

The Embassy of Cambodia

written by

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adapted from

"The Embassy of Camodia"
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EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - AFTERNOON

A large red brick wall towers high above the street. A shuttlecock rhythmically rises and falls behind it, its arc visible only at its peak.

The street is quiet, disturbed only by the sound of badminton being played.

FATOU (19; African) is sat slumped at a bus stop in front of the wall. Beside her sits more carrier bags than she can carry, stuffed to the brim with her belongings.

A bus drives lazily down the street and comes to a halt at the bus stop. The doors open. No one gets off, no one gets on. The doors close and the driver drives off.

Fatou is still sat there.

EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - MORNING - TWO WEEKS EARLIER

The large red brick wall dwarfs Fatou as she walks past the Embassy. Her carrier bags bounce off of her legs, they're empty save for a couple of items of clothing.

A game of badminton is in session.

She reaches the bus stop and pauses. She takes a moment to look around and take in the scenery, looking for something, but nothing in particular.

Finding nothing, she carries on her journey.

INT. SPA, SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Fatou swims lengths clumsily in a swimming pool too posh for her to afford.

Her technique grants her glances from the other patrons, almost all of whom are of middle eastern descent. She moves with efficiency but the method lacks in grace, creating more splash than is necessary.

Her costume is made up of an old bra and short shorts. The only piece of actual swimming gear on her person is the cap, stretched over her curls.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Fatou sits alone at a table for two, there's no drink in front of her. She looks impatiently out of the window.

We hear the door swing open and ANDREW (22; African) walks in, sending a smile over to the table.

He squeezes past others, having to make several apologies before he's able to sit down opposite Fatou who looks happy to see him.

ANDREW

Sorry I'm so late, have you been waiting long?

FATOU

Not really, I was late too.

She wasn't.

ANDREW

Oh good, I was reading up on what we were talking about last week.

A WAITER comes over.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Two iced finger buns and two lattes please.

Andrew has a "College of North West London" lanyard around his neck.

The waiter disappears.

FATOU

So how many did die in the Holocaust? Because more died in Rwanda, and while the Holocaust was a very horrid thing, no one ever talks about Rwanda!

Fatou talks with unapologetic passion, Andrew seems unphased by her outburst, she's like this often.

ANDREW

Do you know what numerology is?

Fatou shakes her head.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

The Nigerian government are good at it, more so than the Rwandan. It's covering up figures and changing them to suit their purposes. I prefer to call it 'demonology'. Not numerology, 'demonology'.

He looks proudly at Fatou who's too busy thinking to notice.

After a pause Fatou comes back to him.

FATOU

Andrew, do you think that we're born to suffer?

(MORE)

FATOU (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think we're born to
suffer more than the all rest.

Andrew takes a moment to think. The waiter brings over their
order and they take a bite.

ANDREW

(through mouthfuls)

Who cried for Jesus? His mother.
Who cries for you? Your father. The
Jews cry for Jews and we cry for
Africa because we are Africans.
It's natural law Fatou. Only God
cries for us all, because we are
all his children. It's very
logical, you just have to think
about it for a moment.

(pause)

But why does God allow suffering in
Africa? Think about that, the
fastest growing Christian continent
and he allows this suffering.

FATOU

But it's not him, it's the Devil.

She looks thoughtfully off into the distance.

INT. DERAVALS', KITCHEN - EVENING

Fatou lazily wipes down the surfaces. She lifts up a
newspaper to wipe underneath it, reading it as she cleans.

The title article is "Sudanese Slave Saved".

MRS DERAVAL (44) comes in and snatches it out of Fatou's
hand. She inspects Fatou's work.

MRS DERAVAL

(coldly)

Don't forget to do the oven.

She leaves, just as quickly as she arrives.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Andrew and Fatou are sat in their usual spot, eating an iced
bun and drinking coffee. Rain patters against the window.

ANDREW

I read an article about a Sudanese
Slave today.

FATOU

(proudly)

I've read that article.

ANDREW

I feel sorry for her.

FATOU

But do you cry for her?

ANDREW

No. I cry for you.

FATOU

Why do you cry for me?

ANDREW

Do you not see the similarities?
You are the same.

FATOU

She is not me.

She thinks.

FATOU (CONT'D)

I have freedom. I go swimming.

ANDREW

But you're not supposed to.

Pause.

FATOU

I have a passport.

ANDREW

Where.

FATOU

Mrs Derawal has it.

ANDREW

Are you paid.

FATOU

My wages go to them for housing and
food.

Andrew laughs to himself.

ANDREW

Then you are the same. You just
have the illusion of freedom.

Fatou furrows her brow.

FATOU

They are kind to me.

They both know this is not true, but Fatou refuses to think
of herself as a slave.

ANDREW

You know you're welcome to stay with me.

FATOU

Why would I do that.

ANDREW

So you can find yourself a better job. One that pays. That's legal.

FATOU

No thank you. I'm grateful but, they need me.

ANDREW

Hmmm.

Pause.

FATOU

I had better get back.

ANDREW

I'll walk you to yours, I have an umbrella.

Fatou's reaching into her bags and pulls out her swimming cap. Putting it on she says:

FATOU

No thank you, I'll be fine.

ANDREW

Big woman. Won't let anyone protect you.

FATOU

Rain doesn't scare me.

But the thought of going home does. She gets up.

FATOU (CONT'D)

Peace be with you.

They kiss on the cheek and she leaves.

INT. THE DERAVALS' - EVENING

Fatou rushes inside, soaking wet save for her hair.

She reaches into a bag and pulls out the guest pass for the swimming pool and places it in the drawer of the hallway table with the others.

Entering the kitchen she checks the time and lets out a sigh. She removes the lamb out of the freezer.

INT. DERAVALS', LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Fatou heads into the bathroom and comes out with a basket full of washing, she enters each room and comes out with the dirty clothes from it.

She enters a final bedroom and we hear a thud.

INT. DERAVALS', ASMA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fatou spins around, cowering from her attacker. ASMA (10) is stood gasping for air, clearly struggling to breathe.

Asma hits her again on the arm, pointing drastically to her throat. Fatou drops the basket of dirty laundry and performs the heimlich maneuver on Asma.

After a couple of pumps a marble goes flying across the room.

Asma pushes her off, and runs downstairs.

Fatou picks up the clothes off the floor.

From the kitchen we hear Mrs Derawal shout across the house.

MRS DERAVAL (O.S.)
Fatou! Come here at once!

Fatou sighs and leaves.

INT. DERAVAL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mrs Derawal is stood angrily next to the still frozen lamb leg and a crying Asma, she's just gotten home from work.

MRS DERAVAL
What the fuck is going on?

Fatou wonders what she's referring to.

FATOU
Asma was choking-

MRS DERAVAL
I've spoken to her about that,
don't ever touch my daughter again.

Fatou nods.

MRS DERAVAL (CONT'D)
There is no way this lamb will be
defrosted in time for dinner, when
did you take it out?
(to Asma)
You can go now sweetie.

Asma leaves, hugging Fatou on her way out.

ASMA

Thank you.

Mrs Derawal doesn't approve of the closeness. Asma leaves and Mrs Derawal starts to walk closer to Fatou.

FATOU

I'm sorry, I got home late from shopping and-

Mrs Derawal is as close as she can get, the only barrier is the laundry basket which Fatou holds up as a shield.

MRS DERAVAL

That is unacceptable, now what will I cook.

She bring her arm back and slaps Fatou on the cheek. Fatou naturally recoils but takes it, hiding the pain.

Fatou and Mrs Derawal's eyes are locked onto each other, Fatou doesn't step down.

JULIE (17), the eldest child, enters the kitchen, head down, typing on her phone.

JULIE

What's for dinner mum.

She looks up and notices the frozen lamb and the tense atmosphere. She knows what's happened. It's happened before.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Mum.

MRS DERAVAL

(to Fatou)

You can go now.

Fatou turns and leaves.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

Mass has just finished and Fatou and Andrew stand by the door collecting in bibles from the leaving guests. Fatou is thinking on something, she's visibly angry.

ANDREW

Don't give the Devil your anger, it is his food.

FATOU

I saw the Devil yesterday.

ANDREW

Where?

FATOU

He took the form of Mrs Derawal.

Andrew nods knowingly.

FATOU (CONT'D)

Let's go swimming.

EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - MORNING

Fatou walks past the red brick wall as she usually does, pausing at the bus stop to observe her surroundings before carrying on to the swimming pool. The badminton game still goes on.

INT. THE DERAVALS' - EVENING

Fatou comes into the kitchen holding two full bin bags. She bumps into Mrs and MR DERAVAL (44).

MRS DERAVAL

Fatou, I have a list. For you, it's on the table. Don't forget to return the change. With receipts.

Fatou nods and swaps the full kitchen bin bag for an empty one.

MR DERAVAL

Thank you Fatou.

FATOU

How's Asma?

Mr Derawal goes to speak but Mrs Derawal answers first.

MRS DERAVAL

Oh for goodness sake! It was just a little marble. What a fuss everybody is making.

Mrs Derawal doesn't say this directly to Fatou, she just speaks as if the air around her had asked. Mr Derawal sends Fatou a compassionate glance.

EXT. SPA - LATER

Stood outside the spa waits Andrew, a bag slung over his shoulder.

Fatou notices him, still a long way off.

He begins to wave frantically, Fatou sends a short one back.

She carries on walking, Andrew gives up waving. Once she's closer he begins again.

ANDREW

I'm very excited, it looks so fancy
up close.

Fatou shrugs, trying to act like it's not big deal.

FATOU

It's alright.

They go inside.

INT. SPA, RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Fatou presents the guest pass to the receptionist, KAREN (30s), like she's done a hundred times. Karen looks suspiciously at the guest pass and then at Fatou and Andrew.

KAREN

So you're a guest and this is your
guest?

FATOU

I'm a guest and this is another
guest.

KAREN

Yeah...that's not really how it
works?

FATOU

Please. We've come a long way.

KAREN

I appreciate that but I really
shouldn't let you in to be honest.

FATOU

Please.

Fatou tries to make her eyes look helpless.

Karen sighs, marking the guest pass twice.

KAREN

Just this once, but don't tell
anyone.

FATOU

Thank you.

She leads Andrew to the changing area.

ANDREW

Thanks!

They separate off.

INT. SPA, SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Fatou exits the changing area. Andrew is sat eagerly.

FATOU

Come on, let's get in.

ANDREW

Errrr I think I'll wait a bit, I'm taking it all in.

Fatou climbs in and confidently pushes off. Trying to hone her technique to look good, to look like a natural, in front of Andrew.

After completing a length, she swims up to Andrew.

FATOU

Come on, get in.

Andrew stands and hesitantly walks down the steps. Making noises every centimeter his body goes under the water.

FATOU (CONT'D)

It's not even that cold, don't be a baby.

The waterline reaches Andrew's waist line and he dunks himself under.

ANDREW

Wow it's lovely, this is the life man. You swim, I'll follow.

Fatou kicks off, creating more splash than usual, Andrew laughs and pushes off too.

EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - AFTERNOON

Fatou and Andrew stand outside the embassy. Andrew stares at the game of badminton being played.

ANDREW

I love badminton. It's so calming and exhilarating at the same time.

The shuttlecock comes flying over the wall, carried by a gust of wind.

It lands at their feet. They wait for someone to ask for it back. It never comes, instead, the game starts up again with a new one.

Andrew picks it up.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Here, keep it.

Fatou takes it.

FATOU

I'm going to get out.

Andrew nods in approval.

ANDREW

Good.

Fatou thinks to herself, nodding assuringly.

FATOU

Peace be with you.

They kiss on the cheek and go their separate ways.

INT. THE DERAVALS' LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The whole family is sat on the sofa the TV on mute.

Mrs Deralwal leads the whole family, speaking on behalf of them. The only member we haven't met is FAIZUL (15).

Fatou is stood in front of the TV, head bowed in shame.

MRS DERAVAL

Sorry but you're fired.

FATOU

But-I just said I quit.

MRS DERAVAL

What you don't understand is that we no longer need a nanny anymore. I was going to fire you anyway.

(pause))

We need a housekeeper, but you're too focused on the kids and that's not what they need.

Fatou looks to the children, but they look away in cowardice.

MRS DERAVAL (CONT'D)

You're just no use to us.

Mrs Deralwal looks to her husband. He offers nothing.

MRS DERAVAL (CONT'D)
And-so- you will need to find
somewhere else to live, as soon as
possible. By Friday, this Friday.
My husband's cousin is coming to
stay in that room then.

Fatou thinks for a moment.

FATOU
Can I please use the phone for one
call?

Mrs Derawal checks for something on her nail, then nods.

FATOU (CONT'D)
And I would like my passport
please.

MRS DERAVAL
Excuse me?

FATOU
My passport, please.

Mrs Derawal looks angrily at Fatou. The Devil has climbed up
inside of her.

MRS DERAVAL
For goodness sake I don't have your
passport. What would I want with
that? It's probably in a drawer in
the kitchen. What is my job to look
for your passport too?

She tuts and leaves, pushing past Fatou. Leaving the family
alone with her. After a pause of silence. Faizul unmutes the
TV.

INT. THE DERAVALS' HALLWAY - LATER

Fatou's on the phone, waiting for it to connect. It does.

ANDREW (O.S.)
Hello?

FATOU
Hi, it's me, Fatou, I, erm, I need
a place to stay.

ANDREW
Of course, did you do it.

FATOU
I've been fired.

ANDREW

What for?

FATOU

I don't know.

ANDREW

It'll be ok. Meet me at 6pm after
my lecture.

Fatou looked at the clock, it was 2pm.

FATOU

Thank you.

She sighs and hangs up. She pauses. She opens the drawer of the table and pulls out all of the guest passes, shoving them into her pocket.

She considers for a moment, then reaches for the phone and dials a number.

INT. THE DERAWALS', FATOU'S ROOM - LATER

Fatou's belongings are stuffed into the carrier bags she uses to go swimming with. They're overflowing.

Fatou is sat at a desk writing a letter.

Her passport slides under the door.

EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - AFTERNOON

Fatou walks past the embassy. The game carries on. The bags bounce against her leg. She doesn't pause at the bus stop like normal.

INT. SPA, RECEPTION - LATER

Fatou hands over a guest pass to Karen.

KAREN

A bit weighed down today huh?

She doesn't smile and walks through.

INT. SPA, SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Fatou does her clumsy lengths. She pauses at the wall in thought. Then dunks herself underwater.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Fatou steps out of the spa after her swim.

Police cars drive past.

Seeing them she feels a sense of calm, a feeling of being at ease.

INT. DERWALS', FATOU'S ROOM - CUTAWAY

On Fatou's pillow lies an envelope with the words "From the Slave" on it.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - CONTINUOUS

Fatou takes a deep breath and walks off.

EXT. THE EMBASSY OF CAMBODIA - AFTERNOON - SCENE 1

A large red brick wall towers high above the street. A shuttlecock rhythmically rises and falls behind it, its arc visible only at its peak.

The street is quiet, disturbed only by the sound of badminton being played.

Fatou is sat slumped at a bus stop in front of the wall. Beside her sits more carrier bags than she can carry, stuffed to the brim with her belongings.

A bus drives lazily down the street and comes to a halt at the bus stop. The doors open. No one gets off, no one gets on. The doors close and the driver drives off in a huff.

Fatou is still sat there.

Andrew walks towards her. She doesn't see him.

ANDREW

Hi.

FATOU

Hey.

ANDREW

Is the police car your doing?

Fatou nods.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

"To keep you is no benefit, to
destroy you is no loss."

FATOU
I won against the Devil.

Andrew helps her to her feet and they walk off.

THE END