THE DAY GOD RESTED

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FROM BLACK, A SONG PLAYS

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - DAY

A song plays from an old-fashioned mp3 player resting on Teacher's desk. We're CLOSEUP on the device as it plays the school anthem of ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE which fades out as it reaches the end. The song concludes with the voice of children melodiously chanting "S.A.C! The Great!"

Everything is still for two seconds, then a man's hand moves into frame and presses a button on the player which kicks the same song back to life. We now hear the anthem play from the beginning - a triumphant song of a school that truly believes its the best, as we cut to:

CLOSE UP on specific items present in the office shelf showcasing the life of the teacher:

A gold plaque award for Teaching Excellence, another plaque for the Most Committed Member in a Church Committee, the thickest Bible we've ever seen, a framed photo of the teacher shaking a clergyman, a framed photo of Teacher as a kid sitting on a woman's lap surrounded by other kids, and then a framed photo of a young Teacher standing with the same woman from the previous photo, surrounded by another set of kids.

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - SAME

We cut back to the mp3 player still playing the anthem. It has now reached the end again. We hear the kids chant once more and the song concludes.

Everything remains still for two seconds and just as the same hand is about to press the play button again, an adolescent hand comes into frame and SMASHES the stop button on the player.

We see streaks of dried blood on the fist of the adolescent hand. The hand quivers.

We slowly trace the shaking hand from its palm upward until we REVEAL the owner -- a young schoolboy, **OCHE**, 14 years old with a cross-eye. He has a scar on the side of his face from a previous battle. Nowhere else on his body is injured but his hair is rumpled from what looks like a scuffle. He's the stubborn kid everyone fears in class.

Sitting beside him is **BENJI**, also 14, with a bloody nose and mouth. His uniform and hair is rumpled and it is apparent he was on the losing end of the fight.

Oche is visibly irritated by the situation. With his right hand still firmly on the player, his whole body trembles and his baleful walleyes are directed at us - the teacher and owner of first hand's POV.

Oche's face is a mix of pain, anger and shame. Benji shoots a puzzled look at his mate and adversary. The kind of look that says "what the hell do you think you're doing?!". But Oche doesn't even acknowledge him; his whole body tenses in readiness to explode.

Cue in suspenseful music which steadily builds up to a crescendo as Benji anxiously looks at Oche, then at us, then at Oche and then at us again and then--

CUT TO BLACK:

Super Title: **The Day God Rested.**

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Back to where we where, with Oche about to explode. Amidst his fury, he somehow manages to speak.

OCHE
(Through his teeth)
Let me go now!

BENJI
Just shut your mouth, Oche!

Oche now looks like he's about to transform into the Incredible Hulk. In an expression of rage, he uses his hand to sweep the mp3 player off the desk. Some other items fly with it.

TEACHER (O.S.)
You're letting the devil use you, Oche.

OCHE
(Angrily)
Do you know who my father is?!

TEACHER (O.S.)
You're a child of the most high God.

OCHE
You've kept me here for one hour, playing that stupid anthem. Do you think --

BENJI
(Interrupting)
Oh shut up. You're not the only person here!

TEACHER (O.S.)
That's enough!

The boys become silent and the room calms, but the air is still tense. Oche slumps his head so he's looking directly at the ground, refusing to acknowledge the teacher's presence. His hands rest on the chair handles as if they're shackled. His chest goes up and down.

TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(To Oche)
Look at me.
(Oche doesn't comply)
I said look at me!

Grudgingly, Oche looks up at us.

A BEAT. And then a CLOSE UP of the teacher as we meet him for the first time.

He's **RUFUS AKUA**, late thirties with a face as smooth as a teenager's. He's average-looking but with a little more effort would make for a handsome man. A CRUCIFIX necklace rests on his neck.

RUFUS AKUA
(Matter-of-factly)
I hate punishing you guys. You know that. But you should also know that fighting is forbidden in your lives as S.A.C. Students and more importantly, as Christians. The--

OCHE
(Interrupting)
It wasn't a fight.
(With a smile)
I beat him.
(Benji shrugs and looks away)

Rufus doesn't appreciate the interruption.

We go SUPER TIGHT on his face and he looks he's about to lose it. He tries to speak but he's clouded by rage. He fumbles his necklace and taps the desk. Suspenseful music cues in and builds to a crescendo but just when we think the teacher is about to snap,

He begins to sob.

RUFUS AKUA
(Sobbing)
You cannot miss Heaven because of football? Everyday I try to make sure you guys are prepared and living according to God's words, but you keep creating spaces for the devil to come in.

Rufus' weeping intensifies and he struggles to speak amidst the tears.

Oche and Benji are now both calm, starring at their teacher in completely bewilderment.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(Stuttering)
I,I,I
(Grabs a napkin and wipes his face)
I just wish you--

An alarm in the office and a loud bell rings off screen in quick succession. A moment later, we hear the excited voices of kids O.S. Followed by quick crowded movements outside the office door. It's closing time at the school. Off the boys' shocked reactions...

CUT TO:

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Seven teachers - five men and two ladies, are standing in a fairly large typical academic office. But this office, like everywhere else in the school, has an extra religious flair to it.

They stand facing the school's principal, **ELDER GODFREY IDOWU**, 56 with very well-kept grey hair. He's the clergyman we saw earlier in one of the framed photos. He is sitting relaxed with his legs stretched on a sofa. His demeanour says he's the commander-in-chief.

The principal sits straight and clears his throat.

ELDER IDOWU
Good afternoon.

All the teachers respond with their versions of greetings, all ending with 'sir'.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
(Sternly)
Remember the last PTA meeting? We promised parents there won't be any fights again. What happened today shouldn't have happened and it won't be tolerated.

He gives them a moment to digest. They all stare at him, fully engaged.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
Who is on duty today?

One of the ladies, PATIENCE, 24 and naïve, ducks her head.

PATIENCE
(Prostrating)
I'm on duty today sir.

ELDER IDOWU
And where were you when Benjamin and Oche were fighting?

PATIENCE
(Shrugs)
It wasn't a fight sir. Benji was beaten by Oche.

This draws a mild laughter out of all the teachers, except the principal. The tense room lightens up for a second but the principal's indifference removes the calm.

ELDER IDOWU
Do you people think this is a joke?

He rises.

The teachers adjust their bodies, maintaining a distance between themselves and the principal.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
(Gesturing with his hands)
This institution prides itself on instilling the ultimate rule on ourselves and the children.
(He points at a framed quote)
Love one another as we love ourselves.
What do you think would happen when Benjamin's parents see his botched face?

The teachers understand it is a rhetorical question.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
(His eyes searching the teachers)
And where is the C.R.K. teacher?

One of the teachers, MR. TITUS (late 30s, short and bald) speaks.

MR. TITUS
Mr. Rufus is his office. He's counselling the boys sir.

ELDER IDOWU
Splendid. Go and fetch him. And come with the boys.

Mr. Titus turns and we follow him from behind as he exits the room.

ELDER IDOWU (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mister Akua seems to be the only one taking this seriously.

We follow Mr. Titus as he opens the door and walks into

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

... A typical crowded and busy school hallway with students of various ages pouring in and out of classrooms while others move to and fro.

Mr. Titus walks hastily through a hallway and into

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE STAFF ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The school's staff room and he stops at a door labelled "Rufus Akua. Counsellor."

He knocks once and proceeds to open the door without waiting for any response. We GLANCE with Mr. Titus into the room through the door. He's about to speak but then -- CLOSE ON his face - he looks like he's seeing a pig fly.

Off his puzzled look we see Rufus standing by the window sobbing. Standing beside him is Oche holding a box of napkins and Benji on consoling duty. Benji has a pitiful look while Oche struggles to stop a laughter from bursting out.

MR. TITUS
(Swallowing)
Mr. Akua you're needed at the principal's office right now. Staff meeting.

RUFUS AKUA
Uh, okay.
(He wipes his face and adjusts his shirt)
I'll be there shortly.

We hear Mr. Titus close the door.

Rufus grabs a napkin from the box and walks to his desk. Off Oche dying in muted laughter...

INT./EXT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE - DAY

We hear the *Amazing Grace* tune playing from a church organ as we meet the school.

An outside shot of EMPTY classes and sports field.

EMPTY hallways and classrooms with lockers and white boards.

Then a shot of the school's chapel. It's an simple structure with speakers attached to the sides of the building.

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE CHAPEL - DAY

A service is in session. We see some familiar faces - the teachers from the staff meeting, and Rufus. The principal is on the pulpit preaching a sermon. But he's not there as the principal, he's in clergyman mode. We get a glimpse of him in action.

ELDER IDOWU
(At his inspiring best)
And without honesty one cannot be faithful. Honesty comes from a burning desire to be faithful. It is therefore our responsibilities as individuals to live a life as honest as possible...

We see the congregation respond proudly. From the edge of a wide roll, a beefy man notices something and begins to chuckle. He nudges his friend next to him and points at the other far end of the roll.

At the end of the roll is Rufus and the thick Bible from the opening scene. He looks like the most inspired person in the whole auditorium. Whatever Elder Idowu is selling, Rufus is buying. The two men tease him silently. Off Rufus' vibrant nods...

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE STAFF ROOM LOUNGE - LATER

We open at Rufus PACKING. He hums *Amazing Grace* as he arranges a book, a Bible, and a robe of some sort into a petite bag. Around him is a regular men's staff lounge. No furniture, just wooden benches nailed to the floor. A large framed photo of Jesus hangs awkwardly on the wall.

Three teachers are seated, chilling and laughing between themselves. Two of them are SOLOMON (30, beefy guy from the chapel, looks out of place as a school teacher) and ESE (slightly younger than Solomon, lightweight, the other teaser).

A fourth man walks in with a snack in his hands and a laptop bag hanging on his shoulder.

SOLOMON
(To the newcomer)
Mister Demola the man!

The new guy DEMOLA, acknowledges them with a seasoned gesture. He walks over to a water dispenser at a corner.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
(Teasingly)
So where are you headed off to for the weekend? Special time with the wife?

Solomon laughs with the other guys.

DEMOLA
(Pauses what he's doing)
It seems you have the same thought with my wife. Lately she's been saying I'm becoming too boring.

ESE
That's what S.A.C. does to you.

DEMOLA
Seriously man. She keeps saying to spice it up... you know, spice it up.
(Beat)
(MORE)

DEMOLA (CONT'D)
And spicing it up is always expensive.

SOLOMON
(Laughs)
I feel your pains, but I can't relate.
Why don't we ask the counsellor.
(To Rufus)
What do you think Rufus?

They all focus on Rufus. We've almost forgotten he's even in the room. Busy with his luggage, it takes him a moment to realize the sudden silence.

He looks up to everyone staring at him. But he's apparently been listening the whole time.

RUFUS AKUA
(Awkwardly)
Uh.. I don't think I'm versed to answer that question.

SOLOMON
Come on man.
(Quoting with his fingers)
What will Jesus Do?

All the guys chuckle.

RUFUS AKUA
I wish I could help, but affairs of the heart are not my strong suit.
(Off their teasing laughter)
But you can always take it to God in prayer.

Everybody laughs zealously. Rufus finishes packing, stands to his feet.

SOLOMON
Rufus, I can't wait for the day you finally get married.

DEMOLA
True that. Make sure I'm your first invite, mister Akua.

RUFUS AKUA
Of course.
(Awkwardly)
Uh, gotta leave guys.

SOLOMON
Big weekend ahead?

RUFUS AKUA
Yeah... Uh... I'm going home. I haven't been home in two months. And I need to spend some time with the kids. We're having a little get-together...
(He waves himself off)
Nothing serious.

SOLOMON
That's great man. Good for you.

Rufus nods in agreement, waves them bye and leaves the room.

We see him through a window, walking pass hurriedly.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
What a great guy.

INT. ORPHANAGE HOME - DUSK

A small adorable girl, ZAINAB, 4, stands nervously holding a piece of paper. She's facing a slightly transparent curtain, through which we can map out faces of an expecting audience.

REGINA AKUA (O.S.)
Go on Zainab, you can do it.

Zainab turns to see her mother cheering. Her mother is REGINA AKUA, 65, with covered grey hair slipping from her head tie. She's aged well. She is the woman with Rufus in the opening shots.

Zainab still looks unsure and her mother walks to her, bends down and rests a hand on her shoulder.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
Everyone is waiting for you my baby.
(Nodding)
You'll be great.

Zainab considers it. Doesn't seem convinced.

ZAINAB
(About to break into tears)
I want to pee, mommy.

Regina looks like she's ran out of options. She sighs but just as she's about to get up --

A hand lands on Zainab's other shoulder and the person bends. It's Rufus, with a knowing smile. His crucifix necklace dangles from his neck.

RUFUS AKUA
Its alright, Zainab. Remember what I told you last time?

Rufus whispers something into her ear. Zainab smiles.

Rufus and Regina usher Zainab through the curtain into a stage. We STAY BEHIND the curtain as we hear the audience cheer for her O.S.

They both straighten up, stare at themselves for a moment and then Rufus swallows Regina with a passionate hug. He's taller than her by a considerable length.

REGINA AKUA
Oh, Rufus. Don't squeeze me to death.

RUFUS AKUA
I've missed you mommy. How've you been?

Regina gently releases herself from the hug and stares at her son. She cups his face with both hands and gives him a warm smile. A peaceful smile that answers a hundred questions. Off Regina, dissolve into...

EXT. ORPHANAGE HOME - NIGHT

The other side of the curtain. A celebration is in progress. There's a fairly large audience of about fifty people -- adults, adolescents and kids scattered around. Rufus stands at a corner holding a soft drink.

Balloons fly around and the area is a little decorated. The arena is an open field serving as a auditorium. There's a makeshift stage with a lone microphone standing in the middle, and various performing equipment scattered around.

A lady climbs the stage and grabs the mic. She's AGATHA, early twenties.

AGATHA
(Hailing the audience)
Yeah! Are we having fun tonight?!
Lets give it up for our mommy!
(MORE)

AGATHA (CONT'D)
(Encourages the audience)
She's the reason we're all here tonight and she deserves all our praises, yeah!?

They keep clapping until Regina climbs the stage. Once she's up, she acknowledges the crowd until their cheers subside.

REGINA AKUA
Thank you all so much for being here. I don't think I'm going to stop smiling.
(The audience laughs)
And oh, Agatha. All your praises should go to *God,* not me.

Agatha smiles meekly.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
I'm particularly delighted to have some of our senior brothers and sisters with us today. Right kids, aren't you excited?
(Kids in the audience cheer)
Well uh, enjoy yourselves. Lets have fun!

More cheers.

INT. ORPHANAGE HOME - NIGHT

The orphanage is an affectedly genteel home with large rooms and halls. The fun has now moved indoors, and they're all drinking, eating and chatting to each other. Its like a networking event except kids are involved and the people are genuinely interested in each other.

Mama Regina goes around the hall, conversing randomly one after the other. From a corner we see Rufus talking to a guy. He looks away and his eye catches a LADY. He holds her gaze for a moment and then refocuses on his conversation.

Rufus ends his chat and we see his eyes slowly but deliberately search the crowd. His eyes lingers for a second or two and finds the lady who's also talking to someone.

She's OLIVIA, 28, light-skinned with an arduous beauty and sexy countenance. She floats when she moves. It may be natural, or from perfected practice.

Rufus continues to stare but just when she turns to his direction, he looks away and leaves the hall.

EXT. ORPHANAGE HOME - NIGHT

Its the aftermath of the celebrations. A few kids play around and a handful of people linger. Regina stands on a balcony at the corner of what was the makeshift stage. The curtain is no longer present.

Rufus walks from around the corner and spots her.

RUFUS AKUA
Oh, there you are. I've been looking for you.

REGINA AKUA
(Gesturing him towards herself)
Come, come. Lets talk. How's work at the school?

RUFUS AKUA
The school is great, mum. God has been faithful.

REGINA AKUA
And Elder Idowu?

RUFUS AKUA
(With a big smile)
Oh he's great mum. He recently made me the new P.T.A. secretary.

REGINA AKUA
Wow, great. God is really using him to bless you.

He nods in agreement.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
Oh yes, did you see Adama's daughter? She was here tonight.

RUFUS AKUA
Uh, not sure. You mean uncle Adama?

REGINA AKUA
Yes... Remember little Olivia? You used to play together.

RUFUS AKUA
Hmm, can't really remember.

REGINA AKUA
Oh, dear. Her father always brought her around, you know...
(MORE)

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
after her mother passed. She was the bridesmaid on Victor's wedding...

Her voice tails off as she sees Olivia walking towards them from around the corner.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
(Pointing over Rufus)
Talk of the angel!

Rufus turns and recognizes the girl that caught his eyes earlier. He plays it cool.

RUFUS AKUA
(To Olivia)
Hi.

REGINA AKUA
Hey Olivia. This is Rufus.

They shake hands.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
I'll leave you two to catch up.

She squeezes Rufus' arm, smiles at them both and goes away.

An awkward silence for a moment and then

RUFUS AKUA
So what do you do?

OLIVIA
How was the party?

They both chuckle.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Mommy said you work at a mission school...?

RUFUS AKUA
St. Aloysius, yes. Its a Christian institution. I teach Christian Studies and I counsel the students. Its Elder Idowu's school. Remember him?

OLIVIA
Yeah I do. Good for you.
(Beat)
How long have you been there?

RUFUS AKUA
(Proudly)
Eight years.

OLIVIA
Wow. That's... great. You ever plan on lecturing at a higher lever? Like a university? I mean... with your experience.

RUFUS AKUA
Probably not. I enjoy grooming the little ones. You know, catch them young.

OLIVIA
(Laughs awkwardly)
Oh, that's nice. Good for you.

Awkward silence.

RUFUS AKUA
How about yourself?

OLIVIA
I uh, work at the Ministry.

RUFUS AKUA
Beautiful. What church?

OLIVIA
(Chuckles)
Oh no not *that* Ministry. The government. Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

RUFUS AKUA
(A bit let down)
Still good. You can always spread the good news wherever you are.

A little boy tip toes behind them and quietly inflates a balloon with his mouth.

OLIVIA
If you say so.

The kid ties the balloon and readies himself to pop it.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Well I'm going for --

POP! The kid pops the balloon and it startles everyone. Rufus flints but remains calm, while Olivia jumps and yells, grabbing Rufus' hand in the process.

KID
Haha, I got you!

They both turn to see the little boy with a deflated balloon giggling in victory of his prank.

AGATHA
Jeff!

We see Agatha standing in the field.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
Sorry guys.

Rufus waves it off.

Olivia notices her hand is still holding Rufus' and withdraws.

We follow the giggling kid from behind as he runs back inside. As he disappears, we pan round and see Regina perched on a cushion just behind the door. She's been watching Rufus and Olivia. A slight smile covers her face.

INT. ORPHANAGE HOME - DAY

Fade in to reveal the same hall from the previous night. Four guys and three ladies are gathered around a table. There are no kids in sight. They laugh and reminisce about their childhoods, taking turns to playfully roast each other. Rufus stands quietly at the back, laughing, but doesn't get involved.

Regina walks in and she's immediately drawn into the conversation.

GUY 01
Aha! Mommy. Please tell them I'm not lying.

Regina smiles and nods in anticipation.

GUY 01 (CONT'D)
Remember when the first lady visited back in 2006?

She nods, waiting for the actual question.

GUY 01 (CONT'D)
Victor told her he wanted to be an undertaker when he grew up.
(Regina Chuckles)
And the first lady wished him good luck in whatever he chose to do.

The whole room erupts in laughter. Guy 01 calms them down, waiting for Regina's confirmation.

REGINA AKUA
Well, yes. Victor watched too much wrestling back then.

The room laughs and teases Victor, a twenty something year old guy.

REGINA AKUA (CONT'D)
(To Guy 01)
But I also remember.
(They turn back to her)
You also wanted be a yahoo boy.
(They begin to laugh again. She points to another guy laughing)
You were so dirty, you said you'd invent a cloth that never gets stained.
(More laughter)
You all said and did crazy things.
(Beat)
I guess its only Rufus that actually did what he wanted.

GUY 02
Ooh yeah, Rufus the pastor.

RUFUS AKUA
(Humbly)
Ah, no guys. I'm not a pastor.

They tease him jokingly and Regina walks over and rubs his back.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
Can I talk to you?

She nods.

Rufus walks to the edge of the room and she follows him.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(with seriousness)
I'm going to marry her.

Regina looks puzzled.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Olivia.
(With an assured smile)
I'm going to marry her, mommy.

She stares at him as like he's a child asking to meet Santa Claus. She cups his cheeks with her hands and smiles warmly. This is not the craziest thing he's ever said.

REGINA AKUA
Let God's will be done, Rufus.

Off Rufus' smile...

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE EXAM HALL - DAY

A standard examination hall. About two dozen students are seated for an exam. The students get ready to commence -- some sharpen their pencils, others organise their desks. Angle briefly on Benji and then Oche.

Rufus stands in front of the hall with his wrist to his face, adjusting his watch. A second invigilator, Mr. Titus, stands next to him.

RUFUS AKUA
You have an hour thirty minutes for this paper. Mr. Titus and I will keep things in order. I don't need to tell you the rules.
(Beat)
God hates liars. And cheaters are liars.

He appears to be done. Everybody thinks he's about to commence the exam but then--

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Remember what Jesus told Nicodemus in John chapter 3--

The students begin to groan.

Mr. Titus moves closer and whispers to Rufus.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(Defeated)
Alright, alright. You may begin.

The students dive into action.

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE EXAM HALL - CONTINUOUS

A couple of DISSOLVES to show time lapses as the exam progresses.

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE EXAM HALL - SAME

Rufus checks his watch.

RUFUS AKUA
Thirty minutes left.

Rufus walks along a row and thinks he heard something. He turns around but everything is normal. He looks left and right suspiciously. He looks towards Mr. Titus who's now sitting at a corner, silently reading a newspaper. His attention is not on the students.

Rufus walks through another row and pauses in his steps. As he takes another step, he turns around swiftly and for a split-second, sees papers get exchanged. Or so he thinks. We're also not sure.

He looks across towards Mr. Titus. He's still lost in the newspaper. But Rufus is suspicious. He stares at that section for a moment -- All the students have their faces downwards, their attentions firmly on their papers. And then--

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Stop writing!

Some students look up at him surprised. Others continue writing.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(Louder)
I said <u>stop</u> writing!

They all look up at him, wondering what the hell. As they look up, we see their faces. Rufus is standing in front of Oche's row.

GIRL AT THE BACK
Its not yet time, Mr. Akua.

RUFUS AKUA
I know. Relax.

He turns to look at Mr. Titus who gives him a questioning look.

Rufus takes a step towards Oche.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Let me see your papers.

Oche shrugs for a second and then sits back. Rufus picks the papers up and examines them. He calmly flips through and sees another answer sheet. Oche looks unnerved.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
These answer sheets have two different handwritings. Why do you have two answer sheets, Oche?

Oche doesn't respond. He folds his hands.

Rufus turns to the boy on the next column on Oche's row. He's JONAH, 14. He looks scared as fuck.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Let me see your papers.

Jonah hands over his papers and Rufus examines them. In the background, Oche adjusts in his seat, starting to get nervous. Angle On Benji. A wicked smile spreads across his face.

Cut to Mr. Titus. His mouth is open in anticipation.

Back to Jonah who is on the verge of bursting into tears. Oche looks cold. He looks like an accused waiting to hear a judge's decision.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
(To Jonah)
Your handwriting is on Oche's answer sheet. And I remember giving you an extra sheet. But I didn't give Oche any.

A beat.

The clock tick tocks.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
You're both cheating.

Mr. Titus who jumps to his feet and throws his newspaper on the floor melodramatically.

MR. TITUS
(Snapping his fingers)
Blood of Jesus!

Jonah begins to sob.

Rufus grabs the boys' papers from their desks but Oche hangs on.

OCHE
Sir wait, no! I didn't do anything! His paper fell and I picked it up for him!

RUFUS AKUA
You're putting yourself in big trouble, Oche!

Oche still drags the paper with his teacher.

OCHE
Look sir...

RUFUS AKUA
What!?

They stop dragging the papers, but Oche still holds on.

OCHE
We weren't the only ones.
(He points at different directions)
Uche, Simon, Kemi... Even Benji sir!

The accused students begin to insult Oche. Benji gives him a death stare. Rufus is unconvinced.

As the rest of the class watches on, Oche continues to drag and plead with the unbending Rufus.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE HALLWAY - DAY

An empty college hallway. Everything is still and quiet. A moment later--

A door at the end of the hallway bursts open and Rufus storms into the hallway.

Oche follows him from behind, still pleading with the teacher. Rufus doesn't even acknowledge him. He walks briskly towards us and bends a corner. We follow them both as Rufus bursts into the principal's office.

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rufus walks in and goes straight to the principal who is busy on his desktop. Elder Idowu looks up and sees the teacher and student. He removes his glasses in shock.

RUFUS AKUA
Go back to your class, Oche!

Oche still stands there, frantically trying to explain himself. The principal stares at them both.

ELDER IDOWU
Go back to class, Oche!

Oche sighs in defeat and walks out.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
What's the meaning of this, Mr. Akua? Aren't you supposed to be supervising an exam?

RUFUS AKUA
I'm sorry for barging in sir.
(Shows him the seized papers)
But I caught two students cheating. Oche and Jonah, sir.

The principal considers him for a moment, then gestures to him to take a seat. Rufus sits opposite him and drops the papers in front of the principal.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Mr. Titus is in control of the exam now.
(As the principal examines the papers)
Jonah wrote answers for Oche on the nameless answer sheet.

ELDER IDOWU
And you're certain of this?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes sir. This is cheating sir. It warrants an expulsion. Or a lengthy suspension.

The principal gives Rufus a look.

ELDER IDOWU
You want to teach me my job?

RUFUS AKUA
Of course not sir. I'm sorry.

Rufus falls silent.

Elder Idowu sighs. He picks up a telephone on his desk and dials. A moment later--

ELDER IDOWU
(Into the phone)
Go to Shalom Hall at once. Ask Mr. Titus to meet me at my office immediately.
(Beat)
Yes, supervise the exam.

He drops the call.

Elder Idowu stares at Rufus and Rufus stares back. Its an uneasy silence.

MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Mr. Titus walks in.

Mr. Titus stands next to Rufus and the principal.

ELDER IDOWU
Can you confirm Mr. Akua's claims?

MR. TITUS
Yes sir.

ELDER IDOWU
So you saw them exchange papers?

MR. TITUS
Not exactly sir. But Mr. Akua did. And Jonah was remorseful. He confessed.

Elder Idowu lets out a burdened sigh. He looks at Mr. Titus. Mr. Titus has an agreeing face. They both realise something Rufus hasn't.

ELDER IDOWU
Mr. Akua, you're the new secretary of the PTA committee right?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes sir.

ELDER IDOWU
It means you fully understand how things work.

He waits for Rufus but gets no response.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
We all know this is a mission school. From the outside, we may appear to be doing well, which we are -- don't get me wrong. But as a mission school, we're self-funded. You understand that Mr. Akua?

Rufus swallows.

RUFUS AKUA
Yes sir. I understand we depend on donations and endowments.

ELDER IDOWU
Very good. And you know who our largest donor is at this moment, yes?

RUFUS AKUA
Engineer Ameh, sir.
(He swallows)
Oche's father.
(Mr. Titus ducks his head)
But sir--

ELDER IDOWU
Mr. Akua, listen. Some things are bigger than us. Beyond our control.

RUFUS AKUA
With all due respect sir, you're a clergyman. Your morals and principles should come before any earthly rewards. This institution did not attain it's greatness making choices like this. I--

ELDER IDOWU
(Interrupting)
Mr. Akua. Listen to me. Let it go.

He sighs again. He doesn't like the decision either.

ELDER IDOWU (CONT'D)
(To Mr. Titus)
Take the papers back and add them to the pile. And tell the two boys to see me in my office immediately.

RUFUS AKUA
(Protesting)
No, no, no sir, you cannot do this!

Mr. Titus collects the papers, shakes his head and walks out of the office.

Rufus looks at the principal. He eyes are wet. He gets up slowly.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Everything I've worked for and believe in.

ELDER IDOWU
(Trying to calm him down)
Mr. Akua--

RUFUS AKUA
We're meant to be shining examples for these kids.

Rufus stands up.

ELDER IDOWU
Mr. Akua--

RUFUS AKUA
This school is supposed to guide these kids to earn their places in the kingdom of God.

ELDER IDOWU
Mr. Akua--

RUFUS AKUA
This is hypocrisy!

ELDER IDOWU
Mr. Akua--

RUFUS AKUA
(Breaking into tears)
I looked up to you as a father!

ELDER IDOWU
Rufus!

Rufus pauses. He’s breaths are fast and deep. A tear rolls down his eye. Elder Idowu stands up. They’re now standing face to face.

RUFUS AKUA
(Calmly)
I quit.

ELDER IDOWU
Just listen to me, Rufus.

RUFUS AKUA
I’ll tender my letter.

ELDER IDOWU
(Compassionately)
This is not God’s will, Rufus.

That triggers Rufus. He makes the most disgusted face he can muster. He looks like he’s about to lose it.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE HALLWAY - DAY

Same hallway as last, but we’re looking from the opposite direction, towards the principal’s office. Everything remains still for moment until--

The principal’s door bursts open and Rufus storms out. He marches towards the staff room. Elder Idowu follows him through the door but stops just outside the hall and calls out to him one last time.

But Rufus doesn’t stop. He walks towards us and we follow him till he reaches his office. Some teachers notice the drama and come out to see what’s happening. Some students excitedly follow.

INT. RUFUS AKUA’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rufus barges in and goes straight to a wardrobe in a corner. He brings out some boxes and begins to load them with items on his desk.

EXT. RUFUS AKUA’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A few students gather outside his office and watch him through the window shutters. We see Rufus putting various items into the boxes and a bag.

The boxes are almost full. His desk is almost cleared. He begins to clear his shelf.

He picks the photo with his mum and the other photo with the orphanage kids. He picks all the plaques one by one and stops at the photo of him and Elder Idowu. He considers the photo for a moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE - CONTINUOUS

Rufus walks as fast as he can, clutching two boxes to his chest.Behind him, students peek through windows all over, making hushed noises watching Rufus as he goes.

FADE OUT.

INT. RUFUS AKUA'S HOUSE - DAY

We're in Rufus' abode. Just like his personality, the house is marked by simplicity and religion. It is a one bedroom apartment with outdated furniture and walls that probably need renovation. An old-fashioned TV and VCD player rest in a corner. Religious items scattered around the room.

Rufus is in his kitchen. He's wearing a pyjama. He mouths the remaining half of a slice of bread and walks lazily into the living room. He hits a box lying on what is suppose to be a dining table close to the door. He groans and continues into the living room. He picks his phone from the couch, dials and waits anxiously.

RUFUS AKUA
(Tenderly)
Hello mommy-- Oh, Olivia.
(Deepens his voice)
Uh, good morning.
(Beat)
I'm fine, you?
(Beat)
Great. Uh, where's mommy?
(Beat)
Okay, yes, thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE HOME - DAY

Regina is standing on that same balcony where the makeshift stage was. A handful of kids play in the background. Olivia comes from inside and hands over a phone to Regina, whispers “Rufus”.

REGINA AKUA
(Excitedly)
Hello my baby.
(Beat)
(With concern)
Oh. Okay. I’m listening.

BACK TO:

INT. RUFUS AKUA’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rufus drops the phone from his ear. He’s still sad, but talking to his mother seems to have rejuvenated him. He walks back into his room and we focus on a clock on the wall. Its 9:20 am.

STAY on the clock for a moment.

Pan away from the clock as Rufus walks back into the living room. Now, he’s wearing a tucked in long sleeve without a tie, and sandals on his feet. He’s clearly showered. The clock now reads 10:12 am.

He grabs a bag from the table with the boxes and hangs it on his shoulders. He exits the house and SLAMS the door.

STAY INSIDE the house. As the door bangs, it causes the table to shake and the box he hit earlier falls to the ground. The framed photos and plaques pour out onto the floor.

We see the photo of Rufus and Elder Idowu.

Everything remains still for a moment-- then the door opens and Rufus walks back inside. He grunts as he gathers the items, puts them back into the box and puts the box back on the table. He opens the door and taps the light switch. As the room goes dark--

CUT TO:

EXT. CHARISMATIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST - DAY

Open to reveal a mammoth of a building with a huge cross at the top rising high. The church is steel-fenced with Mary and other canonized saints plastered on windows.

The name of the church - CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST is sculptured to a horizontal pillar somewhere around the middle, between the gate and the large main door.

Rufus arrives at the main door and knocks twice. No response.

A voice calls out from nowhere.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.)
Hey! Who are you looking for?

Rufus looks around to find the person speaking. He realizes the voice came from a communication device.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Speak into the buzzer. Do you have an appointment?

RUFUS AKUA
Uh, no. Not exactly.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.)
Its Tuesday. There's no service until tomorrow. Unless you have an appointment, you can't get in sir. Open hours start at 5PM today.

The person on the buzzer starts to hum Showers of Blessings hymn while chewing a gum.

RUFUS AKUA
(Uneasy)
Yes, I understand. But I was sent to deliver a message to...
(He checks his phone to confirm)
Reverend Ebenezer.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.)
Does he know you?

RUFUS AKUA
I don't suppose so, no.
(Beat)
Please, I really need to see the Reverend. I come in good faith.

A beat. The person suspends his humming and chewing.

RANDOM PERSON (O.S.)
Alright. Wait a minute. Someone will be with you shortly.
(Melodiously)
Shalom.

A moment later, the large door opens and a man walks out. He's PASTOR CHINDU FESTUS, 41, light-skinned. He's dressed like Rufus, except he's wearing a reverend's collar and a nice black shoe.

PASTOR FESTUS
Hello. You asked for Reverend Ebenezer?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes I did. Good day. I'm Rufus Akua.
(Off Festus' inquisitive look)
I was sent by Mrs. Regina Akua.

PASTOR FESTUS
Oh. The great Mrs. Akua. She left a legacy in this church.
(Smiles)
Come in, please.

Pastor Festus lets Rufus in and he leads him through the aisle.

RUFUS AKUA
Sorry, but when can I see the Reverend?

PASTOR FESTUS
He won't be here till the weekend. Is it urgent?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes it is.

The pastor stops and faces Rufus.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Mrs. Akua is my mother. I'm also from the orphanage.

PASTOR FESTUS
Oh that's wonderful.

RUFUS AKUA
She sent me with a personal message to give to the Reverend.

PASTOR FESTUS
Oh okay. I'm Pastor Festus, his assistant.
(MORE)

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT'D)
I can attend to you in his absence if its really urgent, or else you'll have to wait until the weekend.

Rufus considers it.

RUFUS AKUA
It's urgent.

PASTOR FESTUS
Okay. Follow me to my office.

Pastor Festus leads Rufus through the grand church, round the altar. Rufus looks around the church. The interior is magnificent. The seats are arranged in a cascading, stadium-style, rising rows and rows above. Rufus looks at the exquisite pulpit. He's amazed.

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - PASTOR FESTUS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nicely decorated modern office. Pastor Festus' family pictures hang on the walls. He ushers Rufus to sit.

PASTOR FESTUS
So?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes sir. Actually, I'm sure you know this, but Mrs. Akua worked here in the children's department.

PASTOR FESTUS
Yes. Before she left to focus on the orphanage full time.

RUFUS AKUA
Yes. Well uh, she's wondering-- well I'm wondering-- if Reverend Ebenezer-- the Church-- can grant me the privilege to work in the children's, or any department really.
(He swallows)
In the church.

Pastor Festus smiles at Rufus' nervousness.

PASTOR FESTUS
Rufus you said, right?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes, sir.

PASTOR FESTUS
Relax, Rufus. This is not a job interview. Everyone is welcomed to serve in whichever capacity they can.

Rufus chills out.

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT'D)
How involved do you intend to be?

Rufus looks away, considers for a moment.

RUFUS AKUA
Full time.

PASTOR FESTUS
Alright. That's great. But they're some formalities you should be aware of.

Rufus listens intently. Pastor Festus sits up.

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT'D)
First and foremost, if you haven't been, you have to get baptized. The reverend and other elders of the church will oversee the ceremony. As a worker, the church cathedral is open to you always but...

We slowly blur out their conversation and focus on a TV on the wall. A campaign advert plays. We see a man in his 50s waving to a crowd of supporters, and then his campaign promises flash on the screen with the message: "Vote for Change. Vote for Progress. Vote for Assurance. Vote Morito Williams for Governor."

PASTOR FESTUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You know, he used to be a member of this church.

Pastor Festus and Rufus both stare at the TV.

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT'D)
Honorable Williams.

RUFUS AKUA
Oh.

PASTOR FESTUS
(With pride)
Yes. He was quite active back then. Even after he was made commissioner.

Rufus nods. He’s impressed.

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT’D)
Until he gradually withdrew to pursue his political career.

RUFUS AKUA
Well, we can all serve in various capacities, right?

Pastor Festus nods.

In the TV, Honorable Williams shares meal with some scrawny children. Then he sits surrounded by some widows. Then he stands out of an open SUV, waving at his cheering supporters as they chase his motorcade.

EXT. CHARISMATIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST - DAY

Rufus is done with the pastor. He walks by the large main door towards the gate. He’s so little standing beside the building. He pauses and brings out his phone. Dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BUSY MARKET - SAME

Olivia and Regina are in a typical busy Nigerian market. They both approach a meat guy and then the phone rings. Olivia takes it out of her handbag. Regina continues negotiating with the meat guy.

OLIVIA
(Loudly)
Hey, Rufus!

RUFUS AKUA
Hey Olivia, uh...

OLIVIA
Sorry I can’t really hear you. This place is loud!

RUFUS AKUA
Can you call me--

OLIVIA
Do you want to speak to mommy?!

Regina signals her to come.

RUFUS AKUA
Actually, I want to speak to you.

OLIVIA
You want to speak to me?!

Regina gives her a look. She needs her assistance.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I'll call you in a bit, okay?!

She hangs up and walks straight to the meat guy.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
(Assertively)
How can you say a kilo is 1,500 naira? Na human being meat?

EXT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - SAME

Rufus drops his phone from his ear. He sighs.

INT. RUFUS AKUA'S HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Rufus sits watching TV. He's bored. He looks at the clock. It reads 4:20 pm. He flips the channels lazily. He looks at his phone beside him, stares at it for a moment, expecting Olivia's call.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Olivia's lying naked under the sheets. We see her head, neck and shoulders partially. Her makeup is faded and her hair rumpled. She picks up her phone and dials.

OLIVIA
(Exhaustedly)
Hello, Rufus?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - SAME

Rufus is a spectator watching a children's football game.

RUFUS AKUA
Hi, Olivia.

A smile spreads across his face.

OLIVIA
Yeah, uh, sorry I haven't called since. I've been busy.

RUFUS AKUA
Oh, its no problem. Well uh...

OLIVIA
What did you want to talk about?

RUFUS AKUA
Um, nothing serious. I wanted to invite you to have dinner with me. Or lunch-- whichever is fine by you.

Olivia scratches her forehead. She's not excited.

OLIVIA
Uh, sure. Yeah.

RUFUS AKUA
(Delighted)
Tomorrow?

OLIVIA
Yeah, tomorrow.

RUFUS AKUA
Perfect. I'll text you the details.

OLIVIA
Alright, Rufus. See you then.

RUFUS AKUA
Yes. Looking forward to.

He hangs up. He's in the moon. In the background, a kid scores a goal and celebrates with his teammates.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

Olivia's still in bed, staring into space. She's jaded. Someone calls her from inside the bathroom. We hear a man's voice.

VOICE (O.S.)
'Livia, you coming in or what? The baths ready.

Olivia sighs, gets out of the sheet and walks into the bathroom.

Focus on an opened pack of condom on a drawer. We hear Olivia and the man giggle in the bathroom.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Rufus and Olivia collect ice creams from an ice cream van and Rufus pays. They walk away from the van and sit on a park bench. Its a calm, peaceful night. A campaign billboard with a smiling Honorable Williams stands mightily in the background.

OLIVIA
Thanks for the cream.

Rufus smiles. He stares at Olivia. She's beautiful. Olivia catches him staring. She blushes, wipes her hair.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Your mother told me you left the school.

RUFUS AKUA
Yes. It was unfortunate...

OLIVIA
I'm sorry. You really liked it there.

RUFUS AKUA
Yeah... things happen...

She figures he isn't interested in talking about it.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
Things have happened very fast in the last few days, Olivia.

OLIVIA
Yeah?

RUFUS AKUA
Yes. I uh, I've been thinking.

She looks at him intently.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
I know this will sound really crazy Olivia, but uh...

OLIVIA
Go for it.

RUFUS AKUA
I really like you.

She stares at him and smiles slightly.

OLIVIA
I like you too, Rufus.

RUFUS AKUA
Yes. But I mean uh, I have strong feelings for you. And I've prayed about it.

OLIVIA
Oh yeah? And what did God say?

RUFUS AKUA
(Thinks for a moment)
We're not kids anymore, Olivia. I know people like to make jokes but, I'd like to settle down and have a family just like everyone else.

She looks away from him. Looking into the distance, lost in her thoughts.

RUFUS AKUA (CONT'D)
It is my intention that we get married, Olivia. But not, not, not right away-- obviously-- we'd go through the courtship and all the Christian rites. But uh--

Olivia laughs softly under her breath. She gives Rufus the same look Regina gave him when he first revealed his intention to her.

OLIVIA
Rufus--

RUFUS AKUA
Its okay, Olivia. There's no rush.

OLIVIA
Right. Cause this is a lot. Obviously. I uh... have to go sleep on it. You understand that right?

RUFUS AKUA
Sure.

They share a smile.

EXT. CITY STREET SIDEWALK - NIGHT

They're departing. A taxi waits by the side of the road. She gives him a tender hug, smiles and enters the cab. He watches the car drive off.

As the car drives off, cue in a drum's STICKS counted by it's drummer--

VOICE (O.S.)
Two, three, four--

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - DAY

A drummer performs an experienced drum roll, followed by a pianist, a bass guitarist and then a choir coordinator motions the music performance to life. Its an infectious song.

Reveal an elated church congregation as everybody dances to the live music. All the seats in the auditorium are occupied. At the front of the church, around the pulpit is a special section of elders. They're older and move their bodies more cautiously. At another end are rows of pastors and reverends of various ages.

Rufus stands at the second row in front of the church. He's smartly dressed. Better than usual. Though he isn't really dancing, we can see he's having the time of his life.

MOMENTS LATER

The music ends with an applause that roars around the auditorium. As everywhere quiets down, a man approaches the pulpit. He's PASTOR FRANCIS, 45.

PASTOR FRANCIS
God is good!

CONGREGATION
All the time!

PASTOR FRANCIS
And all the time!?

CONGREGATION
The lord is good!.

PASTOR FRANCIS
Please, with a round of applause, let us welcome our great minister. He's been away all week, blessing one of our other branches in the north. But he's back just in time to talk about the upcoming Harvest Festival.

The church cheers.

PASTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)
So, please, with all glory to God, lets welcome, Reverend Ake Ebenezer!

The congregation applauds with a standing ovation. REVEREND EBENEZER, 62, walks gallantly to the pulpit from the pastor's section. The reverend is an exquisite man with fair skin. He spots a palmed hair and a shiny suit, with a chubby figure and a burgeoning pot belly that protrudes proudly like a medal. He speaks with a sweet, American accent; his intonation sounding like he's talking to a kid.

REVEREND EBENEZER
Bless you. Bless you all, my darling brothers and sisters and children in the Lord.

Carrying the microphone, he suspends his other hand in the air for a moment before speaking.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
You see, in this life, you reap what you sow. We emphasize first fruits and seed-sowing and tithes and offerings not just for show. These are fundamental Christian elements which we use to devout our investment in the kingdom God.

Everybody is locked in. His presence fills the auditorium.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
God does not want your money. Or whatever resource you bring to church. He's interested in your heart. We make donations and sow seeds and tithes to the church as a means of enablement.
(MORE)

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
Because you see, we as a church, are a body of Christ. And it is essential we keep our bodies in adequate condition for God to continue dwelling in.
(Beat)
Which brings me to my main point. This year's harvest of thanksgiving.

The church cheers.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
God has been faithful, am I right?

Close up on a diamond ring on his finger.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
This year has been a magnificent one for us as a church and I believe, as individuals as well.

Ushers spill out of various corners in the church, all with offering boxes in their hands.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
(Inspiring the church)
So we've decided that every penny and resources we gather at this year's harvest, will go to the charities and motherless homes around us, because they too, are a part of the body of Christ.

The church roars into applause and a standing ovation. We see Rufus clapping rapidly, full on his emotions. He's transfixed on the pulpit, in awe of the reverend.

Users pass envelopes around row by row.

REVEREND EBENEZER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So when coming next week...

EXT. CHARISMATIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST - DAY

Happy church members greet themselves after the service.

REVEREND EBENEZER (O.S.)
Come with open hearts...

Rufus chats with some pastors alongside Festus.

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - PASTOR'S CHARLET - NIGHT

Rufus sitting on a chair, watching the same service on a phone.

REVEREND EBENEZER (O.S.)
(From the phone)
So we can sow great seeds for our future generations!

Pastor Festus enters the room.

PASTOR FESTUS
Rufus, can I see you briefly?

Rufus removes his ear piece.

RUFUS AKUA
Sure, sir.

PASTOR FESTUS
Don't call me "sir."

Rufus nods.

PASTOR FESTUS (CONT'D)
(Sees the video on Rufus' phone)
Great service, yes?

RUFUS AKUA
Oh, yeah. It was an amazing experience.

PASTOR FESTUS
Right. I have to go visit a grieving family. Can you hang around a bit longer? Just in case the reverend needs anything.

RUFUS AKUA
Oh sure. It would be my pleasure.

PASTOR FESTUS
Great. It won't be too long before he retires to his chaplet.
He should leave around 10 pm. Just knock on his door when you're ready to go.

RUFUS AKUA
Alright.

PASTOR FESTUS
Thank you, Rufus. See you tomorrow.

Pastor Festus exits. Rufus is all smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - EBENEZER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rufus is seated reading a Christian pamphlet, flipping lazily through the document. He stares at Reverend Ebenezer's door for a moment and continues on the pamphlet. He looks at a clock on the wall-- its 20 minutes to 10 o'clock.

He walks to the window and stares into the night sky. PAN away from his face to the calm night. The reverend's office is on a high floor. We can hear the soft sounds of cars in the distance and the urgent but mellow vibe of the city.

As we PAN back to him, Rufus is now holding and sipping a cup of coffee. He walks away from the window and the clock now reads 10 minutes past 10 o'clock.

Rufus drops the cup on a table and walks to the reverend's door. He composes himself and knocks once. No response. He knocks again, politely calling the reverend but still no response. He puts his ears to the door and listens -- we can faintly hear a TV o.s. A worried look covers his face. Rufus composes himself and gently opens the door.

We see the reverend's large office for the first time. Its as elegant as the rest of the church. Furniture, picture frames, and mirror- all antique and exquisite. Rufus looks around but sees no one. On the desk, we see a trail of books dragged to the floor from the side of the chair. Rufus rushes and sees Reverend Ebenezer lying unconsciously on the floor with foam gushing out of his mouth. Rufus frantically tries to lift him up. As Rufus assists the reverend, ANGLE ON the TV which plays the same Hon. William Morito campaign ad from earlier. As the honourable stands beside a person in a hospital connected to drips...

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Close up on a drip half full and slowly zoom out to reveal Reverend Ebenezer lying awake. He's surrounded by Pastors Festus and Francis and a bunch of other clergymen, all with worried looks on their faces.

PASTOR FRANCIS
The devil is a liar.

The other clergymen echo his sentiment. PASTOR CHINDU, 40s, a short and thick man shakes his head vehemently.

PASTOR CHINDU
I'm calling for a nationwide prayer, fasting and vigil. This is an assault by the dark forces of the satanic empire. They will not prevail.

They don't all echo his sentiment.

PASTOR FESTUS
That won't be necessary, Pastor Chindu. With the harvest coming up, we don't want to...

PASTOR CHINDU
(Interrupting)
The harvest won't happen if we let the devil and his devices penetrate us. This is spiritual warfare.

Pastor Festus gives up. Another minister, PASTOR GABE, speaks.

PASTOR GABE
Please, lets have some decorum in this place. We should be thankful the lord spared the reverend's life.

PASTOR CHINDU
Which we are, but...

Reverend Ebenezer raises his hand weakly.

He tries to speak but a cough comes out. We see the Pastor's sympathetic reactions.

REVEREND EBENEZER
(To Pastor Chindu)
Thank you for your zeal and passion, but this is just a minor setback.

Pastor Chindu tries to speak but Pastor Festus shoots him a look.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
The harvest remains our priority and I'm confident I'll be out of here before then.

He exchanges a look with Festus.

REVEREND EBENEZER (CONT'D)
Where is the young man the Lord used to save my life?

PASTOR FESTUS
He's Rufus Akua, sir. He's the new assistant I told you about.

REVEREND EBENEZER
Where is he?

PASTOR FESTUS
He's been excused to go home.

The reverend nods.

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - PASTOR FESTUS OFFICE - DAY

Rufus gathers some books into his arm and leaves the office.

INT. CHARISMATIC CHURCH OF CHRIST - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rufus attempts to lock the office, fondling with the keys with his hands full of books. Some clergymen can be heard laughing O.S. Down the corridor.

The key finally enters the hole. The clergymen come into the hallway from around a corner. Its Reverend Ebenezer accompanied by his hospital entourage.

Rufus stops and acknowledges them. They continue to walk towards him.

RUFUS AKUA
(To Reverend Ebenezer)
Good morning sir.

He nods at the rest of them. His eyes catches Festus with a slight smile.

REVEREND EBENEZER
God day to you, young man.

PASTOR FESTUS
Sir, this is Brother Rufus. He was the one who found you.

A genuine smile covers Rev Ebenezer's face. He moves closer to Rufus and holds both his hands. Rufus blushes.

REVEREND EBENEZER
May the good Lord bless you.

RUFUS AKUA
Amen, sir.

They all smile at each other and the reverend walks away.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DUSK

Kids play football in the pitch. Rufus makes his way through a row, carrying a snack. As he finds a seat, his phone begins to ring.

He finally gets a seat and answers the phone.

RUFUS AKUA
Hello?

AGATHA (O.S.)
(Through the phone)
Hello Rufus?

Her voice is shaky. She tries to hold back a cry from bursting out.

AGATHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry Rufus.

RUFUS AKUA
What happened Agatha? Why are you crying?

AGATHA
It's mommy. She.. She slumped this afternoon.

RUFUS AKUA
What!? What happened?

AGATHA
We're at the clinic now. Come as soon as possible.

Rufus hangs the call and jumps to his feet. He walks away, leaving the snack on the bench.

INT. ORPHANAGE HOME - NIGHT

The living room of the orphanage is littered with kids and adults all mourning. Rufus arrives at the door and just stands looking at everyone. He's in shock.

Victor, standing at a corner sees Rufus and walks over to him and pats him on the shoulder.

VICTOR
Sorry Rufus.

But Rufus doesn't say he word. He hasn't blinked since he entered the room. The shock is written all over his face.

EXT. CEMETRY - DAY

Regina Akua's funeral. Gloomy mood all around. Kids and adults are seated around her casket. A large framed photo of her leans beside the casket.

Rufus is seated at the front in despair. People walk in a line to pay their last respects to Regina. They all pat Rufus on the shoulder when their turn reaches.

DISSOLVE INTO:

The end of the funeral. A man in suit comes to Rufus and shakes his hand. He's BARR. IDRIS HAMZA.

BARR. IDRIS
I'm sorry if this isn't the time Rufus, but I'll like to have a word with you.

RUFUS AKUA
Oh, okay.

BARR. IDRIS
I'm Barrister Idris Hamza. Mama Regina's lawyer. I'm in charge of bequeathing her estate.

RUFUS AKUA
Okay. Is there a problem?

BARR. IDRIS
No, not at all. Just wanted to inform you that she left it all to you.

RUFUS AKUA
What do you mean she left it all?

BARR. IDRIS
The orphanage. Her stake in Exodus Farms.

RUFUS AKUA
Exodus Farms?

BARR. IDRIS
Yes. It's worth about twenty million naira.

Rufus stares at the lawyer for a moment, apparently short of words. He nods at him.

BARR. IDRIS (CONT'D)
(Handing a card over)
This is my card. Contact me when its comfortable for you so we can proceed with the claiming process.

He pats Rufus and walks away.

As Idris walks away, Rufus spots a group of clergymen walking towards him. Its Reverend Ebenezer and his entourage. He can't believe it. He walks over to them and shakes their hands. He's even more emotional now.

REVEREND EBENEZER
Regina was a shining light in the church. Accept our condolences.

Rufus is in tears now.

RUFUS AKUA
You didn't have to come sir. I'm overwhelmed.

REVEREND EBENEZER
Oh no don't say such.
(He places a hand Rufus' shoulder)
At the church, we're a family.

His entourage nods. Rufus sobs.

INT. CHARISMATIC EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST - MORNING

Its harvest day. The church is in full jolly mood. A praise session is ongoing.

Pastor Francis grabs the mic and hypes the congregation.

PASTOR FRANCIS
Yes! Yes! Everybody! The time has come!

The church roars.

PASTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)
We're in farmer mood now. Its time to sow seeds, everybody!

More cheers.

PASTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)
I don't know about you, but I'm ready to harvest. But before we begin, I'll like to acknowledge a very special guest in our midst this morning.
(beat)
With a rounding applause, please welcome Honorable Morito Williams!

The church cheers and claps. Standing ovation.

From his special couch in front row, Honorable Williams stands to his feet gallantly. He waves around and around, campaign style. Everyone is in awe, including Rufus.

As everywhere quits down, Pastor Francis screams--

PASTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)
Let the harvest begin!

Baskets are passed around roll after roll.

Hands drop envelopes into the baskets.

Cheers all around.