

Calling You Back across the Atlantic

A Lagos Love Story of Promises,
Distance, and Destiny



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Short Book Description

Set against the backdrop of vibrant Lagos, *Calling You Back across the Atlantic* captures the tender, heart-wrenching crossroads of love, family, and ambition. When Emeka prepares to leave for Germany on short notice—driven by secret family spiritual warnings—he must break the news to his devoted girlfriend, Fola, a dedicated nursing student. Amidst maternal traditionalism, sweet promises of a shared future, and the painful silence of unspoken secrets, this moving story explores whether true love can survive the ocean between two worlds.

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Introduction: The Sounds of Eko

Lagos is a city that never stops singing. It hums through the calls of street vendors offering bus fare snacks, the rumble of traffic along the causeways, and the energetic melodies playing from battered battery-powered radios on sunlit verandas. It is a place where deep-rooted traditions walk hand-in-hand with dreams of far-off lands.

In the heart of this bustling metropolis, ordinary lives weave extraordinary stories. Love in Lagos requires resilience. It demands holding on to one another while navigating the pull of familial duty, cultural expectations, and the irresistible draw of opportunities abroad. This is the story of Emeka, Fola, and a mother whose faith in visions dictated the pace of their lives. It is a reflection on love spoken in soft promises, hidden behind quiet departures, and whispered across oceans.

Chapter 1: The Rhythms of the Wards

The clinic room smelled faintly of antiseptic and afternoon heat. Outside the window, the chorus of Lagos vibrated—vendors hawking hundred-naira *Eko* cornmeal cakes, the constant rhythm of yellow buses, and the endless energy of *Eko Akete*, the city of wisdom and life.

Inside, Mama sat comfortably in the examination chair, watching the young nurse wrap the black blood pressure cuff around her arm. Nearby, a small vintage radio sat on a side table.

"My wife and I have wanted this specific radio for a long time," Mama said, smoothing her traditional wrapper. She chuckled fondly. "Emeka, *nwam*—my son—tells me it is old school. He says I can just stream the music online. Don't mind him at all."

Fola smiled as she checked the gauge, her calm demeanor putting the older woman at ease. "Anything you need, just let me know, okay, Mama?" she asked gently.

"Are you sure?" Mama chuckled.

"Yes, Mama. But I need to take your blood pressure reading now." Fola raised a playful eyebrow. "Unless I'm talking too much?"

"Mama, now!" Fola added with warm familiarity, pumping the bulb. "You need to take it easy."

After a few quiet moments, Fola unclipped the cuff. "Thank God, at least your blood pressure is back to normal now."

"Mmm, thank God," Mama agreed, adjusting her clothes. "Ehen... should we cook that your *Efo riro* vegetable soup later? You know Emeka likes it very much."

"Okay, okay, Mama," Fola laughed, her heart warming at the mention of Emeka. "We'll cook it together."

To Mama, Fola was already family—she fondly called her *Nwuye nwam*, the wife of her son. The bond between them was effortless, built on shared meals, patient care, and a mutual affection for the young man who held their worlds together.

Chapter 2: Whispers in the Living Room

Later that day, the sun dipped lower, casting long amber shadows across the courtyard. Fola smoothed down her bright yellow nursing dress.

Emeka leaned against the doorframe, watching her with an affectionate gaze. Music played softly nearby, a sweet highlife tune humming through the air.

"Sister nurse, I really like this your yellow dress," Emeka said, a playful grin touching his lips.

"Thank you," Fola replied, trying to maintain her professional composure. "How are you?"

"I'm fine," Emeka murmured, stepping closer. "Smile for me. You know how you make my body feel. Dance for me... I just want to see my baby."

"Abeg, abeg, abeg," Fola teased, looking away with a modest laugh, though her cheeks flushed.

"You know I always tell you that you have the most beautiful eyes," Emeka whispered gently.

"Ehh? Even though it's the exact same thing you tell all those your small-small girls?" Fola teased back, adjusting her collar. "You think I don't know?"

"Which small girls?" Emeka protested dramatically. "You're the only one for me. Stop now. Look at how you're smiling, Fola baby."

"Leave me, jor," she giggled, pushing his hand away playfully.

Emeka's expression shifted, the lighthearted banter easing into a sudden, quiet seriousness. He took a breath.

"I'm leaving on Saturday. Four in the afternoon. Murtala Muhammed International Airport."

Fola stopped cold. The playful mood vanished instantly.

"What are you looking for there?" she asked, her voice dropping. "You've never seen an airplane before? Today is Wednesday, Emeka. And you're just telling me now? Me—your girlfriend?"

"Fola, it's not like that," Emeka pleaded, taking her hands. "Mama said I shouldn't tell anyone because of spiritual reasons. You know how she can be. She had a clear vision from God, and she forbade me from opening my mouth to anyone about going to Germany."

Fola looked at him, hurt mingling with disbelief. She thought of how close she was with his mother, how they had just discussed cooking together. Yet, a secret this massive had been kept behind closed doors.

Chapter 3: Fola Dollars

"Fola, come back," Emeka urged softly, pulling her closer as tears welled in her eyes. "We'll make it work. It's me and you against the world."

He cupped her face, searching her eyes for forgiveness.

"Look at me," he insisted. "When you finish nursing school, I'll find a way for you to come over. In fact, I'll come back for you myself, and we can go together. I promise you. No *oyinbo* girl over there is going to take me away from you."

Fola looked away, swallowing the lump in her throat. "You always know what to say."

"Listen to me," Emeka smiled tenderly. "In fact, I'm going to change your name to Fola Dollars. That way, you can have all my money and my heart. I'm going to miss doing this to you."

"See as your mouth is sweet," Fola whispered, half-laughing through a quiet tear. "I love you, Emeka."

"I love you, sister nurse," Emeka replied, kissing her forehead. "*Ifẹ mi*—my love."

He paused, remembering the heavy tension from moments before. "You said you wanted to tell me something earlier... what was it?"

Fola looked at him, holding back the secret or request she had carried all afternoon. Seeing his bags packed and his fate sealed for Saturday, she shook her head.

"It's nothing," she murmured. "Irrelevant now."

"Are you sure?"

"Affirmative, *ifé mi*," she whispered softly, burying her head in his chest. "Just don't leave me here by myself. What am I going to do without you here?"

Chapter 4: The Departure

Saturday arrived with the relentless pace of a Lagos afternoon. The air was thick, and the roads were already beginning to lock into the inevitable city traffic.

In the hallway, Mama checked over Emeka's luggage one last time.

"I hope you didn't forget anything," Mama said, eyeing his bags suspiciously. "Where is your passport?"

"It's inside," Emeka said.

"Bring it out, let me see," she commanded, waiting until he produced the navy booklet. She nodded in satisfaction.

"Ehen. The vision was clear from God. I hope you didn't open this your big mouth to tell anybody that you're going to Germany."

Emeka looked down, thinking of Fola's hurt eyes three days ago. "Mummy, I did not tell anybody."

He turned to grab his coat, remembering Fola's words. He asked himself quietly what she had held back from telling him. But the time for questions had run out.

"By the way," Mama asked, looking at him curiously, "how is your German?"

Emeka offered a faint, melancholy smile, speaking the words he wished he was saying to Fola: "*Es ist nicht so fast, dass du mich verstehst.*"

"Meaning?" Mama asked, frowning slightly.

"It means... I love you, Mummy," Emeka lied softly, keeping the true weight of his heart to himself.

"*Oda o,*" Mama said, gesturing toward the door. "Let's start going before the hold-up hooks us on the road."

Conclusion: An Echo Across the Sea

As the vehicle merged into the swirling chaos of Lagos traffic heading toward Murtala Muhammed International Airport, the city slipped past Emeka's window.

Back in the quiet clinic room, Fola stood by the window in her yellow dress, looking out at the sky. The radio played a soft song about sweet escapes, moonlight, and memories that linger long after a lover has gone.

Love under the stars of Lagos was easy; love across oceans was a test of faith. Emeka was stepping onto a plane into an uncertain cold European future, while Fola remained anchored to her dreams in Nigeria. Yet, beneath the sadness of departure remained a quiet, unyielding promise. Distance could alter their days, but it could not erase the voice calling out across the water—promising, against all odds, to always come back home.

Back Matter

Reflection Questions

1. How do cultural and maternal expectations influence individual choices in relationships, as seen through Emeka's secret?
2. What role does non-verbal communication play when Fola decides her news is "irrelevant now"?
3. In what ways does the setting of Lagos serve as a silent character in the story of Fola and Emeka?

Key Takeaways

- **Love Requires Transparency:** Secrecy, even when motivated by cultural or spiritual reverence, creates emotional strain between partners.
- **Resilience in Separation:** True emotional connection relies on promises built on mutual sacrifice rather than physical proximity.

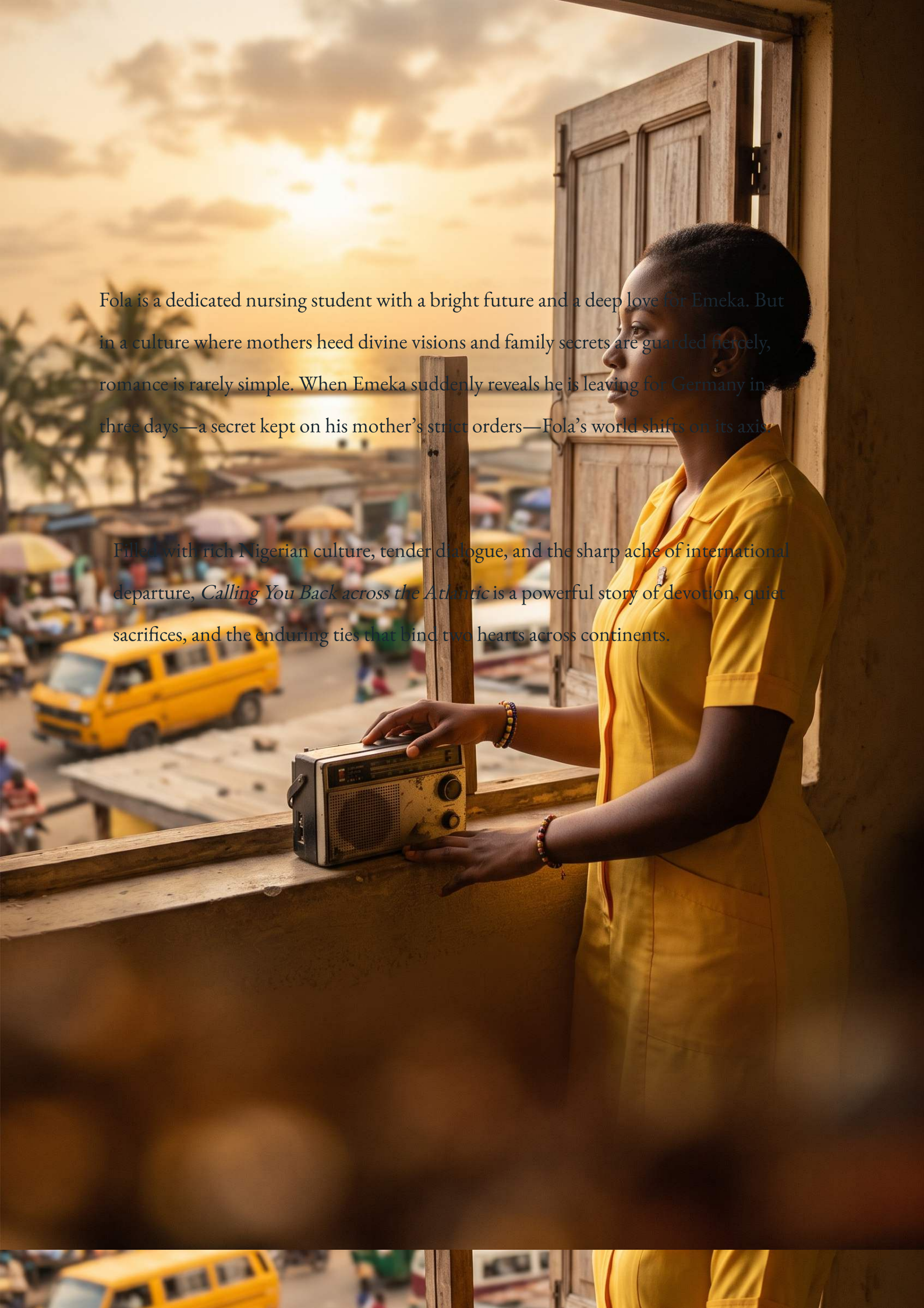
Book Keywords & Categories

10 Book Keywords:

1. Nigerian Romance
2. Lagos Love Story
3. African Diaspora Narrative
4. Long Distance Relationship
5. Contemporary African Fiction
6. Cultural Family Drama
7. Nollywood Romance Adaptation
8. Emotional Separation Story
9. Nursing Student Romance
10. West African Literature

Categories / Genres:

- Contemporary African Fiction
- Black & African American Women's Fiction
- Multicultural & Interracial Romance
- World Literature / Nigeria

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a bright yellow short-sleeved dress, stands in profile looking out of a large wooden-framed window. Her hands are resting on a vintage black and silver portable radio that sits on the wooden windowsill. She is wearing several colorful beaded bracelets on both wrists. Outside the window, a busy street scene is visible under a warm, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise. A yellow van is prominent in the foreground of the street, and other people and vehicles are blurred in the background. The overall mood is contemplative and nostalgic.

Fola is a dedicated nursing student with a bright future and a deep love for Emeka. But in a culture where mothers heed divine visions and family secrets are guarded fiercely, romance is rarely simple. When Emeka suddenly reveals he is leaving for Germany in three days—a secret kept on his mother’s strict orders—Fola’s world shifts on its axis.

Filled with rich Nigerian culture, tender dialogue, and the sharp ache of international departure, *Calling You Back across the Atlantic* is a powerful story of devotion, quiet sacrifices, and the enduring ties that bind two hearts across continents.