

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Ijo: A Love Story

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Draft One

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INT. DANCE STUDIO/SPACE - DAY - PRESENT MOMENT

DEBO, a worn out man, walks into the basically empty dance studio.

The entire focus is on him and the space around him is not in view.

He exhales and observes the environment for a few beats until -

TEACHER (O.C.)

Welcome, it's always nice to have an early student. Are you here for the samba or hip-hop slot?

DEBO

The freestyle showcase.

TEACHER (O.C.)

Amazing, so you're from the online classes?

DEBO

Yes.

TEACHER (O.C.)

Well, it's great to be back to physical classes but I'm just very curious. Did you like the online classes?

DEBO

They were helpful. I'm a first time dancer.

TEACHER (O.C.)

Wait, are you Debo? I've heard of you. Everyone calls you the overqualified new dancer!

The woman laughs and Debo doesn't.

TEACHER (O.C.) (cont'd)

I can't wait to see your showcase. Have you always been a dancer?

CUT TO:

INT. DEBO'S LIVING SPACE - DAY - FLASHBACK

A happier looking Debo is calmly scrolling through his phone when a woman dressed in fitness wear playfully nudges him and adjusts her sports bag.

This woman is MOLARA, a charming young woman. Debo instantly puts his phone away and pulls her close for a tender kiss.

This is a couple that appears completely in love.

MOLARA

Debo, stop this thing.

DEBO

Is it a crime for a man to be slightly obsessed with his woman?

MOLARA

Only slightly?

DEBO

Fine. Painfully obsessed, stalker level.

MOLARA

Ah, maybe you should calm down small.

They laugh.

DEBO

Do you have everything you need in your bag?

MOLARA

Yep, water bottle and change of clothes.

DEBO

What's today's dramatic theme again?

MOLARA

It's hip-hop and I don't like when you talk about my dance classes in that tone.

DEBO

Molara, what tone again?

She slowly pulls away. No point for an argument.

MOLARA

Never mind. I'm running late and I don't want to enter traffic.

DEBO

(in Yoruba)

Are you angry?

MOLARA

I'm not angry.

Debo leans in to playfully tickle her.

DEBO

Why is your face now strong anyhow? Small thing like this, you'll be vexing and twisting your face.

MOLARA

(laughing)

Debo! Stop being annoying.

DEBO

You love me like that.

There's silence for a beat as he holds her like a prized possession and she gives him a tender smile.

MOLARA

I'll be out late tonight.

DEBO

How late is late?

MOLARA

Don't wait up. The gang is watching a play after classes.

DEBO

How many plays in Lagos run that late?

Here we go again. Molara tears away from him.

MOLARA

How many plays have you followed me to see? All of a sudden he's the scheduler of plays.

DEBO

Just calm down, have you forgotten what tonight is?

MOLARA

Our anniversary. How can I forget?

DEBO

So you even remember and you now want to miss our usual anniversary dinner?

MOLARA

(with a shrug)

Guy, what's one skip? It's just an anniversary, it's not that deep.

Debo is scandalized.

DEBO

Molara, 3 years wedding anniversary is not deep?

MOLARA

Debo, I've been home all day and you didn't say anything about dinner or lunch or whatever.

DEBO

Did you hint that your dance class will be doing midnight runs?

(pause)

Wait, did you make any plans for the anniversary?

Molara has no answer.

DEBO (cont'd)

Babe, are we fighting? You love celebrating every little anniversary or date.

MOLARA

Maybe I'm sick of it. What else do we do after eating and fucking? No surprises, no changes, just saying how much we love each other and moving on.

DEBO

Who stopped you from getting creative? You know I'm always open to your plans.

MOLARA

Are you really? Didn't I invite you for couples dancing? What did you say?

DEBO

Oya fine, let us do the dance thing for our anniversary. Let me go and change into -

MOLARA

I think it's best for us to spend the day apart. I want to enjoy my class today.

DEBO

That's a little harsh. You really can't pick dance over our anniversary.

MOLARA

Running late!

Molara swiftly kisses him on the cheek. Debo still manages to smile.

DEBO

Is there a surprise you're hiding from me? It's like there's something you're not telling me.

MOLARA

You'll surprise yourself o. I'm running late and I don't want Alex to be upset.

DEBO

Molara baby, don't tell me you've started eyeing that your Spanish dance instructor or -

The wheels turn in her head. Molara is a bruised lion.

MOLARA

Are you mad? Is that supposed to be funny?

DEBO

Can't you see that I'm trying to stay in a good mood?

MOLARA

I don't want you to be in a good mood. I want you to tell me how you really feel.

DEBO

You want me to say how I'm really feeling about you flaking on me again?

MOLARA

Flaking? Is that what you call someone having healthy boundaries?

DEBO

(in yoruba)

Don't start speaking English with me.

(in English)

I've made plans for us and you don't even care about that.

MOLARA

You made plans without asking me.

DEBO

You people don't do surprises in your village, abi?

MOLARA

What's so surprising about doing the same thing we did last year?

DEBO

(frustrated)

Yet, you didn't make your own plans. You don't even care about our wedding anniversary, it's almost as if you don't care about our marriage or my feelings.

MOLARA

Maybe it's because I don't.

DEBO

Why would you say that?

MOLARA

Maybe I don't care about this marriage because I'm no longer in love with you.

Debo is like cold water has been poured on him. Silence descends on them for an intense beat.

DEBO

Molara -

MOLARA

It's been hard to love you since the incident. It has been so hard!

DEBO

Please, just stop. Every single thing about the incident is in the past.

MOLARA

But it will continue to hang over our heads like a dark cloud. Your family and friends still treat me like I'm a criminal.

DEBO

That's because you keep revisiting the past. I don't care about what happened. I don't care that you slept with my best friend. I forgive you and I don't care, okay?

MOLARA

Why did you forgive me? Who asked you to forgive me? You forgave me without my consent.

DEBO

I forgave you because I love you. I will always choose you. I will always love you, Molara.

MOLARA

It's hard to believe all this forgiveness and love even after I hurt you. Debo, your wife cheated on you. Normal men revenge or something.

DEBO

I'm not those men. I have forgiven you. Accept it!

MOLARA

I haven't forgiven myself. It's been many months of hating myself for hurting you. You staying with me after everything feels like the ultimate punishment itself. It's pure torture.

DEBO

What does this mean?

MOLARA

I don't love you, Debo. I thought I did and Koye showed me what love could truly feel like. Koye loves art and he understands me. I wish I didn't have to cheat. I wish I met Koye before you.

Debo is hurt with every word.

MOLARA (cont'd)

I thought the guilt of cheating would make me love you again. I don't want to celebrate an anniversary that I don't care about. I don't want to toast to many more years when I'm suffocating in these three little ones.

A broken Debo falls on his knees and wraps his arms around Molar.

DEBO

Don't do this to me. Not on our anniversary. Be a little kinder to my heart, Molar. What do you need from me? Is it to dance? I will revenge, I will surrender myself to you, just anything.

Molar also falls on her knees and touches his face. They are still for a few beats, forehead to forehead.

It is intense.

MOLARA

Debo, let me go.

Debo breaks down in tears and Molar calmly rises.

With that, Molar sighs and leaves for Dance Class.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO/SPACE - DAY - PRESENT DAY

Debo is alone in the dance studio.

He sets his bag aside and slowly starts his freestyle routine.

As he dances, a voice-over plays over the dance.

A phone rings and rings till someone picks it.

KOYE (V.O.)

(sober/in disbelief)

Debo, yeah...this is Koye. Sorry I'm
calling this late at night but...

(beat)

Molara had an accident on her way to
my place...

(beat)

Man...I'm so sorry...

Debo dances and cries till he finishes off his dance.

THE END.