

# BORN TO REIGN



FUNMI ANU BANKOLE

*“The Literary Queen  
of Domestic Fiction”*

Reader's Digest

**BORN TO REIGN**

**BY**

**FUNMI ANU BANKOLE**

**Copyright © 2021 Funmi Anu Bankole**

**All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author, except by reviewers, who may quote brief passages in a review.**

Visit [www.funmianubankole.com](http://www.funmianubankole.com)

## Chapter 1

### Providence

A long time ago in the village of Bologna lived a bright eyed little girl named 'Nomith'. She was a cheerful child with plum cheeks and brown eyes, which glistened with moisture when she laughed. Her village was a small one, far away from civilization and modern technology, and a place where formal education was the right of privileged boys.

It was Nomith's lifelong dream to have a formal education and experience life in the city—a place where boys and girls were treated equally and where fine buildings stood defiantly, facing beautiful skylines with crystal-clear water like the ones Mr. Johnson told her about at Sunday school.

“This village is not all that there is to this life,” Mr. Johnson would say to the children. “There is another kind of life in the city. There is very little anyone can achieve here with no access to electricity, pipe-borne water, good roads, schools or any of the niceties of city life. The river Poplar, from which you drink and bathe and feed your livestock, is not healthy. Someday, I will take one of you there.” When he said such things, it filled the children with hope. Everyone wished they were the lucky one.

Many of the villagers were happy with village life. It was easier because it afforded them the opportunity of avoiding life's many questions. Life was simpler without the burden of hope. They felt it was proper for the girls not to go to school as, someday, they would end up married and would keep the home.

As a missionary teacher, Mr. Johnson had volunteered to teach the children in the village of Bologna whose parents would not release them to join the regular school classes for fear that work on their farms would suffer. Nomith was one such child. She had previously asked her parents to let her go to school in Alexa or allow her join Mr. James' classes in Bologna but her parents had refused, telling her to be content.

“Someday,” said her father, “you will be a wife and going to school will not matter.” However, they allowed her to attend Sunday school, which she liked.

“Yes, next question,” Mr. Johnson said after Sunday school. “Nomith, what's your question?”

“Mr. Johnson, there is something that has been bothering me for a while,” said Nomith, her voice ripe with scepticism.

“What is it?” he replied.

“Do you know Bathsheba in the Bible?” Nomith asked.

“Yes, she was to marry Uriah, the soldier,” replied Mr. Johnson, nodding his head. “She was meant to live in the barracks as the wife of a soldier, perhaps selling petty things in a shop not far from her homestead like most soldiers wives did.”

“She was meant to look after the children when her husband was out at the warfront,” continued Nomith, “but her husband were killed in some circumstances and she ended up as queen. And not just the queen but also the mother of a king.”

“Yes,” Mr. Johnson agreed.

The whole class was very attentive, wondering what Nomith’s question was.

“She had a boy called Jedidiah (Solomon), and whom God said He loved very much. Now my question is this: despite the fact that there were other sons born to the king before him— and them more qualified—still, God chose this boy, Jedidiah, to be king. How do you explain that?”

The class was silent. No one had thought of it. Mr. Johnson, wiping beads of sweat from his head, didn’t really know how to answer the question but as their Sunday school teacher, he perceived that the children expected him to know the answers to all their questions. After a while, he said, “The only explanation I can give is providence.”

“Providence?” the whole class chorused and burst out laughing. It was a strange phrase.

“What is providence?” one of the children asked.

“It is an act which no one can explain. Only God has the answer,” replied Mr. Johnson. There was silence again. “There are some situations or circumstances that we may never be able to understand or find answers to. We marvel at the power of God. He does as he pleases. He is unquestionable. Nomith, have I answered your question?”

Reluctantly, Nomith nodded her head. She did not understand why an all-powerful God would choose a child born out of circumstance to ascend the throne. However, she made up her mind that if she had a daughter someday, she would call her ‘Bathsheba’. Who knows

whether ‘providence’, as Mr. Johnson called it, would happen to her daughter.

With the coming and going of seasons, Nomith’s dream of getting formal education and living in the city did not come true. Now married, Nomith was determined to live her dreams through her children. She never wished for her children to go through the hardship of life in the village. She believed that if providence could change the story of Bathsheba, the same could happen to her daughter.

“Bathsheba?” Nomith called.

“Yes, Ma,” she replied.

“There is no more water in the house. Get ready to go to the river and make sure to bring some firewood on your way home.”

Fourteen-year-old Bathsheba, called ‘Bath’ by her friends, picked up the pitcher and set off on her way to the river. As a rule in the community, no one went alone to the river. It was not for the fear of anything sinister but a way of ensuring there was always help around should one needed it. Young boys and girls usually called out to each other, forming groups of six or seven. Bathsheba thought to herself that she would call Paul and Ava, Paul’s friend, making a group of three. If they were fortunate, they might find other children along the way. The one-mile trek to the river Poplar was insignificant when the children walked in groups.