:** Why didn't you seek his help?

**FAITH:** I did.

**ITURA:** And couldn't help?

**FAITH:** It is a bargain. He offered what I couldn't succumb to.

**ITURA** (eagerly); what?!

**FAITH:** Only if I would be his mistress that when he could help my family. I refused at first. But after serious thought about my family: my bed ridden father that needs money for his medication, my suffering mother that works 24/7 to make ends meet, my siblings that have turned to beggars and almost to pick pocket on the street. I went back to him. He defiled me. I was in tears. He gave me thirty thousand naira on that day to use for urgent expenses and that he will take care of my family. He promised to send my siblings back to school. I was asked

where I got the money when I got home. What would I say? I just told my mother that I ran into one of my old friends and after hearing my story he offered the money to help me. We used it to settle some things. But you know, a drop of water can never suffice a thirsty throat. My uncle came to visit us once, making my family thought he is a good person. He gave my mom another little money. You know, when life punches you in your face, you seek any shield possible to avoid another one. After that day, it was up to two months before I could set my eyes on him.

**IDORENYIN:** Why?

**FAITH:** I was never allowed to enter his house. They kept telling me he is not around. I realized that he has abandoned me and my family, like my country abandoned me and my family. Like those wicked politicians abandoned their youth's dream. He called me one day. I was surprised. He said he had not been in town. I was not a fool. I knew he was lying. But his urge to see me couldn't be suppressed. I went to his house. He begged me for not being in touch with me all the while. He did type of things cock does whenever it is horny; yank off its pride, dragging its feathers on the ground seducing, making series of promises from the planet of impossibility.

**ITURA:** What a shame!

**IDORENYIN:** Didn't he have a wife?

**FAITH:** He has. In fact, he has two wives living in the abroad and newly wedded one living with him. He has 7 children, all studying in the abroad.

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**ITURA:** He must be wicked!

**IDORENYIN:** More than wicked.

**ITURA:** But how come his new wife never caught both of you?

**FAITH:** You should know that people like that don't have one house. He took different girls to different houses.

**IDORENYIN:** You were saying... you went to his house?

**FAITH:** Yes, I went there. after all his cajoling, I told him I was not feeling fine. He said he would take me to the hospital. I refused to have sex with him. His face became hard. His voice began to thicken. I sensed that he was preparing to rape me. I was hopeless. But I gathered my inner strength that, come what may, I would fight to the end. He pinned me to the bed like a hungry lion in the forest. My strength couldn't rank with his. I got tired. I wanted to release myself, but suddenly I didn't know where the strength came from. I squeezed my left hand from his grip, as he was about to rend my clothes, and laid my hand on a vase beside the bed. I smashed it mercilessly on his head.

**ITURA:** YES! that's a breaking through.

**FAITH:** A kind of. He wriggled in blood on the floor. I searched the house and saw some money. I packed it and found my way out of the house.

**IDORENYIN:** What a relief!



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**FAITH:** Not at all. I was happy that at least I would use the money to pay for my father operation. But before I could get home on that day, my father had died. I saw my mother and siblings in the pool of tears. I couldn't control myself. I cried my eyes out. My dreams vanished like a vapour, right that moment. Hope deserted me on that day. I lost in the ocean of struggle. I gave my mother the money and left home the following day.

**IDORENYIN:** Oh! Please, accept our condolences for your loss.

**FAITH:** Thank you. That's life actually. It happens to everyone. We all have different stories to tell. That's the kind of country we are. That's the kind of leaders we have.

**ITURA:** And the man, what happened to him?

**IDORENYIN:** Did he die?

**FAITH:** Who cares! I don't know. The last time I heard about him he was in coma.

**ITURA:** Good nemesis!

**FAITH:** I have the plan not to go back home until I make it big. Every time I summon my courage and hit the street, life hits me back in ten folds. Whenever I eventually find a job, until my back touches the ground before I could be given is what rings in my ears. And since that of my uncle incident, I've vowed not to be used again. Not until I get here.

**IDORENYIN:** "Here"?

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**FAITH:** Yes, here. I told you they rape. They do all other bad things to us here. I think not, as far as I have seen, any female hostage has escaped their merciless rods that dangle between their thighs.

**ITURA:** Then how were you captured and your life in here?

**FAITH:** That's another long story for another day.

**IDORENYIN:** Your story here would be the worst. Because how could one explain the roaring of darkness accompanies by torment here.

**FAITH:** Apparently, is of no difference. We suffer outside from the hands of our self-centered politicians. We also suffer here from the hands of herdsmen. What is the difference?

**ITURA:** I do fall into Oblivion whenever I dive my mind into thinking how much it takes for our leader to wipe out all the terrorists in this country.

**IDORENYIN:** Perchance Sani Abacha was right that whenever there is a commotion in a country that last for 24 hours, the citizens should come to their senses that it's the doing of their government.

**FAITH:** You are going to learn things here. Things that will shock you to your marrow. Things that will well tears in your eyes and you must not let loose of it. Just be patient and don't act stupidly. You will see how things work here. from here, if you all make it out alive, you will be exposed to the core problem of this nation.

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**IDORENYIN:** What do you mean?

**FAITH:** Patience! Just a matter of time.

*(Silence.)*

**ITURA:** Have you been to other rooms?

**FAITH:** Quite often.

**ITURA:** Everyone has?

**FAITH:** Few of us!

**FAITH:** Why?

**FAITH:** You will understand. I am tired.

**FAITH:** Since when have you eaten last here?

**FAITH:** Food will soon arrive. Although is not a good one that you could enjoy, or eat to one's satisfaction, but we eat. We eat twice in a day. One in the morning and another one in the evening.

**ITURA:** What if we want to ease ourselves?

**FAITH:** If not the darkness of the room, you would have got answer to your question.

**IDORENYIN:** What?!

**FAITH:** You urinate at the verge of the room there. (points.) But you knock the door three times repeatedly if you want to

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pass excreta. And it shouldn't be more than once in a day.

**ITURA:** You don't mean it!

**FAITH:** Don't you know where you are? That is life in captivity for you, girls. You could not get more than that. Even, this is a privilege. Accept it gladly.

**IDORENYIN** (*bawling*): I am in doom!

**ITURA:** Why crying?

**IDORENYIN:** I neglected the admonition of my parents. As elders say, the dog that will go astray will never listen to the whistle of the hunter. They are trying to rescue chicks from the claws of death and the chicks mumble that they allow them not to wander around freely.

**ITURA:** Is that the stories of yours?

**IDORENYIN:** Yes. I have a boyfriend that my parents warned me not to have affairs with. I refused. My parents are rich enough to take good care of me. They always take extra care of me and make sure I lack nothing.

**ITURA:** They must be fond of you.

**IDORENYIN:** It solely because I am their only child.

**FAITH:** What a shame!

**IDORENYIN:** I kept running around with the boy. Despite the fact that I didn't yield to my father's warning, he still loves

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and cares for me. I got everything I want in time. I was in luxury. They boy lives in Kogi. I live in Akwa Ibom. We met online. Since then, we have been doing lover bird. The boy is a wayward person that knows nothing than party. He would cajole me to collect money from my parents and spent it lavishly. I left Akwa Ibom, without my parents knowing, to follow him to Lagos to catch some fun. It makes one week today. And I decided to go back home. We were coming back together when our car was hijacked. He refused to cooperate with the herdsmen. (*In between sobs.*) So they had no time to waste and shot him on his forehead. Blood gushed out like a spring of water. His eyes were wide open. His body strangled on the ground for a while before it stopped. I was shocked. My soul left me completely. My whole body became paralyzed. I didn't know what to do; whether to wail, cry, scream, or just die silently with him. I couldn't do anything. I couldn't help the situation. I was just pushed into their car and found myself here. Ah! I must revenge his death.

**ITURA:** That is why Yoruba proverb says, “*omọ tí a wí fún tí ó n wàrùn kì ṣetán àti parun nì*”.

**FAITH:** What does that mean?

**ITURA:** It literally means the child that we warn but refuse to adhere to our warning is ready to be destroyed.

**FAITH:** Yes, that's also true in Igbo. *Nwa anyị na-adọ aka ná ntị ma ọ jụu igbasi ịdọ aka ná ntị anyị dị njikere ibibiya.* You should have been enjoying the good life God has given you. You should have! Life gives opportunity in a flash. And

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once the opportunity is taken with levity hands and slips away, to regain it will prove difficult. You have a life that some are praying fervently for. Such life that they will handle with upmost care. Like egg. And will never allow it to fall nor slip away. But such is life. We never understand the importance of what we have until we completely lose it.

**ITURA:** SORRY!

**IDORENYIN:** Don't be sorry for me. I pity my parents. I pity their condition now. if I could make it out here alive, I would seek their forgiveness. I will never disobey them again. But if I couldn't...

**ITURA:** Don't say that, Idorenyin. we will all make it out alive.

**FAITH:** Allow her to free her mind.

**IDORENYIN:** I pray Allah forgive me and wipe the tears of my parents.

**FAITH:** Amen!

**IDORENYIN:** It's true that we all have stories to tell. Sad stories! This is what our leaders have done to us.

**ITURA:** Not from them alone, remember. We common citizens don't love one another. We hate ourselves. In our country, it's very hard to see someone that has little that will share it with love, and work on the terrace for other people to have too. It's here you will see members of a family destroying one another in the course of wealth. It is in this nation that you see father neglecting his children and children resenting

their parents because of money or power. The problem starts within us. Those politicians know that love is not settled down comfortably among us. So they use us against one another and continue flourishing from our chaos.

**FAITH:** EXACTLY!

**IDORENYIN:** Those politicians are crocodile who are the most comfortable swimmer in the ocean of politics.

**FAITH:** Every damn thing is corrupted: the government, the army, the police, the justice, the media.

**IDORENYIN:** But isn't it hypocrisy when you point fingers at the media when the three pillars of democracy are falling?

**FAITH:** The media is the fourth pillar. Their job is to show the wrongdoings of the other three pillars of democracy. In our society, the people who steal are called thieves. What do we call those people who steal facts? Should we call them news channels? They add a lot of drama to the news and turn it into a puff piece with slow-motion effects and different graphic effects.

*(The sudden throaty cough by someone from the extreme right corner of the room jolted the girls from their discussion. The person's face cannot be seen as the room linger in darkness, but his voice gives a hint of a depressed man.)*

**BAKU:** Girls, weytin you dey discuss since morning wey you no allow pesin enjoy him little sleep.

**FAITH:** Sorry, Baku. We have new members. Wake Tychimba

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and move closer to say hello to them.

**BAKU:** Weytin be the use of all kain tin? Eh, tell me? You dey tok as if no be everytime dem dey bring new members come join us. Abeg, make you leave me alone. I don tire welcoming pesin and explaining *yeye* thing to dem.

**FAITH:** At least say hello to them.

**BAKU** (*still lying down.*) Okay. Sannu.

**FAITH:** Where is Tyehimba? (*Moves her hands on the ground zig-zag like a blind beggar that lost his walking stick*) Tyehimba? (*Her hands touch him.*) Wake up.

**TYEHIMBA** (*resuming consciousness*): I am here! Let's go! Thank God o!

**FAITH:** Calm down, Tyehimba. Not again!

**BAKU** (*sits up*): You this Tiv boy. You dey still do all this *yeye* kain tin.

**ITURA:** "Let's go" to where?

**IDORENYIN:** Is this sleepwalk or what?

**BAKU:** No answer am. Coward Tiv boy. He *think* say dey don release us make we dey go. Na Weytin he tok be that whenever we wake am from him sleep. I no understand am again at all. This kain *yeye* people, dey no fit use charm release us. But Allah save dem dey no meet me Baku. If no be for the ambush, this people no fit cross my way.



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**FAITH:** Enough, Baku. That is only what you know, boasting. You can just back, you can't bite.

**TYEHIMBA** (*consciously*): Don't answer him. You that are even less a woman not to talk of man.

**BAKU:** Me! You wan try me. Sey make I show you my power?

**TYEHIMBA:** Don't even show. Display. Idiot. That is why you were crying and urinating in that your stinking trousers when they caught us while trying to escape.

**BAKU:** Me! Urinate. No be water pour on my trousers?

**FAITH:** Baku?! Don't lie. You know you always call yourself true believer. And true believers don't lie. So, admit it.

**BAKU:** If no be water wey I wan release wey dey my bladder before, I no fit urinate.

**TYEHIMBA:** He don do! We don hear! (*Moves his gaze to ITURA and IDORENYIN.*) Girls, we are sorry for you. I am Tyehimba. I am a Tiv boy. I have been here for more than two months. I've lost hope already. And this is Baku...

**BAKU:** Weytin happen? You wan do am for me. Hey, I no understand big English no mean I no know how to... (*Couldn't get the right word.*)

**ITURA:** Introduce.

**BAKU:** Thank you.

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**TYEHIMBA:** Then introduce yourself.

**BAKU:** No be you go tell me to do am. I know I go do am before. No rush me, you Tiv boy. Eh-en, my name be Baku. I dey from Sokoto. I dey go to Sokoto to harvest my watermelon before dem bring me come here. But wallahi ta Allahi, if my people hear, if they hear, this place go turn to fire.

**TYEHIMBA:** SHUT UP! No be your people be Boko Haram...?

**ITURA:** Please, guys. We have no time for that. That is part of our core problems. Instead of us to fight for better tomorrow, we keep rending our garment of unity. When are we going to wake up from our slumber?! We are all here for a reason. Maybe for all the tribes to learn how to stand in unity and fight all oppressors. Don't you think it?

**IDORENYIN:** Whenever unity is dominant, their is bound to be peace, love and Concord.

**TYEHIMBA:** Okay.

**ITURA:** I am Itura. A half cast.

**BAKU** (*perplexed*): Half... (*Lost the remaining word.*)

**ITURA:** My father is Yoruba, my mother is Hausa. That is what I mean.

**BAKU:** OH!

**IDORENYIN:** I am Idorenyin, an Ibibio.

**ITURA:** We should find our way out here. This is not meant for us. It's not our home.

**TYEHIMBA:** There is no way. Only if God descends.

**ITURA:** Don't say that. Most people dreams can be bought. With enough failure. With enough rejection, they will sell their dreams. They can't still fight. They can get a little bit, but when it gets a little too hot, they go boom, sold. "Buy the dream. You can have it. It's not worth it to me", they say. And their will to win can be bought. But if you decide your will cannot be bought, you won't care how long it takes. You will keep fighting. "I'm gonna change the situation", that will be your decision.

**TYEHIMBA:** I know what I'm saying.

**ITURA:** Our parents will be waiting for us. We have to go back to them. We all know how we get here. I have my own story too.

**BAKU:** Make we hear.

*(Prolonged silence.)*

**ITURA:** After my father was sacked from his place of work, he searched for job for two years. When he noticed that the tunnel is not ending and there is no sign of light, he got land and started farming. We all kept our hope on the farm and we were doing fine. We planted several types of crops. We sold part and other part for consumption. Everything was going fine. Until one day, as we were working on our farm, it was

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harvest time, so we are harvesting, suddenly, we heard the moo of a cow. We all stop abruptly. “Is that not those herdsmen with their cattle?”, my mother asked. My father stretched his head left and right but couldn’t see or hear any sound again. “No. What are they going to be doing here. Won’t they realise that this is a farm not bush”, my father replied. We continued our work.

**IDORENYIN:** Something is looming there!

**TYEHIMBA** (*whispering*): We should be patient to know!

**ITURA:** Shockingly, we started hearing the sounds of steps like a giant coming towards us. The steps were so heavy like a battalion of soldiers at the war front. We raised our head and landed our eyes on cattle, eating hurriedly our plants. We all screamed. My father ordered the herdsman to stop his cattle and take them away. He refused. He didn’t say a single word.

**IDORENYIN:** Was he deaf?

**ITURA:** My father sliced out his machete and threatened to kill his cow. That was when his sense resurrected, as if he was dead before. He shouted on top of his voice. Before we know what was happening, he brought out a gun and pointed it to us. My father was furious that how someone could come from no where and started threatening him, but my mother drew him back. He commanded us to leave or he pulled the trigger. We left the farm that day. We went there the following day. Our faces deserted laughter and cuddle dejection. Everything has been grazed on by the cattle.

**FAITH:** What a wicked son of a bitch!

**ITURA:** Since then we are still on the struggle of living a normal life. I was sent to meet one of our relatives that promised to give us money to pay for the operation of my sister. But now I am here. Can you just see the cruel fate? What would have been the condition of my sister now? Would she have died, or see messiah that would have paid the money? What would have been the state of my parents and other sibling? How would they know I am here, and not died? Ah! (*Tears well up her face.*)

**IDORENYIN:** The activities of herdsmen is a threat to economic, political and social security and a major factor associated with underdevelopment; it discourages both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital, damages relationship between citizens and the state, thus undermining democracy, and the rule of law.

**ITURA:** More dangerously, there are findings that the herders have formed alliances with terrorist groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP.

**IDORENYIN:** There is no alternative to ranching; open grazing is outdated and disruptive. The federal and state governments should develop policies to attract private investment in ranching, food processing and packaging, and exports. In Brazil, soft loans are given to herders who embrace ranching. Climate-smart agriculture should also be promoted. The switch to heavy investment in cattle ranching

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has catapulted Brazil to the world's largest exporter of beef.

**TYEHIMBA:** This is true. But we haven't done anything wrong. It is our country!

**BAKU:** Wallahi ta Allahi, that story pained me. Ha ha!

**ITURA:** This is enough for us not to keep silence anymore.

**BAKU:** weytin go happen?

**ITURA:** We strike.

**TYEHIMBA:** We have nothing to fight this fight. We have lost once. We cannot continue waisting our lives and that of these children.

**ITURA:** Have you try to escape before?

**IDORENYIN:** How did it happened?

**TYEHIMBA:** We have planned to escape before. We took every possible measure to make sure we execute the plan. Baku, Zango and I took the lead. But Zango was our master planner. We escaped to the hands of policemen. We were happy that we were safe. But what we discovered later was that they hand us over to the herdsmen back for money. Those that tried to make a run were shot dead instantly. They killed Zango too.

**ITURA:** But how come? Why would the police that should be rescuing and protecting us do that?

**IDORENYIN:** Or does that mean they are also working for them?

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**FAITH:** You now start your lesson here.

*(Tension arrests ITURA and IDORENYIN for a while.)*

**BAKU:** Those bastards get informants for here o. But me no fear anything. I no fear dem. Even I no fear death wey be their papa.

**ITURA:** But how come some still prefer suffering to freedom.

**FAITH:** Not their fault.

**ITURA:** Why isn't it their fault? Why would they join hands with the terrorists?

**FAITH:** They use what one can never resist.

**TYEHIMBA:** If you could see my right ear, you will see that it remains half. Check Faith's thumb, it's not there. Examine Baku's left eyes, you will discover it almost blind. That's what they did to us. Things that will never be recover in our lives. Probably things that we will have to show our grandchildren. We would have been died but we were spared because they couldn't find our replacement on time.

**FAITH:** Can you see now? You don't have to put yourself in such a situation that even death will turn deaf ear if you call him.

**ITURA:** Sorry, guys!

**IDORENYIN:** We will have to learn from the mistake and plan without exposing it. We cannot continue like this.

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**ITURA:** Yes, we have to plan; every stratagem needs a plan. It needs revision. of great help it will be for us, Thirty-six Stratagems, chapter 1, verse 6! “Make a sound in the east, then strike in the west.” We fight or die. And fighting is not magic. It’s skill. Let’s demonstrate we possess many. We should not act alone. Alone, we are killed or worse. They have broken our peace into pieces because we fear their might. But at what price? It is a poison slowly killing us.

**FAITH:** Are you sure this is not putting ourselves into another danger?

**ITURA:** No great achiever - even those who made it seems easy - ever succeeded without hard work. To get rid of fear, you must forge ahead into the darkest corner! If you don’t face your fear, you will keep running from it. It will keep coming after you. And catch up with you. It’s better that you run after fear and make it run. Do you know what is beyond and behind fear?

*(Prolonged silence.)*

**ITURA:** Only when the raw gold burns in a fire it becomes an ornament. Only after the caterpillar is insulted by people around it, it will be able to turn into a butterfly and fly. Behind fear is death. Beyond fear is life. We should live our lives fearlessly. This is a sign of bravery, not cowardice. We will narrate this story to our children one day.

**TYEHIMBA:** Only if that “one day” comes.

**ITURA:** Everyone has to choose their own path in life. People



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can walk with you, but they can't walk for you. Let's plan and work it together. Together we can achieve this. Remember, war - an act of violence whose object is to constrain the enemy, to accomplish our will.

**FAITH:** We will all have to pay the price. There is nothing that is free in life. The only free cheese is in the mouse trap.

**IDORENYIN:** Isn't it pays us to leave this den first?

**FAITH:** Who knows how outside will look like? That's our life actually. if you are born in a poor developing country, you have lost the first wager of your life. Your life expectancy is about 45. When you are born a female, you have lost the second. When you are born into a poor family, you have lost the third gamble of your life. These are the important factors that will dog you all your life, but you have no say in them.

**IDORENYIN:** Oft quoted Shakespeare line: "The fault, Dear Brutus, is not in our Stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings".

**ITURA:** Today, it isn't the prince who mounts the throne but the man who proves his worth. We should prove our worth. We might be bent, not broken. Beaten, not defeated. Deviled, not destroyed. They think we are worthless, their opinion. We are useless, still their opinion. We amount to nothing, again, their opinion. What matters, our opinion. What we make out of every situation, still our opinion.

**TYEHIMBA:** Even though our opinion is lost.

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**ITURA:** If you want to fight darkness, you should go into darkness.

**BAKU:** No be other way to that?

**ITURA:** Here the value of a strong man's lies is greater than the truth of the weaker man. That's why truth always loses the battle.

**BAKU** (*looks dejectedly*): E no easy at all!

**ITURA:** I know. It is all wrong. By rights we shouldn't even be here. But we are. full of darkness and danger, they were. Sometimes we didn't want to know the end. Because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it's only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness, must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines, it will shine out the clearer. Those are words that must stay with us. That means something, even if we are too small to understand why. We have low chances of turning back, only we should keep going. Because we are holding on to something.

**FAITH:** Tomorrow shall be the dance. Some will die tomorrow, why some will be free. No matter what our fates happen to be, let's accept it and have rest of mind.

**BAKU:** Yes, tomorrow na be dance.

**ITURA:** Why would people die?

**TYEHIMBA:** Don't you know they are our gods. They decide whether we live or die for now. Anybody that misbehave or

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try shit tomorrow, and those that their people were given ultimatum of tomorrow, will be below six feet.

*(They hear some crackling sounds on the door at the other side. FAITH gives sign that they have brought their food. They take the food and eat it. Then They hand their dangling hope over to the consoling dreams. Everywhere becomes silent. Only the warbling of birds can be heard in a distance.)*

**The next day, at night.**

*A room seems like a mini hall is scarcely decorated. Few old chairs are placed at the front with a small table that holds an MP player. One hefty man sit on the chair at the middle, he seems their leader. Another two sit at his left and right side. The MP player is booming with FELA's song "Gentleman". The girls are called one by one to dance.*

**HERDSMAN 1:** LABBO, Stop the music! *(Faces the girl at the front.)* E be like say you wan die. Why you no dance for my Ardo well well. You wan me to use bullet scatter your brain?

**HERDSMAN 2:** leave her. Let another girl dance. Look for good one among those new ones that Ardo can enjoy for tonight.

**HERDSMAN 1:** OKAY! I done understand. *(Looks fiercely.)* You. *(Point.)* Yes, you come out and dance for us.

*(ITURA appears on stage. They play the song and she starts dancing.)*

**HERDSMAN 2:** Ardo, hope you dey enjoy this one.

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**ARDO:** This one sabi dance.

**HERDSMAN 1** (*stops the music*): Congratulations! My Ardo don pick you tonight. You go spend the night with my Ardo (*Turns the music on back.*) Continue.

**HERDSMAN 2:** You will stab the voice of the darkness with this one tonight. Ei, I dey envy you, Ardo.

(*HERDSMAN 1 changes the music as he calls another girl.*)

**ARDO** (*turns to HERDSMAN 2*): Where is Bodejo?

**HERDSMAN 2:** I don't see him.

**ARDO:** Chenido?

**HERDSMAN 1:** Ardo.

**ARDO:** Where is Bodejo?

**HERDSMAN 1:** I no see am o. Maybe he dey for him post.

**ARDO:** Why is he not here now?

**HERDSMAN 1:** Make I go look for am?

**ARDO:** No. Don't worry.

**HERDSMAN 2:** I am suspecting him, Ardo.

**ARDO:** No worry. I will take care of him when the time comes.

(*After hours of dance, they stop the music.*)

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**HERDSMAN 1:** That will be all for today. Ardo don choose this one. (*Points to ITURA*) She go dance in Ardo's room tonight till dawn. We go free those wey their people don pay us. See this one. (*Drags out one boy and makes him knee down.*) As you dey see am so, he wan expose us. He don turn himself to an informant. He no know say we dey everywhere. We go use am as a scape goat, make the rest of you no try am. (*Takes out a knife in his pocket and abruptly slice the boy's throat.*) Na so e dey be. E no take us two minutes to kill all of you if you no behave. Those wey their people dey do double head go see. Now, make you dey go back to your room silently.

(*In ARDO's room, with ITURA.*)

*Ardo removes his shirt and lying on one dirty flat bed on the corner of the room. ITURA stands a little far apart from the bed.*

**ARDO:** What is your name?

**ITURA:** ITURA!

**ARDO:** If not the fact that I like you as I set my eyes on you, I would have announced your death in front of your colleagues. You don't know that their is nothing going on here that I don't know. You are planning to escape.

(*ITURA's brows stand in fear.*)

**ARDO** (*chuckles*): You that just arrived without knowing anything about this place are planning to escape. To where? You should have been fed by the hostages you met inside how

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desperate I am. I don't hear such thing in my territory. But I like your courage. I remember when I was little boy of your age. I always dreamt of becoming a great person in this life. To become someone great in our community. But look at what this country has turned me into. What your leaders have made of me.

**ITURA:** You make the decision of your life. You choose to be good or wicked. Even if the life throws freebies of difficulties to you, you still have the option of being a good person.

**ARDO:** Forget it! You couldn't understand what I went through then.

**ITURA:** Yes, you might be right. But I want you to know that there are numerous people that have faced even more than what you have faced, yet they still chose to be good.

**ARDO:** Your government don't allow me to be in control of my thought. I didn't regret doing this though.

**ITURA:** That's why when we are in bad situation our desperation should be for change not revenge.

**ARDO:** They offer what loyalty can never offer. And one shouldn't lose out at both; you stay loyal, you can't win them. It's better to play rough and tough with them. The politicians use me and I use them too. They use me to get all what they want done at ease. And I use them to get money and protect myself.

**ITURA:** One gains more than other.

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**ARDO:** What do you mean?

**ITURA:** It's simple; they have nothing to lose, your live is at stake. Once they discover you have too much of their secret, they plan your exit and set up another one.

**ARDO:** Not me! Not here!

**ITURA:** This people are smarter.

**ARDO:** And I'm wicked. Not from me will they achieve that. I like your courage. I have an offer for you. But firstly move closer let play before I tell you the offer.

*(As he stretches his hand to pull ITURA to bed, sound of stray bullets that hit his door render his hand in dither. He makes for his gun and asks ITURA to hide under one old large frame leans on the wall at the left corner of the room. Before he could position himself, the person is already in his room and shoots him in his hand that holds the gun.)*

**BODEJO:** You bastard! I told you. I told you that I will stop tolerating all your nonsense one day. The day has come today. And you must bid the world goodbye.

**ARDO:** You!

**BODEJO:** Yes, it is I. Your time is over. It's my time now. I am no longer you servant again. Your men are my men now.

**ARDO:** You traitor!

*(He struggles to get the gun with his right hands, but another bullet hits him before he could.)*

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**BODEJO:** Today shall be your end. And you shall have a painful death. You will also taste it today, as you have been forcing it into the mouth of others. You greedy!

**ARDO** (*groans in the pool of his own blood*): Despite all I have done for you. I took you from the mud and make you live a meaningful life. I favour you over others. Yet you still betray me.

**BODEJO:** Shut your stinking mouth! You fool! You did nothing for me. You use us! You rob us off our dreams. We do the job, you consume the money. We get 100%, you give all of us 5%. Can you see for yourself that you are wicked. When the time comes, you tell the politicians not to worry and use us to carry out their tasks. We are like a pawn in the hands of player. You do and make us do all bad things in the world. You give some politicians some pretty girl to sleep with and do whatever they like with them after you have collected you money. I regret knowing you. I won't find myself in this situation if I am rearing my cattle without meeting you.

**ARDO:** You are not any way different.

**BODEJO:** I know. I know I am not different. But I am tired of you. It is my turn now.

**ARDO:** And you want to cut the hands that raise you?

**BODEJO:** Enough of hands that ruin my life. Our lives. You made us kidnap and kill people for no reason! for an ideology we know nothing about. Now, I don't even know who I'm fighting. Or the reason why I am fighting. I don't know. Am



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I fighting for God? No! am I fighting for the food I will eat tomorrow? No! Definitely I am fighting for your greediness and your politicians.

**ARDO:** I save you from your heartless leaders.

**BODEJO:** You have done nothing for us! You destroy my lives completely with everything in it. You have killed our dreams and aspirations! Look at what you have turned us into. Our fathers' house we have lost! We know not what school walls resemble! We are wild animals that never leave the forest! Is this life? Answer me. Can't you see the lives of those filthy politicians we work for? Can't you come to your sense that they are just using us? You can't remember how they told us to kill Gidado and others, that they have become betrayers. That's how they wipe us out when our task has been done. Is this life?

**ARDO:** You fool! Do you think you can escape this? Never!

**BODEJO:** I know. And I am happy that my aspiration to knock you down comes to pass. I have rest of mind now.

**ARDO:** You shall pay greatly for this.

**BODEJO:** As you are paying for betraying your Ardo too. Selfishness kill you.

*(He points the gun to him and finally pull the trigger. The bullets make through his skull, the gushing of blood consumes his soul, and his voice is silent forever.)*

**BODEJO:** BASTARD!

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*(He takes some steps forward.)*

**BODEJO:** You, come out now!

*(ITURA comes out of her hide quiveringly.)*

**BODEJO:** Now, I am the leader here. Will you join hand with me and work for me?

*(ITURA's voice trembles.)*

**ITURA:** I... I...

**BODEJO:** Don't be scared. I am not forcing you. It's just an offer. if you don't want I can assure you many hostages like you will gladly accept it. We have them among you before, but I need more.

**ITURA:** I am so much happy to receive this wonderful offer from you. I will be so happy to serve you.

**BODEJO:** And be loyal?

**ITURA:** And be loyal!

**BODEJO:** Never forget that 'loyal' part. Because if you forget, I won't hesitate to pluck you soul from the tree of existence with my bullet. When did you get here?

**ITURA:** Yesterday!

**BODEJO:** WOW! And you've made it up to this level just like that. You must be smart. But not only smartness we use here. Even smartness is a second class. You learn how things

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run here. You learn the system. And abide by the rules and regulations here. if you do your job very well, you might be free. But not completely, because you will still be our informant outside. Does that suit you?

**ITURA:** I'm glad to have this opportunity. I will meticulously take care of my tasks. Even if I should not leave here forever. I have nothing outside to take. after all the joy outside there have been consumed by looters we address as leaders.

**BODEJO:** Why don't you resent me for what I just did now.

**ITURA:** Why will I do such!

**BODEJO:** So, I guess you are one of those “do not judge a book by its cover’ type.

**ITURA:** Oh God, no. Books are ment to be judged by their covers, that is why they are there.

**BODEJO:** Oh, I see.

**ITURA:** But, I read a lot of books when I was younger. And most of them, they were without cover.

**BODEJO:** That's very thoughtful of you. Now you will go back to you room with your mouth sealed. I will ask one of my men to come fetch you after your separate room has been prepared.

**ITURA:** Thank you.

*(ITURA returns to her room with fear. And her colleagues start pitying her.)*

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**TYEHIMBA:** Itura, are you okay?

**FAITH:** Thank God you are back.

**IDORENYIN:** We have been worrying about you.

**BAKU:** Say those mad dog no touch you?

**TYEHIMBA:** Shut up, boy! Why are you asking that kind question? Someone comes out of water and you are asking if water touches their body. What kind of question is that?

**BAKU:** Say make I no fit talk again. You know sey I dey warn you this Tiv boy. No fes me o.

**FAITH:** It's okay, boys. Is it not the high time you stopped all this thing. Let her rest.

**ITURA:** The brisk of death didn't allow him to touch me.

**IDORENYIN:** "Death". What do you mean by...

**TYEHIMBA** (*impatiently*): You killed him?

**FAITH:** Will you allow her to talk?

**ITURA:** Ardo is dead!

**IDORENYIN:** Who killed him? You?

**ITURA:** Not at all.

**TYEHIMBA:** Then...?

**ITURA:** He was about to pull me to bed when the heavy

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bullet hit the door.

**BAKU:** Ya wa! Who fire am? Say the bullet hit am?

**ITURA:** He struggled to get himself ready for the fight.

**FAITH:** But...?

**ITURA:** But he couldn't because before he could get hold of his gun and jump off the bed, the door as been forced open and another bullet has been fired. The bullet hit his right hand holding the gun and scattered the hand.

**TYEHIMBA:** Who killed him?

**ITURA:** Bodejo killed him.

**FAITH:** Bodejo killed him and take over?

**ITURA:** Yes.

**BAKU:** That third boy wey always follow that Ardo.

**IDORENYIN:** Even these people don't trust one another. They betray one another. They dupe one another. after all what they are going through together. And when they are serving their leader, it will be so difficult to envisage they will betray one another.

**FAITH:** Exactly when our sugar-coated politicians meet us. They coin sweet words to promise heaven and earth. They build temporary castle of enjoyment. They change our mind with beautiful construction of their deceit. Once we succumb to their plea and fall into their trap, they capture us with

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power, and crash on our head their true color. By then, we have no choice than to remain their slaves. Yes, we are exactly like slaves to them.

**ITURA:** Bodejo is now their new leader!

**TYEHIMBA:** But the same thing that happened to Ardo will happen to Bodejo. His own days are numbered.

**FAITH:** It's game of 'survival of the fittest'. They rule first before anything!

**ITURA:** Bodejo has taken over now. We must be careful.

**BAKU:** Na me go kill that bastard boy too. Wallahi ta Allahi, na me go kill am.

**TYEHIMBA:** I know you won't stop all this boasting until you fall into the pit of regret.

**BAKU:** See your mouth. E be like say you no know Baku boy for Sokoto street. You dey underrate me. I go so you one day.

**IDORENYIN:** You have started again. Why won't you awake your sense of reasoning for once.

**TYEHIMBA:** Why are you insulting us? Who tell you our brains sleep? You better watch your words.

**IDORENYIN:** You should know this situation is beyond arguing or fighting over trivial issue. You shouldn't forget we are still held hostages. We have our people waiting for us outside. We have our dreams to live. We have these children's

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live to secure. Only cooperation and determination can set us free.

*(Silence.)*

**FAITH:** Taking precipitous action can lead to our destruction now when Bodejo will be desperate to fiercely display what is capable of, and will want to instill fears in everybody.

**TYEHIMBA:** It's like we have no hope.

**ITURA:** Why would you say that?

**TYEHIMBA:** Because I am tired as everything is falling apart.

**ITURA:** Listen, people like us, we are different. We should be original thinkers, intrepid outliers in this vast cesspool of adolescence. We don't need these inane rites of passage to validate who we are.

**IDORENYIN:** Our hope must stand firmly, come what may.

**TYEHIMBA:** It seems this hope of ours is too weak to maintain its stand.

**BAKU:** Weytin be your religion?

**TYEHIMBA:** I am both.

**IDORENYIN:** Both?

**BAKU:** Abeg make you say the one you be.

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**TYEHIMBA:** I believe in God.

**ITURA:** State which religion you practice and don't waste our time?

**TYEHIMBA:** I like Christian and Muslim.

**IDORENYIN:** Then you should believe in hope.

**TYEHIMBA:** This situation is stabbing it.

**ITURA:** I will tell you a story of hope someday.

**TYEHIMBA:** Many stories my ears have consumed. I am tired of fantasy of no reality.

*(The door opens silently and HERDSMAN 1 enters with angry face. The hostages flag their hands across their mouths.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** Who be Itura for here.

**ITURA:** I am.

**HERDSMAN 1:** My new Ardo say make I tell you say your room don ready. I go come back to take you go there.

**IDORENYIN** *(whispering)*: What does that mean?

**BAKU:** I no know weytin dey happen again.

**TYEHIMBA:** Itura, will you explain this?

**ITURA:** What is it that you don't understand?

**IDORENYIN:** Everything! Everything that's happening



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now. Why you are called to a separate room.

**FAITH:** I couldn't believe you have betrayed your people.

**ITURA:** Change is constant!

**IDORENYIN:** With all the stars of hope you've shown us in our dark sky. With every plan we have made together. So you could change so easily. I couldn't believe you. It's true that people we trust lack power to help us. And once they get a chance, they turn to people we couldn't trust. So you could betray us.

**FAITH:** Betrayer is a soul brother in this land. Trust no deep.

**ITURA:** Once opportunity is lost, it can never be regained. I have to do what I have to do.

**FAITH:** I've thought this might happen. By the time you were brought here with that burning rage, I have discovered that it can't go any far.

**BAKU:** Tell me this na play?

**TYEHIMBA:** But why?

**ITURA:** Life itself get confused about its prescription.

**IDORENYIN:** And you betrayed!

**ITURA:** It makes life moves and gives us more options in life to achieve our real intention.

**FAITH:** So fighting for better morrow is not your real

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intention?

**ITURA:** And I have told you that prediction of life set one at the verge of mirage.

**TYEHIMBA:** Itura, you shouldn't have done this. These people will just use you and smash your cherished future.

**ITURA:** Sometimes, our situation changes our perception. This people offered me what those looters can never do for me in freedom.

**FAITH:** And about your family you told us... or are they cooked up story?

**ITURA:** Thick and fast, we shouldn't give room to some thoughts that give birth to obstacle, preventing us not to forge ahead.

**IDORENYIN:** Nothing remains in this nation again; not a single trust, not a single humanity, not a single hope; or a single change.

**FAITH:** The terrorists and the politicians will succeed again. They will lure, fixing the galaxy of fake promises and threat at the same time. You fall into their trap, you get used and dumped. You refuse, you set your life on the verge of war and death.

**BAKU:** See wey life don turn into where everybody dey fight for himself.

**TYEHIMBA:** We should just stop here and give everything to

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destruction to swallow. And pray the next generation survives the storm.

**IDORENYIN:** At least we start the struggle.

**FAITH:** And in the end?

**IDORENYIN:** We leave it to fate to decide.

**FAITH:** No point in fighting losing battle.

**IDORENYIN:** It's better we die than do nothing; because if we don't fight now, we continue breathing in doom.

**TYEHIMBA:** We are captured already.

**BAKU:** Make we break the shackle and free our generation.

**TYEHIMBA:** We are losing the battle.

**FAITH:** This generation has lost already.

**TYEHIMBA:** Or maybe the stew is overflowing, so let's lower the heat a little.

**IDORENYIN:** No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.

*(The herdsman comes back again and order ITURA to follow him.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** Who be the girl, ITU-RA, or weytin dem dey call am?

**ITURA:** I dey here.

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**HERDSMAN 1:** Oya, make you follow me. You don step up be that.

*(ITURA rises and makes her way towards the door.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** Make you no do gragra o. Abi say because I say you don step up you wan be doing yanga. if you no be careful, na this gun I go use to be careful you.

*(As ITURA gets to the door, IDORENYIN raises her voice.)*

**IDORENYIN:** Go. Go you betrayer! You shall reap what you sow.

*(HERDSMAN 1 hears and moves inside to confirm the person that said it.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** Who tok rubbish for there? Who?

*(Silence.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** You tink say I no hear you? You tink say I no know you?

**FAITH:** I beg you leave us alone.

**HERDSMAN 1:** You better keep your mouth before I scatter am with my stubborn bullet. You tink say I be mumu? Or you tink say I be like Labbo? Me no tolerate nonsense o.

*(He moves close to IDORENYIN and knocks her with the bottom of his gun.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** Na you tok am! Na you tok rubbish. *(He*

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*continues hitting her.)* How many times we go warn you sey make you no tok rubbish again?

**FAITH:** Please, let her live. She is a female. I beg of you.

**HERDSMAN 1:** I say you shut up for there!

*(He stops hitting her. Blood paints IDORENYIN's face. her forehead is swelling gradually. And she is at the brim of fainting.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** So because she be female na hin give her the opportunity to tok anyhow.

**FAITH:** We are sorry.

**HERDSMAN 1:** Sorry for yourselves. if you do this kain thing another time, I no go think am twice before I shut your mouth with my bullet. I no be gentle boy o.

*(He takes some steps backward like a retreating soldier and point his gun to ITURA.)*

**HERDSMAN 1:** You, let's go.

*(They both go out. FAITH, TYEHIMBA and BAKU rush to IDORENYIN where she is.)*

**FAITH:** Are you okay?

**TYEHIMBA:** *(rapping one piece of clothe on her head):* This will stop the blood.

**BAKU:** These people no be human being again o. See the wey dem dey do human being like dem.

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**FAITH:** Once your soul leave your body out of frustration, it's replaced by beast and you lose control over your action. You become mindless. You act ruthlessly. The beast in you controls you and overshadow your sense of reasoning. You change from normal human being and eventually turn to beast. That is what they are now. You can't blame them completely. We are all denied of our right.

**IDORENYIN:** Then how will this nation know peace out of all this?

**FAITH:** Truly, there might be light at the end of the tunnel, but this one seems unending.

**BAKU:** Na so that stinking Itura fool us and go join hand with those wicked herdsmen.

**TYEHIMBA:** I couldn't save myself from the shock. I'm now coming to the affirmation of the word that we should believe nothing we hear and half of what we see.

**IDORENYIN:** Is she not the one that told us what those herdsmen do to her family's life? Is she not the one who swear to revenge? Is she not the one who keep telling us that we can work the change, and our nation can be free of corrupt people if we stand strong in unity today? Where are those words now?

**TYEHIMBA** (*unconsciously*): They have vanished to the thin air.

**IDORENYIN:** Where are those burning rage oozing in her eyes?

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**BAKU:** E don disappear like a vapour.

**FAITH:** There are some certain situations in your life that will keep your mind away from believing people, your eyes from sighting trust in people's eyes, doubt everyone, including yourself. Because if it is not like that, you will lose your aspiration in the sea of dilemma. At first, you will be neglected. But before you drown completely, you will be rescued by hands of confusion claiming that they own your life because they save your life. You will be hopeless and hapless. At the end, you will become nothing than to be a hunting dog. Later become worst than them.

**TYEHIMBA:** You starve your slave to the point of death to let him realise you own his life. You control his life. You inflict pains on him. By the time you throw little food and lift the pains on him, he won't hesitate to have a second thought of your command. By then you own him, and he has no thought of himself except what you install in him. That's exactly what they do. Indirectly, they make us suffer to lose our sense of reasoning. They bail us from the suffering they cast on us to let us believe they are messiah.

**IDORENYIN:** We are the cause of our problems. Not from those politicians alone.

**BAKU:** How that wan be true?

**IDORENYIN:** We betray one another after crossing the Rubicon of agreement. We steal from one another. That is why the rains comes and goes in our lives without achieving the change we clamor for. I distrust the wisdom if not the

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sincerity of friends who would hold my hands while my enemies stab me.

**FAITH:** You make me remember the story my school teacher used to tell us. He titled it “human deceit”.

*(In narrative tone.)*

**FAITH:** There was a village where their King was ruthless and rule without mercy. He had no respect for his people. He killed without having any genuine reason for it. His ruling became unbearable for the people. Some secretly sneaked out of the village in the dead of the night to save their heads. While some had to continue bearing the brunt as they had no where to go. The king continued without any form of resentment. He doubled his guards everytime to assure his protection. No one dared raise any opinion in front of him. His decision was final. His cruel ruling aroused the rage of young people in the village and started gathering themselves secretly to cascade the ruling of the ruthless king. They started planning. The king was not that easy to bring down. His empire was not easy to enter. His battalion were difficult to defeat. They got weary of what to do. When the time came for the king to double his security, some out of the raging youth found a way and joined his guards. They were happy that they were finding way to halt the king's life. Those that were working in the palace were relaying everything about the king to their people. They continue like that secretly. Not long, they started gathering information on how to execute their plans without any form of chaos. They knew the number of guards working for the king. They mastered in and out of the king. Then they were



rest assured that the overthrow of the king won't be difficult for them. They started preparing for the battle. They gathered all the weapons needed and start counting the days to strike. The day to end the king. The day to be free. The day to stop longing in anxiety for their brother who went to farm. The day they would work freely on their farm land without any fear. When it remained few days to strike, something happened. (*Pause*). How the king heard about their plan was unknown to anyone. The king knew their plan without their knowing. The king never asked his guards to destruct their plans, or kill them. Rather he made a wise decision. He summoned one of their leaders to his palace and started throwing some fancy life to him. He never asked about their secret plan to destroy him. He continued caring for him and made him ascertained that he was fond of him and his planning to make him one of his favorite subjects. The man was happy and didn't breath a word of it to his people. One day the king invited the man to his palace and gifted him tons of gold. The man was extremely happy. Out of his excitement, he told the king about their plan. He told him everything; how they planned to execute the king, how they planned to carry out the execution, their numbers and weapons. He couldn't resist the joy and told him everything. The king was grateful and gifted him more gift. The king told him that he will never forget what he has done for him. And after reprimanding the traitor, he would make him great. He begged the king not to let his people get a wimp of it. The day came and they were about to leave their den when the king's guards rounded them up. They were perplexed how the king knew about their plan. The man that divulged their secret was removed from them and the rest were killed.

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He was happy that the king would do as promised. But to his greatest surprise, he was put in the cell in the king's palace and tortured severally. The king visited him one day and the man reminded him about the promised he made. The king chortled and told him that for him to betray his people he won't hesitate to work for his demise too. He told him that after card has been used, its value is no more there again. And the next thing is to throw away the card. The man was starved to death in the cell. The moral of the story is that we shouldn't betray our brothers, but here, we are not given chance not to do so. That's why we are the problem of our problem. Yes it is true that we want change. We don't want to continue being slaves. But the truth is, our greediness and selfishness tow us out of the way of fighting for the change till end. (*Brief silence.*) That is all what I know about this nation. We act as if we are fighting for our people. But once our head is saved, we turned our back and betray our own brothers.

**TYEHIMBA:** Is this how we are going to continue?

**IDORENYIN:** We all have to answer the question. It is ours if, or if not we want to make the change a reality. It's not work of one person. It all our work.

**BAKU:** So na this how Itura betray us?

**FAITH:** What happened has happened. We need not to dwell much on that. It is time for us to put our soul at rest.

**BAKU:** And hope for better tomorrow.

**FAITH:** Possibly.

***SODIQ LAWAL***

**IDORENYIN:** Tomorrow will be better.

*(They get tired as the power of sleep creeps in to their soul. And the grasshoppers' chirrs take over.)*

**THE NEXT DAY.**

*Intervening action between BODEJO's room and hostages'.*

**BODEJO'S ROOM**

*(BODEJO, their new leader, drops his phone and face his men.)*

**BODEJO:** So...

**HERDSMAN 1:** Ardo, I wan tell you something before.

**BODEJO:** What's that?

**HERDSMAN 1:** I wan tell you say I need small cash wey I wan give my wife.

**HERDSMAN 2:** I wanted to tell you too.

**BODEJO:** Don't you know there is no cash in town?

**HERDSMAN 1:** We know, ardo, but make you find us small cash.

**BODEJO:** There is no cash.

**HERDSMAN 2:** We need cash.

**BODEJO:** No cash.

## ***ERUPTION***

**HERDSMAN 1:** Ardo, make you give us cash.

**BODEJO:** I say no cash. But listen, chairman will come tonight with millions of cash. So the plan has changed now. (*Faces HERDSMAN 1.*) You go to room x and y of the hostages. Execute those we don't need, and get the rest ready at the basement. Honorable will soon be here.

**HERDSMAN 1:** Okay. Weytin go happen to those wey dey room z?

**BODEJO:** You go to room x and y. Labbo will go to room z. You have to be very careful. And I don't want fuck up.

**HERDSMAN 2:** To the basement also?

**BODEJO:** No. You take the three ladies that we have marked out of them to the emergency exit. Chairman need them tonight. Our money must enter tonight.

**HERDSMAN 2:** OKAY.

(*HERDSMAN 1 and HERDSMAN 2 stand up and go their way.*)

## **INTERVENING SCENE**

### **HOSTAGES' ROOM**

(*ITURA rushes to the door and squeezes the key into the padlock. She tries at first, fails. She tries again, fails. She get tired. Rest. Put at it again. She finally get the key enters the padlock. She rushes in and calls*

***SODIQ LAWAL***

*the hostages).*

**ITURA:** Hey (*Waking the rest.*) stand up. We have no time. They are almost here.

**IDORENYIN:** Who are you and what do you want?

**FAITH:** What else do you want?

**TYEHIMBA:** Do you want to sell us this time around?

**ITURA:** There are things that are foggy to you. This is not the time of explaining. Just get up. Let us go. We have no much time.

**FAITH:** We said you should go away. We don't wish to hear anything from you. Enough of you deceit. Leave us to our fate. We couldn't be fooled twice. You think we lack common sense. Common sense might not be common but we possess it. Thank you for everything.

**ITURA:** Listen to me...

**FAITH:** And we said our ears are deaf to your words!

**ITURA:** These people are coming to this place to get ride of you. I pray you listen to me now and we all get out of here alive.

**TYEHIMBA:** Let them come. We aren't scared anymore.

**IDORENYIN:** Are you betraying your new people too?

## ***ERUPTION***

**ITURA:** I never join hands with them.

**IDORENYIN:** You do... girl. You joined hands with them and betrayed us. You do nothing than settling our hope on the sea of doom. Now we realise how impossible it is to save this country from the demons of corruption and set a new page of good nation.

**ITURA:** Listen, everyone, that is what Sun Tsur explain that we lack .... and truly... I never join them. I pretended to get into them. Come on, stand up everyone and let find our way out of here. You all know what is like for them to meet me here.

*(Silence.)*

**ITURA:** Why wouldn't I pretended when we fail to figure out the informant within us. Then I have no other alternative than to do it that way. My observation is that whenever one person is found adequate to the discharge of a duty, it is worse executed by two persons, and scarcely done at all if three or more are. I followed both my mother's and father's words; my father would tell me to strike, my mother would tell me to know how to fight a winning battle.

*(Sluggishly, they all comply.)*

## **INTERVENING SCENE**

**BODEJO'S ROOM**

*(HERDSMAN 1 rushes in).*

***SODIQ LAWAL***

**HERDSMAN 1** (*panting*): ARDO! ARDO! ARDO! Where you dey?

**BODEJO**: What is the matter? Why are you shouting my name?

**HERDSMAN 1**: Ardo, no fes. But trouble don happen.

**BODEJO**: What is it?

**HERDSMAN 1**: Ardo, this na big trouble o.

**BODEJO**: I said what is the problem?

**HERDSMAN 1**: Okay. I go tell you now.

**BODEJO**: I am listening.

**HERDSMAN 1**: Ardo, As I dey go room x and y, my brain come dey tell me say something don happen. But sometimes, I no fit listen to my mind.

**BODEJO**: What really happened?

**HERDSMAN 1**: Na weytin I dey talk.

**BODEJO** (*furiously*): Sey you wan tok or you wan say rubbish.

**HERDSMAN 1**: No fes, Ardo. When I get to room x, all the hostages don break the door and don escape. I go to room y, na the same thing I see there.

**BODEJO**: You said what?!

## ***ERUPTION***

**HERDSMAN 1:** They don escape!

**BODEJO:** HOW?!

**HERDSMAN 1** (*panting heavily*): As I don see that dey don escape, I quickly go to Itura's room. Ardo, I no find her in her room. He don disappear.

**BODEJO:** And you can face me to tell me that. (*He takes his gun and shoot him right away.*) You can tell me that, you fool! Your carelessness has put me for trouble now.

## **INTERVENING SCENE**

### **HOSTAGES' ROOM**

**ITURA:** I have released those in other rooms. Let us go. I risked all this for our safety. (*They all stand up.*)

**BAKU:** Weytin be the plan now?

**ITURA:** BAKU?

**BAKU:** I dey answer you. Weytin happen?

**ITURA:** You know you always say that you are not a coward. You are going to stay here beside the door. As one of them enters, you will strangle him to death.

**BAKU:** I be lion? with my ordinary hands? With gun in that pesin hand?



## ***SODIQ LAWAL***

**ITURA:** You are right. But we have to do something. He will be here soon. Okay. How about the idea of spraying some sands in his face and swiftly collect his gun?

**IDORENYIN:** That sounds a bit good, but dangerous.

**BAKU:** I can try that.

**FAITH:** And you sure we can win this war?

**ITURA:** We win battle not because we are stronger, but because we are determined. Idorenyin, you wake all the hostages to be at alert.

**IDORENYIN:** Okay. But wait, where is Tychimba?

**ITURA:** He is no where to be found.

**IDORENYIN:** How? Where will he be just now.

**ITURA:** I can't rap my head around it now. Let get out of her first.

*(Suddenly they start hearing footsteps. Not long the footsteps become near and someone starts scrambling the door to open it. BAKU is at alert. Immediately the door is forced open, BAKU splashes the eyes of the HERDSMAN 2 with sands and drags his gun with him. The HERDSMAN 2 gives no retreat nor surrender. The dragging continue. The rest at the scene know not what to do. The HERDSMAN 2 pull the trigger of the gun but unfortunately hits his own stomach. The gun bit him, passes his abdomen and pieces his intestines. He falls down and died. Not long BODEJO tip toe to the midst and quickly drags one of the hostages to his grip with a gun. They are all shocked.)*

## **ERUPTION**

**BODEJO:** You all think you can come to lion's den and go out alive without being drenched with your own blood? It is never possible. You killed my men and you want to get out of it. You are all fools! And you, Akwaugu, you betrayed us just like that.

**BAKU** (*whispering*): Who be Akwaugu?

**BODEJO:** You traitor! I will not spare any of you. You must pay for your sins. When you get to hell you will aware that their are things in life that can't be changed. (*He points his gun to ITURA.*) I will kill you first. You think you are smart? You betrayed me too. You want to be a heroin. You are their leader. You want to write you name on the sky as someone that change the country. Like those people you have read about. But you fail. Because you are small for this battle. If you have a glimpse of those that are behind this, you will regret taking this action. It's not bad. Since death is the reward for sin, you shall die.

*(He pulls the trigger but FAITH blocks it with her body. The gun hits her in her chest and falls down. Before he pulls another one, ITURA appears behind him with a rod. He smashes it on his head and he falls down wrangling in blood. BAKU moves close to him and smashes him with another rod. They all rush to FAITH.)*

**ITURA:** Faith, please hold on there. You shouldn't die. We won't let you die. We can save you, please hang on.

**FAITH:** I'm sorry, everyone.

**IDORENYIN:** Sorry for what? Just don't talk again.

**FAITH:** My time is up now. I am sorry. I am their informant since I have been kidnapped. I work for them. My real name is Akwaugu. But I change it to Faith whether their will be someone that would be motivated by the word and struggle for change with faith. Thank God I have seen you before dying. My hands were tied, that is reason why I couldn't do much. That is why I couldn't act properly. I am sorry. But I will tell you not to stop. If they chase you, run as far as you can. Not as a coward, but as determined souls. If they threaten you, let it show in your eyes that you have get to a stage that even death will have to beg for his life. Let the eruption of rage for change be clear in your eyes. Let the strength to fight for better tomorrow power your hope. Let unity bind you forever. Never betray one another. Be firm. And victorious you shall become. Only if I have stabbed fear I wouldn't have died a horrible death like this. *(Her veins relax as she slowly takes her last breath.)*

**IDORENYIN:** What a mirage of life. And we couldn't snuff any sign.

**ITURA:** That's is the definition of life. Most times we have misjudged of character, and pass unjust judgement.

*(Sounds of guns start rending the silence of the place from afar. Gradually, it becomes clearer. They all dash out and take to their heels. ITURA starts mumbling some words as they are running.)*

**ITURA:** Omi ò ní kúnkún kó bojú ẹja. Ile ò ní sù sù kí àfín ó má mọ̀nà. Ẹfúùfùlẹlẹ ò ní fẹ kómi inú àgbọn ó dànù .

**IDORENYIN** *(still on run)*: What is that you are saying?

## ***ERUPTION***

**ITURA:** Worry not girl. That is what our warrior fathers do at the war front. It just a concoction of some powerful words.

*(They continue running for hours non stop. After getting to somewhere seems safe a bit, they all stop and breathe in some fresh air of relief.)*

## HOPE

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*The saving of our world from pending doom will come  
Not through the complacent adjustment  
Of the conforming majority  
But through the creative maladjustment  
Of a non-conforming minority.*

---

### THE NEXT DAY.

*They wake up under one large rock where they could use as a shed for themselves. They are now nine in number apart from five children with them. They are all hungry. BAKU and TYEHIMBA search around for food and get only panpaws. They all settle for the panpaws horridly.*

**IDORENYIN** (*excitedly*): Thank you so much, Itura. You really resurrect our hope. And I know these little children will be happy to be safe.

**ITURA:** Fate has a weakness for brave souls, but it can be a powerful foe to those who are weak. That's it. We must always stand and try. Try all our best, even if we later fail. At least, our soul will not live in agony.

(BAKU and TYEHIMBA appears with panpaws in their both hands.)

## ***ERUPTION***

**TYEHIMBA:** These are all what we could get. We couldn't go far. Let just consume these ones to survive.

**BAKU:** Make we use this to hold our body.

**ITURA:** We should be happy we have something to hold ourselves on the thin line of surviving. Thank you, boys.

*(They break the pawpaws, remove the seeds inside and share it.)*

**IDORENYIN:** Now we can rest a little.

**ITURA:** We still have journey ahead of us.

**IDORENYIN:** At least we are no more in captivity.

**TYEHIMBA:** Here is not safe either. Don't you know we are still in the middle of the forest. This place is dangerous.

**IDORENYIN:** Then what alternative do we have now.

**TYEHIMBA:** We have to move away from this place. I could sense a path that seems safer when we are looking for something to eat. If we could take it, we can get to a safe place.

**IDORENYIN:** Are you sure?

**TYEHIMBA:** This is no time for doubting. We have to continue taking the risk, or we get tramped.

**ITURA:** Then let's try that when the dusk is drawing. We have not to relent. We continue the battle we start to the end. Most especially for the sake of these children. We shouldn't allow any negativity to flush our courage.

***SODIQ LAWAL***

**BAKU:** But, what if we don't enter those people's hands again?

**ITURA:** All things require sacrifice. Worrying about too much things only prevent us from achieving what we want.

**IDORENYIN:** I'm afraid how we are going to get out of this forest safely. What a relief will it be if we could see soldiers to come to our rescue now.

**ITURA:** Don't pray for that. Because they are even worst...

**TYEHIMBA:** But we have to hang our hope on something. We have to keep the hope alive. Everything that is done in the world is done by hope. There is hope in a forlorn space.

**ITURA** (*unrelenting*): Numbers of them we have seen feigning loyalty to keep launching rockets of destruction. They do even worst than those insurgency.

**BAKU:** We still have good ones among them.

**ITURA:** And them - the good ones - we can't figure out. We have to be strong to fight this fight alone if need be. It's hard to beat a person who never gives up.

**BAKU:** But say we fight this fight alone?

**ITURA:** Sometimes a termite takes down an elephant. When it rains, our ancestors weep for the pain our fathers have felt in the dark hulls of ships bound for distant shores! When the wind blows, our ancestors push us to march into battle like this against these people who enslave us! When it thunders, our ancestors demand we rip the shackles of doubt from our

## ***ERUPTION***

minds and fight with courage! We fight not just for today, but for the future! We are the spear of victory! We are the blade of freedom! Many never thought it's possible. But we should believe. That's what makes great people, seeing what others do not. The Europeans and the Americans have said if you want to hold a person in chains, one must first convince them that they are meant to be bound. We shouldn't succumb to this idea anymore.

**IDORENYIN:** I can't believe Faith is an informant and died just like that.

**TYEHIMBA:** The dead can be just as annoying and unreliable as the living. Those who have left are no longer with us, but we must move on with our lives.

**ITURA:** That's why it's good to be a little nobody than to be an evil somebody.

**IDORENYIN:** Poor thing! She died in struggle. She couldn't even get a flash of live she wished to live. Her mother. Her siblings. Only God knows what will have befallen them. LIFE! so miserable!

**BAKU:** No be that miserable. Na your those politicians wey make am more miserable.

**ITURA:** In a world where those with strength continue gaining greater power, the weak will continue perishing. The foolish greed of humans will lead the world to burn to ashes. So if we want peace, we had better get prepared for war.



**IDORENYIN:** War!

**ITURA:** Yes, war. If you want a big fire, you have to start with a spark. That's what we have begun now. And that's the only way to be safe.

*(A brief silence.)*

**ITURA:** My people, that's the only way to rebirth. And if we are killed in the process, we can die but once; but to live in constant dread of it, is to die over and over again.

**IDORENYIN:** Hmm.

**ITURA:** Not only for our generation, but also for these children's.

**BAKU:** I no think dem go allow dem generation to be good.

**IDORENYIN:** What do you mean?

**BAKU:** Weytin I mean be that three of these pikin come to this world by those terrorists. Who go tell dem that? How dem go interpret their fate?

**TYEHIMBA:** How do we do that?

**ITURA:** That's why we should keep the battle to save their generation.

**TYEHIMBA:** I'm getting tired.

**BAKU:** Of weytin?

## ***ERUPTION***

**TYEHIMBA:** Of everything. Every damn thing in this world.

**ITURA:** Then rest! Getting some rest isn't stopping, or an act of laziness, since we don't completely halt our mind to forever rest.

**IDORENYIN:** I miss my family.

**ITURA:** Family is not important thing it's everything.

**IDORENYIN:** I shall make it right with them if I eventually make it out alive.

*(Suddenly, they hear the crumbling of bush a bit far from them. They all get stuck, rolling their eyes on one another. There is a prolonged silence. They crawl back to their hide out - under the rock. TYEHIMBA and BAKU summon their courage to act as boys in their midst by protecting the rest. When the sounds die down a little, TYEHIMBA speaks from where he is.)*

**TYEHIMBA** *(voices a little)*: Baku?

**BAKU** *(crawling under bush)*: Weytin happen?

**TYEHIMBA:** Advance to check the cause of the commotion!

**BAKU:** You be soldier? Why you dey order me?

**TYEHIMBA:** Baku, be a man. Check what it is.

**BAKU:** I no be man at all o. Thank God you don tok am before say I no be man. And I no fight you. So you wey be man fit go naw. *(In mimicking tone.)* Tyehimba, make you advance to the scene make you check the cause of the commotion!

***SODIQ LAWAL***

**TYEHIMBA:** You are not a man at all.

**BAKU:** I no deny that. But you wey be original man fit go.

**TYEHIMBA:** What are you afraid of.

**BAKU:** I wan ask you the same question.

**TYEHIMBA:** You don't want to die?

**BAKU:** You wan die?

**TYEHIMBA:** Why are you answering my question with question?

**BAKU:** You dey ask me? Sebi you be man, then go face death for us now.

**TYEHIMBA:** It's not that I can not go, but I must protect these girls.

**BAKU:** No be to protect dem I dey here for? I go crawl to that side. You no worry. Just go.

**TYEHIMBA:** Oh, Baku! You want me to die?

**BAKU:** No be you say you no fear anything, even death? No be you talk am?

**TYEHIMBA:** We are in different situation now.

**BAKU:** Weytin different about this situation? Ehn, tell me?

**TYEHIMBA:** I no dey fear!

## ***ERUPTION***

**BAKU:** Yes, you no dey fear. I know. And na you talk am say one get mouth. I don catch you now.

**TYEHIMBA:** Catch me?

**BAKU:** Yes, I don catch you. I know say your own will not be urine this time, but thing wey get power than that.

**TYEHIMBA:** Then I will show you what bravery is. *(He tip toes forward a bit, peep his eyes to survey the place. He calms himself. As he get ready to take some other steps, the rustling of the bush starts suddenly again. He runs back to hide.)*

**BAKU** (*guffaws*): Say I no tell you? You no be man at all. See the way you dey do like small pikin. So you fear death like this?

**TYEHIMBA:** (*panting*): You want to die?

**BAKU:** I no wan die o. Even as the country dey so, I no wan die. Nobody wan die. Is that no be reason why we dey struggle, clenching to the rope of hope. But you be the one wey talk sey nothing dey fear you. (*Patronising him.*) Tyehimba, if you no face anything wey dey there now, I no go believe you again. Say you hear me so? I no go trust any of your word again.

**TYEHIMBA:** I don't need your trust in me. Keep it to yourself. You coward!

**BAKU:** See coward dey call me coward. No be you wan go tackle the thing and run back?

**TYEHIMBA:** For that, I'm far off better than you.

**SODIQ LAWAL**

**BAKU:** Weytin you say?

**TYEHIMBA:** At least I made an attempt. What did you do?  
Shaking restlessly under the bush there.

*(The bush becomes calm after some minutes again. No one talk. Everywhere is silent. No word comes from the girls under the rock. It's as if the rock has consumed them. BAKU and TYEHIMBA appears at the scene at once.)*

**TYEHIMBA:** Now you can come out.

**BAKU:** Ta! No tell me that kain tin. No be when we don see that everywhere don calm we both come out?

**TYEHIMBA:** But what is that thing?

*(The bush crumble again and two deer run after each other to another direction. TYEHIMBA and BAKU hold their chests with relief from bursting out.)*

**BAKU:** So na this animal wey wan give us hypertension.

**TYEHIMBA:** Everybody come out now. We can breathe now.

*(They all come out and spread out themselves in the fresh air.)*

**TYEHIMBA:** This place is not safe for normal human being at all. Anything can happen anytime.

**ITURA:** Let us take the path you said.

**IDORENYIN:** Everywhere is jus foggy; we can't even sense

## **ERUPTION**

any way out.

**ITURA:** We shall soon find it.

*(The play of the children gather interrupts them for a while.)*

**ITURA:** Can you see those children? Those little innocent souls. They can breath a little freedom now. At least they are free from bondage. That dark room. That's the dilemma of innocent souls. They can't fathom the place they are now as they start playing. They have low difference of freedom from captivity. What they just want is food and space to play. They are not to blame. Because their generation shouldn't be denied of its right. They a fresh beautiful generation like a blossom of good smell flowers in the spring season.

**IDORENYIN:** Life shouldn't be made difficult for some people by some other people. We all have the right to be happy and live our normal life.

**ITURA:** That's what the powerful minority will never allow.

**IDORENYIN:** But why?

**TYEHIMBA:** For them to keep ruling over the majority.

*(The plays of the children arrest them again. And they are all carried away as a Yoruba child starts a play song.)*

Ení bí ení: lẹmọdé n kawó

Èjì bí èjì: làgbàlagbà n tayò

***SODIQ LAWAL***

Èta bí ètà: ẹ jẹ ká tara wa lóre

Èrin bí èrin: ẹni tó rín ni láá rín

Àrún bí àrún: Ọba má se wá lárungún

Èfà bí èfà: ẹ jẹ ká fara wa mọra.

one like one: children count money

two like two: elders play

three like three: let's help one another

four like four: one makes jest to counter a jest.

five like five: may God not make us prodigal.

six like six: let's embrace one another

*(The children seem enjoying their play as another Igbo child starts another play within their circle.)*

maka gi, ma i mara mma maọbụ nìí ìmaghì

ụwa ga-ahụ

mma ,njo maọbụ ụso dika nwa ugo

Eze ñunụ ga adi gi dee ụso ma ụgbene ya mara mma

You are beautiful, you are ugly

your complexion is compared to that of an eaglet

## ***ERUPTION***

king of eaglet is beautiful

The plumage of an eaglet is beautiful or magnificent.

*(They are jolted back to normalcy after some minutes and avoid the children's play as it continues in the background.)*

**ITURA:** That's great part of what they've learnt here. The unity. The sharing of Languages and cultures. This will be with them forever. And will help them in saving the country in unity.

**IDORENYIN:** I can't believe they are doing all this together within short period of time in captivity.

**ITURA:** The brains of little children are faster and sharper in developing the sense of unity. That's the reason why their early stage should be nurtured properly. They have to be walked to the passage of youth on the terrace of good living. That's why I'm afraid their generation is lacking it.

**IDORENYIN:** Only those dubious give their children the good live...

**TYEHIMBA:** To continue ruling when it's their time.

**BAKU:** We no go allow that to happen.

**ITURA:** Only if we fight today. But now illiteracy is more than blindness. That is why people fail to understand how to fight for their freedom.

**IDORENYIN:** We shall not stop!



**ITURA:** The drop of rain make hole in the stone not by violence but by often falling. Their violence will definitely be consumed by our resistance and perseverance. We continue breaking until we win. It's called revolution power.

**BAKU:** At this juncture, make we trust Allah. He dey listen to His devotees' pleas. Make we have faith in Him. Here, the decision will be made base on the belief we have in Him. Just one try to be hopeful. Definitely, Allah know a way to protect us and safe us from our cruel ruling leaders.

**ITURA:** We choose political thief to rob us. We blindly say we are not blind. We fight one another to defend and protect those political thieves. And they never stop stealing our future, education, heath and business.

**IDORENYIN:** The quality of a real leader is to form a society that doesn't need a leader. Instead they sit on the throne of dictatorship.

**TYEHIMBA:** I hope we get a better morrow woven in new generation.

**IDORENYIN:** This is the morrow. We work that morrow today. For what we've done yesterday unfolded what we are seeing today. The generation of change is this - ours. The gravity of how well we extinguishes our silence and ignite the light of fighting against them will undoubtedly determine the fate of our generation.

**TYEHIMBA:** At school, I was not brilliant. I was not attentive in class. While the teacher rambled on how to know some

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maths formulas, I thought of what to eat in the afternoon, and how to survive to the morrow. I often went to school on empty stomach. Having no time to study, I barely passed. I did not learn to concentrate. Instead, I learnt to dream, to imagine my life in ten years, when, with hunger banished and my mother healed, I would become the happiest man on land. Even in the nadir of poverty. But still yet, in the ocean of mirage I inhale my daily breath.

**ITURA:** I couldn't figure it out if it is a crime to seek to create a blissful new world in which everyone is a little less greedy, and everyone a little happier.

**IDORENYIN:** "To lose but not to surrender", the Polish warlord had said, "that's victory". That's best demystification of our situation now. We fight till our last breath.

*(Silence.)*

**ITURA** (*facing* IDORENYIN): If you eventually make it out of here [alive](#) what do you want to do?

**IDORENYIN:** I just want to live an ordinary life having babies, cooking, doing the laundry, and nagging at my kids and husband from time to time. I want to live like that. Without thinking about things like terrorism, corruption, bad leaders and revolution. Will that be possible?

**TYEHIMBA:** Sure. There is nothing impossible.

**ITURA:** You will live that life.

**TYEHIMBA:** But I guess one of the great agonies of life is

that we are constantly trying to finish that which is unfinished. Because how can we save our way out of this calamity. This seems like a dark circle with no end.

**BAKU:** Why you dey talk like that?

**TYEHIMBA:** I just think about everything and wonder if everything will be resolved and have the type of normal life we are imagining.

**ITURA:** Until we stop wondering some things, but continue taking the path - even when where it leads to desist our knowledge, in as much the beginning is clear to us, we will never set our feet on the terrace of our dreams realisation.

**BAKU:** Me I no wan know Weytin go happen tomorrow or where I go be. Weytin I wan hear today na to fight with all the blood wey dey my veins for the freedom of tomorrow. I believe say if we make today good, tomorrow go be better. Even if we no dey in life again, the generation wey come next go accompany our names with prayers.

**TYEHIMBA:** The dust is appearing. Before it approaches fully, shouldn't we continue our journey out of here, and get another secured place for ourselves?

**ITURA:** We shall continue now as you lead the way.

*(They all rise and trudge forward after TYEHIMBA, in the middle of the bush. Some hostages strapped their sleeping children at their back. While some hold theirs tight to their chest like a man with a gift of gold bars. They follow a narrow path till they get to a clear ground under a big*

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*tree that gathers shade beneath it with the thickness of its leaves.)*

**TYEHIMBA:** I think we should rest for a while here and find something to down the pangs of our hunger.

**ITURA:** Let rest little here before we continue our journey.

*(The tired hostages spread themselves without hesitation, out of tiredness, spreading their children on the self-arranged dried leaves under the shade of the tree.)*

**BAKU:** Everybody make you relax. Let me and Tychimba enter bush to find Weytin we go chop.

*(Immediately, BODEJO's tick voice responds.)*

**BODEJO:** Bothering yourselves to enter the bush will be a waste of time, because you wouldn't have to worry, what you will all eat is here - gun! This area is under our control. The stones you hurled at us are no way stronger than the spray of our bullets.

*(They are shocked to their marrows to see BODEJO alive again. They hold one another in fears and perplexity. The expression on their faces reveal their confusion whether they should just sit down their, make for a run, or pray for the ground to open up and swallow them wholly. They sit still, freeze, as BODEJO walks round them with a gun in his hands.)*

**BODEJO:** You are surprise to see me alive. You thought I would just die like that. You forget that it's only calabash you can smash not plate. You failed to have a second thought that the king of the jungle dies not easily in the jungle. The white whale dies not horrible death in the sea. It's not possible. We

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are watching you like a vulture circling a carcass. I've told you that this battle you invite is beyond you. But isn't not elders that say the dog that will go astray will never for once listen to the whistle of the hunter? And I shall show you in this jungle, how the stubbornness of the rod brings upon itself the hotness of the water.

*(Two herdsmen appear with guns in their hands, looking fiercely.)*

**BODEJO:** You are nothing but pawns in a bigger game. *(He faces his men)*. Drag them to our torture hideout. Let's end this game fast this time around.

**ITURA:** We refuse to play the role of a pawn in you people's corrupt game.

*(The men drag along the hostages for about five minutes before reaching one dilapidated house. The hostages are all backed to enter the house.)*

**ITURA:** What exactly do you want to achieve with turning the peace of the country upside down? You don't care how many people die or suffer, as long as you are happy.

*(Another deep voice of a man forced ITURA to struggle her body in bondage to look at the direction where the voice is coming from. She is half faint to sight her father's friend, CHIBU.)*

**CHIBU:** How will you know when you dart your young live and the lives of others in the line of what beyond your cognitive percipience. Tyehimba, well done. You've demonstrated your loyalty to us by luring them here. You shall be rewarded.

*(IDORENYIN fainted as he heard that TYEHIMBA also is part*

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*of them.)*

**ITURA** (*whoops*): Tyehimba? You too!

**TYEHIMBA**: No one bet on a losing horse. In our country, even a common man's honesty is at risk.

**BAKU**: I for don know before now and kill you. YOU!

(BAKU tries to gather himself up to fiercely piece TYEHIMBA, but TYEHIMBA quickly draw out a big stick and descends it on his head.)

**TYEHIMBA**: Sit down there!

**BODEJO**: That's why this war can never be won by pikin like you. You mistake an ocean for a pool. You shall see the reason we call this jungle an abattoir.

*(ITURA squeezes her face angrily.)*

**CHIBU**: No no, you don't have to look like a deadly reptile about to strike. Not here, girl. That rage shall be suppressed here.

*(IDORENYIN comes around faintly like a resurrecting lamp.)*

**ITURA** (*facing CHIBU*): So you too are one of them?

**CHIBU**: As you can see! I pity you have the same blood as your father, my friend. That's what I try to explain to him always. But he couldn't listen. Here, either you play to the gallery of those politicians you called bastard, or you get

yourself drown in the pool of your rage.

**IDORENYIN** (*regains* consciousness): But how about our generation? Don't you think about the lives of your children too?

**CHIBU:** I don't think whether my father thought or not about my own generation. Yes, I don't, because each generation runs on its own axis without any pre plan of the preceding generation.

**ITURA:** Exactly what is worsening the country. I'm sure you are now familiar with the Yoruba saying, "òní lá tí n pètà ọ̀lá". We plan tomorrow today.

**CHIBU:** You will realise as you grow older that not all sayings are to be followed. Some are just said just for saying sake.

**ITURA:** Raping my head around the fact that you are part of those bacterias we are fighting to wipe out from this country cart me into delusion.

(BODEJO, *Who is furious about what ITURA just said moves close to her, gives her a heavy punch on her face and strangle her.*)

**CHIBU:** You don't have to kill her without letting her taste the wrath of death. You, little fly, buzzing around full speed. But you don't know where you are going. We need smart young generation. The dumb ones like you die quickly. I have watched young people die because they don't have discipline.

**ITURA** (*Spitting some blood*): I so well know now that you are the beast we shouldn't allow to breed their young ones. Here,

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we will be the hunter not prey.

**BAKU:** We no go surrender until we see your end!

**CHIBU:** You are too small for this. You must by now know that Giraffes can go without water longer than a camel.

**ITURA:** And I believe you know too that ant can pull about 30 times their own weight and lift about 50 times their own weight. We might rank inferior to you in comparison of everything, but with our unrelenting rage of cooperation we shall demolish you and those of your corrupt politicians' cattle of hardship.

**BODEJO:** You still don't get it. You don't have to surrender. We don't want you to. That's what we are here for actually. To teach brat like you big lesson of their life. You are so daft for you to think we come to your land, grazing our cattle on your farm, kidnapping you without the help of politicians and people like Chibu. I thought your generation will be wiser than this. But you are duller!

**CHIBU:** This is how thing works here, daughter. The more you dig the tunnel of corruption the more you bump into another wider ones.

**ITURA:** I detest you! (*Her eyes riveted on CHIBU.*)

**CHIBU:** Hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.

**IDORENYIN:** The time of silence is over. Even at the brim of death we won't seal our mouth, tame our strength and



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succumb to slavery. For we know that for evil to triumph it is only necessary for all good men to do nothing.

**CHIBU:** A problem left to itself dries up or goes rotten but fertilising a problem with your so called “solution” will hatch out dozens of problems.

**BAKU:** Then weytin we don see for all the silence wey we don have?

**CHIBU:** Well, perchance not yet time.

**ITURA:** Why do you yank off your garment of humanity and cloak yourselves with the blankets of bad people? Why?!

**CHIBU:** That’s what the nation teaches everybody, either you are good or bad. But the latter is better - here - than the former. What do you know? What have you seen in this country.

**ITURA:** But working for this headsmen and those politicians isn’t the best option.

**CHIBU:** If not for jungle, what does the street offer? If not for these people, what will have become of an ordinary man. Have you ever lived your life hoping for dawn, yet knowing that the same dawn might usher you in your end? The game is simple, we all work together to achieve our aims - for them to remain in power, and for us to get rich and some other things that is taboo for you to hear.

**BODEJO:** And you can’t live your life to the fullest if you don’t have money or power. But if you have them, you need more. Our needs are unlimited, you see. What would become

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of vultures if the earth is swept of carcass? What would become of us if calamity vanished from the face of earth? Answer me?

**ITURA:** Rain is necessary, but it shouldn't last forever. The sun is also necessary, but it should set as well. And no one should stay powerful and live forever.

**BODEJO:** In your own mental faculty!

**BAKU:** Good people no be people wey go stray when they face problems. Good people na the ones wey fight with life under every circumstances and win.

**IDORENYIN:** We continue clamouring that the politicians are bad without knowing that people like you are the fertilizer that germinate their bad deeds. Because if we have no one assisting them, we would have triumph over them long time ago.

**CHIBU:** I can now see how well you've trained your supporter on this. Why do you really want to waste your lives?

**ITURA:** To win a war, you don't always need strength, you need brain.

**CHIBU:** But you have neither of the two.

**ITURA:** We can't lose anything in this war. So we fight it to the end. But it costs you heavily - your family, the wealth you are killing for, and the power you can't ever reach that you are fighting for.

**BODEJO:** Have you ever killed before?

**ITURA:** Pull the trigger on the head of the bad people like you, and it's over.

**BODEJO:** No, it's not over. The eyes of the first person you kill will haunt you forever. The eyes of the person whose life slips away from your hand will follow you around, when you eat or sleep. Even in your dreams. Your life will be a living hell where you're chased by those eyes endlessly. That's actually what we live with.

**ITURA:** Everyone has to choose their own path in life. You choose to be a destruction.

**CHIBU:** The country imposes it on us. The system is the enemy not me. But we are not sad about it. Yes, we gladly accept it.

**ITURA:** So you are just using the word 'change' to becloud your true colour.

**CHIBU:** That's how things choose to operate here - this country We have no choice.

**IDORENYIN:** And you will appear as the elder we can rest on his shoulder, chanting "youth are the leader of tomorrow". But I tell you that morrow will never come until we realise that today is the morrow we pray for yesterday.

**CHIBU** (*looks like a deadly reptile about to strike*): Shut up your stinking mouth, you fool. I have been in this country you weren't being born. You know nothing! Absolutely nothing!

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You know nothing about my fruitless struggle in this country. You know nothing about our fight. You should have known this word of wisdom that one should not meddle in issues that are higher than one. Or let me put it in this way, a child does not go asking about who killed his father. But now you have meddled in what you shouldn't try to meddle in, and you have no alternative than to witness the brunt of it.

**ITURA:** if you have really suffered, you shouldn't have join hands with those wicked politicians to destroy the country completely.

**CHIBU:** Let me tell you, Nigeria politics rule is simple "never hit the big guys, focus on the small people". That's it. Nigerian all talk. Their anger extinguishes in their parlours and the newspaper stands. (*Raises his forefinger, jabbing the air in emphasis.*) You try and steal a loaf of bread out of hunger, they will stone you. But loot billions from the national treasures and they will crown you with chieftaincy on red carpet. If they ever riot, is only to kill one another. They never rise against the politicians.

**IDORENYIN:** And we have risen against them now.

**CHIBU:** Nigerians are fragile that's why the politicians always have their way. They hit Nigerians with something that will make all their trouble disappear. How do they make their troubles disappear? They swallow it up with a bigger problem, that's all! In many countries, fuel scarcity, major fuel scarcity like this can bring down a country. But in Nigeria, it's semen for a weak government. Because the more the Nigerian people suffer, the weaker they become. I'm talking about kind of fuel

scarcity that will make an Okada man sleeps at a filling station for days just to buy petrol. That kind of scarcity can quenches any political protest. And if they still prove stubborn, then it's time to play the heavenly card. The politicians will start abusing one another in newspapers and social medias, as they are play-fighting in the press, so will the Nigerian citizens be fighting one another on the street for real. Isn't it amazing?

**ITURA:** Why just knowing all this without fighting for the change.

**CHIBU:** "Change". Too much change can be too dangerous, you know.

**BODEJO:** You have been seeing how easy it is.

**CHIBU:** I couldn't believe you are soo daft to this level. Can't you see how things work here. Listen, the best option for you is to join hands with them or die a horrible death.

**ITURA:** Sometimes, death is a better option than living a horrible life.

**CHIBU:** That's the problem of your generation. Young people don't understand the elderly since they have no experience.

**ITURA:** And the elderly forget what it was like when they were young, and fail to understand young people.

**CHIBU:** Ask yourselves if you are courageous enough to fight against the prejudice of this country.

**ITURA:** That's not something we contemplate anymore.

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**BODEJO:** Learn to hide your true feelings if you want to succeed.

**IDORENYIN:** Is that not why you people feign to be good people in front of people.

**CHIBU:** Since it's clear that we couldn't get our ransom from your people, it's better we elongate this conversation anymore. We have to get our pay by all means. So, you will have to go and continue the rest of your dialogues with those that you call corrupt politicians. We have to hand you over to them in order to get our money. Yes, we have to get money. New currency. Money is part of our business here. And they need you now. What a beautiful coincidence.

**IDORENYIN:** Until now, we may have been outmatched and outmaneuvered, but the final gambit has yet to be played. We have looked past our tears and masks of grief. Now, we won't be intimidated and we will never give up.

**BODEJO:** Before we end the chapter, I will get taste of you (Points his gun to IDORENYIN.)

**CHIBU:** See what you have put yourselves into.

**BODEJO** (*beckoning his two men*): bring her to me. (*He enters one room.*)

(*The two headsmen dragged IDORENYIN as she screams in to the dark room. BAKU tries to stop them, but the rope they tie him with couldn't allow him. ITURA and the other five hostages are also helpless as they are all in bondage. Not quite long, IDORENYIN screams*

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*consume the silence of the room completely. Slowly, the scream is fainting away and completely stop.)*

**ITURA:** Is this the future you want for us, for you children? I am under no illusion that you and your politicians see us as anything but a commodity.

**BAKU:** You no be human being at all. You be beast that no fit live with people. You no get respect for female. And you call yourself an elderly person.

**CHIBU** (*scoffs shortly*): I'm not too surprised because I blamed endlessly when I was your age too. Have you ever heard the proverb? A rotten apple spoils the barrel. So, not to allow you to spoil the barrel, we have no choice than to wipe you out.

**BAKU:** We no dey fear death.

**ITURA:** You can't escape the debt you owe.

**TYEHIMBA:** Ardo, make we finish this people sharply. Dem they talk too much.

**ITURA:** We all live for a reason. For some, it's love. For some, it's friendship. For some it's family... or self interest. For people like us, it's for our country.

**CHIBU:** I wish you could go home to know the state of your family. But I'm afraid you can't leave here alive. Yes, you shouldn't live.

**ITURA:** What have you done? My sister has died? You've killed my father? Or my entire family?

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**CHIBU:** Those questions are none of my business.

**ITURA:** We need not a ruling aristocrat. But a servant in service. That's the meaning of authority. And I will do my work to make you know about it. I will re-write a new era. I will always slogan the people's interest.

**CHIBU** (*sighs*): I don't think the rage that erupts in you is hot enough to cause the volcano of change in this nation. I think not! Because these people are more than how you see them. They give no chance of losing the game. They are more powerful than what you can ever imagine.

**ITURA:** Your corrupt politicians are using the method of cashless policy to punish innocent people. See people queuing, fainting and dying at the extent of withdrawing their own money at the ATM stands. They are wicked.

**CHIBU:** That's the reason the 'citizens' right' is the first thing snatched from the citizens. And you will see, after some days of clamouring, they won't have alternative than to continue their life with it.

**ITURA:** You remember those women whose story occupied the front page of newspapers couple of weeks ago? The ones who stood for your corrupt politicians. They died of heart attack because of them. They even chased them far away. No selling by the road. No this, no that. Those woman died in many ways that I can't even count. First son of one of them died because their hospital are not functioning. They wouldn't touch him unless they grease currency. Another one's daughter was shot the day their boys stopped her bus. But their boys



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don't care, "nothing must happen to Oga". And just like that a graduate was dispatched to meet her God. All what they do is to pretend as if the really care. Yes, we people supported, voted them into power. We know that every four four years they will remember that we are their people. They told those woman their small shops would be demolished to make way for big mall. They said their houses they built with their sweat would be used to make road and they would get rewarded. But nothing happened afterward. They will say they don't steal but what about the oil revenue? They scandaled the wealth we are all entitled to then ship their children abroad, bring them back in private jet for reserved good jobs. But our parents are here hustling and praying to God for our daily bread. And that we - their children - don't end up dead.

**CHIBU:** We work not with useless history here. Your time is up.

*(BODEJO comes our of the room adjusting his stinking trousers with his left hand and pushing IDORENYIN out with his right hand. As they get to their midst, he pushes her to her colleagues.)*

**BODEJO:** Yeah, I enjoy this one. I don't know how come, I just enjoy her. What next now Chibu?

**CHIBU:** Call honorable and let him know that we have captured them again and ask about the next step.

**BODEJO:** Okay. I will do that now. Are you going home tonight.

**CHIBU:** I should pass the night here and skedaddle before

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the dawn finally arrives.

*(BODEJO tells TYEHIMBA to monitor them and deal with anyone of them that misbehave. He faces his men.)*

**BODEJO:** Go back to the base and inform your colleagues to always be at alert.

*(They salute him and rush out. BODEJO also enters one room. It remains TYEHIMBA alone with the hostages in bondage.)*

**BAKU:** I no fit believe say you too no be by our side since this time. People.

**TYEHIMBA:** You better shut you mouth because I have no time to deal with your delusional fantasies.

**ITURA:** I see your sanctimonious smirk. But we will get the last laugh. I shall humiliate you so badly that the bitter taste of defeat burns in your throat.

**TYEHIMBA:** Shut your trap!

**ITURA** *(to IDORENYIN):* Sorry. How are you feeling?

**IDORENYIN** *(sobbing):* The bastard raped me mercilessly. My live. I never imagine I will be in a mess like this.

**BAKU:** Sorry, Idorenyin.

**IDORENYIN:** I count that as part of the sacrifice. Come what may, we are not stopping this fight.

**ITURA:** Tyechimba, why do you too change? Are you part

of them before? Or you joined hand with them here? How? Why?

**TYEHIMBA:** Story for the gods!

**IDORENYIN:** There are monsters everywhere. And sometimes the monsters we least suspect are the most dangerous. They don't need teeth and claws to terrify. They hide in the shadows until no one is looking. And then they strike.

**TYEHIMBA:** I'm just doing my job well.

**IDORENYIN:** Is this a good job? Is destroying the lives of other human beings like you a job worth boasting about? Is pouring the peace of the country into the pool of destruction calls for laughter?

**TYEHIMBA:** Sometimes, is not exactly what you do that count, In as much as you keep your head above the water, that's all.

**ITURA:** Are you not going to give us at least little thing to survive?

**TYEHIMBA:** You deserve nothing like that.

**IDORENYIN:** If not for us, what of those of this children?

**TYEHIMBA:** Both live and dead hostages are useful. You don't worry. Even it's better you die from the hand of hunger, that's one of the best way to die here. Rather than witness the the wrath of real death.

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**BAKU:** Na me go kill all of you.

**TYEHIMBA** (*chuckles*): So, you are still wallowing in that illusion?

**ITURA:** Even if we end it here, we try our best to work the change. And the incoming generation will do more than this.

**BAKU:** Make all of you listen to me, we no go die here. Trust me.

**TYEHIMBA:** You that are not a man is talking. How do you want to do that?

**BAKU:** I go show you that I be Hausa boy. We no dey surrender!

*(TYEHIMBA moves close to them, checking if the ropes used to tie them are tight, leaving his gun behind. When he get to ITURA, not knowing that the rope that bind her hands has loosen. She rushes up and swiftly strangles TYEHIMBA's neck with the rope. They continue dragging it. The remaining hostages are shocked to see ITURA doing that. They both continue dragging, muffling grunt. After some minutes, TYEHIMBA seems tired and too weak to continue the struggle. His body becomes cold. But ITURA doesn't leave him until he confirms that he has died. She lies him down and snatches his head in anger. She picks up the gun and untie the remaining hostages.)*

**ITURA** (*breathing heavily*): The rage is enough to prove you wrong that woman are nothing.

**IDORENYIN:** That good of you, Itura. Deceitful ones become the cause of his own death. Now we have to finish

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the rest of them and dash out immediately.

**BAKU** (*shocks*): I no think say that one necessary. I think say we should just escape now.

**IDORENYIN**: If we do that they can still catch us.

**ITUURA**: Yes. Don't worry, I will handle them. You stay with the rest let me enter their rooms.

( ITURA enters the room and finds CHIBU snoring heavily. She gently moves close to him and hack him down with a filthy rag he could lay her hands upon. She presses him down so hard that he couldn't make any sound or fight back till he loses his breath. ITURA rushes out looking for the room where BODEJO is. She searches for a while before finding the room. As she turns to enter the room, she starts hearing footsteps. She pauses, cocks the gun in his hands and ready to shoot. She can't hear any step again. After a while, she hears the step again and BODEJO's eyes bore into hers, brimming with murderous intent. ITURA waits no more and fires him. BODEJO fall down looming in the pool of his own blood.)

**ITUURA**: I've vowed not to let you live. I found this in Chibu's pocket. It will be useful.

**BAKU**: You don't do well, Itura. You be real man, no be woman.

**IDORENYIN**: I think we should leave here first before their members start swarming like mosquitoes in July.

**BAKU**: Oya make we dey go.

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*(ITURA hands over the gun to BAKU. As they turn back to go, BODEJO stands up staggering. Before BAKU could look back and balance his posture, he pulls the trigger and the bullet hits him in his chest. He falls down.)*

**BAKU** *(faintly, in blood)*: Itura, take the people go. I can't survive this. Don't try to help me. Go!

*(Before BODEJO could take few steps forward, BAKU manage to point the gun to him and they both shout each other and die. ITURA and IDORENYIN, with the other hostages dash out and continue struggling with the tick forest in the dark till the dawn announces its arriver. They get to a tied road and sigh some breaths of relief.)*

**ITURA**: Girls, I think we are free from bondage now. And this might be our road of departure. I hope we meet again. Not as hostages, but as conqueror, in a new nation of no corruption and commotion. Remember what we have passed through in the jungle. Remember we are yet to complete our work for change. Even this is just the beginning. Whenever you find yourself, I want you to always work for the betterment of the country and I believe you will desist any form of supporting corrupt politicians. You with children, I hope you nurture your children beyond the barrier of how you gave birth to them, but to be great holders of the pillars of great nation tomorrow, who wipe away the stains of the country. The country is counting on you. Our country needs us. The world we are about to face is invisible. It's a dark world conquering the world of light. We are to be strong and be determined.

**SOME HOURS LATER**

ITURA *gets home and her family are perplexed to see her. The condition she meets her family at home explain to her that something has happened. The expression on her mother's and brother's faces makes her eyes well up of tears. They look haggard and unkept.*

**ITURA:** I'm back finally, mother.

**FATIMA** (*in tears*): AH! So I will still set my eyes on you again. God is great.

**ITURA:** I was kidnapped by the herdsmen. But thank God we conquered them.

(SUBAIR *hugs her tightly with happiness.*)

**SUBAIR:** Thank God you are back. Things have happened behind your back.

**ITURA:** What happened?

**FATIMA:** Many things!

**ITURA:** Where is my father? Is Amina getting better at the hospital?

**FATIMA:** Your father died of poison after coming back from his outing, complaining he was having stomach pain. We rushed him to the hospital, but it's too late.

**ITURA:** AHH! Father. (*She sobs.*) you shouldn't leave us like this.

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**SUBAIR:** Amina is still in the hospital. Her condition has worsen since you couldn't bring the money for her surgery. Even they have started pestering us to come and take her from the hospital if we can't afford the money for her surgery.

**ITURA:** Why everything is like this? Why?!

**FATIMA:** Can you just see what "revolution" you and your father are chanting brings to us.

**ITURA:** We can't continue watching, mother.

**FATIMA:** Why do you want to fight? Tell me why? You want to be famous? Rich? You want power?

**ITURA:** None of those. None.

**FATIMA:** Oh, yeah. You want to save the country I guess. But of millions that have fallen for this country, how many have been celebrated as heroes. How many ITURA?

**ITURA:** I'm not looking to be a hero. I am not looking to be a hero. That's not ...

**FATIMA:** Then what?

**FATIMA:** I've always cherish the simplicity and privacy of our lives. Why are you taking it away from us.

**ITURA:** Mother...

**FATIMA:** You sometimes need to leave the battle in order to win.



**SODIQ LAWAL**

**ITURA:** This is the battle that determines the morrow of our generation, mother. The war I have started is clearly and precisely right. I am doing what I can do to stop them from doing what they should not do. I have met numerous condemnation with a believable justification. And countless excuses to stop me. But this fight is the right thing to do. That is why I know exactly whom to put my sword at and which path to take. You have no worries, father has taught us to be strong and independent. How to navigate ourselves in a world full of treachery and prejudice.

**FATIMA:** And I've explained how impossible it is to win.

**ITURA:** It's possible mother, if not for the help of people like CHIBU.

**FATIMA:** Which Chibu? Your father's friend? What happened to him.

**ITURA:** So this is what Chibu meant after killing my father?

**SUBAIR:** What do you mean?

**FATIMA** (*impatiently*): How?

**ITURA:** He is part of the corrupt people. He is just pretending. If something happens to me, don't write or say about it.

**FATIMA:** What are you saying?

**ITURA:** Many people are trying to bring about change. They might lose their courage.

## ERUPTION

*(ITURA dashes inside her room and comes out in a jiffy. Before her mother could block her, she has escaped her grip. She goes straight to a Tv station. They denied her entry. She swiftly get a gun from one of the security men and threatens the workers there until they give her space to do whatever she want to do. She insert the flash with her and series of unbelievable secret of the corrupt politicians are displaying on people's television.)*

**ITURA:** I'm very sure good percentage of people are watching this. Watch it carefully and see the lives of the politicians you are fighting for. How they support and use the headsmen and other terrorists to continue their ruling.

*(After some minutes of the video that reveals the secret of the corrupt politicians and how they dine and wine with the terrorists and other bad acts, the shouting of guns and shouting can be heard afar. ITURA moves close to the mic and speak.)*

**ITURA:** What exactly the value of the lives of the Nigerian citizens? Controversies have filled the airwaves and media headlines debate on who is to blame or not. But I tell you, I am to blame, you are to blame. Every single citizen of this nation is to blame. Bodies lie lifelessness everyday because we know who these corrupt politicians are yet we allow them gallivanting freely among us; with reckless impurity. The lives lie lifelessness every day because we see corruption flourishing and we do nothing about it. Nothing about it! We suffer everyday because every Nigerian citizen that gather in group indoors and outdoors and argue about the state of the nation, about the corruption in this country and take no action. We don't even have the gut to work this corrupt politicians out.

## ***SODIQ LAWAL***

Our brothers and sisters feed on wild plants and drink their urines so they can quench their thirst from the scorching sun of the Sahara while they cross in search of greener pasture and above that same Sahara 35 thousand feet above we have these men sitting in their luxurious jet, sipping on expensive wine and cross-legged in their first class seat. They loot day in day out nation treasury into banks abroad. Thousands of brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters are fed on by sharks while their boats and ships capsized in the Mediterranean Sea. All because they are looking for greener pasture in a foreign land. And then, we have these people enjoying on different beaches, those fool compatriots. But they reign with this evil they have done. Those loyal innocent dead bodies we see in our country everyday are crying out for vengeance, but not only for themselves, they are crying for vengeance for those who have lost their lives in accident our horrible roads. Roads that've been commissioned to be fixed by those men embezzled every single penny that has been pulled aside for these roads. They cry out in vengeance for the unfortunate citizens that have lost their lives fighting for their pensions and gone unrewarded and their families are left to dry. They cry out in vengeance for those that have lost their lives in civil and religious crises masterminded by these evil geniuses. They cry out in vengeance for our soldiers who have lost their lives to insurgency sponsored by these devilish politicians. They cry out in vengeance for our failed justice system that has seen thousands of men and women in prison for crimes they know nothing about. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Nigeria that can't be fixed by what is right by Nigerians. Nigerians may have been slow, but we are not weak. We may

## ***ERUPTION***

have acted cowardly, but we are not stupid. We may have been silent but we are not deaf. And until the eruption of rage for better tomorrow oozes up on our minds, the new nation will never rises.

*(ITURA hardly finishes her speech when the whole compound of the TV station is arrested by gunshots coming from no particular direction. The targeted ITURA is hit. As she struggles to survive in blood, the shouting of the youths consumes the atmosphere. Eruption of rage to change the situation of the country bursts in people. In a jiffy, more people are joining, demonstrating against the bad leadership.)*

“The old era is dying, a new one will soon be born; the prologue has ended, the drama will now commence”.

**-Femi Ademiluyi, (*The New Man*)**

END

END

## GLOSSARY

**Rob Halford:** Robert John Arthur Halford (25 August 1951) is an English heavy metal singer.

**Yamayama:** Used literally to mean not to do anyhow.

**Sani Abacha:** Sani Abacha (20 September 1943 - 8 June 1998) was a Nigerian military officer and politician who ruled as the military head of state after seizing power in 1993 until his death in 1998.

**BIAFRA WAR:** Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970.

**Yẹyẹ:** Someone that is essentially useless, worthless or senseless.

**ISWAP:** Islamic State West Africa Province; it is an offshoot of Boko Haram with which it has a violent rivalry.

**Thirty-Six Stratagems:** A Chinese essay by Wang Jìngzé to illustrate a series of stratagems used in politics, war and civil interaction.

**Shakespeare:** William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 - 23 April 1616) was an English playwright, poet and actor.

**Wallahi Ta Allahi:** A Hausa expression literally means 'I swear to God'.

**Gragra:** Pidginised word for an unstable person or lifestyle.

**Yanga:** Pidginised word for pride or flamboyance.

## TESTIMONIAL