

# *Something New*

**By**

*Kemka Ezinwo*

## *Something New*

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## Two

Anytime Olamide thought of what he had lost and what he was about to drop, his heart raced. He had used his mother's company as a lien to secure the loan: a third one. They may be right about a fool at forty. After all that's how old he'll be in a few months. In less than two weeks their external auditors would make their sojourn in Lagos, and no excuse will be satiable.

It was a dicey period in the country with every legal entity trying to make their mark. He looked around the room gloomily, as the thought of losing everything conjured up in his mind again. He was going to be late on the mortgage. There was no money in his account. He couldn't tell his wife that the house she lived in with the kids in London was under a mortgage.

The only freehold was the *Ferrari Enzo* he bought for his wife, his mother's *Range Rover*. He smiled as his eyes fell on his limited edition *Porsche Turbo S* and *Maserati 3200 GT coupe*. He loved the turbocharged V8 of the *Maserati* because he believed it gave an upward thrust to his boisterous personality.

He was not going to part with those cars, come what may, but he could risk parting with the one he bought Temitope for a reasonable price because she didn't know he had bought her a car. His wife was his number one concern though; he didn't know how to break the news to her, especially over the phone. If he found a way to confide in his wife, then she would stand in for him when his mother came to collect.

He remembered the day his mother gave him the documents after a lot of arm twisting. *Maybe I should have let go. Which of these women is the lesser of two evils? My*

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*mother? My wife?* He needed to change his situation and time was running out. Duncan E. Fubara's advice to join the bunkering business clawed its way back into his thoughts.

He sniggered at the thought because Duncan had an idea of every quick-money making scheme that ever existed; Duncan was his first cousin who had been in Prison in almost every country he visited. Brazil was the only country Duncan hadn't been incarcerated in, where he had a wife and two kids.

Olamide was always immune to these advances, but this time was different. After two hours of restlessness, he dozed off, each time waking up and murmuring: "bunkering".



Athena hated these Parents Teacher Meetings; everyone seemed to know what was best for the school, yet none of them was willing to go the distance or even lift a pin to save it. The meetings she has had to attend these past weeks had given her more headache than a solution so much so, that she had to ask herself if it was worth it. The answer made her smile – although she always came off as weird and unenthusiastic, she did always twist her tongue. *Who's laughing now?*

There was a clamour of vague voices, followed by hushed talks like a babbling stream. Then a woman towered over her. She looked up to see an oval face with deep-set eyes and a broad nose looking at her and reclined further into her seat to make way for the woman to pass. The woman almost caught Athena staring at her. Athena drank the smell of *Thierry Mugler's Comet*, which engulfed her and reminded her that she needed to get a bottle of perfume for her graduation dinner.

The woman gave Athena a querying look.

Athena wilted; blushing almost immediately, from face to neck then shook her head.

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The woman looked at her from head to toe, tightened her lips, adjusted herself in her seat to straighten her back, crossed her arms, and smiled a greeting to Mrs. Olsen with a slight nod. Mrs. Olsen gave the woman a sad look and a placid smile.

Athena decided to keep herself to herself the rest of the evening, which meant she couldn't conduct the survey or an interview.

When the meeting ended, Mrs. Olsen asked to speak to Mrs. Ademinokan. Temitope followed the Headteacher, and they walked out briskly. The other women, except a trio at the back of the hall close to the toilet, had formed a band at the buffet table, all oblivious to the Headteacher's rapid departure. Some were busy stuffing food in their bags, that didn't surprise Athena. What did surprise her was the woman who stuffed an already unscrewed bottle of champagne into hers. She then saw it as an opportunity to survey that the Headteacher blatantly forgot to put on display.

By the time she finished, it was almost ten. She decided to beat traffic by taking the train, cutting across the school lawn and over the three feet barricade to the train station which would take her four minutes rather than fifteen minutes going around. She saw Mrs. Ademinokan in the car park; her white brocade illuminated in the unlit area of the park. Athena was glad to talk to the woman now that the alcohol still had some effect on her. She had just made a turn beside a four-wheel drive when she recognized Mrs. Olsen's voice; the argument was about someone called David.

The argument died down a few minutes later, but Mrs. Olsen blocked Temitope's path and pleaded with her simultaneously, but Temitope shoved her as she brushed past her, and started walking in Athena's direction. Athena ducked beside the four-wheel drive. Her heart almost stopped beating when the engine of the car beside her revved. As the vehicle jerked backward, Athena hid beside the large dustbin

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and waited until the car had sped away.



Moses took a peek through the peephole of his door to see Cora opposite him. He hissed and walked back to what he was doing on his bureau: playing Ludo. Groaning each time Cora knocked and trying hard to ignore her he gritted his teeth. He didn't have a girlfriend; hadn't had one in just over two years. The chance of something abominable happening was high.

He knew that the minute he opened the door, there would be nothing holding him back. He was sure Cora's intention was to torment him into giving into her desires but she was a married woman, a no-go area. His dilapidated second-hand laptop was on. If she weren't there, he would have been able to go to Kelechi's room to use the internet, even if it meant crouching on toe tips all the way there.

He was still contemplating when a large brown envelop was slipped under his door. He tore it open quickly, then shrieked away when he saw the letterhead. He remained rooted on the spot, wondering where he was to go from there. He frowned, feeling sure that he didn't owe rent and that he was supposed to have three months remaining. Why would solicitors contact him when he still had over a month's rent – that is if the rent had not been increased without his knowledge?

*All those people wen no wan make e better for me God dey see una o!*



Olamide was glad to hear from Moses but didn't like his inability to assist him in his predicament. Time was running out: it had been months now, and he hadn't yet told his wife about the loan, the mortgage, or even the collateral, though he was sure she would be secretly glad that his mother's hold over him, *i.e.* the company, would be history. If only he could

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tell her that the house she was living in was mortgaged. He had done much running around, achieving nothing, but empty promises and distasteful looks. He couldn't sell anything because he had vowed not to follow in his father's footsteps.

One way or the other Temitope was bound to find out, sooner than later if he didn't sort Stella out. He mournfully muttered as he thought of his wife waking up one night and chopping up his manhood. Each time he tried to buttress the thought by finding a solution that same idea webbed its way through.

He kicked off his shoes and padded into his walk-in closet. He sat on the stool, then got up abruptly, and tucked his hands into his pockets. He looked around him like someone taking one last look before a long journey. He shook his head, and said in a loud voice with outstretched arms, "I sunk everything into you, and I'm the losing party."

His phone started to vibrate. Before he heard the ringtone, he knew it was his wife. He picked it up and talked with her for about an hour, never giving anything away. When the call ended, he sighed deeply, relieved and glad that she couldn't see his face.

He glanced up and sighed again before he started his bedtime routine, starting with emptying his pockets. He sorted the business cards and stopped when he spotted the one from Osagie's brother, looked for Duncan's, and tapped on them a few times before placing them on the dresser.

*If I can't get to those dupers, I could get to the rest of the world.*



After reading Kelechi's email, he deleted it and hissed. He was more concerned with paying his rent than sorting out other people's problems. It's had been a year, two months, and fourteen days since that letter got to him. His hand started to

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sweat when he carried it up.

He dropped it on the bed, and rubbed his hands until his palms were warm, then pulled out the letter slowly. He started dancing, jumping. It wasn't for joy and excitement, but out of anger, pain, and a little bit of anguish. *What to do?*

He started pacing around the room, each time increasing speed until he hit the big toe of his right foot at the end of the bed. Two days later, he travelled to Birmingham to meet the lawyer. He fell in love with Birmingham; it was a much calmer version of London. The lawyer that wrote him had now retired, and his firm was being run by his only child: Jane Natalie Reginald Portman. She handled the 'leftovers' of her father's clients.

Moses had to admit that the way he hungered for money, he wouldn't have minded having her. He got the sum of £74,273.42, including interest accumulated five years before he received the letter. He was glad he had opened an account before he sent his passport for the renewal of his visa.

*2006 is a good year, after all!* He thought as he massaged his chest.

As he came out of Barclay's bank, he saw a law firm for 'people like him' and walked in. He agreed to book an appointment but scuffed and walked out when he found out it was three weeks from that day. *I'll do it when I get back to London abeg!*

He checked the time and looked at the skies. The weather started to change. He scouted for a shop that sold umbrellas. Not seeing any, he hailed a taxi. He entered every shop he had previously been to with his friends. By the time he came out of the mall, it was already dark. He decided to spend the night in Birmingham.

There were no rooms in the entire hotel. *This is the fourth hotel, for goodness sake!* When he went to Jury's Inn, where he was initially turned down, he pretended to be searching for something and emptied his pockets. At the sight of a wad

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of £50 notes, a manager appeared. The manager didn't even wait to find out if the money was genuine before telling him that someone had just cancelled.

In a matter of seconds, he was given a key card and ushered into a room on the sixth floor. He felt the lie was stupid when they asked him about the type of room he wanted and listed some options. *You didn't have any before.* He had his food brought to his room after taking his bath. He later found out a weighty shareholder of Ramadan hotel pretended to be riffraff and was turned out of the hotel.

After dinner, he brought out a notepad and started preparing a strategy for which to go about starting his business. One thing was clear: he wasn't going to start a company in London, which meant he would have to relocate to Nigeria. Settling in Nigeria was a relief since he had no familial strings in England.

However, his resolve changed when he remembered he hadn't been in touch with his home base for almost ten years, then resolved to create a niche for himself, then take his brand to Nigeria. He unpacked his new laptop and smiled, made a call to the reception desk and was given a code to enable him to access the internet.

Hours later, he laid out what he was going to wear the following day. Bored with staying indoors and watching the activity of the nightlife, he got dressed. Looking at the mess, he had made on the bed he promised to get a place of his own before Olamide set foot in England. Unknown to him, London was very different from Birmingham.



Temitope was agitated. She twisted her ring several times, before pulling it off, and tossing it in the sink.

She was tired of Olamide's excuses; she was only human and hadn't felt like a woman in years. She went for a walk but spent just five minutes outside because it was freezing.

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She entered her car and drove for hours before parking in front of a pub. Not thinking, she walked into it, and ordered the most alcoholic drink they had. The confused look from the bartender caused her to settle for brandy.

It wasn't until she bumped into a bum that she realised she was not tipsy but drunk. She scrambled out of the pub and staggered to her car. She fumbled with the keys because the keyhole was lopsided; she turned sideways to fix the problem and landed in the dirt.

"Need help?" Moses asked the woman who almost knocked him out.

Temitope smiled gleefully.

He shook his head, tugged the car keys from her clenched fist, and subsequently carried her into her car.



She woke up, sat up on the couch, and tried to recollect how she got home, all at the same time. She saw snapshots: someone had demanded her keys; *oh they've stolen the car.* She looked at the table, saw the keys, and frowned. She felt a cold hand on her shoulder and bolted upright, her head hitting Moses on the face. The water in the glass he held spilled on the royal blue harlequin rug.

Temitope shifted to the opposite end of the sofa, while Moses covered his nose and then stood up holding his nose. She became even more confused, and her mind began to reel. *Oh, did I bring a man home? I brought a man into my house! What if he is a paedophile? Where are my daughters? Oh, thank God! Yes, that's right, sleepover. Did he sleep with me? Thank God! Phew, what type of headache is this? If this is how it is, why do people drink?*

Her eyes darted around the room, blinking for a few seconds. Her eyes widened. She stifled a sound when he came close to her: he wore a look of concern. She gulped the water noisily but declined the tablets he had brought for fear

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that it may be date-rape drugs, even though she could see its name embossed on it.

She started laughing and held her head in her palms. She still felt lightheaded. She tried to suppress the urge to puke and choked. He came to her side and started to massage her back. She leaned into him, not wanting him to stop. She hesitated for a few seconds and then relaxed.

As something in her stirred, she stiffened then rushed out, covering her mouth and picked up a throw with her free hand. A few minutes later, she came back with another glass and set it down untouched. She tucked her hand under the throw that was now slung across her shoulder then looked at him long and hard. “Who are you?”

“The man you were in bed with?”

“What? Scratch that o! Wetin?”

“You be Naija?”

“Before nkó?”

“Sorry, abeg no vex, wen we enter jand everybody dey form —”

“We no dey jand o!”

“Eh?”

“Jand na USA no be *England*.”

“Oh, that!”

She looked at him pleading. “Please, please, please, tell me the truth, did something happen?”

He got up looking amused. “Why is it important?” he replied and picked up his jacket.

“I was drunk for goodness sake.”

“Not that drunk,” his said, slinging the jacket over his right hand.

“You want to justify your actions?”

“What action is there to justify? My name is Moses, you are -?”

“So nothing happened?” she asked hopefully and sighed. *Thank God o! Olamide would have killed me!*

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“So...”

There was an awkward silence, then the phone rang. Temitope nearly ran to pick it. By the time she hung up, she was sobbing. Olamide’s driver’s call was to tell her that her maid, Stella, went for an abortion which had turned septic. She was recuperating, but she had refused to mention who was responsible.

“Kai!” she exclaimed and bit her nail. *If it weren’t for his children coming in tomorrow, I’d have left for Nigeria today. What am I doing here, anyway? And to imagine that I was feeling sympathetic for that stupid man! Where is that stupid passport sef? I’m going oh! Every time, it has been me that would make all of the sacrifices. And what does he do? Nothing Oh! He’d stay there, counting sheep under the skirt of every girl he can get his hands on. Why did I even marry him sef? While I’m here, working my butt off, horny and lonely. Mr. Man is screwing my maid. Why else would she keep it to herself?*

*This business that he is using as an excuse to remain in Nigeria will soon end. I’ll make sure of it. O God! He didn’t even have the decency of wearing a condom. O God, I WILL KILL THIS MAN! GOD WILL PUNISH HIM OH! What kind of man did I marry sef? Ah!*

She hugged herself and started sobbing. Unsure of what to do, Moses remained where he was staring at her. She was breathing in short gasps and shaking, her head buried between her knees. Moses sighed, then reluctantly walked to her side and wrapped his arms around her.

As soon as she stopped crying, she shrugged him off and asked him to leave. On his way out, he spotted some pictures that were knocked down, but one was on the floor, and she was in it with two girls. He smiled and put it away before walking out.

A few minutes later, she let out a violent scream, then muffled the sound with the maroon-coloured throw, and

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began to rock herself.

Moses was back. He pulled her into his arms and rocked her. It tortured him to be there, but he felt he could overcome his urge.

Temitope curled up beside Moses, and the little restraint he had, shut down violently.

## *Three*

Olamide had a few contacts in the clearing and forwarding business. Using them, he was able to siphon 3 barrels of crude oil right under the nose of Duncan's friend, a retired Sailor, who had many tentacles in the navy and was greedy. Since the oil was initially siphoned illegally, they couldn't chase him. All the Sailor had was suspicion and decided to trap Olamide to catch him in the act.

In less than two years Olamide had increased it to 8 barrels, so as his friends were recording losses to Pirates, he was recording profits and was hiking the price. All this time he didn't buy anything. He started laundering his money. Temitope called him several times to ask if he was doing anything illegal - he would deny it - a habit he had now perfected. She unwittingly became his informant.

Unlike his friends, he didn't have to go through the stress of settling local communities or for security who were the better of the thieves. As the years went by, he garnered himself a platoon of enemies; hence the need to leave the country at all costs.

In the early harmattan season of 2006, Olamide arrived at the visa office an hour earlier than anticipated and had to wait in his car for another one hour in the heat. The air condition was bad even after two repairs. He bought a newspaper just to fan himself, but it seemed to be blowing only hot, stagnant air.

He was glad Temitope was now a British citizen and wondered why Moses, who had been there three years before his wife, didn't have one. Olamide felt fortunate that he had sent most of his money across the ocean before the bank officer disappeared with £27,800, the last money he had paid

into his account. He had finally reached his 12 barrels benchmark and was going to make up his losses and leave the country immediately after.

Because of the theft, he decided to carry out a final sweep. This time, the pay was more, the risk was higher, and he could not afford to take the regular route from the port in Warri. He had to organise a crew of people who knew the terrain. As always, he organised a new team then invited his friend Osagie, a former naval officer to go with them.

Osagie was honourably discharged a few years ago after he lost the use of his right arm. He was glad to go with his friend from high school and to feel the absence of urban life. His gut however kicked against the journey. His wife told him to leave his gut in Port Harcourt because they needed the money.

Four days later, he asked Olamide to hire a speedboat. Olamide did. Three days later they headed for Forcados River where the exchange of crude oil was to take place.

They were twenty miles away from Aboh in Delta state when they heard the sound of several speedboats but dismissed it as harmless because it carried mostly women and children. When they got to the boundary of Burutu, the other vessels surrounded them. By this time it was too late to mount a defence.

The leader of Olamide's team whispered in harsh tones, "Close your eyes, raise your hands!"

Most of the people in his boat had already raised their hand in surrender. On one of the other boats were three women, an old man, and two boys, probably in their early teens. The two pregnant women removed the mould from their belly and were rifling through it, while a woman carrying a baby, opened her napkin bag to retrieve two guns, then handed one of them to one of the boys.

"CLOSE YOUR EYES!"

The second boy alighted from his boat, onto theirs with thin muslin cloths.

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They were all bound and blindfolded then jab to move forward. Osagie was counting; they travelled two hours in the boat, with a few manoeuvres. After walking for thirty-seven minutes, they travelled by canoe for a whole day. Each of them were then led by the hand.

Osagie smiled, it was a terrain he knew too well. He knew they were in Bayelsa state from the position of the sun, and wished he'd brought a map with him. He planned their escape and wondered if the enormous young man with them was much of a weightlifter or if he just looked like one. He managed to tip one side of his blindfold and was caught.

Olamide didn't know what their kidnappers wanted, who they were, or why they were taken. Then he heard something that sounded like beating followed by a gunshot. Olamide peed in his trousers. When his blindfold was removed an hour later, he saw Osagie in front of him with his face double its size.

Olamide swallowed hard, holding his breath when he was about to choke. He slanted a look to his right and saw most of the men were fully armed. Their guns were sophisticated; the ones held by the policemen he used to come with were nothing to compare. They were all blindfolded again. A day passed. While the sun was set to rise the following day, there was another rap of bullets, then a tumult of whistling, following sequentially like music. He heard rapid footsteps, and then everything was silent.

When he opened his eyes and saw his wife, he fainted. She poured water over him. When he woke up this time, she was squatting over him.

"What are you doing here? So, you are behind my kidnapping?"

"Shut up! If it were me, you'd be dead now. Wicked man, so because you wanted to marry another woman, you pushed me to go abroad, something I kicked against for years. Do I look like a trophy wife? Abi I resemble firewood?"

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“I’m sorry,” he replied, sounding remorseful.

She let out a long hiss and clucked her tongue. She was too tired to fight. All she wanted was a long sleep; she had not had the time to rest since she arrived in the country four hours ago. She slumped to the ground beside him trying to hold her head up while he helped one of the men she came with untie Osagie.

Olamide came to her side, “Are you okay?”

“Do I look okay? I followed you. Since when did you start this business? How did you get involved?” Temitope bit her finger mournfully. “Ah!? So your plan is to make me a widow abi? Ha! You’re indeed a wicked man.”

“I’m sorry!”

She stared sternly at him.

They were about to head back after the men had given their okay when they heard another rap of gunfire, this time in rapid succession. Olamide and Osagie remained flat on the ground, rooted to their spot. While they were trying to decipher where the sound was coming from, Temitope had started running into the thicket of mangroves. Everywhere was suddenly quiet except for the sound of light footsteps. Olamide got up, tilted his head, and waited until it faded.

“Temi, I think they are gone o!” Olamide whispered. When he didn’t hear her respond, he started to shiver. He spun. She was nowhere to be found. He began to panic.

Osagie saw the imprint of her shoes on the ground and followed it while Olamide and the others tagged along, not wanting to be left behind. Osagie was looking down and frowned when he saw the reflection of something falling. He turned around and found nothing. Wondering if shock could trigger hallucination, he sighed and almost fell from shock when he saw a hand come out of the ground.

He would have ignored it or confirmed his theory if he didn’t recognise his watch; Olamide won it over at their last poker game. Olamide disappeared again just as the others

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caught up with them. Osagie caught him by the wrist, two of the men came to his side, one wrapped his hand around Osagie's waist, and the other stood beside Osagie in half-squat. Two joined the man behind Osagie with the last holding the last man, a weightlifter, held the man in front of him by the belt, and used his free hand to hold onto the mangrove stalks.

Olamide was unconscious by the time he was brought out and had to be carried on a stretcher made of their shirts and bamboo stalks.

They emptied the remaining water on his face and threw the bottle away.

"What about recycling?" The weightlifter asked.

Everyone laughed.

Osagie frowned down at Olamide. Then he produced a mud-covered compass from his pocket, shook it, and angrily tossed it. He looked at the sun using his hand as a sundial then tugged Olamide's watch off then wiped the surface as he tried to determine how lost they were from the position of the sun.

Olamide seemed to be suddenly full of life and jumped, hopped, and scratched, and wriggled. Osagie instructed him on how to remove leeches, but he continued with his twisted dance steps. Everyone else shook with laughter.

Olamide attempted to walk ahead of Osagie but was pulled back just in time to dodge another quicksand. They looked anxiously around, trying to make out where they were. Olamide moaned, wishing he'd paid attention to map reading in geography class.

"Where are we?" Olamide asked.

"Am I a compass? What did you get me into?"

"Don't make up excuses for being here because you got yourself into this mess."

"Hey!" Osagie said, facing his friend squarely, "Watch your mouth."

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“I...I...” Olamide tripped over his tongue with embarrassment.

“I...I... what? Ol’boy no just make me vex o! No be you and Bernard dey do una deals?”

Olamide opened his mouth, then closed it, blinked and swallowed when he remembered how Osagie used to beat him back then. He lost track of how they became close friends.

Osagie suggested following the crushed leaves and disturbances in the mangrove.

They finally found Temitope. She lay sprawled in a recovery position. He and Osagie sat down beside her. Then some people came to meet her.

“How come?” Olamide asked Temitope, still scratching.

“Ah! Where is your trouser?” she asked, frowning.

“Hey!” Olamide growled, taken aback and continued, “Where is my trouser?” then to his wife, “Who are these people?”

“They are from the village, em... it’s a long name, but it’s just a mile off.

“How do we get out of here?” The weightlifter asked, suddenly.

The other men stared at him then shook their heads.

“Let’s check for the closest police station.” The weightlifter continued.

“Eh!?” Olamide exclaimed.

Osagie nodded his approval, ignoring Olamide’s attempt at getting his attention quietly.

“Don’t be stupid. Don’t you see the footpath leads to a village? Carry your house abeg!” Osagie said, slapping Olamide’s hand off his arm.

Olamide wrapped his arms around Temitope, and she shrugged it off. “Don’t you dare touch me, you useless man.”

“What did I do *sef*?” he grumbled.

“You will know when we get out of here. Don’t worry eh. You will know.”



Three weeks later, Olamide's plan to leave the country was finalised. He had been unable to sleep properly since the kidnap incident. He didn't want to go anywhere, but Temitope's nagging gave him the courage he needed to leave the house. She suggested that he go to a therapist, and he thought she was mad to have mentioned it. His nightmares were centred around quicksand; even his children were in it.

One evening, as he was murmuring and hugging himself, his driver came in. His driver would have ignored him, but for the fact that he had never seen his boss sit on the ground, even when he played with his daughters.

"Oga, any problem?"

"I could feel the sand eat me, slowly, slowly. It was like cement caking around my chest. Can you imagine that? I couldn't breathe; you know they tried to dig me out of that makeshift grave?" Olamide muttered, striking his chest.

His driver shook his head and nodded even though he didn't know what his boss was on about.

Osagie was already in Stratford, a week earlier, to see one of his cousins, Bernard, who had vowed not to come back home after he had been kidnapped twice. Bassey's wedding was taking place in less than a week and Olamide needed to be on time for the bachelor's party if he and Moses were commencing business before the end of the fiscal year.

He hadn't been able to sleep two nights before, and he drank sleeping pills which began to work as he kept watch. When he woke up it was fifteen minutes to four, he bolted upright, picked his car keys. He drove to the bank in his pyjamas – his account officer had gotten used to his many phases; so far as she was concerned, he was bipolar.

Olamide was daydreaming about staying in England.

"Sir," the account officer called.

"Yes, yes," he replied quickly, blinking.

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“Are you all right?”

“Yes....”

“It’s just that I’ve been calling your attention and ...”

“I’m fine,” he responded, coldly.

He found her annoying, and it infuriated him that she was the one woman that got away, with her long endless legs, curves like *Beyoncé*, and teeth that reminded him of his first crush: Amanda. Amanda, who had unknowingly caused problems in his marriage so much so that Temitope wanted to confront her, thinking her husband was sleeping with her. She finally got to Amanda and left her crest on the poor woman: three cuts and six stitches - this, with the timely intervention of their driver, who in turn lost his job for interfering.

His new account officer was honest and efficient, judging from his carelessness of late. He tried his luck at asking her out again. She flashed him a smile and then showed off her left hand with a large ring on it. He mumbled and walked out with his money. When he got to the front desk, he grimaced and went to put some money into her account.

Feeling sleepy as he drove, he pushed the gear and headed home. He woke up sweating. He looked at his side, but Temitope wasn’t there. A few minutes of hysteria reminded him of her abandoning him at home as soon as he recovered from his wounds. He climbed out of bed, took a long cold shower, and with a towel around his waist made a few unsuccessful calls: it was the weekend, so none of his mistresses were available. He got up and went to the French window. With hands resting on his waist, he wondered what UK would be like.

His towel fell off his waist but he ignored it when he found Stella, the maid, butt naked on his bed.