

"This novel is an eyeopener"

- Prof. Akachukwu

"The hoodwinked is truly a masterpiece and a display of extreme creativity"

- Prof. Elliot Effiong

THE HOODWINKED

INEMEAWAJI
PRINCE
HARRY

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

It was Monday morning, when Amara came out from her room in Port Harcourt to notice that there was no electronic appliance left in her sitting room and home office. She was confused because a night before, she slept with her fiancé; Ezekwe in her condominium and never had any thought that he can do such an appalling act. Amara ran into her bedroom to check on Ezekwe, on getting there she was surprised to notice that he was fast asleep. The motionless lips of hers knows not what to say or do, the air that swept through the room became so hot on her that she felt, she was experiencing the heat produced during a volcanic eruption. Amara subconsciously was pondering on how to present the matter to her friend, neighbours, colleagues and the police.

When she regained consciousness, Ezekwe was wide awake looking at her. What on earth is eating you up? He asked.

Amara! Amara!! What is the problem? What is troubling your heart? He asked

Tears travelled down her cheek just like the liquid from an overflowing tumbler. Ezekwe became curious and asked what the problem really was? If he did anything wrong or have anything to do with her moodiness. She tried to speak but her lips were wide apart but no sound came out through them. The more she tried to hold back the shock the more the pain forces the tears that has already accumulated in her eyes to gush out. Ezekwe stood up from the bed and walked towards her direction. Amara was motionless, the life she once had was just sapped out of her. In this present state, snag is even livelier than Amara because a snag houses living

organisms. When Ezekwe approached her, he embraced her trying to console her so as to let out the news that has made her moody.

After a while she regained her ability to speak, just like a dump that just received a miracle.

“Ezekwe! Eeh!” She cried out

My world is stumbling beyond my understanding, am afraid to say this to you but I just have to say it. Ezekwe! I have been robbed!

I am finished ooh!

“Ezekwe! All my life savings, all the stipends I have been receiving in my place of work, the companies records, the money I withdrew to give to my parents, all has vanished in my own very watch. What is here again to live for? I better die and forget that such a thing is happening to me” she lamented

“Amara! What did I hear you say now? Do you mean that while we were asleep, that this building was ransacked by some miscreants?” he asked. Before she was able to respond he found his way to the sitting room and also checked on her home office.

“Ezem yes oh!” she responded after he had left.

In the sitting room Ezekwe nodded his head in accordance with the rhythm from the neighbor’s stereo beat. Immediately he sensed the presence of Amara, who was running down the stair case. He began to scream and cry.

“It will never be well with the perpetrators,” he sworn.

When Amara arrived at the sitting room, she walked straight to the sofa and took the keys to her door and car. She hurried to make a statement at a nearby police station 3km away from her residence. At once Ezekwe joined her at the police station.

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It was moonlight in Oko, Amara and Ure were in the company of some class friends after their last paper in their W.A.S.S.C.E. (West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination). They all sat around a fire that was fuelled by a fuel wood (*Dialium guineense – black velvet tamarind*). The smoke generated from the fire spiced up the atmosphere, chasing away the mosquitoes that came to feed on their blood. Every one of them have some experience they want to share with the group about their past exams. The girls enjoyed every moment they spent talking about their secondary school experience.

“Ure, which of the universities did you fill in your UTME (Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination) Form,” one of the girls asked.

“Well, my parents asked me to apply for the University of Lagos, because my aunt resides there,” Ure said with a profuse smile.

“Ewo! My dear friend will soon become a Lagosian.” Amara said. “Well, I will be leaving for Abia very soon, I applied for Business Administration in Michael Okpara University,” she added.

“So you all want to leave me in this State right”? One of the ebony girl said.

“No, it’s not what you think, we all have our genuine reasons,” Amara said. “Ok, what is your plan here”? Amara asked. “I don’t have much plans for now, just that I applied for Medicine in Nnamdi Azikiwe University,” the ebony girl replied.

“Thank God, we all have our cell phones to help us stay in touch even when we are far apart,” Ure added.

Amara smiled at Ure, and the other girls were just laughing. It was very late that night when Amara and Ure stood up to take their leave. At home, Amara was very happy to have spent an ample of her last days in Oko with her friends. She slept after having her bath.

CHAPTER TWO

It was Friday morning when Amara received a message that she has been offered a provisional admission into Michael Okpara University to study Business Administration. She was filled with joy, the fulfillment that she displayed, portrayed how accomplished and happy she was. On closing the message box, she jumped up without considering the phone in hand, screaming at the peak of her voice. The sound was so loud that her mother who was arranging fuel wood at the back of the building, came running towards the direction of the sound, afraid of what might have happened that made her daughter scream in such a high pitched tone.

“Amara! Amara! She called out, as she ran effortlessly towards her daughter.

Mama! Mama! It has happened, God has done it again for us. Amara shouted while leaping around. “I have gained admission,” she said to her mother who has approached her panting and gasping for air. God, I thank you ooh! She exclaimed on hearing the good news. She began to sing, praising God for what He had done in their dialect.

“Mma, Mma eeh! Chukwu ji eme onu mma mma eeh, na ra ekele nara otuto’ m eeh, agam aturugi mma mma.” She sang repeatedly with tears of joy flowing down her cheek, as Amara joined her in the chorus of the song.

That night the moonlight was so bright that one can pick a pin from the floor of the veranda. There sat Mr. Chinedum, Amara’s father on an armed chair made from rattan. Beside him was his favorite relaxation drink, Mazi Ukandu’s palm wine. Which Mr. Chinedum always praised to be the best palm wine tapper in the entire

village of Oko and its environs. As he was drinking his palm wine pondering on how things are going on in the community, and in his life. He thought of the devaluation of Naira in the global market and the situation of the country's economy, which has turned the middle class into the poor whose monthly allowance can't afford a bag of rice or a bag of bean, which are the staple food in the country. Not too long, Nnenna, Amara's mother came to inform him on the good news that has visited their family and her presence interrupted his meditation.

"My husband, I greet you. My heart has been filled with joy all through the day". Something good has happened in our family, now no one will say "can something good come out from Chinedum's household?" My husband guess what? She said looking at her husband who was already tensed and eager to know what the news is all about. "My dear, you know too well that I'm never good in guessing and that it has never been a part of me. Stop keeping me on suspense, because my heart is wondering what it might be that you want to say. The elders usually say that it is always good to hear good news from the bearer of the news".

"Ok, No need to beat about the bush. It is about our daughter Amara," she replied. "What has happened to her? Has she found a suitor?" he asked anxiously.

"God forbid any evil that comes her way. She has not found any yet but what I bear is a better news, our daughter has gained admission into the Federal University in Abia state. She replied with a blissful smile.

"Wow! *Ome ka Nna ya*, the daughter that does just like her father would have done. Where is she, call her for me," He said as he joyfully drank the remaining wine in his cup. Nnenna ran to the back yard to fetch Amara.

“Amara! Amara! Come here, your father want to see you.” Amara rushed immediately to join her parents.

“My daughter, congratulations. I am proud of you. Nnenna go and get me the dried bush meat I bought from Nkwo market. We have to celebrate this success as a family. I pray that the God I serve and that of my ancestors will never let success and joy depart from this home.”

“Amen! She replied as she hurried to get the meat from the kitchen. Not quite long she has returned with a tray of dried meat, a knife and a sauce.

“Sit down everyone, we have to enjoy this moment together as a family”. They drank and ate the meat until there was no room left in their stomach for more.

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In Abia state, Amara arrived at the bus station in Umuahia trying to board a bus heading for Umudike where she got an admission to study Business Administration in Michael Okpara University. At the bus station she received a call from Ure, who has left for Lagos a day before.

“Hello, Ure, how are you today,” Amara said.

“Amy, am very fine, things are really different here,” Ure replied.

“Babe, do you mean it”? Amara asked.

“I woke up this morning to listen to the news at 6.00 AM, you can’t believe what I heard, the lady broadcasting was speaking in Yoruba, saying things like “Lo gbo’ Iroyin,” Ure said.

“Wow, you are now a Yoruba girl, come back and teach me, ok,” Amara replied.

“By the time am through with my schooling, I will be perfect to be able to teach you,” Ure said. “Bye and take care”

She ended the call and boarded a bus going to Umudike. In the bus she was next to an old woman, who looked to her as a trader. The woman was very happy when Amara greeted her and tried to inquire where next she would stop. She was very happy to assist her to locate Umudike.

It was on the second week of September and fresh students were resuming for registration and orientation in the campus. The school environment was saturated with sounds from cars, stereo of the Student Union Government and people conversing in different languages at different vocal length and pitch. As Amara stepped into the school environment, she felt a breath of relieve. She wondered in the bus on her way coming that she might be the only under 20 girl that gained admission. She thought on how the senior girls in her secondary school bullied her and her friends because they are small in stature and young in age. She feared that the campus might be the same. But as she looked around, she saw other fresh students that she is older and bigger than. So her troubled mind became relaxed. As she walked through the administration block, she wondered on how beautiful the landscape and buildings are. She was lost in thought when a pretty looking girl approached her.

“Good afternoon, I’m Laura and You?”

“I’m Amarachukwu, please are you a fresh student,” she asked with caution in the tone of her voice. “Yes I am and I believe you are too, judging from the way you are looking around one can say you are new here.” They both giggled at each other. “Please where is the registration office?” Amara inquired from Laura. “Walk straight, join the road to your left you will see an auditorium. There is where the portal is situated.”

“Thanks, but I don’t know my way around, can you help me out?” Amara said. “Ok, since I’m through with mine, I can be of help to you. So let’s go.” Laura replied.

They both walked and talked about how they applied the school at the UTME and how they have heard a lot about the prestigious University called MOUUAU. Laura was offered to study Microbiology although she was screened out to a different department due to some papers she didn’t sat for in her WASSCE.

“So what is the course they screened you to?” Amara asked out of pity. “Forestry and Environmental Management, I am okay with the course, I had researched on it immediately they offered me the course. And I believe it is the best place for me.” Laura replied.

As they approached the auditorium, the fresh students are in a queue waiting for their turn for them to get registered. Amara and Laura identified the last person on the queue and assumed the last spot.

“The crowd is much. Is this what the general courses will be like? I pray that I don’t suffocate there.” Amara said to Laura, who was standing beside her. “Well not

everyone will be able to attend general courses so the crowd won't be much as you thought." Laura replied.

The people handling the school portal were very fast in doing their job in less than two hours, it was Amara's turn to get registered.

"Next person please!" the young Lady sitting on a rotatory armed chair called out. Amara quickly entered the office leaving Laura behind.

"Good afternoon Ma, I am Chinedum Amarachukwu a fresh student. I came for my registration." Amara said.

"Welcome young Lady to this prestigious University. I'm Mercy Copeland, where are your credentials, so that I can process your registration for you." The lady replied. Amara quickly opened her file to present her credentials. "Here are my credentials Ma," she replied as she handed over her credentials to the lady sitting at the other side of the desk. The lady typed in Amara's UTME number and downloaded all information pertaining to Amara.

"You are offered Business Administration, right?" she asked

"Yes, Ma," Amara responded.

"Your credentials meet up with the requirement for the course and there is no need to screen you out to a different course. Congratulation, submit your photocopied credentials on the other desk for your online course registration," the lady said motioning her hand to the desk containing papers piled up for online registration.

"Thank You Ma. When will the online print be out?" Amara asked. "Come back next week and while coming come with your portal receipt." She replied with a polite

smile. Amara stood up and left the office. "Next person please!" the lady called out as Amara left the office.

Amara approached Laura in the hallway, she was very happy that Laura assisted her and also stood all the time waiting for her. "How was it?" Laura asked. "Fine, I'm asked to come for my online print next week." Amara replied. "It's okay," Laura said. Let's go and process for your hostel since you can't live off campus. They went to the hostel balloting unit for the processing of a bed space for Amara. Both girls approached the office few minutes before the arrival of the man in charge.

"Good afternoon, we came to process my friend's hostel accommodation," Laura said. The man looked at Amara and asked if she had paid for her balloting fee. "Yes, I have Sir," she responded. "I thought you were dumb and she was your spokes lady," he said and smiled at Amara. "Okay, let me see your receipt for the payment," he said. She issued the receipt to him, as he scrupulously looked at it. "You know students can be mischievous these days. Yesterday a young lady came with a forged receipt. Thank god that I discovered on time," he said.

Amara imagined how on earth a lady will be doing such a thing. "Sir, Mine is not forged. It was issued to me few minutes ago by the bursar," Amara replied. "I know yours is the original copy, so you are cleared," he brought out a box filled with pieces of papers containing different hostel bed spaces. "Please you can pick one of the paper and give it to me to unveil," he said as he handed over the box to Amara. She deep her hand into the box and selected a piece of paper. She handed over the paper to the man with anxiety. He unveiled the paper and documented the hostel name, bed space and her name. "Congratulation, you have a bed space in the *Goodluck Jonathan Transformation Hostel B 13*," he said. Laura jumped up

and hugged her, telling her that she was offered a bed space in the same room. Amara was over joyed to hear that the first friend she met in school is living in the same room with her. “Wow! At last life will be fair sharing a room with you Laura,” she said.

CHAPTER THREE

On Friday morning as early as 9:00 AM, all fresh students assembled at Pius Anyim Auditorium for their Orientation Programme. For several minutes they waited for the speakers of the day as they are been entertained by the Student Union Government. Every one of them were conversing with each other trying to make new acquaintances. Amara and Laura and some first year roommates of hers were sitting together in the auditorium. The moment for the orientation finally came, when a gorgeous looking lady with eye brows carved in an artistic manner mounted the platform. Her lips were very pink as a result of the lipstick she applied. As she picked up the microphone on the podium to speak, every one of the student became calm and the woman began to speak.

“Good morning, my fresh students, welcome to the 21st Orientation Programme of Michael Okpara University, of Agriculture. My name is Prof. Agu Chidinma Emerald.” She paused and looked at the fresh students as if she want them to digest her last statement before she continued. “This school became a Federal University in 1991 and has more than Nine Colleges with several Departments under it,” she said as she continued to talk to them, giving them the chronology of the institution. She was a good orator, during the speech the hall was quite even a pin can be heard when it falls or a lady on high heels will be heard when she walks, the entire students were captivated by her speech and body movement as she made the most explicable statement. “Education is the only way out of ignorance, the way out of darkness, into the glorious light of intellectual illumination,” she said as she looked towards the direction where the Academic staff of the institution were seated, she

said to them “Teach the students, that they must do what they have to do, in order to do what they want to do. Thank you everyone for your keen attention,” As she stepped down from the podium. There was a standing ovation, as the student clap continuously until the next staff stepped onto the podium. As they walked home, Amara and her friends were all happy discussing on how splendid the orientation was. “Laura, that first lady that spoke with us did so well in her speech,” Amara said. “Yes, I seem to like her. I loved her statement and quotes. They were educative and inspiring as well,” Laura said. The group of girls dispersed to their various destination as they approach the hostel. Amara and Laura went into their room to have their shower and a short nap, before they went for their night classes.

The weekend went on well as both girls get to know each other very well. They spent time together at church service and read throughout the day.

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Monday morning everyone is preparing for their first lectures in campus. Amara and Laura woke up as early as 5:30 AM to prepare for lectures. After they are through with their breakfast, both girls left the hostel for the lecture hall. They were early enough to the lecture hall, that they got a spot at the front roll. Thirty minutes later after their arrival in the hall, a tall, dark skinned man with an Afro hair walked into the hall.

“Good morning everyone, sorry for being late. My name is Dr. Halim Mutiu and am the one handling you on *GSS 111 (Use of English)*. Here is the synopsis of the course,” he said as he wrote on the white board with a marker and projected the

synopsis on the projector screen hung at the corner of the hall for those that were unable to see the writing on the board clearly.

Amara was unable to meet up with the lecture and she was able to grasp little knowledge about what was been taught. The man after his lecture gave an assignment on the “forms of distraction.”

“This should be submitted in the next lecture, I’m I understood?” he said looking towards the Lad that presented his self as the general course representative. “Yes Sir!” he replied.

It was two hours after the end of the lecture and Laura was not comfortable with Amara’s mood. She wondered what the problem was that have subjected her friend to such a depressed mood. “Amara, what has eaten you up? I know you too well to know when there is a problem. Tell me what the problem is, I might be of help,” Laura inquired as she tapped Amara on the shoulder.

“Laura, I’m okay. Don’t worry I’m very well,” Amara said putting up a deceitful look. “I am very sure that all is not well with you,” she insisted. “Okay, I am unable to understand anything during the English lecture and I hope that other Lecturers won’t have the same modus operandi that he had,” Amara said.

“That is not a problem, I can help you to explain the lecture note later,” Laura said, crossing her arm over Amara’s neck and drew her closer to herself to comfort her.

Two weeks has past and Laura and Amara has been punctual to lectures. It was Monday of the third week, and every student went for their various lectures. At the end of the day’s lectures, both girls retired to their hostel.

In the hostel Amara sat at the edge of her bunk and was lost in thoughts. “How do I cope here, I never expected the lecturers to be speaking at a fast rate. How do I understand when they never pause to explain further than what they are dictating in their note and a little explanation of what they dictated. Why not relate each topic with a realistic example. Dear Lord, I don’t want to fail, most especially I don’t want to fail my parents by not doing well. Help me to find a way to understand my lecture notes.” She was pondering over her school activities when Natasha dabbed her on the shoulder and she became conscious of what is happening around her.

“What is the problem roomie?” Natasha asked.

“Sorry, am fine,” Amara said.

“No, you look pale, what is the problem,” she asked Amara with curiosity to know what the problem truly is.

“I’m in a terrible situation, I need help with my academics,” Amara said. “How, what is the problem,” she insisted to get the full detail of the problem at stake. “I don’t understand my lecture notes and I don’t follow up when the lecturer is teaching. It seems that I’m not fitting into the system of learning in this campus,” Amara said.

“My dear, I do understand how you feel, I passed through a related circumstance in my first year, then I had problems understanding the calculation courses been taught in class, but when I found out the best method and time that I assimilate well, my understanding of the courses improved in a 180⁰ turn,” Natasha said. Try and find the best way you assimilate and stick to the method. Amara was relieved to hear that someone has passed through a similar situation and was able to overcome it. This gave her hope and assurance that she will overcome the

circumstance in due time. “Thank you for your understanding and advice, I will surely look for a way to apply it,” Amara said.

“You are welcome. So put off this moodiness and cheer up, okay?” Natasha said as she stood up and walked over to her bunk.

The night was very bright, as a result of the moon and stars, which compete to outshine each other. It was very cold that night and Amara was yet to sleep by 12:00 AM. She thought about the conversation she had earlier with her roomie Natasha and never knew how to apply the advice that she was given. “What method do I perform the best in learning? Is this the right method for me to gain knowledge? Am I a good audile learner or a visual learner?” thoughts after thoughts, she asked questions. Questions which presently she had no answers for. This continued for few moment before she dozed off.

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The intensity of the sun was high at Michael Okpara University, Amara and some course mate of hers are heading for lectures in one of the most wonderful theatre in the school. In the lecture, Amara noticed the difference between a secondary school and a higher institution, she identified that the lecturers are not like her secondary school teachers. When the lecturer began to dictate his note, Amara was very surprise and at same time afraid because almost all the lecturers were like her English Lecturer. She can't meet up with the rate of acceleration he was using. At the end of the lecture, she headed for her hostel.

She arrived early enough to join her room-mate to eat the Achara soup they prepared the previous day. The tantalizing aroma of the food travelled to all corners of the hostel room. After the delicious meal, Amara picked up her phone to call home. The phone rang for some minutes before a woman answered.

“Hello, *Nne*, good afternoon, *kedu ka unu di*”? Amara asked.

“Amara my daughter, we are doing well, just that the economy is tough. How are you and your studies”? Her mother said.

“Yes Ma, all is going on well,” Amara replied.

“Your friend Ure called me on phone, she said her institution will soon go on strike and likely I know yours will do the same. She said something about A.S.U.U. embarking on a six months strike,” her mother said. “If you people go on strike, try and come back home immediately, so as to assist me with my farm work, you are aware that you are the only one I have,” she pleaded.

“*Nne’m*, I have heard you, so once they begin the strike, you will see me in Oko the next day, my regards to everyone,” Amara said.

The woman on the other end of the line ended the call and Amara stood up and went outside to throw away the water in the bowl used for washing their hands.

CHAPTER FOUR

A month has slipped through her finger tips without Amara grasping any course that was taught. She wanted to lose hope on being optimistic about the situation. She and Laura had attended several tutorials and she had also met Laura and other colleagues of hers for assistance, but every effort of hers to understand what is been taught was in vain.

Two days later, on a Thursday afternoon. Amara was on her way to the state library at bank road, when she stumbled on a book store, which displays a book by Dr. Ben Carson "You have a Brain". She took the book and read through the paper back and table of content. She was captivated by the content of the book. "How much does that book cost?" she asked the man at the sales desk. He told her the cost of the book. She brought out her purse from the hand bag she was carrying and paid him for the book. Immediately she arrived at the library, she took a position and began to read through the book. The more she read the deeper she got lost in the printed pages of the book. After some hours of in-depth learning, she learnt to manage her situation and believed that God directed her towards purchasing the book. By the time she finished reading the book at the library it was already late in the evening. She left the library and was revived in spirit. As she arrived at the hostel she began to apply all that she has learnt from the book. Her understanding and discussions on every course began to change for good. Few weeks later, she is now a guru in every course that she attended and the students were surprised at her new found knowledge.

One day after lectures, Amara and Laura was walking back to the hostel and group of girls approached them, and was thanking Amara for the tutorial she had with them. Laura was surprise on what was happening. "So everyone in our level now know that Amara is extremely intelligent. God, I thank you for this divine transformation," she thought for few minutes and never knew when the girls parted. "Laura, hope you are okay," Amara asked with a fulfilled smile, as she held her friend's hand. "My dear, I'm fine. Just happy for you." She replied. "Thank you," Amara replied. "So you now hold tutorials for our fellow fresh year students," she said. "It is the Lord's doing. We have to keep going, so that we don't faint along the way before we arrive at the hostel. I'm very hungry," Amara said. They both laughed as Laura carried her bag on the head to demonstrate how hungry she also was.

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Two weeks later, every student was busy packing his or her belongings and set to travel to their respective destinations. The A.S.U.U. strike began earlier than expected. Amara woke up early and packed all her items and headed for the school park, where she boarded a bus going to Anambra. When they were travelling Amara wished that the strike will not linger for up to Six months, because she don't know what to be doing in the village for such a long time.

After a couple of days of Amara's arrival, Ure and Other girlfriends of hers were also back, the community began to seem friendly to her and her days of boredom was vanished. Amara became enthusiastic about live in the village again.

The A.S.U.U. strike was prolonged to seven months and the reason being that the government was unable to concur with the Union's demands. As a result of this, the strike was not called off at the sixth month. Amara and her friends were not happy with the situation, also the village is not as interesting and lively as the cities in which they reside for their education.

Ure came to visit Amara, so as to spend some time with her in her family house in Oko. When Amara got a glimpse of Ure at their entrance gate. She stood up from her chair and ran towards her, both girls exchanged pleasantries.

"Amara, you have gotten fat, please don't get too fat so that you won't become obese, it's just a compliment," Ure said. "My dear, was it not this strike that made me to be at home and consume more food than I should. If I was in school, this wouldn't have happened," Amara replied. "Well you don't look bad," she added. "How are your parents? Are they at home?" Ure asked. "Actually, my mother just stepped out to get bitter leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*) in the next compound, but my father is in his Obi," Amara replied. "Please come inside and have a seat," Amara offered. Ure went in and sat on the chair kept towards the entrance door, while Amara went into the kitchen to get a plate of Abacha, a bottle of groundnut and a cup of water. After a while Amara came in with a tray, and kept it on the side stool. Both of them sat down and discussed over lots of issues. The one that caught Amara's interest was the news Ure said she heard over the radio when she was in Lagos. The news was about a man that man handled his wife to death, reason because his wife caught him in bed with another woman. After Ure had disclosed the news to Amara, she became emotional.

“Ewo!” she exclaimed. “So that was how the woman’s life came to an end,” Amara said. “Do you know what baffled me the most?” Ure asked. “My dear what?” Amara replied in a questioning manner. “The police arrested the man and interrogated him and he denied ever touching the woman, talk more of manhandling her to death,” Ure said. “What did the police do to him? Did they release him?” Amara asked. “Well, he was still in the custody of the police who were carrying out further investigation, I never got the full news, before ASUU’s strike began,” Ure replied. “Na wa! Most men are extremely heartless,” said Amara. “Do you just say heartless, a better word for that should be atrocious or devilish,” Ure added.

During their discussion, Amara’s mother came into the sitting room and Ure stood up to greet her. “*Nne m Ndewo,*” Ure said.

“*Ndewo nwa’m kedu ka i mere?*” Amara’s mother asked. “*Ndi Ulo ahu o di kwa ha mma?*” she added. “Anyi di mma,” Ure replied.

Ure looked at Amara and smiled, and her mother went out to prepare her bitter leaf soup. “Amara, your mother has never changed a bit she is still young and lovely as she always has been,” Ure complimented. “You talk as if yours is not looking the same way. I don’t know what these women that makes them look so,” Amara said as they both chuckled and ate from the plate of Abacha.

It was late in the evening when Ure notified that it’s getting late and that she had to go, due to the fact that the pathway she would take home is unsafe when it gets dark. “Ure, are you still afraid of the folklores they told us while we were kids, about mermaid and other spirits kidnapping and killing humans along pathways at night,” Amara said, when Ure notified that she had to go. “Not that, I’m grown up now. So I don’t believe in most folklores but I have to apply precautions because it is not

good for a maiden to be walking through a bush path at night all alone,” Ure replied. Amara concurred with her and offered to see her off. They both stood up and went outside to meet Amara’s mother who was busy preparing her *Onugbu soup*. “Ure, do you have to go now that the food is almost ready, why not spend the night with us and call your people informing them that you won’t be back to night that you will be back first thing tomorrow morning?” Nnenna asked. “Nne m, I have something to do at home very early in the morning and my parents do not have any cell phone, which I could contact them with and moreover it’s getting late and you know how dangerous the pathway to my house is at night,” Ure replied.

“Okay, there is no problem. Your reasons are clearly justified. Farewell, and my regards to your parents. Tell Adaobi that I will visit them as soon as I’m through with my farm activities,” Amara’s mother said.

“Thank you Ma, for your understanding, I have to be on my way now,” Ure replied as Amara accompanied her to the gate and bid her farewell. Amara returned to the kitchen to assist her mother to prepare the soup, so that they could have their dinner.

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Few weeks has passed in the seventh month and no information about ASUU and Federal Government calling off the strike. Amara and her friends became tired of the situation and were beginning to lose hope of ever returning to school. Just to keep herself busy she applied as a secondary school after class tutor in her village. Where she took the students on business studies, Government and other art

related courses. Two weeks later she convinced Ure into helping out in the evening lesson with her. Ure was happy to leave home at last to do something meaningful and interesting. The girls enjoyed every minute they spent teaching and it recalled them of their days in secondary school.

CHAPTER FIVE

ASUU's strike has been called off and every student was already in school to resume lectures and other academic activities. Amara and Ure are now back to their respective institutions to resume picking up the enlightenment pebbles from where they stopped.

It was a sunny day in Umudike and Amara tried to unpack her luggage in her hostel. Suddenly some group of girls came in and was discussing on what has prolonged the strike and how they would had loved the strike to be prolonged further. Amara could not believe her ears, she stopped what she was doing and walked over to the girls and tried to know why they wanted the strike to continue. Notwithstanding that she enjoyed her stay with her parents and friends, she never would have loved the strike to continue.

"Natasha, sorry for poke nosing, I would love to know why you all hoped for the strike to continue?" Amara asked. The girls were taken aback.

"What on earth is this girl trying to say? Is it that she came from one of the obsolete towns without transmission poles, come to talk more of having event centers around," Natasha thought. She decided to express how classy and fabulous the strike was to her. "Amara, do you mean you never loved the strike to be prolonged further or you just want to act up like a serious student?" she asked.

"No dear, I never saw any interesting thing about staying at home, crossing my legs while sitting on a settee to watch a programme on the television or accompany my mother to her cassava or vegetable farm. It's not that to be at home is bad or to

stay with your loved ones after some months of being far from home. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the time I spent at the village, the colourful scenarios in the village square during the wrestling competition and the moonlight gatherings where we performed various cultural dance display in groups. My dear, it was fun, but schooling and education is far much better,” Amara replied.

At the end of her statement all the girls in the room were laughing uncontrollably. She tried to understand the reason for the laughter but was unable to calm the girls, whom were lost in the laughter.

“Please, what is the amusement all about, was it that what I said was off the book?” Amara inquired, when the girls were able to catch their breath and the room was a bit calm. Ella who gave a gasp of relief, looked at Amara and wondered about the village in which she spent her strike days.

“Please we were sorry about what just happened. We were amazed to here that moonlight gathering still exist or anything like local village wrestling do exist in this part of the world. Well, I never wanted to come back to school, reason being that I had so much fun in Lagos with my friend and family. During the strike I also got a job that paid well for an undergraduate student,” Ella said.

“Mine was splendid not just because I visited Accra, but also visited the famous tourist centers in this country. The best experience was that of Calabar,” Natasha said.

“Wow, I have heard of many of them, but have not had the opportunity to visit.so which among them did you visit?” Amara asked, looking at Natasha whom was already sitting on the edge of the bed.

“Okay, I spent few days in Tinapa

The investigation team from the police station at which Amara made her statement to came to the scene of the crime which was at Amara's condominium. During the investigation Sergeant Uche and Officer Raphael found out that the condominium was not burgled and that the handle of the entrance door was not destroyed or broken. Sergeant Uche documented all the necessary information that will be used for the proper investigation.

"Young lady, are you with anyone or have any knowledge of anyone who is capable of doing this?" Sergeant Uche asked.

"Sir, to the best of my knowledge no one I know of could be capable to do such a thing to me," Amara replied while shading tears and cleaning her eyes with the handkerchief she had with her.

"Young Lady, the reason why I asked was that from my investigation, I have come to understand that this crime can only be carried out by someone close or an insider who has the ability to enter the house without breaking into the house. So, give us the necessary information that will enable this investigation to be successful. Who has access to this apartment other than you?" He asked again in a more strained tone.

She did not respond for a while and the police men were not happy with the way she is reacting to the investigation. Amara in her mute state was pondering on the people who has access to her apartment other than her. "Is it that Ure, Ekenma or Ezekwesili was in one form or the other part of this my predicament," she thought. "Sir, I have few close friends and relative that have access to this apartment. Ure, Ekenma and my Fiancée Ezekwesili are the only ones that have access to the apartment," Amara said.



Inemeawaji Prince, Harry grew up in Abia, Nigeria. He graduated from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike where he acquired his B.Forem degree as one of the best graduating student in 2015/2016 session. The hoodwinked is his first published book, other book credited to him includes; *“Untold”*, *“The place I came from”*, *“Destiny – An autobiography of Harry Prince”*. He is the Chairman of Harry’s foundation and a member of Enerst and Finesse group.

From the inspiring author Harry Prince, comes a tremendous novel exhibiting deceit, trust, love, power tussle, administration and investigation. The Hoodwinked is set in Portharcourt, Ogun state, Anambra, Abia all in Nigeria.

Amara and Ezekwe fall in love in portharcourt, a year after she got employed by Fintech company. After two years of service she was elected the assistant managing director instead of Mr. Olabisi, who menaced her and later became one of the prime suspect, when Amara’s condominium was robbed by a group of unknown miscreants. Investigations went on to

“He started with a bang and kept the readers in suspense all through the work. It is truly a nice piece of work. ‘The hoodwinked’ is a flagship, when it comes to fiction. I urge every youth to read this novel” – Kamara Amina

“ The author showed a skillful display of foreshadowing, which kept the reader alert and enthusiastic to read more” – Ogbu Ann Ugochi

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