

**NEARLY
ALL THE
MEN IN
LAGOS
ARE MAD**

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

**NEARLY
ALL THE
MEN IN
LAGOS
ARE MAD**

PROPERTY OF SHEPHERD BOOKS

SHORT STORIES

Damilare Kuku



MASOBE

Published in 2021 by Masobe
An imprint of Masobe Books and Logistics Limited
34 Gbajumo Close, off Adeniran Ogunsanya,
Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria
Tel: +234 906 730 5909, +234 701 838 3286
Email: info@masobebooks.com

Copyright © Damilare Kuku 2021

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored
in a retrieval system or distributed in any printed or electronic form
without permission in writing from the publisher or the author.

The moral right of Damilare Kuku to be identified
as the author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance
with the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the National Library of Nigeria

ISBN: 978-978-990-719-9

This is a work of fiction. All names, characters, places and incidents
portrayed are the products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance
to actual persons living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Cover Design Oriahi Ofuzim Anderson
Layout by AI's Fingers

To Oluremi Abake and
You who has dealt with a mad man
I salute you

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

CONTENTS

Cuck-Up	9
The Gigolo from Isale Eko	27
The Anointed Wife	41
International Relations	63
Òdè-Pus Complex	83
A Lover's Vendetta	105
First Times	121
Catfish	145
Side-Lined	167
Beard Gang	187
I Knew You	205
Independence Day	227

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

PROPERTY OF MASOBE BOOKS

CUCK-UP

One night, you will calmly put a knife to your husband's penis and promise to cut it off. It will scare him so much that the next day, he will call his family members for a meeting in the house. He will not call your family members, but you will not care. You won't need them.

Your husband's family will crowd the new apartment—a bedroom and a parlour, called self-contained by Lagos agents—you got three months ago. It will feel like they surround you. They will exclaim, sigh, frown, click their tongues, gnash their teeth, and repeat a million times that you committed an abomination.

His potbellied uncle, Buraimo, who always leers at your bosom will point at you and say, "Shebi I told him not marry you? I said marry someone from your tribe. Igbo women are dangerous." He will say this while ogling your bosom. "Well, I blame him for not handling you properly. Because if it was me who was handling you, ehn," he will

beat his chest in anguish at this point, “if it was me, you wouldn’t have tried this nonsense.”

His eldest sister, Azeezat, will pretend to appeal to your shared womanhood. “Isi, as a woman myself, I know men can be difficult. But what you have done is terrible. No woman has done this thing in our family. In fact, it is a disgrace to womanhood to want to cut your husband’s member. Haba! If you cut Lukumon’s member, how will you people have another child? You know we expect your next child to be a boy.”

You will be so amused that she calls it member, it will make you smile.

They will misinterpret your smile.

“You are smiling at your evil, abi? You are not well! You hear me? You are mad!” Lati, his immediate elder sister with the tiny voice, will jump and bark at you before someone will tell her to calm down.

You will stay silent as you planned. Till, your husband’s older cousin, Mufu, the thief, will make you talk.

“Mufu, please bring out Lukumon’s watch from your pocket, and put it back on the side-stool,” you will say quietly, but with clear menace.

Everyone will turn to Mufu. Their embarrassed faces will confirm they know he’s a thief. But because he’s one of theirs, Uncle Buraimo will try to save his face.

“Mufu, eh, I know you were just . . . eh . . . admiring,

eh . . . Lukumon's watch. But sha, put it back o, before she cuts your manhood."

They'll all titter, nervously, forcefully, while Mufu will pull the watch from his pocket and place it on the side-stool. He'll glare at you. You'll glare back and hope he gets the message that you'd no longer stand for him brazenly pilfering things anytime he visited, partly because Lukumon was scared to call him out.

You'll look at Lukumon and wonder how you came to love such a sorry excuse for a man.

You will remember when you were younger, when every man wanted you, but you fell for Lukumon's natural charm. You'll remember how he used to come knocking on your parents' door, leaving you sweets, and sweeter notes. You will wonder if your life would have been better if you had chosen the soldier with tribal marks from the barracks in Egbeda. The soldier loved you, but you'd chosen Lukumon, the beautiful man-boy who made you laugh and overfilled your heart when he said he loved you. You chose Lukumon because of his words—he wrote love letters, recited delicious poetry, whispered magic in your ears, and sang as you danced till you believed the lyrics of all the world's love songs were written just for you.

"God forbid you marry a teacher. You must do better than us," your father had said. But you were so possessed by love, you threatened your parents—to elope, to get pregnant, to kill yourself. It was your first and only

rebellion, and they were so confused by it, they let you have your way.

“Isi, why did you threaten to kill my son?” Lukumon’s mother’s voice is soft, and her face impassive, as always. But you will remember she never liked or accepted you—she was just indifferent, and sometimes, it rankled more because you’d have preferred her to hate you. You will never say it, but you blame her and his five elder sisters for over pampering Lukumon. Yes, he was the last child and only boy, but their coddling contributed to making him lazy, entitled, and impotent in any adversity.

Before you answer, Kitan, your six-year-old daughter will wake from her nap in the bedroom, come to the parlour, be scared of the crowd, spy you, and dash to your open arms. You’ll hug her, carry her, sniff her neck and enjoy her dusting-powder scent. She’ll hug you tightly as if she knows you are under fire and she wants to shield you. She’ll hold you till your heart warms. Till you’ll say a silent prayer, for wisdom, for peace, for Kitan—that her life will be soft and she’ll never leave you. You love her too much.

It was all for Kitan. You will remember your husband, when he was pressuring you and trying to convince you, had said, “Do this for Kitan.”

You will look at him and your anger will rise red again. But Kitan will rub your face with her cute fingers and calm your soul so you can tell your story.



You used to sell roasted corn at the junction of Unilag. When corn was out of season, you sold boli and sauce. Your business was fairly successful because your location was strategic, and there was a lot of foot traffic. Also, because you were punctilious with your business—in sourcing the freshest corn and plantains, in selecting the best charcoal for roasting, in preparing the sauce (with the famous boli-sauce recipe from Port Harcourt), and in serving with neat newspapers and takeaway packs—you had many loyal customers. Lukumon said it also helped that you are friendly and you look like Naomi Campbell (people usually said the Naomi Campbell thing, but you'd never seen it, and frankly, it irritated you because you don't have Naomi Campbell money).

Selling roasted corn or boli was never the plan. You always thought you and Lukumon will make something of yourselves. But he lost his job a year after your marriage, and you had to leave your job as a secretary when you got pregnant. The aftermath of Kitan's birth was tough as you were both jobless, and your meagre savings ran out. In those days, Lukumon sent you to ask Uncle Buraimo for money for food, and to get it, you endured the man bear-hugging you in greeting so he could crush your boobs against his chest. Eventually, you refused to go. It caused the first fight in your marriage, during which you flippantly said you'd rather sell roasted corn by the

roadside than collect money from Uncle Buraimo. Then, weeks later, on a night after the landlord had made a scene because of overdue rent, a coaxing Lukumon reminded you of your words.

“It’s just to bring a daily income while I’m job hunting,” he said. “Mufu has talked to his oga at work about me. Hopefully, in another month or so, they’ll give me a job. Just be patient, ife mi.”

That was over six years ago, but Lukumon still hadn’t found a job. You’d sold corn or boli during that time and you didn’t mind. It was honest work and provided for your family’s basic needs. On average, you made about five thousand naira daily. Enough for food and rent for your family’s one-bedroom face-me-I-face-you apartment. Enough to pay for your contraceptive pills because you both agreed not to have another child until you were financially stable. The only thing you paid a premium for was Kitan’s education. You’d insisted that she attend one of the best private schools in Yaba.

Lukumon had argued that you were wasting money because Kitan could thrive in a public school and turn out well, just like he did. But you’d quietly said, “My child will never go to a public school in Nigeria as long as I’m alive.” And he’d looked at your face, and never spoke of the matter again.

You met Ehi on a rainy Thursday in June, when he pulled up in his SUV to buy corn. He rolled the window down, “Madam, good afternoon. How much?”

You greeted him like you did everyone else. “Good afternoon, sir. Thank you for stopping. It’s two hundred naira for one.”

“Okay, give me five and six pears. Hope they’re soft.”

“Yes, sir.” You nodded, wrapped up his food, stood, and handed it to him through the window. He gave you five one-thousand-naira notes.

“Sir, your bill is only two thousand naira.”

“I know. Keep the change. I like that you’re very polite.”

“Thank you, sir.”

He returned two days later. This time, Kitan was with you as usual every day after you picked her from school. He parked and got down. You studied him for the first time. He could have passed for average—his features, height, and build were average—but his clothes (well-tailored kaftan and designer slippers) and an air of brusque determination stood him out.

“Madam, your corn was so nice, I came all the way from Surulere to buy again.”

“Good afternoon, sir. Thanks for coming again.”

“Good afternoon, sir,” Kitan said. As a rule your daughter greeted all your customers.

He beamed at her. “Good afternoon. What’s your name?”

“Olaoluwakitan,” she answered.

“Nice name. What does it mean?”

“God’s wealth never ceases,” you said.

He studied both of you for a moment. “Your daughter looks exactly like you.”

“Thank you.”

“You speak so well. What school did you attend?” There was a directness about him.

“Yabatech.”

“That’s nice. And how’s business?”

“We thank God. We are pushing it.” You were thankful he didn’t ask how you’d ended up selling roasted corn by the roadside.

“Good. Oya, let me have the same order.”

You added two extra cobs and five extra pears to his food. “Here, sir.”

He collected it and gave you a wad of notes. It was fifteen thousand naira.

“Sir, please I can’t accept it.”

He shrugged. “I won’t take it back either.” Then he smiled. “But I suggest you take it and buy something for Olaoluwakit . . .”

“Kitan. It’s easier to call her Kitan.” You smiled and thanked him as you took the money. It was enough for you to take the next three days off, but you didn’t because you only rested on Sundays. But you did as he suggested and bought five dresses for Kitan: two new ones for church and outings, and three second-hand casuals for stay-at-home. She’d been wearing the same clothes for some years. And for the first time, impulsively, you bought her new clothes in her size. And when Lukumon, who you’d