

**WHEN THE
LAMB HUNTS**

A play by:

OMA DIDI

Disclaimer

Though set in Nigeria, Africa, this is a work of fiction and purely a product of the author's imagination. All names, characters and events are fictional and bear no relationship or reference to anyone living or dead.

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a beautiful young African girl Ebele and her journey through childhood and poverty. We shall see how she deals with the cards life has played her....

This story is set in Nigeria and primarily draws attention to the twin plagues of child abuse and child trafficking, with the objective of identifying the root causes of these hydra headed monsters in our society. Poverty has been opined to be a primary factor. Like the protagonist in the story (Ebele), a lot of children especially young girls are sent away from their homes at very tender ages, to serve as maids to wealthy families. Many of these girls end up becoming sex toys to their masters and sometimes the young sons in the family. This problem is quite common but rarely gets reported. The victims have no one to turn to, they are scared. Some of them run away and usually end up in the streets, a case of jumping from frying pan to fire; many end up as prostitutes, drug addicts, and criminals; most end up dead.

One deadly form of child trafficking is the alleged running of baby farms as exemplified by madam Dorcas; where babies are bred for sale to the highest bidder; usually to desperate childless couples or ritualists.

Lastly this story touches on the issue of childlessness in marriages; the desperation and societal pressure that will and usually pushes a woman into acts nobody can conceive of.

I sincerely hope this story will touch someone, especially those in authority to rise up and face the challenge. Let this be a call to battle, lets save our girl child; for she is the mother of the nation!

Oma Didi

SCENE I

Village setting. Mama Ebele is busy cooking with firewood in her backyard. Her children Uloma (14 yrs), Oduche (10 yrs) and Amaka (8 yrs) are gathered in one corner, breaking and eating palm kennels. The kids are all raggedly dressed. From the surroundings, it is obvious that this family is living in abject poverty.

Mama Ebele (tastes the soup from the candle and nods in satisfaction):

Uloma!

Uloma (chewing palm kennel): ma?

Mama Ebele: this soup is almost done; go and fill the other pot with water and bring it here for garri.

Uloma: yes ma (she leaves and returns with a pot of water which she places near her mother and goes back to her siblings.

(Mama Ebele lifts the pot of soup from the fire and puts the water for garri on the fire).

Mama Ebele: Uloma go and bring the garri.

(Uloma goes into the house once more and returns with a small quantity of garri in a basin. The garri is obviously too small).

Mama Ebele's that the only garri in the house?

Uloma: yes ma

Mama Ebele (sighing): well we have to manage it, tomorrow morning I must harvest my cassava and fry garri. i just hope there will be enough to sell as well feed us.

Oduche: but mama why must you sell the garri? We don't even have enough to eat!

Mama Ebele (sadly): my son, if I don't sell my garri, how will I get money for your school fees? And other things we need?

Oduche: ask God for money mama, our teacher said that God can give us anything we pray for.

Mama Ebele: that's true my son, but sometimes not immediately.

FADE OUT

SCENE 2

Front of mama Ebele's home; Monica is at the front door knocking and trying to attract the attention of the residents.

Monica: kpom kpom kpom, is anybody at home?

(Ebele is seen coming home with a big bucket of water on her head. She reaches the verandah just as Monica is knocking again).

Ebele: good evening ma.

Monica: good evening dear, where is your mother? (Helps ebele to lift the bucket of water from her head and place on the floor)

Ebele: thank you ma, mother must be at the backyard cooking. wait, let me go and tell her that you are here. (She goes inside) mama! mama!

Camera cuts to the backyard where mama ebele and the children are now eating. The three kids are sitting on a raffia mat, eating from the same plate, while their mother is sitted on a bench near them; eating alone. The soup is

watery egusi and while the children's' soup contains one tiny piece of fish; mama Ebele's soup contains neither meat nor fish. The eba in both plates is tiny. ebele comes out to the backyard from the back door.

Ebele: mama! You have a visitor

Mama Ebele: who?

Ebele: one aunty like that, she looks like someone from the township.

Mama Ebele: really? Why didn't you bring her in? Oya, go and bring her!

Ebele runs off and returns. Meanwhile her mother washes her hand and is wiping them on her wrapper as ebele returns with Monica.

Monica: mama ebele! Is this you? (The two women embrace)

Mama Ebele: Monica my old friend! Long time no see, look at you. You are quite prosperous indeed! Please sit down (indicating the bench)

Monica: why don't we go to the front verandah? It's quite breezy there.

Mama Ebele: ok (turns to ebele) ebele your food is in the cupboard. You Oduche, you can have the rest of my food.

Oduche: thank ma (rushes to grab the food)

Mama ebele carries the bench she was sitting on and followed by Monica, walks back through the house to the frontyard. camera pans the sitting room after they pass; it is a poor man's sitting room...shabby and sparsely furnished.

FADE OUT

SCENE 3

The two ladies are sitting on the bench in the front verandah. Mama Ebele is dressed in threadbare blouse and wrapper; with her hair made in the local style. Madam Monica is well dressed in smartly sewn Ankara skirt and blouse with nice shoes, handbag and bold costume jewellery.

Mama Ebele: mmm, Monica my old friend, life has indeed been good to you. Look at you....a big city lady!

Monica: I thank god o, if I hadn't left for the city to live with my aunt; who knows what would have happened? Probably I would still be in the village now shelling melon from morning till night and aging beyond my years!

Mama Ebele: look at me now, my sister; married off to the village carpenter at 16 yrs, widowed after 16 yrs of marriage and alone now with four children to raise. Anyway let's talk about you, how is life in the city? I heard you married a business man from Nnewi?

Monica: yes, you remember how my aunt who lives in Lagos came to take me to Lagos?

Mama Ebele: yes

Monica: I became housemaid to her family, they sent me to learn typing and eventually I left them to work in a business centre. It was there I met and married Obinna my husband. We have two kids and things are moving fine. infact I met mazi Okolo your cousin the other day when he came to buy roofing sheets from my husband's shop.

Mama Ebele: eh? Mazi Okolo from the next compound? (Pointing)

Monica: yes. it was him that told me your husband died and that things are hard for you and your children.

Mama Ebele (voice breaking): my sister, I don't know what I have done to deserve this kind of life, why god has chosen to

Monica :(interrupting) hush! Don't blame God, he has his reasons, and that brings me to the reason for my visit. I want to take your daughter ebele to the city with me. A friend of mine needs a housemaid to take care of her home.

Mama Ebele: mmm? Who is this friend of yours?

Monica: her name is Clara Johnson, she is married to Chief Raymond Johnson; a big construction contractor and they have 3 children; a boy and 2 girls. Clara is into Dubai runs.

Mama Ebele: Dubai runs? Which one is that?

Monica :(laughs) village bumpkin! It means she travels to Dubai, London, Italy, you know? Big oyibo cities; to buy goods which she sells in Nigeria. So she is very busy and needs a maid.

Mama Ebele: but ebele is my eldest surviving daughter, if she goes who will take care of her younger ones when I go to the farm? My other girl is just 12 and not as level headed as ebele.

Monica :(firmly) those your children are big enough to go to the farm with you and help. I am just trying to ease your burden o! But if you don't want, no problem (rises) am going o!

Mama Ebele :(hurriedly) please sit, let's discuss this further... (Monica sits)

FADE OUT

SCENE 4

The Udede's sitting room on a Saturday morning. The whole family is gathered including Ebele's siblings. Madam Monica is also there. She has come to take ebele, who is silently crying.

Mama Ebele (in a sad voice):don't cry ebele, don't you want to go to the city?

Ebele (sniffling) no I don't want to go, mama! Please don't send me away please!

Douche and Amaka (crying) mama don't send ebele away!

Mama Ebele: children, children! Stop crying.ebele is going to the big city to attend school and become a big city girl. Don't you want her to become a city lady and buy you nice clothes when she comes back?

Amaka: will she buy bread for us?

Monica (laughing) of course!

Oduche: will she buy motorcar for me?

Monica: yes dear, she will buy everything you want

The two little kids are cheered by this and their crying stops.

Mama Ebele (turning to Monica): you said they' ll send her to school, didn't you?

Monica: of course, the Johnsons will enroll her in a nice school in the city.

Mama Ebele: in that case, come my daughter let me pray for you.

(Ebele goes and kneels in front of her mother).

Mama Ebele: almighty God, you are the alpha and omega. You are the omniscient and you know that I have no choice but to send my innocent daughter into the city. Father protect her and guide her. Keep the devourer away from her, and when she is coming back home, let her come back with a testimony and thanksgiving. In Jesus name I pray.

All: amen!

Mama Ebele (to ebele): nne get up and bring your luggage.

Ebele goes into the room and returns with a pitiful looking Bagco cement bag. As she is about to leave with Monica, her mother stops them.

Mama Ebele: wait (she goes into the room and returns with a small paper wrapped package which she gives to ebele.

Mama Ebele: this is akara, in case you get hungry on the way.

Ebele:thank you mama, bye bye(she goes and hugs her siblings starting from the biggest to the smallest one. when she gets to Amaka,the little girl clings to her, crying and refusing to let go. mama ebele has to firmly take her from Ebele's arm and hold her to herself, with Amaka crying pitifully all the while.

Monica: we must leave now; the city is a long way.

Mama Ebele: God be with you, journey mercies.

Monica takes Ebele's hand and leads her out the front door .all Ebele's siblings start crying loudly at the same time. Camera zooms in on mama Ebele's face as she looks profoundly sad, though dry eyed.

FADE OUT

SCENE 5

(LAGOS; THE JOHNSONS' HOME)

In a plush sitting room in a highbrow part of Lagos, Monica is sitting on a sofa with ebele sitting beside her, clutching a Tattered Bagco cement bag,. She is obviously dazed by her surroundings and is gazing around wide eyed at the expansive furnishings. camera following her gaze, zooms in on one piece of furniture after another.mrs Clara Johnson walks in. she is dressed in very expensive looking boubou,jewellery and slippers(talking as she walks towards Monica)

Clara: Monica my dear! Sorry for keeping you waiting was having my bath.

Monica: its ok dear (standing up and embracing her) this is the girl I told you about, her name is ebele (hearing her name ebele stands up and curtsies to Clara and remains standing)

Clara: mmm, I thought you said she was fifteen? This one looks quite mature to me.

Monica: she's fifteen, just well developed for her age but she's a good girl, very hardworking.

Clara: that's good, you have saved me my dear friend(to ebele who is still standing)sit down my dear(she sits)so what can I get you?drink?food?

Monica: nothing, I must run, I have to go the market (turning to ebele) ebele, and this is your new madam from now on. Take her like your mother. Obey and respect her, do you hear?

Ebele: yes aunty

Monica (to Clara) I am going Clara, take care of Ebele, she is my relative's daughter please o!

Clara :(laughing) of course, I'll take care of her. Let me walk you to the door.

(They both leave, leaving Ebele looking bemused and still clutching her luggage)

FADE OUT

SCENE 6

The Johnson's at dinner. Mr Raymond Johnson is sitting at the head of the table. He is a dark beef with pot belly, Clara Johnson is sitting at the tail of the table with their 2 daughters Lillian and Sarah sitting one side and the son Randy sitting opposite. The girls are typical spoiled brats in their late teens, Randy is slightly older about 22 yrs and in his third year in the university, Lillian is in year 2 while Sarah is still taking JAMB. They are all eating rice and chicken.

Clara: how is the food honey?

Raymond: delicious darling

Sarah: is there no salad mum?

Clara :(tapping her forehead in exasperation) oh my God, I was so busy thinking about my debtors that I completely forgot! Ebele! Ebele!

(From the kitchen)

Ebele: madam!

Clara: bring the salad from the fridge, will you?

Ebele: yes madam!

She carries the salad bowl in, as she places it on the table, camera captures Raymond and Randy Johnson's faces as they ogle her chest, camera zooms in on her boobs. as she turns and walks back to the kitchen, camera captures her backside, then pans to the males with lascivious expressions on their faces. Randy resumes eating with a thoughtful expression. Raymond comes back to himself with a jerk. The girls and Clara are oblivious and are busy with their food.

FADE OUT

SCENE 7

Raymond Johnson is in his office doing some work with his laptop. His secretary Sophie enters with some documents for him to sign. She's a pretty girl dressed in a long sleeved shirt which is tucked into a tight black skirt, emphasizing her shapely backside.

Sophie: sir, the engineer's invoice is here, accountant needs your signature before he can pay.

Raymond: drop it; I'll look at it later.

Sophie drops the invoice, turns and starts walking out. Raymond looks up from his laptop, focuss on her ass and licks his lips

Raymon: em, come come Sophie (she comes back and stands in front of his table)

Sophie: sir?

Raymond: ehe, you say this invoice is from the engineer eh? Come this way pls (gestures for her to come around the table, she does so reluctantly)

Sophie: yes sir, it's from the engineer

Raymond (fondling her ass, she pushes his hands away) mmm.m I see, very nice ass...I mean invoice. So do you think it's in order?

Sophie: the accountant thinks so, that's why he sent it up for your signature(pushing away his hands which have crawled back to her ass,she moves away from him and stands in front of his table)will that be all sir?

Raymond: em, yes, yes

Sophie walks away with an angry look on her face, Raymond gazes after her with lust, licking his lips... **(FADE OUT)**

SCENE 8

Ebele is asleep in her room at night, Raymond comes in and starts fondling her, she tries to scream but he covers her mouth with his hands threatens to kill her,she calms down out of fear and he has his way, then leaves. As she is crying, Randy comes in asks her why she is crying, she refuses to talk. He holds her, comforts her, and then rapes her.

Next morning at breakfast at ebele is dull and red eyed as she serves them; moving sluggishly because she is in pains.

Sarah: are you all right ebele? You look sick

Ebele: am fine aunty Sarah

Lilian: go and get me vanilla yoghurt from the fridge and move sharp!

Ebele goes, brings the yoghurt and serves Lillian

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