

Life's Meal

~~~ Doreen Ukeje

She saw him drop dead and for the first time she became scared. What if the police came after her? What if his family doesn't believe her? What was she going to tell them in the first place? Hot tears rolled down her eyes as she sat broken. Suddenly, she started blaming herself. "That was too easy a death. He was only poisoned. I should have made his death worse. What's even the point of living with a dead womb? What was even my offence?". Sandra asked as she recoiled how she had met the demon which later became her husband.

They hadn't really known each other. She had met him through one of his brothers who used to stay in the village with her. She had been so happy getting married to Gani because of how rich he was. He had brought her to the city, lavished his money on her to give her that city girl's look. She could remember going back to the village to visit her mother after one year of marriage. Her old village friends had surrounded her, admiring her wig, clothes, bag and even the car she had brought back as a gift for her parents. They admired the change in her, praising her husband to the high heavens. Just like they say, "Only the hen understands the level of strength it exercises to crow", only her knew how things were really going. No one knew that the reason she hadn't come back with a baby was because her husband had beaten her till she lost it. Anyways, she took all the compliments and left the villagers with both admiration and jealousy in their eyes.

She hadn't been able to conceive ever since then and Gani started flirting with other ladies. She had once caught Gani on her matrimonial bed with their neighbour's daughter who was between sixteen or seventeen years. That wasn't her first time seeing him with other ladies, but with a child who wasn't even up to eighteen? She had lost it and unlike other times she hadn't left them to continue having fun. She stood there, she saw the horror in the girl's face. She stood there till the girl ran out, crying and asking for mercy.

"What's wrong with you Sandra?" She had heard him ask and had wondered if that question was meant for her in the first place.

"You are so shameless. I've tolerated you sleeping with anything on skirt, I've tolerated you bringing them to our matrimonial bed, but this...a girl of sixteen or seventeen...you brought" she felt a lump in her throat as tears flowed down her eyes. Her heart was broken

"You really got some nerves to come and destruct me while I'm having fun. I satisfy you almost every night, don't I?"

"Satisfy or rape?" She asked herself. She remembered how he usually forces her and leaves her taking pain killers and other drugs, she could remember how she uses hot water to massage herself most times, while he sleeps and snores. He continued. "But still your womb is too weak to give me a child". She looked at him with nothing but hatred.

"That's a lie, you know that you killed my child! You're a murderer! You murdered him! You, this devil killed my child"

She didn't really remember what happened next. All she remembered was that Gani had rushed to her and next thing, she started receiving blows, slaps and punches. She felt like stones were falling down from heaven. She could feel the heat in her body. She felt a heavy blow on her belly. Her whole body was wet, she knew that she was crying and sweating, but she also felt another liquid. She managed to lick her lips as she tasted blood, her own blood. The last thing she remembered was that something started flowing down her laps. It was thicker than water. She could feel it, but couldn't see it. Suddenly the whole world became black.

She had woken up in the hospital only to find out that her husband had killed her second child, but not just that, he had succeeded in killing all her children. She had lost her womb. Confused, bitter and angry she had dragged herself back home only to find him with the same girl, kissing her passionately. He hadn't even stopped when he noticed her, neither did the girl go, rather she began unbuttoning her husband's shirt. She had walked out to give them their space and had returned to serve her husband the poisoned tea. She heard him talk about getting married to the girl. She heard him ask

her when she would be going back to the village. She only kept quiet, counting down till the time he dies.

"What was the need of living? There was every possibility of the girl suspecting her". She took a pen and a paper and wrote few things down. She drank the remaining tea which happened to be her husband's last meal on earth

"Good bye wicked world". She said as she lay on the couch like she was about to take a nap.

~~~ *Doreen Ukeje studied at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She is an emotional writer who frowns at infidelity of any form.*