

LOGLINE: Caged in a grim shelter for 15 years, a neglected Ugandan boy with an abstruse speech impediment sets out to achieve his goals of study and normal life despite incredible odds.

hardest climb

by

Tom Musinguzi

mustom321@gmail.com

Tel: +256-(0)-772-470-527

FADE IN:

INT. CRYSTAL UNIVERSITY HALL - KAMPALA CITY - DAY

Graduation ceremony.

Click! WILLIAM AKI (15) takes a Selfie, all bedecked in his blue cap and gown. Smiling broadly. Honoured by an audience of thousands.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O)
I'm so proud of you, son.

William turns to look at the man...

INT. DORMITORY - SUNRISE SHELTER - KAMPALA SUBURB - DAWN

...then snaps awake. William, frail, dry lips, messy hair, has been having a dream. He lies on a mat, on the floor.

TWELVE other boys (5-13) spread around the dark, cell-like room. All still asleep.

William slowly pushes the covers back, gets up. Quietly dresses up - in rugs.

He grabs his tired shoes, tiptoes to the wooden door.

Peeking out, through a crack, he sees--

A short, heavysset WOMAN (mid-60s), strolling across the compound. This is AUNTIE PEACE (mostly, Auntie P.) She's the founder of Sunrise Shelter. And William's guardian.

WILLIAM
(under his breath)
Arghhhhh!

William waits for Auntie P. to pass out of sight.

He opens the door, creeps out. Unnoticed.

INT. KITCHEN - SUNRISE SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

The door whines open.

Auntie P. enters. Looks at the stack of dirty dishes, mold, grime everywhere.

Gasps.

She storms out.

INT. DORMITORY - SUNRISE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

The boys busily fold their mats and get dressed.

Auntie P. comes in, inspects each of them in turn.

She notices that one mat remains unfolded. Its owner is missing.

AUNTIE P.
Where is William?

Silence: nobody knows.

She fires out.

EXT. WASHROOM - SUNRISE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Some boys wash up and brush their teeth.

Auntie P. pokes her head.

AUNTIE P.
Has anyone of you seen William?

Heads shake 'No'.

Auntie P. spots a little boy, JAMES TAHA (10).

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
James.

JAMES
Yes. Auntie P.

AUNTIE P.
Go do William's work.

He nods, shuffles across the compound into the--

INT. KITCHEN - SUNRISE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

James walks in, rolls up his sleeves. Grabs the dishes.

He starts to clean.

EXT: BUS STOP - KAMPALA SUBURB - LATER

William waits. Across from him is a signpost that reads: CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL. He watches it for a long moment as if transfixed...

A bus horn hoots nearby.

He snaps out of his thoughts, boards the bus. Rolls off.

EXT. STREET - KAMPALA CITY CENTER - LATER

The bus stops.

William jumps off, wanders down a sidewalk: passing one shop after another.

On every turn, he reads 'NO VACANCY' signs, posted on windows and doors.

He keeps walking with no particular destination.

EXT. MAIN MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

William enters a cluttered market and walks past ordinary people on stalls: selling, buying, haggling.

He comes out a side exit, spots an athletic-built man, SIMON BYA (30s).

Simon welds a steel bed outside his workshop.

EXT. SIMON'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

William stops, looks around. Dazzled by the finished beds on display.

Two women stop by, stare at the beds. They walk off without saying a word to Simon.

A man also appears, looks at the beds. Turns back around.

Another man stops, looks. Walks away.

William keeps observing the infrequent comings and goings at the workshop. Then--

He closes in on the beds, notices that they are so dirty.

Simon stops welding, gives William a stink look.

SIMON

Hey. Hey. What do you want?

William looks at Simon, gives him a faint smile.

SIMON (cont'd)

What is your problem?

WILLIAM

(stutters)

I can. Clean. The beds.

SIMON

So.

William runs his finger along one bed, shows the dirt on his pointy finger.

WILLIAM
The way the beds look...Nobody
is. Going. To buy them.

Simon is confused by William's slurred speech.

SIMON
You go to school?

William shakes his head 'No'.

SIMON (cont'd)
Go. I can't afford to hire you.

Simon goes back to welding.

William doesn't move.

SIMON (cont'd)
I said, go away!

William keeps staring at him.

Pause. Simon disappears into his workshop, reappears with a piece of cloth. Throws it at William's chest.

SIMON (cont'd)
Let's see how it goes.

William, anxious, grabs the cloth. Just as he turns his attention to the beds--

A tall, dark man, VINCENT KATA (40s), stops by and glumly looks at the beds.

William walks over to him.

WILLIAM
Nice beds. Ya?

Vincent turns, looks over William from head to toe.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I'm here. To clean them.

VINCENT
I'll come back when you and the
beds are clean.

Vincent turns to leave.

William grabs his arm, stops him.

WILLIAM
Can I tell you. Something?

VINCENT
What?

WILLIAM
If you. Buy a bed now...

William points at Simon.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
That man...will afford. To hire
me. And my life will change.

Vincent looks at him for a moment.

VINCENT
Okay. Let's find a good '6-by-4'
bed, if that helps.

Simon joins in, assists Vincent to choose a bed.

William cleans it. Spotless.

Vincent pays Simon and leaves - with a bed.

Simon gives some money to William.

WILLIAM
Mine?

SIMON
Commission for you. I want to work
with you...You have good luck.

William--mouth ajar--takes the money.

SIMON (cont'd)
By the way, I'm Simon.

WILLIAM
William.

William slips the money in his pocket, goes to clean.

EXT. COMPOUND - SUNRISE SHELTER - LATER

Darkness settles in as William pushes the gate open.

He walks through, closes the gate. Turns when he hears--

AUNTIE P. (O.S)
William...?!

He squints. Sees Auntie P.

WILLIAM
(under his breath)
Arghhhh...!

He quickly ducks out of sight.

AUNTIE P.
Hee. Don't play games with me.

William walks over, stands a few feet from her.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
How many times should I tell you
that I need to know where you are
at all times?

WILLIAM
I want to go. Back to school.

AUNTIE P.
You stupid boy! I don't know
what's got into you lately.

WILLIAM
I'm...asking...

AUNTIE P.
You are not asking. You are just
stupid. I've told you a million
times that your education is a
waste of your time and my money.

WILLIAM
I got a job today. I want to save
up the money. Pay for my classes.
On my own.

AUNTIE P.
What job did you find?

WILLIAM
Cleaning beds...at a workshop...
With a good. Commission.

Auntie P. sighs, shakes her head.

AUNTIE P.
Even if you clean 1000 beds every
day and earn a good commission
selling every piece, you'll still
have to borrow money and NOT be
able to complete your education.

William looks like he's been hit in the face by a brick.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Also, remember that you have
language apraxia. It's hard for
you to talk, and a struggle to
understand things...So, forget
all about your education. Okay?

William nods like a robot.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Now go to sleep. Wake up early
tomorrow...The dishes are waiting
for you in the kitchen.

William walks off, passing her. She sniffs the air and crinkles her nose.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Phew! You smell horrible...When
is the last time you had a bath?

William keeps walking, no response.

INT. DORMITORY - SUNRISE SHELTER - NEXT MORNING

William blinks awake. Looks desperately around.

All boys, except him, are still asleep.

He gets up, quickly packs a few of his belongings - they don't fill a sack.

He grips the sack tightly, sneaks out.

EXT. COMPOUND - SUNRISE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

William closes the door behind him.

He looks around - No sign of Auntie P.

He takes tentative steps across and, just as he's about to pull the gate open, Auntie P. pushes it open.

They nearly collide.

AUNTIE P.
That's my sack.

William just stares at her.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Is this the way to leave? After
15 years?

WILLIAM
I-I have. To go...

AUNTIE P.
Don't be silly. You are better
off working here in exchange for
food and shelter.

William squirms, walks off.

WILLIAM
Bye.

She turns, watches him walk through the gate.

AUNTIE P.
Have you thought about where you
are going to sleep tonight?

He's gone.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

William waits. No bus stops - all are full.

A young man (18) approaches, riding a rusty *boda-boda*
(motorcycle taxi).

William whistles at him.

The young rider sees William, rounds a corner. Stops in
the bus lane.

William adjusts his sack, jumps on the back seat.

YOUNG RIDER
Yo ready?

WILLIAM
Ya. Be fast.

The *boda-boda* peels away.

EXT. BODA-BODA - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Young rider weaves in and out of the morning traffic at a
rather high speed. William clings on.

YOUNG RIDER
Where to?

WILLIAM
Main Market. Simon's Workshop.

LATER

The rusty *boda-boda* rolls down a bumpy road that leads to
the market entrance.

WILLIAM
Stop. Here.

Young rider steps on the brake pedal.

The *boda-boda* doesn't stop.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I said. Stop. NOW.

Young rider fidgets nervously - Nothing.

YOUNG RIDER
The brakes don't work.

WILLIAM
THE BREAKS. DON'T...WHAT?

BAM!

The front tyre hits a pothole, rockets up.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Awwwhhhhhh!

William screams as he catapults in the air.

EXT. ON THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

William and his sack, Young rider and his *boda-boda* fall, then roll in different directions like pebbles.

Young rider gets up, looks at himself - he only suffers a few scratches. He looks over at William - his mouth opens in shock.

Just above William's left knee, the thighbone is jutting out through the flesh. It's dead white. Blood runs out.

Distraught, Young rider quickly jumps on his damaged *boda-boda*, starts it. Speeds off--

Leaving William sprawled up in the middle of the road.

He's still. Unconscious.

INT. ICU RECOVERY ROOM - MISSION HOSPITAL - LATER

William lies on a propped-up bed, panic fills his eyes.

His left leg--in a fiberglass cast--is raised in traction. Steel pins protrude through his upper thigh. A bag of Donor Blood connected to the IV tube is taped on his arm.

Click! The door opens.

A tall, prosperous-looking, DR. FRED AKI (32), comes in. He's the lead E.R. Surgeon.

DR. FRED
Hello!

William opens his mouth, but holds his tongue.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
You are saying something?

WILLIAM
(weak)
Will I be. Able to walk. Again?

DR. FRED
Oh, yes. You'll walk just fine...
But that's after you've recovered
fully...We've inserted a steel
plate and clamped it on to your
bone with screws.

WILLIAM
Screws?

DR. FRED
Yes, right here.

Dr. Fred points at the x-rays of William's shattered
thighbone clipped on a light board.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Outside of this, you are okay.
Nothing to worry about.

William manages a small smile.

Dr. Fred walks to the door, calls down the hall.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Justine...!

A female nurse, JUSTINE MERE (30s), comes in. She starts
to ask William questions while filling out the form.

NURSE JUSTINE
What's your name and age?

WILLIAM
William Aki. Fifteen.

A concerned look comes over Dr. Fred. He interrupts.

DR. FRED
William Aki? Where do you live?

WILLIAM
Sunrise Shelter.

Dr. Fred's eyes peel even wider.

DR. FRED
SUNRISE SHELTER?

William nods.

Dr. Fred stiffens.

Nurse Justine stares.

INT. DR. FRED'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

After hours.

Dr. Fred sits dejectedly, head in his cupped hands.

He pulls out his wallet, takes out a battered photograph.

The photo shows a younger Dr. Fred (17), frail, messy hair, dirty fingernails, carrying a little baby.

Dr. Fred's eyes well up as he looks at the photo.

KNOCKING, Nurse Justine opens the door. Rushes in.

She holds a paper with words printed on it.

NURSE JUSTINE

Dr. Fred! Great news!

Dr. Fred turns to look the other way.

Too late. Nurse Justine's already seen his tears.

She hands him the paper.

NURSE JUSTINE (cont'd)

99.99999 percent! The DNA test is a perfect match. You're William's father.

The full horror of the situation dawns on Dr. Fred.

He stares off into space, remembers...

INT. SLUM - KAMPALA CITY - DAY - **15 YEARS EARLIER**

One-room home. Tin-roofed. Mud walls. No furniture.

A younger Dr. Fred Aki (17) sits on a mat next to his critically ill girlfriend, ANNA NIKI (16). Their one month old baby lies sleeping next to them.

Fred silently listens to every breath Anna takes. She wheezes with every breath - the phlegm in her chest rattles.

Suddenly, she starts to cough. Heavily.

Gasping for breath, she lies on Fred's lap.

Her breaths start to slow. And slow...Finally, she quits breathing.

Fred--screaming--starts to shake the lifeless body.

FRED

Anna!! Anna, wake up!!!

The silence lasts forever. And ever.

EXT. VILLAGE FUNERAL - NEXT DAY

Amen! The REVEREND makes the sign of the cross.

Anna's casket is lowered down into a dark grave.

Fred--carrying his baby--scans a small crowd of mourners.

He spots IVAN MASI (20s). His buddy. Raggedy dressed.
Dirty fingernails. Messy hair.

FRED

Ivan!

Ivan walks over to him.

Fred whispers something into his ear. Ivan nods.

INT. ONE-ROOM HOME - LATER - NIGHT

Fred sits on the mat across from Ivan. The baby lies down next to them.

IVAN

What killed Anna?

FRED

I don't know. Was unable to
transport her to Mission
Hospital. Had no money at all.

The baby starts to cry. Ivan picks him up.

IVAN

And this one here. How are you
going to take care of him?

FRED

That's why I called you here. I
need your help.

Fred whispers.

FRED (cont'd)

There's a Shelter I know. He
might be safer there.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - LATER - NIGHT

Ivan rides a *boda-boda*.

Fred sits at the back. His fingers clutch a cardboard box.

They approach a modest house. The sign at the metal security gate reads: SUNRISE SHELTER.

Ivan stops the *boda-boda*, but doesn't shut off the engine.

Fred quickly jumps off, runs to the gate. Puts the box down.

He opens it - inside is his baby, sound asleep.

He pulls a note out of his pocket. It reads: WILLIAM AKI - ONE MONTH OLD - DADDY LOVES YOU.

He places the note on his baby's chest, says a prayer...

IVAN

Hurry up.

Fred runs off, climbs back to the *boda-boda*.

They peel away--

Leaving BABY WILLIAM curled up in the box.

INT. DR. FRED'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - **BACK TO PRESENT**

Dr. Fred--grim--still stares off into space, moved by this grisly memory.

NURSE JUSTINE

Aren't you so happy that you've found your son? Just like that.

He looks at Nurse Justine for a moment. Contemplative.

DR. FRED

It's not as easy as it sounds...I can't tell William I'm his Daddy. I'll frighten him to death.

NURSE JUSTINE

Hey. For the last five years I've heard you say how you long to meet your son. This is a chance for you to spend quality time with him.

DR. FRED

I know, but...

NURSE JUSTINE

Dr. Fred. You got to stop talking and take action.

DR. FRED

Oh, my God...How am I going to roll back the last 15 years?

He ponders. Then--

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Listen. Let no one know about
this. Okay?

NURSE JUSTINE
Don't worry. It'll be our little
secret.

INT. ICU RECOVERY ROOM - HOSPITAL - LATER

William lies in his bed, staring into space. Lost.
Click! The door opens.

Dr. Fred walks in, smiling. William smiles back.

DR. FRED
William! What's the name of your
guardian? At Sunrise Shelter.

WILLIAM
Auntie P.

Dr. Fred walks back to the door, calls down the hall.

DR. FRED
Justine...!

Nurse Justine comes in.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Contact Auntie P. Let her know
what happened to this young man.

NURSE JUSTINE
I'll do that right away.

She exits. William winces.

Dr. Fred walks to William's bedside, tries to connect.

DR. FRED
So. How does Auntie P. treat you?
Good?

WILLIAM
Not good.

DR. FRED
You show respect for her?

WILLIAM
She doesn't want. Me. To leave
Sunrise Shelter.

DR. FRED
Why?

WILLIAM
She wants me. To do all. The
chores.

DR. FRED
Does she pay you?

William shakes his head, bites his lower lip.

Dr. Fred rubs William's head.

DR. FRED
I bet you're hungry, aren't you?

William nods.

Dr. Fred walks out. Returns moments later with a plate of
mixed fresh fruits. Sliced.

DR. FRED
Here we go. You need a lot of
vitamins and minerals.

WILLIAM
Thank you. Doctor.

DR. FRED
If you need anything, let me know.

William nods, starts to eat.

Dr. Fred exits.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark.

A cell phone light suddenly knifes through the darkness.

Auntie P. wakes up, checks. Answers the phone.

AUNTIE P.
Hello!...WHAT?...An accident?!

INT. ICU RECOVERY ROOM - NEXT MORNING

William lies on the bed, wide-awake.

Click! The door opens. Dr. Fred leads Auntie P. inside.

William quickly squeezes his eyes shut and pretends to be
asleep - there's FAKE deep breathing.

Auntie P. gives him a penetrating look.

AUNTIE P.
Is he conscious?

DR. FRED

Oh, yes. But he lost a lot of blood. We are stabilizing him.

Auntie P. grits her teeth.

AUNTIE P.

Stupid, stupid boy. I told him not to leave.

William coughs in his fake sleep.

DR. FRED

It's nobody's fault. Accidents happen.

Auntie P. turns, faces the wall. Seething.

Dr. Fred puts a hand on her shoulder.

DR. FRED (cont'd)

Everything's will be alright.

AUNTIE P.

I can't go through this.

DR. FRED

What do you mean, you can't go through this.

AUNTIE P.

It means, William has no one to take care of him.

Dr. Fred freezes, disturbed by this. Then--

DR. FRED

Can-Can we talk? In private.

Dr. Fred leads her out the door.

William slowly opens his eyes, catches a glimpse of Auntie P. as she follows after Dr. Fred.

INT. CORRIDOR - HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fred and Auntie P. walk down.

DR. FRED

In the time being, don't worry. William is in good hands here.

AUNTIE P.

It's not William I'm worried about. It's the hospital bill.

DR. FRED

Well, the hospital bill isn't my concern. It's Sunrise Shelter.

Auntie P. gives him a confused look.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Soon as William can be moved, I'm
requesting you to take him to
your house, not to Sunrise
Shelter.

AUNTIE P.
My house?

DR. FRED
Yes.

AUNTIE P.
What for?

DR. FRED
All I'm asking is for you and
William to feel like a family, as
he recovers.

AUNTIE P.
You want me to baby-sit him?

Dr. Fred chuckles to ease the growing tension.

DR. FRED
Well, William's not a baby. But
he needs full-time care...We are
probably the best chance he has
at a normal life.

AUNTIE P.
We?

DR. FRED
Yes! You and I. Together.

Auntie P. ponders.

AUNTIE P.
So how much are you paying me...
for baby-sitting William?

DR. FRED
Excuse me?

AUNTIE P.
I'm not Mother Theresa.

Dr. Fred's cell phone vibrates. He pulls it out, reads the
message.

DR. FRED
I got a patient to see now. Let's
talk a little bit later. Okay?

No response.

Dr. Fred reaches for his wallet, takes out some bank notes. Hands them to her.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Buy stuff that William needs as I think about how much to pay you.

Auntie P. takes the money, gives him a suspicious look as he hurries off.

INT. SUV - MOVING - DAY - **TWO WEEKS LATER**

Dr. Fred drives.

William rides in the passenger seat. He holds clutches.

Auntie P. sits in the backseat, staring out the window.

Nobody talks.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The SUV rolls down a few homes, stops in front of a modest house. This is Auntie P.'s home.

Dr. Fred exits, helps William to stand.

Auntie P. climbs out and gathers a few bags. She walks to Dr. Fred, puts out her hand.

AUNTIE P.
Everything has a price. That's how the world works.

DR. FRED
I know that.

Dr. Fred reaches into his pocket, pulls out a wad of cash. Hands it to her.

She takes the money, leaves without saying thank you.

Dr. Fred watches her enter her house, turns to William.

DR. FRED
Be nice to her. Knock before you open a door. Say hello when you enter a room. Say sorry when you make a mistake. Always say please and thank you. Help her when you need to. Most importantly, keep a smile on your face. Okay?

William smiles.

There is a FATHER AND SON hug that lasts a little longer.

DR. FRED
See you next month when I'll cut
off that cast.

William nods.

Dr. Fred climbs back into his SUV, drives off.

William turns and takes short, hobbling steps, propped up
by crutches, towards Auntie P.'s house.

INT. SITTING ROOM - AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door is open.

William hobbles in as Auntie P. dusts a chair. He stands
there, looks at her. Smiling.

Auntie P. keeps dusting, won't look at him.

There's an awkward silence. Then--

AUNTIE P.
Do you know your problem?

William's smile vanishes.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
You never listen.

He sullenly nods.

She points at the chair.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Come sit here.

WILLIAM
Thank. You.

Auntie P. heads for the kitchen.

William hobbles, sits. Looks around.

An old framed photograph catches his eye. It's of a
younger Auntie P., sitting next to five little children.

Auntie P. returns.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
There's you, in that photo.

William traces the image with his finger.

WILLIAM
This one?

AUNTIE P.
No, that one. No, down...Yes,
that one.

William looks closely at the image.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
A sweet kid then. If I told you
to do something, you did it
without complaining.

Auntie P. sits opposite, looks him in the eye.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
I want you to be like that kid.
Again.

William nods.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Because soon as you recover, you
are going back to Sunrise
Shelter.

He nods again.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
No questions. No objections. No
negotiations. No complaining.

He takes that in.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Don't annoy me again.

WILLIAM
I won't.

AUNTIE P.
Okay. Let's try living together.
Just for a while.

William smiles - it looks forced.

INT. DR. FRED'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - DAY - **A MONTH LATER**

William sits on a chair.

Beside him, Dr. Fred cuts the cast off William's leg.

He slices the cast apart, folds it. Throws it in a bin.

William leans in and takes a closer look of his damaged
leg - it's pale, frail and ulcerated.

WILLIAM
It doesn't. Look good.

DR. FRED
Sorry. Exercising will help you
recover quickly.

WILLIAM
I can't jog.

DR. FRED
Just walk...walk to and from
school every day. That way,
you'll develop the weak muscles
in your leg.

William's voice crackles with emotion.

WILLIAM
I don't. Go to school. Anymore.

Dr. Fred frowns, concerned.

DR. FRED
You mean you are not thinking
about going back to school?

WILLIAM
I'm. Thinking about. Going back.

DR. FRED
Then what's stopping you.

William looks at him.

WILLIAM
Money.

Dr. Fred chuckles.

DR. FRED
Money is no excuse.

William gives him an "are you serious?" look.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Okay. Let me tell you a bit of my
story...My mother and father died
in a bus crush when I was 5 years
old. I was left in the care of my
grandmother, a deaf-mute, living
in dire poverty.

William listens.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Because I had nothing, I dropped
out school at 13. I went to live
in a slum...collecting trash in
exchange for food.

William grimaces.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
At age 17, I discovered marijuana.
I could steal, lie just to get a
joint. Also, I did lots of things
considered wrong...gambling,
fighting, drinking, womanizing...
It's at that time that I-I-I...

He can't bring himself to say it...

WILLIAM
How did you. Get through school
...without money?

DR. FRED
I asked for help.

William nod again.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
On my 18th birthday, I was
attacked by a man with a knife.
Being high on weed, I could not
defend myself. He stabbed me in
the chest. In the hospital, I met
a wonderful doctor...I wanted to
be like him. I asked him if he
could help me get through school.
He said yes.

William shifts slightly in his seat, anxious.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
I joined one of the best schools
and worked extremely hard...I
didn't want to mess up. I became a
star student. After high school, I
went to Imperial College, London.
Graduated. I returned five years
ago, to give back to my community.

There's a glint of hope in William's eyes. Then--

WILLIAM
Doctor, do you think you could
help me get back to school?

DR. FRED
I was hoping that's what you were
going to ask...So, what's your
dream? What do you hope to be?

WILLIAM
Like you. A doctor.

DR. FRED
Are you ready to work harder than
you ever done? You can be anything!

William nods, super excited...

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - **THREE WEEKS LATER**

Packs of students in uniform mosey towards the campus.

William's among them - he's the only student in the crowd, limping with a help of a stick.

He's smartly attired in a collared shirt. Neck tie. Trousers. Blazer. Leather shoes. He carries a backpack.

He approaches a huge metal security gate with the words: CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL.

He smiles to himself, hobbles through the gate.

EXT. COMPOUND - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

It's a modern school. Storeyed brick and cement buildings. Manicured lawns. Beautiful flowers. Exotic trees...

William limps across, enters the--

INT. CORRIDOR - SCIENCE BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Noisy students everywhere, socializing with friends.

William limps down, checking the classroom numbers.

He stops, lost. He looks around for help. No one makes eye contact - some students snicker at him.

At that moment, a boy comes out of a classroom.

William approaches him.

WILLIAM
Form Three. Sciences class.

The boy points at the--

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

William enters, pulls a chair. Lowers to sit as the bell chimes outside in the compound.

Students begin to flood in.

The chemistry teacher, MASTER OTI (40s), walks in. He carries a briefcase, which he places on the front desk.

He looks around, spots William.

MASTER OTI
Okay class. Let's first welcome
our new student.

Heads turn to look at William.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
William Aki's joining us mid-term
in the Sciences class. Please
make him feel very welcome. Okay?

A few heads nod.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
Now, put all your books away and
get your pens out...It's time for
the mid-term chemistry test.

William stiffens.

Master Oti opens his briefcase, pulls out papers. Starts
to hand them out to students.

He gets to William's desk.

William leans in to Master Oti, whispers--

WILLIAM
Sir. I'm not prepared. For. This
test.

Master Oti turns to the class.

MASTER OTI
William says he's not prepared
for this test.

A few students speak out.

RANDOM STUDENTS
So am I! Me, too...

BANG! Master Oti strikes William's desk.

Every one falls silent.

MASTER OTI
Mid-term tests help me to weed
out weak students. So, if you
think you aren't prepared for
this test, just leave. The
Sciences class is not for cows.

Master Oti turns to William.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
I know you haven't been around.
But it doesn't preclude you from
doing the mid-term test.

He slaps the paper into William's hand.

William takes the paper, reads through.

Suddenly, his eyes peel wider. Everything's new to him.

INT. DR. FRED'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - DAY

The door is ajar.

Dr. Fred studies pages and pages of records at his desk.

Auntie P. appears in the doorway.

AUNTIE P.
How's the good Doctor doing?

Dr. Fred looks up, smiles.

DR. FRED
Very well. And you?

She smiles back, enters. Sits across from him.

AUNTIE P.
I'm here to thank you for
financing William's education.

DR. FRED
Hope he gets the best education.

AUNTIE P.
Don't worry about that...I'm
going to push him hard until I
squeeze the best out of him.

DR. FRED
I don't think I like the idea of
pushing William.

AUNTIE P.
A little bit of pushing is a good
thing for him. Because he's so
stupid sometimes.

Dr. Fred doesn't take kindly to William being called
stupid.

DR. FRED
Excuse me. There's no need to be
rude. Okay. William's a kid going
through tough times. Pushing him
might cause more harm than good.

Auntie P. shoots him a sceptical look.

AUNTIE P.
What do you suggest I do?

D. Fred looks at her.

DR. FRED

Be a little more patient with him. Give him space to make mistakes. So he can learn from them and grow at his own pace.

AUNTIE P.

Give him...WHAT?

DR. FRED

Space. And a lot of love.

Auntie P. leans back in his seat, angry.

AUNTIE P.

So. You want to me to sit back and watch him fool around. Eh?

Dr. Fred's cell phone vibrates. He picks it, reads the message for a moment.

When he looks up from reading, Auntie P.'s gone.

He shakes his head, goes back to reading.

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - DAY

William and his classmates wait for the lesson to begin.

Master Oti enters, opens his briefcase. Pulls out papers.

MASTER OTI

Last week's test results.

William freezes.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)

Generally speaking, you did a great job. But there's one cow that's wasting time in my class.

Master Oti picks the papers.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)

We will start from the top student...Christie Heebwa!

CHRISTIE HEEBWA (15) gets up, dashes to the front desk. Picks up her results paper from Master Oti.

William looks at Christie, absorbs her: tall, curvy figure, big eyes, afro hair...beautiful.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)

Next, Brian Aga!

William turns, watches Brian get up and go.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
Next, Davis Kello!

William gazes at Davis.

William's caught up in the game of watching students get up, go and come back...

His name is called last - he's the bottom student.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
And last of all, William Aki!

William--beyond embarrassed--rises, limps up.

Silence. All eyes are on him.

The class bully, BORIS BEKA (17), shouts.

BORIS
Cow!

Everyone laughs - even Master Oti.

William gets to the front desk. Takes his paper from Master Oti. It's marked 'F' in red ink.

He limps back, falls in his chair. Puts the paper away.

EXT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER

After school. William stops at the front door.

He keys in, opens. Pauses when he hears--

AUNTIE P.
William. How's school?

WILLIAM
It's okay.

Auntie walks up to him.

AUNTIE P.
Good. Guess you are working twice as hard...done any tests yet?

He cringes.

WILLIAM
Only...Chemistry.

She puts out her hand for the results paper.

AUNTIE P.
I'm excited to know how you are performing.

William--as if with an effort--digs in his rucksack, pulls out a paper. Hands it to her.

Auntie P. notices the 'F' grade.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Is this a joke?

Silence.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Is this how you are rewarding us?

More silence.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
I knew it. I told you...This is a waste of time and money.

She crumbles the paper into a ball, throws it at him.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Get off my face before I smash your empty head back into Sunrise Shelter.

William picks his paper, enters.

Auntie P. glares at him. Mutters.

EXT. COMPOUND - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Break time. Students soak up the mid-morning sunshine.

William limps across, looking around.

Boris--the bully--heckles the moment he sees William.

BORIS
There goes Mr. Cow.

Laughs. One of Boris's buddies (AMON) chimes in.

AMOM
Mr. Dumbest.

More laughs.

William overhears them, but pretends he didn't.

He limps on, spots two TWIN GIRLS lolling about.

WILLIAM
Hi.

TWINS
(in unison)
Hi.

WILLIAM
I'm looking. For Christie...The
top student...in our class.

The twin girls point across at the--

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Christie sits alone. She reads a magazine.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

Christie looks at the door as it opens slowly.

William stands in the doorway.

WILLIAM
Christie. Could I talk. To you.
For a moment?

CHRISTIE
About what?

William stammers.

WILLIAM
I-Is it alright? That. That...

He searches for words.

CHRISTIE
Alright that what?

WILLIAM
Alright that. You help me excel.
In the. Science subjects.

CHRISTIE
You want me to coach you?

William nods, eagerly.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
What are you paying?

WILLIAM
Please...! Help me.

Christie smiles.

CHRISTIE
I'm kidding...Why sciences? What
do you hope to achieve?

William hesitates, almost ashamed to say--

WILLIAM
I need to. Become. A. Medical
Doctor.

CHRISTIE
Need?

WILLIAM
I-I don't want. To be. A cow.

CHRISTIE
You are not a cow...!!!

She pulls a nearby chair, motions him to enter.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
How do you want me to help you?

WILLIAM
I don't know...but...

William limps inside, sits next to her.

INT. SCHOOL STAFF ROOM - SAME TIME

A group of teachers drink tea as--

Master Oti thumbs through a pile of homework papers.

There's one 'A+' paper, Christie's. Then, a bunch of B's, C's and D's. There only one 'F', William's.

Master Oti pulls out William's homework paper, hands it to a nearby teacher who scans it. Growls.

MASTER OTI
This William boy. He's a real problem.

TEACHER
Has he got the brains to do much better if he tried harder?

Master Oti shakes his head.

MASTER OTI
Not at all. He is a cow.

Laughs. The teacher hands the paper back to Master Oti.

TEACHER
Fine. I'll take him up.

Master Oti nods, rises. Storms out with William's paper.

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - MOMENTS LATER

William and Christie sit together, studying.

Christie reads from a textbook--

CHRISTIE
Sucrose is made up of...

William completes.

WILLIAM
Glucose and fructose...Which are.
Joined together. By a chemical
bond. Known as. A glycosidic bond.

Christie nods.

CHRISTIE
What's the chemical formula for
sucrose?

Before William could answer--

Master Oti fires in, throws the homework paper at
William's face.

MASTER OTI
Arrangements have been made for
you to join the Arts class.

William picks the paper, looks at the 'F' grade.

Silence.

Christie jumps in.

CHRISTIE
It's important that William stays
in the Sciences class. His dream
is to become a Medical Doctor.

Master Oti laughs at this.

MASTER OTI
Don't play with me, Christie. You
know that dream is unrealistic.

CHRISTIE
Is there a way you can help him?
Maybe, give him special lessons.

Master Oti laughs again.

MASTER OTI
I can't fit a cow in my lesson
schedule.

William jumps in.

WILLIAM
Sir. Christie here. Has offered.
To help me. Up my grades...We meet
during. Our free periods.

Master Oti stares hard at William.

MASTER OTI
Don't waste people's time again.
You aren't smart enough.

The bell chimes out in the compound.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
Now, get out of my class.

Master Oti walks up to the front desk.

William remains seated.

Master Oti scans the room as students begin to enter.

He returns his gaze to...William.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
William! Get out. You are not
registered for this class.

William doesn't move.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
Don't make me come over there and
have you forcibly removed.

William remains in his seat.

A tense silence.

Christie leans, whispers into William's ear.

William nods, gathers his stuff. Walks out.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

William stands in front of a short, balding, moustached
school boss, PRINCIPAL EVANS (50).

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Can't you see that Master Oti is
trying to help you?

WILLIAM
Master Oti is. Applying his help.
Improperly.

Principal Evans has a confused look on his face.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Improperly?

WILLIAM
Master Oti is. Forcing me. To...

Principal Evans interjects sharply.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
There's no forcing here!!! You
have a choice...You either do
what Master Oti is telling you,
or don't bother coming back at
Crystal High School.

WILLIAM
But...

PRINCIPAL EVANS
There's no...But!!! Get out of my
office now. You are a time waster.

William exits, dejected.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

School's out. Students everywhere: jumping in cars, riding
bikes, walking home.

Christie waits by the gate. William emerges, limps past
her without a look.

Christie is stunned.

CHRISTIE
William...?!

William keeps walking, doesn't look back.

Christie runs, catches up with him.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
What did the Principal say?

WILLIAM
I hate him. I hate Master Oti. I
hate this School. I hate ev...

CHRISTIE
No! Don't hate.

William stops, buries his face with his hands.

WILLIAM
Arghhhhh!!!

Christie stops, faces him.

CHRISTIE
Calm down...

William removes his hands from his face, looks at her.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
So, what are you going to do?

WILLIAM

I don't know. Maybe I'm going. To see if Simon. Can hire me again ...while I think.

CHRISTIE

If you don't come back, you are going to lose a lot.

WILLIAM

I can't stay. In this school.

They walk in silence, approach the junction.

Christie looks at him closely.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Hey. Have a good night. I expect to see you tomorrow. Yeah?

WILLIAM

I said, I'm not. Coming back.

Christie doesn't know what to say to this.

They go separate ways.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Auntie P. emerges from her bedroom, stops at the dining table. Looks at the untouched breakfast.

She glances up at the wall clock - 9: 32 a.m.

Gasps.

She shuffles towards the door of--

INT: WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

William's in his bed, sound asleep.

The door opens.

Auntie P. enters, opens the window. Shakes William.

William stirs, sits up. Startled.

AUNTIE P.

Aren't you going to school?

William hesitates...Finally plucks up the courage to say--

WILLIAM

I'm not. Going.

AUNTIE P.
What did you do?

WILLIAM
Nothing.

AUNTIE P.
Nothing?

WILLIAM
The teachers. Don't like me.
Nobody ever likes me.

Auntie P.'s eyes get wide, walks out.

William leans back, pulls the blanket over his head.

Auntie P. re-enters with a bucket of cold water.

SPLASH! She pours the water on him.

William peels the blanket back, looks at her in shock.

AUNTIE P.
If you want to play games, find
some other fool to play with.

She walks off.

William rubs his wet face in his hands.

EXT: BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

The sky is grey and overcast.

William--in school uniform--waits.

SPLASH! A sudden drop of rain splatters on his forehead.

A flash of lightning flames the dark sky.

A clap of thunder follows. It starts to rain.

William hurries across the road.

INT. MINI SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

ASHISH KASH (30s), an Indian proprietor, stands behind the counter.

The door opens.

William--dazed and soaking wet--walks in.

ASHISH
Can I help you?

WILLIAM
I need. An umbrella.

ASHISH
What type?

WILLIAM
The. Cheapest.

ASHISH
Let's see what I've got.

Ashish walks to the back room.

William looks around. Then--

Leans at the counter, snatches a packet of cigarettes from a rack. Slips it in his pocket.

Pause. He spies at Ashish - he's still busy at the back.

He leans back, grabs a Lighter. Drops it in his pocket.

Ashish returns with five different umbrellas.

ASHISH
You have a variety to choose from.

William picks one. Pays.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

It's raining. Heavily.

William emerges from the mini-market, shields himself with an umbrella. Crosses the road to the--

EXT. BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

William waits. Cars zoom past him: no buses, no *boda-bodas*.

WHAM!

Thunders strikes nearby.

He jumps in horror, dashes off.

EXT. COMPOUND - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

William, umbrella over his head, walks through the gate. Passes the--

INT: SECURITY GUARD SHED - CONTINUOUS

The tall, muscular, school security guard, VICTOR MANI (30), stands by the window.

Through the rain-streaked glass, he watches William as he scuttles past the classroom block into the--

INT. BOY'S WASHROOM - CONTINUOUS

William enters a toilet cubicle, drops the umbrella. Sits on the toilet seat.

He lights one cigarette, inhales.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

He quickly drops the cigarette, steps on it. Waves the smoke away.

The toilet door opens.

Victor steps inside. Sees a thick cloud of grey smoke floating over William's head.

VICTOR
Smoking isn't good for your health.

WILLIAM
My health is. My problem.

VICTOR
You think you can do anything you want here?

William stands up to leave.

Victor blocks his path.

WILLIAM
What are you. Going to do?

Victor grabs William by the wrist, tugs him.

VICTOR
Let's go.

WILLIAM
Where?

VICTOR
To the Principal's office.

William tries to free himself.

Victor uses his second hand to hold him. Tightly.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

It has stopped raining.

Victor drags William out of the boys' washroom.

WILLIAM
Let go of me. Now.

VICTOR
Shut your mouth and let me do my
job. Okay?

WILLIAM
I'm going to. Burst your head.

Victor laughs.

VICTOR
In your dreams.

POW! William's left fist lands on Victor's jaw.

THUD! Victor lands on the slippery ground, face first.

He quickly gathers himself, rises. Clenches his fists.

VICTOR (cont'd)
Okay. Let's do it.

William quickly grabs Victor's shirt, pulls him down.

Victor lands again.

William bends, puts a knee on Victor's ear. Starts to
punch rapid shots onto the face.

VICTOR (cont'd)
Ouchhhh. Youuu huuuurting mee.

William keeps hitting. Hard.

VICTOR (cont'd)
Geeet offff myyy heeeead. Awww...

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - SAME TIME

Master Oti stands in front, teaching. Christie and others
students listen attentively.

There's a sudden STRANGE MOAN.

They all looks out the window.

Their eyes widen and jaws drop as they watch William
punching Victor.

Christie jumps, runs out at top speed.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Christie gets to the scene as Principal Evans, teachers and other students gather.

She looks around - William's vanished.

Christie pushes her way through the crowd, looks down.

Victor lies on his back, still. There's a gash under his left eye. Blood trickles from his nose and mouth.

CHRISTIE

Victor! Victor, can you hear me?

He doesn't respond.

The crowd stares with horror and pity.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Someone call an ambulance.

Principal Evans pulls out his cell phone, dials.

Christie drops on her knees, grabs Victor's arm. Checks the pulse.

PRINCIPAL EVANS

Is he breathing?

CHRISTIE

No. He needs oxygen now. Very restricted blood flow.

PRINCIPAL EVANS

Let's wait for paramedics to perform CPR on him. They are on their way.

Christie removes her sweater, uses it to clean Victor's nose and mouth.

CHRISTIE

We have to act now...If we wait, he's going to die as we look on.

PRINCIPAL EVANS

How do you know? You are not a doctor.

Christie ignores him.

She pulls out her handkerchief, places it on top of Victor's mouth. Pinches his nose shut with her fingers.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)

Christie! Don't...

Too late. She's already puffed air into Victor's lungs.

She stops, watches Victor's chest - No movement.

She puffs again, pumping his chest...

Finally, Victor takes a long, rugged, hollow breath. His chest starts to move up and down. Slowly.

In a distance, sirens wail.

Christie steps aside.

An ambulance skids to a halt. Doors burst open.

Two PARAMEDICS jump out and cover Victor's face with a hand pumped oxygen mask. They load him into the ambulance. Race away.

Everyone turns, looks at Christie - awed by her bravery.

She walks off. Enters the--

INT. GIRLS' WASHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christie heads to the sink, washes her hands. Scrubs under her fingernails.

The water is faintly red.

EXT. SIMON'S WORKSHOP - SAME TIME

William approaches. His uniform shirt is splattered with blood.

He looks around - No sign of Simon.

A YOUNG MAN cleans the beds.

William walks over to the young man.

WILLIAM
Simon. Where's he?

Young man points at--

INT. THE NILE BAR & GRILL - CONTINUOUS

Simon sits at a table with a group of people: drinking, eating, laughing.

William walks in, spots Simon.

WILLIAM
Simon!

Simon turns, looks at blood stains on William's shirt.

SIMON
What's that?

Before William could answer--

MAN'S VOICE (O.S)
Get out!

William turns. Sees a tall, super-muscular BOUNCER, looking down at him.

BOUNCER
Persons below 18 years are not allowed in here.

INT. WAITING AREA - MISSION HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Principal Evans sits dejectedly, looking at his watch.

Dr. Fred emerges from a door.

Principal Evans gets up, intercepts him.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Doc. How's Victor doing?

DR. FRED
Very well. There was massive internal bleeding. He's stabilized for now.

Principal Evans shakes his head.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
No need to worry. In the next one or two days, he'll be discharged.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
There's something worse.

DR, FRED
What could be worse? I always tell people to look on the positive side of things.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
William caused this.

DR. FRED
William who? Oh! WHAT?!!!

Dr. Fred's smile vanishes.

EXT. PARKING YARD - THE NILE BAR & GRILL - SAME TIME

William and Simon have an argument outside the bar.

WILLIAM
I don't understand why. You can't
hire me back?

SIMON
I gave you a chance. You didn't
come back. I hired someone else.

WILLIAM
But you said. I have good luck.

Simon smiles a little.

SIMON
Look. For me to hire you back
means I have to let someone else
go. I can't do that.

WILLIAM
Please...I have nowhere. To go.

SIMON
Sorry. There's nothing I can do.

Simon walks off.

William buries his face in his hands, completely stuck.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Principal Evans drives out of the hospital gate.

He pulls out his cell phone, dials.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Auntie P. washes vegetables.

Her cell phone rings nearby. She wipes her hands on her
apron, picks it.

AUNTIE P.
Hello?

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Principal Evans drives, holding the phone to his ear.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Hello, Auntie P. I have something
important that we need to discuss in
person...it's regarding William...
Tomorrow morning...is fine. Bye...

INT. BUS STOP - LATER

A bus is parked. Various people get on.

William walks over to the bus, but instead of boarding, he sits on the ground. Holds his head in his hands.

He has hit rock bottom.

Suddenly, he jumps and runs off into oncoming traffic.

He stops in the middle of the road. Shuts his eyes.

He is certain he's going to be crushed into pieces.

This is the end. No more suffering. No more pain.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

A BEARDED DRIVER (50) sees someone standing in the middle of his lane.

BEARDED DRIVER

Aw, shit!

He slams on the brakes. Tyres squeal.

The truck stops mere feet from where William stands.

EXT. WILLIAM - ON THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

William opens his eyes, looks around.

The accident hasn't happened - Maybe in his pants.

The driver angrily jumps out with a long stick.

BEARDED DRIVER

Little shit. Why do you want to
kill yourself? Get off the road
before I whip the crap out of you.

William--trembling--scatters across, disappears.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Auntie P. emerges from her bedroom, stops at the door of William's bedroom.

KNOCK, KNOCK - No answer.

She opens, pokes her head - William's not inside.

She shuffles into the sitting room - Empty.
She looks up at the wall clock - 11: 53 p.m.

AUNTIE P.
(to herself)
Is this fool coming home tonight?

She hits the lights off, shuffles back to her bedroom.

EXT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

It's dark.

William--in complete resignation--stops at the front door.
He sits on the concrete steps. Closes his eyes.

AUNTIE P. (O.S)
William...?!

EXT. CONCRETE STEPS - AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

William opens his eyes to see--

Auntie P. in the doorway, glaring down at him.

AUNTIE P.
Why did you spend the night out
here?

A deathly silence.

INT. PRINCIPAL EVANS' OFFICE - LATER

Principal Evans sits across from Auntie P.

William stands by the door.

AUNTIE P.
(to Principal Evans)
If you didn't know how stupid
William is. Now you know.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
(to William)
What happened?

WILLIAM
I did not want. To hurt Victor.

AUNTIE P.
(to William)
Shut your stinking mouth.

William shuts up. Principal Evans looks at Auntie P.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
I and Dr. Fred talked and decided
to give William a second chance.

William puffs out his cheeks, somehow relieved.

AUNTIE P.
A SECOND WHAT?

PRINCIPAL EVANS
We will keep him here. On the
condition that he writes an
apology letter, begging for
forgiveness.

AUNTIE P.
And then what?

PRINCIPAL EVANS
His apology letter will be
published in *The Crystal* for
everyone to read.

AUNTIE P.
What's *The Crystal*?

PRINCIPAL EVANS
The school magazine.

AUNTIE P.
So, that's it. His apology letter
in the school magazine.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
We all make mistakes. I guess
you've made mistakes growing up.

AUNTIE P.
I paid heavily for my mistakes.
...An apology letter is the most
stupid punishment I've ever heard
of.

Principal Evans ignores her, turns to William.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
You are a time waster...Mess up
again, you are out of here.

William exhales.

Auntie P. gets up, glares at William.

AUNTIE P.
I don't want to see your ugly
face in front of me again.

She walks to the door, opens. Look at Principal Evans.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
I don't want to hear anything
about William again.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Auntie P. Do understa...

SLAM!

She's gone.

Principal Evans opens a drawer, pulls out a sheet of
paper, slams a pen on it. Pushes them to William.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
Write an apology letter.

William sits, takes the pen and paper. Starts to write.

Moments later, William puts the pen down.

Principal Evans takes the letter, reads--

APOLOGY LETTER

*I'm deeply sorry to everyone I've hurt. But
I'm hurting more than anyone can imagine.*

*Growing up, I've been surrounded by people
who tell me, 'you are stupid', 'you are a
fool', 'you aren't smart enough', 'you are a
time waster', 'you can't make it', 'you are
different', and much more...*

*But deep in my heart, I know I'm good
enough. I'm normal. God loves me. I can make
it. I deserve to be happy...*

*I guess I do odd things in an effort to get
attention.*

*I believe, one day, God will send me an
angel to hold me by the hand and help me to
find my place in this world.*

Please do understand and forgive me.

WILLIAM AKI

The Principal looks up from reading, stares at William.
Reads again. Then--

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Creative.

William stares at him, not sure what to say.

Principal Evans digs in his drawer, pulls out two more
blank papers. Pushes them to William.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
 Write two more copies of this
 letter. Give one to the editor-in-
 chief of *The Crystal*. Give the
 other to Auntie P. when you get
 home today.

William takes the papers, goes back to writing.
 Principal Evans looks at the letter, reads again.

INT. WAITING AREA - HOSPITAL - LATER

Nurse Justine sits behind a reception desk.
 Auntie P. storms in.

NURSE JUSTINE
 How can I help you, Ma'am?

AUNTIE P.
 Dr. Fred. Is he around?

NURSE JUSTINE
 No, Ma'am. He's off today.

AUNTIE P.
 It's urgent.

Nurse Justine hands her a card.
 She reads, exits.

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - DAY - LATER

Break time.
 Christie sits alone. She reads *The Crystal*.
 William walks in, apology letter in hand.

CHRISTIE
 William! You almost killed
 Victor. What were you thinking?

WILLIAM
 He was mean. To me. I wanted to
 stop him.

CHRISTIE
 Fighting isn't cool.

WILLIAM
 Thank you for. Saving his life.

CHRISTIE
 I hope he's doing okay.

Christie looks at the paper in William's hand.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
What's that?

WILLIAM
The Principal told me. To give
this. To the editor-in-chief. Of
The Crystal.

CHRISTIE
I'm the acting editor-in-chief.

WILLIAM
Where's the real editor-in-chief.

CHRISTIE
He was fired.

WILLIAM
Why?

CHRISTIE
It's a long story.

Christie snatches the letter up from William. Reads.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
This is nice.

WILLIAM
The Principal. Wants it published.
In *The Crystal*. For everyone to...

RING, RING! William turns to walk away.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Time for my. History class. Can't
be late.

Christie is taken aback.

CHRISTIE
How about your Science path? Did
you and the Principal talk about
it?

WILLIAM
No. Principal Evans still thinks.
That I'm a time waster.

William and Christie exchange a resigned look.

INT. CORRIDOR - CRANE TOWERS - SAME TIME

Auntie P. strides down, fingering Dr. Fred's card.

She stops at a door with a tag that reads--

INT. YOUTH ALIVE FOUNDATION - CONTINUOUS

Dark room. Dr. Fred sits amongst thirty typical TEENAGERS. They watch the final moments of the 'UNDERDOG KIDS' movie. Click! The door opens and Auntie P. pokes her head.

DR. FRED

Come.

She walks in, closes the door. Leans on it.

Dr. Fred, using a remote control, freezes the image.

FROZEN IMAGE ON THE TV SCREEN

SEVEN young inner-city kids stand side by side, arms raised in triumph. They are Karate tournament champions.

Dr. Fred gets up, points at the image.

DR. FRED (cont'd)

What one life lesson do you learn from these kids?

Hands rise. Dr. Fred picks the thinnest boy.

BOY

That we should never give up.

DR. FRED

That's it! These kids went from the lowest of the lows to the highest of the highs, because...

TEENS

(unison)

...They never gave up.

Dr. Fred paces around, facing one teen after another.

DR. FRED (cont'd)

Now, I want you to go out into the world and be winners like these kids.

He keeps pacing, moving from face to face.

DR. FRED (cont'd)

Inside of you are skyscrapers waiting to be built. Businesses waiting to launch. Internet sensations waiting to be created. Novels waiting to be written. Better bread waiting to be baked...

Stops. Looks at them all.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Make all your individual dreams
come true...Don't quit. Don't
fear to try. If you fail, try
again. And again...Then, you'll
achieve greatness. Okay?

The teens nod, energized.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Thank you for coming today. See
you again next time.

The teens gather their stuff, exit. Leaving behind Dr.
Fred and Auntie P.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
I volunteer here every Thursday.
I inspire young people to take
the hardest climb.

AUNTIE P.
Hardest climb? Isn't it painful?

DR. FRED
It's interesting...The best view
comes after the hardest climb.

AUNTIE P.
Hmmm...William's now fighting at
school. You know that, don't you?

DR. FRED
The Principal mentioned something
like that.

AUNTIE P.
I want him out of my house.

DR. FRED
William did one mistake. I don't
want us to make a big deal out of
it.

AUNTIE P.
It was one BIG mistake. He almost
killed someone. We must cage him
back in the Shelter. Or else, he's
going to end up in jail or dead.

DR. FRED
You want to disrupt our efforts
over this?

AUNTIE P.
If you think I'm wrong. Take
William to your house...See for
yourself what I'm dealing with.

DR. FRED

Well. Okay. Before we take him anywhere, why don't you do one special thing for him?

AUNTIE P.

What's that?

DR. FRED

Sit him down for a good one-on-one conversation. I mean, talking and listening to one other.

AUNTIE P.

I think now you are taking this a wrong way.

Dr. Fred doesn't know how to respond to this.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)

Because, I can't sit down and listen to a kid.

DR. FRED

Here's what I know: The moment you start listening to William, you'll understand him better and then you'll know how best to help him. Yeah?

Auntie P. gets up, upset.

AUNTIE P.

What do you know about raising kids? How many do you have?

Dr. Fred just stares at her, says nothing.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)

I hate it when people like you give people like me advice. Especially, parenting advice.

She walks to the door, opens.

DR. FRED

Okay. Fine...Send William to me. I'm ready to...

SLAM! She's gone.

INT. CORRIDOR - CRANE TOWERS - CONTINUOUS

Auntie P. strides down, fingering Dr. Fred's card.

Mumbling, she crumbles up the card into a ball, throws it in a nearby wastebasket.

She exits the block.

INT. HISTORY CLASSROOM - DAY

School's out.

William sits alone, head in his hands.

He pulls out a paper, looks at it.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

He quickly puts the paper away, looks up.

It's Christie.

CHRISTIE
What are you hiding?

WILLIAM
Nothing.

Christie gives him a concerned look.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
It's my apology letter. I'm
supposed to give it. To Auntie P.

CHRISTIE
So.

WILLIAM
She won't read it.

CHRISTIE
Why?

WILLIAM
She'll crumble it into a ball.
And throw it on my face.

CHRISTIE
What makes you say that?

WILLIAM
She said...The apology letter is.
The most stupid punishment she's
ever. Heard of.

CHRISTIE
Still you got to give it to her.
Because you'll be in trouble if
the Principal discovers that you
didn't do as he told you.

Silence.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
It's getting late. Let's go home.

William rises, they head out.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
How was the history class?

WILLIAM
Different.

CHRISTIE
What do you mean, different?

WILLIAM
I was. Sitting on my own...You
were not with me.

Christie smiles, mesmerised. They exit.

INT. SITTING ROOM - AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER

Click. The front door opens.

William walks in from school. He pulls out his apology letter, walks to the kitchen door. Holds up his fist to knock.

Pause. He brings his fist back down.

He closes his eyes. Brings his fist up again.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Auntie P. prepares dinner.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

AUNTIE P.
William!!! I don't want to see
your face. You hear? STAY AWAY!

WILLIAM (O.S)
I-I have. A letter for you.

Auntie P. walks to the door, opens. Snatches the letter from him.

SLAM!

She shuts the door in William's face.

She unfolds. Reads.

Suddenly, her eyes peel wider. Jaw drops.

She pulls up a nearby chair, sits. Reads through again.

Without warning, a tear rolls down her face like a little snake.

INT. KITCHEN DOOR - SAME TIME

William stands waiting. His legs wobble.

Then--

The door whines open, Auntie P. stands in the doorway.

Silence.

William steals a glance, notices that she's been crying.

He quickly looks down - he's never seen her like this.

There's silence until--

AUNTIE P.
I'm very sorry.

William looks at her: is this real?

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
I've always known that you are a
special boy. But...I guess I've
been too proud and selfish to
tell you that.

William looks down again, doesn't know how to respond.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Thank you for taking this first
step to remind me of that.

William could cry, but he's not the type.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Forgive me...!

William's voice gets shaky.

WILLIAM
I-It'sh o-okhay...A-Auntie P.

AUNTIE P.
Call me, Mommy.

Somehow Auntie P. becomes a mother.

William hesitates. Then, as if with an effort--

WILLIAM
It's. Okay. Ma'am.

There's an uncomfortable silence that lasts for a moment.

AUNTIE P.
Alright. Go bathe. Dinner will be
ready in ten minutes.

William dashes off.

TEN MINUTES LATER

Dinner time.

Auntie P. and William sit across from each other, eating in silence.

Neither is sure what to say to each other.

They avoid each other's eye contact.

The tension is heavy between them. Finally--

AUNTIE P.

Did you write the apology letter yourself or someone did it for you?

WILLIAM

I wrote it myself. In front of Principal Evans.

AUNTIE P.

Did he say something about me?

William shakes his head 'No'.

AUNTIE P.

I think I owe him an apology letter. Because I've been so difficult these days.

Silence.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)

You also need to write one for that security guard you almost killed.

William cringes. They go back to eating in silence.

INT. HISTORY CLASSROOM - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Games time.

William sits alone, head in hands, staring at the wall.

All hopes of ever achieving his medicine dream are gone.

Christie appears in the doorway.

William--lost in his thought--can't see her. She sneakily enters, hides behind the door. Makes a CAT sound.

CHRISTIE (O.S)

Meow!

William turns, looks around - No cat in sight.

CHRISTIE (O.S)

Meow!

William gets up, walks. As he approaches the door--
Christie comes out of hiding.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Meow!

William unwittingly jumps. He almost falls.

WILLIAM

Christie...!!! You! Scared me!

Christie laughs at him.

William doesn't laugh.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Hey. I saw your gloomy face and
felt you needed some cheering up.

WILLIAM

I'm thinking.

CHRISTIE

About what?

WILLIAM

When are you. Publishing my
apology letter. In *The Crystal*?

CHRISTIE

Next week.

WILLIAM

Is it okay...if I share my story
...alongside my apology letter?

CHRISTIE

Your story?

WILLIAM

I think. People need to know. The
whole story.

Christie lets out a sarcastic laugh.

CHRISTIE

What story?...Who really cares to
read a story about you, William?

WILLIAM

Let me. Just write.

CHRISTIE

Don't waste your time.

WILLIAM

Why?

CHRISTIE

One; Your story doesn't have a happy ending. It will leave the readers down.

Pause...

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Two; You are not a writer...Not everyone is a writer.

WILLIAM

How do I become. A writer?

CHRISTIE

You need to have talent.

William takes a deep breath, has no word to add.

Christie looks out the window.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

A beautiful day outside...Let's go to the pool.

They exit.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

William and Christie stroll down, passing students playing several outdoor games.

They veer off to the--

EXT. POOL SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Students splash around in the swimming pool.

CHRISTIE

Do you know how to swim?

WILLIAM

I don't swim.

CHRISTIE

I can teach you.

William stops at the edge of the pool.

WILLIAM

I will watch. And learn.

CHRISTIE

You learn by doing.

Christie heads into the girls' washroom.

Reappears changed in a swimsuit.

SPLASH! Dives into the pool.

She does flips. Twists. Spins. Then, comically mimes that she's drowning.

William watches her, troubled.

She comes back up, floats on the water.

WILLIAM
Wooooowww!!! How did you learn to
do all this?

CHRISTIE
Lots of practice.

A sudden look of determination washes over William.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
What?

WILLIAM
I think I can also learn...to be
a writer.

CHRISTIE
How?

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Lots of practice...Practice and
practice...

Christie rolls her eyes, does more flips and twists.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

William--on his bed--scribbles notes. Lots of notes.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

WILLIAM
It's open, Ma'am.

The door opens slowly. Auntie P. steps inside.

AUNTIE P.
Doing your homework?

WILLIAM
I'm writing. A story.

AUNTIE P.
What story?

WILLIAM
A story. Of my life.

AUNTIE P.
Did someone ask you to share your
story?

WILLIAM
No. Just writing.

Auntie P. ponders.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
What is it?

AUNTIE P.
Look. Whatever happened...at
least you always take a step to
do something on your own. Most
people never do that. I don't
...because of that, the amount of
pride I have for you is huge.

William smiles, toughed.

WILLIAM
Do you know. What matters to. Me.
Right now?

Auntie P. shakes her head.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
There are two people. I want to
be proud of me...One is you. The
other is Dr. Fred...that's what
my story is about.

AUNTIE P.
You mean, your story is about me
and Dr. Fred?

WILLIAM
It is a story. Of hope.

AUNTIE P.
I can't wait to read your story.
I really don't know a whole lot
about you.

William smiles, goes back to writing.

AUNTIE P.
Dinner will be ready shortly.

WILLIAM
Coming.

She exits.

EXT. COMPOUND - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Break time.

Christie strolls down, her eyes jumping from one student to another.

She spots JANET MINE (16), a petite girl with long hair.

CHRISTIE

Janet!

Janet turns, glances at Christie. Walks away.

Christie runs, catches up with her.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Janet. Where's your story? I needed that piece yesterday.

JANET

I forgot.

CHRISTIE

What do you mean, you forgot?

JANET

It happens so.

Christie, frustrated, turns around. Walks towards the--

INT. SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Small, polished room. Walls lined with shelves, stacked with newspapers, books and magazines.

Chairs face an expansive desk, with several laptops.

Christie walks in, powers up her laptop. Googles... 'How to make lazy kids work'.

As she waits for the sites come up, William appears in the doorway, holding a sheaf of papers.

WILLIAM

There you are! Been looking everywhere for you.

Christie glances at him briefly. Looks back at her laptop screen. No word.

William walks in, places the papers at her desk.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

My story.

Tap, tap, tap on her laptop keyboard. She doesn't pick the papers.

William wistfully looks at her.

CHRISTIE
I said, your story won't work.

WILLIAM
You look tense.

CHRISTIE
I'm okay

WILLIAM
You don't look. Okay.

Christie sighs.

CHRISTIE
It's hopeless.

WILLIAM
Hopeless?

CHRISTIE
The Crystal is due out this week.
But none of the writers has
handed in their assignments.

WILLIAM
What is the problem?

Christie points out the window.

William looks out - Students enjoy the sunshine.

WILLIAM
I see no problem...Everybody
seems to be having fun...The sun
is out...It's a beautiful day.

CHRISTIE
That's exactly the problem. None
of the writers is willing to give
up the sunshine for just a few
days in order for us to get the
issue of *The Crystal* out on time.

William ponders.

WILLIAM
I have. An idea.

CHRISTIE
Nothing can make these lazy
writes work. Especially when the
day is beautiful outside.

WILLIAM
Simple. Work from outside.

Christie's gloomy face suddenly lights up.

EXT. CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT MORNING

Christie staples a Poster on the noticeboard.

Several students stop by, read.

A passing student--lazy to read--asks.

STUDENT

What's that about?

CHRISTIE

I'm inviting *The Crystal* staff
for a meeting. Today. Break time.
By the pool side.

STUDENT

By the pool side?

WILLIAM (O.S)

Hope they like. The idea.

Christie turns to find William.

CHRISTIE

Of course they will. Working from
outside will inject some fun and
excitement into their lazy bones.

Christie and William walk off.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)

Wow. I read your story.

WILLIAM

Did you like it?

CHRISTIE

Perfect. I tried to edit it and
hardly changed a word.

WILLIAM

Are you going. To publish it?

CHRISTIE

Yes. Of course.

William pumps his fists in the air. So excited.

EXT. POOLSIDE - LATER

Break time. A glorious, sunny mid-morning.

Six GIRLS and four BOYS work on their laptop.

William, Christie and Janet are among them.

CHRISTIE
Let me introduce a new member on
The Crystal team.

Heads turn to look at William.

JANET
What's he writing about?

CHRISTIE
He's sharing his story.

They all stare back at William - with wonder.

JANET
Is he some sort of a hero?

Laughter.

CHRISTIE
On a serious note, we shall sit
out here for the next three days
and work tirelessly to make sure
that *The Crystal* is out on time.

A boy chips in.

BOY
Who came up with this brilliant
idea of working from outside?

Christie and William share a warm look, smile.

INT. PUBLICATIONS OFFICE - DAY - **THREE DAYS LATER**

The latest issue of *The Crystal* is out.

Students scramble for FREE COPIES stuffed in boxes.

EXT. COMPOUND - SAME TIME

All students read the magazine: Some standing, some
sitting, some lying on the lawn.

INT. STAFF ROOM - SAME TIME

Master Oti and teachers are consumed up by the magazine.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The door is ajar. Christie walks in, hands a copy of *The
Crystal* to Principal Evans.

The Principal flips through, gets to a story with a bold heading: 'DOCTOR WILLIAM'.

He gazes at the writer. It's William Aki.

The Principal reads...Finally looks up at Christie.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Did William write this?

CHRISTIE
Yes, sir.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Wo! This is the best story of *The Crystal* ever since it started.

CHRISTIE
The whole school is abuzz with William's story.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
For the first time, *The Crystal* is out on time. What did you do different?

CHRISTIE
I can't take the credit. Without William, the magazine would never have come out.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
I think William deserves a reward for his efforts. Organize a dance party for him. Invite your staff and a few guests. Put the budget on my desk tomorrow morning.

Christie nods. Exits.

INT. DINING HALL - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Students wait in line at the food counter.

Some are seated already...eating lunch.

At one table, two boys converse.

BOY #1
Did you read William's story?

BOY #2
Ya. I'm surprised by his bravery to share his big dream of becoming DOCTOR WILLIAM when some of us don't even know what our small dreams are.

BOY #1

What's strange is that although he was kicked out of the Sciences class, he still believes that someday he'll see his medicine dream come true.

BOY #2

I'm impressed by his confidence.

BOY #1

I think I'm jealous. I wish I had half of his balls.

As the boys share a laugh, William enters.

Suddenly, activity in the hall stops.

Everyone watches William - he's sort of a celebrity.

He tries to join the line, but the students step aside and offer to let him go ahead of them.

WILLIAM

What's going on?

Boris--the bully--walks over to him.

BORIS

Doctor Willy. We enjoyed reading your story. Thanks for sharing.

WILLIAM

Thank you. For reading.

William tries to join the line again.

BORIS

You don't need to join the line. Go straight to the counter...We all respect you.

William hesitates.

Boris starts shouting. Other students join him--

BORIS/STUDENTS

(in unison)
Doc, Doc, Doc, Doc, Doc...!

Seeing everyone chanting, William walks up to the counter.

He grabs his plate of food, sits at a nearby table.

The twin girls stop by.

TWIN #1

(to the other twin)
Let's sit next to William.

TWIN #2
Ya. Let's talk to him about his
story.

The twin girls sit - William's sandwiched between them.

TWIN #1
What drove you to share your
story?

WILLIAM
Fear.

TWIN #2
Fear of what?

WILLIAM
Fear of letting people down.

TWIN #1
Which people?

WILLIAM
There are some people. Who have
sacrificed resources so that I
become somebody, someday...I want
to make them happy.

TWIN #2
What if you don't become DOCTOR
WILLIAM?

William smiles.

WILLIAM
Fear will keep me running. Until
I reach that dream.

The conversation trails...

INT. SIDEWALK - LATER

School is out.

William and Christie emerge from the gate, walk down.

CHRISTIE
Confirmed. The dance party is on.
This Saturday afternoon.

WILLIAM
I'm not attending.

CHRISTIE
The Principal wants to see you
there. He said it.

WILLIAM
It's very complicated.

CHRISTIE
What's complicated?

WILLIAM
You won't understand.

CHRISTIE
William, you have to be there.

William shakes his head 'No'.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
You will have a lot of fun.

WILLIAM
I'm not going to have fun.

Christie sighs. They walk in silence.

INT. KITCHEN - AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER

Auntie P. prepares dinner.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

The door opens. William enters, *The Crystal* in his hand.

WILLIAM
Good evening, Ma'am.

AUNTIE P.
Good evening, William.

WILLIAM
Here's my story.

AUNTIE P.
Where?

WILLIAM
In here.

William tries to hand the magazine to her.

Auntie P. points at the table.

AUNTIE P.
Put it there. I'll read later.

William does as he's told.

WILLIAM
The school magazine staff is
having a party. This Saturday.

AUNTIE P.
Are you part of the staff?

WILLIAM
Yes. But I don't need to go.

AUNTIE P.
Why not?

William hesitates, ashamed to say--

WILLIAM
I've never danced before.

Auntie P. squirms, goes back to cooking.

William exits.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

William strides to campus. He approaches the gate as--
Victor emerges.

They stop, gaze into each other's eyes. A tense silence.

This is the first time they are meeting since the bloody fight. There's a small bandage strip on the left side of Victor's face.

William puts a hand in his pocket, pulls out a piece of paper. Tries to hand it to Victor.

Victor doesn't take it.

WILLIAM
I want us to be friends.

Victor says nothing.

William goes down on his knees, paper still extended.

VICTOR
WHAT'S THAT?

WILLIAM
I wrote you. A letter.

Victor takes the paper, unfolds. Reads.

Suddenly, a smile brightens his face.

He looks at William, gives him a hand. Pulls him up.

VICTOR
I forgive you.

William gets up, gives Victor a BIG hug.

All smiles.

EXT. BUSY STREET - CITY CENTER - LATER

Auntie P. strides down.

She stops by a shop with a banner that reads: LATEST MEN'S CLOTHING.

She gazes through the glass window, spots a collared shirt displayed alongside T-shirts, suits, ties, belts, socks, wallets, jackets, jeans, boxers, shoes...

She enters, comes out carrying three bags of purchases.

She gets lost in a crowd of pedestrians.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER

Click! The front door opens. William walks in from school.

He sees three bags of purchases lying on the floor, bends to check. Pauses when he hears--

AUNTIE P. (O.S)
William! Is that you?

WILLIAM
Yes, Ma'am.

Auntie P. emerges from the kitchen.

AUNTIE P.
There! I've bought new clothes and shoes. You have to attend the party.

William's eyes peel wider, awe-struck.

WILLIAM
Wooooonderful! Thank you, Ma'am.

He tries to open one bag.

AUNTIE P.
Wait!

She pulls money out of her purse, hands it to him.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Go cut your hair off.

William runs his fingers through his long, messy hair.

WILLIAM
I'll comb. I like my hair long.

AUNTIE P.
Cut it now.

He drops his rucksack, takes the money. Walks out.

INT. BARBER SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

William walks in.

A handsome hairstylist, DENO ABE (20s), welcomes him with a smile. He wears short dreadlocks.

DENO

Hey.

WILLIAM

Hey.

Deno directs William to a barber's chair. He sits.

DENO

How do you like your hair to look?

William looks at Deno's dreadlocks through the mirror.

WILLIAM

Exactly like yours.

DENO

Cool.

Deno washes William's hair with warm water and shampoo.

He towels it dry, combs. Trims it to evenness.

Using honey and beeswax, he starts to twist the hair into small locks.

Finally, Deno showers William's hair with a Holding Spray.

DENO (cont'd)

Done.

William gets up, admires himself in front of a mirror.

WILLIAM

Wow.

DENO

See you again in two weeks' time when new growth comes. Remember to always keep the scalp oiled. Also wear a nightcap.

William nods. Pays. Exits.

INT. SITTING ROOM - AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens.

William walks through, a spring in his step.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

William stops in the kitchen doorway, all smiles.

WILLIAM
Don't I look. Great?

Auntie P. looks at the short dreadlocks. Her face falls.

AUNTIE P.
Don't you care about what people
will say?

WILLIAM
What matters is that I look
great. Don't I?

Auntie P. sighs.

AUNTIE P.
Dreadlocks are associated with
people who smoke marijuana...and
mad people who don't bathe.

William chuckles.

WILLIAM
Ma'am. I don't do drugs. And I'm
not mad...I now bathe every day.

AUNTIE P.
Still nobody's going to take you
serious. You'll get no respect.

WILLIAM
I'm a serious person...

AUNTIE P.
It doesn't matter. Nobody wants
to be near someone with that kind
of hair...I don't.

William pulls a chair, falls in it. Defeated.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
It would be a good idea to go
back and cut of those dreadlocks.

William buries his face in his hands.

Auntie P. goes back to cooking.

INT. MAIN HALL - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

The party is going on. Wilting balloons. Neon lights.

About 100 sit: eating snacks, sipping sodas.

A DJ in a booth plays sweet music.

Principal Evans walks up, grabs a microphone.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Are you having a great time?

PEOPLE
YEEEEEAH!!!

PRINCIPAL EVANS
None of us would be here today,
without William on *The Crystal*
team, you realize that. Don't
you?

Everyone looks around - William's not present.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
Of course. We all enjoyed reading
William's story. Didn't we?

PEOPLE
YEEEEAH...

PRINCIPAL EVANS
But I liked his writing more. His
style. His nerve. His drive...

He pause, scans the room.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
Although William isn't here, I
believe he is our best chance of
fixing *The Crystal*. Because this
magazine has been in bad shape...

As Principal Evans speaks--

William walks in.

Everyone is amazed by his new looks.

He's dressed in new khaki trousers. New collared shirt.
New belt. New coffee-brown blazer. New watch. New loafers.

His hair's trimmed to evenness - the dreadlocks are gone.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
William! Come over here.

William walks up. Principal Evans puts a hand over his
shoulder.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
You've got real talent.

William frowns.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
Writing is your gift.

Dr. Fred looks him in the eye.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
 Forget about becoming DOCTOR
 WILLIAM...that's NOT your calling.

William stiffens.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
 Focus more on developing your
 writing skill. Write more. Okay?

William looks down, conflicted.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
 Beginning today, you are the new
 editor-in-chief of *The Crystal*...
 I don't you to take your writing
 gift for granted

People rise in their seats, applaud William.

The DJ turns the volume knob to '7'.

Music over powers everything.

People start dancing.

William leans in to Principal Evans.

WILLIAM
 Sir. I think. I need something to
 drink.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
 That's good.

William walks down, passing the dancers.

Everyone pulls him, wanting a dance with him.

He manages to break free.

He gets at the back of the hall, pulls a chair. Falls in
 it. He holds his head in his hands.

CHRISTIE (O.S)
 You look fabulous!

William turns to see Christie. She wears a pink knee-
 length dress. Pink necklace. Pink earrings. Pink high-heel
 shoes.

WILLIAM
 Thank you...so are you.

CHRISTIE
 What can I get you? A coke...
 Orange juice...Water...?!

William shakes his head.

WILLIAM
Nothing, thank you.

CHRISTIE
Okay. Can you give me one little
dance...a small dance with you.

WILLIAM
(fake deaf)
WHAT...?!

Christie links arms with him, pulls him up.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I don't dance.

CHRISTIE
Neither do I...

Christie drags him back to the dancing floor.

She starts to dance in front of him.

William just stands, barely moves.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
Dance. William. Just dance.

William--beyond embarrassed--starts to move his legs.

Tentatively.

Christie gives him a reassuring smile.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
Keep going.

William increases his pace to follow Christie's pace.

After a few awkward steps, he catches up and starts to
move his legs with the exact precision of Christie.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
You are doing great.

William starts to shake his body. Pump his fists. Rock his
shoulders.

The TWIN girls join in.

They dance together: smiling, grooving to the music.

EXT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Auntie P. sits at the dining table, reading *The Crystal*.

CLICK! The front door opens.

William comes in.

WILLIAM
Hello, Ma'am.

Auntie puts the magazine down, looks up.

AUNTIE P.
Did you have a great time?

William sits across from her.

WILLIAM
I'm now a super dancer.

AUNTIE P.
Are you?

William gets up, starts dancing without music...bursting crazy moves that Auntie P. has never seen.

Auntie P. laughs hard - Maybe for the first time.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Enough. Dinner's getting cold.

William washes his hands, sits. Serves himself.

He picks a piece of chicken, nibbles on it. Munches.

Auntie P. does not eat. She eyes William, wearily.

William glances up at her.

WILLIAM
You are not eating.

AUNTIE P.
I read your story.

WILLIAM
And?

AUNTIE P.
You write that your dream is to
become DOCTOR WILLIAM.

William nods.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Do you really have to be that?

WILLIAM
I can't see myself. Being
something else...I even dream
about it in. My sleep.

AUNTIE P.
I don't know how to say this. But
I think your expectations are too
high...to me, you don't look like
you can be a doctor.

William shakes his head, looks down.

Auntie P. grabs his arm, squeezes it.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Please, don't trouble yourself. I
don't care if you become a
hospital cleaner or gatekeeper.
I'm proud of you anyway.

William gives her a curious smile.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
By the way, Dr. Fred called. He's
asking if you could spare time to
be with him.

William--anxious--stops eating. Wide-eyed.

WILLIAM
When? I want to go now...can I...

AUNTIE P.
Tomorrow!!! Eat your food.

William slumps.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - THE NEXT MORNING

Sunday Mass is going on. Dr. Fred sits beside William, all
dressed in their best attire.

A PRIEST reads from the Bible.

Dr. Fred and several church goers follow along in their
own Bibles...

LATER

After church.

Dr. Fred drives his Mercedes Benz SUV down a winding road.

William sits in the passenger seat.

They cruise through a neighbourhood of big houses,
manicured lawns. Exotic trees.

The SUV turns a gate, stops in front of a beautiful house.
This is Dr. Fred's luxurious home.

They jump out, walk to the front door.

INT. DR. FRED'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens, William enters first.

Dr. Fred walks behind William, his hands over William's eyes. He leads William into the sitting room.

DR. FRED
Are you ready?

William nods, excitedly.

Dr. Fred uncovers William's eyes.

William's mouth hangs open at the sight of a--

A banner reading: 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY WILLIAM'.

Nurse Justine emerges from a door with a tray. On it is a big cake and knife. She places the tray on a table.

William is speechless. Frozen.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Today is your 18th birthday.

WILLIAM
But...I-I've never celebrated a birthday. I don't know the day. I was born.

Dr. Fred smiles, points at a calendar on the wall.

DR. FRED
Just know, that's your date of birth.

William looks, notices that the date, July 19, is circled.

He turns back, gives him a 'how do you know' look.

Nurse Justine interrupts.

NURSE JUSTINE
What are we waiting for?

Dr. Fred and Nurse Justine sing a 'BIRTHDAY SONG'.

William cuts the cake. Blows some candles.

Nurse Justine disappears into the kitchen, reappears with bowls food. Glasses of juice.

They sit, eat together: talking, laughing.

LATER

Dr. Fred is driving. William rides in the passenger seat.

WILLIAM
Thank you. For today.

DR. FRED
You had a good time?

William nods.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Heard you are a talented writer.
How's the school magazine coming
up?

WILLIAM
Very well...But I don't think I'm
a talented writer. I work so hard
to come up with a great story.

Dr. Fred smiles.

DR. FRED
Keep pushing harder. I like people
who go out and push beyond their
comfort.

WILLIAM
I don't want to be a professional
writer.

DR. FRED
I know you want to be a Medical
Doctor, but you can also succeed
as a writer. It's all fine...

William has a faraway look.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
Whatever you do, give it all
you've got. Whether you are
talented or not, you can succeed
at anything...only if you work a
little harder than anyone else.

Dr. Fred looks him in the eye.

DR. FRED
Be fearless in fighting for what
you really, really want.

William's face sets hard.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

William can't sleep. He tosses and turns in his bed.

He gets up, walks to the window. Opens it.

He stares at the stars for a long moment as if transfixed...

Then, he quickly dresses up, opens the door. Sneaks out.

EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

William walks down a deserted road.

A sudden BARKING shatters the eerie silence.

He looks around, spots a DOG jumping over a fence.

He walks on, fearless. Strong. Determined.

The dog tears towards him, stops at his feet. Sniffs.

William keeps walking, unshaken.

The dog hops on the fence, jumps into a neighbouring yard. Disappears.

William strides on, finds a house he's looking for. Walks down a path.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

A LADY (40s) comes to the door.

LADY
How can I help you?

WILLIAM
Master Oti. Is he around?

LADY
My husband never sees students in his home.

WILLIAM
It's important that. I see him now.

MASTER OTI (O.S)
Let him in.

INT. SITTING ROOM - MASTER OTI - CONTINUOUS

Master Oti sits on a couch, watching the ten o'clock local news on a small TV set.

William strides in.

MASTER OTI
What brings you here at this time of the night?

WILLIAM
I'm sorry to bother you.

MASTER OTI
Is everything okay?

WILLIAM
Sir. I'm asking for a second
chance. In the Sciences class.

Master Oti looks at him like he's crazy.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I vow not to eat my lunch until I
score. Straight A's...In all
science subjects.

MASTER OTI
You make it sound as though it's
a joke.

William's eyes are desperate, pleading.

WILLIAM
I'm ready to do anything. Even if
it means repeating my last
year...Start all over.

MASTER OTI
I thought you had discovered your
calling. You're a gifted writer
... Lots of careers have been
launched through writing.

WILLIAM
I'll still write. I love to write.
But my dream comes first.

Master Oti stares for a long moment. Then--

MASTER OTI
Look. There's no sense in giving
you a second chance if you are
not going to keep your promise.

WILLIAM
I promise to be one of the best.

MASTER OTI
Don't focus on being one of the
best...Focus on being your best.

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY - DAY

RING! The bell chimes outside in the compound.

Master Oti stands in front. He gives final instructions as
students shuffle out.

MASTER OTI
See you tomorrow with your
textbooks. Okay? Remember to
bring your textbooks...

William sits in his seat - the only one to do so.
He puts up his hand.

WILLIAM
Sir. I don't have a textbook.

Master Oti goes for his wallet, takes out a bank note.
Hands it to him.

MASTER OTI
Pass by the bookstore today and
buy your copy. Because you really
need it...It will be difficult to
catch up without it.

William takes the money.

WILLIAM
Thank you so much. Sir.

Master Oti exits. Passing Christie who waits by the door.

CHRISTIE
Hey. It's lunch time.

William looks at her.

WILLIAM
I'm not coming.

CHRISTIE
Aren't you hungry?

WILLIAM
I'm hungry. But I'm choosing not
to eat.

CHRISTIE
Why?

WILLIAM
It's my strategy for winning.

CHRISTIE
Are you kidding?

William pulls a book, starts to read while taking notes.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
I got to go. I'm starving.

WILLIAM
You can eat my share. As well.

Christie shoots him a look, walks off.

INT. PRINCIPAL EVANS' OFFICE - DAY - MONTHS LATER

Principal Evans and Master Oti sit across from each other.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
What's this lunch vow I'm hearing
about William? Everybody is
talking about it.

MASTER OTI
William wants to score straight
A's in all science subjects. He's
taken a vow of not eating his
lunch until he reaches that goal.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Is William back in the Sciences
class?

MASTER OTI
I thought you believed in second
chances.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Well, I do. But I don't believe
in the lunch vow.

MASTER OTI
At first, I thought William was
crazy. But he's now doing much
better in class. I think his vow
is helping him somehow.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Still, it sounds weird and I
don't like it...What if other
students take it up? Remember, we
are dealing with kids here.

MASTER OTI
It is only a game.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Whatever it is, you must tell
William to stop it immediately.

MASTER OTI
No. We can't stop him without
some kind of proof that what he's
doing is harmful.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
Master Oti. You are an excellent
teacher. We love you here. But if
this game you are playing with
William goes horribly wrong, I'm
afraid I will ask you to seek
employment elsewhere.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - **THREE YEARS LATER**

William lies on his bed. Eyes closed. Slight smile.

He bops his head to a beat coming from the ear buds which are connected to his cheap Smart Phone.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

William--lost in the music--can't hear the knocking.

The door opens slowly. Auntie P. stands in the doorway.

AUNTIE P.
William...!

He looks up, pulls off the ear buds.

WILLIAM
Yes. Ma'am.

AUNTIE P.
I thought sweat would be dripping onto your textbooks, preparing for tomorrow's final paper.

WILLIAM
Ma'am. I prepared. Long time ago.

She looks at him, totally sceptical.

AUNTIE P.
Dinner's ready

WILLIAM
Coming.

Auntie P. turns to leave, then stops.

AUNTIE P.
By the way, which university did you apply?

WILLIAM
Imperial College.

AUNTIE P.
Where's that?

WILLIAM
London.

AUNTIE P.
William...!?

WILLIAM
Ma'am...!?

They gaze into each other's eyes. Auntie P. sighs.

AUNTIE P.
Okay. I know you've improved. But
joining a university in London? I
don't think so.

William smiles, puts back the ear buds. Bops to the music.
She walks away. Mutters.

INT. MAIN HALL - CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

Silence looms over the room.

William, Christie and classmates wait for the examination
to begin.

An INSTRUCTOR (50s) enters with an envelope.

He unseals the envelope, pulls out question papers. Starts
distributing them to students.

He looks up at the wall clock - 9: 00 a.m.

INSTRUCTOR
Start.

Students begin to read, scribble notes.

William's face shows signs of intense concentration.

Instructor paces around, watching the students.

Time passes. The clock reads - 11: 30 a.m.

INSTRUCTOR
Stop.

Students stop writing.

Instructor collects the answer sheets, put them in
envelopes. Exit the hall.

Students rise and hug, congratulating each other.

EXT. COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER

Master Oti emerges from the staff room, strolls down.

He spots William chatting with a group of students.

MASTER OTI
William...!

William breaks from the group.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
 Congratulations on completing
 your examinations.

WILLIAM
 Thank you.

MASTER OTI
 You haven't eaten your lunch
 for...

WILLIAM
 2 years, 8 months and 3 days.

MASTER OTI
 That shows tremendous discipline.

WILLIAM
 Master Oti. I don't know how to
 thank you.

MASTER OTI
 What for?

WILLIAM
 For believing me.

MASTER OTI
 You believed in yourself first...
 That night you came to my home
 asking for a second chance was a
 clear indication of believing in
 yourself.

William smiles as they shake hands.

MASTER OTI (cont'd)
 I wish you the best.

WILLIAM
 Thank you.

Master Oti walks off. William re-joins his friends.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - DAY - **THREE MONTHS LATER**

Auntie P. emerges from her bedroom.

She hears the SOUND of William's voice.

Pause. She listens...

WILLIAM (O.S)
 Our Father, which art in heaven.
 Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
 come...

She follows William's voice into the--

INT. SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

William's on his knees, eyes squeezed shut. Praying.

WILLIAM
...Lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil. Amen.

He opens his eyes to see Auntie P. watching him.

WILLIAM
Good morning, Ma'am.

AUNTIE P.
Good morning, William.

WILLIAM
Today is the day.

Auntie P. nods.

AUNTIE P.
Yes. We shall know whether your
lunch vow worked or not.

William exhales, sits.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
You are nervous.

WILLIAM
Yes. And curious. And excited...

William grabs a remote, turns on the TV set.

The NEWS ANCHOR's face flushes on the screen.

ON TV SCREEN

NEWS ANCHOR
Let's take you LIVE to the State
Examinations Headquarters where
the Education Cabinet Secretary
is about to announce the results
of the just concluded university
entrance exams.

The SECRETARY'S face appears on the screen.

AUNTIE P.
Can't watch this.

She leaves.

William increases the volume. Edgy.

INT. PRINCIPAL EVANS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Principal Evans stares at list of high schools on his computer screen.

He types: CRYSTAL HIGH SCHOOL in the search bar.

Details of students flash up on the screen.

He scrolls down various names, double clicks on the name: WILLIAM AKI.

Suddenly his eyes bulge. He grabs a telephone, dials.

INT. AUNTIE P.'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Auntie P. sits on her bed, head in cupped hands.

Her cell phone rings nearby. She picks it.

AUNTIE P.
Hello? Yes? Principal Evans...Oh
yeah! WHAT?...Straight A's? My
God!...In all science subjects?
Oh...My...God...

She collapses on the bed.

William has done it.

INT. THE NILE BAR & GRILL - MOMENTS LATER

Lunch time. William sits at a table, looking at a menu.

A waitress arrives.

WAITRESS
Sir, you ready?

WILLIAM
Yeah. I'll have. Smoked
silverfish-in-groundnut sauce.
Plain rice. And pineapple juice.
Please.

The waitress departs.

William scans the crowd, spots Simon. Waves at him.

Simon sees William, walks over.

SIMON
We've met before?

WILLIAM
William. I cleaned beds at your
workshop.

Laughs. Hugs.

SIMON
You look different. And happy.

Just then the waitress arrives with a tray of food.
Simon pulls out money, hands it to the waitress.

SIMON (cont'd)
This is on me.

WILLIAM
Thank you so much.

The waitress takes the money, departs.

SIMON
Tell me. What happened?

WILLIAM
It's a long story.

Simon pulls a chair, sits across from William.
William eats as they talk.

EXT. AUNTIE P.'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A small group of REPORTERS wait at the front door.

William arrives in Simon's car.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

Reporters take pictures as he gets out of the passenger seat.

Simon drives off. William walks towards the house.

A reporter and his CAMERAMAN intercept William.

JOURNALIST #1
(facing the camera)
This is William Aki. He's one of
the best science students in the
state...The reason we are here is
that William had an unusual
method of preparing for exams. He
skipped lunch for...

The reporter shoves the microphone into William's face.

WILLIAM
3 years, 2 months and 8 days.

Another reporter jumps in.

JOURNALIST #2
 Now that you've earned straight
 A's in all science subjects, did
 you have your lunch today?

WILLIAM
 Yes. Have just finished eating my
 lunch.

Enter another reporter.

JOURNALIST #3
 Is skipping lunch a common
 strategy for preparing for exams?

WILLIAM
 I invented it.

JOURNALIST #1
 Do you recommend other students
 to take it up?

WILLIAM
 Not really. I recommend anyone
 with a goal to look out for a
 simple plan and stick to it. So
 as to stay focused at all times.

More reporters surround him.

William pushes his way, manages to get to the front door.

He keys in, enters. Locks the door.

The reporters pack their stuff, begin to leave.

INT. PRINCIPAL EVANS' OFFICE - DAY

Principal Evans, Master Oti, Auntie P. and Dr. Fred sit
 around a long table.

Everyone's relaxed. They've just finished eating - empty
 plates, bottles of soda litter the table.

AUNTIE P.
 Still, I can't believe that
 William is one of the best
 students in the state.

Principal Evans opens a drawer, pulls out a white
 envelope. Pushes it to her.

PRINCIPAL EVANS
 Open it.

Auntie P. rips the envelope open, takes out a piece of
 paper. Reads.

Suddenly, her mouth hangs open. Speechless.

PRINCIPAL EVANS (cont'd)
It is an acceptance letter to
Imperial College, London...with
full scholarship.

They all glance at each other in complete surprise

AUNTIE P.
If somebody would've told me, say
five years ago, that William
would amount to anything, I would
have laughed in their face.

DR. FRED
And here we are. It's happened.

MASTER OTI
I'm amazed by the way William has
transformed from a bottom student
to a star student. This is a
statement that good things will
continue to happen here at
Crystal High School...I won't
give up on any kid again.

Principal Evans smiles.

DR. FRED
William proves that anything is
possible.

They all nod in forgiveness, acceptance and understanding.

INT. COFFEE BAR - DAY

William sits on his own, drinking coffee.

Christie comes in.

Smiles. Hugs. She sits.

WILLIAM
I'm so glad you came.

CHRISTIE
Thank you for tracked me down.

The waitress arrives.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
I'll have coffee, please.

Waitress departs. William looks at Christie.

WILLIAM
I want to say. Sorry.

Christie sighs, sad eyes.

CHRISTIE
Yeah...The exams didn't go as well as I'd hoped.

WILLIAM
So, what are your plans?

CHRISTIE
I have a hazy idea about what I want to do with my life.

WILLIAM
You mean...You are not thinking about going. To University?

CHRISTIE
What am I going to do with a chemistry degree?

WILLIAM
Maybe...You can be a teacher.

CHRISTIE
I don't know...I love to work with little children. Maybe, I'll set up a kindergarten with the best facilities...and perhaps free for the less privileged.

William looks at her adoringly.

WILLIAM
Whatever you decide to do. You have my full support.

Christie smiles.

CHRISTIE
That's why I love you.

WILLIAM
I love you, more...

Christie laughs, waves him off.

William can't keep his eyes off her.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I wish I could explain how I feel. About you.

Christie looks at him, mesmerised.

CHRISTIE
I feel you too, William. But we are not ready for that now.

WILLIAM
I know. It's just a thought. Don't worry about it now.

CHRISTIE
By the way, when are you leaving
for London?

WILLIAM
Tomorrow. 9. a.m.

The waitress arrives with the orders.

INT. SUV - MOVING - NEXT MORNING

Dr. Fred drives. He whistles a song.

William rides in the passenger seat. He studies his
passport and air ticket.

Auntie P. sits in the back seat, looking at a multitude of
newspaper and magazine clippings.

She picks one clipping with a headline: WILLIAM AKI: THE
MOST UNLIKELY HERO. Below the headline is a photo of
William, all smiles.

AUNTIE P.
William.

WILLIAM
Yes, Ma'am.

AUNTIE P.
Do you realize the whole world
knows you?

WILLIAM
I do, Ma'am.

AUNTIE P.
Don't mess up.

WILLIAM
I won't. Ma'am.

Dr. Fred turns a corner, drives into the--

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING YARD - CONTINUOUS

The SUV parks.

Dr. Fred, Auntie P. and William climb out.

William--suitcase in hand--looks at them.

WILLIAM
I can't thank you enough.

DR. FRED
What for? You shouldn't be
thanking us.

Auntie P. takes a scarf out of her bag, wraps it around
William's neck.

AUNTIE P.
Remember to always keep your body
warm. I hear London is freezing
cold all the time.

WILLIAM
Thank you. Ma'am.

Dr. Fred pulls out a card, hands it to William.

DR. FRED
Call me, anytime.

William takes the card.

WILLIAM
I will.

AUNTIE P.
Don't miss your flight.

Hugs. Bye-byes.

William strides off towards the--

INT. DEPARTURE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

The sliding doors open. William pauses, waves.

Dr. Fred and Auntie P. wave back.

William enters, joins a line at the check-in counter.

EXT: AIRPLANE - ON THE TARMAC - CONTINUOUS

William boards.

The plane rolls onto the runway, readying for take-off.

It lifts off slowly. Up. Up. And away...

EXT. KAMPALA SUBURB - DAY - **SEVEN YEARS LATER**

A yellow airport-taxi parks in front of Auntie P.'s house.

A prosperously attired young man with short dreadlocks
exits. This is William Aki, (now DR. WILLIAM AKI, 25).

He's prosperously dressed in khaki trousers. V-neck t shirt. Checked blazer. Loafers.

He grabs his suitcase, walks up to the front door.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

No answer.

He turns back around.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Dr. William strides down, lugging his suitcase. He stops in front a gate, reads the sign 'HOME FOR BABIES'.

He stares off into space, remembers...

...as a little boy walking in and out of this gate, not long after fracturing his leg.

He walks over.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

A short, uniformed gatekeeper, RONALD MISI (30s), comes to the gate.

RONALD
How can I help you?

DR. WILLIAM
SUNRISE SHELTER. Right?

RONALD
Not anymore. This place is now called HOME FOR BABIES.

Dr. William narrows his eyes, confused.

DR. WILLIAM
What happened? I lived here many years ago.

Ronald looks at him suspiciously.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
Auntie P.?

Ronald smiles.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
Is she here? Do you know where she's at?

Ronald steps aside. Dr. William walks past him, into the--

EXT. COMPOUND - HOME FOR BABIES - CONTINUOUS.

Spotless. Manicured lawn. Beautiful flowers. Exotic trees. New paint on buildings.

Dr. William strides up a tiled path, suitcase in hand. He spots a lady in a distance.

She's dressed in pink: pink blouse, pink skirt, pink high-heel shoes, pink watch, pink necklace...

Dr. William stops, squints. It's Christie Heebwa (now, 25)

DR. WILLIAM
Christie...?!

She turns.

CHRISTIE
William...?!

Dr. William runs, scoops her into his arms.

DR. WILLIAM
What are you doing here?

CHRISTIE
I work here.

INT. OFFICE - HOME FOR BABIES - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. William and Christie sit across from each other, drinking coffee.

CHRISTIE
You inspired me to set up HOME FOR BABIES.

DR. WILLIAM
Really?

DR. WILLIAM
What is HOME FOR BABIES? What do you do?

CHRISTIE
We rescue, rehabilitate and re-home abandoned children.

DR. WILLIAM
Re-home? I hope you are not trying to promote inter-county adoption. That's dangerous in the long run.

Christie shakes her head.

CHRISTIE
No-no! We resettle abandoned

children back with their birth families. If their families can't be traced, children are placed in loving adoptive families here.

Dr. William nods.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
We also help families at risk of losing their children due to poverty.

WILLIAM
How do you do that?

CHRISTIE
By raising resources for Shelters and charities that keep families together.

DR. WILLIAM
Where do find the money?

CHRISTIE
The online support is overwhelming.

DR. WILLIAM
And how did you team up with Auntie P.?

CHRISTIE
I shared my idea with her. She liked it. And here we are.

Dr. William beams.

DR. WILLIAM
I can't wait to see her.

They exit.

INT. DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

Baby cots. Toys everywhere.

A hanging TV set plays cartoons.

SOCIAL WORKERS take good care of healthy-looking babies.

Dr. William and Christie enter.

DR. WILLIAM
This place brings bad memories. I lived in here for 15 painful years.

Christie squeezes his hand, points at the babies.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
You see that baby over there? She
was abandoned on the street...that
one was dumped in the garbage pit
...That one was picked from the
drainage...The other one was left
at our gate...That one down there
was pulled out of a latrine...

William exhales.

CHRISTIE (cont'd)
You want to know the great news?

WILLIAM
Ya.

CHRISTIE
Every kid you see has a loving
family here waiting to open their
hearts and homes for him or her.

Dr. William smiles.

DR. WILLIAM
Amazing work. I think now is the
time to surprise Auntie P.

Christie takes Dr. his hand, leads him out.

INT. KITCHEN - HOME FOR BABIES - CONTINUOUS

Auntie P. prepares lunch.

The door opens slowly. Dr. William and Christie step
inside.

DR. WILLIAM
Silverfish-in-groundnut sauce.
That is it. My favourite dish.

She turns looks at William's short dreadlocks. Her eyes
almost pop out.

AUNTIE P.
William...? Your hair!!!

She stretches out her arms.

Dr. William falls straight into them.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Why? You didn't tell us you are
arriving today.

DR. WILLIAM
I wanted to surprise you all.

AUNTIE P.
What a wonderful surprise...Food
will be ready in a few minutes.

DR. WILLIAM
I can't wait. I missed your
cooking.

They let go of their embrace.

Auntie P. grabs dirty bowls, begins to clean.

Dr. William picks a cloth, stands next to her.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
I'll help you to dry them.

AUNTIE P.
You don't have to do it.

DR. WILLIAM
This was my job, remember?

Auntie P. rolls her eyes, hands him a dish. William dries.

Christie watches them silently.

AUNTIE P.
So what should we call you?
William, Dr. William or
something.

DR. WILLIAM
Dr. William.

Auntie P. gives him a look, not sure.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
You don't believe me?

Silence.

Dr. William tosses the cloth to Christie.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
Take over for a second.

Christie grabs the cloth, watches him leave.

She pulls out her cell phone, presses some numbers...

INT. DR. FRED'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Dr. Fred works on his computer.

His cell phone vibrates nearby.

He picks it.

DR. FRED
Hello, Christie...WHAT?...
WILLIAM? I'll be there shortly.

He grabs his car keys, dashed out.

INT. KITCHEN - HOME FOR BABIES - SAME TIME

Dr. William ducks back in, an iPad in hand. He powers it, swipes a bit. Brings it closer to Auntie P. and Christie.

They all watch two VIDEO CLIPS of William, all bedecked in his graduation caps and gowns. Smiling broadly. Honoured by an audience of thousands.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
I emerged as the best student for
a bachelor of medicine and
bachelor of surgery degree.
Graduated. Went on to obtain a
master of medicine in surgery.

Auntie P. is crying. William gives her a big hug.

Christie watches them closely.

Auntie P. sniffs the air, crinkles her nose.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
The food is burning.

She turns to check on the food, leaving Dr. William and Christie together.

CHRISTIE
Are you here to stay or?

DR. WILLIAM
I'm joining Dr. Fred at MISSION
HOSPITAL. Starting next Monday
...I want to give back to my
community.

Christie flashes him a beautiful smile.

Dr. William looks at her, taking in her stunning eye.

They adoringly gaze into each other's eyes.

After a long magical moment--

DR. WILLIAM
Why did you hide the HOME FOR
BABIES idea from me?

CHRISTIE
We wanted to surprise you.

DR. WILLIAM
Speaking of surprises, I have a
special surprise for you.

He puts a hand in his pocket, pulls out a small box. Hands it to her.

Christie opens the box. Sees a silver ring with sparkling diamonds. She looks back at Dr. William, mouth ajar.

Dr. William holds her hand, goes down on one knee.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
Christie. Will you marry me?

CHRISTIE
Seriously?

DR. WILLIAM
I'm serious.

CHRISTIE
YES!!!! I want to marry you.

Auntie P. turns--

Sees Dr. William sliding the ring onto Christie's finger. She rolls her eyes, goes back to cooking.

Dr. William rises, hugs Christie.

DR. WILLIAM
I can't imagine my life without
you. Christie.

CHRISTIE
I can't imagine my life without
you, either.

Dr. William pulls out his iPhone, presses some numbers.

DR. WILLIAM
There's one more person I need to
surprise.

Christie and Auntie P. exchange looks.

CHRISTIE
Who's that?

Shhh!!! Dr. William puts a finger over his lips, lifts the phone to his ear.

EXT. COMPOUND - HOME FOR BABIES - SAME TIME

Dr. Fred drives his SUV through the gate, parks.

He jumps out as his cell phone buzzes. He pulls it out, checks the caller ID. Smiles. He doesn't pick it.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fred stops in the doorway, his phone still buzzing in his hand.

Christie and Auntie P. see him, but Dr. William, phone on his ear, doesn't.

Dr. Fred looks at Dr. William for a moment. Then--

DR. FRED
DOCTOR WILLIAM!

Dr. William jumps around to find Dr. Fred smiling at him.
Laughs. Hugs.

DR. WILLIAM
How did you know, I'm here?

CHRISTIE
I called him.

More laughs.

Dr. William motions all to come closer. They do. He puts his arms around their shoulders and draws them even closer.

First, he looks into Christie's eyes.

DR. WILLIAM
You are my angel.

He turns his gaze to Auntie P.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
You are my rock.

He cuts his eyes to Dr. Fred.

DR. WILLIAM (cont'd)
You don't know how I've longed to
have a Daddy like you.

There is a comfortable silence.

Then--

DR. FRED
I'm your Daddy.

Dr. William smiles.

DR. WILLIAM
Yes, you are an amazing father-
figure to me. More than a million
times, thank you for taking good
care of me.

Dr. Fred pulls out his wallet, takes out a battered photo. Hands it to Dr. William.

DR. FRED
Take a look at this.

Dr. William stares at an image of a younger Dr. Fred (17), holding a little baby (1 month).

DR. WILLIAM
Who is this baby?

DR. FRED
Baby Dr. William Aki.

Dr. William chuckles.

DR. WILLIAM
What a joke.

DR. FRED
You are my birth son.

Dr. Fred pulls out a DNA card, hands it to him.

Dr. William takes the card, looks. Returns his gaze to Dr. Fred.

Silence - you could hear a pin drop.

AUNTIE P.
Alright. Who's ready to eat?

She places bowls of food on the table - Nobody moves.

AUNTIE P. (cont'd)
Dr. Fred. Are you going to tell us why you kept this to yourself for this long?

DR. FRED
Some things are better left unsaid.

Suddenly it hits Dr. William.

He stares at his Daddy.

Dr. Fred looks at his son.

They stare into each other's eyes for a moment.

After a magic moment--

Tears stream down Dr. Fred's cheek.

Dr. William begins to tears up.

They then fall into each other's arms, FATHER AND SON comforting each other.

DR. FRED (cont'd)
I'm proud, so proud of you, son.

Dr. William fights back more tears - these are the words he's longed to hear.

Christie hands him a tissue.

CHRISTIE
William, say something.

DR. WILLIAM
Say what?

CHRISTIE
Is this a blessing or something?

DR. WILLIAM
What can I say? I've got all I ever wanted. I got it all...

Dr. William holds his Daddy closer.

DR. WILLIAM
I'm the luckiest person in the whole world.

Auntie P. blows her nose, noisily.

They all look at her.

AUNTIE P.
The food is getting cold.

Bowls are grabbed.

They eat together as family: talking, laughing.

CLICK! Dr. William takes a Selfie, smiling broadly.

He couldn't look happier.

FADE OUT:

THE END