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**A Darker Chocolate**

Prologue:

(A small village in Ghana, Africa. Women are in the sheds making a dinner for their husbands and sons. Men come in, shouting. They go into to the huts. Gunfire starts and the men from the village run in with knives. All you can see is men stabbing women and children, and children killing children. Young Ashiba is stuck watching his mother be stabbed in the back of the neck repeatedly by a young boy his age. He’s hearing her screams and can’t help because he is frozen, with fear.

(Ashiba wakes up in his fathers shed, In a cold sweat).

Ashiba: (Crying) Mom!

Taruke: ( Door bursts open) What’s wrong!

Ashiba: I had a dream about mom again.

Taruke: That was a long time ago

Taruke: Just shut up and get out of bed, I need help in the back. I know you had such a good life with her

(Ashiba gets up and goes to the yard)

Taruke: Give me that axe.

(Ashiba hands Taruke an axe)

Chop!!

(Taruke cuts another chicken head, Ashiba looks at it like it is his mother’s head rolling into the dirt and her dragging her head along the straw on the ground.)

Ashiba: Why do you do that to them?

Taruke: We need the money. We’re broke son. It’s either kill the chickens or spend another night with hunger pains like everyone in this God forsaken village does. Its more than you’re doing.

Ashiba: Don’t you feel bad? killing them?

Taruke: Nope they're just stupid birds. Go take them to market. Take this

Ashiba: (taking chicken) Fine!

( Ashiba gets up and walks down to the river bay.)

Taruke: I need money, and I get what I need, one way or another. I love my son, but I can’t afford him anymore.

(Ashiba is at the market he walks past a man, selling people, like animals)

Slave Owner: Three healthy men here! good workers! ( walking past vendors)

Fruit salesman: Would you like an orange, young man? Half price!

(Ashiba walks through the sales tents and by the merchants he finds a nice square where  he can sell the chickens.)

Ashiba: Chickens! 3 Cedis per chicken!

Slave owner: Ashiba, hello, I’ll buy your chickens.

Ashiba: Who are you?

Slave owner: A friend of your fathers, I was just talking to him, I paid quite a lot of money for his finest possession.

Ashiba: Oh, and what’s that?

Slave owner: Come with me. (Punching Ashiba)

(The slave owner grabs him, and carries him away to his boat. He puts a bag on Ashiba’s head, and binds his hands, Ashiba could feel the butt of the gun smack his head [painfully, and the young boy falls to the ground, unconscious.)

Chorus: It is unfair. Ashiba has been

stolen wrongly, like an animal,

and is being brought to a farm

to work as a slave. Many children

share his fate. I am sorry Ashiba,

for soon you too will be broken.

Scene 2.

(Ashiba wakes up, head pounding. He does not recognize where he is. He has just been taken away from his home with no explanation. Another boy walks up to Ashiba)

Cocoa Slave: The cocoa farmers bought you away from your dad for 300 celis (90$). Your father has given you to them.  These men aren't kind men Look around, you are on a cold mat, on the ground. We have all been brought here.

Ashiba: ( waking up in a haze) What happened?

Slave owner: Get up now!!! New kid, come with me, I’ll show you what to do. Do a good job and I won’t have to lash you, finish your daily work and you get fed, got it?

Ashiba: Who are you?

Slave owner: I’ll tell you when you can talk. Climb the tree cut down the pods with the machete, climb down the tree, cut open the pod with the machete, get out seeds, repeat. Got it, or are you too stupid to figure it out?

Ashiba: No, I got it.

Chorus: Ashiba climbs the tree and after countless

cuts from his knife and falling from the tree his

hands are rubbed raw and his feet are bleeding.

Once the blisters fade it is easier for Ashiba to endure

long hours of work day and night for weeks on end.

It is a terrible thing that has happened. A sweet little boy

has been turned brute. Why, why has this happened, and for what?

Scene 3:

(Ashiba is getting stronger, used to working in the farm now, but he has lost his will to live and realizes that he cannot trust anyone.)

Chorus: Ashiba you are sick and your skin is

rotting from the blisters you are enduring too many

beatings and aimless fists. You are beaten and bruised,

Ashiba you must run, these people don’t plan to

let you free, you're killing yourself!

 (Ashiba wakes up and walks to his tree and starts climbing. Out of nowhere, a Guard at the farm runs to ashiba and pulls him from his tree. Guard pulls out machette and cuts ashiba, )

Ashiba: Aahhh!!! Stop!!! Please I beg you!!!

Chorus:The Guard drops to knees, choking ashiba,

The guard grabs his knife and stabs Ashiba in the

ribs slicing  in between like a piece of meet. The

guard crawls to the top of ashiba and

sits on his chest so he can’t move.

Guard: Your dead kid!

Chorus:After Ashiba tries to crawl away whimpering,

the guard jumps on top of him. He throws his fist

as hard as he can into Ashiba’s face and grabs the

back of his hair and pulls it as hard as he can, then

lets go leaving his neck to sag. Disfigured and dismembered

Ashiba tries to crawl but as he gets close to the river the

guard stabs his knife into Ashiba’s foot and staples him

to the ground. Ashiba cries in fear as the man grabs

turns Ashiba around to see his face and Ashiba cries

with shock, for his father is the one holding him, beating

him. Ashiba, beaten turns, and with his last bit of

energy, he punches his father off of him and gets away.

As he lies on his bunk and slowly loses consciousness,

he thinks about what he has just done to his own father.

He fills with anger at the Slave Master and the farm. He

has lost his joy, and his empathy. He does not feel sorrow anymore.

(The next day, Ashiba can hardly walk. All the other kids have gone to work for the day. The Slave Master comes up to Ashiba’s mat and pulls him up.)

Slave Master: Why are you not working?!!

Ashiba: (mumbling to himself and stumbling to a tree )  I will, It’s what I do, I climb, I cut, I open, all day, all year, all my life. There’s nothing left of me, you stole it all pig!

Chorus: Ashiba is done. He is too hurt to work,

yet he does. Too broken to be, but he is. It is

something wrong that has been done to him.

He has not been killed, but his life has been

taken. Ashiba walks to a tree, climbs higher then

he has in all the time he’s been there. He grabs a

branch, but it is not secure, he falls all the way to

the ground, all the way to his last

breath. A terrible thing, the farm has taken

everything from him now, there is nothing left.