

The Money Pressure

And other stories

Editors

Mike Turere

Isaac Maina

Elong'o Publishers Anthology

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ISBN-13: 979-8371-30-511-4

Printed by Elong'o Publishers

Email: info@elongopublishers.co.ke

Phone: +254742433826

Website: <https://elongopublishers.co.ke>

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The Money Pressure

By Muchanji Pius

We found ourselves with limited alternatives and a lack of alternatives, leaving us with no choice but to persevere. Our determination to improve our lives led us to make a solemn commitment: we were willing to undertake whatever measures necessary. As evening fell, Lens demonstrated his resolute nature by shouldering the blame for his own suggestion. It was he who had proposed the concept that resonated with all of us, the concept that ultimately became known as "The Day-Night Secret Success Behind the Door." We collectively agreed to document our experiences under this title, envisioning a future where we would share our story after acquiring our meticulously guarded black limousine.

"Robbing from the poor is a weak decision. What the heck is that...it isn't robbing...it's killing them. They are just like us... Remember that old lady's cry? What's that...huh!"

"That wasn't our initial plan but we had no other options Lens" I stood and spoke up weakly.

"Let's stop these brothers. The poor lady almost died, wailing mentioning her poor granddaughter. Remember her words too?"

"Yes we do ..." Roy replies then he starts imitating the poor lady's actions. He picks up a stick to represent the lady's walking stick. "Oooh...wuiii....wuiii... I.. I.. Only have 450 shillings...here... here, wuuuuu....wuuuu...was the only food for my poor granddaughter. Spare my life she got no one to take good care of her...her parents are no more...please

my grandsons...you... you... (Pointing at us repeatedly) you and you...and you, you are all my grandsons"

Roy stops and shouts angrily "we showed her mercy, we left her. We didn't take a cent from her. She was faking it, maybe. Look at us! The system didn't show us that mercy, it robbed us time, our minds. The four years for nothing? To be ruled out by the so-called experience? Are we stupid...have we failed the tastes in the fields? Lens...stop being namby-pamby, the world is abundant. Why can't we use that huh?"

"Well well...you always laugh at me for being short. You don't call me Kyle nowadays. I'm Shortee...hey Shortee...hey Shortee... but my mind is taller. Let's leave the poor ones. If the world is abundant and the system keeps us below then we have to drag them down. Bite their pockets for 1, 2 years. They'll surely won't be poor after that period... they'll still hold on to their abundance.

Lens chuckles "Shortee again... I had that before you even thought about our deeds. That's why I mentioned that grandma buddy. We are all under one roof...the sky is our roof and it's fair that we all touch that roof in this little time we all have. If not now then let it be the next second, not tomorrow. Life is so short...it has gained the speed of a lightning. Patience pays is a deal in BC, AD times. Times when Enoch... Abraham...Noah could hit 500+ years. We have 65 at least, 25 in school, 5 to look for a purpose in life. Life begins at 40, you only have 15 to set everything...damn let's cut that my brothers. Let's go for the system."

We caused harm to several individuals and forcibly took away what the destitute had collected through begging, disregarding any concerns because

we had not yet taken a life. Our hands remained unstained by blood. The echoes of screams and the tears of our victims haunted me during countless nights, yet I found a way to detach myself, averting my gaze. Our actions transpired within the confines of the city, far removed from our village where our families firmly believed their sons were earning an honest living. We had achieved success, reaping the rewards of our education. Our families adhered to traditional notions of immediate success upon graduation. We had shed our metaphorical chains of servitude to toil for a company owned by a Caucasian individual. Collectively, we decided to abandon the label of "cheap labor" that the company owner applied to us. What truly pained me were our colleagues who served as supervisors, acting with utmost cruelty and subservience to please the white employer. They embezzled a portion of our wages and subjected us to constant surveillance. The erosion of morale commenced with them, crushing our spirits.

They are the top fish, whales? Shark...or say what? We were like sardines compared to them. Thought of the question I had asked people back in the street... A rich guy accused of killing a poor man after grabbing his property for his benefits. One of the police officers had the evidence but the court declared him to be innocent because of bribery. So, the policeman followed the rich guy and killed him. He later killed the judge and the parties involved. Did he really help that poor dead man? No, maybe he just sent them to a new battle in the other life where money isn't involved? Adding food to a full stomach doesn't make sense. To me, the policeman did it right.

Lens and Roy assumed the role of the team's physical protection, acting as bodyguards to shield us from potential threats, namely the assassins who ultimately became the targets and adversaries within our system. Shortee, on the other hand, played a significant role in manipulating their

psychological state. Despite his diminutive and frail physique, he possessed the ability to feign certain illnesses, effectively creating a sense of genuine disruption. Notably, his exceptional swiftness made him the fastest member of our group, earning him the nickname "windsock" due to his propensity to be easily propelled by the wind, thereby augmenting his speed. Roy, characterized by his gruff demeanor and brusque nature, served as our tenacious and uncompromising individual, embodying the archetype of a formidable team member.

I was the coolest. I played cool most of the time. I was the mind when it came to locations and the set. My eyes were sharp and my mind could master each route we used. I can't say it's genius because I only used the features around. I could survey location unique features like the railway, satellites and majorly the main road. I hated concentrating on the obvious things. Avoided human interactions. I had one goal and money was the goal.

Most of the time I could feel that life is a tautology, you wake in the morning only to go back to bed at night. Be born and learn that you are breathing for a couple of years. Eat mostly because you're hungry, get satisfied but that doesn't last. You are tied to being either happy or sad every time. Live from January to December, the sun in December is still the sun in October and January. That's life.

If you are given a day to describe one thing you want you will be confused. The list is long and life is so short.

The big question that always pops into my mind is why is that for the blacks? It's so hard for a black to give his brother a hand. They prefer to see you suffer and struggle in the name of "I also went through this before

making it." I guess it's because of slavery. It taught us how to be hard, hardening our hands without sparing our hearts. Our minds are hard too thus creating a wall to flexibility. Slavery controlled our minds, it's still controlling our minds then that's why it's hard to grow as a community, one community. Slavery? We follow every step the original slaves' masters do.

It all started the day I stepped my foot on the university's soil. Schools' hostel life wasn't easy on me. I had to interact with other students, one thing that I was so poor at. I like it when I'm alone to avoid exposing the struggling me. I couldn't fit in most of the fancy. I came from nothing and when I say nothing I mean nothing.

As one of the final students admitted due to financial constraints, I was fortunate enough to be assigned a two-bedroom accommodation that allowed me to limit my social interactions. As I approached my designated room, I caught the faint sound of lively music emanating from within. Initially, the urge to retreat and avoid the gathering crossed my mind, but I ultimately decided to enter. Inside, my fellow residents were already immersed in a celebration of sorts, though I never took the initiative to inquire about the reason behind it. Without engaging in conversation, I simply placed my bag on the bed and made my way out, disregarding their attempts to engage me. As I ventured outdoors, I observed various clusters of students engaged in animated conversations, with some even showcasing their dance skills to the amusement of their peers.

A juvenile individual was situated beneath a tree, engaging in the act of masticating upon a sugar-infused confectionary stalk. The peculiar circumstance generated a sense of amusement within me, as it fortuitously

synchronized with the auditory stimulus provided by the music I was currently immersed in...

"Me know bout sadile....yeeeah!

Mackree.....yeeeah!

bullybeef.....yeeeah!"

I really loved the song, I was a higgler to be a survivor. Fancy to me could have hit a "nothn a waste nothn a dash way" wall.

The boy had old, dirty shoes. He was so emaciated. Another funny thing is that he was in a red; t-shirt and rugged trousers, an agent from the red cross? Sat opposite to him by a far waiting for him to finish chewing. No one was closer to us, we were a little bit far from the hostels.

"Hi...I'm Bay" I started

He didn't say a word for some time. Felt like I was bothering his nerves so I decided to walk away. Heard a snap and turned to face him.

Holding 2 pieces of a stick "Kyle... Call me Kyle"

Awkwardly shifting my eyes from the pieces of the sticks he had to his shoes...had broken his rule

"Kyle"

"Yes... you heard...I'm Kyle"

Shockingly stared at him with my mind wondering why he was rude irregardless to his body.

"I'm from Russia" He said

Staring at him "Russia!"

"Yes...with ..ash..."

"Just heard of it...a small town in Central...Rashia?"

"Yes, you?"

"No, let's not talk about where I come from..."

I introduced him to the song I was listening to. It's about money so we start talking about how we are on those soils looking for money.

"Yes, we will surely get it after our 4 years here"

Dusk comes and we part. I have only one place to go...to my room. Sighing because the party is over. They were wrapping their things up. One boy remains behind, takes his laptop and hands it to me.

"I'm your roommate. You can use this to watch movies. We are going for supper...to an Indian lady. She runs a nice hotel"

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