

A Love Unveiled: Ajike and the "Enchanted House"

By Adenike Olaniyan

Chapter 1: The Magnetic Beginning

Ajike, who had moved from Nigeria to Canada, had gradually acclimated to the cold climate thanks to her bustling real estate career. On a seemingly ordinary day, she met Tunde during a property showing. Tunde had just come to Canada from the United States, and despite his initial apprehension about the cold weather, he was captivated by Ajike's enthusiasm for real estate and her zest for life. They quickly became friends and soon, their friendship blossomed into something much more. He was charming, and his laughter was infectious—a **warmth in the Canadian chill**. Tunde seemed almost too good to be true: supportive, attentive, and mysteriously reticent about his own life. Ajike couldn't shake off an old Yoruba saying her mother used to tell her, "Ooto oro eni kii tan ni itelorun" — one's truth never ends in comfort. Tunde was almost too good to be true—supportive, and attentive but mysteriously silent about his personal life. This reticence gnawed at Ajike. This left her feeling uneasy, and although she was head-over-heels in love with Tunde, she couldn't help but wonder what he was hiding from her. As the relationship progressed, she found herself becoming increasingly suspicious and uncertain about the future of their relationship.

Chapter 2: The Deepening Mystery

One year into their relationship, they celebrated their anniversary with an intimate dinner, featuring both Canadian and Nigerian dishes that Ajike prepared. As she served the jollof rice—a reminder of home—she felt truly happy, yet a nagging sensation haunted her. Tunde had never invited her to his home, citing renovations, and avoided discussions that touched on family or past relationships. *Why hasn't he ever introduced me to his family?* Ajike wondered, sipping her wine and scanning Tunde's face for signs of deceit.

"Is everything okay, darling? You seem lost in thought," Tunde asked during dinner.

"Just thinking about us," Ajike replied cautiously, her intuition whispering that something was deeply amiss.

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Chapter 3: The Enigmatic Estate

Ajike was given the assignment to sell a unique property, an estate considered 'enchanted' and steeped in urban legend. Built in the late 1800s by a heartbroken alchemist, Arthur Whitfield, the property was said to be imbued with spells of love and despair. Ajike researched its history, she discovered that Whitfield had vanished mysteriously, leaving behind only his writings that described the house as a **"mirror to the soul"**. She felt an eerie connection between the house and her own enigmatic relationship.

Intrigued, Ajike invited her boyfriend Tunde for an exploration date at this 'enchanted' property. "A romantic day out in a haunted mansion—what do you think?" she texted him. Tunde's reply was immediate: "Enthralling. I'm all in."

Chapter 4: The Mirrors of Truth

As they drove to the mansion, a golden sunset enveloped the structure, casting it in an otherworldly glow. The air was thick with the smell of ancient wood and a hint of something metallic, almost like blood. Ajike couldn't help but see the property as a reflection of Tunde—mysterious, enchanting, and elusive.

Finally in, they wandered through ancient hallways, rooms adorned with living artwork, and lifelike sculptures. Eventually, they reached a chamber full of antique mirrors, each with its own ornate frame. Ajike hesitated at the threshold. *This room will show me something; I can feel it.* The atmosphere changed as they entered the room of mirrors. Ajike glanced into a mirror and felt her curiosity intensify. Just as she was about to ask Tunde about his obscured past, the door flew open.

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A pregnant Lola charged in; her face flushed with fury. Two children, bearing a striking resemblance to Tunde, trailed behind her. Close on their heels was Lola's brother, Mark, his face twisted in what could only be described as a vile cocktail of betrayal and resentment.

"What is going on?" Ajike managed to say, still in shock.

Before she could even react, stinging slaps hit her face, not just from Lola, but also from Mark and the children. Ajike was dizzy and disoriented, her ears ringing with a resounding buzzing sound. *"Lola, please. Mark, you're a man. We are in public. She's just my real estate agent,"* Tunde stammered, attempting to defuse the situation but obviously lying.

In a whirlwind of chaos, Lola, in a fit of rage, pulled a gun from her purse and shot into one of the mirrors. The shattered glass sprayed across the room, causing Ajike to bleed from multiple lacerations. Ajike, feeling the cuts from the broken glass, realized she needed to escape. Her life was at risk. She seized the momentary distraction, pushed past the shocked faces, and ran out of the room. Ajike sprinted down the winding hallways of the enchanted house, her breaths shallow and quick, her heels clicking frantically against the marble floor. She burst through the front door, rushed to her car, and sped off, leaving behind the haunting estate and the ruins of her relationship with Tunde.

Chapter 5: Shattered Illusions

As she drove, tears streaming down her face, Ajike's phone buzzed. It was a message from Tunde: *"Please let me explain., you are the one I want Ajike Mi"*

Ignoring the message, Ajike drove home, where she would later learn from Tunde the reason for his tangled web of deceit. Tunde and Lola had been struggling with their marriage for years now, and Lola had been suspicious of Tunde cheating for some time, so she apparently had her brother Mark tail him. Mark caught Tunde and blackmailed him into a sordid affair. When Tunde finally broke it off, Mark,

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feeling scorned, spilt the beans to his sister and even claimed Tunde raped him. He explained how he was entrapped in a life he didn't want but couldn't escape. But Ajike knew she couldn't risk finding out anymore.

Ajike couldn't comprehend the magnitude of the betrayal. She knew she had to cut Tunde off but couldn't help wondering why he involved her in his messy life in the first place. But whatever the reason, whether it was love or something more sinister, Ajike knew she couldn't risk finding out.

In the quiet of her car, amidst the chaos of her thoughts, Ajike realized the enormous bullet she'd dodged, almost literally. The enchanted house had lived up to its legend, revealing hidden truths and shattering illusions, and she had narrowly escaped with her life. But at what cost? The truth had set her free, but it had also broken her. It was a lesson Ajike would carry with her, a permanent scar on her otherwise unblemished life.

Driving through the empty streets, Ajike made a vow. "Never again," she whispered to herself. She reflected on her mother's Yoruba proverb, now understanding its depth. Love, she realized, was often a beautiful lie—until the mirror shatters, revealing an ugly truth you can never unsee.

In the following days, Ajike withdrew the property from her listings, unable to shake off the eerie connection it had with her broken relationship. Her real estate career would recover, but her heart would bear the scar forever.