

## There's Zombies in Lagos?!

Have you ever asked yourself the question: "What if zombies appeared in Lagos?"

Well, Lekan didn't even have the time or luxury to entertain such incredulous thoughts. In his 31 years of living on this earth, he'd only ever watched *one* zombie movie and ended up sleeping halfway through it.

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A man walked out of the Murtala Muhammed Airport, dragging behind him a small black suitcase. He had just narrowly escaped from a certain lab in Washington, D.C., after enduring numerous terrifying experiments performed on him and had taken the next flight back to his homeland- Lagos, Nigeria.

He wiped the sweat off his forehead with the back of his hand and stared up at the scorching sun in the sky. "I have to make it home to Chioma and the boys," he mumbled to himself.

He took slow steps out on the pavement, his view getting blurrier as the seconds passed. Everything felt louder, much more amplified, but his vision remained clouded with a reddish hue.

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Lekan took frustrated strides to the side of the road along with some other pedestrians rushing to save their spot on the rusty, damaged *Danfo* bus. Sweat trickled down his forehead; the effect of the blazing Lagos evening sun. He could feel more sweat seeping through different areas of his blue button-up shirt, such as his armpits and collar.

"Of all the days for Lade to take the car. It had to be on this hot one, eh?" Lekan murmured to himself angrily as he arrived in front of the bus.

*"I told Mommy that I want to drive your car today, and she said you should give me. Me and my friends are having a girls' day out. You can take danfo, right?" Lade asked-no, demanded subtly of Lekan.*

*She pouted and let out a sigh. "You know I'm not used to BRT bus and the rest. Anyways, thank you!" She said and swiftly snatched his Ford Edge 2012 car keys from his tray of keys, exiting his apartment and leaving him stunned on the spot, without giving him a chance to respond.*

Lekan rubbed his temple in annoyance as he remembered the discussion, a headache making an appearance. While waiting for the people in front of him to enter the yellow-turned-brown vehicle, he shrugged off his bag from his back and cradled it in his arms, so as to avoid *one-chance*.

The earlier man from the airport took heavy steps, treading along the dusty road and sweating profusely from head to toe, quite *literally* too. His suitcase now scuffed all over was still being pulled along with him. He heaved strained breaths as he moved, the whites of his eyes turning redder by the minute.

The man neared the pedestrians boarding the bus and bumped shoulders with Lekan causing him to momentarily lose his grip on his black bag, but he caught it before it fell.

“Ahn ahn?” Lekan exclaimed, turning to look at the man who continued to walk on his way non-apologetically. Lekan sighed and shook his head, deciding to let it go. It was too hot and he was too tired to start something with the stranger.

He entered the bus which squeaked and swayed with each step he took and sat on the metal chair by a window. The bus slowly filled up, and Lekan loosened the navy blue tie around his neck. He'd had a long day listening to multiple complaints from customers at the bank.

As the only and eldest son of his family, he had quite the responsibility on his shoulders. Out of his minimal salary of 90,000 naira, he had to give both his parents and his younger sister allowances, subtract his house rent, subtract his parents' house rent, and still have to deal with other expenses of his own.

Lekan had made many sacrifices to enable his family to live a comfortable life even if it meant depriving him of his comfort. The only source of luxury he had ever gotten for himself was his spacious one-bedroom apartment and his *tokunbo* car.

Despite feeling this constant, never-lessening pressure on his shoulders, Lekan smiled to himself knowing that a promotion would soon be his in the coming week.

“At least someone will finally have extra cash,” he said, clicking his tongue and holding his bag closer to his chest.

He was getting promoted to a senior manager position. After 9 years of enduring unfavorable working conditions, insults, maltreatment from colleagues, and continuous sucking up to his superiors with barely enough pay, his efforts were finally going to pay off.

And just in time for his birthday.

The bus began moving slowly following the course of traffic that had built up. A female hawker carrying a basket on her head filled with cold drinks passed by his window and stopped as soon as they both made eye contact.

“Madam, abeg gimme cold water,” Lekan said to the woman. She raised the basket from the rolled faded wrapper on her head and picked out one sweating blue bottle, extending it toward Lekan.

Lekan collected the bottle and said, “Thank you,” before fishing into his pockets for some change. He found 200 naira and held it out for the woman to take.

As her fingers brushed the overused, crumpled note, someone suddenly latched onto her, wrapping their arms around her torso and sinking their teeth into her neck. She screamed, “Ye!” and dropped her basket to the ground, the drinks rolling all over the tar road.

“Madam! Madam!” Lekan shouted as he watched the woman fail to push the stranger off her body, tears streaming quickly down her face. Lekan knit his brows together as he recognized the man as the person he had bumped into a few minutes ago.

The man finally let go of her neck, tearing off a piece of her skin in the process, his mouth filled with her warm, scarlet blood and his pupils black coated in red. The woman’s body dropped to the ground, lifeless, dead probably.

The man locked eyes with Lekan who started sweating even more. His hand holding the naira note trembled at the sight before him, he was left stunned. The man looked away from Lekan, turned around, and walked off in the direction he had come from.

Lekan let out a deep breath he had been holding and tapped the arm of the man beside him. “Oga, you see am?” He asked an elderly bald man with a gray beard.

“Wetin?” The man asked back with a frown.

At this point, Lekan thought he had been seeing things due to his fatigue and rubbed his eyes. As he removed his hands from his eyes, he saw the hawker woman slowly standing upright, a gaping hole visible in her neck.

Lekan’s eyes grew wide with fright and he frantically tapped the older man again, pointing a shaky finger at the woman. “See nau.”

The woman’s eyes quickly turned red and black, and she growled at Lekan. He turned to the man by his side whose eyes bulged out of his head as he stared at the lady.

“Haew!” The man exclaimed.

She lurched at the window which Lekan was next to, forcing her hands into the vehicle. He let out a shriek and tried to avoid her by shifting onto the lap of the man beside him. By now, everyone on the bus had noticed the woman and her absurd behavior and began murmuring worriedly.

The bus driver shouted angrily at the woman, “Madam, abeg abeg commot for here. Why you dey disturb my customers?”

She turned her head slowly toward him and growled again, like a rabid dog. The bus driver muttered expletives in Yoruba and came down from the bus.

“Madam. Abi you no dey hear? Make I no vex for you. Commot for here,” he warned in an angrier tone, hands on his hips.

The woman pounced on the man, sinking her teeth into his neck. The bus driver screamed very loudly, writhing in pain, “Ye! Ah!”

Everyone in the bus grew alarmed as they witnessed the horrid sight in front of them and murmured even louder. Lekan wore his bag on his back again and got off the older man’s lap.

“Abeg I no dey here!” He shouted anxiously and exited the vehicle, pushing past the conductor.

A few impatient passengers shouted at the driver, urging him to start moving as the road began clearing up, with car horns from behind blaring repeatedly.

The conductor came down from the bus as well, walking over to see what was happening to the driver. He pushed the woman away with great force, severing the contact her teeth made with his skin and causing her to fall to the ground.

Placing his hands on the driver’s shoulder, he asked with concern. “Bros. You dey alright? May we go hospitu?”

Fright captured his eyes as he examined the huge bite mark that didn’t stop bleeding. The bus driver’s head hung low for a few seconds and suddenly shot up; his eyes the same black coated in red like the hawker lady and the airport man.

In a swift action, he opened his mouth and bit the conductor’s arm like a savage dog, tearing off the skin and chewing it, blood splattering everywhere uncontrollably.

The conductor screamed and fell to the ground on his butt, holding his bleeding hand. The veins on his forehead protruded as he screamed in pain. But his eyes quickly changed colors, and he rose from the ground.

The three of them slowly turned to the passengers on the bus, their wounds clotting and the blood no longer pouring out. They walked around the bus, approaching the door in quick steps, and that’s when the chaos began.

Everyone started fleeing from the bus, pushing and shoving one another, in an attempt to flee from the craze that was ensuing.

Lekan had been frozen in place as he watched the unbelievable occurrences unfold right in front of him with horrified eyes. He couldn't make any sense of the whole situation. He began to wonder if he was even dreaming at that moment.

By the time he broke out of his daze, he noticed that a majority of the passengers that were in the bus now had pupils that were black coated in red corneas and were growling at him with clothes stained red from their own blood.

Lekan took fearful steps backward, staggering as they approached him, his breathing quivering. He immediately turned on his heels, his fear triggering adrenaline causing his body to move on instinct and sprint away from the mob.

“Run o! Everybody run!” He yelled in a coarse tone like a madman as he ran, confusing everyone he passed.

But once people saw the red and black-eyed group chasing after pedestrians, with man eating man, turning into *savages*, they wasted no time heeding his warnings and began running for their lives.

As Lekan ran, pushing past everyone in his way, he had a feeling that he was not going to get his promotion.

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Meanwhile...

*In a certain mansion in Kingdom Estate, Victoria Island.*

A group of twenty-something-year-olds who frequently hang out together were seated in the private theater room of the house, watching *The Walking Dead*.

These four friends- Stephanie, Precious, David, and Dami, are childhood friends who have grown up together. They got to know each other through their parents.

Stephanie's father is the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Precious' dad is the CEO of NNPC- Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. David's is the owner of the biggest bank in Nigeria- Access Bank.

The house they were currently in was owned by Dami's father who is the current President of Nigeria.

“Why are you always hanging around Lagos when your family lives in Abuja?” Stephanie asked Dami who fed her a piece of popcorn from the bowl in his hand.

“Because Abuja is dead. Lagos is more fun, and you guys live here. Especially *you*, Steph.” Dami replied, smiling affectionately at Stephanie.

“Can you guys get a room or something? Some people are actually watching this thing,” David threw his head back exasperatedly, tired of the lovey-dovey nature of the couple.

“You guys,” Precious began, “you see all these zombies that are in this film, how scary they are. Can you imagine zombies appearing in Lagos?”

The group went silent for a few seconds before bursting into laughter. “Precious, this is Nigeria; Lagos we’re talking about. There’s like a *zero* percent chance zombies will ever show up here. Besides, they don’t even exist. They’re *made-up* characters.” Dami shook his head as he stated matter-of-factly.

“Don’t be boring joor. Just *imagine*. How do you think it’ll be? And what will you guys do? Who do you think will be the first to die?” Precious turned around in her seat, folding her legs on the maroon leather, completely disregarding the show now and turning all her attention to her friends.

“Hm.” Stephanie hummed and folded her arms. “I think it’ll be really scary because Lagos is *so* overpopulated. But that’s not a problem for *us*. If anything happens, *Dami* here will call his daddy to send a private jet for us to fly out.” She winked at Dami who placed a kiss on her forehead.

“Anything for you, my love,” Dami said, adoringly gazing at Stephanie.

“Ugh.” David let out, and Precious rolled her eyes as the pair wrapped their arms around each other and started to cuddle themselves.

“Well, I personally think it’ll be fun. You know, running from them, fighting the zombies with weapons. It’ll be so cool,” Precious stared at the wall with dystopian fantasies swimming in her eyes.

“Fun ke?” David countered. “You’ll definitely be the first one to die.” Stephanie and Dami snickered at David’s jab at Precious, while the said girl shot him daggers with her eyes.

“*Attention, citizens of Nigeria. This is an emergency message.*” A female news anchor spoke on the tv surprising the group.

“*There have been sightings of...*” the woman paused and cleared her throat as if she couldn’t believe the words she was reading off the moving screen, “*people tearing each other’s flesh. It’s been confirmed that they are...zombies.*”

“No way,” Precious’ legs dropped to the ground, mouth agape as she turned around to face the television.

“They can interrupt TVs in Lagos?” Dami asked in a baffled tone.

Stephanie scoffed and added, “This isn’t real, right?”

“*The Lagos State Government has declared a statewide lockdown. For your safety, every citizen has been asked to remain indoors and not leave their homes no matter what. The Government will get back to us with a speech and more information once they complete further investigations on this matter;*” The news anchor continued.

Dami and Stephanie untangled their hands and legs around each other and watched the news with seriousness.

*“Thankfully, we’ve managed to acquire a short clip of what these “zombies” look like.”* The screen changed and a 10-second video someone had taken of the zombies chasing after people and biting body parts played.

The four friends watched with disbelief, hands hovering over their mouths, fear draining the earlier amusement each had on their faces.

“You’ve got to be joking,” David whispered, his body stiffening and hands fisted at the sight.

Stephanie abruptly rose from her seat and ran to the bathroom, hands preventing the vomit bubbling up her throat from escaping.

Dami stood up and took out his phone from his pocket, typing on the screen with trembling hands.

“I’m calling my dad.”