

SESAN
OGUNTADE



*The
Prostitute*
A NOVEL

A story of extreme love, fury and jealousy

The Prostitute

Chapter 1

Along the street corner in the twilight, the darkness thickening very fast into the night walked a young man in his early thirties. He was grey-headed as an albatross and his eyes inside his dark glasses silently looking through a particular section of the street. He looks so well and grimly as if he was out on a gold hunt. His bold and blue face cap did much to cover the whole length of his face. His eyeglasses were so dark that it almost made him look like a runaway criminal. One would have said that he was a high-profile criminal trying his best to avoid the prying eyes of the rule of law.

Just before him, stretched a long, laborious, dry, empty and dark road. The secrecy of this road's appearance and make-up go a long way to speak volume of its occupation. The popular Allen Avenue, a sprawling metropolis in Lagos, Nigeria housed and harbored the people popularly called the ladies of the night. No one comes here at this period without a secret mission to play the night game.

"Steve, I'm just catching fun with these girls." Bobby Tamor had said in one of their discussions some days ago.

"Catching fun," Steve had replied. "With terrible ladies of the night, you must be out of your mind. You can't walk barefoot on hot coals and not get blisters."

“Why are you sounding so judgmental,’ Booby had said. “You know it’s not so good to pass judgment on others before you hear them out.”

“Yes,” Steve had agreed. “But that does not rule out the fact that they’re potential poisons in a cup of coffee.”

“Man, here you go again, something is not a poison until it has killed you.”

“Do you then have to wait till it killed you before you stay away from it? You don’t wait for an adulteress to prey upon your precious life.”

“Oh come on,” Bobby had said angrily. “Spare me these lectures. Sometimes, you need to hear these ladies out before you begin to hit them with your hammer of judgment and condemnation.’

“I agree,” Steve had said. “I’ve not hit anyone with any hammer of judgment. I’m only trying to do a favor to a friend who’s trying to set his house on fire with his careless adventures. By means of a harlot, a man is reduced to a crust of bread.”

“You’re a judgmental dictator,” Bobby had said angrily. “I’ve always asked you to look at issues from the two sides of the coin.”

No, Steve Davies said to himself, now almost approaching the main hangouts of the night girls.

He took out his handkerchief, raised his dark glasses and wiped off the remaining sweat that was now gathering on his face. *I’m not a judgmental dictator. But I was only trying to help a friend.*

"If," his mind said to him. "You're trying to help a friend, then why're you here on this street at this time of the night?"

"No," he answered himself. "I thought we've settled this."

"Have we."

"Yes, we have.'

"Have you completely convinced yourself?"

"Yes, I have.' He said to himself and tried to shut the door to his thought.

Steve Davies remembered vividly how he had looked admiringly at one of the two night ladies his friend Bobby Tamor brought to his house. This other lady looked extremely radiant and beautiful and only accompanied her friend who had entered into a sex contract with bobby for the weekend. Steve's stubborn mind and subconsciousness could not easily let go of this lady all through the weekend and for another seven days after he set his eyes on her and that was what impelled him to stamp her name on his brain for many days.

Am, Steve thought as he stood within a touching distance of one of the spots on this notorious street where these girls of the night carry out their businesses. I in love with this lady already? That must be silly of me. Am in love with a terrible lady of the night. Am in love with a prostitute. How do I explain this and how do I inform Bobby that I was actually a judgmental dictator who was not always ready to look at issues from the two sides of the coin. How do I convince Bobby and anyone that this is true love? I'm confused.

"Hey, "a sweet voice from behind him woke him up from his reverie. "Looking for a night deal?' A tall, loud and

rebellious lady tapped him on his right shoulder and held firmly to it.

“O o h h,” Steve stammered and stuttered. “Not really thanks.”

“Oh come on, I’ve spread fresh, clean sheets on my bed, colorful imported linens. My bed is aromatic with spices and exotic fragrances. I’ll give you a good love business all night.”

“Thank you, I’m okay.”

“No, you’re not. I can feel the rush of blood in your veins begging for pleasure. You need to satisfy the strong urge of your sexual desires.”

“I’m okay,” Steve said, now feeling uncomfortable. “I told you I’m okay.”

‘Okay, then dearie; I’ll be on my way but in case you change your mind and you need this, you should just call me up, I’ll be waiting for you over there.” She said turning her back on Steve and pointing her long colored fingernails at her rounded and tightly packed buttocks.”

Steve looked quickly away from the direction of her finger and tried to readjust his eyeglasses as if to block every other outlet where the light will transmit the unpleasant scene into his eyes.

“But hello,” Steve said as the lady took some steps away from him as if a cerebral force just dropped in his mind a golden idea.

“Here I am Mister,” the lady turned and walked back to him. “Finally changed your mind. “

“No,” Steve replied trying to find his voice. “I’m here to look for a lady called Serena.”

Serena,” she said, surprised. “What have you got to do with Serena? I’ll give you what Serena will never give you.”

“Look,” he said, irritated by her aggressive professionalism and advertisement. “I’m here for her to discuss an important issue that will greatly benefit her.”

“Hey Mister, are you a cop? We’ve had problems with you plain clothes cynics called policemen these days.”

“No, I’m not.”

“Then who’re you?” She hit back, her eyelids rising to a height. “We hate policemen. They’re cynics and cheats. They carry out their nasty official duties arresting us and still come back in the wee hours of the night for a taste of the action. We wonder why they fight what they love in the first place.”

“Hey lady,” Steve replied. “I swear, I’m not a cop. I’ve important information for Serena. It’ll add immeasurable values to her.”

“You swear! Don’t bring that into this. I hate people who swear. They are always incredulous bigots and cheats.”

She said and turned her back at Steve trying to find her way out of the scene.

“Hello,” Steve quickly called her back, dipping his hand into the inner pocket of his jacket. “I’ll pay you handsomely if you can help me find Serena.”

She looked back, turned swiftly and said, “Now you’re talking. Where did you put that in the first place? The only voice we obey here is that of money. Even the holy book says money answers all things.”

“I did not ask about your name.” Steve said trying to become friendly with the discussion and pulling out ten crisp and clean 1000 naira notes.

“You don’t need my name Mister.”

“At least we’ve become friends, I should know.”

“Okay, I’m Lara but my friends call me stinger.”

“Stinger! That’s interesting. What’s the meaning of that?”

“I sting men in bed.”

“That’s interesting. Can you help me to find Serena?”

Steve said changing the discussion back to his main mission to the den of the night ladies.

“I’ll. There’s only one Serena in the whole of Allen Avenue. Sweet loving Serena. I’ll get her for you immediately. “

She turned her back on Steve and walked speedily into the dark section of the streets holding firmly to the naira notes in her hands.

That, Steve, said to himself. Was war. I’m glad I won. Money is truly the root of all evils. She was ready to give her friend or colleague up for a gift of ten thousand naira notes. Money indeed answers all things.

While Steve engaged his mind in thoughtful dialog, he looked up and saw Lara and Serena approaching from a far distance. He could recognize Serena even at a distance of hundred miles. She was the lady whose memories had lingered in his mind for days now. She was the reason why somebody like him, who had great disgust and hatred for prostitution and night ladies, is here on the major street of prostitution in the city of Lagos.

He took off his dark glasses as the two night ladies got to about twenty feet from him. He noticed the same rounded face with white eyes and curly eyelashes that attracted him in the first place when he set his eyes on Serena. He also quickly recognized the full, well-formed breasts that caught his attention that first day. Serena's figure-eight shaped body was still there and her majestic stepping and walk showed like a queen even in that night.

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Chapter 2

Steve woke up that Saturday morning earlier than usual. Saturday was a work-free day and he usually stays longer in bed on this day. He sat straight on the bed and looked at the time from the clock hung on the wall adjacent to his bed. He was excited about the time and looked away and smiled as if he just remembered something.

He stood up from the bed and slipped his feet into the slippers carefully placed beside his bed and tried to move away from his bed to the big mirror on the table to check out the condition of his now fully awoken eyes. Then suddenly, he sat back again when he remembered the event of yesterday night at the hangout of the ladies of the night at Allen Avenue.

Oh, he said to himself, that was an outing of a lifetime. I was able to convince a harlot to be my friend. Silly me. He withdrew his feet out of the bedroom slippers and laid his back on the bed and his head on the pillow as more

memories of his strange outings flooded his mind. *But Serena was tough. She could not understand why a man like me could pay a strange visit to the den of harlots seeking friendship.* He sighed. *Good,* he continued in his thought. *Friends are not found in harlots' hangouts, they are found in sane and holy places. Well, I only hope I'm still sane. I only hope I'm still in the right frame of mind. I only hope the invisible force pushing me is right after all. I'm befriending a harlot and I'm strangely excited about it!*

He suddenly jerked up from the bed, put on his bedroom slippers again, went back to the wall mirror, carefully examined his face and used his right palm to rub his face from the top of the hair on his head to his chin. *In waiting mood already for the august visitor. I need to get into the bathroom.* He said to himself.

At exactly 10:15 a.m., Steve was resting on his couch in his sitting room after taking a breakfast of bread, egg and hot tea. Suddenly, he heard the sound of cars on the road outside his house and rose to peep through the window to see what must have caused the noise on the street. He turned away from the window because he heard the door open and Serena stood there by the door.

"Good morning." She said sharply.

"Good morning Serena, you kept your promise."

"Yes, I promised you so I must keep my promise or do you think night girls like me don't keep promises?"

"Oh no," he said and ushered her into his living room and pointed his hand to one of the chairs in his living room.

He admiringly looked at her as she walked down to take her seat.

"This is my place and you're welcome."

“Thank you, you’ve got a nice place.”

“Thanks for the compliment. I always try to make it look nice.”

“That’s fine,” Serena said. “Only very few men understand how to keep a clean living room.”

“My mother gave me and my siblings a good training on that.”

“That’s good of her. And now I’m here, I hope I’ve fulfilled my promise.”

“Yes, the promise I got from you after over an hour of tough arguments. “

‘You came at an hour when the rush of business was high. I hardly entertain such unprofitable visitors and discussions at such periods.’”

“Really.”

“Yes. I ...”

He stopped her from completing her last statement by putting his forefinger across her lips to indicate that he didn’t want her to speak any further words.

“Before,” he said. “You can say anything further, what do I offer you?”

“Anything you have at home that you can offer a street girl like me.”

“Oh no,” he charged back at her. “You’re not a street girl!”

“But I am Steve, I told you that yesterday. “

“Yes I know but there are decency and good morals beneath your personality.”

“Oh, common Steve,” She cuts him short. “I took my time yesterday to let you know that you can’t get anything good by befriending a night girl like me.”

“Ok, Ok,” Steve said. “What do I offer you now?”

‘You can offer the street girl in your living room anything you have to offer.’

Steve picked up the small album of photographs on the table in one corner of his living room and handed it over to Serena.

“Please feed your eyes with this while I dash into the kitchen to prepare a welcome meal to my august visitor.”

Chapter 3

“So,” Serena said. “That’s my sad story. “

Steve’s eyes were now filled with lots of tears that were begging and looking for the opportunity to drop off from his eyes sockets. He kept his eyes fixed on Serena as he rested his chin on his two palms with his two elbows placed on the dining table that separates him and Serena. Serena kept her eyes away from him and fixed her eyes, instead, on the plate of rice and boiled egg in front of her.

Serena had painfully narrated her sad and ugly experience to Steve after several promptings from him. She had told the sad story of the tragic death of her dad about seven years ago and the death of her only brother two years after the death of her dad. She explained how these tragic events had led to her mother’s hypertensive ailment. She told Steve all about how she had to leave her native town, Benin, a principal city and the capital of Edo state in

Nigeria to Lagos to embrace prostitution. A trade she has faithfully embraced for the past five years.

“That’s sad, “Steve said ruefully trying hard to stop the balls of tears that were already gathering in his eyes from coming down.

“It’s nothing again to me Steve, it belongs to my past now.”

“And how is your mother now?”

“She’s fine. I send money to her from the income I make from my cherished trade.”

“Does she know you’re into this?”

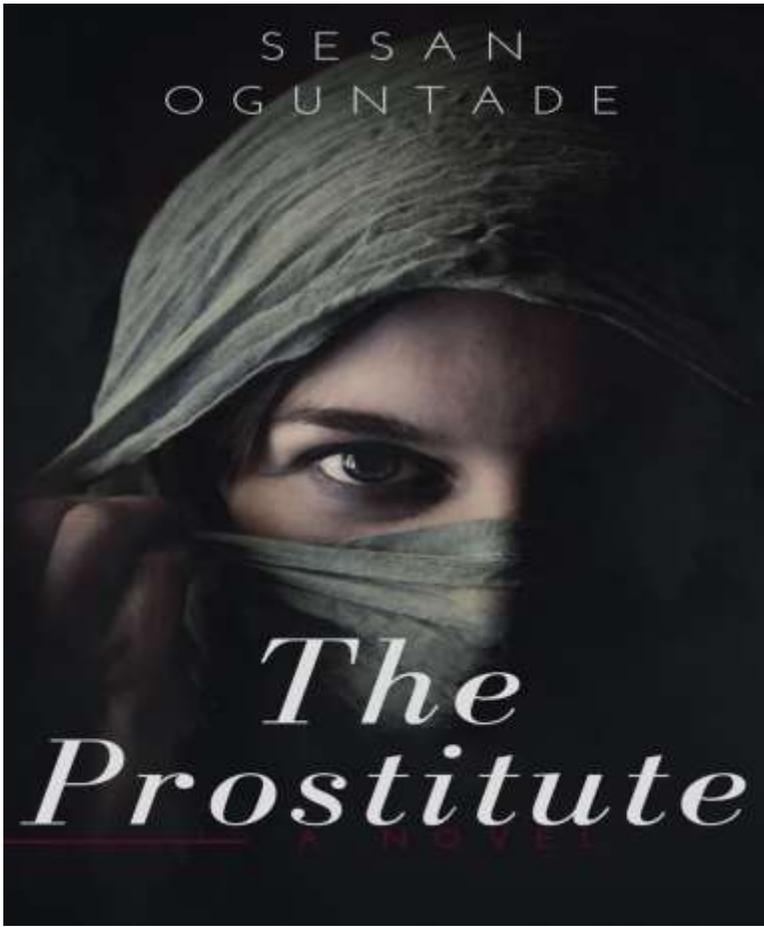
“No,” She said with a growl. “I’ll kill her very quickly if she knows about that.”

“You see, I’ve said it to you on many occasions that you’re not a night girl. “

“Oh Steve,“ She protested, her eyes gleaning.“ I thought we’ve moved over that. I’m a night girl and I love my cherished profession.”

“Common Serena,“ Steve said raising his voice a little, “You’re not. You’re just a child of circumstances. There are decency and good morals lying beneath your personality.”





Find out:

- Why did Steve invited Serena to his house?
- What happened after Serena arrived his house?

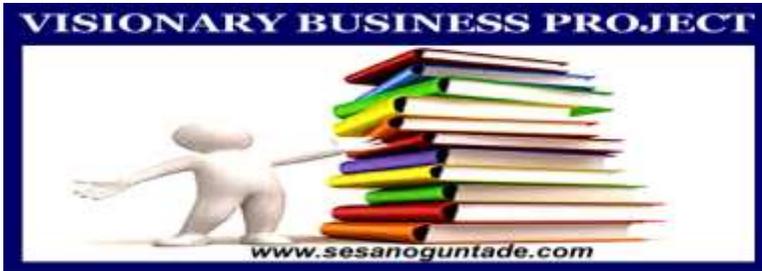
- How did Steve finally propose marriage to this notorious prostitute?
- What must be the strange driving force pushing Steve to do this?
- What were the views of Steve's friend, Bobby, his parents and other acquaintances about his decision to get married to a long-term prostitute?
- How did Steve manage a wife –prostitute?
- Did this strange marriage end in a divorce?
- If they got married, did Serena always return to the mud like pigs?

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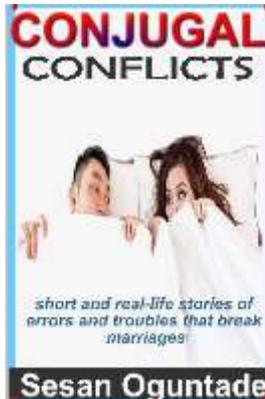
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