

The background is a light grey, textured surface. At the top, there are faint white outlines of clouds and rain falling. A crown of thorns, rendered in a dark grey, almost black color, is positioned horizontally across the middle. Several bright red blood splatters are scattered around the thorns, with a prominent one at the bottom right. The title 'SCARLET DROPS' is written in a bold, red, distressed font across the top. Below it, the subtitle 'The faith fight' is written in a black, cursive font. At the bottom, the author's name 'JEMIMAH OLUWAPELUMI A.' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

SCARLET DROPS

The faith fight

JEMIMAH OLUWAPELUMI A.

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DEDICATION

Scarlet Drops is dedicated to every hurting soul. My prayer is that you find your healing as you glide through the pages of this book.

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PROLOGUE

She started to feel dizzy again. Painfully, with her teeth digging into her lower lip, she got up from amongst the others and walked towards the opened window. She had managed to keep her pain to herself but she knew it would not be long before she needed another change of garment. All she had was hope. No family. No friends. Just hope. She kept hoping, believing that it would end all too soon. Even again, as the physician's assistant walked up to her kindly and whispered into her ears.

Zura watched as her eyes filled with tears, a mixture of fear and pity. Or was it just fear? She knew she should leave quickly. This was just another abandonment. It hurt, but it could never hurt as much as it did twelve years ago, when Shimei forsook her and took in another wife.

The intense pain snapped her out of her thoughts. The hushed whispers. The shuffled feet. All reminding her of her aloneness. One of the women turned sharply, staring at the scarlet stain her condition had created. She got the message alright. She was unclean. Unwanted. Undesirable. Holding her veil tightly, she clung on to the scroll and walked on to the next physician.

THE GENESIS

Like every other morning, with the rising of the sun, Zura got up to worship *Asherah*, pouring out the choice wine as she whispered her requests. Casting her veil aside, she strode to the well, dampening her face with the liquid within.

Water. It was as precious to her as life itself. Her fingers played, forming ripples that made her smile. A sudden fear crept on her, ending her happiness abruptly; sending shivers down her spine. She clutched her belly, gently massaging the omphalic region. What if she never conceived? What if she never had the chance to see her water break? Her hands trembled as she reached out to touch the water again and it seemed to turn to blood. Gasping in shock, she wondered if she was ill-lucked. She was not just barren. Was she going crazy too?

“Zura!” her husband’s mother calling her name interrupted her monologue. She knew what awaited her. It was that time of the month.

Shimei poured libation to the gods and goddesses he inherited from his ancestors. He prayed their protection from bad luck and demons. He prayed that they would look upon him with mercy and give them a child to call their own. He took the scented oil and poured it and the fragrance filled the room, blessing them and their deity. Zura toyed with the necklace on her neck. Shimei had given it to her the very first day she stepped into his house as his wife. He loved her and she had grown to love him back. *Oh, that you would give me a child! Oh, that you would silence they that mock me! I would pour a thousand more libations to honor you and make you happy!*

“Zura!” her mother in law beckoned on her for the morning blessing. Adjusting her veil, she knelt before her as she poured the ointment, rubbing into every inch of her belly with trembling lips, muttering prayers.

It would be until seven days before she would know if her prayers had been answered. For those seven days, Zura went into her husband chambers, hoping and believing, that his seed would find comfort in her womb, and stay.

On the seventh day, she stayed away. She had woken up with no trace of blood. Her face lit with hope as she believed her answer had come. As she took her bath, drenched and soaked in the wetness, she felt a heavy thud in her lower abdomen. On sighting the evidence of her monthly flow, she broke down in despair and wept bitterly.

THE CURSE

Trembling, Zura sat down on the laid mat. The priestess danced seductively, swaying her hips rigorously as the rituals began. Her maidens stood at the edge of the altar, mixing poultices that made her drowsy and weak. Caressing the surrounding bells, she struggled to keep awake. She was completing the seventh cleansing ritual, but her monthly flow had not stopped coming.

Even now, she blamed herself for initially excusing it to be a repercussion of eating so many fertility herbs. How could she have been so foolish? She hoped to her ancestors that it was not too late. For now, she was indeed afraid. Remembering the nightmares she had had nights before, she was now sure her forefathers had offended a particular spirit that was bent on revenge. A revenge to steal her happiness.

Despite her devotion to prayers and incessant rituals, had some evil spirit finally gotten their way through to her? She knew what could happen and she was already living in dread of her would be fate. If all attempts to cure her failed, she would be labelled cursed. She would be asked to leave her matrimonial home. She would be banished from the village. Her parents would be asked to disown her and she would never be allowed to step foot into the land, ever again. Her husband would be asked to burn her belongings and take in another wife with a good spirit to ward off evil from the household.

Hadn't she suffered enough? Hadn't she prayed enough? She had given money for every sacrifices requested for by the priestesses yet no results. All she had was hope. Hope, was all she really had.

“Zura! You must have been promiscuous to have brought such an ill-luck upon yourself! How else can you explain such an ailment? You are cursed, woman! Cursed!”. Her husband’s mother lashed out at her furiously. Zura looked on speechless. She could hardly utter a word in defense. Her body ached wearing her off with weakness due to the incessant loss of blood.

“My son is not infertile! We are of a fertile descent, I gave my husband ten sons! Ten sons! And your husband is the fifth! You know Zura, you know! Your husband already has three sons by his concubines, yet your belly would not bulge for even one! My family treated you kindly and this is how you pay us back? You know the penalty for your actions. Get ready with your belongings! You and your cursed womb!”

Shimei looked on sheepishly. Defending his wife would mean standing in the way of tradition. Which meant he could share in the penalty for her sins. He loved her. *But...* When their gaze locked, he needn’t say no more. She knew the truth. She would have to leave.

THE PHYSICIAN

Zura travelled from one village to the next in search of acclaimed powerful physicians and priests. She spent heavily, offering sacrifices to various gods and goddesses of healing.

Because she was always needing a change of garment, she spent more money on inexpensive gowns and veils. If she was found out, she could be stoned to death. At first, she had tried to hang around womenfolk such as herself, hoping that they would feel her pain and look upon her with pity. But she was wrong. She had only told one about her condition but in a number of days, they all started to avoid her like a plague. The women glared at her for each step she took. She later got used to the gossips but she hid her identity. Behind her veil, she was safe. Safe from a cruel world that offered her nothing but pain.

Blood had a foul odour that could not be hid forever. So, she never stayed too long in a place. It would be noticed all too soon if she did not leave quickly.

She prayed in her heart that the *latros* in Galilee would have a solution to her persistent trouble. She had heard that he was the most potent physician in the village.

* * *

She smiled sweetly as she poured her water to drink. Zura had never met a Jew so kind. “My husband is not home yet. He went to the Sea.” Her innocent statement brought so much anguish to Zura as a mixture of jealousy and pain knifed through her heart. Shimei’s imagery had flashed in her heart at the mention of the word “husband”.

Thoughtfully, Magdala offered her some pain relieving poultices which she declined politely. No one could heal the pain of her soul, not even the strongest concoction in the world. Thankfully, she received the water, trying not to brood over the words of the Galilean *latros* she had seen earlier in the day. He was nothing more than a bucket of despondency. She had met Magdala while searching for an inn to stay the night and the woman had offered her a place in her home. But what would her husband say?

“your husband..erm... would he not be offended to see me in your home? I am a non-JEW...”. Again the Magdala smiled mercifully and said that her husband would be glad to have his home be a shelter to someone in need.

“Forgive my asking, is your husband a fisherman?”

“No, he is not. He went to see Jesus of Galilee.”

“Who is this Jesus of Galilee? I have heard a lot about him since I got here. Pray, tell me, is he as powerful as they claim?”

“I believe he is our Christ. The Messiah of the Prophecy we all have heard from the lips of our fathers. And yes, he is not just as powerful as you may have heard, he is much more.”

Looking at her daughter playing in the shelter some distance away, she said, “Zura, my daughter was born crippled from birth. I do not know what Jesus did or how he did it, but my husband returned home one day with my daughter jumping, walking and praising God.”

“One would never know.”

“Yes! Indeed. One would never have known.” Magdala wiped the tears from her eyes with her shawl. She had cried out that day in happiness seeing her daughter walk for the first time in her entire life.

“My husband knows so much more about the prophet. When he returns, he would sit us and tell us the teachings he received from Jesus today...”

As she spoke, something welled up on Zura’s inside. Whoever this Jesus was, he must be the answer to her problems.

When Magdala’s husband Simeon returned, and started to speak about the teachings of Jesus and how he had raised the dead and casted out demons from people, Zura knew that her search had ended. If he could do all of these, then he could help her. Even if it cost all of the money she had left on her, she would go with Simeon tomorrow to see this prophet they called Jesus.

THE MIRACLE

Seeing the huge crowd that thronged after the Prophet, her courage failed her greatly. For a second, when someone in the crowd would suddenly pause and look at her strangely, she would feel her heart smash into a thousand pieces for the fear of hearing “Unclean! *ti akarthato!*” Ritually, she was unclean and the Jewish people would not hesitate to shame her once they found her out. She nearly burst into wails. She was frustrated, but desperation kept her feet glued to the ground. There were so many people. How was she to get to him? How would she reach out to him? how would she maneuver through the crowd without fainting? Even now, she felt weak as the hemorrhage seemed to increase by the minute.

What if the Prophet did not listen to her? Afterall, he was a Jew too. The dark voices became louder to her in less than a split second. With a huge effort, she pushed them all away. She would just have to get close to him. hadn't she heard worse from physicians and priestesses? Hadn't she slept under the sacred trees of the fertility gods and goddesses at midnight? Did she not bear the torment of snake bites to appease the ancestral spirits?

What was his name again? She could not even remember. With tears, she stooped and struggled through the throng. Every now and then, she would get a boot in her ribs but she did not care. Oh! What a miracle it was when she saw his robe! All she needed to do was get closer. So that she could speak to him.

The dark voices became stronger again as her efforts were met with futility. Those closer to him seemed to be bound to him by some invisible covalent bonds that kept them tightly to his side. With each trial to inch closer, she met with disappointment. **Turn back and go home. It is of no use.** She smiled bitterly. She did not come this far only to turn back. Shoving the voice aside, she took a bold step. The only one available to her at that moment. “If only I can touch his garment, I will be made whole.” If he is indeed the same man Simeon spoke of, then maybe she did not have to speak to him. She would only touch the hem of his garment... yes, that was what she would do! A man who could raise the dead to life would be that powerful. And she could turn back quietly without raising any dust.

As Zura stretched her hand, she knew deep down within her heart that she was taking her miracle step. And even if it was not, what was the worse that could happen? she would go find another physician. With one painful stretch of arm, she stooped lower to touch his hem and it stopped! She knew when the last drop went out of her body. But then, he also stopped.

Suddenly, he turned back and peered into the crowd and asked the question she had dreaded to hear, “who touched me?”

As they all denied it, She felt ashamed. All she wanted was to slip away, into the crowd and disappear. He need not know. People argued but He insisted someone touched Him in a different way and Zura knew it was no other than herself.

This was her opportunity to be grateful, yet shame tore more at her heart than it ever heard in her entire life. Was it the crowd? Or the fact that she as an unclean woman had dared to touch a prophet's robe? What if they stoned her to death?

If I die, I die.

Trembling, she came and threw herself at Jesus feet. There, in front of everyone she spilled it all out. Blubbering, she recounted her condition and why she had touched him. She also affirmed that she had been healed at once.

Looking up, and searching his eyes, she saw no judgement. Instead, she felt light leap into her world of darkness and instantly, she knew in her spirit that this was no young man! He was no ordinary prophet... He was God!

When he called her his daughter and called her whole, Zura had no shame bowing before him. She had borne unending shame for twelve years of her life.

EPILOGUE

As the crucifix was raised up, the tears flowed endlessly from Zura's eyelids. His scarlet drops endlessly mingled with water, sweat and dust. She knew what it meant to bleed endlessly. He had stopped hers but who would stop his? Tears blinded her as she fought her weakness. How could he die? He had ended her shame the very day He healed her, and here she was standing with an unveiled face. But himself? The soldiers had cast lot for his garment and he was here hung shamefully like a criminal with only a loin cloth for the sake of decency. How could this have happened?

Suddenly in her heart, she knew! His scarlet drops were for her. He was dying her death! He was bearing her pain. He was giving it all up for her to have it. And he was setting her free! He had spoken the parables oft times but she had not understood. Now she had a knowing, that this was not defeat. It was victory. His scarlet drops were all for her healing and for as many as would believe in him.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

Some months ago, during my personal Bible study, on the eighth chapter of Luke, the Lord opened my eyes to see the battles that Zura (a fictitious name for the woman with the issue of blood) faced. I had my own battles at the time, and the striking similarities of our faith fight fascinated me. This got me brooding and I meditated on Zura's story for a long while and that was how Scarlet Drops was birth.

Faith is indeed a fight. (1 Timothy 6:12) A good fight; against, doubts, fear, approval addictions, people pleasing, unworthiness, and the devil of course. But the good deal, (it is in fact the best deal) is that for everyone who believes, we have already won. According to 1 John 5:4. Faith is the victory with which we overcome. Ephesians 6:16 says faith is the shield with which we put out all the burning arrows shot by the evil one.

Faith is the Good Fight.

Faith is the Shield.

Faith is the Victory!

Does this excite you just as much as it does me? I hope you are nodding your head and smiling as you read this.

A FRIENDLY NOTE

Jesus is real. He is more real than the air you breathe. He is the force that holds it all together. Everything was created by him.

Perhaps like Zura, you have experienced pain, hurt, disappointment and even shame. You have gone through a heartbreak, the loss of someone you love, a season of despair and you are about to give up.

I have good news for you! Jesus can fix it! Maybe you have prayed several times, and right now, your hope is dwindling. Just hold on, the darkest moment is just before dawn. Cry if you may, but keep your faith fight on! Do not give in to despair! Do not give in to defeat! Do not listen to those dark voices!

Your Faith is your Victory!

Keep up with your affirmations of the WORD!

His YES is your YES!

A PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

I would like to agree with the WORD alongside with you for your healing. Whatever hurt you may be going through right now; physical or soulish, I want us to say a prayer of faith together:

Lord Jesus, we stand in the assurance that your promises are YES and AMEN. We understand that by your stripes, we were healed. We pray that this healing power be made manifest NOW. Let it flow through every cells and tissues, and every soul wounds, and let there be wholeness. We ask and receive in JESUS name. Amen. Thank you Lord.

P.S: Would you like to receive the Life of God? so that you can have the God-kind of faith? Would you like to be born again? Then say this prayer from your heart, genuinely.

Dear Father, I thank you for sending Jesus to die that I might live. I believe this and I receive the life of God into my spirit. I am now a child of God. Thank you Lord Jesus. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jemimah Oluwapelumi A. is a Visionary Life Enthusiast, Educator, Entrepreneur and Writer. She is also the initiator of The WinTeen Faculty; A hub where she passionately commits to raising winning teenagers and youths. Over the years, she has served with various organizations and individuals to help birth brilliant projects.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Shame, contempt, and despair, had become Zura's life's companions. People believed she was cursed by the gods, a punishment for her sins.

She finally meets The Great Physician, but not without a fight. Did she succeed? Find out!