

A TWO-ACT DRAMA

Stepping on the Face of Earth

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adigun wasiu

Bolawritehand Incorporated

PROLOGUE

This drama highlights how bad habits of the child to parents and to God Almighty are as infectious as the plague. It chronicles to us that there is one feature in the law of habit which is so crucial, so uniformly certain in its operation, and in some of its bearings so almost fearful, that it should be remembered by all. It is this, that all power of passive sensation is weakened by the repetition of negative indulgence; and that, just as certainly, our active propensities are straightened by inclination towards God Almighty Allah.

Habit is the child of impulse. There is in human life the period of impulse, when habit is nothing; and there is the period of habit when impulse is nothing. Once a habit is formed, all impulse falls into it. Whereas, good habits are best magistrates – good habits towards Allah and, good habits towards parents. This is what cools the face of Allahu Ta’ala.

Unhappy is the man in whose mother derives no happiness. The dignity, the grandeur, the tenderness, the everlasting and divine significance of parenthood is without measure, as parents’ love endures forever. Brothers and sisters may become inveterate enemies, husbands may desert their wives, and wives their husbands; friends may turn their back on man. But parents’ love in good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world’s condemnation, father and mother still love on, and still hope that the child may turn from his evil habits and repent.

His mother still remembers the infant smiles that once filled her bosom with rapture, and the merry laugh. The father reminisces on the joyful shouts of his childhood, the opening promise of his youth. And they can never be brought to think him all unworthy and lost forever.

Mother is the rallying point around which affection and obedience a thousand tender endeavours to please, concentrate. Oh no, dreary is the blank when such a rallying point is withdrawn, and the child sees her no more. When she is still alive, it is incumbent that the child stoop low to his mother. And, of course, to his father.

It is generally admitted and very frequently proved that virtue and good habits, and all the natural good qualities which the child possesses are derived by the grace of Allah Subhanah wa-Ta’ala, from his parents. No wonder Muhammadu Rasullullah (salallahu alahyi was-Sallam) says in a hadith that:

The entry ticket to Al-Jannah of the child subsists in the heels of his mother.

It is to be understood in at this juncture that parental love sums all bliss.

Baba Adigun /’24

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Crowd : Electorates
Professor : Governorship Aspirant
Borokinni : Governorship Aspirant
Alhaja : Professor's Mother
Baba Onile : Professor's Father
Aafa-Agba : Muslim Cleric
Debisi : Professor's Wife

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**Crowd** : Electorates  
**Professor** : Sunmonu Rayhan  
Aderoju Uthman  
**Borokinni** : Rabiun Mustapha  
Animashaun Ayub  
**Alhaja** : Fatai Yusrah  
Ibrahim Aleemah  
**Baba Onile** : Olaosebikan Haleem  
Adebayo Tawfeek  
**Aafa-Agba** : Agoro Abdul'Haleem  
Abioro Ridwan  
**Debisi** : Alabi Fa'izah  
Ogunfowora A'aisha

**ACT ONE: SCENE ONE**

***Day One in the Marketplace.***

***A large crowd throngs behind Professor who is contesting the governorship.  
The shouts of his Party and of his identity rent the air.***

Crowd : PFP! PFP!  
Professor Governor!  
PFP! Professor Governor!  
PFP! PFP!

Professor : *(stops to address the crowd.)*  
I am running for the gubernatorial election  
For your sake in this state.  
We must put a definite stop to  
Oppression, corruption, misappropriation, extortion,  
Distortion, intimidation, and maladministration.  
Vote my party. Vote me. I am your man.  
I am no such illiterate goats as they....  
Who have come to usurp power.  
Vote the only Professor of repute.

Crowd : Up Professor Governor....  
One Nation, One Nigeria, One Destiny!

***Curtain.***

***Another gubernatorial candidate from another party emerges,  
chanting his party slogan.***

Borokinni : My people at home and beyond  
Here comes your dear Borokinni  
A leader per excellence. Vote me for joy;  
I promise you stable electricity, pipe-borne water.  
I promise your children free education at all levels.  
I promise end of banditry and unprecedented kidnap.  
The history of our legacies is forever history!  
Hear me out, everyone....  
Our legacies are not even a history  
They are talk-of-the-town. Vote me....

BRK Power! BRK Power!

*The crowd seems not pleased with this party. In an eye blink, the place is deserted by the people, leaving the party candidate all to himself.*

***Day Two at the Town Hall***

***Professor emerges again. People cluster round him shouting, yelling, and praising him. Some are dancing while some seek to have a handshake with him.***

Professor : Give no room for further corruption.  
They are looters, embezzlers, dwindlers.  
Go and look for their antecedents,  
You will see skeletons in their cupboard.  
(he breaks suddenly into a dance.)  
*Owo mi ma ree funfun nene...*  
*Owo mi ma ree funfun nene.*

Crowd : PFP! PFP!  
One Nation! One Nigeria!

**SCENE FADES OFF**

## SCENE TWO

***A woman clad in abaya moves out of her bedroom into the parlour to meet her husband who has been much engrossed in reading the Holy Qur'an. She curtsys her greeting but he seems not to notice.***

Alhaja : It's you I'm greeting, Baba Onile.... Alhaji.

Baba Onile: *(looks up and gestures in a way that shows a bit of grimace.)*

Alhaja : *(curtsys again.)* As-sallamun alahykum.

Baba Onile: *Wa alaykumus-Sallam. (Now turns to pay full attention.)*

Alhaja : *(smiles flourish her countenance as she attempts to sit opposite him.)*

Baba Onile: Please.... no such time as affords this. You have eyes, Alhaja... you have ears too. And the brain to discern what I'm doing strikes a chord that transcends the universe. It touches all moral intelligence, visits every world, vibrates along its whole expanse, and conveys its vibrations to the bosom of Allah *Subhanah wa Ta'ala*. Any other conception of genius is doubtful, if not even dangerous possession this time around.

Alhaja : Do not talk much, Alhaji. I know the importance of your adhesion to Qur'an. *Barka Llahu feekum.*

Baba Onile: Aamin. Now, what's the matter?

Alhaja : I curtsy my thanks for the provision fund, but it's too little to sustain our needs.

BabaOnile: *(frowns suddenly and retorts.)* Too little, you mean? Alhaja.... One hundred and fifty thousand too little in your own estimation?

Alhaja: Not in my estimation, sir.

Baba Onile: But what?

Alhaja : It is little by the language of current market prices. The money can't nourish our needs for thirty-day *sahou*, let alone *iftar* added.

Baba Onile: Okay.... Iya, cut your coat according to your cloth. Don't charge me with anything more. No more money.

Alhaja : Does any fasting Muslim get himself into the intoxication of anger?

Baba Onile: Am I angry? Does getting you understand mean I'm angry? *(Shakes his head in amusement and, gives a wry smile.)* When passion is on the throne, reason is

out of doors.

Alhaja : Is that no statement of anger, Baba Nuru? *(She rises slowly on her feet, claps her hands in surprise and then, smiles disdainfully.)* I urge you sir, count ten before you speak again.

Baba Onile: I'm angry?

Alhaja : Very angry now, count one hundred not even ten any more.

Baba Onile: It's all right. Thank you. *(Returns to his chants of Qur'anic verses.)*

Alhaja : Because of money! Violence in the voice is only the death rattle of reason in the throat. Just because of money to buy food items in Ramadan.

Baba Onile: Yes, because of money.... Ask more from your son. He's coming here today. If I no longer control the literature of this family sustenance, your professor son may take over.

Alhaja : And.... you said you were not angry.

Baba Onile: It was the fire you kindled.

Alhaja : O daa, take no offence.... candid bearer of my dowry. The only money-bags placed at my feet. *(Begins to chant his panegyrics.)*

*Alabi mi, Opo-Mu'lero  
Omọ Eṣu, Ilu Oyun  
Ilu Abata, Onileṣe'Yun  
Opo-Mu'lero, 'Mọ Jaa'Lekan  
Omọ ọpọlọpọ eru  
B'aa ba pa wọn pọ  
Wọn ò t'Eṣu  
B'Eṣu ṣe n ya n'ile  
Bẹẹ lo n ya l'oko....*

Baba Onile: *(gradually becomes swollen-headed.)* Thank you. Now, how much do you still require more?

Alhaja : Heen-n? What did you say?

Baba Onile: How much do you need more for the purchase of the food items?

Alhaja : Haa, thank you. Maybe another hundred and fifty thousand.

Baba Onile: (*grabs his phone.*) I will transfer it now.

***Knocks roar on door.***

Alhaja : O Allah, my son is here! My boil bursts forth.

***Almost instantly, a young man in French suit emerges. Alhaja rushes out to welcome him.***

Alhaja : (*ecstatic.*) Kaabo!  
Opo-Mu'lero,  
'Mọ Jaa'Lekan

Professor : (*begins to frown steadily.*) No thank you, Mama.

Alhaja : (*staggers back in surprise.*) Haa! Why, Adisa?

Professor : Once upon a time in this house... not even once and oh-h, not quite long, long time in the distant past did I warn you never to address me again by that rotten name you call Adisa! I am far, far past that name.

Baba Onile : Haa! Adisa was what we named you-u.

Professor : No-o! Adisa my foot, sir. Call me by what people address me everywhere.

Baba Onile: What name do people call you?

Professor : (*furiously*) I am Professor. So what people call me. (*Leaves his side and walks indoors.*)

Baba Onile : (*trailing him wearily.*) I'm no people, Adisa. Your father I am. *Ş'ó o gbọ bayii?*

***The voice of Alhaja now turns husky voice sounds from within, as she trails them with utmost caution, looking at both her husband and son in awe.***

Alhaja : Never having heard this before in all my life... he now renounces his name.

Professor : Look ma, that's not my mission here today. (*Gets seated on a chintz-covered sofa in the living room.*)

Baba Onile: But... you make it bone of contention. You make it a priority!

Professor : It's okay. I take my leave... this instant, this very second!



Alhaja : With your eyes open, you lose the direction of truth, Nurudeen?

Baba Onile: You are by nothing so much yourself, as by your temper and the character of your passions and affections. If you lose what is manly and worthy in these, you are as much lost to yourself, as when you lose your memory and understanding.

Professor : Mama, I'm not Nurudeen. I'm a Professor of Lexicogrammaticology at the high profile university in Africa. If you see how the whole expanse of the world vindicates and venerates me, you will put a definite stop to addressing me in a way that diminishes my status.

Alhaja : Haa, we dare not diminish you....

Professor : What again.... what, were you to diminish me? Oh- oh-h, little wonder then our people say at home does the hen have its value diminished.

***Rises abruptly from the chintz-covered sofa.***

Alhaja : Even in Ramadan you do all this to us your parents, Nurudeen? Do not you fast at all? Or what? Let moral imperative be your lot.

Professor : If the home augurs well, we view it in the build of the inhabitant. And, if it augurs badly, we view it also in his build.

Alhaja : Do not berate us, son. Never berate the home that nurtured you.

Professor : What home nurtured me, Baba?

Baba Onile: We offered you all this education?

Professor : End of story, end of stinking mouthing with you. So long. (Exit.)

Baba Onile: Haa, Nuru-u! You carry your offering far, far past the Mosque. O ma se o! You dare to climb the tree past the foliage.

***Curtain.***

## ACT TWO: SCENE ONE

***At a Muslim missionary house. An old Islamic cleric leads dozens of young learners in a chant. A Porsche glides in and Professor alights. He exchanges pleasantries with the old cleric who quickly dashes into an inner room. He soon returns with an older, long bearded Muslim spiritualist.***

Professor: I salute you, Aafa-Agba.

Aafa-Agba: Welcome. (*Sitting down cautiously. He scans the Professor from head to toe, and shrugs with a moderate smile.*) May I have the pleasure of your name?

Professor: I am Professor seeking your assistance in winning the governorship election.

Aafa-Agba: You want to contest this governorship election, you mean?

Professor: I am contesting already. The whole land desire that it is no one but I.

Aafa-Agba: Then.... go on and win it.

Professor: Haa-a! It transcends mere going to win it now, Baba. The flame is burning past the nodes. The boat is about to capsize.... in the Deep Sea.

Aafa-Agba: Bring your case to the open.

Professor: There are two other contestants in this race, Baba Aafa.

Aafa-Agba: You say the entire land throw their weight behind you.

Professor: Y-yes, still afar though is it coming, we do not sit and fold arms but get prepared for any unforeseen contingencies. Lest we be caught unawares.

Aafa-Agba: What in essence do you think I can do to assist with, Professor?

Professor: Give me the charm that gives me the whole votes at a clean sweep.

Aafa-Agba: I am no fetish priest but a scholar in Islamic theology.

Professor: I learnt that great powers existed in Islamic theology.

Aafa-Agba: Such powers as what?

Professor: Amulets.... charms or talisman fraught with incantations.

Aafa-Agba: That's not my calling as a Muslim.

Professor: Aafa-Agba, I have gathered quite much information on your unrivalled reputation in the field of supernatural power. People talk about you in twos and threes and fours day and night. You are always in the news, Baba. Give this power to me-ee-e! (*Clenches his fists in a frenzy with his teeth chattering wildly.*) See... Aafa-Agba, the comfort of the tree bespeaks the comfort of the bird. I beg of you. (*Goes abruptly on his knees.*) Give me to win this election.

***Aafa-Agba looks up into the sky for long, speechless and then straight into Professor's tear-filled eyes.***

Aafa-Agba: Wait a minute. (*He dashes indoors.*)

***And when he re-appears, he has a little, white paper in his hands.***

Aafa-Agba: (*he hands it over to Professor.*) Never part with this paper till after the election. Allah Subhanah wa Ta'ala will give you to clinch the power.

Professor: (*reluctant as he grimaces over the paper.*)

Aafa-Agba: In good faith take it, Professor.

Professor: I want charms or talisman or the inscription to be washed as potion.

Aafa-Agba: Take this in good faith. *Inna Quwatta Lillahi Jamiha wa Anha Lah-ha Shediddu Adhab.* Seek power nowhere else but from Allah Alone.

Professor: (*takes the paper.*)

***Scene fades away.***

## SCENE TWO

***And it re-opens on a highway. Professor rides on in his car. He fumbles his left hand into his chest pocket and brings out the little, white paper. He unfolds it to see its content and tries to make out what is scribbled in it.***

Professor : *(frowns as he reads out in an undertone.)*

*BismiLlah Rahman Rahim....*

*AlhamdiliLlah Rabil al-Amin*

*Ar-Rahman Rahim*

*Malik Yaomiddin...*

What a typical nonsense this is! Does this relate to my need at all? I told the old idiotic, rubbishy monster of a son-of-a-bitch to help my fame and glory overshadow the humpty-dumpty egg-shell of stupid dunces trying to contest governorship with me! But see the nonsensical thing he handed to me. Is Suratul Fathia anything to me? Suratul Fathia kọ! Suratul Fathia.... my foot! *(And, in bitter fury, he flings the paper.)*

Haa! What-t.... the paper turned to an eagle! É-ée -pà, ee-eagle kẹ! Or it's my eyes deceiving me? No, that's the bird flying into the sky! I would rather return to Aafa-Agba.

***Scene changes to the Muslim Scholar's House. Professor arrives and begins to plead, regretful of his attitude.***

Aafa-Agba : Did you read what was scribbled in the paper?

Professor : Yes-s, sir.

Aafa-Agba : What was it you read?

Professor : Suratul Fathia, sir.

Aafa-Agba : And, it was nothing meaningful to you.

Professor : I thought, I-I didn't .... please, sir. Forgive my error.

Aafa-Agba : You derided the *Ummul-Kitab* which is the panacea, the universal remedy, the balm that soothes Allah when the world anger Him. I turned you from the oracles of man, to the oracles of Allah, but you said No! Man is it. Leave my house, Professor.... now.

Professor : Aafa, is there no further help you could render to me?

Aafa-Agba : Not again. The prospect of your becoming the next governor is the bird that flew back to heaven. You let it open to fly back to heaven. Listen, a

religion without mystery must be a religion without God.

Professor : It is disgraceful to punish me for my error.

Aafa-Agba : Disgrace is not in the punishment, but in the crime you committed.  
Leave my house.

***Scene Fades Off***

### SCENE THREE

**Scene changes into the home of Professor. Debisi his wife approaches him in their living room for a dialogue.**

- Debisi : There is the prospect of your winning this election.
- Professor : No stumbling block. Or what can stand in my way, dear? I'd crush it!
- Debisi : We have already crushed it. The cloud is clear, Prof. We've crushed it. Oh, wait a minute. Did you meet Aafa-Agba?
- Professor : *(becomes suddenly furious and goes on his feet, pacing up and down the room in anger.)* Who's Aafa-Agba for that matter? Or you mean Aafa-Kekere? The stupid .... Baby-Cleric!
- Debisi: *(astonished.)* Haa! Do not blaspheme against the Islamic scholar. All politicians woo him for the winning streak. And, my dear.... Whoever he assists with prayer emerges the winner.
- Professor : *Winner ko, winner ni!* You had better quit your bombastic rhetoric and empty rigmarole.
- Debisi: Haa. Did you go to him or not at all?
- Professor: I did.... The good-for-nothing, empty braggart gave me a paper.... paper in which one Surah nonsense was scribbled. P-shaww, forget!
- Debisi: One Surah nonsense? What is one Surah nonsense in Al-Qur'an?
- Professor: *(anger begins to gather momentum in his heart.)* Look, let me be! *(Moving from his wife.)*
- Debisi: *(follows him.)* I am worried, dear. You perplex me with what comes out of your mouth. Are you kidding me or w-what?
- Professor: *(throws himself into a settee, speechless, then after a while, he shuts his eyes, and speechless still.)*
- Debisi: I am perplexed. You make me dread what has become of you today. This isn't what I knew of you. Have the opposition parties begun to cast spell on you? I hate politicians. Their hands are unclean. Could they have been affecting you with fetish, talisman and incantation?

Professor: *(still motionless with both eyes firmly shut.)*

Debisi: *(goes on her knees by his side, appealing.)* Come alive, darling. Don't break my heart, don't break my hope of becoming First Lady.

Professor: *(mute still.)*

Debisi: I'm going to see Baba Onile. I must see Alhaja today! The symptom of a mind in health is better understood by the parents of the sufferer.

Professor: Never involve my parents in this. *(He rises to her face.)* I am I, not my parents.

Debisi: Do not desecrate the home you ought to consecrate, Prof. Do not desecrate what is holy.

Professor: *(suddenly bursts into a very loud laugh, such as shakes his frame violently.)* Holy! Holy or w-what! My parents are what? Funny, if not hilarious.

Debisi : Happy is the family where the government of parents is the reign of respect, and obedience of the child be the submission of love.

Professor: I do not make the accident of my birth the standard of their merit.

Debisi: This is your view of Aafa-Agba whom you called the Stupid Baby-Cleric. Let me tell you, he who seeks help from people does not hurl diatribes at them. That's why you missed his favour.

Professor : Let me tell you what you don't know.... every misery I miss is a new blessing.

Debisi: Do you call it misery the favour of Aafa-Agba?

***Knocks roar on door. Alhaja emerges on stage.***

Debisi : *(curtsys in greeting.)*

Alhaja: You never speak the truth to your husband, Debisi. When the eye oozes out pus, but we don't remove it and show it to the eyes, the eye wouldn't realize that its wrongs.

Debisi : Haa, grandma.... I have said all what needed be said over and over again, my mouth has nearly bruised. I talked quite a number of instances, Mouth said it never asked me out on errand.

Alhaja : You advised him not to look down on his father?

Debisi: On his deaf ear it all fell. (*Turns to him.*) Would you say you don't see grandma?

Alhaja: Leave him. (*Moves close to Professor.*) Nuru, your father sends me to you. He wants to give you his blessings for the election.

Professor : (*jumps up abruptly and shouts.*) Tell him to go and bless Nuru. I am not Nuru. Whom you see before you is Professor of Lexicogrammaticology... You are talking to Governor impending, mama!

Alhaja : (*astonished.*) Haa!

Professor : The whole world pay obeisance at my feet... kings and princes of rank and file all hail me, saying there had never been man such as I. *How much more my own blood!* Mama, tell my father... I don't beg his blessings. Go and ask, the whole city is mine. Excuse my living, now. I have a Constituency meeting with Ward B2 now. (*He leaves*).

***As he steps out into the streets, a large crowd quickly builds up and troops behind him, shouting his party slogan.***

*One Nation!  
One Nigeria!  
One Destiny!  
Up Professor!  
Up Governor!  
Only you can do it!  
Any other person  
Is a Counterfeit!  
Any other Governor  
Is Owo'Jebu!*



#### SCENE FOUR

*The election day, at various polling booths, situations are similar. People vote against Professor and PFP. He exclaims, alleging sabotage but the crowds boo him as Borokinni thanks the voters all over the place, dancing round the city in jubilation over his victory. This perplexes Professor who rushes out of the scene down to the home of Aafa-Agba.*

Professor : *(breathing heavily as he collapses at the feet of the old cleric.)* Aafa-Agba....  
I, I lost the votes.... you made me lose the election.

Aafa-Agba: *(hisses at him as he shakes his head in pity.)* You campaigned in favour of your opponent.... against yourself.

Professor : *(rises on the haunches but falls flat again. he manages to raise his head and turns his face towards Aafa-Agba.)* You said w-what?

Aafa-Agba: Had you stumbled the feet against stone, it would have healed, Nurudeen... but you stumbled the feet against your parents' heart. They are more sinned against than sinning against you.

Professor : *(his head falls back on the ground. He begins to sob in a way that shakes his total frame.)*

SCENE FADES AWAY

ADIGUN Wasiu /'24

