

## “WINDOW SEAT 32A”

After the breathing world was informed about the uncovering of a cell phone found buried beneath layers of twisted metal and stolen lives, I received a call from my sister.

Under the guise of headphones, I was lost in an abyss of reverie, mindlessly stretching at a gym, thinking back just a few days prior when a friend and I journeyed east along Interstate 10 through several states bordering Mexico. For a brief moment I nostalgically reminisced at the times we drove peacefully for miles through nothing but tumbleweed, rock and oblivion for as far as the eye can see. I then cringed when my mind relived the terrifying moments when the gas indicator light flashed across the dash, forcing us to anxiously gaze out at a bleak horizon for any sign of life. The music in my headphones faded out, jolting my mind back to the now, as my sister’s call transitioned in.

“Hey mokey smokey,” I said, disguising my objection for answering calls while at the gym.

“Hey twin,” she retorted. My sister and I are twins, fraternal twins that is. We aren’t identical, but we do share many similarities.

“How are you doing sweetie?” I asked while engaged in a two-leg hamstring stretch.

“I’m pregnant,” she said. For reasons unknown, my heart instantly sputtered as if this was some newly discovered information. Jumoke, a French Nigerian name, which means, ‘everyone loves this child’, is well into her third trimester with her own soon to be child, but I took the news as a shock.

“Ade, I don’t want to rush the process, but I wish this baby was out already,” she lamented.

“I hear you moke. You only got a few more months so hang in there,” I said perfunctorily with love.

Three flat screen televisions, all manufactured by the Korean giant Samsung were mounted up on a wall, several feet from where I was loosening my aging body. The center television brandished CNN’s simple iconic icon, along with a headline that read, *cell phone retrieved from crash site*. The stretching area was scarcely occupied by other members, mostly midlife females, probably on their lunch break, squeezing in a quick workout before returning to their lives.

“Have you heard from mom?” I asked.

“I’ve been trying to call her the last few days, but she hasn’t answered. I miss mom, I miss having my family here,” replied Jumoke with a hint of sorrow in her voice.

“We miss you, too. Mom will be there soon. June is around the corner. She’s been a little sick lately, though, but I know she’s looking

forward to being near you and the baby.”

A traditional white school clock, the one with the black hour and minute hand hung from the adjacent wall. It's red second hand ticked away hearkening the coming of millions of new, undiscovered moments. Occasionally, I would come up from my two-leg hamstring stretch and exhale out, no longer able to bear the burn of elongated muscles. My eyes would peer ahead at the long wall mirror before me, as once again my mind would begin to drift. My sister's voice, once clear and coherent, would slowly drown out as I observed my aging self.

“You know?” asked Jumoke, interested in my opinion on the matter, a subject matter, which I had paid zero attention to.

“Hey moke, I'm sorry, what did you say?”

“I was asking if you were going to Alaska again?” she repeated.

“Yeah, definitely,” I answered.

“When?” she asked.

“Um, possibly late May or early June, I'm not sure yet. I still haven't gotten the word from Virginia, so...Hey moke, did you hear about the cell phone they found at the site of that plane crash?” I asked. “You know the one that crashed in the Alps.”

“Uh-uh, I haven't,” she said.

Choppy images of snow-capped mountains with rugged terrain and deep valleys in between flashed in my mind.

“Well, I guess someone recorded what was happening inside the plane. The news used the words, chaos and terror to describe the audio recording. People were heard screaming, ‘My God’ repeatedly in multiple languages.

After a fleeting moment, Jumoke said, “Wow. That's nuts.”

“Could you imagine being a prisoner of that moment? Knowing without a shadow of a doubt that the next few moments would be your last?” I asked.

Jumoke breathed out heavily over the phone, “I can't, Ade.”

“They said that in the audio recording you could hear the plane grinding against mountains and people screaming under the deafening sound of bending metal,” I said imagining myself witnessing the surreal scene unfold from a heavenly view. “Jumoke, I think a piece of us all died on that flight.”

“What do you mean Ade?” Jumoke asked.

“I mean picture yourself as a mother, any mother, drinking your afternoon coffee peering through the kitchen window up at a clear blue sky every time a plane flies over, anticipating the arrival of your child. Meanwhile, somewhere high up in that same massive blue sky, your child is gazing back down at you through the window of the plane, eager to get home into your arms. Who knows, maybe that child is an adult now and

has children of their own seated beside them. The children ask how long until they get to see grandma and grandpa when suddenly the plane dips several thousand feet, at the same time up ahead the pilot is banging his fist mightily against the cockpit door. Imagine that..."

"Ade, you just gave me Goosebumps. Never in my deepest nightmares could I ever imagine myself in that position. You're right, I think we all lost a piece of us on that plane."