

Plot of somebody
helps you cry



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

PLOT OF THE NOVELThe story is geared into life in a systematic holistic approach that sees a young woman heavy with pregnancy walking up the way that led to Sinko Maternity Hospital. Her name is Patricia Teco. A second character, Clifford, is called into play.

He is the security man on duty shift at the hospital gate. He is a father who loves his job. He is perturbed inside at seeing the pregnant lady who danger was written all over. The next chapter introduced yet another character; Agnes, who is reported to hating night-duty shifts. A vivid picture of her is given; Agnes Orah who hails from Ekabo. She is later to play an important role in the life of the pregnant woman. Still on Agnes, she is fed up with her working conditions and plans to spend her birthday and day-off with her new lover, Dr. Benson Ali.

She is also making plans to leave her place of work for Benson's private hospital. But this is not to be as Francis Teco's hammer of horror catches up with her as the story proceeds. She attends to the pregnant woman but something about the lady troubles her. It is later found that even the pregnant woman's trouble is going to swallow her. Francis Teco is introduced as a tall, bulky man in his early thirties. He is the young woman's husband. He is a successful tailor cum politician.

He is the protagonist of the novel *Somebody Helps You Cry*. The story line is reminiscent among the Francis Teco, his wife Patricia, and the hospital. Francis Teco is seen as a hardworking man, though used to be flirtous until Patricia came his way. He walks home late the same day Patricia is seen at the hospital. But he is apprehended on the way by the police. The

incompetence and corrupt system of the police is exposed as the fundamental human rights of movement and expression of Francis are impounded forcefully.

Back at the hospital, Dr. Avre, the chief gynaecologist of Sinko Maternity Hospital is presented. He is a man reputed to be very brilliant recalling his school days as a point of contact. Discrimination against HIV patients is at its peak. The hospital has refused to deliver Patricia of her baby because she has the virus. Agnes Orah is helpless as she is bound by the hospital's rules and regulations of her work place. Poor Patience! What would she do Absolutely nothing.

Family intimacy is pronounced as Patricia whimpers in pains and seeks for her darling Francis. The occasion behind their meeting and eventual marriage is revealed. Francis, a representative of DPM, a political party, had met Patricia at a work shop organized by her organization. Francis had fallen in love with her and they eventually got married. Suspense looms on.

Admittedly, things could be worse. At this stage, Patience is due for delivery. From her residence at 12 Transandi, she boarded a bus to Ogui hospital. We are given an account of Dr. Alloy Ubi, the owner of Ogui hospital and his initial discovery of the HIV/AIDS virus in Patience but unethically had kept it a secret.

Even after realizing that Francis Teco also had the virus, he still concealed the truth from him. On the other side of the story, Francis still suffers at the hands of the unscrupulous police officers. He is jailed without trial.

Still a further indication of our present in the country of our fatherland. A clear picture of the state of affairs in a cell is told. The ??? Presido??? who presides the rest of the inmates at the cell subjects Francis Teco to punishment. Francis suffers yet again at the hands of the Presido, who at his command, Francis and the rest of the new intakes were beaten up. A normal routine in our cells. Inhumane treatment with such ferocity and deprivation. Francis regains his freedom and sensing that a full-scale misfortune will soon close on him, hurries home to attend to his loving Patricia.

He is faced with the fact that Patricia is in labour at Ogui hospital. He scurries off to meet his wife but meets his life-changing experience, the story reiterates. Unfortunately, Patricia is never to make it out of Sinko Maternity Hospital as she is due birth delivery. The African tradition of child delivery is her only way out since she is refused proper delivery assistance at the hospital. It is a tough and touching experience. Even so, Francis is having it tough locating his wife. He is disappointed at Dr.

Alloy??™s decision on not disclosing to him the reality that he and his wife were victims of the deadly disease HIV/AIDS. He further criticized the doctor for refusing his wife of her baby when he said, ??? Why didn??™t you deliver my wife So you rejected her simply because she has HIV. Couldn??™t you have delivered her under strict sanitary measures such that you won??™t get infected (chapter 14, page 68). In a matter of hours, Francis Teco is faced with the reality of his new born baby??™s death. This is followed by the demise of his wife.

Francis is bewildered, angered and disappointed. He vows to take revenge for his wife's death on all who has contributed to her death. Thus, starts a war for humanity led by Francis Teco on all. He raids Ogui hospital and kills Dr. Alloy Ubi which sparks off chains and chains of murder. He continues on his parade to Sinko Maternity hospital where a host of people lost their lives including Agnes Orah, the nurse who had attended to Patricia when she arrived at the maternity. The street is not left out as he takes his revenge on her inhabitants; killing both innocent passersby and the police. The death of losing a loved one is felt as Francis moans his wife vowing on his life to make it up to her.

Francis Teco is a human right activist who is spurred into revenge mission not just for the sake of his wife but also for all ill-fated individuals who are discriminated in our society. There is no much fuss about the brevity of the theme of Okpe Ejikeme's novel 'Somebody Helps You Cry' as the message is clear. In his theme, Ejikeme states and I quote according to Francis Teco's letter, 'To whom it may concern; it is a pity that I had to campaign against HIV/AIDS in this bloody manner. The doctors and the nurses that discriminated against Patricia my wife should be held responsible, even now they are in hell'. Francis further reiterates, 'For those whose eyes HIV had brought tears, cry not again for I cry for you.'

To those hearts that has been fed the bitter pills of sorry, I sorry for you. Let it be known to you young lives and dreams aborted untimely by the recalcitrant sojourn of the virus, that there exists people who care about you. I do. There are people who are aware of your plight and who day in day out pray for you.

Somebody somewhere share your burden. Somebody helps you cry (chapter 30; page 167). Ejikeme is really a force to watch out for, for his incisiveness and presentation of events to analyze and interpret his message through his theme.

Consequent upon that, the theme of the novel goes forth to the governments and persons of high offices that have, over the years paid a deaf ear to the needs and yearnings of people living with the HIV/AIDS virus as Francis??™ letter states ??? Our government is evidently insensitive but I challenge them to sit up for HIV/AIDS seems to be poised to exterminate humanity. Our government should provide HIV/AIDS education to all children in and out of school through the integration of HIV/AIDS education in the school curriculum and the use of appropriate media of communication to reach out to youths. The rural areas should not be neglected.??? Responsibilities abound if we must curb down the extent HIV/AIDS in our society. Priests are also encouraged to carry the message along to their attentive congregations.

SETTINGThe setting of the novel is undoubtedly found in a country which is underdeveloped, socio-infrastructural decadent and misappropriation of information. By deliberate choice, no doubt, Ejikeme has given up an account that though tangentially derived from non-admittance of Patricia into Ogui hospital, extends to Sinko Maternity Hospital, of concern beyond that specific context. For while Patricia leaves her home on Road 12 Transandi Utimi, Francis, her husband was walking from Ugbugbor to his Transandi home.

He is apprehended by the police along the Ngolo River Bridge which forms a T-junction with Akachele and Umekwa. A clear image is shown of Ogui hospital as under-equipped, under-staffed and generally inefficient.

Inefficiency still takes its toll on Sinko Maternity Hospital as it lacks a hygienic and sanitary environment to deliver the HIV/AIDS carrier like Patricia of her baby. Through the novel, we see, once more, Ejikeme's™ turf of a tragic situation mediated with subtly stated hope. In 'Somebody Helps You Cry', the hope does not lie in the campaign to which Francis Teco's™ family lost their lives.

The ordinary ill-fated people, so unfairly neglected and discriminated in the calculation of the narrow-minded ruling elite, come together to provide the hope of a better tomorrow. CHARACTERIZATION