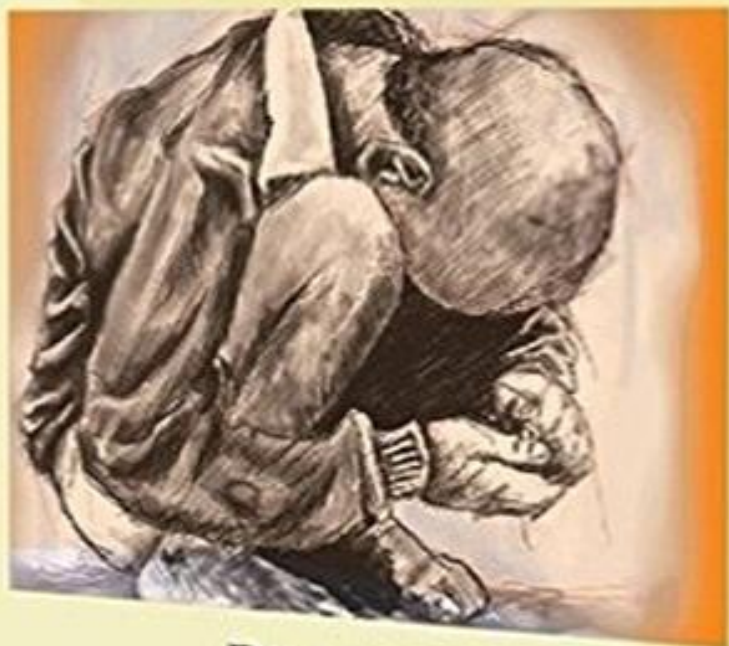


TEARS OF MY LIFE

OLD VERSION



PHILIP
GBORMITTAH

Praise for This Book

Tears of My Life carries “a message of hope to a world that is already dominated by conflict and hatred. It’s not only a beautifully written book, but it’s also a book that alerts us to many of the inhumanities of today and yet provides us with guidance that promises hope for change. Highly recommended”

—Grady Harp, Amazon Hall of Fame Top 100 reviewer - Vine Voice

“Philip Gbormittah, who is himself a native Ghanaian, provides a realistic picture of life in that country. If for no other reason (and there are other reasons), this book is worth reading...to open your eyes to what life is like in sub-Saharan Africa.”

—Doug Erlandson, an Amazon Top 50 reviewer

“*Tears of my life* is a true story about a young man and his life in Ghana. It details the struggles he endured and the triumphs he achieved... What I liked best about the book was the lack of self-pity. The author retells many instances of heartache and pain. However, he always ends with what he learned from the situation and how the situation made him a better person. There were people who treated him poorly, but he always chose to forgive. It is all about moving forward. I also liked the background story; the history and culture of this African nation. The author helps the reader see through his eyes and in some way imagine what it was like to live in this beautiful and sometimes, difficult place. Overall, I enjoyed the book.”

—E.A. Albert

“A story told in a manner that makes it feel real. In this heartrending tale, Kofi recounts his heartaches and joys as he navigates a troubled life. We can learn valuable lessons from others, and *Tears of My Life* had a few of its own to share.”

—William Struse, an Amazon Top 100 reviewer

“The author really pulled you into the story. His descriptive writing of Ghana made me feel as if I was there. This is a story that is told with great inspiration and knowledge. I absolutely adored it.”

—J. Kahele

“Philip’s work *Tears of My Life* is good, and the substance is there. I love the work; it is a beautiful piece that reminds me of many of my favorite authors.”

—Dr. Moussa Traore, editor of *Tears of My Life*, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Tears of My Life

Old Version

By Philip Gbormittah

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This book is dedicated to the homeless and hungry refugees and
all the deprived children.

To my father, Joachim Douglas Yaovi Gbormittah.

To my uncle Sylvester Yaovi Apedoe, known in public life as
Torgbui Anyormi II of Adafienu.

To Keta Business Secondary School, my Alma Mater.

This book is also dedicated to Keta Government Hospital to
include:

Dr. Samuel Nkansah

Patience Foli

Mary Gbemu

Florence Kamasa

Alice Fiawotso

Mary Gbadegbe

Madam Klutse & Gbologa

To all of you, for your courage, love and dedication on that
faithful day, September 22, 1991, as you struggled to save my
father's life.

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To God be the glory for the great works he has done. After many years of intensive frustrations, sacrifices, labour, deception, and compromises, this book is finally *published* and available worldwide.

I wish to pay my humble homage to Kindle Direct Publishing and CreateSpace Independent Publishing teams at Amazon for believing in this crusade via their global platforms.

To Dr. Moussa Traore, lecturer of English at the University of Cape Coast, and Dr. Anthony De Souza, lecturer and language researcher in the department of French at the University of Cape Coast, for final editing and assistance—bless you, sirs.

Special thanks go to Madam Sedem Kpeglo and Mr. Augustus Jones-Mensah for the first and second editing of this work, respectively. I am highly indebted to you both for the long hours spent eradicating errors from this project.

Finally, to all of you, I say that this is our work! I wish you happiness, and I wish you peace. May God bless you.

Author's Note

This inspirational book is based on a true story, and some of the names have been changed in order to maintain the privacy and dignity of others. Other names are fictitiously used and do not relate to anyone.

Tears of My life is the unforgettable account of a dreaded famine that claimed many lives. It is the story of Kofi, the author, whose courage to survive amid scoundrels is rare. His torturous struggles, worsened due to the death of his father, have inevitably left some dark stories—tales that gave birth to dangerous child labour. His luxury of food was nothing more than dried palm nuts with herbs or unripe mangoes. In abject poverty, he started school under a big mango tree and later attended in an old structure with palm-kernel walls.

Looking back at his past and his many sufferings as a sand-winner, minor road construction labourer, and a lot more during his teenage years, Kofi felt that he was abused, victimized, and enslaved by his own people. This was why he envisioned suicide as his last resort after a betrayal by an evil friend. His awesome survival of partial blindness, inflicted grief, and undesirable dejection has lifted him beyond the odds with great hopes for the suffering children around the globe. As the reader goes through the dreaded facts of every wretched situation with him, Kofi smiles at the memories that lie like dust and ashes on his heart, while his enemies rot in the doldrums with shame, devastation, and hopelessness.

Through each near-fatal struggle, you'll find yourself enduring his pain, comforting his dejection, and fighting for his will to survive. This inspirational story will remind you of the

truth about child labour and the ability we all have to make a difference.

Chapter 1 THE BIRTH OF A HERO

We have sent astronauts into space, yet we seem unable to understand ourselves. Why is there a vast gap between modern technology and people's inhumanity? Considering our inhumanity toward one another, can life have real meaning? We have never thought about it; we need to know.—the author

On the morning of October 11, 1974, a Friday, Kofi was born in Keta, a town in the Volta region of the Republic of Ghana. If he had known about the strange life ahead of him, he would have closed his bright little eyes and embraced death. Because the future was unknown to him, he was glad and threw his little arms and legs in the air to his parents' surprise and excitement. They didn't know they had brought an innocent child into the world to face the spiteful storms of life.

As a Ghanaian, I wish to say a little about Ghana so that every reader will know about this beautiful country and where to locate her on a world map.

Ghana, officially called the Republic of Ghana, is a country in West Africa with a sovereign, multinational state and a unitary presidential constitutional democracy. On a world map, Ghana is geographically located along the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana has ten regions, including the Volta region, and has a total population of about twenty-five million. Bordered on the north by Burkina Faso, on the east by Côte d'Ivoire, and on the west by Togo, Ghana is surrounded by francophone countries. The Ghanaian cedi is the national currency, and the official capital city is known as Accra. However, there are other cities and towns, such as Tema, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Ho, Tamale, and more. Though

English is the official language, major languages spoken are Twi, Fante, Ga, Hausa, Dagbani, Ewe, and Nzema.

Ghana has a rich culture with many places of interest. The Karkum and Mole National Parks, Elmina and Cape Coast Castles, Lake Volta, the holy crocodiles at Paga, and Boti Falls are just a few of the many attractions that have won the hearts of a great number of worldwide tourists. There are other places for awesome adventures that have never failed to offer a unique experience in a different setting for our visitors. I will brief you on Cape Coast Castle and Volta Lake, and I will share my personal experience at Karkum National Park with you.

If you have heard of the slave trade before, the Cape Coast Castle served as a prison and a venue where human beings were sold into slavery to other parts of the world, including the United States. As the first country to obtain independence from British colonial rule, Ghana was visited by two former leaders—Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush—and also by the current president, Barack Obama. His Excellency President Barack Obama visited Cape Coast Castle during his first historic visit to Ghana.

The Volta River and Volta Lake are the largest bodies of water in Ghana and the largest in terms of surface coverage in the world. The Volta River is geographically sourced from the north, and the lake is located in the south-eastern part of Ghana. The entire Volta region is officially named after the river. Keta is a small coastal town in the Volta region; this is where Kofi was born. The Keta Lagoon, which is the largest lagoon in the country, is the main source of fishing for the indigenes. The inhabitants of Keta, Ho, and many parts of the region are mainly fishermen and traders. Ewe is largely spoken, and the people from the entire region are generally referred to as Voltarians. The Akosombo Dam, a dependable source of hydroelectric

power, was constructed under the leadership of the first president of the Republic of Ghana—Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah—and is situated on Volta Lake.

On July 16, 2005, I was at Karkum National Park with my colleagues. What I saw was really more amazing than just a thick, green forest with live animals. There was a canopy walkway, miraculously mounted through the upper parts of the thickly wooded forest. I have courageously participated in the intriguing canopy walk and can hardly forget my first daring but shaky steps on the stony staircase that carried me about 120 meters above the ground. I must confess it was a day of either glory or doom, a day on which I was to meet both whites and blacks from all walks of life who either shared tears for fear of their lives or stepped up for adventure. While others just brushed away the opportunity in fear of losing their lives, one female colleague had decided to face her fears. She cried all the way from the beginning to the end of the canopy walk but was glad she did it.

I apologize for the brevity of this introduction of Ghana. I promise to continue writing about the interesting people, culture, and places of Ghana for all my fans in a free monthly newsletter. To receive this free and unique newsletter exclusively about people and places of interest in Ghana, kindly sign up at www.searchlightventures.com or visit the site daily for news from Ghana.

Little Kofi did not forget his childhood days—those days of glory and fun when there were joy, peace, and, above all, the presence of two loving parents. Kofi could still feel the gentle hands of his father touching his cheeks. His father, who cared to make the world a better place, taught him all that was good. Gone were those days he spent with little friends who made life the greatest fun, those who changed little Kofi's lonely life into

a much happier and cherished one. They would not let him go until it was late or when his mum returned from work to feed him.

The beautiful, funny cars—toy cars made from old milk and Milo tins—reminded him of his mother’s voice calling from a distance. The joys they had would never leave his memory, and the care and love of both parents often reminded him of all his friends. But his parents were two special, distinct people. Little Kofi remained so grateful to God for blessing his family with eight brothers and a sister. His uncles and aunts were the most wonderful people in his life when things continued to change.

The gray hair of his grandparents was like a touch of silver on a lily. The old people were so loving that he could still see the love-light in their eyes, bright and admirable. Now, Kofi was sad that most of them had gone to their graves. For all the present and the past people in Kofi’s life, he was always very cheerful and thankful to God for a family no money could buy.

Every living thing has a father, and, of course, much depends on what is meant by the term *father*. What, then, is a father? Kofi thought that a father was someone wonderful, a person who was always near to give help and confidence and share his joys and cares. He was a man who gave inspiration with just a word or a smile. A father was someone who cared to make life more worthwhile.

Due to Kofi’s father’s great love, his father gave all he had to keep up with the needs of the family. The end of every month meant shopping, which was often buying new clothes and pairs of shoes and socks. Academic items were not overlooked, because his father was an educator. However, the wide range of domestic items often rendered the list endless.

Both parents of little Kofi did not leave things to fall apart. Kofi never waited for food anytime hunger struck. Yes, Kofi's mother was a mother of great perfection.

Kofi's numerous ways of being troublesome did not give him or his parents much rest. They always did their best to keep him quiet and gentle, but the childhood devil in his blood did not permit him to keep still at times. Dangerous play and frequent ways of being rowdy had won his heart.

Though Kofi was very young, he was always troubled with cuts and injuries; those were the penalties paid for being rambunctious. Kofi's father was keen on his profession as a teacher. The best times of his life were spent teaching everyone, not only his pupils. All his pupils thought of him as their best friend. In those times, Kofi felt very proud of having a wonderful father. He would always remember his father smiling at his friends and pupils.

One important thing about Kofi's father was his open-mindedness, which Kofi could hardly understand. His father gave him enough counseling and ideas, and those ideas taught Kofi how to learn and how to be a good boy. Kofi did not understand all of these lessons, especially when his father gave him a lot of tasks to keep him busy. In fact, Kofi had disliked his father for many things, but now he was aware that by the time a man realizes that his father was right, he might have a son who thinks he is wrong. Though Kofi had not yet become a father, he had already realized that his father was right. That made Kofi a little more aware of what it meant to be a father. Knowing how much his father loved him, Kofi adhered to his instructions. This got him accustomed to his father's indirect teaching.

Obviously, teaching is not a well-paying career in Africa. Kofi's father trained and guided a lot of pupils, but most of them were very stubborn. Some of those rascals would even attack

Kofi on his way to school whenever they received a punishment from Kofi's father.

These children often mercilessly attacked Kofi, and his tears would have no effect on their hearts. The evil heart of an African student was too hard to be controlled or moved by the tears of a helpless child of Kofi's age. The good students were very grateful for his father's love for them, and they had demonstrated their heartfelt appreciation with gifts and many other things Kofi could still remember.

Kofi had a lot of experiences that caused many issues. One of these even led to the loss of his actual date of birth for some time; this caused a lot of confusion in his life, especially between him and his very best and dearest friend, Naomi. This was because Kofi's parents travelled a lot from one place to another due to his father's unstable health—they hoped to meet a good doctor or herbalist who could heal him. It was also because of extremely hard economic conditions brought about by the 1983 famine, as discussed in chapter two. During those times, Kofi often depended on his elder brothers for his date of birth, which really did not matter to anyone at the time. When Kofi grew to be a young adult and joined the international pen friends society, he met Naomi. Though Kofi told Naomi what he believed was his age and date of birth, there was always a strong feeling of uncertainty in his heart. Their friendship grew stronger and stronger, and one day, Kofi's mum returned home. Kofi asked his mum to verify that his birth date, as often communicated by his elder brothers, was right. To Kofi's utter surprise, his birth date that he had been mentioning all along to everybody was wrong; his mum confirmed this with a document. However, the wrong date of birth, known to Kofi as the right date, had already been communicated to Naomi and anybody who cared to know. Unfortunately, this information

was so disappointing and irritated Naomi so much so that their good friendship turned sour. Kofi, however, was happy to know the truth after his mother had confirmed his actual birth date with his birth certificate.

Kofi said, “All of my life, I have been saying sorry to you, my dear one, for all the pain that blurred your understanding of a true friend.”

Chapter 2

THE FAMINE

There's an old saying that goes, "An army walks on its stomach," but the famine in an entire country contradicted the great philosophers. This time, every able body had to go through hunger and thirst to get something to eat, or it would die. Inevitably, hunger remained a great threat to the whole land while life tried to continue.

How can an engine continue its work when the fuel runs out? A storm of hunger blew over Ghana in 1983. Life was constantly in danger, but only heaven knows why some of the weakest, such as Kofi, survived. The famine decided that friends should be split apart—children against children, parents against parents, and, above all, human against human.

The deep-blue sea stopped breeding fish, and the sky was completely dried up. Kofi could remember the dried environment of dirt and withered leaves. There were no birds in the sky to sing the sweet, lovely melodies everyone loved to hear. Work had no value because no worker was able to fully survive. These factors changed the wonderful world into a different one—a scene of hooliganism and a place where people were always performing acts of vandalism.

I believe Kofi's description may go beyond the understanding of the reading public, but why should his own paternal grandpa cripple their lives because of his sole evil conduct? He killed Kofi's father's beautiful dog, Pull; he remained intrinsically evil and hostile to Kofi's friends; and he even threatened Kofi's father, his own son, with death. To little Kofi, it was cruel of an elderly person to be unwise, even in

times of a dreaded famine, when a peaceful mind could provide great satisfaction.

Life continued harshly while Kofi continued his education. Kofi's father was always happy about his son's brilliance. Soon, Kofi identified within himself the need for education and studies, but it was extremely difficult to study on an empty stomach.

Kofi's father called one day and advised that they ought to start fishing in the lagoon each morning before going to school, based on the idea that it could help with their food situation. Kofi's father also emphasized that they had to start the next morning. His father's idea was good but very hard to accept. This bothered Kofi, but he said, "He is my father, a responsible father, someone who knows all that is good for me. I have no alternative, and I will follow him until I die."

The strange days at the lagoon still stood fresh in his memory—the fog and the harmattan, the chilly morning breeze, and the beautiful fishing birds with their long, thin legs and beaks. Kofi remembered the brave kingfisher, the seagull, and a whole lot of beautiful birds doing the same job as he and his father. He felt the cold lagoon right up to his waist. Kofi stressed that they were always lucky at the lagoon because buyers were always available.

His father's idea, in some ways, made life easier. But what happened? The lagoon soon dried up, and there were no means to make ends meet. Unfortunately, in that wretched season, Kofi's father suffered a stroke. He was rushed to the hospital, and everyone was afraid that he would die. At the hospital, Kofi's father had great care and recovered earlier than expected. The whole family rejoiced over a happy but weak father.

Kofi's elder brothers soon found a way to make life a bit more worthwhile by helping a local baker who often gave them

some goods and money each day. Because of their father's ill health, Kofi was not allowed to go out with them, and the situation forced him to become a bad boy; he always had to steal his brothers' food in order to survive. His siblings gave him nothing of what they earned, and Kofi became Mr. Nobody in the family.

No one knew, except heaven, why Kofi had to become a bad boy. One may have concluded that he was wrong to be so untrustworthy to his own brothers, but the problem was not that Kofi did not love them; he did. But truth and love being equal, it was all the same that Kofi had to survive before they could also cherish the presence of their loving brother. If Kofi's father had been healthier, things might have been better, and life might not have been as bad for Kofi. Kofi had long known his father as highly responsible and kind, and he loved his father, the best person in his life.

Life went on unsupported, and times became worse. Steven, one of Kofi's brothers, was very much like Kofi, and people loved to call them twins. They were not twins, however; they just looked alike and behaved the same way. The only difference was that Steven was a bit lighter than Kofi in complexion. Due to the fatal famine, they spent most of their time picking dried palm nuts under palm-nut trees anywhere in town. With others around their age, they would go through thorns and many unsafe places for miles, all across the town. The nuts were very important to them, and they depended on the fruit and a certain herb, known as palm-nut herb or *nefigbe* in vernacular, for food. One day, something scary happened. They met a very huge animal under one of the trees. It was a reptile, and its eyes were like two little tongues of fire; it was terrifying and wild. Both Kofi and Steven took to their heels without knowing what to do, but they made sure they outran the animal. This left the day and

night incomplete because they had not succeeded in finding dried palm nuts from the bush. With hope, Kofi's brother Steven said, "All will be over in a day."

The next day was no delight. They had to find another means of survival apart from going to the bush for the nuts. Steven suggested that they ought to try their luck under some mango trees about a quarter of an hour's walk from their house, and Kofi agreed. From that day on, they often went to the mango trees together and returned home before attending school each day. They had neither breakfast nor any pocket money. All they had were the mangoes they collected and distributed according to the meal hours of the day.

Most of the mangoes were unripe; even the green ones were of great taste to them. They soon got accustomed to the distance from their house to the mango trees. One can see that during such times, their lives remained unstable and insecure but improved a bit.

One morning, Steven decided that they should not go to the mango trees. He said he had a dream that some people had brutalized them under a number of mango trees, but Kofi did not listen this time. Steven loved him very much and did not want to hurt him, so against his will, he led Kofi to the mango trees. Kofi followed silently, but Steven was not happy at all. He was cold all along the way on the thin path across the bush, and he spoke no words. If Kofi had known the harm his own disobedience would bring, he would never have disobeyed his dear brother. He should have agreed to face the hunger that was due.

They finally arrived under the mango trees, and Kofi's great hope was to pick as many mangoes as possible. Unfortunately, things changed, and neither of them could tell where the mangoes went. They were late; someone had been there earlier.

Steven teased, "I told you we must not come here today, but you insisted; now pick up the mangoes we have come here for."

Kofi was speechless and felt sorry. They smiled at each other in disappointment and started moving toward home.

While Kofi was returning home, he was angry with himself and was trying to imagine how the day could have been. Suddenly, a strange boy appeared and started pushing him to show where he kept all the mangoes he had collected. However, Kofi's unsuccessful visit to the mango trees had already made him angry. Kofi humbly wanted to leave without any argument or fight, but the strange boy would not allow it.

The boy's threatening and aggressive pushing convinced Kofi that he should fight. If the strange boy had known that Kofi was a great martial artist in the field of tae kwon do, he would never have troubled himself to fight with Kofi. With much ignorance and incompetence, the boy started unsuccessfully punching and kicking toward Kofi's face.

Kofi skillfully defended himself from his attacker and taught the boy a great deal of what it takes to fight with a good fighter. Kofi also became aware of how furious he was when he nearly threw a fatal kick. Steven cried no just in time. His shout induced Kofi to correct his mistake, but Kofi was not tired and continued to fight. He had great skill, and this was the only time to demonstrate it.

When the boy realized his great body size could do nothing to Kofi's thin body, he ran away helplessly and quickly disappeared into the bush. When Kofi saw the blood oozing from his nose, he felt very guilty. But Steven remarked that he had made a fool of himself by underestimating Kofi's ability. This brought a lot of laughter to the two little guys. Kofi hated to fight and arrived home hungry and unsatisfied but very happy for winning a fight. Such victory had no positive effect on

eliminating their plight of hunger. Such was the scene under the mango trees when their hopes were totally shattered.

Kofi's father's sickness did not give Kofi much peace. It changed from bad to worse. Despite the destruction of hunger, Kofi decided to find out what was worsening his father's failing health. To achieve this, Kofi sat by his father one day and looked at his weak body and into his sleepy eyes.

Soon his father started healing quickly, and Kofi was very happy. Kofi's father realized that Kofi had been watching him, but he was unable to understand why his son was looking at him so strangely.

Trying to understand Kofi's odd looks, his father asked, "Why have you been looking at me so strangely, my son?"

Kofi answered, "I have long wanted to see your bad health changed into good health, and I was very sad when it did not."

His father promised to get well soon and added that Kofi should never worry. He felt blessed when his father held Kofi's right cheek and smiled brightly.

The next morning, his father called and asked whether Kofi had heard some strange noises on their roof at midnight. Kofi had heard nothing, and the description from his father sounded like the noise of great stones falling into deep waters. Kofi, being very unhappy, went out to see if there could be comfort somewhere, but all he found was heartbreak. The day had no glory, and hunger was written on almost everybody's faces. When it was getting dark, Kofi returned home to reunite with his family. It was all a great joy, and the plight of hunger felt eradicated because they had enough for that evening. Kofi felt blessed again.

During the night, Kofi did not sleep; he stayed awake to see if the strange noises his father had told him about were going to occur again. For a long time, nothing happened. After

everybody was completely asleep, terrifying noises and cries by night birds and others believed by Africans, especially Kofi's tribe, to be witchcraft were heard coming toward their little apartment from a distance.

Everyone was asleep, including his father. Kofi was terrified as all those birds landed on their roof, crying with horror. While the birds were crying, Kofi heard footsteps of animals among the hostile birds. Soon, all had gone beyond what Kofi's little heart could bear, and he was so overcome by fear that he was unable to remember when a deep sleep came over him. The next morning was very beautiful, but Kofi was the last person to wake up. He did not wait for his father to ask him why. Kofi told his father about the terrifying experience he had had the previous night. His father was most surprised but too weak to say very much. He later discovered a total breakdown in his father's health, which triggered his suspicion of the witches having some link with his father's illness. God being kind and loving, his father finally recovered.

Kofi's uncles did not leave them comfortless; they had been coming to them and giving their best to help the family. Uncle Kuedolo and Uncle Ken would be remembered for their wonderful love. This showed Kofi the great love binding him and his family together. The question was, could that kind of love last forever? His Aunt Nunana and her great gifts would never be forgotten. Her beautiful clothes, footwear, and designer T-shirts that she often bought for them from London would be forever memorable.

God did not forsake Kofi's country either. He gathered the rain clouds all over, and after a while, their country was blessed again with heavy rains. The beautiful lagoon had soon returned, and the whole land started to regain its value and great beauty.

The fields were covered with great vegetables and grasses, and most compounds were covered with natural flowers. The sea also started yielding fish for everyone. Anyone would have concluded that the hunger would all be over at last. But could there be any end to hunger in a poor boy's home? The end of the fatal famine was also the end of little Kofi's bad habits.

Chapter 3
A STUDENT, A FISHERMAN, AND A VENDOR

I write not to describe people but manners, not individuals but species. Most people were strongly affected by the false facts of human life, while others were distracted by the beauty of the earth and sky.—the author

Oh, yes! Little Kofi described his life. A tempest heart taught him the fact that no person is wiser for his or her learning. Kofi believed that everyone was born with wisdom. Perhaps because of the great things you are reading and will continue to read about Kofi, sorrow might fill your heart. Do not shed tears for him; do not cry for his experience. After all, he believed that over the bridge of sighs he would pass to the palace of peace.

Life was never comfortable for Kofi, even after the fatal famine. That should not have been the case, but because of Kofi's father's poor health, no significant changes occurred in the family. Kofi was only a young boy in primary school and was preparing for his junior high education. This required much studying, but unfortunately for Kofi, he often took opportunities to make money because money was the only way to live after the fatal famine.

Steven decided that they ought to start fishing in order to support themselves financially. Kofi agreed with him but wondered how they would manage with insufficient time. After consideration, time was scheduled, and Kofi would sell the fish at the hospital market while Steven stayed home to help their mother in the kitchen. After that, Kofi would return home, and they would have dinner together and do their homework before

going to bed. Kofi had many dreams, and time was not going very quickly for him.

When school was over, they ran home for their meals and sleepless siestas. After some preparation, they started the journey toward the lagoon. Kofi enjoyed the wonderful sights on the way—the different exotic birds, their sweet melodies, and many things of the highest beauty were counted with endless wonder.

They did their best, and it was a good fishing day. After a while, Steven called and instructed that they should return home. Kofi listened to him, and they were both glad for a successful day. They arrived home and did as planned.

Selling proved interesting, and Kofi returned home with a broad smile. They gave some of the money to their mother for housekeeping and kept the rest for their educational needs. Unless fishing became unfavorable, life would continue that way. However, their fruitless attempts and disappointments at the lagoon were great enough to teach them. The storms of life soon heightened.

Kofi's talent in art became famous. Life continued in a negative way, but Kofi did not give up, and soon he had many people who were always ready to pay him for any artwork he would do for them. He had done a lot of paintings for a lot of people, and his artistry was known in the whole town. Sometimes, Kofi's father praised him for being a wonderful son. Kofi's knowledge of art seemed to have uplifted his family's name a bit, and he considered himself a good artist.

As winner of the interschool and district art competitions, Kofi was great enough to achieve some fame. All the same, his fame came to a halt when his final-year examination was due. He then devoted much of his time to studies.

A few weeks later, the final exams came. In all honesty, Kofi knew his efforts were good but not the best. For a short time, after the examination weeks passed, Kofi was free to roam about and have fun. This was only the completion of his junior high education and not the end of his life.

Earlier, before Kofi's examination, the death of his grandmother struck the family like a thunderbolt. Stretching from weeks to months, the funeral arrangements and rites had been scheduled. In fact, little Kofi thought that his grandmother's tale went beyond the realm of his biography, and he therefore said nothing more about the funeral. Moreover, bad things took place during the funeral. Uncle Kuvor, from Kofi's paternal side, nearly killed Kofi's mother because of a hatred Kofi could not define.

It all started when Uncle Kuvor, who drank heavily, wanted to beat Steven severely for not finding his own food to eat. Though Kofi had forgiven them all, he found it difficult to forget. Great things took place; they had no good effect on him, and he counted them irrelevant to his biography.

Those sad days were gone, yet there remained tides in the affairs of little Kofi. During Kofi's holiday, he had a lot of time to do whatever he wanted. Somewhere along the line, Kofi realized it would be better for him and Steven to spend their time wisely instead of just roaming about town. He shared an idea with Steven, who accepted it warmly.

Fishing was not yielding in those days, but the two little brothers believed their blood and sweat would yield at least what could quench their thirst.

Though Steven agreed with Kofi, he asked, "Why do we have to worry ourselves knowing very well that fishing is yielding nothing?" Kofi said, "A half loaf is better than none." They smiled at each other brightly in agreement.

The next day seemed favorable. The weather was bright and wonderful. Kofi called it a fateful day. They got ready and quickly started the journey to the lagoon.

If Kofi had known about the great adventure ahead, they would have agreed to enjoy their poor but cheerful lives rather than troubling them.

The thin savannah grasses brushed Kofi's legs. It was a memorable day, and the beautiful fishing birds had started their glorious melodies of praise that Kofi loved so much.

When they were close to the lagoon, they felt a sudden reluctance within themselves. Steven looked as if he were very tired, but when Kofi asked him about it, he answered no and said that they should continue on their way. In fact, they both felt like returning home, but it was too late to say so. They should have listened to their consciences, but they did not.

They now smelled the lovely air and saw the birds flying from place to place. After a while, the beautiful lagoon stood before them. When they started paddling, they noticed that the volume of water was so great that the paddling of their canoe was a tug of war. Kofi saw there were fewer canoes on the lagoon than in the past. He asked Steven why there were only a few people on board. Steven was unable to answer; it was too late for them to escape the angry waves. They moved a great distance to the deepest part of the lagoon.

After they had settled, they wasted no time jumping on their cold breakfast in their little canoe; it was a gift from their friend Jonapat. While they were dining, the whole day looked very promising, but Kofi felt the wind blowing in a new direction altogether. He thought that it was normal, but he was wrong. After the meal, the very few canoes they had seen on the lagoon had disappeared.

They suspected some danger. Within a few minutes, the sun also disappeared and made the whole world as cold as death and as dark as night. The wind was becoming stronger, and they both lifted up their eyes to see what was coming.

They were surprised to see the clouds gathering in the east to bring forth a heavy rain. Kofi called and pleaded with Steven that they should go back home before it was too late to escape from the storm. Steven nodded in agreement, but anger was written on his face.

They paddled their canoe immediately. Things happened so fast that it was impossible to run away from the rain. It was a strong rain, and its strength had gone beyond their young capabilities. They gave all in their blood to reach home early, but the rain and the darkness were so heavy and thick that they couldn't see.

The giant, angry waves did not give them a chance to control their canoe. They continued on their way even though they did not know where they were going. Kofi was tired, wet, and cold and had great pity on himself. They were very unlucky meeting the unfriendly rain. Honestly, Kofi hated that he had planted the idea of fishing in Steven's mind. Kofi was sorry, but it was hard to say so when both parties looked so sad.

Kofi believed that the only way to survive was to get home. God was always there. Finally, they were able to see their way home, and they quickly ran.

Home was a paradise to them. They had the warmth of a happy and loving family, and they were no longer under the cruelty of a cold rain. Kofi described it as a day of terrible adventure. The rain did not take away the idea of fishing, so when Steven suggested it again, they both agreed to try their luck the next day.

The next morning, they gathered their tools and returned to the lagoon. All the mangroves in the lagoon stood firm and motionless. Birds were the only things flying, and they created a little natural beauty. Their absence would have made the place dead and fearful.

Without words, they wasted no time reaching their canoe and quickly finding their way across the deep, dead water. The wind then started slightly while they were already away from land. They had no suspicion of the wind posing any danger. There were no other people out except those in another canoe about a kilometer away.

Soon, things happened. The wind became stronger and the waves bigger and angrier.

Their long silence was broken when Steven shouted, “Look! Look at the waves! What is happening?”

They had already made it quite a distance from home, and Kofi asked himself, *What the hell is life?*

Those waves could easily break their canoe into pieces. In no time, they decided to return home. It was better to seek their peace and to avoid the danger of those angry waves.

The other canoe some distance away came a little closer. There were two people, a man and a woman. Steven always paddled bravely whenever there was a problem. He carefully controlled the canoe through the significant waves and set it right upon their route home. While they were leaving the other canoe behind, the situation became hostile with the large, wild, and merciless waves.

The couple in the other canoe was crying for help, but the harsh noise of the waves did not permit Kofi and Steven to hear their cries. At long last, God opened their deaf ears and gave them new strength to rescue the unfortunate ones from the rough and unkind waves. They did their best until the couple was

rescued. All their belongings were lost to the lagoon, but their joy was great for surviving the battle between life and death.

They later became good friends, and they told Kofi and Steven a lot about themselves. They came from an island called Dudu, which was in the middle of Keta Lagoon. They loved Kofi and Steven for saving their lives and invited them to their home on the island. Unfortunately, their home was so strange; they lived in the middle of the largest lagoon of Ghana and survived without electricity or portable water. They had their own way of cooking or setting fire. There were no markets; they simply cultivated everything they would need from the island, and their lifestyle simple didn't match that of the people of Keta. These differences looked so strange from a distance that the two little boys were afraid to go there.

Kofi said, "We loved them and had agreed to visit them, but as they were a little different from the people living in the town of Keta, we were discouraged. And that was the only thing that killed our interest in visiting them."

When they were out of the lagoon, they departed, and their hugs showed their gratitude. Steven was never satisfied, and knowing frankly that Kofi would not be willing to go with him, he told him that he would be joining some neighbours at the lagoon in two weeks. His idea seemed odd, and Kofi did not like it. Because they often left at dawn, Kofi knew that he would be taking Steven to the neighbour's house before returning home all alone. Kofi was a fearless boy, but how could a little boy like him defend his life should anyone hostile attack in the dark?

Two weeks later, Steven was ready and informed Kofi about those who would be fishing with them. Kofi was not in favour, but because Steven asked him to take him to the neighbour's house the next day, he had nothing to say to discourage his dear brother. Nodding his head in agreement,

Kofi had a sudden feeling that the next day could be his last day on earth.

The night before, Kofi did not sleep. When he woke up, it was 3:30 a.m. He called Steven to get ready. After putting everything in place, Steven asked Kofi to escort him. Kofi took him to the neighbour's, and they arrived there a few minutes before four.

The darkness was so thick that they were unable to see each other on their way to the neighbour's house, and Kofi was gripped with fear. He was thinking of the lonely, dark way lying ahead of him. At last, they arrived at the house, where the neighbours stood waiting. Kofi shook hands with Steven, and they said good-bye to each other.

They went to the lagoon and left poor Kofi in the darkness before dawn. In the lonely, dark atmosphere, he was fearful, and his own negative thoughts made him scared. His footsteps were heavy enough to frighten him—as if there were some other footsteps following him as he was getting nearer to his home. When he got closer to home and all his fears were gone, a scary creature appeared before him.

It first appeared as a little tongue of fire, and then it started to grow larger while getting closer to Kofi. Kofi pretended not to notice it and turned toward another route home, but the ogre did not leave him alone. The most chilling aspect of the tale was when the little tongue of fire enlarged into a great human shape and stood right in Kofi's way. The fire was so frightening that Kofi did not know what to do. The fire of the incredible creature then brightened the darkness, and Kofi's eyes became fixed on the beast. Kofi soon felt so sure and strong of God that all fear in his heart melted, and he became a strong, courageous boy, not a coward.

Kofi thought to himself, *I will win or never see home again.*

The strange beast seemed to have comprehended his thoughts and started rushing toward him. Kofi had no weapon, but he was very grateful to God for his two hands and the sand on the surface of the earth. He did not mind the sharp particles in the sand and the way they were cutting his hands; he focused all his attention on the hostile creature, and he threw countless quantities of sand against it.

While fighting for survival, Kofi was also shouting for help. Everybody started running to the scene, but when people arrived, the terrible creature had vanished into thin air.

Kofi's mother was crying out at the top of her lungs while she ran to the scene. In the process, she dashed her foot against a stone and fell to the ground. She sustained many injuries as a result of the fall. The wounds were big, and Kofi felt sorry for his dear mother. Kofi's mother's scars remained a great testimony to this tale. Steven and his friends had probably reached the lagoon by that time and were absolutely unaware of what happened. Kofi's elder brother hastily ran out of the house before realizing he was naked. Many came and surveyed the ground. They asked Kofi many questions, but he was too weak to give answers.

Many things happened in Kofi's life, and he counted them as great sources of experience and knowledge.

Some people claimed that Kofi met with witchcraft that night, but Kofi did not know exactly what it was. His father was unable to utter a word, for his health was very bad. In a few weeks, their holiday was over. It was hard for Kofi to forget about the great injuries his mother had sustained because of him. He realized from that day that his mother was his closest friend on earth. As a result of his realization, Kofi composed a song to mark his love for his mother. The title of the song was "The One to Love Is You."

Chapter 4 THE DEATH OF KOFI'S FATHER

“Life is but a walking shadow; suddenly it is heard of no more.”—William Shakespeare

Kofi had no understanding of death until his father's unusual demise. His father's death was unexpected, and Kofi was short of words in those days.

Kofi had good results from his junior high school and qualified for secondary education. He had three letters of admission, but due to financial problems, Kofi could not go to school. He was unhappy for a long time. He thought because his father was sick and there was no money, he could not continue school. His father was a teacher and had long known the essence of education. Therefore, he borrowed money to pay for Kofi's admission fee at the Keta business secondary school, which was situated along the coast. Kofi's shattered dreams were then rekindled. He was taken to the school. From that day, Kofi was no longer the usual Kofi I knew, but a freshman.

The next day, Kofi started school as a freshman and had met both juniors and seniors, most of whom liked to demonstrate their superiority in many unfriendly ways. Everything was interesting at school except those seniors who did not leave Kofi and the new students alone. Some of them were so wicked that Kofi had to ignore their punishments to survive. School continued, and the days of success and achievements were difficult.

A few months after Kofi's admission, his father had a stroke again and could not walk by himself or talk. They rushed

him to the hospital and were very tired on arrival, but the warm welcome of the nurses renewed their strength. Kofi loved the nurses of the Keta government hospital. They were so caring and loving toward the sick, especially his father.

The senior nurses ordered them to send their father to the consulting room for the doctor's attention. They did as ordered, but it was unfortunate because only a few understood why the most serious medical case should be dealt with first. There, they stood speechless and unhappy as their father was admitted. There was no money for the medicines prescribed.

His father's health was not improving, and the doctor had no further diagnoses apart from the stroke. Kofi's mother had to sell some of her jeweler and garments in order to buy medicine, but his father's health was not getting better as expected. He was later transferred to a traditional hospital for herbal treatment, and little Kofi had to live on his own. Kofi's mother advised him and Steven to have good morals and gave them some food and money.

Kofi's mother then left, and hope was all Kofi and his brothers had. Within a few weeks, their food and money was gone, and they had to work for survival. The situation led Kofi to a good friend, who gave him a lot of tasks. He would pay him even more than what was due in most of the contracts, which were usually hard labour.

Because of those difficult tasks, Kofi had no time to study. There was one unforgettable thing during this stormy time of life: God so loved and kept him away from all manner of sicknesses. Kofi's heartfelt thanks to God for his great love were always there. Months later, Kofi's mother and father returned, and he felt great joy to see the loveliest people in his life again. On the other hand, his father did not recover from his stroke as everybody had expected. Soon Kofi's father was admitted again,

and his health began to fail more seriously; his breathing became unusual.

After some days in this condition, he gave up his ghost. It was on September 22, 1991, at the stroke of seven in the morning on Sunday at the Keta government hospital. It was all over in a second.

Kofi silently spoke these few words within his heart: *The son of Africa is now fatherless and helpless. Oh, dear and loving father, why have you laid so low? Farewell to you from the bottom of my heart. May you rest in perfect peace.*

After his father's death, Kofi believed he had no soul in this world, but God is a merciful father and a man who understands our entire situation. The news of Kofi's father's death brought a number of sad people extending their condolences. It was as if Kofi's father had been a president.

Later, the family gathered, and the funeral rites were arranged. Kofi was very surprised to see that his father had a great number of relatives. He loved them all for their condolences, but he hated them for loving only the dead.

They planned everything in such a way that his father's wake fell on October 11, 1991, which was Kofi's birthday and the actual day he was born—Friday. Even after the burial, there was sorrow. Everything looked so dark for him that Kofi felt so tired of the business called life.

However, there is some sort of comfort within every situation, no matter how wretched the scenario is. During those days of sorrow, there was something Kofi cherished—a mother who remained the kindest on earth. She often flashed a smile as brave and extraordinary as a smile could be at Kofi and his brothers. Many people commented anytime his mother portrayed this kind of affection to the poor boy and his brothers,

who had just lost their dear father. Kofi hated such people and had no time for them.

On the afternoon of the wake, they went over to the mortuary and brought home his father's corpse on a stretcher. They dressed and laid the corpse of his deceased father at rest in a flat, horizontal position and closed the door before it was time for the wake. Kofi had no thoughts of crying; he kept mute and thought of what life could be after his father's burial.

Kofi understood that death is for both the just and the unjust; if death was only for the unjust, Kofi knew his father wouldn't have died so soon. It did not matter whatever one does, whether good or bad; death is death, and life is life—both belong to the good and bad. They are two opposite friends. Life is always for death, as friends are always for each other. That was the day Kofi was near madness.

Their grandmother, Dora, took Kofi and his brothers and sister into the room where their father was laid. They were the first people to pay their last respects to their father on his deathbed. All eyes fixed on them as the old lady called them, singing some traditional songs. She knocked on the door three times and shouted, "Ago! Ago! Ago!"

At last, she opened the door and led them into the room. She called Kofi's father's name three times and started talking to the dead as if he were still alive. Kofi's deceased father, whose full name in real life was Joachim Douglas Yaovi Gbormittah, was popularly known by and called *Douglas*.

"Douglas! Douglas! Douglas! Wherever you are, turn your attention to us here on earth, especially to these young children of your flesh and blood. Do not turn away from them. Be their burning light at all sides. Be their good luck and success wherever they may be, and forget not about them. Show them

you still love them, even in the land of the dead.” She did the same thing for Kofi’s mother.

While the old lady was saying all these words, cold tears filled Kofi’s eyes and started flowing down his cheeks. From that day, Kofi knew that tears arise from the heart and outflow through the eyes; he discovered that tears seemed to be the truest expression of unspeakable grief from a broken heart, a heart that needs a firm consolation to let go.

Their grandmother then performed some rituals; she stroked their father and stroked Kofi and his brothers and sister with the same stick. She also pronounced some incantations, and at these words, Kofi’s pores were sealed while chills ran down his spine.

The old lady was also moved by the death of Kofi’s father, and her helpless tears started flowing like waterfalls. She did not want the children to see her tears, but she could not hide them. Having seen her tears, Kofi felt his heart turn cold with sorrow. It seemed to him that the dead were hearing all that the old lady was saying, though Kofi never actually believed that. Finally they went out, and the public was allowed to pay their last respects.

No one returned without tears, and a lot of people paid their last respect to the deceased. Kofi felt so sorry for his poor grandfather, who was met with his son’s death at the time he most expected to die. The wake continued until the next day, and the endless line of sympathizers and their loud cries did not cease. Later, an elder in the family diplomatically stopped the wake in order to follow the program for burial.

At about 8:30 a.m., they started moving toward the chapel with a large number of people. A band led the people, with both students and teachers lining up on both sides of the streets leading to the mission house. There were also a few cars. They were all very beautiful to see, but Kofi’s world was turning

every beautiful thing ugly. The mass and other necessary religious prayers and rites were performed before they moved to the cemetery where the burial rite took place.

The lowering of his father's coffin and the throwing of sand on the coffin by old family members signified the fact that his father was made from dust and was therefore returning to dust. Kofi's eyes were filled with tears, which everybody hated to see. His eyes were blind with tears, and Kofi did not know what he would do to forget about the loss.

Soon the burial was over, and everybody went on with his or her lives. But it was impossible for Kofi to understand what would happen next. He had sleepless nights, and the sweet music of the morning birds that sounded so beautiful before was turning heart-breaking, deafening, and totally undesirable.

That was the end of Kofi's father, and there were many negative times that followed.

Kofi knew his father would have been the happiest to see him when he matured, but who can change what nature has ordained? May his father's soul rest in perfect peace.

The death of a good father marks the beginning of many tears. This has reminded me of the stories of dead men troubled in their graves by the singular disregard of their last wishes.

Chapter 5 AT THE GUESTHOUSE

After Kofi's father's death, school was not the right place to be. There were numerous problems. Second-cycle education is more advanced than the junior secondary education he already had. It was much higher and therefore required a lot more attention from an average student like Kofi. Kofi usually gave little attention, and he needed a lot of time and support to carry on.

Kofi was lucky a few days after his father's death; he secured a job as a caretaker of Harley's Guesthouse, a local guesthouse in Dzelukope, Keta, which was in the Volta region. Kofi was content with his new job and worked between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day. There were no days off.

Kofi was always very pleased with his job, even though it was tedious. He knew that he had to give all his attention to his studies, but, instead, he gave his all at the guesthouse. Sweeping the rooms and mopping the floors, washing all the used bedsheets, cleaning and keeping everything tidy, and sometimes fetching water from the ground floor proved to be very difficult.

It is not hard to discover the challenges at the guest house, but such were the works Kofi thrived on, and he did this with all his strength. He met different types of people at the guesthouse—gentlemen and ladies, careful and careless, loyal and dishonest, good and bad, and, above all, friends and admirers.

Kofi showed the highest morals and hospitality to every customer. His great patience and service won him a lot of gifts.

Many guests loved him, especially the whites. He loved the Americans, British, Dutch, Australians, and Japanese to name a few. He felt blessed most of the time by those bright smiles.

Kofi loved the whites because they made life easier at the guesthouse and always showed so much appreciation for everything he had done for them. Sometimes they even helped him do whatever he did to help them, if they had the time. Kofi therefore had some regard for them, based solely on the fact that his own race never helped in any way to make life easier for him. They only liked to boast of themselves, even when he was dying for them.

A few of the customers were notorious and stubborn. They hated instruction and liked to do irresponsible things. He called them men of notoriety, and frankly, he did not like them but could not hate them at the same time. That was because they were his customers, and, as the saying goes, “The customer is always right.” No matter what the situation, one thing Kofi knew was to serve both good and bad customers to the best of his ability.

Work was quite enjoyable at the guesthouse. It was unfortunate that thieves started breaking into rooms and stealing customers’ belongings at odd times and that most of the time suspicion was raised toward him. Sometimes, bedsheets were even stolen.

This continued until Kofi concluded that the culprit might have a master key. The fact that customers complained of losses while their doors remained unbroken contributed to this idea. Kofi’s point was very strong, because he realized from the day he started work that he was handed single keys for each room, which should never have been the case.

His bosses also had some suspicions while the complaints of theft kept pouring in the guesthouse, and they suspected Kofi.

Whenever he tried to tell them what was happening at the lodge, they asked him questions that often indicated to Kofi that they thought he did it. He assumed that whatever they asked him was their right, but his opinion was that if they knew him as a bad boy, then why did they offer to employ him?

The guesthouse was later transferred to new management, and Kofi thought that was going to be the end of his career, but he was wrong. The new manager of the guesthouse was Kofi's friend and had even given him a lot of opportunities in the past. This good friend was known as Mr. FMA for short. He was an old fellow of Kofi's grandfather's age, but he was as loving as a father.

Due to his great love, Kofi called him Papa, a name for a responsible African father. He brought many changes into the guesthouse, and many guests enjoyed the new comfort and relaxation. Though many changes took place, they had forgotten the most important of all those changes—the replacement of door locks.

Two weeks later, the thieves started their operation at the guesthouse again. Some guests even demanded that the police arrest Kofi for their losses, but Kofi did not blame anyone. It was not long before a police inspector came and lodged at the guesthouse for more than a month. Before leaving for the police barracks, he befriended Kofi for his services and often gave him a lot of money. The locks were changed within a short time.

One chilly morning, a new Mercedes-Benz arrived at the guesthouse. A young lady was sitting in front with a very handsome man. They drove up and started blowing the horn for Kofi's attention. He warmly ran to meet them, and they were very glad to see him.

Kofi escorted them upstairs, showed them the vacant rooms available, and helped them with their luggage. As Kofi was

explaining everything they needed to know, they suddenly became more friends than guests. The man introduced himself as Mr. Acquaye and the young lady as Anita, his niece.

Anita and Mr. Acquaye enjoyed their days with Kofi at the guesthouse, and within the shortest possible time, Kofi learned a lot from Anita. When Kofi had given them the key for their room, he introduced himself as the caretaker and assured them he was at their service.

During introductions, they both looked at him with anxious interest and admiration. They were very impressed with Kofi, and had mentioned that, they come from Roman Ridge, Accra. After the conversation, Kofi wished them well during their stay.

When Kofi was talking to them, they asked him to sit with them, and as he sat, they asked him many questions that really made him aware of how deeply they cared for him. They were a couple of the most wonderful people Kofi had ever met at the guesthouse. In their apartment, while sharing conversation with them, Kofi noticed an unusual chemistry between himself and Anita.

Anita was staring at him with soft, bright eyes, and Kofi knew there was something like love in those eyes. But he found it hard to understand this love. The man was surprised by his friendliness and gave him a lot of money and praised him for being respectful, serviceable, and wise. Kofi felt happy for those strong and encouraging words. Anita did not speak that time, but her eyes were full of questions. Kofi understood most of the questions, but they were too hard to answer with words.

This started a speechless communication between Kofi and Anita. Mr. Acquaye knew what was going on. After a while, Mr. Acquaye told Kofi that they wanted to get out for a stroll, but Anita did not go. She pleaded to stay at the guesthouse with Kofi, and her uncle had no objections. They both ushered the

uncle into his car, and he drove off. Anita then held Kofi's hands in a way that demonstrated her love for a stranger like him. As they entered the lodge, she quickly gave him a kiss, and Kofi was jumping within himself.

He did not know of love, kisses, and a lot more that Anita thought he knew all along. They went upstairs, and many great things followed. Kofi loved those moments of higher understanding and education from a young woman. On reaching the apartment, they looked at each other for a while, and Anita started her story and stressed how she could not survive without Kofi's love.

It was very hard for him to understand a strange story from a girl he had just met. He described Anita's love as one that had gone beyond expectation.

After her words, she held both of his hands and declared, "Kofi, I love you. I want you to be my darling." Kofi had no answers, and she asked, "Would you mind loving or kissing me now?"

Kofi felt loved, but he did not recognize that love. Kofi should have given a positive answer, but he realized the meaning of Anita's love would be quite different from that of the brotherly and sisterly love he had known.

Despite her great hope for what he would answer, he said, "Anita, what is love, and what do you mean by the term *kiss*?"

She looked into his eyes for a while with great surprise and said, "Love is when two people agree to live together, accepting each other for whatever or whoever they prove to be. Love is sharing two lives as one to the extent that one could not survive without the other." She continued, "Let me teach you what a kiss is." She then drew him closer. She let her sweet tongue roll in his mouth.

Kofi's heart melted with love, and that magic moment touched his life. He learned that day what it takes to be a lover. Her soft, electrifying body warmed his, and she wanted them to make love. A sudden thought occurred to him, and he instantly broke away from her.

She stood some distance away with her eyes closed, and Kofi woke her up by running his fingers on her lips. She then grabbed Kofi's hand so firmly that he realized her love could never die. Kofi did not believe in love, but the urge to satisfy Anita was fully recognized. Unfortunately for Anita, there was nothing to keep Kofi from going on, as he was very young, and sex in his life proved the greatest mistake now and then.

Soon she was calming down; Kofi thought her demand for sex had also died, and he felt a bit relieved. They stood very near the bed. She opened her eyes and looked right into Kofi's. She was murmuring. Kofi also wanted to say something, but the words were not coming. Kofi had seen and recognized the glory in those eyes, the burning desire for everything in the world. Kofi said she was one of the most beautiful girls the world had ever known. Anita took a step back, a bit discouraged and disappointed.

She asked, "Kofi, don't you love me? Do I look so unwanted?"

Her questions were difficult to answer. Kofi knew he loved her but not to the degree of destroying his holiness with her. He therefore did not answer but kept looking at her. Suddenly, a strong, affectionate feeling came over them, and tears were flowing down her cheeks. At her tears, Kofi was moved to believe that no waterpower was more effective than a woman's tears. Nothing was more frustrating.

He did not know exactly what to do or say, and hot sweat started dripping down all over his body. She held him close to

her body and started kissing him; this time they had a mad kiss, so full of power and passion that it went beyond the imagining of sex. They both fell on the bed. She kissed upper parts of his body, and Kofi presumes every reader already knows how that felt.

The upper parts of Kofi's body were ripe apples for her searching fingers and tongue. Kofi loved every bit of it. Anita teaching him was the greatest moment of his life. Her beautiful body was very lovely and tender, like a rose with morning dew. Kofi was carried into the air by her soft touch, and that was the day he saw great things. Kofi's experience with Anita was unforgettable.

He called her the strange angel of goodness, the rose of Sharon, and the queen of beauties. He loved her big eyes and dimpled cheeks, and he called her breasts two young roses.

Because they were almost naked, anyone who might have seen them would have concluded that they had gone all the way. Kofi was very wet but did not remove his clothes. On the bed, deep sleep came over them, and they slept like two little babies.

Though everything went on with the exception of sex, Kofi was unable to believe that love took his heart. It was then that Kofi started to understand love.

The next day brought about the unexpected, and Anita promised to give Kofi her address and some money before leaving. When Anita and her uncle were leaving for a funeral in town, she and Kofi looked at each other with the truest admiration a young boy and girl could give. Kofi remembered her waving good-bye with a bright smile. He would have never believed that was the last time he would see Anita. Kofi lost his angel of goodness forever.

Kofi had no means to contact Anita while his love grew ceaselessly. He would not believe that Anita was gone for good.

Kofi had many dreams of her and finally wished he still knew her; he had never felt so deserted and lonely.

He said, “I never have had my peace since her few days’ presence in my life brought a change and a loss no one could repair.”

The thought of Anita carried him beyond what anyone could imagine. As Anita left so unexpectedly, Kofi missed her a lot, and that led to a feeling of loneliness, sleepless nights, and dreams of no one but Anita. Kofi lost his entire peace of mind and his understanding for the world. He blessed himself for having no sexual relations with her but didn’t know if it would be possible to avoid falling in love.

Kofi’s vow never to fall in love again plagued him with great problems. To rise up through the occupational ladder, Kofi knew he must give education all his attention, regardless of his practical problems and obstacles.

One warm afternoon, Kofi sat on the porch of the first floor at the guesthouse and enjoyed the sights of nature. Within the twinkling of an eye, his sightseeing revealed an interest and later led to one of his life’s problems—something he never wanted to encounter again.

A young lady who had been passing by Kofi’s guesthouse could not take her eyes off his. She stared at him, and he was troubled. The sight of her reminded him of Anita, and he kept looking at her until she was out of sight. This happened over and over again and later led to something unwanted. It was only unfortunate that Kofi did not realize what was happening from the beginning. He did not know the girl was falling for him and that actually the girl was already in love. Kofi had no thoughts of seeing this strange lady in his house until she started visiting him there.

The strange girl did not stop coming to Kofi's house and visiting him at the guesthouse. This was totally against his will, but Kofi was unable to ignore her at the same time. Kofi hated her for talking about boys and her problems. Those were things Kofi could never talk about or do anything about.

Her unusual visits did not stop, and one day she tried luring Kofi into sex. Fortunately, her trap failed, and this was the time Kofi proved himself a man no woman could induce into doing something he did not want to do. When she sensed that her evil attacks had no effect on him, she fell sick from shame, and that gave her no hope of entering Kofi's house again. Kofi was so happy that she stopped visiting him.

Meanwhile, Kofi's aunts and uncles were no longer the same ones he knew. They had changed to the extent that it was very hard for him to believe he was related to them. Despite the fact that he was blood of their blood and flesh of their flesh, the absence of love meant there was no happiness. Their loveless lives often reminded him of his father and his great love for Kofi and his family. Kofi lacked understanding of his uncles and aunts, because sometimes they would be kind and other times they would be hostile. He often prayed for their repentance, but they never changed. Some of his aunts, especially Aunt Amenuveve, remained good.

Uncle Ken was not intimate with any of them and was quite unfriendly to them, but Kofi loved him for caring whenever he was residing outside Ghana. Uncle Ken wronged him one day when he insulted him and told Kofi's sister that Kofi and his brothers were all blockheads. This surprised Kofi. He could not believe someone that was like his father could talk so badly about him and his brothers.

Kofi was studying for his professional diploma in marketing, and his uncle did not know, because he did not care.

Kofi still loved all his relatives for everything life brought their way. He said that it was not their fault, and whatever came his way was his fortune.

Uncle Kuedolo, the kindest of all his uncles, changed into a different man altogether and cut off their main electricity. This act plunged their little apartment into total darkness and made learning very difficult. Kofi asked himself, *Father, where are you?*

For a long time, Kofi did not forget his father. The negative attitude of his own relatives was too much for him to take.

Kofi explained that many bad things he had suffered were still taking place in the world, and most victims were women and children who committed no crime and knew nothing about the government in their country.

Kofi knew he was not the only person suffering in life, and when he read stories of homeless children and great men, he said to himself, “I am already a victim of much suffering, but one day, I will become one of the great men, and I will build a home for the homeless, the afflicted, and the needy. I will make this world a better place for all the little children.”

Kofi recalled that his life was completely unpredictable. His soul was still crying for God’s judgment and forgiveness toward Uncle Kuedolo—the devil of an uncle who made him slap his brother Steven in the face. Because of his father’s death, Kofi was like a toy with which everyone did as they pleased.

Kofi did not forget about his good maternal relatives who were so caring, and he often prayed that God would bless them for whatever they did for him or any of his siblings.

Chapter 6

LOVE AND LIFE IN STORMS

Love is a spirit filled with fire. No one knows where it comes from or where it goes. Sometimes it is in the spirit of good feelings but not very comfortable. It is a tree planted in every human's garden, and it grows only when it is watered and allowed to flourish. Since days of old, love has remained the sweetest fruit in everyone's life; when a couple shares love, they have everything in common. Kofi believed that when we learn to care, understand, and cherish each other, we are definitely in love.

Kofi was very stubborn but lovable. Girls in his class liked him very much. He did not have enough clothes to wear, but most people thought he just did not like dressing properly. Unless they went too far, he had no time to answer questions he deemed unimportant. Sometimes he reprimanded some of his peers.

On the other hand, his gentle and quiet lifestyle with friends was something to see. Girls in Kofi's life had exceptional admiration for him. Kofi admits his female classmates were very caring.

Such care caused him to wonder most of the time if they knew something about him. Perhaps they knew he often did not have money. When it was time for break, they often bought him some light foods, things he liked best. He tried finding answers but could not. However, he was always sure that all of his benefactors felt his gratitude, and that was where he counted himself blessed.

In Kofi's class, most of the guys did not like him because most of the girls had an eye for him. He was not very close to

them, but they often visited his desk. Meanwhile, the other guys were always finding means of getting acquainted with these girls, which caused the ladies to hate them more.

The days, weeks, months, and years passed by, and when it was time for his final examination, Kofi tried his very best—but he did not pass all his subjects.

He said, “It was a new educational system, and there were no textbooks, no competent teachers.” The great problems of his life guaranteed his underperformance.

Kofi’s school completion led to boredom and loneliness that made him miss all his friends, but it also made him a full-time caretaker at the guesthouse.

Unfortunately, nature does not understand things the way we do. One windy afternoon, when Kofi was going to his friend Kwabla’s house, he saw a girl looking at him from a nearby mill house. He pretended not to notice and thought the girl would forget about him when he entered Kwabla’s house, but the girl did not. She kept stretching to look at him through a window, and this frightened him. He then asked his friend, “Why should a girl I do not know keep looking at me so strangely?”

Kwabla encouraged him not to be afraid and teased that the girl was simply falling for him. Looking at him was the only way to demonstrate her love for him. Kofi was not happy to hear this. He was not interested, as the trench Anita had dug was yet to be filled. Soon, he turned to look at the girl. She knew they might be saying something about her, so she disappeared. He later hated himself for the necessary gossip he had with the friend.

Three days later, Kofi was going to pray in the chapel, located at a place popularly known as the RC Mission. A feeling of heaviness came upon him, so he looked around. To his great surprise, he established eye contact with the same girl he had

met near Kwabla's house a few days before. This time she was smiling and started waving at him. Kofi waved back at her and continued on his way, but he continued thinking about the strange beauty. The sight of her led Kofi into another world where all he knew was this new girl.

Anita had been the most beautiful girl in Kofi's whole life. Since Kofi had not known the strange girl for long, he could hardly explain why he felt chills at the sight of her. Besides Anita, Kofi had never spoken to any girl in his life about love, and that made everything hard from the beginning, especially when Kwabla was trying to convince him to make a move on this beautiful girl.

Kofi met her one evening and tried to befriend her. It was not the creation of a relationship that mattered; it was the studying of girls and whether they were well-mannered or not. Since that day, anytime Kofi met her, he had many wonderful thoughts. Her name was Florence, and she said that Kofi was a real man. Their friendship grew, and they were both happy with what they had begun.

Once they met unexpectedly, and there was a long silence between them. After a while, she broke the silence, and Kofi did not accuse her for prior mistakes. Kofi should have accused her, but he did not, because he thought she was the loveliest person in his life.

Kofi spoke to her of his love for her and why they had become friends. He said, "I wonder if you can remember the very first time I met you. I fell in love with you as if I had known you quite long ago. You looked like the kind of girl who could be the best friend I wished to have. I guess this might not be your thought, too, but I believe we could find a way. I hope we can share ideas together."

Florence smiled and held him by the shoulder while saying, “I know you love me, and I love you too.” Kofi then left feeling very content; the sky was very bright.

They visited each other several times, and Kofi was very sad when he realized Florence was not faithful to him in many ways. She was very secretive and kept lots of things hidden from him. Kofi tried to find out as much as possible about her.

Kofi’s hope was that Florence would change and tell him something good one day. When Kofi was leaving for home one afternoon, he had no idea that it would be the last day seeing Florence; but when she came closer to kiss his hands, the thought came to mind.

Indeed, Kofi did not believe that was the last day, but after that, they lost contact. She relocated and never told Kofi where she could be found. Thus, they lost each other for a very long time. Kofi wanted to know a lot about her, and his investigation proved that Florence was not a good friend.

She had about four boyfriends who were all older and stronger than him in many ways. He also imagined his diplomatic talks could make a difference. Though Kofi had these good thoughts, Florence did not return from her unknown location, so it was impossible for Kofi to materialize his intentions.

The days came and went, but Florence was nowhere to be found. This made Kofi suffer from loneliness even more than the loss of beautiful Anita. He then decided to move on with his life by not thinking about it. He believed that the crown of his heart, his best friend, would be living somewhere he had never seen.

From then on, Anita became history. Kofi knew no other girl apart from Florence, and he did not intend to live his life for

girls. In light of this, he kept himself open for Ms. Right and hoped to succeed in his search for a loved one.

One Saturday, while sadness took the better part of Kofi, he jumped on a rented bicycle and started riding toward the local police station. In the middle of the road, he heard a sweeter voice than any bird that sang in the morning. He turned and looked in the direction of the voice. It was hard to believe what he saw. To Kofi's utter surprise, there stood Florence; Kofi's missing jewel was before him. He got closer, and they were quiet for a while before jumping to hug each other. Florence, while acknowledging her faults, accused Kofi of not paying her a visit on campus. Kofi coldly smiled and thought maybe she had forgotten to tell him where she lived.

Kofi said, "Florence, you have offended me because you left without telling me where to find you, and now you want to put the blame on me? Never! You owe me no apology, but you have yourself to blame. Don't let me lose my temper."

Florence felt sorry and held him firmly by the hand and shoulder. "I know I love you, and I will never willingly do anything to hurt you again. It is unfortunate."

Suddenly, Kofi was stricken with anger and told Florence, "I need to go." Florence was confused about why Kofi looked sad and asked him what was wrong. He did not answer, so Florence looked at him with eyes full of questions and guilt.

At long last, she pleaded for Kofi's forgiveness for all the mistakes she had made. She confessed she did not mean to hurt Kofi in any way. She then asked Kofi to visit her at the Keta secondary school. He agreed and left but could think of nothing else as she smiled so lovingly to bid him good-bye.

When the time came for Kofi to keep his promise, he headed for the campus and arrived two minutes early. A number of beautiful and ugly faces were there.

Everyone was busy. The Keta secondary school was the busiest campus Kofi had ever seen in the Volta region. From every direction, people were moving and wasting no time. Kofi loved the campus but hated most people for looking at him so strangely.

Their odd looks affected him so much that he could hardly describe how he found his way to the nearest garden seat. He sent for Florence, and she came in no time, looking very beautiful and smiling to signify her joy and pride at the sight of the blessed boy, Kofi. She comfortably sat beside him, and they had wonderful talks but only for a short time. They exchanged questions and answers about campus, home, the future, the world, and what it meant to each of them to meet again.

Kofi never had such a splendid experience with a girl in his life. Kofi's visit to the campus continued until he found out that Florence was still untruthful in all her answers to most of his personal questions.

His many visits to see Florence helped him learn a lot about girls and also helped him understand that some girls could lie in order to change the mind of anyone they are in a relationship with. Kofi had not believed that Florence could change so drastically. Florence was no longer the good friend Kofi knew, and this drove him away from the dark angel. She lived a life that Kofi knew would discredit her as a woman.

Asana was another young and beautiful girl who thought Kofi was the right person for her. She was right, but Kofi didn't agree. Kofi acquired much knowledge about girls through his relationship with Florence, and this made him think that girls really believed what they wished. Thus, Kofi did not encourage Asana's love for him. He stopped her while the love she tried planting between them was very new.

It was not true that Kofi did not have affection for her; he did, but it seemed this green light would result in a double standard. To avoid false relationships, Kofi joined the International Pen Friends Society of Ireland to find a true friend. This gave him the opportunity to meet many girls and boys from diverse cultures of the world. This also got rid of his loneliness. His busy lifestyle gave him the courage to recognize that he had the potential to do something to move the world. This thought grew stronger and induced him to devote most of his time to writing poetry and lyrics. He also spent some of his time developing his knowledge in tae kwon do for self-defense and fitness. He was a God-loving person and did not forget about his God in all his endeavours. Kofi also wrote many songs, and this gave him the opportunity to become a contract writer for Columbine Records Corporation.

However, Kofi lost this great opportunity because he was a poor boy, and there was no one to help. Below, one can read two of his songs that were selected from over one thousand songs from all over the world for a test session and master recording in 1997 and 1998.

The Language of Love

1

Caring everywhere you are,
Loving each and every one,
Restoring peace in the families,
Keeping their joys safe and sound—
That is how to speak the language
Of love in the world today...

Chorus:

I want to speak the language of love,
For we need love to survive.
I want to speak the language of love,
For love is the most infectious word.

2

There are wars in the world today,
Killing, stealing all the time.
These are not the love languages
We are yearning for throughout the world.
Endless love, self-sacrifice
Are the languages of love to speak.

Repeat chorus.

3

When we go back to the scriptures,
Jesus spoke the language of love.
He loved each and every one,
Healed the sick and raised the dead,
And beyond he shed his blood
And died that we may live.

Repeat chorus.

4

Brothers, sisters of the world,
Let us speak the language of love.
This would lead us to a victory.
There will be no more cry for peace.
With joy, peace, and prosperity,
Oh, let us speak the language of love.

Repeat chorus.

Paradise

1

Why all this hell in the world

On our planet Earth?

Those brothers hating sisters, sisters hating brothers

Everywhere.

Those fathers hating mothers, mothers hating fathers

Everywhere.

Oh, what a world, oh, what a world

We are living in.

Chorus:

Let us make a paradise.

Let us make a paradise,

A paradise.

Let us make a paradise.

Let us make a paradise,

A paradise!

2

To make a loving world a better place

For me and you,

We just have to say no to wars

And yes to peace.

So why do we still live in a mad, mad world

That we could change?

Repeat chorus.

3

I want to make a world. Help me make a world,
A wonderland,
Where brothers clutch sisters, and sisters hold brothers
Everywhere.
Where mothers love fathers, and fathers love mothers
Everywhere.
Oh, that is the world I want to make
For everyone.

Repeat chorus.

Those were Kofi's lovely songs that were refused justice for financial reasons.

Kofi's good old friend Papa grew older and was stricken by diabetes. Kofi loved him and stayed to help and do everything he wanted him to do, because he was the most caring person in Kofi's life. Kofi said, "I must forever love him, because I cannot thank him enough for his great love for me."

In most cases, Kofi thought about life as his widest source of knowledge and power, but he also realized that life could be difficult sometimes. He felt some sort of comfort within every situation, however wretched, because God was always there and not as far away as we often think. Kofi had no good understanding of life at the time, and his biography being read today lies like dust and ashes on his heart.

There was one friend who Kofi cared so much about. Kofi mentioned her name as Naomi at the later part of chapter 1, and Kofi said he loved her because she gave him hope and power at a time when there was no one else. Naomi really loved him and

had called him on the telephone all the way from the Netherlands several times. They loved each other, but their relationship turned sour because of the misunderstanding relating to Kofi's actual date of birth. Naomi thought Kofi was deceitful. It was difficult for Naomi, a true African descendant, to comprehend why someone wouldn't know his actual date of birth. In sub-Saharan Africa, life is a difficult question.

He said, "I know Rome was not built in a day, yet Rome once built can only to Rome be compared. I will continue to learn much about life as far as I can go. I wish I was not born, but all the same; the baby of yesterday has now become a man."

Chapter 7

TWO WEEKS OF BLINDNESS

Negative thoughts ruled his life, so he decided to give himself to Christ all the more. Kofi put his plans into action and became a good member of the Peace and Love Charismatic Prayer Group of Dzelukope.

In the presence of God, all that was found was happiness, and this made Kofi a new man. Kofi assured me of his closeness to God and his unfailing love for him. Kofi was growing, and it was sometimes very hard to separate himself from the opposite sex.

The wish for a sense of belonging was overwhelming. There were a great number of temptations, and only true men of Kofi's caliber were fit to win the battle. Yes, only those who stood by the Lord's side were strong enough to overcome the moral vices.

Kofi was, and is still, on the Lord's side, and he said that knowledge lies in the spirit of God. Kofi's greatest expectation was to move the world. "I wanted to change the world," he said.

Yes, that was his dream, because he loved the world. He often went to the church to pray when his friends were going to discos and engaging in dangerous lifestyles. He generally did not trust girls and did not necessarily keep company with them, but most of them liked him. Whenever he went places with his friends, everybody liked him for his personality; he was a gentleman. He was fond of making jokes with girls, and they seemed to like his jokes very much.

Naturally, his affection for other young people endeared him to the girls and boys, but in some cases, his friends hated others for loving him. Kofi said that those who preferred the

grown ones to the young ones were doing so because they didn't know that adults were more dangerous.

His friends Kwabla, Kwesi, and Koklotsu were considered very wonderful gifts from God. They shared ideas together and learned from each other every day. The only difference was that they all had girlfriends, and Kofi did not. This fuelled their suspicions that Kofi had a girlfriend who he kept secret from them whenever he went out alone. They were wrong and never believed Kofi. But they were his friends, and he never lied to them.

The first week of July 1997 was an unforgettable week for Kofi. It was a week he promised to remember even after he died. The fearful sights and experiences he had will always remain fresh in his memory, and the chill that ran down his spine was great. It all started when Kofi was going to witness a speech and prize-giving day at the Keta secondary school.

Kofi first went to Kwabla's house before continuing to the venue. Kwabla was very happy, and Kofi wondered why, because Kwabla was not always so cheerful. Kofi had become Kwabla's friend when his brother Steven left for Accra to continue his education. The old saying holds that true friends are like diamonds—not easy to find and hard to break. When Kofi asked why Kwabla was so happy, he smiled and answered that it was because of Kofi's presence. Kofi then pleaded with him to accompany him to the Keta secondary school, but he gave a lot of excuses.

Kofi left alone. As he was leaving, Kwabla teased that Kofi looked like an angel, and no woman on earth could love him. Kofi was surprised and left with a smile. On his way, Kofi met a lot of people, both males and females, all heading to different places.

When Kofi was close to the school, a frightening thing happened. He saw a very beautiful woman about 150 meters away. Because of her fairer complexion and beauty, Kofi was staring at her as he got closer. Though it was really happening, it was all like a dream. The model-like lady disappeared before Kofi's eyes.

This was in broad daylight and was one of the unbelievable things that happened in Kofi's world. He had just turned to look at the other side of the road as he heard a voice that called his name, and the lady disappeared. The last things he remembered were sweet fragrances in the air and a strong chill running down his entire body. Everything in the world was lost in that moment. The event was almost over before he arrived, so he simply stood somewhere for a while and then decided to return home. On his way home, his eyes became itchy, but he could not imagine what the cause was. The itchiness continued and was getting more painful with every second. Soon, he was very restless, because he could not see.

After a few days, his sight became so bad that he had to cover his head with a piece of cloth before going out in the sun. Everything he saw was blurred. To avoid many questions, Kofi kept himself in the house, and he remained blind. This was hard, but there was no way to escape this bitter experience. The next day, his mother and his eldest brother led him to the hospital.

Kofi was treated well at the hospital but could not see well after he returned. He could only recall how he was missing his steps and how his elder brother, JB, escorted him to the house. Until he was dashing his feet against the steps at their gate, Kofi was not aware that they had reached home, because both of his eyes were covered. In the house, Kofi was sad and speechless, and he ate very little because there was no pleasure in eating something he could not see.

One windy morning, which was a Friday at about one in the morning, Kofi had a guest from the spiritual world. His eyes were covered, but when it came to the unexpected, he had the sharpest of all eyes.

On their veranda were four angelic ladies of great beauty. The most attractive one among them came close to Kofi's bed. He wished to run his fingers through her black, flowing hair. Her big hazel eyes; long eyelashes; pointed nose; thin, sexy lips; straight and naturally ringed neck; and slender body were extraordinary. He thought she might be a mermaid.

She opened her eyes wide and was coming to him. Kofi loved those eyes because they were everything a man was looking for. Kofi was looking at her strangely but was never afraid. Standing right beside his bed, she waited for a while and smiled at him. Her teeth were like shattered glass or the finest diamonds, and her lips and tongue were scarlet. He was speechless, but he was murmuring. She looked at him gaily and asked, "Kofi, what do you want in this world? Do you love me?"

Kofi did not answer. He was very surprised that she knew his name. She continued to talk: "I could give you everything you want in this life if only you love me." She repeated her statement. "I could give you everything you want in this life if only you love me."

He was puzzled at her delectable beauty and what could cause a wonderful thing like her to fall for a poor, wretched, little thing like him. She said to him, "I wish for a kiss from you. Can I give you just one kiss?"

Kofi was totally mute, and she bent toward him for a kiss. Her lips were coming straight to his, and he was swallowing sweet saliva while forgetting that he was entirely in the wonderland. In a split second, the love of God lifted him beyond

the charming powers of the devil, and Kofi's chained lips shouted, "Jesus!"

At the name of Jesus, the strange beauty was thrown out of the room, and the three others on Kofi's veranda found themselves on the floor. When Kofi realized the name of Jesus was the weapon that was scaring them away, he kept mentioning the holy name at the top of his voice until the dark angel disappeared into the night.

During Kofi's temporary blindness, a few people were so kind, and he very much appreciated their love for him. He described it as his two weeks of blindness. Having received the necessary treatments, Kofi gained his sight back but later suffered sight and reading problems. He couldn't read for long hours anymore.

When he went to the hospital for a check-up, he was prescribed many expensive medicines. They were too expensive for his mother to buy. This made him remember his father, who he described as a man of many minds who had left for the ancestral city, a man known for his responsibility.

Any time of hardship or tragedy is when you know your loved ones and those who do not love you. He thought that his Aunt Nunana and Uncle Ken, both abroad in Europe, would be able to help him with the medicines alone, but he was absolutely incorrect. He wrote more than three letters to each of them explaining what was actually going wrong with his eyes and the medicines prescribed to cure him, but he received no reply, even though he stressed how urgently he needed their help.

He also sent copies of the prescriptions he had, but neither of them replied to let him know whether he or she was in a position to help him. They kept silent while the young boy was going blind day after day.

Little Kofi did not complain too much, but it hurt because two people he loved ignored him at the time he needed them most.

This made Kofi think, and miss his father more. Kofi's relatives' unkindness made him feel that God was so far away, because his uncle and aunt were as close to him as the representation of God. He concluded that it was hard to believe God was close, because if the representations of God he could see here on earth were not as loving as possible, then God must also be far away.

"I am the Lord. I change not; therefore you sons of David are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6). Kofi recollected this phrase from the scriptures, and in his bedroom, he knelt and prayed with faith that what was impossible for humanity was very possible for God, the father of the universe.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for every challenge in my life.
Have mercy on me, a miserable sinner,
For you are the son of God.
You are the son of man, and
I know you are the answer to all my questions.
I know you are the solution to all my problems.
You are the fulfillment of all my fondest wishes,
The hope of all people of all ages.
Save me that my lips shall flip open
To praise the father in heaven ceaselessly.
Through you, our Lord Jesus Christ,
I pray with all my thanksgiving.
Amen.

When Kofi was done with his prayers, he immediately recalled his maternal uncle residing in Accra, the capital city of

Ghana. He quickly wrote a letter about his plight and all that he needed. When the uncle received it, he called on the phone and ordered Kofi to come for the medicines. Counting on God and his uncle's call, he went, and his uncle bought all the medicines for him and did not even want him to see the receipts.

His uncle was then the kindest man on earth, and Kofi's problem was soon solved. Unfortunately, it was necessary to wear ophthalmic lenses to see since he had not taken the medicines at the right time.

When Kofi completed his second-cycle education, he failed his senior secondary-certificate examination twice. He later mustered the courage and privately studied on his own and passed his general certificate of education.

Kofi said, "I had to study in my bedroom because I simply could not afford the tuition fees for the private classes that were being organized."

He started seeking employment for money to help his mother and his younger brothers and to help him further his education. He was also studying by distance learning from the British College of Professional Management in the United Kingdom, thanks to his dear friend Naomi. She encouraged him, telling him that education was the only key to the greatest opportunities.

Naomi had long deserted Kofi as a friend because she was hurt and thought that Kofi was hiding something from her. She once insulted Kofi by calling him crazy for calling her on the telephone late at night.

Kofi confessed, "I knew she loved me, but she hates me now because of one of my dark mysteries of life. I forgave and love her as my sister forever, and that is why I kept her good advice on education with me. Any good academic activities I

embarked on were to make Naomi happy. Unfortunately, she was never there to celebrate with me.”

Chapter 8

THE VERDICT OF DISCRIMINATION

Kofi's father told him that the missionaries came to Africa with the word of God. He was not narrating these tales to disprove what his father had said; however, to the best of his knowledge, they did not only come with the word of God. They also came to sacrifice themselves for Africans through every effort to help and to get the best they could from the Dark Continent. Three people to whom Ghanaians and other Africans—especially the suburb of Keta, Dzelukope, in the Volta region—owe great compliments are Rev. Fr. JC, popularly known as Aguda, and his benefactors, Mr. W. Zelta (German) and Mr. Hullem (Dutch). For charitable purposes only, these benefactors supported Aguda to help Kofi's town in many ways.

Aguda became the first person to establish an optical firm in Dzelukope that served people from all over the country and also from Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and many more places. This helped eliminate most sight and reading difficulties in the east coast of Keta, where Kofi lived, and beyond. Kofi spent a few months with them and soon discovered they were highly discriminatory.

As Kofi was working with the organization, he acquired a great deal of knowledge. However, he understood that staff is employed for an assigned task, which should be done under agreement and not only by those who are forced to do all the unpleasant work.

He argued that his application did not say that he applied for the post of a layman, and therefore, he should be treated as he was due. He thought that even if he was not treated well, he

must at least be treated as a staff member. This was his hope, but as was often the case, things went in the opposite direction.

In cases of emergency, Kofi knew he could do a lot to help. He sometimes wondered whether he was regarded as a general hand or as a staff member. He never had answers until he left that unpredictable workplace. His early days there were the happiest in his life, because he met new people.

As a new person himself, he had no idea what was actually going on in all the departments until the manager introduced him to other colleagues. He first worked at two jobs, as a lens analyst and as a frame selector for other branches of the organization.

His main roles involved the analytical arrangement of lenses, from the lowest number to zero and from zero to the highest. He was happy with his job, and his manager and other colleagues were also pleased with him. So it was quite surprising when they severely criticized him. Unlike a staff member, Kofi had to sweep the entire place. He confessed that this was not difficult, but his wages should have been revised accordingly. They left every kind of work related to sanitation in his hands.

Before performing his main role as a staff member, he found that his clothing was often soaked in his own sweat. Sometimes, one could see him dozing while sitting at his desk, because he was always very tired and was responsible for anything anyone hated doing. Kofi did not like to see others talking about him, and their lifestyles puzzled him. He often called them crazy.

The replacement of wastewater from the grinding machines with freshwater was a hated job, but this was something only staff could do. Kofi didn't care if he did it; what mattered was how he was treated while he continued to do this alongside his

official roles. All these unwanted tasks were left to him. This was one of the dirtiest tasks, which he hated but had to do over and over again.

One fateful day, while he was changing the waste-water, a piece of broken glass in the poisonous water cut the middle finger of his left hand. The wound was infected and caused many troubles, but no one cared, because it was Kofi. Throughout his time as a worker there, he expressed his great dissatisfaction because the charity was a home of serious discrimination, where he was mercilessly cheated and maltreated.

Kofi should have left the organization, but for economic reasons, he was unable to do so. He did many dirty jobs no one loved to do, and he was sure he would leave the charity home should the bad management system persist. Even in front of their customers, Kofi was treated with hostility.

They were capable of barking any abusive language at him, and this made him realize how underappreciated he was. He also realized the degree of discrimination and its bad effects on the average worker. He counted such practices as undesirable and very contrary to the general humanitarian themes of the office.

Good customers did not only have pity on him; they sometimes gave him money for performing his many roles. He very much appreciated all their kind gestures. Their great love strengthened him to carry on. No one cared to know how well he could do his job. Their disregard reminded him that every person is as useful as God made him or her, but humanity is always seeking ways to downgrade its fellow human beings.

Because his manager did not have enough time, Kofi had the poorest job orientation. Any question about his role as staff or a new employee was only responded to with a shout, which discouraged him. It was better for him not to ask, because they

often just gave him their unwanted tasks, especially at lunchtime. Kofi thought it would be the best place to work; unfortunately, he was wrong.

He now regretted his appointment, and he now counted those who were not offered employment very lucky. He was sad every day. Kofi said, “They are like slave drivers. I will forever call them the evil rulers of ancient Rome.”

Chapter 9

THE UNWANTED

No matter what's happening in life, everyone should be treated with care and respect. Unfortunately, that was not the case at Kofi's workplace. Life was as opposite as the left hand is to the right. Kofi, as the most unwanted worker within the organization, did not understand this attitude. He believed himself to be a true image of God and therefore hoped to be treated as fairly as everyone else.

All his colleagues thought because Kofi was a new employee, he had no right to speak. They became annoyed any time he tried to complain. They thought whatever they said was correct. In Kofi's view, only people with little knowledge cherish the practice of autocracy. "Common sense may be very common but may not necessarily apply to anybody or to the common people," he said. Kofi did his best at the workplace and told them all they deserved to know. Often he was denied the right to learn. They always expected him to stay far away from them, but that was very unpleasant, as they were all colleagues.

Some even asked why he was always around them, and his answers were never good enough. Their insolence caused him to wonder if he was expected to share his life with some other colleagues living somewhere unknown or with wild animals in the bush.

He was not pleased with their behavior, and his thoughts were always angry. He could hardly believe his sad experience with the little organization. They only loved him when he was far away from them, but as soon as he got closer to them, they hated every part of him.

Everybody seemed to have forgotten about the other people in the world, because those people never wanted to own the whole world and lose their own souls. Kofi never had answers to these questions, and he discovered that man is mysterious. He said the deep sea was so shallow compared to man's thinking and negative intentions.

Unless his service was needed, they had no regard for him. Kofi had no prior intentions to abandon his work, but because of the undesirable nature, he decided to quit as early as possible to further his education. He was always as tired as the most highly paid employee in the world and did not have enough time to study anything else.

For a time, his entire task in the container where he was working was done, and he had to move to other departments to acquire more knowledge on the job. It was rather unfortunate when he was learning how to remove used lenses from frames and how to cut new models for them, because he often impaled his hand with the little, sharp screwdrivers.

No one cared to show him sympathy. He was often puzzled by the kind of people they were and the stuff they were made of. The unfriendly and heart-piercing expressions were so great, but he suffered it all.

A few months after Kofi's employment, a colleague had a motor accident and died. He had no idea that it would have any negative effect on him, but it did. New tasks were added to his formal roles. He then had to analyze in the containers, help in the optical laboratories, measure lenses on the Humphrey instruments, and help in the computer and repair centers.

Kofi was very sad to mention that his efforts were often not appreciated, though he did his best and was very hardworking. Being a man, he did accept everything in good faith. Indeed, when Kofi recollected the large dirty cartons he often carried on

his head, heavily sweating and finding his way through a number of customers, he thought that he looked like the most unwanted and humiliated staff to all those men and women from different regions of his country and beyond.

Chapter 10 WHY I HATE VOEDZI

Let the kind men walk with me, for the lanky Voedzi was too lean and had an angry look; such men are dangerous.—The Author

By the grace of God, Kofi hardly ever fell sick, despite the hardships; it was very likely he would have gotten sick, had it not been for the saving grace of God. God had a different plan for his life, and Kofi always looked at every bad thing with good hope. Working with colleagues, he thought that they had to be very kind to each other, but this was not the culture of the organization.

Their manager added other tasks to Kofi's roles by ordering him to start his new work in the general stores. He abided by his manager's orders but really hated the position, because the conditions of work proved too harsh for the little wage he earned.

In the stores, Kofi had to work while standing. He distributed and analyzed plain and other lens types by the thousands. From his former position to the new one, he had no salary increase, and he perceived this as a great cheat. The manager and his team ought to have thought of his salary, but they ignored the little boy about everything. His biggest hope was to earn a little more, but at his workplace, new positions never meant new salaries.

His early days in the stores led to many experiences, and working conditions were a little more stable. Kwabla's employment did reduce Kofi's duties, and Kofi was pleased to teach him almost everything he knew about the field. That

meant that Kofi would not do everything alone. The only problem with Kwabla was that he was the laziest friend Kofi had ever had. He was always fond of looking for another way and hesitating whenever there was something that had to be done. Kofi hated the word *lazy* and did not like lazy friends.

Constantly standing while working for long hours was the most difficult part of his job. The heat in the room itself was devastating, and most colleagues, as well as his director, never stayed with him long because they could not stand the heat. Many times, Kofi had to come to work earlier than usual, and this led to overtime without pay.

He also had many experiences with ghosts in the stores and could hardly believe that there were no such things as ghosts. Great were the things that transpired in the stores; packed things would be unpacked the next morning, and yet every parcel was often intact. Voedzi also met him unexpectedly one day and asked him if he knew about what was happening.

In this case, Voedzi was the one who helped Kofi pack the things the previous day after they had been brought in from Accra. Kofi smiled and thought that it was Voedzi's turn to experience something.

It was not long before Kofi's director left for his medical treatment abroad that he announced vacancies for two positions. Kofi was then working with him and took this opportunity to speak to his director in favour of Kwabla, because he considered him his best friend since his elder brother Steven had left for Accra. Kofi's director then told his manager about Kwabla, and then he inquired further about him. Kofi's comments were positive enough and had convinced them that Kwabla was qualified for the job.

At the close of work, Kofi was given a letter of appointment to be delivered to Kwabla. Little did he know that in a few

months to come, his so-called friend would be the source of his troubles. Kwabla came, and for a while, they existed happily as colleagues and brothers. Kwabla's employment marked the director's departure for his medical treatment abroad. Kwabla was diagnosed as an asthmatic patient and could never carry out heavy duties such as those Kofi had already been doing.

He was then taught lens measuring on the computer, and that was all he loved to do. Dust was not good for his health, so he often swept a smaller portion and did less of the necessary tasks Kofi had been doing long before he was employed. In all fairness, Kofi did not assign any unwanted tasks to Kwabla, because he always tried to do what was right.

Despite the fact that Kofi was the only person working in the general stores, he was again assigned to work with a colleague in the computer and engineering department. There were difficult tasks in the new department, but the engineer who was controlling the department treated him well.

His new work involved sandpapering old grinding machine spare parts for repairs and carrying the heavy machines from one place to another. These tasks were tedious and very dirty, but Kofi had no complaints. Kofi ought to have hated the job for the little wage, but the chief engineer was so inspiring. He treated him with absolute kindness. The two became very close friends for many reasons, and Kofi called him Scholar.

Kofi should have chosen to remain with the engineering department, yet there were still some tasks in the stores. Kofi returned to the stores after his responsibility in the engineering department was over. No one loves to be hated or stigmatized, but Kofi's life was like that; he seemed to have experienced only the bad and unwanted parts of this job. Lunchtime was meant for rest and refreshment, and it didn't matter how one spent it. Kofi called it private time.

One dark afternoon, after Kofi's tedious tasks in the computer department, he was very tired but could not leave without Kwabla for recess. He sat and waited for Kwabla in the repair centre. Kofi was there for a while when Voedzi entered.

At the sight of Kofi, he shouted furiously and kicked him out of the office; he did it in a way that the young man felt unwanted, disgraced, and like nothing in front of the world. Kofi instantly resented his harsh language and his animalistic behavior but had not reacted because of the many customers standing around. From that day, the idea of seeing him or getting closer to him was completely erased from his mind.

Immediately, Kofi left. Many accused Voedzi of misconduct toward Kofi, and he realized his mistake. The next day, he tried making Kofi happy, but the young boy did not respond. Kofi was not happy with him, and Voedzi knew very well how he had offended him and why his little words were not enough to melt Kofi's heart.

Kofi tried his best never to forgive him. On the contrary, God's principles of love, peace, and forgiveness compelled him to pardon but never to be affectionate toward him anymore. Voedzi was always finding means to make the young boy happy, but he never knew how much Kofi hated him for those jokes.

One morning, Voedzi surprised Kofi with new clothes. Even though Kofi loved the present, he never showed any sign of happiness in his presence. His face remained pale and dull. He was cold to Voedzi in any way he could be. When he recalled his wickedness and the wickedness of others at the workplace, Kofi felt angrier and believed everyone was a thorn in his flesh. When Voedzi left, Kofi took the present and was very happy with it. This made his forgiveness complete toward the bully.

Facing rough times in the stores, Kofi saw his woes continue. He never believed there could be a more tedious job in the stores. There were many hard tasks. Sometimes, Kofi would be called to the office at six in the morning even though regular work hours began at nine.

Kofi also disclosed that when his friend Kwabla was employed, an amount of 100,000 cedis went missing at the place Kwabla was assigned to clean. He denied knowledge of anything about the lost money, but when Kofi was there, no such thing ever happened. Many other strange things transpired, and to Kofi, such issues were difficult to understand.

The job in the stores was very tedious in nature, but his boss only looked to him to open heavy parcels. Consequently, a new wristwatch his elder brother bought for him was badly damaged. He also had a severe cut on the forefinger of his left hand. His director was the one who noticed the scar first and felt very sorry for him. He then promised him a new watch but later gave him one from an old Belgian woman. Kofi remained very grateful regardless.

The next day in the stores, Kofi had good news. He brought a large parcel to his boss. He had opened it and found a good computer monitor of the latest brand—Novita.

His boss was so excited and ordered him to send it upstairs where he lived. He also promised Kofi that he was going to give it to him and add a new system unit to the monitor for him.

That was the best news Kofi had heard the whole week, and he was very much waiting for that day when he would set eyes on the sweet gift.

Chapter 11 THE WINNER

In all your ways remain positive. Remember that your veins are millions, but your heart is one. Do not love an individual with all your heart; rather, love the nations. For the nation is made of millions of individuals and your heart millions of veins. Sometimes, the individual you fondly love might be the cause of your death and the destruction of your home. A nation could never be so dangerous, for if one hates you within a nation, another loves you, and you are never lost. —The author

In the world around him, little Kofi considered everybody to be a winner. God is a winner through the creation of the world and everything within.

If from the inception of our nine-month journey before birth, God declares, “I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11), then we are winners indeed.

You have already won the battle into the world, a place for winners and not losers. If you agree with me, what could be so strong to prove little Kofi a loser while living in the world of winners? He is a winner and, above all, the image of God, the winner of the world.

As Kofi regarded all people as the image of God, he gave due respect to all, even to the least. He understood the need for equal rights for this world to be a better place.

He therefore disliked people who discriminated, and he called them small-minded. Be you a king or a governor, to little Kofi, if you show favoritisms, you are inhumane. He believed

that only with equality and great humanitarian skills could a man rule his neighbour—never with inhumanity or racism.

Kofi did not confess that all his colleagues were hostile and that they had treated him with unfriendliness. He learned a great deal from them, and the kind of hostility he had experienced was multi-layered and had no actual definition in his life.

Kofi's work continued in the stores among thousands of lenses, and he never had delight anytime he was at work. His condensed responsibilities and longer hours of working under the most undesirable conditions did not earn him a penny more than his usual wages.

On the other hand, he was unsure that his director would keep his promise to give him a personal computer. Kofi was the happiest of all men when his director sent for him and gave him a new personal computer on March 3, 1999. His boss taught him how to turn it on and off.

Then Kwabla was jealous. One morning, he went and asked their director for a sewing machine, and he told him to go and make his choice from the store where Kofi was working. He also told Kwabla to send some of the machines upstairs to his apartment for other workers who might also have been willing to take some of the sewing machines home.

While Kwabla was making his selection, he opened all the well-packaged sewing machines in order to choose a good brand. There were some pieces of old women's clothing stuffed in each parcel. Most of these were left in the stores, and Kofi kept them in an open box for his director's attention. The rest of the clothes remained in the parcels sent to the director's apartment. About two hours later, Kofi's boss returned and was very angry because of the opened sewing machines. He cried out his name, and Kofi quickly ran to him.

He asked him with great anger, “Who opened these parcels?” Kofi confirmed to him that it was Kwabla. Kofi’s boss called Kwabla and was very upset with him. The man was so angry that their manager had to intervene in order to apologize.

Kofi was very sorry for everything, but why should his boss be angry with him when the boss was the actual person who ordered Kwabla to do those things? This thought was very scary to Kofi, and he started to suspect some danger. Nothing got lost, and Kofi would not lie for his own friend for something he did not do. But why was his boss angry? In the evening, Kofi took Kwabla to their director’s place to apologize as Voedzi advised. He apologized that evening.

Their boss did not accept his words; he only ordered him to come another time because he was entertaining a visitor. When returning home, Kwabla told Kofi that he would never go to their boss again, because he had already pleaded for forgiveness.

Kofi never knew Kwabla had made up his mind to go and lie against him. Early the next morning, he went to their boss and lied that he only opened two of the parcels and that Kofi knew everything about the rest of the parcels that were opened. He then returned to Kofi’s house to tell him of the lie he told their boss.

Poor Kofi. What could he do then? Kofi confronted him for lying, but he confessed it was their manager who told him to tell such a lie. Kofi did not believe his ears. How could a credible manager have such involvement in an issue he did not understand? With great anger, Kofi further confronted his friend, but he was unable to answer and left with shame as Kofi angrily turned away and left the door ajar.

Kofi did not bathe that morning; he only washed his hair and face before dressing. He ran to his manager’s house and was told he had left for town. He quickly proceeded to his director’s

place to talk things over with him, but he stopped him on the way and immediately confronted him with Kwabla's vindictive story.

From there, he led Kofi into the stores and started asking him strange and surprising questions, and Kofi realized his boss did not trust him again. The poor boy gave him every piece of information he needed, but he was never satisfied. His mind was bubbling with suspicion against the little boy because of the wrong information he heard from Kwabla.

That was the point when Kofi began hating his deceitful friend. He was the only friend Kofi had, but then he was reminded that the only way to have a true friend is to be one yourself. Their boss did not investigate; he accepted Kwabla's lies and did bad things with the information. He suspended Kofi for a month.

Kofi grieved. His loyalty was unjustifiably questioned, and he vowed never again to work with a man who judges blindly after hearing lies in Kofi's absence. He also felt sad and cheated for working for a wage against the social-welfare laws of his country. Above all, he felt sad for being judged with words heard in his absence and from a poisonous liar—that devil of a friend.

He no longer understood the meaning of life; his dearest friend, Naomi, had deserted him a few days before, and now it was Kwabla. He decided to commit suicide. He reached out to pick up a container he was certain contained some poison, but it was entirely empty. With great disappointment, he fell on his bed with hopes of meeting his death soon.

In a short while, deep sleep came over him, and when he woke up, the thought of suicide was completely out of his mind. He swore never to take his precious life because of what two or more ignorant people did. The bad idea was due to the anger

that gripped him for all the wrongs against him. Since Kofi did not meet his death as he thought, he later told his manager what Kwabla said.

The manager did not take action against Kwabla or the lie. Life then took a turn, and Kofi started to suspect his manager of having a hand in what was going on. He was left in the middle, as if his faith hung between the devil and the deep-blue sea. Yes, it pays to know your friends better because the price of a wrong friendship can be endless troubles. If you want to go to bat for a friend, you are free to do so, but make sure you are right.

Kofi was also angry because Kwabla was not accused of any wrongdoing; he was the man of all men at the time. If liars could be free and gain so much support from their superiors, then the world still has much to learn, little Kofi suggested.

The very morning that Kofi was suspended, he went to Kwabla's house to tell his mother what he did. Kwabla's mother said he did not tell her the same story Kofi was telling. He lied to his mother about a severe headache that caused him to fall and resulted in the destruction of a lot of expensive lenses at the workplace.

He did not tell his mother what happened and how he lied about his friend. It was Kofi who revealed everything. How then could such a liar be accepted in any way? Thereafter, Kofi's life seemed a bad dream, but with Christ in the vessel, he felt assured he would smile at the storm.

Chapter 12

JOACHIM

Mind you, evil begets evil, and love begets love. Good begets good, and that is why life is free and priceless but needs to be lived as due. For life once lived can only to life be compared. —The Author

The great harm Kwabla caused in Kofi's life made Kofi want revenge, but he was very much discouraged when he remembered his father's name—Joachim, a name that caused him to wait upon the Lord. The name Joachim means "the Lord will judge." Kofi knew that was the end of his malice, remembering what the Lord said on the cross of Calvary: "It is finished." That ended everything.

On April 8, 1999, Dr. K'Deep, Kofi's friend, urged him to go in for his post one month and two days after he was suspended. Kofi told him he did not want to work again but wanted to continue his education, but Dr. K'Deep pleaded with him.

He convinced Kofi that he knew he was not part of what had happened and that if he took back his post, he could then talk to his boss, and he would be trusted again. Dr. K'Deep was mature and about fifty years of age, but Kofi did not listen to him at first. He said many things to convince him, and Kofi finally agreed to his advice. Kofi had no dreams of working again, but in order to avoid ignoring Dr. K'Deep, he decided to go in for the post and resign after a month.

Dr. K'Deep also instructed him to apologize to his boss, but Kofi expressed regret that he could never go in to plead while knowing very well how right he was. He further explained how

impossible it was for him to apologize for a crime he did not commit. Kofi reminded Dr. K'Deep that only the blameworthy should apologize and never the blameless. Dr. K'Deep agreed with him, and Kofi went to his boss again.

Kofi thought his director and colleagues would be very happy to see him after a month's suspension. When he arrived, everyone was excited to see him, but Kwabla could not look him in the face. He was ashamed and did not know what to do because all his colleagues turned to him with pale faces. Kofi saluted everyone and climbed up the stairs to his director's office. When he arrived, the director looked at him coldly, unlike those wonderful colleagues he had just seen. His sad looks convinced Kofi to quit the little organization with big troubles. At that moment, Kofi regarded his previous love for Kwabla as a great mistake.

Kofi was happy that God could help him do anything he wanted to do, because he knew everything hidden to great men like his director. He also prayed that all those who had the strength to help him should never have their peace until they had done so. First, his director offered him a seat, and Kofi thought he was going to welcome him with some good news.

The director said he would like Kofi to resume his position, but only if Kofi would return the great gift he had received. Kofi resented this, and before the director had finished his tale, Kofi was already on his way. This alerted Kofi that the man hated him for the crimes of others even more than he thought.

Kofi, in the long run, forgave Kwabla, but he was no longer his friend. Since Kwabla had lied about him, Kofi knew his faults and never entered his house again. Only Kwabla's mother went to Kofi's mother to ask forgiveness for what her son had done.

It was not long afterward that Kwabla was caught red-handed with stolen items. Kofi did not have the pleasure of saying anything to discredit him, but some of the goods were found in his pocket and later in his room, where a whole lot of related goods from the organization were found. That was when Kofi's director should have corrected his mistakes. Kofi did not believe his former friend could be so dangerous, but that was what he proved himself to be.

Kwabla was sacked for stealing and for his deceitful behavior against other colleagues. Did Kofi's director have the right to judge Kofi with words heard in his absence from a liar and a thief? Kofi had not believed the warning of their security officer, Mr. Wagadri, that they must be very careful, because whatever he would tell their boss would be considered fact. He repeated his disbelief until his so-called friend deceived the poor septuagenarian, only to betray his trust in Kofi and provoke his anger.

The truth later came to light that when Kwabla was caught red-handed for stealing goods belonging to the firm; he falsely mentioned a few other colleagues and stressed that they were the people who sent him to steal. When Voedzi called all those mentioned during the investigation, Kwabla completely denied that everyone was present. That was when they discovered the great hypocrisy he had demonstrated against Kofi. However, at first, everyone was puzzled and not sure of what conclusion to draw.

The manager sacked him for lying and stealing, and the others he lied about were set free. "Out of ignorance shall my people perish" (Hosea 4:6). This quotation from the scriptures could now apply to little Kofi. If his boss had known that Kwabla was falsely testifying against him, he would not have

listened to him. The director liked Kofi very much but needed to be patient with the young boy.

He had suspended Kofi out of total ignorance, but Kwabla's disgraceful days allowed Kofi's boss to have his best days, to correct his mistakes and great malice against the poor but faithful Kofi. Kwabla might have been sorry, but to Kofi, once gone is gone forever.

His great belief was that once everything was done, be it good or bad, the Lord would judge everyone accordingly. His life, however, offered the lesson of never judging a person with words heard in his or her absence. When the devil closed the door, God opened the window for the righteous, but to the unjust, the door, once closed, will remain closed forever.

Kofi later continued his education and left the troublesome organization for good. His boss might have finally understood what happened, because he was always saluting Kofi and even offering him peace during holy mass. Where was Kwabla? No one knew his whereabouts after he was caught and expelled for his fraudulence.

Why, then, should life be this way? And if this was the best life could be, then what does the future hold? Kofi said, "I am not afraid of those who can kill just my body, but it is rather wiser to fear him who has the power to destroy both the body and the soul. That is one thing all workers of evil fail to know."

Kofi also said, "Now that I am far from them, they have started loving me once more, but I know some of them were only acting as lovers. I have nothing to do with any of them. I want to love the world, and I want to serve the world because the evil that men do will always live after them."

"Please help. I want to spend my heaven on earth doing good. I want to bring smiles to the faint faces of those children drowned in the valley of tears in the war-torn cities of the

world.” Oh, just read a copy of this book, and you will have started to love someone.

Words from the Author

Tears of My Life is a true story that conveys a message of hope to a world that is already dominated by conflict and hatred, and it highlights the factual challenges that have inflicted bitter grievances on little children in many parts of the world. The author reiterates how Kofi, amid unfavorable difficulties, reclaims his lost hopes and ambitions in life.

Even through the regular media bombardment of extremely perturbing figures of human suffering and despite massive international intervention, poverty continues to dehumanize and inflict unthinkable deprivation on millions globally today. This always causes me to reflect on my childhood experiences and ignites my enthusiasm to share the little I have with the suffering majority of children around the globe and encourage them to carry on.

I am now a banker who lives an average life above the poverty line, but I am constantly reminded of my own personal struggle to make it this far. I am a product of voluntary child labour caused by the death of my father when I was fifteen. To survive the 1983 bush fires that caused catastrophic food shortages in Ghana, I fought in endless queues, waiting for a ration of free yellow corn, powdered milk, wheat, and sugar donated by the Western world. This barely mitigated the hunger, let alone dented the profound poverty surrounding me.

Determined to get an education, I had labored during my childhood. I had to become a fisherman, hawker, sand-winner, and minor road-construction labourer to stay in school. In retrospect, I realize that my interest in poverty alleviation and support for the suffering children dates back to those extremely difficult days. My life experiences, together with the media

images of suffering, especially among my compatriot Africans, quietly but persistently inform my drive to contribute my quota to poverty-alleviation projects.

I shall investigate the impact of existing poverty-alleviation programs in sub-Saharan Africa with a special interest in the effectiveness of existing strategies for regional economic development. I want to discover if there is any economic profitability of adopted poverty-alleviation strategies in the region and how much monetary independence has resulted from the available strategies.

Poverty, being a global phenomenon, makes the United Nations' trusted affiliates, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and World Food Programme, my favourite choices to assist the suffering children around the globe. Since I had no such opportunities, I hope the publication of this motivational book will support their endeavours. I have always adored their activities, which strongly focus on minimizing global human deprivation.

About the Author

Philip Philips Gbormittah is a Banker, Author, and family man. He has over a decade's experience in banking, and has at least two books to his credit.

Philip is recipient of great awards including Overall Best FLA (frontline associate) for the southern zone; International Award of Excellence, and a lot more.

He is a versatile individual with very dark life stories; he was a child labourer and a survivor of the 1983 famine that claimed many lives. Now an author and a relationship manager of a renowned international bank, he speaks English and French and writes fiction, nonfiction, thrillers, and poetry. He is highly interested in motivational engagements that inspire youth worldwide.

Living above the average poverty line today, he often says, "my course is stiff but there is no way out; I am meant for it, and I must do it!"

Other Book(s) by the Author:

[My Language of Love](#) —*this golden collection of poems was composed with everyone in mind. Written to foster peace, love, and unity among individuals and nations in order to wipe away all the tears from faint faces, this collection maintains the fluidity of the general humanitarian theme in both English and French.*

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