



RIGHT

on

TIME

Faith lies

RIGHT ON TIME

BOOK ONE OF THE TIME SERIES

FAITH IJIGA

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to everyone going through any kind of emotional pains... I pray that God will comfort you and meet you at the area of your need.

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PROLOGUE

POLICE STATE COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.

The present Rivers State Commissioner of Police, Abubakar Abdulrahman, plopped down with a massive sigh on one of the leather-strapped chairs in his office which was located at the State Command Headquarters. He kneaded his temples, dreading the imminent ringing of his phone which signaled one of the calls he detested receiving. It was the call from the Inspector-General of Police, Ahmed Kabiru.

The Inspector-General just urgently requested a conference call through his Personal Assistant (PA, for short) with him and three other commissioners, which were the police commissioners of Lagos State, Kano State, and finally, the Federal Capital Territory. He had five minutes of freedom left before his own PA would connect him to a live video call with the IG of police and the other commissioners.

He already knew what the call was about, even though the meeting was impromptu.

But he was trying his best, wasn't he?

Obviously, his best was no good. That was what the IG was going to tell him and the other commissioners. He would blast them with how the president had been seriously breathing down his neck and how they must "Act fast!"

Well, that seemed to be the word of the day. "Act fast. Act faster than lightning. Time is of great essence." Those weren't just the IG's words. They were the governor's words which he reiterated the last time they spoke, which was just yesterday.

The Governor of Rivers State had been so bent on achieving this goal before his administration was over. He wanted it to be etched in history's record that an imposing mountain was conquered during his administration. It would bring him more honor from his people, and he would be revered in the whole of Nigeria for a long time. It would also boost his future political career.

What the commissioner of police was about to discuss with the three other commissioners and the IG of police was one of Nigeria's greatest headaches. Any political figure who could use the police or any other means to provide the solution would be highly esteemed in the country. That was why the governor was pressurizing him. Besides, the IG of police was receiving the same fire from the president.

And today the IG would also repeat the same line which he was already tired of hearing. "Act fast, oga commiss. Time is flying."

Of course, he wouldn't pronounce it as "commiss"; he would pronounce it as "commish".

"Act fast, oga commish."

His phone's alarm, which he had set in order to be punctual, rang. It was time for the conference call. A shudder ran through his shoulders.

Mr Abubakar's PA, who was a computer whiz, connected him to the virtual meeting after a rapid succession of strokes on the keyboard. In no time, he could see the faces of the other three commissioners and the IG of police on the screen of the computer.

Mission accomplished, his PA walked out of the commissioner's office, leaving him all alone with the gadget.

He wasn't particularly computer literate and that was why he saw what his PA did with the computer as a perfect case of manipulation. What other word could be used for it? When a human being could compel a bleeping machine to do whatever he wanted with just a few taps on a keyboard or touchscreen and some vocal commands.

His brain groped for another suitable word but he couldn't find any at the moment.

Manipulation.

No, there was definitely no other word to qualify it. Or so he thought.

This was what he perceived the politicians in the country were doing to the police. We are just puppets in their hands. They try to make the police do their bidding for their own glory.

This was why they were currently on this conference call. That was Nigerian politics for you, he thought wistfully.

Come to think of it, just like the computer in front of him which had been designed to serve its handler, wasn't that what the police and every other military personnel in the country had signed up for?

To serve Nigeria by protecting the citizens' lives, properties and more.

Yes, this was what they were meant to do, regardless of any politician or government administration's good or bad motives.

And this job they were doing was for as much glory to the police as it would be to any government in power.

"Good day, ladies and gentlemen," the Inspector-General of Police greeted the four commissioners.

CHAPTER ONE

FIVE YEARS BACK.

NEW LIFE SECONDARY SCHOOL, PORT HARCOURT
RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

The tropical June sun was already mid-ascent in the pale blue morning sky, overlooking the SS3 students of New Life Secondary School that stood in a wobbly queue at the entrance of the large PTA hall. They were there for the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The school atmosphere was lit with the jubilant and smiling faces of the SS3 students. Some of the SS2 students passed by the WASSCE exam hall, staring at the SS3 students in awe and a sprinkle of envy. Oh, to be one day on the brink of the open cage called school, about to fly free like these opportune ones were!

Some of the junior students who passed by the exam hall observed the seniors with different expressions on their faces. The comments that these wannabes blurted were the most fascinating spice in this setting.

From the well wishers: "Congratulations, seniors! I'm so happy for you guys."

From the jumpy sanguines: "Oh, I wish I were you, seniors."

From the curious investigators: "What does it feel like to be writing your final secondary school exams?"

From the impatient: "When will my turn come?"

From the prayer warriors: "The God that did it for these SS3 students will also do it for me."

From the truants and bad boys: "I'm glad to see these blasted seniors go. I don't like them one bit."

From the pessimists: "God no go shame una ooo. Hope you sha have plan B?"

From the lazy: "School na scam."

From the motivational speakers: "Life na turn by turn ooo."

The exam of gloom-glory had started a month back. Today, ninety percent of the students would be writing their final papers. Too bad for those who had selected Woodwork as their compulsory vocational subject for that was to be the very last paper.

Among this cluster of WASSCE finalists was a pretty, petite, sixteen-year-old girl who bore the name Ayanate Green.

Like every other student in her class, she was thrilled to be writing her final paper.

Before leaving home that morning, her mother, Mrs Righteous Green, had hugged and congratulated her in advance. Her only brother, Preye Green, who was a 200 level Computer Science student of the University of Port Harcourt, had even promised to take her out for fun and ice-cream after her final paper. So excited was she about his promise that she couldn't wait.

She had studied frantically for this exam, and in her mind, she could see herself receiving her own question paper, going through the questions, and answering every one of them perfectly well, so well that it could be used for a marking guide. The thought made her chuckle under her breath.

Her eyes scanned her environment. She knew that after her graduation she would dearly miss this place that had become like a second home to her. Now was the time to slowly drink in the sight that would soon be tagged her Alma Mater.

The blaring colors of the immaculately trimmed and lush ornamental flowers that accentuated the ridge of each building were not lost to her optical sense. The classroom blocks were painted white and orange, a partial contrast to the school uniform—navy blue blazers, white skirts for the girls, white trousers for the boys and a matching blue and white striped tie.

It was 9:30 a.m., exactly thirty minutes before the exams commenced. Some of the junior classes had already started their second lesson period for the day, the class being the much detested nightmare of average students—Mathematics.

Her gaze moved to the school's sports field, a few meters to the right side of the hall. She saw a gang of boys in her class laughing and chatting. Her heart skipped a little at the sight of these macho beauties.

"Stop it. You're embarrassing me," she chided her heart.

But her heart refused to acknowledge her warning.

In fact, when her eyes caught the frame of a certain lanky, young, male student chilling with some of the guys in her set, it bounded up an extra two fifty miles per hour, like an antelope being chased by a tiger.

There he was, standing in an imaginary spotlight, sparkles flying all around him, with his God-given features distinguishing him from the crowd. Anyone seeing him for the first time would immediately take a second glimpse because he was so different. He had a peculiar aura about him.

He was none other than Munachimso Onuoha, the school's male Senior Prefect.

As far as she knew, she had been crushing on him since forever.

She couldn't hear what he was saying as he chatted with the boys, but she could see from the smile spread across his face that it was a conversation that made him happy. His smile made her smile as well. His joy made her happy. Wasn't that what love was about? To be happy when the one you love is happy, and to feel their pain when they are sad?

Munachimso was quite tall for his age. about 6'1. He was indisputably handsome. He seemed to be moulded from a different cast with his rare androgynous look. Lacquered and enameled by the sun, he radiated energy and brio. His mountain-peak cheekbones appeared chiseled with the dexterity of a master sculptor. With eyes as bright and spell-binding as lodestars, he bewitched all those who fell under his steady gaze. His dark brown eyes danced and twinkled, with cute dimples appearing on both cheeks when he smiled.

To top it up, he was also among the school football team's best and first eleven players. Those who were Ronaldo's fans called him Ronaldo, and those who were Messi's fans called him Messi.

He had what it took to attract ladies to himself, like a magnet would nails. One would think that a person of his caliber would turn himself into the greatest playboy of all time, but no, he wasn't a womanizer. He treated the

female folk like innocent, fragile vessels and casual friends, not like toys to be fiddled with. And that was one of the many qualities Ayanate adored about him.

He was a focused and serious-minded student. One of the best the school had ever produced. Ladies swam around him like bees about a nectar-producing flower. Many were ready to go to great lengths to express their feelings for him, but he still treated them like friends or sisters. It was either he was a fool, or he was oblivious of his screaming qualities and the starry-eyed feminine company they attracted. The latter was most likely.

He had none of that because he wasn't a heart-breaker or a game-player. Besides, one of the female students had actually captured his heart. She was Mary Obiora, the female Senior Prefect. And they were in a dating relationship already. Head Boy plus Head Girl. As they say, two heads are better than one. The students saw it as a match made in heaven.

Still, some of the female students who were crushing on Munachim disliked the head girl for taking over what they believed was their rightful position. These were determined to either have him for themselves or share him with Mary.

As Munachim kept on discussing with his fellow classmates, he seemed to have a premonition that someone was staring at him because he shifted his gaze and caught Ayanate admiring him. Alarmed at being discovered, she swiftly and stylishly wheeled away.

Ayanate's chocolate skin flushed in embarrassment and she tried to hide her burning cheeks. What would she say to the inquisitive parrots if they caught her looking so flustered? That the school's Head Boy had just caught her red-handed checking him out?

"Oh my world! What must he be thinking of me now? I hope he doesn't think that I'm one of those cheap girls who are foolishly crushing on him? I still have my pride to uphold. He may be sizzling hot, but I will never stoop low for that jerk to take advantage of me. He is so not my type," Ayanate protested mentally in denial.

Voices in her head screamed back their reply, "Liar, liar, liar! You're the one who isn't his type."

She covered her ears with her palms, trying to drown out their taunting and ugly voices. As if that would help. The voices rang from inside her.

"Oh, but why is that stupid girl dating him? That ugly, fat girl! Why did she have to be the privileged one? That wench!"

Feeling suddenly ashamed for her horrendous thoughts, she repented. "Oh, God, forgive me for calling someone foul names. I just can't help it. That Mary girl is a con."

Before she could finish crying out that prayer, the voices started spilling their vile words in her head.

"You want to know why he is not dating you? You want to know why he is in love with the Head Girl and not you? You want to know why he would never admire someone like you regardless of your beautiful singing voice and talent?"

She gulped, knowing what would come.

"Well, that is because you are a simple Arts and Humanities student while the Head Girl is a Science student. It is also because you are a Pentecostal, which invariably translates to the fact that you're too fanatical a Christian for him to come close to."

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