

## AFTER THE WAIT

It rained throughout the night but reduced to a drizzle the next morning. Surprisingly, the sky was very clear and she could even sight the sun rising. It was almost as if the rain, the sky and the sun were fighting. She remembered Grandma used to say the rain and the sun fought but later agreed to co-habit. It was today, after a long wait, the D-day had finally come and she must not be late or she would have to wait long for her turn.

She had always been waiting for the D-day with trepidation because she knew it was the day her fate would be decided but as she put on her black flared gown with different designs of red roses scattered on it, she felt nothing. There was no excitement, nor fear, no expectation, no hope, no positivity and no negativity. It was as if she had exhausted all those feelings before the D-day.

The rain had withdrawn its outpour when she stepped out to her destination but she made sure she had her black umbrella with her. To get to the bus which would take her to another bus, she had to trek for fifteen minutes. It was just 6:30 in the morning but many had resumed their regular daily routine. Some were opening their stores, some were already opened and attending to customers, some were dressed and hurrying to their place of work while some were running. One of the runners splashed water on her as he ran past a gallop. She tried dodging but some still touched her gown. It would not show because it was black but she could see the mud color had stained one of the red roses. She tried to clean it with her palm but ended up distributing it all over the rose. There was no time to turn back, she just had to manage with the gown. She was not sure anyone would notice the stain because they would all be waiting for their turn.

There were many buses lined up in a queue waiting for their turn to load passengers. The driver of the bus loading passengers was shouting that there was just one chance and she doubled her step but a man ran past her and entered the last seat before she could get there. The driver pointed for her to join the next bus. It just meant she had to sit down as the first passenger and probably wait for up to twenty minutes before the bus would be fully loaded but she had no other choice apart from a cab which she could not afford.

She rested her head on the chair of the front seat and watched people walk past the bus. She kept willing them to join the bus but most were not heading towards her destination, they were rather entering the second queue of buses which was heading towards the opposite direction.

Four buses on the other line loaded and drove off but her bus just had three including the driver. She checked the time and found out she had already spent fifteen minutes waiting

for passengers to fill the bus, fifteen minutes she did not have because she had no money to take the final bus to her destination. She was going to trek and it took fifteen minutes to get to her destination and by then, those waiting would be so much that she would have to wait extra three hours for her turn. Three hours that always felt like a day. Well, she might never have to go there again depending on what she would meet.

The bus finally filled up after thirty minutes and the driver ignited the bus but it made a very scary loud noise which ended abruptly. The driver tried it again, there was actually no key, he touched two wires together but the bus made the same noise. The driver came down to check the bonnet but some passengers started complaining. The last passenger to arrive told the driver to hurry up because he was already late, another one who was the fourth to arrive opened the door and went to the next bus. Other passengers followed her and

the bus became empty. She was the only one still sitting down. She became confused on what to do because the drivers always followed their rules of not leaving when the one in front was still loading. She decided to join the crowd but before she could open the door, the bus ignited. The driver quickly ran back to the bus after closing his bonnet. The crowd ran back to the bus and a quarrel ensued because new passengers, up to three of them were already occupying the back seat. The former seat owners wanted them out because they came before them but they refused. One said she did not see anybody before she sat down. The driver had to intervene by pushing those at the door away after which he closed the door. They rained curses his way as he went back to the driver's seat. The bus jerked forward then stopped, then jerked forward again but did not stop. One of the aggrieved passengers on the ground picked a stone and stoned the back of the bus as the driver forced the bus to its destination. She

checked her time and saw she had wasted thirty minutes at the park, that would extend her waiting for four hours.

One of the passengers highlighted after just two minutes. He was the last passenger who was in a hurry. He told the driver he was going the opposite direction and had entered the wrong bus. The driver demanded for his money but the passenger gave him half. As the man turned to leave, the driver stopped the bus and ran after him. He jerked him back, using the collar of his sparkling white and neatly ironed long-sleeved. The driver spun him with same momentum and grabbed the front of the shirt. His hand which got greased while working on the bonnet of the bus added a new color to the white shirt. The man looked at his shirt in horror, his eyes bigger, his forehead reminded her of waves in an ocean, she counted the wave lines and came out with five, his mouth was not left out because it was opened like someone trying to force out the O alphabet. He had with him a black portfolio

which he dropped on the ground. He sent a punch to the driver's stomach which reminded her of her Grandma's thermocool native pot which she used to store her drinking water, only that the driver's stomach looked exactly like the pot when Grandma turned it upside down after washing it.

The man sent another punch on same stomach while screaming for the driver to buy him another long-sleeved shirt which he said he borrowed from a neighbor for his interview.

The driver raised him up and sent him on the ground, inside a red muddy gallop of water. The white instantly became red sand color. Passengers came down to separate them because the man had already pulled the driver to the mud and they were rolling inside. The passengers must have forgotten they were shouting on the driver to hurry up just few minutes before the fight. She checked her time and saw she had wasted forty five minutes and her waiting would be more than five hours. But there was a bigger issue, if she did not get there at

a certain time, she would never be attended to and waiting for her turn would no longer be necessary. There was no way she would postpone her fate for another week. She jumped down from the bus and started running.

She ran, paused to breathe in some fresh air, then continued her race. It was when she got to the gate which would lead her to her destination, she remembered she forgot her umbrella on the bus. But there was no time to go back, she just hoped the driver would keep it for her. She would go and ask for it at the park later, that was if things came out positive.

She had just entered the building when it started raining. Grandma called such rainfall, elephant and lion rain. She got to the reception desk just two minutes before the deadline.

The crowd waiting were massive that were no space to sit down, some were even standing. The receptionist looked like she was having a bad day because she was trying to convince



an elderly lady that she came on the wrong day. The lady was shouting same time splashing spit on the face of the receptionist. The receptionist ignored her and attended to the next person waiting to get a pass.

“I don’t blame you, it’s the failure of your mother. She failed to raise a responsible lady” the elderly woman shouted. The receptionist stopped what she was doing and turned to face the elderly woman.

“It is your children and you future generations that are failures” the receptionist replied pointing her finger at the elderly woman’s forehead.

A quarrel ensued and another receptionist had to take over while the two ladies quarreled amidst many futile attempts to stop them. It soon got to her turn and she was told to go and pay. That was the first step of a long day of waiting.

The revenue section had a long line of both old and young all cramped up together. The worse was there was nobody there to receive payment and it was already 8:39 in the morning. She tried going over to the second revenue section but stopped when she heard someone saying they did not have network in their computer. She had to join the very long queue to wait. After five minutes, the revenue collector walked in carrying a large umbrella. Although it was still raining, the buildings provided shields to move around. The revenue collector must have carried the umbrella to prove the rain prevented him from coming early but it did not stop people from raining curses his way. He ignored them, entered his office and locked the door. He opened the window where he would be taking the money from people on the queue but did not start working immediately. He started cleaning his desk while humming “Don’t worry, be happy’ song. She knew that song very well because Grandpa used to sing it

every time his business did not sell. The revenue collector moved over to clean the computer but his song had changed to Brunu Mars' song.

“It’s a beautiful day, we’ll looking for something dumb to do...” but his voice was cut off by a heavy bang on the window followed by yelling and curses by aggrieved waiters.

“You must be very stupid” a young man who was second on the line shouted.

The revenue collector paused his song which could no longer be heard.

“Your father’s left eye, idiot. Goat” he replied the young.

The crowd attacked the revenue collector and she placed her palms on her ears to quench the noise. A security woman who looked like a man came to find out what was happening. She was able to stop the quarrel and the revenue collector started working.

A young lady wearing a black short skirts with a red heel which matched with her spaghetti red top came to the sixth man on the line. The man shifted back and allowed her to stand in front of him but everybody saw his actions and disagreed.

“Ashawo, prostitute go to the back of the line and wait for your turn” an old lady who could barely stand straight except with her improvised walking stick shouted. She was behind the sixth man.

“Who did you call a prostitute? Is it not prostitution that made you useless that you can’t stand straight? Or are you jealous your daughters can’t attract a man even when they are naked?” the lady shouted, turning to face the old woman.

The security woman intervened before it could escalate. She dragged the lady to the back amidst cheers from the crowd.

It got to her turn after thirty minutes of waiting and with no other incident. She ran all the way to the main building. It was still raining but no longer elephant and lion, just cat and dog. She submitted her receipt to the first receptionist who had a quarrel with the elderly lady. The receptionist told her to sit and wait for her turn. It was going to be a long wait before she would find a seat to wait for her turn. She stood by the corner of the wall leading to the bathroom because all the other walls had people using them to rest their back as they waited.

After just one hour of waiting, she saw a vacant seat and quickly sat on it. She rested her back on the chair.

A man dressed in a suit came into the building carrying a big basket with him. His black suit was oversized but neatly ironed. She could see the sharp lines marked by the iron at the center of the suit trousers.

“Clock sandwich, sandwich, cheap sandwich” the man shouted as he walked around the building. Some patronized him while more ignored him.

She closed her eyes and started imagining what she would be told. She tried to be positive, to hope that something good would come out from her long wait but could not.

Time crawled slowly and it seemed like she had been waiting for seven hours when she heard her name. She stood up and ran to meet the lady calling her name. She was showed where to sit and told to enter the room as soon as the person in the room came out. She nodded and waited.

After five minutes of waiting, she saw the door being opened and entered after a man came out. She was told to sit down after her name was confirmed. The room was very cold due to the air conditioner but she shivered because she her fate was about to be announced to her. She was made to

undergo a quick test and the lady wrote down the result on her file.

“Your visual field is still okay, no permanent damage to any of the nerves and I just checked your pressure, it has surprisingly come down from forty one to seventeen.”

“What does that mean?” she asked.

“It means you will no longer be undergoing surgery and your vision is still okay.”

“But the last doctor said I might have just six months before I lose my vision completely” she wanted to be sure.

“I saw that but your visual field result is showing otherwise.

The new drugs are working but you will have to undergo another test in two months’ time.”

“Please can I know why?”

“It takes about three months to completely know if the drugs are working, so you will come back for another test in two

months. Glaucoma does not mean you will automatically go blind, early detection has saved a lot of patients, there is still hope young lady.”

She nodded as she stood up. She took the paper the doctor wrote for her and went back to give the receptionist who booked another date for her.

As she came outside the building, she noticed the rain had stopped and had given room for the sun to shine. Although the sun was already withdrawing its light, she could see the rays hitting the windscreen of a car in front of her. They looked like rays of hope.