

## **PALM NUT SOUP BAPTISM**

Saturday morning it was. The long-awaited *Science Festival* was finally here. This had long been touted as the event which was going to have most students in attendance. Our single-sex senior high school was going to host many students, especially girls.

The fever of excitement that had caught us was inexplicable. All those who had suspended their baths for weeks had to break their vow. Those of us who didn't give a hoot about looks had become fashionistas overnight.

Every soul wanted to look good; even if it meant borrowing another's look. Those who had to be lent white long sleeves at the expense of their valuables had to do so. And... I was one.

I had been lent a neatly-pressed *Calvin Kleen* (guess it had its roots somewhere in China) long sleeves and I couldn't wait to impress my Adwoa Smart, whom I was going to meet the first time ever after writing several romantic letters to each other.

Since the program was going to last long, lunch had been scheduled to be served earlier. On my table, as usual, were seniors Abenkwan, Immortal and Mugabe.

Snr. Abenkwan was so-called because of his undying love for palm nut soup. "I won't miss my Saturday's rice and palm nut soup for all the A's there ever is or ever would be," he would always remind us.

Snr. Immortal, as aged as he was, knew exactly what 'economics' meant. He was faithfully present at every dining hall sitting.

The diminutive-statured Mugabe had in his chop box all that any student would covet; as to why he was more a staunch dining hall attendee than Snr. Immortal or Abenkwan was a mystery to me.

The pantry man could be seen heading towards our table. I was really famished. All I had in my chop box were empty *Milo* cans and books; a lot of them.

I had placated Snr. Obanzy, my Chinese long sleeves owner, with my last tin of sardine. I had no hope. If there was any at all, it was found in nothing else but the content of that approaching pantry.

I stole glances at my seniors, each of them stealthily advancing towards our savior meal. Before the meal could be placed on the table, Snr. Immortal and Abenkwan had pounced on it. I joined, too.

“Let me have mine first!” Snr. Immortal yelled, trying to have a grip on the pantry.

“Nonsense! You know this is my field. No way!” Snr. Abenkwan retorted.

I held the pantry as the man left it. It wobbled. I tried to balance it and; probably cheat gravity. I slipped. It overturned. Alas! There I was... drenched in the salmon-garnished, warm palm nut soup!

Immediately, someone yelled from behind.

“There he is.”

I turned. There, in our dining hall right beside me, stood a bevy of beautiful ladies.

“Is that Adwoa Smart?” I imagined.

“I thought you told me you were allergic to palm nut soup.”

I froze. My heart beat loudly against my chest.

“Yes. Yes. Errm... Errm... April f-o-o-o-!”

“Heerh! So you gave me an expired tin of sardine eeh. Where is my London long sleeves!?” the heavily-built Snr. Obanzu could be heard barking from a distance.

I heaved deeply.

“Oh Lord. Into your hands I commit my spirit.”

I lost consciousness... consciously.