

The Lekki Headmaster JAMB Novel Summary Chapter 1-12

Chapter One: Dusk

The story begins with an unusual scene at the school assembly. The principal, Mr. Bepo Adewale, walks to the podium looking distressed and disoriented. Unlike his usual charismatic self, he is visibly off, and his trademark smile is absent. Instead of addressing the students, he stares blankly ahead and begins to cry uncontrollably. His attempts to speak fail, and he becomes so overwhelmed with emotion that he hides his face in his hands. The Vice Principal, Mrs. Grace Apeh, is the first to approach him, asking what is wrong, but the principal does not respond. Teachers and staff try to comfort him, but he remains inconsolable.

The situation raises concern among the staff, and some parents quickly hear about the incident, causing further anxiety. Mrs. Apeh calls for the Managing Director (MD), Mrs. Ibidun Gloss, to come to the school. The MD, after arriving, tries to understand the cause of Mr. Bepo's distress, but he only mutters that he will be "alright" without explaining. Despite attempts by his colleagues to support him, the principal remains overwhelmed by his emotions, causing even more speculation among staff and parents.

The chapter reveals that the school had recently lowered its boarding fees, which led to an increase in student enrollment, and the principal's absence from the assembly is a stark contrast to his usual energetic presence. The chapter ends with a sense of mystery surrounding Mr. Bepo's emotional breakdown.

Chapter Two: The Enticement

After several days of attempts to understand the source of Mr. Bepo's distress, it is revealed that he is planning to leave Nigeria for the United Kingdom. The pressure from his family, especially his wife, had become too much to ignore. His marriage was strained, and his wife had already relocated to the UK with their children. Despite his love for the school and his students, Bepo felt that he had no choice but to join his family. He had already secured a teaching job in the UK, which promised a better future for his family.

The chapter delves into Mr. Bepo's past at Stardom Schools, where he had worked for over two decades. He had been known as the "Lekki Headmaster" during his time as Headmaster at Stardom Kiddies and had a reputation for resolving conflicts and fostering a positive environment. His decision to leave, despite his success at Stardom, is seen by some colleagues as foolish, especially when considering the financial rewards awaiting him in the UK. His salary in Nigeria was a mere N400,000, while in the UK, he would earn nearly six times that amount in British pounds.

Mr. Bepo had long been considering a life outside education, imagining a future where he could venture into entrepreneurship. He had thought about starting his own business, such as a school, but lacked the capital. He also considered other ventures like farming or commercial transportation. However, with the pressure from his wife and the opportunity to work in the UK, these dreams were put on hold.

Despite the substantial financial benefits of relocating, Bepo struggled with leaving behind his passion for teaching and the students at Stardom. This inner conflict forms the core of the chapter.

Chapter Three: Migration Tales

Mr. Bepo's decision to relocate to the UK is now final. He becomes more interested in stories of migration to developed countries like the UK, USA, and Canada. He is particularly intrigued by the concept of hourly wages, which contrasts with the fixed salaries common in Nigeria. He is excited by the flexibility this system offers, which would allow him to work different jobs and earn more money.

Bepo learns from a friend in the USA that one can earn between \$150 and \$250 per day, depending on the job and location. With this information, he calculates that if he worked four days a week, he could earn up to \$2,400 a month, a significant amount when converted to Nigerian Naira. He also hears stories of Nigerians who earn even more, especially in skilled professions.

The chapter explores the larger trend of Nigerians migrating abroad for better opportunities, particularly in fields like healthcare and education. Bepo is motivated by the potential for financial stability and a better life for his family. He also considers the education system in the UK, which offers free primary and secondary education and affordable higher education. This is a stark contrast to the struggles many parents face in Nigeria, where education fees are often prohibitively expensive.

Through conversations with Sola, a former teacher at Stardom who had already relocated to the UK, Bepo learns about the realities of life in the UK. Sola reassures him that his relocation will be easier because his wife is already established in the UK and he will not have the burden of paying school fees for his children. However, she also shares the challenges they faced in adjusting to life in a new country, including the financial pressures of living in a place with a high cost of living.

The chapter ends with Bepo feeling more confident about his decision, but also aware of the challenges that lie ahead. He reflects on the stories of those who have migrated, both the successes and the struggles, and understands that life abroad is not without its difficulties. The chapter highlights the allure of the UK as a land of opportunity but also the realities that come with it.

Chapter Four: A Case of Visa Denied

Mr. Bepo is disturbed by a late-night phone call from Mrs. Ignatius, a parent at the school. She has been one of those parents who have overstepped boundaries, sharing personal issues with him. On this occasion, she calls at 1:55 a.m. to discuss a family crisis — her husband, Ibe Ignatius, is refusing to believe that their daughter, Favour, is his biological child after a DNA test, which the family had to take as part of their visa application. This revelation led to their visa being denied. Mrs. Ignatius is desperate and fears her husband may never return home after their heated discussion about the situation. Bepo listens in silence, reflecting on the awkwardness of this personal matter and wondering how he got involved in such a personal relationship with the family.

Bepo's reflection on the case of the Ignatius family is juxtaposed with his own thoughts about his imminent relocation to the UK. He hopes to leave behind the stress of such situations. He also reminisces about his experiences at Stardom School, which he feels would make for interesting material for a book in the future. He contemplates how parents' behaviors affect the management of an elite school like Stardom, with some being considerate and others making demands that complicate his role as the principal.

Chapter Five: Snake in the roof

The chapter begins with a lively break at Stardom Schools, with students and staff enjoying their time. Mrs. Ibidun Gloss, the MD of the school, retreats to a secret room to rest, as she deals with a chronic health issue that causes her discomfort when sitting for long periods. This is a well-kept secret, and only a

few people in the school are aware of it. After a brief rest, Mrs. Gloss decides to inspect a property that Stardom acquired years ago. Upon visiting the site, she is surprised to find that several cars, some new and others older models, are parked there, all with Stardom School stickers. This discovery raises suspicions for Mrs. Gloss about how some staff members could afford such cars, especially given the school's financial constraints.

She calls Bepo and the school accountant to investigate the matter, fearing that there might be some financial mismanagement or theft. When they meet at the property, Bepo and the accountant explain that many staff members had taken out loans from the school's cooperative, which was responsible for financing some of the cars. However, the revelation raises further concerns about the size and control of the cooperative's finances. The board of directors, including Mrs. Gloss' family members, decides to impose stricter regulations on the cooperative, limiting loan amounts and requiring management approval for any loan requests.

Chapter Six: Ade as well as Jide Comes vs Come

The chapter focuses on the tension surrounding the school's "Open Day," a day when parents meet with teachers to discuss their children's academic progress. While the event is a source of pride for many teachers, it can also be a day of tension as parents bring their complaints, especially about issues related to their children's performance and behavior. Bepo recalls a particular incident where Mrs. Ibidun Gloss, the MD, summoned him to her office to discuss an issue with one of the English teachers, Mr. Fafore.

Mr. Fafore, who has been teaching English at Stardom for several years, faces a crisis when a parent, Mr. Guta, complains about a grammatical error in his students' notebooks. The error in question is a sentence where Mr. Fafore used "comes" instead of "come" in a sentence about two students, Ade and Jide. Mrs. Gloss, in her frustration, insists that Mr. Fafore's teaching is inadequate and that he must be fired.

Bepo, however, disagrees with Mrs. Gloss and defends Mr. Fafore's use of grammar. He explains that the sentence was grammatically correct, based on a specific rule for using "as well as" with singular verbs. Despite the tension, Bepo stands by his decision to support the teacher, but Mrs. Gloss remains determined to let him go. The situation becomes even more awkward when it is revealed that the principal and Mr. Fafore were correct, and the MD had made a mistake.

The chapter ends on a lighter note when Mr. Audu, a colleague, diffuses the tension with humor. He humorously “pardons” Mrs. Gloss for her mistake, and the staff members share a laugh, easing the pressure from the earlier confrontation. The chapter highlights the challenges of leadership, the pressure from parents, and the dynamics between the school’s management and its teachers.

Chapter Seven: Ritualist

Bepo reflects on his previous teaching experiences, particularly his time at Beesway Group of Schools, where he faced a tense situation with the director over a grammatical error. The school’s name, “Beesway Group of School,” was incorrect, as “group of” implies multiple entities and should have been “Beesway Group of Schools.” Despite explaining this to the director, Mr. Meko, the director dismissed the issue, claiming that the name was divinely inspired and held spiritual significance. Bepo, however, struggled with this response, as it undermined his professional integrity as the senior English teacher.

The situation worsened when a parent raised the issue at a PTA meeting, which led the director to accuse Bepo of trying to sabotage the school. The director’s refusal to correct the name, even when others acknowledged the mistake, further strained their relationship. Eventually, Bepo left Beesway, not because of the grammatical issue but due to a more unsettling matter—a ritualistic event at the school. One night, Bepo witnessed the director and several men burying a cow alive on school grounds. Initially, Bepo thought it was a supernatural or occult ritual, but the director later claimed it was part of a spiritual prayer for his late father.

Despite the director’s explanation, Bepo was shaken by the event, realizing that there were darker forces at play. He struggled with whether he should report the incident to the authorities, but the potential consequences made him hesitant. This disturbing experience marked the end of Bepo’s time at Beesway, leaving him questioning the ethics and practices of the school.

Chapter Eight: Mission Unaccomplished

As Bepo prepares to leave for the UK, he reflects on the unresolved issues he will leave behind. One of the most painful is the legal dispute between the families of two students, Banky and Tosh. Their rivalry had been simmering for years, exacerbated by the parents’ involvement in the conflict. During an election for school prefects, Banky made an inflammatory remark about Tosh’s

father, calling him an ex-convict. This comment escalated tensions, leading Tosh to storm out of the event, and ultimately, legal action was taken.

Bepo, who had tried to mediate between the families, found himself unable to resolve the issue. Despite his efforts, the legal battle continued to linger. He also lamented that he would miss the launch of the Invention Club's Breath Project, a student-led initiative to create a phone from recycled materials. The project had garnered interest from the media and an NGO, and Bepo had been a strong supporter. He feared that the project might stall in his absence, and he would miss out on the moment of achievement.

Despite these challenges, Bepo hoped that the legal dispute could still be settled outside of court, and that the Invention Club project would continue to flourish even after his departure. However, he couldn't shake the feeling of leaving many tasks unfinished, and these unresolved issues weighed heavily on his decision to relocate.

Chapter Nine: Laughing Waterfalls

Stardom Schools has built a strong tradition of excursions, giving students exposure to Nigeria's rich cultural and historical heritage. Bepo, a strong proponent of these excursions, had organized numerous trips for the students, visiting iconic sites such as the Erin Ijesha Waterfalls, Ikogosi Warm Springs, and the Owu Waterfalls. These trips were not only educational but also served to enrich the students' understanding of Nigeria's natural beauty and history.

Bepo's efforts to promote cultural awareness were further reflected in his philosophy of ensuring students had a deep connection with their home country, especially since many of them would eventually study abroad. He hoped these excursions would instill a sense of pride in their heritage and a deeper understanding of the nation they came from. The students visited historical sites like the National Museum, the National Theatre, and various notable landmarks in Lagos, as well as touring major corporations and high-class neighborhoods. These trips were part of Bepo's belief in holistic education that goes beyond the classroom.

On one of their excursions to Badagry, a town with a significant history in the transatlantic slave trade, Bepo was moved by the stories of the enslaved people and the legacy of slavery. He reflected on the irony that many Nigerians today were willingly seeking visas to leave the country, seeking opportunities abroad at any cost, even if it meant accepting demeaning jobs. Bepo found it troubling that after centuries of struggle, many Nigerians were now essentially seeking a form of new slavery, working for foreign masters in exchange for financial

rewards. This contrast deeply troubled him, especially as he was preparing to leave Nigeria for the UK himself.

During the excursion, the students visited the Akran of Badagry's palace, the First Storey Building, and the Black Heritage Museum, which left a lasting impact on Bepo. He felt a deep connection to the history of the place and was moved by the stories of slavery. However, he couldn't shake the thought that many Nigerians today were repeating the cycle of dependency on foreign powers, willingly enslaving themselves for financial gain.

Chapter Ten: Passport Pains

Bepo had put off renewing his expired passport for two years, mostly due to his lack of urgency about relocating abroad. However, by the first quarter of 2022, the pressure from his family grew unbearable, and he knew he had to take action. His passport renewal had become an urgent matter, but the complications surrounding it made him uneasy.

The pandemic had delayed the process initially, and when things started to return to normal, the influx of people rushing to renew their passports made the process even more stressful. The constant tales of long lines, bureaucratic delays, and missing booklets made Bepo increasingly hesitant. The new passport rules seemed even more complicated, and soon, bribery had become a common solution to speed up the process. Desperate, Bepo decided to try his luck in Ibadan, where he found an agent who could expedite the process.

After paying a hefty fee to the agent, Tai, who promised to help him renew his passport within a month, Bepo made the trip to Ibadan. He opted to travel by public bus, fearing for his safety due to reports of kidnapping along the Lagos-Ibadan route. The journey was smoother than expected, thanks to the newly reconstructed road. Upon arrival, Bepo met with Tai, who took care of the paperwork and connected him with an official who would handle his application. Despite the legal framework that outlawed middlemen, the system still ran on bribery and corruption. Bepo paid the agent an extra amount for faster processing, and after a brief validation of his National Identity Number (NIN), he was told to return in three weeks for data capturing.

The whole process left Bepo feeling frustrated, but relieved to have it behind him—though he still feared missing his travel date. His struggles with the passport system were a stark reminder of the challenges he faced as he prepared to leave Nigeria for a new life in the UK.

Chapter Eleven: Point of No return

The farewell for Bepo was an emotional affair. Stardom Schools had organized a week-long celebration to honor their principal before his departure. From novelty matches to debates and cultural performances, the farewell was filled with laughter, nostalgia, and reflection on Bepo's invaluable contributions to the school. The farewell ceremony was a tribute to Bepo's hard work, passion, and dedication over the years, which had helped transform Stardom Schools into a respected institution.

The event began with a novelty match between the school team and the staff, followed by a heated debate on the role of the arts in national development. Students and teachers alike showcased their talents in dance, drama, and music. The cultural performances, including the Bata, Atilogwu, Koroso, and Canoe dances, highlighted Nigeria's rich heritage, a tradition Bepo had always encouraged and celebrated. The students had perfected the Canoe dance, which held a special place in Bepo's heart, reminding him of his trip to Badagry and the history of slavery.

As the farewell festivities concluded, Bepo was presented with a generous gift from the school. Mrs. Ibidun Gloss, the Managing Director of Stardom, spoke of how Bepo had become an integral part of the school, contributing to its growth and success. The MD praised Bepo's dedication, empathy, and commitment to his students and staff. She also revealed that Bepo's first encounter with the school had been with her late father, Chief David Aje, who had believed in Bepo's potential even before he officially joined the school.

Bepo was overwhelmed with emotion as he received the gift, a cheque worth \$10,000, and the heartfelt thanks of the Stardom family. The entire assembly rose to their feet in ovation, showing their deep appreciation for his years of service. Bepo, unable to hold back his tears, struggled to find the words to express his gratitude. He realized that leaving Stardom, a place that had become his second home, would be one of the hardest moments of his life.

Chapter Twelve: Dawn

The day of Bepo's departure had arrived. He was set to fly to the UK, but as he prepared to leave, he couldn't shake the feeling that something was missing. His past experiences, both good and bad, weighed heavily on him as he boarded his flight. Memories of his time at Stardom, the relationships he had built with students and colleagues, and the culture he had fostered all came rushing back.

At the airport, as he went through the check-in process, he was met with affectionate farewells from his colleagues, including Mrs. Apeh, the vice principal, and Mr. Jeremi Amos, the school accountant. The farewell was bittersweet, and Bepo felt the weight of leaving his students behind. However, as he made his way to the boarding gate, a sudden realization hit him. The people he had mentored, the school he had helped build, would continue to thrive in his absence.

As he settled into his seat on the plane, Bepo slipped into a dream-like state. He found himself back at the Heritage Slavery Museum in Badagry, witnessing the cruel treatment of slaves. He screamed, desperate to stop the suffering, but was pulled back to reality by a flight attendant who gently tapped him on the shoulder. The moment had passed, but the emotions were still raw.

As the plane took off, Bepo drifted between dreamland and reality, unsure of what the future held but determined to face it head-on. He had made his mark on Stardom, and now it was time for a new chapter.

Back at Stardom, life continued without Bepo. His absence was keenly felt by everyone, especially the students. They had grown up with him as their principal, and now they had to face the reality of a new leader. But as they gathered for their Monday assembly, something unexpected happened. The students, unable to accept the change, rushed to the school gate, chanting “Principoo!” They lifted Bepo on their shoulders, celebrating his return, even if it was only for a moment.

Bepo’s heart swelled with pride as he realized that his legacy at Stardom would never fade. The love and respect he had earned from his students, the school, and the entire community would remain with him, no matter where he went. As the students danced around him, singing their victory song, Bepo knew that his mission at Stardom had been completed. But, as he said, “I am here to complete my mission!” And that mission would live on in the hearts of those he had inspired.