[Drama] Chief’s Hall of Justice

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PERSONS

CHIEF

GUARD 1

GUARD 2

VINCENT ADAMMA

BAYODE CATHERINES

ABASIAKARA IDARA

BELLO LEILA

EXTRA TRANSGRESSOR

Afternoon in a hall. A middle-aged woman, CHIEF, sits at a table on the podium, going through papers. A door opens and two female guards herd five men in handcuffs into the hall and make them stand in a line before the podium, in the order of their appearance. One, GUARD 1, stands by their

side; the other, GUARD 2, by the door.

CHIEF: Are these all the transgressors?

GUARD 1: Yes, Chief.

CHIEF: [*To the men.*] You have nothing better to do with your lives than break the rules, eh?

[*The men grumble and murmur.*]

My dear?

GUARD 1: Yes, Chief?

CHIEF: Give them one.

[*Guard 1 hits each man on the head with her baton. The hall is filled with yelps.*]

Very good. We're going to be snappy today; I have a fashion show I want to watch.

So, scum one, Vincent Adamma. Charge: dressing indecently to work. Young man, your employer claims that for some time, you have been coming to work dressed inappropriately. She claims to have cautioned you, but as the numskull that you are, you threw this caution to the wind. True or true?

VINCENT ADAMMA: Ma…

CHIEF: I prefer the title, Chief.

VINCENT: [*murmuring*] You are not my chief.

CHIEF: What did you say?

VINCENT: Nothing.

CHIEF: My dear, give him one.

[*Guard 1 hits his head.*]

I heard you right. And true, I am not your chief. Because if I were, you wouldn't turn out this way. Now, what were you saying? For the sake of your head, be wise.

VINCENT: Chief, the accusation is false. I have been dressing properly to work.

CHIEF: I don't remember giving you the option of pleading false. Now, let me detail your charge. Your employer claims, and she has other employees supporting her claim, that you wear tight-fitting trousers that exhibit your dick print. And when you erect, which is often, it is an unsightly view. True or true?

VINCENT: My trousers are not tight, Chief. They are normal. It is not my fault that I have a big penis.

CHIEF: Is it then our own fault, dear Vincent? Why must our eyes and hearts suffer because of your biological misfortune? I'm sure it is also not your fault that you allow your erections in the

workplace? Who are you trying to seduce?

VINCENT: But erections are natural. I have little control over that, especially when the women literally wear their underwear to work and nobody cautions them. Should I cut off my penis?

CHIEF: One, if a part of your body will cause the sisters to sin, by all means, boy, cut it off. Two, you stand in contempt of the Chief for speaking ill of your female co-workers when they have done no harm to you. Three, there are prassieres* in the market, for god's sake. Why do I even have to tell you this? You people know the right thing to do, and you still refuse to do it. Then, when they haul your sorry ass in here, you find a woman to blame it on.

[*She places her palm on her face in exhaustion.]*

Vincent, I am giving you one month for indecent exposure, a fine of ₦100,000, to be paid to your employer, and a mandate to get three prassieres immediately after your release, which you will come show me here for the release to be absolute. ₦10,000 for contempt of the Chief, to be paid before admission into jail. My dear, take him away.

[*Guard 2 drags a protesting Vincent away. Chief eyes him derisively.*]

Scum two, Bayode Catherines. [*Looks him over.*] As shapeless as you are, you are causing trouble. You don't know men like you should put all their efforts into being likeable so they'll find a woman willing to marry them? [*Hisses and looks at charge sheet.*] Oh, you are even married. And it says here you refuse to cook, clean the house, and take care of the children. And you keep insisting on getting a house boy. What do you have to say for yourself, young man?

BAYODE CATHERINES: Chief, this whole arrangement my wife wants is entirely unfair to me. I go to work everyday, I am also enrolled in evening classes at the university. And somehow, my wife expects me to wake up, clean the house, make breakfast, prepare the kids and take them to school, before even starting my own day. Then I must bring the children back from school and make lunch before going for my own classes. When I come back, she still expects me to prepare the dinner. She does nothing, absolutely nothing. She doesn't even go to work, yet she cannot lift a single hand to help in the house. What hurts me the most is that I am the breadwinner of the house; this woman does not contribute a Kobo to the family finances. I am just a slave in my own home.

[*Begins to sob.*]

CHIEF: Hey, hey, hey, suck it up. You men can be too emotional for my liking. Any little thing, the tap bursts.

[*Bayode quietens down.*]

Good. Mr Catherines, I want to give you some important advice before I sentence you. Listen to me, you are lucky to be married. A lot of men finer than you, a whole world finer than you, are in their mothers' houses, praying to God to remember them. And it is in your best interests to secure this marriage with all you have, because a lot of useless boys are waiting, ready to pounce on your wife and snatch her from you.

All the things you say you do are expected of you as the husband. Should your wife wake up in the morning and cook? Or dress the kids up for school? You, would you be comfortable seeing her do that? No! Because it is not befitting her; that is not her duty. Her duty is to take care of you and your children, protect you from external aggression, give you a name and a home. You say you are the breadwinner. Let me ask you, did you get the job before or after you got married?

BAYODE: After.

CHIEF: Oho! Whose favour was it? Your wife's! This is you being ungrateful, honestly. That your night school, I don't know what you're studying there.

BAYODE: I'm pursuing a Master's in Law.

CHIEF: Just imagine. You already have a degree and a good job, but you are still pursuing more. And here you are, complaining of the heavy load on your head, whereas you put that load on yourself. Well, it is to be expected. You men that study Law know how to be stubborn and proud. But, listen to me, stubbornness and pride will not take you anywhere. You're a man. Better drop that Master's and face your family.

Because you're a father, I will not put you in jail. Because, what will your wife do, then? Bayode, go home and sin no more. Heed my advice. I am placing you on a month's probation. Should I receive any other complaint from your wife during that period, you'll see the other side of me. Today is for my merciful side. Dear, take him to the probation office.

[*Guard 2 leads a silently weeping Bayode away.*]

Scum three, Abasiakara Idara. It says here you accused your landlady of rape, but she claims it is a ruse you're trying to use to skip all the arrears you owe her.

ABASIAKARA IDARA: [*crying*] Chief, please, she is lying. She raped me when I went to her house to discuss how to pay my rent in installments.

CHIEF: What were you wearing?

ABASIAKARA: What?

CHIEF: What, your own. What were you wearing, mister man?

ABASIAKARA: A t-shirt and shorts.

CHIEF: Were you wearing a prassiere?

ABASIAKARA: No, Chief. Those things are uncomfortable.

CHIEF: [*Spreads her arms and looks at the guards.*] Have you seen it? Have you seen it? You went to a woman's house exposing yourself, without a prassiere even, and you expected something to not happen?

ABASIAKARA: But Chief, it's the same compound.

CHIEF: And so? Does that make you less indecent? Let me ask, what time did you go?

ABASIAKARA: Around 8:00 PM.

CHIEF: [*hisses*] My dear, you don't even have a case. You went to a woman's house at night, to look for what? Your head? And you come here crying rape, thinking anyone will listen to you. You wanted to be raped, very simple.

ABASIAKARA: Chief, how can I want to be raped?

CHIEF: Please, don't disturb me. I am giving you one week to pay your landlady, or you'll be ejected, you and your rape allegations.

[*Abasiakara cries louder as Guard 2 takes him away.*]

Where is scum four, Bello Leila? Come, are you the one that led a protest in your school because you were not allowed to run for the post of SUG president?

BELLO LEILA: Yes.

CHIEF: Yes, *Chief.*

[*Bello ignores the correction and looks away. Guard 1 hits him on the head twice.*]

Oya…

BELLO: Yes, Chief.

CHIEF: [*Eyes him.*] Look at a fine boy like you. Instead of you to be priming yourself to get a good woman that will marry you, you're here being stupidly stubborn. Did they write it in your birth certificate that you will be SUG president? Eh?

BELLO: No.

CHIEF: It's boys like you that are giving us a headache in this world. All these ones that will grow up and start calling themselves masculinists, like Charles Bridgets. It's because you saw food to eat. What is the course you're studying, anyway?

BELLO: Law.

CHIEF: [*hisses*] I said it. Honestly, none of my boys will study Law. It's like there's an injection they give them in that course, that makes them start feeling like they're the boss, like nobody can talk to them.

[*Shakes her head.*]

Bello, I am giving you a week in jail. I would have let you off, since this is your first time. But I want to help you. You will go to jail and see what the real world is like, so those your nonsense ideals will be nipped in the bud, for your own good. Take him away, please.

BELLO: [*Resisting Guard 2.*] One day, the matriarchy will be dismantled! One day, there will be equal rights for all!

CHIEF: What is the nonsense this one is saying? It's like you're too stubborn. I'm giving you two weeks, then.

[*Guard 2 hits him on the head and drags him off.*]

My dear, what is the time?

GUARD 1: 3:30 PM, Chief.

CHIEF: Ha, I've overstayed my salary here oh. I think it's time to go; I have a show to catch. Please, take the remaining scums away, we will resume tomorrow.

[*She shuffles her papers as Guard 1 leads the remaining transgressor away.*]

*prassiere: a man’s undergarment to cover the penis

THE END

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OLONGO AFRICA