



BENITA

A POWERFUL CHRISTIAN
NOVEL SERIES

SEASON 3

— ✧ — WRITTEN BY — ✧ —

ANTHONY IJERE

SEASON 3 · EPISODE EIGHT

The Mystery of Njaba



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For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

— JEREMIAH 29:11

The drama rehearsal had gone on for almost two hours, and Clara stood at the centre of the church auditorium while the other members of the drama group took their positions. They were preparing for a special presentation, and Clara had insisted that the story should carry a message about spiritual freedom.

The stage was arranged to look like a forest, and one of the actresses played a woman running for her life who looked frightened as she moved through the imaginary bush, constantly looking behind her.

“Help me!” she shouted.

The demons were chasing her, and she ran until they caught her. They dragged her into a dark spiritual house and locked her inside a cage, and she struggled to come out.

Then she saw the key lying outside the cage, so she

stretched her hand through the bars and tried to reach it, but she could not. She pushed against the cage, and the moment she tried to step out, an invisible force pushed her backward.

She tried again and the same thing happened, and she cried out in frustration.

“I cannot get out!”

The others acting as demons laughed around her, then the lights changed and an angel appeared. The angel picked up the key and threw it toward her, and she caught it.

For a moment she stared at the key in her hand, then she inserted it into the lock and the cage opened. She ran, and the demons immediately chased after her.

“Catch her!”

“Don't let her escape!”

She ran faster, then she suddenly turned toward them and shouted,

“Whoever the Son sets free is free indeed!”

She kept running.

“I am free in the name of Jesus!”

The demons continued chasing her, so she shouted again,

“Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty!”

The entire drama group had become quiet, and the woman continued running as the demons were almost catching her. Then Clara, who was directing the drama, suddenly shouted,

“Cut! Cut! Cut! Cut!”

Everyone stopped and the auditorium became quiet, and Clara smiled with satisfaction.

“That's the end.”

The actors relaxed, some laughed and others began discussing their parts, but Clara remained standing for a moment. Then her expression changed as she looked around the room because there was something she needed to tell them.

WE HAVE LOST BENITA

“Please, everyone, come together.”

They gathered around her, and Cynthia was among them while Clara took a breath.

“Thank you all for coming for the rehearsal.”

She paused.

“There is something I need to tell you.”

Nobody spoke, and Clara looked down before speaking the name that changed the atmosphere.

“Benita...”

She continued.

“We have lost Benita.”

Cynthia's face changed immediately.

“What?”

Clara continued with a heavy voice.

“It has been more than a year. She has not returned. Her number is no longer going through. I have tried calling her many times. Benjamin has tried too.”

Someone whispered, “Maybe she changed her number.”

Clara shook her head.

“I had a dream.”

Cynthia stared at her.

“What dream?”

“I saw Benita dead.”

The room went silent and Clara's voice trembled as she explained.

“I didn't want to believe it. But she has been gone for so long. Nobody can reach her.”

Cynthia's eyes filled with tears.

“No...”

Another person began crying.

“How can we know that she is really dead?”

“We don't,” Clara replied. “But something is wrong.”

The room became filled with tears as some sat down and others covered their faces, and Cynthia cried openly.

“She cannot be dead.”

Clara also began crying.

“I wish I was wrong.”

That evening became one of the most painful evenings they had experienced, and many of them could not sleep because the thought of Benita being somewhere, perhaps dead, kept disturbing them.

WHY DID SHE HAVE TO DIE

Benjamin was suffering too, for Clara's dream had already planted fear in his heart, and then he had a dream of his own where he saw Benita dead. He woke up frightened and sat on his bed for several minutes without moving.

“Lord...”

He tried to pray.

“Is Benita dead?”

There was no answer he could hear, so he prayed again.

“Lord, please tell me something.”

But his mind was already filled with fear, and he began to cry as he remembered how much he had hoped to marry her. He remembered the conversations they had shared, how she had supported his ministry, her

courage and her voice.

“God, please.”

He buried his face in his hands.

“Why did she have to die?”

But somewhere deep inside him he still wanted to believe she was alive, even though he just could not see past the fear.

Mrs. Evelyn was also breaking down, for she could hardly eat and would sit with food in front of her and simply stare at it. Sometimes she would pick up Benita's photograph.

“My daughter.”

She would cry until she became tired, while Mr. Paul was still in the hospital and his condition had become serious because of the shock. Every day he asked about Benita.

“Has she called?”

Mrs. Evelyn would struggle to answer.

“No.”

He would close his eyes.

“My daughter...”

Benedict was confused and did not know what to do, because the thought of losing his sister became too heavy for him. At one point he thought about taking his own life and considered drinking poison, then he stopped, and another time he thought about stabbing himself and stopped again. He sat down and began crying.

“No. I cannot do this.”

He knew that Benita would never want him to destroy himself, so he remained alive carrying the pain.

WHAT ABOUT ME

Meanwhile in Njaba, Benita was sitting quietly inside the corps members' house while the others were preparing for the seventy two hour prayer they had agreed to undertake. But Benita's mind was somewhere else because she had been watching the sick people who came to the house.

People came with different conditions, they prayed, some became better and some experienced relief, and each time Benita saw someone recover, another thought kept returning to her.

She had no womb and had known it for years, and she had tried to accept it even though she had made mistakes in her past and had cried over it before. But lately something about it had become difficult to ignore, so she looked at herself with sorrow.

“I am praying for other people's lives.”

She wiped her eyes.

“People are coming here and getting better.”

She became silent.

“But what about me?”

Her voice became weak.

“God, I want to help deliver this land. I want to see these people free. But I don't have a womb.”

Tears gathered in her eyes.

“Can You give me one?”

She looked down.

“Why can't I have a womb?”

She began questioning herself.

“Have You not forgiven me?”

She knew she had made mistakes and knew the things she had done before her transformation.

“But I have given my life to You. I have tried to serve You. Why am I still carrying this?”

The tears came freely now as she picked up her Bible and opened it, but before she could read, tears dropped onto the pages. She closed it and could not concentrate, and she did not eat much that day but simply sat quietly.

SEVENTY TWO HOURS

Eventually the time came for the seventy two hour prayer, and all seven corps members gathered in one room: Benita, Constance, Kelvin, Evans, Kemi, Chioma and Udoka. They closed the door and had water beside them with no food.

The first hours were intense as they prayed loudly and moved around the room, and some knelt while some stood and some prayed in tongues while others opened their Bibles and read Scriptures aloud. After about two hours the strength began to leave their bodies and their voices became softer.

Someone would pray for a while and then lie down, and another would wake up and continue praying. Sometimes they would sleep for a short time, wake up and pray again, and there was no comfortable routine as they were simply trying to remain in God's presence.

Sometimes they sang and sometimes they danced, sometimes they sat quietly and sometimes they opened their Bibles and studied. As the hours passed something changed and the room became unusually quiet.

There were moments when nobody spoke for a long time, then suddenly someone would begin praying in tongues, another would join, and then everyone would join. They continued for twelve hours, twenty four hours, thirty six and forty eight, and the days seemed to merge into one another.

They drank only water and their bodies became weaker, their faces became thinner and their clothes began to hang loosely on them, but they continued. At the end of the seventy two hours Benita could barely sit upright and was lying on the floor with her eyes closed. The others were also exhausted and nobody

had the strength to shout anymore, and the room was quiet.

J E S U S

Then something happened, for Benita was no longer aware of the people around her as the room disappeared and the weakness disappeared. She opened her eyes and Jesus was standing before her, and she could not explain how she knew it was Him but she simply knew.

She looked at Him.

“Jesus?”

He looked at her with compassion, then He began to show her something. She saw the land of Njaba, the forest, the river, and the strange spiritual activities that had surrounded the village for generations, and then she saw a woman.

Jesus showed her the history of the land, for long ago the surrounding communities had attacked Njaba and the people of the land were weak and could not defend themselves. In desperation they went to a woman who lived near the forest close to the river, and she was a powerful sorcerer.

They sought her help to fight their enemies. So they fought and won the battle with her witchcraft powers but the surrounding communities also sought greater spiritual power and came after her. The woman ran to the river and entered the water, and through the power she carried she became a fish.

But the people pursuing her followed with their own spiritual power, and they caught her and forced her back into human form. They tried to kill her, but the weapon they used could not penetrate her body because her spiritual power had become so great that they could not kill her normally.

So they burned her alive near the river, but they did not understand what they were doing because the burning became the very ritual that gave her a different kind of spiritual existence. They thought they had destroyed her, but instead they had helped her become something even more dangerous.

When they tried to leave they were all struck down spiritually by her. She now existed spiritually. She became a spiritual ruler over the land and influenced generations of people, and she operated through fear, witchcraft and covenants.

Benita stared at what she was seeing, and then she remembered something.

“Jesus...”

She looked at Him.

“Is she the woman we saw when we were coming into Njaba?”

Jesus answered.

“Yes.”

Benita's eyes widened.

“The woman who stood by the road and told us to go back?”

“Yes.”

Benita remembered Kemi's experience.

“What about the woman Kemi saw standing on the river?”

“Yes.”

Benita could hardly speak.

“So it is the same woman.”

Jesus remained silent, and Benita's mind moved immediately to Didi and John.

“Lord, how do I rescue them?”

Jesus answered her.

“

You will not rescue them before their appointed day.

— JESUS

Benita listened.

“The strangers are taken on the final day of the festival. A male and a female are chosen for sacrifice.”

Benita remembered the things the villagers had told them.

“The witch leads them through the forest,” Jesus continued. “The hunters then capture them. Didi and John became the strangers they were looking for.”

Benita understood.

“So that is why they were captured.”

“Yes.”

She looked troubled.

“Then how will I rescue them?”

Jesus looked at her.

“On the day of their sacrifice.”

Benita became silent, and then Jesus reminded her of something important.

“Do you remember the gift I gave you in drama?”

Benita thought about it.

“Drama?”

“Yes.”

She suddenly understood.

“You mean the drama ministry?”

Jesus nodded, and Benita's eyes widened.

“It will be an instrument I will use for the deliverance of this land.”

Benita listened carefully.

“I will give you inspiration for what to act. My Spirit will move through it.”

She understood that the drama would become part of

the battle.

Benita breathed deeply.

“And the land?”

Jesus looked at her.

“Leave the rest to Me.”

Benita wanted to ask another question, but the question that had been troubling her for days came back. She looked at Jesus with tears.

“Lord...”

She hesitated.

“I don't have a womb. I am praying for people. I am believing You for other people. I want to see this entire land free. But what about me? Will I remain like this?”

Jesus looked at her and then He smiled and gave her a word of comfort.

JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

Benita recognized the Scripture, and she looked at Him through her tears. He said nothing more and simply turned and walked away.

“Jesus!”

Benita reached toward Him, then suddenly she opened her eyes and was back in the room. She could hear the others breathing and feel the floor beneath her, and her body was still weak.

She slowly looked around and saw that nobody seemed to know what had happened to her. Benita remained silent and could not immediately explain what she had seen, but something had changed inside her.

She now understood why they had been brought to Njaba, why Didi and John were trapped, why the festival mattered, why the drama ministry had been placed in her hands, and that the battle for Njaba was only beginning. She slowly sat up with eyes still wet with tears, but this time they were not tears of despair, and she looked at the others with renewed purpose.

“We have work to do.”

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END OF EPISODE EIGHT

WATCH OUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE

WRITTEN BY
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