

*“Father: close neither to a village ahead nor an inn behind.*

*Father: a father’s order must be obeyed.*

*Father: a father’s debt must be paid by the child.*

*Father: either a serpent, or a God.*

I would rather have a father who punishes me for my grades, no matter how high his standard is. A father who scolds me for coming home late at night. A father who rides a bicycle while I sit on the backseat nibbling a freshly-baked yam he just bought for me at the market. A father who takes walks with VeVe hand in hand while I follow behind. A father at all.

With the cup still in my hand—I feel the need to hold something—I lean my head on Sugar Cane’s shoulder. His body stiffens, but just for a moment, before he relaxes and flips another page. I can smell the scent of “Phoenix” cigarette on him. When he turns the page, I hear the soft crisp sound it makes. I close my eyes, indulging in his warmth, closeness, and the smell of a man, a mature man of my father’s age.”

“But all has come to a halt, as a scene freezes on the screen when the tape is stuck, and the story—however beautiful, however enthralling, however vivacious—cannot go on.”

