

Girly Evening Party

~~~ *Ifeomachukwumeluamaka Obi*

"Happy birthday, happy birthday, happy birthday to you," we all sang.  
"Hip Hip Hip"! Merit shouted.

"Hurray"! We echoed happily. We raised our glasses high. The toast was garnished with lots of beautiful wishes for Juliet, for it was her birthday. Juliet was my colleague. We worked in the same department - Customer Care Service. She had invited only the female staff to her house for her birthday celebration. According to her, she just wanted a 'Girly Evening Party' that Sunday. It was indeed a 'girly party' from the pink colour everywhere to the teddy bears, to the beautiful cream and gold cake on the centre table, and to feminine scents swimming in the cool 'air-conditioned breeze'. Did I forget the feminine laughter that filled the atmosphere? The only thing that wasn't feminine was the food. Yes, from my point of view and even how I felt you'd see it, can Vegetable Soup and Semovita be an appropriate food for such event?

Do you think we would mind? Everyone was happy to see what was served. You needed to see how they washed their hands and waited to be served. I served the meal. I opened the cooler of soup and the steam joyfully danced into the atmosphere. From the aroma, one could tell that the soup would be delicious. Juliet provided suitable dishes for the meal. That was the only feminine part of the meal if you ask me. They were pink and purple ceramic plates with an S-shaped partition so that one part would contain the soup and the other, Semovita. There were drinks too. Assorted? Yes, and plenty of it.

Do you want me to talk about the meat and fish and other proteins in the soup? The soup was really rich in vegetable but even richer in protein than every swallow because there was a pause to chew something sweet at every little interval.

Juliet's 'girls' were all enjoying the meal without much 'baby-girl-shakara'. They ate hungrily. They were indeed hungry. I dished an extra plate of food with more soup and meat than what I served others, and kept it on the centre table. I wanted to share another round of meat when Favour called my attention. I went close to her to know what she needed. She told me that her friend who was also our colleague, Naza, complained of not having a single chunk of meat in her soup.

"What are those hilly particles I see in her soup". I nearly asked Favour. As if Favour already read the question in my mind through the screen of my eyes and facial expression, she told me that what I saw as meat in Naza's soup was only stock fish. That was what she said that Naza told her. I wondered why Naza could not tell me that herself.

"Hey, I'm so sorry," I earnestly apologized but Naza's face was beyond description. However, if you insist I described it, I would say that it looked so rumpled that you may not feel any flesh but bones when you touch it. She couldn't even look at me. I wondered if it was only because of meat or there's something else behind that expression. Dear cheerful me, I didn't even let that bother me. I carefully selected almost a plate full of meat in a different plate and gave to her, and then passed another round of meat to the rest of the guests. If there were other ladies who noticed that moment, I couldn't say. That plate of food I reserved - the one I kept on the centre table, I called the gatekeeper and handed the food to him. He was the only one who is not female who ate the food (during the party period though). I did not eat the food. Yes, that delicious meal with irresistible aroma. I didn't eat it because I am a Jew. I don't eat some of the proteins like snail and crayfish. Juliet was so unhappy because she said she didn't remember that I had told her of Jews and our 'Kosher Meals'.

How about Naza? She was ashamed of herself. "She thought the food you reserved belonged to you," said Juliet on reporting what Favour said to her about Naza's intention. Who cares about girls' 'say-say-gossip'? Definitely not me. Well, this was another inevitable feminine aspect of the 'girly evening party'.

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