

ENGLISH THEORY QUESTION FROM WAEC 2023 GCE:

WRITE A STORY ON AN EVENT THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF YOUR LIFE.

An Event that Changed the Course of My Life

Here is a story of how one wrong turn changed the course of my life, whether for good or bad, you will have to read on to find out.

It was a Saturday, and my sisters and I were preparing to go to the market. Our mother had gone to see a colleague over some issues at the office, and our dad, being a businessman, was at his print shop.

My sisters, Joanne and Destiny, were aged 16 and 13 years. I was the middle daughter. The market was within walking distance from our house, but we often paid one of the ever-present motorbike riders to take us there.

But since we had already made food for the day, and the purchases were for consumption the following week, and also because we were three, we decided to trek to the market to reduce cost.

My Forgetful Nature

Halfway there, I suddenly remembered that I did not have the list of items to buy. Joanne was furious! "I'm tired of your forgetful nature, Faith! When will you change?" She ordered me back home to get it.

I rushed to our house. Luckily, our elder brother had not locked the house to go and play football with his friends. I grabbed the list where I left it on the dining table. I ran back outside on my way to meet Joanne and Destiny, who were waiting for me.

I decided to pass through a narrow footpath that branched off the major street. It was a shortcut to my sisters, but the problem was that the path was bushy, as people hardly used it. Under normal circumstances, we were forbidden from using that path. But I promised myself that I would run like the wind.

I was close to the exit when I heard a voice shout, "Stop there!" My heart flew into my mouth, and at the same time, my nose perceived smoke, not that of a wood fire, but of cigarettes.

A Wrong Turn

I turned and saw a scary-looking man. He had a bald head, and reddish eyes, and smoke was billowing from his nostrils like the time Destiny tried to make a wood fire with sodden wood so that she could roast corn.

Just as I was turning to bolt out the exit, I noticed something bulbous in the man's hands. And when he pointed it at me, I just started screaming and crying. He must have hit me with it because I saw darkness as I was falling.

I woke up to the sense of movement, and not being alone. Something was making me bounce from side to side, and I noticed that I was in the back of a vehicle. I also noticed an old woman lying on one side of her body. Her hair was completely white. At first glance, her clothes seemed modest, but on looking closer, one would observe a careful coordination of the outfit.

Kidnapped!

It dawned on me that we had probably been kidnapped! Tears started gathering in my eyes once more. I remembered my sisters waiting for me under the shade of a mango tree. They would become frustrated and then progress to panic at the realization that something had gone wrong with me. Poor Joanne, especially, would receive the worst of the scolding as she was the eldest.

Darkness was falling when the vehicle finally stopped. There were three young men, and they ordered us down. I helped the old woman get off.

The two of us hostages sat under a tree while the three villains plotted. I overheard them saying they would call our relatives in the morning because by then, they would be out of their minds with worry and therefore, more willing to bargain.

The Old Woman

They left us there without food or water as the night became darker. The old woman continuously talked to herself, and I was afraid that she was mentally unsound.

Then, when I had managed to doze off, I felt a hand shaking me. I looked up to see the old woman standing over me. "You have to go," she said. She put a hand in her blouse and brought out a tiny phone. She handed it to me, saying, "When you have gone some distance, put it on and call any number there. My children will come."

I was reluctant to take the phone, and I was too scared to move. The old woman gave me a gentle shove. "What of you, Ma?" I asked tearfully.

It was not pitch black, so I saw her smile and wave at me. I clutched the phone and looked around. Trees dotted the vicinity. I could not see a sign of the kidnappers, but surely, they were around there.

Escape

I decided to find out. I was regarded as the tomboy of the house because of my penchant for climbing trees. I would climb the mango tree in our compound, which Dad had planted to provide nourishment for us, and throw down the fruits to my sisters, who would greedily

eat them without leaving any for me. From then on, I would sit comfortably in the tree and eat to my heart's content, much to the annoyance of my sisters.

Now I climbed this unknown tree and carefully surveyed the area. From time to time, a faint whiff of smoke assailed my nose. Looking harder, I observed a tiny red light not too far off. It's the light of a cigarette, I told myself. Therefore, I would go in the opposite direction.

I came down from the tree and approached the old woman, who was sitting with her shoulders down. I knew the criminals would take it out on her if they found me gone. She would slow me down, but I thought of my mother crying bitter tears at my loss. I knew this woman was someone's grandmother, and they would miss her too.

Through the Forest

So I took her hand and we started walking. The forest was thick, but her eyes were so sharp that she saved me many times from tripping over a log. We heard many scary sounds that night, but one was puzzling; it was a rooster crowing. That could only mean that we were not far from a human settlement.

After we had walked for what I thought was a long distance, I brought out the phone, switched it on, and sent an SOS to the first five numbers. I then put on the location app and reduced the volume and darkened the screen.

We continued walking until I could see streaks of faint light indicating dawn was coming. I knew those criminals had discovered us missing and were likely combing the forest. I found a small clearing next to a cassava farm. I spread Mama's top wrapper on the ground, then made her lie on it. I gathered dry palm fronds and put them lightly over her. Then I climbed a nearby breadfruit tree for a lookout.

Betrayed!

Breadfruit trees grow big and long. I was able to climb high up and observe the goings-on for a long stretch of distance. I saw there was a village and the villagers were stirring. I was excitedly coming down to ask for help when I noticed movement in the opposite direction.

Faintly, I could make out a footpath, and it did not take me long to recognize the kidnapper who had hit me with a gun! Some women were coming from the village with calabashes and pots, and I wished I could warn them. But they approached the men and stood discussing. Then the women handed over the things they were bearing to the men and turned back to the village. I almost fell out of the tree with shock.

But I held fast. The morning sun was turning to its scorching afternoon cousin, and I was worried for Mama, who had been without water for hours now.

Rescued

Then I heard the glorious sound of a siren in the distance. A convoy of police trucks and personal vehicles stormed into the village. People burst out of the doors, including one man holding something like a big phone. He was tracking us!

I came down from the tree and removed the palm fronds from Mama while we waited for the rescuers. The man with the tracker came into the clearing first and rushed to Mama. Dad came in next, and I ran crying to hug him. We were free!

That Was the Event That Changed the Course of My Life

I don't know what Mama told her youngest son, who had been taking care of her before her dementia episode occurred, and she wandered from the house. The son told his eldest brother, who happened to be the speaker of the federal House of Representatives. The speaker, on behalf of the family, gave me a scholarship to study in the United States!