

Till It Happens To You

...A story about love

By

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Jude is somewhat gruesomely handsome, rich but he can't keep his pants on.

He has everything laid out for him but his poor mental health leads him straight into the arms of a gold digging, greedy lover Elizabeth who quickly becomes a leech.

His arranged marriage to a wealthy millionaire's daughter changes everything for Elizabeth, but soon someone winds up dead and Jude is the main suspect.

Will Elizabeth kill to get what she wants or is Jude truly a killer in disguise?

... How deep can true love be that it knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope? You might never know until it happens to you.

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Part 1

A NOVEL

TILL

IT

HAPPENS

TO

YOU

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Chapter 1

The phone kept ringing at the other end for the 30th time. She knew she had blown off his phone's battery with every turn of a dial but what did he expect her to do. He didn't pick up on the 7th, 17th and 30th try. Why wasn't he picking up his phone calls? She asked herself then she dialled the number again and again, one last time she said; in case he picks.

But he didn't...A lump of saliva climbs up from her chest into her mouth; it is so bitter and heavy. She threw her phone against the wall so hard, the fragile android screen cracks before landing on the floor scattering its remains everywhere. The girl screams out loud before letting the tears roll on her cheeks.

Why had he done this to her? Less than 24 hours they were together and he is avoiding her, she wondered.

Chioma had so much pain inside; she drilled her nails into her body piercing her skin. Her eye shadow now smudged and her hair no longer in place but she didn't care the least of her worries, she wanted the pain to go away.

She called out. "Why?" Then she yelled. "Why me"

Silence! The response she gets back. Nobody else in the room but her; the young lady cries so much that she had thick mucus over her mouth from her nose as she spoke.

Chioma goes over to lock her room door; she then turns on her CD player and increases the volume. The last thing she

needs is her mother or sibling hearing her cries or seeing her in this present state.

She recently bought Phyno's album "The Playmaker" after the smash hit single "Fada Fada" hit the airwaves. Chioma put the song on replay all week and danced to it for so long she could eventually lip sing along knowing almost every lyric to the song. Now, the same music played on while she weeps.

Finally, her phone rings. The music is so loud she didn't notice the ringing phone. Then the interlude between the playing track and the next track gives Chioma's phone the big break it needs just to be heard.

She hears the ring tone, crawls off her bed and reaches for the phone on the floor. The caller ID read he is calling her back, 2hours after her 35th call!!! She tries picking the call but the damaged phone's screen wasn't sliding or responding to her finger demands to answer the call.

"Aaaarggggh!" She shouts and slams the phone again on the wall. This time, the remnant of phone's screen came off; the back cover went off next and the battery followed.

Jude is a senior in school and hung out with a group of boys that were hugely admired by the girls in her set. While Chioma had transferred from her previous school to this new school because her parents were completely convinced by friends that students who graduated from this new school came out with better grades for their final year exams in SS3 and had better chances of getting into any higher institution of their choice. Plus, it was cheaper for her to start in SS2 - 3rd term - as they avoided the extra charge the school enforces on pupils who just joins in SS3 for the sole purpose of getting the final year grades.

Chioma is a new student, fair in complexion and very pretty. Those two combinations were just the right characteristics Jude finds attractive as she comes across as naive.

She first meets Jude at the school's cafeteria. He is the life of the party, tall and somewhat handsome. Everyone around him laughed at his jokes and girls were always trying to get his attention one way or the other.

He comes up to her and asks her to join their table. She doesn't refuse. Within a week of starting the new school, she had blended in quite well and earned a good reputation for herself because of Jude which she liked very much.

Jude is in his finals and the preparation for his graduation is in top notch. Therefore, a week to his set's graduation party and months after they met, he asks Chioma out and invites her to be his date for the party. She didn't refuse either.

He is extremely nice to her; a gentleman. Helping her to blend in easily, introducing her to all the cool people in school which rubbed off on her because it made her automatically cool too.

He never bought her anything in particular but he always offered and she always turned his offers down. Chioma didn't want Jude thinking she is completely using him or his money. She also didn't want to lose him quickly because she is getting to really like him a lot.

She told her childhood friend Kunle about Jude and the graduation party. Kunle responds that it is too soon to be going out on late nights with someone she barely knows. She says it is just one party and shouldn't be a big deal. Kunle responds rudely that it doesn't matter so Chioma walks away from the conversation, calling him jealous and tells Kunle she regrets telling him about the whole thing. Kunle watched her leave without uttering another word.

The night of the graduation party finally comes and Chioma puts a black gown "the little black dress" not too short, not too long but the perfect knee length which is very tempting but chic in her school bag. She tells her mother she is going for choir practice and will probably get home late. Wearing a blue skirt, black tank top and a black wedge to match she leaves the house and her mother doesn't object because Chioma's mother personally signed her daughter to the choir unit in Church as most of her friends had their daughters there.

Chioma leaves home with her bag in hand, she meets Jude at the junction of the venue to the party because he didn't want to pick her up at her house and made excuses of how inappropriate it would look.

She didn't want to annoy him or make him cancel their date so she agrees to meet him at the junction of the event and from there; they would pretend they had come together.

Chioma and Jude enter the bubbling venue as Chioma excuses herself and finds a bathroom to change. She swaps her casual church clothes for her sexy party clothes but the shoes remain the same.

The party was fun, organized by his clique and attended by the poplars' in their school. There is so much to drink and in no time Jude is drinking it all. Suddenly, he becomes loud and obnoxious to her. He is rude and annoying; offering her alcohol and touching her inappropriately while they danced.

She had had enough and announced that she is going home. Jude told her not to worry, time shouldn't ruin their fun. Besides he brought a car so he would drop her off at home with ease. She looks at him with disgust and storms out of the party.

"I can't believe you drove here and you couldn't pick me up from the junction of my house?" She asks as she walks away

while he is in the car trying to get her to enter because she is causing a scene and he hates public embarrassments.

He asks her. "Can we talk about this in the car?"

"No, I am taking public transport home." She replies

"Come on Chioma, that's stupid and you know it. It is 11 pm and you don't even know where the next bus-stop is located." She stops walking and thinks about what Jude said. For once that day, he is absolutely right. So she walks over to the passenger's seat in front of the car and straps herself tight remembering he is drunk and this might influence his driving. She is more than ready to end the date.

Unfortunately, he didn't intend to drive her home. Instead, he takes her to a deserted street and rapes her.

Chapter 2

Memories of what happened plays in Jude's head as he heads home... Jude had parked in a deserted street and pleaded with Chioma to forgive him. He unstrapped his seat belt and moves closer to her; to kiss her or maybe not. He can't remember but the next thing he remembers is being on top of her and her struggling with him.

Why is she struggling with him? The boy is too drunk to understand the reactions he is getting from Chioma, so he assumes she is just playing hard to get.

While pulling her black gown up, she says "No" or was it "Yes"? His brain couldn't remember either. What he remembers is, he had sex with her and enjoyed it so much...It was his first time and from the little struggle he had, it is obvious it is her first time too. Afterwards, he pulls out of her and looks into her eyes, with love in his heart but she looks back at him with disgust and hatred.

He didn't mistake the look. It is a signature he gets from people he loves the most but never loves him back. It hurt him so much that it came from her. So he tells her sorry, gets off her, wears his pants while she adjusts her clothing, then he settles into the driver's seat again and drives her home.

"What have I done?"... "Why did I do it?" Jude asks himself questions as he parks into the driveway of his father's house.

He hits the steering wheel so hard, so many times that his palm becomes red and sore.

Then one of several bangs on the steering wheel touches the horn attached to the wheel and the car's horn goes off alarming those in the main building of Jude's arrival. Soon, the lights to the main house come on and he sees his father storm out of the main building. The built man walks towards

his son with his wife tottering at the back trying to calm her husband.

Jude gets out of the car. "Where did you go?" Jude's father confronts him.

Jude responds. "I went for my graduation party and I told mummy before I left the house."

"What graduation party? You this ungrateful boy" Jude's father says spitting the words right in front of his son's face.

Jude's mother pushes her husband away from her son. "Enough!" "That is enough" Jude's mother yells at her husband.

Jude walks past his parents and heads for his room, leaving his vibrating phone in the car. The expression on his father's face is what he recognized on Chioma. His heart hardens as he walks into his room. She deserves everything she got that night and such a girl can never get his love. Coming to this conclusion makes him feel so good. He jumps on his bed and falls asleep within minutes.

Jude wakes up hours later with a headache. He checks the time and it is almost noon.

"What?" he says. "Was he that drunk last night?" His inner thoughts ask.

So as fast as he could, he takes a shower, gets dressed and heads out of his house with his car keys in his hands.

He walks out of his house heading straight for the driveway, thankful that he did not bump into his mother or father or the both of them. Over time, his mother is now nothing but a weakling to him, always tottering behind his father, doing everything his father says and never standing up for herself when he beats her. Women are nothing but weaklings to him. He

opens the driver's door, gets in and sights his phone showing a low battery. He takes the phone from its slot at the centre of the car and checks all his messages.

"Haba! 35 missed calls?" "What does Chioma want?" he says as he notices she had called him since he dropped her off at home. He dials the number back. It rings and rings until it stops ringing.

Jude dials the number back again but this time it does not connect. So, he takes out his car charger, plugs his phone into it, he slots in a mix CD on his mp3 player, and skips songs until he gets to Rihanna's single "FourFiveSeconds". The young man increases the volume of the song to the loudest as he drives out of his house; the part of the song that makes him very relaxed is the part that says "All of my kindness was taken for weakness" so he sings along with Rihanna every time the lyrics comes up.

With no more tears left to cry and a damaged phone, Chioma is exhausted from crying all night and continuing at day break. She pulls off the little black gown she bought with most of her savings.

"What a waste of investment," she says to herself as she removes her underwear.

Folding the clothes in a neat pile, she puts them in nylon and dumps the nylon into her school bag after taking out her blue skirt and black tank top she had worn the previous evening to the party. She wears a jeans trouser and a chiffon top, takes out facial wipes from her makeup purse and cleans out her face. Afterwards, she combs her hair and packs it into a nice bun and avoids looking at the mirror.

Walking from her room straight into the bathroom, Chioma finds her toothbrush and a paste, brushes her teeth, goes back into her room, grabs her school bag and walks out of the house. As she steps out of the house, she takes a long breath in and breathes out.

Kunle is in his room practising on his guitar for the presentation in Church the next day when his mother tells him he has a visitor. Then his mother tells him the visitor is Chioma.

He stops playing the instrument. "I will be with her soon", he responds although he wanted to tell his mother to tell Chioma he wasn't in but thought otherwise.

"Hi". The only words he says when he sees her in his living room

Chioma responds. "I need to talk to you".

"Can you come back later; I am practising for my presentation and the notes are not perfect yet".

Chioma replies "No, it can't wait I need to talk to you now!" forgiving the rude vibe she was getting. "Remember last year in Church, health workers came as facilitators for the medical outreach and they taught us so many things." Chioma says making alot of gestures with her hand because she is nervous.

"Yes, I remember". Kunle says confused and wondering where the conversation is going

"The class we both took on first aid and emergencies which includes rape. Can you remember what the facilitator said the victim should do after the rape occurs?" Chioma asks looking at Kunle hoping he will catch up quickly

Kunle responds. "Do not shower?"

"No, after that"

Kunle is frustrated. "Chioma, what point are you trying to make?"

"Kunle, the next thing they asked a rape victim to do?" Chioma asks looking at him and wondering why he wasn't catching up on the discussion.

"Don't get rid of the evidence. Do not throw your clothes or underwear away no matter how much you want to get rid of it." Kunle says

Chioma shouts. "After that Kunle, think!"

"Tell a friend or family. Someone you can trust". Kunle remembers and understands what is happening. He says nothing else. They both stand there staring at each other for a minute or longer until Chioma takes a sit. She avoids looking at him because the shame had engulfed her entire being.

Kunle stays silent. He feels sad trying to recall the class again and how they advised a rape victim be handled. Then he remembers they said it is never the fault of the victim. "No matter what, yes the victims were naive, but no reason is justified for the abuser". The facilitator had said

"You need to go to a hospital". Kunle says breaking the silence

"Yes I know. I will go after I finish talking".

"Okay". Kunle says sitting beside her. "Are you sure you want to talk to me? You should talk to a counsellor instead. I don't know what advice to give Chioma." Kunle mutters

Chioma tells him "It's awkward talking to you, but I trust you right now with this information. I will talk to a counsellor, but I am not ready to tell anyone else. Those facilitators said the victim should talk to someone to ease the pain and help you heal, someone you trust".

"They said it could be a stranger, someone who won't judge you". Kunle replies

"Okay, I admit you were right, you warned me but I didn't listen. Your mind is saying I told you so right? I shouldn't have come here Kunle, my explanation might end up unlikely and it will hurt me more". Chioma says standing, ready to storm out of Kunle's house.

Kunle responds. "No, don't go. It is no longer a secret so, just tell me everything. I won't judge you Chioma although I am upset. I can't say if it's because you didn't listen or the fact you got hurt not listening. I am happy you came and I will never betray your trust. If you don't want to tell me I won't judge you. No matter what, what happened is not your fault and the abuser is wrong and should be punished".

"Thanks, Kunle". Chioma says and sits next to him, this time looking at him without shame.

She tells him everything. "I will never forget his face when he finished. It glowed with peace; I looked back with disgust and hated him. He told me he is sorry and then drove me home. I got home and believed it was consensual. I might have wanted him or prompted him to rape me. So I picked up my phone and dialled his number. He didn't answer. I didn't stop dialling and with every dial of his number, the realisation hit in deep. I was raped and he couldn't care less. By the 35th dial, I stopped and threw my phone hard on the wall. He called back a few hours ago but my damaged phone didn't allow me pick the call so I smashed the phone again. I was so angry". Chioma explains

"Then I decided to talk to someone before I do something stupid" Chioma says

"I swear I want to kill him". Kunle responds

"I want to kill him too". They smile at each other and laugh at each one admitting to the thought of committing murder. It is such a relief she was laughing again.

"Have you had a bath?" Kunle asks

"No". Chioma replies

"Good, let's go to the clinic. We will go to the one those health workers came from. I collected a pamphlet and kept it. It has the clinic's location on it, we should be able to locate the place". Kunle says standing up and heading for his room.

Ten minutes later, he shows up with a pamphlet in hand and shoes on his feet.

"What if they ask for money?" Chioma asks

"I have money in my wallet and I took the identification card they gave us last year as volunteers. It should count for something". Kunle replies

"Yes, it should. I am now ready to go to the clinic".

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