

My Memoir on
My Darling Wife
Princess Dr. Mrs.
OLUYEMISI
BAMIDELE SANNI
(Nee Aletan)



The First First-Class (Hons) Graduate in Language Arts Education
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
06 August 1965 – 15 March, 2021

- Professor Lekan Sanni

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OLUYEMISI BAMIDELE SANNI (nee Aletan)

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Yemisi...

*She caught my eyes in her penultimate year at Great Ife
and has since held my heart.*

She is the most precious jewel God ever gave a man.

- *Professor Lekan Sanni*

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Princess Dr. Mrs. Oluyemisi Bamidele SANNI
(Nee Aletan)

PREFACE

I was honored and intrigued when I was asked to write the Preface to this book (*My Memoir ON MY DARLING WIFE, Princess Dr. Mrs. **OLUYEMISI BAMIDELE SANNI** (nee Aletan)*).

The major reasons for giving me this assignment centered on my being a personal close friend of the author (Professor Lekan Sanni) for more than four (4) decades and serving as the Best-Man at their wedding. As one of the closest friends to the family, I can testify to the fact that more than 90% of what was written here are known or witnessed by me.

I have read it all through and can therefore say, without mincing words, that the *Memoir* includes harrowing tales as well as happier times. However, it is all an account of a true love story.

Although Princess (Dr. Mrs.) Oluyemisi Bamidele Sanni lived a very short life (1965 - 2021), she contributed her little but humble quota towards the upliftment of humanity. She was a goal-getter, who always strived for the best even under difficult situations. She had positively influenced and impacted the lives of many people: in the home front as a daughter, a sister, a wife, an in-law and a mother; and as a friend to her friends, colleagues and subordinates in her different places of work. I, therefore, want to recommend that this book is a "must read" for everybody, with the strong belief that one is going to gain one or few lessons therein.

I trust you will enjoy and benefit from reading it just as I did. It is an absolutely amazing and soul-inspiring *Memoir* of a wonderful woman.

Finally, I thank God, who in His infinite mercies, granted Professor Lekan Sanni the grace to put up this write-up in honor of his darling and amiable wife, especially during this trying period.

May God continue to console and comfort him and his children. May He grant all of us the fortitude to bear the irreparable departure of Princess (Dr. Mrs.) Oluyemisi Bamidele Sanni (nee Aletan).

Thank you.

OLA OBAJU, Murtala Sina-ayo. FCA

CHAPTER ONE

GENESIS

My first awareness of a girl named Yemisi Aletan began with a visit by Boye Adereti, my cousin and dear friend. I had returned the previous day from my station in Nassarawa, Plateau State in Northern Nigeria, where I was working as a Lecturer at the Federal Polytechnic. As a very dear cousin, I had the habit of making Boye's house my first port of call whenever I travelled from my station to Ile-Ife, my hometown. On this occasion, I had met only Yinka, Boye's wife and Dami, their first son, and had requested that Boye should be informed of my call. Boye's visit early the following morning was, therefore, not a surprise to me. Boye came directly into the bedroom I occupied in my father's house and sat in the only three-seater seat in the room. Hardly had he sat down when he opened discussions on the burning issue for which he had really come to meet me so early in the morning.

'When last did you see Bolatito?' He asked.

'I have not seen her in the last eighteen months'. I responded.

'Has she written any letter?'

'She has neither written any letter nor called by phone'.

'Do you have access to any telephone on which she could contact you?'

'I gave her a friend's telephone number on which I could be contacted. She also has a friend on whose telephone she could be contacted'.

'Did you make any effort to contact her?'

'Yes, of course. I contacted her friend on the telephone number she gave and enquired about the possible time Bolatito would be around in the house to take my call. I then implored the friend to help inform her to expect my call during the specified period. At the agreed time, her friend informed me that she was not around to pick my call'.

'What reason did the friend give for her not being around to pick the call?'

'She did not give any cogent reason. I asked her to relay my message that I would be calling the next evening'.

'Was she available to pick your call the next evening?'

'No'.

'Was any reason provided?'

'No'.

'What then did you do?'

'I wrote and posted a registered strongly worded letter to her, expressing my dissatisfaction with her current lukewarm attitude'.

'And she still did not respond to your letter?'

'No, she did not'.

'What inference did you draw from her actions?'

'I suspected that she was no longer interested in our relationship. I have had reasons to suspect this a long time before now, but I did not want to make hasty conclusion considering our long years of courtship. I contacted her sister and explained my feelings to her. She promised to *"help talk sense"* to her'.

'What then is the outcome of the "sense talk"?''

'Her sister informed me that she confessed being tired of our relationship and advised me to let the sleeping dog lie'.

'What steps will you now take in response to her decision?'

'I have been very loyal to Bolatito all these years. Since she could, at this juncture, decide to end our relationship, I have made up my mind never to go back to her nor accept her coming back to me at any time in the future'.

'Is there any girl you are currently going steady with?'

'No'.

'You mean you have no side chick among those beautiful girls that abound in your school and the community at large?'

'No'.

'Why? Are you a saint?'

'Only dead people are canonized as saints. Since I am still alive, I am not a saint'.

'Why then have you not easily picked one of the beautiful girls that abound in your school?'

'As a Yoruba Lecturer in my school and an active member of the Catholic Church in my station, I know and have very cordial relationships with many responsible girls from responsible families from which I could pick one for marriage. The only constraint I have in picking a wife from among these girls is my desire not to marry a wife that could tie me to the north'.

'What do you mean? Are you so tribalistic?'

'It is not a matter of tribalism, but that of being rather too close to my parents and my roots'.

'In what way is your choice of a spouse thus constrained?'

'I cannot marry a girl that is not fluent in Yoruba language since my mother can only communicate in Yoruba language, and I would love my mother and my wife to be very close. My choice of a girl fluent in Yoruba language is constrained by my desire to scout for a wife that will also not be interested in our settling permanently in northern Nigeria, as I would not like to live far from my aged parents'.

'From your school's community, you should be able to easily pick a girl fluent in Yoruba language that will be ready to comply with your desire not to reside permanently in the north. To what extent have you explored this avenue?'

'From discreet discussions with some of the girls that meet the desired criteria, the urge to live and work in Abuja, the new seat of the federal government, is too strong to sacrifice for marrying a 'Tisa oko' ('village teacher').

'With your decision to scout for a wife outside the north, is there any girl you have in mind as a possible spouse?'

'As I said earlier, the coast is now very clear. At present, I do not have any reasonable girl in mind. Picking a wife is not a task one rushes blindly into. Since my mind is now made up on getting a wife from southwestern Nigeria, I will have to scout around for a good marriageable girl. Though this caliber of girls is very rare, I am confident that God would lead me to the one that He has preserved for me'.

'Amen!!!'

At this point, my mother called me and requested my attention in the family sitting room. I rushed into the sitting room, attended to my mother, and returned to Boye, who continued our discussions.

'During your brief absence, I ruminated over our discussions and I am convinced that you do not deserve having a wrong wife. Picking a wrong spouse always lead to truncated destinies for the couple'.

'The case of Uncle Sode confirms possible strong association between picking a wrong spouse and ending up with truncated destiny. I pray that Uncle Sode's story is not repeated in my life'.

'Amen!!! Since you went to attend to Mama, I have been juggling my brain for very few highly responsible single girls I can vouch for'.

'Do you mean you have any decent single girl you can vouch for?'

'Although decent presentable girls are very rare in present day Nigeria, there is one girl I am sure has all required qualities of a decent marriageable girl. My only fear is that she might already be in a serious courtship'.

'Where and how did you know this girl?'

'She was my wife's colleague at Ife City College'.

'Is she still working in that school?'

'No. She was not a permanent staff in the school. She spent a year there as a member of the Oyo State Youths Voluntary Service Corps'.

'What is she doing?'

'She did the service as a graduate of Oyo State College of Education, Ilesa. She is now on a full-time degree programme at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife'.

'Is she still training to become a teacher?'

'Yes. Why did you ask that question?'

'Being a potential teacher stimulates my interest in her since I have soft spots for teachers who, I believe, will have less tedious work schedules and will, thus, have much quality time for the family'.

'In addition to high moral values and physical beauty, being in the teaching profession is another major factor I considered in selecting Yinka as my wife'.

'What is the name of this girl you have been busy eulogizing?'

'She is Yemisi, Yemisi Aletan'.

'Is she Oluyemisi or Oluwayemisi?'

'She is Oluyemisi'.

'Judging from her surname, Aletan, she should be from Ijesa or Ekiti stock of Yoruba race'.

'She is an Ijesa from Imesi-Ile, the boundary town between Ijesa-land and Ekiti-land'.

'When are you contacting her to intimate me of her disposition to meeting me?'

'I will check on her either today or tomorrow'.

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After Boye's departure, I lay in bed ruminating over our discussions, especially in relation to Bolatito...

I first met Bolatito during her final year in one of the secondary schools in Origbo, near Ile-Ife. I was then working as an auxiliary teacher in a

Modern School in Origbo and a friend and secondary school classmate was an auxiliary science teacher in Bolatito's school. She came to our rented apartment in company of her cousin to see the said teacher, and, as youths, we discussed and argued on various issues ranging from politics to religion. At the end of the day, I had been able to establish some mutual understanding with Bolatito. I was not able to pursue and cement possible friendship with her as she was busy preparing for her terminal external examinations.

It was twenty months later, when my status had changed from that of an auxiliary teacher to an undergraduate student at the University of Ife, Ile-Ife, that I sighted her in company of that very cousin of hers. After exchanging pleasantries with them, I immediately informed her of my consistent interest in being in very cordial relationship with her. After initial "females' usual pretenses", she agreed to be in a relationship with me. We exchanged addresses and parted ways as I had some lectures to attend that day.

Since we both resided within the university campus, I, as a student in the students' hostels, and she, as a daughter of a staff in the staff quarters, we had ample opportunities to meet very often. Her being employed as a clerk in one of the faculties very close to mine smoothened our relationships. We utilized every opportunity to see each other and visited cinemas, theatres, zoological garden, botanical garden and other exotic places within the campus reputed to be 'The Most Beautiful University Campus in Africa, South of the Sahara'. We both agreed on her spending only one year on the clerical job and proceeding to further her education in a tertiary institution, with the understanding that we would be getting married immediately either of us completed his or her tertiary education.

As a 'future couple', we freely introduced each other to our friends and members of the extended families. Our siblings also became more of brothers and sisters than friends.

A litmus test case came for our friendship when Bolatito was involved in a ghastly motor accident in which her face was badly damaged and possibility of amputating one of her legs was strongly considered. As a 'future husband', I waded in to give strong moral and psychological support. I advised against amputation, citing success stories of some traditional bone healing homes I was familiar with. Against her father's decision, and more in line with my advice, her maternal aunt got her discharged from the government hospital and had her transferred to a traditional bone healing home in Eastern Nigeria.

I was a regular visitor to the healing home, spending all my spare money on transportation and modest provisions I could provide. To God's infinite glory, the bone healed and she was discharged from the healing home. Fats from python and tiger were obtained from local hunters to smoothen the face to its original curvature. She was able to complete the first lap of her academic programme at the time I was serving my compulsory one-year National Youth Service. It was during my National Youth Service programme that we decided that she should go for her Higher Diploma programme while I return to school at Ile-Ife for my M.Sc. programme.

We both returned to school as agreed. To provide required financial backing for our schooling, I registered and operated a private consultancy outfit while she engaged in petty trading. We were thus able to complete our academic pursuits with minimal financial stress. On completing the Higher National Diploma programme, she was posted to a state in eastern Nigeria for her mandatory one-year National

Youth Service programme, and, with the assistance of my uncle, was posted to a very popular accounting firm for her primary assignment.

Two of my very intimate friends that played very prominent roles in my courtship with Bolatito are, Georgie Ogundele and Sina Olaobaju, popularly called 'Alhadji'. Georgie, a Chartered Accountant and a childhood friend, always provided adequate accommodation for Bolatito and I in his rented apartment whenever I visited Bolatito in her school. It was Georgie that assisted in taking all necessary photographs during Bolatito's convocation ceremony. Alhadji, also a Chartered Accountant and a childhood friend, always served as the courier for our letters and other messages.

Immediately Bolatito completed her National Service, she secured an appointment with the nation's Prisons Service and was sent to the nation's Police College for para-military training. A week to the expiration of her training at the Police College, I invited her to Georgie's house where we had long discussions. I informed her of my being fed up with the persistent challenges in private practice and my readiness to scout for government employment. She informed me that she had very powerful contacts in Abuja that could fix me anytime I made my credentials available. She even assured me that a director in the nation's Immigrations Services would issue her my letter of employment the very day she presented my credentials. I opened my bag and gave her copies of all my credentials. We parted early the following morning with her assurance of giving me my duly signed and addressed letter of employment as an immigration officer within the next ten days. That was the last time we had ever seen one another till date. All emissaries sent to her, especially through Georgie and Alhadji, were fruitless.

That she did dump me at that juncture in life nearly paralyzed me and nearly made me lose interest in members of the opposite sex. But time

being a natural healer, I got over the pains over time. God compensated me, exactly five months after her exit from my life, with a pensionable employment as a Lecturer at the Federal Polytechnic, Nassarawa.

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On the same day, in another part of Ile-Ife, Georgie and Alhadji were rubbing minds on the best way to convince Lekan on the need to move on with his life.

'Lekan really made a big mistake in the contents of his last discussions with Bolatito'. Georgie said, cuddling a bottle of Coca-Cola in his hands.

'In what way did he make any mistake?' Alhadji queried.

'I expect him to preview the contents of the discussions with me before hand to enable us fine tune its contents'.

'What aspect of the discussions are you talking about?'

'His claim that he was fed up with his private practice and was desperately looking for any government paid job, even as a gate man or an office assistant'.

'He said all those things to convince Bolatito of his present hopeless condition'.

'This is my major reason for accusing Lekan of being responsible for Bolatito bolting away'. Georgie retorted. 'How many post-National Youth Service Corps female graduates can stoop so low to cling to a man in such a glaring hopeless condition?'

'But, considering the depth of love Lekan and Bolatito claimed to have for one another, the "hopeless condition" should not warrant their permanent separation'.

'Are you insinuating that Lekan would have behaved better if the shoes were on Bolatito's feet?' Georgie asked.

'From previous actions, I am convinced that Lekan would not have abandoned Bolatito for any reason on earth. He has made up his mind to marry her despite negative insinuations from distractors'.

'What do you mean?'

'Right from the beginning of their courtship, rumor mills have always tried to paint Bolatito as 'not being a wife material', and were always discountenanced by Lekan as emanating from envious rumor-mongers'.

'Now that Bolatito has abandoned him, how long will it take him to pick up his life?'

'Bolatito abandoning him is a gamble he had to take. Contents of his last discussions with her emanated from the advice given by friends to test whether Bolatito could readily weather adverse conditions of life with him. All were reviewed at Ile-Ife before he travelled down to Lagos. Only Lekan believed fervently that Bolatito would see through the story and stick tighter to him. Her bolting away immediately was a reaction he truly did not anticipate of so dear a person as Bolatito'.

'Are you insinuating that the contents of his last discussions with her was not true?'

'The contents were far from being true. Lekan's private practice was expanding and his customer-base was expanding astronomically. There was no month he did not earn more than two times the wage he would have earned as a civil servant and his access to acquiring real property was increasing steadily'.

'Why then did he misinform Bolatito of his true position?'

'It was to test her loyalty and the level of sincerity of her claimed love'. Alhadji responded.

'It is unfortunate that Bolatito was easily swayed by such a white lie'.

'Now that Lekan has waited for eighteen months, he should be encouraged to divorce his mind from attributing Bolatito's actions to every woman. He should be convinced that the type of true selfless love he aspires for still exist. He need not condemn womenfolk as being unlovable'.

The duo, therefore, resolved to pay Lekan a visit since they were sure of his being around from his station.

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I was already dozing off in bed when the door to my room was flung open and Georgie and Alhadji entered.

'Think of the devil and he enters!!!' I yelled.

'And, who is the devil?' Georgie queried.

'When do we become devils in your life?' Alhadji asked.

'I am sorry, it's merely an idiomatic expression. I was just thinking of the two of you and your roles in my ill-fated association with Bolatito'. I explained.

'We have spent enough time on this Bolatito or no Bolatito issue. Now that Alhadji has given me the full picture of what really transpired between Bolatito and you, I am convinced of the need to let the sleeping dog lie'. Georgie explained.

'I have really put Bolatito behind me for good and have resolved to move forward immediately. I have delayed getting a substitute for Bolatito because I was nursing the ambition of becoming a Reverend Father, which my father has just disapproved of. I am now left with no option than to search for a suitable girl to marry. I therefore confess that I am now desperately looking for a respectable, responsible girl that is fluent in Yoruba language for marriage'. I declared.

It was then that Alhadji informed me of 'seas' of females that meet my specifications in the Teaching Hospitals Complex where he was working as an accountant. Alhadji affirmed that being a Christian was an added advantage for me, as single female professionals in the medical professions - doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other allied professionals - usually flood various Christian Fellowships in the hospital. He informed of special vigils usually held for 'Single and Searching Youths' in which I could easily participate. He promised to help do some spade works on some responsible single girls he was cordial with.

Since I did not want to put all my eggs in one basket, I did not inform them of my earlier discussions with Boye, believing that God would guide me to make the best choice.

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Later in the day, Boye informed me that Yemisi had travelled to Ibadan to see her sister and would not be back till Wednesday. He promised to contact Yemisi immediately she returned. I informed him of my plan to return to my station the following day to return three weeks later for the Muslims' Eid El-Kabir's public holidays. I also informed Alhadji and Georgie of my planned homeward journey during the Eid's public holidays. I emphasized that I expected them to have completed their assigned tasks.



Yemisi with Dr. Adeboye Adereti and Mrs. Yinka Adereti



Aljadji Sina Olaobaju and Alhadja Aina Olaobaju



Sir George-Maria Omotomilola Ogundele (KSJI, JP)

CHAPTER TWO

THE ENCOUNTER

Before the advent of the Global System of Mobile-Telecommunication (GSM), landline phones were the main form of telephoning in Nigeria. The available lines in the whole country were grossly inadequate for the nation's population and services were rather erratic. Having landline phones installed into private buildings was, therefore, an unaffordable luxury for majority of the citizenry, making ownership of landline phones a status symbol in the country. Services provided by the telecommunication via landline phones were so unpredictable that the chance of making or receiving telephone calls at the expected time could not be guaranteed. While owners of private telephone lines enjoyed the luxury of being able to receive or make calls whenever the trunk was free, either in the late night or very early in the morning, majority of the citizenry relied on either the good will of friends or relatives that had landline phones, or the public service provided by the telecommunication department, that were often congested with people that wanted to either make or receive calls.

Majority of Nigerians, therefore, took solace in writing and posting letters. Unlike the unreliable telephoning system, the nation's postal services were relatively more reliable and most letters got to their designated destinations within five working days.

Immediately I returned to my station, in line with my usual habit, I posted letters to my friends and relatives informing them of my safe trip. I later wrote more comprehensive letters to Boye, Alhadji and

Georgie, thanking them for their concern for me. I intimated them of the specific day I would be returning to Ile-Ife for the Eid holidays.

Since I was about to embark on a very crucial journey in my life, I prayed fervently for God's guidance in selecting my spouse. I prayed for God's intervention, the way He intervened for Abraham's slave when he went to find a wife for Isaac. I beseeched God to please guide my steps to the girl He had preordained for me.

On the day I left for Ile-Ife, I planned to first stop over at Alhadji's station at Ilesa, stay overnight for the fellowship vigil, before proceeding down to Ile-Ife the following day. I even made provisions for possibly spending a day or two in Ilesa, if I was able to contact a girl that warranted my doing so.

At the public motor park at Abuja where I boarded an Ibadan-bound vehicle, I informed the driver that I would be alighting at Ilesa. I strongly emphasized the importance of dropping me at Ilesa, and the driver confirmed that he would not forget since he was an Ijesa man. I took out a novel from my bag to while away the time while we travelled. The novel was so interesting and so engrossing for me that I did not realize how fast the vehicle was moving until we got to Owo junction in Ondo State. I reminded the driver of my designated point of alighting from the vehicle.

Although I was not conscious of ever falling asleep in the vehicle, my awareness was jolted by the car running into a bump. I opened my eyes and discovered that my whole body was covered with sweat and the novel had dropped on the floor. On enquiring about our present location, I was informed that we were already at Osu, more than twenty kilometres beyond Ilesa where I planned to drop. Since I had prayed for God's intervention before embarking on the journey, I concluded

that God did not want me to visit Ilesa before Ile-Ife, that He preferred my seeing Yemisi before any other girl.

I proceeded to Ile-Ife and alighted at Boye's house. Boye informed me that he had seen and discussed with Yemisi who, in females' usual attitude, told him she was already in a very serious relationship that she would not love to break for any reason. He, however, said that he obtained a promise that she would not be hostile to us if we should visit her whenever I was around.

The following day, Boye and I paid the scheduled visit to Yemisi. Being on Eid public holidays, she was at her parents' apartment at More. Since Boye was the one more familiar with the house's terrain, he led and I followed him to the first floor of the building where the Aletans were residing. Boye knocked the door to the apartment and a boy I later come to know as 'Dare', Yemisi's younger brother, opened the door and ushered us into the sitting room. He went into the inner section of the house to inform Yemisi of our presence.

I sensed her presence before seeing her. I experienced electric waves in the air, the type I had never experienced in life. I did not experience palpitation of my heart nor sweats in my palms. No. But I became aware of radiation of some waves that were very much palatable to my taste. I felt a very strong urge to behold her. It was then, before setting my eyes on her, that I made up my mind that I would do everything within my power to marry the girl about to unveil before my eyes. Then, she emerged.

Tall, slender, ebony black with well proportionate front and back views, with no effort at painting her face, thus revealing her natural beauty, she floated into the sitting room, greeted us and asked us to sit down. From the brief encounter, I discovered that she had all the physical attributes I admire in females. I also sensed the presence of a

very strong aura of attraction, the type I had never experienced and have never experienced till date, for any other woman in life.

Introductions were briefly made by Boye who, for the first time, informed me that Yemisi was in her penultimate year at Great Ife. I informed her of my being an alumnus of Great Ife and a pioneering student of the then Oyo State College of Education, Ilesa, now Osun State College of Education, where I studied Geography and English Language. She also informed us that she was an alumna of Oyo State College of Education and that she was currently studying Language Arts Education at Great Ife.

She offered us beverages which we took moderately. Our discussions then generally centered on Great Ife and Oyo State College of Education. I was thrilled to learn that many of my Lecturers that taught us education courses also taught Yemisi during her days at the College of Education.

It was when we rose to go that I signaled to Boye to give me a moment with Yemisi. Immediately Boye went out of the sitting room, I told Yemisi:

'Thank you for being very hospitable and accommodating to us. I am excited to observe that earlier information I heard about you could not adequately capture your good nature. I have come mainly to make a proposal to you. For years, I have been longing to meet a person like you. Now that I have met you, I am sure I have reached my final bus stop. I am not looking for a girlfriend. I am looking for a wife to spend the rest of my life with. Although I cannot at present promise you much material things, I solemnly promise you that if you agree to be part of my vision and give our relationship a trial, I will spend the rest of my life making you happy. Your happiness will always be my number one priority in life'.

She gave a dry smile and said, 'Mister Lecturer! I really enjoyed your sermon, but didn't Uncle Boye inform you of my being in a very serious relationship?'

'I really do not expect a girl with all your physical and mental attributes not to have butterflies hovering over her. Yorubas have a saying that *"four hundred are a female's suitors though the four hundred and first man will be the husband"*. I am your four hundred and first man: your destined husband, not a mere suitor'.

'What gives you the impression that I will ever marry you?'

'My spirit confirms it every second I spend in your company. We are destined to be one. Do not stop God's appointed moving train. I will be around for two more days and will come to check on you if you are still around'.

'I am scheduled to be at a sister's wedding programme beginning from today, and will not be around till the end of the Eid holidays'.

'Could we turn up at the ceremony as your invited guests?'

'No. I will be very busy and will not be able to attend to you'.

'If it then means that we will not be able to meet again until I depart for my station, I might have to depart earlier since meeting you is my main reason for being around at Ile-Ife. I will write a letter to you restating my aspirations for you. I strongly implore you to take time to read its content and reply, no matter how brief. If I do not receive any response to my letter, I will conclude that my thoughts and feelings that God has selected you as my life partner are erroneous and I will continue seeking the face of God for my life partner. But if you reply, no matter how briefly, I promise you that I will devote the rest of my life to making you happy'.

With these parting words, we departed from her house and returned home. Being satisfied with my meeting and discussing with Yemisi, I sent a message to Alhadji and Georgie that I had found a girl I was convinced was suitable for my taste and would not be coming down to Ilesa for girl-hunting anymore.

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Immediately Yemisi parted ways with her visitors, she rushed to her room, locked her door and flung herself on the bed.

What could possibly be wrong with this Uncle Boye that he starts trying to match-make for me? Who does he think he is? What special things does he see in me that he will not leave me alone? What hold does he think he has on me? What really concerns him about my life? What? She wondered.

She had known Boye since the period she was serving her *Voluntary Service*, popularly tagged '*Olurin Service*' by the participants, after Governor Adetunji Olurin, the Oyo State's military governor that initiated the service for National Certificate of Education (NCE) graduates that were then disengaged from participating in the one-year mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). She was serving her *Olurin Service* at Ife City College, Ile-Ife, as a language teacher, and shared general office space with fellow teachers comprising regular teachers and teachers on national and state services. One of these teachers was Yinka, an Ekiti female teacher on *Olurin Service*. Yemisi and Yinka took to each other right from their first day of meeting in the school, such that it was very difficult to believe that they had no prior contact before their *Olurin Service*. Before the end of their first day, Yemisi had learnt that Yinka occupied a room in a rented apartment within the school's vicinity, and Yemisi had described the location of her father's apartment where she lived.

The following day, during the break period, Yemisi was strolling towards the school's gate to buy some snacks when Boye came in a Volkswagen Beetle car into the school compound. He parked close to Yemisi, greeted her, and enquired about Yinka. Yemisi directed him to the staff common room in which Yinka was accommodated and went to do her chore. When she returned to the staff common room, Boye thanked her for her courtesy and introduced himself as Yinka's fiancé which Yinka confirmed. Yinka later informed Yemisi that Boye was very much instrumental to her participating in the *Olurin Scheme* that was meant exclusively for indigenes of Oyo State and their spouses. Being an Ekiti from Ondo state, she was participating in the scheme as Boye's wife. She confirmed that all traditional rites of their marriage had been performed and that they rented the apartment close to the school mainly for visitors they might have from outside Ile-Ife since their present apartment in the town was not spacious enough.

Since that day, Boye made it a point of duty to visit Yinka in the school every working day and would not depart for his office until he saw and chatted with Yemisi. That Boye, Yemisi and Yinka were very close friends was an undeniable fact in the school, and got to an extent that some of the staff and students started insinuating that Boye might be going out with the two friends.

The very day Yemisi got wind of the unpalatable insinuations, she called Boye and Yinka together and informed them. Boye, in his usual jovial manner, waved off the insinuations, attributing them to 'idle and dirty minds'. It was then, in Yinka's presence, that Boye informed Yemisi that he was very much interested in her getting married to someone very close to him that he would, one day, bring to her. Both Yinka and Yemisi laughed off his statement as mere jesting. He implored Yemisi not to allow the busy bodies to place an obstacle on his brotherly

relationships with her and he assured Yinka that he could never have any amorous thoughts towards Yemisi.

Since that day, Boye always gave her attention whenever they happened to meet. He always asked probing questions about her academic and business life, the way expected of a loving brother.

Since she enrolled for her degree programme at the Obafemi Awolowo University, she had met him on the campus on more than three occasions on which Boye had insisted on giving her some money and had even taken her to a café for snacks, always emphasizing that he was 'grooming' her for his friend that would later come to marry her.

All these Yemisi took for a great joke since Boye was a very jovial person, until about two weeks before that Boye came in company of Dami, his first son. Yemisi had welcomed them into the sitting room, thinking they had come with a special message from his wife. Hardly had he sat down than he started talking patronizingly at her.

'Yemisi, thank you for welcoming us into your abode'.

'You are always welcome Sir'.

'I know you know Dami my son'.

'I was there when he was named and I have seen him on more than three occasions'.

'Thank God, you really know him. I have brought him so that you do not trivialize my purpose of coming to see you today'.

'What, then, is your main purpose for this visit?'

'I hope you still remember what I told you during your *Olurin Service* days'.

'Sir, you had very many discussions with me during and after the service year. You will need to remind me of the particular discussion you have in mind'.

'I am referring to my response to insinuations that I was going out with you and Yinka'.

'Ummm, those useless good for nothing people!'

'Remember I informed you I was interested in your getting married to a person close to my heart?'

'Umm umm'.

'Remember I always take the pain to repeat that dream whenever we have course to discuss one on one?'

'I do'.

'Well, I am here today to confirm my seriousness about the discussion. I have a very dear friend who has been pestering me to connect him to you. He has not been able to meet you because he works up north and is only around for brief holidays'.

'Sir, I would advise you do not belabour yourself too much on this issue. I am already in a serious relationship and will be rolling out my wedding invitation cards very soon'.

'Considering your personality and character, I do not expect you to be without male admirers by now. You, therefore do not disappoint me by your response. I have only come because of my sincere concern for you and your future life. Knowing you all these years, I am convinced that you do not deserve any other man than this friend of mine'.

'Uncle, but I have informed you that I am not interested in that friend of yours because I am already engaged to another man'.

'Yemisi, I am pleading that you please do me a favour. This man will be travelling down from the north mainly because of you next week and I will very much appreciate you do not snub us when we come visiting'.

'Uncle, you know I have a very high respect for you and your family. I strongly plead that you do not bring any man to me as I will not attend to the two of you, which you might tag being disrespectful to you'.

'I really appreciate your giving me attention and allowing me to air my views. As an older person, I advise you please at least attend to us if and when we visit. Hear us talk and then make up your mind. You are not bound to accept his proposals. There is no compulsion at all. Please do attend to us and listen to him talk, then, make up your mind'.

'Okay Sir'.

'We will, most likely, be around on Thursday'.

'Okay Sir'.

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Yemisi had even forgotten about Boye and their previous discussions, and had already put the whole events behind her, assigning them to relics of the past, until around 7.00 a.m. on Thursday when Dare informed her that a visitor was looking for her. Enquiring about who the visitor was, Dare informed her that the visitor was the light complexioned man that visited the previous week in company of his young boy. Before she could ask Dare to inform him that she was not around, she saw Boye standing right behind Dare.

'Good morning, Yemisi'.

'Good morning, Uncle Boye'; she responded drily.

Sensing the hostile tone in her response, Boye informed her that he would not sit down as he came just to say 'Hello', inform her that his friend had arrived from his station in the north and to seek her consent on when they could come visiting. Yemisi informed him that she would be going on an important errand for her father, but would, hopefully, be home before noon. Boye then requested that she should please make herself available to receive them at the time.

She had hardly taken her bath on returning from her father's errand when our presence was announced by Dare. Not being a lady involved in frivolous face painting, she quickly dried her body with a towel, ran a comb through her hair and came to attend to us.

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Now that the visitors had departed, Yemisi took stock of all that happened during the duration of the visit. Had she made any mistake? Was there any way she might have appeared either too tough or too soft?

She relived every moment she spent with the visitors. Although she had requested that Uncle Boye did not bring the visitor to her house, she had been much surprised when she saw the visitor. Tall, ebony black in complexion and slender like her father, the visitor had struck her as a likeable person the very moment she set her eyes on him. Although she never considered the possibility of ever marrying him, she was curious to hear him out.

Being from a family that placed much emphasis on high moral values and chastity, her parents had always advised against having amorous relationships with members of the opposite sex as such relationships could lead to unwanted pregnancies and disgrace. She had, therefore,

since she attained puberty, avoided possibility of having flings with boys. Despite most of her friends and classmates having boyfriends, she did not join them in that form of indulgence. She, therefore, readily waved off all efforts by boys and men to woo her for friendship. Her attending a secondary school for girls only did not give her the opportunity of having intimacy with males outside her immediate family. Throughout her days in the college of education till that very day, she had never given any man or boy the opportunity to discuss amorously with her for as long as she had done that day.

With the way Lekan behaved on that day, she was confused as, although she had never met him before, she could sense sincerity of purpose in his utterances. The way he expressed himself and the contents of his discussions were not in tandem with those of males that previously attempted to woo her. They were, also, at variance with what she had read in love novels that were popular in her time.

'I am not looking for a girlfriend, but a wife to spend the rest of my life with'...such an affirmation from a very transparently sincere heart! Should she agree with him? Should she say 'yes' to his requests? What will her friends say, especially if they learnt that 'the mighty Yemisi' had succumbed to a suitor?

Taking a mental note, she compared Lekan with male friends and husbands of many of her female friends and colleagues: he is physically fit, a six-footer, a university graduate with an M.Sc. from Great Ife, gainfully employed as a Lecturer in a federal institution, above all, he is attested to be morally upright, and has sworn to spend the rest of his life making her happy! What more does a woman want in life?

Another line of thought crossed her mind: what gives her the impression that he is not already married with children tucked away secretly in places all over the country? With his sugar-coated tongue,

how many girls has he already lured to their sorrows? To cap it all, he is a Lecturer! Lecturers that are notorious for running after girls that are young enough to be their daughters! She easily recollected stories of atrocities of some notorious Lecturers that specialized in deflowering young virgins and running after married women in colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Pictures of Lecturers that spend almost all their leisure hours carousing around beer parlours, pepper soup and similar joints easily came to her memory. Vivid picture of a particular professor at Obafemi Awolowo University who nearly blackmailed her into visiting him in his office at very odd hours easily came to her mind. She would have been forced to succumb to this professor's threats if she was not a virgin. It was the fear of losing her virginity through adultery that emboldened her resolve to call the professor's bluff. Despite her not succumbing to his threats, she made diligent study of his course such that he had no choice than to award her her merited highest score in his course. That Lekan is a Lecturer, then, is a great obstacle against his being given favourable consideration. She would rather remain single than marry a Lecturer that would, almost certainly, never give her peace of mind.

On sober reflections, she silently scrutinized most of the Lecturers she had encountered since her studentship in the college of education and she was convinced that only a very small percentage of Lecturers, the few conspicuous ones, that were really wayward in women matters. She even readily recollected names and faces of some Lecturers that were more of brothers and fathers to their students. Some Lecturers were even so good that they readily provide financial and material assistance to students of the opposite sex without ever thinking of taking undue advantage of these students. She wondered if Lekan belonged to this group. But, she reasoned, could Uncle Boye be so confident in backing and presenting Lekan if he belonged to the wayward group of

Lecturers? She was convinced that the Uncle Boye she had known and trusted for years would not back a wrong horse. Questions and barrages of questions flooded her mind. She remembered the biblical statement that '*It is not given to be who is walking to direct his steps*', implying that it is only those that God directs that take right steps. She, therefore, resolved to put her case in God's hands.

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On my part, although I maintained appearance of full confidence while discussing with Yemisi, I, inwardly had apprehension of her possibly rejecting my offer of friendship. Although I had developed and mastered the skill of wooing girls right from my secondary school days, none of my previous wooing exercises had been so apprehension-filled as the one I had just done with Yemisi. The major difference being that while all the previous wooing exercises were mere play-acting to later boast about among friends, wooing Yemisi was for real. I was emotionally, psychologically and mentally involved in every word I uttered. I meant every word I said to Yemisi from the very bottom of my heart. For the first time in my life, I really prayed that a girl I had wooed, that is, Yemisi, should give a favourable response to my request.

Although I had informed Yemisi that her failure to respond to my letter would be convincing evidence that she was not interested in me and my proposal, I resolved to persist until my dreams were realized should she refuse to reply to my letter.

The following day, I had a heart-to-heart discussion with my father, centered on his advice against my plan to become a Reverend Father. Much as my father believed that my decision to become a Reverend Father was a hasty one engineered by parting ways with Bolatito, I disabused his mind by informing him that I was convinced that I had a divine call which I had now shelved in obedience to him.

My father expressed his appreciation of the love and honour I had given him by retracing my steps from the path of becoming a Reverend Father. He prayed that God would guide me to the wife He had pre-ordained for me. It was then I informed him of my encounter with Yemisi, who I was convinced was the girl ordained for me. I provided information on Yemisi's mother, her shop, their previous and present place of abode in the town, the church the family usually attend and their home town. I implored my father to work with my mother to carry out thorough investigations on Yemisi's family tree in line with the Yoruba tradition.

Since Yemisi was a student of Obafemi Awolowo University, I contacted my friends in the university to assist in oiling our budding relationship. Prominent among the contacts were Bisi Olowookere, a childhood friend that is married to Folake, Yemisi's childhood friend. Yemisi and Folake had been close friends since their primary school days when they resided in adjacent buildings in the city. Their attending the same secondary school as classmates strengthened their friendship. Although Yemisi was not the Chief Bride's Maid during Folake and Bisi's wedding, she was involved as the 'Chief hostess' in charge of ensuring that every guest was adequately taken care of.

Another notable person was Abiola, my younger brother, who was a Lecturer-cum-postgraduate student in the university. With these machineries already in motion, I departed from Ile-Ife to my station.



Dr. Bisi Olowookere and Mrs. Folake Olowookere



Prof. Abiola Olaitan Sanni, *SAN*

CHAPTER THREE

COURTSHIP

Immediately I arrived at my station, I wrote letters to my friends and relatives on my safe trip. It was later in the night that I sat down to compose a letter to Yemisi. In the letter, I reiterated my earlier discussions with her, emphasizing my sincerity. I requested her to investigate my person and personality both within the metropolitan city of Ile-Ife and the university campus. I provided clues on areas where she could obtain tangible information about me. I emphasized my sincerity of purpose and my resolve to devote the rest of my life to making her happy. I ended the letter by imploring her to respond promptly to my letter. I posted these letters early the following morning on my way to my office.

Although I knew that it would take about five working days for the letter to be delivered to Yemisi's home address to which the letter was addressed, and that she might not even see the letter until she returned home, I started checking my mail box at the post-office from the third day after I posted my letter. Pretending as if I did not really want to visit the post-office, I would always find an excuse to go into the premises and check my mail box, whenever I had course to pass within its vicinity. Despite all my eagerness, the reply did not come until the fourteenth day.

Remembering my last discussion with Yemisi on the importance of her replying to my letter, no matter how brief, my first reaction on receiving the reply was to have a relief that she had agreed to be mine. Knowing

that I needed a calm environment to read and digest the contents of the letter, I returned home earlier than normal. In the privacy of my room, I opened the letter and read the letter in which she thanked 'Mr. Sanni' for visiting in company of 'Uncle Boye'. She informed me that she was about to start the second semester examinations and would, therefore, not be able to have time for letter reading and writing.

I replied and posted my letter that very afternoon, emphasizing my joy in having her as the woman I would spend the rest of my life with. I emphasized that much as I loved the contents of her letter, I had a misgiving towards her addressing me as 'Mr. Sanni'. I impressed it on her that as my future wife, she should cultivate the habit of addressing me by my name. "*Lekan' I am, 'Lekan' is my name*". I wrote. I emphasized that she should cultivate the habit of always thinking of and addressing me simply as 'Lekan' for the rest of our days. I informed her of when next I would be returning to Ile-Ife, primarily to see her and physically congratulate her on the successful completion of her semester examinations.

I did not receive the reply to my letter to Yemisi until a fortnight. The two weeks that elapsed between my posting the letter and receipt of the reply were the longest weeks in my life.

With the receipt of her letter, and favourable reports from various investigations on her family tree, our courtship started in earnest. I made my point clear that since I never intended Yemisi to be my girlfriend or mistress, I would love us to work on having very plain and honest relationship. Our relationship led to my increased frequency of visit to Ile-Ife in general and Obafemi Awolowo University campus in particular.

Our friends and relatives also played very significant roles in keeping Yemisi company in my absence. Abiola, my younger brother, who was

a Lecturer-cum-postgraduate student in the university, made it a point of duty to spend at least an hour with her in her hostel, every night. Many of her friends and roommates even thought that Abiola was her boyfriend.

Bisi and Folake provided a haven for her on the campus while Boye, Yinka, Alhadji and Layades provided a home from home for her in the town. She, therefore, had not much time to really feel my physical absence. My parents and other siblings also made Yemisi much welcome, taking her as a daughter/sister, not a wife.

Yemisi did one thing that really thrilled me at the very beginning of our courtship. I had taken her out to a joint on our first time out and bought pepper soup and soft drinks for the two of us, which we both cherished and enjoyed. When I picked her in her house the following day and suggested that we repeated the previous day's routine, she rebuked me, saying that I was trying to live the life of a man without any plan. She said the money we 'wasted' the previous day was enough to prepare stew and delicious meal. She insisted that, I being a teacher and she training to become a teacher, we need to be more prudent in our spending as teachers are generally known to be poorly remunerated in Nigeria. She volunteered, 'with immediate effect', to be responsible for my breakfast whenever I was at Ile-Ife.

A very notable event occurred during our courtship: I was hospitalized for typhoid fever in my station. As telephone was, by then, a luxury enjoyed by only privileged few in the country, I wrote a letter to Yemisi, informing her of my being hospitalized. Being rather too busy preparing for her semester's examinations, she could not travel down to my station, but quickly wrote a lengthy letter informing me of the "dos" and "don'ts" of typhoid patients. She even suggested some herbal remedies I should try. I spent up to three weeks on the ailment, during

which period I relied totally on my colleagues and neighbours for food and other sustenance.

Although Yemisi had not been to my station, my friends and close associates in Nassarawa already knew about her as her photograph was conspicuously displayed in my sitting room, serving as a bold signal to female students and other '*single and seriously searching*' female acquaintances that I was already in a relationship I was not in a hurry to terminate.

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Since Our relationship started, Folake, being Yemisi's confidant, had been playing major roles in lifting us before God in prayers and looking eagerly forward to the time we would be legally joined together in a holy matrimony. Their friendship had also blossomed to the extent that Yemisi often spent some weekends with Folake and Bisi in their apartment.

In the month of May in her final year as an undergraduate, the students went on a strike and the school was closed down '*with immediate effect*' and students were ordered to vacate their halls of residence. Immediately the quit order was given by the University authority, Yemisi went to inform Bisi in his office, imploring him to send his official driver to come and take her to his wife at home.

Yemisi quickly packed her load and awaited the driver. To her surprise, it was Folake that drove the family car to her hall of residence.

'Ha!! You are the very last person I expected to see right now!!!' Yemisi exclaimed.

'Hardly had you left Bisi's office than I got there. He informed me of your request and I decided to give you a surprise visit'.

'Knowing that schools are on mid-term break, I really planned to meet you at home, believing you will be busy at home'.

'I was busy as you expected, but I had to rush down to the main campus to buy some things at the Students' Union Building. I called to say "Hello!" to Bisi only to learn of your request for a vehicle to convey you home'.

Yemisi loaded her belongings in the car and sat beside Folake.

'Now that we are going to be together for only God knows how long, we shall be able to update each other on our usual gist', Yemisi said as she made herself more comfortable in the car.

'The only gist I welcome from you is on Uncle Lekan. When last did you hear from him?'

'I received a letter from him yesterday'.

'Is the letter here with you?'

'Yes, of course'.

'Can I read through its contents?'

'Since you never hid anything about your relationships with Uncle Bisi during your courtship, I am duty bound to reciprocate your kind gestures'.

Yemisi then informed her that she had copies of every letter Lekan had so far written to her in her bag, which she could go through when they reached their destination.

Immediately they reached their apartment, Folake took hold of the letters and sat down and read them silently, one after the other. She was

so serious digesting the contents of the letters that one would think she was preparing for a very serious examination.

'Mama Acada, why are you so serious in reading these letters that one would think you were preparing for a very important examination?' Yemisi queried.

'I am preparing for something more important than an examination'.

'And, what is that?'

'I am trying to gauge the personality of the writer of the letters, to enable me give you a very sincere heartfelt advice'.

'Are you now a psychologist or an analyst?'

'I am neither of these. I am a woman who has been courted and is now married with a child. I know more about men than you'.

'What, then, is your advice?'

'Going through the letters and my previous discussions with Bisi, who happens to be Uncle Lekan's childhood friend, I am convinced that Uncle Lekan is the type of man that will always live up to his promises, especially, those he makes in writing'.

'My main reason for coming to see you is to have your direct sincere comment on my relationship with Lekan. You are the only person I am sure will never deceive me'.

'You were my only frank and sincere adviser during my courtship with Bisi and I am forever grateful to you for your sincerity. You do not deserve anything less from me'.

'What, then, is your frank and sincere advice?'

'Since Uncle Lekan really intends to marry you and I am convinced of his sincerity, I strongly advice you give him all necessary support and encouragement'.

With the advice being given and found to be satisfactory to both the giver and the receiver, they drifted to the kitchen to start preparing food in anticipation of Bisi's return from office.

It was while they were busy in the kitchen that Folake suggested possibility of Yemisi paying Lekan a surprise visit in his station.

'How do you expect me to pay Lekan an unscheduled visit at his station?' Yemisi flared up.

'I am not asking you to pay him an unscheduled visit without cogent reasons. As a woman that has been courted and married, I know that your paying the visit will provide an opportunity to move your relationship to a higher level'.

'How do you mean?'

'Your paying him a surprise visit will enable you obtain first-hand information about him: how he lives in his station, what type of person he is, what type of friends he keeps, what are his hobbies, etc. These are very important aspects of his life that your going will make you privy of and will enable you make your final decision on your relationship'.

'Are you pulling my legs or you are strongly suggesting that I make this surprise visit?'

'As a friend that is more than a sister, I advise you, from the bottom of my heart, to make this surprise visit to Nassarawa'.

'When do you advise that I make the journey?'

'From all indications, the strike-induced break will not last more than a week. You should, therefore, endeavour to make the journey either tomorrow or the next day'.

'The idea you started as a joke is gradually taking up a concrete form. What if he has travelled out of Nassarawa to other towns in the north?'

'This is a chance you have to take. You will go with enough money to transport you to and from, with excess for your lodging and feeding'.

Just then, Bisi arrived from his office and was welcomed into the house. He went into the family's bedroom, changed into his 'house wears' and came back to the sitting room to meet Yemisi and Folake who had already set their meal on the dining table.

'Student, now that you have forced the authority to close down the school, what do you stand to gain from the palaver?' Bisi asked Yemisi rhetorically.

'As an individual, nothing'. Yemisi replied.

'What, really, do the students want this time around?' Folake enquired.

'There was electricity outage "*for up to one solid hour*" yesterday, disrupting students' preparation for their forthcoming first semester's examinations'. Yemisi explained.

'Is an hour electricity outage enough ground for the students to embark on strike?' Bisi queried.

'There is more than meets the eyes on students' strike in this university'. Folake interjected. 'Since my undergraduate days, the general pattern in the university is that students will always find frivolous reasons to embark on strike whenever examinations are around the corner'.

'That practice started at an earlier date than you cited. It started in the mid-1980s. Before that period, the university's lectures and examinations time-tables were always released and pasted on the boards at the beginning of the academic year, and they were strictly adhered to. This practice made it easier for both students and staff in the university to easily plan ahead their various activities for the year'. Bisi explained.

'That is an era that might never be witnessed again in our universities, as going on strike is generally perceived as the main function of the students' union executives. The more the strikes, the more 'vibrant' the executives are perceived to be by majority of the students'. Yemisi interjected.

'Although the main cause of the present lock-down of the university is due to a 'frivolous' local issue, some of the lock downs are due to circumstances outside the campus' boarders'. Folake explained. 'For instance, most of the lock downs that lasted more than a week are due to industrial disputes between the government and the various university staff unions'.

'Your observation is quite true'. Bisi interjected. 'Realization of the fact that most of the school lock downs are due to forces outside the purview of the students is a major reason why the old practice of making the provisions of the school calendar approved by the university's senate sacrosanct is not very much feasible nowadays. Academic calendars approved by the university's senate, are, thus, always flexible, being subject to amendments to suit the existing tide'.

'Since the present lock down is due to a 'frivolous' local issue, it is most likely the lock down will end within a week and students will resume to start the first semester's examination immediately'. Folake explained.

It was then that Bisi cited his discussions with some members of the university's senate who confirmed that the lock down would not last more than a week. He strongly affirmed that the students would return to their various halls of residence within a week and commence the semester's examinations the following day.

When the meal was over, Bisi asked Yemisi how she planned to spend her one-week holidays and Folake responded by informing him that Yemisi had resolved to travel down to Nassarawa on a surprise visit to Lekan.

'Have you informed him of your planned journey?' Bisi queried.

'No. Although it was not initially anticipated by me, yet I now find it very much exigent since I have a week-long holiday dropped on my laps which I think is best utilized getting to know Lekan better in his "academic habitat"'. Yemisi explained.

'Since you have never been to Nassarawa, have you ever considered possible inconveniences in your decision to embark on your surprise visit?' Bisi queried.

'I do not anticipate much inconveniences. Lekan had given me written detailed guide on how to travel from Ile-Ife to his doorsteps at Nassarawa'. Yemisi explained.

'Have you both been planning this "surprise journey" together for quite some time?' Bisi queried.

'No'. Yemisi explained. 'His providing detailed guide on how to get to his residence started casually when he was explaining details of his journeys to and from Nassarawa. In his usual habit, he jotted down 'cogent points' in his explanations which I took and kept in my hand

bag on that day. With the details now in my hands, I am sure I will not have any serious challenge in getting to his door steps'.

'Since the *emergency break* will not last more than a week, I advise that the earlier you embark on your surprise visit, the better'. Bisi advised.

'Since your first semester examinations will definitely commence the very next day the school resumes, why not consider the possibility of going either tomorrow or the next day?' Folake advised.

'The whole idea of the surprise visit that started as a joke by Folake is now assuming a monstrous shape that I believe I have to sleep over to clear my head'. Yemisi responded. 'I am sure that I will definitely have a cogent response to your suggestions by tomorrow morning'.

With that, she picked her handbag, bid her hosts 'good night' and headed for the guest room.

On entering the guest room, she bolted the door, dusted the bed, put off the light and flung herself on the bed with the intension of sleeping off immediately. But, to her surprise, sleep refused to visit her eyelids. She was busy wondering what was responsible for her agreeing to embark on a surprise visit to Nassarawa. Why on earth did she allow Bisi and Folake to goad her to taking so irrational a decision? Although she had often visited and stayed alone with Lekan for hours, and she had found him to be highly responsible and a pleasant company, going all the way to travel down to Nassarawa, a strange land, is an entirely new game.

Will he welcome her? Will he be happy to see her? Will she not be an unwelcomed guest? Will she not be an embarrassment to him, especially if he already had a live-in lover? Where will she sleep in the night? How will her siblings react if and when they learn of her making this journey? Is she not selling herself rather too cheap? Will Lekan not

end up despising her for the action? These were some of the questions begging for answers, ravaging her brain.

But she was convinced that Bisi and Folake would never deceive her. Did they not assure her that her embarking on the surprise visit would be more of a blessing than a curse for their relationship? Had she and Lekan not, on many occasions, earnestly promised to cleave together for the rest of their lives? She remembered a statement in Lekan's most recent letter that '*there is a tide in time which, when taken leads to eternal joy, but neglect of which leads to eternal damnation*'. He had ended the letter by imploring her to please join him in maximizing the gains of the present tide in time by sailing with him in the Zion Train that was warming up to take off. Much as she ruminated on the possible meaning of the sentence, she could not decipher any clue until the next day when the school was locked down and students were compulsorily expelled from the halls of residence. Is Lekan a prophet? How prophetic was his call on her joining him in sailing in the current tide!!!

By the time she slept off, it was more of 'when' to take off than 'if' she would embark on the journey. She slept fitfully, with every moment filled with diverse images of pleasant memorial aftermath effects of her embarking on the surprise visit.

By 5.00 the next morning, she had already taken her bath, was fully dressed and ready to take off for the surprise visit. She called Folake and informed her of her decision to go as advised by her and her husband. She requested that Folake should please take her to her room in the hall of residence to pick some loads that were vital for her journey. Bisi came out and drove the two ladies to Yemisi's hall of residence where the friendly porters on duty allowed them to enter her room and pick some of her remaining foodstuffs – five litres of palm oil, dried fish, dried

meat, dried ground pepper, ground melon, sachets of tomato paste, a sachet of salt and about ten kilograms of pure yam flour (*elubo*). With all these additional loads, she implored Bisi and Folake to take her to the garage where she would board a commercial vehicle to Akure.

She really enjoyed divine favour at every stage of the journey. For instance, she was the last passenger to board the Akure-bound vehicle that alighted her at the Owo Garage in the city. She had to rush into the Abuja-bound passenger car she met at the garage. By the time the vehicle got to Lokoja, the driver decided to stop for the passengers to take their meal at the various catering centres. Yemisi, who was already famished, very eagerly got out of the car and joined her fellow passengers in moving to one of the catering centres. She ordered pounded yam, vegetable soup and assorted meat which she 'washed down' with a chilling bottle of Coca-Cola. Her appetite was whet by two major considerations: that she had not eaten anything that day, and possibility of her not meeting Lekan at his station that might make the meal her first and only meal for the day. At Abuja, she had no challenge at all in locating Nassarawa-bound vehicles and was also the last passenger to board the vehicle.

At Nassarawa township motor park, which was the last bus stop for all Nassarawa-bound passengers, she beckoned on a commercial motor cyclist, the only means of public transportation in the town, and requested to be taken to 'Overseas'.

The first major surprise she experienced at Nassarawa, that left an indelible mark in her mind, was when Felix Attah, the first person she met in the compound containing my apartment, asked her blankly:

'Are you Yemisi?'

She asked him why he should be enquiring whether she was Yemisi, only to hear him retort:

'You look exactly like Yemisi in the photograph boldly displayed in Lekan's sitting room'.

She, therefore, had no choice than to confirm her being Yemisi.

Felix called his niece, Nkechi, and asked her to go and open the main door to my apartment. He then called his nephew, Oliver, who assisted Yemisi convey her loads to my apartment.

On entering the apartment, the second surprise was her photograph displayed conspicuously on the wall such that it was the first thing anybody entering the sitting room would behold. Felix informed her that I was still in the school and would return 'very soon'. He offered Yemisi some beverages which she was pressurized to take from him. He later offered some food which she declined. She took a cold bath to relax her body of the strenuous journey. She made herself comfortable in the three-seater, with her ears at alert, awaiting the sound of a motorcycle that would herald my return.



The Photograph in Lekan's Sitting Room at Nasarawa

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I, on my part, had been in the class since morning, busy guiding the students in arriving at a reasonable design for the semester's studio project. In my habitual practice, the students had taken it for granted that I would not leave the studio till late in the evening. I had guided each of the students in the studio in maneuvering over at least one obstacle in the neighbourhood project they were designing. At around 3.30 in the afternoon, I felt a strong urge to return to my apartment. Without informing the students, I moved away from the classroom towards the toilet which I bye-passed and hailed a commercial motorcyclist who had just dropped a student.

On opening the main gate to my compound, I nearly collapse in surprise as I saw Yemisi 'in flesh and blood' walking towards me.

'Welcome!!! When and how did you get here?' I enquired breathlessly.

'Welcome!' Yemisi responded, leading me into my apartment.

'How did you get here?' was my first question immediately we were alone in my apartment.

'I boarded commercial cars from Ile-Ife to Nassarawa township motor park from where I boarded a commercial motorcycle, popularly called "*Going ne?*" to this place at overseas'.

'You are not serious. I am not enquiring about your means of transportation but I was wondering how you could create the time to be here when you are expected to be preparing for your first semester's examinations'.

'I am able to have the time to be here mainly because students of the university went on strike and the university's management closed down the school, asking the students to vacate their halls of residence with effect from yesterday morning'.

'Thank you for your decision to spend your emergency break in my station. I am grateful'.

It was then Yemisi informed me of Felix giving her access to my apartment and providing her some refreshments. We then went to Felix Attah's apartment to thank him for his kind gestures. My other colleagues in the compound were also visited and introduced to Yemisi. The visitation to the various apartments lasted more than thirty minutes.

It was when we returned to my apartment that I received the greatest shock of my life when Yemisi opened her loads and brought out the raw foodstuffs she brought for me. I was too surprised that I could not believe my eyes and ears. Throughout my life as a bachelor, I had neither personally experienced nor heard of any girl on a surprise visit providing such for the man. All I was familiar with usually involved the girl being 'taken out' on eating and drinking spree.

I was very much emotionally dazed that I grabbed Yemisi and thanked her profusely, informing her that nobody had ever treated me like that in my entire life; that I would be forever grateful for the true love she displayed in carrying the foodstuff to my place of abode and risking her life and everything to be with me.

It was there and then that we initiated a practice we adhered to throughout our married life, a tradition that made our marriage a role model for others: we went together to the kitchen and together prepared food for our two-persons family.

After the meal, which happened to be our last for the day, we sat down in the sitting room and had our first really heart-to-heart discussions. Her coming on the visit was a confirmation, to each of us, that our courtship had reached a point of no return. Discussions centered on various issues, prominent among which was finance, number of children desired, child spacing, and final place of residence.

It was agreed that we would both take academics as our vocation, but we should both endeavour to seek employment in universities located in southwestern Nigeria, as residing permanently in the north was not considered an option by either of us. Yemisi emphasized that her being retained as a Graduate Assistant in her department at OAU was a concluded case since she was already in the First-Class Honours division grade, which she hoped to maintain till her graduation. The onus of

transferring my services to a university in southwestern Nigeria was, therefore on me. It was also agreed that our wedding should hold during Yemisi's NYSC period and that we should save towards achieving the dream. To that end, we resolved to operate open joint financial system in which every income belongs to the family, not individuals. I presented my pay slip and bank cheque book and placed them on the table for the family. Yemisi reminded me of her being involved in trading in textiles, shoes, bags and trinkets. She then went on to provide the breakdown of her existing stock including list of her debtors. This is the precursor of the open joint account the family operated throughout its life span. Two children that were either twins or were born within a space of two years, irrespective of their sexes, was agreed on.

The next day was spent on touring important places in the town, prominent among which were the market, the king's palace, the Polytechnic's Guest House, the Polytechnic's Staff Club, the Polytechnic's temporary and permanent sites and official apartment of some of my colleagues. No visit was made to the students' hostels and the Youth Centre, behind which I was first accommodated in the town.

At the Staff Club, Yemisi was introduced to my colleagues with an explanation that she would be coming to the polytechnic for her NYSC in the next few months. She was made welcomed and assorted pepper soup were provided for her consumption. Immediately we returned to my apartment, Yemisi advised that we should visit the Club the next day to reciprocate the kind gestures bestowed on her, after which we should desist from visiting such places to enable us save enough money for our wedding.

After her second day in Nassarawa, Yemisi picked her bags and we left for Abuja where we were guests to Gbenga and Funke Obafisoye.

Getting to their apartment in NEPA quarters in Wuse, Abuja, Obafisoyes gave us a royal welcome. Drums were literarily rolled out to welcome Yemisi into the house. Funke and Yemisi easily cleaved to one another and they spent quality time together. In the afternoon, Gbenga took Yemisi and I on a tour of Abuja, the nation's new capital city. Most of the important landmarks in the city were visited. The cityscape presented a more fascinating scene than that of Nassarawa town. Gbenga also linked us with members of Obafemi Awolowo University Alumni Association. Our visit to Abuja was so exciting that we spent two days with the Obafisoyes.



Engr. Gbenga Obafisoye and Mrs. Funke Obafisoye

It was while in Abuja that we concretized the plan to get married at the earliest opportunity after she completed her final year examinations. To this end, it was resolved that our parents should be informed of the need to initiate meetings of the immediate nuclear families. To conserve money for our 'fast approaching' wedding, Yemisi advised me to delay my home coming till a month from then.

On the third day in Abuja, we were driven to the motor park where Yemisi boarded an Ibadan-bound vehicle. Obafisoyes and I waited to chat with her until the car was filled up and left the garage. I then thanked Obafisoyes for their hospitality and boarded a vehicle to Nassarawa.

On returning to Nassarawa, the whole world collapsed around me. For the first time since I joined the polytechnic where I was working, I realized how empty my life really was. My apartment was empty. I could easily hear echo of my footsteps in the empty and desolate apartment. I was convinced of the fact that the coming of Yemisi had made me realize the terribly lonely life I had been living. A five-days break in loneliness brought about by Yemisi's presence made me realize the fact that I could never really adjust to my former lonely life. The days and nights, since Yemisi's departure, dragged on very slowly and painfully. Eating food became a hectic task. Even beans and fried plantain I used to enjoy very much became unpleasant to my taste. Hectic school assignments compelled me to spend ten 'solid' days before I packed my bag and headed to Ile-Ife.

On getting to Ile-Ife, I went straight to Yemisi's hall of residence. On getting to her hall, I went up the stairs to her floor and peeped through the louvre blades to her wing of the room. To my utter surprise, I saw Yemisi finished packaging her newly prepared 'amala', spread melon soup on the food and said, loudly:

'How I wish Lekan was here to share this delicious meal with me!!!'

I immediately knocked, entered her room and informed her that her prayers had been answered by God. She could not believe her eyes when I suddenly emerged in her room in response to her prayers. I explained the trauma and anguish I had experienced since our separation at Abuja. Yemisi confirmed that she had not suffered less since our separation.

We jointly 'did justice' to the amala, tidied up the room and I prepared to leave, to enable Yemisi prepare adequately for her next and last paper the next day. I then left for the town to see my parents, friends and relatives.

That night, I had a long discussion with my parents and siblings on my plan to be wedded within the next one year. Plans were agreed on to formally meet Yemisi's parents to set the ball rolling.

Yemisi finished her examinations the next morning and I met her immediately after the examination. We went to inform Bisi and Folake of our plan to get married 'very soon'. This message was later, that same day, conveyed to Boye, Yinka, Alhadji, Georgie, Layades and others. It was right from then that Alhadji was selected to be the groom's best man and Yemisi's younger namesake was the tentative chief bride's maid.

Within a week of Yemisi completing her examinations, my parents and siblings paid Yemisi's parents an official visit at their home. By this token, our courtship now had official blessings of the two families, and we were, henceforth, officially recognized as a couple, with members of the two families becoming in-laws. What then remained was the solemnization of the marriage in the church at a later day.

The next line of action involved Yemisi and I going on official 'thank you' visits to her sisters and relatives outside Ile-Ife. This we did within a week, before the beginning of Yemisi's final semester as an undergraduate. Having accomplished these landmark 'victories' on my journey out of bachelorhood, I joyfully returned to my station.

Yemisi's final semester witnessed the highest level of correspondence by letter between us. The second and final semester appeared to be the longest of all the semesters allocated to her degree programme. And,

fortunately, her two last semesters recorded her best academic results throughout her studentship. At the end of the session, she graduated in the First-Class division and became the first ever to graduate at the First-Class Honours Division in Language Arts Education in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The record was unbroken for decades.



**Yemisi with HRH Oba Segun Layade and Olori Ruth Layade
Carrying Our First Baby**

CHAPTER FOUR

NYSC SERVICE AND MARRIAGE

Registration for the orientation programme of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for the year was nearly coming to end by the time results of the final year students of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, were approved by the university's senate. Successful final year students from the university, therefore, did not have enough time to adequately prepare for their departure for the various orientation camps to which they were posted.

Yemisi was posted to Imo State and was to report at the state's orientation camp at Nekede, Owerri, the next day. She immediately picked her baggage and headed for Owerri. She was fortunate to be admitted to the camp as those who reported the following day were not allowed to participate in the year's batch. Immediately she reported at the camp, she wrote a letter informing me of her whereabouts. She even forgot that she had earlier sent a hurriedly scribbled message to me, informing me of the 'recent developments' necessitating her immediate journey to Imo State. I wrote a nerve-soothing letter to her in which I advised her to make the best of her NYSC camp life. She responded that she would make the best of the life at the camp. She even sent photographs she took while participating in the activities in the camp. She informed me that she would be going back to Ile-Ife to really

prepare for her NYSC life at Imo State, immediately the orientation programme ended.

At the end of the orientation programme, she was posted to serve as a Lecturer at the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, for her primary assignment. She reported for duty at the college of education and, as was the usual practice of members of the NYSC, she obtained a week casual leave to return to her home base to take necessary materials for effective performance of her primary assignment.

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In the evening of the day before Yemisi was scheduled to leave the NYSC orientation camp at Owerri, I went to Obafisoyes at Abuja, with the aim of travelling, the next day, to Ile-Ife, to await Yemisi's arrival. Unknown to me, Yemisi's camp period ended that very day and Yemisi had decided to come down to me at Nassarawa with the hope of travelling together with me to Ile-Ife. She got to my apartment late in the evening and was informed that I had travelled that very day. She was adequately taken care of by my colleagues, Felix Attah and Ahmed Wada Ikaka. She informed them that she would be joining me at Ile-Ife the following day.

On that very next day, I followed Gbenga to his office and decided to while away some time to reduce the agonizing period I would spend awaiting Yemisi's arrival from Imo State. At 10.15 a.m., I rose from my seat and informed Gbenga of my decision to commence my homeward journey. Gbenga asked his official driver to convey me to the motor park. As I pressed the door's handle, I sensed it being pushed at the other side of the door. On opening the door, I nearly collided with Yemisi who was trying to hurry into the office. We were both speechless for up to a minute.

Gbenga, watching the scenario from the comfort of his chair, could not help laughing at us. He asked us to come inside and make ourselves comfortable, which we did. It was then that Gbenga posed a question that was to have a long-lasting effect on our courtship.

'Yemisi, welcome'. Gbenga greeted.

'Thank you, Sir. How are Auntie Funke and our children?' Yemisi responded.

'They are all fine, thank you. Is this how you love birds will continue agonizing for one another till the end of Yemisi's twelve months long service year?' He enquired.

'What else can one do in the face of the call to national duty?' I chipped in.

'Since the two of you are already legally married, why don't you utilize the existing provisions for married female corps members to be posted to their husband's place of residence?' Gbenga advised.

'This is an opportunity we are very much ignorant of. Since the National Headquarters of the NYSC is here in Abuja, can you, please, link us with anybody that could assist us in crossing over this hurdle?' I asked.

It was then that Gbenga rightfully inferred that our chance-meeting in his office was a divine intervention as the officer in charge of posting of NYSC corps members happened to be a guest of one of his colleagues, and was, at present, in the office next to his. He requested to be allowed to go and see him immediately.

About ten minutes later, Gbenga came in and enquired whether Yemisi would prefer to be transferred to Abuja or Plateau state. Plateau state was chosen as she could easily be posted to Nassarawa town in the then

southern Plateau. Relevant documents were collected from Yemisi and she was advised to report in Jos the following Wednesday for her final posting to Nassarawa. That was how God turned our temporary adversity to our advantage.

At Ile-Ife, our parents, relatives and friends were informed of Yemisi's transfer from Imo to Plateau State. The need for quick solemnization of our existing marriage in the church was emphasized to enable us settle down in time.

On returning to Nassarawa, friends, especially Ahmed Wada Ikaka and Malam Sanni, assisted in contacting the Executive and the Legislative arms of Nassarawa local government council to secure Yemisi's posting to the local government council. To this end, a letter was issued on Yemisi to the Plateau State's NYSC Director. On delivering the letter at Jos, Yemisi was posted to the legislative arm of Nassarawa local government council.

Transferring her NYSC service to Nassarawa provided a very conducive environment for us to really understand and comprehend one another as we operated everything in common. Our incomes were in a common pool jointly owned and accessed. Meals were prepared and taken together and our strolling hand-in-hand together in evenings was a very common feature in the town.

Our previous relationships were freely and openly discussed. For instance, I explained everything about my previous relationship with Bolatito without concealing any detail. Yemisi did not have any previous relationship as she feared men's evil motives. She only succeeded in naming and describing every man that had wooed her at one time or the other. She always had reasons to thank her stars for not yielding to their overtures as most of these men were, at one time or the other, either my friends or associates. She, however, talked of a senior

professor at the university who was very notorious for breaking girls' hearts. She said that the professor tried every way to seduce her but she refused to yield to all his antics.

The next time we went to Ile-Ife, our parents fixed a date for the solemnization of our wedding in the church and responsibilities for various aspects of the wedding were easily shared among the families. The date chosen for the wedding was very symbolic and became the motto of the new family: it was 24th of July, often abbreviated as 24/7. Immediately the date was chosen for the solemnization of the marriage, we both pledged to God that each of us would try his or her best to ensure that the marriage was truly 24/7 (*i.e., '24 hours long in everyday of every week'*): that our love would be 24/7, that we would love each other 24/7 and that our loyalty to the relationship would be 24/7. The pledge ignited a new depth in our relationship as each really took the pain to make the other's interest uppermost in his/her heart. Being each other's shadow was a habit we cultivated and nurtured during our courtship and we sustained throughout our marital life. For instance, throughout our marital life, time spent in classrooms and at statutory meetings in our various schools were the only times we spent away from each other.

With the day of solemnization of the marriage fast approaching, prayers were held for the smooth and peaceful celebration of the marriage. Every aspect of the marriage had been well taken care of. Necessary apparels had been bought, sown and delivered, thanks to Alhadji for taking care of all my needs. Other necessary materials were already paid for and majority delivered. Despite the myriads of prayers said for the day of the wedding, the devil, in its usual evil ways, came up with a plan to truncate the programme.

It came, subtly, through the nation's presidential elections that was held throughout the nation on the 12th of June, 1993, six weeks to the wedding day. Despite the election being universally upheld as the most free and fair election in the country, and the more popular of the two contestants was comfortably on the lead in most of the states' results that had been released, the military leader suddenly annulled the election, declaring it 'inconclusive'. Fearing that the self-styled military 'President' was trying to perpetuate himself in power, nationwide protests that claimed hundreds of lives and maimed thousands erupted. The strike and its attendant atrocities continued to intensify in magnitude and severity throughout the nation in general and southwestern Nigeria, the home base of the perceived winner, in particular.

Being residents of Plateau state in the north with imminent wedding at Ile-Ife in southwestern Nigeria, our major challenge centered primarily on our movement, together with our colleagues, to and from Ile-Ife. The chance became bleaker as the day approached. The tension in the southwest and Ile-Ife in particular, was palpable as rallies were held on daily basis, lasting from dawn till dusk. Roads and streets were totally locked down by the protesters. Friends and colleagues in Nassarawa and other parts of the nation were assured, in faith, that all would be well on that day. A week to the wedding, Yemisi and I boarded a vehicle that miraculously conveyed us to Ile-Ife.

On Monday before the wedding day, God answered our prayers as there was a pause in the strike throughout southwestern Nigeria. This peace lasted throughout the week and no single disturbance of peace was recorded throughout southwestern Nigeria till Monday, 26th of July, 1993, two days after the solemnization of our marriage.

Visitors to the wedding solemnization ceremony were thus able to attend conveniently and returned to their various bases peacefully without any cause for alarm.

After the solemnization of the marriage, the earlier agreement that Yemisi would not stay in the north was reaffirmed and an apartment was rented for her at Ikoyi Quarters, a new residential suburb of Ile-Ife. The house was located very close to Boye's house, guaranteeing companionship of Boye, Yinka, Dami and Dotun, their sons.

With Yemisi thus secured at Ikoyi quarters, I left for Nassarawa to continue my duties as a Lecturer. My not returning with Yemisi was easily perceived as a pointer to the fact that my days as a Lecturer at the federal polytechnic, Nassarawa, were numbered. When Ifedayo, our first son, was born, Yemisi travelled down to Nassarawa to present him to our colleagues and thank them for their various contributions to her happiness during her NYSC days and for their contributions in cash and kind to the solemnization of our marriage.

Without mincing words, parting was usually a very painful event whenever I visited my wife and child at Ile-Ife. The previous nights were always spent crying and holding each other very close. The pains got to a stage when I even contemplated resigning my job as a Lecturer and coming to stay with my family. The idea was not accepted mainly because Yemisi had not been able to secure any employment and it would be folly and suicidal for me to resign without any other possible source of revenue to take care of the young family. We therefore intensified prayers to God to provide an opening to enable the family live together.

Answer to our prayers came in form of a little inconvenience that warranted Yemisi being detained overnight at the Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospitals Complex, Ile-Ife. It was while I went out of her

ward to buy some beverages for her that I met the then Doctor (now, Professor) Afolabi Okewole, my only Lecturer that attended our wedding. I complained bitterly about the inconveniences my staying in Nassarawa was causing my young family and prayed for possible assistance in bailing us out of our present predicament. Professor Afolabi Okewole gave me a personal note to the Head of the department of Urban and Regional Planning at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomoso. Similar notes were also sent to the university's registrar and bursar.

Armed with these notes, application letter and copies of my credentials, I went off to LAUTECH, Ogbomoso as advised. I was eventually employed as a Lecturer in the university and was thus able to reside close to my family. Unlike the time I was in Nassarawa, my stay with the family was, in normal weeks, guaranteed from Friday evening to Monday morning.



Professor Isiah Afolabi Okewole

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Like most of the marriages, our marriage experienced some early challenges, some of which are relayed here to convince couples in the younger generations that challenges are very common phenomena in every marriage and that it is the way these challenges are managed that determines the ultimate success or failure of the marriage.

Our first most obvious challenge as a couple was on where to reside. As explained earlier, our resolve not to raise our family outside southwestern Nigeria was one of the criteria that even led to the beginning of our courtship and final marriage. Immediately after the solemnization of the marriage in the church, an apartment was secured for Yemisi at Ikoyi Quarters, a serene residential sub-urb of the town. Residing alone in the apartment as an expectant mother was a very taxing task for her. The building had some challenges that could have been very tasking for us to handle together as a couple, that were then being confronted and tackled by Yemisi alone.

The strain of these challenges got to a stage that our parents, siblings and friends suggested that she should move away from the apartment to either her parents or my parents' apartment. She refused to budge, countering their suggestions with the question that would they have advised her to vacate the apartment if the building had been built by her husband and herself? She coped by scheduling her time and daily chores to have adequate time allocated for the Aderetis, her in-laws, Olowookeres, Layades and her parents.

Despite these time management strategies in place, parting with me whenever I came home from my station was always a heart-breaking trauma for both of us. With complete trust in each other, open and transparent accounting and unceasing prayers to God, the challenge

was solved, as explained earlier, through divine contact with Professor Afolabi Okewole.

The second challenge had to do with Yemisi's inability to secure an appointment. Since she graduated in the First-Class Honours division, the general believe by friends, Lecturers and colleagues was that she would be retained as a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Language Arts Education. To guard against the possibility of putting all her eggs in one basket, her father presented a copy of her credentials to a very dear friend and relative that occupied a very prominent position in Osun State Ministry of Education, for her possible reabsorption and/or fresh recruitment as a secondary school teacher. He even travelled down personally to deliver the application and all other documents to the relative. Despite all the assurances given, she was never even invited for an interview, talk less of being given employment in the state.

The dream of being absorbed as a Graduate Assistant in the department where she graduated was ignited by one of the most senior Lecturers in the faculty of education who even sent a message to her, asking her to see him in his office for possible employment. She became very excited and rushed down to the university to meet the man. To convince her of his readiness to assist her in securing the employment, the man assisted her in preparing her curriculum vitae in line with the university's requirements and assisted in preparing and arranging the required number of copies. With these documents already prepared and packed in a big brown envelope, he requested her to follow him to his personal office to rehearse for the interview scheduled for 10.00 a.m. the next day. Seeing him as an uncle and a friend of the family because he attended our wedding and even presented us gifts, she followed him to his office. It was inside the office that the gentleman Lecturer made

some amorous moves towards her which she rebuffed. She was then informed, pointblank, not to link her possible failure at the next day's interview with whatever happened in the office that day. That she was not successful at the interview was a foregone conclusion we had expected since the previous day's drama in the most senior Lecturer's office.

Disillusionment and discouragement were Yemisi's first natural responses to her shattered dreams of becoming a Lecturer at her Alma Mata. She was depressed for about a week after which she braced up, taking solace in the believe that God did not destine her to work in that department at that time. She turned her attention to trading in textiles and ladies' wares and shoes that she really thrived in during her studentship days. Giving birth to Oluwafikayomi, our second son, was used by God to wipe away all her possible reservations about her missed chance of becoming a Lecturer. Her morale was so high that immediately Oluwafikayomi was three months old, she went back to the university for Master's degree in education management, not language arts education.

Another challenge in the young family had to do with one Mrs. Nkem Johnson, Yemisi's elderly childhood friend. 'Aunty Nkem', as Yemisi often called her, was the daughter of a neighbour in the adjacent building to the one occupied by the Aletans when the family decided to stay put at Ile-Ife. The decision to stay put at Ile-Ife was taken as a result of the parents' realization that the father's frequent transfer to and from different towns in the then Western State, was having adverse effects on the children's educational performance.

On getting to their 'new' house at Ojoyin Street in Ile-Ife, the first person Yemisi got attached to was Nkem, the daughter of a plumber residing in the building adjacent to theirs. That they belonged to

different tribes and different Christian denominations did not reduce the respect and attachment Yemisi had for her. Nkem was already in her third year in secondary school while Yemisi was in primary four. Thrilled by her very serious and studious nature, Yemisi cultivated the habit of always sitting down beside Aunt Nkem, to do her home assignments every day. By the time Aunt Nkem got married to Mr. Johnson, most of his relatives did not know that Yemisi was not Nkem's relative. Yemisi was therefore always a welcomed person in the Johnsons' home.

Relationship between Aunt Nkem and Yemisi is a reflection of some of the paradoxes of life: love and emotional attachment are not always reciprocated at the same intensity. Yemisi loved and respected Aunt Nkem with all her heart as a blood sister. She was ready to sacrifice everything for the Aunt.

Aunt Nkem graduated as a nurse while her husband was a pharmacist. Yemisi often spent her holidays assisting the Johnsons in taking care of a pharmacy shop they had in the city of Akure where they resided. The general thinking of majority of the people that beheld Yemisi's close relationship with the Johnsons was that the Johnsons were grooming her for either one of their relatives or friends. But, to Yemisi, such a thought never crossed her mind at all. Her actions were based on her natural tendency to devote all her energy to satisfying anybody she cared for. And, outside her immediate family, the Johnsons were the first family that mattered in her thinking.

Unknown to Yemisi, but clearly easily deciphered by all that had cause to relate closely with the Johnsons, especially Aunt Nkem, Yemisi's natural love for the Johnsons did not receive the expected reciprocal affection. Nkem had inferiority complex towards Yemisi. Despite her being a bit taller and fairer to behold and her family being far more

affluent than Yemisi's, Yemisi's personality and presence always made her feel inadequate. Her husband having a thriving pharmacy store while Yemisi had no boyfriend at all did not reduce her inferior feelings.

Her hatred and ill-feelings for Yemisi was ignited by Yemisi's decision to further her education after graduating from the college of education. Despite her efforts to discourage her, Yemisi insisted on going for the degree programme and even ended up graduating in the First-Class Honours division, thereby eclipsing her pride of graduating in the second-class upper division in nursing sciences. Yemisi went further to '*add pepper to her injury*' by going for postgraduate studies to the level of obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in education!!! Auntie Nkem was so disturbed by Yemisi's academic successes that she could hardly sleep. Deeply wounded as Auntie Nkem felt as a result of Yemisi's rising academic profile, she kept all these bad feelings to herself, and always presented smiling and encouraging façade whenever she was in Yemisi's company.

Challenge on Auntie Nkem was one that really taxed the existing love in the family. Since I was the very first person that diagnosed Auntie Nkem as a challenge in the family, Yemisi's initial reaction was to think that I was envious of the existing cordial relationship between them. With steadfast love and guidance, Yemisi was convinced of who Auntie Nkem really was to her. Friends and colleagues that were initially non-committal later opened up and, with concrete examples, convinced Yemisi of Auntie Nkem's true feelings for her. Since she had been Yemisi's childhood role model and 'friend', it was resolved that her menace should be tackled through tactical withdrawal by Yemisi and our family. Details of the family's plans and activities were no longer made available to her, and the frequency of physical interactions dwindled. She and her family had, since then, been placed on my

family's arms' length, only invited to general functions like ordinary members of the public.

Every family has its own Auntie Nkem: loved and cherished by the family, closer to them than their jugular, yet, often deadlier than the ravenous Mamba!!! The best antidote for these Auntie Nkems is the couple's cultivation and display of mutual open love, understanding, fervent prayers on the family's altar and steadfast joint desire to put the family's interest higher above Auntie Nkem's.

Inadequate finance was another major initial challenge of the new family. Although Yemisi had been involved in mobile trading in textiles and ladies' wears, shoes and bags since her undergraduate days, being married with advanced pregnancy forced her to withdraw temporarily from active trading. Her practice of selling on credit with a proviso for the customers to pay back the full cost over a period of two to three months led to her not having direct access to much of her capital. As the two major stakeholders in the new family, we analyzed and discussed this challenge and resolved to revitalize the trading immediately she put to bed. The need to ensure that customers paid more than a half of the total cost upfront and paid the balance at the end of the next month was adopted as the strategy to minimize defaults and bad debts menace.

To ensure that the family's economic base was diversified as much as was practicable, wider sources of income were explored by the family. For example, production of starch from cassava and production of corn paste (*ogi*) for sale were ventured into by Yemisi. She also ventured into 'importing' dried fish from Igbokoda in Ondo State and sourcing and repackaging fairly used goods from Kotangua market in Lagos State.

While we were literally eating from hand to mouth, Yemisi muted the idea of the family embarking on compulsory savings to prepare us for

the rainy days. Her argument was that considering my age and the number of years I had spent as a university graduate, there were some levels of solvency expected of me which I must not fall below. She even suggested that building our own house before I attained the age of fifty should be our priority.

All my excuses were easily waived away by her, insisting that we needed to ensure that we had some degree of solvency to ensure that our sons were able to be given the best education we could afford. The policy of always ensuring that a proportion of our income was saved against the rainy days was thus mutually agreed on and enforced in the family. To this end, I always registered as a member of cooperative societies in every institution in which I worked, with a proviso that a percentage of my salary was deducted from the source.

The ingenuity of our decision to prepare for the rainy days was tested when the federal government stopped salaries of striking university teachers for six months in 1996. By that time, I had transferred my service from LAUTECH Ogbomosho to Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, and I had not registered as a member of any cooperative society in my new station. For the first month, we had to depend on income from Yemisi's ventures. In the second month, till the end of the strike, God intervened and provided an open heaven for the family through my consultancy services. Clients flooded my office with requests such that I was very busy moving from one project to the other throughout the last five of the six months long strike. All financial largess from the consultancy services were ploughed into Yemisi's ventures.

Our experiences from the financial insolvency period we passed through confirmed the power of mutual understanding, steadfast love,

open discussion and devotion to duty after prayers in getting over periods in financial valleys in life.

Despite financial solvency then enjoyed by the family, there was a deep craving in Yemisi's heart that was far beyond money. She yearned for activities that would enable her expand her mental prowess. Her going to the faculty of education, OAU, for her postgraduate programmes was becoming too burdensome as she very much loathed the sight of the very senior Professor that truncated her dream of being employed as a Graduate Assistant in her department, the front door of whose office she had to pass through every day she went for lectures or counselling. The more she went to the faculty, the more traumatized she became. As a remedy for the trauma, she was advised to terminate her programme at the university and move to Ibadan for her academic pursuit. It was therefore resolved that the family should relocate to Ibadan.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOJOURN AT IBADAN

Immediately the decision to move to Ibadan was taken, Yemisi's sister, Odun, and Deji Adeleke, her husband, were contacted and briefed on the family's decision to 'relocate' to Ibadan, and were implored to please assist in scouting for an apartment. To our surprise, the Adelekes responded promptly and informed us of their readiness to vacate their apartment at Odejaye Street in Ibadan for our family.

My major challenge was how to convince our parents and relatives of the sanity in my decision to move my family to Ibadan while I continued my appointment as a Lecturer at the OAU, Ile-Ife. As Yemisi was generally known to be presently unemployed and Dayo, our first and the only child that had started schooling, was in a reputable school in the town, the general opinion among relatives, friends and colleagues, was that the decision was an irrational one. We resolved that the best approach was to tell our parents the plain truth behind our decision and the parents easily reasoned along and blessed our decision. With the coast cleared, we, together with Ifedayo and Oluwafikayomi, our sons, and Lewa, a relative's daughter living with us, moved from Ile-Ife to Ibadan on the 24th of December, 1996.

The first thing we noticed, early the next morning, as we adjusted our bodies in the bed we occupied with our sons, was the abundant business opportunities in the part of Ibadan we now resided. From around 5.30 in morning, droves of youths and women were thronging into the various buildings on the street, seeking for ice blocks. We readily concluded that commercial production of ice blocks would be a thriving business to venture into in the city. Deciding not to spite the days of small beginnings, we arose from the bed and poured water inside eight nylon sachets which we placed inside the small space available in our portable fridge freezer. We reasoned that these forming ice blocks and being sold at the rate of two naira per sachet, would fetch the family our first income of sixteen naira in the city of Ibadan, a city flowing with milk and honey. I proceeded to prepare hand-written flyers specifying that 'Ice Blocks Are Available Here', and posted these at strategic places on the building's fence.

In the spirit of oneness developed during our courtship at Nassarawa, every business venture embarked upon belonged to the family and every member of the family voluntarily contributed his or her maximum quota to its development. Our decision to move to Ibadan sacrificed our business goodwill in Ile-Ife, as most of our customers, especially for starch and *ogi* were now beyond our range. Building required network to rejuvenate our business platform was thus our first main challenge at Ibadan. Yemisi strongly believed that all our friends, relatives and colleagues, held her responsible for the family relocating to Ibadan, and that she needed to strive to ensure that the family did not suffer financial losses to justify our decision. Hence, she resolved to pursue every strand of business opportunity that came her way. In the spirit of not despising the days of small beginning, the family really appreciated and was grateful to God for the extra sixteen naira being realized every other day from the ice-block business. Although these sixteen naira

every other day appears very small at the naira's current rate, it was a relatively decent income when considered against the fact that my monthly salary as a Lecturer then was not more than six-hundred naira, an average of twenty naira per day.

Despite the initial 'little income' the ice-block guaranteed for the family, the returns were very minimal and could not meet the family's daily basic needs, especially now that I had to travel to and from Ile-Ife for my duties. Yemisi was therefore very much worried and concerned about how she could contribute meaningfully to the family's income. All my efforts to convince her not to worry were not accepted by her as she perceived herself as not doing enough, no thanks to the most senior Professor that truncated her hope of being employed as a Lecturer in her Alma Mata at OAU, Ile-Ife.

The next thought that crossed her mind was obtaining eggs from poultry farmers and selling them at retail prices. To this end, we contacted some poultry owning families from where we were able to buy crates of eggs, which she sold at retail prices. Although this gave higher returns than the sixteen naira every other day provided by the ice-block business, the income was still a far cry from the family's daily minimum financial needs.

A significant turn-around in the family's business ventures occurred through Yemisi's mother. She had attended a party at Ibadan where *fizzes*, that would turn into *Fanta* juice when added to water, was served and presented as take-away gifts for the guests. Mama brought her fizzes to us and demonstrated its turning into a liquid with *Fanta*-like taste. It was then that the idea of buying more of these *Fizzes* and using them to prepare *Lollypop* for school children was muted and accepted. Yemisi quickly journeyed down to *Agbeni* Market to buy more Fizzes, nylon and other ingredients for preparation of lollypop.

The maiden edition of the lollypop was prepared on that same day by tying the end of the nylon wrappers. By the following morning, the lollypop had frozen and Lewa was asked to pack them inside a cooler and take them to a primary school close to our house. Yemisi and I followed her and stood nearby to watch her sell the lollypop, while Mama stayed at home with the children. To our surprise, the whole pack was sold within thirty minutes.

For the first time since the family moved to Ibadan, we had an encounter that signified a promising ray of light at the end of the dark tunnel: a whooping profit of thirty-five naira, nearly twice my daily pay as a Lecturer, had been recorded within thirty minutes!!! This was a wonderful windfall for the family.

With this sudden encouragement, we took all the remaining money at home to Agbeni market to bulk-purchase required ingredients for the lollypop preparation. Like a miracle, the family's lollypop business started. With the lollypop business, the family's income improved significantly and innovations were introduced into the packaging of the lollypop. For instance, sealing machines were bought and used in sealing the lollypop.

'When a student is ready, the teacher will emerge' is a popular saying that came true for us in the lollypop business. The family's bold move in venturing into lollypop production led to the emergence of a teacher that guided us into mass production of modern lollypop. The teacher emerged in this way: when Yemisi's elder sister, Laide Elusade, learnt that the family had ventured into lollypop production, she asked Yemisi to visit her at home in Lagos. There, Yemisi was connected to her sister's friend that had been in lollypop production for years. This lady provided adequate training in the mixing of various ingredients used in

lollypop production. She took her to places where all ingredients were sold at wholesale and retail prices.

Yemisi returned to Ibadan a very happy person, and the family's lollypop production began on a larger scale. It was, at this time, that Lewa, the female relative residing with us, ran away from our home. Her closer relatives were informed who assured us that she was not lost but had decided to relocate to another relative. The vacuum created by Lewa's absconding from home left Yemisi with the choice of either abandoning the trade or becoming personally responsible for hawking the lollypop at the school. To everybody's surprise, Yemisi, despite being a graduate in the First-Class Honours division from Great Ife, chose the latter. She became a food vendor in a primary school.

Behind our house at Odejayi street, was Loyola Grammar School, with students' population far higher than that of the primary school where Yemisi used to sell her lollypop. With the assistance of Mama Funmi, a food vendor whose shop was in front of our house and Mrs. Ominiyyi, the Vice Principal in charge of administration in the school, Yemisi was enrolled as a food vendor in Loyola Grammar School, with a proviso that she should always appear in the uniform designed for food vendors in the school. Yemisi happily complied with this and other conditions.

Lollypop production, then, became a full-time activity in the family, in which almost every visitor participated to meet the targeted market demand. Helping hands were later employed on commission basis.

During the period when Yemisi was a full-time food vendor at Loyola Grammar School, the quality of her Hygienic Lolly was compatible with that of multinational corporations and the product enjoyed very high patronage such that she usually exhausted whatever quantity she conveyed to the school at any period of time: during the break period and at the closing time. Market survey carried out by her led to her

adding soya milk and zobo drink as new products to her wares. With this diversification in trade commodities, income derived from the sales increased significantly.

It was at that time that a major challenge reared its head in the school. It manifested in this way: Yemisi, with the assistance of the family and the hired hands, had prepared more than enough quantity of lollypop, soya milk and zobo drink and had conveyed them to her 'stand' in the school compound. With the assistance of two sales-girls, she had been busy dispensing her wares to the customers when a student came to inform her that her attention was required in the Staffs' Common Room. As expected, she rushed down to the room dressed in food vendors' uniform, wondering what might have necessitated her being summoned.

On getting to the Staffs' Common Room, one of the female teachers informed her of her 'offence': a sachet of soya milk sold by her was found to have 'particles' that could be injurious to the consumers. Yemisi requested to be allowed to examine the sachet, which was denied. She explained that the soya milk in question could not be from her as she always took adequate care to 'double filter' her products. Many of the teachers said unsavory words to her. Some even insulted her. But she maintained her ground that the said soya milk was not hers. She was then openly scolded by some of the female teachers in the Staffs' Common Room and warned to ensure that she 'desist from packaging unhygienic goods for the students'. It was then emphasized that repetition of such an offence would lead to her being banned from further vending food and/or beverages in the school.

Yemisi wept bitterly because of the open humiliation she was subjected to. She quickly packed her containers as all the remaining goods had been sold by her sales girls in her absence. She rushed to the house,

locked herself in the room and wept profusely before God. She took out all her credentials, spread them on the bed and talked frankly with God. She implored Him to please bail her out of her present jobless status by providing a job that befits her academic status.

Her initial resolve was to put an end to her food vending days. Immediately she made that resolution, she discontinued preparation of lollypop and other goods for the next day. On sober reflections, she cautioned herself that she was really overreacting to the event of the day. Although she was very sure that the poor soya milk did not originate from her, she reasoned that the teachers had acted right on their assumption that she was the culprit that vended unhygienic drink for the students. On the realization that throwing in the towel at that juncture would be interpreted as her owning up to being responsible for the contaminated soya milk, she resolved to liaise with some teachers in the school in carrying out discreet investigations into the source of that soya milk. With that resolution, she returned to the task of preparing goods for the next day's sales. Within a week, the results of the discreet investigations exonerated her and revealed the culprit: a teacher, that did not register as a food vendor but was involved in preparation and sale of soya milk. The teacher was adequately sanctioned by the school principal.

Food vendors in schools usually have seasonal fluctuations in their income, with the holiday periods in general, and the long vacation period, in particular, being their most precarious period. A practice Yemisi developed that easily endeared her to most of the food vendors in the school was her decision to distribute foodstuff and money as 'palliatives' to food vendors during the regular holidays. This practice was also extended to some of the teachers. She also usually dedicated time to assist students in their English language assignments. This

display of kindness, love and care endeared her to most of the co-vendors, staff and students in the school.

To expand the market base of the business, the Principal of Oke-Ibadan Grammar School was contacted for Yemisi's possible enrolment as a food vendor in the school. When the Principal saw a copy of Yemisi's first degree certificate, he said he would never have peace of mind if a graduate in the first-class Honours division from Great Ife should be working as a food vendor in his school. He suggested that she should, rather, apply to be employed as a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) recruited teacher, with the assurance that employees in that category might soon be converted into permanent staff in the state. This, Yemisi agreed to. She had barely worked for two months when all PTA teachers in the state were converted to permanent staff in the state's employment as envisaged by the Principal. She was posted to Lagelu Grammar School as a language teacher.

At Lagelu Grammar School, after the usual initial introduction and initiation into the school's traditions, Yemisi contacted the school's food committee and enrolled one of her sales girls as a food vendor in the school. To meet the increased demand necessitated by the new incursion into Lagelu Grammar School, more hands were employed to take care of production, sorting, loading and sales. The practice of 'taking care' of teachers, students and co-vendors initiated at Loyola Grammar School was extended to Lagelu, with a difference: since Yemisi was a full-time teacher at Lagelu, the 'largess' was not limited to holiday periods but all year round gifts.

It was during Yemisi's tenure as a teacher at Lagelu Grammar School that the family's economic base really stabilized and paved room for Yemisi going back to school for postgraduate programmes. Loans were obtained from the cooperative society to purchase a family car that

provided a boost for the family business, as more loads could be conveyed to and from the two major schools in which the family had representatives registered as food vendors.

With the family's improved regular income, Yemisi suggested that the family should give high priority to owning her own house. Her usual argument was that considering my age and my occupational status as a Lecturer of many years, owning a family house was an achievement that was overdue for the family. Her earlier argument that we should have a family house before my fiftieth birthday was reintroduced and emphasized. With her advice being favourably considered by the family, friends and families were contacted to help assist in scouting for a plot of land in a new residential suburb of Ibadan city. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that the said plot of land should enjoy easy access to Ife – Ibadan express road for ease of the family journeying to and from Ile-Ife to visit our aged parents.

About two days before the end of 1999, Mrs. Adegbenjo, our next-door neighbour, informed Yemisi that she learnt that two 'secured' plots of land were available at a 'new site' off Ife-Ibadan express road. This information came at a time the family did not have as much as one-hundred-naira cash, since the schools had been in their end of the year holiday period and every available money had either been spent on stock-piling required raw materials for producing the beverages in the new year or had been given out as Christmas presents.

Despite the family's precarious economic condition, the family took a step of faith and followed the Adegbenjos to the representatives of the family that owned the land. After some haggling, a price was agreed on, with a proviso that the said money should be paid within a week. The next challenge then was how to raise the said amount of money within a week.

During that period, two of the family's very close friends, Boye and Alhadji, were residing with the family. Boye was serving his sabbatical leave as a manager in a micro-finance bank at Ibadan, while Alhadji was on a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme at the University of Ibadan. The two usually reside with us from Monday to Friday, spending the weekends with their families at Ile-Ife. The discussions with the land owners were held on Thursday, and Alhadji and Boye were informed of our dilemma immediately we returned home in the evening. They were implored to please help secure the required amount of money, ensuring that they bring it along with them on Monday.

Alhadji informed us that his only usual source of loan facility was his working place's staff cooperative society. He informed that he might not be able to secure any loan from the society since he had just collected a loan that he had not paid back. Since the existing regulation was not favourable to his applying for a new loan, he would not be able to be of assistance. Boye also gave similar excuses. With all hope apparently lost, Boye and Alhadji were implored to still try their best to ensure that the land was secured for the family.

For the first time since the duo resided with us, only Boye returned on Monday, and explained that all his effort to secure soft loan for us was futile. With no access to telephone, there was no way Alhadji could explain why he was not able to come that day.

Early the following morning, Alhadji returned from Ile-Ife and met us in the sitting room.

'Why did you not inform us that you would not be around yesterday?' I queried.

'You will not even bother to greet me before firing me?' Alhadji retorted.

'You kept everybody tensed up throughout the day. We could not even lock the main door until very late in the night'. Yemisi explained.

'I am sorry I could not make it yesterday'. Alhadji apologized.

'Apology well taken; pardon granted'. I chipped in.

'My inability to return yesterday was due to my quest to assist in solving the challenge identified by your family'. Alhadji explained.

'What challenge are you talking about, after you have informed us that you could not obtain any additional loan from the cooperative society?' I queried.

'It is about the land you intended to buy. I am happy to inform you that the loan has been granted and I have cashed the money'. Alhadji explained.

'How did you achieve the miracle?' Yemisi and I asked together.

'I was very much disturbed by my obvious helplessness in assisting you to source for money to buy the land that was obviously very important to the two of you. I therefore set my mind on thinking of possible ways to source out the money for you'. Alhadji explained.

'Considering the obvious impossibility of your being given additional loan, how did you swing it?' Yemisi asked.

'Nothing works wonder than being truthful at all time'. Alhadji explained. 'I resolved to see the executives of the cooperative society and narrate your predicament to them. Since most of the members of the executive know Lekan, they decided to assist. I was then advised to apply for additional loan, explaining that the earlier loan was not

adequate enough to execute the project it was procured for. I spent the whole working hours of yesterday processing and cashing the loan. I have therefore brought the cash to you this morning to enable you meet the land-owners'. Alhadji explained.

'Uncle Alhadji, thanks very much. You are a friend indeed!!!' Yemisi yelled, kneeling down and embracing Alhadji.

'Alhadji, thank you. I am very grateful!!!!' I shouted in gratitude.

'You need not thank me. What are we friends for?' Alhadji replied.

Alhadji then handed over the money to me, and I, in turn, gave it to Yemisi for keep. Alhadji then took a light breakfast and left for University of Ibadan to join his colleagues in the MBA class.

In the evening, Yemisi, Adegbenjos and I, went to the representatives of the land owners who requested us to bring the agreed money for the two plots by Saturday. On Saturday, the land owners were met at their family house and the agreed sum of money was paid for the two plots of land, one for the Adegbenjos and one for us. It was then that the land owners informed us that the parcels of land paid for would be demarcated in situ for all the potential buyers in the morning of the following Saturday.

While the Adegbenjos planned to commence construction of their building immediately their plot was allotted to them, Yemisi and I planned to cultivate some crops on our plot. To our bewilderment, on demarcating and allocating the plot to us the following Saturday, we were privately and reliably informed that the land owners were notorious for land grabbing and sale of same plot of land to multiple customers. It was emphasized that the only way to secure the land from being sold to other customer was to immediately commence construction of our building. Since the money for the land had been

paid the previous week and was already shared and spent by the previous land owners, seeking a refund of the money was an impossible task. Hopeless as our situation appeared, we resolved to commit everything into God's hands.

When the Adegbenjos hired a labourer to clear their site, we requested the labourer to clear ours immediately he completed the Adegbenjos, although we had no concrete assurance of where the money to pay for his labour would come from. To God be the glory that we took the step of faith in asking the labourer to commence the site clearance. By the time the site was to be cleared, God intervened in form of the university paying academic staff some arrears. The windfall received was enough to clear the site and dig the foundation of the building. I prepared a well-dimensioned sketched-design of the building, detailing the various internal and external spaces of the proposed building. Adegbenjos' bricklayer was commissioned to dig the foundation of the building based on the plan provided by me. Every action taken by us was gingered by our desire to prevent possible sale of our plot by the previous land owners. We strongly believed that digging the foundation would convince any prospective buyer that development was already in progress on the plot.

With the urgent need to ensure that the land was not taken over by its initial owners, every effort was made to increase the family's income. Concerted efforts were made to boost the production and sale of the family's beverages: lollypop, zobo drink and soya milk. The family's vehicle was dedicated to production and sale of these beverages in the two secondary schools where the family had registered as food vendors. On more than three days in the week, Yemisi usually shuttled between the two schools many times to ensure that the ever-increasing demand for the family's goods were met. All revenues realized from the family's

salaries and business were ploughed into the family's building project. In addition to finance, we were involved in contributing manpower labour to the building development project. Many of Yemisi's co-workers at Lagelu Grammar School were also involved in physical contribution to the building development project. Most notable among these are Tunde and Taiwo Arulogun.

A major factor that enhanced the construction of our house was the introduction of 'jumbo' salaries for government workers in general and university Lecturers in particular, since the tail end of the General Abdulsalami's military rule in 1999. With the advent of democracy in the year, workers' salaries were favourably reviewed and majority of the workers became economically buoyant. For instance, my monthly salary increased from just six hundred naira in 1998 to more than six thousand naira by 2001. In line with the extant tradition in the family, more than three-quarters of the windfall was saved in the university's cooperative society, and, with effect from year 2001, I was able to obtain a loan of millions of naira every year, which were invested in the building construction.

On the 24th of February, 2006, less than ten years after the family was 'smuggled' into a three-bedroom flat at Odejayi Street, Ibadan, we moved into our family's building in Ebeneseri, off Alakia-Isebo-Iyana-Church Road. Adequate information on the contributions of Yemisi to the actualization of the family's movement to the family house deserves being provided at this juncture.

After the building was roofed in 2004, Yemisi strongly believed in completing the building to taste before the family would move in. In line with her insistence, efforts were made by the family to save massively towards providing befitting finishing for the building. Unfortunately, not much money was saved between March 2004 when

the building was roofed and December, 2005, when the family suddenly decided to move hastily to the new building. Two major factors contributed to the sudden change in Yemisi's perception, that compelled her to agree with my earlier stand that the building should be completed in installments, in line with a novel approach to housing delivery for people in the middle- and lower-income group that I often agitated for in my housing classes.

Within Odejayi and Oke-Badan areas where my family resided, four of my family's closest friends completed their family houses and informed us of their desire to relocate to their family houses before the end of the year. These are: Femi-Isolas, Lekan-Busaris, Sulaiman-Allis and Gbadeboris.

Since these friends' family houses were located at various locations far away from Odejayi Street, it was obvious to Yemisi and I that our close friends' general 'exodus' from Odejayi Street could lead to our possible 'isolation' as we would end up not being easily accessible to our close friends. In addition to the fear of possible isolation from friends, the caretaker of the building in which we resided, in October of the year, informed us of substantial increase in the building's rent, that would be with effect from January of the following year, with a proviso that the following year's rent should be fully paid before the end of the year. With all these 'pressures' from different quarters, the family was in a dilemma on how to go about addressing the unfolding challenges.

On the last Saturday of the year 2005, the building's caretaker visited us to collect the following year's rent. On his arrival, Yemisi implored me to negotiate payment for six months after which the family would move out of the building. In negotiating with the caretaker, I requested him to give the family till the end of February, not June, of the following year, as the family would be moving out to her own building. With the

promise made to the caretaker, the family paid for only two months and expedited efforts to make the new building habitable before the end of February.

On the 24th of February, 2006, my family vacated the building at Odejayi Street and moved to our new building. Yemisi's prophetic aspiration that we should move to our own building by my 50th birthday was thus fulfilled, as I marked my 50th birthday in January of the year. At the time of moving into the building, no plastering had been done in the building: the floors and the internal and external walls were not plastered. Only the three entrance doors to the building were in place, mosquito net was nailed on the walls containing the spaces provided for the windows to prevent reptiles crawling into the house. Other than these, there was no other form of security provided in the building. Two coaches of blocks were erected as the fence, with two gates, and the external drainage channel already provided to prevent run-offs from the street and the adjoining neighbourhood flooding the house. Our friends and relatives were informed and invited to visit the family in the new building. Every visitor wondered openly why the family had to move into an uncompleted building like war refugees.

All Yemisi's friends and colleagues expressed shock that she could agree to dwell in so derelict-looking building. She informed them that the family decided to put into practice what I had always been advocating in my classes and various studies on adoptive installmental housing as a strategy to addressing the persistent ever-increasing housing deficit in the developing world. That my family in general and Yemisi in particular, could move into an installmental building, served as an encouragement for many of our colleagues to move out of their rented apartments to installmental houses, that were all later fully upgraded and completed to taste in record time.

As anticipated, our moving into the building served as a stimulus for earlier completion of the building to taste within three years. Contributions of Ahmed Wada Ikaka in providing the money for the painting of the building are hereby publicly acknowledged.

A major prize paid for moving from Odejayi Street to the new house is winding up the family's beverages business as the new area, unlike Odejayi, does not enjoy regular electricity supply. Since it was not economical to run the business on diesel generator, the most plausible action was to fold it up. Another very prominent reason for the decision to wind-up the beverages business was the stringent conditions stipulated and enforced by the federal government's National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC). Their no-nonsense approach and propaganda on the print and electronic media in which defaulters were publicly embarrassed as deterrents to others, discouraged our thinking of operating in rented apartments in an area that did not have electricity challenges.

Yemisi's academic pursuit is a landmark series of events that need to be adequately discussed under 'our sojourn at Ibadan'.

Career path to be followed by Yemisi and I was one of the major decisions we arrived at during her NYSC primary assignment at Nassarawa. Her love for academics, spurred by her graduating in the First-Class Honours division, and the high hope of being retained in her graduating department, reinforced her decision to pursue a career in academics. On my part, my already having a thriving academic career at the polytechnic enhanced our resolution that I should transfer my services to any of the universities in southwestern Nigeria.

As expected, therefore, immediately after Oluwafikayomi, our second son, was strong enough to be placed in care of trusted hands, Yemisi seized the earliest opportunity to enroll for master's degree at the

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The academic pursuit was, however, short-lived as she had to disengage from the programme due to some circumstances beyond her control. With her dream of being employed as a graduate assistant at OAU being shattered, and her forced exit from her postgraduate programme, continuing her postgraduate studies at the University of Ibadan was upper-most in her mind. Much as she loved to continue her studies immediately we arrived at Ibadan in December 1996, the fact that admission into postgraduate programmes at the university had closed and sales of admission forms for the next academic session was yet to commence, forced her to wait for the time the admission forms would be available. As a person who believed in the proverbial 'killing two birds with a stone', she devoted the 'waiting period' to taking care of the family and building the family's economic ventures.

It was also during this intervening period that she developed a sharper focus of the area of education she would love to specialize in. Her involvement and interactions with fellow-women struggling to sustain their various families shifted her focus to conducting academic investigations on various educational and occupational challenges of women and the girl-child. Realizing that department of adult education would be most suitable for her new flared-for area of specialization, she applied for admission into the Department of Adult Education, not Language Arts Education, in which she had graduated in the First-Class Honours division, nor Education Management, which she had abandoned after completing the course work, at the OAU, Ile-Ife.

Her failure to be admitted into the Department of Adult Education in 1998 did not dampen her resolve to pursue her dream in the department. It, rather, made her more determined to make a career in

adult education. Her resolve yielded positive results in 1999 when she was given admission in the Department. She thus enrolled and registered for courses in the Masters' Programme of the department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan.

Despite her combining her employment as a full-time language teacher and being fully in-charge of supervision of production and distribution of beverages produced by the family with her Master in Education programme, she successfully combined these roles and none suffered. She completed her master's programme in record time and successfully defended her dissertation on 'Effects of Literacy Programmes on Women Development in Ife Central Local Government Area'. Extracts from the dissertation were later developed into an article she published in a reputable international journal.

With the Master in Education programme behind her, she enrolled for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Education. On commencing the Ph.D. programme, she discovered that it was far more tedious and more demanding than all her previous academic endeavours. Many individuals even advised her to abandon the programme as it had no relevance in her attaining the peak of her career as a secondary school principal. But, being determined and strong-willed in her resolve to end her career as either a Professor or a Chief Lecturer, she persisted.

It was during her Ph.D. programme that she had cordial relationships with Queen Dr. Fausat Omolara Aromolaran, the Queen of His Imperial Majesty, Kabiyesi Oba Dr. Gabriel Adekunle Aromolaran, the Owa Obokun Adimula of Ijesa-Land, who was her fellow-doctoral student. It was Queen Dr. Fausat Omolara Aromolaran that influenced Kabiyesi Oba Aromolaran to assist in Yemisi being employed as a Lecturer at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, in 2011.

With her transferring her services to the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, the need to complete her Ph.D. programme became more obvious as it would enhance her academic career in the school. She therefore resolved to be more dedicated and more dogged in her academic pursuits.

Her doggedness and steadfastness encouraged some destiny helpers in the Department of Adult Education and the Faculty of Education to provide required assistance in guiding her through preparing her Ph.D. thesis on *'Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors as Determinants of Women's Participation in Non-Formal Education in Southwestern Nigeria'*. Her completing, presenting and defending the thesis was well received in the department.

In the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, her new station, she was very fortunate to be surrounded by amiable, peace-loving and sibling-like colleagues. She was very loving and accommodating to her colleagues and students too. She performed her duties meritoriously and contributed her very best to the development of staff and students she encountered during her sojourn in the school. Between 2011 when she joined the college, she rose from the position of Assistant Lecturer to the position of Senior Lecturer, and had prepared her curriculum vitae for promotion to the position of Principal Lecturer before God disengaged her from the school's services.

PHASES OF YEMISI'S EVOLUTION IN PICTURES



Yemisi as a teenager



Yemisi and Secondary School Classmates



Yemisi with Some of Her Secondary School Classmates



Yemisi's Graduation from College of Education



Yemisi as a University Undergraduate



**Yemisi's Graduation as the First First-Class (Hons.)
Graduate in Language Arts Education at O.A.U., Ile - Ife**



Yemisi During NYSC Orientation



Yemisi at the NYSC Orientation Camp



Yemisi and I During Our Introduction and Engagement



**Yemisi and I Exchanging Wedding Rings
on Our Wedding Day**



Yemisi Carrying Our Baby Son



Yemisi and The Family
(Your L-R) Ifedayo, Yemisi, Lekan, Oluwafikayomi



Yemisi with Our Sons at Their Convocation



Yemisi and I at Our Sons' Convocation



**Yemisi and I with the Adelekes and
Professor Adebomi Oyewumi at Our Sons' Convocation**



Yemisi and I on My 60th Birthday



Yemisi and Our Sons on My 60th Birthday



Yemisi on Her Ph.D. Convocation



Congratulating Yemisi for a Job Well-Done



A Visit to Yemisi's Final Resting Place

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING CHAPTER

Reminiscence On Yemisi's Peculiar Attributes

Throughout her lifetime, Yemisi had some peculiar attributes that were easily and readily discernible within minutes of interacting with her. Most prominent among these are: sacrificial love, integrity, Godliness, sincerity, boldness and frankness. For record purposes, some instances of when these peculiar attributes were displayed are relayed in this chapter. For ease of comprehension, these instances are presented in relation to personalities involved in the display of her peculiar attributes. These are:

- i. Myself
- ii. Our sons.
- iii. Members of Sanni family
- iv. Yemisi's siblings
- v. Members of Larger Aletan family
- vi. Colleagues at place of work
- vii. Neighbours
- viii. Former classmates
- ix. Fellow church members

Yemisi and I

As explained earlier, my first awareness of and contact with Yemisi was in her penultimate year at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife. Her initial efforts to address me with courtesy was rebuffed by me as I insisted and encouraged her to address me simply as 'Lekan'. My reason for this insistence is my realization that being on first name basis often remove formality from relationships, thus, paving ways for quicker and more enduring intimacy. As anticipated, our being on first name relationship really sped up our intimacy, such that most of our colleagues that did not know of the time we started our relationships often had the impression that the relationship was many years older than its actual years.

With our resolve to get married right from the inception of the courtship, we did not waste time on window-dressing pretenses. We were frank and open with each other. For instance, I remember the time I bought a cotton fabric from Jos as a present for her. On receiving the fabric from me, she thanked me profusely, and then asked about the price I paid for the fabric. On telling her, she made me realize that the fabric cost less than a halve of the amount I paid at Aswani which she visited regularly. She told me that her love was not dependent on material things I present to impress her, but on her firm believe in the genuineness of my love. She advised that we should concentrate on making the best of our meagre income. Comparing her gestures with those of other girls I was familiar with till then, she stood out as the only one that was not interested in my taking her out to eateries and 'joints', advising, instead, on the need to plan for our future.

Before ever meeting Yemisi, I had a fervent belief that a couple must have everything, most especially, the finances, in common. At a

Youth's Retreat in my Church, I had contributed to a debate on which of the spouses, husband or wife, should be richer in a family. While majority of the males insisted that the man should be the richer, and was countered by majority of the females, only I had a deviant view. I insisted that since the man and woman were no longer two but one, everything they had – parents, friends, relatives and material goods – must be jointly owned, ending my argument by reframing the biblical injunction that '*What God has joined together, LET NOTHING put asunder*'. Although most of my male colleagues insisted on the impracticability of my reasoning, I emphasized that it was my view on the family I intended to put into practice whenever I was married.

Meeting Yemisi made me realize that the 'reasoning' was not only practicable, but was the most potent antidote to most of the family's misunderstandings. As I said earlier, we cultivated the habit of operating open joint account during her NYSC primary assignment at Nassarawa. I later found this practice to be of invaluable assistance both in our planning and preparing for our wedding and later life as a couple. All anticipated possible sources of finance for the wedding were openly discussed, with a hindsight on not compromising the young family's financial independence. She boldly informed her family of my financial limitations and pleaded my cause during the family's deliberations on wedding and engagement materials we were to bring.

During her stay at Nassarawa, she did not hide her believe that I should transfer my services to a university in southwestern Nigeria. All efforts by friends and colleagues to persuade her to even consider possibility of moving to Abuja was openly rejected by her, with her emphasis on our need to reside close to our aged parents that were all domiciled at Ile-Ife.

Right from the beginning of our courtship, once she made up her mind to marry me, she made my happiness her primary duty on earth. My

comfort and conveniences dominated her thoughts throughout the duration of our earthly conjugal bliss. She was the one that chose, bought, sewed and prepared every apparel I put on every blessed day of our married life. She had the habit of scouting for the best materials she would buy and sew without informing me, long ahead of the time it would be required for outings. She specialized in surprising me with brand new clothing whenever the need arose. She was ready to quarrel with anybody that either acted or behaved in anyway inimical to my comfort.

We strictly adhered to our idea of 24/7 love...Right from Nassarawa, we were each other's shadow. All my friends were hers and hers were mine. Being more convenient at handling telephones, her telephone number became the main avenue for people contacting the family. The only time we were not in each other's company was when we were in classroom performing our duties as teachers and when we were at statutory meetings. Concerned about the possibility of some lousy drivers insulting me while on the wheels, she readily volunteered and acted as the family's driver throughout our marital life. All staff and students in institutions where I worked and had cause to either go for external examination or Sabbatical leave would forever remember her as the only female Ph.D. degree holder-Lecturer that doubled as her husband's Personal Assistant. On my part, I had intimate relationship with all her friends and colleagues whom I related with as brothers and sisters.

In various places where I had worked, Yemisi always ensured she worked out a more conducive environment for me by going all out to establish personal friendship with many of my fellow workers and students. Her rapport with this category of people was so high that most of them often route their pleas through her. And, her pleas were

often granted by me because she would always advise on ways to accommodate the request. For instance, students' applications for privileges submitted at the tail end of the submission deadlines had been thus accommodated by me with the assurance that she had met the higher authority in-charge behind the scene to ensure that the act would be accommodated.

At various occasions when I was either the Head of Department or the Dean, she liaised very well between me and the staff and students to ensure my smooth sail. As my very loyal 'Senior Personal Assistant', she made contacts and established friendship with everybody that could be of assistance to me both within and outside the university community.

To ensure consistent personal contact, we slept in the same bed throughout about twenty-eight years our marriage lasted. The only nights we slept apart were the few occasions either of us travelled outside Ibadan, and these were, cumulatively, less than thirty days in the entire twenty-eight years. Our consistent togetherness gave us a reputation which served as a spiritual and physical bond, consistently rejuvenating our perpetual friendship. Despite the family having more than a car, we always cruise about in a car, with her on the driver's seat. She would alight me in my office before zooming off to hers, and return to take me home from my office. She was a tireless marathon worker, especially in matters concerning the comfort of the family.

Strong as she was, she was most apprehensive of my falling sick. Like a mother-hen, she was ever ready to cover me, literarily, from all darts that might be fired at me from both visible and invisible forces. She was, thus, always involved in marathon prayers for me and the boys.

As stated earlier, she played a very crucial role in achieving her dream of our moving into our own building at my 50th birthday. She worked her fingers grey and physically participated in the construction work to

actualize the dream. She never saw her chores as labour but a love feast provided for the family she so much loved and cared for.

Every married person understands the fact that although the man is the titular 'head' of the family, it is the woman, through her actions, that determines the extent to which visitors throng to the family's house. Yemisi's open-handedness and readiness to welcome visitors encouraged many of our relatives, friends, colleagues and students to throng to our house, thus, strengthening our relationship.

Throughout our life together as a couple, she never had any elaborate birthday celebration, insisting on very modest ones, involving members of the family and one or two families that accidentally stumbled on the celebration. On the other hand, my 40th, 50th and 60th birthdays were elaborately celebrated by her. She had even started talking about my 70th birthday that was five years away by the time she transited to glory. She always insisted on the need to celebrate me as the head of the family, with the belief that anointing the head will guarantee the flow of the oil of joy to every other part of the body.

Our operating on first name basis may give wrong impression that she did not accord me the respect due to me as the head of the family. I always informed and it bears affirmatively restating that Yemisi gave me all respect due to me as her husband. She never did anything that would hurt my pride. She respected and honoured me and my position as the head of the family. She did not indulge in the hypocrisy of calling me 'Daddy' in public while dishonouring me in private. Yemisi verily honoured me always in every way possible. For instance, bold and daring as she appeared, she ALWAYS sought my clearance in whatever agreement she ventured into. All our new friends were freely discussed and the level of our mutual commitment mutually agreed on right from the inception. I enjoyed and had 100% confidence in Yemisi's integrity

and chastity. She gave her priceless virginity to me only after the families' introduction was done and was never involved in any carnal relationship with any man other than me. Chastity and high moral integrity were the bedrock of our mutually reciprocated love. She sacrificed her most burning dream of becoming a Lecturer at Obafemi Awolowo University for me and the family, preferring to uphold her moral chastity rather than dishonour her matrimonial bed for employment as a Lecturer. My personal integrity and moral chastity I promised her on our first encounter, which I repeated before God and men on our wedding day, I abided with throughout our time together and still maintain till date.

Yemisi and Our Sons

Since the aim of writing this memoir is not to eulogize Yemisi posthumously, but to document my true everlasting memory of life and time of Yemisi since I had the privilege of knowing, relating with, loving and living with her, her relationship with her two sons is presented unedited in this section. To provide a clearer and more vivid picture of her relationships with our sons, I have to go to the very beginning, the time that Ifedayo, our first son, was still in Yemisi's womb.

Immediately the doctor confirmed that Yemisi was pregnant, I was very excited and I boldly informed her that the baby would be a baby-girl, in line with my siblings' first child being females. Yemisi countered my statement and affirmed that the baby would be a boy that would be my replica in appearance. I told her I would love the baby irrespective of its gender and whichever of us it resembled. Since the confirmation of the pregnancy, Yemisi became very much concerned about the health of the foetus inside her. She took precautions to follow every health guideline provided by the medical staff of the hospital we patronized at

both Nassarawa and Ile-Ife. She avoided taking drugs, even when she had physical discomforts, insisting that the mildest drug could have adverse effects on the unborn baby. She therefore preferred her bearing some pregnancy-related discomforts, with the believe that the discomforts would ultimately subside and fizzle out, to taking drugs to suppress the discomfort, which might ultimately have adverse effects on the unborn baby.

As an expectant mother, she ensured that adequate baby dresses and baby's materials were procured in anticipation of the incoming baby. Considering my prediction that the baby would be a girl, contrary to her own prediction, she towed the neutral line by buying unisex baby dresses and baby materials for the unborn baby. Despite the fact that she was the only one residing in our rented apartment at Ikoyi Quarters while I was away at my station at Nassarawa, she, with the assistance of Aderetis, Olowookeres and other friends at Ile-Ife, ensured that everything that would be required for the child's safe delivery were made available in anticipation of the day.

On the day of delivery, we were very fortunate that I was at Ile-Ife on my usual visit. We were in our apartment, attending to some of our visitors, when she complained of some sudden contraptions in her 'stomach'. Since the expected delivery day (EDD) was some weeks away, we did not suspect that the baby was on its way to the world. Together with the Fajuyigbes, we took her to the hospital in the afternoon, expecting the doctors to give her some first aid and discharge her for the day. To our surprise, the doctor ordered her to be prepared for the delivery ward. Barely one hour after our reporting at the hospital, around 5.00 p.m., our first bouncing baby boy was delivered.

With the delivery of our first son christened *Ifedayo*, Yemisi's joy was filled. That she had been able to deliver a baby boy for her husband was

a very commendable feat for which she was eternally grateful to God. Ifedayo was greatly loved by us as he now served as his mother's companion during my sojourn in my station at Nassarawa. Before Ifedayo's second birthday, our second son, christened ***Oluwafikayomi***, was born, and the cup of our joys became overflowing with true joy and happiness.

Although we had a female relative named *Sewa* residing with us and assisting in the home management, Yemisi made herself the one solely responsible for the preparation of food and feeding of the children. She also ensured that the children's clothes were thoroughly washed and ironed.

As explained earlier, I had already transferred my services from LAUTECH, Ogbomosho to OAU, Ile-Ife by the time Oluwafikayomi was born. I was, therefore able to be physically present to assist in the nurturing of the children. By that time, Ifedayo had been registered at a private foundation school, for nursery and pre-nursery classes, and I was personally responsible for taking him to and from school. Right from then, the tradition of ensuring that the children were fed home-prepared food with another ration prepared and packaged in a food-flask, was established and maintained by Yemisi.

Integrity, Godliness and moral uprightness were virtues strongly emphasized in the family. Our children were taught to see these virtues as their major hallmarks in life. The tradition of reading story books to the children started right from Ifedayo's conception, as story books were bought and read frequently to him. Bible stories and folk stories were also relayed to our children right from the womb. The practice was continued and reinforced immediately they were born. Acquisition of reading skills was, therefore, a very easy task for our sons who easily became voracious readers. The boys were encouraged, right

from their primary school days, to read books on African, European, Asian and American history. They were encouraged to adopt Ben Carson as their mentor, and were encouraged to adopt his reading habit. Yemisi ensured that they registered at Oyo State's Library Board, Dugbe, Ibadan, and often visited the library to study and borrow books.

Yemisi encouraged our sons' felicitating with their friends at all level of their lives. She developed and maintained the habit of having personal encounter with each of our sons' friends and had pet names for most of them. These friends were always welcome in our house and Yemisi gave each one of them the freedom to go into our kitchen to serve himself or herself whatever ration of the food was being dished out for consumption. She developed personal friendship with parents of our sons' friends and these friends enjoyed unrestrained access to both Yemisi and myself. We could conveniently say that she was our sons' closest friend and confidant.

Throughout her lifetime, Yemisi served and functioned efficiently as the family's library and librarian and she was the depository of all documents, dates and important functions. She was the mother of 'the three boys' in the family, comprising myself, Ifedayo and Oluwafikayomi. She was our nurse as she was responsible for taking care of our various health challenges. Her interest in the field of providing first aid was unparalleled. Although she did not have any formal training as a nurse or a medical doctor, she devoted quality time to obtaining relevant information on diverse health challenging issues. Her competence was such that *the three boys* were rarely hospitalized throughout their period under her care.

She was the person solely in-charge of the family's wardrobe, in terms of purchase of materials, selecting the fashion designers, choosing the day to put on any particular apparel and laundering and safe-keeping of

our different wares. On most occasions, the purchase, etc. of our various apparels were done without our knowledge and were often presented as surprise packages for us.

Yemisi and Members of Sanni Family

Right from the beginning of our courtship till her transition to glory, we accepted members of each-other's families as ours: the parents, siblings and relatives. Yemisi, therefore, boldly discussed with members of my family as hers. For instance, she usually had frank discussions with my parents, most especially, my mother, who she made feel towards her as her daughter, both on telephone and whenever we paid her a visit. Their discussions often centered on what I term 'women gist'. She was the one that insisted on our putting our parents on monthly 'salaries' from our income. In addition to the regular income, she cultivated the habit of supplying them prepared stew, foodstuff and baked beans (*moin-moin*) and corn paste (*ogi*). Providing clothing apparels as occasional gifts for my mother was a regular habit she cultivated and maintained throughout our marital life.

The first member of Sanni family Yemisi was introduced to and with whom she maintained the closest relationship, was Abiola. By the time we started our courtship, Abiola was a Lecturer-cum-postgraduate student in the faculty of Law, OAU, and Yemisi was in her penultimate year as an undergraduate in the faculty of Education. Abiola was one of the people that contributed immensely to nurturing our relationships by 'being my eyes' after Yemisi in the university. Abiola usually visited Yemisi almost every night in her hostel, and most of Yemisi's friends and block-mates assumed Abiola to be her 'main man'. Since that time, the two had and maintained mutual respect for one another: Abiola usually addressed her as '**Aunty Yemisi**', while she

reciprocated by calling and addressing him as '*Uncle Biola*'. Their mutual trust and respect lasted throughout Yemisi's life in the family.

Yemisi's relationship with my immediate elder brother, Brother Rotimi, deserves being fully explained in this section. Brother Rotimi, often addressed as 'Buoda Rotimi' or, simply, 'Buoda', played a very crucial role in my marrying Yemisi. He was the arrow-head of the people goading me away from my dream of becoming a Catholic priest after I parted ways with Bolatito. Immediately I informed him of my relationship with Yemisi, he and his wife accepted her as a sister, providing every assistance in nurturing the relationship. He, and his wife and children, played very prominent roles in our wedding. His family's abode was my family's usual rendezvous most of the evenings, especially since I transferred my services to LAUTECH, Ogbomoso.

A major misunderstanding occurred between Buoda and Yemisi, for which I was fully responsible. This is how it happened.

Being employed as a Lecturer at the Federal Polytechnic, Nassarawa (FPN), barely five months after I gave my credentials to Bolatito for an appointment that never came through, was an important experience in my life. I, therefore, put in my very best in attending to every assignment and task given to me in line with my duties. Mr. Babalola, the Head of the Department of Town Planning, my colleagues in the department and School of Environmental Studies, and my students, all provided a very conducive environment for me. Mr. Babalola took me as a younger brother and guided me in adjusting to the life of a Lecturer. We were always together in the evenings and weekends, and I was a much-welcomed personality in their home.

The cocoon-like environment provided by the Babalolas was shattered the following year when Mr. Babalola transferred his service from Nassarawa to the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro (FPI). Although he had

informed me of existing understanding that Dr. Prince Olateru-Olagbegi, the former Rector of FPN, now serving as the Rector of FPI, that he (Mr. Babalola) would be accommodated at FPI immediately Town Planning Department was created at FPI, I was not prepared enough for the shock of his leaving me behind. His collecting my application letter and copies of my credentials, with a promise to secure a place for me at FPI whenever a vacancy existed, spurred my dream of transferring my services '*soonest*' from FPN to FPI. With this mind-set, I anticipated leaving FPN at the end of every semester. Buoda Rotimi, who was a Lecturer in the department of accountancy at FPI, was involved in assisting in pressing all necessary buttons to actualize my dream of moving to FPI.

In late 1993, I submitted my application and credentials for promotion from the position of Lecturer Grade Two to that of Lecturer Grade One. The application was being processed and I was reliably informed that my application was successful. It was before the promotion letter was issued to me that I applied in 1994 for the position of Lecturer Grade One at LAUTECH, Ogbomosho. For reasons best known to the then Head of Department of Urban and Regional Planning, LAUTECH, Ogbomosho, I was shortlisted for the position of Assistant Lecturer. Surprised that I turned up for the interview, the Head of the Department drew my attention and members of the interview panel to the disparity between the position I applied for and the one for which I was to be interviewed. He informed the interview panel that although Lecturers coming from the polytechnic with similar credentials in other departments in the Faculty of Environmental Studies were considered for higher positions, the position of Assistant Lecturer was the one available in his department. He emphasized and advised the interview panel to document that no petition for upgrading would be entertained by the university's authority should I accept the position of Assistant

Lecturer. I responded that since crossing over to the university system would be more beneficial to me in the long run, I was ready to pay any price to become a university Lecturer.

When my success at the interview was communicated to me, I contacted my Rector at FPN and intimated him of my desire to transfer my services to LAUTECH. Thinking that my decision to relocate was due to the delay in the issuance of my letter of promotion, he promised to issue the letter. I declined his offer, emphasizing that my decision to move into the university system was hinged on my believe that the movement had numerous long-term benefits. Being a University Lecturer himself and on secondment to FPN, he agreed with me and blessed my future endeavours. It is pertinent to observe that the position of Assistant Lecturer I was offered at LAUTECH was at the same level as my entry point at FPN six years earlier. I accepted the offer for two main reasons: it would provide a 'gate-way' for my entry into the university system; it could also serve as a stop-gap for my earlier aspirations to cross over to Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, about which I was still very much enthusiastic.

That I moved from the position of Lecturer Grade One to that of an Assistant Lecturer, with all its financial, social and psychological implications was enough to traumatize and discourage anybody that was not strong-willed and determined. My case was compounded by my Head of Department at LAUTECH who made the working environment very much unconducive for me. Working at LAUTECH became a nightmare for me as the working environment was totally different from the one I enjoyed at the FPN. Hostility in the environment got to a stage I was even seriously contemplating resigning my appointment, with the believe that God would provide a more conducive one. It was in this spirit that I wrote to Mr. Babalola to

inform him of my present predicament, imploring him not to forget his earlier promise.

Since the general believe of my relatives, friends and colleagues was that Yemisi was responsible for my transferring my services from FPN to a lower cadre at LAUTECH at a great cost, I never made her aware of the various challenges I was facing at LAUTECH. She was not even aware of my seriously contemplating resigning from my employment. This is a major mistake I later much regretted.

In early 1995, an appointment letter, appointing me as a Lecturer Grade One, was issued by the management of FPI, with a proviso that I should assume the position immediately. An office was already allocated to me and courses assigned to me. With great joy and appreciation to God for my answered prayers, Buoda Rotimi collected my appointment letter and came to deliver same to me at home. Unfortunately, I was not at home, and he, with excitement, informed Yemisi of the 'good news'. Instead of the expected excitement and enthusiasm that he anticipated to emanate from Yemisi, Buoda received the greatest shock of his life. Yemisi informed him that *'Lekan can never and will never accept the offer'*. The finality in her words gave Buoda the impression that she had the final say on the issue. My brother rose gently from his seat and walked back to his house. When I arrived, Yemisi relayed the whole story to me, emphasizing the absurdity in my brother suggesting that I should transfer my services back from a university to the polytechnic system.

It was then I provided her the 'behind the scene' activities, emphasizing my being in dire need of any other job to save me from my constant nightmare and frustrations at LAUTECH. Realizing that she had acted in error, we went together to Buoda's house where Yemisi apologized to him, attributing her actions to my failure to carry her along in my

response to my persistent challenges at LAUTECH. It was then amicably resolved that I should scout around for possible employment in any other university in southwestern Nigeria, to sustain my dream in academia I talked about during my interview at LAUTECH.

The misunderstanding that might have been created by the Polytechnic-University employment 'controversy' was laid to rest by God who, later in that same year, provided an avenue for me to transfer my services from LAUTECH to the Department of Geography, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. With me thus being able to reside with my family, we were all grateful to God for the wonderful ways he navigated my journey back to my family's base.

Yemisi saw herself as a sister to all my relatives and acted and discussed frankly as expected of a sister or a daughter at all times. For instance, she was so close to all my siblings and parents that most of their requests to me were usually channeled through her, with the sound knowledge that, unlike me, she would never say 'no' to any of their requests. She was always personally involved in providing lasting solutions to individual challenges of my siblings and relatives. She was a bridge-builder, making herself personal friends of my siblings' in-laws just to ensure that conducive environments prevailed in their respective homes.

She believed in being very frank at all times irrespective of whose ox was gored. A good example of her frankness was when some members of the family raised the issue of changing the family's name from 'Sanni' which was apparently an Arabic name. The agitation emanated from some indoctrinations received in one of the churches attended by some of my siblings. The discussion was moving towards being concluded as being accepted when Yemisi stood up and objected to the whole plan. She cited bible passages and examples to indicate that children do not

have the right and power to change their parents' names. All individuals whose names were changed in the Bible left their parents' names intact: examples include Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter and Saul to Paul. She drew our attention to the fact that it was Jabes's destiny, not name nor surname, that was changed by God. She argued that if God did not change these individuals' surnames, who then were we to tamper with our surname? She concluded by emphasizing that she got married into 'Sanni family' and she would spend the rest of her life bearing that surname. Her argument carried the day, and the idea of changing our surname died permanently in the family.

Another occasion when her boldness and readiness to air her views irrespective of the prevailing circumstance, was in 2016 when we were planning for my mother's burial. It was her candid advice on the *modus operandi* of the burial ceremony that saved the day and added glamour to the event when it was eventually executed. She was the one that introduced the novel idea of our providing free Ankara cotton dresses and *gele* headgears for the women in our community (*obirin-ile*). The gesture was so popular that it was extended to *obirin-ile* of my mother's parents' community. The practice has now become accepted and adopted as part of the tradition in the two communities in Ile-Ife.

Yemisi and My Friends and Colleagues

All my friends and colleagues could testify to the extent to which our vow of 'becoming one' was applied in terms of Yemisi's relationship and interactions with my friends and colleagues. Right from the beginning of our courtship, we accepted and respected the existing fact that some people in form of relatives, friends and colleagues have played some pivotal roles in our individual growth and development. We both, therefore, resolved to assist each other in not rocking the existing

boat, except in cases where close friends and associates of my former girlfriend were concerned, to ensure equity and fairness on my part.

Yemisi not only related easily with most of my friends and colleagues, she often served as the bridge between us as most of them even preferred contacting me through her. Concrete examples of her playing the role of a catalyst in cementing my relationships with some of my friends and colleagues are provided in this section.

While she was serving her primary assignment as a NYSC corper at Nassarawa, she had the opportunity of having close contact with most of my friends and colleagues at FPN and in the town. My colleagues residing in the same compound with me will forever remember the good times we all shared in the then 'Transit Camp' at 'Overseas, Agwan Gwari Quarters' of the town. We often made jokes together as we shared food, beverages and other 'goodies' together. Some specific examples of our good times are provided here, not to ridicule anybody, but to present true rendition of some real-life occurrences.

Mr. Felix Attah, one of my colleagues and neighbours, had two of his relatives, Nkechi, his niece, and Oliver, his nephew, residing with him in the compound. The two were still in Primary school. Nkechi, being older and in higher class, could communicate effectively in pidgin English, while Oliver was still trying to comprehend English language. One day, Yemisi looked intently at Oliver and said:

'Come here, you this human being!' ensuring she placed much emphasis on *'human being'*.

Assuming he was being abused and insulted, Oliver quickly responded:

'I no be human being o!'

Yemisi frowned, and then shouted in reprimand, 'You are a human being!!!'

Thus, indirectly reinforcing Oliver's belief that he was really being insulted.

Oliver, thus, responded emphatically, 'I no be human being!!!'

Their contention on 'You be human being!!!' and 'I no be human being!!!' lasted for up to five minutes and might have lasted the whole day if Nkechi had not intervened. She explained in Igbo language that 'human being' means 'madu' in Igbo, which made Oliver change his contention from 'I no be human being' to 'I be human being'. The main advantage of the day's lesson is that Oliver's vocabulary increased to include 'human being'.

By the time Yemisi was in the first trimester of her first pregnancy, mere smell of every food prepared by either me or her or anyone we hired always made her vomit uncontrollably. The first day she had this feat, I was totally confused, not knowing what to do. She could neither eat nor drink anything, she was just vomiting greenish fluids. At the peak of my predicament, Nkechi carried a plate of porridge she had prepared for her to under orange trees in front of my apartment. Perceiving the aroma of the porridge, Yemisi implored her to give her some servings of the porridge, which she ate without any side-effects. Since that day, till the beginning of her third trimester, Nkechi was responsible for preparing her meals, with a proviso that only the fully prepared food should be served when ready.

It was, also, during Yemisi's first trimester that Oliver returned from the school and found Yemisi vomiting laboriously. He had compassion for her but lacked the words to express his sympathy. He looked at her with a very sad and pathetic countenance and said:

'Madam, good afternoon'.

To which Yemisi responded, 'Thank you'.

Noting that his cares were acknowledged, he ventured further and said:

'Madam, well-done!!!'

The spirit and seriousness with which he said these words forced Yemisi to burst out laughing, since she did understand that he never meant to say 'well-done' but wanted to say some soothing and comforting words to her.

Since that day, 'Good afternoon' and 'well-done' became popular jokes in our compound till date.

Since none of my close colleagues and friends in Nassarawa had a Ph.D. and only a handful had Masters' degree in their various fields of specialization, the need to return to school for higher degrees was Yemisi's crusade among them. She always argued that the best time to return to school for higher degrees was before the children's education and other financial commitments would make the task an almost impossibility.

She always initiated our various visits to my colleagues' homes in evenings and weekends. Her very cordial relationship with my friends and colleagues at Nassarawa yielded very positive results in form of a 54-seater luxurious bus-load of them turning up for our marriage at Ile-Ife, despite the obvious threats to life occasioned by the then prevailing anti-government riots ravaging southwestern Nigeria.

Yemisi ensured that I maintained my love and care to all my friends. Yemisi, in her usual character of love and care to all my friends, always insisted that my good friend and former Lecturer colleague at the Federal Polytechnic, Nassarawa, Ahmed Wada Ikaka, now a Director with the NYSC, should stay in our house in Ibadan each time he was around on official assignments. She led me to take him away from Premier Hotel, Ibadan, where he was given official accommodation, to

our house, where we stayed joyfully and ruminated on our Nassarawa life as Lecturers. On another occasion, when Ahmed Wada Ikaka informed me that he was in Ibadan and was lodged in a hotel by his office, Yemisi insisted he must leave the hotel for our house. He had to comply despite the fact that he had already spent a night in the hotel. Since then, he stayed with my family whenever he was in Ibadan, which was a way of reuniting me and Yemisi with Nassarawa, his home town. We always use our reunion to reminiscence on our 'great days' in Nassarawa.

Many of my other friends and colleagues in the north had, at one time or the other, received similar level of love and open invitations to our house by Yemisi, which made our house a ready abode for them whenever they had any cause to stay overnight in Ibadan.

Yemisi's relationship with my friends and colleagues in southwestern Nigeria could best be likened to that expected among siblings. For instance, she had very cordial relationship with wives of my very close friends, whose houses she always insisted we visit often.

That Yemisi had '*an anointing for rendering assistance*' is a common phrase among my friends and their families. She would readily volunteer to shoulder the highest portion of whatever was required to bail out any of my friends and colleagues from their existing challenges. On many occasions, she went to collect loans to bail out some of our friends from financial embarrassments. On many occasions, she had volunteered to accompany individuals, on the spur of the moment, to hospitals, some even necessitating her staying overnight in hospitals. On numerous occasions, she had had cause to embark on impromptu journeys to other towns and cities to connect some of my friends that had health challenges with doctors.

She was also very much noted for her concern for the academic progress of children and relatives of many of my friends and colleagues. Instances abound when she paid school fees of some of these youngsters. Right from the time she was a language teacher at Lagelu Grammar School, she assisted many of my friends' and colleagues' children and wards in registering for School Certificate Examination without collecting any form of gratification.

Throughout the duration of her appointment as a lecturer at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, she was instrumental to many of my colleagues' children and wards being admitted to various courses in the school. Most of these children and wards were also assisted financially, morally and psychologically and Yemisi usually went all out to assist in ensuring that they made the best of the opportunity and privilege provided for them. Substantial number of these children and wards have not only completed the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) but are now proud and gainfully employed graduates of various universities in the country.

Yemisi, Her Parents and Her Siblings

In explaining Yemisi's position in Aletan Family, I must recount her father's parting words on the night of our wedding when Yemisi was released to my family for her final official departure from her family to mine. His emotion was highly charged. He coughed repeatedly and had to sip some water. He took out a white handkerchief to wipe the corners of his eyes, and said:

'I have no special child among my children and have the same degree of love for each one of them. Despite this, Yemisi is a child very much dear to my heart ('*Omo ni Yemisi l'owo mi!!!*'). Lekan, I hand her over to you and your people. Please do take special care of her for me'. He again used the white handkerchief to wipe corners of his eyes.

His emotion was very much contagious as both myself and members of Sanni family that was present had to wipe corners of our eyes. I promised him that I would spend the rest of my life making her happy. I also promised to sacrifice everything within my power to ensure that she accomplished all her plans and aspirations in life and would make her happiness my primary responsibilities in life.

The import of her father's emotions did not dawn on me until some days after our wedding. I discovered that Yemisi had unexplainable strong love and emotional attachment to every member of her father's family and the Aletan's larger family. This she demonstrated when she learnt that one of her aunts residing in Lagos was sick. Tight as her schedules were as a newly married wife, she expressed a strong urge to travel down to Lagos to go and nurse her aunt. She informed me of the various ways the aunty had assisted her in life and felt that nursing her at that point in her life was one of the modest ways in which she could register her appreciation of her sacrifices for her. I urged her to delay her Lagos-bound journey till I returned to my station at Nassarawa. She later raised some money and paid the visit. She was grateful for my giving her the permission to embark on the journey and explained that she would not have had peace of mind if I did not allow her to go.

Throughout our marital life, Yemisi was noted for always being the one to volunteer to follow her siblings to markets where goods were cheapest and her readiness to serve as the group's head-porter. She recounted to me an occasion she went with them to Lagos to shop for the family's 'uniform' for the burial ceremony of one of their grandmothers. In her usual way, she had taken with her bathroom slippers to wade through the muddy market streets. After the shopping had been done, she balanced the load on her head like a common professional head-porter at Yaba motor park, only to notice Tinuade,

one of our neighbours at Ile-Ife, smiling and waving at her in one of the buses loading at the motor park. She immediately pretended as if she did not know Tinuade to save her face from the obvious embarrassing situation. Immediately she returned from Lagos, she informed me of the experience. We were, thus prepared for Tinuade's narrations when she turned up in our apartment. We bluntly denied that Yemisi ever travelled out of Ile-Ife on the day in question, insinuating that the person Tinuade saw at Lagos must have been Yemisi's 'double' as everybody has at least a replica. We had a hearty laughter when she left our apartment. This is the first time the story is ever truly relayed.

Her love for her siblings was adequately replicated by them, as each one of them made very significant contributions to our live as a couple. For instance, the contributions of her oldest sister and her husband, the Ajiboyes, to our wedding and early marital life was quite enormous. They provided the required guidance for Yemisi's quick adjustment to marital life. The family was also present at the hospital when Ifedayo was born and have assisted my family in diverse ways. The Elusades are noted for their sacrificial love for me and my family. As explained earlier, Mrs. Elusade was the person that guided Yemisi to our breakthrough in lollypop business. Their residence always served as our 'ever-available' abode whenever we had cause to sleep over at Lagos. As earlier explained, Adelekes' readiness to vacate their apartment for us at Odejayi Street served as a positive stimulus for our relocating from Ile-Ife to Ibadan. Till date, the family's contributions to our family are unquantifiable. Femi, Kemi and Dare, are also very dear brethren of Yemisi whose families have rallied round us on challenging occasions.

Yemisi and her siblings' practice of rallying round one another, especially during challenging periods, is exemplary and commendable. They were able to organize periodic ceremonies for their parents in

which they always ensured that they and their families were elegantly dressed and the guests adequately catered for.

Throughout Yemisi's lifetime, my family cultivated, nurtured and maintained close and cordial relationship with all her siblings, members of their families and entire members of the larger Aletan family.



Yemisi with Her Parents, Her Siblings and Their Spouses

Yemisi and the Larger Aletan Families

Yemisi enjoyed a very cordial relationship with members of the larger Aletan family and their relatives. Some of the various examples of her relationships with the relatives are provided here. As explained earlier, Yemisi responded to a great urge to travel down to Lagos to nurse an

aunt (Mrs. Ogunyoooye) few days after our wedding. Between our wedding in 1993 and her aunt's transition to glory in 1995, many visits were exchanged between Yemisi and the aunt. It is on record that the aunty paid us her last visit at Ile-Ife barely two weeks before she transited to glory. Yemisi and my family maintained close relationship with her husband and children till she breathed her last.

The Fakolas in Ibadan are always remembered for their brotherly and sisterly affection for Yemisi, myself and our children. Their homes were homes away from home for Yemisi and I, and we always exchanged visits during festivals and ceremonies. Till date, they send regular condolence messages to me and my sons. May God remember their contributions and reward them accordingly.

The Elebutes are Yemisi's cousins that are more of brothers and sisters to me and my family. May God reward them all.

Families with roots in Imesi-Ile residing at Ile-Ife, Ilesa and Ibadan, too numerous to list here, all enjoyed very cordial relationships with Yemisi and my family. May God reward their invaluable contributions to my family.

One of Yemisi's uncles that played the most significant role as a father and guardian angel for me and my family in Ibadan, was Lawyer Emmanuel Abiodun, fondly called 'Lawyer Abiodun' or 'Daddy Folake'. Yemisi's earliest memory of him centres on special privileges he always accorded her whenever he was around. He always advised her on steps to take in life. He played a pivotal role in broadening her horizon and life perception. Her not relenting on her academics after secondary education, moving first to Oyo State College of Education, Ilesa, then to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for her First Degree, and ultimately, pursuing postgraduate studies at the University of Ibadan, culminating in her bagging a Ph.D., owe much to his

consistent encouragement. His obvious heart-felt love and care for Yemisi was freely extended to me immediately I married Yemisi. His love for me and my family was unparalleled as he served as our father, counsellor, guardian and everything expected of a responsible father. He, together with his family and brilliant lawyers in his chamber, provided us a home from home and readily filled the vacuum that might have been created by our relocating to Ibadan. He always showed up with heart-felt gifts whenever we had anything to celebrate in my family. For instance, he was the only father-figure that accompanied Yemisi and I to the Faculty of the Social Sciences' Rotunda for the celebrations that accompanied my delivering my Inaugural Lecture at the University of Ibadan in August, 2018.

He really touched our lives in a special way when Yemisi had an accident around J-Allen area in Ibadan on 14 December, 2018, while on an errand to collect a niece from school. In addition to serving as our legal representative on our subsequent litigation against the careless driver and his employers, Lawyer Abiodun miraculously turned up in our house in October 2020, when Yemisi had just fully recovered from a protracted battle with pneumonia. He claimed that his visit was spurred by his worries on what he would tell *his Buoda* (Yemisi's father) about Yemisi's health condition if and when they meet in the after-life.

Lawyer Abiodun transited to glory in December 2020, barely two months after his miraculous visit to our house, and was buried and interned on the 10th of February, 2021. Yemisi and I were actively involved in his burial and internment. By the time of his burial and internment in February 2021, none of us ever suspected that Yemisi's burial and internment would take place barely a month later.



Lawyer Abiodun, His Wife, Children and Grandchildren

Yemisi and Her Colleagues at Work

One major peculiar character of Yemisi that distinguished her from many of her contemporaries, was her ability to adjust and adapt to whatever situation she found herself. Her ability to ensure that she created and spread happiness wherever she worked is a unique character that was commended by majority of her colleagues in her diverse work places.

By the time Yemisi was working as a food vendor in a primary and a secondary school in Ibadan, she really adjusted her live at that work place to conform with her role as a food vendor. She was very respectful to her fellow food vendors and never had any cause to quarrel with either her colleagues or any of the teachers. As explained earlier, she cultivated the habit of providing palliatives for her fellow food vendors and some of the teachers during the holiday periods when majority of the vendors had no tangible income. She was also concerned about their personal and domestic challenges. Advice on how to improve production and distribution of wares were freely given by her, and she often provided financial assistance to those that were more needy than her.

As a strong believer in education being a catalyst for personal and community development, many of the females that she judged could still participate in part-time education programmes were advised and encouraged to do participate. Our apartment was thus turned to a place for free coaching in Ordinary level English language and mathematics for many of these food vendors. Those that could not participate in literacy programmes were advised and encouraged to be involved in skill acquisition programmes during the holidays. This advice yielded some positive results as many were able to acquire rewarding skills in fashion designing, home economics, home management, hair-dressing and other similar skills.

By the time Yemisi became a language teacher at Lagelu Grammar School, her aspirations to guide her friends and colleagues to widen their horizons had increased significantly. In addition to providing herself as a good example of teachers involved in generating multiple streams of income through her lollypop business, she persisted in her campaign for her colleagues to go for higher academic pursuits. Her

going for higher degrees at the University of Ibadan, and her persuasions and encouragements, stimulated many of her colleagues to further their studies. To this end, many of her colleagues without education-related qualifications registered for postgraduate diplomas in education that enabled them become registered professional teachers. Significant number of her colleagues in this category are currently on their Ph.D. programmes.

She always emphasized the need not to sacrifice the home responsibilities for official duties. In this wise, she encouraged most of her colleagues by visiting them with members of her own family and assisting them, to the best of her abilities, in some of their domestic chores. She assumed the position of a counselor for her colleagues that were not yet married, prayerfully encouraging them in searching for their soul-mates. In performing this role, she and members of my family were often involved in settlement of disagreements between lovers, majority of who ended up in life-long marriages.

As advocates of 'housing for all', Yemisi and I were involved in the crusade aimed at every teacher becoming house owners. Strategies to raise money and gradual process involved in house ownership were freely shared with her friends and colleagues in the school. Our moving into our family house at the stage at which it was 'not completed' encouraged many of her friends and colleagues to follow suit. To God's glory, all her close-associates in Lagelu Grammar School are now proud owners of fully completed and inhabited houses.

As explained earlier, it was during her Ph.D. programme that she met Queen Dr. Fausat Omolara Aromolaran that assisted her in getting employed at the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo. Since the leopard cannot change its spots, Yemisi's habit of being concerned about the progress and comfort of her friends and colleagues followed

her to her new place of appointment. Her decision to always personally drive herself to school in our family car was borne out of her desire to provide free ride for many of her colleagues that were residing at Ibadan like herself. That she would thus be assisting in reducing their financial burdens was uppermost in her mind.

In her new school, she was involved in every aspect of the school-life: academic, social, cultural and economic. She cultivated and maintained, throughout her employment in the school, the habit of being punctual in classes. She was reputed to always be among the first to report at statutory meetings in the various committees she belonged to. She also developed, cultivated and nurtured my family's close friendship with most of her colleagues in the department and school, and some principal officers, especially, Dr. Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi, the Provost that employed her in the college. It is pertinent to use this medium to express my family's appreciation to Dr. Emmanuel Olufemi Adeniyi and his family for maintaining close relationships with my family till the end, and attending her burial and internment at Ile-Ife.

Yemisi was an unrepentant adviser on the need for furthering one's educational career. In her crusade, she was instrumental to many of her colleagues, both in academic and non-academic cadres, furthering their academic careers. She also contributed immensely to some of her colleagues preparing their credentials for various promotion exercises.

She was bold in airing her views on various occasions where others might feel jittery. For instance, on two occasions, she played a very significant role in nominating, campaigning for and ultimately ensuring successful tenures of the Dean of her School. In the pursuit of ensuring that 'the right candidate' became the School's Dean, she boldly contacted some of her colleagues in the 'opposing camps' and

convinced them on the need to ensure that 'the right peg was placed in the right hole'.

She was a very hardworking, voracious reader and a seasoned researcher per excellence. She had more than forty publications in reviewed books, international journals of repute, chapters in blind-reviewed books, and referenced conference proceedings. It is on record that she had prepared her curriculum vitae for her promotion to the rank of a Principal Lecturer by the time of her transition to



**Yemisi and Her Colleagues at
the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo**

glory.

Yemisi and Her Former Classmates at Our Lady's High School

That Yemisi had and maintained close and cordial relationship with most of her classmates at Our Lady's High School, Modakeke, Ile-Ife, was one of her attributes I observed right from the beginning of our

courtship. I also observed that she had the habit of sticking to her classmates' various nicknames in addressing them, despite the existing long years since they graduated from the school. She informed me that the habit of sticking to the various nicknames has the psychological effect of erasing the time lapse in their separation, transporting them to the period they were comrades in the college.

She had the habit of total commitment to her friendship with her classmates, many of whom my family maintains close and cordial friendship with. Even before the era of the internet, she usually made physical contact and periodic exchange of letters as her main media of maintaining the contacts. The scope of her contacting her schoolmates was widened and enhanced by the introduction of the internet, and the creation of a WhatsApp group for the class. With this electronic device, she became a regular contributor to various discussions on the platform. She was one of the major advocates of providing welfare packages for distressed mates.

She was also involved in integrating families of her mates. In this wise, I was introduced to the families of majority of her classmates within Lagos, Oyo and Osun states axis. Celebrations of birthdays, burials, wedding anniversaries and other joyful occasions enjoyed her participation often with me as a companion, or with her being alone with her classmates. Places like the '*Far-East*' Akwa-Ibom State were easily travelled to in order to felicitate with her classmates.

In her habitual character as an advocate of the need to further educational careers, Yemisi was involved in advising and encouraging her mates' children to further their education.

Her modest contributions to the lively reunion of her class set members did not go unnoticed and unappreciated by her mates who did not only grace her burial service and interment, but contributed a substantial

sum of money as a present for our sons. Many of her mates are on constant contacts with my family, most especially, our sons. We use this medium to express our appreciations to them for their heart-felt love and care, even when she is no longer around to reciprocate their kind gestures.



**Yemisi and Her Ladian Classmates
at a Ceremony in Southwestern Nigeria**



**Yemisi and Her Ladian Classmates
at a Ceremony in Akwa-Ibom**



**Representatives of the
Ladian Classmates on Condolence Visit**

Yemisi and Her Former Classmates at Oyo State College of Education (OYOCOL), Ilesa

Right from the time of our courtship, I had become aware of Yemisi's close relationship and association with her classmates at the Oyo State College of Education (OYOCOL), Ilesa. The relationship and closeness were such that one of them was responsible for the purchase of her wedding gown. Another travelled down all the way from Italy, to attend our wedding: I nearly wept in appreciation of her sisterly love when I saw her sitting down gorgeously in the church during the wedding service.

Like her secondary school classmates, she maintained very cordial relationships with her OYOCOL colleagues, majority of who are, till date, very close friends of my family. As a family, we have shared a lot of good, pleasant and not-so-pleasant times with many families of her OYOCOL classmates. Like in every of her clime, Yemisi contributed immensely to many of her OYOCOL classmates and their children's educational progress. Her OYOCOL classmates, as individuals and as a group, have proved to be very dependable friends to Yemisi. They played very active roles in her burial and internment and presented a bountiful sum of money as a present to our sons. May God reward their love and sacrifices.



Yemisi and OYOCOL Classmates at a Colleague's Wedding



**Representatives of the OYOCOL Classmates
on Condolence Visit**

Yemisi and Her Friends in the Neighbourhood

Throughout our lives together, Yemisi consistently confirmed her being a very amiable neighbour. Right from our days at Nassarawa, she played active roles in putting smiles on the faces of our needy neighbours. Providing cash gifts and interest-free loans to less privileged neighbours was her usual pastime. A major peculiarity of this philanthropism was that she often provided the gifts without the beneficiaries' request. On many instances, she would observe the would-be beneficiary for some time and then decide on what form of assistance to provide. In this wise, children of neighbours had benefitted in form of provision of school fees and school materials, unofficial scholarships had been provided and seed money for entrepreneurship had been sown on numerous occasions.

Her concern for the neighbours' children's educational progress led to her creating an informal 'Reading Centre' in our house right from the time our children were toddlers. At the 'Centre', many of our neighbours' children were guided to learn and develop reading skills. She also had the habit of ensuring that she was personally involved in finding lasting solutions to any form of challenges besieging any of her friends. She rarely parted from any of her friends as she still maintained close contacts with majority of the 'new' friends she acquired in our various neighbourhoods till she breathed her very last.



**Representatives of Ebeneseri Zone II
Landlords' Association at Yemisi's Ph.D. Convocation**

Yemisi and Her Friends in the Church

Yemisi was a devout Christian who had many friends she knew in the church. Her church-based friends were not limited to those attending our current church, but all that had, at one time or the other, worshipped in the same church with us. With these, she had a very strong sisterly and brotherly relationships, often stronger than blood sister-hood. It was in the bedroom of one of such church-based friends that she spent her last two nights before her final journey to the hospital.

In the friendship that developed between Yemisi and her various friends, it is worthy to notice that the friendship often transcended personal friendship but involved every member of the families.

Invaluable contributions of our various relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbours to Yemisi's pleasant and joyful life and peaceful transition to glory are hereby commended and appreciated by me, our sons and members of our larger families. May God reward you abundantly.

POST SCRIPT

Princess Dr. Mrs. Oluyemisi Bamidele Sanni (Nee Aletan) lived a fulfilled and impactful life despite being interned barely five months before her fifty-sixth birthday. Like heroes and heroines before her, the value of her short and impactful life is not measurable in terms of years she spent nor the earthly material things she acquired, but by the moments she spent giving herself, sharing wisdom, inspiring hope, wiping tears and touching hearts. She will forever be remembered for good by all whose lives she had touched in one way or the other.

A Dirge on Yemisi – By Prince Dr. Michael Rotimi Sanni

Baba Arayesebolatan Eluwole SANNI,
You never told me that
I'm the one to bury Yemisi
When you handed the
Headship of the family to me.

Mama Comfort Opa SANNI,
You never told me that
I'm the one to bury Yemisi when you passed on to glory.

Mama Ebunlomo SANNI,
I was beside you when you passed on.
You never hinted me that I'm the one to bury Yemisi.

Parents. Why? Why?
Yemisi, my wife,
Daughter of Aletan,
Mother of Ifedayo,
Mother of Fikayo,
Soulmate of Lekan.

Bí o bá dé'lé kí o kí ará ilé
(Greet those you meet at home when you get home)
Bí o bá dé ònà kí o kí èrò ònà
(Greet those you meet on your way as you journey home)
Bí o bá dé òrun kí o se òrun re.

(Do well when you get to heaven)

Má je òkùn

(Do not eat millipedes)

Má je ekòlò

(Do not eat earthworms)

Ohun tí wón bá nje ní òrun ni kí o je.

(Eat anything edible in heaven)

Greet Baba Arayesebolatan SANNNI

Greet Mama Òpá SANNNI

Greet Mama Ebunlomo SANNNI

Greet Sister Foluke SANNNI

Greet Bolarinwa SANNNI

Greet Risikatu SANNNI

Greet Oni SANNNI

Greet Ayokunle SANNNI

Greet Omololu's wife.

Greet Omoyemi SANNNI

Greet all those who had gone before you.

Tell them that Lekan loved you

Tell them that Dayo loved you

Tell them that Fikayo loved you.

Tell them that we all loved you.

Tell them that we took care of you.

Tell them that we did our best for you.

Tell them that none of them hinted me that I am the one to bury you.

ROTIMI SANNNI

(Posted on March 19, 2021)

List of Yemisi's Publications

A. Books (2)

1. **Sanni, O. B.** (2014a). *The Fraudster*. (A Play). New Deal Publications, Osogbo. Pp. 25.
2. **Sanni, O. B.** (2014b). *Bedtime Stories, Volume One: Tortoise and Iroko Spirit and Other Stories*. New Deal Publications, Osogbo. Pp. 37

B. Chapter Contribution in Books (8)

3. **Sanni, O.B.** (2014). Philosophy of adult and non-formal education. In Owoeye, J.S. (Ed.) *Essentials of adult and non-formal education*. Oyo: Odumatt Press & Publishers. pp. 189 - 208
4. **Sanni, O.B.** (2014). Psychology of learning in adult and non-formal education. In Owoeye, J.S. (Ed.) *Essentials of adult and non-formal education*. Oyo: Odumatt Press & Publishers. pp. 25 – 41
5. **Sanni, O.B.** (2014). Introduction to literacy education. In Owoeye, J.S. (Ed.) *Essentials of adult and non-formal education*. Oyo: Odumatt Press & Publishers. pp. 170 - 188
6. **Sanni, O.B.** (2015). Adult and non-formal education as panacea for urban crime in Nigeria. In Omolayo, E.L, Opoola, B.T., Olowo, G.M., Taiwo, A.O., Animasaun, A.G. & Akinsowon, F.I. (Eds.) *Emerging issues in teacher education*. Ibadan: Kazzy Publishing. pp. 1 – 6.
7. **Sanni, O.B.** (2017). Assessment and evaluation techniques. In K.O. Kester and V.I. Aleburu (Eds.) *Methods of teaching adult and non-formal education*. Oyo: Adeyoung Prints. pp. 75 – 90.
8. **Sanni, O.B** (2017). Special groups in adult and non-formal education. In O.O. Owoeye and K. Quadri (Eds.) *Contemporary*

issues in adult and non-formal education. Oyo: Adeyoung Prints. pp. 24 – 52.

9. Sanni, O.B and T.I. Akinyemi (2018). Adult and non-formal education as panacea for youth unemployment in Nigeria. In K. Kazeem, K.A. Aderogba, O.T. Ogidan & M.B. Oni (Eds.) *Understanding adult education practice in Nigeria (Essays in honour of Professor Kehinde Oluwaseun Kester)*. Ibadan: John Archers. pp. 222 – 237.

10. Sanni, O. B. (2020). Practices, Merits and Demerits of Lifelong Education. In Quadri, K., et. al. (Eds). *ECPAE Book of Reading*

C. Publications in Learned Journals(19):

11. Sanni, O.B (2003). Literacy programmes and women in development in Ife central local government area, Osun State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Continuing and Non- Formal Education* 2(1), 99 – 106.

12. Sanni, L.; F. Adesanwo and O.B. Sanni (2010). Relationship between available facilities/services and students' academic performances in selected secondary schools in Abeokuta, Nigeria. *International journal of applied psychology and human performance* 6, 1217 – 1235

13. Oyewumi, A; Ibitoye, H.O. and Sanni, O.B. (2012). Job satisfaction and self-efficacy as correlates of job commitment of special education teachers in Oyo State. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 3(9), 95 – 103 www.iiste.org (Online Journal)

14. Sanni, O.B (2013). Adult education and females' security in Nigeria. *Geo-studies forum – An international journal of environmental and policy issues* 6, 180 – 193 [December, 2013].

15. **Sanni, O.B** (2015). Effects of social factors on females' participation in adult and non- formal education programmes in Southwestern Nigeria. *DELSU Journal of educational research and development*. 2(2), 147 – 154
16. **Sanni, O.B** (2015). Effects of insecurity and challenges on females' education in Nigeria. *African journal of psychological study of social issues*. 18(3), 51- 57
17. **Sanni, O.B.** (2015). Information technology (ICT) as innovation to enhance performance in adult and non-formal education. *The knowledge resort: a biennial journal of school of education, Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo*. 1(1), 29 – 37.
18. **Sanni, O.B.** (2016). Adult and non-formal education as a tool for rehabilitating and empowering 'Area Boys' in Lagos, Nigeria. *Journal of adult and non-formal education (J A N F E SPED)*. 1(1), 71 – 82.
19. **Sanni, O.B.** (2016). Adult and non-formal education: implications for national development. *The educator: journal of contemporary issues in education* 11(1), 163- 173.
20. **Sanni, O.B.** (2017). Safety consciousness of female participants in part-time NCE programmes. *Ibadan Planning Journal* 6(2), 135 – 164.
21. **Sanni, O.B.** (2017). Prospects of lifelong education for adults with hearing impairment. *Journal of educational thought*. 6(1), 380- 395
22. **Sanni, O.B.** (2018). Challenges of providing vocational education for youths in Nigeria. *African journal for the psychological study of social issues* 21(3), 238 – 247. 4.

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24. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Challenges of providing private non-formal education for people with visual and hearing impairment in Ibadan. *Journal of educational thought* 7(2), 49 – 62.

25. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Acceptability of continuing education programme as a strategy in enhancing quality basic education for national development in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of early childhood care, primary, adult and non-formal education (JECPAE)* 1(1): 89 – 100.

26. Olaojo, O. A.; Ajagbe, S. W. and Sanni, O. B. (2018). Impact of smartphone on the information seeking behaviour of students and staff of Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo State, Nigeria. *Nigerian library and information science review (NLISR)* 24(1), 23 – 33.

27. Sanni, O. B. (2020). Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria: An Exploration. *OSCOTECH Journal of Arts and Social Sciences (OJASS)*, 7(2),

28. Sanni, L. & O. B. Sanni (2020). Urbanization and Housing Challenges in Nigeria. *OSCOTECH Journal of Arts and Social Sciences (OJASS)*, 7(2),

29. Sanni, O. B. (2021). Perceived Benefits of Literacy Among Aged Women in Ife Central Local Government Area, Nigeria. *Ethiopian Journal of Environmental Studies and Management*, 14(2), 191 - 200

D. Conference Proceedings(15)

30. Sanni, O.B. (2013). Security challenges of female participants in part- time NCE programmes. A paper presented at the 2013 BI-Annual National Conference Organized by the School of Education, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. Held at the Multi-purpose Hall, FCE (SP) Oyo, between 19th - 22nd of March.

31. Sanni, O.B. (2013). Challenges of providing non-formal education for people with special needs. A paper presented at the 1st Zonal Conference of National Centre for Exceptional Children (NCEC). Held at the International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, between 3rd - 6th June.

32. Sanni, O.B. (2015). Creativity and innovations in adult and non-formal education for national development. A paper presented at the 2015 Biennial National Conference Organized by the School of Education, Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria, at the School Of Special Education, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, between 4th - 8th May.

33. Sanni, O.B. (2015). The role of adult and non-formal education in including the excluded. A paper presented at the International Conference / Workshop Organized by the Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, at Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, between 16 - 19 June.

34. Sanni, O.B. (2015). Education, peace and global security. A paper presented at the School of Education, Federal College of Education, Kotangora's 8th Annual National Conference on Education, Peace and Global Security Held at the Federal College of Education, Kotangora, between 28 July - 1st August.

35. Sanni, O.B. (2015). Vocational education, a catalyst for national security and stable economy. A paper presented at the 7TH

National Conference of the School of Vocational, Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Lagos, at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Lagos, between 6th – 9th July.

36. Sanni, O.B. (2016). The role of sign language interpreters in enhancing the education of the hearing-impaired in Nigeria. A paper presented at the 2016 Maiden Conference Of Educational Sign Language Interpreters' Association of Nigeria (ESLIAN) at the School of Special Education, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, between 8th - 11th February.

37. Sanni, O.B. (2016). Counselling for the eradication of dehumanization of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). A paper presented at The Annual Conference of Counselling Association of Nigeria [CASSON, Oyo State Chapter], Held at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, between 10th – 12th March.

38. Sanni, O.B. (2017). Challenges of providing education for adults with special needs. A paper presented at The 29th Annual Conference and Workshop on Sustainable Special Education Service Delivery In The 21st Century, Organized By Nigeria Association Of Special Education Teachers (NASSET) At Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, between 22nd – 26th October.

39. Sanni, O.B. (2017). Effect of corruption on the implementation of the provisions of the National Policy on adult and non-formal education in Oyo State. A paper presented at The 3rd National Conference On 'Corruption and Education Policy Implementation for National Development' Organized By School of Education, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, between 6th - 9th November.

40. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Reforming science education for adult learners to achieve sustainable development goals. A paper presented At The 2nd International Conference on 'Reforming Science, Technology & Mathematics Education For Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Organized By School Of Secondary Education Science Programmes, Federal College of Education, Obudu, Nigeria, between 12th – 16th June.

41. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Continuing education programmes and enhancing quality basic education for national development. A paper presented at the 1st National Conference On 'Qualitative Basic Education for Sustainable Development', Organized by School of Early Childhood Care, Primary, Adult and Non-Formal Education (ECPAE), Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria, between 2nd – 6th July.

42. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Adult and non-formal education and challenges of globalization in Nigeria. A paper presented at the 39th Annual Convention and International Conference Organized by Educational Media and Technology Association of Nigeria (EMTAN) at The Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria, from Monday 15th - Friday 19th October.

43. Sanni, O.B. (2018). Perceived challenges of providing vocational education for youths in Nigeria. A paper presented at the 2018 International Conference of the Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria, between 27th – 30th November.

44. Sanni, O.B. (2019). Women education for peace and national security in Nigeria. A paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Education for Tolerance, Peace and National Security in Nigeria, Organized by the School of General Education, Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State, on 12th – 15th March.

About the Book

My primary aim of writing this book is not to eulogize Yemisi post-humously, but to document my true everlasting memory of the life and time we shared together since the time I had the privilege of knowing, relating with, loving and living with her. The book is a true documentation of the good, the bad and the ugly periods we shared together. It is written to open the eyes of the younger generations to some of the challenges in marriage and real-life examples of how we were able to weather the storms. It also serves as an avenue to document our gratitude to diverse individuals, families and friends that have played significant roles in nurturing our family. It is filled with real testimonies of how true love and dedication to ideals of marriage assisted us to have a successful married life in the midst of diverse challenges that could easily and readily tear families apart.

About the Author



Professor Lekan SANNI, a Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, specialized in Housing Development and Management, and Regional Development Studies. Between 2018 and 2020, he served as the elected Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Design and Management, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

A direct descendant of the legendary Obalufon Alayemore, he had his early education at St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Lagere Road, Irewo-Ife, Ile-Ife; St. John's Grammar School, Ilode-Ife, Ile-Ife; University of Ife, Ile-Ife; and

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

His marriage to Princess Dr. Mrs. Oluyemisi Bamidele Sanni (Nee Aletan) is blessed with two sons: Ifedayo and Oluwafikayomi.

Professor Lekan Sanni has published extensively in his areas of specialization.

This is his first novel dedicated to the evergreen memory of his beloved wife.

In addition to the publication of this Memoir, an Education Endowment, tagged 'Princess Dr. Mrs. Oluyemisi Bamidele Sanni (Nee Aletan)'s Memorial Prize' has been inaugurated in memory of his wife For The Overall Best M.Ed. Graduating Student in 'Literacy' in the Department of Adult Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, with plans to extend this to other educational institutions (Primary to Tertiary) in which his wife either schooled as a student or worked as a teacher or lecturer.

