



I am Amoti

I am Amoti. This was one of the most significant days of my life. My little ramshackle stall, made of woven matete, was weighed down with plastic bags filled with tap water to sell to the thirsty commuters of Lagos. A flamboyantly dressed Yoruba woman approached me. 'Would you like to come and look after my children rather than sell water on the streets?' she asked me. Within hours my life had been transformed. At Mama Edi's house I looked after two small boisterous children, whilst Mama undertook her import export business. I had my own room! And my clothes provided for me. Not since before my parents died from HIV Aids had I been so happy. Time passed, the children were ready to go to Secondary school and my work changed to that of assistant housekeeper in Mama Edi's Lagos compound.

One day, after a particularly long and enthusiastic church service, Mama Edi introduced me to a friend of hers who lived in Great Britain! She was so friendly and excited to offer me the post of a nanny to her young son – in a house overlooking the River Thames! In no time I was on a plane to London, with smart, warm clothes for the cold British weather. But the plane landed in Dublin, and Mama Edi's friend did not meet me. Another woman, Mama Luka, who was Ghanaian, met me and brought me to a house. There, instead of a young boy of three, I was met by a Winston, a young Ibo man and three young women about my age. Winston was very friendly, took me by the hand and showed me to my room. After a cup of tea together and some bread and Blue-Band, he raped me. This was my work from now on. To be ready to receive and entertain the men who Mama Luka arranged to come to the house. Did I understand? Did I know how to use Durex?

I cried, I pleaded no, this is not what I wanted, not what I had come for, where were the children? I wanted to look after Mama Edi's friend's son - but Winston did not listen. I was left sobbing on the bed – my new blouse bought only two days ago in the market in Lagos was ripped. My thoughts were confused. My hope for a new life was shattered.

Amoti's story is the combination of three young Nigerian women's accounts. These and several other young African women have been helped by CHASTE to access safe housing and support whilst their cases are heard by Asylum tribunals. The majority of these young women are currently returned to their source countries under current UK immigration law and lacunae in counter- trafficking legislation and protection.

NOT FOR SALE Sunday is an initiative of CHASTE.

All funds raised will help CHASTE to take forward its work and vision to end trafficking for sexual exploitation. CHASTE is a Registered Charity No. 1106353 www.chaste.org.uk