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Abdoulaye

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He soon finds the woman’s phone, new and hardly smudged by her clean fingers. Triumphant, he weighs it in his hand as if trying to guess its worth. It falls and hits the marble step, making him flinch. He picks it up – no damage.

He pulls a cigarette from his own pocket and lights it up, another new practice. The smoke curls into the night like breath in the winter, although tonight is warm and humid. Beside him, the phone vibrates suddenly, and he jumps up wildly. He recognizes the noise, settles back down, and glances at the text that has lit up the screen. *Where are you?* It says. He clicks it off, goes back to his cigarette.

It buzzes again:

*Where are you?*

He stares at the screen for a long time. Now he is shaking, though not from the nicotine.

“Stupid bitch,” he whispers as the embers fall and die.