ANGEL OF DEBT

Written by

BOSTON FLAMEZ

Original Screenplay

FADE IN:

EXT. SADE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Wide and lonely shot of a housing block somewhere in Lagos Mainland. A lady leans on the boot of a parked sedan at the side of the street. She's **OLUCHI,** 26, aloof. Oluchi wears a long, black trench coat with fitted trousers and ankle boots. Her hair is a medium length afro.

PUSH IN slowly till we meet Oluchi. She lights a cigarette and drags an effortless puff. She holds it in and stares straight ahead with null eyes.

SADE (O.S.)
Can't you go an hour without doing that?

Another young lady approaches the car from behind Oluchi. She's **SADE,** 25, petite and bubbly with long braids. Chronically Gen-Z.

Oluchi releases the smoke slowly and turns around.

SADE (CONT'D)
You couldn't just wait for like five minutes.

Oluchi's eyes are empty.

OLUCHI
You're the one that kept me waiting. Why are you complaining?

Oluchi enters the car and shuts the door in Sade's face. Sade rolls her eyes and goes round the corner and sits behind the driver.

INT. MOVING CAR - CONTINUOUS

Oluchi sits behind the front passenger seat. She throws her face away from Sade.

SADE
Sorry I was late jorh. It's because of the protest. They've blocked the highway.

Oluchi isn't moved.

OLUCHI
I still don't think this is a good idea.

Sade brings out a small mirror and brush and begins to adjust her makeup.

SADE
Ah, ah, nawa for you oh. I already told you it'll be alright. I spoke to Camilla. It's correct guys that are going to be there. Not some local setting.
(A beat)
Trust me now.

Oluchi gives her a side eye.

The driver **SIMON**, 35, turns up the volume of the radio.

FEMALE RADIO BROADCASTER (O.S.)
"... The protesters are now charging through the barricade at the National Assembly complex! Armed forces are struggling to keep them at bay! This is crazy. The youths are not playing this time around..."

Simon nods enthusiastically, fully in support of the news he's hearing.

SADE
(Cutting in)
Please turn that thing off abeg. We don't need that kind of energy right now.

Oluchi shakes her head and rolls her eyes.

SIMON
Madam. Na still your right them dey fight for na.

SADE
Abeg abeg abeg. I already posted the protest banner on my story. It had thousands of views.

SIMON
Ah.

Sade returns the makeup items. She notices Oluchi staring at her.

SADE
What happen? Please!

The driver shrugs. Oluchi looks away.

SADE (CONT'D)
Ehen. Remember that Big brother guy from last year...

OLUCHI
Who?

SADE
(Snapping her fingers)
That guy that was the second runner up. Umm...

She searches for a name.

SIMON
- Roman!

SADE
Yes. Amazing Roman.

Sade faces the driver and taps his sit.

SADE (CONT'D)
Oga. Abeg mind your business.

Simon shrugs. Sade turns back to Oluchi.

SADE (CONT'D)
Amazing Roman is going to be there. Don't say I didn't tell you oh. Anyhow you want to package, make sure you catch his attention.

A beat.

OLUCHI
Is this all a game to you?

SADE
Babes we need that connect. When I make content with Roman I'll shutdown social media.

OLUCHI
So nobody is actually looking for love.

SADE
No one is stopping anybody from finding love.

Oluchi shakes her head.

OLUCHI
(Whispers)
Right.

SADE
My own is... Don't go and be doing smeh smeh on that stage oh. You need to represent. I called in some favours to get you the slot.

Oluchi just stares at her blankly.

SADE (CONT'D)
You can't even say thank you.

Oluchi mouths a sarcastic "thank you."

INT/EXT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

The car pulls over beside a commercial building.

SIMON
Madam abeg give me five stars.

The ladies step out of the car.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Madam...

Sade bends over into the passenger seat window.

SADE
Can you come and pick us later in the night? So we don't have to book another ride.

SIMON
We go do am offline be that.

SADE
Okay.

She opens her phone and rates the driver 5 stars.

SIMON
Me I for go protest oh, but I need to make money.

SADE
Oga nobody asked you.

She leans away from the car. Oluchi is shocked by her attitude.

OLUCHI
Sade!

Oluchi peers into the car.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
(Politely)
Sir, we'll call you. She's Sade and I'm Oluchi...

Simon shakes his head and drives off.

Sade looks at Oluchi as if she's just seeing her for the first time.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
What?

SADE
We need to fix your makeup. Let's go inside.

Oluchi rolls her eyes. Sade opens the gate and they head in.

SADE (CONT'D)
And why're you dressed like the undertaker?

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The reception area of a video production studio. A couple of young people are seated and standing. Sade and Oluchi walk in casually. A TV hangs on the wall; on the screen is a live broadcast of a dating show. Five men stand with balloons in their hands.

A lady, **AUTUMN** (27, elegant) approaches them. Autumn has a headphone with a mic hanging on her head with an iPad in hand.

She drops the headphone to her neck and shakes Sade. Autumn speaks with a foreign accent.

AUTUMN
Hi, I'm Autumn.

Suddenly, Sade's accent changes.

SADE
(Posh accent)
Hi, I'm Shar day. We spoke on the phone.

AUTUMN
Yeah hi, Shar day. Nice to meet you.

SADE
Nice to meet you too. This is my friend Luchi.

Oluchi raises her brows at Sade. Autumn shakes Oluchi.

AUTUMN
Nice to meet you, Luchi.

OLUCHI
Nice to meet you too, Autumn.

AUTUMN
You guys are pretty late.

SADE
Yeah the highways are blocked.

AUTUMN
(Concerned)
Oh, that protest thingy.

SADE
(Calmly)
Yeah.

Oluchi scoffs.

Autumn shrugs it off.

AUTUMN
(To Sade)
Well, she enters in 5 minutes. The commercial break will soon be over.

Autumn looks at Oluchi as if she's just seeing her for the first time.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
We need to fix your makeup quickly.

Sade gives Oluchi a look. "I told you so."

Autumn points to a makeup up chair by the corner.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Go to that booth over there.

Autumn steps away. Oluchi pulls Sade aside.

OLUCHI
Since when did I become "Luchi?"

Sade returns to her normal accent.

SADE
Babes just act right. Don't be asking too many questions.

Sade drags Oluchi to the makeup chair and the makeup artist starts touching her up. Oluchi rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - LATER

Autumn approaches Sade and pulls her to the side. She taps something on her iPad.

AUTUMN
The ratings are off the charts. The last girl that entered... She had a back and forth with Roman and left without a match...

Sade's posh accent is back.

SADE
Yeah? And?

AUTUMN
Roman's fans are coming for her online. She's already had to deactivate all her socials.

Sade turns and looks at Oluchi in the corner. A slight concern covers her face.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
But guess what? She boosted the rating! We're currently trending at number 9 in Nigeria!

SADE
Wait... This is live?

AUTUMN
Of course. I told you remember?

Sade strokes her braids anxiously.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
We're live streaming. And we have...
(She taps the iPad)
Fifty two thousand viewers. Holy shit.

SADE
Woah.

AUTUMN
Listen Shar Day.
(She pulls Sade even closer)
We need to talk strategy. Camilla sent some notes.

SADE
Okay?

AUTUMN
Luchi needs to quarrel with one of the contestants. Preferably Roman.

SADE
Wait, what?

AUTUMN
Yeah. Look, our viewers are rabid. They just want to see Roman in action. She needs to engage him. Camilla believes we can break 100k viewers tonight.

Oluchi approaches them looking hardly any different. Autumn welcomes her with a smile.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
(To Sade, with a serious face)
Talk to her.

Autumn walks away.

Sade strokes her hair.

OLUCHI
Is everything alright?

SADE
Oluchi see ehn. In case any of the guys start insulting you...

Suddenly the main studio door bursts open and a lady **CAMILLA** (28, beautiful and dressed to impress) steps out with a mic in her hand. She sees Oluchi and Sade standing.

CAMILLA
(Urgently)
Yes? Who's Luchi? Are you Luchi?

Sade nudges Oluchi forward.

SADE
She's Luchi.

CAMILLA
Let's go, let's go. We're live.

Camilla nudges Oluchi into the studio.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

We're inside the live broadcast from the TV earlier.

Oluchi's POV:

The lights blind her. She stretches her left hand in front of her face to calm the sudden chaos of light, camera, action. Her hearing becomes muffled and static as she looks around the room - five male contestants are standing, each with a balloon in hand; a live stream setup being monitored by a guy, and a camera man shooting the live show. The contestants from left to right are **JAYBOOZY** (28, filled with steeze), **FABIAN** (30, light skin), **GIOVANNI** (28, gym bro), **FOLA 4 SURE** (27, wearing bespoke senator ankara) and **ROMAN** (30, iced out in designers) the obvious star of the show. They all look and act like different variations of the same person. It's all about their composure.

Her eyes pan back to Camilla and her hearing becomes audible. End POV.

CAMILLA
Hello? Hello? Can you introduce yourself?

Immediately, Jayboozy and Fola4Sure pop their balloons and they all begin to laugh and murmur.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Yes...? I'm Camilla. You are?

Oluchi composes herself. Camilla points the mic to her.

OLUCHI
Sorry. Hi, I'm Oluchi.

Camilla urges her to speak more.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Uhh. You can call me Luchi.

CAMILLA
(To the live camera)
Hahaha guys. It seems we have a shy one here. Meet our sister - Luchi.
(Back to Oluchi)
How old are you, and what do you do?

A beat.

OLUCHI
I'm 26 years old. I work as a personal assistant to The Cereal Killer.

But it sounds like she said "Serial killer."

CAMILLA
What?

Everyone is perplexed.

OLUCHI
Cereal Killer.

CAMILLA
Huh? You're an assistant serial killer?

OLUCHI
I work as a personal assistant -

CAMILLA
(Motions to the left)
- Yes?

OLUCHI
To -

CAMILLA
(Motions to the right)
To...

OLUCHI
(Drags it)
The Cereal Killer.

CAMILLA
Oh! The Cereal Killer! Hahaha

OLUCHI
Yes. Chief Chef.

CAMILLA
Hahahaha.
(sarcastically)
Pardon my insolence.
And I was even at his restaurant
last week.

OLUCHI
Oh.

CAMILLA
Anyway...
(Turns to the camera)
Ah, two guys have already popped
their balloons oh. Let's see if our
sister Luchi can still find love.
(To Oluchi)
Do you think you can find love
here?

Oluchi looks away for a second.

OLUCHI
I hope love finds me.

Camilla hails and teases her. Oluchi's eyes lock with Roman's for a second. She sharply looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sade stands watching the TV broadcast anxiously. She notices Autumn behind her.

SADE
(Posh accent)
Well? How is it going?

Autumn winces.

AUTUMN
I don't know. Still curious.
(She taps the iPad)
They're calling her "Shy Lu."

Sade rolls her eyes. The TV channel glitches and turns off.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
What happened?

Autumn picks up the remote from a table and presses it furiously. TV doesn't respond.

Sade collects the remote from autumn and smacks it against her palms Naija style. She presses a button and it works at once. But the TV opens to another channel. A news broadcast.

NEWSCASTER
This is unbelievable! The protesters are now breaking through the barricade! Politicians inside the building are running away! Some are evading in helicopters… Others are running on foot. Complete carnage here at the National Assembly!...

They're all in shock.

SADE
Woah.

AUTUMN
Please change that channel. It's not giving.

Sade lets go of the moment. She's even disappointed in herself.

SADE
Right.

She switches the channel back to the game show. In the TV, we see Oluchi standing in front of Jayboozy.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - SAME TIME

Oluchi looks straight at Jayboozy.

AUTUMN
So for the sake of the viewers just joining, please introduce yourself again and tell us why you popped your balloon.

JAYBOOZY
My name is Jayboozy. Jay to the Boo to the Zed to the Y.

Oluchi doesn't flinch.

JAYBOOZY (CONT'D)
I actually popped my balloon because of the way you came in acting shy and surprised like you didn't know what was going on.

AUTUMN
Oh wow. So bad first impression.

JAYBOOZY
Yes. I admire women who are composed and classy at all times.

AUTUMN
You don't think she's classy?

JAYBOOZY
I mean... She claims to work for Chief Chef but I wouldn't know that. At least not from the way she's dressed.

The other guys begin to snicker.

Oluchi looks at them curiously.

JAYBOOZY (CONT'D)
No shades though.

Autumn points the mic to Oluchi.

Oluchi shakes her head.

AUTUMN
You don't have anything to say to that?

OLUCHI
It's fine if you don't like my way of dressing. But it's not up to you to determine my class.

JAYBOOZY
See, I've been with a lot of classy babes. Classier than you could ever imagine. And they've all looked better than you. Rest.

Camilla gets excited.

CAMILLA
Ah! Things are heating up oh.

JAYBOOZY
I mean… Chief Chef is known for rolling with bougie and elite people. Forgive me for wondering why he'd want to be assisted by a trenches babe like you.

All the other guys gas him up. Camilla is melodramatic.

Oluchi waits for the room to quiet.

OLUCHI
I know your type.

JAYBOOZY
Excuse me?

OLUCHI
I know your type. You have no real self worth, so you cling to people with perceived value so their significance can rub off on you.

JAYBOOZY
Abeg shut up. Stop speaking gramma. Literally nobody is impressed here.

He looks around for validation. The other guys echo him.

JAYBOOZY (CONT'D)
You don't know me young lady. So stop opening your mouth and saying rubbish. You think speaking like an Aristo makes you classy?

Oluchi stares at him for a moment. The remaining guys pop their balloons. Oluchi turns and looks at Camilla.

CAMILLA
Things are getting spicy out here. Ah, Luchi. They said they don't want you oh!

She laughs cheekily.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Okay, let's see why the rest popped their balloons. We'll come back to you Jayboozy.

Camilla strolls to Fabian. A flirtatious smile spreads across his face.

Camilla points the mic at him.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Let's get to know you sir.

Fabian licks his lips and rubs his palms.

FABIAN
First of all, you don't need to keep that attitude with me, baby girl. I'm a lover, I'm not a fighter.

Oluchi is still not impressed.

CAMILLA
Ah. It's not a small something oh. Can we know you sir?

FABIAN
I'm Fabian, but you can call me whatever you want.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sade and Autumn watching the show on TV.

SADE
Omo who be this one?

Autumn gives her a puzzling look. Sade realises she just broke character. She cracks her throat and brings back the accent.

SADE (CONT'D)
Who the hell does he think he is?

Autumn gives her a look.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

CAMILLA
Why did you pop your balloon Fabian?

FABIAN
(Smiling cheekily)
I actually don't like how you spoke to my guy Boozy just now. I could tolerate you being nervous and all but c'mon baby girl, you need to be courteous.

CAMILLA
Ah. First she lacked class, now she lacks courtesy. Interesting.

OLUCHI
Would you let some random guy speak to your sister like that?

JAYBOOZY
Hey hey better watch your mouth. Who is "some random guy?"

Oluchi doesn't even acknowledge Jayboozy. Her eyes remain fixated on Fabian.

FABIAN
My sister knows better than to talk to a man like that.

OLUCHI
Good thing I'm not your sister then.

Camilla interjects.

CAMILLA
So Luchi. Wait, wait. Is he your type?

Oluchi considers Fabian for a moment.

OLUCHI
Not exactly. No.

The other guys snicker. Fabian looks at them and his face tightens.

FABIAN
Hey hey hey. Be careful with yourself. See someone I'm even trying to be reasonable with.

OLUCHI
I'm unreasonable because I don't find you attractive?

FABIAN
Do you know how many ladies in this city beg for my attention? Babes that you'd have to cover your face if you're in their presence.

CAMILLA
Ah…

A beat.

Oluchi stares into Fabian's eyes intently. Her head is slightly tilted to the side. She's still. She tries to speak but begins to cough. They all stare at her. She coughs a couple more times until she regains herself.

OLUCHI
I'm not enjoying this game. This feels pointless.

CAMILLA
Ah, sister Luchi is vexing oh.

OLUCHI
I thought this was supposed to be a friendly dating show?

CAMILLA
Sister Luchi…

OLUCHI
They are supposed to be gentlemen.

Camilla waves her hand at Oluchi, trying to get her attention.

CAMILLA
Luchi girl… be calming down…

Oluchi turns her head and stares into the live camera. Her eyes wander around the room- she looks at the cameraman, and then the livestream setup. She slowly turns and looks at the door, and then she turns and faces Camilla.

OLUCHI
This doesn't make any sense.

CAMILLA
(Sarcastically)
Ahn ahn, don't be angry, Luchi.

OLUCHI
How could you take a divine idea and reduce it to this nonsense?

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sade and Autumn are shocked at what they are seeing.

AUTUMN
Oh, okay.

SADE
Is she allowed to do that?

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

JAYBOOZY
I've told you nobody is impressed by these your fake fake grammas.

CAMILLA
But Luchi we've not even found out why the other guys popped their balloons. They may still be light at the end of the tunnel.

FABIAN
Baby girl just chill out. You're taking this too personal.

CAMILLA
(Temptingly)
Don't you want to meet Amazing Roman?

Roman strikes a pose. Oluchi turns and locks eyes with him.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sade is standing by the TV, anxiously stoking her hair. Autumn paces back and forth behind her, swiping furiously through her iPad.

AUTUMN
(To Sade)
Could she not ruin it for everybody?

Sade sighs

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Camilla drags Oluchi along towards Roman.

CAMILLA
Okay let's hear what Roman has to say about this.

The cameraman turns to Roman as Camilla points the mic to him.

But Oluchi doesn't move. She's now standing face to face with the rest of them. The cameraman zooms in on her face.

ROMAN
Cmon girl. Don't spoil the fun for everyone. Okay I actually didn't mean to pop my balloon.

Oluchi just stares at him.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
Come on baby girl. Do a 360 for us.

Oluchi turns to Camilla.

OLUCHI
You know what? I'm done with this game.

Everybody is confused. They all begin to murmur.

ROMAN
Who does she think she is?

Giovanni lets out a sarcastic laugh.

JAYBOOZY
Who do you think you are?

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

AUTUMN
Who the hell does she think she is?

BACK TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Oluchi puts her hand in her trench coat and pulls out a pistol.

Everybody gasps.

OLUCHI
Enough of this bullshit.

She sways the gun around - the live cameraman ducks. She steadies the gun on him - at the live viewers.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Keep rolling. Don't stop until I tell you to.

She points to the livestreamer.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Are we still live?

He nods.

She points the gun at Camilla.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
You. Get out.

CAMILLA
Me? Luchi please stop this nonsense. It's not funny. We have live viewers.

She laughs nervously.

Oluchi shoves the gun at her.

OLUCHI
It's time to play another game. And I don't need you in it. you're bias anyway. I'll be the referee this time.

A beat. The livestream record light beeps. The contestants are hugged up on each other - nobody wants to be in direct line of the gun.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Get out!

Camilla drops the mic and hurries away. Oluchi opens the door and shoves Camilla out of the room. She bangs the door shut.

Oluchi turns and points the gun at the five guys.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Camilla stands wiggling her fingers in confusion. Everyone stares at her. She's approached by Autumn and Sade.

AUTUMN
What the HELL is this Camilla!?

Camilla turns and almost lunges at Sade.

CAMILLA
What the hell is this!? Who did you bring here? Is this supposed to be some kind of joke?

Sade stands motionless. Her eyes search with pacy breaths.

AUTUMN
You need to go back there!

CAMILLA
The door only opens from inside once people are in.

Camilla smacks her hand on her head.

They turn to the TV and watch as Oluchi points the gun at the contestants.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

OLUCHI
Back to your positions. You can't help yourselves now. Every man for himself.

She sways her pistol and they begin to comply.

Roman steps forward, stretching his hands pacifyingly.

ROMAN
Look, young lady…

OLUCHI
I have a name.

ROMAN
Right. Uh… Luchi yes? Look -

Roman takes a step forward. She traces his step with her eyes.

OLUCHI
Stop.

ROMAN
That thing in your hand is not a toy. We get it, you hate how they spoke to you, but don't you think you're overreacting?

He takes another step forward.

OLUCHI
Stop.

The other guys murmur in the background.

ROMAN
We can be civilized about this. By the way I haven't even said anything to you.

Roman takes one more step forward. Oluchi cocks the gun and points it at his head.

OLUCHI
You obviously have a problem with the word "stop." Why am I not surprised?

Roman mouths "what?"

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Oh, you'll see what.

She points the gun directly at his dick.

Roman retreats back in line.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Enough of the bullshit. Now we're going to play my own game.

She turns to the live camera.

The name of my game is "Why Shouldn't I Kill You."

Everyone in the room is confused. Outside, Camilla is helpless. Autumn and Sade look at each other.

Oluchi sways her gun from side to side.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
So who wants to go first?

The boys move away from the gun's sight.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Ah, ah. Nobody? I thought you all wanted screen time?

She shakes her head.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Okay then.
(She points the gun at Fola4sure)
Why don't we start with you.
(Sarcastically)
Mister Fola4Sure! The man with the numbers! You always have the best signals huh? "Buy the dip!" "Play this pattern!" "This ticket na cashout!" Why don't you tell them how you really got rich?

Fola is perplexed.

FOLA 4 SURE
What the fuck are you talking about?

OLUCHI
What? Aren't those your buzz words? You make your impressionable teenage fans empty their pockets for you without any care in the world. Or am I making shit up?

The other guys look at Fola curiously. The live cameraman zooms in to his face.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Or would you rather we start from the beginning?

She points the gun closer at him.

A beat.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
After conniving your way through the faculty to becoming department rep...

CUT TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY - FLASHBACK

A younger Oluchi sneakily looks straight ahead, past a lecture hall corridor swarming with students. Time freezes and we see Oluchi's gaze:

A younger Fola4sure covertly handing over an envelope to a lecturer. The lecturer pats him on the back and they shake and smile.

OLUCHI(V.O.)
Or when you were given the master copy of the final year handout and instead of acting like a normal human being, your insatiable hunger for profit made you charge your own course mates for the handouts.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY - FLASHBACK

A group of students barrage the younger Fola standing in front of the class. He holds up a thick course document above his head, out of the reach of the other students. Some students beg him while others barrage insults at him.

The younger Oluchi sits in a corner behind the crowd, watching Fola with disdain.

OLUCHI(V.O.)
You knew how shitty the economy was. How difficult it was for most of them to afford the most basic things.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - PRESENT DAY

FOLA 4 SURE
Oh please. Nobody should blame me for their personal failures. We all did what we needed to do. Resources are scarce. It's nobody's birth right to demand anything. I placed a price on the handout. Those who were willing did what they could and passed. Simple and short!

Oluchi holds his gaze.

OLUCHI
Or is it when you allowed the government use you for their bullshit propaganda? Huh?

FOLA 4 SURE
Oh please…

OLUCHI
Oh yeah? You demolished a thriving rural community to “plant trees and replenish the ecosystem.” Those people already had fragile lives and you still uprooted them without adequate support!

FOLA 4 SURE
Abegi! How was that my doing? All I did what start a viral challenge to help the planet. I was just doing my part. Who cares if the government decided to invest in it?

OLUCHI
Oh the government abi? Or you mean Minister Ojo? Your uncle.

FOLA 4 SURE
What?…

Roman looks at Fola from head to toe. Fola turns to the guys who are now gradually creating a distance between themselves and him.

OLUCHI(V.O.)
By some miracle you people found out there was oil beneath the whole community. Your little capitalist minds couldn’t contain itself. You invited some petroleum engineers to come and explore…

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Fola is standing in an open construction field alongside two geologists.

Away from them, a van pulls up and some engineers step out one by one. One of the engineers is Oluchi.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY - FLASHBACK

As the engineers do their work, Oluchi steps away from the drilling hole and looks far ahead.

OLUCHI(V.O.)
You know I thought the community and its land was sold to the highest bidder, but then it hit me.

Away from the field, a black suv pulls over. The door opens and Fola shakes and hugs the man. He's HONOURABLE OJO (late forties, pot-bellied). The man can barely hide his excitement.

Oluchi watches as they both sign some documents.

OLUCHI(V.O.)
The whole challenge was fake! The minister and his new administration probably found out about the oil reserve and used you as a puppet to have clean access to the land and not have the public freak out.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - PRESENT

OLUCHI
They used you to do the whole climate change plant a tree challenge to have access to the crude oil!

Oluchi laughs sarcastically. The guys fully step away from Fola who's now standing on his own.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Autumn's eyes are wide in disbelief. Sade is frozen, staring at the Tv.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

OLUCHI
Hundreds of people lost their lives because of that stupid challenge and the displacement that followed.

The other guys moan between themselves. Oluchi cocks the gun and steadies it at Fola.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
So tell me why you deserve to live?

Fola4sure starts to get tense.

FOLA 4 SURE
I'm not responsible for anything! Minister Ojo made all the decisions!

OLUCHI
Yes, and he will get what is coming to him. It seems you're not aware of what is happening outside.

The red light on the live camera beeps. The cameraman swallows in his throat.

Live camera POV:

Fola paces on his spot. He looks around the room. The other guys add more distance between them and him. And then Fola loses it.

He heads for the door.

FOLA 4 SURE
I'm done with this shit! Who the hell do you think you are. You're not shooting me on live t——-

Pop!

Oluchi shoots Fola at the back of his chest. His body falls to the ground and everything freezes for a moment.

End POV.

Everyone begins to freak out. Roman shoves the guys away and heads for the door in panic. The other guys follow suit. The live camera loses focus as the camera man also starts to panic.

But Oluchi stands right in front of the door and stretches her gun out wide, daring anyone to approach.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

There's pandemonium in the waiting room. The TV glitches.

Camilla dashes for the exit door and everyone follows suit. Only Autumn and Sade remain. The two ladies are distraught. Sade is frozen on the spot. Autumn looks at the TV, and then door, and then the TV again.

SADE
Are we still live?

Autumn unlocks her tablet and scrolls.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Oluchi stands in front of the door like a security. She points the gun at the live camera man who's trying to regain his composure.

OLUCHI
Keep rolling. Don't stop until I tell you to. This is what they want isn't it?

She points the gun back at the guys who now understand she means business.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
So brethren. Who wants to go next?

Roman looks at Giovanni. Giovanni looks at Fabian. Fabian looks at Jayboozy. And then they all turn back to Oluchi.

Oluchi points the gun forward and meets Giovanni.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
You. Tell me why I shouldn't kill you.

Giovanni raises his hands like he's under arrest.

GIOVANNI
(Stuttering)
I, I, I…

He closes his eyes and swallows.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)
I haven't done anything wrong. I don't know you from anywhere! Look I don't know what information you think you have about me but I haven't done anything bad to anybody.

Oluchi stares straight into his eyes.

GIOVANNI (CONT'D)
Or are you a fan or something? What, you followed me and I didn't follow you back? Or what, because I popped my balloon? WHAT IS IT!?

Oluchi chuckles and brings the gun down.

OLUCHI
You really don't get it, do you? Look at all the futile things you hold so dearly. I know you also don't like my dressing, but look at you… You're a caricature.

Quick montage of successive snapshots of Giovanni: taking a photo leaning on a supercar; Giovanni posing with different high-end luxury items - a wristwatch, a first class plane ticket, a high-end restaurant food, and on vacation.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - PRESENT

OLUCHI
You've been completely swallowed by the algorithm.

She slowly moves closer to him.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
You mask your ignorance with branding. All you do is consume, consume, consume. You morph your personality to whatever is reigning. You think owning shit makes you important? Ehn mister Giovanni?

Giovanni soaks it in for a moment.

GIOVANNI
Why are you so angry at me huh? I'm just playing my part. You can ramble about vanity and all that nonsense but I know one thing for sure - I'd rather be me than whatever you have going on here… Don't hate the player, hate the game.

Oluchi slowly backs off away from him.

OLUCHI
Well then. Fair enough. You're a dead man already anyway. So be it.

Oluchi cocks the gun and points it straight at Giovanni. The guys all begin to groan and plead with Oluchi.

But Giovanni doesn't say a word. He holds Oluchi's gaze tightly. Oluchi moves closer until the gun is almost touching his forehead. She steadies her hand to pull the trigger.

Giovanni closes his eyes in anticipation as everyone begs.

Oluchi puts her finger on the trigger, and just as she's about to pull it,

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Get out!

Giovanni opens his eyes. Oluchi shoves him away out of the room. He hurries out but before he opens the door, she stops him.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Your soul can still be saved.
Create.

Giovanni stares at her for a moment. Then he looks at Fola's corpse. He opens the door and heads out.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Giovanni jams the studio door and as he does, his Rolex falls off his wrist. He immediately bends down and picks it up. He begins to clean it and check for cracks when he notices Autumn and Sade staring at him in bewilderment.

He tucks the watch into his pocket and goes away without saying a word.

The two ladies turn and look at each other.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Fabian stares at Fola's dead body and his eyes become wet.

Suddenly, an explosion goes off in the distance outside the studio building. Everyone is startled.

Oluchi stares outside the smiles.

OLUCHI
The world is burning. Its unfortunate we're not there to witness it. It's a beautiful sight, believe me.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. SHORTLET APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Oluchi walks towards an apartment building. It looks like a house party is going on lowkey inside the apartment. Two bouncers stand outside vetting a couple of people trying to enter.

Text flash on screen:

“6 Months Ago”

Oluchi stops and brings out her phone. She dials a number.

OLUCHI
Hello Sade? I’m at the location, where are you?
(Beat)
Okay.

She stands and wait.

A moment later, Sade comes out of the apartment with her usual bubbly self. She looks right and left and sees Oluchi.

SADE
Lu Lu! Come inside nau.

Oluchi approaches the apartment but she’s stopped by the bouncers.

OLUCHI
(Pointing at Sade)
I’m with her.

SADE
She’s with me.

BOUNCER 1
Do you have a pass?

SADE
She’s with me oga.

BOUNCER 2
Nobody can enter here without a pass. Inside is already full.

Sade tries to sweet-talk them.

SADE
Ah ah chief how far now. We’re together. She’s my friend.

Oluchi just stands and stares. The bouncers don't budge. They look at Oluchi from head to toe. She definitely don't look like she belongs there.

BOUNCER 1
Madam calm down. You can't enter without a pass.

AS THEY GO BACK AND FORTH, A COUPLE WALKS TOWARDS THE BOUNCERS AND THE GUY SHAKES BOUNCER 2. THEY LOOK FLY AS HELL.

The bouncers hail him and let him pass. The lady laughs at Oluchi and they march in, but just before they enter, the guy stares at Sade flirtatiously. Its Roman.

Sade sighs.

SADE
Oluchi just give me one moment. I'll come back with a pass for you.

Oluchi rolls her eyes. Sade disappears into the house.

Oluchi walks away from the entrance and stands at a corner beside the building. She looks around the neighbourhood and brings out a cigarette. She lights it and begins to puff.

At the entrance, the bouncers enter and close the door from inside.

Oluchi's phone pings. She brings it out and see a notification:

"SadeDay is going live on Instagram."

Oluchi taps the notification and we see Sade partying and having the time of her life in the house party.

Oluchi suddenly begins to cough and cough. After a while she gathers herself.

Oluchi sighs and begins to walk away.

As she walks, she lights another cigarette and begins to smoke. Behind her, a car pulls up at the front of the apartment.

Oluchi turns and watches from afar as Roman comes out of the apartment with that same lady, but it looks like he's helping her walk. Oluchi squeezes her eyes to see better. It looks like the lady is asleep or unconscious. We're also not sure.

Roman opens the back door and shoves her inside. The car drives off, passing Oluchi who stars at the vehicle curiously.

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB CENTER - DAY - FLASHBACK

A TV sits on a wall in a bland room. A news caster reads the news from the TV:

NEWSCASTER
The commissioner of police Tanko Ibrahim has announced that a special investigation unit has been launched to root out the leaders of the planned upcoming national protest. Answering a question while speaking to the press, he reinstated the administration's commitment to maintaining law and order and warned any individuals who planned to disrupt the daily lives of the public in the name of any protest…

Pan away from the TV around the room as a woman **JOLAKE** (early forties) walks into the room. She picks up some files on a desk and begins to swipe through the pages.

The door swings open again and Oluchi walks in hastily. Jolake turns to her.

JOLAKE
Oluchi, you're finally here.

OLUCHI
Good afternoon aunty Jolake. I'm so sorry I'm late, I had to work overtime at the restaurant.

JOLAKE
Oh it's fine. There isn't much to do today anyway.

Oluchi sighs.

JOLAKE (CONT'D)
Are you alright? You know you don't have to show up everyday. You're just a volunteer.

OLUCHI
Yeah. I just needed to escape from that place. Working with that man is exhausting.

JOLAKE
Oh. I don't even understand what an engineer like you is doing working in that place.

Oluchi laughs softly.

OLUCHI
I don't know myself. I just needed a change of environment I guess.

Jolake shakes her head.

Oluchi carries a "Volunteer" ID card and hangs it on her neck.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
So… what can I do today.

Jolake waves her off and begins to walk towards the door. Oluchi follows her behind. Jolake opens the door.

JOLAKE
Nothing really.

Jolake stops and her face saddens.

JOLAKE (CONT'D)
I brought my niece here today.

OLUCHI
Who? What happened?

Jolake closes the door.

JOLAKE
Kemi… Something happened to her and she wouldn't tell anyone. Her mom asked me to take care of her for a bit. I don't know, I'm… I'm really worried.

Oluchi moves closer.

OLUCHI
What happened aunty?

JOLAKE
She overdosed last night. It's weird. She has never been one to take hard drugs before. Not that I know of.

OLUCHI
I mean, aunty… You never know really.

JOLAKE
Yes but. This is different. I'm sure something pushed her. I think she tried to-

Oluchi closes her eyes and looks away before Jolake finishes the sentence.

JOLAKE (CONT'D)
Can you talk to her? Maybe she'll be freer with you.

OLUCHI
Sure. Of course.

Jolake waves her to follow along and opens the door.

We walk with them through a small character-less facility until they reach a room with the door wide open. A lady is asleep on the bed with her face away from the door.

They enter and Jolake closes the door behind them. The lady turns. It's the same girl that was with Roman the night of the party. Oluchi recognizes her instantly and they lock eyes curiously. The girl is **KEMI**, 23.

JOLAKE
Adekemi, this is Oluchi. She volunteers here at the rehab.

Kemi stares at them both.

OLUCHI
Hey Kemi.

JOLAKE
Let me leave you guys. I'll be in my office.

Jolake leaves and shuts the door.

Oluchi gestures to the bed.

OLUCHI
Can I?

Kemi sighs and nods.

Oluchi walks and sits on the bed.

KEMI
You look familiar.

OLUCHI
Yeah. We've ran into each other before.I'm Oluchi.

Kemi stares at Oluchi curiously, searching her eyes.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
You can talk to me, Kemi. I was at the party too. Well, kinda.

Kemi isn't still sure.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Look, for real you can talk to me. I wasn't even allowed into the party... I saw a man carrying you inside a cab. You didn't look aware of yourself. Tell me what happened Kemi.

Kemi bursts into tears.

Oluchi looks around awkwardly and hugs Kemi. Kemi sobs and sits up straight. She wipes her face and gets serious. She clutches her knees to her chest.

KEMI
I met this guy at a music festival. Roman. He approached me and I gave him my number. He was so calm and gentle.

Oluchi nods, fully engaged.

KEMI (CONT'D)
He invited me to follow him to that party on the island. I had no reason to refuse so I went with him.

OLUCHI
But that was last month.

KEMI
Yeah. I met up with him at a bar in V.I and we left from there. When we got to the party, he took me with him to a private vip room. There were some Instagram influencers there.

Kemi begins to sob again.

KEMI (CONT'D)
He asked me what I wanted and I asked him to get me a drink. After drinking it, I noticed my body becoming lighter… I thought I was just tripping cause I usually get anxious and claustrophobic around crowds like that. And there were smoking everywhere in the house.

Kemi breaks down in tears again, struggling to speak through the tears. Oluchi comforts her.

She gathers herself and continues.

KEMI (CONT'D)
I asked… I told him I was going to book a cab cause I wasn't comfortable with how I was feeling and he agreed. When the cab came, he insisted he escorted me to make sure I got home safely. By the time the cab came, I could barely stand on my feet.

Kemi begins to twitch as she recollects her memory. She looks into yonder, her eyes unblinking and distant.

KEMI (CONT'D)
The last thing I remember was me being inside the cab. I don't know what happened, but I woke up the next day on my bed. My chest was open and my dress was folded up to my waist. I could smell his cologne on the sheets.

Oluchi stands up in disgust and paces around the room.

KEMI (CONT'D)
I felt so sore. I'd never been in such pain before.

Oluchi is restless.

OLUCHI
Fuck fuck fuck fuck!

Kemi has now stopped sobbing. She looks resolute.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
So? Did you tell anyone? Did you go to the police?

KEMI
And tell them what? I kept calling him throughout the day and he didn't even answer. Two days later he was introduced as a housemate on Big Brother and the whole country fell in love with him immediately.

Oluchi stops pacing and looks at Kemi. For a moment they share the weight together.

KEMI (CONT'D)
I've been miserable since. Everyone praises him online.

OLUCHI
Your parents?…

Kemi looks away.

KEMI
I've never felt more ashamed in my life. I felt so dirty! I kept taking Molly cause I just wanted to numb myself. I'm tired of...

Kemi stands up and faces Oluchi with a serious look. Oluchi holds her gaze.

KEMI (CONT'D)
I don't know what to do. Help me.

EXT. REHAB CENTER - DAY - FLASHBACK

Oluchi walks outside the rehab center and stands beside a corner. She paces on the spot. A million thoughts are running through her mind.

She brings out a cigarette, lights it and begins to puff.

Jolake find Oluchi and walks over to her.

She observes Oluchi smoking and shakes her head with a slight smile.

OLUCHI
You don't have to judge me aunty. Say your mind.

JOLAKE
I'm done talking to you about that. Or should I get you a room here?

Oluchi gives her a look. She throws the cigarette away and steps on it.

JOLAKE (CONT'D)
By the way, I listened to your conversation with Kemi. Your generation is wild.

Oluchi shakes her head.

JOLAKE (CONT'D)
I hope you're not thinking of doing anything crazy Oluchi? I know you. You're just like your mother. You don't always have to carry people's crosses you know.

Oluchi sighs.

OLUCHI
I'm tired aunty. This world takes everything from you. It just sucks your energy until there's nothing left in your soul. And it's not about my generation… The devil manifests herself through everybody. Anyone can be a vessel.

Jolake looks at Oluchi with pity.

JOLAKE
Oh dear. You sound just like her. She would be proud of you, you know.

Oluchi shakes her head.

OLUCHI
There's nothing to be proud of, aunty.

She looks at Jolake intently. Her eyes are wet.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
What do we do?

Jolake’s face is empty.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLUCHI’S HOUSE - DUSK - FLASHBACK

Close up on the front door of the house. A doorbell is on top of the peephole.

A hand comes into frame and presses the doorbell. It ding dongs.

INT. OLUCHI'S HOUSE - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

An eye peeps through the peephole.

We see Sade waving excitedly with a big smile.

The person peeping is Oluchi. She sighs and rolls her eye. Takes a deep breath and opens the door.

Sade goes inside to hug Oluchi but Oluchi quickly steps outside and hugs Sade. She softly closes the door behind her.

SADE
Ah ah, Oluchi you don’t want me to enter your house?

OLUCHI
Oh it’s not like that. I have a guest inside.

Oluchi makes a face pointing inside the house. Sade starts teasing her.

OLUCHI (CONT’D)
I can’t explain that right now.

SADE
(Laughing cheekily)
You don’t have to oh. So I was just in your area and I thought I’d stop and say hi to my bestie.

OLUCHI
(Sarcastically)
Oh, yeah?

SADE
Ah ah nau, don’t tell me you’re still mad at me about the party.

OLUCHI
I didn't say anything.

SADE
I told you when I entered they locked the door and...
(She swallows saliva)
Everything just became crazy trust me. You know you're my guy nau.

OLUCHI
Well next time make sure there's enough space for everybody before you invite me somewhere.

Sade yells indwardly in frustration.

She taps Oluchi on the shoulder.

SADE
Let me tell you what happened.

OLUCHI
Ah, Sade...

SADE
Do you know one guy got drunk and started confessing to his girlfriend that he cheated.

She laughs teasingly, holding and pulling Oluchi's arm. Oluchi rolls her eyes.

OLUCHI
What?

SADE
Yes, nau. And they brought one kush from Orchid Road. That's how the whole place was faded.

OLUCHI
Sade...?

Sade laughs and catches her breath.

SADE
Later they now streamed that Pop-The-Balloon dating show.

OLUCHI
People still watch that stuff?

SADE
Ah yes oh. See that's actually why I'm here. I want to make it up to you.

Sade puts on a humble face

OLUCHI
What do you mean?

SADE
Okay look. Somehow somehow I managed to get a slot in the next episode as a contestant. Like trust me I'd have loved to do it oh, but, my ex works with the organizers. The last I need is us running into each other for any reason. You get?

Oluchi considers it for a second.

OLUCHI
And…?

SADE
I want you to have my slot. I know I didn't try that last night so at least, inside of some other person getting it… it might as well be you.

Sade smiles excitedly. She's proud of herself.

OLUCHI
So you really think I'd want to participate in that kind of show? Sade…

Oluchi starts laughing sarcastically but it turns into a cough.

Just then, Sade's phone starts ringing. Oluchi struggles to tame the cough but she needs water or something.

Sade rubs her chest, asking her to relax. The phone continues to ring.

Sade answers. Then Oluchi waves her off and turns to go back inside.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
I'll talk to you later.

SADE
Yeah update me. Take something for this your cough oh Oluchi.

Oluchi waves her off, enters inside and shuts the door.

INT. OLUCHI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Oluchi finally catches her breath.

Just then, Kemi walks towards her from inside a room. She looks better than the last time we saw her.

KEMI
Are you alright?

Oluchi nods.

KEMI (CONT'D)
You need to take something for that cough.

Oluchi sits on a couch and holds her head in her hands.

KEMI (CONT'D)
What was that about?

OLUCHI
Oh that was my friend… Sade. She was at the party too…

Kemi frowns.

KEMI
Oh.

OLUCHI
(Scoffs)
She couldn't get me in so she thinks she owes me. She said something about that Pop-The-Balloon show.

KEMI
Uh I can't remember. But I know the show. Why?

OLUCHI
She wants to get me a slot. As a favour.

KEMI
Oh…
(She chuckles)
I can't imagine you attending that show.

OLUCHI
Imagine needing some random guys to validate you.

Oluchi shakes her head. Kemi sits beside her.

KEMI
I actually know one of the guys that organizes the show. Do you know some ladies even sleep with him for slots.

OLUCHI
Is it that deep?

KEMI
I mean… if you value the clout, I guess it is. He was at the party that night. I remember seeing him.

This catches Oluchi's attention.

OLUCHI
He picks the contestants?

KEMI
I think so, yeah. I heard Roman is going to be a celebrity contestant on the next episode. But it's supposed to be a surprise.

Oluchi starts thinking.

She gets up and begins pacing around slowly, whispering under her breath.

KEMI (CONT'D)
What's on your mind Oluchi?

Oluchi stops moving. She carries her phone and dials a number.

OLUCHI
Hello? Sade?
(Beat)
Yeah yeah, listen.

Sade begins to ramble on the line. Oluchi rolls her eyes.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Sade listen. I'd do it. I'd do the damn show.

Kemi questions her with a look.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
Yeah sure. Alright, call me.

She hangs up the call.

OLUCHI (CONT'D)
I have an idea.

CUT TO:

INT. OLUCHI'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Oluchi stares at her outfit spread on the bed. Its the outfit she later wears to the game show.

Kemi sits at the edge of the bed, staring at her in bewilderment. She scratches her forehead.

KEMI