

Imagine Me Carrying You

The chapter opens with the protagonist returning from a weekend getaway to learn about her mother's involvement in a fatal car accident. While staying at a friend's mansion to avoid her mother's scrutiny, she receives a call from her father, who reveals that her mother hit and killed a young woman during a heavy rainstorm on the Ibadan Expressway. The family of the deceased has chosen not to involve the police, and her mother, though financially compensating them, is emotionally shattered. The protagonist rushes home to find her mother inconsolable, wrapped in grief and guilt, a stark contrast to her usual composed demeanor.

Upon arriving home, the protagonist attempts to comfort her mother, but her efforts are met with hostility. When she makes a dark joke about the inefficiency of the justice system, her mother slaps her—an unprecedented act of violence that shocks the protagonist. This moment underscores the depth of her mother's trauma and the strained relationship between them. The mother's obsession with attending the victim's burial further highlights her desperation for absolution, even as the deceased's family rejects her presence, leaving her to grapple with her guilt in isolation.

The mother's grief takes a haunting turn as she recounts the accident in vivid detail, comparing the victim's weight to her daughter's and describing the futile attempt to save her life. This monologue reveals the mother's psychological torment, blurring the lines between the victim and her own child. Meanwhile, the protagonist discovers a temporary voter's registration card belonging to the deceased, Eyitayo Omolade Ogunlesi, which her mother has kept as a morbid keepsake. The card humanizes the victim, forcing the protagonist to confront the reality of the life lost, though she resists delving deeper into the victim's identity.

The chapter closes with the protagonist reflecting on her mother's tendency to preemptively punish her for imagined transgressions, a pattern that has defined their

relationship. Despite her desire to escape through parties and alcohol, she stays by her mother's side, resentful yet resigned to her role as the caretaker. The mother's assumption that her daughter would prioritize fun over family underscores their mutual misunderstanding, leaving the protagonist to navigate the complexities of guilt, grief, and familial duty.