

The Grandchild.

Things are different with me now, but the wheel of the world continues to spin despite my stillness. All I remember before the darkness was the cold, the sudden itchiness of the scarf around my neck, and my granddaughter Molará sitting by my side, holding my hand as she watched me disappear.

‘You can close your eyes now, Nana’.

But this box in the ground does not hide everything from me. I heard everyone whisper about her; their snide tones about what happens when people of questionable pedigrees are allowed into good families, of tainted bloodlines.

‘Is that her? I think she looks harmless’

‘I hear Mama Sanami was fine before she visited them that weekend’

‘Na the child and husband wey that one follow all of us fight for be that? God forbid’

‘I’m not saying that she’s a witch but something is not right with that little girl. Remember what happened with the clown at her 5th birthday party?’

I heard the paced, labored breathing of Molará’s father as he tried to hold his temper, wits, and daughter steady.

And in the early hours of this morning, I saw Molará’s mother wake her up and instruct her to get dressed. I saw Molará sit still and stare at her, not confused but as though contemplating refusal, then how she later walked out of the house behind her mother with the solemnity of one resigned to what was coming.

At the church, I saw the man of God tie the hands and feet of a ten-year-old girl and ask her to confess.

I saw her father storm in an hour later, grab the pastor by his collar and spit in his face. I see the three of them now in the car on their ride home.

‘She did something, oko mi. I know what I sound like but she did something to mama.’

‘I can’t believe this. She’s a child, she’s your child. I have tried my best to ignore your insane family but how could you do this? Your mother would be turning in her grave’

I hear Molará say ‘You are wrong, she can’t turn. There isn’t enough space’.

