

Matalita

By Darren Pickering

(Reader advice: this story contains adult themes and language)

The heat in the room was oppressive, there were dirty sheets on the bed and no blanket for warmth, she guessed that no one would use a blanket anyway in the Christmas season. The mangoes had come early this year, “signs of storms to come”, she had learnt that from her grandmother in the village. “You’re a long way from the ocean Matalita” she mused. She untangled herself from the arms and legs of the man next to her and stood carefully. She beathed a sigh of relief when she began fumbling towards the fan control near the door, if he woke up he would expect her to go another round and she didn’t want to smell his stale beer breath and have his sweaty wrinkled skin drowning her in waves of salt and yuck as he used her nubile body to satisfy life’s most basic craving.

She tried to get the fan moving faster to scatter the torridness from this tiny room, it stubbornly stayed at a creaky mid speed swinging dangerously loose above the bed, offering little relief from the heat but always threatening to decapitate the multiple lovers it found beneath it by breaking free of the ceiling that helped it defy gravity. She looked at the clothes folded in a neat pile on the bedside table.

“Why did he always do that?” she wondered. She always meant to ask but he wasn’t interested in having a relationship with her, she was only an object and that was all she was worth to them. She crept up to the bed and unfolded his pants, fishing around in his pockets for cigarettes. He stirred and she froze, her breath was momentarily trapped in her throat, but he rolled over — even the dark could not hide his old frame and voluminous flesh. She shuddered, she could wash her body, but the stain of the memory of men sweating, grunting and pawing could not be cleansed from her soul. At least she could use his underwear to wipe his old seed from inside her. The rise and fall of his chest became rhythmic again and she made her way to the window, cigarettes and wallet in hand.

She flung the window open and sat on the sill, the cool night air caressed her naked dark skin. Her face was momentarily lit with the aura of flame she used to light her cigarette. She sighed

smoke out of her body with a resignation that was out of place for one so young. She looked out into the street, towards the discordant vices of a man and woman as it wafted hurriedly up to her from the street.

“HEY GETAWAY!!!” the woman stormed from below at her companion in an exaggerated falsetto. The man tried to hug and appease her, by whispering slurred sweet nothings. Up in the window, she laughed to herself at the obvious fact that his amorous seductions were less effective than this Casanova thought he was having. The woman shoved him away and erupted “NO MONEY NO FUCK!!!.”

The cigarette had burnt low, threatening to burn her fingers, she flicked it out the window and watched it cartwheel itself down into the bushes between her and the “lovers” below. She lit another one and opened the wallet with yellow stained nails. She looked at the cards inside, the name on it was not the name he gave her but then again, she was just flesh in this world. He had a photo folded lovingly amongst the brand-new crisp hundred-dollar notes. She unfolded the photograph and saw him standing regally with his wife. She was pretty but fat and must have been quite a beauty decades before this photo was taken.

“YOU JUST ONE KALAVO” the man bellowed furiously, enveloped in the bitterness of a love scorned. Blue and red lights flashed on the wall opposite and the woman removed her shoes and disappeared into the night leaving the man oblivious to what was obviously about to unfold.

She slunk away from the window into the darkness of the room. She watched from the safety as the man below was grabbed and unceremoniously dumped into the back of the truck and carted away to a holding cell. She hoped the police beat him for calling her a kalavo.

“A rat, how dare he, she was just trying to feed herself and her family,” she fumed.

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