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English 100

Digital Portfolio: Narrative Project

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**My Step Mother Torture**

It was in 1989 West Africa, Monrovia the capitol city of Liberia, in one of the slums called West Point. It was a steamy hot afternoon, like a volcano was about to erupt. The leaves were all over the yard. I could hear dogs barking afar and chickens crowing behind the house. I was 6 years old at that time and, I was wearing a long dirty white fruit of the loom t-shirt, it was size 2x that looked like a dress on me. I had no underwear under the dress -like t-shirt. It’s smelled like baby poop and vomit. The monster was wearing her usual multi-colors African gown sitting on a long blue bench in the corning of the patio. The patio was painted pink with black at the base of the wall. The voice came over to me like an intercom, “Francissssss.” I answered, “Yes sister Marie.” “Go and get your little brother Dump Site from inside the bed room.” She could hear him crying from the patio where she was sitting. She named him Dump Site because of the continuous death of her children which was infulfillment of the traditional doctor’s request. If she did not name him Dump Site, she was going to lose him to death. “Yes, sister Marie,” I replied.

I ran quickly in the house to get him. I brought him out of the bed room to the patio where the Monster was sitting, carrying him in my hands. The Monster said to me, “Put him to bed by rocking him on your shoulder.” “Yes, sister Marie.” I was doing what she had asked me to do, that’s trying to put him to sleep. The Monster said to me, “I want you to walk around with him, while rocking him on your shoulder.” “I need him to burp and then sleep.” Yes, sister Marie, I replied. While I was walking around rocking my little brother Dump Site on my shoulder, my hands and feet started to get weak and not to mention, I was very hungry. But I couldn’t tell the Monster that I was weak or hungry and tired of carrying him on my shoulders. She was going flog me if I had told her that I was tired and hungry. I fell to floor with my brother on my shoulder. His head hit the concrete floor and blood came gushing out. The monster came running to get her son from the floor, she shouted, “Do you want to kill my only son?” “But I will kill you before you kill my son.” She picked him up and took him in the house to clean the blood and see what impact the fall had caused. On her way in the house, she said to me in a mean voice, “I am coming back for you.”

I became a domestic slave when I was only 5 years going on to 6 years. My father had traveled to the United States of America and he had left me with his girlfriend, called Marie Blamo. I called her Sister Marie and to me she was more than a Monster. It’s a tradition in Liberia to call anyone that is older than you sister, brother, uncle or aunty in addition to their original given name. Marie had no child. According to family members she lost about five children during birth or miscarriages. However, she was pregnant with her sixth child this time around when my dad left us; rumors had it that she had been to more than a dozen native doctors, so that this pregnancy could stay. Few months after my dad left, Marie had her first child and named him Dump Site. The name that one of the native doctors give her. She was told that if she refuses to call him Dump Site, he was going to die. Marie was very worried after she was given the information from the native doctor. However, she was not will to take a risk of loosing her child this time. When the child was given birth to, she gives the child the name which was given by the native’s doctor, “DUMP SITE.”

The Monster was very happy that she had a child. I was now treated as slave. I was doing all the house work at age 6. I fetched water from wells between 1 to 2 miles distances from the house to the wells on my head using five US gallon. I went to the market to buy the house groceries. I washed the house floor every Saturday morning. I did the laundry using my hands. They were so little to hold the clothes, but I had no choice and did the cooking. I was lashed mercilessly for any mistake I made and sometimes lashed me for no reason. She used anything that was in her reach, ranging from her hands, feet, electric wire, tree branches, belts, shoes heels and vehicle fan belt. The Monster threw breakable things at me, which included bowls, mugs, plates and bottles. She hardly fed me. I ate off our neighbor’s leftovers and when am caught eating from neighbor’s, I get flogged and punished the next day from eating and still must do the work. I still have marks on my both from the treatment from the monster, many days I will ask God to please deliver me out of the hands of this MONSTER, and I sometimes say, “Ooh God, why me and when will you take me out of this bondage?

I started shivering after she told me that she was coming back for me, something inside of me was telling me that I was going to die. I didn’t know what to do or what to think off. I started crying out loud before she could even start to torture me. The Monster came out with a red, white and blue baseball bat. She swung the bat at the back of my head. I fell to the floor, at that moment I had strange feelings, something started to flow from the back of my head. My clothes started to get wet as if I was in the rain, the smell was fresh like raw meat, my eyes were swinging as a pendulum. I could hear noise but not knowing what exactly where or what was making those sounds, like I was in a busy street with cars honking and pedestrians moving back and forth. The sound became less and less. I thought I was in a middle of a terrible dream and struggling to wake up from it. A Monster was running after me and was almost to get me when I screamed at the MONSTER, “please don’t kill me”! I jumped up from a bed, breathing heavily with my eyes open and realized that I was in the community clinic and couldn’t remember what had happened to me. In the clinic room, were my grandparents and some family members. They told me that I was rushed to the hospital because Marie hit me in my head and that is why I was in the hospital. A kind voice came from across the room saying, “It’s ok and you’re saved my grandson”! It was my grandmother; she came closer and held my hands with tears in her eyes. “Thank God you’re alive”. She whispers in my ear. I glance in the entire room; the MONSTER was nowhere in the room. I thought to myself, is it true that she’s no more around or was it really a dream come true that I have been save from the MONSTER? As I sat on the bed of the clinic, I couldn’t believe it. I had thousands of things popping out of my mind, but the MONSTER was no more!

On the twelve day of April 2019, I received a facebook request from this strange person name Godfearing Nyumah. I viewed the person’s profile picture, but I couldn’t tell who the person was. I didn’t confirm the friendly request because I never knew who the person was. Few days late I got a long text message from that same person and it read.

Hi Francis,

It’s been a long time since I last talked to you. I know you’re wondering how I got your information on face book. It was your aunty Abbie that give me your contact, I just saw her two days ago in Rome, Italy. I am of the believe that you’re in good health. Francis, I must tell you how I feel about the past. I am getting old and I can not live with this guilt anymore. I must let it out of my mind especially when you are now older and you’re the big brother of my only son who is a man now. I need to unite both of you as brothers. I may not have the chance to do this, so let me do it while I still have life.

I am very sorry for the way I treated you while you were a child living with me. I know that I was very wicked to you. I treated you like a slave and I know you never deserved treatments of that kind. I’m out words to express how remorseful I am. I was really frustrated over many issues I was facing at the time. Just to name a few, I had no child, no husband and lack of family support. This led me to turn all my emotions toward you. I am writing you to let you know that, I regret all those negatives actions and things I did to you. I am asking you to please find place in your heart to forgive me. I know it’s heard but as a Christian, I know you can. I will talk to you again and I will be awaiting your response.

Always,

Sister Marie.

I read the text from Sister Marie about ten times and I couldn’t think of what to say to her. It took me one week and days to get myself together and come out with my reply. I wrote the words blow to her.

Hi Sister Marie,

I’m happy that you’ve decided to come out to let me know that you’re sorry for the way you treated me. I didn’t know that you were in search of me all these years to apologize for you wrong deeds toward me. I read your text more than ten times and I couldn’t get words to reply you. I straggled to put these little thoughts together. On the strong note, I have forgiven you because you recognized your shortfall as a human and apologize to me. It was very hard for me to make this decision, but I did it because you first show me how your past still hunts you and you’re willing to smoke a peace pipe.

All of what you did to me in the past transformed me to be who I am today. Your treatment of yesterday made me to be a better person today. I am an independent man, I can perform any task given me as it relates to house choices like cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and learn to appreciate every individual regardless who they are. I’ve developed physically, mentally and emotionally because of the way you treated me. Let me say again that I’m happy that you came out to say sorry and I accept your apology.

Best regards,

Francis