

Pack 116

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2020

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**Lockdown rage: Gender-based violence during COVID-19** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Notes to broadcaster

Gender-based violence is an act, or the threat of an act, that causes physical, psychological / emotional, economic, or sexual pain or injury to a person because of that person’s gender.

The increasing reports of physical and spousal abuse to the police led the Ghana Police Administration in 1998 to establish the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU), which is now called DOVVSU (Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit), a specialized unit that handles crimes against women and children. The enactment of the Domestic Violence Act 2007 and the Legislative Instrument in 2016 by the government of Ghana have also helped to tackle domestic violence in Ghana.

In spite of the existence of DOVVSU, Ghana still faces increased reports of domestic violence because there are inadequate essential services to address it, including social services, educational, and health services. For example, victims of domestic violence must pay for medical fees though they are supposed to be free; there are limited DOVVSU offices and staff at the district and community levels; there are limited shelter facilities for abused women; and the degree of ignorance about domestic violence allows perpetrators to go unpunished in some circumstances.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened pre-existing gender inequalities and power hierarchies. To prevent widespread transmission of the virus, there have been quarantines, lockdowns, restrictions on movement, and bans on public gatherings. While these measures are important for public health, they have led to increased occurrences of sexual and gender-based violence in communities and among vulnerable people.

Coupled with limited access to essential services such as shelters and hotlines, this has created a situation where gender-based violence is thriving in many communities in Ghana. These challenges make it necessary to educate people of Ghana on gender-based violence, so that the abused are aware of the services available to them, and the necessary steps they need to take in order to free themselves and get justice.

**Scene 1**

In this fictional drama, Foriwaa and her children are subject to abuse from Foriwaa’s husband, Daniel, who, after losing a percentage of his salary due to the COVID-19 pandemic, takes out his frustrations on his wife and children.

He tries to marry off his under-aged daughter to make money, and he takes advantage of the lockdown situation to abuse his wife. This play depicts the horror of abuse in the home, the effect it has on children, and the need to report perpetrators in abusive situations.

This drama contains five scenes, varying in length from 4-7 minutes.

Duration of the entire drama, with intro and outro: 30 minutes.

[Grab your reader’s attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

**SETTING:** FORIWAA’S HOME

**CHARACTERS:** FORIWAA, DANIEL, CHILDREN (SERWAA, BABY, & PAAPA)

**SFX:** MUSIC

**DANIEL:** Darling, we have to talk. Lower the volume of the radio and come here.

**FORIWAA:** Yes, dear.

**DANIEL:** Look, I have been thinking about our situation at home, and I’m very concerned about our survival. Since the emergence of this COVID-19 pandemic, our lives have quickly moved from good to bad and it keeps getting worse. I have just been informed by my school that teachers will now be paid only 50% of our salaries due to the uncertainty we are facing as a nation.

**FORIWAA:** I’m so sorry to hear this, my husband. I know it’s not easy, but we will get through this, we will survive this pandemic.

**DANIEL:** Yes, we will survive it, but not by sitting down and doing nothing.

**FORIWAA:** So, what do you suggest we do? I haven’t been able to open my salon since the lockdown, and as a hairstylist, it’s too dangerous to work now. I can easily catch this virus from my clients.

**DANIEL:** Yes, I know, the more reason to secure our survival before it’s too late. Look, Serwaa is now a young woman, we brought her up well.

**FORIWAA:** [CHUCKLES] We certainly did. I’m so proud of how smart and responsible she has become.

**DANIEL:** Exactly, and she is also very beautiful …

**FORIWAA:** Well, what has she got to do with the crisis we are facing?

**DANIEL:** Everything my dear, everything … you remember Baba?

**FORIWAA:** Yes, that rich friend of yours?

**DANIEL:** Yes, he asked for our daughter’s hand in marriage. He couldn’t have reached out to us at a better time. See, this man is ready to stock our home with everything we need as well as give us a good amount of monthly support if we agree to give him our daughter’s hand in marriage!

**FORIWAA:** No! Never … Oh, Danny. How could you even consider giving our daughter to that … that … man! He is too old; besides, he has a wife!

**DANIEL:** Oh, his wife died last year, and he believes our daughter will make a good wife for him! Think about it, dear …

**FORIWAA:** No, Serwaa is a bright young woman. She has to finish high school and go to the university. She has a bright future!

**DANIEL:** What is brighter than marrying a rich man? She will be given the world.

**FORIWAA:** That’s not true, I can’t believe that a *krache* (*Editor’s note: A Twi title for a teacher*) like you would even think like this! How can you even think of marrying our daughter off to some rich man at a time like this? Serwaa is still a baby, for goodness sake!

**DANIEL:** She is not a baby.

**FORIWAA:** She’s 17.

**DANIEL:** Yes, she is of age.

**FORIWAA:** No way. I don’t agree to this! I won’t allow you to marry my daughter off to a stranger. He doesn’t even live in our town. What if he maltreats her, or harms her in any way?

**DANIEL:** That won’t happen.

**FORIWAA:** How do you know that?

**DANIEL:** He adores her. Besides, he is no stranger, he is my friend.

**FORIWAA:** Friend, my foot. It’s over my dead body that you would marry my daughter off to a stranger!

**DANIEL:** [HE SLAPS HER AND SHE SCREAMS]So be it! How dare you talk back at me! Have you forgotten your place in this house? You are my wife!! You are not my equal!! Don’t you ever talk back to me again!

**SFX:** HE BANGS THE DOOR AND FORIWAA SOBS UNCONTROLLABLY

**Scene 2**

**SETTING:** FORIWAA’S HOME

**CHARACTERS:** FORIWAA, DANIEL, CHILDREN (SERWAA, BABY, & PAAPA)

**SFX:** DOOR CREAKS OPEN

**FORIWAA:** Serwaa! Where have you been all day? I have been worried sick about you!

**SERWAA:** Mummy, I’m sorry, you were asleep and I didn’t want to wake you up. See, I brought you some money and food.

**FORIWAA:** Ah, where did you get this?

**SERWAA:** I sold all my homemade face masks.

**FORIWAA:** Oh … really. I thought you said you were just trying your hands on it.

**SERWAA:** Yes, but they came out really great. And I know we need the money, so I sold them.

**FORIWAA:** Oh, Serwaa, what can I say, I’m so proud of you.

**SERWAA:** Thank you, Mama. I know that it’s hard for you and daddy to take care of the house these days. You have two little mouths to feed; I don’t want to be a burden … and … Thank you for not agreeing to send me away …

**FORIWAA:** Shhh … quiet. He might hear you.

**SERWAA:** Sorry …

**FORIWAA:** No, no, no. [CLEARS HER THROAT] You better leave your slippers outside the house and head straight to the bathroom. I hope you weren’t careless out there …

**CHORUS:** COVID-19 is real!

**SERWAA:** I know that, Ma, and I was careful. I wore my nose mask all day (*Editor’s note: A “nose mask” also covers the mouth.*), and I always kept a distance of one metre with my clients.

**FORIWAA:** Two metres will make me feel better.

**SERWAA:** Oh, Ma, how then do I sell my products if I have to be two metres away from the buyers?

**FORIWAA:** I don’t care … where is your hand sanitizer?

**SERWAA:** Here …

**FORIWAA:** Good. Now straight to the bathroom.

**SERWAA:** Yes, Ma.

**FORIWAA:** And please, soak your dress in warm water and wash it with a detergent immediately!

**SERWAA:** Yes, Mama!

**DANIEL**: (COMING ON-MIC) Is that daughter of yours back?

**FORIWAA:** (WHISPERING) Hurry, rush to the bathroom!

**SFX:**  DOOR CREAKS OPEN

**DANIEL:** I told you she is up to no good. She went to see her lover, didn’t she …?

**FORIWAA:** No, please, she went to sell her face masks. Look, she brought us some money. I told you she is a good girl. Daniel, please let’s support Serwaa, she will make us proud.

**DANIEL:** Get out of my sight, you make me sick, both of you.

**FORIWAA:** Daniel, what have I done to deserve this? Serwaa is our only daughter, we can’t …

**DANIEL:** I said get out! (HE HITS HER CONTINUALLY AS SHE SCREAMS IN PAIN. THE BABY CRIES.)

**PAAPA:** Father … dada … st-o-p … (Sobbing) Ple-a-se …

**DANIEL** Shut up, boy, what do you know*?* (HITS FORIWAA AGAIN AND SHE SCREAMS.)

**SERWAA:** Dad!

**DANIEL:** And you, Serwaa!

**FORIWAA:** Please, don’t touch her … please …

**DANIEL:** Get married and leave this house, we have enough mouths to feed. You are too old to be depending on us. Go and pack your things, your days in this house are numbered!

**FORIWAA:** Please, don’t touch her … please …

**DANIEL:** Get out of my way… all of you. (BANGS THE DOOR LOUDLY).

**SFX:**  CHILDREN CRY ALOUD, MOTHER SOBS.

**SERWAA:** Am so sorry, Mummy. I’m so sorry!

**FORIWAA:** It’s not your fault, none of you are to blame for this. Your father is only stressed. Everything will be okay.

**Scene 3**

**SETTING:** FORIWAA’S HOME

**CHARACTERS:** FORIWAA, DANIEL, CHILDREN (SERWAA, BABY, & PAAPA)

**SFX:** SIGTUNE

**SERWAA:** Ma … Mama! Listen, you must listen to this program, it’s very educative.

**FORIWAA:** I’m busy, Serwaa, bring the radio to the kitchen.

**SERWAA:** Okay. (PAUSE)

**SFX:** MUSIC PLAYS

**SERWAA:** Listen, it’s the weekly message by RADIO X. They deal with different topics every week. It’s very educative.

**SFX:** [RADIO TUNED IN] This is Radio X’s weekly broadcast. Greetings, dear listeners, this message is brought to you by the Women’s Foundation of Love and Service. Listen carefully and stay safe.

music for one second and then the following audio message

In these days of the COVID-19 pandemic, where people find themselves in the same space for a longer period of time, the chances of gender-based violence are likely to rise, but we must desist from inflicting such pain on our loved ones. Gender-based violence inflicts a lot of suffering and damage to its victim, it destroys a person’s self-esteem, and can cripple them physically and mentally.

Beloved listeners, rape, early marriage, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and physical, mental, and emotional abuse are all forms of gender-based violence. These are all forms of abuse that are punishable by law and perpetrators must be arrested and brought to book.

If you know of any person who is currently the victim of any kind of gender-based violence during this pandemic, please do not keep quiet. Report such cases at the nearest police station, or call these available help lines for help: \*3390# or \*12i4. (*Editor’s note: These are “fictional” help line numbers. You may want to insert the number of a real help line in your area, with the permission of the organization that operates the help line*.)

Mothers, grandmothers, brothers, sisters, neighbours, let’s all be each other’s keepers. Reach out and help victims in your area, your compound, or your neighborhood. Dear victim, do not be afraid to ask for help. Stay home, stay safe, and say NO to this shadow pandemic—say NO to gender-based violence!

Beep. SIG TUNE PLAYS

**FORIWAA:** Put that thing off, put the radio off! Did you know already that this is what they will talk about?

**SERWAA:** Mum …

**FORIWAA:** Did you know?

**SERWAA:** No … I listened to it last week, and they educated us on how to stay safe during the COVID-19 partial lockdown. I didn’t know today’s message. (PAUSE) Mummy, are you okay?

**FORIWAA:** Yes!

**SERWAA:** Then why are you piercing the table with the knife? (FORIWAA DROPS THE KNIFE)

**SFX:** SERWAA LETS OUT A MUFFLED CRY AS KNIFE DROPS ONTO THE FLOOR.

**SERWAA:** Mama … (quietly)

**FORIWAA:** Do you know what your father will do to us if he heard us listening to that program?

**SERWAA:** But he didn’t, and that is good for us. Mama, we must ask for help. Report to the police or …

**FORIWAA:** Shh, nobody is going to the police station. Are you mad? Do you want them to arrest your father?

**SERWAA:** But ma, he wants to marry me off to a stranger. Mama, I’m still a minor, and it’s against the law for him to do this to me. He told me my husband will arrive this Friday.

**FORIWAA:** He what???

**SERWAA:** Yes, Ma, he made me promise not to tell you. But Daddy insists on giving me away, with or without your consent.

**FORIWAA:** That will not happen!

**SERWAA:** What are we going to do then?

**FORIWAA:** I don’t know …

**SERWAA:** But mum …

**SFX:** BABY CRIES

**FORIWAA:** Go away, go and take care of your baby brother. Leave me alone. I need to think.

**SERWAA:** Okay.

**SFX:** FORIWAA CRIES BITTERLY

**Scene 4**

**SETTING:** FORIWAA’S HOUSE

**CHARACTERS:** FORIWAA, DANIEL, CHILDREN (SERWAA, BABY, & PAAPA), BABA, POLICE OFFICER, VIVIAN.

**SFX:** SOUND FROM TRUCK

**DANIEL:** Ah, there he is. Park over there. Wow, I’m so happy to see you, my good friend. I didn’t think you could make it because of the partial lockdown. How did you get past the police checks?

**BABA:** Hahaha, I went to buy household necessities. Besides, who would deny me passage when I have all these foodstuffs in my truck as proof?

**SFX:** LAUGH OUT LOUD

**DANIEL:** Good one there, my friend. (PAUSE) Foriwaa, come and take these things inside.

**FORIWAA:** Yes?

**DANIEL:** Are you deaf, I said take the foodstuffs indoors!

**FORIWAA:** Okay. (CALLING) Serwaa …

**DANIEL:** No need to call Serwaa, she is getting ready for her husband. He mustn’t see her until the bride price is settled and all schnapps received. (*Editor’s note: Schnapps are a type of alcoholic beverage that is the standard drink for most traditional wedding ceremonies in Ghana*.)

**SFX:** MEN LAUGH OUT LOUD

**BABA:** Exactly, my friend. (LAUGHS)

**FORIWAA:** Daniel, can I talk to you indoors … please?

**DANIEL:** Baba, sit down and wait for me, I’ll be right back. Paapa, Baba would like some water to drink.

**FORIWAA:** Paapa, wear your face mask. And don’t stand too close to the visitor, just put the water on the table and come inside.

**PAAPA:** Yes, Mummy.

**DANIEL:** What is the meaning of all that?

**FORIWAA:** I need to protect my children from this coronavirus.

**DANIEL:** Why? Does Baba look sick to you?

**FORIWAA:** No, but I heard you can get COVID-19 and not show any sign of sickness. Better to be careful than sorry.

**DANIEL:** Whatever! What do you want, I can’t keep my friend waiting for too long?

**FORIWAA:** Daniel, please reconsider. It’s against the law to forcefully marry off your daughter. Serwaa is a minor. You could be arrested for this. Please, my dear, listen to reason …

**DANIEL:** What! Are you calling me insensitive or mad?

**FORIWAA:** No that’s not what I said, I …

**DANIEL:** Stay out of my business, woman. [HE HOLDS HER IN PLACE AND HITS HER WITH EVERY WORD HE MENTIONS] I - will - do – what - ever - I - want - with -my - daughter.

**FORIWAA:** Aoow, agyei I … oh … Eii ... help … help … hmmn … hmmn ...

**SERWAA:** Daddy, please stop … leave her neck, you will kill her. Please stop … somebody help us …

**SFX:** DOOR CREAKS OPEN

**BABA:** Ah, my friend, what are you doing? Do you want to kill your wife? Let her go!

**PAAPA:** Dada, dada, the police are outside!

**DANIEL:** What? The police? Who called the police? Foriwaa, did you call the police?

**FORIWAA:** No … [SHE COUGHS AND SPEAKS AMIDST TEARS]. I promise, I didn’t call the police. Maybe they are looking for our neighbours.

**DANIEL:** Yes, we aren’t the only family living in this compound house. Now, I need all of you to behave yourselves, you hear me?

**SFX:** HE LEAVES HER, OPENS THE DOOR, AND STEPS OUT.

**VIVIAN:** Good morning, sir, my name is Vivian Lamptey and I’m with the Women’s Foundation of Love and Service. I got a distress call from a young lady, and she directed me to this compound.

**DANIEL:** Okay, that must be Lilian, check the next door.

**VIVIAN:** No, I believe we are in the right place. Are you not Mr. Daniel?

**DANIEL:** Yes, it’s me, I called??

**VIVIAN:** No, you did not, and we cannot disclose the caller’s name. But we are well-informed, and very much aware you intend to give your under-aged daughter away in marriage. That is against the laws of this land and is an offence punishable by law.

**DANIEL:** Foriwaa, (PAUSE) it’s you, right? You called them? (THREATENING) You ungrateful woman, I will …

**SERWAA**: Stop it, daddy! You will kill my mum … and … I don’t want to marry this old man. Please help us, Ma’am.

**DANIEL**: SERWAA!

**FORIWAA:** Leave my daughter alone, we did nothing. I swear! I didn’t call them!

**DANIEL**: Shut up, woman! (FORCEFULLY GRABS FORIWAA). Come and explain why they are here then. (FORIWAA LETS OUT A FEARFUL CRY)

**POLICE OFFICER:** Don’t touch her, sir. My name is Constable Bright Bilson from the Kandan Police Headquarters. You are under arrest for trying to marry off a minor, and for violently beating up your wife. You have the right to remain silent and everything you do or say will be used against you in the court of law. You have the right to a legal counsel.

**DANIEL:** What? No … my daughter is 18 years, she is of age, and she agreed to this marriage. She changed her mind at the last minute and didn’t know how to tell me. That’s why she is saying nonsense … and … my wife is fine. Look at her, she is fine.

**VIVIAN:** Is that so? How then do you explain the bruises on your wife’s face?

**FORIWAA:** No, I fell.

**DANIEL:** You heard my wife. She fell. You have no right to come to my house and accuse me falsely.

**VIVIAN:** Madam, there is no need to be afraid. Please, tell us the truth. Everything will be okay, don’t panic, this is a civil rights case and we will see to it that you, your children, and even your husband get the needed support. Your husband may be very unstable if he did this to you.

**SERWAA:** Mama, please tell them the truth … help me, mummy. Daddy needs help too …

**VIVIAN:** Trust me, this is the best way to help your family. Your husband will face the law for his crimes, but it is the best way to help him reform and think about his choices. You need not raise your children in such a toxic environment.

**SERWAA:** Mother, please … please …

**DANIEL:** Foriwaa … please …

**FORIWAA:** He did it. He hurts me, all the time. And it keeps getting worse. Since the lockdown and restricted movements began, he moved from bad to worse. I’m so scared for my children, my two boys and beautiful daughter, Serwaa. She is such a bright child. She doesn’t deserve to be married off to this old fool. [WEEPS]

**BABA:** Who is the old fool? I am your in-law, don’t be disrespectful!

**VIVIAN:** Officer, arrest this man too, he came here to marry a minor.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Sir, you must also come with me to the station.

**BABA:** No, no, no …

**POLICE OFFICER:** We will take your statement at the station. You have the right to remain silent, and anything you say or do will be used against you in court. You are entitled to a counsel.

**SFX:** DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS. PAUSE AND OPENS AGAIN.

**FORIWAA:** Here is my daughter’s birth certificate. This is proof that she is still a minor.

**DANIEL:** Foriwaa, please. Madam, I’m sorry. Let’s talk about this. I was only trying to secure our bread and butter before they announce a total lockdown. We are broke … I am only paid 50% of my salary because our school closed down. I’m just a desperate father who needs the money.

**VIVIAN:** And what is your excuse for beating up your wife? Just look at her—her face is swollen from your beatings?

**DANIEL:** I’m sorry, I never meant to hurt her. I’m just stressed out.

**VIVIAN:** Being stressed out doesn’t give you the license to abuse your partner or loved ones. You could have gone for a run, exercise, meditate, or do other healthy things to get rid of stress, yet you decided to inflict pain on others.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Let’s go!

**DANIEL:** Please [STARTS TO CRY]. I’m sorry, I’m so sorry.

**VIVIAN:** Thank you, Serwaa, for opening up to us since we got here. You are very brave. And you too, Foriwaa. Our doors are open to you. We can help you with some virtual counseling and provide financial support until you are able to get your life back. Here is my card. Please call me anytime.

**FORIWAA:** [SNIFFS] Thank you.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Madam, you and your daughter are required to come with us to the station to write your statement. Since she is a minor, she will need your consent.

**FORIWAA:** Yes, we are coming with you.

**VIVIAN:** I will drive them to the station. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the police car is already full.

**FORIWAA:** Thank you, Madam, we are very grateful.

**SFX:** DANIEL SNIFFS AND CONTINUES TO CRY & PLEAD.

**Scene 5**

**SETTING:** AT THE POLICE STATION

**CHARACTERS:** VIVIAN, FORIWAA, DANIEL, POLICE OFFICER.

**SFX:** FOOTSTEPS

**FORIWAA & VIVIAN:** Good morning, officer.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Good morning, welcome. How may we help you?

**FORIWAA:** Hmm, please, I’m fine. I’m, I mean, we are here to bail—eerh … my husband.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Oh ok, Mr. Daniel? But hold on a second, are you not Foriwaa?

**FORIWAA:** Yes, I’m Foriwaa, his wife.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Ah …we were called to your house and had your husband arrested for hitting you, and you are here to bail him? [chuckles].

**FORIWAA:** Officer … hmm, you may find me weird, but he is my husband … and … he was just under a lot of pressure! He didn’t know how to handle it. Please, I’m here to bail my husband.

**VIVIAN:** Officer, kindly go and bring Mr. Daniel.

**SFX:**jail cell gate squeAks open and closeD

**VIVIAN:** Stay calm, Foriwaa, I know you are scared and uncertain …

**FORIWAA:** Yes, but I also don’t want to abandon my husband here …

**DANIEL:** Foriwaa, you are here indeed!

**FORIWAA:** No, don’t touch me.

**DANIEL:** I’m sorry, Foriwaa, please forgive me.

**VIVIAN:** Daniel, you have a woman who loves you this much, and you still treat her the way you do [chuckles].

**DANIEL:** You never know what you have until you lose it. Hmmn, so what about my friend, Baba. Is he still here?

**POLICE OFFICER:** No, two women who claim to be his third and fourth wives came to bail him!

**FORIWAA:** Third and fourth wives? Daniel, I thought you said his wife was dead?

**DANIEL:** I lied. I’m sorry, Foriwaa, I regret my actions and this will not happen again.

**FORIWAA:** Oh my God! If I had known this, I wouldn’t even consider bailing you out of here, you liar. Why did they grant him bail Madam Vivian? I hope he doesn’t go scot free for wanting to make my innocent daughter his fifth wife.

**VIVIAN:** Don’t worry, Foriwaa, he will pay for his actions. He will be tried at the court soon for wanting to marry a minor. And so will your husband here.

**DANIEL:** Madam, I’m so ashamed of myself … the two days I spent in these mosquito-infested cells have really brought me back to my senses. Foriwaa, in front of these officers, I want to say I am sorry—sorry to you and Serwaa. I don’t know how I allowed myself to be so consumed by the pressure of providing for my family. I lost my senses. Some men, including me, tend to think that we are supreme over all things … (PAUSE) untouchable, until the law grabs us, and then we realize it is very serious to be on the wrong side of the law. I’m truly sorry, I want to make things right. I will never lay my hands on you or our children. I will try not to use abusive and offensive words towards you or the children.

**VIVIAN:**  Mr. Daniel, talk is cheap, unless it is backed by actions. Here, this letter is to invite you to DOVVSU. (*Editor’s note: Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit*.) Your wife sent her complaint and you will be required to go there with a family member, preferably an elder.

**DANIEL:** But I said I’m sorry … Foriwaa?

**VIVIAN:**  This step is necessary for both of you, Daniel. This will ensure that the law has your records, well … in case this happens again!

**DANIEL:** It won’t happen again, Foriwaa, I won’t hit you again, please, I don’t want to go to jail …

**FORIWAA:** It is important to me that our families are aware of what is going on with us.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Yes, with DOVVSU, the families of the abuser and the abused person are called to be witnessed to our case. In this way, you will be accountable to them as well as the law.

**VIVIAN:** Yes, this pandemic has made it very easy for people to abuse their partners. This trend is very worrying, and we hope that you and every other perpetrator is aware that COVID-19 is not an excuse to commit crime and abuse your partner, and that the law will still hold everyone accountable for their wrongdoings. If you are caught, you will face the full weight of the law.

Daniel, this letter isn’t a jail sentence. At DOVVSU, you may get the chance to go and settle this issue with your family, or your case may be referred to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Unit, depending on the degree of offense. It depends on whether your wife is willing to give you a second chance or not. But you should understand that you will be prosecuted if it is deemed necessary, regardless of whether your wife decides to bring charges or not. So, you better be on your best behaviour after today.

**FORIWAA:** I know you are a good man, and I want to give us another chance … with patience and perseverance, we will get through this pandemic together. But we must do this lawfully, so you don’t take me for granted ever again.

**DANIEL:** Thank you, Foriwaa, I understand … let’s go home now.

**FORIWAA:** Daniel, I’m not ready to come home. (PAUSE) Serwaa isn’t ready either. Although she misses you, she is very confused.

**DANIEL:** I understand, but where will you stay now?

**VIVIAN:** They moved to our shelter when we agreed to bail you.

**DANIEL:** A shelter?

**VIVIAN:**  Yes, the Women’s Foundation of Love and Service home. Don’t worry, we are taking good care of them. We always maintain all social distancing protocols and follow all the guidelines given to us by the World Health Organization and the Ghana Health Service to help stop the spread of the coronavirus and to keep our wards safe. You are required to meet with them once every week, and that visit will be supervised. Our psychiatrists will help you and your family understand each other and help you overcome your fears and manage your anger and frustration. There will be other virtual meetings also, so that by the time all this is over, you will be in a better position to take care of your family, without resorting to violence or any dubious means.

**DANIEL:** Hmmn …

**VIVIAN:** Marrying your daughter off for money would have robbed her of her happiness and the right to grow as a young adult.

**DANIEL:** Yes, my eyes are opened, and I have learnt my lesson. I will do whatever it takes to ensure that my daughter lives a full and happy life.

**FORIWAA:** Yes, Dan, money isn’t everything. What really matters is patience and having the will to live. One day at a time, life will get better.

**POLICE OFFICER:** You have spoken well, Daniel, but now let your actions do the talking. Remember, the laws of the land watch in silence, and until you are caught again, we will be watching. See you soon …

**DANIEL:** No, never again will I set foot in these police cells, I am born again! [all laugh]

**VIVIAN:** That is good to hear, but if you say so, then you better mean it. Violence is certainly not the answer!

**FORIWAA:** Good bye, Daniel, see you soon.

**DANIEL:** Good bye, Foriwaa, I will make it to every meeting … I promise.

**POLICE OFFICER:** It is in your best interest that you do, Daniel. You could face even bigger charges if you don’t. Goodbye.

**DANIEL:** (THOUGHTFULLY) Yes, Officer, goodbye.

**VIVIAN:** I hope this serves as a deterrent to you—and to all men who think they can abuse their partners, daughters, sisters, brothers, children, and nieces in the name of family or relationships and not suffer any consequences. No one is above the law. You will be dealt with accordingly—your relationship with the abused doesn’t exonerate you in any way.

This is also a plea to all who are being abused or mistreated in any way … Please, do not stay silent. Report perpetrators irrespective of their relations to you. It’s the only way you can be freed from such oppression. We must all be each others keepers and foster peace, unity, and love amongst ourselves.

**SFX:** end music

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