

24, Alhaji Williams Street

The chapter opens with a vivid depiction of Alhaji Williams Street, a place steeped in history and community ties. The narrator, the only son in his family, reflects on his deep familiarity with the street's every detail, from the sound of Mr. Joro's car horn to the Obozos' aggressive Rottweiler. The street's tranquility is shattered when a mysterious fever begins claiming the lives of the youngest sons in each household, starting with Ade, the only child of Ms. Williams. The grief-stricken mothers, including the narrator's own widowed mother, gather to mourn and share futile remedies, highlighting the helplessness that pervades the community.

As the fever spreads, the street's residents grapple with fear and superstition. The deaths of the Emenikes' youngest son and later the Adeyanjus' and Bellos' boys reveal a chilling pattern, sparking whispers about the cause. The narrator's mother, while sympathetic, maintains a pragmatic stance, dismissing the idea of moving away as futile, citing the Anthonys' failed attempt to escape the fever by relocating to Abuja. The family's daily life—studying for exams, repairing furniture, and stringing beads—continues amidst the growing dread, underscoring their resignation to fate.

The mothers' nightly gatherings become a poignant ritual of shared grief and desperate hope. Each family tries unconventional remedies, from cayenne pepper to grated ginger, but none can halt the fever's march. Oga Tanko's futile attempt to freeze the illness away with air conditioners ends in a pile of broken units, symbolizing the community's powerlessness. The narrator's mother, ever resourceful, scours the internet for more solutions, reflecting the blend of tradition and modernity in their struggle.

The chapter closes with a sense of inevitability as the narrator, his sister, and mother confront the unspoken fear that he may be next. The sister's question about moving is met with resignation, emphasizing the family's emotional and financial ties to the

street. The narrator's quiet anxiety is palpable as he studies, his pen digging into the paper, mirroring the tension between normalcy and impending tragedy. The street's collective grief and the mothers' unwavering but futile efforts paint a haunting portrait of a community bound by loss.

