

Title (up to 20 words) - **Crumbling from Within**

Strapline (up to 40 words) - **Together, we were strong... Apart, they were stronger**

Copy (between 900 and 1000 words) -

Chapter 1: Eniobafe

My jaw was six feet under the ground when I entered the boundary for the Presidential estate. You wouldn't believe we were in Africa if you saw this area. The grass was so luscious, 4 fountains jutted from each corner. The cloudy skies even seemed to part to show the heavens above, just for this estate. It was just so beautiful. I can't believe Adenrele, President Adenrele, owned all of this. After knowing him for 10 yrs, I know that he was never the type for aesthetic beauty. It all almost made me forget... that I was there to arrest him.

As I approached the big house, a barrage of guards spilled out of the house. I expected them to be greeting me or leaving, since we signed a temporary treaty with them, so I waved at them as they approached me. Oh how naive I was.

Like knives, they all brought their batons out and struck me until I was barely recognisable. I was dragged to a posh office room, where a tall dark figure stood in front of me, gun in hand. I knelt in front of him as he raised his gun at me.

I tried to speak, "Ade? What is-"

"You will address me as president, Lieutenant Eniobafe" Ade growled.

My chest and stomach clenched around my heart, making me suddenly vomit a waterfall of blood onto the floor. "How... How did you know?"

His cold sharp eyes darted into mine, "When you control the entire country and communications in it, it's hard for me not to know things" He replied, signalling to the man we trusted to send the treaty to the Head of Guard.

My head slumped down, I did a silent prayer to God that Durodule would come to save me, since this was his plan and he was supposed to have everything under control.

"You shouldn't have trusted your life with him," Aderenle started, as if he was reading my mind.

"General Durodule was always so paranoid, I knew he would eventually see me as a threat."

I begged with him, "Please, Ade. Let me live! I will join you, Just please!"

He looked as if he had just dropped his dinner on the floor, "Oh, Lieutenant General, I didn't expect this from you. You were never the kind to beg."

Tears scratched down my face while I said, "Ade, you won't kill me, right? We're friends right?"

His face suddenly hardened as he twitched the gun in front of my face.

Chapter 2: Durodule

The report slipped out of my hands. A tornado seemed to form in my mind. "WHAT. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?". I made sure to check everything: Every problem, every weakness, every unforeseen circumstance. How did my plan still fail? How is Eniobafe now dead?

I called for the rest of the group.

"General Durodule? What is the problem?", One of them said.

These 20 people handpicked in the military were the ones that I trusted the most. That was important, since any sane person would even think about doing what I am proposing.

"Men, this right here is the moment I need you most. My right hand, Lieutenant Eniobafe, has died." Some gasped, others started tearing up. "The person who did this was the President, Adenrele. I know you all have ones who you love, and you'd never want to lose them. I'm asking for the ultimate favour from all of you. I want you to give your lives for me and the country."

None of them ran, we were all ready.

Chapter 3: Durodule

We came in like a tempest. From all four corners we entered the estate. The estate guards swarmed outside, hastily. Without hesitation, they started shooting. We returned fire, but it was clear that we were outnumbered. Then I had a crazy idea. "Cover me! I screamed to my squad. As they all were shooting, I broke from the group to find Adenrele, by myself.

I entered the presidential office and, low and behold, he was there.

He stood up from his desk, gun in both hands. Neither of us had anything to say. In unison we both dived behind an object while releasing heavy fire to each other. I peeked my head around the column I stood behind, immediately pulling it back as bullets rained in my direction.

I took a deep breath, waiting for the moment that he ceased fire to reload. Then the room went silent. I sprang from the corner as I unleashed the greatest hellfire I could on this demon in front of me. When I stopped, I noticed the lack of a response. Slowly, I tiptoed behind the couch he laid behind.

This was the first time I ever saw Adenrele look helpless. He got on his knees, clothes shredded and said to me "Du-Duro? Please... I didn't want to kill him. You have to understand I-"

As the ear piercing strike echoed through the corridors, my gun's smoke filled the entire room, shielding the flamboyant bursting of the president's head.

And what did I do after that? I did not cry, I did not shout out of regret. I smiled.