

NO REST

by

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NO REST

FADE IN:

EXT. IN A TAXI ON THE DC BELTWAY - DAY

We see the main character Noelle. She is in a stuffy taxi, stressed out fighting rush hour traffic on the way to the airport. She looks at her watch impatiently knocks on the window pointing at her watch.

NOELLE

How much longer? I have a
international flight to catch.
(Pause) This is crazy, stupid DC
traffic.

Taxi driver is a big nordic, pale skin, light blue eyes and long blond hair in a braided pony tail.

TAXI DRIVER

Much cars, sorry I hurry.... fast.

Noelle looks at her watch and sends a text message. She see's a car accident ahead and becomes unglued with frustration.

TAXI DRIVER

Crash, police, you be late.

NOELLE

Oh no! Sir, we have to find a way
out of this mess, so I can make my
light. I must see my daughter I
have not seen in a long time.

TAXI DRIVER

Ok, I try.

Taxi driver turns on GPS and hits a few buttons looking for an alternate route. He then calls the dispatch and talks in Sweedish asking for directions. He hangs up the phone and turns to Noelle.

TAXI DRIVER

We change, go 'nother way.

NOELLE

Praise the Lord, Thank you!

Driver snakes through traffic, finally making makes it to the off ramp towards the airport. The GPS is audible, but directions are in Sweedish.

TAXI DRIVER

Ten Minutes.

Noelle looks up to the sky and holds her arms to the sky in silent praise. She mouths "thank you Jesus". She opens her iPad and goes online to check the flight status of her plane. She then calls mom and talks for a few minutes.

The taxi zips through traffic and pulls up to the Air France terminal and comes to a stop.

TAXI DRIVER

Made here!

NOELLE

Thank you! I think I can make it now. That short cut sure did help.

She fumbles through her purse looking for money, but in her hurried state the purse is turned upside down and all the contents fall on the floor of the cab.

NOELLE

What the heck is going on? I can't even get to the airport without 100 things going wrong.

She gathers everything and puts back in purse. Hands him her credit card and prepares to get out.

TAXI DRIVER

..uh sorry. No credit. Please cash.

NOELLE

What? I dont have any cash, what kinda cab in DC doesnt take credit cards?

TAXI DRIVER

Sorry. \$52.55. You go ATM at airport, I wait luggage.

Taxi driver gets out, comes around and opens Noelle's door, tips his hat and bows apologetically.

NOELLE

Oh wait! I do have cash, its somewhere in my pockets.

She stands near the curb and goes through her pockets until she finds a three \$20 bills and crams in his hand.

TAXI DRIVER

Thank you. Hope you get flight ok.

Her phone rings while she is struggling with her carry on items.

NOELLE

Yes yes, I know! I'm at the airport just getting out the cab.
(Pause) Did you hear what I said?
I told you I cant talk now, bye!

The taxi driver taps Noelle on the shoulder Noelle turns around quickly glaring at him.

TAXI DRIVER

Sorry, police, have move taxi.

The police walks up and waves indicating they should move it along.

NOELLE

It's ok, I understand...uhhh
Mr.....?

TAXI DRIVER

Gustav, I Gustav! Nice meet you.
I help...you have many luggage.

He vigorously shakes Noelle's hand, then stares at her with a smile.

TAXI DRIVER

(staring with a
smile)

Eyes, you have.....uh...pretty eyes.

Noelle takes a good look at him and smiles demurely, she finds him attractive. Gustav takes the luggage one by one to the sky cap. He returns and impulsively reaches out to hug Noelle and she accepts. A police blows his whistle and waves his hand at Gustav. Gustav smiles, waves goodbye gets in the cab and drives away.

Noelle is standing with her suitcases in skycap area.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Make sure you have your itinerary
and passport out and ready. Also
make sure your baggage tag with
(MORE)

AIRLINE ATTENDANT (cont'd)
your contact info on it.

Skycap walks up and down the line, checking IDs and overseeing the flow of travelers. When Noelle is next in line, the attendant walks up to her shaking his head vigorously and waving his hands.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT
Ma'am what are you doing? You can't check all those suitcases here, you have to take them inside.

SKYCAP
Yes, and you are an international traveler, you have to go inside anyway.

Noelle drops her head and exhales deeply.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT
You gon'a have to put them on a cart or something, but you cant leave them here blocking the walkway.

NOELLE
How in the heck do you expect me to take all of them in by myself and not leave any of them unattended? At least you could help me.

The attendant looks at her harshly and annoyed. He softens slightly and walks towards her.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT
yeah well I guess I can help. But its not our job to do all of that, the travelers are supposed to handle their own luggage.

The attendant grabs two suitcase start rolling them. Just then a scuffle breaks out between two men waiting in line. The attendant drops her suitcase and runs to break up the fight.

NOELLE
JESUS! Help! I can't do this alone.

She drops her head chocking back tears.

Two Marines in dress blue uniform quickly walk over to help.

MARINE

Ma'am, may we help you?

NOELLE

Yes please!

Each Marine takes 2 suitcases and take them inside. They return a few seconds later and get the remaining suitcases.

INT. AIR FRANCE TICKETING LINE. - DAY

The Marines have gathered all suitcases and taken them to the front counter and explained to the ticket agent. They return to Noelle standing in line.

MARINE

Dont sweat it ma'am, the hard part is over, at least for now.

NOELLE

Semper Fi. First to Fight.

MARINE

Yes Semper Fi to you. Were you in the Corp?

NOELLE

Well I was in Marine Corps JROTC in high school. Oh yeah and my sister was a Marine.

MARINE

Really? Where? When?

NOELLE

Oh it was back in the 90's. She was one of the first woman on Embassy Duty.

They chat for a minute while the line slowly moves up.

NOELLE

Let me get you guys some lunch after I get through the line.

MARINE

A smart jarhead never turns down free chow, especially with a beautiful lady. But we are waiting on our ride.

Suddenly a female voice says John Junior?

MARINE

Thats my mom. It was nice to meet you....uhhh Miss?

NOELLE

Noelle Hunter. Thanks again guys, you saved me fromfrom myself. I was at my wits end.

MARINE

Your sister is a Marine, so you're a part of the family! Semper Fi

They shake hands again and the Marines wave and smile as they leave. Noelle resumes her place in line.

The line is moving slowly and Noelle looks at her watch repeatedly and exhales in frustration.

LADY AT AIRPORT

Wow! Ma'am that is alot of luggage, must cost alot to ship it.

Noelle looks perturbed and rolls her eyes silently but turns around at the lady speaking to her. Noelle nods her head and turns around.

LADY AT AIRPORT

Ma'am if you dont mind me asking, where are you going? Are you moving overseas?

NOELLE

Actually I am going on a mission trip to Mali, West Africa. My community in Kentucky collected toiletries and I am on my way to deliver them to a rural village school.

The lady perks up, smiles broadly, folds her hands in pray and points her hands to the celing.

LADY AT AIRPORT

What a blessing! My name is Pastor Shelia Williams. I am on a mission trip too.

NOELLE

What country?

PASTOR SHELIA

Our church sponsors an orphanage in Rwanda! I am hosting a women's conference with pastor's wives and going to look in on the orphanage while there.

Noelle's phone rings when she pulls it out of her purse it slips out her hands and scoots across the floor. She quickly runs to pick up the phone. A little African girl steps from out of line and runs to get the phone. She picks it up, looks at it and walks towards Noelle. The girl looks much like her daughter Muna.

AFRICAN GIRL

Ici, il est , je l'espère, il fonctionne toujours. Uh sorry Here you go, I think it still works

Noelle stares a few seconds at the girl as she hands her the phone. She smiles and thanks the little girl.

NOELLE

Merci , vous êtes une jolie fille merci.

AFRICAN GIRL

Merci...uh thank you. This is a nice phone.

The girls parents call her over. She smiles at Noelle and walks back to her parents. Noelle returns to the line and checks to see if her phone is working. Pastor Shelia talks with Noelle another minute

Just then Noelle is called to the counter in one direction and Pastor Shelia goes several counters down to be processed.

INT. INTERNATIONAL BOARDING GATE - LATER

She made it through security and customs and is seated in the gate. A sign says boarding will start in an hour. She is listening to her ipad and sending a text message. Pastor Shelia walks over and motions with her hand asking to sit down. Noelle smiles, takes out her ear buds and invites her to sit.

PASTOR SHELIA

Wow, looks like we are on the same flight.

NOELLE

Looks like we are. Can't wait to deliver the supplies to the village school. I also have candy, games and other surprises.

PASTOR SHELIA

Children those countries don't understand the importance of good hygiene.

NOELLE

Yes I am excited, the kids are just so wonderful! Also I am hoping I can see my daughter when I get there.

Noelle immediately regrets what she said and dreads having to explain the painful history.

PASTOR SHELIA

See your daughter? You live in Kentucky and your daughter lives in Mail?

NOELLE

It's a long story pastor.

Thankfully her phone rings and Noelle excuses herself and steps away to talk.

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS

NOELLE

Hey sis, I'm at the gate, boarding in an hour.

ANGELA

Yeah mom and I wanted to pray with you. I have her on three way.

MOM

The ladies prayer group has been praying for you. Make sure you keep us in the loop by email or Facebook. I know the phone system is messed up.

ANGELA

Ok now control yourself over there. No bringing back any cuties with accents.

Laughter.

NOELLE

Ok thanks for calling. I need to go to the desk to get my seat assignment. I will text you when I am on the plane.

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS.

After the her phone call ends, Noelle waits to see if Pastor Shelia will leave, but after a few minutes it becomes apparent she is waiting for Noelle to return to continue the conversation. Noelle goes back and sits down.

PASTOR SHELIA

I apologize if I am being too personal, but...well I am here if you would like to talk.

Noelle exhales, closes her eyes, turns to pastor and starts to tell her story.

NOELLE

I live in Kentucky and teach at a college there. My 3 year old daughter went to visit with her father, my ex-husband, on Christmas day. I found out the next day he had abducted her and flew to Mali West Africa against the court order.

Pastor Shelia reaches out and grabs Noelle's hand firmly and nods sympathetically.

PASTOR SHELIA

God knows exactly where she is and He is watching over her. I have a good feeling that you will be able to see her when you get there.

NOELLE

It's my fervent prayer pastor. I have not seen my baby in a year and a half.

Pastor Shelia lifts Noelle's hand in the air in victory and smiles reassuringly.

PASTOR SHELIA

I cant believe America cant compel him to return her.

NOELLE

Mali West Africa is not a signatory to the Hague Convention for international kidnapping. So that means they have no obligation to return children who have been kidnapped and brought here.

PASTOR SHELIA

I have three children and four grand children, I can't even imagine the pain you are going through.

Noelle is silent and nods her head. Pastor Shelia stops talking and just sits there and holds her hand. After a moment of silence, Pastor Shelia stands up.

PASTOR SHELIA

Let's go have our last American supper, hahah. We still have an hour before we board.

NOELLE

Thanks, but I am too excited to eat anything. I have a napsack full of dried fruit, nuts and granola bars.

Pastor William waves as she walks away. Noelle is relieved and puts her ear buds back in, lays her head back and dozes off.

INT. FOURTY FIVE MINUTES LATER - LATER

The gate agent announces boarding will commence in 10 minutes. Noelle does not see Pastor William looks around for her.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

We are now boarding zone 1 and 2. Please have your ID and ticket out for the agent.

Noelle asks the gate agent if she would call Pastor Shelia Williams on the loud speaker. The agent declines and continues to call for zones to board. Noelle leaves her carry on goes to look for Pastor Shelia. A gate agent calls out to her.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Ma'am you are not permitted to leave your luggage unattended.

NOELLE

Me and another lady were just talking and she is on this flight. I am going to see if she's in the restaurant.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Ma'am if you leave your bag, we have to call security. No exceptions.

Perturbed, she puts on her backpack and rolls the other two as she hot foots it up the jet way. She stumbles when one of her wheels gets caught. She catches herself against a wall and keeps going. She looks at shops, restaurants and goes in the first women's restroom and calls out.

NOELLE

Pastor Shelia, are you in here? Our plane is boarding.

After five minutes she decides to go back to the gate. Noelle happens to pass a coffee shop and see's pastor Shelia.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Boarding the final zones 5 and 6 non stop service to Paris. If you hold a ticket on this flight please board at this time.

NOELLE

Pastor Shelia! Hurry our plane is boarding.

Pastor Shelia looks at her watch and jumps up from her table bumping it and tipping over her coffee.

PASTOR SHELIA

Oh my, I lost track of time.

Pastor walks to the counter and explains her plane is boarding. She throws a \$20 bill on the counter and quickly leaves.

PASTOR SHELIA

Thank you, thank you, thank you for coming to get me. I dont know how I lost track of time.

They are breathing heavily as they are almost at a jog jostling their carry on baggage trying to make it to the gate. Just then they hear the gate agent calling off names of people who have not boarded yet.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Noelle Hunter, Shelia Williams and Sebastian and Marie Beaumont please board immediately through gate E 23. This is last call for boarding.

NOELLE

We're coming! Please hold the plane.

PASTOR SHELIA

Yes, we're here.

Noelle and Pastor Shelia show their boarding pass and walk down the jet way to the plane.

NOELLE

I am in seat 44c, which means I am sandwiched in the middle between two people. Man I hope they dont snore and slobber all over.

PASTOR SHELIA

Normally I'm in coach, but we travel so much I have a gazillion sky-miles. I wish I had of known, I had enough to upgrade you to first class as well.

NOELLE

Oh, dont worry I am just glad to be able to see my daughter Muna. And of course the kids at the village school.

PASTOR SHELIA

If I don't see you again, may God bless you and I will be praying for you.

NOELLE

Thanks same to you.

Noelle goes to the rear of the plane, puts her baggage in the overhead bin and gets settled in her seat. Puts her headphones on and closes her eyes.

A few minutes later a flight attendant taps her on the shoulder.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Ma'am, you have been upgraded to first class please follow me.

NOELLE

Uh...yeah,..are you sure?

Noelle looks around, shakes her head in disbelief, smiles, unbuckles her seatbelt and makes her way across her two seat mates.

Noelle gathers her stuff and walks towards the front with the flight attendant. She is directed to a comfortable seat in roomy first class. After she is seated, one of the pilots comes up to her with a smile. An African male 50 years old, wearing pilot uniform stands with his hand on the overhead bin and starts talking to her.

PILOT

Bon Jour! Thank you for flying Air France. Are you the missionary for The Village School and orphanage for the children of Mali.

Noelle looks quizzically, still unsure of what's going on.

NOELLE

Yes sir.

PILOT

Well I grew up in an orphanage in Mali. My parents died when I 8 years old during and outbreak of Cholera and Malaria. (Pause) The American missionaries were so great to us, a real blessing to all of us. I will never forget it.

The pilot talks a moment about his memory as a child in the Mali orphanage. A dinging sound is heard indicating the plane is making final preparation for taxing.

PILOT

You are my guest today in first class. So glad to be able to help people who helped me so man years ago.

The pilot reaches down to shake her hand, but she stands up and they embrace and the pilot does the customary kiss on

both sides of her cheek. The pilot smiles and returns to the cockpit.

She turns and finds Pastor Shelia, smiles and mouths the words thank you. They make eye contact for a few seconds and Noelle turns back around.

NOELLE

Abba Father.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT IN BOMAKO MAIL - DAY

Noelle is standing outside with suitcases when a beat up white van pulls up. A sign on the doors say "The Village School". The driver pulls up next to her, gets out and walks up.

NOELLE

Hi! I am Noelle Hunter, are you with the village school?

MALI DRIVER

Yes! Thank you. I'm Mamadou Youssouf.

NOELLE

Nice to meet you. Thank you for coming to get me.

MAMADOU

Oh my pleasure, we are so excited to have you come.

NOELLE

Well, here are the supplies, let's load them in the van.

Just then two men come walking up with big smiles on their faces and grab her suitcases. She quickly looks at Mamadou.

MAMADOU

Madam, these men have no work, they help at airport. It is customary to allow them to help you for a few coins.

Noelle smiles sheepishly and nods her head in agreement. They watch the guys load up the suitcases in the van and climb up and secure some on top of the van. They stand smiling, proud of themselves waiting for a tip.

MAMADOU

American money is much best for
them. Is \$1 ok?

NOELLE

Of course!

Noelle hands them each \$5 and they are incredibly grateful
nodding and thank her in French and English.

MALI AIRPORT HELPER

Merci! Merci! Vous avez de jolis
yeux

Noelle looks at Mamadou quizzically.

MAMADOU

He says you have pretty eyes.
(Pause) They are a nice shiny
brown.

Noelle turns to the two Mali airport workers and smile. She
shakes their hand.

MAMADOU

Madamn Noelle, the children wait
very happy for your visit. They
have special special surprise for
you.

They get in the van and drive off to the village school.

EXT. THE VILLAGE SCHOOL - DAY

Noelle and Mamadou arrive and children quickly swarm the van
laughing, smiling and dancing. Someone is playing a drum
and the kids clap and sing.

NOELLE

Je suis honoré , je vous remercie
beaucoup . Que Dieu vous bénisse .
(I am honored , thank you
so much . God bless you)

AFRICAN LADY

Madam Noelle, we are so happy have
you here again. May I present the
children's choir?

The children start singing in French a song of celebration.
After the song concludes, two staff start unloading the
suitcases out and take them towards the building. Several

children run after the suitcases and attempt to open them to see whats inside.

MAMADOU

No!

Madam Constance then chastise them in French telling them it is rude to accost the guest. The children drop their head in embarrassment and but snicker and smile as they walk away.

NOELLE

Who wants some candy?

Children eagerly jump and twist. Students who understand English word Candy, quickly says it in french and soon everyone is smiling.

NOELLE

Here you go!

Noelle opens her backpack and pulls out bags of various types of candy. She is tossing them in the air and kids are laughing and quickly eating them.

INT. VILLAGE CLASSROOM - EVENING

Noelle is wearing a lab coat and is standing in front of the class. She is describing and demonstrating the importance of brushing teeth. Constance is translating.

NOELLE

That was a delicious dinner.

She rubs her stomach and smiles.

MADAM CONSTANCE

Madamn Noelle will be teach about brushing teeth and washing hands.

NOELLE

Clean teeth and hands means a healthier body, keeping the germs away.

The staff pass out bags to all the kids which contains 2 tooth brushes, toothpaste, dental floss and a bar of soap. A girl raises her hands and waits to be called upon.

AFRICAN GIRL

What is germ?

Noelle looks to the translator and he answers the question in French to the class.

NOELLE

Wow, we have some clean white teeth. Makes a beautiful smile.

AFRICAN GIRL

Mmmm good taste tooth paste.

NOELLE

Yes, its a minty flavor.

Students clean up from washing hands and brushing teeth.

EXT. SITTING AROUND FIRE ON STOOLS - MOMENTS LATER

The community grio is providing an oral history. He is dark skinned African male, 5'2 80+ years old. He leans against his can telling the history of the village. Noelle looks into the distance longing for Muna.

NOELLE

This is wonderful!

A girl comes to sit on Noelle's lap. Another sits next to her feet.

MADAM CONSTANCE

This is good for the children. He has not been here in a couple of years. Some of them are orphans they need to know the history of our people.

INT. INTERNET CAFE IN BOMMAKO - DAY

NOELLE

Noelle is on her laptop in a internet cafe. She looks over and sees an obviously homeless man, disheveled. He is looking on the tables for left over food.

HOMELESS MAN

Avide (Hungry)

He puts his hand to his mouth in a motion meaning I am hungry.

NOELLE

Uhhh avoir qu'un café (Only have coffee).

Noelle holds up her coffee up showing she only has coffee and no food.

HOMELESS MAN

D'accord (ok)

The man goes over to a bench and sits. Noelle calls over the wait staff and asks them to bring him a bag of food and put it on her tab.

A cafe worker brings a bag to the homeless man. He smiles and thanks the lady promisingly displaying the few teeth he has. He quickly rips into the bag causing napkin and fork to fall out on the group as he eats quickly.

CAFE WORKER

You have pretty eyes. You American?

The café worker stares at her eyes and smiles.

NOELLE

Yes, I am.

CAFE WORKER

Your eyes ...uh shiny brown. I like them.

NOELLE

(Smiling)

Thank you!

CAFE WORKER

Americans so nice, always help and friendly. (Pause) I want go to America.

Noelle smiles, grabs the workers hand and slips a large bill in her hand. Stands up, smiles and walks away.

CAFE WORKER

God Bless you.

Noelle turns, waves smiles big and keeps walking.

INT. MAIL FAMILY COURT - AFTERNOON

Noelle stands next to her lawyer and interpreter. The defendants table has Noelle's exhusband Ibrahaim N'Dayie with his attorney. A court officer is talking to both parties preparing them for the arrival of the judge.

NOELLE

Do I get to see my daughter Muna today after court?

Noelle turns to her lawyer Gabrielle Gabon

GABRIELLE

I hope so Noelle. This hearing is to see if you can see her for the time you are here. He has not ruled yet on your petition for taking her back to America.

NOELLE

I am so excited. I have a good feeling. Everyone at home is praying for me.

GABRIELLE

I will do my best, but I want you to understand that you are an American here in Mali courts. This is a male dominated society,...ah..well I think we will be ok.

Gabrielle grabs Noelle's hand for reassurance. She then speaks to the court officer in French. Ibrahim's attorney walks over and joins the discussion. Noelle isn't able to understand the conversation and turns to her interpreter.

INTERPRETER

Madam, it looks like your lawyer requested the hearing be in English. But the Mr. Adia, your ex-husband's attorney is saying it should be in French, the official language.

The discussion between the lawyers get heated and Mr. Adia waves his hand in dismissal and walks back to his table.

GABRIELLE

Good news, we got the court to agree to hold the hearing in English instead of French. Mr. Adia for some reason was against

(MORE)

GABRIELLE (cont'd)

it.

The judge's chamber door opens he walks and is seated. The court officer says something in French and calls both lawyers up to the bench. Mr. Adia is adamantly protesting the hearing be held in English, but the judge agrees.

JUDGE

Madam Gabon and Mr. Adia please present your case.

GABRIELLE

Your excellency, Ibrahim N'dayie took their daughter Nylenee Myamuna to Mail against a Kentucky judges order for visitation. Madaman Noelle has not seen or talked to her daughter in 18 months.

The judge looked down his glasses at Ibrahim.

IBRAHIM

Your excellency, Madam Noelle Hunter uses drugs and I was afraid for her safety if our daughter stayed in her custody.

The judge turns back to the plantif's table.

JUDGE

Madam Noelle, is this true?

NOELLE

Yes your excellency at one time in my life I did have a drug problem. It was a terrible thing to do to my family. But I have been drug free for two years.

IBRAHIM

Yes, it was very bad for us.

The judge looks over at Ibrahim and frowned him into silence.

GABRIELLE

Here are weekly drug tests results ordered for the last two years. No drugs at all.

The judge motions for the court officer to bring the drug testing paperwork over. He takes several minutes and looks through it.

JUDGE

What other reason do you have to deny visitation?

IBRIHAM's attorney started to talk but the judge waves him away and looks directly at Ibriham waiting for an answer.

IBRAHIM

She is a bad mother, she drinks wine like all Americans. She listens to dance music and that is not how I want my daughter to be raised.

JUDGE

You married her while you were in America?

IBRAHIM

Yes, but now that I am back in Mali, I want my daughter raised in the customs and ways of our people.

GABRIELLE

This child had two parents, one of them who she has not seen in almost two years. What kind of father does this to a child he loves?

The judge waves his hand in dismissal.

JUDGE

Absent any legitimate reason to keep a girl from her mother, I order a visitation with the daughter to begin tomorrow morning.

NOELLE

(Quietly)

Oh Jesus!

MR. ADIA

Mr. Ibriham is afraid Noelle will take her daughter and run back to America.

GABRIELLE

Oh, like Mr. N'Dayie did?

MR. ADIA

Your excellency it is a real concern.

GABRIELLE

Easily solved. She will leave her passport with the court before every visitation.

The judge stands up, grabs his papers and prepares to walk out.

JUDGE

The girl will be dropped off at Noelle's hotel at 10am and collected at 6pm daily starting tomorrow for a week.

GABRIELLE

When will the court decide on Madam's petition for custody.

JUDGE

At the end of the week of visitation, I will consider the issue of custody.

Everyone stands up and the judge walks out. Noelle is silent, tears streaming down her face, she opens her mouth but she can't talk.

NOELLE

Thank you God! I get to see my baby in the morning!

Noelle hugs her lawyer and collapses into her chair and puts her head on the table and cries with her body going up and down with the sobs.

Gabrielle gives a dirty look at Ibrahim and his attorney. She shakes her head in disgust and then helps escorts Noelle out the door.

EXT. VILLAGE SCHOOL - EVENING

Noelle is seated on the floor having dinner with the children.

NOELLE

Thanks for the good dinner. My room at the Sleeping Camel hotel is too quiet. But good news!...I get to see my daughter tomorrow.

Everyone in the room cheers and claps, excited that Noelle gets to see her daughter Muna.

MADAM CONSTANCE

Children please join hands around Madam Noelle and lets pray.

The children surround Noelle and join hands.

AFRICAN GIRL

I want to pray.

One of the girls prays in French and another child prays in English.

After the prayer the kids sit looking expectantly at Noelle.

NOELLE

I have a surprise for everyone.

Noelle pulls several neon green, pink and yellow glow in the dark soccer balls out of her bag. The kids go crazy squealing with delight. They are kicking it around, bouncing it off their knee and head.

AFRICAN GIRL

Thank you. We no play soccer at when dark we no see ball. Thank you.

Madam Constance is moved to tears, hugging Noelle.

MADAM CONSTANCE

This is great. They can play evening when they are good.

The children are screaming, laughing and kicking the soccer balls as the dusk disappears into dark night.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - MORNING

It is 11am and Noelle has been waiting an hour for Ibrahim to bring her daughter Muna. She has been pacing back and forth and walking outside and looking down the road, but nothing. Noelle calls her lawyer Gabrielle to check the status.

PHONE CALL: NOELLE CALLS HER LAWYER GABRIELLE.

NOELLE

Gabrielle, this is Noelle. Ibrahim was supposed to bring Muna at 10:00 and has not arrive yet.

GABRIELLE

I am glad you called, I was just about to call you. Ibrahims attorney just called and said Ibrahim didnt think it was proper for him to be in a private room with a woman he was not married to.

Noelle throws the cup she was drinking against the wall in anger.

NOELLE

That's bull!

GABRIELLE

Please calm down. I know that, but you want to see your daughter right now...correct?

NOELLE

Yes, I am sorry. But this has been such a roller coaster. What can we do now?

GABRIELLE

Leave your hotel right now and come to my office. They are bringing Muna to my office. He insists some sort of supervised visit.

Noelle is visibly shaken with anger, her hands are shaking as is her voice.

NOELLE

Ok, I'm on my way.

Noelle grabs two back packs and runs out the door. She hails a cab and heads off to her lawyer's office.

INT. GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - LATER

Noelle and her attorney has been waiting an hour and half for Ibrahim to bring Muna. Neither him nor his attorney will answer the phone.

NOELLE

I cant believe that he can just violate a direct court order like this. I am so angry I could....

Gabrielle takes Noelles hand and pats it and nods her head.

GABRIELLE

Please this is exactly what he wants you to do. A display of anger or arrogance from an American woman, will not be to your benefit.

Noelle walks to the window and stares outside, tears flow. Gabrielle looks at her planner and the clock. She walks over to Noelle.

GABRIELLE

I am so sorry, but I have to be in court in an hour. We may need to reschedule for tomorrow.

Noelle walks over and puts her hand on Gabrielle's shoulder.

NOELLE

Thank you for your help. I apologize for being so upset. It's just that.....

The door opens and Ibrahim walks in with Muna. The room is stone silent as mother and daughter make eye contact. Muna stands there looking with vacant eyes, unsure of whats going on.

GABRIELLE

We have been waiting, the court order said for you to drop her off at 10:00 at the hotel.

Ibrahim ignores Gabrielle and walks Muna towards Noelle and stoops down to Muna. He whispers something in Muna's ear and she turns around and nods up and down.

IBRAHIM

Do you remember mommy?

Muna looks scared and uncertain but nods her head that she knows who Noelle is. Noelle's knees are shaky and she walks to the couch and sits down. She smiles and waves Muna over.

NOELLE

Hi baby, mommy missed you. You look so pretty in that dress!

Muna is silent and looking scared. She takes two steps towards Noelle and allows Noelle to hug her.

GABRIELLE

Noelle has visitation until 6pm, so let's meet back here at 6pm ok?

IBRAHIM

She will not be staying. I have a relative coming into town who has not seen her. We came by for a short visit.

Noelle rockets off the couch startling everyone including Muna who scurries back to her dad's side.

NOELLE

That is not what the judge said. I am supposed to get her from 10am to 6pm daily.

Gabrielle quickly steps between them and motions Noelle outside the office door. They both walk out and stand in the hall.

GABRIELLE

I know this is difficult but you must.....

NOELLE

What type of judicial system let's him do this? I don't understand? You told me this would be fair.

Gabrielle grabs Noelle by both arms and holds her firmly.

GABRIELLE

You must control yourself. He could be recording this to show the the judge.

NOELLE

Ok, ok ok...lets go back inside so I can see her. I have no idea when the idiot will take her back.

GABRIELLE

You need to apologize to both of them.

NOELLE

(Praying)

Father God, give me your peace.

They walk back in and Muna is sitting on Ibrahim's lap. Noelle walks over to her bag, picks up a gift bag and goes to sit on the couch next to them.

NOELLE

Muna honey, mommy's sorry for scaring you. I was just so excited to see you...I'm sorry.

Noelle looks at Ibrahim with evil eyes, then smiles at him.

NOELLE

That's so nice for your daddy to bring you to see me.

Noelle pulls out a hello kitty stuffed animal, a ring pop and coloring books and crayons. Muna leaves dad's lap and goes to sit with Noelle on the couch.

MUNA

Merci, Il est tellement agréable et jolie

Noelle looks blankly at Muna and then Gabrielle and finally at Ibrahim.

NOELLE

She doesn't speak English anymore?

IBRAHIM

She speaks French and the native language of our tribe.

Gabrielle clears her throat as a warning to Noelle.

IBRAHIM

I can translate.

GABRIELLE

I don't think that will be necessary, Noelle does understand a little French.

Noelle and Muna continue to play, color and enjoy each other as if no one else is in the room. After half an hour Ibrahim stands up.

NOELLE

How about we all go to dinner,
there is a cafe two blocks down.

IBRAHIM

No. We have to meet my uncle.

Gabrielle looks at Noelle and frowns and shakes her head slightly.

NOELLE

Honey I love you, I will see you
tomorrow.

Gabrielle translates to Muna what is happening.

MUNA

Ah bon.

Noelle hands Muna the backpack with toys and goodies inside. She prepares to put it on her back and Ibrahim puts his hand out and pushes it back to Noelle.

IBRAHIM

She has plenty of toys at home,
she doesnt need anymore. Her room
is messy as it is.

Gabrielle interjects and convinces him to let Muna take the backpack.

NOELLE

Je'taim Muna.

Muna slightly smiles, nods her head and impulsively gives Noelle a hug and walks with him to the door. Noelle looks at Gabrielle.

GABRIELLE

Let's meet here tomorrow at 10am
as the court order says.

IBRAHIM

I dont know. I will have my
attorney call you and let you
know.

Noelle looks at Gabrielle and sees her slightly shake her head.

NOELLE

See you soon honey.

They leave the room and Noelle collapses on the couch.

INT. GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Three days have passed since Noelle has seen Muna. Noelle called the American Embassy for help. She is now back in her Gabrielle's office.

NOELLE

How can he not follow the court order?

GABRIELLE

I have contacted the judge twice asking for help. He is upset that you contacted the U.S. Embassy and they put pressure on him.

NOELLE

Well the U.S. State Department said to contact them if I have any problems.

Gabrielle leaves her desk and goes to sit next to Noelle on the couch and offers her a bottle coca cola.

GABRIELLE

I studied in America for a year. I understand how the American justice system works. But it is not the same here. (Pause) When the embassy contacted the court it was not received well.

NOELLE

I am in debt thousands of dollars and may lose my job in KY if I don't get back soon. All I want to do is see my child. (Pause) What's wrong with that?

GABRIELLE

You must show respect for our customs and protocol. I am doing everything I can. Please help me, help you and Muna.

Noelle drops her head and nods in understanding.

GABRIELLE

Promise me you will not contact anyone unless you go through me. I have connections here that may be helpful.

NOELLE

Ok, again I am sorry. I know you are doing your best to help me see Muna. So what's the next step? I only have 5 more days and I have to fly back.

GABRIELLE

Let me make some calls.

Gabrielle makes several calls speaking in French and another language.

GABRIELLE

I was able to get Ibrahim to agree to bring Muna back to my office but his sister Oolee will come along.

NOELLE

I need three chaperones to see my own....

Gabrielle looks at Noelle sternly.

NOELLE

Thanks! I am so excited, whatever it takes, by any means necessary.

GABRIELLE

Muna will be watching, show her how happy you are.

INT. GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - LATER

An hour has passed with no word about Muna.

NOELLE

Thank you for your help, I really appreciate it.

GABRIELLE

I am so sorry Noelle about this. Actually its embarrassing for me as an officer of the court.

NOELLE

(Sigh)

I have gotten used to it. I think
I will go see the children. It
always brings me peace.

GABRIELLE

This is not normal for custody
visits. I have had problems like
this before, but nothing like
this. His resistance to letting
you see Muna is.....

Ibrahim, Oolee, his sister and Muna walk in the room. This
time Muna is more upbeat and smiling. She runs over to
Noelle and hugs her leg. Noelle picks her up and hugs and
kisses her.

IBRAHIM

This is a bad week for visit
visitation. She is going to a
type of summer camp in two days.
We already had this planned before
you came.

Noelle ignores everyone Muna. Noelle is speaking one or two
words in French and Muna is speaking one or two words in
English.

NOELLE

She needs to skype with her sister
Rysa, I already have the computer
set up, I just need to call her to
make sure she is on the computer.

Confidently Noelle takes muna to the laptop and sits at the
computer and uses her cell to call.

IBRAHIM

We didnt discuss skype.

GABRIELLE

What is wrong with two sister's
talking on the computer?

His sister steps in and chastises him and they talk back and
forth. Finally he agrees to let the skype go ahead. Soon
both sister and mom and skyping.

After 10 minutes a power surge ends the skype.

NOELLE

Muna honey lets go to the cyber
cafe around the corner.

Ibrahim, his sister Oolee and Gabrielle talk back and forth and they agree Noelle can go to have lunch and continue to skype. Everyone gets up and walks out the door. Gabrielle does not go but makes eye contact with Noelle giving her a warning look.

GABRIELLE

Have fun with your sister Muna.

EXT. NEAR INTERNET CAFE - AFTERNOON

Noelle and Muna are seated at the internet cafe skyping laughing and having a great time. They are eating fruit and drinking cokes. Ibrahim is seated at the next table angrily seething. Oolee is seated with him and trying to calm him down. After 10 minutes he stands up and walks over telling Noelle the visit is over.

IBRAHIM

We have to go.

NOELLE

Muna honey, thanks for sharing
your mango with me.

Noelle stands up and puts her ipad in her messenger bag and slings it crossways across her body they start walking. Muna stands with her hands in the air and Noelle picks her up. They laugh and giggle loudly. Ibrahim tries to snatch Muna from Noelle's arms. He pulls hard on Muna's arm and she screams in pain.

IBRAHIM

Let her go!

Noelle holds Muna tightly and makes the woman's call in that part of the world where you put your tongue at the roof of your mouth. This brings people out of the cafe and people walking by stop and observe whats going on.

NOELLE

Jesus help! You're hurting her.

IBRAHIM SISTER

Ibrahim stop! They are just
walking. Noelle, come get in the
car with me, I will take you back
to the office.

NOELLE

NO! I am not getting in a car with either of you. He could have broken her arm. Does he usually abuse her like this?

Oolee talks to Ibrahim and he dismisses her.

Two police run up to investigate. Everyone speaks fast in French and Noelle is unable to follow.

POLICE

Girl back to papa. Talk to judge.

Noelle pulls out her custody papers and gives to the police. She tries speaking a French and English to explain. They read the papers, and talk to Ibrahim, but raises his voice to the police officer.

POLICE

Girl go to father. You go to court.

OOLEE

Noelle, I am sorry this has happened. But for now, let Muna go before it gets worse.

NOELLE

I love you Muna.

Oolee takes Muna from Noelle and all three of them walk away.

INT. VILLAGE SCHOOL - EVENING

Noelle looks haggard. She is sitting on the floor with the kids who are laughing and smiling around her, but she is distant. One of the girls plays with her dreadlocks.

AFRICAN GIRL

So pretty, long.

NOELLE

Merci, thank you. I have been growing them for 10 years.

MADAM CONSTANCE

Madamn Noelle loves to read books and act out what's happening in the books. (Pause) Who wants to help?

The kids raise their hands and jump up and down excitedly.

NOELLE

I need someone to repeat the words
in French.

AFRICAN GIRL

Ohhh I want to.

For the next hour Noelle reads books, uses puppets and and acts out a few scenes in the book. Its nearing night time and Noelle stands up and invites them to sing.

NOELLE

Madam Constance says that everyone
knows the song Amazing Grace. Can
we sing it together before
bedtime.

They start singing in English, but some students are singing in French. Noelle is smiling and enjoying the harmony.

INT. MALI FAMILY COURT - DAY

Two days have passed since the incident at the cafe and Noelle has not seen Muna since. Gabrielle and Mr. Adia Ibrahim;s attorney are in the judges chambers. After ten minutes, both attorneys come out and the judge sits on the bench.

NOELLE

What's happening? Today is
supposed to be the court hearing
for me to petition to take Muna
back to America...right?

GABRIELLE

uh...Noelle there has been a
change. Ibrahim has filed an
appeal to a higher court. There
is nothing we can do at this
point.

Noelle is visibly shaken and dismayed. She looks over at Ibrahim and his attorney who are smirking and nodding their head.

NOELLE

This can't be happening. I have
spent every penny I have and I
only spend a total of 1 hour with
her?

GABRIELLE

Noelle, remember what I said. This is not America and you must observe the protocol here. I can't stress it enough.

NOELLE

Sorry, Help me God.

JUDGE

Ibrahim has filed and appeal for custody to the regional court. So I cannot rule on this issue. However I insist that Ibrahim allow visits starting today.

MR. ADIA

Your excellency, Ibrahim has already planned a family vacation. Madam Noelle did not let him know she was coming.

GABRIELLE

Ibrahim refused all phone calls and didnt answer the emails that Noelle or I sent. Here are the emails and the calls logs your excellency.

The court officer hands the paperwork to the judge who reads them. He looks at Ibrahim sternly.

JUDGE

You will call your family right now and have Muna brought to the court within 30 minutes. You will remain in court until she arrives.

NOELLE

Merci excellency.

Noelle is shaking and tears are streaming down. She mouths the word thank you.

GABRIELLE

Let's go into a conference room and relax until she is brought. Remember no matter what happens be thankful, friendly and respectful

INT. MALI FAMILY COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Noelle, Gabrielle, and the court officer are in the conference room. Ibrahim walks in with Muna. The court officer stops Ibrahim with his hand up and speaks to him in French. He hands Ibrahim a sheet of paper which he reads, looks at Noelle and walks back out the room.

MUNA

Bon Jour mommie, ca va? (Good day
mommie, how are you?)

NOELLE

Ca va bein, tres bien (I am very
good)

Noelle and Muna talk and laugh. Gabrielle brings paper, pencil, drinks and snacks. Gabrielle and the court officer depart, leaving just mother and daughter in the conference room alone.

MUNA

Where is sistee? She likes owls?

Noelle fights back tears and tells her about her sister (sistee) They eat candy, drink cokes, draw pictures and make paper airplanes. After an hour, the court officer walks back in with Ibrahim and Gabrielle. Muna gets up and hugs Noelle for a long time and kisses her on the cheek.

MUNA

I love you mommie. See you soon.

NOELLE

Je' teim Muna (I love you), see
you soon.

Noelle thanks the court officer and shakes his hand. She offers to shake hand with Ibrahim but he ignores her, takes Muna's hand leaves.

GABRIELLE

I will call you in the morning
with the next step. Glad you had
some time alone with Muna.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - MORNING

Noelle is sitting on the patio having breakfast and sees Gabrielle walk up.

NOELLE

Bon Jour. What a lovely day. Would you like some tea?

Noelle pours her a cup of tea, but see's something's wrong.

NOELLE

Is everything ok?

GABRIELLE

Ibrahim has left the city with Muna. He showed the judge the travel documents which were purchased months ago.

NOELLE

What?

GABRIELLE

I called the judge at home and spoke with his wife, pleading on your behalf.

NOELLE

How long will he be gone? I could probably extend my stay another few days.

Gabrielle hands Noelle the travel itinerary.

GABRIELLE

Two weeks. I am so sorry, I tried everything I could.

Noelle is quiet, sipping tea.

NOELLE

God must be testing me. I don't understand. I'm just empty inside.

GABRIELLE

I will still represent you when your case comes up again, usually 60 days. I take it you wont be able to make it back?

NOELLE

I would love to but I am broke. I have borrowed from everyone and maxed out my credit cards.

GABRIELLE

I understand.

NOELLE

Even if I could get the money to return, I could lose my job. As a professor, I have to be there to teach, otherwise.....

Noelle keeps drinking her tea and looks off in the distance.

GABRIELLE

I will contact the embassy so they can set up monthly welfare visits. And hopefully you can skype with her.

Noelle isn't convinced and nods her head aimlessly.

NOELLE

I sure hope so.

Gabrielle hugs Noelle and starts to leave. She stops halfway down the walkway and comes back.

Gabrielle takes photos from her purse and hands to Noelle.

GABRIELLE

(Smiling broadly)

I snapped several of these pictures with you and Muna when he wasn't looking.

NOELLE

JESUS Thank you!!!

Tears are quickly flowing and Noelle hugs Gabrielle in gratitude.

NOELLE

I didn't even think to take pictures because of everything that happened. I would have died had I made it home without one picture of my baby.

Noelle walks Gabrielle walks down the sidewalk to her car and waves as she drives away.

FADE OUT

INT. VILLAGE SCHOOL - MORNING

Noelle is having breakfast with the kids. Madam Constance has announced that Noelle is leaving today to fly back to America.

AFRICAN GIRL

Madam Noelle thank you, so fun.
You go America?

NOELLE

Yes, I have two girls in America.

Noelle pulls out her ipad and flips through various photos. The kids are excited to see pictures of people, places and things. After ten minutes a car horn blows and its time for Noelle to leave.

MADAM CONSTANCE

Thank you for everything you have done for these kids. You have showed the love of God in every way possible. You are welcome back anytime.

NOELLE

You are all of Gods children and he loves you very much.

AFRICAN GIRL

Gods loves Madam Noelle.

The kids circle around Noelle and take turns hugging her. A horn sounds and Noelle says goodbye and leaves.

EXT. NOELLE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Noelle, just returned from Africa. She pulls up in her car and sees cars and a news van. She is exhausted and dreads going in. Several people come out with welcome home signs. Noelle's daughters Rysa and Rachael are standing there with smiling.

NOELLE

Thank God! I'm home.

Everyone hugs her.

Rachael home from college grabs and hugs mom.

NOELLE

Rachael honey, so glad to see you.
I thought you were doing a
community service project in DC.

RACHAEL

They gave me two days off, they
know about Muna. (Pause) Sorry I
missed you guys at the embassy but
I followed you on Facebook.

NOELLE

I know you were with us in spirit.
We did get to talk to a guy in
the embassy though.

Noelle hugs Rachael. The cat stella is winding around their
legs and meowing.

RYSA

We sure did miss you. (Pause) I
had a great time at the
Robertson's house, they're cool
peeps.

NOELLE

I am so glad the Robertson's took
good care of you. Hopefully you
didn't get into any trouble missy.

A reporter from the local station walks up with a camera man
and asks for an interview. Noelle gives an interview
telling much of what happened in Africa.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

First day of college classes, Noelle is greeting everyone.

NOELLE

Good Morning I am Dr. Noelle
Hunter and I am teaching Peace
Studies.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Professor, are you the lady I saw
on the news where your daughter
was kidnapped?

NOELLE

Yes it is. What's your name?

COLLEGE STUDENT

Sharon Jackson. Will you tell us about it? I read something on my bff's Facebook page.

NOELLE

This was an emotional roller coaster for my family. I just returned a couple days ago.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Ok, professor I understand.

Noelle considers the request for a moment.

NOELLE

Actually this may be an interesting way to start the class. (Pause) By a show of hands, how many have heard about my daughter Muna being kidnapped.

A hand full of students raise their hands.

NOELLE

Let's take a few minutes to discuss the situation. Then we will go over the syllabus.

Noelle recounts Muna's story.

INT. NOELLES LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Rysa walks in the living room in her band uniform and puts her clarinet on the table. She takes off her band jacket and collapses on the floor. Stella comes over and head butts and meows at her.

RYSA

Hey kitty kitty. 'Sup mom?

NOELLE

Oh the kitty get's love before mom? Poor mom who slaves away hours in the salt mines so you can play in the band?

RYSA

Please mom! You hassle college kids all day and threaten 'em with F's and take away their cell phones. (Pause) Real hard work.

NOELLE

Heheheh ok ok. How was practice?

RYSA

Band practice was murder today.
The drumline was wack and tuba
section was super lame. Only the
flag team was worth anything.

Noelle lays on the floor next to Rysa. She then holds
pinches and crinkles her nose.

NOELLE

Pew weeee. Someone needs to run
into soap and water.

RYSA

Very funny. See how you are? I'm
trynna rep for Moreadhead and
you're cracking jokes. (Pause)
Lame jokes I must add.

NOELLE

Ima tell you like granny always
told us "you gota pay the cost to
be the boss". Hahahahah

Rysa rolls her eyes, then laughs and they lay on the floor
and talk.

RYSA

Mom, what do you think Muna's
doing right now? (Pause) Do you
think she knows we're fighting for
her.

NOELLE

Honey, Muna knows how much you
miss her. How much all of us miss
her.

Their talking trails off and they doze off. Noelle starts
dreaming about Muna.

DREAM SEQUENCE STARTS- MALI WEST AFRICA MUNA'S BEDROOM

In the dream she see's Muna laying on her bed crying calling
for mommy and sistee. Ibrahim walks in to Muna's room.

IBRAHIM

(VO)

Muna stop crying. Grandma's here to see you. Get up, wash your face so you can go see her.

MUNA

(VO)

When can I see mommie and sistee?

IBRAHIM

(VO)

You're not a baby anymore, stop crying and come downstairs.

MUNA

(VO)

Can I go see mommy tomorrow?

IBRAHIM

(VO)

Shhhhh. Let's go.

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS - EVENING

She opens her eyes and see's hears Rysa snoring. Her phone rings and she answers it in a whisper and walks outside to talk.

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS: NOELLE AND MOM

NOELLE

Hey mom! (Pause) Shhhh Rysa just returned from band practice and crashed on the floor.

MOM

Hey, Noe' how you holding up?
(Pause) Papa and I are praying for you guys.

NOELLE

Holding strong. Did you read on my Facebook pages I got the permit to protest at the Mali embassy in DC?

MOM

My computer's acting up. But your sister told me. It's gonna be cold in Nov, bundle up.

NOELLE

Ten people I dont even know, said they will cycle through and support us.

MOM

You are a fighter through and through. (Pause) God's speed.

NOELLE

Oh yeah my lawyer and the American Embassy in Mali arranged a skype conference on Friday. I am praying everything goes ok.

MOM

I hate to see you get your hopes up honey, you know how he can be.

NOELLE

I'll call this weekend and catch up. By the way, did I tell you I got a new kittie?

MOM

Have you bumped your head? You know black people dont have inside pets. (Pause) I guess I just raised you wrong.

NOELLE

(laughing)

I will text you a picture of sweet furry Stella later on.

MOM

Uhhhh no thanks. You know darn well I don't want to see no nasty flea bitten cat on my phone. (Pause) Tell my sweet grand daughter granny says hi.

NOELLE

(Smiling)

Bye.

INT. PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS. - DAY

INT. NOELLE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Noelle returns from outside talking to mom. She wakes up Rysa telling her to shower and get in the bed.

NOELLE

Honey, get a shower and get in bed. I will take care of the dishes.

RYSA

Thanks mom. I'm not even hungry.

NOELLE

I have to pick you up late tomorrow from school because I have to go to the optometrist.

RYSA

Are you getting glasses? Please no lame professor ones.

Noelle puts her hands on her hips in feigned dismay.

NOELLE

Smarty pants! Actually I am getting fit for colored contact lenses.

RYSA

Why mom? You got the light brown eyes that all my friends say is cool. They want to know why I don't have them.

NOELLE

Honey they make me stand out there with the African, uh Mali people. I need a basic brown color to blend in.

RYSA

Why? I don't understand.

NOELLE

I....uh...well I may have to do something on the down low. I don't want to stand out, but just blend in like anyone else.

RYSA

(Exhaling)

On the man hunt huh? Please leave
me out of your scams.

Rysa gets up, and takes her clarinet and band jacket and starts to walk upstairs. She goes into Muna's bedroom and sits on her bed. She turns on Muna's Hello Kitty TV and watches a video with Muna during Christmas.

RYSA

Dont worry Muna, Sistee gona see
ya soon.

Fade out with Rysa laughing and talking to Muna.

INT. MUNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rysa, Noelle and Muna's Sunday school teacher are gathered in Muna's room waiting on the skype conference scheduled by the American Embassy In Mail.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

We sure do miss Muna in kids
church. She was so helpful and
everyone loves her.

RYSA

Mom, why are we in Muna's room,
its small and kinda junky in here.

NOELLE

It be cool to show her all her
toys . Its been almost 2 years,
and I think she'll like seeing all
us playing in her room.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

Fantastic idea. If things get
awkward, she'd love to see all her
old toys and new ones.

An hour passes with no word about the planned skype.

RYSA

Mom, why do you think it's taking
so long? Think Ibrahim didn't even
bring her to the embassy?

NOELLE

Hang in there honey, there is a major time difference and remember it is a 3rd world country.

Rysa holds her head down and rolls her eyes, shaking her head.

RYSA

Yeah that's right. I 'member the lights out all the time. And the wif was really messed up.

The phone rings startling everyone. Noelle excitedly grabs the phone and hits the speaker button.

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION: NOELLE AND EMBASSY IN MALI

NOELLE

Hello? This is Noelle Hunter.

EMBASSY STAFF

Noelle, this is Andrea Johnson, counselor officer at the American Embassy in Bomako Mali

NOELLE

Yes yes. We hear you clearly. Are we ready to skype? I have my computer all set up ready to go.

ANDREA JOHNSON

I am so sorry but your ex-husband refused to let Muna skype today.

NOELLE

What?! You got to be joking. I can't believe this.

ANDREA JOHNSON

I know you are upset, but he did allow us to take a few pictures that I already emailed to you. (Pause) He only stayed about 15 minutes. I was able to talk to Muna.

RYSA

Miss Andrea, did Muna ask about me? Did she see my picture?

ANDREA JOHNSON

I showed her the pictures you emailed me. She said she wants to see sistee and mommy.

Noelle is furious. Her face is red with anger and her lips are trembling.

NOELLE

Did she look healthy? Was she smiling or crying? Did she ask about me or going home?

ANDREA JOHNSON

I debated about telling you this, but Muna looked skinny, almost gaunt. She didn't smile much. (Pause) I asked him if she was ill, but he said no.

Noelle walks to the wall and pounds it with her fist. Then picks up a huge stuffed animal and hugs it tightly. Tears are streaming down.

NOELLE

Thanks for everything. I know how difficult he can be. (Pause) Did he say when he would bring her back for a visit?

ANDREA JOHNSON

No, he didnt. I didnt push him because I wanted to spend time with Muna. (Pause) She is such a remarkable girl. She drew several pictures which I will scan and email you.

The line get's stat-icky and a quick busy signal is heard as the phone call ends.

RYSA

Mom, its ok. The lady seen her and she's ok. (Pause) Let's pull up the pictures on the ipad.

They quickly pull up the photos and the pictures Muna drew on the computer.

FADE OUT

INT. NOELLE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Noelle and Rysa are sorting and filling care care packages for the Village School. They stand at the dining room table with small toys, toiletries, crayons, and candy, they pack little paper sacks.

RYSA

Muna is going to love the hello kitty things auntie sent. (Pause) All her mystery shops are paying off.

NOELLE

hahha You're right. (Pause) Im so thankful that out community loves the Village School and gave us all the wonderful goodies.

The phone rings and Noelle starts to ignore it but walks over to pick it up. She does not recognize the number and hesitates again, but answers it.

NOELLE IS TALKING ON THE PHONE.

NOELLE

Hello?

MUNA

Mommy?

Noelle is silent a few seconds and drops to her knees, breaths heavy and tears quickly well up in her eyes.

NOELLE

Muna? Baby is that you.

MUNA

Yes mommy. At grandma house, she call.

NOELLE

I'm so happy you called. Sistee is here, she wants to talk to you.

Noelle activates the speaker phone and everyone is talking. Muna talks to Rysa for a minute then asks for mommy.

MUNA

You come see me? I go home ...America?

Noelle closes her eyes and exhales.

NOELLE

Me and sistee will see you soon.
(Pause) Tell me about your
friends.

MUNA

I have friend, Isha.... we play
soccer.

Static is heard, a loud buzz and finally a fast busy signal and the phone goes dead. Noelle's crestfallen but quickly recovers and maintains a happy demeanor for Rysa.

NOELLE

Praise God! I got to hear my
baby's voice. (Pause) I wish I
could have recorded it.

RYSA

(Smiling)

I know mom! She sounded so cute
with her French accent. (Pause) I
could understand her better this
time. She must be speaking English
more often now.

They hug each other smiling and walk back over to the table and continue packing. They are each lost in their thoughts and are quiet for a minute.

RYSA

Mom! I have a good idea, let's
pack a special package for Muna's
friend Isha.

NOELLE

Great idea, she'll love it.

They continue to make care packages as the scene ends.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Noelle is standing in front of her Peace Studies class.

NOELLE

Ok guys do we have any questions
on your final project and final
exam.

Students look at each, some shake their head or shrug
shoulders.

COLLEGE STUDENT

They are both due on Dec 3rd right? So we add them to the blackboard, or do you want them emailed.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Duh! We always post them to the blackboard. Don't you read the syllabus?

Noelle steps closer to the two students, and puts her hand on the shoulder.

NOELLE

Hey, let's get into the holiday spirit and get give peace a chance. (Pause) Yes all assignments should be posted to the blackboard. But I went down load them until Dec 4th.

The college dean walks in with a big over-sized check. The students then break out clapping and cheering. Noelle is caught by surprise, looks around and then smiles broadly.

DEAN SMITH

Hello Dr. Hunter, your students have a surprise for you. (Pause) Miss Jackie, the floor is yours.

Jackie stands up and goes to get the over sized check from the dean and presents it to Noelle.

JACKIE

Dr. Hunter, we know you are sending Christmas care packages to the African kids in the village. We raised money to help the village kids.

NOELLE

(Tearing up)

Thank you so much class and Dr. Smith. This will be such a blessing to us. We will mail about the Christmas boxes to the children when we get to DC next week.

DEAN SMITH

(smiling)

You have great students. They came to me with this idea and the

(MORE)

DEAN SMITH (cont'd)
 department was all for it.

NOELLE
 They are the best students in the
 school.

DEAN SMITH
 Everyone have a good Thanksgiving
 break. (Pause) Make good
 decisions during this week off. I
 don't want to see anyone in the
 newspaper or on television.

COLLEGE STUDENT
 Dr. Hunter will be on TV and the
 newspaper. hahah But it will be
 because she is protesting at the
 Mali Embassy in DC.

One student stands up with their book and waves it in mock
 protest. Laughter.

NOELLE
 Several people will join me. I
 will provide real-time facebook
 updates, instagram and tweets.

COLLEGE STUDENT
 You go Girl! Uh I mean Dr. Hunter.
 We will be retweeting and sharing
 your progress on social media.

NOELLE
 Thanks guys for your emotional
 support and generous donations.
 Enjoy your week off.

FADE OUT

EXT. REPUBLIC OF MALI EMBASSY- WASHINGTON DC - DAY

We see Noelle, Rysa and about 20 supporters who have
 assembled on the sidewalk outside of the Mali Embassy. It's
 30 degrees and windy. Everyone has large signs in English
 and French. They have been protesting about an hour telling
 everyone who passes by what happened. A news crew has just
 arrived up and is interviewing Noelle. An an embassy
 spokesman comes outside.

EMBASSY STAFF

What is going on? Who are you and why do you march at my embassy.

Noelle shows him her protest permit and stacks of signed petitions. She reminds him that she has been trying to meet with the ambassador and has made numerous calls and emails.

NOELLE

I am Noelle Hunter, my daughter Muna N'Dayie was abducted by a Mail national and taken to Mali against American law. (Pause) What's your name sir?

EMBASSY STAFF

I am Abulla Omar. We are sorry about your daughter, but we can not help here. Please contact the Mali family courts.

We see the news reporter who has been recoding the interaction suddenly put a microphone in Abdulla'S face and asks questions.

ABULLA OMAR

We are so sorry about her daughter, but we're just a diplomatic embassy here. We cant do anything about child custody issues.

The embassy front door opens and another person speaks in French to Abdulla and waves him in. Abdulla shakes Noelle's hand and apologizes demurely and scurries back inside the embassy.

NOELLE

Well that's progress. I asked for meetings with their staff but was given the brush off. We're making waves.

RYSA

Mom, I feel closer to Muna now that we are at the embassy. I feel like we will see her soon. (Pause) I can't wait to update my facebook status.

Noelle, Rysa and fellow protesters get a group hug and sing "Amazing Grace". Someone brings a gallon of hot coffee and snacks and sets up a table.

A sheriff car drives up parks next to them. He gets out and starts walking towards them.

RYSA

Oh no mom, here comes the police.
I guess that embassy guy called
them on us. (Pause) We still have
3 hours left on our permit.

NOELLE

Ok everybody let me handle this.
Please no one say anything.

Sheriff walks up sternly with the large brim hat low on his forehead.

SHERIFF

Are you Noelle Hunter?

NOELLE

Yes officer I am. Is there a
problem?

ERIC

I'm Eric Brown from Enterprise
Alabama. I went to school with
your sister Angela and we went
into the Marines together. (Pause)
Don't you remember me?

Noelle heaves a sign of relief, smiles and tries to remember him.

NOELLE

(Grining)

Oh yeah! You were a skinny little
scared dude. Man, you got some
meat on your bones now. Looks
nice....real nice.

Eric looks embaressed. Takes off his hat, rubs his forehead and puts it back on.

ERIC

Uhhh....thanks. I think.

NOELLE

I remember you came to the house a
couple of times. Mom's thought
you were a pretty good guy.

RYSA

How did you find out about us? Are we on TV or something.

ERIC

I peeped Angela's Facebook status and read about your story. I wanted to come out and see how things are going.

Noelle offers Eric some coffee and Eric stands around chatting with everyone. After 10 minutes Eric shakes hands all around and prepares to leave.

ERIC

Hey, I have an apartment a few blocks up the road if you guys wanna crash there. (Pause) I just bought a townhouse across town and my apt is vacant until I sell it.

Noelle screams excitedly and grabs and hugs him.

ERIC

Here is my phone number, call me when you're done and I'll come scoop you and drop you at the apartment.

NOELLE

Thanks Eric, what a blessing! We had no money for a hotel room. We were gonna just crash on my friends floor.

ERIC

Slow your roll dear. Its nothing fancy, its a bare bones bachelor pad. A couple of beds, couch, and TV.

NOELLE

Thanks you so much! You're a chocolate angel from heaven.

Noelle makes an exaggerated move to take a faux picture with her hands as if he is a model. Everyone laughs.

ERIC

I wish you guys the best. Stay out of trouble now, I don't want to have to come out on a dispatch call for you crazy girls.

RYSA

Thanks officer. I will keep everyone in line.

Eric gets in the car and toots his horn as he drives away.

NOELLE

God provides again!

RYSA

Wow, Auntie Angela's boyfriend from years ago shows up to help us and gives us a place to crash?

People continue to stop by and sign her petition and make donations.

FEMALE PROTESTER

It was great meeting you, but I have to leave. (Pause) Whats your next step.

NOELLE

Next top is the United Nations in New York. The Mali delegation will be there and we hope to present our petition to them.

FEMALE PROTESTER

How long will you be in NY.

NOELLE

For a couple hours while the UN is in special session. (Pause) Gota be back by Sunday, school starts Monday.

FEMALE PROTESTER

Do your hustle girl. I will keep the prayers going.

Scene ends as everyone is bundled up to keep warm and drinking warm drinks.

FADE OUT

INT. US POST OFFICE -WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Noelle and Rysa make several trips taking boxes from the car to the post office. Postal workers and customers look inquisitively. An employee comes from behind the counter and comes over to offer help.

POST OFFICE WORKER

Wow, sure is alot of boxes here
ladies. Helping Santa are we?

Laughter in the post office from curious customers and
Noelle and Rysa.

NOELLE

haahah. We're shipping Christmas
care packages for children in
Africa.

POST OFFICE WORKER

Well that's wonderful! (Pause)
That's what Christmas should be
about, helping needy children.

POSTAL CUSTOMER

What country in Africa?

RYSA

Mali West Africa. A school there
has children who have been
orphaned due to diseases and war.

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Thats' great. So glad to see young
people like you ...willing to help
others.

That customer is called to the counter.

The post office worker helps to prepare boxes, fill out
customs forms and loaded them up in a hand truck. After all
the paperwork is done Noelle goes to the counter.

POST OFFICE WORKER

Ma'am a customer left \$50 to help
pay for your shipment.

NOELLE

(Smiling)

Really? That's wonderful sir!

Noelle finishes the transaction, pays and they leave the
post office.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The local church is holding a 2 year anniversary of Muna's abduction. Community members and reporters are taking part. Noelle's family is here, her daughter Rachael, mom, dad, sister and nephew.

PASTOR

I want to thank the community for coming out to the 2nd anniversary of our beloved daughter Muna who was abducted.

The pastor motions for Rysa to come up to the podium.

RYSA

Thanks Pastor John and the entire community for all you have done to help my sister Muna come home.
(Pause)Also to my granny, papa and my aunt Angela who are here today.

Granny stands up and motions to the pastor to speak. The pastor gives permission.

GRANNY

Thanks to the entire Morehead community for watching over and supporting my daughter. God is so good to our family!

PAPA

My daughter Noelle is a great mother. Thank you for praying for her and helping. We can go back to Alabama knowing she is in good hands.

Each parishioners turns and light the persons candle to their left. After all candle's are lit, the congregation sings "Hold up the Light" by New Jersey Mass Choir.

NOELLE

Muna honey....you will be home soon.

FADE OUT

INT. NOELLE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Noelle and Rysa are waiting on the embassy to call. The scheduled a skype visit.

RYSA

Mom its been 2 hours, do you think Ibrahim is going to bring Muna for the skype.

NOELLE

I hope so baby. Our team made over 100 phone calls to the embassy in DC. (Pause) Our Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell is working behind the scenes.

RYSA

Yep I hope so. I bet they are tired of hearing from us huh?

NOELLE

No rest baby....no rest!

Phone rings. She grabs it excitedly.

NOELLE

Oh that's my friend Jennifer in DC, I will call her back. I want to keep the line open.

Jennifer calls several more times. Noelle decides to answer it.

PHONE CONVERSATION: NOELLE AND JENNIFER

NOELLE

Girl let me call you back, waiting for a call from Muna.

NOELLE'S FRIEND IN DC

Turn on the TV now!, its about Mali. God's speed, bye.

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS.

Noelle runs and turns on CNN. She see's a story about rebels attempting to overthrow the Mali government. It shows men in jeeps with mounted guns and soldiers with guns threatening people. The reporter says the American Embassy in Mail was locked down as a precaution.

RYSA

Mom, maybe that's why no one called us, the embassy is closed.

NOELLE

Yes baby you're right.

RYSA
 I'm scared for Muna, what if they
 have a war there? We can't go
 back to get her.

Noelle turns from the news to Disney Channel which is
 playing Muna's favorite show.

NOELLE
 Let's pray.

Noelle hold's Rysa's hands and they pray.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Noelle is at her desk grading papers when the phone rings.
 It is Senator Mitch McConnell's administrative aid Nancy.

PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN NOELLE AND NANCY

NOELLE
 Hello

NANCY
 Dr. Hunter?

NOELLE
 Yes

NANCY
 This is Nancy, I am Senator Mitch
 McConnell's office manager. We
 met in DC when came to get the
 protesting permit?

NOELLE
 (Laughing)
 Oh yes Nancy I remember. How is
 my favorite Kentucky Senator?

NANCY
 He's doing great. Actually he is
 the reason for my call. (Pause)
 Would you like to testify before
 the Senate Foreign Relations
 Subcommittee on Child Abduction?

NOELLE
 What? What? Are you kidding?

NANCY

No ma'am I am serious. The panel will testify before the committee. Senator McConnell thought you might like to participate.

NOELLE

Praise the Lord Yes! When?

NANCY

It will be televised live on CSPAN and on line. It will be in a couple of weeks, most likely the second week in February.

NOELLE

Yes yes yes yes, did I already say yes?

Laughter between them.

NANCY

We will call you when we firm up details. I look forward to seeing you and Rysa again.

NOELLE

Thank you Nancy, be blessed.

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS.

Students file into class.

INT. CAR HEADING TO DC - DAY

Noelle and Rysa are in the car headed to Washington DC for Noelle to testify before a congressional committee.

RYSA

Are we going to say in the sheriff guys house? Forget his name?

NOELLE

No we are staying at Jennifer's house. Remember, she has the little girl that plays with Muna.

RYSA

Yep, I remember her.

NOELLE

Oh yes we are. It's a blessing to because it's easy to get to. Plus it's close to the subway that takes us right to capitol hill.

RYSA

Mom, I can't believe it. You are going to be speaking to congress, crazy. (Pause) has anyone in our family ever done that?

NOELLE

No honey I don't think so. But you know your Auntie Angela met President's Regan and President Bush when she was a Marine at the embassy in Paris.

RYSA

That's right. Paris, oh yeah. When can we go to Paris?

NOELLE

We should go there on a vacation when Muna comes back.

Rysa is on her phone scrolling through Facebook.

RYSA

I just read on Facebook that my history teacher gave a pop quiz. Haha losers, I missed it.

NOELLE

We should be at her house in thirty minutes. Can you get the GPS out and plug in her address.

Rysa plugs in the GPS and puts in the address. She tunes the radio and find Lecrae's song "God is enough". They sing that song loudly as they exit the beltway and goes towards downtown DC.

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE - DAY

Noelle is preparing to go to capitol hill to testify before congress. She sits down with a cup of coffee and watches the news. Jennifer walks in.

JENNIFER

You must be so excited about speaking before congress. (Pause) Do they tell you what to say? or do you just tell Muna's story.

NOELLE

I had to submit my proposed testimony for prior approval.

JENNIFER

What the heck? I thought you could just tell about Muna being abducted and stuff.

NOELLE

This is a panel and there will be several parents there whose kids were abducted. (Pause) So its not just about us.

JENNIFER

ok, I guess that makes sense. (Pause) Well let's get rolling. We have to take two trains and then walk several blocks.

They watch the news and see a report on Mail and other African nations with drought and civil unrest. Rysa walks in.

RYSA

Mom dont watch that, its only gonna make you moreuh you know anxious about Muna in Africa.

Rysa turns the TV off.

NOELLE

You're right honey. (Pause) Make sure you bring your ID and stuff, they check it when we get to capitol hill.

INT. CAPITOL HILL GREEN ROOM - DAY

Noelle Rysa and several other people are in the waiting room preparing to enter the congressional hearing. Nancy and others are prepping the speakers, checking microphones and going over speeches.

NANCY

In five minutes please go sit at table with your white name card. You will speak in order from left to right.

NOELLE

Thanks Nancy.

A Capitol Hill police officer comes in and escorts everyone out to their table.

NANCY

Best wishes for a good hearing Noelle.

The hearing is called to order. Senator Robert Mendez from New Jersey begins the hearing. Dr Noelle Hunter is introduced and is a part of the panel discussion.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Noelle is standing in the white board.. A male student raises his hand.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Dr. Hunter, the substitute teacher let us watch you testify before the the congressional committee. (Pause) How was it?

NOELLE

Joshua, it was a very memorable experience. Following the law and established protocols I was able to address my issue with the highest level officials.

Noelle talks about her experience and meeting the Kentucky senator.

NOELLE

I was even able to crash a Mali State Dinner and met Madame Lobbo Toure, First Lady of the Republic of Mali.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Hahah, funny. It sounds like the Salahi couple who crashed President Obama's State Dinner. (Pause) John Stewart really had a (MORE)

COLLEGE STUDENT (cont'd)
field day with that.

NOELLE
I had an invitation through another contact. I was respectful and followed all the appropriate protocols. (Pause) She even posed for a picture with me.

COLLEGE STUDENT
It must have been difficult not to go off on them. (Pause) Especially if you know they were giving you the run around.

NOELLE
Peace studies just isnt some abstract idea. But rather ways you may solve complex, often emotionally frustrating situations with a peaceful approach; much like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.

JOSHUA
Are you still planning to go back to Africa...uh Mali West Africa.

NOELLE
Yes my daughter Rysa and I are going when school is out.

JOSHUA
I see you have a Go Fund me campaign, how close are you to your goal?

NOELLE
What are you talking about? I don't have a Go Fund Me page.

COLLEGE STUDENT
Yes you do professor, I donated my happy meal money to it.

Laughter. The Joshua pulls it up on the website and Noelle walks over to see it.

NOELLE
Oh my God! Who did this? It's up to \$855.

JOSHUA

Professor, everybody in the community supports you, we all want to help.

NOELLE

Whoever did it...thank you. We have to cover hotel, meals, court fees, lawyer, interpreter....thanks everybody.

Students come up and hug Noelle and give her high five's.

INT. NOELLE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Noelle and Rysa are eating breakfast. Noelle is on the ipad.

RYSA

(Rolling her eyes)

Mom get off the ipad and enjoy a meaningful discussion with your daughter. (Pause) Isn't that what you tell me all the time.

NOELLE

Sorry honey. I am excited I started a new organization for parents of abducted children.

RYSA

Really? What's the name?

NOELLE

iStand Parent Network. What do you think?

RYSA

Sounds cool, especially with the i, like ipad or iphone. How did you come up with it.

Rysa knocks over her milk and it runs across the table. Noelle snatches up the ipad quickly and looks at Rysa with a smirk.

RYSA

oops sorry mom, my bad.

Rysa is cleaning up the spilled milk, wiping the table and mopping the floor.

NOELLE

You not slick. I got your number girl. You think if this dinosaur ipad gets zapped, you can get a new one. Sorry charlie, no such luck.

RYSA

(rolling her eyes)

You never said how you came up with the name?

NOELLE

On the ride back from testifying before congress. You were sleeping and I was praying asking God what to do next. (Pause) And He gave me this idea.

RYSA

Nice mom...I like it. (Pause)
Let's see how much Go Fund Me has raised for our trip.

They go sit on the couch and scroll through their Facebook and Go Fund Me page.

RYSA

Praise God mom! Look. Its up to \$2,000.

NOELLE

Thank god. We probably need \$4,000 total for the two to three weeks we will be in Mali.

RYSA

Several people are having fundraisers for us. I think we can do it.

They go in the living room, sit on the couch and turn on the TV. It shows CNN Breaking News, Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for kidnapping 300 girls at a Christian school in Nigeria.

NOELLE

OH God NO!!

Noelle is scared, concerned for Muna. She starts welling up.

RYSA

Dont cry mom. That's in Nigera,
not in Mali. (Pause) Anyway we
will be in Mail in a couple weeks
bring her home.

Rysa turns from the news and stops on Muna's favorite Disney show. She sits next to Noelle on the couch and they watch the Disney show. They both laugh and recount how Muna loved it.

FADE OUT

INT. RYSA'S HIGH SCHOOL LUNCHROOM - DAY

Rysa and several of her friends are at the cafeteria table talking about the end of school, prom and the summer vacation.

RYSA

Does everyone have their dress for
the prom? Susanna, Hannah whats
the deal?

SUSANNA

Yup me and Hannah ordered ours
online. What about you guys?

They continue talking about prom plans.

SUSANNA

Rysa are you going to your dad's
house in Atlanta this summer?

RYSA

No, remember I'm going to Africa
to try to get my sister.

HANNAH

Wow that sounds exciting. I never
been out the country. (Pause) I
bet it cost alot to fly to Africa.

RYSA

Yeah I think mom said the tickets
are like \$2,500. (Pause) I dont
know how much Muna's ticket will
be cause we dont know when or if
she will come back this time.

SUSANNA

Man that's horrible to have your
baby sister so far away.

Rysa looks away for a minute thinking about Muna. Just then
Rysa's boyfriend Isiah walks up to the group and sits down.

ISIAH

Hey everyone, what's popp'n?

RYSA

Oh...nothing. We're just deciding
on our earrings, dresses and hair
styles. Uhhh you're welcome to
give us your two cents if you
want.

The girls at the table snicker.

ISIAH

Uh...no thanks. But hey I came to
tell you guys I got the limo for
prom.

HANNAH

Nice!

Everyone high five's each other.

HANNAH

Rysa your hubby rocks!

RYSA

Hello, stop being a weirdo. We're
just friends.

ISIAH

(Laughing)

Rysa dear, let's stop pretending.
You're my girl for a lifetime,
stop running.

HANNAH

Mmmm sounds like love birds to me.

Isiah gets down on one knee and holds Rysa's hands
pretending to ask her to marry him.

ISIAH

Rysa Lee will you marry me?
(Pause) About six years from now
when I graduate college.

Several people in the lunchroom hoop and holler and make loud sounds. Rysa is embarrassed and drops her head. The bell rings and Rysa gets up and goes to put her tray away.

RYSA

All of you are weirdos. I'm out.

Rysa walks away with people snickering.

INT. NOELLES LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rysa is standing in the living room dressed for prom. She is wearing a bright red dress with diamonds. Noelle is pinning a corsage on her dress.

NOELLE

(Awestruck)

You look beautiful, totally stunning and captivating.

RYSA

Thanks mom. But my hair is freaking me out, these two strands wont lay down, I look like a Martian.

Noelle uses gel and tames the wild hair. A series of loud car horns is heard.

RYSA

Crap, their here in the limo. I'm not ready.

Rysa scurries upstairs yelling she's not ready.

A knock on the door.

NOELLE

Get your purse and stuff, I will have the talk with Isiah.

RYSA

OMG please tell me you are not going to embarrass me. I will just die if you say anything crazy mom.

NOELLE

Don't forget to gargle so your halitosis doesn't wilt your flowers.

Noelle opens to do to see Isiah is standing in a black and white tux. He comes in and stands.

RYSA

Here I come.

When Rysa comes downstairs they take pictures in the house and in front of the limo. Everybody gets back in and the limo departs.

INT. NOELLE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phone rings.

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS

NOELLE

Hey sis. You just missed your favorite niece, she's on her way to the prom with her on again off again ex.

ANGELA

You got to be kidding. Rysa went with a boy? She said dates were lame and she was going with a group of girls.

NOELLE

Teenagers, who knows why they do what they do.

ANGELA

Everything all set for your trip back to Mali? You leave in a few days right?

NOELLE

Yes, we fly out of Cincinnati. It was cheaper than flying out of DC. (Pause) Plus its only 3 hours from the house and DC is a 6 hour drive.

ANGELA

Do you have Plan B all set?

NOELLE

Yep. I got someone who will buy the get away car. (Pause) Your son and I mapped out two escape routes out of Mali.

ANGELA

Another option is to grab Muna and run to the Embassy. It's considered American soil and you will be safe there.

NOELLE

Yeah...I guess.

Noelle is looking out the window.

NOELLE

I know, I know. But man I'd hate to run with her to the embassy, only to have the ambassador make me return Muna. I know I will never see her again if that happens.

ANGELA

It's such a hard decision, either way you go. There is civil unrest on the borders of Mali.

NOELLE

Don't tell mom whatever you do.

ANGELA

Ok I won't. (Pause) Did you tell Nancy in the Senator's office? Might be a good idea to give them a heads up, in case things don't go as planned.

Noelle sits on the couch and rubs her temples and lays her head back.

NOELLE

I thought about it. But, well, I didn't want them to tell me no. I know they bent over backwards for me, but this is my child.

ANGELA

I gotcha. Hard decision either way (Pause) Did you get the contact lenses?

NOELLE

Yes I did. The eye doctor eyed me strangely asking why would I want to cover up such pretty eyes.

NOELLE

Yes, trust the Mali courts. Snatch her and run to the embassy. Or get bodyguards, buy a car and try to make it across the border. (Pause) A no win situation.

ANGELA

May the Lord order your footsteps.

NOELLE

I receive that.

ANGELA

Oh yeah make sure you tell Rysa to post her cheesy prom pictures on Facebook or instagram.

NOELLE

Alright sis. Oh yeah tell your handsome son thanks for the maps various escape routes of Mali. hahahah

ANGELA

I sure will. I feel good about this visit sis, I just know God will bring our daughter home.

NOELLE

Words from your mouth to the ears of God. Amen to that.

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS.

INT. NOELLES LIVING ROOM - DAY

Noelle and Rysa are preparing to leave to for Africa. The car is loaded up and they are doing one last check of the house. The cat Stella is winding around their legs.

NOELLE

Ok, looks like we're ready to hit the road. Suitcases are in the car and I have all paperwork and stuff right here.

Noelle lifts a softside briefcase.

RYSA

Yep. I got Muna's bag of goodies,
our cell chargers. OH! Let me
update our status on Facebook.

Noelle leads Rysa over to the couch for serious talk.

NOELLE

Honey, are you sure you want to
go?

RYSA

Mom you're such a drama queen. Of
course I want to go. I havent
seen Muna in almost 3 years.

NOELLE

What I'm saying is I dont know how
things will turn out honey. This
is serious, very serious. (Pause)
We could get arrested...or maybe
beaten by their police.

RYSA

Mom! What are you talking about?
We are just going to court to ask
for Muna to come home.

NOELLE

And if the court does doesn't give
me custody, I am thinking of other
options.

Rysa looks away, swallows and closes her eyes.

RYSA

Like what?

NOELLE

Your auntie Angela said we could
get Muna and run to the embassy.
(Pause) But I have another plan
that involved escaping through
another country.

RYSA

Oh. uh.....oh.

NOELLE

Honey, if you want to stay here I
totally understand. This really
isnt your fight anyway.

Rysa stands up sternly and puts her hands on her hips.

RYSA

She's my sister! Of course this is my fight. (Pause) I couldn't make it just sitting here checking Facebook every few minutes for the next two weeks.

NOELLE

We may have to run at night with no notice in a old car and go across the border. There could be problems with their customs, police....uh

NOELLE

Ok, if you're sure let's do one last check around the house.

STELLA WALKS UP MEOWING LOUDLY.

RYSA

Kitty its ok Miss Becky is staying here with you, you'll be ok.

FADE OUT

INT. AIRPORT BOARDING GATE - AFTERNOON

Noelle and Rysa are at the boarding gate eating chicken and fries. They alternate between making last minute phone calls and surfing the web.

RYSA

Did you call Auntie Angela and granny?

NOELLE

Yes I talked to both of them. Auntie Angela sais she put \$200 on your visa card.

RYSA

Sweet....she rocks.

Noelle is gobbling up the sandwich and stuffing fries in her mouth.

NOELLE

Nothing like a spicy Chick-fil-A.
Our last American meal for a
couple weeks.

RYSA

Yep, we may be eating prison food
soon. hahah

Noelle gives Rysa a stern look and turns away.

RYSA

Sorry mom.

INT. MALI AFRICA AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Noelle and Rysa have arrived in Mali. They are at the
baggage claim and a driver walks up to offer help.

TAXI DRIVER

Madam, welcome to Mali. I take
you to hotel?

NOELLE

Yes thank you. Just these four
bags and we are going to the
Radisson Hotel.

They follow the driver to the car and he loads up the
baggage. They get inside and turn on their phones to check
for a signal.

TAXI DRIVER

We go.

Mali scenery includes people on motor bikes, dirty, dusty
unpaved streets. Signs are in English and French.

NOELLE

Uh...I know the way to the
Radisson. Do not drive around to
make a higher fare. (Pause) We
will be here for a while, if you
want us to call you again for a
ride.

The driver turns the rearview mirror to see them and smiles
broadly.

TAXI DRIVER

Yes Madam.

They arrive at the hotel and Noelle goes to the counter while Rysa helps the driver with the suitcases

NOELLE

What do you mean the room is not ready? I made this reservation a month ago.

HOTEL CLERK

Sorry Madam. Please come back in three hours and it will be ready.

NOELLE

No! I will not. I have an important meeting and I need a room to shower and get ready.
(Pause) I am a guest of the Ibrahim N'dayie and family.

The hotel manager comes over to speak to the clerk in French. The clerk repeats what Noelle says about the N'dayie family.

HOTEL MANAGER

Sorry ma'am for the delay. We can offer you the presidential suite at the same rate as your room.

NOELLE

Yes, that is acceptable.

They head up to the room.

INT. RADDISSON HOTEL PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

They are marveling at the luxurious accommodations. Rysa is jumping on the bed and Noelle is having a coke on the patio overlooking the city.

RYSA

Incredible, I can't wait to send instagrams to my friend, they won't believe it. (Pause) they thought we were staying in huts with goats.

NOELLE

Enjoy it honey. But you know we only have enough for a couple of days here. Then we go back to the rinky dink Sleeping.

RYSA

Works for me. Hey! Let's order room service.

NOELLE

I guess we deserve a treat. Muna will love this. They even have a hot tub in the bathroom.

RYSA

I'ma get in the hot tub right now.

NOELLE

Go ahead. I need to send some emails and call my lawyer Gabrielle and set up visitation.

INT. GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Noelle, Rysa and Gabrielle are sitting around the table having general conversation.

NOELLE

Well I called and emailed Ibrahim several times over the last two days with no response.

GABRIELLE

I asked his lawyer several times over the last week and he couldn't give any answers.

NOELLE

Huh? I have a court order from the Mali family court that I get her for two weeks starting yesterday.

Noelle waves the court order.

NOELLE

Please don't tell me it will be like last time. I don't think I can stand it.

GABRIELLE

No, I don't think it will be like last time. The judge we have now was lived in America for a few years and returned here after college.

RYSA

Miss Gabrielle, when can I see my sister?

GABRIELLE

I have court in 30 minutes. Can you call me back..say 4pm? I will see what I can arrange.

They leave the office and go next door to the café.

RYSA

Can't we just go to his house? He wont be able to say nothing when we are there.

NOELLE

Hum...honey that's a good idea. He says with his parents. (Pause) But I have not been there in years.

RYSA

They are pretty famous here, maybe the cabbie knows where they live.

NOELLE

No, we are outsiders and they automatically protect each other. But maybe we can get the cab to ride us around near the elementary schools.

RYSA

Yep, that's a good idea.

They call the same driver who got them at the airport. As they drive around aimlessly, the driver keeps asking where they are going.

NOELLE

(At a wisper.)

God help me find my baby. We have come this far Lord.

TAXI DRIVER

You go to business or house.

Noelle sits ram rod straight finally recognizing the area.

NOELLE

Hey! Turn down this way and go towards that tall building.

She gives directions as she recalls until the cab pulls up at Ibrahim's parents house.

RYSA

I see girls toys outside, maybe
this is it.

They get out the cab and Noelle leans in and talks to the driver. She gives him the fare and a large tip.

NOELLE

Thank you. Can you wait?

The driver agrees to wait while they go to the door.

EXT. IBRAHIM'S PARENT'S HOME - AFTERNOON

She knocks at the door and the housekeeper she met years ago answers. The housekeep smiles and hugs Noelle and invites her in.

NOELLE

Is Ibrahim and Muna here?

Just then both Ibrahim's parents come to the door and are shocked at seeing Noelle and Rysa.

NOELLE

Bon Jour, ca va? Ibrahim and Muna?

IBRAHIM'S MOM

No. No here. Come.

Noelle waves the cab driver away and goes inside. The parent speaks almost no English. The housekeeper translates back and forth. Ibrahim and Muna will return tomorrow. They enjoy tea and make small talk for 30 minutes.

NOELLE

Thank you for tea. We will return
tomorrow about this time.

The housekeeper translates and then walks them to the door. Ibrahim's mom impulsively hugs Noelle and kisses her on both sides of the cheek.

HOUSEKEEPER

Call tomorrow, I tell you if
Ibrahim here.

They walk to the corner and find a taxi.

INT. RADDISION HOTEL - DAY

After two days with no word from Ibrahim, it's time to check out of the hotel. They are downstairs with their suitcases at desk. The clerk runs Noelle's credit card and it's declined.

NOELLE

This can't be, I have over \$3,000 in my checking account. Please try it again.

HOTEL CLERK

Sorry madam I tried it twice, its not working.

RYSA

Mom, what's happening.

NOELLE

I don't know, let me pull up my account on my ipad.

Noelle steps away and to access her online banking. She see's the decline indicating an international fraudulent charge.

NOELLE

Oh crap. I forgot to tell my bank that I would be traveling internationally and they assume its fraudulent.

RYSA

Can you call them now?

NOELLE

Its 4am there. (Pause) Oh wait, I forgot your wonderful auntie gave me a credit card for emergencies.

They go back to the counter and run the card. The card is accepted and they check out and take a cab to the Sleeping Camel.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - LATER

They are settled in the room. Noelle's lawyer knocks at the door.

GABRIELLE

Hi everyone, how's your day going?

NOELLE

We just moved from the Raddisson.
We wanted Muna to hand out with us
in the presidential suite. (Pause)
Any word on Muna?

GABRIELLE

(Laughing)

His lawyer said you are an
aggressive women to just show up
at the parent's house.

NOELLE

They will get no rest, until my
baby is in my arms again.

GABRIELLE

It took some doing, but I arrange
for you to visit with her at the
parents house for the next couple
of days.

NOELLE

What? I still have to have
supervised visits with my own
child?

Gabrielle gives her a stern look.

RYSA

Shoot mom don't matta what they
say, let's go see Muna. Can you
take us?

GABRIELLE

Yes I will take you now if you're
ready.

NOELLE

I am so excited. It's been a year
since I have held her. Let's go.

INT. IBRAHIM'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Noelle, Rysa, the parents and housekeeper are chatting in
the living room. Muna and Ibrahim walk in.

RYSA

Muna! Oh my God I miss you, I love
you.

Rysa rushes over and picks up Muna and twirls her around.
Rysa's tears are flowing.

MUNA

Hi sistee.

Muna is stiff and not receptive. Rysa looks at Noelle.

NOELLE

Rysa, she has been on a long trip.
Let's just sit in the floor and
talk ok?

Noelle, Rysa and Muna sit on the floor and play. Rysa brings out candy, toys and a little music box. They play totally oblivious to everyone who is looking on. After an hour he stands up.

IBRAHIM

Ok, it's time for Muna to have
dinner.

Rysa starts to tear up.

RYSA

Can we come back tomorrow?

Everyone in the room looks at him. His parents say something in French, an admonishment.

IBRAHIM

Yes Rysa you can come back here
tomorrow about noon.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - DAY

Noelle has two additional visits at the parents house. They are ready to go back to the parents for a third visit. Someone knocks on the door. Rysa opens the door and Ibrahim and Muna are there.

MUNA

Hey mommie!!

Muna runs and crashes into Noelle.

IBRAHIM

My mom isn't feeling well and
didn't want a house full of people
and all the noise.

Muna goes from room to room and finally comes back and sits on Rysa's lap.

MUNA

Where is the camel sleeping momma?
Is he outside?

LAUGHTER.

NOELLE

Honey, that is the name of the hotel, the Sleeping Camel. We don't have real camel here.

MUNA

Oh ok. (Pause) Sistee, you have owls?

RYSA

Yes I do. I got some for you too in my suitcase.

Muna and Rysa go into the back bedroom to play. Noelle asks Iba to step outside to talk.

NOELLE

I have a court order that says I have her for two weeks. (Pause) The court has mine and Rysa's passports, we're not going anywhere.

IBRAHIM

You are in my country. You don't tell me what to do. Be glad I am even letting her see you.

FLASH BACK TO GABRIELLE'S ADMONITION TO NOELLE

GABRIELLE

Remember you're a guest in Mali. Following our protocols is always in your best interest.

END FLASHBACK

NOELLE

Tell your parents thanks for hosting us for the last couple of visits. I am glad to see her healthy and doing great.

IBRAHIM
(rolling his eyes)
Yeah ok. I have to run a few
errands but will be back shortly.

Ibrahim walks away and Noelle returns to the hotel. After 45 minutes Ibrahim returns and comes inside without being invited.

NOELLE
You could have waited until I
opened the door and invited you
in.

IBRAHIM
Muna, come on..we have to go.

RYSA
Can't she stay longer. I brought
her favorite Disney movie we were
about to watch.

Noelle looks at Rysa and slightly shakes her head.

MUNA
Papa, I stay with mommy and
sistee. We have make cake.

IBRAHIM
No. Get your bag.

Muna starts crying and runs in the room and shuts the door. Noelle goes in and brings Muna out. She hugs her and tells her she will see her tomorrow.

IBRAHIM
Not sure about tomorrow, I will
let you know.

Muna's eyes are watery as she hugs both Rysa and Noelle. She waves to them as she walks out the door.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - MOMENTS LATER

Rysa is crying and angry at the same time. Mumbling stuff under her breath.

RYSA
This is bull mom. Who is he to
keep her from us? I wish he was
dead. Why can't he get hit by a
bus or something.

NOELLE

Rysa, don't say that. I know you are upset, but let's keep positive.

RYSA

Now I see what you mean about making an escape. I agree, let's get Muna next time and run.

NOELLE

Well honey he is always around. We have to figure out a way to make him leave her with us.

RYSA

Did you call the guy who is helping us? (Pause) Are you using those special army guys I see on TV when they go snatch people in foreign countries?

Noelle is on the computer and talking to Rysa.

NOELLE

That costs \$25,000 and then you have to pay bribes to everybody and their daddy.

RYSA

So what's your plan.

NOELLE

I got a guy who can get us a car and we can drive across the boarder. Or we can get Muna and try to make it to the American Embassy. (Pause) But I don't know what to do.

Rysa walks into the bathroom to wipe her eyes. She looks down at Noelle's contact lenses on the sink.

RYSA

Now I see why you have the brown contact lenses. I haven't seen anyone with the crazy eyes you have.

NOELLE

Yes. We can wear our African garb and just blend in when we sneak across the border.

INT. GABRIELLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Gabrielle's called and said to get to her office immediately. To drop whatever you're doing and come as soon as a cab can get them there.

NOELLE

We came over in a hurry after your call. What's happened? Did he leave again?

GABRIELLE

No he is still here as far as I know. But I think I may have good news. I got an emergency hearing with what you call an appellant judge. He spent time in America and may be more sympathetic than the judge last year.

NOELLE

When is the hearing?

GABRIELLE

Right now, he is waiting. He called me and said to have you get down here now.

They leave her office and walk fast to the court. They stand at the table and wait for the judge.

INT. MALI COURTROOM. - DAY

GABRIELLE

The judge may give you, your two weeks of private visits.

NOELLE

What about me taking her back home?

She puts her hand on Noelle's shoulder and pats her reassuringly.

GABRIELLE

Let's focus on you seeing her right now ok?

NOELLE

Where is Ibrahim and his lawyer?

GABRIELLE

I don't know. It's odd for them not to show up. After all, this is a heavyweight judge and it doesn't make sense for them to not be here.

The judge walks in and sits on his bench.

JUDGE

Madam Noelle have you been able to see Muna since you arrived last week?

Noelle stands up holds Rysa's hand and her voice is shaking.

NOELLE

You're excellency we saw Muna a total of 5 hours over the last week. And always with Ibrahim there.

JUDGE

Madam Gabrielle why is that? The court order from last year says she gets 2 weeks of private visits.

GABRIELLE

Ibrahim is unwilling to follow the court order. Even when his own lawyer told him to allow visits, he refused.

JUDGE

I will take a moment to review this case.

Several minutes pass as the judge flips through the case file. The courtroom is silent. The judge closes the file and stands up.

JUDGE

This should never have gotten to my desk. This is a travesty and an embarrassment to the Mali courts.

The judge talks about the rule of law and how Mali is a country of laws and how he expects its citizens and visitors to follow the law.

JUDGE

If my wife and I ever got a divorce, neither of us would prevent the other from seeing our children.

GABRIELLE

You're honor, we request she be able to have private visits with Muna for the full two weeks.

The judge holds his hand up like a stop sign. Turns to Noelle and Rysa with slight smile.

JUDGE

I apologize for the hardship these last 2 years has been on your family.

NOELLE

Yes your excellency, thank you.

JUDGE

You may take your daughter and return to America.

NOELLE

(shocked)

What? Huh?

JUDGE

Please collect your passport immediately. I recommend you depart Mali today.

Rysa and Noelle are stunned and speechless.

GABRIELLE

I apologize for my client, this has taken us by surprise.

JUDGE

I will sign the appropriate forms and file them. Please see that adam Noelle gets to the airport today.

The judge leaves the courtroom.

Noelle flops on the chair and lays her head back. She then stands up and pumps her fists in the air.

NOELLE

Jesus! My Lord and My God. You did it.

GABRIELLE

Listen, you must leave today. If Ibrahim finds out about this he will file another appeal and stop you.

Gabrielle gets all the paperwork and everyone walks to the door.

NOELLE

He is bringing Muna to the hotel in an hour. What do I do?

GABRIELLE

That's perfect. Act like everything is normal. I will have a court order and two police to be ready if needed.

Noelle stops in her tracks and has a scared look on her face. She puts her hands on either side of her head.

NOELLE

Oh no! I don't know how much the plane tickets are. I have to pay for Muna's and the change fee for mine and Rysa's.

GABRIELLE

Call whoever you have to, but you need to be on a plane today. Even if its just to Europe somewhere, you have to get out of Mali, today!

RYSA

Mom, does that mean the judge is letting us take Muna?

NOELLE

Yes honey. Let's get back to the hotel and pack.

Rysa is jubilant, jumping and spinning around.

INT. SLEEPING CAMEL - DAY

Noelle is talking to a travel agent.

NOELLE

The total is how much? \$3,800?

RYSA

What? mom we don't have that kinda money.

Noelle waves Rysa into silence.

NOELLE

Hold that ticket on my credit card please, but don't charge it yet. Thanks, goodbye.

RYSA

Mom how in the world can we pay that? We're not going to be able to leave today. Is Ibrahim going to take Muna from us?

Noelle grabs Rysa and holds her tight. They are silent for a moment then Noelle recites the 23 Psalms.

NOELLE

My old boss said if I we money to call him. Also we have some money left on the credit card. (Pause) Have faith honey, God brought us this far....

Noelle call's her boss, they speak for a minute and the call ends.

NOELLE

He said yes, he will put it in my bank account right now.

RYSA

Let me pack up everything so we can be ready to go when the lady shows up with the police.

NOELLE

No, let's wait. I don't want him to suspect anything. He may leave her like he did day before yesterday. Then we can just get in a cab when we know he is gone.

A knock on the door, the knob turns and Muna comes running in.

MUNA

Surprise! Papa says I can have a sleep over.

They hug and talk for a minute. Muna shows them some pictures she drew. Muna wants to jump on the bed and takes Rysa by the hand into the bedroom. She starts jumping on the bed and singing a song in French.

NOELLE

Thanks for bringing her over. I thought all the activities and playing may be too much for your parents.

Ibrahim turns and locks eyes with Noelle.

IBRAHIM

She is not to leave this room until I come get her in the morning. I have friends in this area, they will call me if you trying anything.

NOELLE

I'm glad to see my baby, not trying to cause problems.

IBRAHIM

Like I said, if you try anything, you will never see her again. And you may find yourself in jail. Then Rysa will be left alone.

Muna beckons Noelle to come in and referee a sisters disagreement.

MUNA

Mommy come here, Rysa's trying to make me jump over the pillow, but she keeps moving it too fast.

Ibrahim tells Muna goodbye and leaves.

NOELLE

Rysa, hurry pack.

Noelle checks online and see's the money is available. She calls the travel agency and pays for the ticket. She calls Gabrielle and tell's her what's going on.

PHONE CONVERSATION STARTS.

GABRIELLE

There has been a change in plans. Your Ambassador has taken over and they are sending a car and security detail to escort you to the airport. Are you ready to go?

NOELLE

He left Muna to spend the night. He departed about twenty minutes ago. (Pause) He did say for me not to leave with her or I could end up in jail.

GABRIELLE

We just need to get you out of there and into the American Embassy vehicle. You probably have diplomatic immunity inside.

NOELLE

I just bought the tickets for all of us.

GABRIELLE

Your ambassador personally called the judge and they arranged it. They will call you in about 15 minutes so be ready to go.

NOELLE

We're not done packing yet.

GABRIELLE

Get all your paperwork and your kids and leave everything else in the room. (Pause) Are you paid up for the next week?

NOELLE

Yes, we are paid up.

GABRIELLE

Be ready when they call. Walk right out and get in the vehicle. It will be either a black or white SUV with diplomatic plates.

PHONE CONVERSATION ENDS.

MUNA

Where are we going with the suitcases? Are we going to your house?

NOELLE

Oh we will take a little trip.

Knock on the door.

NOELLE

Who is it?

MARINE GUARD

Sgt Williams from the U.S. Embassy.

Noelle opens the door and see's a Marine in dress blues. The same Marine that helped her at the airport a year ago.

NOELLE

I remember you from the DC airport. You and your buddy helped me with my luggage.

MARINE GUARD

Yes I remember you too. Good to see you again. I told my mom about your missionary trip, she does that too.

NOELLE

Unfortunately this trip to rescue my daughter. But thank God she's with us now and we are on our way home.

MARINE GUARD

Yes we know about that. We have had you under precautionary surveillance for the last two weeks. (Long pause) Let's go, you guys got a plane to catch.

They leave the hotel with two small carry on's and a backpack. As they round the corner Noelle see's two huge white Range Rovers and a black stretch limo with diplomatic plates. The Marine guard tosses the suitcases in the trunk and helps them get in.

NOELLE

Ambassador Jamison?! Wow I am surprised to see you.

AMBASSADOR

Oh, I thought I would ride along to facilitate your departure. (Pause) But I don't expect there will be any problems.

AMBASSADOR

Good afternoon girls. Hi Muna. I have heard so much about you.

RYSA

These are cool cars. Why is the back seat so big? And yeah why don't the windows let down, I want to see outside?

AMBASSADOR

Oh we got a large car cause we wanted all you girls to fit in. (Pause) Would you like a drink? I have some juice and coke.

The ambassador opens the wet bar and pulls out juice and sodas and passes it out. She offers Muna crackers.

MUNA

Oh yes I want juice. Papa never lets me drink in the car. Wow, you have a refrigerator in your car?

The caravan is traveling at 60 miles an hour for the 40 minute ride to the airport. The ambassador is making small talk and is constantly on her blackberry.

AMBASSADOR

I'm glad you got your daughter back. Senator McConnell worked a miracle to make this happen. (Pause) You have no idea how much diplomatic finesse this took.

NOELLE

Thank you for personally coming to get us. I feel much safer. I thought he might try to.....I am so proud and blessed to be an American.

AMBASSADOR

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of something so special. (Pause) Diplomatic relations can be rather boring and uneventful.

(MORE)

AMBASSADOR (cont'd)

But the thought of reuniting a family...well it does my heart good.

MUNA

Are we there yet? How long til we get to your house? Is it near grandma's house?

NOELLE

Hey I have a surprise, we get to ride in an airplane.

MUNA

Oh mom thats fun. They have juice and snacks on the plane. (Pause) I want to look out the window.

They arrive at the airport and enter in the rear of the airport and is escorted to the back. They go in a secret entrance and to a VIP waiting area.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Madam may I have your travel documents please: passports and plane tickets.

NOELLE

Oh! I didnt have time to print them out. We left so quick from the hotel.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Well if you can just give me the confirmation travel number, we can take care of it. Are you checking luggage with us?

NOELLE

Here you go sir.

He takes a the paper and leaves. A few minutes later the judge who ruled on her case walks in the VIP waiting area. He greets everyone with a big smile.

JUDGE

Madam Noelle, I came to see you off. Is this Muna? Ca Va Muna? (How are you)

Muna walks up tentatively and hugs him. Noelle's eyes well up with tears and her voice cracks.

NOELLE

Thank you sir! I can't thank you enough for bringing our family back together.

JUDGE

We are a nation of laws and when people don't follow the law, our entire system is in question.

Rysa extends her hand for a handshake.

RYSA

Thank you sir. I am Rysa, Muna's big sister.

The judge speaks in French to Muna for several minutes. He then hands her a wrapped gift and gives her a hug. The ambassador walks up and joins the conversation. After a moment, the judge and ambassador are laughing and chatting as they walk away.

RYSA

Mom I can't believe it. We didn't have to go through the security check point. We have Marines to guard us and the ambassador and the judge are here.

NOELLE

God is awesome, it's all I can say.

RYSA

Oh they have wifi, I can't wait to post this to Facebook. Auntie and granny will be so happy.

NOELLE

NO! We are not out of the country yet. Wait until we land in America.

The airline attendant comes up and hands Noelle tickets and tags the bags and takes them to the plane. The ambassador returns to sit with them.

AMBASSADOR

Well you guys are all set. In a few minutes and you will board the aircraft. Here are the numbers to the embassy in Paris and consulate in Toronto if you have any problems as you fly through there.

A boarding announcement is made and several people in the waiting area get up and walk down a hallway. As Noelle starts to follow them, the ambassador stops them and directs them back the same door they came in.

AMBASSADOR

You get back in the limo and ride it to the plane's steps.

They leave the waiting area, get back in the limo and the limo and the two range rovers drive on the flight line and stop in front of the plane. The Marine Guards get out and escort everyone to the planes steps.

AMBASSADOR

Safe journey. Remember to contact the embassy if have any problems. We sent them your itinerary and they are standing by to help.

RYSA

Thank you ambassador. We are so happy to have our family together again. May God bless you.

Noelle picks up Muna and have a group hug with the ambassador. The ambassador says a quick prayer and they board the plane.

INT. CINCINNATI AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

They landed and are in baggage claim. A tall blond guy walks up to them.

MAN AT AIRPORT

Dr. Noelle Hunter?

NOELLE

Yes?

MAN AT AIRPORT

I am John Thomas, Senator Mitch McConnell's assistant. He would like to meet everyone.

Noelle turns and see's Senator McConnell and rushes to him and embraces him. Everyone has a group hug and John takes several pictures.

NOELLE

Thank you Senator I can't tell you how thankful I am.

SENATOR MCCONNELL

(Voice cracking)

We are glad to have our little Kentuckian home. (Pause) This is probably the most rewarding thing of being senator.

NOELLE

May God richly bless you and your family Senator.

FADE OUT

INT. CHURCH SERVICE - DAY

Muna, Noelle and Rysa are up on the platform while the pastor is recounting their journey. The musicians play and parishioner are coming up to hug them. The song "You Turned My Mourning Into Dancing Again" by Ron Kanole is playing.

PASTOR

Thanks everyone for coming to celebrate the return of our daughter. (Pause) In times of trouble God wants us to trust him totally. He will make things turn in our favor.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Rysa takes the barrettes off Muna's pony tails and bushes Muna's hair. Muna then brushes her teeth but knocks over Noelle's contact lenses. Muna picks up the contact lenses case opens it and puts her fingers inside.

MUNA

Mommy what are these brown circles floating in the water?

Noelle and Rysa look at each other with a smile and both shrug their shoulders.

NOELLE

Something mommy brought for our trip to Africa.....uh...but we don't need them anymore.

RYSA

Yes Muna, all we need is you now.

THEY WALK TO MUNA'S BEDROOM

They tuck Muna in bed and read a story. Stella the kitty is scratching and meowing at the door. Rysa opens the door and lets Stella in.

MUNA

Mommy can the kitty sleep with me?

NOELLE

Ok honey. We told her you were coming home and I know she is so excited.

Stella jumps on the bed and walks by the pillow and starts kneading the covers. She then gets in a ball and starts purring.

MUNA

Why did she do that?

NOELLE

She's purring because she's glad you're home and feels safe now.

MUNA

Me too mom. Goodnight.

NOELLE

NOW WE HAVE REST!

Rysa high 5's Noelle.

RYSA

(smiling)

Amen to that!

The movie ends as Muna falls asleep with Rysa and Noelle looking on. The song "It Is Well With My Soul" is playing softly at the end.

FADE OUT.