

Listen, I'm in Search of Fire By Kanyinsola Olorunnisola

I had been thinking of fire. I had been dreaming of passion setting my heart aflame. I was bored and in need of that ecstatic fire. So, when Bosco passed the pill to me at that bash, I did not hesitate to chase it down with a shot of vodka. What was it? Cocaine? Methamphetamine? Ecstasy? He would not say. But it did not matter much because I was soon higher than Mount Everest.

It was a bar-party at one of the Lagos beaches, the name of which I cannot now recall. It was a send-off party for our friend who was travelling to England to complete his schooling. We were all jealous of him but that did not stop us from getting into the groove. The babes were twisting and twerking to the beat, sweaty-bodied and all. The dance floor was ablaze with nineteen-year old bodies dancing erotically to the rhythm of Wizkid's latest hit. It seemed almost like a sex club. Kisses and moans filled the air. A lot of abortions would take place after this, I thought.

Accompanied only by my shot-glass, I mellowed at a corner. "Cheer the fuck up," someone walking by said to me. It was getting very dark but I did not care. My mother and her new boyfriend would not notice my absence anyway. At that point, I was no longer myself. Bosco came towards me, beaming with creepy smiles. He was getting high too. The music slowly became a discordant cacophony of harsh sounds drowned out by ghostly voices. The faces of the party-goers contorted into blurry patches. Some of their heads became thrice as large while some had their eyes right beneath their nostrils. The sand outside arose and formed into the shape of my former girlfriend, Chika, who had ditched me a week before for a sugar-daddy. "You witch!" I screamed. Next thing, I began laughing hysterically. The waters sang and their voices morphed into that of Enya, humming the tune of "Only Time". I walked outside the bar, towards the water with hopes of seeing Enya's face. I fell face flat into the ground and a fistful of sand took shelter in my mouth. I smiled and must have passed out for about two minutes before standing back up. Two girls clad in bikini were before me.

"Are you alright?" one of them asked.

"Shania, I think he's high."

"Aren't we all?"

"Ladies," I said. "Let's light this place up!"

They screamed happily. I tore my shirt and ran back into the bar. A live-band was performing now. I went up on stage and danced like a madman on steroids. I jabbed the air, screamed, jumped up, break-danced, cursed the music, praised the band and whipped my long dreadlocks in the air like my life depended on it.

I was feeling this music inject itself into my soul, with my body taking on a new mystical destiny of itself. It moved at its own will and it shook like never before. The fire was within my spirit now and it felt like every single inch of my being was burning up and drifting into the wind. I was bathed in sweat but I did not care. If others found my behavior odd, I did not notice. I was too busy having no inhibitions to care. I walked towards the guitarist and snatched his guitar from him. I began to play the guitar with a violent energy. The music I played could have been very terrible (in fact, it must have been horrifying since I knew nothing about playing guitars) but I did not really care because I felt like the world's greatest rock star. Before I knew it, someone was dragging the guitar from me. I turned around and saw the guitarist trying to wrestle my new favourite instrument from me. I kicked him in the groin and pushed him down from the podium. His band mates attacked me but I hit them in the head with my guitar. I heard bottles break somewhere and a fight erupted. Someone tore at my chest but I felt absolutely no pain. I jumped off the stage and saw that everyone else was fighting everyone else. This was not the first I had witnessed. People were not fighting due to provocation. Everyone was high and they just needed the right spark to get them unleashing their madness.

Some uniformed men rushed into the bar and began to separate people. I threw my guitar up into the air and it landed right on my head and I crashed to the floor. Everything soon coloured itself into blackness. Consciousness swam out of me and got drowned beneath the sea of oblivion.

I woke up behind bars. My head hurt as if I had been carrying the pyramids of Egypt. My eyes were as heavy as rocks. The fire of the previous night had cooled down. The pill's effect had worn off. Bosco was sandwiched beside two guys who had also been at the party, all still snoring. I wanted to scream at them to wake up but my headache was splitting. I had been a party dog the last night and now, I had woken up with a hangover, handcuffs, bad reputation and an almost fatal headache.

My mother's boyfriend came to pay my bail, to my dismay. During the ride home, he gave me the lecture about being responsible and conservative. I wondered if he knew how much I hated him, how much I detested him for thinking he could replace my father, for thinking he was special even though he was my mother's sixth lover in two years. He finally kept shut and brought out his lighter. As he lit the cigarette, my eyes focused on the fire. It would later remind me of my shirtless self, with my dreadlocks, clawing my fingers and screaming. But at that moment, I focused on the fire.

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