

THE VAMPIRES OF AFRICA

Chrispinus Mutimba

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my loving parents with most heartfelt gratitude to my dad Habil Mukhwana Wesonga, he is a motive in our lives, a responsible dad I Love you papa. And to my mother Janet Osore, who will always remind us to focus and ignore setbacks. A lady of compassion, I love you mama.

CHAPTER ONE

What if I told you, I know what happens when you die, you become a ghost entombed in indefinite realm indiscernible, confined in gloom, a world of whispers, forlorn except for other ghosts, incapacitated of returning to those ones you ardor. Ghosts have one power, to plague the living, afflict them for what they have done. And perchance, what if I told you, I know what happens when you become a politician, you turn into a vampire confined in an errant world, vampires have one power, they are interminable, compelling and monstrous. Life like a coin is two faced, one side of life is entangled with evil, killings, corruption, covet, false witnessing while the other side is engulfed with virtuousness and righteousness. Never underestimate the power of very nice suits, brutality goes in hand with impunity.

All stupefying tales you over heard about vampires are delusional and irrefutably do not add up to anything. You are on this side of the existing and there is always the other side lodged by the dead, yet another side dwelt in by those reckoned celestial divinities. But in acumen, the dead intermingle with the living, vampires, ghosts and angels interact with the living. Yes, humanity. The mortal party with the immortal. This is positively not a presentiment; on the contrary it is what we experience in Africa. The virtuous and the wicked intermingle in a communal contentment. It is immorality, it is reality. My sympathies. There was one instance when I heard an African story of vampires that petrified me out of my wits.

If you will ever make your mind up to visit Majengo, get by without some of your precious time and of course pay a visit to Popco Bar and restaurant, Kinywa one of my newly met friends swanks a proprietorship of up to forty percent shares in that- hole-in-the-wall. Just like any other business enterprise, Popco has a vision of broadening its wings to every corner of our county...I mean has proposals of spreading out. Leave that one alone, they also believe that in a decade's time, they in all probability will be brushing shoulders with EABL. "...we produce a small scale of these beers you see around," Kinywa will always remind me of this. I never mention to him of how beers are not of my fancies. With this belly I bear, spirits are more recommended to beers.

Let's talk about our joint, "*mbuzi Choma*" is the most served meal with Tusker bottles and yellow portraits embroidering the restaurant. Never ones would you miss out on charming bar maids. They in all honesty, make the place more charismatic, a true tourist vocation for most of the men frequenting the place. Don't you forget, services at Popco are offered on twenty-four hours a day basis.

At Popco, you have a prospect of reuniting with someone you were once with at school, this gives you a leg up to muse over the past olden days of your infantile mulishness, and learn news of an incarcerated friend, deceased friend and of course one who went mad. A big crowd of teachers, accountants and these boda-boda guys frequent the place more so on Saturday and Sunday twilights of course to catch on an "English Premier League" match in a once "ONLY FOR WHITES" hall.

Take note of this, Popco restaurant or preferably tavern is not just a bar, it is more than that, just like a communal gathering. I don't

applaud that you visit the place for packed fish. No, in fact you will be scoffed at. I cited earlier that only charcoal roasted goat meat is in profuse.

And now this is the stake and the most alluring part of our restaurant. Chitchats, tittle-tattles some of you will call it speculations if not hearsay.

Ladies and gentlemen, uncluttered sitting arrangement markedly advocates for the gossips. Well and in a classy manner embellished sofa chairs you find most in public taverns in Kenya-our beloved country-surge the restaurant. The only ticket you necessitate to take part in this mongering is a litter of your preferent thirst-quencher. Let's say Pilsner if not tusker if not KC if not...oh cite them. With either of them you are unquestionably set to go.

You involve yourself either by talking or listening, of course talking is constrained to the narrator of the day. Liquored up men and women are inaudibly driven away by the bouncers who are ever ready to pounce on any lazybones around. You see, at Popco your welfare is guaranteed, security is an added advantage. The tavern is under surveillance of security cameras too. I did forget to mention to you, an ample packing space for those ones who were lucky enough to own a car if not a motorbike, the parking is satisfactorily endowed.

What have I just said? Oh, gentlemen and ladies of course, at Popco, you participate in the discussion only either by listening if not talking. No gracefulness of noninvolvement and comportment lest of course you simulate. Discretion is constrained only to those ones who can hire a separate confidential room, let's say if you have

a tryst. It turns out that most people dread those rooms, you know these bar maids are ever opportunistic. Now I know you cotton on this.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was there one Sunday twilight that I sat through an engrossing story. Politics specify our lives; politics has characterized our past and most likely future lies in the hands of politics. This takes me back into my political science class. Professor Jumbo, will ever remind us “...matters concerning our lives, our country should never ones fail to be part of our concern”

Undeniably, to me, politics is ‘matters’ concerning my life. I find it so knotty to dodge my concerns.

Ever heard of “Vampires of Africa?”

The narrator, one of those dread hair suited brothers, hair as dark as a raven’s wing; and his whole appearance be spoke that composure and tenacity peculiar to men accustomed from his seeming embrace to compete with threat, and ever confounded for criminals by our friends from police and intelligent departments, he was vibrating in a poignant tone. A restaurant never known to silence risked divulging a pin’s drop sound. The public opinion in him was protuberant, he seemed to be talking to a group of his acquaintances which progressively turned out to be the whole crowd at Popco that evening, I attribute this to the loud voice he opted to use. He must have been a little bit tipsy; you see this is a club everything is logical. His voice, was more than just serious, absolutely overwhelmed with emotions.

As I mentioned earlier, he narrated and we listened. The law of compliance. Of course, no one interrupted the story. It was uncommon that no usual spectacles and commotions were created, everyone sat calm you might have confused a tavern to a graveyard. Nothing gave an impression of witticism, just patriots playing their role in national development.

I slightly sipped on my frothy beer, no, I mean spirit. I dislike beers.

I am a man of my country if you wish to know about me. Despite sitting several meters from the narrator, I cocked my ears and soon enough I was gathering every word of his mouth.

He was talking of someone who had recently or ones worked as a farmer or maybe something like had died. Just a worker. Apparently, everyone works even the dead. They never cease showing up in our dreams. I call that working.

“...yes...I confess.” He was saying.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the truth is that I also had forgotten about him. I would have propounded to say nothing about the dead, you see even the Bible reprimands that we should leave the dead for the dead except that his name once again surfaced into sudden importance of that ungodly event. Very true gentlemen. Most of you must have even skimmed through at it, it even got some column inches in *Daily People's*. Some of you with these big phones must also have had an eye into it. You see... it is something to get an attention of such a newspaper, given that they don't publish liabilities, only assets. It is something, with big disgraces fighting

for attention, unethical story of a musician throwing away his wife for a sponsor lady, an ambassador selling an embassy, lady lawmaker suckling in a parliament, a governor slapping a women representative, a politician's mansion auctioned, his vehicles and posters burned down by outraged ruffians of a rival politician...some politicians enigmatically evacuated for cryptic justifications of the well-being of the country...don't forget of the Chinese bond scandals that touches every administrator even the opposition teaming with the government to lavish foreign loans and grants...you see there is a lot to cover in that newspaper. A lot ladies and gentlemen, but this one...it emerged”

The narrator paused. Took a deep breath and continued.

“I still call that, a year of record, a year of scandals ladies and gentlemen”

I stood up and stretched, oh, my action was met with angry looks from my counterparts, the audience seemed active that nightfall. Yes, just like in political classes you never have to sleep when case study is being carried out.

“...with such issues fighting and wrangling for attention, editors of newspapers let us say, *Daily Peoples'* pay no or little attention to inferior matters of mini-county elections...”

The narrator continued as I secured myself a comfortable position, the story was utterly fascinating. You would have not wished to miss a word.

He continued.

“...why would anyone get disconcerted and take interest in a rather silly story? A story that did not involve the criminal department. Not mentioned in any court. A story of a mystifying corpse wrapping up the aftermath of an election in a rather very small and remote county. And not that I want to hypothesize this, His demise, I mean Odongo, would not have aroused so much zeal and tension and curiosity had it not come during an election year. Very true gentlemen. He was merely nothing almost inconsequential to the county politics until his death.”

The narrator had my affirmation on the assertion. In our local states, trivial and improvident subjects make politicians abounding, fatefully even purposeless politicians. For instance, however malevolent you are, you can still be voted for into presidency. It only dangles with the framework of the election. The International Criminal Court only serves a role of making you peoples’ firm favorite and more formidable in your country for denouncing you of manslaughter. Such in a case what I term sympathy votes win you an election. Makes you a president. A brigand with veto powers of a country. For having been indicted of drug peddling, you can be elected into a governor’s seat. You see, in Africa sympathy and not democracy awards criminals’ dominance. You don’t get elected for the reason of having a noble standing and a righteous stratagem, you get elected out of pity and compassion if I am to be right. In our Africa you can also get into a sensitive office only by being mentioned in a scandal, leave alone your participation. A multi-million scandal will make you a senator in our country. You don’t need to be auspicious; you don’t need a republican-like proposal to mobilize sincere votes into leadership. No, not in Africa. The context and your partaking in public derailment is liable to securing you an

election. Don't even cheat, just invite the attention of intelligent departments, call their involvement "BULLYING" if not "character assassination" you will undoubtedly triumph.

After a gauge and sensitive look at his audience, the dread haired man continued.

"...now let me see, the governorship attracted many people from resolved chumps to substantial intellectuals. Of course, every seat disputed for has an incumbent. The greatly elevated H.E, Respectable Wanyoike Wa Wanyoike WWW...yes, he was the one, the incumbent. A short bald-headed man who permanently dressed a smile on his face. Would anyone believe that his name was Washington Warner, true switched it to what he labelled as Africanism and Partisanship. To my comprehension, just like Pablo Escobar this man was peoples' darling. Had open hands even to his widely prominent foes. He delivered foods during hankering times; he gave accommodation to those impacted by the frequent floods. I mean he utterly had no strategy of erecting dykes, food supplies won him election more than dykes and good farming strategies would do. But why? I have never known. WWW, a highly regarded man with the longest C.V ever in history of leadership. He would always say that. But what was entailed in the C.V...?"

I nodded in concurrence with the narrator's brainwaves. Ones again I won the attention as I fortuitously dropped my lately acquired iPhone. Upsetting it was. Don't you think so? I was for another time catching the fancy of the audience.

Indeed, it is frankly true, bound to be facts. African politicians have this propensity of switching their European names to local

ones. I mean from what sounds foreign to local. Very smart, psychological push designed at winning trust of poor voters. Simulating fidelity. We can best call that duplicity. It maneuvers like a bait in substantiating him or her of the seat come next election. And true it has pretty well relinquished fruits to most of them. The trick has made some presidents, prime ministers and big ambassadors. Try it some other time. The other extreme happens when an African leader switches his name to something that sounds extraterritorial from local. African name to European name. In such case it is reckoned betrayal, lack of decency and respect to the people you lead or intend to lead. Betrayal. Not patriotism. They however will never fail to shield their actions, "...we are becoming civilized, we have to start by taking up change. Our names should not impede us from getting foreign endowments and loans, remember they burrowed our ores we have to get them back by a little bit enticing them to accept us. I will be the example." A leader leads. A preacher practices what he preaches. The international formality and degrees call that from us. This brings about a diverse and muddled reaction. A mixed opinion and conflict of interest. It can win you an election and as well it can send you packing for five political years, I don't recommend that. Oh, let us continue with our narrator.

"...H. E, Wanyoike Wa Wanyoike, a man of the people, a heartbeat of the people" he continued. "...wanted to return unchallenged. He stood for "STATE COHERENCE AND INTEGRITY" a catchphrase that kept his breath audible...there was also a treasurer to farmers Sacco, he wanted to be elected in without essentially being countered, what again was his name...?"

“Mr. Muganda” came a voice from the far-right corner, and that way the attention was trailed. The man wore a leather jacket, a “godfather” hat. You could tell that he was a middle-class bread winner by the fact that he was putting on eye glasses. We call them spectacles.

“...yes exactly” confirmed the narrator before picking up.

“...Mr. Muganda was a commendable man only that, despite being the longest serving treasurer, he machinated with the chairperson to passionately, psychologically and economically smash up and sabotage the SACCO...true ladies and gentlemen. They never called for a general members meeting, never called for the SACCO’s election. The two formed a complete tyrant dual that conducted the SACCO’s affairs as their family issues. When rumors alleging him of using the SACCO’s money to fund his campaigns were raised it did not throw anyone aback. Ladies and gentlemen, I know you can even relate this at your own level of twiggging. Mr. Muganda wanted to step in fresh and unopposed. He stood for ‘THE NEW BEGINNIG’”

I gingerly changed my bearing determined not to interrupt the staunch attention the narrator had gained. There was a flash of thoughts crisscrossing my mind over the statements the narrator had just raised. His mind must have been magically connected to mine. Why would anyone embezzle money, grab public property and waste his illegitimately secured mammon to fund a campaign for an election he is likely not to win? SACCOs have no money, parastatals are depending only on the limited liabilities they have, companies are being placed under insolvency and others risk being liquidated. Banks world over depend on central banks, countries relying on

World Bank and IMF. What is the point here, corruption and mayhem has quite for long time now established African leadership? Yes. Integrity fails everyone I can tell you, but it fails politicians the most. Politicians are delinquents with legally listed podiums that they use without any sense of integrity to fleece their corresponding countries under the watch of toothless decrees they promulgate against themselves. Roofed by the blood of the statute. They steal to fund campaigns. They provide more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain the poor, that is crazy. Don't you think so?

My aunt in recent times resigned from her vocation. Essentially, she used to work as a head of a secondary school, the school endures today a discrepancy of KSh.20 million. I confine myself from saying she is liable, but what to my knowledge, her endeavor of becoming an MCA miscarried not because she lost, not because of bad context of an election period no, but because wining against any incumbent in Africa takes you back to the drawing board. Horrifying truth now.

My devotion was not dwindled into something else. The concurring from the audience served as an energizing factor to the narrator. This must be his third glass. Surprising today the glasses at Popco are barely touched. It felt like a dream.

“...there were positions in the country to be precise. Not forgetting other insignificant federations and unions, infinity to be accurate but just as it is communal everywhere in Africa, the preceding inhabitants wanted to be restored unobstructed ...”

“Hold on there.” I said to my mind and just as if he had skimmed my psyche the narrator paused for a sip. My “Hold on there” proposed to explicate on the expression “greedy.” Greed is a

malfunction where the patient aching from it cannot get satiated. When everyone aspires to be re-elected then this essentially communicates to you of how the previous is certainly true. The disturbing point is that even complete dupes yearn for re-elections. Hence it is absolutely true stating, wages in any political spot counts not, what counts are the bonds the same office holds.

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