

CIRCLES

Life Needs More Fruit Bearers



KELICHA OCHONOGOR

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LIFE NEEDS MORE FRUIT BEARERS

BOOK WRITTEN

BY

KELICHA OCHONOGOR

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Harmony Court Estate, 2 Hope Street, 143, Iju Road, Ifako Ijaiye, Lagos

Website: www.kelichaochonogor.com

Email: odinichi4real@yahoo.com

Facebook: /Kelicha Ochonogor Ministries

Twitter: Kelichaochonogo

Instagram: KelichaOchonogor

Snapchat: kelichaochonogo

Tiktok: Kelichaochonogo

Linkedin: Kelichaochonogor

Tel: +2348033074456

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to God almighty who has never failed me. He has been the rock and on which this work is based.

PREFACE

Florence is the child of a single mother. She has a best friend whose brother is her crush. Her friend refuses her from making advances at her brother but due to her stubborn nature, Florence goes ahead to go contrary to their agreement. She finds out that her friend's brother actually loves her but wants her to finish school first. She tries to speed up the process of him accepting her by getting along with Tom, his friend. She is warned against this but she does not listen and gets raped. She eventually becomes pregnant and ashamed of herself. How will her Mum react? Will she abort the child? What about her education?

So much tragedy and lessons to be learned in the book, titled, “Circle”.

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CAST

Florence -

Esther -

Sandra -

Raymond -

Tom -

Kelechi -

Act 1

Florence is pregnant. Her mother calls her and she remembers how everything began and culminated to this point. She remembers how she promised to make her mother proud and of how her best friend warned her against making advances for her brother without her prior permission.

Scene 1

Threadbare curtains and a torn sofa grace the sitting room of Esther's house. Two chairs without arms stay directly opposite the sofa. An old standing mirror stands out of place before the tiny door that leads to the small bedroom. A brownish white ceiling fan turns slowly up ahead. A woman sits staring at the dull bulb directly opposite her eye range.

Esther: (calls) Florence! Florence oh!

Florence: (answers from the bedroom) Yes mum, I'm coming!
(walks into the sitting room and stands in front of her mother)

Esther: Florence.

Florence: Mum.

Esther: Florence!

Florence: (casts her eyes to the floor) Mum.

Esther: (looks at Florence for a while) Why are we so alike?

Florence bends her head and concentrates on looking at her toes. She obviously did not have an answer to her mother's question.

She had been shocked and scared when her mother discovered she was pregnant; the way her mother had laughed was what gave her the chills much more than the unwanted baby she was carrying.

How it all began was still very fresh in her memory as though it had been yesterday.

Scene 2

(FLASH BACK)

[A year before (Florence's pregnancy), Florence and her mother are seated in the living room discussing. It is just as the same as that in the last scene.]

Esther: My fine daughter, you are growing so fast. Was it not just yesterday that you were this small? Now look at you; before you know, you'll be taller than me. Who knows if you will reach the ceiling?

Florence: *(laughs)* Haba, mummy! I will not reach the ceiling. I'm just growing small small.

Esther: We know. *(wears a serious face)* But as you are growing small small, be careful of boys. I am always here for you. Don't mind my temper sometimes but I want you to make me proud.

As such, I would advise you to stay away from boys. If you must have a boyfriend, let me know. Let me see him. I'm your mother. I see more than you do. If there is something wrong with him, I will know and I will do the needful. Nobody loves you more than I do.

Florence: Mummy, I will make you proud.

Esther: *(studies her daughter for a while wondering whether to toe the line she wanted to in their discussion. She makes up her mind)* You are a very intelligent girl. I know you'll make me proud. Just don't be like your mother.

Florence: *(wears a broad grin)* Mummy, you worry too much. Let me grow first!

Esther: Grow oh, pikin!

Florence: Yes oh!

They laugh.

Scene 3

In the school compound, under a mango tree, two girls sit discussing.

Florence: Babe, this last holiday was a boom! When I and my mother returned from the village, so many people have been noticing me. I keep getting greetings from almost everywhere.

Sandra: You is a fine girl na. Why won't they call you? I just hope you are not answering any of them that's not worthy.

Florence: Sandy, you should know me better na. I cannot answer anybody on my street. They are all very poor people.

Sandra: (laughs) I trust you! Me, my body doesn't want to add anywhere. My mother keeps calling me a bag of bones.

Florence: Don't worry. Your time will come. Do and come to my house! It's been long mum saw you last.

Sandra: (*smiles broadly showing off her equal and fine dentition*) I will

come if only she will cook that her special jollof. I love it!

Florence: I now see the kind of friend you are. You cannot come to see me and my mother who is missing you. It is rice you want to come and see. Foodie like you.

Sandra: *(smiles cockily)* As if you used to come to my house to see me.

Florence: I am not like some people oh.

Sandra: Who? It's my brother you always come to see, not me. Abi you think I don't know?

Florence: *(blushes and tries to save face)* You mean your younger brother? Why won't I come to see my small friend?

Sandra: Stop this your play. You know I am talking about my senior brother. I know you have been crushing on him.

Florence: What do I know about crushing?

Sandra: I thought you were my friend. Why not just talk?

Florence: Your brother is fine sha.
Brief silence.

Sandra: Can you promise me something as my best friend?

Florence: What is that?

Sandra: That we would not date any of our known family members without permission between ourselves.

Florence: That promise is all on my head. I don't have cute family members to keep you away from. But I accept, nonetheless.

Sandra: Thank you.

Florence: Whatever.

Sandra: I'm trying to help you o!

Florence: *(jovially)* Your business.

Sandra: Concern you. Don't worry, one good day, you will realise that it's not just your business, it's mine too. I love you, you know.

Florence: I know right? I couldn't have wished to know a better person!

The bell rings to summon all students back to their classes.

Sandra: Whatever happens Floxy, I want you to know that I've always got your back. Talk to me whether I'm in support of your decisions or not. I know for a fact that you are stubborn

Act 2

Raymond - Sandra's elder brother helps the two friends with their school work. Florence's infatuation with Raymond becomes clearly visible. She gets to know Tom who is Raymond's friend. A plan hatches in her mind involving the duo.

Scene 1

At Sandra's house, Florence has gone visiting. She sits outside with her friend poring through a maths assignment.

Sandra: What kind of assignment has this man given to us. See what he gave in class as his teaching example (*flips through her note to show the example*) See what he gave as assignment (*turns the next page*). This thing is not balanced at all.

Florence: Is life ever balanced?

Sandra: Life tries, honestly. You see maths? The class example is like building a sand castle. The assignment is like building a concrete house while the exams is like building a sky scrapper!

Florence: (*laughs*) Girl, you're over exaggerating the whole thing. If we look closely enough, we'll find the answer.

Sandra: I don't have patience for maths. I'm tired. Time is going

too, you will need to be going soon.

Florence: So what do you suggest we do? We are to submit this assignment first thing in the morning. You can't expect us to keep this till tomorrow.

Sandra: I want to use the easy old method joor.

Florence: Your brother?

Sandra: Before nko? *(goes inside the house)*

A few minutes later, Sandra returns with her brother Raymond.

Raymond: Florence, how are you?

Florence: I'm fine.

Raymond: I hear you two are having problems again with maths.

Sandra: Yes big bro. We've been trying to answer these questions for close to three hours now.

Raymond: What seems to be the matter? *(Sits down and takes the rough book they were using to try and solve it).*

Sandra: *(carries her note away from the table)* The ones you see we marked, we followed the textbook and got it right. But these

three we've been trying to do is giving us headache. Please help us!

Raymond: How do I know this is not your assignment?
Florence stifles a laugh.

Sandra: No, it's not. We are trying to prepare. Soon, we'll be writing mock exams and you know it.

Raymond: *(looks at them suspiciously)* Florence, is this you girls' assignment?

Florence: *(stutters)* Er hmm...

Sandra: *(looks at Florence sternly)* Tell him nah!

Florence: Yes? Yes, it's my assignment. Our assignment! Sorry, I mean we are working on it like... We want to know how to do it so we are reading everything like this... *(looks confused)*

Raymond: It is obvious that it's your assignment. I will do it nonetheless.

Sandra: Yeah! That's why you're my big bro!

Raymond: Whatever!
(Sandra laughs heartily while Florence only manages to smile)

Raymond: Now you're laughing. You will not concentrate.

Scene 2

In the classroom, Sandra and Florence are alone writing.

Sandra: What if the compound master catches us here? What reason will we give him for not being out with others for sports?

Florence: (*absent-minded*) We forgot our sportswear.

Sandra: I pray he doesn't check our bags.

Florence: Yeah.

Sandra: I know you for being fast in note copying.

Florence: Yeah.

Sandra: I think you have left your record.

Florence: Yeah.

Sandra: Are you even writing at all?

Florence: Yeah.

Sandra: Florence!

Florence: Yeah.

Sandra: *(Grabs the pen from Florence's fingers)* Florence!

Florence: *(tries to keep a serious face but ends up laughing)* Sandy, what is it nah? Someone cannot write in peace again?

Sandra: Peace? Peace when your brain has flown away from you? Where the heck is your mind?

Florence: Right here, writing this note with you.

Sandra: Big lie. All what I have said today entered one ear and went out through the other.

Florence: No way!

Sandra: Way! Okay, what was I saying about the compound master?

Florence: How serious he always is? *(Laughs)*

Sandra: This is no laughing matter. I know what you were

thinking about and I do not like it.

Florence: What am I thinking about? The house master?

Sandra: For once in your life Florence, be serious!

Florence: But I'm always serious especially when I'm reading for exams. *(Becomes serious)* Okay fine and yes. I was thinking of him.

Sandra: You know he's not your mate.

Florence: I know. But, he's just...

Sandra: *(cuts in)* Just your brother too. He's my brother, he's your brother.

Florence: *(shifts uncomfortably)* I have heard you.

Sandra: I know you're headstrong Florence. I don't want you making moves at my brother.

Florence: What makes you think I'd make moves at our brother? Besides, he's not my mate abi I'm not his mate.

Sandra: I'm serious!

Florence: I have heard you.

Sandra: Promise me that you'd always remember that my

brother is off limits.

Florence: Alright. I promise not to make moves at your brother. Can we keep quiet and write this note in peace now? Before the compound master will hear us and come discover that we purposefully stayed away from sports today. You know that man is very thorough.

Sandra: So, your brain has finally returned?

Florence: *(laughs)* It's alright ma. Let us finish before Kelechi will come back to collect his note, since we don't have a complete note.

Sandra: You're supposed to tell yourself that. Before you drifted into one of your countless day dream.

Florence: You're making it look like a big deal. Is it because it's your brother?

Sandra: It's because you're my best friend. Now, can we keep shut?

Florence: You'll probably have to turn to a door for that to happen.

Sandra: What do you mean by that?

Florence: I meant what I meant.

Sandra: Do you want to take style and insult me?

Scene 3

At Sandra's house, Florence sits on a sofa in the living room looking at the familiar family portrait.

Raymond: (*walks in*) Sandra, is this you?

Florence: Yes, Ray. Welcome!

Raymond: Your friend is not in I believe?

Florence: Yes. Mum sent her to get some things in the market. She told me she'll soon be back.

Raymond: Okay. How is school?

Florence: Very fine.

Raymond: How's mum?

Florence: She's fine.

Raymond: I hope you don't have any issue of any kind.

Florence: *(keeps mute)*

Raymond: *(sits down)* What could be the matter? *(Cajoles)* You know you can talk to me about anything. Anything at all! What is the problem? I hope it's nothing serious.

Florence: I don't know if it's serious or not. *(Thinks for a while)* It's nothing serious.

Raymond: Tell me, whether it's serious or not.

Florence: Well, I like someone. But I don't think he knows I exist. *(Hastily)* But that's okay.

Raymond: It's not okay. Why does he not know you exist?

Florence: Because I'm not his mate.

Raymond: That sounds like Sandra. I don't know you for that statement. Is he your classmate?

Florence: Nope

Raymond: Who is this person? He has a name, aye?

Florence: Yes, he has a name.

Raymond: Yes? What's his name?

Florence: *(cheeks reddening)* Ray.

Raymond: He's my namesake?

Florence: No, it's you! But forget I said that.

(Silence for a while)

Raymond: Florence, you're still young and growing. You have to focus on other important things. Love will come, but you don't need it now. *(Keeps quiet a while)* You are intelligent, smart and bold. You will go places. But leave love first.

Florence: Your sister was right. You're not my mate, I'm sorry.

Raymond: There is nothing to be sorry for. I do love you Florence, but I was waiting for you to finish school first. I want you to concentrate on your studies. You will soon be done.

Florence: *(defiantly)* Thank you for the advice.

A knock is heard on the door. The blind is moved and a tall dark guy walks in.

Tom: *(hails)* Some light, the sun, a ray and more!

Raymond: *(springs up)* This doubting guy! *(They laugh and shake hands)*

Tom: Longest time boss! I've missed you!

Raymond: The whole squad has missed your trouble.

Tom: I know you have not missed me yourself. (*Notices Florence*)
And who is this lovely lady seated here? Man, you never told me you changed your girlfriend!

Raymond: Your brains on the ground man. This is my sister's friend.

Tom: (*faces Florence*) Beautiful lady, how you doing?

Florence: Very fine, thank you.

Tom: What's the lovely name?

Florence: Florence sir.

Tom: What a lovely Florence! I'm not a sir yet you know. My name is Thomas but my friends call me Tom. You can call me Tom.

Raymond: Get your blind eyes away from my sister.

Tom: She's not your sister. Besides, would it be bad if I become your in law?

Raymond: Yes.

Tom: What a friend you are. More like a ray of darkness. *(To Florence)* Don't mind your fake brother okay?

Florence: *(laughs shyly)* Okay.

Sandra walks in without prompting. She carries a big bag on one hand and a smaller one in the other.

Sandra: *(exclaims)* Uncle T! It's been ages!

Tom: Sandy soil! You don't want to grow. It has been a while and still, you look the same.

Sandra: *(laughs and ignores him playfully)* I'm back big bro.

Raymond: You better take that to the kitchen. I'm hungry already and mum is waiting.

Sandra: Fine girl... *(gestures to her to follow. Florence stands to follow.)*

Tom: The light, you are going in? Will I see you around?

Florence: Sure, I'm around. *(Leaves with Sandra)*

Raymond: *(sternly)* Mind yourself Tom.

Tom: Chill joor, you are always too serious.

Act 3

Sandra and Florence have a serious quarrel over Florence's tactics to make Raymond jealous. Sandra confronts Florence again over her beginning of a cheating lifestyle in exams. Tom invites Florence for his birthday party which Sandra later finds out is fake.

Scene 1

At Esther's house, Sandra and Florence sit poring through some school materials.

Florence: These questions are simple but tricky. If you're not careful, you'll just write the most wrong thing.

Sandra: *(changes topic)* Are you dating Tom?

Florence: *(surprised, tries to cover up)* Why would I date Tom?

Sandra: Probably to make my brother jealous.

Florence: So you knew all along that he liked me and you did not tell me. See the kind of friend you are.

Sandra: The reason for not telling you is not far-fetched. Sometimes you act before you think.

Florence: Who told you I'm dating Tom?

Sandra: My brother did. He noticed it.

Florence: (*absent-minded*) which means it's working.

Sandra: You are crazy! The last person you would want to play games with is Tom!

Florence: Whatever.

Sandra: What do you mean by that?!

Florence: Look, I know what I'm doing, okay?

Sandra: I know my brother loves you, and he has told you he is waiting for you to finish school first. Why are you doing this?

Florence: He's not my mate nah. Tom is his friend but he's just cool and is not taking this mate thing seriously. Since he is taking a very long time to make up his mind, let me help him make it up faster.

Sandra: Can't you wait?

Florence: He'll see a finer girl before then.

Sandra: Can't you be patient for once in your life?

Florence: Anyhow.

Sandra: (*visibly very angry*) What do you mean by that? I've been very patient with you and you are behaving as if you left your brain in last year.

Florence: (*angry too*) What brought about that insult?

Sandra: You have crossed me already, do you now want to cross my brother?

Florence: Cross you how?

Sandra: Did you not promise to not do anything with my brother without my permission?

Florence: And what the heck have I done with him that I need your permission?

Sandra: You know what I am talking about. Now that you got a positive answer to what has been in your mind since, you now want to cross him with his own friend.

Florence: It's not like I'm dating him.

Sandra: But you guys were going to. And I am warning you that you trying to make him jealous will land you in big trouble.

Florence: Is it flogging he wants to flog me or what?

Sandra: It's not him. Tom is the worst person to play games with.

Florence: I can handle him.

Sandra: I am telling you, you can't!

Florence: That's your headache.

Sandra: Florence, you are my best friend! You should know that I care for you deeply. Don't continue with what you are doing!

Florence: If you cared, you'd have talked to your brother in my favour. I know he loves you above all your other siblings.

Sandra: You are very funny. I have not even talked about your double crossing me and you are asking me to speak in your favour.

Florence: Whatever.

Sandra: You don't have any remorse.

Florence: Suit yourself.

Sandra: Okay, forget that one first. But you seriously have to leave Tom alone.

Scene 2

Under a tree at a cross Road close to Esther's house, Tom and Florence stand discussing.

Tom: Florence dear, how are you?

Florence: I'm fine.

Tom: I don't think so. *(Raises her face with both hands)* You seem troubled.

Florence: I'm okay. *(thinks twice)* I don't know.

Tom: *(holds her hand)* Now talk to me, what's the problem?

Florence: I and my best friend are not on good terms.

Tom: Why are you having an issue with Sandra?

Florence: Well, she is not in support of our relationship.

Tom: Sweetheart, she could be jealous! What if she liked me all along but never had nerves to open up? Who knows if she was crushing. Maybe that's why she doesn't want you to have me.

Florence: I don't know. I did not ask for the reason though, she only said it was not going to do me good.

Tom: Do you believe that?

Florence: Of course not!

Tom: Then why has my house become the lion's den for you? Or are you afraid of lions too?

Florence: (*chuckles*) Nope!

Tom: Then I don't understand why you won't visit me. I'm not even living far away from you.

Florence: It's not like that. It's just that I don't want people to think ill of me.

Tom: So, you're trying to say that I am a bad person?

Florence: No!

Tom: Come, what are you afraid of? Do I look like someone that will hurt a woman or force you to do what you don't want to do?

Florence: I never said that.

Tom: But you implied that. Or do I have sharks who eats human beings in my house?

Florence: No?

Tom: Florence, just visit me. Okay, let's say you don't want to come at all but come on Friday please. I have a very nice and wonderful surprise for you.

Florence: What surprise?

Tom: (*sighs*) It's my birthday on Friday.

Florence: Ohhhhh! I'm so sorry! Yes, it's your birthday.

Tom: I want you to be there. I'm celebrating low key but it would be nothing without my heart throb there with me.

Florence: What time?

Tom: 5pm.

Florence: I can't come. It would be late.

Tom: Then come after school. I will wait for you.

Florence: I don't know... What will I tell my mother?

Tom: Tell her you're going to see Sandra. If you think I'd be alone, Raymond would be there so just come. Don't worry about anything that you might be thinking.

Florence: Ray will be there?

Tom: Yes, I just said that.

Florence: Okay, I will come.

Tom: That's my girl! *(Let's go of her hand)* Let me allow you go now so that mum won't search for you.

Florence: Alright.

Tom: Greet mum for me.

Florence: I will.

Tom: Take good care of yourself for me!

Florence: I definitely will.

Tom: Be a good girl oh. I'm missing you already!

Scene 3

The bell has just rang signalling the end of the school day. Students are milling out of their classes. Florence leaves her class first with Sandra following her behind.

Sandra: Florence, what was that you did in that test?

Florence: What?

Sandra: *(silently)* I saw you with those papers you were copying from.

Florence: And so?

Sandra: I don't know you to partake in such things. Florence, What has gotten into you?

Florence: Sandra, mind your business and leave me alone!
(walks away)

Kelechi: What is wrong with your friend?

Sandra: I don't know.

Kelechi: I saw her with papers in that simple test. Is that how she used to use and pass all her exams?

Sandra: No. She's just having a little problem now.

Kelechi: Little problem hiding it I'm sure. Do you use papers too?

Sandra: Why would I do that?

Kelechi: I don't know. Maybe you're having a little problem too. She is your friend after all.

Sandra: I don't want to have this conversation.

Kelechi: I guess you're also going for the party she kept talking about that is happening this afternoon.

Sandra: What party?

Kelechi: Do I know? She said it's about Uncle Tom's birthday. Bye!

Sandra: Uncle Tom's birthday today?

Scene 4

6.30 pm, at Sandra's house. Sandra meets the brother just at the door. It is obvious she had been waiting for him.

Sandra: Bro, you're back late!

Raymond: You call this late? I do come back around 8pm sometimes, how come 6.30 is now late?

Sandra: Sorry about that. I have been waiting for you.

Raymond: You have another maths assignment? This is friday, chill. We have saturday and sunday. If I don't teach you on time for any reason, I will do the assignment for you on Monday morning before you go. I will even copy it into your notebook for you. But right now, I am quite tired. Lectures were funny today in length. I want to really rest. My head is on fire.

Sandra: Is today not Uncle Tom's birthday?

Raymond: No, it's not.

Sandra: Have you seen him today?

Raymond: No. What is your problem?

Sandra: (*lies*) Florence told me that today is his birthday and she was celebrating with him.

Raymond: That is not true. His birthday has passed already. He threw a big party.

Sandra: Please can you call him?

Raymond: And ask him what?

Sandra: (*lies again*) If Florence is with him. I checked her house but she isn't there.

Raymond: I am very sure that Florence is fine.

Sandra: Please?! Pretty please??!

Raymond: Dah! No assignment this weekend if I do this. Agreed?

Sandra: Agreed!

Raymond: (*removes his phone from his pocket and dials Tom's*

number. He puts it on loudspeaker) Hello, Tom, what's up?

Tom: Ray, thanks for calling to check on me. You're a true friend!

Raymond: Are you alright?

Tom: I'm not feeling fine. I'm not even at home. I'm at my girlfriend's place. She's nursing me back to health.

Raymond: What is the nature of the sickness?

Tom: It's malaria.

Raymond: Sorry. I wish you a speedy recovery!

Tom: Thank you.

Raymond: Alright. (Cuts call)

Sandra: Could he be lying?

Raymond: What do you mean by that?

Sandra: Could he actually be sick? Is he not the one we saw hale and hearty day before yesterday?

Raymond: So, you're calling my friend a liar and calling me a fool?

Act 4

Florence is pregnant. Sandra finds out and tries to comfort her and work a way out. Raymond accompanies them to Esther's house to plead for her. Esther shocks them with her behaviour towards the whole incident.

Scene 1

At a desolate part of the school backyard, Florence sits crying.

Sandra: *(walks in carefully)* Floxy, what's wrong?

Florence: *(looks up)* Sandra? *(Cries harder)*

Sandra: Dee, talk to me. What's wrong?

Florence: You warned me oh! I did not listen! I allowed my strong head to get me to this point!

Sandra: I hope Tom is not involved!

Florence: *(looks up like someone possessed)* I don't want to hear that name again in my lifetime!

Sandra: *(shaken)* What happened?

Florence: He faked his birthday! He defiled me! Now I'm

pregnant for him.

Sandra: Ewoh! (Puts hands on head) My father oh!

Florence: When I told him, he told me to get out that he does not know me.

Sandra: What kind of wickedness is that?

Florence: I don't know! I just don't know!

Sandra: *(goes closer to Florence)* What are we going to do?

Florence: I don't know! This is not your fault in any way Sandra. I am sorry for not listening to you.

Sandra: I'm sorry for not getting you closer to my brother. This would not have happened if I did that.

Florence: But you were right! He's not my mate. I thought I was bigger than that. I tried to make your brother jealous and see me as someone close to his equal. He advised me but I refused to hear. I could not wait! I tried to cheat nature.

Sandra: No need crying about the past. What will we do now?

Florence: I am not worthy to still call you my friend Sandra.

Sandra: No matter what happens, I'm always your friend.

Florence: I am grateful for that. I wish I knew anyone who could do an abortion.

Sandra: If you do that, I'll denounce you as a friend. The risks attached are too much.

Florence: Like, you want me to keep this baby which the father denies?

Sandra: I don't know. I really don't know. We need to talk to an elder about this. You could come to the house today so that we would talk to Ray...

Florence: (*cuts in*) No please. Not him!

Sandra: Then who do we go to? Should we talk to my mum about it?

Florence: I really do not know! I don't know! I'm finished!

Sandra: Stop that, you're not finished. I think we should tell your mother before she finds out by herself.

Florence: I'm so finished! She'll kill me!

Sandra: No, she will not kill you. You're her daughter!

Florence: I'm good as dead already! I have disappointed her!

Scene 2

At Esther's house, Raymond and Sandra are seated on the chairs while Florence is kneeling. Esther is just sitting relaxed on the only sofa in the house.

Raymond: It's all a very big error ma. We hope you will forgive your daughter and accept her and the child in her womb. Please ma, we are pleading.

Esther: *(says nothing but looks at them one by one)*

Raymond: Ma please, do forgive her.

Sandra: *(joins Florence to kneel)* Please ma, please forgive...

Esther: *(still silent)*

Raymond: Ma, I'd take responsibility for the baby. But please, forgive your daughter.

Esther: (*finally speaks up*) Why would you take responsibility for another man's child?

Raymond: I feel partly to blame ma. I should have paid more attention. I should have noticed what was going on sooner before it reached this stage.

Esther: Are you her brother?

Raymond: She's like a second sister ma.

Esther: (to Sandra) I thought you took her as a sister.

Sandra: Yes ma. And I still do.

Esther: Did you not notice this issue when it started building up?

Sandra: I did, ma!

Esther: You were in support of it?

Sandra: No ma. I tried to talk her out of it but you know Florence, she can be stubborn sometimes.

Esther: Is it because of this same issue that you two were quarreling that other day?

Sandra: Yes ma.

Florence: (sheds tears) She warned me. She tried to tell me! I wish I listened!

Esther: What is done is done. Thank you for telling me. Can I finally offer you two something to drink?

Raymond and Sandra look at themselves surprised.

Raymond: No, ma. We'll be taking our leave now if it's okay with you.

Esther: No problem. Greet your mother for me as you go.

Raymond: Okay, ma. We'll do that.

Sandra: Ma please, I hope you will forgive floxy.

Esther: Don't worry about that. When I'm ready, we'll talk.

Sandra: Ma, please... Take it easy on her, please.

Esther: Sandra!

Sandra: Ma.

Esther: Go, I have heard you.

Act 5

Esther tells her daughter of why she had not reacted the way they expected her to. She tells Florence of her past.

Scene 1

(Back to the present.)

Florence: *(puzzled)* Mum, alike how?

Esther: *(stares hard at her daughter)* I'm sure you're wondering why I have not done anything or said anything serious about your pregnancy. True?

Florence: True, mum.

Esther: Well, I was once in your shoes.

Florence: *(eyes wide with wonder)* For real mum? Is that how I was born?

Esther: I am coming to that. I got pregnant but I did not have the courage or good friends you had. I aborted my first and only child.

Florence: (*gasps*) Mum?!

Esther: Yes, I was a coward. I lost my womb in the process.

Florence: (*confused*) Then how did you come about me?

Esther: I got married but knew I was not going to have any child. I bought you from a teenage mother. Just before you were handed over to me, my husband died. His family pushed me out. Else, we wouldn't be in this run down area.

Florence: (*shocked*) All this time, I never knew! You never showed it!

Esther: That is because I loved you as a mother should. And you have always made me proud. I clearly understand how you feel right now because I was once there. Though what has happened is not good, I'm glad you did not try to correct one wrong with another. I'm glad you showed courage. As for the father of the baby, let him be where he is. I just hope you've thoroughly learnt your lesson.

Florence: I really have learnt, mum. I will not be so stupid again next time.

Esther: Or desperate. Sandra met me again in private to plead for you. You have a good friend in that girl.

Florence: Indeed, I have.

Esther: I will still punish you for trying to run faster than your shadow; for trying to cheat nature. But that will be much later. Right now, I am in no mood to punish you. I wish to be left alone now.

Florence: I am truly sorry, Mum. I wanted to know how you got pregnant in the first place.

Esther: It's a very long story. I will tell it to you much later. Please leave me.

Florence: Okay. *(Leaves)*

Esther: *(bends her head as tears fall out)* Just when I thought life is running better. When will I stop paying this retribution? I thought I could run away but here I am, walking in circles. Now, my daughter has followed my footsteps. Is it now a curse or what? God please, do forgive me! *(Buries her face into her wrapper to muffle the sound of her sobs).*

The End.

Conclusion

Florence is the child of a single mother. She has a best friend whose brother is her crush. Her friend refuses her from making advances at her brother but due to her stubborn nature, Florence goes ahead to go contrary to their agreement. She finds out that her friend's brother actually loves her but wants her to finish school first. She tries to speed up the process of him accepting her by getting along with Tom, his friend. She is warned against this but she does not listen and gets raped. She eventually becomes pregnant and ashamed of herself. However, her mother doesn't go so hard on her. That is because she had a similar experience in the past.

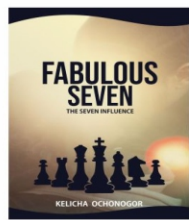
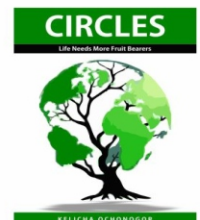
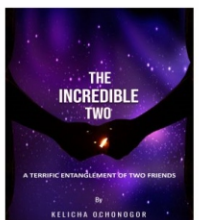
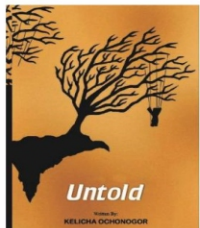
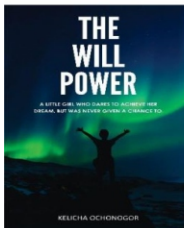
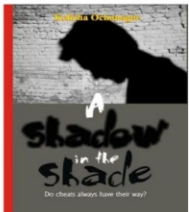
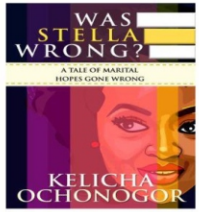
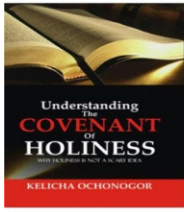
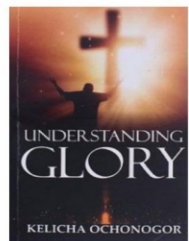
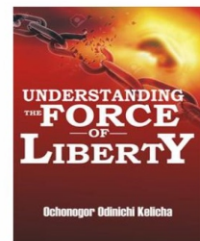
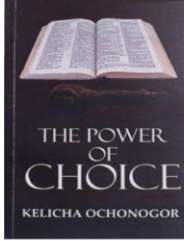
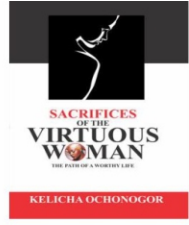
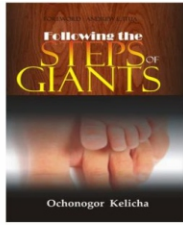
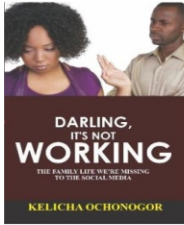
Moral lesson:

1. Do not lie
2. Do not plan evil in any form.
3. Pay attention to instructions and advice.
4. Be patient and wait for the right time to do the right thing.
5. Always let your parent know the kind of company you keep.
6. Be careful and prayerful about any wrong you could have committed. You never can tell if it would become a bigger problem to you tomorrow.

About The Author

Kelicha Ochonogor is a graduate of English language (Education) from Delta State University Abraka. She also holds two Masters Degrees in English language from Covenant University Ota, Ogun State and Educational Administration and Planning from National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). She has authored twenty two (22) books and counting! Kelicha is a business woman and happily married with four young children.

OTHER BOOKS BY MRS. KELICHA OCHONOGOR



ABOUT THE BOOK **CIRCLES**

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www.kelichaochonogor.com