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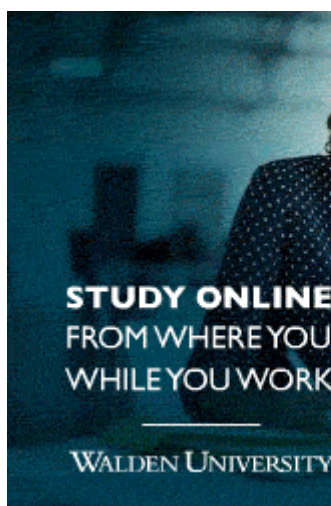
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Slaves of passion: A generation driven by greed, instant gratification

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ROTIMI IGE, in this feature, writes about the rising harm and deaths to young Nigerians, caused by their quest for sudden wealth or at least, the appearance of it.

The pictures were graphic. The girls, said to be teenagers, were in various stages of decay. Witnesses said the state their corpses were found was gruesome and pitiful and gesticulated prayers of protection to heaven on behalf of parents across the world. The scenario above describes the story of two young Nigerian girls who, recently, became victims of their 'love' quests.

One of the girls, Tola (real names withheld), was an 18-year-old undergraduate of a state university in Ogun State and went missing in May and few days later, the boyfriend's car was found, with the Tola's slippers inside. Neither the lady nor her boyfriend, who was also a student of the university, were found.



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After an intensive search by the police, both of them found dead, decomposing and half buried in a bush at Oru, Ijebu, Ogun State, weeks after they

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were declared missing. Her friends and eyewitness reports said that the deceased had been dating her boyfriend only for a few months and was a victim of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. According to arrested suspects who confessed to the killing of the young couple, Tola's boyfriend 23, was a popular 'yahoo' boy (someone who makes money via internet fraud, among other illicit methods) who financed rival cult gangs without giving deserved respect to them (suspects). They confessed that he was killed along with his girlfriend in order to teach them a lesson.



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The second girl, Bimpe (real names withheld) was a daughter to a prominent politician and was in her early twenties. Reports said she had left her hostel to visit her Abuja-based boyfriend who was visiting her base in Ondo State. Days later, she was reported missing, with widespread searches organised by friends, family and the police force. About a week later, her decomposing body was found buried in her supposed boyfriend's room, under his bed.

He had dug a grave in his room, buried her and placed a mattress on the grave and was sleeping on it. According to her father, "My daughter was not found under the bed frame because the boy had no bed frame. When we tried our best to find her, we organised prayers. When we finished with the prayers, the heat was on him and he said he wasn't able to continue with the ritual. He rushed out and confessed to his immediate sister. He told her what

he did and asked her to bring a sack. It was then that the sister rushed to their father to inform him of what her brother did. Their father immediately invited the police and the boy was arrested”.

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Confirming the incident, the Ondo State Police Public Relations Officer, (PPRO) Mr Femi Joseph, said the command had begun investigation into the matter. Joseph said the command’s officers discovered the dead body of the undergraduate at a house at Oke-Aro area of Akure following a tip-off.

The Police image maker disclosed that some arrest had been made in connection with the death but said the State Commissioner of Police, Mr Gbenga Adeyanju, would address brief the public on the incident after the completion of investigations.

A young student of a polytechnic in Delta State, has been found dead, with her vital organs missing, days after going out. Reports claim that the victim was an ND 1 student of Science and Laboratory Technology, SLT. According to the reports, she had left her hostel to visit a friend at Oleh in Isoko south LGA of the state and her friends became worried when they were unable to reach her some days later. Shockingly, her body was later found in a bush at Owhelogbo, with her vital organs missing.

There has been a rise in similar occurrences in the last two years, where young ladies were being killed for alleged ritual purposes after disguised relationships. Apart from a few cases of kidnap, most of these occurrences have also been caused by the desperation of young girls for quick money.

It is common place nowadays to see secondary school students and undergraduates, especially boys, with no particular visible source of income asides stipends from their parents, use high end gadgets, live in furnished apartments and drive cars. They are normally the focus of young girls who are attracted to flashy lifestyles, and as such, these girls fall over themselves in a bid to be their girlfriends or affiliates without caring about how such boys earn their lifestyles.

"It is so sad. Go to any major mall or club in any city in Nigeria and see how girls are losing their morals in a bid to hook boys who show off and spend lavishly. Not all these girls are from poor homes though. At the end of the day, its greed and low self esteem that entices these ladies. If you see the way such boys treat them, you discover that the girls are indeed slaves of passion", Mrs Damilola Ogunseye, a retired public administrator, said.

A psychologist, Emeka Nwachukwu, responding to the trend of loose relationships as evidenced by today's young generation, said that the quest to feel fulfilled (mostly from acquisition of material possessions) or relationships with people seen to

have adequate resources (for bragging rights), push most young adults, who usually lack experience, into it.

“That is why you see the rising trend of domestic abuse, single mothers, rapings, deaths rampant in the society because most of these men see the ladies as acquisitions. We need to educate our young men and women properly of conduct and self control. Because we live in a materialistic society made worse with the popularity of social media, the situation deserves immediate attention”, he said.

He also advised parents to educate their wards, male and female from a young age, on content, sex education and self respect/esteem, accompanied by the duty earning their trust so that problems can be detected and addressed early.

“Greed is killing our youths in present day. Sadly, the society celebrates people with resources which further worsens the situation. Some parents will see their ward using expensive gadgets or driving cars (which they didn’t buy) and wouldn’t ask where such a child got it from, rather would hail the child’s hustling ability. Most parents, citing the struggle for daily bread as their excuse, have little or no time to monitor their children. Such wards learn morals from friends and society without control.



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