**THE SACRIFICE.**

**Chapter one.**

A hot afternoon in ubulu-ukwu village, delta state, a young woman, obianuju nwafor was declared missing. This mishap has never happened in the history of ubulu-ukwu village before. This news has just gotten to the obi and he has sent out the palace guards to look for this maiden.

Obianuju is a beautiful maiden in this village. She is the daughter of ichee Onoha and Beatrice nwafor. Obianuju is the first daughter of her family and she is the eyes of the family as her siblings are still too young to make decisions. Obianuju goes to the farm every day and takes care of her siblings at the same time. Obianuju is a very hardworking daughter. Her father is really fond of her because of her diligence in her work. She is also a very brilliant student in her school. Obianuju is loved by so many in the village because of her kindness and generosity.

Obianuju has been running errand for people in the village and helping the old people do some house chores. This made them love her even more. The disappearance of obianuju got everyone in the village worried because obianuju is a very useful girl in the community and most importantly, something like this has never happened in this village before.

Obianuju has five siblings, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 years of age respectively. Ngozi is 8 years old, obinna is 10 years old, chukwudi is 12, Irene is 14 while comfort is 16. Obianuju is the eldest child. She is 20 years old. Obianuju takes care of the family whole heartedly. She cooks, cleans, takes her siblings to school and goes ahead later to pick them up. Obianuju tries so hard to assist her parents in selling yam and cassava after they have gone to the farm to harvest them.

Ever since obianuju finished secondary school, there was no money to further her education so she decided to help her parents take care of her younger ones while she still tries to help them save up for her university. Obianuju is not a demanding child. She belies that Gods time is always the best although she loves going to school but since her parents do not have enough to send her to school, she has decided to stay calm till Gods time.

After helping her parents sell yam and cassava, she usually goes for evening lessons at a school down the road. She couldn’t afford the lessons but due to obianujus kindness, she was allowed to go to the lesson for free. When she comes back from the market square, she cooks dinner for her family then she goes off for lesson. Although obianuju stopped school after secondary level, she still had great ambitions set aside for when she grows up. She has always thought about being a lawyer but the setting in which she was brought up associated with financial support would not let her work on that but nevertheless, that did not stop her from pursuing her dreams of being a lawyer. From time to time obianuju would go to the community library to read some law books to boost her knowledge. Obianuju has continued her education by herself with the help of the library and her part time lesson.

**Chapter two**

On this day of the mysterious disappearance of obianuju, she was in the kitchen after dropping off her younger ones in school, she decided to prepare food for her parents. All of a sudden, obianuju started walking away, out of the kitchen, out of the house. Apparently, this was not normal.

When her parents came back from the farm, they noticed the food burning in the kitchen. They called out for obianujus attention but she was nowhere to be found and that was where the search began.

Initially they decided to give their worries some time in hopes that she will eventually come back as she does not stay out long or sleep out but they became more worried after they waited till the sun came down and it was already evening that was when they went down to her lesson school to check on her but she was not there. They became worried. They decided to go back home and give it till morning before they send out search parties.

The next morning, obianujus parents started the search because this was very abnormal for obianuju because something like this has never happened before. Obianuju is not the type to stay away from home so this made them more worried that something bad must have happened to her.

The able bodied men in the village set out to search for obianuju. Her parents were very worried and so was every other villager because their lives were now at risk if indeed she was actually kidnapped because this mysterious disappearance made everyone have unanswered questions on their minds.

This unfortunate disappearance has gotten to the obi and he also sent out his palace guards in search of her. Everyone was on the lookout for their lives because they were no longer safe in their village. Obianujus family members were not taking her disappearance easy on themselves because of how attached they have all been to her. It was really a bitter situation because they could not take it all in. they found it very hard to move on without her.

**Chapter three**

It has been one year since obianuju has been missing and her parents still were not taking it well. Since they couldn’t find her they assumed she was dead and automatically all the search for obianuju has stopped and people kept coming to pay condolences visits to obianujus parents.

It has not been easy for obianujus parents to move on without her. Her siblings were not able to really understand what was going on they were just told that obianuju will come back home soon.

The obi of this village was always there to console this family because he knew how helpful obianuju has been in the community. Although all searches for obianuju had stopped and she was assumed dead, her parents still felt she was alive somewhere but always kept on praying and hoping that one day she will return home to them and everything will go back to normal.

Now things have changed in the village. The mode of daily activities has now changed due to the fear that the disappearance of obianuju will befall on someone else in the village. People now go to farm and not spend much time to return but most importantly, they were always watching their backs.

The obi put in more measures to ensure tight security in the village so as to not lose any other person in the village. The people of ubulu-ukwu were indeed frightened with everything that they were taking precautions by themselves.

A year has passed by but still not a word from obianuju but her parents were still hoping on God to bring her back home safely. Her siblings were always asking when she will be back but her parents kept telling them that she will be back soon enough.

Obianujus disappearance has put a frown on everyone’s face and also put everyone on proper alert so as to not be a victim next time. Everyone has lost hope in getting her back so they found it in their hearts to move on without her. Especially her parents.

**Chapter four**

It’s been a year and six months to the disappearance of obianuju and everyone has forgotten about her. It was really hard for them but they tried their best to move on.

One faithful day, nkem, the famous palm wine tapper reported to the obis palace with so much happiness that he knows obianujus whereabouts. At first what he was saying was not making sense to him but he insisted that he found her and she is very much alive.

Nkem was given the ground to explain what he saw. Obianujus family were present in this testimony as they have missed their daughter deeply so they listened to him attentively.

Nkem stated that he saw her in the neighboring village, Agbo. He said that he went there to tap palm wine as usual then he saw someone that looked like her but he was not sure so as to not jump into conclusions he kept looking at her till someone called her name then it was confirmed that she was the one. He further stated that she was with a child in her arms and also heavily pregnant for another.

Nkem followed her so he would know where she lived now and who she lives with. He said that he followed her dep into the bush then he found her going into a hut in the bush and he also saw the popular native doctor welcome her home.

This was very heartbreaking and unbelievable that obianuju would abandon her family and her dreams of becoming a lawyer to become the mistress of a native doctor. Her mother thought deep about this information that she just got and got a flash back of the time that this native doctor came to take her away forcefully some time ago stating that he gets whatever and whoever he wants as a native doctor and he will come back for her. That was when she realized that obianuju didn’t fall into his arms willingly and she was probably jazzed.

They had to do something and they had to act really fast so as to not completely lose their daughter. The obi sent out his palace guards in disguise to go bring obianuju home safely.

The next day they set out to go and bring her back home. On getting there, fortunately for them, the native doctor was not home so it made everything easy for them to bring her and her children back home. When obianuju came back, everyone was happy to have her back. She was questioned deeply but she insisted that she didn’t know how she got there that she found herself there one day and she also believes that she was jazzed because she could not see herself married to a native doctor.

Her parents were so happy to see her that they decided to throw a welcome back party for her as everything was all over but little did they know that it was not yet over. The native doctor found his way back to them in full force to get back his wife.

On the arrival of this native doctor, the obi was quickly summoned but the native doctor insisted on taking obianuju back. The obi was so furious that he dismissed his presence immediately but before he left, he threatened to be back and said they would not see him coming and they should expect his arrival.

**Chapter five**

One faithful afternoon, Irene, obianujus youngest sister was outside playing with obianujus children, when she turned to pick up something, by the time she turned back, the children were gone. As worried as she was she called out for attention and help when they all came out and started chasing after the woman who took them but she had already gotten to her car, put them inside and zoomed off. Obianuju spotted the familiar face that took her kids which was one of the wives of the native doctor so she reported this case to the obi. The next day the obi set out guards to go in search of the children. On getting there, they found the hut empty. The native doctor had gone away from there.

When they got back, they told the obi what they saw and how the place was empty on their arrival. Obianuju was so devastated and did not know what to do about it but the obi assured her that they will do everything in their powers to find her children.

Finally, they were able to reach out to the native doctor and he told them that if they don’t give him back his wife, he would not let go of the children. He insisted that he paid her bride price and so his wife should come back to him or else she does not get to see her children anymore. Obianuju cried and rejected to go back there and blamed herself for going there in the first place but they made her understand that it was never her fault.

A meeting was called by the obi with the nwafors. The obi needed to clarify things from Mr. nwafor alongside the native doctor to find out how much was paid for the bride price and to see how he could be refunded but Mr. nwafor insisted that the native doctor took obianuju illegally without paying any single dime. While all these arguments were going on, Mr. nwafor decided to cut the noise and agreed to pay him back his bride price, if he so wishes in order to let his grandchildren go.

The nwafor family were not the rich ones so it gave them a very hard time to raise money to meet up to the agreements.

Shortly after the agreements were made, a suitor came for obianuju. They explained everything that went down with obianuju and the native doctor and he agreed to pay off the native doctor. While they were getting to know each other, they found out that he was also a native doctor, but a peaceful one.

Amadi is a well-known native doctor in enuguyi village in delta state. He heals people with herbs and helps them with other issues. He came to heal a sick person in ubulu-ukwu village when he came across this beautiful maiden. He stopped her and asked for her name and she told him. They got talking and started getting acquainted with each other. Obianuju took him to her parents in due time and they blessed their marriage but before then, they told him everything that transpired with the other native doctor from Agbo. Amadi assured them that he will do all it takes to settle scored with the other native doctor and get her children back.

**Chapter six**

It has been a month after Amadi and obianuju got married and paid off the other native doctor but no word had been said about her children so one day she decided to take a trip over there and get children by herself.

She spoke to her husband about this and he offered to follow her to get them back. On getting there she was redirected to the native doctor’s new house. On getting there she was told that he passed away exactly one month ago. She broke down in tears as she could not see her children around and she could not tell where to start from in looking for them.

While she was at it, a woman that looked familiar to her walked up to her and told her that her second child passed away shortly after he was kidnapped by her father and her first child was sold out to a family in the neighborhood. This woman took obianuju to this house. on getting there, her daughter was the first person she saw immediately, she ran back inside the house on seeing her mother. She went in to call her new mother.

They spoke about it for a long time. These people were ready to give up obianuju not her real mother although it was really hard for them to come up with the conclusion but obianuju pleaded with them to let her go home with her child. As they were coming to a conclusion, the young girl spoke up. She said she would not be going home with her mother because her mother threw her away. On hearing this, her mother broke down in tears. She did not know how to further explain to her that she was kidnapped. She left in tears but pleaded with her new parents to take good care of her and she would be sending in stuff from time to time.

Obianuju went back home in tears. Her husband was always there to console her. Then she made up her mind to move on and start a new family with Amadi.

**Chapter seven**

Years after Amadi and obianuju agreed to take a huge step in their lives and start a family with each other, they had 4 children. Amadi had successfully converted her husband to a Christian and he beloved the change. They were living happily ever after with their family. Amadi became a carpenter while obianuju goes to the farm from time to time to get food for her children to eat.

Obianujus children grew up really fast and they were also helping out with farm works and other things that would help grow the family. They made sure they took good care of their children with good faith and strength.

After some years, obianujus parents passed away after being happy about the way things turned out with their children. Obianujus siblings grew up and became successful with her help. She made sure her and her husband saw them through school after their parents became too old to fend for them. Obianuju was now the only parent they had. Obianuju and her husband made sure they took them to the city to further their education. She made sure they got to study what thy always dreamt of without any obstruction.

Her siblings finished school in flying colors and they got into the search of work. Things were working okay for them. They all got what they wanted in life except obianuju got only happiness meanwhile being a lawyer was left on hold.

Obianuju was really proud of the woman she has become. She was a very good mother to her children, wife to her husband and sister to her siblings. Her siblings always looked up to her so as her children.

Few years after, her husband died. She was sad but she had to be strong for her children. He was taken to the mortuary while they made plans for the burial. Obianuju called some church members asking them to come and commit her husband’s soul to God and they agreed to come when the date was finally set.

**Chapter eight**

It has been two months after her husband died and a burial date was already set in two weeks to come. She did all she could to raise money with the help of her siblings to give her husband a befitting burial. The burial date was set to the coming week. Now she was ready to finally lay her husband’s soul to rest.

She called all her family members and sent out invitations to the noble people of high class of the village to honor her with their presence. She knew her husband was a good man and he deserved a perfect burial. All of them agreed to honor her invitation.

While all these preparations were going on, she was also preparing her mind on the single mother journey she was going to embark on. she could not stop crying as she missed her husband’s presence.

It was already two days to the burial and much preparations were made. Practically all preparations were made for the burial. Family members started coming down to the village for the burial ceremony.

Seeing her family was one great jpoy to obianuju. She was really happy that everyone came together for the burial especially her siblings.

**Chapter nine**

On the day of the burial, the burial rites started right on time. Everyone came back for the burial. The noble people of the community also were in attendance in the burial. Her husbands people were also present for the burial.

As soon as the pastors were about to deliver amadis soul, a group of people on white and red stormed the burial. On getting close they were mummuring some incantations to themselves. They were quickly stopped and not allowed to go any closer to the body but they insisted.

Thjey claimed that once a native doctor is forever a native doctor. They insisterd that amadi must be buried in the traditional way of the native doctors. They had littlke arguments on how he clearly gave his life to Christ befor he passed away but they would not listen. They insistef that he should be buried the traditional way. The burial was delyed on the arrival of these men on white.

After much arguments, obianuju agreed for peace to reign. The last thing she ever wanted was for her husbands burial to end up badly so she agreed.

She was asked to walk round naked with a white cloth around her waist with a calabash of candles seven times. Obianuju could not wrap her head round this request. Accprding to nthem, gthis was to specify that his soul was going back to the native doctors community.

She agreed to do it tpo avoid more arguments from these people. She wnt inside, dressed up in the white cloth bare chested, she was covered with white powder and the white cloth around her waist. It was an awful sight for her children but she had to do what she had to do to make peace. When it was time for the sacrifice, she came pit with the candles and walked round seven times. When she was done she quickly went baack inside to change. Assoon as she finished, the uninvited guests left. The burial ceremony continued. The church prayed over his bodyb then they laid him down to rest.

After much struggles, the burial was finally over and she finally was able to find it in herself to accept that her husband was gone and it was left to hrer to handl,e things on her own.

Years passed by and obianuju became older and one day she passed away.