

THE WAKE

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OVER BLACK:

The sound of a river FLOWS... massive metal SPLASHES against a water surface... solid steel CRASHES through a concrete wall... a tanker's baleful horn BLARES... tires SCREECH against coal tar... glass SHATTERS. GUNSHOT. GUNSHOT.

A woman's FRANTIC SCREAM and a daughter's DISTRAUGHT WAIL pierces through the darkness.

FADE IN:

INT. THE DUMUNOS' HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dimly lit. A gothic wall clock ticks. A standing fan whirs.

SUPERIMPOSE: "3 Months Later."

KOSI DUMUNO (42), pretty, shivers from a cold in a wheelchair by the open balcony door. She stares out to the darkness. Her daughter, FUMNANYA (15), a fragile eerie presence, sits quietly in bed. They're both wearing red evening dresses.

Kosi looks at Fumnanya. They share a sad smile.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Frost builds on a window pane. A portrait of Fumnanya, Kosi and Kosi's husband, OSINACHI DUMUNO, hangs on the steel door.

Osinachi is 45 and bleary-eyed. He types on his laptop at a table when his cell phone buzzes. An SMS: "U in China now?"

Osinachi replies: "Canceled the trip. But what's your specification. Might have it here."

Osinachi gets a reply: "I'll be right back."

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The front doorknob turns. The door opens ajar.

LOTANNA DUMUNO (52), impeccably dressed, creeps in. His ally, SEGUN (40s), dressed like a hoodlum with a rucksack across his shoulder, pushes his way through.

Segun admires the home: the expensive art works, the antique furniture, the polished floor.

SEGUN

Omo! We could've just shot this guy.

Lotanna, poker-faced, picks up a framed PHOTO of Osinachi, Kosi and Fumnanya from the center table and looks at it.

Segun peers over Lotanna's shoulder to see the photo.

SEGUN (CONT'D)

R.I.P.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight leaks in through the parted curtains creating a dreamlike softness. The master bathroom door is open.

LOTANNA (O.S.)

You never got the heat with Kosi
and Fumnanya that's why you're
talking about shooting.

Kosi awakes from sleep, getting her bearings. Fumnanya fast asleep next to her. Kosi hears footfalls in the hall. She rouses Fumnanya awake and gestures for silence.

KOSI

(whispering)

There are people in the house.

SEGUN (O.S.)

But no one accused you? The stupid
policeman was only thinking aloud.

Fumnanya flinches. She hastens out of bed as Kosi fumbles into her wheelchair.

LOTANNA (O.S.)

It's called a hunch. And they only
dig deeper if there's a repeat.

Kosi and Fumnanya slip into the bathroom just as Segun and Lotanna step into the room.

SEGUN

Hm. But seriously, why the snakes?

LOTANNA

You notice the bushes around here?

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Terrified, Kosi and Fumnanya huddle behind the bathroom door. Fumnanya furrows her brows as she recognizes Lotanna's voice.

LOTANNA (O.S.)

It'll only add up that a snake
crept in from a bush. And who's
going to investigate snakes?

FUMNANYA

(whispering)

Uncle Lotanna?

Kosi flicks a panicky gesture for silence.

FUMNANYA (CONT'D)
(mouthing)
Where's daddy?

INT. STUDY - SAME TIME

Osinachi dozes across the table next to his laptop.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lotanna opens the closet. Segun unslings the rucksack and hands it to Lotanna.

Lotanna leers at him, doesn't take the rucksack.

SEGUN
I want to ease myself.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Fumnanya grabs a pair of scissors atop a cabinet, holds it like a stabbing knife. Kosi fixes her with a frightful stare.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Segun ruffles the rucksack and places his palm on it. Something JABS at him from inside the rucksack. He teases.

SEGUN
Man up. It's no ordinary bag.

Segun sets the bag on a table and starts for the bathroom.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Segun urinates into the toilet. His back to Kosi and Fumnanya who cringe further behind the door with dread etched on their faces. Fumnanya trembles with the scissors in her clutch.

Done. Segun zips up, turns to leave. He sneezes, lingers a look at Kosi and Fumnanya like they're not there.

A tense beat. Segun blinks and walks away.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Segun emerges from the bathroom leaving the door open. His face is ashen. His movements strained. He fumbles a small bottle of chemical from his pocket and clutches it. Pensive.

Lotanna watches Segun from across the room.

SEGUN

Are you going to live in the house
or would you sell it?

LOTANNA

Why would I want to sell the house?

SEGUN

I don't always feel this way, but
something -- there's something
ghostly... something haunted in
this house.

LOTANNA

What did you just smoke in there?

Segun shrugs and shakes his head.

LOTANNA (CONT'D)

Ghost stories are for the White.
Osinachi will soon be as dead as
his wife and daughter are and the
dead don't talk, not in Nigeria.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Fumnanya pulls away from the door, dreadful. Kosi is absorbed
in a thought with a faraway look on her face.

FUMNANYA

(whispering)

Mom? Why is he speaking about us
like we're dead?

Fumnanya stares at Kosi. A telepathic-like connection builds
between them as a fateful memory dawns on them.

They both hear in their heads the exact reverse order of the
sounds from the opening scene.

No. The opening scene was the reverse order.

IN THEIR HEADS:

-- Fumnanya's DISTRAUGHT WAIL. Kosi's FRANTIC SCREAM.

-- GUNSHOT. GUNSHOT. Glass SHATTERS. Tires SCREECH.

-- A tanker's baleful horn BLARES.

-- Solid steel CRASHES through a concrete wall.

-- Massive metal SPLASHES against a water surface.

-- The sound of a river FLOWS.

BACK TO SCENE

Kosi and Fumnanya snap out of it, drained. Kosi takes several deep breaths in order to regain her composure.

FUMNANYA (CONT'D)
 (panting in a low voice)
 Did we survive the river, Mom?

Tears in Kosi's eyes, she tears her gaze away from Fumnanya.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Osinachi awakes to the buzzing of his cell phone. It's a picture message -- a SUEDE BRIEFCASE -- with a text: "suede."

Osinachi replies: "I'll check."

Osinachi rises. He looks sad. He gets to the steel door, runs his fingers over the family portrait and dwells on it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Fumnanya crouches on the floor beside Kosi, forlorn and inadvertently pushing Kosi's wheelchair back a pace.

NOTE: Even though Kosi and Fumnanya speak from time to time, no one else in the house will hear them, but themselves unless indicated otherwise.

KOSI
 I don't think we survived the river.

FUMNANYA
 (in denial)
 No. No, mom. We're not dead.

KOSI
 Then why can't they hear us.

Kosi realizes she's in the open bathroom doorway. She looks at Lotanna and Segun unsure whether they can see her or not.

Segun sucks up the chemical from the bottle with a syringe, about one third full. Lotanna perches on a chair.

Segun takes out the needle from the syringe, covers the tip of the syringe with a finger and pulls back the plunger.

The liquid evaporates.

Segun attaches the needle and injects the gas into the rucksack.

LOTANNA
 How long before it kicks in?

SEGUN

Three minutes. They'll be asleep
like newborns.

Kosi and Fumnanya watch from the bathroom doorway with hatred etched on their hopeless looking faces.

Certain they're unseen, Kosi wheels out from the bathroom. Fumnanya lingers behind.

Lotanna and Segun keep their eyes on the gothic wall clock.

TIME LAPSE:

The clock ticks away from 11:57 pm to 12 midnight.

BACK TO SCENE

Lotanna rises from the chair. Segun brings out three comatose, ghastly-looking mambas from the rucksack.

Kosi cringes. Fumnanya gasps in horror and flops down to the floor beside Kosi.

FUMNANYA

Snakes.

Segun teases Lotanna with the mambas.

LOTANNA

Hey! Do and let's get out of here.

Segun persists. He pecks the mambas making Lotanna recoil in disgust.

LOTANNA (CONT'D)

Segun.

Segun stops and flashes a stupid grin.

KOSI

You want to kill my husband? Lota?
What are you doing?

FUMNANYA

They can't hear you Mom.

KOSI

Why?

Segun places the mambas in the closet and shuts the closet.

They start to the SLAM of the study door from the hallway.

Furious, Segun pulls a gun from his jacket and points it at the door.

Lotanna eyes Segun furtively.

KOSI (CONT'D)

No. Osi don't come in here!

Kosi moves into the doorway as if to shield Segun's view but useless. Fumnanya stays rooted in her spot.

Lotanna and Segun speak in WHISPERS. Segun still has his gun aimed at the door, but he can't see Kosi.

LOTANNA

He's supposed to be in China.

SEGUN

You tell me.

Lotanna eyes the balcony door.

KOSI

He loved you, Lota.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Osinachi walks into a spare room at the end of the hall.

INT. SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

No furniture. A few boxes labeled "Kosi's" and "Fumnanya's." A number of luggage and travel gears in a corner. Amongst the luggage and travel gears is an impressive collection of POLYCARBONATE BRIEFCASES.

Osinachi pinches the bridge of his nose as he scans the collection. He replies the sms: "Sorry I don't have suede."

Kosi and Fumnanya appear in the doorway.

Osinachi SNEEZES -- a subliminal response to something Kosi had said, but we don't hear what Kosi says and neither does Osinachi who can't see them -- we only see Kosi's lips move.

Kosi shuts her eyes in pain.

Osinachi catches something in the corner of his eyes. Something poking out from the box labeled "Kosi." He checks it out. It's a red evening dress. The same Kosi is wearing.

Osinachi holds the gown dearly. Tears well up in his eyes. He puts the gown back into the box and starts for the door.

Kosi reaches for Osinachi as if to hold him by the arm, but Osinachi walks right through her.

Kosi screams and again we don't hear it -- we only see her open her mouth.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

The door leading to the master bedroom is shut. Segun and Lotanna behind it. Segun holds his gun.

SEGUN

I'm done waiting like a retard. If he comes out. I'll shoot him.

Segun opens the door and enters. Lotanna follows. They both stifle a sneeze, surprised at themselves.

Kosi glares at them from her wheelchair in the doorway.

They hear the study door shut.

LOTANNA

That's our cue.

Segun and Lotanna start for the door. They walk right through Kosi who makes a futile and desperate grab to stop them.

Kosi wails in anguish, and again we don't hear it -- we only see her open her mouth.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kosi bangs on the study door. Fumnanya beside her.

KOSI

Osi! My love! Osi open up!

INT. STUDY - SAME TIME

It's contrastingly quiet in here. Osinachi dozes on his table.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kosi bangs some more. Gives up. Fumnanya holds her hand.

FUMNANYA

It's a dream Mom. We'll wake up. You'll see.

Kosi shakes her head gesturing her disagreement.

FUMNANYA (CONT'D)

If we're dead you shouldn't be in a wheelchair. You told me limitations are taken away in death.

Kosi looks at her toes. She wriggles them, shuts her eyes and braces herself.

Slowly, Kosi rises and gets out of her wheelchair.

Fumnanya gasps in awe.

KOSI

We are dead. And we don't need
doors.

Kosi clenches her fists. Breathes. She places her hand on the steel door and pushes against it. Her arm disappears into the steel. Then her whole body follows. She walks through the door like it's not there.

Fumnanya swallows hard and braces herself. My turn.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Kosi appears through the shut door. She looks on at Osinachi who's still asleep. Fumnanya enters through the shut door. She glances back to the door, intrigued, sad and surprised.

KOSI

He should hear me when he's asleep.

Kosi leans closer to Osinachi and says something we don't hear, only her lips move.

Osinachi mutters some words as if in response.

FUMNANYA

Go on, Mom.

Close to tears, Kosi goes on.

INT. LOTANNA'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lotanna changes into his pajamas. He gets into bed.

KOSI (V.O.)

There's something you must know.
Your brother, Lotanna has planted
three deadly snakes in your closet.
He wants you dead.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Osinachi's eyelids flutter as the moonlight streams in through the bare window creating a DREAMLIKE SOFTNESS.

KOSI (V.O.)

It was his friend, Segun, who shot
at us. I'm sorry, my love.

Osinachi awakes, panting. He glances about the room taking inventory of his surroundings.

Kosi and Fumnanya are in the study, but HE CAN'T SEE THEM.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Osinachi storms in. He grabs the closet doorknobs. A panicky doubt overtakes him. He yanks the closet open to see a mamba in defensive position and the two others falling in line.

Osinachi staggers back.

The lead mamba dives for Osinachi's face with its fangs ready.

BACK TO:

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Osinachi jolts awake sweating all over as the MOONLIGHT recedes bringing the room back to REALITY. He exhales. He's is alone in the study.

The attack was a nightmare.

EXT. THE DUMUNOS' HOME - DAWN

Osinachi gets into his JEEP and slams the door shut.

INT/EXT. OSINACHI'S JEEP - MOVING - DAWN

The city waking up.

The Jeep speeds down a city street. Osinachi clutches the steering wheel. Three similar polycarbonate briefcases lie in the back seat. The Jeep disappears down a valley.

EXT. LOTANNA'S HOME - DAWN

The Jeep pulls up. Osinachi gets down. He takes the briefcases from the backseat, gets to the front stoop and presses the doorbell.

INT. LOTANNA'S HOME - FRONT STOOP - DAWN

Lotanna, sleepy in his pajamas, opens the door. He stops short at the sight of Osinachi who's on the stoop with two POLYCARBONATE briefcases in his hands and one under his arm.

Osinachi gives Lotanna a slow, disbelieving head shake.

FADE TO BLACK.