

## **Mama**

~~~ Edna Chinaza Ohabughiro

Mama regaled us with the haunting tale of the wounded Hausa soldier who had unwittingly sought refuge in their backyard, a place of refuge marred by the echoes of gunshots and unrest from the previous night. A throng of furious women had gathered, throwing stones and hurled curses at the ill-fated man. Mama, fueled by a deep-seated resentment stemming from the memory of her husband's incomplete returns from the North, had joined in the stoning with the same fervor she once used to pound fufu in good times.

Her eyes gleamed with a wicked satisfaction as she aggressively flung a stone at the man's eye; his anguished groans a momentary balm for her pent-up grief and anger. But this fleeting release of emotion was quickly replaced by an overwhelming guilt, when the man took his last hard breath. Her thoughts turned to the soldier's wife, now a widow just like herself. A sense of unacceptable guilt washed over her, a reminder of the anguish she felt when she first saw her husband's lifeless body.

Mama's fury intensified as she imagined the man's wife indulging in the luxury of cow meat up North while her own children suffered from malnutrition. The anger etched on her face betrayed her inner turmoil, yet beneath it all, her conscience harbored a hidden guilt. Even after Mama had embraced Christianity, she never sought forgiveness for her participation in the soldier's demise. Instead, she prayed to God, confessing her actions without seeking absolution or forgiveness, resolute in her choice to carry the burden of that particular sin to her grave.

~~~ Edna Chinaza Ohabughiro is a young Nigerian writer with great creative ingenuity. She Studied English Language and Literature at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.