

THOU ART WORTHY

Written by

Robert Finlayson

Based on *Beasts Of No Nation*

By

Uzodinma Iweala

Robert Finlayson
thebluegypsy@hotmail.com
323-470-5563

Address
Phone Number

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THOU ART WORTHY

OVER BLACK:

SUPER:

Until The Lions Have Their Own Historians, The History Of The Hunt Will Always Glorify The Hunter - African Proverb

FADE IN:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - UNKNOWN COUNTRY - DAY

A DULL THUD...

followed by a howling SHRIEK.

Somewhere nearby a man is crying out in absolute anguish, SCREAMING at the top of his lungs.

A second THUD, then...

THWACK! THWACK!

More blood-curdling SCREAMS.

A COCONUT sits atop a cut-off fence post with a rusty machete embedded in its shell. It is split almost all the way through.

A hand pulls the machete out of the split coconut, whacking it again with a powerful blow.

The milky liquid drips out of the gash left by the machete, steadily spraying outward as each strike hacks deeper into its shell.

More SCREAMING from somewhere nearby -- ear-piercing SCREAMS.

A man's head is being split open by machete blows as a raggedy-looking soldier stands over him and hacks away at his him.

The man is alive as the blows mimic the THUD of the coconut shell, gouging out chunks of flesh and bone with violent force.

THE SOLDIER rains blows down over the blood-covered man even after he's well dead, taking sadistic pleasure in his handiwork.

He too is soaked in blood and gore now as he walks away from the grizzly remains of his victim.

Off to the side a frightened young boy stands watching the brutal scene unfold.

He attempts to hold up a machine gun that is far too big for his body as he's only a ten-year old boy -- it hangs from its strap almost down to his knees.

He is AGU, an unfortunate victim of an anonymous war being fought in anonymous country by anonymous armies and warlords.

He's so scrawny as to be on the verge of starvation and his shabby uniform jacket, combined with tight fitting soccer shorts, makes him look like some sort of clown or court jester.

Agu looks on in horror at the gruesome sight of the dead man's mutilated corpse -- a sight all too familiar to him since the beginning of war.

Despite the common occurrence of brutal violence and death, it is all still disturbing to Agu and what is left of his now jaded young soul.

The hot African sun beats down upon his boyish face, covering it in countless beads of sweat.

Agu wipes off his forehead with his free hand -- the other one rests on the trigger of his gun.

A drop of sweat trickles down from his forehead, over his eyebrow, dropping down past his face and finally onto the barrel of his machine gun.

Agu is now one of the countless soldiers conscripted into a ragtag army of revolutionaries in a country besieged by a violent civil war.

Boy soldiers now outnumber the adult men of their respective units. Their undisciplined and untrained horde of thuggish brutes roaming the countryside in an aimless journey of murder and brutality.

Agu is much more a prisoner than a soldier. If he doesn't fight, he dies, simple as that.

Choice is not part of the program for him and the other innocent youths plucked from their villages and families, and sent to the frontlines to kill, rape, pillage and steal as they are ordered.

The Soldier turns to Agu and smiles a sinister smile, revealing teeth that are a combination of equally yellow and brown stains.

He is proud that he butchered the villager with such ferocity and disdain.

The soldier is also glad that Agu is rightfully frightened by him.

Agu looks down at his machine gun, the sweat from his forehead dripping on to the barrel.

AGU (V.O.)

It is starting like this. I am feeling itch like insect is crawling on my skin... and then my head is just starting to tingle between my eye... and then I am wanting to sneeze because my nose is itching, and then air is just blowing into my ear and I am hearing so many thing...

An insect zips back and forth on Agu's forehead.

AGU (V.O.)

The clicking of insect...

A cargo truck REVS its engine off to the side.

AGU (V.O.)

The sound of truck grumbling like one kind of animal...

Off To the side someone is YELLING in a loud, booming voice.

It is the soldier with the rotted death and rusty blood-covered machete still in hand.

AGU (V.O.)

...and then the sound of somebody shouting.

SOLDIER

Take your position right now!
Quick! Quick! Quick! Move with speed! MOVE FAST OH!!!

COMMANDANT walks over to Agu, a mountain of a man and a natural-born soldier and warrior.

He wears a dirty white tank top that is practically brown from lack of washing.

His powerful biceps constantly glisten with sweat, defining them even more and giving his muscles an overall menacing appearance.

His head is shaved but he wears a beret, and a blue bandanna is wrapped around his thick neck.

A BULLET BELT is strapped across his shoulder that crosses down over his massive chest and torso.

Commandant is practically the spitting image of a die-hard soldier from a comic book or action movie.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Agu marches with the rest of the boys.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not wanting to fight today because I am not liking the gun shooting and the knife chopping and the people running. I am not liking to hear people scream or to be looking at blood. I am not liking any of these thing.

(beat)

So I am asking to myself, why am I fighting? Can I not just be saying no.

Commandant throws a young boy to the ground, kicking him in the stomach and back for some offense or another.

Agu watches the scene unfold fearfully from the side.

AGU (V.O.)

Then I am remembering how one boy is refusing to fight and Commandant is just telling us to jump on his chest, so we are jumping on his chest until it is only blood that is coming out of his mouth.

The other soldier boys join Commandant in kicking and beating the boy.

One of the soldier boys jumps up and down on his birdchest, stomping on the boy like he's trying to press his body into the very ground.

The boy spits up blood, crying for mercy.

Commandant comes over and kicks the boy square across the face, knocking him unconscious.

COMMANDANT

That is enough. Form rank!

The boys all run into a line, attempting to form some sort of order.

Agu joins them, all the while looking at the bleeding, unconscious boy still laying in the dirt.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

You who are going with me and you who are going with Luftenant.

The line the boys make isn't even close to being straight.

All of their legs shake and shiver as if they're barefoot in the snow out of fear of the Commandant's temper.

Commandant walks in front of the boys, inspecting their ramshackle formation.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Tenshun!

BOYS

(in unison)

Yes, Sah!

COMMANDANT

This village is between these two road, so people with me will be attacking from one end when people with Luftenant is attacking from the other.

He constantly turns his head side to side, looking up either end of the road, fearful of an ambush of any kind.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

That where there is not even any place for these dog to be running. We will be killing them like they are killing us and stealing from them what they are stealing from us!

The boys shout in unison:

BOYS

Yes, Sah!

Commandant separates the boys into two groups, leaving Agu in Luftenant's group.

An older boy named RAMBO helps Luftenant organize the boys better.

RAMBO
You there, come here, stand like
this.

The boy runs over to him, standing at attention.

Rambo sees Agu looking frightened, time to intimidate.

RAMBO (CONT'D)
(to Agu)
You, at the end. Come over here.

Agu jogs over to him.

AGU
Yes, Sah!

RAMBO
Listen to what I saying and you
will be living.

AGU
Yes, Sah.

RAMBO
I will keeping eye on you because
you being so young. You living
longer with Luftenant.

AGU
Thank you, Sah.

RAMBO
Fall in line, we marching now.

Agu obeys him, runs over to join the others. He's still shaking with fear.

AGU (V.O.)
I am liking Rambo and wanting to be
wearing red bandanna like that on
my head like he is wearing to be
keeping the sweat from pouring into
his eye when he is busy killing
killing.

(beat)
(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Nobody is knowing why he is getting the name Rambo, but I am knowing of the movie and how that man is very tough and very mean and I am thinking to myself yes, yes this Rambo is very tough and also mean, but he is also very smart.

Rambo tightens his red bandanna as sweat drips from it on to his forehead.

He attempts to exude an air of toughness but he is hardly older than the others.

Luftenant has given authority so the boys fear him for this, and only this.

AGU (V.O.)

I am liking the way his eye is so sharp that they are seeing everything each time we are in battle. He is dodging bullet and bomb and all of the thing that are killing people. Sometime I am wondering if he is having his own juju to be making him live without fearing death, but I am not wanting to ask him or he will be laughing at me. I am knowing that if I am staying with him, then at least I am surviving, so it is not making me to feel too so mad that I am having to go with Luftenant this time.

RAMBO

Tenshun! Move out!

The boys begin marching down the road.

Agu walks in between rows of ROTTING CORPSES on either side of the field.

It is ubiquitous death in every direction he turns.

FLASHBACK

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

The bright BEAM of a flashlight pierces the darkness through the roof.

SOLDIER (O.C.)
(shouting)
Take your position right now,
quick!

Flashlight beams criss-cross Agu's body. He crawls over to the corner and huddles himself against the wall.

A figure, a soldier, moves in the darkness towards him. He shines his flashlight in Agu's face.

Agu makes eye contact with him, then a powerful slap knocks Agu to the ground.

The soldier drags him from the corner out of the room...

EXT. SHACK

...and into the mud as it pours down rain.

Agu curls up in a ball as the soldier, who is nothing more than a boy, keeps hitting him.

Suddenly the boy soldier stops, runs over to a truck and stands next to the passenger side door.

The door swings open forcefully, throwing the boy backwards to the ground. His name is STRIKA.

The other soldiers LAUGH.

A large man, illuminated by the moonlight, exits the dilapidated truck. It's Commandant.

He walks over to Agu who is laying in a pool of mud.

COMMANDANT
So who is finding this thing?
(louder)
Why is this thing here on the
ground?

Strika gets his attention.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
Strika, is it you who is finding
this thing?

Strika nods, yes, stands at attention.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
Ehh, Strika! Is it you?

He turns to the older soldiers gathered around him.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

So you mean of all of you grown men
only this boy, one skinny little
thing like this, is finding this
thing here.

(to Strika)

Where are you finding him?

Strika points to the shack that is Agu's house.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Is that right?

Strika nods his head, yes.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Where is Luftenant? Luftenant.
Luftenant!

FIRST SOLDIER

He is in the bush.

LUFTENANT emerges from the tall grass zipping his pants with one hand and carrying his gun with the other.

LUFTENANT

(saluting)

Commandant, Sah.

COMMANDANT

Come here.

Luftenant moves in closer.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Just what are you doing?

Luftenant says nothing.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(angrily)

You don't know?

LUFTENANT

Please, Sah. I was shitting in the
bush.

Commandant grabs him by the ear and squeezes.

COMMANDANT

Open your ear and listen to me well well. If you are wanting to shit, you are not shitting on my time. Who are you? Just running into the bush like woman.

(beat)

If you are wanting to shit, you should be shitting right here on the road. You are not leaving this road for anything. Are you understanding me, Luftenant?

LUFTENANT

(nodding)

Yes, yes.

Commandant points to Agu, still laying in the puddle.

COMMANDANT

Can you be telling me what this is? Why are you leaving Strika to bring him out?

LUFTENANT

Oh God, what am I doing? He is spy, oh. It is ambush, oh. Let's just kill him and clear from this place.

COMMANDANT

(angrily)

Shut up your mouth! Who and who is asking you to speak? Idiot. If anybody is coming here we will deal with them proper.

Commandant kneels down and examines Agu.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(to Strika)

Are you trying to eat this one, enh?

Strika nods his head, no.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Strika, go and bring more water.

Strika runs off to the truck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(to Agu)

Are you hungry? Are you thirsty?

Agu nods his head, yes.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

That is no problem. If you are wanting food, you will eat. And if you are wanting drink, you will drink, but that is having to wait until you are telling me your name. How can I be sitting down to eat with a man who I am not knowing his name? Are you hearing me?

Agu doesn't speak, just nods again, yes.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

You are having name is it not?
(points to himself)
My name is Commandant. Everybody is always calling me Commandant. What is everybody always calling you?

AGU

(whispered)

Agu.

COMMANDANT

Agu, enh? They are calling you Agu. Well, that is what I will be calling you.

He stands up and looks at one of the soldiers.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

See this one on the road? Do you see him?

The soldier is nodding, yes.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Bring water, enh!

Strika appears a beat later with a jerry can in hand.

Commandant takes a filthy handkerchief from his breast pocket and pours some water on it. He grabs Agu's neck, props him up, gently wipes down his face.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Well, if you are going to be eating with man, then you are having to be clean.

He lifts up the jerry can and pours water onto Agu's face and into his mouth.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Why are you just lying by the roadside like one dead rat. Luftenant thinks you are spy. Is it so?

Luftenant comes over, staring angrily at Agu.

LUFTEENANT

(to Agu)

So, what is your business here?

COMMANDANT

Shut up your mouth! Who is asking you to be opening this your stupid mouth anyway?

(to Agu)

So what is it that you are doing here in one small small stall just waiting. You should be telling me. Are you spy? If you are not speaking, then heyeye!

He pulls out a big military knife, holds it against Agu's trembling cheek.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Otherwise, I will just be giving you to Luftenant. Just look at him. I am not even knowing what he will be doing to you. Better you just tell me and I will be helping you.

AGU

My father is telling me to run. Run far far so the enemy is not catching you and killing you. And then I am just hiding in the bush and running this way and that way not knowing anything.

COMMANDANT

Hmm. Is that so? Where is this your father?

AGU

I am not knowing. He is saying that he will find me.

Commandant gently touches Agu's face, lifts him up to his feet.

COMMANDANT

Do you want to be soldier? Do you know what that is meaning?

Agu nods his head, yes.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

If you are staying with me, I will be taking care of you and we will be fighting the enemy that is taking your father. Are you hearing me?

(licking his lips)

Are you hearing me? Everything will be just fine.

He smiles as he rubs Agu's face with the palm of his hands.

AGU

What am I supposed to be doing?

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Commandant stands before all of the boy soldiers.

AGU (V.O.)

So, I am joining. Just like that. I am soldier.

COMMANDANT

Don't think, just let it happen. The second you are stopping to think about it, your head is turning to the inside of rotten fruit.

Agu listens intently to Commandant's instructions.

AGU (V.O.)

Commandant is saying it is like falling in love. You cannot be thinking about it. You are just having to do it, he is saying. And I am believing him. What else can I be doing? They are all saying, stop worrying, stop worrying.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Soon it will be your own turn and then you will know what it is feeling like to be killing somebody. Then they are laughing at me and spitting on the ground near my feet.

COMMANDANT

Dismissed!

EXT. REBEL TRUCK - DAY

Agu and Strika sit on the edge of the rusty truck bed, their legs dangling over the bumper as it hobbles along.

AGU

Are you Strika?

He nods his head, yes.

AGU (CONT'D)

Are you having parent?

He nods, no.

AGU (CONT'D)

Are you liking plantain?

Strika nods, yes.

AGU (CONT'D)

Fish?

He nods, yes.

AGU (CONT'D)

Pear?

He nods, yes.

AGU (CONT'D)

Are you stupid?

He nods, no.

AGU (CONT'D)

Why are you not talking talking?

Still Strika is silent.

AGU (CONT'D)

What is it like to be killing somebody?

No answer.

AGU (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Strika!

Finally Strika turns and looks Agu in the eye.

The truck comes to a stop in the middle of nowhere.

A young scout named HOPE comes running up the road towards the truck.

HOPE
They are coming, oh! They are
coming again!

He trips and falls on the road. He has a machine gun slung across his back which is too heavy for him.

Commandant exits the truck scratching his beard. He waves to Hope and shouts to the driver.

COMMANDANT
Move this truck across the road!
Park this truck here!

He heads to the back of the truck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
Everybody take your position!
(points to a soldier)
You in the bush! Speed up, speed
up! Quick, quick, quick!

The soldiers leap out of the back of the truck and take cover behind it.

Agu follows Strika and they kneel down beside the large tires.

Strika carries a machete and Agu struggles to hold his rifle properly.

A truck stops on the road ahead of them in the distance. Maybe it is the enemy, maybe someone else.

Commandant scratches his beard, spits on the road, takes a position in front of his truck.

Agu copies Strika, takes out his machete, grips it tightly.

AGU (V.O.)

I am holding my machete closer. I am liking how it is feeling in my hand like it is almost part of my body. If it is time to be killing, I am ready, but I am putting my hand between my leg because I am feeling like I need to be going to toilet. My heart is beating bump, bump, bump, bump, and I am finding it hard to be breathing, but still I am saying God will be helping me. I am ready.

THE ENEMY TRUCK

The twenty or so soldiers get out of their truck with their hands in the air.

ENEMY CHIEF

Please do not shoot us! We are not having any weapon, or any food, or any money, or any ammo. Please just let us go!

He walks out to the front of the road.

ENEMY CHIEF (CONT'D)

See, see. Our hand is up and we are not having any gun. No weapon at all.

THE REBEL TRUCK

Commandant grins, walks forward several feet with his weapon at the ready.

COMMANDANT

Number One, this territory is belonging to all of us rebel. You are trespassing. Number Two, take off all your clothe and put them in the road. Number Three, lie down with your face on the ground and your hand stretching all the way out. If you are not doing this in ten second, we will be shooting you dead. Are you understanding me?

Agu peeks his head out to see what's happening. Mosquitos buzz around his head.

The enemy soldiers are all exchanging looks, but not obeying Commandant.

KPWANG! PING! BANG!

Several bullets strike the truck door and the soldiers scramble away from the truck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 (angrily)
 Come on! I said off your clothe!
 Everybody take off your clothe
 right now!

The soldiers obey him now, quickly taking off, ripping off in some cases, their clothes and tossing them to the ground. Their sweaty bodies glisten in the noonday sun.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 Lie down! Put your hand on the
 ground!

Commandant walks towards the enemy. The other rebels appear out of the roadside bush and join behind him.

Strika leaves the safety of the truck's cover, Agu follows closely behind him and they join the others.

Now Commandant and the rebels are standing in front of the enemy truck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 Who is the leader?

Nobody answers.

Strika gathers up the clothing and runs behind the rebels.

ENEMY CHIEF
 Please do not shoot us!

Commandant walks over to him and pokes him hard with his gun barrel.

COMMANDANT
 You, where are your weapon? Get
 up. Where are they?

The soldier gets up, cautiously, hands still in the air.

ENEMY CHIEF
 We don't want trouble, oh. We
 don't have any weapon.

COMMANDANT

Oho! This enemy dog is not wanting trouble.

The rebels all laugh.

Commandant kicks the man hard in the stomach and he collapses to the ground, puking his guts out.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(to the Rebels)

Search the truck!

Three rebels swiftly ransack the truck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Agu, come here, enh. Come here right now.

(to the Enemy Chief)

Kneel down.

The man is still on his knees, wiping vomit from his mouth.

Agu is too scared to move, stays where he is at the back.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Bloody fool. Come here and bring that machete.

Agu stays put.

Commandant is furious, he walks over and grabs Agu by the neck.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

You idiot! Come here, come here right now!

He drags Agu over to the cowering Enemy Chief.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Do you see this dog! You want to be a soldier, enh? Well, kill him, kill him now!

Agu is shaking, tears roll down his puffy cheeks.

AGU (V.O.)

In my head I am shouting No! No!
No! But my mouth is not moving and
I am not saying anything.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And I am thinking, if I am killing
killing then I am going to hell so
I am smelling fire and smoke and it
is harding to breathe, so I am just
standing there crying crying,
shaking shaking, looking looking.

One of the enemy soldiers, naked from head to toe, gets up
and darts off towards the bush.

KWAP!

Flesh and blood fly off the soldier's leg, he hits the road
hard, writhing like an injured lizard.

COMMANDANT

Anybody who is trying to run away
will not be having leg to run with,
understand!

He points the gun at the chief's sweaty face.

The Enemy Chief blinks constantly, his sweat and tears mixing
to burn his eyes.

ENEMY CHIEF

Please, sah. Please, oh, we are
not doing anything. Please now,
sah... don't just kill us, oh...
Just take us, makes POW. Please,
oh, we don't have anything.

Three of the enemy toss out several guns, some large some
small, onto the ground.

Commandant is pissed now. He turns to the chief and beats
him with the gun barrel.

COMMANDANT

Liar! Liar and idiot, stupid
somebody!

The man falls over, a bloody mess, but still alive.

Commandant shoulders his rifle, unzips his pants and pisses
all over the Enemy Chief, especially his face.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

See this bloody goat. Get up you
bloody fool! Kneel, come on,
kneel!

(in Agu's ear)

Kill him, kill him, oh!

He lifts Agu's arm holding the machete up in the air.

Agu closes his eyes, tries to withstand Commandant's strength.

ENEMY CHIEF

Please don't kill me, oh. Please,
I beg enh.

He spits up blood and saliva with every word.

ENEMY CHIEF (CONT'D)

God will bless you!

COMMANDANT

See this man, look at him. He is
not even man. He is just going to
toilet like sheep or goat or dog.

He jerks Agu by the neck with his powerful hands.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Kill him now because I am not
having the time, oh! If you are
not killing him, enh. Luftenant
will be thinking you are spy. And
who can know if he won't just be
killing you.

Commandant squeezes his hand around Agu's and the machete handle. He forces Agu's arm downward against the Enemy Chief's head.

SCREAMS from the man as the blade cuts into his skull. He puts his hand to the wound, blood pouring through his fingers.

Agu is horrified at the spectacle.

Commandant leads the rebels in rousing laughter.

Agu wields the machete alone this time, not realizing that Commandant has let his hand go.

The second blow sends blood, bone and brain into the air.

SCREAMING and CRYING as the helpless man tries to defend himself.

Agu wields the blood-covered blade with increasing ferocity, blood is everywhere.

Strika comes forward with his machete, joins in on the slaughter. He and Agu hack the enemy into a bloody pulp resembling crushed fruit.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
(grinning, laughing)
It is like falling in love.

Agu looks at Commandant, not understanding his meaning.

Strika continues chopping at the dead man's body until he stands in a pool of blood.

The rebels join in now, attacking the others.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
Save your bullets!

The rebels use their machetes with gruesome efficiency.

Arms are chopped off and thrown to the ground, one rebel attacking his victim with his severed limb.

Agu steps back away from the melee, observes the brutality in a daze. He hunches over, vomits all over the ground.

The MOANS of the dying are atrocious.

Strika joins the rebels in the unbridled butchery.

The wounded man from before drags himself slowly up the deserted road. A trail of blood follows his path like the slime of a slug.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

The rebel truck travels along the endless road. Barren wasteland in every direction.

Agu sits in the back, in the middle of the boys his age.

AGU (V.O.)
I am not bad boy. I am not bad boy. I am soldier and soldier is not bad if he is killing. I am telling this to myself because soldier is supposed to be killing, killing, killing. So if I am killing, then I am doing what is right. I am singing song to myself because I am hearing too many voice in my head telling me I am bad boy.
(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They are coming from all around me
and buzzing in my ear like mosquito
and each time I am hearing them,
they are chooking my heart and
making my stomach to turn. So I am
singing.

He begins singing out loud:

AGU

Soldier soldier, kill kill kill.
That is how you live, that is how
you die.

AGU (V.O.)

This is my song that I am singing
all of the time wherever we are
going to be reminding myself that I
am only doing what soldier is
supposed to be doing. But it is
never working because I am always
feeling like bad boy. So, I am
thinking, how can I be bad boy?
Me, bad boy... somebody who is
having life like I am having and
fearing God the whole time.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Agu opens his weary, bloodshot eyes.

He wipes the sleep from his eyes and rises up from the
ground, no padding, no covers, just the hard sun-baked soil
for a bed.

AGU (V.O.)

It is morning again, like all the
other morning. The sun is just
jumping up up into the sky so
quickly that we are not even having
any time before we are just
sweating sweating everywhere.

He gets up and stretches his body for a moment.

The others soldiers are awake doing the same thing as Agu.

AGU (V.O.)

My feets is paining me. My leg is
paining me. My knee is hurting
because we are training very hard
now. All the time just training
training.

He bends down, stretching his skinny legs.

AGU (V.O.)

They are telling us to run up and down so we are running up and down like we are running race when I am schoolboy. They are telling us to be crawling on the grasses and to be running zigzag to be dodging pretend bullet. I am hot and my body is too tired. I am not feeling good at all at all.

Rambo runs up to where the waking masses are gathered.

RAMBO

Ten-shun!

The rebels quickly organize themselves in a row as Commandant steps in front of them.

Agu studies Commandant's face as he walks by.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not liking this field even if Commandant is loving it because he says it is taking away insubordination. I am not liking everything Commandant likes even if I am supposed to be liking it. But I am liking his shiny forehead and his big nose that is covering his whole face and even his top lip. I am liking his mustaches and his big black beard, and I am liking how he is squeezing his chin and all of its hairs in his fist when he is thinking very hard.

Commandant scratches his beard and pulls the long hairs with his fingers.

AGU (V.O.)

I am wanting beard so I can be doing that. Maybe then I will be feeling older and I won't be tiring all the time. If you are seeing Commandant, you will be knowing that he is just very big man even though this war is coming to make most men small like children and children small like baby.

Commandant stops and stands directly before Agu. He eyeballs Agu intently.

AGU (V.O.)

He is so tall that looking at him is like climbing tree, so big that if he is standing next to you, then his shadow is blocking the sun.

He slowly raises his gaze from Commandant's waist up to his face.

AGU (V.O.)

He is so strong that I can be seeing the vein on his arm. It is funny to be watching him moving also because he is walking like his leg is wooden pole that is not bending for anything.

Commandant walks away with his stiff, wooden gait.

AGU (V.O.)

Even when we are running his leg are moving this way and it is making me want to laugh at him, but nobody is laughing at him because that is annoying him. He is beating people who annoy him and one time he was even killing one man who just annoyed him too much.

Commandant stands before all the rebels.

AGU (V.O.)

As we are standing in this field, Commandant is walking in front of us and shouting...

COMMANDANT

Are we soldier?

REBELS

(in unison)

Yes, sah!

COMMANDANT

Are we army?

REBELS

(in unison)

Yes, Sah!

COMMANDANT

Are we strong and proud?

REBELS

(in unison)

Yes, Sah!

AGU (V.O.)

Commandant is smiling, but I am knowing that he is not believing what we are saying because sometimes he is talking to himself that we are hopeless and only good enough to be thrown into battle and die.

COMMANDANT

We are going to be raiding one village today so ready yourselves. Are you hating the enemy?

REBELS

(in unison)

Yes, Sah!

COMMANDANT

Show me you are really meaning you hate the enemy!

REBELS

(stomping the ground)

Yes, Sah!

COMMANDANT

The enemy is killing our mother and our father and burning our house!

REBELS

(softly; in unison)

Yes, Sah!

AGU (V.O.)

We are answering softly because we are all thinking of all the place and person we are leaving behind. I am thinking of my mother and sister who are running away. I am not knowing if they are dead or alive or if I can even be knowing what they are looking like if I am seeing them today.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Every time we are seeing woman or girl, I am looking at them well well to be knowing if they are my mother or my sister.

COMMANDANT

Be ready for fourteen hundred hours.

Agu thinks this is funny, looks down the line at Strika.

Strika leans outward and smiles, sticks his tongue out at Agu.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Dismissed!

A group of rebels follow behind Commandant as he heads towards the huts where some of the soldiers are staying.

Agu looks around for Strika. He finds him underneath a tree with a stick in his hand.

AGU

What is that you are drawing there?

Strika looks up at him but says nothing. He keeps drawing two stick figures in the dirt. It is a man and a woman without heads. The heads are on the ground by their feet.

AGU (V.O.)

Since I am becoming soldier, I am never hearing the sound of Strika's voice, but now, I am knowing what is his problem. His picture is telling me that he is not making one noise since they are killing his parent.

Strika scoots over to the side.

Agu sits down beside him in the shade.

Strika erases the drawing with the stick then starts over again.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not believing Strika the first time he is telling me this, and every time I am trying to get him to say something or at least be making one sound from his mouth.

AGU
They kill your parents.

Strika continues drawing.

AGU (CONT'D)
They kill my father too. My mother
and my sister, I am not knowing
where they are anymore.

Strika looks at Agu, but as always, silence.

AGU (CONT'D)
I am older than you. But nobody is
really telling how old they are
anymore. All we are knowing is
that before the war we are
children, and now we are not.

Now Strika erases the stick figures again, writes in the
dirt. He writes out HUNGRY.

AGU (CONT'D)
I am hungry too. There is no food
left for anybody in the camp.

Strika leans over, lays his head against Agu's leg. He licks
his cracked lips.

AGU (CONT'D)
One day there will be no more war
and we can be living together in a
house an eating all of the food we
are wanting to eat. Are you
hearing me?

Strika punches the air above his head.

AGU (V.O.)
He is not acting like he is hearing
anything I am saying because he
knows it is lie. We will always be
fighting war, but sometimes it nice
to be thinking that there is
something else for our future.

LUFTENANT (O.C.)
It is fourteen hundred hours!

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
Come on, get ready! Time to go.
Time to go.

The rebels load up an old rickety truck with their meager supplies.

The driver has trouble starting the engine. The truck is truly on its last leg.

A second truck is used by Commandant and his most loyal men.

Commandant separates the men into groups.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 (to various rebels)
 You come with me. You go with
 Luftenant.

Agu moves over next to Strika in the group.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am wanting to be in the same
 group as Strika, and also, the same
 group as Commandant because he is
 real soldier and making people to
 behave more like soldier than
 Luftenant.

Commandant points at Strika.

COMMANDANT
 You coming with me today.

Strika smiles.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am wanting to be with Commandant
 and Strika, but of course the thing
 you are wanting most is always the
 thing that is not happening. I am
 not wanting to be with Luftenant
 and I am not wanting to be riding
 in his truck.

COMMANDANT
 (pointing to Agu)
 You, you are going with Luftenant.

Agu walks over to Luftenant's group. He's visibly upset at his bad fortune.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am not liking Luftenant because
 he is coward. I am knowing he is
 coward because his skin is looking
 very light and yellow like one of
 his parent is white man.
 (MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I am not knowing if it is his mother or father that is white because, most of the time, I am wondering if he is even having mother and father.

He climbs into the bed of the truck with all the others.

AGU (V.O.)

I am angrying that Commandant is not taking me and Strika together and I am fighting very hard to get into the back of the truck first so at least I am not having to stand and be too too tired wherever we are going to raid. I am finding my seat in the corner where I am having wood wall on one side. This way no one can be pushing me this way or that way. No one will be making me to get up.

EXT. TRUCK

Agu peeks through the wooden slats at the passing countryside. It is a more lush area than before, trees as far as the eye can see.

EXT. JUNCTION

The truck comes to a stop on a hill overlooking a heavily forested valley.

The rebels pile out of the truck, stretching their legs and pissing by the roadside.

Agu is the last to get out. He wipes the sweat off his face, flings it to the ground.

Commandant walks round to the back of the truck.

COMMANDANT

The blood must flow!

REBELS

(in unison)

Yes, Sah!

Commandant scratches his beard, pulls the scabs off his numerous sores.

Agu looks out at the dense cluster of trees lining either side of the road.

Strika walks over, stands beside him.

AGU

Do you know what they are calling these trees?

Strika shakes his head, no.

AGU (CONT'D)

I am only knowing the Iroko tree. These are much shorter than the Iroko.

Strika shrugs his shoulders.

AGU (CONT'D)

I am calling these one Children of the Forest. If I am tree, then I will be liking to be like the Iroko because they are so tall and strong that nothing is bothering them...

AGU (V.O.)

...but I am thinking that I am more like slave tree because I can never be doing what I want.

Rambo comes over and motions for them to follow him.

Commandant is handing guns out.

RAMBO

There is not enough gun for each person to be having one.

COMMANDANT

(to Agu)

You are too small to be carrying gun because small person is not holding gun well well, and just bouncing up and down when they are shooting.

He hands Agu a large knife instead.

AGU

Gun juice, Sah.

Commandant grins and hands him some.

AGU (V.O.)

Everybody is always wanting gun juice because it is drug and making life easy easy. Gun juice is making you to be stronger and braver. It is making your head to hurt and it is tasting like bullet and sugarcane. I am not liking how it is the color of oil and the color of black paint or water in the gutter, but I am struggling to get my own so I can be putting it in my mouth.

Agu gives some of his gun juice to Strika.

AGU (V.O.)

It is tasting like licking rock and it is tasting like eating pencil, but it is also tasting like licking sweet. My throat is burning like the fire of gun, but it is also sweetening like sugarcane. I am wanting more gun juice.

EXT. VALLEY

The rebels move through the bush towards a stream. They stop at the stream to drink.

Agu spits out the muddy water. He ducks his head in the water. As he pulls his head up, something is different...

The clouds form various animal shapes. Agu looks at the faces of the soldiers and they have no noses or mouths.

The sun turns gray, the sky melts like a leaf in a fire.

AGU'S POV

Agu moves in the middle of the chaos, invisible to everyone.

AGU (V.O.)

I am feeling in my body something like electricity and I am starting to think... yes, it is good to fight. I am liking how the gun is shooting and the knife is chopping.

The rebels are shooting and hacking to death defenseless villagers across the stream.

AGU (V.O.)

I am liking to see people running
from me and people screaming for me
when I am killing them and taking
their blood. I am liking to kill.

Butchery and mayhem as the rebels kill everyone in sight,
even the livestock.

AGU (V.O.)

Across the stream I am feeling like
man with big muscle and small head
and I am thinking that nothing can
be stopping me and nothing can be
slowing me down, not even the hill
we are climbing. I am like leopard
hunting in the bush and I am
feeling like I am going home.

The rebels glide up the hill like they are floating on air.

Agu glides along with them, the foliage passing him at
breakneck speed.

He watches Commandant firing his heavy gun like he's in a
Hollywood action film, one hand holding the gun, the other
hand holding the bullet belt.

Rambo chases fleeing villagers with two machetes in hand,
hacking wildly at their backs.

The violence is horrific as Agu's vision changes to slow
motion -- flesh, bone and blood flying past him.

AGU (V.O.)

All of the leaf is red and dripping
and all of the plant is too thick.
The bush is chooking me with its
branch and it is trying to trip me
with its root, but I am running
running through all the color of
this world, through all the tree,
through all the flower. If I am
falling on my knee it is not
mattering because I am getting up
and running, running, running.
Nobody is knowing we are coming
here, coming just like cloud when
you are not even expecting it.

Agu trudges barefoot through the thick mud as he passes down
the main stretch of the village.

AGU (V.O.)

On the path I am feeling wet mud
between my toe and grasses like
knife on my ankle. I am saying
prayer to God but all my word is
going to Devil.

Agu looks up at the sky.

AGU

(pleading)

Help me to be doing the thing You
want me to do!

AGU (V.O.)

But I am only hearing laughter all
around me in the tree and in the
farm we are passing... many farm
that is having no more yam or
cassava because there is nobody
staying to be growing them.

The rebels ransack all of the mud huts, others set fire to
the thatch roofs.

Commandant and Luftenant pass through observing the carnage,
Commandant laughing all the way.

Agu is coming down from his gun juice high, the
hallucinations subsiding.

AGU (V.O.)

Faraway I am hearing screaming and
gunfire and my head is growing
smaller and my body is growing
bigger.

(beat)

I am wanting to kill... I don't
know why. I am just wanting to
kill. I am seeing animal and I am
wanting to kill it.

(raises his machete)

I am raising my machete and then I
am seeing... I am shouting...

AGU

(shouting)

Strika!

Strika stands in front of him, mute like always.

AGU (V.O.)
 (lowering his machete)
 ...because I am almost chopping
 him. He is looking like dog to me.

Agu grabs Strika and hugs him tightly. The intense mayhem continues unabated all around them.

AGU (V.O.)
 In all of the screaming and all of
 the gunfire and I am feeling his
 head and he is feeling my head and
 then we are going together through
 all of the changing color to the
 main house of this compound.

INT. COMPOUND

Agu and Strika enter the ramshackle hut, already pillaged by the others. They cover their noses because of the unbearable stench.

A MOTHER cowers in the corner, holding her young daughter. The daughter is rail thin, starving to death.

Agu approaches them with his machete at his waist.

AGU
 Are you my mother? Are you my
 sister?

The Mother is confused. Maybe he is joking, toying with them.

MOTHER
 (praying)
 Please take my daughter safely to
 heaven. Forgive her sin. You are
 saying blessed is the children and
 who is living in You. They are
 never seeing death. Am I wronging
 You? I am trying to live for You!
 Please, Lord, I am begging to You.
 I am laughing laughing because God
 is forgetting everybody in this
 country.

Agu just stares blankly at her.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am not Devil. I am not bad boy.
 I am not bad boy.
 (MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Devil is not blessing me and I am
not going to hell. But still I am
thinking maybe Devil born me and
that is why I am doing all of this.

AGU'S POV

He sees himself standing before the Mother and daughter,
outside of his own body.

AGU (V.O.)

But I am standing outside myself
and I am watching it all happening.
I am standing outside of myself. I
am grabbing the woman and her
daughter. They are not my mother
and my sister. I am telling them,
it is enough. This is the end.

The Mother SCREAMS.

Strika and another rebel come forward. Strika pulls his
pants down.

MOTHER

(shouting)

Devil bless you! Devil born you!

They grab her legs, spread them apart.

AGU (V.O.)

It is not the Devil that is borning
me... I am having father and
mother, and I am coming from them

Agu closes his eyes as the Mother's SCREAMS intensify.

INT. COMPOUND - LATER

Strika gets up off the Mother, pulls his ragged pants up.

Agu grabs the daughter and pulls on her arm.

The girl resists, the Mother SHOUTING and fighting for her
daughter's life.

Agu jerks the fragile girl's arm... CRACK... her elbow
breaks.

The girl falls to the ground defenseless as Agu cruelly kicks
and stomps her battered body. She holds up her hands to
cover her face.

Strika takes his machete and cuts off one of her hands.

The SCREAMING stops.

The daughter stares at the bloody stump that was once her hand, opens her mouth to speak, no sound comes out.

Agu takes his machete and hacks away at the Mother now.

AGU
(shouting angrily)
You are not my mother! You are not
my mother!

He wields the machete like a veteran warrior of a thousand battles.

The rebel joins in and soon there is only the sound of metal smashing flesh and bone.

Blood stains the mud walls of the hut. The deed is done.

Agu turns to Strika, they breathe heavily, both of their faces covered in blood.

Agu looks up through the big hole in the roof, it's nighttime now, moonlight illuminates his cherubic blood-splattered face.

EXT. POND - DAY

Agu cleans his bloody face in the small fetid body of water.

The red blood mixes with the brownish-green color of the pond.

Animal carcasses float in the water, others lay butchered on the water's edge, swarms of flies covering them like buzzing blankets.

AGU (V.O.)
Time is passing. Time is not
passing. Day is changing to night.
Night is changing to day. How can
I know what is happening? It is
like one day everything is somehow
okay even if we are fighting war,
but the next day we are killing
killing and looting from everybody.
How can I know what is happening to
me? How can I know?

Off to the side he sees Strika sitting alone under the shade of a large tree.

Strika thinks he's alone, he starts sobbing.

Agu watches from a distance but doesn't go over to him.

AGU
Poor Strika.

AGU (V.O.)
I am older than Strika but there
are other boys younger than he
fighting fighting in this war.
There is Hope...

Hope sits in the grass scratching his head.

AGU (V.O.)
The boy we are calling Dagger
because he use knife to do
everything, even to be eating his
food...

DAGGER picks food from a tin can with the blade of his knife.

AGU (V.O.)
The one they are calling Griot...

GRIOT is tying up a hammock between two trees.

AGU (V.O.)
Preacher who is always reading
Bible and talking with God...

PREACHER sits on top of a jerry can reading from his extremely tattered Bible.

AGU (V.O.)
Even all these one are younger than
me. I am not knowing their story
but I think they are missing family
too, and being made to fight in war
against their will.

Agu walks over to a tree and sits down in the shade.

FLASHBACK

EXT. AGU'S VILLAGE - DAY

Agu stands with his FATHER in the center of the village.

All of the Families are evacuating their loved ones before the rebels attack.

A white UNITED NATIONS truck is picking up the evacuees. The soldiers wear their distinctive blue helmets with their camouflage gear.

Agu's Father escorts his Mother and Sister over to the UN truck, helps them climb inside.

Agu holds his Mother's hand for the last time. He looks at his Sister and they wave goodbye as the truck pulls away.

INT. DARK ROOM - LATER

Agu, his Father and dozens of others are holed up inside of a shack of sorts.

Light penetrates through a small hole in the tin roof.

Bullets WHIZZ by outside, men SCREAMING orders to others.

AGU
 (to his Father)
 Father, will they be killing us?
 Will they be killing us?

THUMP!

Somebody punches Agu in the mouth.

AGU (CONT'D)
 Father!

VOICE (O.C.)
 Shut up!

AGU'S FATHER
 Agu!

AGU
 Father...

His Father stands beside him but he Agu cannot see him in the darkness.

AGU'S FATHER
 Look, you can be dying now or dying later. It is all the same. Are you wanting to sit here until they are coming to burn us to ash, enh? Remember now, you can only be dying once.

(MORE)

AGU'S FATHER (CONT'D)

If you are not dying standing
anyway, you will be walking on your
knee with all the ancestor.

VOICE (O.C.)

I am rather to be living now inside
than to just be dying like animal
outside.

Other voices are whispering... *yes, yes.*

AGU'S FATHER

Then your son will be spitting on
your grave.

The voices speak again... *It is true, It is true.*

VOICE (V.O.)

Are we ready?

The sound of a machete SCRAPING the floor.

Bullets are being FIRED and the laughter of soldiers echoes
in the darkness.

AGU'S FATHER

Agu, when we are going out, you
should just be running running.
Running in the other direction. It
is okay. It is okay.

AGU

Okay.

AGU'S FATHER

If you are running fast, then the
enemy won't be seeing you.

AGU

Are we going to die, father?
(no answer; several beats)
Will we die? Will they be killing
us?

Agu is slapped in the face again.

The soldier's voices outside are closer now, right outside
the door.

VOICE (V.O.)

(terrified)

They will be using our body after
they are killing us.

SECOND VOICE (V.O.)

They will just be loading us onto
one truck, bleeding like that so
our blood is just dripping from the
edge, into the wind.

THIRD VOICE (V.O.)

And they will be driving us into
the bush so we cannot even be
buried in our own village, and just
leaving us for the animal to be
eating like that.

ELDER'S VOICE (V.O.)

They are the Devil. I am seeing it
with my own eye. They are looking
like monster with half face, long
fingernail, and sharp teeth.

AGU

Father, is it true?

ELDER'S VOICE (V.O.)

They are looking like the Devil
because you cannot even be living
long enough to see them, and if you
are living, then you are already
becoming Devil like them.

SECOND VOICE (O.C.)

(angrily)
Shut up! Shut up!

THIRD VOICE (V.O.)

(frightened)
There is no time!

A soldier's VOICE from just outside the door...

SOLDIER'S VOICE (O.C.)

One, two, three!

The door swings open, blinding light pierces the darkness.

All the villagers raise their hands to cover their eyes.

AGU'S FATHER

(shouting)
Run! Run, Agu, run!

Agu darts out the door...

Machine guns OPEN FIRE on the villagers.

Agu looks back as he runs through the mud. He sees his Father's body being riddled with bullets.

Agu doesn't stop, sets off running as fast as he can.

The villager's SCREAMS and CRIES ring in Agu's ears.

VOICE (O.C.)
 (screaming)
 They are killing me, oh! Jesus
 Christ, help me! Help me!

Agu is leaving the village's boundary, heading into the uncertainty of the bush.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. REBEL CAMP - DAY

The soldiers gather wood from chopped-down palm trees and thatch to make huts.

Agu is chopping away at the trunk of a large palm tree.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am watching how the sun is just
 dropping down behind the hill like
 it is not wanting to be seeing us
 anymore.

In the distance the orange sun slowly sets...

AGU (V.O.)
 All the color is leaking out of it
 and looking like flame from hell
 all over, eating up the top of all
 the tree, making all the leaf
 bright, bright.

The trunk starts to bend, Agu hits it again, and the towering palm tree falls to the ground.

Agu wipes the sweat from his face as Commandant observes from the side.

EXT. REBEL CAMP - DUSK

Agu is at the camp's perimeter, staring up at the sky.

AGU (V.O.)

Suddenly it is night. The earth is changing from bright orange to black and I am seeing steam rising up from some darkness, just chasing the sun away.

He walks throughout the camp. Some rebels are building fires.

AGU (V.O.)

Every night they are making fire and soldier is sitting down and talking.

Agu joins a group of older soldiers by their fire, sits down.

AGU (V.O.)

After some time I am getting up to go and sit with them around the fire. It is warm and it is making me to feel a little bit okay and I am happying to be back at the camp because it is nice here. And here I am relaxing because there is no enemy that I have to be watching out for if they are wanting to kill me.

(beat)

But I am sitting here listening at the other men talking and breathing and breathing and somehow looking alive. When it is so, we are really all just waiting to die, I am still sadding too much. I am not liking to be sad because being sad is what happens to you before you are becoming mad. And if you are becoming mad, then it is meaning that you are not going to be fighting. So I cannot be sad because if I cannot be fighting, then either I will die, or Commandant will be killing me. If I am dead, then I will not be able to be finding my mother and my sister when this war is finishing.

INT. AGU'S HUT - NIGHT

Agu lies awake on the floor.

All the boys sleep on thin mats on the floor.

AGU (V.O.)

I am never sleeping. I cannot be sleeping. I can never be sleeping. I am just listening listening. No noise. Then I am hearing one boy talking talking. We are calling him Griot because he is always telling story when we are falling asleep. This is story he is telling...

Griot lays on his side. The other boys are turned towards him.

GRIOT

I was just with my mother when the war is coming. We are just in the market to get some food because we are having no food to eat, not even the skin of cassava. I was just in the market when I am hearing GBWEM! I am just hearing one blast and the whole ground began to shaking shaking.

(beat)

And then those government pilot, they are just coming in low with their screaming plane and I was covering my ear, but the drum were just beating BOTU BOTU BOTU because the pilot was shooting TAKA TAKA TAKA and everybody is running this way and that way.

Now all the boys are propped up, leaning on their arms or sides on their mats, enthralled by his tale.

GRIOT (CONT'D)

This one is hiding under wheelbarrow. That one is hiding in church. This one is jumping in gutter. I am not knowing where to be hiding so I am just running running up and down the road. I am hearing another GBWEM landing right next to me. And then I was feeling fire next to my body but I wasn't burning. When I am looking up, I am seeing people hanging from tree like piece of meat. Head just hanging like coconut before it is falling off. Ah ah. Nah wah oh!

AGU (V.O.)

No noise.

The boys all stare at Griot, including Agu.

GRIOT

My mother, my mother. Heyeye now.
My mother is dead. All of her
meats just hanging from tree.

He starts coughing uncontrollably, shaking in his bed.

The other boys turn back over on their mats.

AGU (V.O.)

And then there is boy we are
calling Preacher who is not coming
from village. He is coming from
the bush. He is twisting around in
his sleeping and singing song I am
never hearing before.

Preacher is singing in a low voice, deep in tone for his age.

Agu looks over at Preacher, his tattered Bible resting atop
his chest.

The song he sings is familiar to Agu -- the old hymn *Thou Art
Worthy*.

PREACHER

Thou art worthy, thou art worthy,
thou art worthy, oh Lord...

AGU (V.O.)

He is singing in his deep voice
that is making me to fear because
it is sounding like it is coming
from nowhere... from spirit.

PREACHER

For thou hast created, hast all
things created, thou created all
things. And for thy pleasure these
things are created, thou art
worthy, oh Lord.

AGU (V.O.)

Preacher is having Bible that he is
using as pillow sometimes. That is
why we are calling him Preacher.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His Bible is so tattered that it is not even staying together by itself anymore, and he is having to hold it together with piece of old shirt. He is keeping it in his pocket with his knife and his extra bullet.

Preacher continues singing.

Agu is comforted by the words and Preacher's unique voice.

AGU (V.O.)

Still, I am liking the sound of Preacher's singing. It is helping me to think of good things. It is helping me to think of my mother and my sister.

(beat)

I am not bad boy. I am not bad boy. The Devil no bless me. I am not Devil born.

Tears roll down Agu's cheeks as Preacher continues singing in the peaceful night.

Strika enters shining his flashlight in Agu's face.

Agu quickly wipes away his tears.

Strika points to the door, imitates Commandant scratching his beard.

Agu gets up and exits the hut.

EXT. COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS

Agu moves aside the mosquito net and enters the tiny space.

Commandant's shadow on the wall is the only thing visible as Agu looks around.

A few candles provide the only light.

AGU (V.O.)

They are calling Commandant the man who is driving the enemy to madness.

COMMANDANT

What is taking you so long?

Agu creeps in slowly.

Commandant is sitting on the ground scratching his thick beard and bald head, alternating between the two. He doesn't even look up at Agu.

Several maps are strewn all around him and he is half-naked.

AGU (V.O.)

He is fighting in many battle even if he is only young man, so he is always telling story of people who are treating death like lover and child who can kill before they can even speak.

COMMANDANT

Don't be afraid, come in.

AGU (V.O.)

He is always saying that he is eating people, but it is not tasting too good. And he is saying he is seeing people eat people like they are real meats.

COMMANDANT

Sit down.

He points to a cot in the corner.

Agu goes over and sits on it.

Commandant makes marks on the various maps with a pen. His white shirt is a disgusting brownish-yellow color now.

Agu rubs the mud off of his dirty feet.

AGU (V.O.)

I am looking through the mosquito net to where I can see the fire outside. It is very low now, but still I am wanting to be outside where the other soldier is sleeping, where Griot is talking and Preacher is singing, but I am not saying this to Commandant,

Commandant blows out the candles.

COMMANDANT

Take off your clothe.

He walks over and sits down next to Agu. He pulls Agu's shirt off.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

This is what commanding officer is supposed to be doing to his troop.

He runs his fingers over Agu's back and chest, breathing heavily.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Good soldier is following order anyway, and it is order for you to let me touch you like this.

Agu stares straight ahead, stiff as a board.

AGU (V.O.)

I don't want to be good soldier. I don't want to be soldier at all... but I am not saying that.

Commandant licks Agu's shoulder.

AGU (V.O.)

I don't want his finger creeping all over my body. I don't want his tongue to be touching me and feeling like slug should be feeling if it is on your body.

Commandant gently places his hand behind Agu's neck and guides Agu's head down to his waist...

AGU (V.O.)

I am smelling his smell and feeling how much it is making me want to vomit.

COMMANDANT

(softly)

Touch my soldier.

After a few beats Commandant lifts Agu's head.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Kneel.

Agu gets up onto his knees on the cot.

Commandant takes off his belt, drops his pants. He smears palm oil on Agu's backside, then penetrates him.

Agu CRIES out, his mouth agape from the pain.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Don't scream, Agu. I go slow.

Tears stream down Agu's face as Commandant GRUNTS and GROANS.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Agu strips down next to a stream and sits in the cool water up to his chest.

AGU (V.O.)

If I was brave boy then I would be
swallowing water or rock or
something that would make me to
stop breathing and sink right to
the bottom where I would just be
staying forever, but I am not
wanting to die this way because the
ancestor will not be letting you to
come and live with them. Instead
your spirit will just be living
wherever you are leaving your body.

EXT. REBEL CAMP

Agu slowly lies down on his mat next to Strika. He touches his bottom, looks at his hand, he's still bleeding.

Strika is awake. He sees the blood on Agu's hand, extends his arm and touches Agu's shoulder.

Agu jerks away, then sees Strika's awake.

Strika doesn't open his eyes, leans over and cuddles up next to Agu.

EXT. REBEL CAMP

Agu wakes up with the brilliant sunrise. He turns over and sees Strika's gone.

In the dirt he finds a scribbled message written by Strika, It reads GOD WILL PUNISH HIM.

EXT. REBEL CAMP - LATER

Agu is on guard duty on the edge of the camp near the stream from the night before.

Commandant comes over, touches Agu's shoulder, startling him.

COMMANDANT

Don't worry, it will be okay.

AGU

Yes, Sah.

Commandant hands him a open can of food, an extra ration, hands him a clean shirt.

COMMANDANT

These are for you.

AGU

Thank you, Sah.

COMMANDANT

You and Strika, I am taking care of you young boys. Everything will be okay.

Commandant walks away back towards camp.

Agu sticks his fingers in the can and shovels the contents into his mouth.

EXT. REBEL CAMP - DAY

The army is setting fire to the huts they were using.

AGU (V.O.)

We are leaving this place and before we are leaving we are tearing it all down.

Other soldiers load up the two trucks with jerry cans of kerosene in one, and food in the other.

Agu and Strika set theirs on fire with matches.

AGU (V.O.)

The morning is cool and it feels nice on my skin. And if there is no war and we are normal person and not soldier, we are jubilating and saying how nice the morning feels.

The hut burns up quickly in a large fury of flames.

AGU (V.O.)

It is still very hot and still rising up quick quick until everything is burning burning.

Agu and Strika stand away from the intense heat.

AGU (V.O.)

The flame is having the color of sunset, just orange everywhere but everything it is touching it is only making then black so quick that there is nothing nice to be looking at.

The entire camp is aflame as all the huts are burning up.

Agu and Strika line up beside the trucks with the others.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not liking the way this orange is just making black smoke to be flying everywhere and if you are looking through it, it is making everything to move back and forward even if it is standing still.

Commandant is choosing who goes with each truck like always, and he stops in front of Agu and Strika.

COMMANDANT

You two are bodyguarding me today.
You will be riding in my own car with me.

INT. COMMANDANT'S TRUCK

The truck leads the way down the barren road.

The boy named Driver sits appropriately behind the wheel.

Agu and Strika sit in the middle and Commandant sits by the passenger side door.

AGU (V.O.)

There are so many of us to be sitting on one seat of Commandant's truck, but we are all squeezing in. Inside of Commandant's truck is so nice past anything that all the other soldier are even having. His seat is not made of wood but cushion so it is feeling nice on your buttom when you are sitting on it.

Driver switches on the radio and some West African style music plays.

It is *Beasts Of No Nation* by Fela Kuti.

The four passengers tap their fingers on the dashboard to the beat of the song.

Agu stares through the window past Driver at the passing countryside.

AGU (V.O.)

My thinking is like the road, going on and on, and on and on, until it is taking me so far far away from this place. Sometimes I am thinking of my life far far ahead and sometimes I am thinking of all the life I am leaving behind.

(looks at Commandant and Strika)

And then I am looking at Commandant and Strika and I am also thinking to myself that both of them are looking so peaceful and beautiful like how we are looking before the war, like how we are being after the war, but not like now. Now we just be looking like animal.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

The truck pulls into a small town.

INT. COMMANDANT'S TRUCK

A sign on the road reads WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF ABUNDANT RESOURCES.

COMMANDANT

Ah, this is my town. I am living here as soldier sometimes before this war is starting.

AGU (V.O.)

I can read so I am knowing what welcome is meaning. I am knowing what town is meaning. And I am knowing what is abundant resources. But still I am wanting to know what this sign is meaning for us. I am wanting to ask somebody but I am not saying anything. No word is coming out of my mouth.

The truck pulls to stop and everyone gets out.

EXT. TOWN

Commandant stretches his arms, a smile covers his face for once.

COMMANDANT

(very animated)

My town is fine past any other town. It is like paradise they are always talking about in Bible. In this place, in this place, everything is so fine. If you are looking from top of hill, you are seeing how all the house is having different color roof, red, green, blue, yellow, orange so the whole place is just looking like flower stretching all the way up to the river which is shining shining.

Agu and the others follow Commandant over to a river bordering the town.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Ah, this river is shining so bright at the end of the town like one big piece of tin lying on the ground.

AGU (V.O.)

We are always saying, Commandant is saying, that in this place, maybe one day, big bird will just be coming down and carrying it off because he is thinking it is tin and not water.

Commandant taps Agu on the back...

COMMANDANT

Ah, Agu... we are always having light all the time, and water and so many foods to be eating like chicken, and cow, and goat, and vegetable, and fruit, and any kind fruit you are wanting because trader is always bringing everything he is having to this place to be selling.

AGU (V.O.)

I am never seeing Commandant so happy as now in his town.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He is not seeming like bad man who make me to do bad things with him in this moment.

COMMANDANT

There is nothing they are not selling in this place. If you are wanting beautiful clothe, you can have clothe. If you are wanting beautiful wood, you can have wood, and jewelry... gold and silver, it is all here. But that is not even what I am really liking...

Commandant starts walking along the riverbank and the others follow.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

The best thing this town is having is all the womens. Ah, woman in this place is just too beautiful. If you just see woman here, before you are even knowing it, your soldier is standing at full tenshun!

He laughs loudly.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

They are having breast big like pillow and so nice and round that their clothe is even rejoicing to be holding them. And they are having buttom that is just rounding so nice that when they are sitting down, chair is also rejoicing.

(beat)

They are knowing well well how to make man feel so good with their kissing and loving. Kai! The last time I am in this place, enh! I am having four womens in one day until my soldier is hurting too much for me to even be easing myself.

Agu and Strika smile at one another. Driver is smiling too.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

You cannot even be knowing how nice this place is. It is just too nice.

Agu looks in Commandant's eyes...

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Why are you looking at me with your
eye open like that? Enh? You
think it is lie? Agu, enh, you
think it is lie?

Agu shrugs his bony shoulders.

The other rebel truck arrives. The soldiers join up with
Commandant and the others.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(puts his hands on Agu's
shoulders)

Let me show you paradise.

EXT. TOWN MARKET - EVENING

Commandant leads Agu, Strika and Driver through the town's
main street.

Garbage of all sorts is piled up on either side of the
street. Rotting animal carcasses of all sorts hang from tiny
wooden stalls.

The streets are empty. Not a single soul is visible
anywhere.

AGU (V.O.)

If this town was big place for all
the trader to be buying and selling
this and that, I am not seeing it.
The market is empty. The whole
place is just empty.

They pass by several stalls with the rooftops hanging down
from them. Everything is in tatters, bullet holes in all the
buildings.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not knowing if Commandant is
telling everybody about all the
thing we should be finding in this
place. I am thinking he is not
because they should be madding
since we are not finding any good
thing. We are walking through the
market and finding nothing. And
when we are walking out of the
market, we are still finding
nothing.

COMMANDANT

Dismissed. Start making camp.

The soldiers disperse and go about their duties.

Agu wanders through the gate into the compound after everyone leaves.

INT. BUILDING

Agu enters an abandoned classroom. Maps of the world line the walls, a cracked blackboard with bulletholes still has the last lesson written on it.

FLASHBACK

Agu is in his classroom back home. The room is full of students.

AGU (V.O.)

I am seeing all of the face I am
knowing from home all sitting there
and doing work and then I am
looking at the woman who is writing
lesson on the board.

The teacher walks over and writes on the board. She walks with a limp. She writes I WILL NOT KILL on the blackboard.

AGU (V.O.)

She is writing I will not kill, I
will not kill, I will not kill, and
everybody is writing in their book
I will not kill, excepting me
because I am not having book.

The teacher turns towards Agu... she has the face of the woman he killed in the village.

Then the teacher is turning around
and looking at me and I am fearing
because she is having the face of
that woman I am killing with blood
everywhere on her face and in her
eye. She is saying to me...

TEACHER

Are you not understanding the
lesson?

AGU (V.O.)
 ...even while she is walking to me
 with one sharp machete that is
 shining like the river is shining.

Her bloody face is hideous, the machete gleams as if its
 reflecting sunlight.

AGU (V.O.)
 When she is coming near to me, all
 of the face of the child are only
 the girl that they are using
 anyhow, that Strika is killing. I
 am starting to want to scream.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
 Agu!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. CLASSROOM

Commandant stands over Agu who is sitting at a desk.

Agu jumps up, stands at attention.

AGU
 (shouting)
 Yes, Sah! Yes, Sah!

COMMANDANT
 What is wrong? What is wrong?

Agu stares blankly at him, says nothing.

Commandant looks around the derelict room.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 Come on. Let us leave this place.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

The rebels are setting up camp.

Agu walks down the main street in search of Strika. He comes
 to a house where Commandant sits alone on the front steps
 smoking a cigarette.

COMMANDANT
 Ah, Agu. What are you doing? Just
 come here right now.

Agu walks over to him.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Sit down.

Agu sits down beside him as he slowly puffs on the cigarette.

Commandant rubs the back of Agu's neck.

LUF TENANT

Commandant, Sah. Is that you?

COMMANDANT

(to Agu)

Let us go, hmm. If you are my
bodyguard, then if I am going, you
are also going. Is it not so?

EXT. MARKET

Commandant addresses the rebels in a large open space.

COMMANDANT

We are going out this night. Half
of you, come on, let us go. The
other half, you should be staying
here.

Grumbling from the soldiers.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Don't worry. There is enough woman
so that they will still be here
tomorrow. Relax yourself, enh.

EXT. STREET

Commandant, Agu and Luftenant lead a group of the men to the
local whorehouse.

A lone WOMAN sits outside the gate of a compound with a
scraggly dog sitting at her feet. She shines a flashlight in
their faces.

WOMAN

So you have come, enh?

REBEL (O.C.)

Why are you so angry, Sista?

The Woman doesn't answer. She looks at Agu.

WOMAN

Child is not coming for this place.

AGU

(angrily)

Stupid woman!

Commandant smacks him against the side of his head.

COMMANDANT

He is my own bodyguard.

The Woman spits at Agu, it lands at his feet.

WOMAN

Devil bless you.

Agu smirks, moves past her with Commandant.

INT. BROTHEL

Everything is saturated with blue light. All the women's eyes are glowing blue.

Agu walks over to a television playing a movie, no sound is coming out. His eyes are fixated on the film.

AGU (V.O.)

Television! In this war! Can you imagine?

COMMANDANT

Bring something that will satisfy soldier.

AGU (V.O.)

There is no sound coming from it, but one movie is playing. I am having to try and hear what they are saying, but I am seeing police officer and woman who is looking like prostitute shouting at each other on the screen.

(beat)

A whole television! I am never seeing anything like this since war is starting.

COMMANDANT

(shouting)

Bring beer! Bring mineral! Bring it all!

Agu focuses his attention a young girl sitting on a stool in the corner.

The MADAME sees this, walks over to the girl.

MADAME

Get up, you lazy idiot! Can't you see we are having guest?

The girl walks over to the cooler and bends over to get the beer. All of the soldiers stare at her ass as she bends over.

She walks over to Commandant.

BROTHEL GIRL

It is all warm. No ice to be cooling it.

COMMANDANT

No ice? How can that be, enh?

BROTHEL GIRL

Because of war.

COMMANDANT

Ah, war no stop you from making ice. Bring the drink. We will be drinking it even if it is warm.

The girl brings some beers over to Commandant and the nearest soldiers. He grabs her ass.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Baby, baby I love you.

The girl pulls away from him. The soldiers all LAUGH.

AGU

(to Brothel Girl)

Be bringing us some breads.

MADAME

(sucking her teeth)

Is this war just making you to have no respect for your elder? This small thing borned yesterday trying to order me around. Enh! You this small thing. I can be your mother!

Now the soldiers really have a good and hearty LAUGH.

The girl's shirt is covered in sweat and her nipples poke through her thin shirt.

Agu stares at her perky breasts as she walks past him with a small basket of bread.

The soldiers gather around her pushing and shoving for the bread.

Commandant grabs one of her tits when she's next to him, she slaps his hand hard. It only makes him grin wider.

The Madame approaches Commandant now...

MADAME (CONT'D)

If it is woman you are wanting,
leave this one. I am having plenty
plenty womens in the back if you
are having plenty plenty money to
be giving me.

Commandant and the others follow her to a door in the back of the room.

INT. BROTHEL - LATER

Agu sits alone at a table eating bread. Empty beer bottles sit on the tabletop.

The Brothel Girl is cleaning up the room.

AGU (V.O.)

I am waiting. Ten minute. Twenty
minute just staring at the
television and the movie with
policeman and prostitute. I am
chewing my breads and also watching
the young woman who is coming over
to collect the bottle on the table.

The Brothel Girl leans across Agu to grab the bottles, her firm pointy nipples erect as ever.

AGU (V.O.)

I am looking at her breast and
wanting to touch her buttom like
Commandant is doing, but as soon as
I am even bringing up my hand to be
touching her, she is looking at me
like she will be beating me to
death and sucking in her teeth so
I am putting my hand down.

She pulls away, looking with disdain at Agu.

AGU (V.O.)

Then I am getting so hot because there is not even one bit of air in this room and I am going outside to be catching some breath.

EXT. BROTHEL

Agu stands in the dark underneath one of the windows.

A woman GROANS with pleasure from inside the room.

AGU (V.O.)

I am hearing all of these noise coming from inside sounding just like Commandant when he is entering me. I am hearing these thing and it is making my soldier to become very hard and I am not knowing what to be doing.

(he starts touching his crotch)

I am touching it very softly through my short and it is feeling very good, so I am touching it some more whenever I am hearing the man and woman making more sound from the room. My hand is just moving up and down and up and down like it is not even part of my body anymore and I am thinking to myself of how I will be touching breast and leg.

(closes his eyes)

All of this thing is making my eye to close and my heart to beat fastly and I am liking it and doing it so much until I am just hearing one scream...

LUFTENANT (O.C.)

(shouting)

Ayieeee, she has killed me, oh!

Agu is startled, takes his hand from his shorts and runs to the entrance.

INT. BROTHEL

Agu enters as the soldiers are all over the place, leaving their rooms with their guns in hand.

Luftenant is up against the wall, the blood coming from his mouth appears black in the extreme blue light.

AGU (V.O.)

I am looking at Luftenant and thinking whatever it is that is happening is good for him, but then I am seeing how his face is looking like all the bad thing in the world is paining him and I am sorrying small small.

Two soldiers rush over to Luftenant and sit him down in a chair.

Commandant storms out of his room in his shorts.

COMMANDANT

What is it that is happening!

The woman who was with Luftenant enters the room with blood on her head and mouth. She holds her neck, sliding against the wall for support.

The Madame comes over..

MADAME

What is happening here?

Luftenant is pointing to his stomach.

The soldiers lay Luftenant down on a table underneath the television set. A small knife is sticking out of his abdomen.

LUFTENANT

Kai!

He shakes violently, mumbling to himself.

COMMANDANT

(shouting)

Who is doing this?

MADAME

Heyeye now! What is happening here, oh!

She looks at her girl still holding her throat.

PROSTITUTE

(sobbing)

He is just grabbing my neck and beating me.

(MORE)

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

So what am I supposed to be doing?
I am only small girl. How can I be
stopping him from doing anything?

The Madame comes over and puts her arms around her.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

So I am just seeing this knife that
he is having in his trouser and I
am using it and just chooking him
to get him off of me. I am not
knowing it is going to be like
this.

AGU (V.O.)

I am watching how Commandant's face
is darkening and how the room is
smelling of fear and sweat. I am
thinking that he will be telling us
to be grabbing this woman and
shooting her, but he is not even
opening his mouth.

Commandant looks over at the dying Luftenant...

AGU (V.O.)

He is just standing there and
looking around us and then at
Luftenant who is lying shaking
shaking on the table.

COMMANDANT

Come on! Everybody just get up.
Get him up. Let us be getting out
of here.

The Madame wipes the girl's down with a cloth.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Come on. Move quick!

EXT. BROTHEL

Several soldiers carry Luftenant through the gate.

The old woman is asleep as they pass her by, the dog still
laying at her feet.

INT. BOMBED-OUT BUILDING - DAY

Two soldiers dress Luftenant's wound.

Agu and Strika sit in the corner holding their guns.

AGU (V.O.)

A whole three day we are staying here and Luftenant is not getting better. Every day somebody is washing his stomach with cloth and water and soap, but it is not doing anything and he is just shivering in the night.

Rambo walks over and takes Luftenant's clothes. He puts on the jacket, two sizes too big, but wears it anyway.

Agu snickers as Rambo walks by him.

Rambo gives him a dirty look, keeps on walking.

INT. BOMBED-OUT BUILDING - NIGHT

Agu and Strika are on duty to watch over Luftenant.

AGU (V.O.)

Three whole day somebody is watching him on and off but he is never speaking anymore and his face is just growing too white.

He dips the dirty cloth in a pot of brown water, rubs it over Luftenant's face.

AGU (V.O.)

All the morning he is just groaning and moaning like his spirit is fighting to be let free from his body, and all the evening he is shaking and shivering like it is so cold even though the night is so hot that we are all sweating. We are just watching him like this for all this time and everybody is not saying anything.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - DAY

Agu, Strika and Rambo carry Luftenant's body.

AGU (V.O.)

It is taking Luftenant three whole day to be dying, and then he is dying when the moon is full and the night is shining like silver.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 We are dumping his body in the
 gutter...

They toss Luftenant's corpse in a gutter as Commandant
 watches.

AGU (V.O.)
 ...but before that, Rambo is just
 taking his clothe because
 Commandant is saying that Rambo is
 new Luftenant. Then we are leaving
 his body for the cat and dog and
 maggot and worm to eat. We are
 leaving him and I am thinking that
 he is getting his wish not to be
 fighting anymore, and I am fearing
 because I am seeing that the only
 way not to be fighting is to die.

The others walk away as Agu stands looking over Luftenant's
 body.

AGU (V.O.)
 I am not wanting to die.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The army trudges along as usual. Dead bodies litter the road
 and fields.

A disgusting bloated corpse captures Dagger's eye, he goes
 over to inspect it.

Dagger pokes the swollen abdomen with his rifle barrel.

DAGGER
 Agu, look at this here!

AGU
 What are you doing? Aren't you
 knowing it is no good to be
 touching the dead?

DAGGER
 Why? He is dead.

AGU
 You show disrespect to the dead and
 the ancestor spirits will curse
 you, and haunt you.

DAGGER

How much more cursed can our lives
be, Agu?

He has a point -- Agu knows it's true as well.

Dagger removes the dead man's boots. He puts them on, three sizes too big, he wears them anyway.

Agu smiles as Dagger struggles to walk in the boots. He hasn't smiled in months.

DAGGER (CONT'D)

(looking back)

Come on, Agu. We don't want to be
falling behind.

KABOOM!

Dagger explodes into a pink mist as he steps on a landmine.

Agu covers his face as the blast knocks him backwards several feet. He's covered in Dagger's blood.

INT. COMMANDANT'S TRUCK - DAY

Agu, Strika and Driver are in Commandant's truck again.

GUNSHOTS are fired at them from the bush...

COMMANDANT

Stop the truck!

Driver hits the breaks and the truck skids sideways.

EXT. COMMANDANT'S TRUCK

Commandant leads the men behind the truck. They open fire on whoever is in the bush.

Agu and Strika FIRE their guns with unbridled joy.

Rambo commands the men in the other truck.

The FIREFIGHT intensifies, the rebels are outgunned.

COMMANDANT

Let us get back in the truck!

Agu notices the young boy Hope among Rambo's men.

Enemy soldiers appear out of the bush and run at Rambo's truck, SHOOTING all the time.

Hope doesn't move quick enough and two enemy soldiers throw a crude bomb at the truck as Hope is climbing in.

BOOM!

The fire from the bomb engulfs Hope as he opens the passenger door.

AGU
(shouting)
Hope!

The men inside shove Hope back out of the cab, his burning body falls to the road, consumed by flames.

COMMANDANT
Move quick, Agu!

Agu comes to his senses as the soldiers head for Commandant's truck. He jumps in the cab just in time...

INT. COMMANDANT'S TRUCK

Driver turns the truck on.

COMMANDANT
Get us out of here now!

Driver hits the gas and they speed away, bullets still hitting the side of the truck.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Helicopters are FIRING on the two rebel trucks and dropping bombs at them.

Rambo's truck is hit by a bomb, it overturns on a curved portion of the road.

The surviving rebels jump out of the wreckage and take cover in the bush.

Commandant and his men exit their truck and join in the battle.

The rebels suffer heavy losses as the helicopters bombard them with gunfire and bombs.

Agu and Strika follow Commandant as he leads his men into the bush for cover.

AGU (V.O.)

There is so much bombing and
bombing and shelling and shelling
and sending helicopter to come and
shine light on us and kill us.

A helicopter hovers over the bush, shining a bright light down on the rebels.

AGU (V.O.)

All the time, the ground is shaking
and the tree is shaking and the air
is smelling of smoke or the air is
beating in your ear BOTU BOTU BOTU
and you are not even having one
second to be thinking anything.

The rebels SHOOT at the helicopter, hitting its tail rotor.

The helicopter pulls away, spinning out of control, the bright light zig-zagging all over the night sky.

COMMANDANT

(shouting)

Kai!

He FIRES at the helicopter as it regains control and comes back for more.

On its return pass, the helicopter drops a bomb directly on Commandant's truck, destroying it in a huge ball of flame.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(angrily)

No! No! No!

The helicopters fly away after destroying the two trucks.

The rebels come out of the bush and gather in a clearing.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

(to Rambo)

How many man we lose?

RAMBO

Eleven, Sah.

Commandant scratches his bushy beard and rubs his bald head.

COMMANDANT
 (to Agu)
 Are you alright, Agu?

AGU
 Yes, Sah.

COMMANDANT
 Strika?

AGU
 He is okay, Sah.

Commandant looks at the burning trucks and the dark road ahead of them.

COMMANDANT
 (softly; dejected)
 Move out.

EXT. FIELD

The rebels march in a loose formation, no more order or discipline.

AGU (V.O.)
 So much time pass us now. I am not seeing road or village or woman or children for too long. I am only seeing war, one evil spirit sitting in the bush just having too much happiness because all the time he is eating what he wants to eat... us, and seeing what he is wanting to see... killing, so he is just laughing GBWEM! GBWEM! GBWEM!

Commandant is unfocused, walking side to side at the head of the army.

Agu walks next to Strika.

AGU
 Do you think war will ever end?

Strika shrugs his shoulders.

AGU (CONT'D)
 Do you think Commandant will survive war?

Strika nods his head, no.

AGU (CONT'D)

Do you think we will survive war?

Strika nods his head, no.

EXT. REBEL CAMP - NIGHT

Agu and Strika stand guard outside Commandant's makeshift quarters.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)

Agu, come here.

He and Strika exchange looks. Agu knows what's in store in for him.

INT. COMMANDANT'S TENT

Commandant is smoking a cigarette. A single candle provides the light.

Agu starts to take his clothes off right away.

COMMANDANT

Now you believe me about those woman in my town, enh?

AGU

Yes, Sah.

COMMANDANT

Paradise. Once it was a paradise.

Agu walks over to him.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Agu, Agu... you poor boy.

He touches Agu's chest, caresses his shoulders.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

This is what war make men to do.

AGU

Yes, Sah.

Commandant licks Agu's shoulder's blades.

COMMANDANT

No coconut oil tonight, enh. It will be okay.

He stands up, drops his pants, and bends Agu over his cot.

EXT. COMMANDANT'S TENT

Strika covers his ears as Agu MOANS in pain.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH - DAY

The rebels are digging a lengthy trench for their new base camp.

Commandant and Rambo supervise the men.

Agu, Strika and Driver are digging a section together.

DRIVER

(to Agu)

I am to be leaving tonight.

AGU

What do you mean?

DRIVER

I am driver. There is no more truck to be driving so I am no fighting anymore.

AGU

Commandant will not be happying to hear this.

DRIVER

I am leaving tonight. Come with me, Agu.

AGU

No, no. If Commandant catch me, I don't want to think about what happen.

DRIVER

Well, I am no scared no more. I want to see my family again, my village, my people. Don't you want the same, Agu?

AGU

I miss my family and my village, but I know that things can never be the same again.

DRIVER

We are going to die if we stay here. Death is the only escape for us.

Rambo comes over to inspect their work.

RAMBO

More working, less talking talking.

He walks away.

DRIVER

If you changing mind don't be waiting too late.

AGU

Don't do it, Driver. You see what Commandant is doing to deserter.

DRIVER

Only deserter he is catching.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH - NIGHT

Driver sneaks up the trench wall and sets of running into the darkness.

He makes it one-hundred yards or so when a GUNSHOT rings out and Driver falls to the ground.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE REBEL CAMP

Commandant stands over Driver as he holds his wounded leg.

COMMANDANT

Idiot boy. Where did you think you are escaping to?

DRIVER

(frightened)
Don't kill me, Sah. I only young boy.

COMMANDANT

I no kill you, boy. I need you for example.

He grabs Driver's ragged shirt and hoists him on to his feet.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH - DAY

The rebel army stands before Commandant and Rambo.

Driver stands next to Commandant.

COMMANDANT

Last night this idiot trying to escape from the army. There is no escape for you. Without this army you are dying dying. So if you are deserting army army you are dying dying.

He pulls out a pistol and SHOOTs Driver in the back of the head.

Blood and brains are expelled from his forehead for all to see.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

This is what I do to deserter. It is easy, it is quick. Get back to your posts!

The rebels disperse double time back to the trench.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH

Agu and several boys are pissing into a ditch.

DAGGER

(sad)

I can take no more. Driver was so young.

AGU

He know what he was doing. I told him not to be trying to escape.

PREACHER

Commandant did not have to be killing him.

DAGGER

Soon he will be killing us all from his madness, not enemy soldier.

AGU

Shutup, all of you. If Commandant overhear you he do the same thing he do to Driver.

DAGGER

You say this Agu because you
guarding Commandant's tent. You
starting to talk like Rambo now.

AGU

Shut up and get back to the trench.

Dagger and Preacher finish up, walk back to the trench.

DAGGER

Agu thinks he is new Rambo.

PREACHER

This is because Rambo is new
Luftenant.

DAGGER

And he is Commandant's freshest
meat, tighter than the rest of us.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH - NIGHT

Agu and Strika stand guard in the pouring rain.

Commandant's quarters is little better than the others.
Wooden branches are erected to form a tiny room covered by
clothes and a sheet of aluminum.

AGU (V.O.)

It is night. It is day. It is
light. It is dark. It is too hot,
it is too cold. It is raining. It
is too much sunshine. It is too
dry. It is too wet. But all the
time we are fighting. No matter
what, we are always fighting.

(beat)

All the time bullet is just eating
everything, leaf, tree, ground,
person... eating them... just
making person to bleed everywhere
and there is so much blood flooding
all over the bush.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The bleeding is making people to be screaming and shouting all the time, shouting to father and to mother, shouting to God or to Devil, shouting one language that nobody is really knowing at all.

(beat)

Sometimes I am covering my ear so I am not hearing bullet and shouting, and sometimes I am shouting and screaming also so I am not hearing anything but my own voice.

Sometimes I am wanting to cry very loud, but nobody is crying in this place. If I am crying, they will be looking at me because soldier is not supposed to be crying.

Strika fiddles with his machine gun.

Agu peeks inside Commandant's HQ to see if he's okay.

INT. COMMANDANT'S HQ

Commandant sleeps atop a crate with his back against the trench's mud wall, his boots submerged in a puddle of water.

EXT. REBEL TRENCH

Agu readjusts his gun.

AGU

(to Strika)

Commandant is sleeping still.

As always, Strika nods his head.

Rambo approaches out of the darkness, his breath visible in the faint light.

RAMBO

Come on, out of my way.

Agu stiffens to attention.

AGU

Commandant is sleeping.

RAMBO

Well, wake him up.

AGU
He is tiring, so don't be bothering
him.

He is shaking now. Who knows what Rambo will do to him.

RAMBO
Out of my way.

He steps forward towards the opening.

Agu moves and blocks his path.

AGU
No, he is resting.

Rambo is furious, gets in Agu's face.

RAMBO
Listen, you small boy. Get out of
the way, we are not playing game.
I am not remembering the last time
I am playing game.

Agu's frightened now, he's never seen Rambo act so aggressive
with him.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
What is all of this noise?

RAMBO
Sah, it is me.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
Idiot, can't you see I am sleeping.

RAMBO
Ehnen, now Sah, I can see.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
Then shut up and go back to your
post.

RAMBO
No, Sah, I am not doing that
anymore, Sah.

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
(angrily)
And why not?

RAMBO
Because we are leaving, Sah?

COMMANDANT (O.C.)
 (shouting)
 Who and who is leaving?

Commandant emerges from the tent, shoves Agu to the side.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)
 Who is leaving, idiot? Go back to
 your post. You are leaving when I
 say leave. Understood?

RAMBO
 No, Sah... never. We are going. I
 no want trouble, oh.

COMMANDANT
 Who is this we, enh? You are the
 only one stupid enough...

Voices of other rebels come from the darkness. One voice
 shouts I AM GOING, then another, I AM GOING TOO. Several
 voices shout aloud ME, ME, ME.

Commandant looks around but sees no faces. No one is brave
 enough to confront him but he knows a dozen or more men are
 gathered around the tent.

Rambo's finger slides down to his trigger.

Agu sees this and slides his own finger down to the trigger
 too.

RAMBO
 (shouting)
 See! We are going.

Commandant grimaces, he doesn't have a weapon with him.

POP!

Rambo fires a single shot.

It doesn't matter Commandant's unarmed. Rambo's not here for
 a fair fight.

Commandant's sickly eyes are wide open, mouth open too, but
 no words come out. He looks down at the bullet hole in his
 chest.

Rambo stands there defiantly. Agu relaxes his trigger
 finger.

Commandant falls to his knees in the mud, dirty water
 splashes all over his torso.

AGU (V.O.)

Commandant is dead. It was so easy to be killing him. Why we are not doing it before I am not knowing, but I am not wanting to think about that right now. I am tiring too much.

Rambo is breathing heavily, staring at Commandant's corpse.

The muddy water is now red with blood, flowing down into the trench.

AGU (V.O.)

Rambo is stopping his shaking and is puffing out his chest. Rambo is looking at me and I am looking at him. He is looking at me for long time then he is just turning and climbing up wall.

Rambo climbs up out of the trench.

AGU (V.O.)

Then I am looking up and hearing how all of the soldier is climbing up out of the trench and I am hearing Rambo shouting...

RAMBO

Come on! Come on quick quick quick! Move fast, oh, move fast with speed! Home, home! We are going home!

One by one the rebels climb out of the trench to see for themselves.

AGU (V.O.)

I am looking at Commandant and then I am climbing out of the trench. I am tired and hungry and I am wanting to go home.

The rebels flee into the night in every direction.

There are no trucks or vehicles of any kind but the call of freedom causes them to act blindly.

Rambo disappears into the night with a group of rebels at his command.

Agu finds Strika taking bullets, and anything else he can carry, from Commandant.

AGU

We go now, Strika, fastly. We are
free to go.

Agu and Strika follow behind the older men, assuming they
know where they are going.

EXT. BUSH - NIGHT

Agu and Strika walk under the imperious light of the moon,
still carrying their guns across their backs.

AGU (V.O.)

Wherever we are going the moon is
following us. It is so big and so
bright that we are not using any
torch to be seeing, so nobody is
fearing that the enemy can be
seeing us from wherever they may be
hiding in this bush. They cannot
see us if we are not having torch
because we are invisible unless
they are bringing helicopter to be
beating the air botu botu and to be
shining their bright light on the
road.

(beat)

I see tree and its shadow. I see
rock and its shadow and then I am
saying let me just make it to that
tree or to that rock. My eye is
becoming used to the light and I am
beginning to see more of everything
that is around... each tree, each
rock, each piece of rubbish or
plant growing alone in the mud of
the road.

Agu looks up at the snow white moon dominating the nighttime
sky.

AGU (V.O.)

Wherever we are going it is only
the moon shining and it is making
the whole place to be looking like
it is glass and will just break if
you are touching it too hard.

EXT. BUSH - LATER

Agu and Strika are running in the darkness.

The sound of helicopter rotors WHIRS somewhere in the distance. A bright light beams down from the chopper just in front of them.

Agu and Strika drop to their bellies and hide under the dense shrubs.

The helicopter hovers for a few moments then moves on into the night.

Rambo appears and grabs Agu by the arm.

RAMBO

If you are wanting to live you will
come with me.

Agu nods his head, yes. He and Strika grab their guns and follow Rambo without a word.

All the young boys are following Rambo into the new unknown.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The boys ramble along by the light of the moon.

AGU (V.O.)

We are tiring so so much, but we
are trying to reach some place.
Where is this place? I am not
knowing, but I am knowing that
Rambo is saying that we should not
be stopping. So we are not
stopping and we are walking through
the whole night into the day.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The boys continue on their way, Rambo in the lead.

AGU (V.O.)

The sun is rising behind us so all
our shadow is growing front from
our feets and making the road ahead
very dark which is making it harder
to be taking each next step.

He wipes the sweat from his face, breathing heavily.

Strika is right beside him, matching his steps.

AGU (V.O.)

My sweat is burning my eye away.
Now it is so hot because the sun is
beating on my back and making my
gun to warm so much that it is
feeling like hot iron on my back.

He adjusts the gun on his back

AGU (V.O.)

I am not liking this at all at all
and I am wanting to be throwing gun
away into the bush, but if I am
throwing gun away, then Rambo will
be throwing me away because gun is
more important than me. I am
always remembering this.

EXT. FIELD

The soldiers walk through a a recently plowed field.

Preacher walks just in front of Agu and Strika. He is
singing quietly to himself.

KABOOM!

Preacher steps on a landmine. His right leg is blown
completely off.

RAMBO

Everybody, stop moving!

Agu ignores the order and runs over to help the boy.

AGU

Preacher!

PREACHER

(screaming)

Jesus! Dear Lord! The pain, the
pain!

Agu and Strika kneel down, each taking hold of Preacher's
hands.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

Dear God, come take me! Come take
me!

His body shakes violently and then he is still.

Strika closes Preacher's eyes, Agu takes the Bible from his shirt pocket.

RAMBO

He is gone. Let us keep moving.

Agu and Strika stand up and look at their friend one last time.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - LATER

The soldiers are weary now.

The noonday sun is oppressive, some of the boys unable to keep up.

AGU (V.O.)

One time I am seeing Strika in front of me walking slowly slowly...

Strika is in front of Agu...

AGU (V.O.)

...then the next time I am seeing him behind me walking fastly fastly.

He turns around and sees Strika behind him, smiling.

AGU (V.O.)

This is making me to think am I mad.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE

AGU (V.O.)

We are moving always moving because that is what we are doing and watching all the thing on the road passing us by. House, tree, school, empty car all burned up, refuses, all passing us, but still we are not seeing person.

EXT. VILLAGE

The boys enter the main path into a tiny village in the middle of nowhere.

AGU (V.O.)

We are coming into another village,
but it is just small, not even
really village. It is only just
house on each side of the road, and
it is empty, nothing there
excepting the refuses.

The boys hold their noses as they pass the large piles of
garbage gathered by the path.

Women grab their children and enter their huts as the
soldiers pass through.

AGU (V.O.)

Person is running away from us like
we are sickness, like we are the
most evil thing to be on this
earth.

Strika steps on a broken bottle and falls down.

Agu stops to help him up, Strika's foot is cut and bleeding
badly.

The others keep on marching past them.

AGU

Strika, Strika. We are having to
go or they will be leaving us.

Strika ignores him, picking the jagged glass pieces out of
his skin. He licks the blood from his fingers, careful not
to touch the gruesome sores on his chapped lips.

Agu helps him to his feet and they set off...

AGU (V.O.)

One step, two step... he is falling
down.

Strika falls, he can go no further.

AGU

Get up.

Strika coughs, spits blood into the dust.

AGU (CONT'D)

Strika, you have to be getting up.

Strika spits up more blood.

AGU (V.O.)

His lip is moving but there is no noise coming out. I am looking at him. His face is just shining shining like he is sweating so much, but there is no sweat coming out.

(kneels down next to Strika)

I am just watching all the other soldier just walking away from us.

(touches Strika's chest)

I am feeling his heart that is just beating beating like whole village is stomping on the ground.

AGU

(pleading)

Ah ah, Strika! What is happening?

He gets up to leave...

STRIKA

Don't leave me.

Agu stops. Did Strika just speak?

AGU

(turning around)

Come on! Get up and stop this thing you are doing!

STRIKA

(sobbing; pleading)

Don't leave me. Please, Agu... don't just be leaving me!

Agu goes back, bends down, puts his arms around Strika.

AGU (V.O.)

Strika is my brother and my family and the only person I can be talking to even if he is never talking back until now. I am watching him and then I am looking up because I am not hearing all the other soldier walking on this road. I am not wanting to be left behind. I am not wanting to leave Strika behind.

AGU

Strika.

AGU (V.O.)
I am calling his name, but he is
not answering...

AGU
Strika?

AGU (V.O.)
He is not saying anything...

AGU
(sobbing)
Strika!

He rocks Strika back and forth like a baby in his arms.

EXT. ROAD

Agu walks at the rear of the group of boys.

AGU
One day we are on the road and then
we are just hearing some noise like
truck and then we are scattering
into the bush, all of us to one
side just moving moving quickly
into the shadow of all the leaf and
tree.

The soldiers duck into the bush, hiding where they can.

Agu takes off running away from the others. He trips over
something and hits the ground hard. He looks over at what he
tripped on...

...it's a bloated dead body. It looks like it's about to
burst.

Agu scoots away from the black rotted corpse.

A soldier appears out of the bush, smiling at Agu, his teeth
brown and yellow. He walks over to the corpse and unbuttons
the shirt.

Maggots and a large silver beetle crawl all over the dead
man's chest.

The man rolls up the shirt, puts it under his arm. He leans
down and takes the boots as well.

The man smiles at Agu with his disgusting teeth sticking out,
then disappears back into the bush.

Agu looks at his busted and bloody knee. He tosses his gun off to the side.

AGU (CONT'D)

I am not needing you anymore.

Agu get sup and walks past the others like he's floating on air.

AGU (V.O.)

Nobody is seeing me as I getting up and walking through the tree right to the road.

(he floats over the road's surface)

I am feeling breezes to my back that is pushing me to walk far far away from here and I am moving quickly quickly onto the road where I am just walking walking to where the sun is setting.

(he stares directly at the bright shining sun)

I am looking at it and wanting to catch it in my hand to be squeezing until the color are dripping out from it forever. That way everywhere it is always dark and nobody is ever having to see any of the terrible thing that is happening in this world.

He floats over the road towards the setting sun.

INT. ROOM

Agu lies on a bed staring at the ceiling.

AGU (V.O.)

In heaven I am thinking it is always morning. It is not mattering when I am waking up, there is always the feeling of warmness from the sunlight that is coming in through the window, and the sound of bird singing outside in the tree, and the sound of the cock shouting KROO KROO, and the smell of smoke coming from where they are making fire. Everything is new. Everything is fresh. That is how I am feeling each time I am waking up in this place.

INT. AGU'S ROOM - MISSION BUILDING - DAY

An older Agu sits at a table next to the window staring out into the countryside.

AGU (V.O.)

Now I am strong again. My arm and my leg is carrying me again and when I am walking my bone is not cracking and the whole place is not spinning around and around anymore.

(beat)

They are giving me one room for myself where I am having whole bed, and my own table right under the window for the sunlight to be warming.

(beat)

They are giving me all of the book I can be wanting to read because I am telling them my father is schoolteacher and that before the war I am always reading whatever I can. They are even giving me as much paper as I can be wanting and telling me to write or draw whatever I am wanting to draw so I am drawing picture of school so I can be finishing and becoming Doctor or Engineer.

INT. MISSION CHAPEL

Agu sits with FATHER FESTUS as the priest reads to him from the Bible.

AGU (V.O.)

There is priest who is coming every Wednesday and Sunday in his black clothe and white collar. He is calling himself Father Festus so we are calling him that. He is saying, turn to God, pray to the almighty so he can be forgiving you. Confession and Forgiveness and Resurrection, Father Festus is always saying... these are the only thing you are needing to be giving The Life to *your* life.

INT. AGU'S ROOM - NIGHT

Agu prays on his knees beside his bed.

AGU (V.O.)

I am always thinking Confession and Forgiveness and resurrection, I am not knowing what all this word is meaning. They are not making any sense to me anytime he is saying them.

INT. AGU'S ROOM

Agu lies in his bed. The white moonlight illuminating his room through the window.

AGU (V.O.)

The only thing that is making sense to me is memory that I am having of another boy, Strika, sleeping next to me, so close because we are the only people protecting each other from all of the thing trying to kill us.

EXT. MISSION CHAPEL - DAY

Agu walks to the front door of a humble one-room church painted white.

INT. MISSION CHAPEL

Agu sits with other youths his age and younger children as they sing along with a woman pianist playing hymns.

INT. MISSION CHAPEL

AMY, an American missionary sits beside Agu in a pew at the front of the church.

AGU (V.O.)

Every day I am talking to Amy. She is white woman from America who is coming here to be helping people like me. Most of the time she is not even saying anything and is sitting across from me in her chair.

(MORE)

AGU (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She is sitting in her chair and I am sitting in my own chair and she is always looking at me like looking at me is going to be helping me.

INT. CLASSROOM - CHURCH

Amy and Agu sit across from one another.

AGU (V.O.)

She is telling me to speak speak speak and thinking that my not speaking is because I am like baby. If she is thinking I am baby then I am not speaking because baby is not knowing how to speak. But every time I am sitting with her I am thinking like I am old man and she is like small girl because I am fighting in war and she is not even knowing what war is. She is always saying to me, tell me what you are feeling, tell me what you are thinking. And every day I am telling her the same thing...

AMY

How are you feeling to day, Agu?

AGU

I am fine, Miss Amy.

AMY

And what are you thinking about?

AGU

I am thinking about my future.

AMY

All right, what is your future?

AGU

I am seeing myself becoming Doctor or Engineer, and making too much money so I am becoming big man and never having to fight war ever again.

AMY

Have you been reading your daily scriptures?

AGU

Lately I have fallen behind. When I read it now, I am not feeling the same like before.

AMY

You mean when you were still with your family?

AGU

Yes.

AMY

I know how difficult it must be for you, having lost your father like you did...

AGU

He was murdered right in front of me.

AMY

I can only imagine how terrible that must have been.

AGU

I carry his memory inside. All the good things.

AMY

I am glad to hear it. You know, Agu, it's in times like these that we can find comfort in the words of scripture, in the words of the Lord...

AGU

I am wondering how God can be so good but let me be taken from my family. How could he let me go to make war, to kill other men.

AMY

I do not have all the answers you seek, but I do know that every thing happens by God's will. He has a purpose for every one of us, no matter the circumstances, and perhaps your ordeal was to prepare you for something greater, something only you would be able to understand.

AGU

When I was a boy my family sit together and read from Bible aloud. These were happy times. This is how I am remembering my mother and sister.

AMY

Honor their memory by continuing that tradition with us here, Agu. You can help teach the younger children who have also lost their parents to war.

AGU

I do not know. I am not feeling the same.

AMY

I understand.

AGU

For me now, Miss Amy, the memories are too sadding. All I hear are screams of men, the dying, the bullets shooting from gun. I see the faces of the dead in my dreams. From old man to small child, all of them pointing finger at me. I am wanting to be dying so I am never hearing it again.

AMY

But there is forgiveness with the Lord. No sin or sins are too great to be forgiven.

AGU

How could he love me after what I have done, what I have been made to do?

AMY

God is merciful, Agu... he died upon the cross for our sins so that we might have forgiveness.

AGU

I will try to read again. I am liking how King David is sinning sinning but Bible still says he is man after God's own heart.

AMY

And that's because despite David's many shortcomings he remained faithful to the Lord, even after he committed murder and adultery. Through his story you can see the patience and long-suffering of God towards us sinners.

AGU

We are all of us sinners, no?

AMY

But by the grace of God, that is why we can rejoice in his undying love for us.

AGU

This part I am really liking... I just do not know if I am believing it anymore.

AMY

I will continue praying for you, Agu.

AGU

Thank you, Miss Amy.

EXT. FIELD NEXT TO CHURCH

Agu strolls around the grounds.

AGU (V.O.)

I am wanting to lie down on the warm ground with my eye closed and the smell of mud in my nose, just like Strika. I am wanting to feel how the ground is wet all around my body so that if I am sweating, I am feeling like it is the ground sweating through me. And I am wanting to stay in this same place forever, never moving for anything, just waiting waiting until dust is piling on me and grasses is covering me and insect is making their home in the space between my teeth.

He stops in front of a large Iroko tree.

AGU (V.O.)

I am telling Amy that I am thinking
one Iroko tree will be growing from
my body, so wide that its trunk is
separating night and day, and so
tall that its top leaf is tickling
the moon until the man living there
is smiling.

He touches the trunk of the gargantuan specimen of a tree.

AGU (V.O.)

I am not bad boy. I am not beast,
or Devil born like woman say to me
once. I am Agu. I am all of this
thing... but I am also having
mother once... and she is loving
me.

EXT. HILL - DAY

Agu sits staring off into the distance. The majestic African
sun slowly setting.

He opens up the Bible he took from Preacher and begins
singing *Thou Art Worthy...*

SUPER:

Only The Story Can Continue Beyond The War And The Warrior

-- Chinua Achebe

FADE OUT:

THE END