

## **MY MOST MEMORABLE DAYS**

**(As related to my love live)**

I remembered the day my grandma died and I felt that was the most memorable day of my life. This was because it marked the departure of the dearest and most caring woman I have experienced. I'm talking about the one who laid my foundation, the one who became a nursing mother again at a very old age to ensure Great Fwi is trained. However, some days came and broke the record.

July 7, 2006 came and it was like it would just be like those past years: wishing my Dad and Tobi, my childhood friend a happy birthday. But, something better and more memorable happened: the excursion to Daybis Printing press. Though not planned earlier, I happened to find myself sitting beside Bolanle at the back seat of the second bus. During the journey, I had a little time with Bolanle and it was like a mixture of jokes, fantasies, sincerities and realities. My friends were busy making jest of us. As we journeyed into the so called 'Largest City', she showed me where she lives from a far distance but I could not really figure it out especially because I do not stay in Ibadan.

I was trying to tell her that day was my Dad's birthday but she happened to have heard something else and she asked how I got to know about Tunji. Lanre and I played all along, telling her we knew everything about Tunji. Meanwhile, we did not even know who Tunji was. Lanre broke the 'camel's back' when he said Tunji was her ex-boyfriend. Then, she said Tunji was rather her present boyfriend and not her ex-boyfriend as Lanre guessed wrong. "Whatever" I said within and the gist continued. It got to a situation when she told me she would be introduced to her boyfriend's family (I cannot remember if she said that would happen in August or September). "Yes, you'll be introduced to my family" I joked with the fear that the end was fast approaching.

I earlier planned to buy lunch for Bolanle and Dammy but I could not because I left Daybis to retype and print a letter which Miss. Akinwunmi should have given them earlier. By the time I returned, Bolanle and some of my course mates had already eaten. I entered the bus that I came with only to find out that Bolanle was already in the other bus. She must have done that to avoid me because she kept telling me earlier

that I was disturbing her. On our way back to school, Fikayo, Yemisi's sister came with the food the boys (including me) had been expecting and we continued our journey only to halt at Mr. Biggs. Then I decided to send a token (meat pie) to 'MY LOVE' through Dammy who also came to buy Biggs for the same person I was primarily buying Biggs for: 'HER LOVE'.

Back in school on the night of July 27, we attended the dinner the vice-chancellor organized for pioneer students. Xsi called and I had to leave the venue to gist with my blood. Despite the fact that I never planned to discuss the day, Xsi asked after Bolanle and I had to give him a brief narration of how 'fulfilled' my day was. As planned by my heavenly father, I looked into Munchies cafeteria and found Bolanle walking with her plate of food. I had to tell Xsi that I just saw her and he requested to have a word with her. Rushing to one of the small entrances to Munchies, Bolanle sighted me and the first thing she did was to ask me to get food. I told her I already did and that 'Chris' (that's Xsi's first name) wanted to speak with her.

Bolanle gave her food to a friend (It's either Dammy or Biola) and joined me outside Munchies. I gave the phone to her and stood beside her for a while. Noticing her smiles and responses, I was so happy. The call was over, we returned to the dinner, I briefly greeted her friends and I disappeared outside. The time came for friends to hugs and enemies to be reconciled. Dammy was the first to hug me. I immediately went for Bolanle and there was a pause. "Won't you hug me" I said. Without audible response, she approached and I hugged her for the first time in my life, I mean, for the first time in four sessions.

I had the intention of letting my feelings known to Bolanle on a face-t-face basis because I have always done that through text messages and she has had to bang the phone when she suspected something close to that. "Can we briefly discuss?" I asked but her response was "I'm tired". I was down, my spirit was crushed and my glee ceased. Irrespective of the merriment that was on: hugs, and knowing hidden and scarce faces among others, I left for the hostel. On my way to the hostel, I could not control the magical tears that flowed down my cheeks. "Bolanle has made a baby out of me again" I thought as I walked to my room. I was really sad and disappointed. To be sincere, she had every reason to be tired. Does tiredness mean she could not spare few minutes to discuss with me?

On July 15, I went for Seun Lala's wedding. I was trying to locate the bride in order to inform her that Lanre. Rommel and Bolaji were around to join the groom's men as planned. In the course of the action, the only thing I could remember was that my camera was in my left hand because I planned to give the three groom's men a nice shot. It was when the new groom's men are being taken to the prepared seats that I noticed my camera was no more. The first thing that came to my mind was: "Bolandle's Parting Gift." I tried all I could but could not find the camera.

On July 17, I received Bolandle's call; she told me she needed me to type few things for her. I was glad to have a reason to help with whatever it would be. Meanwhile, I was in University of Ibadan, binding my project. Deji and I rushed to school, but, getting to Iwo garage, I decided to call Bolandle to inform her that I was on my way to school. This was because there were no business centres in school and I had no credit on my phone. Bolandle told me that she would be in Laosebikan hall. Deji and I wondered what she could be doing in Laosebikan hall.

Getting to Laosebikan hall, I remembered there's always a traditional Monday Evening in Bowen University. After the service, I collected what Bolandle wanted me to type for her: two appendices and works cited. She gave me my memory card, telling me how surprised she was to hear my camera was stolen. I earlier told her about my camera and pleaded that she should collect my memory card from Adaboyan, whom I gave it to at the wedding.

July 21, 2006 came and it seemed it would be a busy day: I've got the year CDs to sell, Yemisi's project to finish up and favours to complete. Mr. Oyadiran's own was successfully done and Yemisi's own too was done to a level where he could continue. The reason why I told Yemisi to alight from the car was to explain the reason for the late submission of his Printing Process excursion report. It was when we alighted that I discovered Bolandle was there with Miss. Akinwunmi, who happened to be her supervisor.

Like I do think and say: "As planned by my heavenly father", Miss Akinwunmi had to go and use the toilet, Yemisi understood that I'll need time with Bolandle and Pero refused to be kept company. I already took Bolandle's bunch of keys, sincerely observing the key holder that represents a bottle of oil with amazement. Bolandle was

about to go to the hostel and I decide to see her off with the bunch of keys in my hands.

We began to discuss when each one leaves school and one conversation led to another. Before we knew it, we were discussing her. I used the opportunity to confess the frustrations and rudeness she's made me experience. She humbly apologized and I sincerely declared forgiveness (I already done that long ago). Dupe Johnson had to interlope but that was divinely ended as my heavenly father had a better plan. We kept walking to her hostel and back to Lonpus Cafeteria. It then became obvious that I was not ready to leave her as there were more issues to discuss. More so, it would be the last evening she would be spending in Bowen.

Dammy came, reported their misunderstanding and promised to be back for the reunion. After listening to Bolanle's side of the story, I knew it was the childish quarrel that happens among ladies. "Do you love her?" I asked her. "No" she politely replied, "I like her" she concluded. We were both standing in front of Lonpus office, close to Laosebikan hall (Las). "Do you love me?" I asked. "No" she sincerely replied. "Do you like me?" I asked. "Yes" she replied. With confusion in my minds, I wondered if she could differentiate between 'love' and 'like'. Subsequent questions and answers revealed that she loves her parent and Biola, her best friend in school. Then, I knew she knew and meant what she said.

Dammy returned and I tried to settle their quarrel. Dammy left and our conversation continued. She insisted that she wanted a copy of the year CD, I therefore saw her off to the hostel. Meanwhile, I already knew I was not going to sell the CD to her. Although I was sincerely broke, I had planned to buy her a copy. She came out with the money and I begged her to see me off for the very last time, promising I won't stress her further. She yielded and off we were. Then, a friend of hers teased in Yoruba "My fronting friend." Up to this moment, I'm still finding a meaning to that attribution. "Give me your home address" I pleaded continuously to no avail. I sincerely have no plan of visiting her at home to continue to pestering. I only planned to drop a package I would not deem 'safe' even with DHL.

Getting to UPE 1, which happened to be the first hostel, I resided in 100 level, she paused and I did. Her slippers was slipping off her right foot and I stupidly but

jokingly hastened the process by stepping on it and subtly pushing her backwards. She gave me the money and requested for the CD. I jocularly collected the money and gave her the CD. She was on her way to her hostel when I asked “What gave you the impression that you have the right CD?” She turned back and handed over the CD and left in vexation. I thought and I still do think that she formed the vexation as I did not and do not see a reason for her to be vexed. “Bolanle” I endlessly called to no avail. I dialled her number, it rang, and she looked back but ignored me. Then, I did not realise I was breaking the promise: “...I will not stress you further.”

I got to hostel and began to reminisce. I knew we would still see before she goes especially because I would like to handover her money and her copy of the year CD. I dialled her phone over and over again but she did not pick it up. Then, I discovered it was low battery. I collected Tide charger and while charging my phone, I dialled again. She picked the phone and told me she was in Munchies. I carried Lanre’s schoolbag which I used earlier in the day and left for Munchies. About few steps to Munchies door, though dark, I felt saw two ladies and I was convinced it was Bolanle and Dammy. I was right: Bolanle tried to be an actress, preventively asking for her money with anger. Being a ‘Bowen-wood’ star for the past three weeks, I developed a better scene in the act and Dammy kept saying “Fred, don’t mind her o, she rehearsed it. “Don’t tell me you are talking to me” I said to Bolanle as I walked past them. She touched the right sleeve of my shirt with her fingers barely missing my skin, thereby preventing me from walking away.

Dammy excused herself and vanished into Munchies. “Bolanle, why are you doing this to me” was the next I could say. She asked what she was doing to me and I was speechless for seconds. I asked why she did not pick up the phone and all she could say was low battery. Despite the fact that I have always concluded that knowing fully well that I was falsely defending her, I knew that night that she was sincere but could have picked the phone if she wanted to.

We moved forward a bit and we paused again. Like it happened to Peter on the day of Pentecost, I knew I was not myself as I felt boldness within. Before I knew it, with all seriousness, I said to her: “I love you.” Then, everything changed: Bolanle was silent for a long while. Even when I needed her to respond, she did not. Whenever she agreed, she nodded and whenever shed did not, she shook it. I erased her guilt, telling

her that God has made everyone differently. I pointed out that he has made one love a thing while another cannot even dare to hear or take a look at such. It was almost but not exactly this:

“God has created us all with such sophistication that we have different feelings. The fact that I love you and you do not love me does not make you wicked or inconsiderate. After all, you like me. But, I do not like you, I love everything about you and that’s why I’ve swallowed the rudeness and frustrations over the years. You’ve said that you will not miss me and that you do not love me. I’m not deceiving myself, I have, I do and will always love and I’ll miss you every moment of life afterwards.”

While saying all those, she was silent and looked straight with her hands dropped by her sides. She was not facing me, she was looking away with her right arm and the right side of her face left for me to see. After her long silence, I wished she made at least a response. But all I said generated none. “Have I hurt you?” I asked but she only shook her head in disapproval. “Do you like me?” I asked but she only nodded. “Will you pick my calls?” I asked but she moved her shoulders up and all I thought she meant was: “I do not know”.

Worried about her silence, I thought: “Does she love me and cannot or do not want to say so?” I got the courage to ask: “Why are you silent?” I got no answer. I kept on asking for the reason why she was silent. I finally thought and voiced out: “Silence is the best answer for a fool. Right?” “No o”, she answered at last. “Why then, did you keep silent for that long?” I further longed to clarify. With remorse, she told me that she was avoiding a situation whereby I will misunderstand what she utters. I wished the magical nature of love envelopes her as it does to me. But, God’s will, as I now believe just had to be done.

I gave her the year CD and she refused it, insisting that she just must pay for it. I asked for the reason for the rejection of the gift and she pointed out that she just would like to buy it with her money. I had planned to give this to her even before they arrived, I had saved as much as I could to pay a token of a thousand Naira which happened to be a lot to me then, because I was sincerely broke. As if she was omnipresent, she told me she knew I was broke and would not collect it. Knowing

fully well, that that was the best time to give such a gift (a moment when I had nothing on me), I kept persuading her to forget about my being broke.

The struggle continued as she was not ready to take the CD and it was like a repeated uttering of “Please, take it” and “No, I would rather buy it”. I told her I would not collect the CD back with my hands and she carefully dropped it on the floor (it was in a case) in such a way that I would not be angry. Feeling I was totally losing, I bent, picked up the CD and gave it to her. I explained that I had to give it to her, no matter what. She reluctantly agreed and I was a bit happy. I quickly flashed back on how I lost my cute camera which I was planning to give her as ‘parting gift’. That’s what virtually everyone in school called it.

At this juncture, tears rolled down my cheek but I thought she did not notice them. Dammy was approaching and I summoned the courage and uttered what should have been the last I would physically: “See you at the top, Goodnight”. Barely finishing my ‘last phrase’, Dammy and Bolanle started walking away to their hostel (UPE 3) while I also took a left (alternate) turn and before I knew it, I was crying. All these happened in front of Munchies Cafeteria, in between the Mango tree and the Palm tree and very close to Saddler Hall.

I cried from the spot to the hostel, continuously asking my heavenly father: “Why am I’m I going through these?” “Why the strong feelings when you knew earlier that it’ll end like this?” “Is this really the end?” I realised I was questioning the unquestionable or better put, I was asking too many questions. Then I decided to say: “God, let your good purpose for these come to past.” With this wish, I began to reminisce as I cried the more. Getting to Storey building, I sat close to the dirty gutters (then, unnoticed) and stared into the half forest. Tears increased and for minutes (almost half an hour), I remained in the spot mixing reminiscences with realities. Two about-to-be Bowenites approached and asked if I was not going in. I told them I was only reminiscing. Then, I saw the need to go into the hostel as my staying in such a place may generate awareness.

Entered the hostel with tears within and not outside, I sat on Biggie’s bed, which was the closest to the door and my minds wondered away. By 10.00pm, her text came in and it read (the exact way it was):

*“Thanks 4 d CDs, i really appreciate dem and all uve done for me even though u dont know it but all dsame am grateful. Hope u were not vexd 2nit? Good night.”*

Then, I knew and concluded that she knew my intentions from the very beginning and appreciated the poor gifts I could afford over the years. She just did not show it all the way. Probably because of what they call fronting or she wanted me to accept my fate early enough.

Biggie grabbed my phone, read the text and all he could say was: “Make some money and make some bitches cry.” I knew that was what I would never do. I will never make a bitch cry let alone, Bolanle, the one I truly love. I will rather rephrase it: “Make some money and make some people proud of you.” Biggie’s quote however complemented the quote I took from Twister’s ‘Sunshine’: “I keep my minds on my money, money on my mind.” To better it all, I rephrased it to be: “I keep my minds on my wealth, my greatness, and my ‘bloods’.” I immediately composed my reply but decided not to send it till the next day. My reply reads:

*“Thx 4 d time n d sincerity. I wasn’t angry, I was fulfilled avin xpressed myself n u/stood our contrasting feelings. Thx 4 d tym. Safest jorny. See u at d top.”*

In reminisce of the past moments which were not really good but at least promising because the camel’s back was not broken, I cried till I was under the spell of sleep. And lots of dreams followed with me having to wake up every now and then. I could not remember anything about the dreams. But, one thing, I surely do remember: ‘BOLANLE’ was everywhere.

Saturday morning came and I sent my composed text by seven o’clock in the morning. Bolanle flashed my phone probably to notify me that she’s got the text and I dialled her number. ‘Ring, ring’ and the next I heard was “Hello”. Then, my heart leaped with joy and I realised within: “she’s the only one that makes my heart beat faster and slower.” She told me she would leave by nine o’clock that morning. As fate would have it, I saw Dammy and Bolanle off to Sumptuous cafeteria.

Around twelve noon, I had a zeal to go towards girls' hostel, strongly feeling Bolanle's presence. Tide, who was with me then said she would have gone but I insisted, telling him I had to see Mr. Oyadiran and that I may be lucky to see Bolanle around. Tide waited under the tree in front of girl's hostel and I went to Mr. Oyadiran's house. When I returned to Tide, he confessed Bolanle just came out of the hostel and returned back in a hurry. Then, I guessed she was expecting the car that would come and pick her. We decided to go when I met Dayo and he disclosed that he wanted to see Dammy. Lucky to have little credits on my phone, I dialled Dammy's number to no avail. Then, I decided to dial Bolanle with the aim of telling her Dayo was around to see Dammy. Probably thinking it was one of my disturbing calls, she ignored my call. I tried again and to my surprise, MTN connectivity was frozen on my phone and everyone's as calls and checking of accounts became impossible until 4.32pm. This is a 'MYSTERY' I still find difficult to understand.

Well, I returned under the tree and Bolanle came out putting her luggage in a red car that seemed to have appeared supernaturally because I could not trace when it drove in. Then, I spotted a handsome young man I guessed would have been her dad. The man, though sitting, I guessed would have been quite tall, he's 'dark and lovely'. "Bolanle," I shouted but only asked if Dammy was in the hostel. That was however not was in my minds. I actually would have said, "Are you really going?" "Is that your dad?" She replied that Dammy was in the room and before I could coin another question, she disappeared into the hostel.

I began to contemplate on whether it would be right for me to greet her dad. I began to think: "Would he not be suspicious?" "Won't Bolanle be angry about it?" Before I could conclude, Bolanle was already in, the guy who came with the handsome man moved to the back sit, paving way for Bolanle beside the driver seat. The car, which could not notice how much I wished Bolanle remained reversed and was going. Then, I stared at no one but the one I love, waiting for her to do the same and as if the 'Spirit became one', she looked at me and we simultaneously waved. While waving, the car zoomed off and the words of Jesus Christ on the cross came to me: "IT IS FINISHED." At that juncture, I felt it was the end.

However, I knew and still do know that even if everyone parts, Bolanle and I will never part. Even if we will never see again, my heart will continue to play her presence.

I kept trying her number while MTN remained dead. Her phone eventually rang around four o'clock and heartbeat was at its fastest, it was never that fast. She told me she just got home and that she knew about MTN problem. I confessed I was already missing her. Saturday ended with Bolanle being absent in school but present in my minds, thoughts and reminiscence. Bolanle, the only 'campus brother'... That was not what I intended to type. Hope you now understand what I meant when I said: "BOLANLE'S EVERYWHERE." Lanre, the only 'campus brother' left with me in school told me he was missing everyone. I sincerely told him I should be missing everyone but I can only think of 'ONE': "BOLANLE".

Sunday came and my feelings refused to be subdued. I was on my way to Mr. Oyadiran's house; I wanted to give him the MP3 (130 classical songs) CD I burnt for him. I passed through Sumptuous to Munchies and memories of Friday night was summoned. I remembered everything and tears briefly dropped. I quickly cleaned my face because service was going on. I did not enter the chapel because I had to get to Mr. Oyadiran's house but little did I know that God had a mission for me. Getting to UPE 3, I saw Dammy trying to assist the taxi driver in pushing the taxi that was meant to take her to Iwo garage. Then, I did one of the tasks I felt my heavenly father sent me out to do. I pushed the car with all the strength within me, having Bolanle written all over my thoughts. When the car responded, I could not dare to look at Dammy as I said: "bye" in a jiffy. Mr. Oyadiran was already approaching and I quickly cleaned the tears. Then, I looked at Dammy and said my goodbye again. Each moment of that day was filled with reminiscence.

Monday, July 24 came and I text her that I would leave school by twelve noon but I did not leave school till five noon. I immediately dialled her number but it rang to no avail. Then, I thought she might be busy or with someone like Tunji. So, I notified her through text that I left school around five, further promising to call when I get home. It was as if, I was meant to report my movements to her as a mother, guardian or wife. We dropped Lanre at home, I returned home and I tried to fulfil my promise. Her phone rang twice and it stopped. I tried again and the phone rang twice again and it

stopped. Then, I concluded, she definitely would not pick this call. She was interrupting the call probably because she was with someone, before whom she could not pick it up or she could not take my disturbances any longer. I notified her (through text) that I was back home and tried to fulfil my promise. I set up my computer and set the picture we took together at the dinner as background. I played the play list I title: “Goodbye” and the first song that James Blunt’s ‘Goodbye my lover’.

Then, I thought that even being around my own people could not stop my deepest feeling of ‘betrayal of love’ and ‘separation’. However, I was the only one in my room. Kaydee had gone out and I could not just open up to my cousin, who never knew anything about Bolanle. But then, I thought daddy would make lots of changes when he returns. More so, my computer should have been upstairs close to ladies who give the best of comfort and encouragement.

It was Tuesday, July 25, I woke up, checked my phone and saw her text, which according to MTN, came in at 04:01:52. The text is type below without any form of editing:

*“Hope uve gotn home now, I went out so ‘just saw ur txts. Good night.”*

I dressed up and went to the post office to post Akano’s pictures. On my way to the post office, I stopped by a business centre and dial Bolanle’s number but it rang to no avail. I stopped by two more of such and it was the same thing. That night, I text her and went to bed.

On Wednesday, July 26, I got out of bed at 6:30am and text her. The text contained few words from James Blunt’s ‘Goodbye My Lover’:

*“I am a dreamer but when I wake,  
You can't break my spirit - it's my dreams you take.”*

In the twinkling of an eye, a reply came in and it read:

*“I guess I dont like txt msgs dat much except dey’r impt so I get ur  
msgs but am not a txt fan so dat’s y i hardly reply. Av a nice day  
Hope i wasnt proud again”*

In disappointment, I composed and sent this, hoping it would be my last text message to her:

*“U were not, dt’s why I prefer callin bt it seems u don’t like calls as well esp if its from a jobless man like me. Blame me not, it’s my feelins. I 10Q 4 July 21. I appreciate d stress (standin 4 dat long), copin wit a fool like me. I know I didnt deserve it. Thx 4 d tolerance. -PEACE-“*

At this juncture, I knew attempts to keep ‘in touch’ will only succeed in keeping me ‘out of touch’. Then I decided to fully keep my minds on my money and nothing else. But, I immediately asked myself: “How possible is that?” “Should I just let it go?” Then, DMX’s words which I could not accurately quote came to my mind. I structured it thus:

*“If you truly love Bolanle, give it a try (declare your love) and if she has to go, let her go. If she returns, she is yours and if she does not, she was never yours.”*

With the hope to make it in life, I continue to pursue my goals and battle my feelings. It’s all about sacrificing my ‘LOVE’ for my ‘FUTURE’. After all, I’m not ready for marriage, I was only trying to secure a future wife, who will share my greatness and assist me in breeding my God-fearing children. Realising the reality of it all, I’m saying:

*“BETTERDAYS ARE COMING SOON...  
MEANWHILE, LIFE GOES ON  
THE GREATNESS, ADVENTURE AND FAME BEGIN...”*

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**Frederick Gbemileke Odutola**

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