



BENITA

A POWERFUL CHRISTIAN
NOVEL SERIES

SEASON 3

— ✧ — WRITTEN BY — ✧ —

ANTHONY IJERE

SEASON 3 · EPISODE FOUR

The Woman on the Water



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Do not shy away from your mission. You have been sent to bring light into this territory and to deliver people from the powers of darkness, witchcraft and sorcery.

— THE VISITOR IN THE STAFF ROOM

Evans had always loved food, and everyone in the group knew it. If there was food anywhere, Evans was usually the first person to notice it, and if somebody mentioned a restaurant he wanted to know the menu. If a villager brought roasted yam, he was already asking whether there was fish to go with it, and even when the others were fasting, Evans could spend several minutes talking about what he would eat when the fast was over.

They often teased him about it.

“You were not sent to serve Nigeria,” Kemi once told him. “You were sent to discover Nigerian food.”

Evans laughed.

“At least I am serving the country through my stomach.”

But his love for food was about to become a dangerous

weakness, because there was a girl in SS2 who had noticed it. She was one of the students who often watched Evans whenever he passed through the school compound, and she had noticed how quickly his attention changed whenever food appeared. She also noticed that he was always joking and that he enjoyed being around people.

At first she simply greeted him whenever she saw him, and then one afternoon she approached him with a small food container.

“Sir.”

Evans turned.

“Yes?”

“I brought something for you.”

“For me?”

“Yes.”

He looked at the container.

“What is inside?”

The girl smiled.

“Roasted yam and fish.”

Evans looked at her again.

“You are serious?”

“Yes.”

He collected the food.

“Thank you.”

“You're welcome.”

He opened it almost immediately, and the smell of roasted yam and dry fish filled the air.

“This is good.”

The girl laughed.

“I knew you would like it.”

He ate everything, and the following day she brought food again, and then she brought it another day. Before long Evans began expecting her, and sometimes she would wait for him after class while sometimes she would leave the food somewhere for him to collect secretly.

And Evans began hiding it from the others.

Whenever Constance asked whether he was still fasting, he would quickly answer, “Of course,” and then he would disappear somewhere and eat. When Benita asked him one evening, “Evans, you have not broken the fast, have you?” he shook his head and said, “No. I am still fasting,” but he had already eaten.

His weakness had become a secret, and the girl soon became more than someone who brought him food. They began talking regularly and met in empty classrooms after the other students had gone, and sometimes they sat behind one of the school buildings where they could not easily be seen.

At first they only talked, then they started holding hands, and eventually they began kissing. Evans was becoming emotionally attached to her, and he did not know that none of it was accidental.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE GIRL

A MOTHER KNOWN IN NJABA FOR WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY

The girl was working with her mother, who was known in the village as a powerful woman involved in witchcraft and sorcery. She had watched the corps members since they arrived and had become particularly interested in their growing spiritual

discipline.

She knew that most of them were fasting, that they were praying at midnight, and that they had begun becoming spiritually sensitive. And she knew that Evans was different because food was his weakness, so she had decided to use her daughter to reach him.

The plan was simple, for if Evans could be weakened, manipulated and brought under their influence, he could become a doorway into the lives of the others. They did not need to attack all seven corps members directly, they only needed one, and Evans had unknowingly become that person.

THE SAME BOY, AGAIN

Meanwhile, Benita was becoming increasingly concerned about the boy in SS1 because it happened again. She was teaching one afternoon when the boy suddenly froze and stared toward the back of the classroom, and his breathing became heavy before he screamed.

“They are here!”

The students immediately became restless.

“Who is here?” Benita asked.

The boy pointed toward an empty space.

“They are here! They are here!”

He tried to run and two students held him, but Benita stepped forward because she had seen this before and knew what she needed to do. She stood before the boy and prayed with authority.

“In the name of Jesus Christ, I command every spirit troubling this child to leave him now.”

The boy's body shook and his eyes closed tightly, then gradually he became calm as the classroom fell silent. Benita looked at him and saw that he was sweating heavily, so she helped him sit down.

“Are you okay?”

He nodded, but Benita was not satisfied because the same thing was happening again and again. Every time she prayed the boy would become calm, only for the manifestation to return another day, and it troubled her deeply.

One evening she sat quietly after everyone had left and whispered a prayer.

“Lord, what is happening?”

She had begun to feel as though she was constantly dealing with the same problem without addressing its source, because she would cast out the spirit and the boy would calm down, then another day would come and the same thing would happen.

Benita sighed.

“I did not come here for this.”

She opened her lesson notes.

“I am here to teach.”

She tried to convince herself that she should simply concentrate on her official assignment and did not want to become involved in everything happening around the school. But deep inside she knew she could not completely ignore what she was seeing.

THE VISITOR IN THE STAFF ROOM

One afternoon she sat in the staff room during a break when the room was relatively quiet. Some teachers had gone to their classrooms while others were discussing quietly at the other end of the room, and Benita rested her head on the table. She only intended to close her

eyes for a few minutes and did not realize when she fell asleep.

Then she felt a touch on her shoulder.

“Benita.”

She slowly lifted her head and saw someone standing beside her whose presence was unusually peaceful.

“Why are you avoiding your assignment?”

Benita stared at the person.

“What?”

“You did not come here merely to teach.”

Benita listened.

“Do not shy away from your mission.”

She felt a strange weight in her heart.

“

Your mission here is greater than what you can see. You have been sent to bring light into this territory and to deliver people from the powers of darkness, witchcraft and sorcery.

— THE VISITOR

Benita stared at the person, and before she could ask

another question everything changed. She opened her eyes and was back in the staff room, and she sat upright with her heart beating rapidly.

She looked around and saw the teachers still moving around, someone talking near the window, another teacher marking books, and a ceiling fan continuing to turn above her. For several seconds Benita could not understand what had happened, and then she realized she had been asleep.

She looked around again and there was nobody standing beside her, but she knew that what she had experienced was not an ordinary dream. She immediately thought of the angels and the spiritual encounters that had accompanied her life and whispered with understanding.

“Lord, I understand.”

She knew she could no longer pretend that her assignment was only about teaching, because something was happening in Njaba and somehow God had placed her there for a reason.

MIND YOUR BUSINESS

Benita immediately looked for Constance and Kelvin,

and when she found them she told them what had happened. Constance listened carefully and Kelvin did not interrupt.

“We need to ask questions,” Benita said.

“About the school?” Constance asked.

“Yes. Too many things are happening.”

They decided to speak with the principal, and the three of them went to his office. The principal looked up when they entered.

“Yes?”

“Sir,” Benita began respectfully, “we want to ask about some of the things happening in the school.”

The principal's expression changed.

“What things?”

“Some students are seeing strange things. Some collapse in class. Some scream repeatedly. There have also been cases of students becoming seriously ill.”

The principal stared at her as Benita continued.

“We have also heard that some students have died. Some teachers have become seriously sick and have

stopped coming to school after certain incidents involving students. We just want to understand what is happening so that we can know how to respond.”

The principal suddenly slammed the pen in his hand onto the table.

“Mind your business!”

The three corps members were startled.

“Sir?”

“I said mind your business!”

Benita looked at him in disbelief.

“We only need information so that we can understand the situation and know what we are dealing with...”

“Which information?”

The principal's voice became harder.

“What information do you need?”

He leaned forward.

“The only information you need is that you are a corps member. You came here to serve for one year. You will complete your service and leave.”

The room became silent and the principal pointed toward the door.

“Do not involve yourself in matters that do not concern you.”

“But sir...”

“No!”

His voice echoed through the office.

“Do not ask questions about these things again.”

Kelvin looked at Benita as the principal continued.

“If you involve yourself in what does not concern you, you will bear the consequences.”

Nobody spoke.

“Now leave my office.”

They quietly walked out, and when the door closed behind them the three stood in the corridor for a moment.

Constance shook her head.

“I did not expect that.”

“Neither did I,” Kelvin replied.

Benita looked toward the principal's office, and his reaction had raised more questions than it had answered.

THE WOMAN ON THE WATER

That same afternoon Kemi was in a completely different situation, because Kemi loved making content and could turn almost anything into a video. A tree, a road, a funny conversation, a market scene, a traditional building, even Evans eating could become content.

That afternoon she decided to record another video about life in Njaba, and she held her phone in front of her and began speaking to the camera.

“Today, I am taking you people deeper into this village so you can see some of the things we have been seeing since we came here.”

She laughed.

“Do not worry. I am still alive.”

She continued walking and did not notice that she was gradually moving away from the familiar paths. The trees became thicker, the sounds of the village grew faint, and the path became narrower.

Kemi continued recording.

“This place is actually beautiful, but you have to be careful because once you enter some of these places, you may not know how to come back.”

She laughed again, then she stopped because something had caught her attention. Ahead of her was a small river where the water was unusually still, with barely any movement on its surface.

Kemi slowly lowered the phone, and then she saw someone.

A woman was standing on the water.

Kemi froze. The woman was dressed completely in white and stood several metres away with her back facing Kemi, and her feet appeared to be resting directly on the surface of the river. She was not sinking and was not standing on a visible rock, she was simply there on the water.

Kemi's heart began pounding.

“What?”

She looked at her phone and saw that the camera was

still recording, so she zoomed in and the woman was still there. Kemi took one cautious step backward, but the woman did not move, and then she took another step.

Then, slowly, the woman turned, and Kemi's blood ran cold because the woman's eyes met hers directly. For a moment neither of them moved and Kemi could not breathe, then the woman suddenly began moving.

Kemi screamed and turned and ran as branches struck her arms and face while she forced herself through the bush. Leaves slapped against her skin and her phone almost fell from her hand, and she did not know where she was going but only knew that she needed to get away.

Behind her she heard footsteps as someone was coming, so Kemi ran faster. She took one path which suddenly became blocked by thick vegetation.

“No!”

She turned around and ran back as the footsteps seemed to be getting closer behind her. She pushed through the bushes, stumbled, recovered herself and kept running, until she collided with someone.

“Ah!”

The man almost fell while carrying a bundle of firewood on his shoulder, and Kemi staggered backward.

“Sorry! Sorry!”

The man looked at her strangely, but Kemi looked around and suddenly realized where she was because the path had led her back to the main farm road. She did not wait to explain anything and ran until she reached the house, breathing heavily with dirty clothes, disorganized hair, and sweat covering her face.

Benita immediately stood up.

“Kemi! What happened to you?”

Kemi could barely speak.

“Water.”

“Give her water.”

Someone quickly brought her a cup and she drank.

“What happened?” Chioma asked.

Kemi looked around the room.

“I saw something.”

“What?”

“A woman.”

“Where?”

“In the bush.”

Evans looked at her.

“What kind of woman?”

“She was standing on water.”

The room became silent.

“What do you mean standing on water?” Constance asked.

“I mean standing on water!”

Kemi's voice trembled.

“She was wearing white. She was standing on the river. Her back was facing me. Then she turned and looked directly at me.”

Benita frowned.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes!”

Kemi immediately reached for her phone.

“I recorded it.”

Everyone gathered around her as she opened the video, and the footage showed Kemi walking through the bush with her voice audible and the trees and the river visible. They could hear her breathing become audible as she approached the water.

But when she turned the camera toward the river, there was nothing at all. No woman and no figure, only the quiet surface of the water.

Kemi stared at the screen.

“No.”

She replayed it and still there was nothing.

“But she was there,” she whispered.

Nobody spoke as she replayed the video again with the same result of an empty river. Benita looked at Kemi with concern.

“You are sure you saw her?”

“I am sure.”

Kemi's voice broke.

“I saw her with my own eyes. I even saw her turn and look at me.”

Kelvin took the phone from her and watched the recording carefully, replaying the exact moment when Kemi said she had seen the woman, but there was nothing there.

He looked up.

“This is not ordinary.”

Constance nodded slowly while Benita remained silent, for the principal's warning came back to her mind.

“Mind your business.”

* * *

END OF EPISODE FOUR

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE

WRITTEN BY
ANTHONY IJERE