

NOLLYWOOD

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MERRITT WEAVER, a sharply dressed woman in her late twenties, stands at the head of a long, polished conference table in a movie studio office building.

On the big screen behind her is a concept movie poster titled: **Slacking With Delilah.**

The poster is comical, showing a man tripping to the ground with his pants around his ankles and a woman levitating over him with a mocking grin on her face.

Sitting at the table facing Merritt are two studio executives, an old timer, MARTY JACKSON (60's), and the younger CHARLES STEPHENSON (30's).

Merritt confidently presents her pitch for her film - a pitch she has practiced for weeks.

MERRITT

Slacking With Delilah is an irreverent rom-com that is quintessentially New York, filled with the trials, travails, anxieties, and over-analysis that populate the likes of Woody Allen or Lena Dunham's work, and I believe the relatable characters and funny-'cause-it's-true comedy will make it a hit at the box office considering the necessary budget is small, about 10 million.

Marty stares expressionless, and Charles makes a note of the budget before looking back up sternly. Merritt powers on.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

We already have star power attached. My good friend Kiley Kaine is on board to play a character very similar to ones she has played with great success on SNL.

Charles lightens up at this info and nods encouragingly.

Marty frowns, uninterested in the SNL connection.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

This production is also the perfect opportunity to snag an up and coming hot male talent that could be the launch of the next Hemsworth or Pine... or Evans... or Pratt.

Charles makes notes. Marty narrows his eyes considering that. He looks down at the production book Merritt provided them.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Also, the prominence of the sibling characters and parents will allow us to round out the cast with a fantastic ensemble. Gives us plenty of names to put on the poster. With the right talent on, your studio behind it, an early summer release next year before the superhero barrage, you're looking at a number one opening weekend on a movie with legs to pick up all the non-blockbuster movie goers for months. Slacking With Delilah. Thank you for your time.

Merritt finishes with a beaming, confident smile, folding her hands at her stomach.

The two execs stare at her with unreadable faces. Marty blinks and looks down at the production packet again. Charles smiles at her falsely.

CHARLES

I have a couple of questions.

Merritt nods and smiles.

MERRITT

Yes, please.

CHARLES

You emphasized the possible talent involved rather heavily. Why not sell us on the characters as they are on the page, not by who might play them?

MERRITT

(clearing her throat)

Well I think the story speaks for itself, and obviously finding the proper people to bring them to life is always a challenge, especially with romantic comedies such as these. With Kiley on board, we can easily get the other named talent in to the supporting roles.

Charles tightens his lips, doubtful. Marty speaks without looking up.

MARTY

It's generic. It's been done. Clumsy guy falls for hot girl he stands no chance with. He pursues her like a fool. She's endeared. A nice honeymoon phase before things go south. She cheats. He's heartbroken. They break up. Meet up again randomly a couple of years later, then bam. All is lovey-dovey again.

MERRITT

(trying to be polite)

It's more from the main female's perspective, and there is more to it than that. I mean--

MARTY

And one funny girl attached isn't going to get us big names, not at 10 mil.

MERRITT

Kiley is killing it on the indie scene--

Marty completely ignores Merritt. He slides the packet onto the table and leans back in his chair speaking to Charles.

MARTY

And filming in New York? It's been done to death. And the permits alone for all those landmarks would be half your budget.

CHARLES

(thinking)

We could consider filming out of state. Cut costs.

MARTY

It's no good.

Merritt stares dumbstruck as her hopes are dashed so easily.

CHARLES

(shaking his head)

I don't think this is going to work, Merritt.

MERRITT

The character arcs that the protagonists go through, and their relationships with their families are grounded in real life. These are real people--

CHARLES

So it's a character driven story, then?

MERRITT

Yes.

CHARLES

So the story doesn't--

MARTY

Charles, we're going in circles here. I have a lunch.

Marty stands up to leave, he patting Charles on the shoulder.

CHARLES

Nice to get a break from the superhero and reboot pitches though, right?

Marty groans then walks out.

Merritt looks desperately at Charles. Charles has sympathy, but it's over.

MERRITT

Charles... please.

CHARLES

Merritt, I like your shorts and your ads are really good. That BMW commercial was fantastic, but I'm not confident in your ability to stretch that out into a feature.

MERRITT

Can you at least read the script?

CHARLES

I'm not hooked, Merritt. I'm sorry.
I appreciate you coming in and all,
I always take Raven's
recommendations seriously but--

MERRITT

Please read the script. I'm
terrible at pitching, I don't think
I served the project justice.

CHARLES

(kindly)
If I have the time.

MERRITT

Just the first ten pages, you'll be
hooked then, I promise.

CHARLES

Thank you, Merritt.

Charles gestures to the door.

Merritt stands for a beat, not ready to leave - leaving now
is the end of it. She knows that.

Sadly, she gathers her things and leaves.

MERRITT

(quietly)
Thanks for your time.

Charles feels bad and watches her go.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - AFTERNOON

A NEW YORK CITY production studio lot - sound stages, golf
carts zipping around, manicured hedges, classic film posters.

The picturesque Movie World.

Merritt walks sadly through it holding her presentation
pieces.

She steps through the MAIN GATE and out into the
sidewalk/parking lot just outside the studio - the "Real
World", which is instantly dirtier and far less wonderful.

She crosses to her car - a fairly nice BMW.

INT. MERRITT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Merritt shoves her presentation into the back and plops into her seat.

She shuts her door and sticks her key in the ignition.

She leans forward and rests her head on the steering wheel sadly. She lifts her head and takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. MERRITT'S CAR - HEAVY TRAFFIC - LATER

Merritt is stuck in the classic New York City traffic. She speaks on the phone through the Bluetooth, on the other end is KILEY KAINE. She has a jovial, sultry voice.

MERRITT

--And the old guy just sat there staring at me like I was some sort of freak show. "What's this girl doing here?" I don't think he made eye contact with me once, except maybe my tits. And Charles, the other one? He just kept nodding and smiling. Ugh! Kiley! I blew it. Goddammit! I don't know what to do now. That was my only chance. That was my only chance--

KILEY (O.C.)

You want me to talk to one of them? I'm not that familiar with Charles, but I know that Marty guy. Old fart's been around forever.

MERRITT

No, Marty is definitely out. He left almost immediately after I finished.

KILEY (O.C.)

Jeez. That's rough.

MERRITT

I just don't know what to do now.

KILEY (O.C.)

Let's go out for lunch. I just have a quick thing for Vogue, but then I'll be free. Wanna meet in like an hour?

MERRITT
(defeated)
Sure.

KILEY (O.C.)
You're the best, Merr. I don't care
what that old fossil and his cabana
boy have to say. You're the best.

MERRITT
Thanks, Kiley.

The call ends. Merritt exhales and shakes her head.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

A nice place. The sort of establishment with cloth napkins
instead of paper ones. A soft Italian TUNE plays overhead,

Merritt and her friend - Merritt wolfs down a large bowl of
spaghetti.

Across from her sits Kiley, the hot, young redheaded actress.

KILEY
That's it. Eat your sorrows away.

MERRITT
(mouth full of noodles)
I feel like shit.

KILEY
I know. But it'll pass, and you're
going to hit it big. I know it.
It's gonna happen. No matter what
it takes. You'll make it happen.

MERRITT
How many women direct a feature a
year? Like five? And four of them
are some super small Oscar bait
movie that they don't even get
nominated for.

KILEY
What about Raven?

MERRITT
I don't wanna talk about Raven. She
doesn't count. She got her break in
New Zealand anyway, not Hollywood.

KILEY
Are you guys okay?

MERRITT
(dismissive)
We're fine.

KILEY
Merr? Come on, what's up?

Merritt finishes chewing and stares at her plate. She's full.

MERRITT
I've just been making shorts and commercials for the last six years.

KILEY
So? There's no deadline on making your first feature. You're still working toward it, one thing at a time. And that BMW commercial was literally the best ad in history.

MERRITT
There IS a deadline. I don't have time to wait until I'm forty to break through. Everything is moving so fast and I want to be a part of it.

KILEY
You are a part of it. Just be patient. Good things happen. You're just better than everyone. They can't see your movie the way you do. It's a problem all geniuses have.

MERRITT
Ugh, stop with the platitudes. I'm not a genius.

KILEY
I dunno. Making a BMW ad without actually having a BMW car in it? That's pretty genius.

A CHUBBY MAN walks nervously up to the table, his phone in his hand.

CHUBBY MAN
Hi, um. I'm so sorry to bother you, but you're Kiley Kaine right?

KILEY
 (smiling kindly)
 I am.

CHUBBY MAN
 Oh man. I'm sorry to just come over
 here, but I loved you so much on
 SNL. You're so funny. Oh jeez.

KILEY
 Thank you. What's your name?

CHUBBY MAN
 Dale.

KILEY
 You want a picture, Dale?

CHUBBY MAN
 Oh my god, really? Oh jeez. This is
 exciting. I'm excited.

KILEY
 Come on.

Kiley stands and puts her arm around the Chubby Man, his
 hands shake as he snaps a selfie. Kiley turns his hand around
 to look at the photo.

KILEY (CONT'D)
 Oh, we can do better than that.

She makes a face and the Chubby Guy smiles in wide-eyed
 excitement.

CHUBBY MAN
 Thank you so much. I'm such a big
 fan. You're so funny.

KILEY
 And I'm a fan of yours, Dale. Have
 a good night.

CHUBBY MAN
 Thank you. Oh jeez, thank you so
 much. This was very exciting.

The Chubby Man hurries away beaming as Kiley sits back down.

KILEY
 He was cute.

MERRITT
 It's definitely a woman thing.

KILEY

What?

MERRITT

I mean how many rom-coms get made a year? There's like two a month. Just let me make one. What's the big deal? It's not like I'm some new director who nobody is familiar with. I've directed sketches, I've made shorts. I've made people laugh. And it's always the same bullshit excuse. "Oh it seems so generic", "I'm not confident in your ability to stretch this out into a feature". I can guarantee you there will be a movie released next year that's basically just a worse version of Slacking with Delilah with a random ass dude directing it.

KILEY

Probably.

MERRITT

I'm so frustrated.

KILEY

Yes, you are.

MERRITT

What does it take?

KILEY

You know what? I say you call that Charles guy right now, and you tell him that.

MERRITT

I should.

KILEY

Seriously, you're right. There aren't enough women doing these stupid films. YOU should get to do one too.

MERRITT

Yeah!

KILEY

It'll probably be way less stupid!

MERRITT

Probably?

KILEY

Definitely! Call that guy up. You say, "Charlie, we're doing this with or without you. Don't pass up this chance!"

MERRITT

Yeah!

Merritt digs out her phone and holds it up just as it rings. She takes it out and looks at the display. Her eyes widen.

KILEY

Who is it?

MERRITT

It's... uh... it's Charles.

KILEY

Charlie Charles?

MERRITT

Yes!

KILEY

Well answer it!

Merritt is about to press the button.

KILEY (CONT'D)

Wait!

Merritt pauses.

MERRITT

What!?

Kiley fumbles around in her bag.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

KILEY

One second.

Kiley pulls out tangled earbuds. She quickly plugs it into Merritt's phone as she answers it while plugging an earbud into her ear. Kiley listens in with the other earbud.

MERRITT

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHARLES' OFFICE - DAY

Charles sits back in his leather chair. Merritt's script open in front of him.

CHARLES

Hey... Merritt, it's Charles.

MERRITT

Yeah, uh, yeah? Thanks for calling. I wasn't really expecting to hear from you again.

CHARLES

So, my lunch date canceled on me, and since I had the time, I took a look through the opening of your script.

Kiley looks at Merritt, excited.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And I loved it. I thought I'd give you another shot at pitching it. I usually don't call so soon after reading just the opening, but I mean, truly, it's exceptional. There's a voice here that I don't think we get enough of. You're a female writer and director? You should've included that in your pitch.

Kiley rolls her eyes.

KILEY

(whispering)

They couldn't SEE that when you were right in front of them?

Kiley looks down Merritt's shirt.

KILEY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I mean, that's a healthy amount of cleavage.

Merritt shushes Kiley and speaks into the phone.

MERRITT

I'm a terrible pitcher. Sorry.

CHARLES

It's okay. But this is good stuff.
It's fun. It's cute. It's got a
nice spin on the same old thing.

MERRITT

Thank you. That means a lot.

CHARLES

So let me tell you what's gonna
happen next. I'm going to finish
this script. My assistant will send
you an email with any notes I might
have. Rework your pitch, and we'll
reschedule. I'll get a couple of
other producers in the room as
well. I know some guys who are
looking for a project like this
right now.

MERRITT

Oh my god. Thank you so much,
Charles.

CHARLES

My pleasure, Merritt. I'll see you
very soon.

MERRITT

Yes, thank you. I'll see ya.

She hangs up.

Merritt and Kiley simultaneously scream in excitement turning
heads around the restaurant.

KILEY

That's right! You go girl! This
movie is getting made!

MERRITT

Oh my god! Oh my god!!

A TALL MAN nervously walks up to the table - another Kiley
fan holding his cellphone.

TALL MAN

Excuse me. You're Kiley Kaine,
right?

Kiley puts her arm around the guy and yanks him down to her
and Merritt's level. She forces the Tall Guy's phone up and
snaps a selfie of her and Merritt beaming excitedly.

The Tall Guy is crammed in between them with a bewildered look on his face.

Kiley shoves him away.

KILEY
(quickly to the guy)
And I'm a big fan of yours too.

TALL MAN
(dazed)
Thanks?

KILEY
(to Merritt)
My friend, the genius!

Kiley and Merritt continue to celebrate. Kiley raises a glass of wine to her friend. Merritt smiles with an anxious stare.

INT. MERRITT'S HOUSE - DAY

Merritt's townhouse is cozy. It has the slight mess of a creative's home, with shelves of books and records, framed art on the wall. It's an old building with modern decor.

Merritt closes the door behind her as she hurries in.

MERRITT
Raven! You home?

Merritt peeks into the living room and then heads up the stairs to--

INT. MERRITT AND RAVEN'S BEDROOM - SAME

RAVEN STANTON, a punky, tatted woman with short blue hair in her early thirties sits at a desk, headphones on, typing a screenplay on her laptop. Merritt enters. Raven doesn't hear.

MERRITT
Raven?

Merritt sneakily walks up behind Raven. She taps her on both shoulders, causing Raven to jolt up in the shock. She has a New Zealand accent.

RAVEN
Jesus Christ, Merritt.

Raven takes off her headphones.

MERRITT
(grinning ear to ear)
Working hard?

RAVEN
Yup. I'm on a roll. I was stuck all week, and this morning, the muses just - WHOOSH! It's all just coming out now. I think this one will work back on the islands. I could totally cut cost filming the dragon boat chase off the coast. And the break dance fight might need the bush. Ugh! It's too good! What's up?

MERRITT
You've really sold out haven't you.

RAVEN
Huh?

MERRITT
Whatever. I have news.

RAVEN
The pitch! Oh my gosh, I completely forgot! How did it go?

MERRITT
(blurting it out)
Charles is interested!

RAVEN
What? That's amazing!

Raven hugs her.

MERRITT
He said he'd bring in a few producers and I should rework the pitch.

RAVEN
(smile falling)
Wait, they didn't option it? You haven't actually gotten funding?

MERRITT
Well, no. Not yet. I mean...

Merritt's self doubt threatens to return. Raven amps up her joy, but it rings false.

RAVEN
Hey, it's progress! He's
interested! That's a big step!

MERRITT
Yeah, it's a big step.

RAVEN
Just... Nothing is final. Don't get
too ahead of yourself.

Merritt, looking slightly demoralized, walks over to the bed
and lies down.

MERRITT
You're such a downer.

RAVEN
I just don't want you to think
anything is actually going to
happen yet. You know this business.
Things fall apart like that.

Raven snaps her fingers.

MERRITT
Yeah, yeah. But I feel good about
this. You've read the script.
Charles said he loved the first ten
pages.

RAVEN
It's a solid script.

MERRITT
Thank you for getting me the
meeting by the way. It paid off.

RAVEN
Yep.

MERRITT
Does he know we're together?

RAVEN
Who?

MERRITT
Charles.

RAVEN
No, I don't think so.

MERRITT
You don't think so?

RAVEN
I never told him. Somebody else
might've. I dunno. Things get
around. Why?

MERRITT
Just asking.

RAVEN
You want people to think you're the
hot new thing, huh?

Merritt shrugs nonchalantly.

MERRITT
A lot of women are going to want to
have sex with me and we want them
to think they can.

RAVEN
Well, when you put it that way. I
understand.

MERRITT
It's only until I have my first
Oscar.

Raven throws a PILLOW at Merritt. They laugh. Merritt reaches
out to take Raven's hand.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
Lay down with me.

RAVEN
I'm on a roll here.

Merritt stretches out on the bed.

MERRITT
Pleasseee.

RAVEN
Take a nap. I'll join you later.

Merritt releases Raven's hand and curls up on the bed. Raven
puts her headphones back on and continues typing.

INT. MERRITT AND RAVEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Merritt stands between the couch and TV, practicing her pitch to Raven, who's slouched on the couch.

MERRITT

Slacking with Delilah is a mystical romantic comedy centered around Delilah Phoenix, a spiritual and open postgrad student who doesn't believe in love, but she does believe in lust. She's had hookups and flings, but once all her friends move away to start their own lives, Delilah feels alone and confined. As many of us have after our college years. She struggles to find a job, but her parents are happy to bring her back home--

RAVEN

Stop. Stop. Stop.

MERRITT

What?

RAVEN

This is boring. Spice it up.

Merritt sighs in exasperation.

MERRITT

How?

RAVEN

Don't give a rundown of the story from act one to three. Explain the essence, make us connect to the events unfolding. Everything sounds generic right now.

MERRITT

Everybody keeps saying that.

RAVEN

It's because you aren't selling the concept.

MERRITT

Maybe there's nothing there to sell.

RAVEN

You can sell anything. Paul Thomas Anderson sold a movie about an oilman building a city.

MERRITT

There's more--

RAVEN

Exactly. There's more to the movie than that. Get to the more.

MERRITT

Okay... Fine.

Merritt thinks for a moment then clears her throat.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Slacking with Delilah is a satire about clashing cultures between generations--

RAVEN

Nope. Seen it.

MERRITT

(huffing)

Maybe I don't have an original story then.

RAVEN

Maybe not.

MERRITT

At least a movie about an oilman building a city has never been done before.

RAVEN

You have to transfer the voice in your script to the voice you use in your pitch. Don't aim for story. Don't even aim for theme, because it is still familiar and not that engaging.

MERRITT

The voice is Delilah.

RAVEN

Right. And who is she?

MERRITT

She's open minded. Free spirited.
Lost in her own beliefs and values.

RAVEN

What's her goal?

MERRITT

To find someone. Love.

RAVEN

I thought she doesn't believe in
love.

MERRITT

She wants to. She's confused about
who she is.

RAVEN

Finding love isn't a goal. It's a
result.

MERRITT

She wants to be a part of
something, but her personality
pushes new people away. She wants
people to like her, but she doesn't
even like herself - doesn't even
know herself.

RAVEN

Okay, now I'm interested. That's
relatable.

MERRITT

It's a coming of age story. Her
friends are engaged or married or
having kids. They have careers and
mature lives, and she's just out
there getting by. She's surrounded
by people more mature than she is.

RAVEN

But they aren't. They just comply
with the norm.

MERRITT

She just wants to belong somewhere.
She wants to find a place where
everybody is like her.

RAVEN

Then she meets Tom.

MERRITT

And she thinks Tom is just like her. It's perfect. They have a great time together...

(cutting her momentum)

Are you sure I shouldn't talk about the family?

RAVEN

No! It'll confuse things. Don't lose this. Keep going. Get to the twist.

MERRITT

Okay. It turns out Tom was just conforming to what Delilah wanted to see in him. He wasn't like her at all. Tom was just a boring accountant working a nine to five job. Delilah's still lying to herself about who she is. She can't wrap her head around how she couldn't see it. All the clues were in front of her, and she feels lied to. They break up. It's over. Boom. Just as fast as it started. And Delilah sees now that she just has to grow up and stop pretending she's still a kid.

Raven nods. Merritt's energy is good. She's selling well.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

We jump ahead five years. Delilah is working as a secretary in a major corporation, she comes across Tom. Who is now in a band. And the two talk about rekindling their relationship...

(she stops)

I dunno, it still sounds kind of generic. Shit. Did I write a generic-ass script?

RAVEN

Conceptually? Yes. But this will sell.

MERRITT

You sure?

RAVEN

Yes, Charles has read the first ten, the voice and point of the movie is clearer. I think you have a good shot. But you need to think about changing one thing to take all this derivative bullshit and turn it into something people haven't seen and didn't know they wanted to see.

MERRITT

What's that?

Raven grins and shakes her head at how obvious it is.

RAVEN

Tom shouldn't be a guy. Tom should be a girl.

Merritt stares blankly at Raven.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Early in the morning, Merritt is pulling on her outfit for her pitch. Raven is asleep in the bed.

Merritt stares at herself in the mirror. Through the reflection, she sees the SHELF OF AWARDS Raven has over her desk.

It is a collection of writing awards with Raven's name carved on plaques and trophies. Two of them stand out, almost glistening in Merritt's face.

The double whammy. An Oscar for Best Original Screenplay beside the Oscar for Best Director.

Merritt stares. It is intimidating. She pulls her SHIRT over her head to block them out of her vision.

She walks over to the bed and gently touches Raven's back.

MERRITT

Alright, I'm leaving.

Raven rubs her eyes.

RAVEN

(groggily)
Good luck. Call me after.

Merritt and Raven kiss. Merritt leaves.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Merritt is concluding her pitch. Charles sits in the room along with TWO PRODUCERS: SAMUEL, a handsome man in his forties, and LENNY, a graying man in his late fifties.

MERRITT

--as relateable as any romance and coming of age, but it's for this generation - for this era we all live in now. It has deceit, constant conflict of values, and despite what the concept art may tell you, it is grounded in realism. With a moderate proposed budget of ten million, and already with Kiley Kaine attached, I believe that Slacking with Delilah will be an easy turn around hit, as well as a movie that can generate conversation about the true purpose of life and why our core beliefs change as we age and as the world changes. Thank you for your time.

Charles smiles and offers a polite clap.

CHARLES

Thank you, Merritt.
(turning to his
colleagues)
Well? What'd you guys think?

SAMUEL

(thoughtful)
I like it. It's new. It's a new take on the tired genre. I could see that working.

LENNY

(skeptical)
We have a rom-com on the slate already. Similar to this. And that one's a blacklist script.

CHARLES

Not like this, Len.

LENNY

It's similar enough.

SAMUEL

We might not have any room on our slate right now, but we could make room.

LENNY

That one's going into production immediately to get it out in the spring.

CHARLES

Fair enough. But this has spirit. This has something unique no one else is offering. Plus a female writer and director.

Merritt smiles.

LENNY

(shaking his head)

I'm just not comfortable with two romantic films in development at the same time.

SAMUEL

Kaine is on the rise. We'd get heat from her.

LENNY

(decided)

No, I'm sorry, Miss Weaver. If you would have pitched this two days ago, I would have been very interested, but I don't think we're looking for another rom-com.

CHARLES

Sam?

SAMUEL

I love the angle. I really do. Two women. It's fresh. It's modern.

LENNY

I don't see the angle working here. It's confusing. She's straight. She's gay. There's a guy. There's a girl in the end. It's too confusing.

SAMUEL

No, no it's a good gimmick. Gay film is on the rise.

MERRITT

It's not really intended to be a gimmick. It's not a "gay film." It's about a girl trying to figure out who she is, not just romantically, but emotionally--

LENNY

(holding up a hand)

I don't need you to rehash the story for me. I just don't see this concept getting butts in seats. If anything, it'll infuriate the audience more than entertain them. We'll have the conservative movie goers putting up a stink about it being a gay movie.

SAMUEL

I don't think that's a fair assessment, Lenny.

CHARLES

(offering)

No such thing as bad press. It would just make headlines and probably get some reactionary sales from the liberal millennials.

LENNY

Just my opinion. We got our finances in the O'Neil script.

Merritt takes a deep breath. Charles gives her a consoling look.

SAMUEL

I'm sorry, Merritt. It's just the timing and the finances.

LENNY

(offhandedly)

Unless you can film the movie in a week for five hundred K and have it ready for a holiday season release.

Samuel laughs at the notion.

SAMUEL

I wish you the best of luck, I like the idea, truly.

Samuel shakes Merritt's hand.

MERRITT

Thank you for your time.

Lenny, without saying a word, shakes Merritt's hand and nods, then exits the room with Samuel.

CHARLES

I'm sorry, Merritt. I really thought you'd win them over.

MERRITT

Yeah. Just not the time, I guess.

CHARLES

Your pitch was amazing though. If I can think of any friends over at another studio that might be interested, can I send them your info?

MERRITT

(half-hearted)

Yeah, thanks.

CHARLES

Keep in touch, okay? You know your way out?

Merritt nods. She begins to leave and stops.

MERRITT

How long do you need to distribute?

CHARLES

What do you mean?

MERRITT

How late can you set a release date?

CHARLES

(thinking a moment)

Five, six months would be the latest we could do.

MERRITT

For the holidays?

CHARLES

Yes. That's a packed schedule. But, we're six months out, so it could get done. Why?

Charles looks at her carefully. He can see she her mind is racing, but the steam goes out, and Merritt shakes her head.

MERRITT

No. Nothing. Never mind. Thanks for the opportunity, Charles.

CHARLES

Alright. Well, see ya around, Merritt.

Charles and Merritt shake hands, and she leaves.

INT. MERRITT'S KITCHEN - DAY

Merritt and Raven have a bowl of spaghetti out in front of them. Raven calmly eats as Merritt rants.

MERRITT

I mean didn't he know that he was going to be pitched a rom-com? But no! Yesterday he options a goddamn blacklist script from some asshole who just got lucky before me.

RAVEN

Maybe it was the writer-director angle. Producers don't always like writers who want to direct their own stuff. They're harder to push around.

MERRITT

I'm a nobody! I'd be SO easy to push around!

RAVEN

I'm sorry, babe.

MERRITT

And then he says "if you can film the movie in a week for five hundred K." Who the hell does he think he is?

RAVEN

Wait.

MERRITT

I really thought I had the Sam guy won over, but that prick is just smug as shit.

RAVEN
Shut up. Did he really say that?

MERRITT
Say what?

RAVEN
That he'd give you five hundred thousand if you can film the movie in the one week?

MERRITT
Well, he didn't phrase it like that, but yeah, I guess.

RAVEN
Dude! Take that offer!

MERRITT
What?

RAVEN
Make the damn movie in a week. You got an offer! Take that fucking offer!

MERRITT
I think it was a joke.

RAVEN
Producers don't joke when it comes to budget and schedule.

Merritt scoffs.

MERRITT
I can't make a movie in a week. I mean, the pre-production will take a month.

RAVEN
Why?

MERRITT
Why? Cause I'm not hacking out a short in high school.

RAVEN
One week is plenty of time. One day for casting--

Merritt scoffs again.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

--then film twelve to thirteen pages a day.

MERRITT

Do you know how many locations I have?

RAVEN

Rewrite it.

MERRITT

You're out of your mind.

RAVEN

No! YOU are! You're passing up an opportunity. It's five hundred thousand dollars. A distributor in your pocket. It'll be an incredible turn around, but you can do it! And when you pull it off, not only will they be able to market on the damn good script, but they have miles of traction that you did it in a week! You'll be able to do whatever you want for the rest of your career.

MERRITT

I'm not going to be able to make a movie in one week in this city. With the permits and the--

RAVEN

You don't make it in this city! That old dude was right; the permits would be too damn much.

MERRITT

Then where?

With a glint of excitement in her eyes Raven stares at Merritt.

INT. SAMUEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Samuel sits at his cluttered desk across from Merritt and Charles. Charles is grinning - enthusiastic about the potential of Merritt's proposal.

Merritt is very nervous, but more determined than ever. Samuel is in the middle of a laugh.

SAMUEL

Nigeria?

MERRITT

Yes, Nigeria.

SAMUEL

Who's brilliant idea was this?

CHARLES

Merritt's. It's crazy, but it's
crazy smart.

MERRITT

They make movies there in three,
four days all the time.

CHARLES

And the costs are microscopic
compared to shooting in the states.

SAMUEL

Yes, but have you seen the quality?

MERRITT

None of them come even close to
having the budget I'll have. The
work is cheap, the locations are
free, You give me a set of ARRI's
and we'll make it look like a
million bucks.

SAMUEL

You sound like a film school
student.

CHARLES

You're going to have to do a major
script rewrite, Merritt.

MERRITT

I don't think too many, really.
Locations, and I'll change the
names to be Nigerian. Kiley is
still on board, so there will still
be a face to sell the film.

CHARLES

It's an incredibly safe investment
for us, Sam. Even if the movie
makes just ten million.

Samuel sits back.

SAMUEL

I can't believe I'm seriously considering this.

CHARLES

A first time director. A super hot SNL cast member. Gay girl coming to terms with her sexuality in a foreign land. The first Hollywood, Nollywood co-production. We'll be making history.

Samuel chuckles.

SAMUEL

Jesus Christ. Okay. Let's do this. I'll make a couple calls.

Charles claps his hands. Merritt smiles.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(holding up finger)

But I do have one request.

MERRITT

Yes, anything.

SAMUEL

We bring in a small behind the scenes crew. I think the documentary about the making of this film will sell more than the actual film.

CHARLES

Love it.

MERRITT

Yeah sure, sure. That's fine.

Samuel smiles.

SAMUEL

It's a deal then.

Samuel and Merritt shake hands.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Charles is your contact. You keep him in the loop on every single detail.

CHARLES

Perfect.

SAMUEL

I'll find you a line producer and a-

MERRITT

No, save the money. I'll get one in Nigeria. I just need the money for travel and hotel expenses.

SAMUEL

Okay... I want a detailed schedule and budget breakdown on my desk yesterday. I'll get this in the grinder as soon as you walk out that door.

CHARLES

Fantastic.

SAMUEL

You're crazy, you know that, right? And I think I might be just as crazy green lighting this, but I like you, Merritt. And I love this script.

MERRITT

Thank you.

They shake hands again.

INT. KILEY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Merritt and Kiley sit on the couch of Kiley's rather lavish, high rise apartment. Kiley is staring at Merritt with a look of half disbelief and half utter amusement etched on her face.

KILEY

Nigeria?

MERRITT

Raven's filmed overseas for nearly everything she's made, and the industry there is super enthusiastic, especially for big names to come there and produce.

KILEY

Does that mean my costar is going to be Nigerian?

MERRITT

Uh... Well yeah. I'm assuming.

KILEY

Nice.

Merritt stares at Kiley.

MERRITT

Are you okay with this?

KILEY

Oh, I'm thrilled. This is going to be the most insane thing I've ever done.

MERRITT

Because you don't have to do this. I can just cast your part local too.

KILEY

Are you kidding me? You wrote this thing for me! I'm not letting anyone take my part! And making me gay now? That's Oscar bait!

MERRITT

Don't be weird about this.

KILEY

Being weird is my thing, Merr! That's what I'm all about! And this is crazy, and I love it, and I can't wait to get weird with you in Nigeria! Hahah!

Kiley tackles Merritt into a bone crushing hug.

INT. MERRITT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Raven sits up in bed late at night, typing on her laptop as Merritt sits at the desk, also typing. They are both focused on their respective screenplays.

Merritt's eyes lift from her computer and glance up at the shelf of Raven's awards. She smiles determinedly and returns to her keyboard.

RAVEN

Hey.

Merritt turns to Raven.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

I'm super proud of you, you know that?

Merritt turns out of her chair and falls into bed with Raven. They hold one another.

MERRITT

Thank you for believing in me.

RAVEN

(smiling)

You're going to be amazing. I want to hear every detail as it's happening. Live updates. Constant. I demand it!

MERRITT

I'll only be gone a week.

RAVEN

I know. And when you get back you'll have a whole film ready to cut.

Merritt smiles. The two kiss, as she releases Raven--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. LAGUARDIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

--the sidewalk/cab area of Lagaurdia International. Merritt and Raven give one another one final kiss and hug, and Merrit walks into the airport. Raven watches her go.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Merritt sits in the middle seat, working seriously on her screenplay. Kiley is asleep to her left and another ATTRACTIVE WOMAN is asleep to her right.

Kiley's head falls onto Merritt's shoulder. Merritt looks over, when suddenly she flinches.

She looks over to her left and sees that the Attractive Woman's head has also fallen onto her shoulder.

Merritt closes her eyes centering herself, then starts typing on her laptop again.

INT. MURTALA MUHAMMED AIRPORT - LAGOS - DAY

Merritt, looking exhausted, walks beside Kiley as they drag their luggage through the busy airport.

MAN (O.S.)

Merritt!

Merritt turns around. A man, RICK NEWTON (30's), jogs up to Merritt carrying a large backpack.

He is an American - a documentary filmmaker who has the appearance of someone who is used to running and gunning - torn jeans, stubble, and a tan.

RICK

Hey. Rick Newton. I'm gonna be directing the behind the scenes.

MERRITT

Oh, great to meet you.

Rick looks behind him as two other men, dragging much larger bags filled with heavy equipment, walk up.

RICK

This is Jeff. Our cameraman.

JEFFREY, the bearded cameraman waves.

RICK (CONT'D)

And Peter. Our sound guy.

PETER, the tall sound guy waves.

MERRITT

Nice to meet you guys.

KILEY

I'm Kiley!

RICK

Hi, Kiley. Loved you on SNL.

Kiley smiles as she and Rick shake hands.

MERRITT

Pretty small crew, huh?

RICK

Yeah, last minute arrangement. You know how it is. It'll be guerrilla film making for sure.

MERRITT

You and me both.

RICK

Hotel isn't far from here. You two need to grab any bags?

MERRITT

Yeah.

RICK

Baggage claim is this way.

Rick leads them down the terminal.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

A CAB DRIVER helps Kiley and Merritt put their luggage in the trunk.

Note: Throughout Merritt's time in Lagos, all characters introduced are black and speak with a Nigerian accent unless otherwise specified.

INT. CAB - DAY

The Cab Driver drives down the busy streets of Lagos.

CAB DRIVER

First time in Nigeria?

MERRITT

Yeah... yeah first time.

CAB DRIVER

Americans, right? What brings you to our country?

MERRITT

We're actually making a movie.

CAB DRIVER

Ooooh. Hollywood people! I like. I like. We big movie buffs here. Movies are made here all the time.

MERRITT

I know. Nollywood. I've watched a lot of documentaries on it.

CAB DRIVER

No, not documentaries. Real movies. We make real movies here. People here very enthusiastic about movies. You will have a good time. Plenty of movie makers who can help you. You'll have a good time.

MERRITT

I hope so.

CAB DRIVER

If you need a cab, I'll be your cab driver. I'd look good on the big screen. This is a face made for the movies. What do you do for the movie?

MERRITT

I'm directing. She's an actress.

CAB DRIVER

Actress! Beautiful! Of course you are. I'll be your costar. I'm very handsome, no?

KILEY

(happily)

I would be the luckiest girl in Nigeria.

The Cabbie laughs with Kiley. Merritt, exhausted, shakes her head as they zip through traffic.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Outside of an average looking hotel not much different from any interstate motel, the Cab Driver helps Kiley and Merritt take out their luggage. Merritt hands the Driver some money.

MERRITT

Keep the change.

CAB DRIVER

Oh thank you very much ma'am. You let me know about being your leading man, right? Haha! No, I have my cab to drive. You two have a great time here. Good luck with your movie, my friends!

KILEY

Thanks, Joe.

CAB DRIVER
I'll be looking for your face on
the posters, Miss Kiley!

The Cab Driver gets back in his cab and drives off as Merritt and Kiley walk into the entrance of the hotel--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MERRITT AND KILEY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Merritt walks into a mediocre sized hotel room with two beds, a desk and a small TV. Merritt looks it over. It's fine, though far from impressive.

MERRITT
Sorry we can't get two rooms.

KILEY
It's okay. We can have some girl on
girl bonding time... I mean... not
like THAT kind of girl on girl,
but, you know, we can at least have
a naked pillow fight.

MERRITT
Raven will demand pictures.

Kiley flops onto her bed.

KILEY
I claim this bed in the name of
Kiley Kaine!

MERRITT
Got it.

A KNOCK at the door.

Merritt answers it. It's Rick, Jeffrey and Peter. Jeffrey holds a camera out, as Peter holds a mic. Kiley perks up seeing the guys. Merritt is caught off guard.

RICK
Hey, so do you mind if we start?

MERRITT
Oh jeez. Now?

RICK
Well, we're only here for a week.

MERRITT

Right, I was actually going to go a local production company. See if I can find a line producer. And some local crew.

RICK

Perfect! We'll follow you.

MERRITT

Yeah, uh, sure. Cool.

RICK

Great.

KILEY

Want some company?

MERRITT

Hold on, Kiley, you should get some rest.

KILEY

I'm not tired. I'm hungry though...

MERRITT

(to Rick)

I want to get my checklist and--

Rick and his crew walk into the room.

RICK

You rolling, Jeff?

JEFFREY

Rolling.

RICK

Peter?

Peter gives a thumbs up.

RICK (CONT'D)

Great. So, Merritt, just say a few words. You just landed. Give us a run down of the schedule you got planned.

MERRITT

Uhh... should I like change or fix my hair or--

RICK

No, no, no this is great. Raw.
Realistic. The true experience.

Kiley jumps up and quickly primps herself at the wall mirror.
Merritt clears her throat then looks into the camera.

POV - CAMERA

MERRITT

We just landed literally ten
minutes ago. We're spent.

Merritt turns to look at Kiley who is posing and smiling.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

That's Kiley. Our main actress.

KILEY

(enthusiastic)
How amazing is this!

MERRITT

I'm heading out to a local
production company I've been in
contact with here in Lagos, and
we're going to see if we can
wrangle up some local crew members.
We got eight days to make a movie,
let's see how it goes...
(to Rick)
How was that?

BACK TO SCENE.

RICK

Good. Good. You're a natural.

EXT. GREEN WIND PRODUCTIONS - DAY

Merritt walks up the steps to a small, rundown, two-story
building. The behind the scenes crew tags along behind her,
always filming. Merritt passes a plaque next to the entrance
door reading: **Green Wind Productions.**

She enters.

INT. GREEN WIND PRODUCTIONS - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Merritt walks up to the reception desk where a RECEPTIONIST
looks up and smiles.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi. Yaya zan iya taimaka ma ku.

MERRITT

Hi. Is Mongo here? Mongo Chikwe.

RECEPTIONIST

You from America?

MERRITT

Yes. Yes, I am.

The Receptionist notices the small film crew.

RECEPTIONIST

You make documentary on Mongo?

MERRITT

Uhh... No, this is for something else. Is he here?

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

MERRITT

Oh, no, but he said I could just come in when we landed--.

RECEPTIONIST

Mongo only takes--

MONGO (O.S.)

It's okay, Ndidi.

MONGO CHIKWE, mid forties and bald walks in. He has a serious look about him - scowling and scrutinizing.

MONGO (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

MERRITT

Hi, Mongo. Merritt Weaver, I'm the writer and director from New York--

Mongo's mean expression suddenly lights up. He is thrilled and very warm all of a sudden.

MONGO

Oh! Weaver! Yes! Big shot Hollywood!

MERRITT

Not yet. I hope to be.

MONGO

Come, we talk in my office. We talk about your big movie and what you need. I'll get you everything you need. This way.

MERRITT

And is it okay if they film?

MONGO

Of course. Of course. I love the camera.

MERRITT

Great.

MONGO

Thank you, Ndidi.

INT. MONGO'S OFFICE - DAY

Mongo's office is decorated with a variety of Hollywood movie posters intermixed with some of his own Nollywood productions.

Mongo is more than happy to be a part of this "big Hollywood production."

MONGO

There is no finer place to make a movie than in Nigeria.

MERRITT

Yes, I have a close friend who's filmed here. She spoke very highly of the experience.

MONGO

She is not wrong. We make blockbusters here. The Avengers could film here. Star Wars could film here.

MERRITT

Well, as I said, I only have one week, and a very tight budget.

MONGO

You came to the right place. We make movies in three days here. Sometimes even two. Very efficient!

MERRITT

I know. That's why I need your help. You said you can provide crew and help me cast locals?

MONGO

That's right. You have script, no?

MERRITT

Yes, though I had to rewrite the entire thing to suit this time frame, budget and location.

MONGO

You show me script, yes? I read it right now and tell you what I think. We'll cast tomorrow. Filming starts the next day. That's how it works here.

MERRITT

(nervous)

I'm determined to make this look like it was filmed in the US. I need the best you got.

MONGO

Correct. The best. I got stars and the best film crew in the world. We work quickly. Many, many movies come out each week. I just finish production on action movie two days ago. Now, I wait for new project to come to me and you are here. I help you now. Working with an American has always been a dream of mine. We become Hollywood hotshots together, eh?

MERRITT

That would be great.

MONGO

Great. You send me script. We meet tonight, and I tell you what I think, okay?

MERRITT

Sounds good.

Mongo stands up, Merritt follows.

MONGO

I see you soon, Miss Merritt
Weaver.

The two shake hands.

EXT. GREEN WIND PRODUCTIONS - DAY

Merritt stands at the edge of the steps, looking into the camera.

POV - CAMERA

MERRITT

Well, that went well. Hopefully he likes the script. Though, to be honest, it's more important that he knows where we can film everything and that he gets us the people we need.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The lights are off and the blinds are drawn. There is laughing and rustling of sheets.

Merritt opens the door entering her room.

KILEY

Oh shit.

More rustling.

MERRITT

Kiley?

Merritt turns on the light and looks over to Kiley's bed where she's lying next to AKONI, a ripped, model worthy man.

They both cover themselves in sheets, only slightly embarrassed. Merritt is taken aback.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Jesus, Kiley! I've been gone for,
like, an hour.

KILEY

I thought you'd be out longer. This
is Akoni. I met him at the bar.

MERRITT
 (dryly)
 Nice to meet you.

KILEY
 He's an actor too. Maybe he can be
 my co-star.

MERRITT
 You guys seem to have the chemistry
 already.

KILEY
 Look at his muscles!

Kiley shows off Akoni's biceps.

AKONI
 Nice to meet you, madam.

Merritt waves and walks into the bathroom shutting the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Merritt sits across from Mongo in a fairly upper scale
 restaurant.

MONGO
 This place has the best pottage.
 You ever have pottage?

MERRITT
 No. I don't think so.

MONGO
 I order one for you. The best.

MERRITT
 Okay.

The WAITER walks up to the table.

WAITER
 Kun shirya yin oda?

MONGO
 A, za mu iya da Bean da plantain
 pottage ga ta kuma moin moin domin
 ta.

WAITER
 Okay.

MONGO

Na gode.

WAITER

Marabanku.

The Waiter grabs the menus and leaves.

MONGO

I read your script.

MERRITT

What did you think?

MONGO

It was... uh... very American.

MERRITT

What do you mean?

MONGO

You write a story set in Nigeria,
but you make the characters speak
like Americans. We don't share your
culture.

MERRITT

I'm sorry, I've never been to
Nigeria. I didn't want to
stereotype anything.

MONGO

It's okay. I can help.

MERRITT

What do you recommend I change?

MONGO

The dialogue was very subtle. Lots
of subtext. That works in America,
but here we are an expressive
people. You will see tomorrow at
auditions actors struggle to
deliver lines properly.

MERRITT

I think I can direct my way around
that.

MONGO

You came to Nigeria. You should
consider embracing Nigeria! I don't
think it will work out like how you
are imagining in your head.

(MORE)

MONGO (CONT'D)

Trust me, you will be pleased with what our actors bring to the screen.

MERRITT

I understand, but the goal is to make this feel like an American movie. I'll just direct the actors to be, you know, American.

MONGO

(unsure)

Okay, my friend. But I am here to help you and give you advice.

MERRITT

Duly noted.

MONGO

I had my assistant post online a casting call for tomorrow. At our building tomorrow at eight AM. There will be a lot of people. It will be a full day endeavor.

MERRITT

I'm excited.

MONGO

It will be interesting to see how our actors interact with the white actress you bring along with you.

MERRITT

It will be interesting indeed.

MONGO

There will be many eager, passionate actors vying for roles. Very talented locals.

MERRITT

I really hope so.

MONGO

Have you seen "Green White Green?"

MERRITT

No, sorry.

MONGO

It is like your movie. Very funny, like yours. We'll make a movie like that.

The waiter returns with two plates of food.

MONGO (CONT'D)

Ah! Our feast!

Merritt smiles. She is tired and anxious. Mongo's enthusiasm is infectious though.

Around them, the restaurant is alive with the people and energy of Nigeria. It is beautiful and otherworldly to Merritt, but she is enamored by it.

She watches with interest as people move and exist around her.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Merritt wolfs down her delicious looking meal. Mongo looks on, smiling.

MONGO

You enjoying your meal?

MERRITT

Oh yeah. This is incredible.

MONGO

I tell you. Best food in Nigeria.

MERRITT

You're setting the bar high.

MONGO

This is what you need in order to make a good movie in Nigeria. You need the culture.

Merritt nods. She isn't exactly interested in Mongo's advice.

MERRITT

I'll try. I know what I want from the movie, but yeah, we'll try to get the culture in there too.

MONGO

There is a film screening tomorrow for a new movie by my good director friend. We will go to that after the casting.

MERRITT

I don't know. There's a lot of work to do.

MONGO

It'll be good. You will have an idea of what we can do here, and you'll want your movie to be like our movies!

MERRITT

Sure, Mongo.

MONGO

Then, tomorrow night, after you've experienced it, you'll be racing back to your hotel to rewrite the entire script. You'll see that Nollywood is what Hollywood has been missing!

MERRITT

(beat)

Okay. Yeah. Sure.

MONGO

But for now, we use what we have. I have the very best for you to see tomorrow. The best! I picked the best scenes for the audition. Tomorrow morning we have huge lines waiting to audition.

Merritt smiles and keeps eating. She is growing more and more nervous.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Merritt sleepily walks into the hotel room. Kiley is sitting up in bed, reading a printed out version of her script. Merritt flops face first onto her bed.

MERRITT

I wouldn't get too attached to that.

KILEY

Oh really? What happened?

MERRITT

Mongo said I should embrace the culture here.

KILEY

Hm. Maybe? I mean, the bar was fun.
Akoni was really fun.

Merritt buries her face in her pillow.

MERRITT

I'm not sure a hook-up at a hotel
bar counts as culture.

KILEY

It'll be fine. You might have to
absorb some of the culture with the
actors, but it'll still work. It's
about the script and story. The
setting is not even important,
right?

MERRITT

Yeah, I guess. And maybe there are
a few little things here that might
enhance the movie.

KILEY

There ya go. Optimism.

MERRITT

Guess we'll see at the auditions
tomorrow.

KILEY

Guess we'll see.

Merritt turns over and closes her eyes.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY - DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE

Shot from the behind the scenes cameras, we see Merritt
eating her breakfast.

Kiley sits next to her fully cloaked in makeup for her role.

Merritt looks into the lens and talks as she eats.

MERRITT

It's six in the morning. We landed
just fifteen or sixteen hours ago
and we're already starting to
audition. Things are moving fast.

KILEY

I'm excited. Are you excited?

MERRITT

I'm too exhausted to be excited.
I'm just nervous.

KILEY

Everyone has been so nice here. It
doesn't feel, you know, that much
different from America. It's sweet.

Over at the bar, Akoni is wiping down glasses. He winks at
Kiley. She smiles and waves.

KILEY (CONT'D)

It's really great here.

INT. OPEN AUDITION ROOM - DAY

It's absolutely packed. ACTORS and ACTRESSES of all ages and
sizes line up and fill out the lobby. The office is almost
unrecognizable.

At a table, Mongo sits with his assistant, ZAKI, a young guy
in his mid twenties.

Merritt and Kiley work their way through the crowd towards
the table. The behind the scenes crew follows just a few
steps behind. They constantly film in all directions.

MONGO

Great! You are here.

MERRITT

Jesus, this is a big turnout.

MONGO

Auditions happen fast and furious
here. Everybody looking to land the
big role. And now we got a big
Hollywood hotshot. The word spreads
fast.

MERRITT

I'm really not a Hollywood--

MONGO

We should begin.

(gesturing)

This is Zaki. He will be your
assistant director and script
supervisor - You're "scripty"
right?

MERRITT

Hi, Zaki. Nice to meet you.

MONGO

He will be a great filmmaker one day. I have him under my wing.

MERRITT

I wish him luck. Oh! This is Kiley. The lead actress.

Kiley and Mongo shake hands.

MONGO

Nice to you meet you, I see some of your skits in America. You are very funny.

KILEY

Thank you! You have a nice grip.

RANDOM ACTOR (O.S.)

Oi! When are we going to start!

MONGO

We're starting! We're starting! Calm down!

Merritt sits and takes out a notebook.

MONGO (CONT'D)

Zaki get behind the camera.
(shouting)
First person in line!

Zaki stands and looks at the display on a nice DSLR camera mounted on a tripod, facing out into the open audition area.

OMO, a young actress in her late teens steps up to the open area.

MONGO (CONT'D)

Name, age and role please.

OMO

Omo Rasaki. Nineteen. I'm auditioning for the role of... Anchali.

Mongo leans into Merritt to whisper.

MONGO

Anchali is a Cambodian name, not a Nigerian one.

MERRITT

Oh... that's... I feel so bad.

MONGO

Easy fix. No worries.

MERRITT

Okay... uh... Omo... I'm going to have you perform your scene with Kiley.

KILEY

Which scene is it?

MERRITT

Pages sixty-four to sixty-six.

KILEY

Okay.

Kiley pages through the script. Merritt smiles at Omo and speaks to her in a clear director's tone.

MERRITT

Okay, Omo. This is the hard-hitting part of the movie. Anchali feels betrayed by Delilah. She and Delilah are clearly in love, but Delilah is with Enofe and won't break it off. Delilah can't come to terms with who she is. She messed up. So you are outraged, but mostly disappointed. You are trying to suppress that anger out of respect. Do you understand?

OMO

I think so.

MERRITT

Great. Let's give it a shot.

Merritt looks back at Zaki.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

You rolling?

Zaki presses record then gives Merritt a thumbs up.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

And action.

Immediately Kiley snaps into a guilty, remorseful character. It's so far off kilter from her usual personality. It's rather impressive.

KILEY

Anchali, I didn't mean it.
Really... you have to try to understand. It was... it was stupid. I was jealous. I can admit that. Just... please forgive me.

Omo stands there, awkwardly. She looks at her page. She has no lines, but she doesn't know how to react. Kiley continues.

KILEY (CONT'D)

I'll do anything.

OMO

(offbeat)

Anything?

KILEY

Yes! Anything. I'll... I'll make a whole public apology, if that's what you want. I'll stand in front of the whole office and admit what an idiot I am.

Omo looks at the page and her one line. She looks up and says plainly.

OMO

You don't have to.

MERRITT

Okay, stop there.

Omo turns to Merritt.

OMO

Was I okay?

MERRITT

So, when you say, "you don't have to", you actually mean that she DOES have to.

Omo stares at Merritt, confused.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

You get it?

RANDOM ACTOR #2 (O.S.)
 We don't have all day here! Move
 along! Move along!

MERRITT
 (annoyed)
 I'll run the audition, thank you.

MONGO
 He is right. We don't have all day.
 We have a hundred actors and
 actresses waiting in line.

MERRITT
 Alright, well. Thank you, Omo.

Omo looks around confused and leaves.

MONGO
 Next!

BEGIN MONTAGE: THE AUDITIONS

-- Various auditions of ACTORS and ACTRESSES trying out
 different roles. The YOUNG ACTRESSES perform the "you don't
 have to" line in a variety of ways. Ranging from extremely
 overacted to extremely wooden.

-- Also, the MIDDLE AGED ACTRESSES audition playing a
 motherly character. Their delivery of the lines are very
 dramatically overacted.

MIDDLE AGED ACTRESS
 I feel like the roof is falling on
 my head!!!

KILEY
 (sassy)
 Well, maybe you should move.

-- Also, inter-cutting is Mongo shouting:

MONGO
 Next!

-- It's rhythmic and predictable. For the most part a
 terrible audition by Hollywood standards.

END MONTAGE.

YOUNG ACTOR
 (angry)
 I hate you, Delilah!

KILEY
(sincerely)
Well, I love you, Enofe.

Kiley hugs the Young Actor. It is a platonic hug.

MERRITT
Okay--

MONGO
Next!

Akoni walks up.

KILEY
Akoni! You made it!

MONGO
You two know each other?

KILEY
Oh, yeah we do.

MONGO
Akoni's one of our best. I didn't know you would be able to make it. You should have told me, no? We would have had the role locked up by now.

MERRITT
Alright, let's see this.

ZAKI
Rolling.

MERRITT
Do you need a script?

AKONI
I got the lines memorized.

Merritt lifts her eyebrows, impressed.

MERRITT
Ready when you are then.

Akoni clears his throat, Kiley bites her lower lip. Akoni clearly has the best audition of the day.

KILEY
So...

AKONI

I never thought I'd get to see you again.

KILEY

I didn't want to see you.

AKONI

I didn't want to see you either.

KILEY

Yet here we are.

AKONI

Here we are...

KILEY

I can't believe you left me like that.

AKONI

I didn't know what to do. I was so caught up in everything, it was all just piling on me at once... and my mother.

KILEY

How is she doing?

AKONI

She's fine.

KILEY

That's good to here.

AKONI

It's nice to see you.

Kiley smiles.

KILEY

I still never want to see you again.

AKONI

I hate you, Delilah.

KILEY

Well, I love you, Enofe.

Akoni and Kiley begin to make out - heavily. Merritt has to physically separate them to get them to stop.

MERRITT
 (laughing humorlessly)
 Okay, alright, guys, that's enough.
 Very good. You're very good at the
 making out part.

She gets them apart and gives Kiley a look and fake smile.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
 Remember, this is a journey of
 Delilah discovering her sexuality.

KILEY
 (smiling in return)
 Oh, right-right. Just... got caught
 up in the moment.

Kiley touches Akoni's muscular arm. Merritt's slaps her hand.

MERRITT
 (to Mongo)
 Okay, I think we got our Enofe.

MONGO
 That was fantastic! You never
 disappoint, Akoni!

AKONI
 (humbly)
 Glad to be here.

MERRITT
 (to Mongo)
 I think he's a lock.

MONGO
 Agreed. Okay! Everybody auditioning
 for the role of Enofe, please
 leave!

Groans throughout the waiting actors. Merritt is surprised by the sudden declaration, and the room clears of several actors.

MONGO (CONT'D)
 Thank you for your patience but we
 got our man!

MERRITT
 Congratulations, Akoni. You two
 have great chemistry.

MONGO

Power duo right here. The next Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling.

AKONI

Thank you, Merritt. I look forward to working with you.

MONGO

Okay, that's enough flattering. Next!

Akoni smiles and Kiley and waves goodbye. He waves goodbye to Merritt and Mongo who wave back.

Akoni leaves and is replaced by a beautiful young actress, EYA.

She has a timeless beauty to her - a star quality so natural and real. She speaks in a perfect English accent. She is shy and soft spoken, until she begins acting.

MONGO (CONT'D)

Ohhh, another good one.

EYA

Hello. My name is Eya.

MONGO

Eya was born and raised in the United States until she was eleven when she moved here. She has flawless American accent.

MERRITT

I hear that. Well... let's see what you got, Eya. You're auditioning for the role of Anchali, Delilah's true love, I'm presuming?

EYA

Correct.

MERRITT

And do you also have your lines memorized.

EYA

Yes, ma'am.

MERRITT

Great. Well, ready when you two are.

Kiley clears her throat and gets into the remorseful character from when she was auditioning with Omo.

KILEY

Anchali, I didn't mean it.
Really... you have to try to
understand. It was... it was
stupid. I was jealous. I can admit
that. Just... please forgive me.

Eya, now transformed into Anchali - the presence of an incredible actress - scoffs softly.

KILEY (CONT'D)

I'll do anything.

EYA

Anything?

KILEY

Yes! Anything. I'll... I'll make a
whole public apology, if that's
what you want. I'll stand in front
of the whole office and admit what
an idiot I am.

EYA

You don't have to.

KILEY

No, really. I will. It's not fair
for you.

EYA

It's your life.

KILEY

It's also yours! We're friends,
Anchali--

EYA

Are we?

KILEY

We're more than friends. Without
you I wouldn't have been able to
survive here. Everything is so...
different. You kept me on my feet.

EYA

You have Enofe now.

KILEY

I'd rather have you.

EYA

Well... That's not going to work.

KILEY

Please! I made a mistake. I was confused. It's you, Anchali. It's always been you.

EYA

Delilah, please!

KILEY

Even if we can't be what we were, I need you in my life. Even if we're just friends.

Eya sarcastically laughs.

EYA

Yeah, right.

KILEY

I don't know what else to say.

EYA

You don't have to. Just get your things and leave.

Kiley's face falls, a tear starts streaming. Eya, tears forming in her own eyes, walks to Kiley.

She steps right up to her - face-to-face, and she kisses her softly on the lips. It is a kiss of true love. The entire room is holding their breath watching the moment.

Eya steps back and looks Kiley in the eyes.

EYA (CONT'D)

I don't want to see you here again.

Eya walks OUT OF FRAME.

EYA (CONT'D)

Have a nice life with Enofe.

BEAT.

MERRITT

And cut!

Merritt and the whole room applauds.

MONGO
 Yesss! Back to back big hitters.
 Good work, Eya.

MERRITT
 That was really, really good.

MONGO
 I think we got our Anchali - name
 to be changed.

MERRITT
 I think we definitely have our
 Anchali.

Mongo clasps his hands together.

MONGO
 Alright, folks! Everybody
 auditioning for the role of Anchali
 please leave!

RANDOM ACTRESS (O.S.)
 No! She wasn't even good!

RANDOM ACTRESS #2 (O.S.)
 Please give us a chance!

MONGO
 Sorry! Sorry! Time is thin! Make
 room!

Groans throughout the actresses again as some of them begin
 filing out.

MONGO (CONT'D)
 (to Merritt)
 We got our main characters, the
 rest should be pretty easy.

MERRITT
 (encouraged)
 Yeah. Yeah, I guess so.

MONGO
 Next!

CUT TO:

INT. OPEN AUDITION ROOM - LATER

The room is very much empty now. The auditions over.

Merritt, Mongo, and Zaki sit at the table accompanied by the CAST, including Eyu and Akoni along with about EIGHT OTHER ACTORS AND ACTRESSES. Mongo passes out papers to everyone.

Jeffrey, Peter and Rick film behind the scenes.

MONGO

Here is the call sheet. Expect a few changes to the script.

(he looks to Merritt)

Right, Merritt?

MERRITT

Yes, I'll keep the locations the same. Most of the changes will be dialogue and slight tweaks in the characterization. I want to play to all your strengths.

MONGO

And because of that, you won't get the full finalized script until tomorrow morning when you arrive on set. Don't be late. Thank you for your time.

Merritt claps her hands and smiles at them all.

MERRITT

Let's make a movie!!

Awkward silence. Merritt's smile falls. The cast slowly turns and leaves.

Kiley giggles and mugs to the BTS camera. She hops after Akoni leaving with him. Merritt sighs and turns to Mongo.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Okay, what's our crew situation?

MONGO

Crew is easy. They'll be on set tomorrow morning.

MERRITT

I'd like a chance to at least speak with the DP before we get started. I have a particular look I want to get.

MONGO

I get the best cinematographer in Lagos. He is the best. Several film awards. Just like Hollywood.

MERRITT

Okay, I trust you. I wasn't sure,
but these auditions went really
great, so I trust you.

Mongo smiles.

MONGO

I'm glad. But for now, you come
with me. It's time for the film
screening. Get ready, wear
something nice.

MERRITT

Uh... I didn't think I brought
anything "nice".

MONGO

We go to the dress shop then!

Merritt forces a grin.

INT. DRESS SHOP - NIGHT

The store is nice. There are beautiful dresses and outfits on
racks and shelves. It could be a shop in Beverly Hills,
except there is a distinct otherworldly beauty to the place.

Merritt walks out of a dressing room wearing a stunning,
jewelry littered dress. It's sparkling, bright and expensive.

She is uncomfortable. She does not dress up often - if at
all. But both Mongo and the RETAILER marvel at her.

MONGO

Oh wow!

RETAILER

You look beautiful.

MERRITT

I don't know...

RETAILER

This is the best dress we have.

MERRITT

Do you have any tuxedos?

MONGO

Tuxedos? I wear tuxedos.

MERRITT
I prefer tuxedos.

INT. TUXEDO RENTAL - NIGHT

Merritt walks out of another dressing room donning a tuxedo. It suits her more. She looks content.

MERRITT
I like this.

MONGO
You Americans are weird, weird,
weird. The men want to dress like
women, the women want to dress like
men. It's all backwards.

Merritt smiles. She pulls out her phone and takes a selfie - sends it to Raven.

EXT. RED CARPET - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A massive event. PRESS, FANS, ACTORS, ACTRESSES, FILMMAKERS, all take part in the familiar red carpet setting.

The set up is very much like those in America. It's a familiar sight with a wildly different demographic.

Merritt looks around, soaking in the buzzing atmosphere. Mongo is at her side.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

A fancy bar, a hundred or so people fill out the lobby. Merritt and Mongo walk up to KALECHI, a bearded man in his forties, who is surrounded by PRODUCERS. They talk and laugh.

MONGO
Kalechi!!

Kalechi turns around, and immediately smiles at the sight of Mongo.

KALECHI
Mongo! My man!!

The two hug.

KALECHI (CONT'D)
Glad you make it. Who's the woman?

MERRITT

I'm Merritt.

MONGO

She's a big Hollywood hotshot.
Making a movie here.

KALECHI

Ahh! Hollywood! Nigerian films...
better than Hollywood.

Merritt shrugs.

KALECHI (CONT'D)

All those Hollywood movies are
so... pretentious, you know? Here
we are reflective of our culture.
America... no culture. Even though
we do have escapists films like
those superhero movies you have,
ours are actually about our
society.

MERRITT

Well... I'm not really a fan of the
superhero movies, myself. I'm more
interested in culture, as you say.

KALECHI

Then what are you doing here?
You're not Nigerian. Are you trying
to make a movie about Nigerian
culture? This is what you white
people do, you come into our
country then tell your people how
we are from your point of view.

MERRITT

No, no that's not it. I came here
because it was, uh, more
affordable.

KALECHI

Cheap, she calls us. So you think
you are better than us?

MERRITT

I... uh...

Kalechi glares at Merritt. She is utterly uncomfortable. She swallows, and then Kalechi's stone face breaks into a HUGE smile. He laughs jovially at Merritt.

KALECHI

Ahhhhh! I'm just messing with you, Hollywood! Mongo tells me all about your film. The human condition. Falling in love. Finding oneself in love. It is a beautiful script! I love it. No explosions or bullshit American tropes. Although, I am guilty of having explosions and bullshit in my movie. But it is good bullshit. I promise!

Merritt laughs nervously relieved as Kalechi puts his arm around her. Mongo laughs as well at Merritt's expense.

MERRITT

Yeah, uh... cool.

KALECHI

It's fun watching you people stammer when you get uneasy. I hope you enjoy the movie. Mongo, you must call me more often. I miss you. We need to get dinner or lunch or just get drunk and see how many women you fail at picking up in one night!

MONGO

(laughing)

We are too busy to be making time for that! Get in there. We'll be right behind you.

Kalechi hugs Mongo once more and walks off to continue mingling. Merritt is dazed by the experience.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

An elaborate, crowded movie theater with a capacity of well over five hundred.

Merritt and Mongo sit next to each other in prime seating as they look at a large screen where the film is about to begin.

ON THE MOVIE SCREEN: A MAN AND WOMAN SIT AT A DINER. THEY BEGIN SPEAKING IN UNSUBTITLED HAUSA.

Merritt leans into Mongo and whispers.

MERRITT

I don't know what they're saying.

MONGO

That's the beauty of Nigerian
cinema. You don't have to.

ON THE SCREEN: IMMEDIATELY THE WOMAN STANDS UP AND FLIPS THE
TABLE. BYSTANDERS LOOK ON. THE WOMAN BEGINS SCREAMING
UNCONTROLLABLY, MAKING HUGE, LARGE EXAGGERATED HAND MOTIONS.

Merritt rubs her temples, it's going to be a long night.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

Merritt, resting her head on her fist continues to watch the
movie as bad ass action music is blasting. She looks
incredibly bored.

ON THE MOVIE SCREEN: THE MAN FROM THE OPENING DINER SCENE IS
RUNNING THROUGH A FOOD MARKET. BAD GUYS CHASE AFTER HIM. THE
MAN STOPS AT A STATION AND PICKS UP A CARROT. HE THROWS THE
CARROT LIKE A NINJA TOWARDS THE BAD GUYS. EVERYTHING GOES
INTO SLOW MOTION AS THE CARROT DECAPITATES ALL THE BAD GUYS
IN ONE HORRIBLE VFX GRAPHIC.

But the sequence generates an audible gasp from the audience.
Merritt, confused, looks around, then back at the screen,
frowning. She takes a deep breath.

EXT. STREETS OF LATHOS - NIGHT

It is a peaceful stroll down a cobbled street. The lights
glow, and the night life of cafes and patrons is calming.

It is after the film screening. Merritt and Mongo walk down
the street, Merritt looking absolutely exhausted.

MERRITT

Should we grab a cab?

MONGO

It is a beautiful night for a walk.
Take in the late night atmosphere.
Maybe it will inspire you and your
rewrites.

MERRITT

Yeah... the rewrite.

They walk slowly through the night, Mango smiling and humming
to himself. Merritt looking around and absorbing the sights
and sounds of the street.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kiley snores on her bed as Merritt is on a Skype call with Raven at the desk, her tux jacket off and tie undone.

She has her earbuds plugged in and speaks in a raspy voice barely louder than a whisper.

MERRITT

I'm not sure what to do. Mango seems to want me to try to use the culture here to make the movie, but I didn't come here to make a Nigerian film. I came here to save money.

RAVEN

No one is forcing you to adapt it for them. Tell your story, make your movie. They're lucky to have you there.

MERRITT

It really is pretty here though. It's hard not to be inspired. Everyone is so hyped all the time.

RAVEN

Well, use what feels right, but remember, Charles and Sam and the studio sent you there to make a movie they can sell, and Nollywood isn't gonna sell shit over there.

Merritt sits quietly and thinks about it all. She nods.

MERRITT

Yeah... Yeah, forget that. I'm doing this my way. I'm not Nigerian. I'm not making a Nollywood movie. I'm making my movie.

RAVEN

That's right. Trust your gut.

MERRITT

I'm trying.

Merritt yawns.

RAVEN

You should get some rest.

MERRITT
Yeah, I should. I miss you.

RAVEN
I miss you too. You looked great in
that tux.

MERRITT
(smiling)
Thanks.

RAVEN
Get some sleep. You're gonna be
amazing tomorrow. Go make the hell
outta that movie!

MERRITT
Goodnight.

Raven and Merritt blow kisses to one another, and Merritt
ends the call with a tired smile.

CUT TO:

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

A clumsy crash as the behind the scenes crew barge into
Merritt's hotel room. They immediately rush up to the bed and
point the cameras in Merritt's confused, hardly conscious
face.

MERRITT
What the shit...

KILEY
Sorry. They didn't stop knocking.

MERRITT
Get outta my face, guys.

RICK
No, this is perfect. Talk about how
you feel about your first day of
filming.

MERRITT
What time is it?

RICK
Five thirty.

Merritt groans. She gets up a little in bed and wipes away
some crusts from her eyes. She stares into the camera.

CAMERA POV:

MERRITT

It's early in the morning. First day of filming. We just got the entire cast together yesterday. I haven't even met the crew. This is probably going to be a shit show. Oh, and the BTS crew is a buncha jerks.

She shoves the camera out of her face.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

GAFFERS set up lights, as GRIPS set up the sound. It's a working set inside of a standard Nigerian living room. Merritt oversees the process as she stands besides Mongo.

The CAST, including Kiley, Akoni, and Eyu stand off to the side eating breakfast from a makeshift catering table.

Mongo shows Merritt a highlighted script.

MONGO

So you have a total of twelve pages set in this room. We film all twelve before lunch.

MERRITT

All twelve before lunch? It'll definitely take longer than that.

MONGO

No time. We have to run around to a lot of locations.

MERRITT

Half of those pages are set at night. The lighting change is going to take at least an hour.

MONGO

No, best crew in the world. They'll have it go day to night faster than you can blink. We cover up the lights really good. Then you fix the rest in post with your fancy Hollywood color graders.

Merritt sighs.

MERRITT

I need more time. These are critical scenes. I mean, the entire falling out between Delilah and Enofe's parents is here. That scene would take half a day at least to get right.

(she sighs, knowing)

But we don't have the time. Okay, twelve pages. 6 hours. Jesus.

MONGO

We will see. I'm a master at this. You're a beginner. We have to move, move, move. I started you off easy. It's your job to execute.

MERRITT

I'll see what I can do.

Merritt turns around to face the set, and-

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -LATER

Lights, camera and sound are all set up. Merritt stands besides BANJOKO, her DP. Mongo lurks in the background with Zaki.

At the center of the set is Kiley and Akoni sitting close to together on a couch. CHINWE and DEBARE, who play Akoni's parents tower over them.

MERRITT

And... action!

Chinwe and Debare "overact" in classic Nigerian style, completely contrary to the subtle acting of Kiley and Akoni.

CHINWE

I told you, I never wanted her in this house again!

AKONI

I know mother... but...

DEBARE

But what? You think there is an excuse for this?

AKONI

We've made amends. We're friends.

KILEY
Mister and Mrs--

DEBARE
I don't want to hear a word from
you. We're talking to our son here.

AKONI
I'm sorry...

An awkward pause. That scene did not go well.

MERRITT
Okay. Cut. Uhh... Let's try that
again. This time can you tone it
down, please? Chinwe. Akoni.

They nod, understanding.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
Cool.

MONGO
Merritt.

Merritt turns back. Mongo taps his wrist.

MERRITT
We only have four more pages left.

MONGO
We only have fifteen more minutes
left.

MERRITT
This is a critical scene. It's okay
if we spend a bit more time to nail
it.

MONGO
We need to eat as well.

MERRITT
Just let me make the movie okay.
You're wasting time telling me to
stop wasting time.

Mongo raises his arms.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
Okay... let's go again. Rolling?

Banjoko nods.

BANJOKO

Rolling.

MERRITT

And... action.

Chinwe delivers her line in the exact same way, just this time with less hand gestures.

CHINWE

I told you I never wanted her in this house again!

MERRITT

Alright. Cut.

MONGO

(urging)

Merritt...

Merritt rubs her chin. She needs a solution, fast. She paces a moment and then walks to the cast.

MERRITT

You know, what? How about we try some improv?

Kiley bites her lip and nods. She can do this; she's not sure the others can. Merritt looks into Debare and Chinwe's eyes.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

(speedy direction)

I want you to be in this moment as though you truly are mom and dad - your son is trying to maintain this relationship with a woman who has ruined his life. This woman you don't approve of let alone like. Just try to keep the core of the scene intact, but other than that... just do what you want.

Chinwe and Debare nod.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Rolling?

BANJOKO

Rolling.

MERRITT

And... action.

Chinwe immediately bursts into a fit of rage.

CHINWE

You stupid child! You disobey me
like that! With this hateful girl!
She betrayed you! She loves a woman
when she could love you!

Chinwe walks up to Akoni and slaps him in the face. Kiley
gasps and takes a step back.

CHINWE (CONT'D)

I never want to see you in this
house again!

Chinwe transitions to speaking in UNSUBTITLED HAUSA.

CHINWE (CONT'D)

You can go live on the street and
make your own life! Don't you ever
come here for food, for money, or
for shelter in your life!

AKONI

Father... please?

DEBARE

You disobey your mother. Get out of
this house.

CHINWE

And take your whore girlfriend with
you!

AKONI

Please can--

CHINWE

OUT!

KALU (O.S.)

OI! What are you still doing here!?

MERRITT

What - No! No, keep going, this is
incredible!

Merritt turns around to the entrance of the room as KALU, a
middle aged man storms in, furious.

MONGO

Kalu... I thought--

KALU

I say you can be here until twelve,
it is now twelve-fifteen.

MERRITT

Wait. Please--

KALU

Out! Get out of my house!

MERRITT

Just one more shot! We need--

Kalu reaches into his closet and takes out a machete. He brandishes it around, creating panic as everybody packs up the equipment.

Akoni takes Kiley and moves her swiftly away. Mongo grabs Merritt's arm.

MONGO

Time to go, Merritt.

MERRITT

If I can just--

Mongo pulls her as the entire crew rapidly packs up everything - moving like a NASCAR pit crew.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

(breathless)

That was so good!

(to Kalu)

Thank you for opening your home to us.

Kalu squeezes his machete and glares as Merritt is pulled out the front door.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The CAST and CREW eat lunch as makeshift tables are set up around the run down park with dense foliage surrounding it.

Eya eats alone at one of the tables, Merritt, holding a sandwich, walks up to her.

MERRITT

Hey.

EYA

Hey.

MERRITT

You're doing great.

EYA

Thanks.

MERRITT

So... how many movies have you been in over here?

EYA

I do about one a week.

MERRITT

One a week? Wow.

EYA

Yeah. Good gig.

MERRITT

I bet. You're originally from America, right?

EYA

Yeah, Baton Rouge.

MERRITT

Why'd you move back? If you don't mind me asking.

EYA

I don't really know. I think it had to do with my father's job. He worked in oil.

MERRITT

Oh.

EYA

He passed away a couple of years ago.

MERRITT

Oh wow. I'm so sorry.

EYA

(shrugging)

I didn't see much of him anyway.

MERRITT

Do you plan on moving back?

EYA

No, I love it here. So does my mother.

MERRITT

Really?

EYA

Yeah. I mean, it was tough the first couple years, I didn't speak Hausa that well, but I settled in. It's a very different lifestyle. I like it a lot.

MERRITT

Interesting...

Merritt munches on her sandwich and stares at the crew eating and mingling. She looks at the timid Eya.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Sorry to be so nosy. I'm just asking 'cause of the movie and everything. Mongo keeps telling me to add Nigerian culture, I think he might be right. It's just all so... foreign. I don't get it.

EYA

(chucking)

You'll never understand the culture. Not any time soon. Took me a long time.

MERRITT

(thoughtfully)

Yeah... I'm not going to figure it out in less than a week, am I?

EYA

Just make whatever movie you think will be good. Don't try to force a culture. That will never end well.

Merritt smiles at the girl. From the tables, Mongo waves his cellphone and shouts--

MONGO

Merritt! We have to keep moving. I'll get everybody together.

MERRITT

Yeah! One second!

EYA

Plus, people are a little put off by your script anyway.

MERRITT

What do you mean?

EYA

You know... Delilah...

MERRITT

What about her?

EYA

Well... she's like... white and, you know, gay... or bisexual or whatever. And then you're talking about culture. It feels... phony. Especially coming from you.

MERRITT

Because I'm white?

EYA

It's just... something you'll never understand.

Eya picks up her food and walks off. Merritt stares, reflecting.

MERRITT (V.O.)

... And action!

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY - LATER

Lights and camera are all set up. Eya and Kiley walk down the park path, the camera on a StediCam rig, tracking them in a ONE. They hold hands, looking genuinely in love.

EYA

This is where I first bumped into you. You remember that?

KILEY

I do. Kind of a cliché meet.

EYA

Does it matter?

KILEY

No... no it doesn't.

A rustle in the trees. Banjoko pans the camera as Akoni makes his way through into the park.

AKONI

Hey!

Eya and Kiley look back.

KILEY

Oh god.

AKONI

Delilah... what is this? What's going on, huh?

An awkward pause.

EYA

Anchali... I can explain.

AKONI

You said... you said it was a phase. You said you were faithful!

Tears form in Akoni's eyes.

KILEY

It's complicated. I can't... I can't explain it.

MERRITT

Cut!

Groans throughout the set. Merritt walks over to the trio of actors.

MONGO

What is it now?

MERRITT

(ignoring Mongo)
Let's try it again.

MONGO

We've done ten takes already.

MERRITT

I know. I know.
(to Kiley)
Really feel his pain. You lied to him, right? But you lied to yourself even more by fighting what your heart wants.

KILEY

(understanding)
Okay, yeah.

MERRITT

(to Akoni)

And you knew this was going to happen. You really did. Remember what I said before the last one? Really feel that betrayal, but it hurts the most because you knew the truth the whole time.

AKONI

I just didn't want to admit it.

MERRITT

Right!

MONGO

Maybe the scene just isn't working. We can move on and try to fit in tomorrow. We can't spend the rest of the day here.

MERRITT

(stubbornly)

Just a minute. We just need one more.

(to Eya)

You're the other woman, but you're her true love. Fight for her. Got it?

EYA

Yeah.

MERRITT

(shouting)

Okay! Reset!

As Merritt hurries over to her monitor, Mongo walks with her sternly.

MONGO

Why does this have to be one shot! Why can't you cut around it.

MERRITT

It has to be one shot. From the top!

Mongo throws his hands up in the air. Everybody slowly resets their positions.

MONGO

C'mon everyone, we're on a schedule.

A random PA snorts and mutters under his breath as Mongo passes.

RANDOM PA
 Maybe if we weren't doing forty
 takes.

Mongo shoots the PA a deadly glare. The PA's eyes go wide and he looks away ashamed.

MERRITT
 And... Action!

INT. GREEN WIND PRODUCTIONS - OFFICE - NIGHT

Mongo wolfs down a large meal as Merritt sits staring at her laptop.

On the screen are the DAILIES of the scenes they filmed that day. Merritt is rubbing her temples. The footage looks terrible.

Through the door and into the lobby, RICK and the crew film their BTS discretely.

MONGO
 (mouth full)
 We're a half day behind schedule.

Merritt exhales in a sad defeated breath.

MERRITT
 I know.

MONGO
 You need to try to be more
 flexible. Stop going for
 perfection. We're not used to doing
 so many takes here. We get one or
 two and move on. That's how we do
 it here. If you pick up your pace,
 we'll catch up. It'll be great.
 Just like a Nollywood movie!

Merritt rubs her face and GROANS loudly.

MERRITT
 I don't want a Nollywood movie. I
 want a...
 (she closes her eyes)
 I have no idea what I'm doing.

MONGO

Half a day. Easy to make up.

MERRITT

It's no good, Mongo. I think I made a mistake coming here. I don't know the culture. I can never understand the culture. It's not worth it.

On the laptop, a moment where Akoni is slapped plays. Merritt cringes. Mongo nods with approval.

MONGO

That is good stuff.

MERRITT

I'm a hack.

MONGO

Everybody here is a hack, Merritt. We make a movie a week.

MERRITT

Yeah, but at least your movies have character and charisma. I have nothing. I can't just transplant this really American story here and expect it to work with a Nigerian cast and crew. I don't know what it's like here, and the people here don't know what it's like in America.

Mongo sets his food aside and looks at Merritt with sympathy. He touches her hand and consoles her.

MONGO

It will be okay. Just focus on finishing your script. Rewrite some scenes into less locations. And be nicer to the crew. You're pushing too hard. They're having no fun.

MERRITT

Rewrite. Rewrite. Rewrite. I'm done rewriting.

MONGO

No more ten, fifteen takes. You get it in two or three. You do. Trust us. We're a chill people here, but we get the job done. We don't want some white woman walking along telling us how to run our business.

MERRITT

But I'm the director.

MONGO

Be chill director. Be willing to go
with the flow.

Merritt looks at the laptop as the machete wielding nut case yells at everyone.

She hits the space bar and stops the image on his crazy face. She leans forward and puts her head on the table.

MERRITT

This is a disaster.

MONGO

But still a movie.

MERRITT

That nobody will watch.

MONGO

You're tired. You need rest. You'll
feel better in the morning.

Merritt sits up and faces Mongo. She has a call sheet stuck to the side of her face.

MERRITT

Are you babying me Mongo?

MONGO

You're acting like one.

MERRITT

I can't decide if you're the worst
line producer in the world or the
best.

MONGO

Only the best in the world in
Nigeria!

Merritt offers a small smile and puts her head back down on the desk hitting the space bar. The screaming of the crew recommences.

From the LOBBY, Rick chuckles at the timing. Merritt lifts her head to look at him. He stifles his laugh and waves an apology. Merritt stares at him - not accusing or angry, but curiously. An idea is slowly forming in her mind's eye.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Merritt sits in bed on her laptop. Her SCREENPLAY open on the screen. Kiley snores in the bed beside her. Merritt stares blankly at the screen.

She clicks **command**, then "A" on the keyboard, highlighting the entire script.

Her other pointer finger hovers over delete.

MERRITT (V.O.)
I scrapped the entire script.

Merritt presses down on the button.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Merritt staring into the behind the scenes cameras.

RICK (O.S.)
Sorry. You did what?

MERRITT
I got rid of the entire screenplay.
Command-A, delete. Gone.

RICK (O.S.)
Did you write anything to replace
it?

MERRITT
Nope. I officially have no script.
No gimmicks. No angle. We'll just
tell the story that needs telling.

She raises her eyebrows and purses her lips in a look that says, "here we go."

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The CREW is set up for filming. Mongo stands with ZAKI. Kiley, Eya, Akoni are in costume chitchatting. Merritt walks in.

MERRITT
Good morning, everyone. Thank you
for coming back for Day Two of this
little adventure. First things;
first: Everybody trash the scripts!

MONGO

What?

MERRITT

I'm scrapping the entire thing.

KILEY

Uh, Merritt? You okay?

MERRITT

I'm brilliant, Kiley. We're going to make a movie.

MONGO

What's going on?

MERRITT

It's time to improvise.

Everybody looks at Merritt confused.

KILEY

You've lost your mind, haven't you?

MERRITT

Maybe. Probably. Yeah.

KILEY

(grinning)

Fantastic.

MERRITT

Alright, let's get the camera over here, and can we get that light over there? Thank you, people. Let's move, move, move.

The crew beings to mutter things to each other, but they start complying. Mongo pulls Merritt aside.

MONGO

What on earth are you doing?

MERRITT

Being chill. Trust me.

MONGO

Are you drunk?

MERRITT

What? No. I don't think so... How safe is the water here?

MONGO

Then why are you saying and doing things a drunk person would do?

MERRITT

You've inspired me, Mongo.

Mongo sees the wild glint in her eyes and smiles.

MONGO

(to the crew)

You heard our director! Let's move, move, move!

Merritt walks over to Eya and Kiley.

KILEY

You gonna tell me your genius plan?

MERRITT

Just... no, not yet. I need Eya.

EYA

Me?

KILEY

Where do you want me and Akoni?

MERRITT

I actually just need Eya for now. But I'll need you in a sec. Cool?

KILEY

Oh. Okay.

Merritt takes Eya and walks her over to the couch. Kiley is a mix of confusion and amusement and steps aside to Akoni who is watching with amusement.

AKONI

Your friend is a strange woman.

KILEY

You have no idea.

Eya sits, confused.

EYA

So... what am I doing?

Merritt waves Banjoko over to her.

MERRITT
 (to the DP)
 Banjoko, frame her up in a medium
 close.

Banjoko nods and begins setting up the shot.

Merritt crouches in front of Eya.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
 We're going to film you - ask you
 questions. Sort of like an
 interview.

EYA
 (hesitant)
 Uh... okay.

MERRITT
 Don't think too hard. Just answer
 however you like.

EYA
 Okay.

Merritt walks over to Kiley and begins speaking to her in hushed tones. Eya shifts uncomfortably. The BOOM OP checks his framing with Banjoko.

Merritt returns and goes and stands by Banjoko as he fiddles with the focus and brightness while Kiley takes a seat next to Eya.

KILEY
 (comforting)
 Relax. This'll be fun.

Eya looks around the quiet room, looking a tad unnerved. Mongo watches on, intrigued.

Rick and his duo watch with interest.

MERRITT
 You ready.

EYA
 I, uh... I don't know what I'm
 doing.

MERRITT
 Just relax.

EYA
 Is this for the movie or...?

MERRITT

Possibly. Just try to answer the questions.

EYA

Do I look at you or the camera?

MERRITT

Wherever you feel comfortable.

BANJOKO

Okay... I'm rolling.

MERRITT

Okay, Kiley. Go ahead.

Kiley smiles, at ease and poised. She looks at Eya.

KILEY

Weird, huh?

EYA

Yeah.

KILEY

Is it the weirdest thing you've ever done?

EYA

Um... Not really.

KILEY

I once did this skit where I was in this huge fat suit, and I fell down, and I seriously could not get back up. I couldn't stop the scene, so I just did the whole thing rolling around struggling. It was amazing.

EYA

(laughing nervously)
That's funny.

KILEY

What's your name?

EYA

(confused)
My name? IT's Eya Adekoya.

KILEY

You're not originally from Lagos, right?

EYA

Right, I'm from Baton Rouge,
Louisiana, and I moved to Nigeria
when I was eleven years old.

KILEY

How old are you now?

EYA

I'm twenty.

MERRITT

(whispering)

Ask what she likes about it here.

Eya looks to Merritt, but Kiley takes her hand to keep her attention on the spontaneous interview.

KILEY

There are so many incredible things
here. The culture is just gorgeous.
I've never seen a place so alive!
What do you like about Lagos?

EYA

I like the way of life. I like the
people. I like how we are an
interconnected, collective society,
you know? I like how we come
together as a community and as a
family in times of despair. It's
not every person for themselves
here. We're a true community with a
sense of understanding... and it's
different from what you get in
America... I think. From what I can
remember, and from what some of my
mom says.

KILEY

You're an actress?

EYA

Yes.

MERRITT

A rather popular one.

EYA

(blushing)

I've had my fair share of hits.

KILEY

You're being modest. I think I saw your face on the side of at least three buses already. The only billboard I ever got was an ad for this zit cream. Really made me a hit with the guys around town. I assure you, zit cream girl is not a label you want to have.

Eya laughs. Several of the crew chuckle quietly.

EYA

You're the one being modest now. I've seen you on Saturday Night Live.

KILEY

(shrugging)

As a featured player. You're the movie star.

EYA

I guess.

KILEY

Nigeria has an... interesting movie culture.

EYA

Heh. Well, it's... it's definitely different from America.

MERRITT

(whispering)

Call it Nollywood.

KILEY

We got Hollywood. What do you call it here?

EYA

Nollywood. Nigerian Hollywood.

KILEY

Holly, Bolly, Dolly, and now, Nolly.

EYA

It's fun. We make movies out of passion and entertainment, and yes it's nice to make some money off of it, but there's so much more freedom.

(MORE)

EYA (CONT'D)

It's not all about the money.
Again, it's about the community.

KILEY

You're really stressing community.

EYA

Yeah... I don't think it's
something Americans can truly
understand. Nor can tourists or
visitors. You have to be here.
Experience it.

MERRITT

Can we talk about your family for a
second?

EYA

Uhh...

MERRITT

Is that okay?

EYA

I don't know.

Merritt nods to Banjoko and he turns the camera off.

MERRITT

That was great, you two.

KILEY

(kindly to Eya)
That was fun.

EYA

I don't know what you want from me,
Merritt. What is this?

MERRITT

I'm making a new movie. Your movie.

EYA

My movie?

MERRITT

About you. A young woman who
returned to her roots in Nigeria.
She has some relatives here, but
isn't familiar with the culture.
She has to adapt. She meets a guy.
Has some familial problems. Gets
assimilated within the community.
Your movie. You're the protagonist.

Eya is dumbstruck. She looks at Merritt and Kiley. She shakes her head.

EYA

What about Delilah? Kiley?

MERRITT

Doesn't matter anymore. That idea's gone. Just another romance movie, and this one even more insensitive considering it's set in Nigeria but the protagonist is still a white woman. No, no. This is your movie now.

EYA

I...

She looks from Merritt to Kiley. Kiley nods encouragingly.

KILEY

It's wonderful, Eya. Say yes. Say yes. Say yes.

MERRITT

Are you okay with that?

EYA

I don't know what to say, I mean...

MERRITT

Are you willing to relive some of your past... for this performance.

EYA

I guess, yeah.

MERRITT

Kiley can prompt you. She'll wing it and help you out in some moments. Keep it flowing.

KILEY

It'll be so great.

Mongo is shaking his head in wonder. Rick and the crew are amazed at this sudden development. Eya thinks a long beat.

EYA

Let's do it.

Merritt claps her hand together and stands up straight.

MERRITT

Great! Only problem is now is we'll only have three days to film.

She snaps around to find Rick.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Rick, you and the guys are part of the crew now. Don't miss a thing. Keep doing what you're doing, but I'm going to need to get all your footage. You got me?

RICK

Hell yeah.

MERRITT

(to the room)

We don't stop rolling unless we're changing cards. Interior. Exterior. Day. Night. Whatever.

(to Kiley)

I want Eya's life to guide us, but you keep things moving, okay?

KILEY

Of course!

MONGO

What do you want me to do, man?

MERRITT

Stick close. Give me any ideas you have. Your own experiences can help. This isn't going to be Hollywood. This has GOT to be Nollywood.

MONGO

This? I like this.

MERRITT

I'm glad to hear it. Let's take a tour of your world. You lead the way, Eya.

The energy in the Crew is electric.

INT. EYA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A relatively modern house with new furniture and appliances. In the adjacent kitchen, Eya's mother, NNEOMA, baking.

Eya opens the front door and leading Merritt and the crew into the home.

NNEOMA

Eya? I thought you were filming today? Who are your friends?

EYA

Hi, mama.

Eya rushes up to her mother and hugs her.

EYA (CONT'D)

This is the director, Merritt Weaver. Mongo, Kiley, the whole crew.

NNEOMA

Um... Hi.

KILEY

Hi! I'm Kiley. May I ask your name?

NNEOMA

Nneoma.

KILEY

And you're Eya's mother?

NNEOMA

Yes. Eya, what is going on? I was just baking a cake actually, it'll be done in about half an hour if you want any, but I don't think I can feed all your friends.

Merritt gives a thumbs up from behind the camera, and Kiley smiles at the confused yet gracious woman.

CUT TO:

INT. EYA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nneoma and Eya sit on the couch next to each other. Kiley sits across from them. Merritt quietly directs Rick and Banjoko where to be aiming their cameras.

NNEOMA

It was hard when he passed away. We were lost for a little bit. I had to do some work. We lost the house, the savings.

KILEY

(tenderly)

That must have been so difficult.

NNEOMA

Eya got into acting. She's pretty big here. I'm so proud of her.

KILEY

Were you ever an actress?

NNEOMA

Oh, no no. I worked too much to even try such a thing. Maybe I wanted to when I was a younger woman, but no. Never had the time or energy.

KILEY

What sort of work did you do before? In America?

NNEOMA

Me? I worked as an assistant preschool teacher for a couple of years when I was in my early twenties. But I've always been a mother first. I worked from home as much as I could.

KILEY

My mom was the same way. She supported me and my three brothers - encouraged my acting, even when I was just a little dork in middle school pretending I was going to be a star someday.

NNEOMA

That was my Eya. Always performing. Always. Just like you.

KILEY

Did she play the second munchkin in Wizard of Oz too?

NNEOMA

(smiling)

She was Dorothy. It did raise some controversy with the conservative community... but she was just that good.

KILEY

Ah! I'm jealous! What work did you do here?

NNEOMA

Chef, actually. I got lucky. In America I would've needed all that training and paper work. Here it was... cool, you know? I gave the sous chef some food, he liked it. Hired me. Easy.

KILEY

Well, if that pie is any indicator of your talent, you'd give Gordon Ramsey a run for his money.

NNEOMA

Now I'm really into cakes.

EYA

She sort of has a cult following.

NNEOMA

I'm just starting up my business. I'm gonna be showcasing it at the market. You should stop by.

Kiley glances at Merritt. Merritt nods approval.

KILEY

Definitely. I've been wondering what a Nigerian market looks like. Is it that much different from a New York Farmer's Market?

NNEOMA

Less crazy, I think.

KILEY

(laughing)
Oh, you're the comedian now, huh?

NNEOMA

(laughing)
I've been to a New York market. It's crazy!

KILEY

How was the transition for you? Between America and Nigeria.

NNEOMA

It's harder when you're older. Eya had friends, I tried to make friends with her friends' parents, but we never really got along. Too many differences. I was too American, I guess. I tried to stick with Eya as much as I could, but obviously when she became a teenager she wanted some space. And that really broke my heart. I felt so alone. My husband was gone, my daughter felt... far away, even though she was right there in the next room. It was tough, but we're close again now.

Eya squeezes her mother's hand sweetly. Nneoma wipes a tear away.

KILEY

Sounds like a moving experience.

NNEOMA

It was a hard time...

EYA

For both of us.

Kiley and the family share a silent moment of reflection. Merritt grins happily behind the camera.

Mongo takes a bite of one of Nneoma's cakes and moans loudly in appreciation. The whole crew turns to him.

KILEY

You two need some privacy, Mongo?

MONGO

Wow... this is incredible.

KILEY

(to Eya)

I think Mongo is having a relationship with your mom's cake.

MONGO

I will buy... twenty cakes for the celebration.

NNEOMA

Twenty? Oh, you will leave me a wreck of a woman! What are you celebrating?

MONGO

For when filming is over. We eat
twenty cakes.

Merritt laughs. Kiley shrugs. Nneoma smiles proudly.

NNEOMA

It will be my pleasure.

EXT. NIGERIAN FILM MARKET - DAY

Mongo leads Merritt, Eya, Kiley, and the crew down an
incredibly crowded street, filled with booths and cheap movie
posters. This is the busiest part of the city.

Merritt looks around in awe.

MERRITT

Jesus... this is incredible.

MONGO

One of a kind, isn't it? This what
movies are about.

MERRITT

Yeah.
(to Rick)
You getting all this?

RICK

Yup.

BANJOKO

(discretely)
Miss Weaver...

Banjoko nods ahead at something OFF SCREEN. Merritt sees it
and SNAPS to Kiley - points. Kiley glimpses whatever it is
and nods. Banjoko points his camera.

KILEY

(pointing)
Hey... Eya... is that you?

Eya follows Kiley's finger. Eya's face is on a big,
impressive poster for a film playing in a small booth.

EYA

Oh... wow. They edited that
quickly.

KILEY

Let's go check it out.

EYA
I dunno. I don't really like
watching my stuff.

KILEY
It'll be great!

Kiley grabs Eya's hands and drags her to the booth labeled:
DEVIL'S WIFE PART 3. Where Kalechi, the Director - and a
couple of PRODUCERS are handing out copies of the DVD for
change and a couple of bills. The Director spots Eya.

KALECHI
Eya! What're you doing here!
(and spotting Mongo)
And my boy!

MONGO
Kalechi!

The two shake hands and fist bump.

KALECHI
What brings you hotshots around?

He notices Merritt and the film crew. Then he spots Kiley.
His eyes widen, obviously taken by her beauty.

KALECHI (CONT'D)
My god, Mongo. Who is this beauty?

KILEY
Kiley Kaine.

KALECHI
You are a friend of the big shot
American director, no?
(to Merritt)
Your star, I assume?

Merritt offers a shrug and a smile.

KILEY
(coyly)
We'll see. Can I have a copy?

KALECHI
For free... A friend of Eya is a
friend of mine.
(flirtatiously)
And maybe, if you like what you
see, you'll let me make you a
Nollywood star, my dear.

Kalechi hands everyone a copy of Devil's Wife Part 3.

A PEDESTRIAN notices Eya and walks up to her.

PEDESTRIAN

Can I have a picture? I'm a big fan!

EYA

Yeah, yeah. Sure.

The Pedestrian takes out his phone and takes a selfie with Eya.

PEDESTRIAN

Thank you so much.

EYA

Enjoy the movie.

PEDESTRIAN

I will. I can't wait until part-four.

Eya smiles as the Pedestrian walks off.

KILEY

(to Eya)

You're such a rock star.

Another set of FANS walk up to Eya with cupcakes and DVDs.

FAN #1

Eya! Love your movies. Would you like a cupcake?

The Fan hands the joyous Eya a cupcake. She gladly takes it.

EYA

Thank you.

FAN #2

(handing DVD)

Here's a movie we made. You can have it for free.

KILEY

(amused)

So many free movies.

EYA

Thank you.

FAN #1
Can we have a picture.

MAN ON STREET (O.S.)
Eya! Eya Adekoya!

A louder buzz reverberates nearby as people turn their heads to the booth. A CROWD begins to form.

MONGO
Uhh... I think it's time to go.
It's going to get crowded real fast.

MERRITT
Yeah, I think we're about to get mobbed.

FANS ON STREET
(various times)
Eya! Wait! Wait! Can I have a picture! Autograph please!
Autograph! I'm such a big fan can I please have a picture!

KALECHI
(shouting)
Alright! Alright! One at a time, my friends! There is only so much of me to go around!

Eya, Kiley, and the GANG sneak behind the Devil's Wife 3 booth and disappear before the mob closes in.

EXT. NIGERIAN BACK STREET - DAY

The CREW walk down the back street away from the crowds now. Kiley and Eva are up ahead a ways giggling, Rick and Banjoko following them. Merritt shakes her head at Mongo.

MERRITT
I've got the biggest Nollywood star in my movie.

MONGO
The biggest star in the world!

Eya smiles at Kiley.

EYA
It's really cool you're telling this story. Showing the world what it's like here.

Kiley glances back at Merritt and smiles.

KILEY

Yeah, it is, isn't it?

EYA

Although I'd prefer somebody in a situation more like me would write or direct it... but at least there's some exposure. Maybe next time.

KILEY

It's your story, Eya. Merritt's just found a way for you to tell it. I just hope the social media backlash isn't too crazy.

EYA

I'll defend you all.

The two hold hands and continue happily down the street.

INT. MERRITT'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It is well past midnight. Mongo and most of the crew is gone.

Jeff and Peter are passed out asleep on Kiley's bed.

Banjoko is face down on the ground snoring gently. Merritt and Rick are tucked in the corner with their camera pointed and Eya and Kiley sitting on the bed watching DEVIL'S WIFE 3 on the TV.

Merritt is nodding off.

KILEY

I should have seen the first two parts.

EYA

They're all the same.

Rick leans close to Merritt and nudges her.

RICK

(whispering)
Hey.

MERRITT

(suddenly awake, groggy)
Huh? What's up?

RICK

(shushing her)

It's okay. I wanted to tell you I'm sending Pete and Jeff home in the morning. Back to the states.

MERRITT

(worried)

What? Why?

RICK

(whispering)

It's okay. I got them flights already. We cut them, that frees up budget you can use to get one more day out of this. You can get a bunch of scripted moments or dramatic re-enactments to round off what we have so far. Go guerrilla and make this thing.

MERRITT

(shocked)

Oh my god. Are you sure?

RICK

Yeah, I already talked to Banjoko about it. His crew can handle the bulk. I'll handle our camera. It's fine.

MERRITT

But why?

RICK

Because I think this is really cool. You need an extra day. It's worth it.

MERRITT

Man, thank you. This is... thank you.

RICK

I'm glad to do it. Even if this place feels like an alien planet outside of time and space.

MERRITT

Oh c'mon, this place isn't--

RICK

Really? Are you going to pull that cliché "it's not that bad"?

MERRITT
 (smirking)
 It has character.

RICK
 (nodding with a smile)
 New York City has character... and
 running water.

MERRITT
 Now you're just being rude.

Eya and Kiley begin laughing at the movie. Merritt glances over at the screen and shakes her head.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 I wish I had the balls to make
 something like this.

ON THE SCREEN: AN OLD WOMAN SWINGS AROUND AN ELEPHANT TUSK.

OLD WOMAN
 Repent! Repent! REPENT!!!!

Merritt and Rick join the laughter trying to stay quiet.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE OF MOVIE MAKING

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

A very minimal crew. Only Merritt, Rick, Banjoko, Mongo, and the few grips, sound, and gaffer make the film.

Eya walks out of the arrivals gate with two suitcases and a backpack the team films a tracking shot. Kiley runs up and hugs her.

SECURITY GUARD
 Oi! No camera here! No camera!

The crew runs off.

EXT. EYA'S HOUSE - DAY

Eya ringing the door bell on her house.

They film this shot from several angles, long shot, mid shot, closeup of her finger, closeup of her face.

Finally, Merritt gives the thumbs up.

INT. EYA'S HOUSE - DAY

Eya giving her mother her hug. Nneoma is in make-up and a nice outfit - her costume.

Eya and her mother sit across from each other at a table eating some food.

Banjoko has an OTS shot set up behind one, Rick the other.

NNEOMA

I can't believe you're here.

EYA

Me too. I hope I... I hope I can fit in.

NNEOMA

Don't worry. I'll help you. Whatever you need. I'm here for you.

EYA

Thank you, auntie.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Merritt, Kiley, Eya and the crew walk down the street. Mongo stops a RANDOM MAN.

MONGO

Hey, my friend. Do you want to be in a movie?

The Random Man looks at his watch.

RANDOM MAN

What I do?

A MOMENT LATER - Merritt is directing the stranger.

MERRITT

Okay, so, Eya here is gonna walk around the corner then you just have to bump into her and start yelling at her in... Hausa? Do you speak Hausa?

RANDOM MAN

I speak Hausa. What I say?

MERRITT

Just like... "Hey what the hell are you doing? Watch where you're going, etcetera. You get it?"

RANDOM MAN

I do that.

MERRITT

Okay, good. Get around that corner, when I say action Eya is gonna start walking, then when you see her turn the corner just bump into her and do your thing.

They quickly set up the shot, Merritt gets behind Rick.

RICK

I got the shot.

Merritt gives Banjoko a thumbs up. He returns one, also set up. Kiley, wearing the boom gear, waves too.

MERRITT

Sound good?

KILEY

Good.

MERRITT

Rolling... Action.

The cameras track Eya as she walks, looking around the neighborhood, acting as if she's in a daze.

She turns the corner and the Random Man bumps into her and immediately starts yelling in UNSUBTITLED HAUSA. He keeps on yelling and yelling, They move in for a closeup on Eya's incredibly confused face.

Rick pans over to the Random Man giving the performance of a lifetime.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Cut.

The Random Man finishes his yelling, then smiles.

RANDOM MAN

How do I do?

MERRITT

That was great. Thank you so much.

Rick keeps rolling as Merritt and Eya chat with the Man. Kiley walks over and he recognizes her with glee. They all take a selfie with him.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The restaurant Mongo took Merritt too. Mongo is speaking with the OWNER who is happily agreeing to the filming.

Rick films Kiley speaking with some patrons.

KILEY
And what do you do?

MAN
I'm a mechanic, but I've always loved the movies! In movies, you can be anything! Anyone!

KILEY
That's right.

MAN 2
In a movie, I could be your boyfriend?

KILEY
Oh, I like this one. This one has good taste.

They all laugh.

MOMENTS LATER - Cameras rolling.

Eya is looking through the menu. RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS stand and sit around, not knowing where to look.

MERRITT
(politely)
Could you guys... Like, act normal?
Just sit down, talk, whatever.
Kiley, maybe you could...

KILEY
(pleasantly)
Of course. Where's my boyfriend?

She takes the arm of MAN 2. Merritt makes sure the shot is set up to her liking.

MERRITT
And background!

Not much changes.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
Rolling... action.

A WAITER walks up to Eya and asks her a question in UNSUBTITLED HAUSA.

EYA
(acting nervously)
Uh... English, please.

The Waiter gives Eya an exaggerated look of disappointment then SIGHS very loudly.

MERRITT
Alright. Uh...
(to the Waiter)
I think that look and sigh can be a bit more... subtle you know?

The Waiter sighs again, loudly.

WAITER
Like that?

MERRITT
That's still--

WAITER
I think it's just the way I sigh.
Very loud.

MERRITT
Yeah, yeah, that's fine. Let's keep moving.

MONGO
I like this speed, Merritt.

MERRITT
I'm learning.

Merritt and Mongo share a smile.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Eya walks down the park, looking around as the CREW follows. Eya sits on a bench and takes a deep breath.

A few seconds later, Akoni, in make-up and costume, walks in and sits next to her.

AKONI
Hi.

EYA
Hey.

AKONI
You look lost.

EYA
I don't know what I'm doing here.

AKONI
You have a good accent.

EYA
I'm from America actually.

AKONI
Oh really?

EYA
Yeah... just moved here a couple of weeks ago.

AKONI
How do you like it?

EYA
I don't know.

AKONI
I can show you around if you like.

INT. CAB - DAY

The Cab Driver from Merritt and Kiley's arrival is driving through the streets. Banjoko and Merrit are crammed in the back. Eya is the front seat smiling nervously.

CAB DRIVER
Best cab service in Nigeria. I assure you!

THE MONTAGE ENDS with Merritt shaking her head amused.

EXT. NIGERIAN FILM MARKET - AFTERNOON

Merritt is standing between Akoni and Kiley as Rick films them. Eya jogs up to them followed by Banjoko and a Sound Guy.

MERRITT

Great work guys. Thank you for making it Akoni. It means a lot.

AKONI

This is great. I'm happy to do it.

MERRITT

Uh... so, Eya, what else? What did you do next?

EYA

Well... we actually did have sex that night.

KILEY

No!!

MERRITT

Oh wow.

EYA

(blushing)

Yeah.

MERRITT

Well... I mean, are you okay with shooting a sex scene?

KILEY

(nodding enthusiastically)

Say yes. Say yes. Say yes.

Eya smiles timidly and bites her lip.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Everything is set up. Eya lies on the bed with Akoni on top of her. They are both under sheets.

MERRITT

Action!

Akoni thrusts once.

EYA

Ouch, ouch, ouch. Hold on.

AKONI

Sorry. Sorry.

EYA

No, no, it's not you.

Eya adjusts a bit.

AKONI
Are you okay?

MERRITT
You okay, Eya?

EYA
Yeah, yeah, something just got tangled up.

MERRITT
Alright, you good?

EYA
Good.

MERRITT
Rolling... and action.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eya sits next to Nneoma on the couch. They have a 50/50 shot set up.

MERRITT
This is the martini, you guys. Last scene of the movie. Then it's a wrap. You ready?

EYA
Ready.

NNEOMA
Ready.

MERRITT
Sound?

Rick gives a thumbs up.

MERRITT (CONT'D)
Roll camera.

BANJOKO
Rolling.

MERRITT
And... action!

EYA

I have to move out. I think I'm ready.

NNEOMA

I understand, but--

EYA

It's been three months. I can take care of myself now. I have a job, I'm settling down.

NNEOMA

But what if it all falls apart?

EYA

You'll always be here for me, right?

NNEOMA

Of course.

EYA

Then I can just come back here.

NNEOMA

I don't want you to go. We finally... we finally had a chance to connect, and now you're leaving me again?

EYA

I'm just moving ten miles away. We'll still see each other.

Nneoma sighs.

EYA (CONT'D)

I'm comfortable now. I know the people, I'm picking up on the language. It almost feels like home.

NNEOMA

That's good to hear.

EYA

I'm home now, okay?

NNEOMA

Okay.

Eya and Nneoma hug.

EYA

I'll just be ten miles away.

Nneoma nods. Eya stands up, grabs a couple of bags and walks off.

Merritt taps Banjoko on the shoulder as he moves into Nneoma who is genuinely crying.

The door closes.

BEAT.

MERRITT

And cut! ... beautiful work guys! I think... I think that's a wrap!

Cheers throughout the small cast and crew.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The entire cast and crew have gathered for a large meal.

Mongo is shaking everyone's hands. Nneoma has brought cakes and pies.

Akoni and Kiley and sitting very close to one another. Rick and Banjoko chat quietly, though Rick is still rolling camera on the event.

Even the Cab Driver, Random Guy, and the others from the cast are there.

Merritt stands up at the head of the table and clinks her glass. Rick nods to Banjoko, and he points his camera to Merritt.

MERRITT

It's been a wild week. Script changes, cast changes, crew changes, friends made, friends lost, but we made a movie. And a damn fine one if you ask me. I've learned a lot here. About my craft and about other things as well. I could talk for hour, but I'll probably just give an interview to the Hollywood Reporter and link you all that.

Laughs throughout the table.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

I didn't have a clue what I was getting myself into when I came here, but seeing you all work so damn hard, experiencing Eya's story, hearing all your stories with Kiley's ridiculousness.

KILEY

You love me!

Laughter.

MERRITT

I do. I'd like to thank all of you for sticking with me. Especially you Mongo, you're one of the chilliest, most level headed but hardest working producers I've ever seen. Gathering cast and crew like it is nothing. The best, right?

MONGO

Best in the world!

MERRITT

I've never seen anything like it. They'd love you in Hollywood for your efficiency.

MONGO

They can't have me!

Laughter. Merritt smiles sadly.

MERRITT

But, like Eya's character, it's time to go home. And home isn't ten miles away. It's halfway across the world. But I want you all to know that I've learned a lot, and I'll never forget this experience. And I hope I can come back one day... if I'm welcome. Thank you all.

An applause at the table. Merritt smiles and nods.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Merritt and Kiley have exited the CAB and stand on the curb as the Cab Driver pulls their bags out of the trunk of his car. Kiley hugs Eya.

EYA

We better keep in touch.

KILEY

We will. You'll have to come back to America, at least a few times a year. You're gonna be huge over there. You are an incredibly talented actress.

EYA

I'm happy here, but maybe--
(she looks to Merritt)
If the script is good enough.

Merritt laughs then looks over at Mongo who smiles at her.

MERRITT

It was a pleasure.

They shake hands.

MONGO

Have a good flight.

MERRITT

Thank you.

Merritt and Kiley grab their bags and walk to the gate. Mongo and Eya wave after them. Merritt looks back and smiles.

FADE TO:

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Back in America. It's a nice autumn day. The wind rustles the well cut trees - the sun shines warmly.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

A darkened room - a small movie theater with plush chairs and a big screen. The last seconds of the movie play. Merritt sits beside Charles.

EYA (ON SCREEN)

I'll just be ten miles away.

Eya walks off as the camera closes in on Nneoma's sorrowful face. Eya walks outside and finds Kiley waiting for her.

They take each other into their arms and embrace. Eya touches Kiley's cheek and looks deeply into her eyes.

KILEY

(gently)
How are you?

EYA

I'm perfect. I've fallen on my
face, fallen out of taxis, and now,
I've fallen in love.

They kiss, the brilliant sunset behind them. The film fades
out and the title comes up: **EYA**

Followed by the credits: **WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MERRITT
WEAVER**

The credits continue to roll the familiar names. Charles
frowns. He sits for a long while before turning to Merritt.

CHARLES

I send you Nigeria to make a rom-
com and you come back with a one
hour ten minute indie doc about a
woman going back to her roots and
finding herself?

MERRITT

We had a few script changes.

CHARLES

I'll say... I mean... I don't know
what to do with this.

MERRITT

Can't you still use the holiday
slot?

CHARLES

No, Merritt, I can't. The quality
is too poor. It's sloppy. Editing
is jumpy. Continuity errors. It's
half documentary. This isn't wide
release material by a long shot.

MERRITT

But it's good, Charles. It's raw,
but it's real. That place. It needs
to be shown. People need to
experience it. And we shot the
whole thing in three days.

CHARLES

Nobody knows you made it in three
days. All I know is this is barely
straight to digital...

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)
and I probably just cost the
company half a million bucks.

Merritt sighs.

MERRITT
It's good. Tell me it's not good.
Tell me you weren't moved by it.

CHARLES
I'm sorry Merritt... but...

MERRITT
Show it. Show to anyone else who
will watch it. I know there's a
movie here people will want to see.
I know it.

Charles stands. He rubs his face and sighs deeply.

CHARLES
I'll show it to Samuel, but don't
hold your breath, Merritt. You
fucked up.

Charles leaves the room. Merritt looks up at the screen as
the screen to see the final credit and image: The cast and
crew in a group photo.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Merritt and Raven cuddle with each other in bed.

MERRITT
It was the most incredible,
wonderful disaster.

RAVEN
I can't wait to see it. It sounds
amazing. And you're proud of it?

MERRITT
As a whole... yes. It's not the
most technically savvy or best
looking movie... but I think I told
a beautiful, real story that is
going to touch people.

RAVEN
You learned a lot. It was an
experience. Use it to write a bad
ass movie. Don't stop here. It's
just the beginning for you.

Raven kisses her softly and sweetly.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
You inspire me.

They hold one another.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

It's later in the night. Raven is fast asleep. Merritt stares at the ceiling. Merritt quietly gets out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Merritt sits on the couch. The TV is on, glowing and filling the dark room with flashes of light. On the screen is The Devil's Wife Part 3.

Merritt smiles ever so slightly at it - her eyes taking in the ridiculous over the top acting and action.

She pauses the movie and pulls her LAPTOP onto her lap. She opens it to a BLANK SCRIPT DOCUMENT.

She opens her phone and calls Eya.

She holds the phone to her ear and waits... And waits... and waits...

No answer.

Merritt sighs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Late at night, Merritt sits with her laptop and headphones plugged in.

She stares at the screen... thinking... She hesitates... unsure. She shuts her eyes tight... and keeps them closed.

They open, she starts typing.

CUT TO BLACK.

T H E E N D