

Dear Obajimi: A Short Story

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LETTER 1.....ONE OF MANY
Our Home
Somewhere in Lagos
August 1, 1998
Dear Obajimi,
Nobody hides letters in the kitchen. Except me. An old Bournvita tin will hold all my letters, far from the garri and rice, even farther from prying eyes. You will read them one day, I'm sure of it. I wonder if you see the connection: the tin was once filled with brown sweetness, desired by many. The sweetness is gone; now, it keeps secrets. Like this house, once full of love, joy and laughter. They all left with you, Jimi. Our home now holds memories alone. Remember that conversation we had the night you bought me suya? NEPA had been especially kind to us and you forgot a bottle of Schweppes in the freezer. It had lain there, undisturbed, for two whole days, two days of uninterrupted power supply. It was when I went in search of something cold to drink that I discovered the shattered remains of your Schweppes. The bottle had exploded in the freezer. I told you about it, and you laughed it off. From nowhere, the conversation jumped to Yaba Left. You said you were convinced that there were many people in the psych ward at Yaba Left who simply exploded because they kept too much bottled up inside. Angst, pain, bitterness, regret, frustration, concentrated and locked up in the heart of one human being. Like every story that ends on a sad note, the turning point is predicated by two telling words: one day. Well, one day, one day, that person exploded and that was what brought him to Yaba Left. It's funny the things you remember when you're alone. I remembered that conversation today, and decided it was time to write. There's so much I've kept bottled up inside and I'm afraid that if it continues much longer, I'll explode. This letter is my precaution. It is one of many. My pen may judge me, but I know the paper won't. Both will bear witness to all that has happened since the day you disappeared. Sincerely, Your Morenike

LETTER 2.....DARE TO HOPE
August 2, 1998
Dear Obajimi,
You're alive! We all thought you were gone, but after the dream I had this afternoon, I know for sure that you're *not dead*. You might be wondering why I thought you were dead in the first place. There's one detective – I call him "Inspector Bobby" – who has been assigned to your case. That man is stubborn. He reminds me of you in so many ways. He told me something the first time he came here. He said that he has investigated cases like this before, where people go missing. Based on his experience, and judging from the amount of time since you were last seen (by tomorrow, Monday, it'll be exactly one week since you disappeared), you were more than likely dead.

On a warm July morning in 1998, a man leaves for work ... and never returns.

After the mysterious disappearance of her husband, a woman writes a series of letters in a desperate attempt to make sense of the calamity of a missing spouse. These letters, set in 1990s Nigeria, provide insight into the life the couple lived before the man's disappearance and the hurricane of changes that occur while the Police investigate.
By the last letter, will she discover what happened to her husband?

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