

No Rhyme Extract

By

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NO RHYME EXTRACT

LIZZIE

Is that you? Victor?
(in Efik)
My precious one?

[*Nkpo Uto mi*]
(in English)
Is that you? Finally?
(in Efik)

It is you.

[*Afo kedi*]

A toilet flushes. It startles Lizzie. She approaches the still occupied cubicle and knocks on the door. No answer. She knocks again. No answer.

LIZZIE

Who is there?

Silence.

LIZZIE

Who is in there? Please?

Silence.

Katya enters (hear Auld Lang Syne as she enters the door, "For old acquaint'ance..."), she heads straight for the mirror to examine her face again. Lizzie is stood behind her. They are looking at each other in the mirror.

KATYA

God, so busy.

She examines her face closely. Lizzie continues to mop.

KATYA

Happy New Year Lizzie.

Silence.

Katya gets out a small mirror to examine herself from behind.

KATYA

Can you believe they are still letting them in. How many people can you fit in this for-saken club?

LIZZIE

I don't know.

KATYA

Well it doesn't matter. I would not want come in here. Can you know how much I hate this place?

LIZZIE

That girl has a knife.

KATYA

(Katya is distracted looking for something in her make up bag)

The things I have in here, see..

(she shows Lizzie her bag)

they are mine... she just took my things like it was hers to take. Nothing respect.

LIZZIE

She will use it.

KATYA

I know and it did look terrible on her.

LIZZIE

The knife.

KATYA

(waves her hand)

Do not bother security again Lizzie you know they don't like you.

LIZZIE

(stops mopping)

They don't know their job. But you could/

KATYA

Long as those animals keep it to themselves who cares? Not business of mine. Not business of yours.

Silence.

.

KATYA

Well, another year Lizzie. D'you think I look older?

Silence.

KATYA

I think I'm getting lines around here. Can you see? It's all worry. I'm still young woman you know. I spend too much time in this bloody place and I have too much trouble. This places makes you old. The forever noise; Awake when I should be sleep. Sleep when I should be awake. I look it up. It's called circadian rhythm. Can you say it Lizzie?

LIZZIE

Circadian rhythm.

KATYA

Nearly. When you go against the natural way it goes against you. It affects my.. you know... circles.

I'm going to have baby Lizzie.

Beat.

Katya looks at Lizzie for a reaction. Lizzie doesn't give one.

KATYA

(aggressively)

How d'you know I'm not? I could be.

Silence.

D'you like this life Lizzie?

LIZZIE

It just is for some of us.

KATYA

My husband and his sister said, "*You will love this life. The people are so English and proper*". "Proper" he says. Ha. He does not see what I see. A job at night should mean more time in day, cept now they find me nother job, looking after a smelling old lady, and I'm tired all the time. And these lines.

(looks at Lizzie)

It's easy for you in here, locked away, hidden here. From me, everyone needs their coat. When I go home, my hair smells. My husband says, "*You smell. Wash*". I've already washed.

Katya opens her make up bag and starts the process all over. She begins rubbing away at her face with foundation.

KATYA

Sleep is important Lizzie. Do you know what not sleeping does? It's punishment for sure.

(turning to Lizzie)

Lizzie do you think I'm fool?

Silence.

KATYA

I've seen you dance. When you think no body watches.

Lizzie mops the floor aggressively.

LIZZIE

I don't dance.

Lizzie takes the mop back to her cupboard and brings out a cloth. She begins to frantically wipe the sinks.

KATYA

I've seen you. My husband said you are thief.

Lizzie laughs ironically.

KATYA

You thief from us. And he said "*What do you really know about this Lizzie? She affect our business, you need know who she is.*" I said she is always in the toilet even when club finished like she never leave. It's like she's scared to leave. But I said she harmless. He said, "*She's dangerous. Get rid of her.*". What are you Lizzie? Why are you always in here hiding? You need money? I need money. My husband's sister she said to me, "*Life is good you don't need do work.*" So we came. She not work. He not work. What bout you? Why are you here? Husband?

LIZZIE

No.

KATYA

Kids then?

LIZZIE

No.

KATYA

Oh. You look like woman who would have many.
Then there must be people somewhere who needs you.

LIZZIE

I work here. That's all you need to know.

KATYA

And this is where you must stay, and I want you to but you must pay me. I don't want trouble.

LIZZIE

Leave me alone then.

KATYA

I can make you thief.

LIZZIE

No one will believe.

KATYA

Why? Over the crazy black woman in the toilet who talk to herself? The manger, he not even know you exist. You will loose job here in your precious toilet.

Lizzie looks to the mirror.

KATYA

And of course police.

Katya looks directly at Lizzie.

KATYA

No one wants police do they? If they come to the club, they will find more than missing things. What you think they will find in here?

(looks generally around the toilet)

Maybe they'll want look in your cupboard.

She goes to the cupboard which Lizzie has locked and is using much force to try and open the door.

LIZZIE

Stop it.

KATYA

This is public place Lizzie. What would I find if I look hard enough? And if police look what would they find ah? I'm giving you chance.

(whispers)

Here is good. Girls come. They forget what they are doing. All you have to do is take opportunity.

LIZZIE

I am not a thief.

Lizzie is wiping the bowl of sweets. The bowl smashes to the ground. They both look at the breakage.

KATYA

You know my husband was all
(whispers)
for reporting you. All these things gone missing he
said, money, purses, phones, nice phones. With people
like that, he said if you don't get in first, she'll
(tone changes)
try put blame on you.

LIZZIE

What are you talking about?

*Lizzie tidies up the broken bowl. She throws the
pieces away.*

KATYA

Look at me and look at you. You people are always
thief. They will always believe me before you.

LIZZIE

What, I said...

KATYA

I know what you said Lizzie and you didn't know what
you were seeing. Trying to be all be better than me.

LIZZIE

You...

KATYA

Don't look at me. Do you know pressure? You can't judge
me. D'you like this job Lizzie?

Silence.

KATYA

Well need then?

LIZZIE

Yes. I need it.

KATYA

It's hard isn't it, to find people who will take on
somebody like us.

*Lizzie laughs she goes into her cupboard and
brings out another bowl for the sweets.*

KATYA

(looks to the occupied toilet)
You put me in this position. My husband he upset. I
cannot loose job.

LIZZIE

What do you want?

KATYA

I need more money before club closes tonight. They rely on me. You are going to get me money and I am going to watch you get it. The other night, you lower my earnings.

(puts on an affected voice)

"Put it back, God see all" you said. I have to make that back and more...

(getting frantic)

or he'll/

LIZZIE

If it is him you are scared of I can lend you something.

KATYA

No Lizzie. You are not understanding. You have to do it, tonight. And I have to see you do it because then....well it doesn't matter.

LIZZIE

You want me to steal for you?

KATYA

When I come in you will do it to the person I show you.

LIZZIE

But I don't know these things.

KATYA

You understand?

LIZZIE

Yes.

KATYA

If you do not, that's it for your precious toilet.

Pepper comes aggressively through the door. Katya gestures that Pepper is the one. Pepper looks like she has no specific purpose in the toilet - she stands halfway between the mirrors and the cubicles. She gets out her phone and goes into a cubicle but doesn't fully close the door so she can see who is coming in.

PEPPER

Pick up. Pick up.....Lee? It's me. Hold on.....she thinks its Jayde.... You've gotta ... tell her it weren't ... Just tell her it weren't. Because.... You. .. Yeah.. you.... Whatever....

(raising her voice)
WHATEVER..... You know why...
.sorry...SORRY. It's not a game now...Oh
whatever. Don't text me nothing. Stop sending me
bloody messages. I'LL TELL HER MY FUCKING SELF THEN.

Pepper hits the phone against the cubicle.

PEPPER
Fuck.

*Lizzie is staring at Katya in the mirror. Pepper
exits the cubicle. Katya goes into a cubicle.
Pepper has tears in her eyes and is sniffing.
Lizzie approaches.*

LIZZIE
Hap..Happy New Year my dear.

PEPPER
(looking Lizzie up and down - tone is
flat)
Yeah.

LIZZIE
(the words are burning her mouth)
...Are, are you a having a....good time?

PEPPER
(continues to look Lizzie up and down)
Whatever....

*Lizzie picks up the bowl of sweets and gestures
towards Pepper.*

LIZZIE
He are my dear. Please have some.

*Pepper tentatively accepts a sweet, she doesn't
eat it but puts it in her bag. Pepper decides to
come to the mirror. Pepper is trying not to cry.
She is staring at herself in the mirror and then
notices Lizzie who is still staring at her in the
mirror. Pepper looks uncomfortable.*

Pause.

PEPPER
What? I'm not crying.

LIZZIE
I know.

PEPPER

I've got something in my eye.

LIZZIE

Of course.

Lizzie is still staring. Katya is making banging noises in the toilet. Pepper looks at Lizzie in the mirror defiantly.

PEPPER

What?

Lizzie looks down.

PEPPER

Am I interesting to you?

LIZZIE

I didn't mean anything.

Pepper aggressively wipes at her eyes.

LIZZIE

You can get soft tissue from in there.

(Lizzie motions to the cubicle)

PEPPER

I don't need soft tissues.

Pepper doesn't move. Pepper suddenly turns on her heels, leaves her bag on the side and goes into a cubicle. We hear her unrolling a toilet roll and blowing her nose. Lizzie quickly goes to her bag and takes a phone she sees lying on the top and slips it into her pinafore pocket. Pepper comes out of the cubicle to find Lizzie near her bag.

PEPPER

(rushing to her bag)

What you doing?

Lizzie is shaking her head. Katya exits cubicle. She is looking at Lizzie and Pepper.

PEPPER

(pointing to her bag)

She was going through my bag.

(Pepper hurriedly checks through her bag)

KATYA

Oh no. I'm sure you have it wrong.

Pepper keeps looking through her bag. Lizzie looks to the floor.

PEPPER

(to Lizzie)

I swear if there's anything missing.....

There's a commotion at the door. Someone banging against it hard. Eventually Nushka appears. She appears to be very intoxicated and stumbles. She sees Pepper. Katya gives a brief smile to Lizzie and exits.

NUSHKA

(slurring her words and pointing)

Alright babes? I was looking for you. Oh bloody hell it stinks in here.

She looks at Lizzie and laughs. Nushka puts her hands to her mouth and starts to heave. She quickly reaches for a cubicle and starts retching loudly in the toilet.

Pepper stares at Lizzie.

LIZZIE

I/

Hear Nushka retching.

PEPPER

Nush? You alright in there? Nush?

NUSHKA

(during a gap in the retching)

I'm dying.

Nushka bursts out laughing. After a brief moment Pepper starts laughing.

NUSHKA

Fucking hell what was in them cocktails?

PEPPER

You can't handle your drink that's what was in um.

Pepper and Nushka burst out laughing.

Pepper goes into a cubicle to fix herself up before Nushka sees her again.

Nushka comes out the cubicle wiping her face. Her hair is all messy.

NUSHKA

I feel like shit.

Pepper exits her cubicle. Nushka turns the tap on, drinks from it, gargles it, spits it out. Then uses it to splash on her face. She starts pruning - takes her hair out of its style puts it in another style, poses.

NUSHKA

What's Jayde saying about Blaze?

PEPPER

You was right.

NUSHKA

I knew it. And I bet it was tiny.

Motions with her hand.

I hate the way some people put skanky skanky men before their mates.

PEPPER

Yeah.

NUSHKA

Poxy little grime crew in a poxy little club.

Nushka tries to sit on the sink.

PEPPER

Nush...you know about Lee?

LIZZIE

Scuse me my dear, you can't do that.

Lizzie approaches. She is stood in the middle of the floor.

NUSHKA

Do what?

LIZZIE

You can't sit on that.

NUSHKA

Why? Who's gonna stop me?

Nushka looks at Lizzie defiantly.

NUSHKA

Imagine Peps if you had to work in a toilet.

Nushka starts laughing.

NUSHKA

Could you imagine a job that is worse than working in a toilet?

Pepper looks to Lizzie and then to Nushka.

NUSHKA

I couldn't do it you know. I mean let's think of a worser job? Dustbin man? No, cause at least that's out in the open. When it starts to stink.

PEPPER

The sewers?

NUSHKA

What does that do?

PEPPER

I don't know but its working with shit.

NUSHKA

Yeah but at least you don't have to see the people that do the shits. You really have to need money. That person ain't got no respect. I mean, say you're out with a mans and he says "What d'you do?" What you gonna say? "I work in a toilet" Innit Peps?

Pause. Lizzie lowers her head.

NUSHKA

...innit Peps?

Pepper looks at Lizzie.

PEPPER

I....yeah.

(she starts to laugh)

NUSHKA

You know my Dad's always, like "Get a job"?

PEPPER

Yeah.

NUSHKA

Imagine if I told him I got one working in a toilet?

Nushka and Pepper burst out laughing.

NUSHKA

He'd disown me, boy. What would you write on your CV thing? I'm very good at smelling other people's shits?

Pause

NUSHKA

Anyways, oh my God, imagine having to smell other people's shits for a job. That's like that Golum off of that, what's it called?

Nushka does an impression (it's also her take on Lizzie)

PEPPER

Lord of the Rings.

NUSHKA

Lord of the Rings. D'you know what I mean though?

They start laughing again. Nushka looks at Lizzie and gets off the sink slowly. Lizzie retreats back to her stool.

LIZZIE

(to herself quietly)

Do not judge...., and you will not be judged..... Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.....For... Forgive, and you will be forgiven...forgive..

NUSHKA

What's wrong?

PEPPER

Nothing. What's your New Years thingy Nush?

NUSHKA

What's yours?

PEPPER

It's gonna sound stupid. I wanna be little again...just us three.. playing on the the Cally ... knocking on doors and running away member...and not even knowing about nothing else. I'm sick of it Nush. I don't think I can/

NUSHKA

You've got family. You've got me.

PEPPER

What we talked about?

NUSH

Yeah?

PEPPER

Say it was it Jayde.

NUSHKA

Anyways, it was Jayde.

PEPPER

Yeah, okay so, say we know it's Jayde. Then we don't need her.

Nushka is frantically putting on eye liner.

PEPPER

Right, drop her. That's enough, cause you and me we're tighter than family. She ain't gonna find that nowhere.

Nushka continues to frantically apply eye liner

PEPPER

That's were we're from, grown, raised and who we're running with and if she ain't got that she ain't got shit. That's worse than....that other thing.

Nushka looks at Pepper.

NUSHKA

Naw. Naw she ain't family but she ain't "just" now either is she? Nobody does me like that and gets away with it. Or what would I look like?

(she wipes her hands as if wiping them clean).

PEPPER

Yeah.

NUSHKA

Family, we stick together.

PEPPER

Yeah, I know.

NUSHKA

And do for one another.

PEPPER

Yeah.

NUSHKA

Cause you know I can't do it, don't you? One more thing and I'm inside and that's twelve months at least

(MORE)

NUSHKA (cont'd)

and I can't go inside. But you can and no one would know. Nls. Southsides. Member?

PEPPER

Right. I know. I know.

NUSHKA

(sober)

I know you know. So no questions yeah?

She looks intensely at Pepper. She suddenly appears very drunk again. Starts slurring and doing big gestures with her arms and hands.

NUSHKA

Us lot. We're proper. Anything Peps and I'm there. All them times with your mums. You know I was there... for you. That night.

Nushka tries to clench her hands together. She's off balance.

NUSHKA

That's a family. No one's gonna betray you...

(points at Pepper)

That's why Peps. My dads I know he gives me things and all that but if I had to choose. I mean he ain't like your mum or nuffing but d'you know what I mean.....

(she tries to stand on one leg)

Sacrifice and that shit. That's what a family means. A real family. You'd give up everything for your family. Cause that what it means

(looks like she might go to sleep)

PEPPER

Without you... I don't think I could... When she gets, you know. Its yous lot.

Pepper starts to sniff she wipes her eyes aggressively to conceal her tears.

PEPPER

I don't know what I'd.. if I didn't have you... It's always a laugh, no matter how fucked up everything gets, I know I've got you Nush... I'd never do anything to hurt you right. I would never. I'd just wanna protect you from anyone that was trying to hurt you and if that means doing something to show you what you couldn't see.. then I'd do that thing, to show you.. even if it was nasty and made me feel... dirty, I'd do it for you cause, only you Nush...

NUSHKA

We've gotta keep it pure, that's all. That's why.
Trust.

PEPPER

I love you Nush.

NUSHKA

(drunk eyes closing)
I love you Peps.

PEPPER

(sober)
No. I mean. I really love you Nush.

NUSHKA

I really really love you Peps Sico

PEPPER

La. La. I couldn't lose you.

Pepper stares at Nushka in the mirror. Nushka is closing her eyes.

Beat.

NUSHKA

Come on, let's go dance.

Nushka holds out her hand. Pepper takes it and they leave the toilet. Lizzie continues to mop. She stands up takes the phone out of her pinafore and looks at it.