

Wisdom & Folly (A Short Allegory)

Timi Oladeji

"Folly, folly", a despaired voice whispers in my ear.

I steadily lift myself up off the floor. My soul is weary; a cold bitter taste lingering at the back of my throat and feeling as though the weight of a thousand boulders were hanging over my neck.

"Do I not call?" the voice whispers again.

I place my right palm on a wall in an attempt to buoy up my ascension but I smothered something. It felt like the silhouette of a protruded carving.

Intrigued I stretch forth my left arm, now placing both my hands on the wall.

Then I saw her looking at me through the window. Her face glowing, her stark brown eyes reflecting my minuscule face – as clear as a mirror.

The burden over my neck ever became lighter. "It is I", she coolly said and immediately my soul began to tremble.

She came running towards me, her garment swaying majestically in the wind. I tasted the sweetness lasting into eternity and I had all but forgotten that I was forsaken. Then came the crackling roar of thunder outside and the rhythmic sound of raindrops beating over my head. In a moment's breath I was brought back to my desolate abode.

I slowly sit back down to the cold earth pondering my situation.

"How did I end up in this mire?"

I gazed into the darkness with no answer. Then the wailing started up again. It was a pattern I had noticed. At a certain time of every day, a voice began screaming in agony as if the poor soul was dragged away to an unknown destination. Often times the voice would cease upon what sounded like a heavy blow, other times dissipating into the distance. The cries were frightening, so much so that I often wondered when it was going to be my turn.

But I thought of her, desiring to hear her pure voice again: pure, as silver tried in a furnace. O her words are sweet to my taste, sweeter than the dripping of a honeycomb. Her beauty became etched in my mind's eye although I still could not behold her.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" came the beating on the door, which startled me. Perhaps I was next. "Bon appétit", a voice uttered as my daily supply was slid into the cell and the door slammed shut! The tasteless food is always served lukewarm, but my system is used to it by now and besides, it keeps me alive.

On a certain day while I was sleeping I heard a whispering

voice, on this occasion coming from the wall to my right. I woke from my half sleep eager to find out if she was the one calling again. "Anyone there?" the person spoke.

It was a masculine voice. I was reluctant to answer.

"Please, speak to me if anyone is there?"

"I am here," I replied. Then I heard a sigh of relief.

"What's your name sir?" he said.

"Folly. People call me folly."

"How did we end up in here folly?"

"I don't know. Who are you?" I quickly replied, also eager to get some answers.

"I'm Earnest. I am a country farmer."

"Where were you before you were taken, Earnest?"

"I was working in the field. One minute I had my head down with my hands to the plough, next minute I woke up in this forsaken abode."

"Tell me what you see?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" he replied.

"Tell me what you see around you in your cell?"

"Scratches everywhere. And symbols. Ancient-looking symbols plastered all over the walls."

"Can you read any of it?"

"There is a symbol of what looks like a house being built and another one in another place of the same house being torn down by another set of characters. I also see a signature of a person who was here before."

"What does it say?"

"It is not very visible but it shows a name beginning with 'W' & 'I', and some other letters that have eroded next to the sentence 'was here'. I'm sorry I don't know what the rest means."

"Hmm," I exclaimed, pondering to myself.

"How long have you been here folly?" Earnest broke my thought.

"I don't know for sure, perhaps just under 40 days," I replied.

"Well whatever our lot, I am ready," he said. "I am ready to meet my maker."

Then he suddenly stopped speaking. It was as if he was never there.

Curious, I got up in the dead silence of the night and began investigating the four walls separating me from freedom. Perhaps this will give me some answers. I made my way from one corner to the next, doing this for many days.

On the seventh day of my investigation, with no progress made, I heard a loud bang on the door. This was unusual and it did not sound like the call for supper.

I quickly fell to the floor, in a sitting posture.

I heard the gentle screech of the door open and a voice calmly said, "Let's go home."

"Who is it?" I replied sceptically.

"It is I, Wisdom. Do not be afraid."

"What of the others?" I inquired.

"Right now, worry for yourself," the voice replied.

I got up and slowly walked through the door. Then I saw a bright white light, shining in my face. Her appearance suddenly made plain. I took one more step forward and woke up from my dream.