



DERIN GBADENO
UNSCRIPTED

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God first... Always.

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Finally Meself dey twitter, if you aren't already following, let's start conversations here... @derinsola_ follow and notify me. I always follow back. Okay, nuff ads for one day...

Time stood still

We ran, we walked, then we learned to stop and freeze

As tandem with time we found

'twas then we soared

And time chronicled our existence

For all eternity...

#1

The words that follow are mine and mine alone. The story of my life, if you please: ah! Do not run away yet, I promise you, when the tale's done, you would be happy you didn't. First however, I believe introduction is a necessary evil, so here goes nothing: My name is Eyimofe Uigiagbe, yup you guessed it, I'm as Edo as they come; stubborn, intelligent and of course good looking, but that's beside the point. I am 5'8" tall with a scrawny build; I did visit the gym once in order to build muscles and upgrade my physique; my beloved muscles issued a stern warning to my brain that weights are not things they would carry lightly. I didn't have to be warned twice, my muscles flayed and tore, I was bedridden for days and didn't even bother going back to complete the regimen. That was how I let go of my six packs dream. *sighs*

That was my vanity talking, I do not care for six packs or large muscles or a broad chest: no, no! Guys get those to impress the girls, I have my brains - which is damn beautiful, a pretty face - for a dude, and of course my voice is the cherry. God blessed me with a voice that keeps ringing long after I've left you. And so it was, where the brawn failed me, the brain saved me. And that's how it started, my story:

Like I said, I'm from Edo state of Nigeria, I studied Law at the prestigious Uniben, graduated with honours and proceeded to the Law School, Abuja to complete my training and become a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Having already spent five years in Benin running from cultists and jealous boyfriends - an act that limited me to just one babe in five years - just one kpere, I was determined to make up for the lost time and get as many babes as I could. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, that I was doomed for failure. On the contrary, I'm gifted, and so I chased and got as many babes as I wanted.

I lied my way into every girl's pants. If I desired a girl, I got her; it was like I was using some sort of 'jazz' on the babes. But, who cared? I was having the time of

my life, getting drunk at night and waking up with a strange face in the morning. I didn't bother memorising names, they were gone as fast as the night. I was slowly building notoriety and instead of avoiding me, more girls wanted a piece of me and I duly obliged. I was doing my thing, getting the accolades of the senior colleagues/lecturers by day, and earning my stripes by night, oh, what a beautiful time it was. Then the unimaginable happened.

I was trying to score a date for the night just outside the Main lecture hall. Her name: was it Sikira or Amaka? Doesn't matter, she had luscious lips, a full body and hips to die for. I wanted a piece of the action, and I was already closing in on the price, I mean Sikira, or was it Amaka was laughing so hard I could already feel the sexual tension rising. Like I said, it was a glorious time, and I was on top of my game: I saw her then.

She was standing there, lost, or was that me? She stood no higher than 5'5", was as slim as a straight ruler and didn't have much by way of assets, I mean, backside, zero, frontal view - Miley Cyrus, this babe had nothing that should have drawn me in; no speed bumps that begged to be mounted, no treasure that begged to be sought and freed, and not even her smartly tucked in white shirt, or pert skirt that hugged her non-existent backside and legs with the kind of threat that you would quickly dismiss as unthreatening, or her pretty face or her well combed hair arranged in a bun showing off her beautiful long neck. Nothing was supposed to draw me to her, but there I sat, joking with Sikira, or Amaka *shrugs* and my game just dried up, at her sight. I mean have you ever watched a football match where the team manager brings on a striker who scores the winning goal after spending less than thirty seconds on the pitch. Yup, you guessed it, the orobo I was talking to no longer interested me. In less than thirty seconds of seeing her, I wanted the lepa. In retrospect, I should have just sat still and allowed her go. But cupid had other plans, and I was about to find out.

So I made an excuse, or did I terminate the process, I couldn't be sure. I just stood up, and like James Bond, adjusted my tie and made my way to her. 'Hi there, are you lost?' It was my lamest line opener.

She gave me the eye, and silently moved away.

I followed her. 'I deserved that,' I held her hand. She turned, fuming, I was smiling. 'What!' She asked in that mean tone girls use when they would rather just incinerate you with a look. I didn't get it and continued to pester. 'So, my name's Mofe and I'm the champion of lost causes, I actually run an NGO, What say you tell me your story?'

She looked at me then, seeing me I felt for the first time, then she shook her head and smiled nervously. 'Mofe, the slut, if you can call guys that. Look, I have your dossier, and whatever you're selling today, I'm not buying. I have enough on my plate already.' She broke free with surprising agility and stalked off. I let her go, a smile creeping up my face. I knew after the initial gra gra, she would calm down and we would reason together. I walked back to Sikira, or was it Amaka, never mind, I had just met the lady that would cage my inner cat. Before that happened, I was allowed a swansong.

I didn't see her again until a week had passed. She knew me, but I had nothing on her. And paranoid me wouldn't share her details with friends lest anyone got the bright idea to go after her and leave me hanging. So I sought her through the halls, visited the library, bribed my way into the female hostel where I saw things... things! Chei! And no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't find her.

Then one day, after classes in the evening, whilst the boys felt it was a fun idea to go get drunk, I decided to hang by myself and just read, we would soon be embarking on our three-month attachment training and I wanted to be sharp for interviews and show experienced lawyers the type of lawyer I would become in a short span of time under the right tutelage. Then I ran into her again, she was dressed in the usual black and white, was wearing braided hair, instead of the

packed hair and pin, and she wore a pair of reading glasses that accentuated her face and gave her this majestic ambience. Again, I was bowled over.

'Hi there, I see we've finally crossed paths again.' I said by manner of conversation, offering my best smile and coming to a stop in front of her.

She raised her head, observed me briefly then went back to what she was studying. 'If you'll please keep walking...' She dismissed me without a second glance.

'Come on! let's not be dismissive today, okay?' I put my palm on the open book prompting her to pause and look at me.

I could tell she wished she had cyclops gift of latent rays, the piercing look she gave me informed that much. 'What do you want?' She asked when she saw I was not going to let her be.

A little smile to celebrate the small victory. 'What is your name?'

'Ifeyinwa Obi.' She gave me the look that said now take off your hand from the book and be gone. I wasn't having any of that.

'So, you're Igbo, you don't look...'

'How do Igbos look?' She quipped.

I shrugged, what do I know really, I can't even tell my own kin apart from a Yoruba man by merely looking and there I was trying to impress the lady. Another stupid move. 'Can't say really, but Igbo or not, I think you and I have a story together. What say?' I took my hand off the book and smiled at her. She smiled back and I thought we were getting somewhere. I was about to open my mouth when she did the unthinkable.

She grabbed the book off the desk, carried her bag as she stood and started walking away. 'Enjoy the hall Mofe, should be just big enough to accomodate you.' She was a sight to behold from behind, yet, again, I let her go.

That was when our dance started, armed with her name and reinforced image, I hounded her all over the Law School. She enjoyed my renewed attention, the constant harassment and my ingenuity at conscripting her friends to aid in my quest to get her. Of course, I had temporarily stopped my skirt chase and was focused on this one person.

Then she shifted; a little at first, we exchanged numbers and bb pins, then we got talking. After three months passed and we got back to Abuja for our final stage. We became inseperable and did everything together. It was a wonderful experience. Then, we finished our study, and then the realisation dawned: we had been living in a fool's paradise. She lived in Delta State whilst I am a true bonafide Lagosian.

After so many discussions, she told me she would not come to Lagos for any reason, and Delta was a no no for me. I was crushed but managed to put up a bold face. We kissed, promised to keep in touch and find a way. In truth, we knew that our story, wonderful as it may have appeared was about to end. On the final day we hugged kissed, and found ourselves in my room one last time. Then for the final time, I watched her go. And thus, our story ended: or did it? Lemme get a drink of water, I'll be back with you soon.

#2

Aha! Where was I? Oh, I remember... *sips water* Allow me to continue:

I didn't see Ifeyinwa for another two years, yup, two long years. Or were they actually short? See, I can't tell 'cause in the time between Abuja and Lagos - where we met again, I had dated, sigh, I had like a thousand one night stands.

First, there was service year, I served in Lagos after touring Edo and Abuja, I stayed home and trolled the streets. Corpers, undergraduates as well as the newly upcoming girls in the area. No one was spared my whip. I became the enforcer, making sure that all the female types behaved.

Forgive my wandering mind, where was I, erm, okay, so I met Ifeyinwa two years after our break up, the bad thing was technically, we never broke up, we agreed that we'd call and write, IM and all, problem was; we drifted away and allowed the other move away. And so, when I went after Corps member on camp with luscious lips and a full body, I had totally forgotten that I had a love stewing away in the cold of Plateau state where she had been posted to serve. I didn't care. My needs were being met, sorry stroked.

Anyways, there we stood, two years later, flesh and blood, seperated by just a few feet and staring into each other's face, hoping to find a residue of the love we once shared. I think it was just me though, and here's why: I had gone to shoprite at Lekki to see a movie, that actually is my euphemism for see another babe. E-Centre is closer to my Surulere abode, I see all my movies there. Anyway, my date stood me up and angry that I had wasted precious time at an overpriced eatery, I was walking away in anger, when I saw her.

She saw me too almost at the same time and like opposite ends of a magnet, we were drawn to each other. We stopped a few feet away to curb our emotions and behave all prim and proper. For all of two seconds, then I opened my hands and she

flew into them. My stony heart melted again as she laughed and giggled as I spun her around. I set her down tenderly and noticed that we had spectators. Among them was Efe - my date for that afternoon. I didn't even act as if I saw her.

'Iffy! Wow! This is you, flesh and blood! Wow!'

Her smile broadened as she winked at me. How could I resist, I kissed her.

She didn't push me away, didn't kiss me back either, she just allowed me hold her as she hugged me again as she stylishly moved her mouth away.

When we broke off, Efe was no longer among the spectators, she had left. We walked back to my overpriced eatery and sat down. And then, I saw it; it glistened softly in the afternoon sun whose rays had been softened by the plexiglass. 'You're married?!' I was crushed.

'Hehe' she laughed easily showing off her ring. 'You like it?'

'Of course not!' I replied, in my head. What did she mean by that question, I hadn't realised that I had been aching that bad for her all those years, and there she sat opposite me, married. 'Congratulations,' I finally managed to say.

She reached out and touched my cheek. 'I'm not yet married o, will be in a couple of months, this is just my engagement ring.'

'Well then congratulations.' I mentally sought out the boo and erased him. There can only be one - me. I managed a smile.

'You look...' Iffy started and then stared into space making me wonder if she had become looney. When she refocused, '...skinny. Not been sleeping much I see.'

A shrug. What did she know?

'Seriously, you need to let go of your womanising. Change.'

'I did that remember, changed. And I got a kick in the nut for that wonderful experience.' I held her gaze and maintained a straight face.

'So now, it's my fault?' She asked hurt.

'It's always the other party's fault to start with. I begged you, come to Lagos with me, you said it's a dead city. Now, imagine my surprise to see you here, cavorting around shoprite.' I held up my hand to stall her from interrupting. 'I imagine you're a Lagosian now?'

She held my gaze for a while thinking, filtering through words to choose the ones that would hurt me the least. And then I saw it, that residue I had longed for, the memory of what we had. She was, in those brief seconds the girl I had fallen in love with.

'It's not what you think. We barely keep up on bbm, and twitter. And when I changed my fone, and waited for you to call in that indignant way of yours demanding to know the reason why I deleted you, I didn't hear from you. You were too busy with your distractions to be bothered with the encumbrance that's me. So I moved on, after waiting on you for five months. Now tell me, how am I to blame?'

The words choked in my mouth. I hadn't noticed that she was gone from my phone until I ran into a mutual friend who had been in touch with her. It was from him that I found out that she had relocated and changed her blackberry phone. Of course pride wouldn't let me ask, but it had started then, the pain, the longing, and I had quelled it the best way I could: get other girls.

Now, as she sat across from me, a hard look on her face, it occurred to me that I may have been the one who was at fault. Wait, I'm not entirely taking

responsibility, I'm just agreeing that my guilt went from zero to twenty percent in that time. 'I'm sorry.' It was all I could offer.

She bit her lip and smiled bitterly. 'Friends?' She stretched her hand as she stood up.

I pushed the hand aside and hugged her tightly. Somehow, in the back of my mind, I had to know. We hugged for more than a minute and true to form, my hands didn't like their restriction to her back, my soldier saluted and started a parade I didn't sanction, she let out a soft moan... it had been ages, but our bodies knew, and I also found out, I had one more revival service to attend. I watched her go as we broke off, and went to my car. Then I remembered that I hadn't asked for her contact again. Despair embraced me.

I went home early that night. The desire to troll, get a fresh pair of cups on a lady to look at evaporated after our meeting. The ache I had repressed came out full blown and threatened to tear me apart. No matter what I did, the realisation that I didn't have her contact gnawed at me. So I went home.

Mom was in the living room when I entered. She looked like she had seen a ghost when she saw me. She checked the wall clock - 8:15pm, 'are you okay Mofe? Hope nothing's the matter?' She hadn't seen me get home that early in almost two years.

'Nothing ma.' I mumbled and made for my room. I needed quiet. In the room, I stripped and went into the bathroom. I allowed the shower run all over me as I took time to assess my life. Ifeyinwa might not be all that in terms of shapes, and sizes, but she had a beautiful face, a tender body, and heck she completed me. Made me a better man. And now she was getting married, and I suddenly realised that I always hoped to swoop in on her, propose and marry her whilst making her believe I was doing her a favour. How could I have guessed that she would get over

me and find love so soon? Didn't girls take years to get themselves back in the game... I stepped out of the shower.

When I entered the room. My phone was ringing. I checked and saw that it was Irene - the girl next door literally. We had an agreement to help each other with certain needs, and she only called to activate our agreement. I do same. We seldom talked outside the terms of our agreement. 'Hey you, what's up?'

'Can you be at my place in twenty? I'm making dinner.'

'Okay, I'll be there in ten, lemme put some clothes on.' I responded without thinking.

'Oh, and by the way, you are spending the night.' The line clicked off before I could protest.

I threw the phone back on the bed and stared into space. Irene and I had an arrangement of convenience. She was the girl that lauded my soldier's parade in private. I got dressed slowly and when I was done, I smelled nice. My cologne wasn't sparingly used. I had to get some, drown the thoughts of Ifeyinwa and consign the pain back to its rightful place - in the dark recesses of my mind. I stepped out.

It was a tumultuous night: Irene and I didn't sleep. We kept vigil from 10pm till 4am, too long? Irene has skills, and I'm a quick study. Besides, these things take time, if you know what I mean. If you don't, brother apply, amma give you a few pointers. Full course is paid though. Oh, shit! Another advert, I'm terribly sorry. Where was I?

Oh yes, so I spent the night at Irene's and got minimal sleep. I went home groggy and tired. Of course, there was no way I was going to church. I decided to just

sleep in and maybe if I felt the stirring again, ask Irene over. I had the house to myself till noon. On entering my room, for whatever reason, I do not know, but I was drawn to the pile of my clothes lying on the floor.

I picked them up and one after the other emptied them into the laundry basket. My boxers, then undershirt, shirt, and as I was about to drop my chinos, I felt a piece of paper. That's odd, I thought, I don't usually carry cash outside my wallet. I put my hand into the pocket and brought out the paper. It was a business card.

Ifeyinwa Obi, her numbers and the name of the firm where she worked were boldly printed. I was stumped. What had I done? I recovered almost immediately before guilt stopped me, I dialled the first number. It rang for a while before being answered.

'What took you so long, you're getting rusty.' She laughed mischievously.

'Erm, erm, I didn't know you picked that move from me na. It's been ages...'

'Whose fault is that?' She interrupted.

'Ours.' I finally admitted. 'Can we see today, catch up and laugh a little?'

She paused for a while, thinking, and my heart raced. What if...

'No problem, be at this address by 4pm.' Iffy dictated her house address to me, then she terminated the call on some pretext afterwards.

I studied the address I had written, Pedro, Gbagada. Not a problem. Mentally, I picked out my clothes, called Irene to come keep me company. I would be needing the company I decided since I had become too pumped to sleep. She protested halfheartedly and was in my room less than fifteen minutes later. We spent the morning together and I finally got some sleep around noon.

Four O'clock couldn't come early enough as I dressed up, got in the car and drove. I got to her house on time but was grossly unprepared for what would happen there. If only I could divine the future, I may not have stepped into the house, but I couldn't, and I entered the house. And the real fun began.

#3

The door was answered on cue and Iffy grining like a million stars ushered me into the living room. My first reaction was to the divine aroma that wafted through the apartment and into my nose. I was happy Iffy was cooking, the marathon with Irene had left its toll and made me hungry. I followed her lead.

'Sit, please. I'll be right back.' Iffy was gone before I could say a word. She reentered minutes later with juice and a glass, and set it before me.

'I poured the juice and drank. I poured the second glass and lifted it to my lips, then I saw her. I almost spilled my drink, but years of practice made me freeze in place, for two seconds, then I set down my drink and smiled like nothing had happened.

She walked over, smiled at me and shook my hand. When she was sure Ifeyinwa was out of earshot, the smile disappeared, replaced with a sadistic look. 'You need to leave now. My cousin's too much of a lady for you.'

I was stunned, cousin? She was, sorry is Iffy's cousin? This babe that I had spent a week with, frolicking all over Osun state where I met her during an out of town assignment. I couldn't remember her name, but she had mad skills. And against my better judgement, we'd lasted a week. Instead of a night. Now she stood in front of me arms folded demanding I make an excuse and leave. What had I gotten myself into.

'Ah! I see you've met Michelle,' Iffy smiled as she reentered the sitting room. 'The best cousin in the world.' She patted Michelle on the back.

I became uneasy. The trip had gone to hell. I managed a weak smile. Michelle took my hand and shook it pretentiously. There was no doubt in her mind that until Iffy called her name, I had forgotten it, totally. She pursed her lips, then surprised me with her next words. 'He's cute. Are you planning on ditching Nnamdi?' She didn't wait for a response before leaving.

I knew my cue, and I was about to make an excuse I had no idea about when the door cracked open. The strange figure at the entrance had a well trimmed bushy face, was well built and stood almost as high as me. Actually, he's taller, looked a lot cuter, and when he spoke, it was as if Barry White had come visiting. I stewed on the spot. Damn right! I was jealous. Iffy did better than me, and that hurt.

Ifeyinwa ran into his arms, necked or kissed, I couldn't tell which, I wasn't looking. Then she dragged him to me and introduced us. 'Mofe, meet my boo, the man in my life - Nnamdi. Nnamdi, Eyimofe, a fellow lawyer. We were at the law school together.'

We shook hands, he smiled politely and mumbled 'fuck you.' Wait, now that I think of it, it may have been 'nice to meet you.' But like I said, at that point, I was stewing, jealous for no apparent reason and of course I had no desire to leave again. I had to know who the guy was bla bla.

It turned out to be a wonderful evening. Nnamdi is an okay guy, and the more I heard him speak at that gathering, the more I was convinced that Iffy couldn't have done better. He was the man for her. So I made up my mind to leave the house after a wonderful dinner, go home and cry myself to sleep in Irene's arms, then forget about her. That was the plan, that was what I determined to do when I stood and kissed the girls goodnight. Then things changed.

I was at my car when I heard my name. 'Mofe, wait up!' I turned and saw Nnamdi approaching. I had the irrational instinct to run, but held my ground. This won't go well, I thought.

'So, Nwa introduced you as a friend, but I know you guys were more than that. But that's in the past, now she's getting married, please don't confuse her head. I could feel the tension building between you two back in the house, so please if it's not too much to ask, just walk away, never come back. We won't miss you.' He patted my shoulder, turned, and left.

I stood there and watched him go back into the house, I tried pushing down the bile that was rising in me but lost. What right did he have to tell me who I could meet? It wasn't like he was married to her yet, I became livid. First Nwa-her name's Iffy! I screamed in my head, then the veiled threat. Calmly, I opened the door of the car and got in. I was whistling by the time I drove out of the compound. That fool didn't know who he picked a fight with.

At home, I went straight to Irene's. She had a visitor, so I couldn't vent out my frustration with her. I went back to my room and paced the floor for a bit. Then I went into the shower to cool off. The cold water helped; my body calmed, I got my emotion under control. I got the singular most brilliant idea of my life then.

I towelled off and pinged Iffy. 'You still up?'

'Yeah, about to turn in.' She responded. Then, 'thanks for coming over.'

That was my opening. 'Do it again this week? Lunch maybe?'

There was a long pause, 'ok, we could do lunch.'

I did the rope-a-dope, then typed. 'Aii, will let you know.'

We went for lunch, the following Wednesday, I came clean and told her about my affair with her cousin after the meal when we were making small talk. Incensed, she poured the remainder of her drink on me and slapped me.

'Have you no shame at all? None? I was there in Warri, crying myself sore, worrying about you, and you were here sleeping with every moving entity with a little heat between their legs. Must your every action be directed by your heat seeker? Have you no head?'

I sat there thoroughly embarrassed as the other patrons of the eatery did not pretend but stared pointedly at us. I had watched my friends get into women trouble, watched as the drama unfolded, and ended. The problem was, I was just a spectator all those times, like the other patrons at the restaurant. That was my first baptism, and I had no idea how to react.

Ifeyinwa grabbed her bag and stood up. 'Do not come after me, call or text me. I want nothing to do with you again, ever.' She left the place blinded with rage or tears, I couldn't say. I shrugged. Watched her leave, motioned to the waiter and paid the bill. I also stood up and left. No need to give the patrons a prolonged topic of discussion. I got into my car, and went back to work. Thankfully, I had extra clothes at the back of my car. I used the bathroom at work and changed clothes. Then I buried myself with work and forgot all about her.

Over the next four weeks, I changed: the night driving and partying stopped. I went home immediately after work. Irene and I redrafted our agreement. We would keep our heat suppressed, and give her a chance with the new boy she had met - Adamu.

Life went by in slow motion, or so I thought as that month was the longest of my adult life. Then I got a bad case of a bad divorce. My senior colleague pushed the file to me as soon as it landed on her table. I had no one to pawn it off on, so, I had to study up on marriage, fidelity, trust and all those crap. Turns out those M\$B authors may have had something, though I still think it's cliched.

Then I started thinking about her again. Ifeyinwa. Until that case, I had totally forgotten her, Irene and I hung out and chatted loads, I took that time to actually

know the lady I had been screwing with all those years but never really knew. I was amazed at how much maturity she exuded, her passion for life and work, and the inspiration she offered me. It was Law School all over again, and I didn't miss Iffy.

However, the heart is a funny organ, and every once in a while, the thoughts of Ifeyinwa made my heart ache, I wished I could apologise to her again. Kiss her one more time then watch her get married and become untouchable for me. I wished she would forgive me and see the man I was becoming because of her. I wished, but wishes don't make things happen, or so I thought.

After the initial appearance at the court for the divorce, I was exhausted as my client, the wife was determined to take her husband for everything he had. I wished both parties would just make up, ask us lawyers to go screw ourselves and then go home to make sweet, wonderful love. Instead, after the appearance, I had gone back to the office to coordinate with my client. She had mountains of proof that the man she once loved was a cheating, whore of a man. I saw myself in him and my heart went out to the man.

She finally left around 8pm - my client, and I dragged myself to the car park. I was tired and exhausted. My phone rang and I didn't check the caller ID before answering. 'Mofe here.'

'I saw you at the court today, you were looking dashing, as always.'

My eyes dilated, I quickly checked the ID to be sure but found to my dismay that the number had been hidden. I put my phone against my ear and said 'hello?'

She laughed easily. 'You've always been one for drama Mofe. What's the 'hello' for?'

I became calm, 'how've you been?'

'So, so,' she responded, 'back to the point, I didn't call so you could walk on eggshells around me. I saw you today, and it finally occurred to me why you're a man whore. I guess all those time, I was blind to it. Now, I see it: you're a beautiful person.'

I thought I heard her sigh.

'Anyway, I saw you, connected the dots, and I've been thinking since..., would you like to attend my wedding?'

I was stunned.

'Mofe!'

'Yes, yes. I'll be there. Just send me the invitation and I'll make time to come.'

'Good. I already sent it. You'll get the IV by tomorrow. And in case you can't calculate days, the wedding's next week Saturday. Don't be late.' The line clicked off.

I stood there for another five minutes resting on my car as I reassessed my life. It's often said that when people you do not know become successful, or are happy, you may not give a hoot. But when close pals are successful and you're not, or they're happy and you're lonely, jealousy, as well as bad belle creeps in. That I think was the emotion I struggled with before getting in the car for the long drive home.

#4

The days that followed did nothing to raise my mood; I was irritable at the slightest provocation. Colour faded from the world, and Irene finally called to terminate our arrangement so we could both pursue healthy relationships. I went to her apartment and passed the night one last time. We both figured since we would be reduced to side hugs and blowing kisses, we might as well get our fill of each other one last time.

That night, we discovered pleasures that were inhibited, places we had never been. Sadly, the night became too short and morning arrived. I sauntered into my apartment and slept like a log all morning. Her wedding was in a week's time.

The days leading up to the wedding dragged, each one slower than the previous, I was going mad with anticipation and a desire to go beyond the date. Finally, the Saturday came and suddenly time decided it had had enough fun with me, it suddenly sped off and I had to chase after it.

I went to bed drunk the night before the wedding, not sure if I would be able to sleep through the night sober. I woke up on Iffy's wedding day at 9am, with a mild hangover. The wedding was taking place somewhere in Lekki and I was in surulere. I ran into a frenzy trying to work myself up to attend the wedding as I suddenly developed cold feet and wanted to act cowardly by not attending.

I dragged myself into the bathroom, took my time in the shower and then went back into the room to dress. Initially, I had planned on wearing a tux to the event, but as I eyed the cloth, I changed my mind. I endured a wardrobe crisis for a quarter of an hour, then I finally decided to wear my creamy linen attire that was designed with woodin material. I got dressed quickly before I could change my mind and rushed out of the house.

I was about entering my car, when the gate opened and Irene came in. She was a sight for sore eyes, clad in a long ankara attire that was splayed with sequins, the dress hugged her body showing off her shape with the right amount of exaggeration. I felt weak in the knee and wanted to rush her then, take her into my room and never let her go again. Then she got close.

'Ok, enough with the theatrics, you can close your mouth now.' Irene said with a smile.

I realised then, that my mouth had been open the whole time. I couldn't hide my embarrassment fast enough, and Irene had a good laugh at my expense.

'What are you doing here?' I finally managed to ask.

She stopped laughing and seemed hurt. 'You invited me to be your date remember? You asked me to go with you, be miserable with you one last time and I agreed. Now, seeing as you've forgotten, I wish I had also forgotten.' She turned around and started leaving.

'Haba!' I rushed to her front and blocked her path, 'it's not like that o. I was only playing with you.' I remembered inviting her to the wedding, but after our last agreement, I didn't think she would feel compelled to honour the date. But she had, and we both got into the car and I drove to Iffy's wedding, to behold her one last time.

We got to the venue early, somehow, the proceeding had yet to start at 11am and I kicked myself for being just an hour late. I thought people no longer adhered to the malady termed 'African Time' but to my dismay, the wedding was going to take a while to start. So I sat there, in the church, Irene by my side, and waited. Then I saw Michelle and made an excuse to Irene before going after Michelle.

Irene had that knowing look of mischief on her face and for the first time in a long while, I halted my movement and explained myself to Irene. She was shocked beyond belief and her dilated eyes gave her away.

'Now you know,' I patted her cheek and went after Michelle. I caught up with Michelle before she turned the corner to the back of the large cathedral being used to for the wedding.

'Hi, can I see Iffy please?'

She gave me the eye, and then she shook her head and continued walking. Without thinking, I cut her off by blocking her path and getting in front of her.

'Look, I know I must have offended you. But we both knew what we were doing back then. I'm sorry we couldn't work out, but you must know, I'm not a terrible person as you've labelled me.'

She pouted, crossed her arms across her chest in a provocative manner I could feel the heat. Suddenly, in that same animalistic way we had been drawn back in Osun, the wheels started moving and I could have sworn I grabbed and kissed her then, but somehow, I stood still. She eyed me again.

'I know your type, you've suddenly decided that you're her Romeo and you've come to disrupt proceedings here. I'm sorry, but I cannot do that to my cousin. She deserves to be happy.' Michelle's word stung.

'I know, I know, I just need to see her...'

'See who?'

I turned and saw Iffy standing in the doorway that was opposite the walkway. Apparently, Michelle was going elsewhere and she had wanted to move away from that position so Iffy wouldn't hear us.

'You.' I managed a smile. 'You look divine.' I continued to smile awkwardly as all the nice things I wanted to say to her vanished from my head.

So we stood there, the three of us, silent. Thinking. Then as if on cue, we all spoke up at once. I didn't hear what they said. I know I said that I was on my way home, but the timing meant nobody heard what the other said. And then, it happened.

I managed a weak smile, pointed my thumbs back at the cathedral still beholding her beauty as I lamely said: 'so, I'll be waiting for you in there.' Maybe I shouldn't have said that, but I was pressed for conversation and was really anxious. Then I heard my name.

I didn't have to turn round to know it was Irene. Unlike everyone, she calls me Eye - this one, and I used to wonder if she wanted me to buy her a ring.

Irene got to us, smiled sweetly at the bride, acknowledged the cousin then leaned forward to give me a peck on the cheek. 'Let's allow the bride space, to complete dressing okay.' She tugged at my arm.

I was reluctant to go at first, wanted to deny Irene and claim she had gate-crashed. Then I saw Michelle rolls her eyes, then smile smugly as if to say, I knew it, you bastard! That may have hurt another time, then, it was the fire that was blazing in the bride's eyes that got me.

Irene and I stole away like kids who had just raided a treasure chest. We were giggling as we entered into the cathedral again causing not a few eyes to turn and observe us.

I noticed the groom give me a piercing look then shake his head. Of course I couldn't care less about him. We sat down again and Irene elbowed me. 'What is wrong with you?' She whispered.

'How do you mean?'

'She's about to get married dammit! Let her go.' Her voice rose a decibel, but she caught herself and continued whispering casting glances at the people around.

I could feel him staring at me with eyes bored into the back of his head. I became uncomfortable, maybe attending the wedding was a wrong idea, I told myself. Irene was still talking and I needed to shut her up so we could get out of the cathedral. So, without thinking, I kissed her.

At that moment, the bride too decided that she had overcome all her cold feet and made her way into the cathedral, only to be confronted with me kissing another lady. 'What!'

The music stopped, the cathedral fell silent as Iffy backed into her bridal train, turned tails and ran. It was reminiscent of the movie 'runaway bride' and I almost laughed.

The groom took off after her, as well as other able bodied men. And I wish I had stayed jeje where I was supposed to stay, or better yet left the place with Irene before the drama started, I didn't. And when the shit hit the fan, I had a front row seat.

That was twelve years ago. Today, I am happily married to a wonderful woman who has given me three kids - a set of twins (male and female) and another boy. I am having the time of my life having multiple affairs each night but waking up with the recollection of what had happened the previous night and how my beautiful wife is the only woman that I have truly loved.

She is my crush, my love and the only one I ever want to have affairs with. My wife.

PS: now, I know y'all want the gist about the wedding ba? Well, let's just say Nnamdi and I are best pals now. We play golf once a month and he got the best trade-off at the wedding. He got a friend in me, and Iffy as his bride. I married Irene one year later.

The End.