

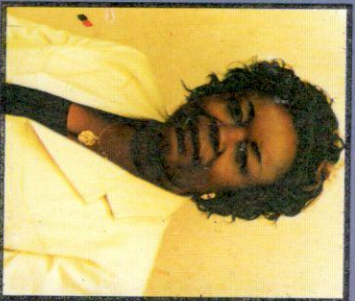
3 PLAYS

A TRAGIC GAMBLE

Hawker's Dilemma
&
Bye to Love



Felly N. Ene



THE AUTHOR.

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She is a veteran teacher, former school principal, a university don and a British scholar. She has worked with young people of all grades. She writes novels, plays and poems for the masses. She is a front-line member of gender sensitive and development oriented NGOs.

THE BOOK

There are three plays in this book. 'A tragic Gamble', which exposes societal problems of sugar daddies who abuse young girls and sometimes ruin their future. The second play 'Hawker's Dilemma, addresses the issue of house help turned hawker and the ensuing problems. Finally, 'Bye to Love' deals with the fate of love when HIV is diagnosed.

These drama pieces teach moral lessons and serve as warnings to the younger ones and the general public.

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PLAYS WITHIN

1. A Tragic Gamble
2. Hawker's Dilemma
3. Bye to Love

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated

to

All who handle young people with care.

A TRAGIC GAMBLE

CAST

Ikechi: A young, eligible bachelor

Emeka: His friend.

Chinyelu: Ikechi's fiancé,

Ifeyinwa: Chinyelu's friend.

Ada: Chinyelu's co-worker.

Mr. Idioko: Chinyelu's boss.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

(Ikechi paces about in his moderately furnished flat with heavy disco sets. He is just back from work and about to hang his suit. He sits heavily wearing a cold grin and soliloquizing.)

Ikechi: What's all this eh? I mean; what is wrong with our society? How is man going to handle our people...I am just tired. *(He stands up)*. The whole place is rotten to the bones, honestly. The rich is grabbing the naira at a break-neck speed. The poor is ready to cut his throat if that's how to come about naira. Our women have all taken to the streets. The working class girl o, the student o, the married o, the young o, the old o. None is left out. Everybody is in the rat race.... Old men and women ...Sugar daddies and Mummies. That's why I have to struggle with that old, good-for-nothing, Mr. Idioko, for a pretty, young girl like

EMEKA: Cool down I.K., don't talk like that. You are running to conclusion too fast. Now have you ever discussed this with her?

IKECHI: That's what I'm telling you. I've talked it over and over again with her and she keeps saying she has nothing to do with him but...

EMEKA: Listen, try to discuss it with her again. You could just be worrying yourself for nothing. You may wonder why I'm that insistent. She is not my sister or friend or anything. I met her through you, and I know you love her. You may think there are many girls. But remember there may be many girls, but very few wives. Since you love that girl and she loves you too, then all is not lost. I know she has the qualities of a good wife. All is not lost. Don't drop her just yet. At worst, let her look for another job or better still, help her get another job,

IKECHI: You think I can cope with this. If she changes job, she will meet another boss. These shameless old men refuse to leave our young girls alone.

EMEKA: Man, you are getting frightened too early. That's the beginning of the ups and downs of marriage in case you don't know. So take heart and cool down. Meanwhile, you know you have not caught them red-handed doing anything.

IKECHI: Is that so? I've got to put up with anything just because I want to marry? No, I would rather stay unmarried. You hear. It's true that I've not caught them yet, in fact, that is the reason I'm still taking it cool. If not, by now you would have heard how it all ended.

EMEKA: O-ooo don't go boiling again. I've told you what I would do if I were you. First, discuss it with her and caution her. Then you can set a trap for her and see if she falls into it. Just a test...

IKECHI: How?

EMEKA: Call on her at odd times in her house and in the office and see if you catch them, perhaps in any compromising position. The whole puzzle would be solved then.

IKECHI: (*Nodding*) Mm-mh. Ok, let's see.

CHINYELU: He came for something else.

IKECHI: Like what. Since when did you become a consultant, that people like that old goat visit you for consultations?

CHINYELU: (Sobbing) Oh my God, I know it's Emeka carrying this gossip around.

IKECHI: Don't you ever call Emeka, you hear, don't you ever do that. And let me tell you, if I ever see you again with.... with.... that man or hear any tell-tale stories about you two again, that ends us. (Bangs on the table). Get that straight. Because I've no naira to throw around, that's why you go about messing up yourself and disgracing me, going about with a sugar daddy whose children are older than you. But I can't have that again. Whatever you had with him must end. Get that straight?

CHINYELU: (Starts weeping profusely)

(CURTAIN)

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

1. (Ifeyinwa's house. Just bare furnishing. Simple plain table with make up kits. Ify, Chinyelu's friend sits and listens to music from her small radio with Chinyelu just entering the room).

IFEYINWA: Oh my dear, do come in. (*Chi enters*) Ah, it's you. Chi, baby, come on, in, and sit down, I was just thinking of you and when to make out time to see you.

CHINYELU: (Listlessly) Well, I've come now so that saves you the trouble. How is everything?

IFEYINWA: Fine. And you?

CHINYELU: Fine.

IFEYINWA: How is I.K.?

CHINYELU: (Pouting) He dey kampe

IFEYINWA: The Ob.j way (*They both laugh but Chichi does not relax fully*)

IFEYINWA: What's wrong? Anything the matter?
(*with a very inquisitive look*).

CHINYELU: My sister, trouble dey o. big.....
big trouble.

IFEYINWA: What's the matter?

CHINYELU: (*Sitting Up And Drawing Nearer To Ifeyinwa.*) You know that I.K. and I
self plan to marry.

IFEYINWA: Yes, of course. You've been on it for
some time now. Any problems?

CHINYELU: Yes o .. You know that my boss ...
Mr. Idioko I've told you about him...
shee?

IFEYINWA: Yes now.

CHINYELU: That is the problem

IFEYINWA: How?

CHINYELU: He does not want to leave me alone
and I.K. doesn't want to see or hear
about him at all. In fact, he has even
threatened to leave me if....

IFEYINWA: And what are you doing?

CHINYELU: How?

IFEYINWA: What do you mean.. how? You say
how? Are you a fool? Will you allow
that old fool ruin your future for you?
Allow him and you will regret it. Tell
me if you will easily find another
handsome and eligible young man

like I.K. who will love you, care and
provide for you ? the way I K does?

CHINYELU: But I don't know what to do.

IFEYINWA: How can you go on receiving
presents from Mr. Idioko and you tell
me you don't know what to do. You
allow him to furnish your house, and
keep buying you things. Just the other
day he bought you a fridge and you
expect him not to worry you. I will not

support you if you continue to accept money and presents from him.

CHINYELU: What am I to do? He is not only my boss., he is the CEO of the company and could easily fire me if I reject his advances. Besides, I am already committed.

IFEYINWA: Tell him openly you are getting married and that you want to be left alone.

CHINYELU: But Ify, you know my problem; He pays school fees for my two brothers and gives me a monthly allowance that covers my rent and other things. I can't cope without him, but I don't want to loose I.K. either.

IFEYINWA: Mmm, I see (Thinking)

CHINYELU: So I am thinking of continuing with him if I can hide this completely so that when I wed I.K. I can then forget about him. You see what I mean? You know I.K. is saddled with a lot of responsibility.

IFEYINWA: Mm-m Now what did you say about I.K.'s attitude? How is he taking it?

CHINYELU: He is highly annoyed. He threatens to leave me if ever there's anything between us again. In fact, I am sure he is spying on us, and if he finds anything, he could leave me. I know him.

IFEYINWA: Ok. Let me tell you what I feel you should do. First you have to take in for I.K.

CHINYELU: What? Are you out of your mind?

IFEYINWA: Yes. Take in for I.K. so he does not leave you. Meanwhile, you have to arrange with your boss, for two or three months, he keeps away from you. After that you can then continue till you wed, and you leave him finally.

CHINYELU: But Ify, suppose this fails. I mean, do you think it will work out properly?

IFEYINWA: You don't know what to do? Oh, You don't know what to do? I guess you do. I need to tell you that I.K. is the one at

eligible young man in town – young, tall, handsome, a good job, furnished apartment and a cosy BMW = Be my Wife?

CHINYELU: Yes, o, but.....

IFEYINWA: Now tell me what else you intend to do. All I am telling you is that you don't know men. Now that I.K. has developed second thoughts, if you don't hold him tight, he could leave you whether you cut off your boss or not. So you better take my advice.

CHINYELU: I will be taking a great risk you know.

IFEYINWA: What's the risk there? It will only leave I.K. with no other choice. And even if it's a risk, don't you hear that venture is success. It is a gamble my dear Just be optimistic, it will work as planned.

CHINYELU: It's alright, if you say so.

IFEYINWA: We shall see that he doesn't carry out his threat. I like that boy for your

sake. You know, he is not bad, only he hasn't got real money yet.

CHINYELU: Thanks very much Ify, I must be going now.

IFEYINWA: No, not yet, stay, let me find you something to eat and drink.

CHINYELU: No, I am expecting I.K. this afternoon. I should go and prepare something before he comes.

IFEYINWA: I think you are right. What type of soup are you going to make or isn't it soup?

CHINYELU: Ah! his favorite, bitter leaf soup.

IFEYINWA: Oho! You had better go, you know the saying? The fastest road to a man's heart is through his mouth! (they laugh).

CHINYELU: Chi baby - I hear you!

IFEYINWA: I shall come later in the evening or tomorrow, so reserve my own share and make it very tasty. You know

you've got to pet I.K. these days to show him that you really love him.

CHINYEI-U: Ah my sister, you are right o. Bye bye.

IFEYINWA: Bye. See you then.

CHINYELLU: See you (leaves).

CURTAIN

SCENE II

EMEKA: Come in! Ah I.K. you're welcome.

IKECHI: Nnaa na waa-o! How are you?

EMEKA: Fine. You've been so scarce. I looked in the other day and you were not in. They said you traveled.

IKECHI: Yes my brother, I've been very busy indeed.

EMEKA: What's making you so busy?

IKECHI: You won't believe it. I've been going to my in-laws?

EMEKA: In-laws? Which in-laws (laughs)

IKECHI: (sighs) You don't know what happened. You know Chi Chi took in and left me with no other alternative than to hurry up marriage arrangements?

EMEKA: You don't mean it. Since when?

IKECHI: I mean it o. This marriage thing, is not a joke I tell you, especially when it

has to be rushed. Look at my poor self. I've spent so much buying this and that and yet we have hardly started.

EMEKA:

My brother, I never knew. Anyway take it easy. Any man suffering for Chi-Chi always forgets the difficulties whenever he looks at her. The girl is beautiful.

IKECHI:

As if beauty means all. A beautiful girl will do for a girl friend but a good manner is also needed in a wife.

EMEKA:

But she is well behaved. Is she not?

IKECHI:

Well.... let's watch and see.

EMEKA:

Why do you talk like that? You had only one point against her? the affair with the boss?

IKECHI:

And so? Isn't it bad enough?

EMEKA:

Hasn't she stopped? Anyway she must have.

IKECHI:

Something tells me they are still on and that's what worries me. If they are still on, then the baby could as well be another person's.

EMEKA:

Don't say that, she can't go to that extent.

I.K.:

I'm not saying she did, but what I mean is that I can't bear her having an affair while I am suffering to get things going for her sake.

EMEKA:

For her sake? Here! alone?

IKECHI:

O.K. for our sakes (They laugh)

EMEKA:

I don't think she will be stupid enough to keep on with that man when...

IKECHI:

Mm-m you don't know these girls. They can be quite unpredictable sometimes. Anyway, I have a plan.

EMEKA:

Yes, what is the plan?

IKECHI:

I will be paying her surprise visits in the office, since the ones I tried in her house all failed. God save her, so I

ACT THREE

SCENE 1

(Mr Idioko's office. Office arrangement Ada sits in one corner table. Chi Chi comes late to work and meets her colleague, Ada.)

ADA: Good morning, auntie.

CHINYELU: Morning Ada. Has Oga come?

ADA: Yes, he came since and he has asked of you.

CHINYELU: Is he annoyed?

ADA: He appears to be in a sour mood.

CHINYELU: OK, let me greet him. *(Opens the door and walks in)* Good morning, Sir.

MR. IDIOKO: Why are you coming now? What time is it? *(Looks at his watch)* Past nine on a Monday morning?

CHINYELU: Sorry Sir. I am coming straight from the village because I.K. went to

introduce his people to my parents for the arrangements..

MR.IDIOKO: Nonsense. *(Flaring up).* What rubbish? You think I pay you to be wandering with your boyfriend? And coming up with all kinds of flimsy excuses? I will not have you mentioning that stupid boy's name here. Where was he when I picked you up from the rubbles, cleaned you out and brushed you up? Who took care of your numerous problem? Now you are attractive and he thinks he is in love with you.

CHINYELU: Sir, am sorry. It's just that I had transport difficulty while coming this morning...

MR. IDIOKO: Nonsense. Will you shut up? Sorry my foot. This office is not run for charity – understand? Nor is it a marriage consultancy office. O K? So, enough of that excuse. In fact, you have to be very careful in this office; else, you could

CHINYELU: *(shocked and rushes out)* Hei, please. I am sorry, sir. *(Breaks down on her table crying.)* Oh God please help me o.

ADA: *(Rushes to her colleague to console her.)* What is the matter? Please take it easy.

CURTAIN

SCENE 11

(In front of Ify's house)

CHINYELU: *(breathless)* Ifeyinwa, come o. I am in trouble, o.

IFEYINWA: *(coming out)* What trouble?

CHINYELU: I am pregnant o!

IFEYINWA: What's wrong with that?

CHINYELU: Nothing but.....

IFEYINWA: But what? Is I.K not happy about it?

CHINYELU: Somehow he is not very pleased. He complains of being rushed into things and not even being too sure of the baby's biological origin.

IFEYINWA: Rubbish! How can he say that? Anyway, that stage will pass soon. Just keep persuading him.

CHINYELU:

That's not the only problem. Mr. Idioko is harassing me everyday. At the slightest excuse, he continues to haller. In short he is threatening to send me packing. I don't know what to do? This life is not easy. I am torn between pillar and post....I.k on one sideMr Idioko on the other. Above all, no rest of mind.

IFEYINWA:

Take it easy, Chinyelu. Life is a gamble. It will all come to pass in Jesus name.

CHINYELU:

I hope it works out fine. If not then I am in hot soup especially with this pregnancy. I don't know why I am so apprehensive.

IFEYINWA:

Be strong. Just try to be balancing your act. And of course prayer ...in a short while it will be all over.

CHINYELU: Ok then. Till later.

IFEYINWA: Take care.

CURTAIN

SCENE III

(Office arrangement, Mr Idioko's office).

CHINYELU:

Did you ring, Sir. em I... (*Opening the door halfway...*)

MR. IDIOKO:

I didn't, but then, do I need to call you, Chi Chi, before you come.

CHINYELU:

It's alright. Forget it (*Going out*)

MR. IDIOKO:

Big baby, Chi Chi, what's wrong? Come on, be a good girl.

CHINYELU:

O.K. what is it?

MR. IDIOKO:

Look, you've been dodging me all along, why? You know how much I love you. Chi, yet you treat me like this.

CHINYELU:

I am not dodging you...But...

MR. IDIOKO:

You told me to keep off, for some months and I did. Now, it's almost

three months and you still don't want to come near me.

CHINYELU:

Yes, because I don't want to spoil things now. I am in a delicate position and I.K. is suspicious. You know if he has any facts against us, he could call off the marriage procedures that are already in progress.

MR. IDIOKO:

He won't and Chi, you know I've missed you all along. I continue to think of you, and whenever I remember that you will soon be married and taken away from me, I don't feel happy.

CHINYLEU:

Eh, that's what you will say.

MR. IDIOKO:

Oh! I know you won't believe me, no girl ever does. All the same I've grown to love you so much because you are not like other girls. You are so beautiful and yet very understanding.

CHINYELU:

You will find another person surely.

MR. IDIOKO:

It will not be easy. Why don't you try to come closer to me now before your wedding? I know that if I ask you to keep going with me after your wedding you might not agree. That's why I want us to snatch the best out of this last time. Come on, let me touch you. *(chair squeaks as he tries to grab her).*

CHINYELU:

No.... wait..... This is an office remember.

MR. IDIOKO:

It doesn't matter. What do you think I am doing? Be a good girl like you've always been. Remember what we used to share. Just kiss me *(holding her close)* *(high knock).*

CHINYELU:

Leave me, leave me alone. There's a knock...

MR. IDIOKO:

Wait, it's not here *(still holding her as door opens. I.K. enters quietly)*

IKECHI:

There you are, Chinyelu. ? So this is it? Mmm, I se-ee. I thought as much, but I never knew you had no shame in you at all. You choose to make love right in the office. And what is more, while carrying a three-month old baby which you claim to be mine. By the way, how do I know the baby is mine? It can as well be your boss's. So I had better leave you both to carry on. I know I will catch you, and now I have. Go on with him you bitch and don't you ever dare to come to me again. You are a cheat. How dare you think you could fool me for long? As for you my man, you are a bloody fool. I leave you to marry her and make her your second or third wife. I can't take her again.

CHINYELU:

I.K. bikonu, ato kwamu o
(*crying and weeping*). Oga
ilaputamu O... What will I do? I.k.
consider my condition.

IKECHI:

Get out!

(**CHINYELU:** (*Weeping*) Please o!. Believe me...o!. Nothing o! between us o!. Please o! believe me.o!

MR. IDIOKO: Come, come my young man, wait a minute. Emm.....

IKECHI: That's your business. (I.k. bangs door on them and storms out as Chinyelu cries louder).

CHINYELU: Oh, why? Why? Why did I gamble with my life? Tragic o!, tragic o! tragic gamble? I don't die.

E N D

HAWKER'S DILEMMA

CAST

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Obioma: | The hawker. |
| Auntly Rose: | Obioma's Madam |
| Uncle James: | Auntly Rose's husband. |
| Nkiru: | |
| Bassey: } | |
| Ndidi: } | Other hawkers |
| Auntly Nneka: } | |
| Auntly Uju: } | Auntly Rose's friends |
| Okonkwo | Obioma's father |
| Ugoeke | Obioma's mother |
| Maduka: | Okonkwo's brother |
| Okoye: | Okonkwo's brother |
| Ogbonne: | Ugoeke's sister |
| President: | Head of customary court. |
| Members: | Part of court staff. |
| Court Registrar: | Staff of the court |
| Odinaka: | Culpit |
| Police Officers: | Law enforcement agents |
| Driver | A dirty looking young man |

ACT ONE

Scene I

(Obioma being helped by her madam to lift a heavily loaded tray of fruits – oranges, pineapple and bananas. Madam admonishes her to sell everything.)

Obioma: Aunt, please help me up with this tray...

Aunt Rose: Okay *(she helps her lift it to her head and balances it)*. Go on now, is it okay?

Obioma: Yes aunty.

Aunt Rose: Good. Have a good market and make sure you sell every thing.

Obioma: Yes aunty. I will try.

Aunt Rose: No, not just try O, make sure you sell everything, do you hear me ? everything I say.

Obioma: Yes ma.

Aunt Rose: Good. And remember to come back early for the preparation of night meal. Take care of the house, bath the children and feed them. I shall be away attending our sisters fellowship. *(Obioma leaves. Madam smiles calculating profits on her fingers.)*

CURTAIN

Scene II

(Around 2pm, Obioma is seen tramping the streets corners, households, and workshops shouting till she meets nkiru her friend who sells groundnuts).

Obioma: Nky – so you de market too?

Nkiru: Hei, Obioma, na your eye bi dis? I was wondering which side you dey so. Person no de see you again?

Obioma: Nne, I dey – o! Na waa. Na dat kind New Market Road side I discovered. Market dey sell well there.

Nkiru: Which side? A beg make we rest small for that shade. (They move towards a big mango tree. Bassey was already lying beside his tray of agidi) See Bassey

Bassey: Una welcome o. Make una come rest small. Obioma, long time no see. Where have you been all these while?

Obioma:

I dey normal o. I no go anywhere, I dey take care of my Madam pikin dem. (Back to Nkiru) You know that Bumper Bus Stop – where you get many shops. You go enter well well far inside mechanic, welder, and gbo gbo ti ti dey there?

Nkiru Na dat side? Hmm me I no dey o?

Bassey: Dat side na wahala o.

Obioma Haba – why now?.

Nkiru: It is that side they beat up one boy who sells okpa. They finished the okpa and threw the boy out.

Obioma: E e e. (She keeps quiet)

Nkiru: Please, don't go there again

Obioma: My God. Who knows? I may even be in trouble.

Nkiru: Why?

Obioma: Since last weekend self I feel somehow.

Bassey:

Nkiru, you better help her o. Make she no enter trouble. You remember her story with one tinker boy. Me, I am going. I have to see a customer. Bye (he leaves).

Obioma:

Ok, Bassey, bye.

Nkiru:

Bye. So Obioma, I hope it is ordinary tiredness, try and rest small. (They drink sachet water and Obioma lies down while Nkiru-eyes her critically.)

Nkiru:

Obioma... Ah, you have slept off? (*Sighs and wakes up trying to stretch out. Another lady, aunty Nneka passes by and sees them.*)

Nkiru:

Good afternoon, Aunty.

Aunty Nneka:

Afternoon Nkiru, What are you doing here? Is this where you are selling the things?

Nkiru:

We are tired so we decided to rest small.

Aunty Nneka: I see, so who is with you?

Nkiru:

My friend, Obioma.

Aunty Nneka:

Ok, Obioma. I see. You people better hurry up so you can finish selling. Is it not getting late?

Nkiru:

Yes Aunty, bye. (As she leaves, she eyes Obioma in her sleeping position)

Obioma:

Who is that?

Nkiru:

Don't mind her, busy body.

Obioma:

Who is she?

Nkiru:

Aunty Nneka, that woman who teaches in one school inside your street. She be your Madam friend now. Aunty Nneka.

Obioma:

Dat fat buttocks wee dey put plenty make – up?

Nkiru:

Yes now.

Obioma:

Which one be her own?

Nkiru:

I no no! She say make we sure say we sell every thing.