

WHITE PICKET FENCE

Written by

Andrew Anthony

Jack Monroe(M) - 60, Rough; large farmer/politician
Ken Sharpe(M) - Early 50's; a slight and bespectacled man
Sochi Monroe(F) - Mid-Late 20's; Estranged daughter to Jack
Adedewe Gharib(M) - Early 30's; Nigerian catholic minister
Sheriff Fingle(M) - 30's; Has known the Monroe's for years

Andrew Anthony
432 Westmount Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M6E 3N5
mr.andrewanthony@gmail.com
6475338009

Scene II - Buried Bones

The natural daylight in the kitchen casts shadows in a single direction; if they reach to Down Stage Left they will suddenly shift to Down Stage Right (and vice versa) to signify time passing.

Punctuating this change, the toaster POPS! And the pan on the island stove SPITS and SIZZLES.

SOCHI comes into the kitchen and bustles to set up plates and utensils. She puts the toasted bread on a plate and turns down the heat from the stove (the SIZZLING subsides).

She bends behind the island for a moment and comes back up with a pie: the unseen Up Stage face of the island has an oven.

SOCHI
(remarks the pie)
Damn...okay. "Okay".

SOCHI then removes the pan from the stove entirely and burns her right hand when setting it back down on the counter.

SOCHI (CONT'D)
Fuckin' sugardust!

ADEDEWE is at the entrance to the kitchen, he laughs.

SOCHI (CONT'D)
Ah. Morning. Yes.

ADEDEWE
Sugardust?

SOCHI
Yeah, for "Shit". My mom had alternatives to swearing that I picked up through osmosis.

ADEDEWE
You still said "Fuck".

SOCHI
Didn't have one for "Fuck". That one's special.

ADEDEWE
You've been busy.

SOCHI
Peace Pie! Last night was pretty rough.

ADEDEWE
Just confusing.

SOCHI comes around the island and extends a hand for shaking.

SOCHI
Sochi Monroe.

ADEDEWE
(accepts her hand)
Adedewe Gharib. I didn't know you
felt sorry.

SOCHI
Well, the misunderstanding and all.

ADEDEWE
This pie is an apology?

SOCHI
No, me making it is. I don't
normally do the atomic wife, "woman
in the kitchen" thing.

ADEDEWE
Oh, I...

SOCHI
It's like ancient bowing; to lower
your status and offer your neck for
decapitation. I'm subjugating
myself. You should feel very
humbled right about now.

ADEDEWE
Sharing food between kindred
spirits or strangers is quite the
opposite to subjugation.

SOCHI
Well, however you take it: there's
pie, bacon, pancakes, and eggs for
you. I went with some variety
because I don't know what you eat.
What you like to eat-I don't- "you
eat", I get that.

ADEDEWE
Thank you. I also felt sorry last
night. I will take the den this
afternoon - I apologize for the
complication.

SOCHI

No need to feel bad. Bacon?

ADEDEWE

It will upset my stomach.

SOCHI

Has a short temper, does it?

ADEDEWE

Sorry?

SOCHI

I'm being funny.

ADEDEWE

I didn't know you were funny.

SOCHI

I'm a riot. You'll come to see that once you're done being American-ized.

ADEDEWE

Where I come from, riots and subjugation bare different weight, so I am inclined to agree with you. "American-ized"?

SOCHI

Yes: Welcome! Land of opportunity; Opportunity knocks - The land where opportunity is from the school of hard knocks; The land of baseball and inside baseball: if you don't speak the lingo or share one of our fifty states of mind, you're "out".

(beat)

I'm a poet, by the way. Sorry for the freestyle rant, I'm not a very good one-

ADEDEWE

Oh?-

SOCHI

-Whatever-I'm just saying..."Welcome to America"...

ADEDEWE

Where making breakfast is degrading?

SOCHI

I think you're missing my point. I don't do the domestic housewife routine.

ADEDEWE

You made me a meal.

(Smiles)

I don't tidy my room and call it my maid routine.

SOCHI

So now everyone's a comedian.

ADEDEWE

Am I funny?

SOCHI

No. And it's my room.

ADEDEWE

Cooking is relaxing. Sharing food is beautiful.

SOCHI

It was a woman's duty for too long.

ADEDEWE

So you take no pleasure in making it your own? I think it's a kind and beautiful way to address the things that used to rule us.

SOCHI

Like taking back the "N" word?

ADEDEWE

The what?

SOCHI

(Gestures)

Come on. Don't make me say it.

ADEDEWE

(Gestures to himself)

Nigerian?

SOCHI

What? No. I...

(The penny drops)

So you are funny.

ADEDEWE eats his toast with a smile.

ADEDEWE

Am I to expect breakfast all week for that one?

SOCHI

Nope.

ADEDEWE

I don't think wifhood equates to slavery.

SOCHI

And I don't think only the 20th century encompasses a woman's history. But I'm not a bra burner and I'm no slave.

ADEDEWE

Nor am I. Let's appreciate this meal for such.

SOCHI

I'm sorry.

ADEDEWE

Yes, there is food.

SOCHI takes a piece of toast.

SOCHI

No, I'm more sorry. I was talking out of my hat with that women's lib rant.

ADEDEWE

I have learned this expression from Jack, "talking out of your hat". I don't know as many American expressions as I would like to; your idioms are interesting.

SOCHI

You're speaking just fine - it's not pretty, but polished.

ADEDEWE

The English I learned back home in the South Sudan was from Australian and British tutors. However interesting phrases like "talking out of your hat", I still learn from Jack.

SOCHI

He'd be the person to learn that from, for sure...

ADEDEWE

Full of wisdom.

SOCHI

Full of sugardust.

ADEDEWE

Jack is a genuine man.

SOCHI

And what is life like, having no sense of bowing your head? Having no need to subjugate to say "thanks" or apologize?

ADEDEWE

No man can say for certain if he is living life a certain way, only what he strives for.

SOCHI

What do you strive for?

ADEDEWE

(smiles content)

To be generous and transparent to others, as I hope the lord will be to me.

SOCHI

(enthusiasticly)

Good boy - good, good boy.

ADEDEWE

Pardon?

SOCHI

Nothing, just..."dogs". I'm just being a bitch. Fuck, now it's layered hilarity.

ADEDEWE

What? - Oh!

(pointing)

There is a flap on the door.

SOCHI

Good eye. It was for our actual dog, "Kennedy". Passed a long time ago, though.

(MORE)

SOCHI (CONT'D)

Noble like the guardians of Athens, he was. I visited the city last year and it was littered with dozens of feral, shabby dogs that lay out in the sun all day, and survive on the charity of others. They seemed depressed, or tired; they seemed like they were weak and dying; covered in flies and everything. It wasn't until the protests and riots escalated (and mind you, I was there in this blissful two week window without anything like that), but when passions flew, and riots happened, it was then that you'd realize those dogs were all the while conserving their energy. They would only bark and stand ground at men in riot gear; ever-protective for the common persons of the city - which the people needed at the time. It was so nice believing there was something bigger at play, you know? It was so nice thinking some cosmic force made something that beautifully random so organized and meaningful. One sunny day, on a hilltop amongst the Cyprus trees, a man pointed to the foggy; mountain-laced horizon with lightning and thunder booming in the distance and remarked: "No wonder they believed in Gods".

ADEDEWE

Where I grew up, between Tonj, and the Boma state - the struggle to live would deconstruct our humanity. I have seen the blade that carves a God-shaped hole in us. I have been challenged every day to believe in something bigger at play. There was the rich, and there was the poor, nothing in between. The rich in fact had guard dogs who lived better lives than we. Dogs that ate every day; rode in cars, and had shelter. Dogs of the rich with their own beds to sleep on while others in our village fit ten to a floor.

(MORE)

ADEDEWE (CONT'D)

I don't much like dogs, it is silly but so...If you looked at certain corners and horizons of my life, you would wonder: "What if more believed in God?".

SOCHI

Kennedy was a good dog in his prime, you'd have liked him. I grew up hearing legends of his pup days before bed but only ever got to meet him as a heavy, old hound. He was a lot like my gramps near the end; which is adorable: when dogs act like people, you know? Less cute the other way around.

ADEDEWE

People are not all so. I'm obedient to my beliefs and the lord. Piety and devotion are not subjugation.

SOCHI

Are you kidding? You're Jack's new pet.

ADEDEWE

I'm his friend.

SOCHI

Yeah, his "best friend".

(beat)

You won't know it till you hear more American expressions, but I'm still being funny.

ADEDEWE

Jack and I are our own men with our own agendas and we respect boundaries. One does not obey the other.

SOCHI

(shrugs)

He collected you; the farmer, he is. He plucked you from the dirt you lived in and brought you into this house. He's not interested in anything he can't chew on or consume.

ADEDEWE

I am not his new harvest.

SOCHI

He checked your teeth, cleaned you
up, and now you're best in show;
the Jack Monroe show: Vote for Jack
Monroe, God and Africa like him!
You should too!

ADEDEWE

Your apology has made me lose my
appetite.

ADEDEWE begins to leave the kitchen.

SOCHI

I'm sorry.

ADEDEWE

And please don't apologize to me
any more; you will have less to
apologize for.

SOCHI

You're a good man - at least you
seem to be. I just don't want you
to be abused or taken advantage of.
I don't want you to unwittingly be
under Jack's thumb just because he
rescued you-

ADEDEWE

(Hot, but not viscous)

The Sudan is not a dog pound. It is
God who will save me when I need
it.

SOCHI

Jack thinks he is God.

ADEDEWE

Then you don't know Jack!

SOCHI

(Beat)

Are you being funny?

ADEDEWE

No.

SOCHI

Sorry, it's just - never mind, I'll
tell you the phrase later - after
you explain how you could possibly
know my father better than me.

ADEDEWE

I tried. I spent time with that in mind and made an effort. You have spent a life time trying to do the very opposite. It was not hard to make more progress than you.

SOCHI

That's not how you get to know someone, that's how to buy what they're selling. You know someone by observing; seeing them when they don't know if you're watching.

ADEDEWE

Then I hope I still have a chance to properly meet you.

SOCHI

So I'm not good at first impressions!

ADEDEWE

This was your second.