DETAILED GUIDE NOTES FOR *DEAR MAMA* – EPISODE 1: "YOU DIED TOO SOON"

Author: Kinyanjui Kombani

Introduction

Episode One, *"You Died Too Soon,"* is the opening episode of *Dear Mama* and introduces readers to the emotional relationship between Kinyanjui Kombani and his late mother. The episode is written in the form of a letter addressed to his mother more than twenty years after her death. Through this letter, the author expresses his grief, love, regret, gratitude, and anger over losing his mother before she could witness his achievements. The episode establishes the foundation of the memoir by showing how the mother's love, sacrifice, and influence continued to shape the author's life long after her death.

Synopsis of the Episode

The episode begins with Kombani writing a heartfelt letter to his deceased mother. Although more than two decades have passed since her death, he confesses that he still misses her deeply and remains angry that she died too soon. He recalls their last meeting while he was still in school. His mother, despite being ill and struggling financially, insisted on visiting him. Since it was not a visiting day and she had no money, she borrowed transport fare to make the journey. During their meeting, she bought him chai and mandazi, yet she chose not to drink any tea herself. At the time, the moment appeared ordinary, but later it became one of the most treasured memories of his life. The author explains that his mother had survived several illnesses before, so neither of them expected her death. Sadly, she passed away before seeing him complete his education, join university, and achieve success as a writer. Kombani often imagines how proud she would have been of his accomplishments and wonders whether she watches over him from the sky like a star. By writing letters to her, he keeps her memory alive and hopes that his story will inspire young people facing challenges in life.

Setting

The episode is set in Kenya, with the most significant scene taking place at the school where Kombani studied. It is at this school that he has his final meeting with his mother. The narration itself takes place more than twenty years after her death as the author reflects on his life and memories. Through the