

Version 1

Everything settled into stillness after Palm Sunday. A soft rain fell with a gentle wind, brushing the frangipani trees with pink and white flowers in the front yard. The door of my bedroom eased open as a gentle breeze drifted through the house, carrying the soothing scent of blooming garden flowers.

Even the silence that filled the house felt calm, as though the old silence had lifted and left behind something softer. The wind, perhaps a bit too eager to greet us inside our home, accidentally knocked over one of Mama's figurines. She swept up the broken one, polished another figurine, and then moved it to the spot on the shelf where the other figurine used to be. Mama then brought Jaja his dinner on a white tray with a matching plate, smiling as she placed it in front of him.

Original

"Everything came tumbling down after Palm Sunday. Howling winds came with an angry rain, uprooting frangipani trees in the front yard. They lay on the lawn, their pink and white flowers grazing the grass, their roots waving lumpy soil in the air. The satellite dish on top of the garage came crashing down, and lounged on the driveway like a visiting alien spaceship. The door of my wardrobe dislodged completely. Sisi broke a full set of Mama's china.

Even the silence that descended on the house was sudden, as though the old silence had broken and left us with the sharp pieces. When Mama asked Sisi to wipe the floor of the living room, to make sure no dangerous pieces of figurines were left lying somewhere, she did not lower her voice to a whisper. She did not hide the tiny smile that drew lines at the edge of her mouth. She did not sneak Jaja's food to his room, wrapped in cloth so it would appear that she had simply brought his laundry in. She took him his food on a white tray, with a matching plate." (pp. 257–258)

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