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Chapter 23

The novel *Americanah* written by [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#), speaks of the struggles a man and a woman have to face, living in Nigeria with dreams of a better life. In this chapter, Obinze carries us through his time in London over the past years, struggling to accomplish what his actual dream is, starting a life in America. In this chapter Obinze walks us through the difficulties he faces, as an illegal immigrant, living in London. After the six-month visa, his mother so graciously advocated for him. It creates an apprehensive feeling in the reader, keeping them in suspense throughout the chapter. This chapter causes the reader to root for Obinze to succeed in what he needs to do for himself. The evidence throughout proves the fact that he wants to make a life for not just himself, but his mother as well. He faces great amounts of anxiety when speaking with his mother because of his lack of accomplishment thus far. Obinze faces the challenge of his circumstances, keeping the conceptual image that he does not do enough in his mother's eyes, even though it is not true in reality .

Struggling to make his way to America, let alone citizenship in London, was more of a challenge than he was anticipating. He decides to find a woman to marry to gain citizenship that way. He then goes through two Angolan men, to find a woman to marry. After finding Cleotilde, They meet and decide to privately get to know one another. As they bond, he feels as though there are attractions between the two of them, trying to keep things strictly business first, he focuses on the goal before anything else. As they talk more and get closer to the immigration

interview, they learn more and more about this lifestyle that they are getting themselves into. They speak about her payout and how much she is being compensated for the help she is doing for him. She admits, it is just five hundred points. The two men explain “we have a good deal”(Adichie 190) when speaking about Cleotilde, and how much they are paying her. Moving along, Obinze picks up his marriage license, and meets with a man named Brown. He leaves with something slightly worn and his new license, feeling the freedom leaves him in disbelief. He describes the feeling of his license as “a slight plastic card, but it weighed down his pocket”(Adichie 190). He describes a couple as they leave, claiming that all marriages are shams (Adichie 190). He is overcome with suspicion and worry, about anyone knowing that he is one of those “sham” couples. Obinze, as he leaves, recognizes a familiar name of a school friend. He sees “Okoli Okafor and Crystal Smith, classmates from secondary school, who later joined a vicious cult in university, then left Nigeria during a long strike”(Adichie 191). This to the reader creates a sense of realization about the lifestyle that is lived while being an illegal immigrant. The struggles and challenges that not only Obinze faces, but others trying to pave a way for themselves as well in this country.

Officially becoming a citizen, the feelings overtake the moments for him. He then goes into a state of regret for his mother. Since being in London for the last three years, Obinze's relationship with his mother has taken a toll for the worse. His lack of success in his own eyes, keeps him feeling unaccomplished and not good enough to talk to her. She respects Obinze enough to not pry for more information when it comes to Obinze proves the love she has for him and his success. He reflects on the beginning of his journey with his mother deciding to get him a visa to go to London. He reminisces on a time with her in their living room back in Nigeria. They speak about what feels like to his mother, personal failure. Her friends are either “dead or

abroad”(Adichie 191) working in America or Canada. Her awareness of Obinze’s plans to start a life in America, makes him feel dreadful when thinking about how he is with her now. His distance from his mother goes on to prove her point that once a person goes abroad they might as well be dead. Obinze’s lack of communication with her makes seeing her even more difficult. He goes on to speak about being denied three times for a visa, leaving him “stunned and unbelieving”(Adichie 192). His resentment for his mother's cheer made his rejection even more challenging for him. He “disliked her calm good cheer, and how hard she tried to be positive”(Adichie 192). Undoubtedly enough, that is an unusual thing to “dislike” about your mother, causing the reader to feel as though Obinze in some way, self-sabotages his happiness, through the way he perceives actual happiness, which his mother exudes. His perspective on things has shaped who he has become. The reader can infer the feelings of Obinze, still living with his mother. He describes looking “ at the website of American Universities. He was living with his mother, driving her car, sleeping with impressionable young students...”(Adichie 192).

Obinze at the end of this chapter describes the different situations that have kept him feeling unsatisfied with his behavior and outcomes. His ability to reflect on the times he had with his mother, puts things into perspective for the reader and Obinze himself. He describes the moments with his mother that directed his life in the way he meant for it to. She explains the plan she has to lie for him, to make his way to London. She explains “I'm going to put your name on my British visa applications as my research assistant” (Adichie 192) continuing, he explains “Maybe you can get to America from there, I know your mind is no longer here”(Adichie 192). That moment she has with her son proves what a mother's love means. Her sacrifices prove that a mother will do anything to see their children happy, despite their wants. Obinze, from a bird's eye view, sees the woman who “would not accept even a Christmas card from her students

because it might compromise her, who accounted for every single kobo spent on a committee she was on. And here she was, behaving as though truth-telling has become a luxury that they could no longer afford”(Adichie 193). This moment, in his reflection back on the times with his mother, makes Obinze see how selfish he has been. He sees the pain he's putting on his mother while being in London for the time he has. He describes the conversations with his mother as “strained, during which he imagined she was wondering why he has made nothing of himself” (Adichie 193). Obinze creates that space in his mind, where his mother is not supportive, so when he visits, he makes the effort to restore their relationship to what it was. This makes the reader feel as though he made many mistakes, He stayed true to himself, and eventually recognized his wrongdoings.

This chapter of the book *Americanah* written by [Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#) explores the life of Obinze and his journey to citizenship. In his discourse, he shows the life that so many people, from all over the world, are trying to attain. Obinze proves that it is possible, despite the many circumstances that got in his way.