

LADY

Written by

OLIVE NWOSU

1 EXT. LAGOS - DAY 1 *

PRE-LAP: The murmur of girls *whispering* - muffled. The soft, lapping sound of water BRIMS.

A blue, endless sky SUDDENLY fills the screen.

It's startling. All that separates it from sea beneath is the thin grey line of the horizon.

2 EXT. FISHING BOAT - CONTINUOUS 2

The whispering of girls continues.

A WOODEN RED FISHING BOAT rocks in the Lagos Lagoon.

The boat is pitched by the side of a FLOATING HOUSE.

Several other houses surround this particular one, all of them set against the water.

This is MAKOKO - a slum on stilts, an informal settlement built along the Lagos Lagoon.

3 EXT. FLOATING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 3

TWO YOUNG BLACK GIRLS (6) and (9) lie on the edge of the open balcony.

All eyes, their heads flop back, hanging over the floating deck.

The girls marvel at their own reflections. The older girl speaks with an intensity too large for a girl her age.

OLDER GIRL

... I go swim with fish. Big big fish. I go catch am for us to eat.

Her dreadlocks almost touch the gentle waves beneath.

Giggling, the younger girl cradles a one-eyed doll.

YOUNGER GIRL

Me, I go buy fan ice-cream! Plenty, plenty!

She laughs.

YOUNGER GIRL (CONT'D)

Dem get fan ice-cream for Freetown, Lady...?

OLDER GIRL

(serious)

Of course dem get fan ice-cream,
Pinky. When we go, you go see. My
mama say Freetown get everything.

Flopping up, the younger one sighs.

YOUNGER GIRL

When we go go Freetown, then?

THUD. THUD. THUD.

Something SHARP interrupts - the rhythmic sound of rocking.
The young girl glances at the red boat, meters away.

THUD. THUD. THUD. It grows loud, insistent.

The older girl sits up.

YOUNGER GIRL (CONT'D)

(quiet)

Where your mama, Lady...?

OLDER GIRL

(sharply)

Stay there Pinky.

4 EXT. FISHING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

4

THUD. THUD. THUD.

Little fingers tracing wooden grain, the older girl climbs
into the boat clumsily, moving towards the cabin in the
middle of the vessel.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

Following the rhythm.

THUD. THUD. THUD.

It GROWS louder as -

5 INSIDE CABIN -

5

- Large brown eyes peer in through glass panels, into the
vessel's belly.

A NAKED MAN towers over something. His TAUT BUTTOCKS thrust
against the cabin floor as he *groans*.

A WOMAN's contorted face hovers underneath his massive frame.

THUD, THUD, THUD.

Her full red lips gape.

THUD, THUD, THUD. That sound.

The woman moans - in pleasure or pain? Her red fingernails dig into flesh.

She opens her eyes - and *freezes* - as the peering brown pupils of her daughter sear into her face.

A SILENT MOMENT.

The woman's mouth opens, her gaping black hole.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(shrill, shouting)
LADY!!!

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES (in blood red font): LADY

OVER BLARING MUSIC.

6

EXT. THIRD MAINLAND BRIDGE - DAY

6

INSANITY.

Lagos rush-hour. A metal gridlock.

Horns BLARING. Drivers CURSING. Street vendors PEDDLING water, food, gardening tools - as if their lives depended on it - to FRUSTRATED motorists.

Everything stinks of sewage.

The sun BURNS in the sky.

As it zigzags through traffic, a MOTORCYCLE MAN hits the side-mirror of Lady's RED CAR.

She pops her head out of the car window.

LADY
(shouting)
YOU WAN DESTROY MY CAR?! THUNDER
FIRE YOU!

The MOTORCYCLE RIDER - a boy really - doesn't stop. From a safe distance, he flips her the bird.

LADY (CONT'D)
(chuckling)
Men these okada boys get balls! *

Through the rear mirror, she catches a glimpse of her passenger, a CHINESE BUSINESS MAN (40s), observing her from the back seat.

LADY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, we go soon reach. You know say I warn you about traffic abi!

He shakes his head.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN
It's something else.

LADY
(smiling)
Welcome to Lagos. There's no place like home.

The news is on on the radio.

NEWS REPORTER
The announcement about the fuel subsidies has created a crisis of -

Lady isn't listening.

She notices a PLANTAIN GIRL (11) in front of her, selling roasted plantains on the road.

The girl is young, pretty. She hops from car to car like a pro. Lady honks to get her attention.

LADY (SHOUTING)
Bole! Bole! Come, I wan buy.

The girl runs towards her, her tray somehow miraculously staying on her head.

LADY (CONT'D)
How much? Two Hundred Naira?

PLANTAIN GIRL
500.

LADY
You're joking! Two Fifty!

PLANTAIN GIRL
Aunty na 500! Everything cost now!

LADY
Three hundred, last! Gimme four.

The girl's expression is pained, but she nods, beginning to wrap the plantains in newspaper.

The traffic starts to move.

LADY (CONT'D)
Fast, fast.

The DRIVER behind Lady beeps his horn.

LADY (CONT'D)
Fast!

The driver starts to curse.

DRIVER
Ye ye woman! You blind?! Idiot!
Move before I slap you.

Lady screams right back.

LADY
Na me go slap you! MUGUN!
Where you dey run go?!

The driver presses his hand down HARD on the horn. He doesn't let go. Like a domino effect, the cars behind him begin HORNING too. The entire bridge reverberates with the sound of horns.

Lady doesn't give a fuck.

In front of her, cars have crept forward. Behind her, drivers are outraged.

DRIVER
See, if you no commot your car for
that place!

LADY
Wetin you wan do?

DRIVER
I swear!

LADY
I say, wetin you go do?!

The plantain girl stares, aghast.

PLANTAIN GIRL
Aunty move, move! I go run chase
you!

Everyone on the bridge is HONKING.

PLANTAIN GIRL (CONT'D)
Please aunty! Move!

Clucking her tongue, FINALLY, Lady moves. Slowly.

Behind her, the plantain girl gives chase. In the process,
her tray of goods CRASHES to the ground - but the girl
doesn't stop. She catches up to Lady.

Lady and the girl exchange plantains for cash.

The girl is SWEATING profusely.

LADY
Keep the change!

The younger girl smiles in gratitude. Only then does she stop,
out of breath. She waves to Lady in thanks.

In the side mirror, Lady watches her pick up her plantains, an
eleven-year-old lost in a sea of traffic.

LADY (CONT'D)
Fuck I swear. *This Lagos no go kill
somebody!*

She sighs, catching herself, glancing at her passenger. *

Slowly, her car creeps forward.

7 EXT. FEDERAL PALACE HOTEL - IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL - DAY 7

Lady pulls up in front of opulent doors, a graceful archway.

It's calm, beautiful, here. An impressive garden keeps the
noises of the streets at bay.

As soon as Lady stops the car, a porter, A TEENAGE BOY, runs up
to open the back door for the Chinese businessman, completely
ignoring her.

8 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 8

Lady clucks her tongue watching the teenage boy bow deeply. *

9

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

9

Lady pops open the boot to let the teenage boy take out her passenger's suitcase.

LADY

It's fifteen thousand Naira.

The Chinese businessman nods, searching his pockets.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN

Give me a call?

He GRABS Lady's wrist as he slips something into her hand - his BUSINESS CARD.

Lady freezes.

LADY

I said it's fifteen thousand Naira,
Sir.

Grinning, he holds out her money.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN

I'd really like it if you gave me a
call... You're a nice girl.

Lady grabs her cash quickly. Stepping forward, she smiles back.

LADY

I no be nice girl. Sir!

It looks like a growl.

The Chinese businessman backs off startled. He flees into his fancy hotel. *

Lady bursts into laughter, a nervousness behind it. She counts out the cash he's given her.

And whistles.

10

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

10

Lady squats behind her car, barely hidden between some bushes, URINATING.

11 EXT. TAXI PARK - DAY

11

A giant mango tree sits in the middle of a large car park, offering shade to the dozen CABBIES parked underneath it.

Inside their cars, the cabbies, ALL MEN, are in different degrees of undress - shirts off or riding above their bellies - DOZING, desperate for coolness in the midday heat.

In one of the cars, a radio is on, a fiery voice bursting through hot air.

RADIO (V.O.)

...they think we don't know what they're doing! The only thing this government has ever done for our people is give us these fuel concessions. And now they want to get rid of them...?! The greed of the cabal is unbearable! How long will we suffer in silence...?! This is DJ REVOLUTION, calling on the true heroes of this country, working young people, liberated -

*

BEEP. BEEP!

Lady's red car revs loudly, halting in front of the mango tree.

LADY

UNA STILL DEY SLEEP?!

She's woken the men.

CABBIE

(sighing)

Lady don come...

Lady grins. Her head hanging out the car window.

LADY

Wetin una dey do?! Why all of una dey here today?

CABBIE TWO

You no hear say fuel price don increase?

LADY

Hmm hmm, I hear na.

The drone of DJ Revolution's voice carries from the radio, as a cabbie turns the volume up.

DJ REVOLUTION

We begin our protests tomorrow in
Tafawa Balewa Square. Friends, I
implore you -

LADY

Mehnnnnn! Una still dey listen to
this DJ Revolution guy?! All him
like do na talk, talk, talk!

OLDER CABBIE

(laughing)

Him dey talk?! Una hear! Lady done
accuse *another person* of talk-talk!

The men begin to cackle.

CABBIE THREE

Ewooo!

CABBIE FOUR

Imagine.

LADY

I dey tell you, una dey waste time!
If dem increase fuel price, wetin
we need do? No be to commot go get
more money? And time no be money?!

OLDER CABBIE

This woman. Free us m'o rest abeg.

Several of them nod, reclining deeper in their seats. Lady's
eyes dart across them.

LADY

How *woman* take enter am now? Hmm?

OLDER CABBIE

Wetin?

LADY

Wetin you mean by, "*this woman*"!

OLDER CABBIE

Una too talk na. Too much! Abeg. I
don leave my wife for house on to
this same cho cho cho cho, I no fit
come here come continue... You no
know?!

A resolute hum of agreement from the others. Lady hisses.

LADY

Fine! Sleep! Why I dey even concern
myself? Make una dey there.

(MORE)

LADY (CONT'D)

Sleep, see if DJ Revolution go come
save you.

More chuckling. They're indulging her.

LADY (CONT'D)

Fuck una!

Lady starts her car. Laughing, the men watch her speed off. *

12 EXT/INT. LAGOS ROAD/LADY'S CAR - EVENING 12

MATCH-CUT: Lady drives - A YOUNG MAN/ AN OLDER WOMAN/ AN OLD GENTLEMAN - down half-empty streets.

JUMP-CUT: A COUPLE sits in the back of her car.

Lady watches as the man and woman cuddle heavily in her backseat.

The woman opens her eyes for a moment.

Lady quickly looks away.

13 EXT. THIRD MAINLAND BRIDGE - BLUE HOUR 13

Finally, the road is empty. The sun sets over the Atlantic.

Finally, Lady drives alone, a gentle wind blowing through her front window.

Finally, she relaxes, enjoying the ocean breeze.

14 EXT. MAKOKO ENTRANCE - DUSK 14

Lady walks into the slum of Makoko.

The surface of the lagoon is covered in trash as far as the eye can see.

A makeshift deck, slabs of wood nailed together hastily, form the passageway through the labyrinth. A novice would fall into the rubbish with one misstep.

But in the night, Lady glides with ease, a pro, like someone who's lived here her entire life.

15 EXT. BLUE HOUSE - MAKOKO, LAGOS - DUSK 15 *

Lady enters a blue shack that stretches along the water.

She searches for some keys, standing in front of her apartment.

*

She lets herself in.

16 INT. LADY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 16

Lady flings herself on her mattress with a groan. She's home.

We see her home properly - a single room: small, dark, dingy.

One corner of the room is a make-shift kitchen. Another is the 'bedroom'. A third corner has a pile of what looks like trash stacked against the wall. And on the final wall, a window.

*

17 EXT. MAMA IYA'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT 17 *

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Lady stands further down the corridor in the block of apartments, in front of APARTMENT 7.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

She's holding the plantains she bought earlier. The door opens -

18 INT. IYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 18

- revealing Lady standing outside. For the first time, her face softens. Her smile reaches her eyes.

LADY

Iya.

The person she's smiling at is IYA, an old woman in her late seventies.

Iya has a pleasant, angular face. Her fully-grey hair is plaited in braids down to the nape of her neck. She smiles through large professor-like glasses.

IYA

You're home. I was beginning to worry.

LADY

You worry too much, old woman.

Shaking her head, Iya steps aside to let Lady in.

*

Iya's apartment is very simple, but it's still larger than Lady's. The living room has a worn sofa facing a tiny, old TV. Apart from the sofa and TV, several framed pictures of Mary and Jesus decorate the walls.

Lady helps Iya settle into the worn seat.

LADY (CONT'D)

Guess what I found!

She reveals the plantains she's been holding behind her back.

IYA

Hey!! How?! The season has passed. *

Lady grins. *

LADY

I have my ways. *

19 INT. IYA'S APARTMENT - LATER 19

Lady and Iya watch TV.

The quality of the image on the screen is awful, grainy, but the women are absorbed in the Spanish tele-novella.

On the table in front of them, the bag of plantains is open. Lady takes a plantain from the bag, smashing it with a fork.

When the plantain is a ball of mash, she hands it to Iya. Iya takes the soft food and begins to chew.

ON SCREEN - a tall, handsome man begins to kiss a beautiful, brunette woman.

Quickly, Lady looks away.

20 INT. IYA'S BEDROOM - LATER 20

Iya gets into bed *slowly*, Lady at her side. She groans as she settles in.

IYA

Pass my rosary Lady.

Lady grabs the pink rosary on the bedside table, hands it over. She kneels over Iya as Iya settles. *

Iya grabs Lady's hand.

IYA (CONT'D)

Lord, I thank you for this beautiful child you've sent to take care of an old woman like me. I pray that you bless her even though she refuses to praise your name...

Iya peaks at Lady mischievously. Lady is smiling. Smiling back, Iya shuts her eyes. Her voice gets serious.

IYA (CONT'D)

Thank you Lord, for the kindness of her heart. Do not hold the things she does against her.

Lady chuckles.

LADY

You're too much.

She stands up.

LADY (CONT'D)

Good night, old woman.

Lady moves towards the door.

IYA

Lady?

LADY

Mm?

IYA

A young lady shouldn't be out so late at night...

LADY

But am I a young Lady, Iya?

Lady winks.

21 INT. IYA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

21

Lady enters the living room. On the telly, NEWS OF THE DAY'S PROTEST is on. Lady watches for a moment, then turns it off.

From the bedroom, she can hear Iya praying - in the middle of her Hail Marys.

IYA (O.S.)

...Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee...

Quietly, Lady picks up the dirty plates. She looks around the room.

IYA (CONT'D)
... Blessed are you amongst
women...

On every wall, Mary's face stares back at her.

IYA (CONT'D)
... and blessed is the fruit of
your womb, Jesus.

- Mary, the virgin. Resplendent in white, impossible in grace.

IYA (CONT'D)
...Holy Mary, Mother of God,

- Mary, cradling her baby Jesus, levitating in clouds.

IYA (CONT'D)
Pray for us sinners, now and at the
hour of our death...

- Mary, clutching her dead son - his ribs protruding - racked with grief. Suffering silently.

Lady visibly shudders.

22

EXT. IYA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

22

Lady steps onto the wooden platform of the passageway, the sea of trash undulating beneath her.

She tosses the left-over plantains into the water, turns to go back inside and FREEZES.

Someone is standing in the shadows.

It's hard to see, they're leaning into the darkness, but it's definitely a woman. The hourglass-curve of her figure is sharply defined in a tight dress.

WOMAN
(whispering)
Lady.

She steps forward, into the light of the full moon. Lady is shocked.

The woman is about her age, about 25. She has a round face, cheeks that look like a child's - full and gleaming.

Her eyelids glitter with gold eyeshadow. She's beautiful - her childhood friend.

LADY

... Wetin you dey do here, Pinky?

Immediately Lady's voice has that bite again. Her posture stiffens. She turns quickly, to look towards Iya's door.

PINKY

Ah ahn, Lady. Na so you dey greet person? Haven't you missed me?

*

Fluttering her eyelashes, Pinky steps forward.

LADY

Shh!

Following her glance, Pinky looks back towards Iya's window.

PINKY

(whispering)

We fit go somewhere, fit talk? This place stink more than I remember.

LADY

What the fuck, Pinky, are you for real...? I never lay my eyes on top you for five years. Five years! And now you just show up like this?

Pinky glances down abashed.

PINKY

I know... Sorry...
You remember wetin tomorrow be...?

Lady's eyes flicker as something registers.

PINKY (CONT'D)

You remember!

A beat.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Let's go to our place, Lady...? I no want make Iya see me.

Lady looks uncertain. But Pinky persists.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Please, Lady?

*

Lady bites her lip.

23 EXT/INT. STREET/LADY'S CAR - NIGHT

23

Lady speeds down an empty road. Pinky sits next to her.

The street is deserted. The world belongs only to the two women. Afrobeats booms out of the car stereo.

Pinky's head hangs out of the window. A smile spreads across her lips, as if she knows Lady is watching.

There's a childlike quality in her, a vulnerability in her ability to just be.

24 EXT. LAGOS LAGOON WAY - NIGHT

24

Lady parks the car in front of a beach, right by the ocean. The two women are alone.

Only the soft sound of lapping water licks the air.

Pinky gets out of the car.

Through the front screen, Lady watches her climb onto the car's hood: a silhouette against the moon. In front of them, the horizon looms large.

Finally, Lady gets out.

LADY

Pinky.

PINKY

Omo, I no believe say this place go still dey here at all. I think say dem for don already build skyscraper on top am or something. But it's still ours, Lady.

LADY

Wetin you want, Pinky?! You no fit just come from nowhere, pretend like say everything normal. You think say I be mumu?

PINKY

Of course not! How can, Lady?

She frowns.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Na my birthday tomorrow.

She checks her watch.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Today.

But Lady doesn't take the bait.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Remember wetin we talk? Say no matter what, on our birthdays, we go -

*

LADY

I remember.

Lady's voice is sharp.

LADY (CONT'D)

You know say that no be the issue, Pinky. You just disappear, just like that, and now you show up, talking about birthdays?! What the fuck?

Pinky's eyes dart to the ground.

PINKY

But I no understand you Lady... You dey vex say that I disappear... but all this time, you no know where I be? Wetin happen to... "best friends for life?" "I have your back, you have mine...? Sisters to the grave?" Wetin happen to that, hmm?

The lagoon laps forward towards the women.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Na because of Iya, abi?

LADY

Pinky, no call her name.

PINKY

I dey lie? No be she -

LADY

Pinky! Stop.

Lady's voice is dangerous. It cuts Pink off.

Pinky looks out at the water.

PINKY

You know... I no even sure say you go still dey here... When I come, I been dey hope say I no go find you. "Lady in Freetown..." How many times we talk about that?

Lady wasn't expecting this. Her shoulders suddenly sag.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Wetin happen, Lady? You dey vex me, but wetin you still dey do here?

Slowly, Lady comes and sits on the trunk next to Pinky. *

LADY

Wetin you really want, Pinky? Why you really come back here?

Pinky sighs.

PINKY

Drop me off at this bar, hmm? Please. I go tell you when we reach...? I swear.

Lady looks down at her hand. Pinky has taken it in hers. Pinky's fingernails are painted a pale, pale red. Lady moves her hand away. *

25

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

25

The women tear down the street. There's a nervous energy between them. The car rattles against the bumpy road.

PINKY

This your car, it dey alright?!

She chuckles as they hit a bump. The glove compartment of the car lets out a nasty sound as it swings open.

LADY

Wetin you think?! Na money happen! You no dey this town?!

She slams the compartment shut HARD.

LADY (CONT'D)

See everywhere, fuel scarcity! Everywhere suffer suffer! How you want make I take get enough money for Freetown eh?! You know how much I dey pay every month for this car!

She's so ferocious - so determined. Pinky can't help a soft smile.

PINKY

Kpele. Nobody for this Lagos hustle
pass you o, Lady.

The admiration in her voice is obvious. For the first time, there's a moment of real connection between them.

Lady glances at Pinky.

LADY

Where you wan' go?

26 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

26

The car turns down a tight road. Only Lady's car-lights illuminate the darkness as she drives down the street.

The lights reveal - standing on either side of the road, all along its length:

WOMEN.

Dozens and dozens of women, women of all ages and sizes: girls in their teens; middle-aged women in their fifties; skinny women; large, buxom women; tall women; dwarf women. Every type of woman. All in skimpy clothes.

"Women of the night."

Lady's eyes are wide.

PRE-LAP:

PINKY (O.S.)

Turn here.

27 INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

27

Lady turns left, into a gate covered with red-bulbed lights. *

The gate twinkles brightly, illuminating the sign for:
"PROF'S BAR."

28 EXT. PROF'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

28

In front of a long bungalow, the red car comes to a halt.

29

INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

29

Lady sits quietly, her hands trembling on the wheel. Pinky notices but doesn't say a thing. The women sit in silence like this.

PINKY

I have a proposition...

LADY

I knew it! I no fit be prostitute,
Pinky! You know say I no fit!

PINKY

Lady! Don't worry! Nobody in their
right mind go ever ask you to be
prostitute!

She laughs, notices Lady isn't enjoying it.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Sorry... Look, our boss need new
driver... Person wey go drive us go
jobs.

LADY

Pinky -

PINKY

Just to drive! That's it. I know
say you need the extra cash. I
mean, you be taxi driver, right? So
you do your thing for day, you
drive us for night - what's the
difference?

Lady doesn't respond. She's sitting frozen, her hands still on the wheel.

PINKY (CONT'D)

He go pay you well-well, Lady.
Think about am... Think about
Freetown.

Silence.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Okay, come inside. See how you
feel?

Lady frowns.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Come for a drink, Lady.

She laughs.

PINKY (CONT'D)
Just one... A birthday drink.

LADY
I gas go.

PINKY
(softly)
Please. I've missed you.

Lady's voice steels.

LADY
Get out.

She doesn't look at Pinky.

LADY (CONT'D)
I said, LEAVE.

After an eternity, Lady hears the door click.

Pinky's silhouette cuts across her headlights. There are tears in her eyes.

LADY (CONT'D)
Shit!

Lady bangs her fist down HARD on the steering wheel. The glove compartment swings open.

Something drops out. It's the Chinese Business man's card from earlier. Lady stares at it for a second.

LADY (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Lady sits in the silence, alone.

*

30

INT. PROF'S BAR - NIGHT

30

*

The door to the bar opens, and Lady saunters in.

Immediately, it's PANDEMONIUM.

Massive speakers THUMP out a relentless, percussive rhythm that SHAKES the walls.

It's hard to see. From ceiling to floor, cigarette smoke FILLS the room. Dim blue lights cast SHADOWS on the dance floor.

The lights illuminate bodies - TREMBLING.

MEN, WOMEN, are pressed together - TIGHT, SWEATY - dancing like they're *possessed*. Everyone is in the music. *Nobody gives a fuck.*

As soon as she enters, Lady is HIT by smoke. She shuts her eyes, blinking, opens them. It's hard to see. Lady tries to make her way through the dance floor, searching for -

LADY

Pinky.

She sees her, at the end of the tunnel of bodies, standing by the bar.

Pinky doesn't hear Lady. She's in the centre of a group of women sitting together, bottles of Guinness and Gulder in hand.

They're a lively bunch, dressed colorfully, dancing and singing LOUDLY. They burst into song as Lady nears them.

WOMEN

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU! HAPPY
BIRTHDAY TO YOU. HAPPY BIRTHDAY,
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
YOU!

One of them, SUGAR, twirls Pinky around.

SUGAR

Birthday girllllll!!!

LADY

Pinky!

Pinky turns, her eyes grow wide.

PINKY

Lady!

She throws herself at Lady, hugs her tightly.

PINKY (CONT'D)

(relieved)

You came.

Grinning, she turns to the other women.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Girls, I want you to meet my
sister! This na Lady!

She pulls Lady forward.

SIX PAIRS OF EYES turn to take her in - Lady. For the first time, Lady is awkward.

LADY
What's up?

The girls burst into laughter.

SUGAR
(mimicking Lady)
"What's up?"

She takes on Lady's posture - her masculine stance.

Beside the other women - in their colorful, tight dresses; their wigs; fake, long eyelashes - Lady's baggy clothes - her large trousers, big t-shirt, her plain face - are suddenly conspicuous. *

PINKY
Lady, this na -

As Pinky introduces them, each of them strikes a pose. *

PINKY (CONT'D)
- Fanta, Sugar, Lekpa, Cinderella and Lolo! Baby girls, Lady is the taxi driver I was telling you about.

Now the girls appraise Lady differently, somewhat impressed. FANTA - bright orange hair - shakes her head.

FANTA
So na you be the person wey go replace Senator?!

Laughing, a pretty girl with striking eyes and full lips, replies. *

CINDERELLA
(impressed)
For real? Girl wey drive taxi for this Lagos?

LEKPA - slim; smooth skin - clicks her tongue.

LEKPA
In this Lagos! Girrrrl.

SUGAR

But you're pretty. Why you go dey
drive taxi like man?

Pinky smiles at Lady.

PINKY

Na because she brave.

They hold eye contact as Lady shrugs, but she's smiling. *

PINKY (CONT'D)

Take care of her, girls. I'll be
back.

Before Lady can protest, Pinky hands her a beer and is gone,
lost in the crowd. Lady stares after her, uncertain, as the
other women move on to something new.

SUGAR

But me o, I know say e go be major
handsome guy. You fit tell. That
voice? Smoooooth. And he get big
dick too. For sure! He get real big
dick energy.

The women cackle. Sugar especially, enjoying the attention.

Awkward, Lady stares at her beer, placing it on the bar, not
drinking, not sure what to do with her arms.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Wetin you think, Lady?

LADY

Hmm?

LEKPA

DJ Revolution. You know am?

LADY

(surprised)
... The protest guy?

SUGAR

Wey get sexy voice. Wetin you think
of am?

Lady shrugs, looking down.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

You no think say him voice sexy?

LADY

I never consider am...

SUGAR

What's to consider? You done hear
him talk for radio, right? You
think say he sound sexy or not?

Sugar stares at her, a penetrating gaze. Her glistening eyes are trained on Lady. There's something aggressive about her, but not obviously so, underneath the surface.

Lady frowns.

LADY

I think say, anybody wey dey talk
politics for this country na mumu.
Nothing like politics for this
place. Politics never help NOBODY
here, only money. Only money dey
speak for Lagos.

She puffs her chest.

SUGAR

Oh yeah? (grinning) Now I see why
Pinky bring you.

She winks, as Cinderella leans into Lady's shoulder casually. *

CINDERELLA *

No mind Sugar. She get crace for
head.

She rolls a finger in circles around her temple.

Lady stares at her, at the other women as they continue their conversation - watching the smiles on their faces, listening to the warmth in their throats.

On the dance floor, *bodies keep touching*. Cigarette smoke fills the room.

VOICE (O.S.)

You be Pinky friend?

A man's voice cuts through the fog. He's standing behind her. It's hard to see his face in the dim light, but he looks young.

YOUNG GUY

Follow me.

He's already a few feet ahead. Quickly, Lady stands up.

31 INT. PROF'S BAR - CORRIDOR - NIGHT 31

Lady walks behind the guy, down a long corridor, away from the dance floor.

It's dimly lit here. But it's quiet. The sound of music fades as Lady walks further and further away from the club.

Lady stares at the guy's back, noticing he has a mark in the middle of his neck, a HUGE scar.

Suddenly, he stops - in front of a curtain.

YOUNG GUY

Oya. He don ready for you.

Lady is confused. But before she can say anything, the guy swaths the curtain to the side. Behind it, there's a door.

32 INT. ROOM - 32

Lady steps into the small room.

A sudden hush falls over a GROUP OF MEN sitting around a large table. It groans with the sheer weight of beer bottles on it.

The men turn, glaring with bloodshot eyes.

Lady glares back, noticing one, in particular:

a TALL, HANDSOME MAN, in the middle of the pack. His impossibly white teeth luminescent against smooth, dark skin. His hair braided neatly in sharp corn-rows.

This man's a knock-out.

HANDSOME MAN

Ladyyyy!!

Something about him is magnetic.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)

Lady! Lady!

He stands up. Lady notices that he's carrying A GUN.

LADY

Where Pinky?

HANDSOME MAN

My name na Fine Boy. I've been
looking forward to meeting you.
Please, sit down.

He pushes one of the boys aside.

Lady doesn't move.

LADY

I say where Pinky?!

Fine Boy takes her in.

FINE BOY

Pinky dey with customer. But she
done tell me everything I need know
about you. Sit down. Make we talk.
I be your number one fan.

Fine Boy smiles, a calm, charming smile. A beat. *

Lady steps forward. She sits down next to him. *

LADY

Wetin you want?

He laughs.

FINE BOY

Lady, Lady. So you be the cab
driver Pinky dey rave about.

He assesses her.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

Relax... You no need fear.

LADY

Who tell you say I dey fear!

She says it so forcefully Fine Boy smiles.

FINE BOY

Tell me about yourself.

LADY

Eh?

He takes his time, drinks his beer.

FINE BOY

I said tell me about yourself. I'm
curious.

(MORE)

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

(Speaking to the guy next to him)
You done ever see woman who dey
drive taxi for Lagos for night?

The guy shakes his head.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

Exactly! We dey curious. Tell us
about yourself.

Lady frowns.

LADY

See, guy. I no know you. And I no
like people wey dey play games. I
only come here because of Pinky. Na
her birthday.

She stands up abruptly, rattling the table.

LADY (CONT'D)

So I no owe you *one motherfucking
thing*.

*

A beer bottle drops, SMASHING to the ground.

FINE BOY

Oh, that's why you came?

He chuckles.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

Sit down, Lady.

Lady stays up, defiant.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

Ahhhh. She get balls o! Woman wey
get balls. (To the guy next to him)
I like it...

He turns back to her.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

I said, *sit down*.

There's a forcefulness in his voice now.

Still Lady stares at him, upright.

LADY

I said, where Pinky?

Fine Boy grins, impressed despite himself.

FINE BOY
Pinky know wetin she dey talk.

He stands up too.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)
Come, make I buy you a drink.

33

INT. BAR - NIGHT

33

Fine Boy and Lady emerge back onto the dance floor.

As they head towards the bar, this time, the crowd parts, making way. There's no pushing or shoving necessary. Everyone knows, and lets the king through.

Lady and Fine Boy reach the bar.

The BAR GUY comes over fast.

FINE BOY
(to bar guy)
Two stouts.

LADY
Nothing for me.

FINE BOY
(ignoring her)
Two stouts.

Like magic they appear.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)
Cheers.

Fine Boy hands one to Lady, clinking her glass, gulping his.

Lady doesn't drink.

Staring out on the dance floor, at all the men and women on it, Fine Boy sips on his beer.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)
Na my kingdom be this, Lady. You see? All of this, na me. I build this place because I know how tough life dey outside. Trust me, I know wetin life for this city be... And me, I just like to dey help. See how I dey help my girls.

*

He points to the women on the dance floor as Lady follows his gaze.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

Your Pinky...

His index finger stops on Pinky, swaying rhythmically, inebriated, under disco lights. Pinky is smiling at the large man clutching her hips. She leans into him, giving him a sloppy kiss.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

You ask wetin I want?

He turns to Lady now.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

My driver, Senator... he disappear... Just like that.

*

Fine Boy shrugs.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

And now I need a driver wey fit help me take care of my girls. I need a one-of-a-kind woman, wey strong, wey smart, who no go *fuck me around*. And my feeling be say that woman na you. Make I help you, Lady.

Lady laughs.

LADY

With all due respect, it sound like say na me dey help you.

Fine Boy grins, amused.

FINE BOY

Maybe. Or maybe we fit help each other...

He licks a finger, gestures at counting Naira notes.

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

We all need something for Lagos, no be so?

*

*

Fine Boy frowns. Something has caught his attention, at the other side of the bar.

*

33A OTHER SIDE OF BAR -

33A

An inebriated guy, a DRUNK, is stumbling around, throwing himself at Lekpa.

DRUNK

Come on baby. I love the way you look. Let me just squeeze your bobby.

The guy is off his face. He slurs his words as he grabs Lekpa's tit.

Fine Boy gives the slightest of nods, and out of the blue, the bartender is on the drunk, grabbing him in a flash.

BARTENDER

Guy.

He squeezes hard, crushing the drunk's neck. *

Fine Boy approaches them.

FINE BOY

(speaking slowly)

Nobody touches my girls like that man. You need be gentleman. *

Lekpa and Cinderella giggle. Lekpa touches Fine Boy's arm.

LEKPA

Baby, it's okay. I can handle him.

But the bartender doesn't let go. He continues to squeeze tight as the drunk struggles against his grip.

LEKPA (CONT'D)

Fine Boy...

Lady is watching. The drunk begins to asphyxiate. *

CINDERELLA

Fine Boy!

A nod and finally, the bartender lets go.

FINE BOY

Are you okay baby?

LEKPA

(unsettled)

I'm fine.

She glances at the drunk, wheezing on the floor.

FINE BOY

Go inside.

Lekpa and Cinderella disappear, as Fine Boy returns to Lady, sighing.

*

FINE BOY (CONT'D)

I love my girls.

He shrugs, knowing Lady has been watching.

*

Despite herself, she's impressed.

*

LADY

40k... every time I drive...

*

FINE BOY

You have yourself a deal.

*

*

Fine Boy grins.

PRE-LAP: SPLASH!

*

34 EXT/INT. MAKE SHIFT BATHROOM/LADY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY ~~34~~

*

Lady pours a bucket of water over herself, naked, standing between four corrugated sheets of metal, propped up by pipes - the communal 'shower'.

We see her body properly for the first time, how skinny she really is. Naked, she really only looks like a girl.

35 EXT. BEHIND LADY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 35

A towel wrapped around her chest, Lady walks towards her building. She walks past Iya's door, glancing at it guiltily.

36 INT. LADY'S ROOM - DAY 36

Lady wrings out her dreads in front of a full-length mirror.

Picking up a small, portable radio, she tunes it, listening through different channels.

Music begins to blare.

RADIO

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie, zombie)!
Zombie o, zombie (Zombie, zombie)!
Zombie no go go, unless you tell am
to go (Zombie!)

(MORE)

RADIO (CONT'D)

Zombie no go stop, unless you tell
 am to stop (Zombie!)
 Zombie no go turn, unless you tell
 am to turn (Zombie!)
 Zombie no go think, unless you tell
 am to think (Zombie!)

Lady bobs her head, starting to do a little dance as she gets dressed.

RADIO (CONT'D)

Zombie o, zombie!

She's feeling it. She's good too. She shimmies over to the part of her room where trash is stacked against the wall.

Lady begins to clear the area, and suddenly, behind it - a COLLAGE emerges.

The collage has been there all along, on her wall. But now we see it for the first time: dozens and dozens of OLD BLACK AND WHITE images neatly cut out, methodically pasted. Palm trees; white beach; ocean; close ups of black faces, staring sternly ahead.

High on the wall, a word has been painted gracefully in pretty cursive handwriting: FREETOWN.

Lady touches one of the photographs, the only one not in black and white. Of a RED FISHING BOAT, floating in a blue ocean. Something feels significant about it.

Carefully, Lady unsticks the photo from the wall. A HOLE has been carved BEHIND the photo.

From inside the hole, Lady pulls out AN ENVELOPE. She opens it.

The envelope is thin, barely any cash in it.

A few grubby notes fall out. The remnants of her forgotten dream.

Lady stares at herself in the mirror.

LADY

Who you be?

She points at her reflection.

With her dreads flowing around her face, silhouetting it, she looks soft, feminine, beautiful...?

Frowning, she flops to the ground, rummages under her bed.

She pulls out a HAT - the words FUCK YOU scrawled across it in big, bold letters.

She puts on the hat, cocks her head, snarling.

LADY (CONT'D)
I SAY WHO YOU BE?!

A beat.

LADY (CONT'D)
You be Lady! You hear?! You be the *baddest motherfucker* in town! YOU HEAR?! Who be your boss?! NOBODY! Who dey tell you wetin to do? NOBODY! Who ever give you anything for this life, Lady?! NOBODY! Na only you! YOU HEAR?! You be a motherfucking boss.

There's a look in her eye, alive, FEVERISH. She snarls at the mirror like a wild animal.

LADY (CONT'D)
Let's go! Let's go!!

Kissing her fingers, she touches her wall.

LADY (CONT'D)
FREETOWN HERE WE COME!

PRE-LAP: VROOOM!

The soft waves of Amaarae's "SAD GIRLZ LUV MONEY" kicks in on radio waves, LOUD.

Women's voices sing along to the words, as the wind HOWLS.

37 INT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT

37

Lady's car is PACKED.

Sitting in the driver's seat, she's surrounded by women, women dressed to the nines - long weaves, tight dresses, high heels.

In the backseats, Fanta, Lekpa, Cinderella and Lolo are squeezed together TIGHT. Pinky and Sugar share the front passenger seat.

They're harmonizing together, singing along to the radio, all lipstick and heart.

Sugar seems to be leading this choir.

SUGAR

No, no, no! Lolo! Shhhh! Your voice
dey destroy the whole thing!

LOLO

Ahn-ahn. Wetin na?! Abeg!

Lolo continues to croon.

LOLO (CONT'D)

*I really like to party. I cannot
control my body...*

Stifling laughs, Lady and Pinky exchange a glance, neither of
them singing. *

As the song ends, Sugar turns to Lady.

SUGAR

So... how you dey feel about your
first day for the job, Lady? You
dey fear?

Lady smirks as she comes to a STOP at a traffic light.

LADY

Wetin I go fear? You...?

The other women laugh. Lady likes it. She gets bold.

LADY (CONT'D)

I mean, frankly, the work sound
easy enough. I mean, I go drive you
go there, drop you off. Una go do
your business, I go drive una back.
Abi?

Sugar grunts.

SUGAR

Sure... It go sound easy now, but
you just wait... You no wonder
wetin happen to the driver before
you?

PINKY

Shut up Sugar! You too dey talk too
much nonsense. *

Lady glances at the two of them, suspicious. From the back,
Cinderella interrupts. *

CINDERELLA

Lady, you sabi who these men be?

LADY

(shaking her head)

Only thing wey Fine Boy tell me na
say na person birthday. Them
request *the most special girls*.

Fanta ululates.

FANTA

Ah! Birthday parties, highest flex!
At least everybody go dey good
mood.

LEKPA

Island boys dey tip well-well too!

She clucks her tongue.

Something catches the corner of Lady's eye - Sugar is pulling
a HUGE joint from her bra. She catches Lady's glance.

SUGAR

(smiling)

You want?

The red light turns green. Lady steps on the wheel.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Wetin you do to get this your car
anyway, Lady? I mean... why the car
jaga-jaga like this?

She grins, high. Pinky shakes her head.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

No, but to be honest, I actually
dey impressed. I mean, no be small
thing for woman like us to get car,
and me I want my own. That's why I
dey ask. So Lady... Who you fuck?

She bursts into laughter.

LADY

Wetin you say?!

Off the look on Lady's face, Pinky intervenes.

PINKY

Sugar, stop. No be everybody be
like us.

SUGAR

What, no be everybody be ashawo?
Please.

From the back, the other girls are listening.

FANTA

Wetin you dey even talk, Sugar?
Sometimes I swear, you no dey make
sense.

SUGAR

AH, but I'm serious. Hear me out.
For real. Wetin be hustle...? No be
to use wetin you have to get wetin
you want? Right? I mean, at the end
of the day, everything for this
world na transaction, no be so? And
wetin be the *most valuable thing*
woman get for this country?

Grinning, she jiggles her breasts.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Mhm. I mean whether you like am or
not, if you be woman, you be like
me. Because you get something wey
men want. No be true? So, even
woman for ministry office, even
woman for university, even wife for
house too - she no dey do the same
thing? When she want something from
her man, she no dey use everything
wey she get, dey say - "hi honey,
hi sweetie, hi friend" -

She imitates the imaginary woman.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

- dey shake her body?!!

Some of the other women in the back giggle in agreement.
Pinky shakes her head.

PINKY

But, you no fit say that na the
same thing...! I mean... Not
everything na transaction! Talk
true, you no go prefer to be man
wife than to dey do this work? I
mean, if man come now, say him want
marry you, you no go 'gree?

Sugar hisses.

SUGAR

Never!

She puts an arm on Pinky's shoulder.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

No offense...

Lady notices.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I no dey do all this work, make I
come be some idiot doormat. At
least this way, I know my value.
EXACT.

She blows out smoke.

LADY

So you dey proud of this work you
dey do Sugar?

SUGAR

Why I no go dey proud? What, you
never fuck guy before?

Lady is silent.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

(laughing)

You be virgin, Lady?

A strange look crosses Lady's face. Sugar screams.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

NA LIEEEEE!

She turns to the other girls.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

SHE BE VIRGIN!

CINDERELLA

No way!

FANTA

For real?!

If Lady could blush, she would.

PINKY

(whispering)

Na true..?

Pinky bites her lip, almost laughing. She can't help herself.

40

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

40

Pinky and Lady watch the women saunter over to the gate.

PINKY
Are you alright?

LADY
Why not?!

PINKY
You sure say you want stay out
here?

LADY
Definitely.

PINKY
The girls dey overdo sometimes, but
I think say them like you.

LADY
It no matter whether they like me
or not.

Pinky can't help a small smile.

LADY (CONT'D)
(obstinate)
What?!

Pinky shakes her head - "nothing". But Lady is pouting like a little boy.

LADY (CONT'D)
Wetin Sugar mean when she talk
about this other driver. Wetin be
him name?

A look fleets across Pinky's face.

PINKY
Senator... Who know wetin Sugar dey
talk half the time?

She shrugs.

PINKY (CONT'D)
That girl no well...

LADY
She don mad!

They stare at each other and burst into laughter, easing the tension.

PINKY

It good say you dey here, Lady. You no even understand. It feel almost like old times.

A smile touches Lady's lips.

PINKY (CONT'D)

The old woman know...?

Lady shrugs.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Of course not... How you fit still dey stay with am after all this time, Lady? I know she took you in after..., but Lady -

*
*

Lady snaps.

LADY

You no get right, Pinky! You no get right to ask me any question! Not any more.

PINKY

Okay... Sorry...

Pinky bites her lip. After a moment, she opens the door and leaves.

*
*

41 EXT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 41

Lady watches Pinky enter the mansion's gate - a solitary figure in the night.

Alone, the car is quiet - still. A not unfamiliar sound. Allowing herself relax, Lady shuts her eyes.

*
*

PRE-LAP: THUD, THUD, THUD.

42 INT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT 42

Lady's eyes FLY open, startled by the BANGING on her window.

A FLASHLIGHT BEAMS in her face, blinding her.

MALE VOICE

You can't sleep here!

Lady blinks, trying to see who's speaking.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

You hear me?! You can't sleep here!

It's a police patrol man, in uniform.

43

EXT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

43

Afraid, Lady tries to keep it together.

LADY

Sorry sir!

She starts the car engine automatically.

POLICEMAN

What are you doing here?!

LADY

Sorry Sir! I dey go!

POLICEMAN

Show me your particulars, what are you doing here?!

Moving fast, Lady steps on the wheel, as the policeman glares after her.

44

INT. LADY'S CAR - LATER

44

Lady coasts round the streets of Lagos, killing time. Streetlights throw weird shadows across her face.

In the passenger seat, she notices someone has left a pack of cigarettes behind.

Lady lights a cigarette, lips curling tight around its butt as she takes a slow drag. BLISS.

She turns on the radio, nonchalantly tuning through.

A fiery voice flutters through the speakers, unmistakable. The lush, confident voice of *DJ Revolution*.

Lady stops, curious, listening as he pontificates.

DJ REVOLUTION

(on radio)

It was confirmed this evening.

(MORE)

DJ REVOLUTION (CONT'D)

Despite our protests and objections, the Nigerian government have decided to go ahead and completely remove ALL SUBSIDIES on petroleum in this country. TOMORROW.

Lady is listening. Her face is placid, blurred by cigarette smoke. But, she's listening.

DJ REVOLUTION (CONT'D)

It's clear, this is a direct message from our leaders that it is not TO US they are beholden... Like harlots of the night, they dance to the tune of international organisations whose interests are their own. Already the average man and woman is choosing between breakfast and lunch. Now, the President has spat in our dinner. Brothers. Sisters. If we do not stand up for ourselves, who will? Brothers. Sisters. Open your eyes! Nobody is coming to save you.

*

Smoke fills Lady's car.

FADE IN:

45 EXT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT

45

The women are back.

The red car ZOOMS FAST as music BOOMS.

The windows are open, the women hanging out from them, singing at the top of their voices...

46 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

46

Drunk, the women are in various stages of undress, as if they haven't bothered to put their clothes back on from fucking.

There's a wildness to their spirit. A disinhibition. The smell of sex and alcohol mingles in the smoky air.

Lady turns to look at Pinky who is laughing at something, her blouse unbuttoned, her hair, wild.

This is a Pinky she's never seen before. She smiles at Lady. Lady doesn't know what to say.

*

PRE-LAP: BEEEEEP!

47 EXT. PETROL STATION - DAY 47

A pregnant dog lies underneath the shadow of a petrol pump, tongue hanging, trying to escape the impenetrable heat.

BEEEEEEEP!

Around the petrol station, COMMOTION -

A queue of over a hundred cars snakes round the block. The petrol scarcity is here, in full force, people are desperate to fill their tanks.

48 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 48

BEEEEEEEEP!

Someone horns loudly at Lady, waking her. Drenched in sweat, she sees that the car ahead of her has moved.

49 AT THE PUMP - 49

Lady counts out Naira notes from her pocket, looking painfully at how much she has to spend - most of her money.

50 EXT. MAKOKO CAR PARK - EVENING 50

SLAM. Lady shuts her door. She's home.

51 EXT. MAKOKO - EVENING 51

Exhausted, Lady enters the Makoko pathway.

52 INT. LADY'S CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 52

Iya is standing at Lady's door, wrapped in an over-sized towel. Her delicate collar bones protrude sharply against the white fabric. She turns and smiles when she sees Lady.

53 EXT. LADY'S APARTMENT - BACK BALCONY - EVENING 53

Lady and Iya sit on Lady's balcony, facing an ocean of trash, as Lady gently bathes Iya.

*
*

Lady seems far away as she rubs the white lather into Iya's wrinkled skin.

LADY

Iya, you think say life go ever get easy for this country...? Like, one day? Like, in the future. Like two hundred years from now... It dey possible say nobody go dey suffer again? Like all of us go just dey happy, dey enjoy ourselves? Maybe even achieve our dreams?

Iya chuckles.

IYA

Lady the philosopher... What makes you ask? Speak English.

LADY

(sighing)

This fuel scarcity thing, mehn... I mean, I don't understand. Why would the government do something like this, remove the subsidy? You know how much I paid for fuel today?

She sighs.

*

54

INT. IYA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

54

Lady and Iya sit on Iya's bed, Iya is wearing her nightdress. Lady rubs lotion into the older woman's back.

IYA

Open that bottom drawer, Lady.
There's a brown envelope inside.

Curiously, Lady reaches towards Iya's bedside table to pull out the brown envelope.

A photo falls from underneath the envelope - of a younger Iya, a teenage Lady and Pinky.

Lady and Pinky are dressed in white - it's their confirmation. Their hands are clasped around each other. They're smiling. The three of them look happy, like one big family.

The image startles Lady.

IYA (CONT'D)

Take out 10,000 Naira. It's all I
can afford to give you right now.

Lady doesn't reply.

IYA (CONT'D)

Lady?

LADY

No.

Iya turns to her, confused.

IYA

No?

Lady shakes her head.

LADY

I don't need your money, Iya.

IYA

Since when?

She laughs.

IYA (CONT'D)

It's for the plantains you bought.

LADY

They were 1,500. It's alright.

She puts the money away, shuts the drawer. Iya's eyes are
trained on her.

IYA

What's wrong? You're acting
strange.

Lady doesn't reply. But she can feel Iya's gaze boring into
her. She glances at the drawer with the photo in it.

LADY

Do you ever think about Pinky?

Iya's face CONTORTS.

She doesn't say anything for a moment... It feels like she
won't. But then finally she does.

IYA

Lady, Pinky decided her fate for
herself a long time ago.

(MORE)

IYA (CONT'D)

Despite what my sister was, I
adopted her and gave her
everything... And she still ran
away... That whore!

*

Iya's voice is shaking. She clutches her rosary in her fist.

IYA (CONT'D)

So no, I don't waste my time
thinking about that useless girl...
Because I have you, Lady. You're
proof that God's grace is infinite.
That no matter what a person's
upbringing is, they can still be
redeemed. Lady, your mother was a
whore too, but look at you - you're
Christ's testament to me.

Iya has tears in her eyes.

IYA (CONT'D)

It's just us in this hard world,
you and me. Everybody else has
deserted us. Your mother, Pinky...
those women prostituted themselves.
But you and me, we will never leave
each other...

She places her rosary in Lady's hand, grips it tight.

IYA (CONT'D)

Promise me Lady...?

Lady stares at Iya's rosary, uncertain, unable to speak.

IYA (CONT'D)

Promise me.

LADY

(nodding)

I promise...

55

INT. LADY'S ROOM - NIGHT

55

Lady enters her tiny room, stirred by Iya's speech.

She looks down at Iya's rosary in her hand. Her wall to
Freetown looms over her.

Lady's spirit is troubled.

Reaching into her pocket, she pulls out a thick bundle of
cash from her trousers, amazed by how much she has.

*

*

Carefully, she unsticks the photo of the red boat from the wall, and hides the cash in the hole behind it. *

Lady stares at herself in the mirror, biting her fingernail. *

LADY
(suddenly)
You be the baddest motherfucker for
this town! You no owe anybody
ANYTHING you hear! *

She drops to her knees, picks up her FUCK YOU hat.

LADY (CONT'D)
(to reflection)
You be LADY.

She kisses her Freetown wall. *

PRE-LAP: VROOOM!

56 EXT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT 56

Lady drives the girls down an express road.

Another night, another drop-off As usual, the girls are singing at the top of their lungs. *

57 EXT. MANSION - NIGHT 57

Lady's red car pulls up in front of the gigantic gates of yet another gigantic house.

58 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 58

Pinky opens the passenger door to leave.

PINKY
Won't you come in?

Lady shakes her head.

PINKY (CONT'D)
Sure? It's dangerous, Lady. A woman
by herself at night.

LADY
I'm fine.

Sugar sticks her head into the passenger window.

SUGAR

You're not curious at all, Virgin
Lady? Sex fit dey sweet you know!

Lady throws her a nasty look that makes Sugar laugh. She shrugs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

(to Pinky) Let's go, your friend
doesn't like us.

59 INT. LADY'S CAR - LATER

59

Lady drives around empty streets, sucking on a cigarette. DJ Revolution is on the radio again. Lady is clearly deep in thought.

DJ REVOLUTION

Let us never forget that this
country, OUR MOTHERLAND, was formed
of SUBJUGATION! And it has remained
and will remain, A LAND OF
SUBJUGATION! It is up to us, this
GENERATION. To *finally* awake from
our AFFECTATION! Join us tomorrow
at Tafawa Balewa Square to share
your FRUSTRATION!

Lady looks down at Iya's rosary, around her wrist. SUDDENLY,
she makes a SHARP turn right.

60 EXT. STREET/LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

60

Lady is back on the street with the large mansion. This time,
she beeps in front of the gate. A SECURITY GUARD comes out.

SECURITY GUARD

Wetin?

LADY

I dey with the girls. I need piss.

*

He stares at her.

SECURITY GUARD

Which girls?

Lady doesn't like his tone.

LADY

THE ASHAWOS FOR INSIDE.

The security guard hesitates.

SECURITY GUARD
Park outside...

LADY
I no fit. You want make police
disturb me?!

He stares at her.

LADY (CONT'D)
Guy. I GAS PARK INSIDE. Unless you
want make police come raid your
oga's house tonight?!

The security guard's eyes flash with fear. He nods and goes
back into the house.

A moment passes and then the gates open.

Lady slinks in.

61 EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

61

The mansion is set back against a luscious garden, a pool
bridging the gap between the garden and the house.

Lady parks in a corner by the side of the mansion. She looks
out the window, taking in the compound's grandeur.

Suddenly, a SCREAM, as a MAN darts out of French windows
carrying something over his shoulders. He jumps into the
pool, SPLASH!

Surfacing, CINDERELLA and the man laugh hysterically. Behind
them, another man and LOLO come running out, giggling at the
wet pair. Lolo pushes the man into the pool. He takes her
with him.

*
*

They're all clearly drunk.

62 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

62

Lady watches the scene silently, as the couples begin to make
out in the water.

Finally, she gets out of the car and approaches the mansion.

*

63 EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS 63

The lovebirds in the pool don't seem to notice Lady, or they don't seem to care.

Quietly, Lady slips past them, careful not to get their attention as she enters through french windows.

64 INT. MANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 64

Inside, the lights are dim, soft music plays from a large TV - five times the size of Iya's.

The light from the telly illuminates a woman kneeling on the floor in front of an arm chair, gagging, giving a man a blow job. His head flops back over his neck as he moans.

Lady sharply inhales as the woman raises her head, and for a SPLIT SECOND, all Lady can see are RED LIPS -

It's Lady's mother on her knees.

A GASP escapes Lady. Quickly, she flees the room.

As her shadow crosses over the woman, Pinky looks up in time to see Lady exit.

65 INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT 65

Lady flees into a stately hall, her face a harrowing mask.

A tall chandelier hangs down from the high ceiling. THIS IS WEALTH - REAL WEALTH - WEALTH LIKE SHE'S NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

Spinning round, Lady takes in the entire room - plush carpets, imposing portraits on every wall.

As the sound of MOANING filters in through brightly-coloured walls, everything feels like it's closing in.

66 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS 66

Lady climbs the winding staircase that wraps around the sparkling chandelier.

67 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 67

Hurrying down the long corridor, she catches glimpses of the other women, in different rooms, working:

- Fanta, in bed with a man and another woman - mouth gaping.

- Lekpa, panties being pulled down by a guy with thick fingers. *

*
*

- Lolo, legs spread, giving a man a lap dance.

- Cinderella, pushed against a wall, dark hands around her breasts.

The sounds of the men echo through what feels like an endless hallway.

Lady FREEZES as she passes by the slit of an open door -

68 INSIDE -

68

Lady sees Sugar on top of a man, RIDING him, clutching him by the neck as she MOANS - choking him.

In pleasure.

Sugar opens her eyes. And CATCHES Lady. *

*

69 INT. CORRIDOR -

69

Lady GASPS, caught in Sugar's gaze.

The two women stare at each other, Lady frozen like a statue. *

*

Sugar continues to ride the man hard, caressing her breasts.

She opens her mouth, wide, a gaping hole. *

*

And winks at Lady.

70 INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

70

It breaks the spell.

Lady POUNDS down the steps, half-blind.

BAM, she bumps into someone - a huge, bulking man.

BULKING MAN
(grinning at her)
You alright, beautiful?

He grabs her arm. Grabs the wrist with the rosary.

Lady stares into his bulbous eyes.

Panicking, she PUSHES him hard, escaping through the front door.

The rosary beads EXPLODE to the floor, as Lady's heart THUMPS. BAM BAM BAM.

*

71 INT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT

71

SILENCE.

Lady sits alone in the darkness, trembling violently. Her right wrist shakes uncontrollably. She stares into empty space, gulping down shallow breaths.

72 EXT/INT. ROAD/LADY'S CAR - LATER

72

The red car zooms down the road as the women chatter away.

LEKPA

Mehn, that house fine well-well.

FANTA

You scope the size of the TV?!

In the driver's seat, Lady's eyes are fixed on the road. Her right wrist is still trembling. The women are chatting away, but Lady can't hear them.

All she hears is her racing heart, and the sound of moaning men.

73 EXT. PROF'S BAR - NIGHT

73

Lady parks in front of the bar. The women begin to get out. Pinky is the only one who stays. She waits until the other women have left.

PINKY

Lady... I need to talk to you about something.

She glances at Lady. To her surprise, Lady is trembling.

*

PINKY (CONT'D)

Lady...? You dey alright?

*

She touches Lady's shoulder gently.

LADY

DON'T TOUCH ME.

Lady recoils.

LADY (CONT'D)

GET OUT.

Stunned, Pinky doesn't move. She sits frozen, unsure what to do.

PINKY

Lady -

LADY

GET THE FUCK OUT! I said, GET OUT!

*

Pinky doesn't move.

*

PINKY

Lady, what's wrong?

All of a sudden, Lady SHOVES Pinky into the car door - FORCEFULLY.

LADY

I said GET OUT!

Pinky scrambles away, stunned. She hurries off, leaving Lady alone.

PINKY

What the fuck is wrong with you?!

Suddenly - BANG! Lady smashes against her steering wheel, spent.

*

74 EXT. MAKOKO PASSAGEWAY - DAWN

74

Dawn breaks over the lagoon, as Lady strides through the emptiness of her neighborhood.

In the morning light, the place looks even more depressing.

75 EXT. IYA'S APARTMENT - MAKOKO

75

Lady knocks on Iya's door.

LADY

(whispering)

Iya...

Iya is obviously asleep.

Searching her pocket, Lady finds a key. She lets herself into Iya's apartment -

76 INT. IYA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 76

- Crossing the images of Mary -

77 INT. IYA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 77

- And quietly, entering Iya's bedroom.

Iya is asleep in bed.

Lady crawls into bed with the old woman.

LADY

Iya... I couldn't sleep...

Lady's voice sounds tiny as Iya slowly wakes.

LADY (CONT'D)

I... had nightmares... about my mother...

IYA

Oh Lady.

LADY

I saw her... I saw a man on her... I wanted to help her, but there was nothing I could do...

Lady curls into a ball.

LADY (CONT'D)

They were hurting her...

A tear falls down Lady's cheek as Iya strokes her hair. *

IYA

Shh shh! It's alright, Lady! It was just a dream. Mummy's here... It's not real. It's not real.

78 INT. IYA'S BEDROOM - LATER 78 *

Lady wakes SUDDENLY. It takes her a moment to realize where she is. Morning has broken. *

From the slit in the door, she can hear Iya singing quietly as she busies herself in the living room.

Lady is lying alone in Iya's bed.

The events of the previous night begin to return to her mind. It's as if the walls around her begin to moan.

SITTING UP QUICKLY, Lady clenches her fist, willing the noises away.

There's a scratch on her wrist, where the man from the night before grabbed her.

Lady curls up into a ball.

Slowly, her eyes are drawn to Iya's bedside table.

Glancing towards the door to make sure Iya can't see her, Lady quietly opens Iya's bottom drawer.

She pulls out the picture of her and Pinky and Iya, smiling happily at a camera. *

Lady stares at it for a long moment. At Pinky's smiling face. *

She clutches herself tight.

81 EXT. TAXI PARK - DAY

81

Lady's car is parked underneath the tall mango tree. Her car-door is flung open, her long legs splayed out.

Fewer cabbies are under the tree after a few weeks. Most of the taxis are dusty - parked and abandoned - victims of the fuel scarcity.

Soft music drifts out of somebody's vehicle.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You know say things dey bad mehnnn
when Lady dey for car park... We
think say fuel crisis done catch
you too. We never see you for some
time.

A CABBIE has come up to Lady, one who teased her once. He finds her eating a loaf of bread. Lady won't look him in the eye.

CABBIE

(sighing)

You want join us? We dey go
protest.

Behind him a few other men, about eight, are holding placards.

*

CABBIE (CONT'D)

Lady?

LADY

Since when you start go protest,
Patto? The only thing wey I ever
see you do for here na sleep.

PATTO, a young wiry cabbie, chuckles bitterly.

PATTO

No be lie... But one day man need
wake up, abi? I now dey shine my
eye well well. You know say my son
and daughter, dem they cry for
night... I no even fit feed them!
You gas follow us, Lady.

Lady laughs bitterly.

LADY

You done listen to DJ Rev too abi?
Naa... that one be waste of time. I
gats shit to do.

PATTO

Na you know... But look around you,
Lady. The only way things fit
change na if we change am together.

*

*

*

Patto shrugs, gesturing to the others to leave.

Lady watches them go, disgruntled.

82

INT. LADY'S CAR - DAY

82

*

Lady drives down empty streets, looking out for customers.
Nobody flags her down.

LADY

You need ride?!

An older man on the side of the road shakes his head.

The effects of the subsidy removal have fully arrived.

- 84 EXT. STREET - EVENING 84 *
- Lady's car ZOOMS down an empty road as the sun sets. This is where the day's protests happened. *
- Several tires - still half-burning in the night air - litter the pavement; smashed glass lying everywhere, where beer bottles were thrown.
- 85 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 85
- Lady slows her car, to look out - curious.
- On one side of the street, a few men wander about in a daze, carrying torn placards.
- On the other side, a couple of police men drink beers, their machine guns resting behind their backs. The police men laugh like hyenas. *
- Lady can't quite tear her eyes away as she drives by a mountain of burning tyres, still in flames. *
- 86 EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - DUSK 86
- Lady arrives on the street of Prof's bar.
- It's early, only a few women stand on the sidewalk.
- One of them throws her a flirty kiss as she strikes a pose.
- 87 INT. PROF'S BAR - DUSK 87
- SLAM, Lady enters the bar. It feels different without people in it. Rickety, small.
- PROF, the bartender, is the only one there, cleaning some glasses in preparation for later. He turns when he hears the door slam.
- PROF
- Ah, Lady.
- She comes over, collapsing on a stool. Prof clocks her mood.
- LADY
- You see wetin happen for outside, Prof?

PROF

I no see, but I hear. These
protests, I no know wetin dey
happen anymore. May God help us.

*

He places a glass of whiskey in front of her. She downs it in one go.

PROF (CONT'D)

Fine Boy commot town for business
but he leave your schedule.

Pulling out a folded note from his pocket, he hands it to her. Lady stares down at Fine Boy's neat handwriting.

PROF (CONT'D)

You go need take Sugar go one guy
side tonight.

ON NOTE - "Lady, see the places and times. I done already arrange payment. Make sure the girls no late. I go see you next week. Ask Prof for your envelope."

Lady folds the note into her pocket.

LADY

Fine Boy leave me anything?

*

Nodding, Prof reaches down below the bar. He hands Lady an envelope stuffed with cash, which she stuffs down her pocket.

*

Lady stares at the mural of Fine Boy painted directly behind the bar. Fine Boy stares back at her - his gun pointed right to her forehead.

*

LADY (CONT'D)

How long you done work here, Prof?
How long you work for Fine Boy?

Prof chuckles as he pours her another drink.

PROF

A long time, Lady. The girls dey
for back if you want join them...?

*

88

EXT. BEHIND PROF'S BAR - NIGHT

88

Lady exits through the back door of Prof's bar into a large garden.

Here, it's strangely peaceful. The ground is lush with green grass. A tree casts long shadows across the length of the garden.

Surprised, Lady takes in this secret place, allowing its calmness soothe her.

The voices of the women filter out from another bungalow, set against the back wall. A washing line stands in front of the bungalow, various colours and cuts of women's underwear hanging from it.

Lady watches the panties waft in the wind.

89

INT. WOMEN'S BUNGALOW - ROOM - NIGHT

89

This is where the women live, a long room with six beds across it, clean and airy. The windows are wide open. The women are lounging around, having a conversation.

The room is lit by a single ceiling bulb.

Cinderella is the first to see Lady walk in.

CINDERELLA

Ah! Lady! Wetin you dey do here??

*

The others turn, echoing greetings.

LEKPA

You dey early.

LADY

Yeah... I just...

SUGAR

She missed us.

Sugar laughs.

Catching Lady's eye, Pinky frowns - concerned.

PINKY

You good...?

*

But Lady won't even look at her. She goes and sits with Lolo and Lekpa instead. Lolo is painting Lekpa's toenails.

Lady tries to catch up with the women's conversation.

LEKPA

No o, I no fit go Dubai, abeg! It bad enough as it dey here. If I come go Dubai I go just burn finish, una no go even recognize me.

CINDERELLA

Na true. You need go Sweden or one of those places like that.

FANTA

Where Sweden dey?

CINDERELLA

It dey high, somewhere for Europe. I hear say sun no dey there. It just cold.

LEKPA

Ah yes! That one fit me. I choose there.

FANTA

No please! Which kind vampire life be that one? Me, I need alllll the sun. For me, na California. I be California girl.

She tosses her hair as the women cackle. Sugar turns to Lady.

SUGAR

You nko? If you fit leave Lagos, go anywhere for this world, where you go go, Lady?

Before Lady can say anything, Pinky interjects.

PINKY

That one easy. Lady go go Freetown. Since day one, she tell me say she go go.

*

FANTA

Where Freetown now?

LOLO

No be this same West Africa...?

Fanta snickers.

FANTA

For real?! So if you get one chance to go somewhere, you go choose Africa?

LOLO

Worse even, Sierra Leone! No be say dem still dey fight war for that country?

Now Fanta really cackles. Cinderella and Lekpa join in too.

SUGAR

Wait, wait, make she explain. Maybe
she get good reason. Why you go
choose Freetown, Lady?

Six pairs of eyes turn to her. Lady doesn't respond. Her face
is like granite. Pinky chuckles nervously. *

LADY

Because Freetown no worse past
Lagos... Freetown na the only place
where slaves ever go to be free. *

The women aren't sure what to make of this...

CINDERELLA

Wetin you mean, Lady? The place no
bad?

LADY

I mean... You no see wetin dey
happen for Lagos? No be just today
that people like us begin suffer...
I mean, it done tey when our chiefs
sell our own brothers and sisters
to oyinbo people make them go
become slave... They sell us, our
own people, *for money*, to Europe
and America...

She stares at them, outraged.

LADY (CONT'D)

But still, dem same brothers and
sisters, some of them escape, come
back here. Come Africa. Them risk
everything, *everything*, to fit come
create a place... them own place...
wey special, where all liberated
Africans fit come, fit... free.
Somewhere wey you fit start afresh,
no matter wetin happen to you in
the past. No matter wetin you be.

She stares at them.

LADY (CONT'D)

That place where dem create, na
Freetown.

The room is silent. She's got them hooked.

CINDERELLA

For true?

Lady shrugs.

LADY

Wetin me I know be say, *everywhere*,
no be so so suffer we dey suffer...
Everywhere, always us. Why?! If you
go Sweden or America now, how dem
go treat you there?!

She looks around, at all of them. They've never heard her speak this way before. The strength of her passion, it's affecting. The women are listening.

LADY (CONT'D)

And me I don tire! I no want be
slave no more! I want go live
somewhere where I fit be, fit free.
Fit have dignity. Even if I poor, I
want make my life mean something...
And if I need suffer, then fine.
Make I suffer for Freetown... Once
I save, I no care, I go go! At
least I know I choose am... At
least I know my life go mean
something there.

She stops. Suddenly. She casts her eyes to the ground.

Lady looks up at Pinky. Pinky is smiling at her softly.

PINKY

Lady's mother come from that place.
She come from Freetown
originally...

LEKPA

Ohhhh, I see...

CINDERELLA

Why you no just say that, Lady?

Lady's face spasms.

FANTA

Hmmm... me I still be California
girl joooo!

She breaks the spell.

LEKPA

And me I be Sweden...

LOLO

And for me, na Paris. Bonjour!

She blows a kiss as the other women begin to giggle. The light goes out, plunging the room into darkness.

FANTA

(groaning)

See now! This na why I want leave this country.

CINDERELLA

We better start to prepare. It's 8 o'clock anyways.

*

The women disperse to their various beds as a certain hush fills the candlelit room. They begin to put on their makeup.

Pinky and Lady are left alone.

PINKY

Lady...

LADY

Why you do that?!

Lady is furious.

LADY (CONT'D)

Why you mention Freetown, eh?!

A beat.

PINKY

Sorry... I no think say you go mind...

LADY

Really?! *You no think say I go mind?! I no tell you explicitly make you never tell anybody about Freetown, eh? Pinky... I no tell you say, make you never tell anybody about my mama?*

A beat.

PINKY

Sorry...

LADY

Of course. "Sorry." Na wetin you always talk, no be so? You always dey do anything wey come your mind, then after you go open your mouth say - sorry. YOU BE MUMU?!

Pinky's face darkens as Lady raises her voice. The other women turn, surprised.

CINDERELLA

Ahn-ahn Lady calm down!

LADY

How I fit calm down?! EH?! How I no go shout this mumu?!

Pinky snaps.

PINKY

What's your problem self?! Wetin?! Every time, Lady! You just dey always shout give me - !

LADY

YES! How I no go shout give you?! EH? How I ever fit trust you Pinky?!

She stands up.

LADY (CONT'D)

(addressing the other women)

You know say this girl and I grow up together?! You know say the same woman raise us, we be 'sisters to the grave?' We talk about our plans every day! Every day! Then all of a sudden, she get up, just disappear? She no tell me anything?! Not one word!

The other women say nothing.

LADY (CONT'D)

(to Pinky) After you promise me say you no go ever sell your body! After everything wey we talk about our mamas... You come bring me here! *Now look*, we dey do the same *shit*.

*
*
*
*

Pinky looks like she's about to cry.

LADY (CONT'D)

And now you dey cry?!

Lady is disgusted.

PINKY

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Wetin I suppose do? I'm not strong like you, Lady! I no fit just wait for Freetown forever! Which other thing I fit do?!

She bursts into tears.

LADY

Bullshit! Iya helped you! She helped me! And you left us.

PINKY

That woman brainwashed us, Lady! Every day of our lives she tell us say our mamas be whores! *She made us believe that we were nothing!* Why you think say you still dey Lagos?!

LADY

But she lie?! My mama no be whore?! Your mama no be whore?! Wetin we be, Pinky? Look around you. *We be nothing!*

Silence.

All the women are staring at Lady.

LADY (CONT'D)

I dey lie?!

Pinky is sobbing. Nobody will meet Lady's eye.

One by one they turn away, upset. All of them except Sugar.

Sugar stares directly at Lady, not saying a word.

90

INT. PROF'S BAR - NIGHT

90

The dance floor heaves with people as afrobeats shakes the walls. The revelers have arrived. Prof's bar is packed. Lady tries to push her way through the dance floor. *

She dumps herself into a stool, her head heavy in her hands.

VOICE (O.S.)

Wetin do you today sef Lady?

LADY

Not now, Sugar.

SUGAR

Yes, now. Why you so vex?

Sugar raises an eyebrow.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Virgin Lady, we gats work tonight.
We need go. No rest for the wicked.

Sugar grins.

91 EXT. THIRD MAINLAND BRIDGE - NIGHT 91

VROOM. *

Lady's hair whips furiously in the wind as her car SPEEDS over the Atlantic Ocean.

A full moon hangs in the sky.

92 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 92

Sugar sits next to Lady, unusually quiet. DJ Revolution's fiery voice perforates the silence.

DJ REVOLUTION

There comes a time when a people
must TAKE UP arms. IN EVERY
CIVILIZATION, there comes a time!
If we are to go down in HISTORY as
people who are free, we have no
choice! Youth of Nigeria, we must
DECOLONIZE our minds!

SUGAR

Talk true... you no think him voice
sexy?

Sugar chuckles.

Caught off guard, Lady can't help herself. A small smile crosses her face.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I know say you think so! Just admit
it. I know say you dey listen to
the guy, girrrrl!

She smiles.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

And to be honest, him smart...
I mean, wetin you and him talk just
now, no be the same thing? I mean,
this Lagos, if we no change am for
ourselves, who fit? At the end of
the day, Lagos be our miserable
mistress.

*

Lady glances at Sugar.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

What?

LADY

So you get small sense Sugar...?

SUGAR

SMALL?!

LADY

Tiny.

SUGAR

Eh! Fuck off!

*

But she laughs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

You get small sense too, Lady. Just
small! Very, very tiny.

Rolling her eyes, Lady laughs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I see you, Lady...

She smiles.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Hey, we fit go somewhere, fast
fast?

*

*

93

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

93

The car takes a left turn, down a dirt road, leading under a
bridge. It's dark, ominous. There's no one and nothing here.

LADY (O.S.)

Where we dey go, this girl?

94 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 94

Sugar points ahead, under the bridge.

SUGAR

Here.

Lady turns again, down further. She stops the car under the bridge - a dead-end.

Graffiti streaks the concrete, trash litters the ground. There's nothing else. It's desolate.

LADY

Sugar?

Sugar has already opened the door.

95 EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 95

Cautiously, Lady follows her out, confused.

LADY

Wetin be this place, Sugar?

SUGAR

This place? Na my first home for Lagos. The place I first land when I arrive. Where I do my first hustle... when I been 13 years old.

Lady's eyes widen. She takes it in differently. It's hard to imagine, that this was a home.

Sugar can read her thoughts.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

That time, we been get one small house here.

She points to an area on the ground, where it's just possible to make out some lines, as if a structure of some sort was once there.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

"House..."

She says it in inverted commas.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

... But na our own, sha. We been dey always stand outside, here... To seduce guys.

(MORE)

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Then we enter the house with them,
six 'beds', rice bags, dey inside.

She laughs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Nothing like privacy at all.

She throws a glance at Lady, stopping at a spot, remembering.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I think the government chase
everybody comot three years ago...
You hear about am? You know this
road dey on the way to airport.
Them dey shame say foreigners dey
see us as they arrive. We be the
Nigerian welcoming party... "A
stain on the Nation's Identity."

She does a perfect imitation of a haughty politician's voice,
then laughs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

This government...

She sighs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

We've come a long way, Lady.

She does a twirl, under the bridge, her voice bouncing
against the walls.

Lady stares at her, this twirling girl. Something shifts in
her face.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

WE'VE COME A LONG LONG WAY, BABY
GIRL!!!

For the first time, Lady realizes - Sugar is just like her.

96 EXT. FEDERAL PALACE HOTEL - NIGHT 96

Lady drives up to the entrance of the luxury hotel.

97 INT. LADY'S CAR - 97

SLAM. Sugar gets out of the car.

Lady watches her saunter in through the same doors that the Chinese businessman did several days ago. She can't help it. A deep unhappiness sits in her chest.

*

98

INT. LADY'S CAR - NIGHT

98

The women are back in the car, a comfortable silence between them now. They drive in solitude through empty streets.

Sugar turns to Lady.

SUGAR

SO, wetin be the deal with you and sex, anyway Lady?

*

*

She says it so casually, Lady is caught off guard. Sugar laughs at the look that crosses Lady's face.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

You gay?

LADY

(alarmed)

NO!

SUGAR

(softly)

I no judge, Lady...

Lady shakes her head, no.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

So... you like men...?

The question hangs in the air.

LADY

I no know...

She's telling the truth. There's a vulnerability in her voice.

SUGAR

But you like watch...

Sugar's voice is soft.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I no judge, Lady. We all get wetin we like, you know.

LADY

I no know, Sugar...

A beat.

LADY (CONT'D)

I dey fucked up...

Lady stares into the rear-view mirror.

Slowly, the woman with the red lips, LADY'S MOTHER, appears, a ghost conjured in the back seat. *

Lady's mother is half naked. A man sits next to her, kissing her neck as her face contorts. *

The sounds of moaning fill the car. *

Lady can't look at her mother. Her fingers begin to shake.

LADY (CONT'D)

This thing just dey inside my chest... It no fit allow make I do anything... It just dey tight... I no know...
But I swear to God, if man ever touch me, I swear to God, I go kill am.

Sugar sees the glint enter Lady's eyes.

SUGAR

Ah Lady...

She turns to stare out into the dark night, sighing.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Lagos done suffer you too.

99

EXT. PROF'S BAR - NIGHT

99

Lady parks her car in front of Prof's bar.

The women sit quietly, not quite ready to go in, enjoying the night's solace, the music trickling out of the bungalow.

Then slowly, Sugar leans into Lady.

Slowly, she *kisses* Lady, softly, on the lips.

Lady is startled. It comes out of nowhere. Her face convulses in shock. For a moment, she begins to pull away.

Then... she doesn't.

Lady shuts her eyes.

And leans into Sugar's kiss.

Everything goes silent. For the first time, every sound fades.

It's the chastest of kisses, but it contains everything...

Finally, slowly, Sugar pulls away. Finally, slowly, Lady opens her eyes. *

Sugar is smiling.

SUGAR

I tell you, Virgin Lady, sex fit sweet...

Sugar laughs.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I better go inside.

She begins to get out of the car.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

(stopping)

Lady, Pinky done tell you about Senator?

LADY

Wetin you mean?

Sugar sighs.

SUGAR

Pinky and Senator. Ask her wetin happen. Ask her... No be my story to tell.

With that, Sugar leaves Lady alone. *

PRE-LAP: DJ Revolution's voice echos in the howling wind.

100

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

100

Lady's red car zooms down the express way, home.

DJ REVOLUTION (V.O.)

This is the beginning of a new movement, fellow Lagosians. One that welcomes us all. Mothers. Fathers. Brothers. Sisters. Let us be clear. Revolution is here. The era of liberation has come.

101 INSIDE CAR - 101

Listening, Lady gently touches her lips. She stares at herself in the rear mirror.

 LADY
 Who you be?

She smiles.

 FADE IN:

102 INT. LADY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 102

Lady counts out her stacks of cash, sitting on the floor. She's got a mountain now. She's arranged it all in stacks across the wood.

 LADY
 380, 390...

Lady's eyes gleam.

 LADY (CONT'D)
 400... 400K! LADY, LADY!

She THROWS the notes in the air.

Makes it rain money.

 LADY (CONT'D)
 Freetown here we come!!! Let's go!
 Let's go!!

*
*

103 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 103

SMOKE EVERYWHERE.

Tyres BURNING, shards of GLASS on tarmac.

The tell-tale signs of PROTEST.

PRE-LAP:

"END SARS/END POLICE BRUTALITY" by P ARPHEKT booms on the radio.

104 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 104

Lady's car TEARS down the street.

In the front seat, Lekpa raps to the song. She's surrounded by the other girls, on their way to a job, spitting out words, fiercely.

LEKPA

Every day for the thief! One day
for the owner! End police
brutality! Call the game over! We
no trust them again! We never trust
them for once! If you say this na
your wife, they go face you with
their gun!

Sitting next to her, Sugar nudges Lady's shoulder.

SUGAR

Oya, Lady! Your turn!

Lady glances at her, shy.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Come on girl, you got this!

In the rear-mirror, Lady can see Pinky watching her from the back. Lady BURSTS into verse.

LADY

SEE, PERSON WEY DEY PROTECT ME,
WANT KILL ME. PERSON WEY PROTECT
ME, WANT SUFFER ME. PERSON WEY DEY
PROTECT ME, WANT FINISH ME. PERSON
WEY DEY PROTECT ME, NO WANT MAKE I
WAKKA FOR STREET. WHICH KIND LIFE
BE THIS, I SEE NO FUTURE! FOR THE
YOUTH OF THIS COUNTRY, IT'S LOOKING
LIKE RAPTURE! WE NO WANT SARS, END
POLICE BRUTALITY, COS NONE OF YOUR
CHILDREN DEY COLLECT BULLET ON THE
STREETS...

She's even better than Lekpa. She's FURIOUS. The other women are STUNNED. *

FANTA

EHNNNN! LADY?! SO YOU FIT RAP LIKE
THIS?!

They begin to hail her, Sugar loudest of all.

SUGAR

WHATTTTTT?! HEYYYYY!

Lady snaps back, heart racing. The women are going WILD.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

Lady is here! LADY IS HERE!

Lady begins to laugh, caught in the energy. She smiles at Pinky but Pinky turns away from her.

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. The song's bass continues to pound, *swelling*, becoming a ROAR. Turning into -

105

EXT. TAKWA BAY - NIGHT

105

- DRUMS. African DRUMS. Beating fast, furiously. Creating a wild rhythm.

FLESH. Sweaty, firm, dark flesh. Rippling in rhythm to the drums.

Barely dressed bodies, gyrating frantically, like skeletons exorcising their souls.

This is Takwa Bay at night - where rich Lagos' youth flock, desperate to dance, to forget everything.

On a make-shift stage facing the ocean, A HIGHLIFE band, FIVE YOUNG MEN - sexy and shirtless - blare their instruments, the source of the music. They play *manically*, as if in contest with the ocean's crashing waves.

Lady and the girls roll in. Against the crowd of Lagosians, they cut quite the figure: Lady in baggy trousers, a white vest-top; * the women in their tight dresses; all eyes on them. *

LADY

Oya! You know the drill!

She has a new confidence, a new energy.

The girls begin to scatter, targeting the best-dressed men - potential customers - pros at what they do.

Lady steps in front of Pinky.

LADY (CONT'D)

We fit talk?

But Pinky doesn't even look at her.

LADY (CONT'D)

Pinky.

PINKY

Leave my way.

LADY
Wetin happen with Senator Pinky?!

*

Pinky's face convulses.

PINKY
Who told you?

A beat.

LADY
Sugar.

Pinky recovers quickly.

PINKY
Leave my way!

*

Pinky pushes Lady HARD, entering the crowd.

106 EXT. BEACH - BAR - CONTINUOUS

106

At the bar, Lady flags the bartender down.

LADY
Hey, guy. I dey here for Fine Boy.
The girls dey work the floor.

BARTENDER
Ah yes! We don dey expect you.
I go tell my boss.

He darts off, leaving her alone.

On the dance floor, Cinderella and Pinky are already dancing
with two men.

*

PRE-LAP:

BARTENDER (V.O.)
TO LAGOS!

107 LATER -

107

WHAM! Lady slams her shot-glass down HARD on the bar.

LADY
Cheers...

She's several drinks in, chatting shit to the bartender.

BARTENDER

Mehn, I really feel like say this
 time it go dey different. I tell
 you, I never see anything like this
 before! These protests? Everybody
 dey there! You know say I hard, my
 chest *hard*, but even **me**, I feel am.
 Something dey happen!

*
*
*

Lady is listening, intrigued, despite herself.

LADY

So you really believe...?

The bartender nods.

BARTENDER

DJ Revolution be the real thing. He
 be the REAL DEAL mehn... Dem say
 tomorrow's protest go be the
 biggest one yet. You need come,
 Lady. Join us. Everybody go dey
 there.

He looks around - at the crowd, the energy - there's
 something indescribably potent in the air.

Following his eyes, Lady spins to face the dance floor,
 trying to see what he sees...

But from where she's sitting, all she can see is Pinky
 dancing with a man.

Agitated, she stands up and wanders off.

108

EXT. BEACH - BY THE WATER - NIGHT

108

Lady walks alone on the beach shore.

Behind her, the lights and music rage on.

It's a stormy night. The sea roars, crashing wave after wave
 on sand.

Lady passes a couple of party stragglers drinking by the
 water, singing at the top of their lungs. She wanders further
 away from the party, away from the noise. A solitary figure
 in the night.

LADY

(drunk, singing to herself
 softly)

Who you be...? Who you be...?

She takes her shoes off, feels the sand in her toes. She softens, allowing herself enjoy the peaceful quiet.

109 FURTHER DOWN ON THE BEACH - MOMENTS LATER 109

Lady flops down on the sand, arms wide, an angel on shore. She stares up at the moon, singing softly.

LADY

Who ever give you anything? Who ever love you? Na only you, baby girl. You be Ladyyy.

Suddenly, a PIERCING SCREAM.

Lady JERKS up.

LADY (CONT'D)

WHO DEY THERE?!

She turns, listening intently...

There's definitely a sound, coming from a grove of palm trees behind her, deep inside the shadows.

110 EXT. PALM GROVE - NIGHT 110

Lady enters the grove of palm trees. She struggles to make out anything. *

It's hard to see. She moves slowly, goosebumps on her skin.

LADY

Who dey here?!

Nothing.

It's very dark.

Her hand finds a tree to guide her. She enters deeper into the woodland. Her breath is slow and shallow. *

SUDDENLY, to her right, Lady hears something - a CREATURE against a tree.

Quickly, she steps behind a tree trunk, trying to get a closer look. She squints her eyes hard.

Palm trees throw strange slanted figures in the moonlight.

But there's definitely a creature. Lady sees that the creature against the tree is a MAN.

He's making grunting noises, pushing himself into the trunk.

The man is half naked, his shirt abandoned on the ground. His trousers are down to his ankles. There's something between him and the tree.

Lady hears the something make a SOUND.

It sounds like it's in pain. *

The man pushes the whimpering thing to the ground.

Lady FREEZES. The whimpering thing is a WOMAN. *

She grunts as she hits the sand. The man doesn't care. He pounces on her, spreading her legs out wide.

The woman moans loudly as the man gets on top of her, grabbing her neck, pinning her down.

Lady sees his penis flash in the moonlight.

Erect.

She sees the woman's face contort, *a flash of red lips*.

Lady detonates.

LADY (CONT'D)

NO!

The man freezes, looking up, as Lady BODY SLAMS him into the sand.

Trousers caught around his legs, he's helpless. Instantly, Lady is on top of him, scrambling, inflicting blows to his head. *

One. Two. Three. Four.

Her wrist comes down hard, heavy against bone.

Five. Six. Seven. Eight.

Her face is a storm.

She growls like an animal, her body wound tight, as the man flails beneath her.

He lets out a limp moan, his face bleeding profusely.

It's as if Lady can't see him, can't hear him. She heaves loudly, letting out sounds from her chest.

In a flash, she sees a beer bottle on the ground.

She stretches long. GRABS IT. And SLAMS it into his SKULL. *

...

A RINGING SILENCE.

The night goes dead.

A sea gull flaps its wings far away, somewhere. A hand comes DOWN on Lady's chest.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(far away)

Lady! Lady!

Lady FLIPS, swinging the glass shard.

A voice is saying something.

Like a wild animal in danger, Lady stands, wired - and grabs... Sugar.

SUGAR

No! Please!

It takes a moment for Lady's eyes to still.

She sees the blood on Sugar's face.

LADY

You dey okay?! Sugar! He hurt you?!
He hurt you?!

SUGAR

Fine... I...

Sugar is struggling to speak through tears. She's blubbering.

LADY

It dey okay Sugar! Wetin happen?!
Tell me!

Sugar is shaking her head. Lady stares at her young face, trying to understand her through her sobs. *

SUGAR

We... We dey play... We just dey
play...!

Sugar is staring at the bleeding man. She bursts into tears. *

Lady's eyes narrow, confused.

LADY
Wetin you mean?

Sugar is still sobbing, staring at the man on the ground. *

SUGAR
He... He like am like that...

Lady is struggling to understand.

LADY
But... See the blood! See your
face!

SUGAR
Your... hand, Lady...!

Lady looks at her hands.

They're bleeding.

She's covered in blood - hers, the man's. Her eyes follow
Sugar's gaze.

A pool of blood is soaking into the sand. A slice of the
man's skull and face are missing...

Understanding dawns.

The naked man lying on the ground is definitely dead.

Fear enters Lady's eyes.

LADY
No.

Behind her, Sugar is crying.

LADY (CONT'D)
Shhh. Shut up Sugar.

But it only seems to make Sugar cry louder.

LADY (CONT'D)
Sugar! Shut up. You hear me?!

She walks to the girl. But Sugar won't stop. Her cries are
getting louder.

Lady SLAPS her HARD across the face. A RINGING sound.

LADY (CONT'D)
Stop!

There's a quiet menace in her eyes.

LADY (CONT'D)

Listen to me. Go back to the party.
Wash your face for sea first. Get
the girls, carry them go the car.
Wait for me there. You understand?

Sugar stares at Lady in fear.

LADY (CONT'D)

YOU HEAR ME?!

Sugar nods.

LADY (CONT'D)

Keep your mouth shut. If anyone
ask, tell dem say you and me fight.
Tell dem say I slap you. You hear?

Sugar grunts.

LADY (CONT'D)

Oya, GO!

Not needing to be told twice, Sugar flees towards the
flashing lights.

111 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

111

A silhouette moves towards the sea. Slowly.

It's Lady.

She's rolling the naked man down the sand, towards the ocean
shore. She's struggling. The man is heavy, and there's a long
way to go.

LADY

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

She's covered in blood. Exhausted.

But she can't stop. The party isn't far away. From where she
is, she can see figures moving.

LADY (CONT'D)

Fuck...!

She shoves the body forward, hard as she can; inching slowly
towards the shoreline.

In the distance, on shore, TWO FIGURES emerge - silhouettes approaching.

Sensing them, Lady looks up.

LADY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She's a distance from the palm trees, an even further distance from the ocean.

There's nowhere to go.

Lady begins to panic.

LADY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She doesn't know what to do. The figures are getting closer.

At the last minute, Lady darts for the trees, leaving the body exposed.

She ducks behind a large tree just in time, as the figures arrive.

There's no way they won't see the dead man. They're only a few feet away from him.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Lady?

Pinky's face is illuminated in the moonlight. She stops in front of Lady's victim. *

PINKY

Jesus!

Now she's really scared.

PINKY (CONT'D)

LADY. Where you dey?!

Shrunken like a terrified animal, Lady stares at Pinky and Sugar from underneath a bush.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Where you dey, Lady?! Come out!

Pinky moves towards the bush, almost in front of Lady's eye line, panicked.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Lady! Where are you?!

Then she sees her, crouched behind a tree. Her sister-friend covered in blood.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Oh God.

Pinky lets out a ragged breath.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Oh God, Lady.

Cautious, terrified, Lady just stares back at her, caught. *

112

EXT. BEACH- UNDER THE MOONLIGHT - NIGHT

112

Sugar and Pinky shove the body towards the ocean.

They work together, inching closer to the sea, dragging with all their might.

PINKY

Take him leg, Lady! Pull am, pull!

Lady stands on the seashore, in shock.

PINKY (CONT'D)

LADY!

Pinky goes to her.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Lady. Look me. We need move. Now!
We need move. Right now!

Nothing.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Lady!

Lady just stares at her.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Please! I got you. We can do this.

Slowly, Lady's eyes clear. She begins to move, slowly.

Sugar pulls on one leg, as Lady shoves the man's shoulders towards the raging sea.

Lady looks down into the dead man's eyes.

PINKY (CONT'D)

No look am! Just push. Push Lady!

Nodding, Lady shoves with all her might.

The women pull the body into the water, trying to get out further.

Around them, waves crash in the stormy ocean, unfriendly and angry.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Push! PUSH. Sugar, push!

The man's lifeless head flops in the waves.

The water rising to their waists, the women keep going.

FINALLY, they're deep enough. All three stand together, holding onto the dead man.

PINKY (CONT'D)

On three. One, two, three...!

They let go at the same time, with one final shove.

In a single file they watch. As the body floats away, into the black waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

113 INT/EXT. LADY'S CAR/BEACH CAR PARK - NIGHT 113

All the prostitutes are gathered around Lady's car. There's a hushed silence amongst them - startling in its unusualness.

Pinky and Sugar are soaking wet. Lady has no shirt on. She stands in her bra and trousers.

Without a word, Cinderella takes off her shirt, putting it over Lady's shoulders. *

114 INT. IN THE CAR/ON THE ROAD - NIGHT 114

Lady drives the car of women back to Prof's bar.

She looks in the rear mirror at Sugar, sitting silently, staring out the window. *

115 INT/EXT. IN THE RED CAR/ PROF'S BAR - NIGHT 115

The car comes to a halt in front of the shack. Lady kills the engine.

Without a word, all the women pile out. Only Sugar, Pinky and Lady remain.

Somewhere far away, the sound of an ocean wave crashes.

For once none of the women knows what to say.

SUGAR

Lady, you dey okay?

Lady doesn't reply. She just sits there, numb.

PINKY

Lady?

Lady's right hand begins to tremble. Pinky and Sugar glance at each other.

SUGAR

Nobody need know...

Quietly, Sugar draws her fingers across her lips - an oath of silence - as she places a hand on Lady's shoulder.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I no go talk. I promise. Nobody else dey, only us. Nobody go ever know, Lady.

Sugar looks at Pinky, who nods.

PINKY

Go inside Sugar.

Throwing Lady one final glance, Sugar gets out of the car.

LADY

Sugar...

Lady calls her name from the car as Sugar turns. *

The two women stare at each other for a long moment...

Then Sugar winks.

SUGAR

Thanks, Virgin Lady.

116

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAWN

116

The pink horizon welcomes a new day's sun.

The morning is gentle. In the dawning hour, the sea is calm.

117 EXT. LAGOS ROAD - CONTINUOUS 117

Lady's car drives across the horizon, a speck in the vast
scape.

118 INT. LADY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 118

Pinky glances across at Lady, who stares straight ahead, not
blinking.

119 EXT. LADY'S APARTMENT - DAWN 119

The women walk into the blue corridors of Lady's building,
past Iya's apartment. Slowly Lady opens her door and lets
Pinky in.

120 INT. LADY'S APARTMENT - DAWN 120

Lady sits on her bed. She stares down at her hands.

LADY

Pinky.

Pinky is standing in front of Lady's Freetown altar.

She turns to look at Lady.

LADY (CONT'D)

I killed that man... I thought...

Lady's fingernails are crusted in blood.

LADY (CONT'D)

I thought he was hurting her...
I... thought...

She covers her mouth, to muffle her cry.

PINKY

I know.

Pinky comes to her, tries to take Lady in her arms. Lady
recoils, afraid to be touched.

PINKY (CONT'D)

I know.

Lady clutches at her chest.

*

LADY

What's wrong with me...?!

*

LADY (CONT'D)

I can't, I can't...

Wrestling with her clothes, Lady collapses to the ground.

LADY (CONT'D)

I can't - breathe.

Pinky grabs Lady, as Lady wrestles against her. But this time, Pinky won't let go. *

PINKY

Breathe, Lady! Breathe!

Lady tries to move away. But she's too spent, and she's too weak.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Breathe. Just breathe!

Pinky doesn't let go. *

And finally, Lady does. Finally, she let's go.

Lady cries and cries and cries, as Pinky holds her, staring into space.

121 MORNING -

121

Lady is fast asleep. The early sun is gentle on her face.

Beside her, on the mattress, Pinky is awake, staring at the Freetown wall, taking it all in.

PINKY

(softly)

Lady...

Lady wakes slowly, looking down at the modest spread of food Pinky has laid on the floor - a loaf of bread, some tins of sardines.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Come and eat.

Slowly Lady gets up. The two women eat breakfast together, leaned against the wall.

The sun makes strange shapes on Lady's Freetown photos. Lady seems lost in thought.

Pinky is looking at her.

PINKY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Lady... For everything.

Lady is too numb. She stares into space.

LADY

It's not your fault Pinky.

She looks down at her hands.

PINKY

No, you don't understand...

A beat.

PINKY (CONT'D)

Senator...

Lady glances at Pinky.

*

PINKY (CONT'D)

You asked me about him...

*

A beat.

*

PINKY (CONT'D)

We started to talk when he was driving us... We fell in love. He used to open the door for me and -

*

*

*

*

Suddenly Lady can sense that something is about to happen.

*

LADY

Pinky, I'm tired. Let's not talk about it now, please.

PINKY

(shaking her head)
No, you don't understand, Lady...

A beat.

PINKY (CONT'D)

I'm pregnant.

LADY

What...?

Lady turns to her, confused. Pinky won't look at her.

LADY (CONT'D)

What are you talking about?

PINKY
(speaking fast now)
He wanted to marry me! He said he
loved me...! ME! He was so sweet.

A beat.

PINKY (CONT'D)
I knew if Fine Boy found out... But
he said he had a plan... We were
going to run away together... We
were going to be happy.

Pinky has tears in her eyes.

PINKY (CONT'D)
Fine boy killed him. I'm sure. He
just disappeared. *

She wipes her nose.

LADY
Pinky -

PINKY
(panicking)
I didn't know what else to do! I
didn't know where to go! And Fine
Boy started looking at me - *

LADY
Pinky...!

Pinky stops. She takes a deep breath.

PINKY
I'm scared Lady. *

LADY
I don't understand... So this whole
time... you came back to me because
you're pregnant? *

PINKY
I didn't know where else to go! I
don't know what else to do! *

Pinky tries to take Lady's hand. But Lady pulls herself away.

PINKY (CONT'D)
Lady, my baby! If Fine Boy finds
out... *

Lady looks down at Pinky's belly. And for the first time she can see the slight swell through Pinky's sheer dress - once you know it's there, it's impossible to miss.

*
*

Anger SWELLS in Lady's chest.

LADY
(realizing)
You've been lying to me this whole time.

*

A hundred different emotions COURSE through her veins.

LADY (CONT'D)
Why didn't you just tell me...?!

PINKY
I tried... Lady, I tried... I'm sorry...

*
*

LADY
I killed someone Pinky!

Lady stares down at her hands. Her fingernails are still crusted, just a little bit, with blood.

*

LADY (CONT'D)
I killed someone!

*

In the silence, the heat of the moment chokes the room.

*

PINKY
Lady... It's okay. I have a plan...

*

Lady turns to look at Pinky.

*

PINKY (CONT'D)
Right now, you and me, let's go to Freetown. Right now. We can go. Like we always talked about.

*
*
*
*

LADY
Freetown...?

Lady stares at her friend.

*

LADY (CONT'D)
You want to go to Freetown...?

And then it suddenly all makes sense. Finally, Lady understands.

*

LADY (CONT'D)

That's what this has all been
about...

*

Lady's shoulders collapse.

*

Her wall to Freetown looks down at her. The men and women on
it seem to be laughing at her...

*

*

Lady realizes in this moment, that she's never going to go.

Sighing, she turns back to Pinky. She looks down at her
belly.

*

*

LADY (CONT'D)

You're really pregnant...?

Slowly Pinky nods.

PINKY

(tearful)

Let's go to Freetown, Lady. Please.
I'm scared.

122 INT. LADY'S APARTMENT -

122

It's later in the morning. The air has begun to get hot. Lady
moves around her room quickly, filling a large duffel bag.

LADY

I'm almost done, I've packed some
things for you.

Pinky is waiting for her at the door. There's a palpable
frenzy in the room.

Reaching into the hole behind the wall, Lady pulls out her
stack of cash, envelopes now. She packs them into the bag
swiftly.

Lady takes one final look at this place that has been her
home her entire life.

Turning quickly, she shuts the door behind her and leaves.

*

123 INT. LADY'S CORRIDOR - DAY

123

Lady and Pinky pass Iya's room. They stop, staring at it for
a moment.

PINKY

Let's go.

LADY
Go. I'll meet you.

PINKY
Lady.

LADY
I said go! I'll meet you.

Biting her lip, Pinky exits the building. Lady knocks on Iya's door.

IYA
(smiling)
Lady! I thought I heard you! Where
have you been?!

She pauses as she takes in Lady's duffel bag.

IYA (CONT'D)
Where are you going??

Iya is suspicious as Lady smiles.

LADY
Just out... for work. I'll be back
later. I just... wanted to check
in. It's been crazy with all this
scarcity stuff mehn! But... you're
good?

IYA
Yes... I'm good...

Iya is still suspicious.

IYA (CONT'D)
I heard something last night... Are
you sure everything is okay?

LADY
For sure! It's just been mad busy
Iya... Mad busy! But I'll come see
you tonight?

A beat.

IYA
Okay. But be careful Lady. There's
all this talk of riots!

LADY
For sure.

Lady answers too fast.

IYA

Lady...

Iya catches her arm.

IYA (CONT'D)

See you later?

*

Iya is staring at Lady. It takes every ounce of energy for Lady not to cry.

*

124 EXT. LADY'S CAR - DAY 124

VROOOM! Lady's red car RACES through the streets.

125 INSIDE THE CAR - 125

There's a nervous energy between the women. Lady winds down her window, sticking her head out, desperate for fresh air.

*

PINKY

Oh my God, Lady! We're doing it!

We're going to go to Freetown!

*

Giggling, Pinky winds down her window and sticks her head out, into the rushing wind.

PINKY (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I'M GOING TO BE FREE!

126 OUTSIDE - 126

On the street, a large group of young men and women cross the road, holding placards.

127 EXT. BUS STATION - DAY 127

Lady drives into a bustling bus station, hundreds of Lagosians coming and going in the heat. She parks in front of the ticket office.

128 INSIDE CAR - 128

A moment of silence.

The two women stare in wonder at the LARGE BUS parked right there, in front of them. The bus with the sign to FREETOWN on it. *

The bus to Freedom...

Neither woman knows what to say.

Finally, Lady picks up the duffel bag. Her hands tremble as she takes out stacks of Naira notes.

LADY

This is 400k... Go and buy the ticket.

Something in Lady's voice makes Pinky look up at her.

PINKY

Let's go inside together.

LADY

(shaking her head)

No. You go and buy the ticket. I'll park and come and find you.

PINKY

Lady... I don't understand...

A beat.

LADY

I don't have enough, Pinky... I don't have enough for both of us.

Pinky's lip begins to tremble as she realizes.

PINKY

No! Lady! I thought you saved!

Lady's voice is steady.

LADY

I only have 400k, and a ticket is already 300. You'll need the rest... For rent, to... tide you over while you figure stuff out...

PINKY

NO. I can't... Lady, you can't leave me alone! You've been saving this money forever... No.

LADY

You must! Pinky, *listen!*

Lady GRABS her hand.

LADY (CONT'D)
You have to go, for this baby.

Pinky looks terrified.

LADY (CONT'D)
I know you can! I know you can!
Look at me, Pinky. *For us.*

Lady stares Pinky in the eye.

LADY (CONT'D)
Pinky... Our mothers... They did
their best...

Lady shuts her eyes.

LADY (CONT'D)
But you were right... Look at us...
They all made us feel like we were
nothing.

Tears fall from Lady's eyes.

LADY (CONT'D)
But we're not! You're strong,
Pinky! You can start over.

Pinky begins to cry.

LADY (CONT'D)
You have to! This baby, you can
LOVE HER... It's not too late for
her!

Pinky stares at Lady. She sees that Lady is telling the truth. She sees that she has to be strong. That she can start over.

LADY (CONT'D)
It's you, Pinky... It's always been
you. You're the one who left...

Pinky touches her hand to her belly.

PINKY
What about Fine Boy? If he finds
out what happened last night...

LADY
He won't find out! There's no body,
and if he does...

Lady grits her teeth.

LADY (CONT'D)
FUCK FINE BOY! I'll handle him.

And she means it too.

LADY (CONT'D)
You can do it Pinky. You have to.
You have to... For us...

They stare into each other's eyes.

It begins to set in. It's really happening...

Pinky lets out a sigh.

PINKY
What are you going to do...?

Lady shakes her head.

LADY
I don't know...

She laughs.

In the backseat, the woman with the red lips, her mother, slowly appears.

Through the rear mirror, she stares at her daughter.

LADY (CONT'D)
I've been so angry all my life...

Lady stares back at her mother. This woman, who's been haunting her all her life.

Tears spill out of her mother's eyes. And then - just like that - she's gone.

Lady presses cash into Pinky's hand.

Pinky grasps it like it's a lifeline.

The women stare at each other for an eternity, not sure what else to say.

Then Pinky grabs Lady *suddenly*, holds her tight, sensing that this might be the last time they'll see each other for a long, long time.

Pinky whispers in Lady's ear.

PINKY
Best friends for life?

Lady smiles through her tears.

LADY
Sisters to the grave...

After a moment -

PINKY
Thank you. Thank you. Come and
visit me one day soon?

129 EXT. BUS STATION - TICKET OFFICE - DAY 129

Pinky steps out of the ticket office, into the sun's glare.

Carrying the duffel bag Lady packed, she pockets the ticket she's bought to Freetown.

One last time, she looks out at Lagos, looks out at the city she's always known. Looks out for her sister-friend.

But Lady's red car is gone...

As she steps onto the large bus, a bitter-sweet smile crosses Pinky's face. *

130 EXT. LAGOS STREETS - DAY 130

An aerial view of Lady's red car - making its way through the colourful labyrinth of the city.

RADIO (V.O.)
Spurred by the now infamous DJ
Revolution, thousands of Lagosians
are gathering... Some outlets are
reporting that this is the largest
mass of protests in the history of
Nigeria... Slowly but surely, the
group are making their way to Third
Mainland Bridge. The longest bridge
in Africa.

Lady's car turns left down one road, drives through it, turns right down another.

Steadily it makes its way towards the Lagos Lagoon.

131 INT. LADY'S CAR - DAY 131

Through her windshield, Lady looks out at all the people moving towards Third Mainland Bridge.

It's mesmerizing.

Thousands and thousands of Lagosians, holding hands, waving placard. Everyone, chanting passionately.

132 OUTSIDE - 132

MASSES

Enough is enough! Enough is Enough!
No more, no more! Sorrow, Tears and
Blood!

133 INSIDE CAR - 133

Tears are running down Lady's face as her car inches slowly through the crowd.

She's never seen anything like this before. The echo of a thousand and more voices rumbling through her chest. Thousands who have had enough.

MASSES

Enough is enough! Enough is Enough!
No more, no more! Sorrow, Tears and
Blood!

She tries to make her way through the masses. But Lagosians are out in full force.

134 THIRD MAINLAND BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 134

Lady's car stops ABRUPTLY. It can go no further through the crowd.

135 INSIDE CAR - 135

Lady makes a decision. She steps out into the crowd. *

136 OUTSIDE - 136

Immediately, she's is caught in the PANDEMONIUM. Bodies everywhere, moving as one, screaming together - PURGING. *

MASSES

Enough is enough! Enough is Enough!

It's like being caught in a wave. People bursting with emotion, *an unstoppable force.*

MASSES (CONT'D)

No more, no more! Sorrow, Tears and Blood!

LADY SURRENDERS.

Tears stream down her face as someone grabs onto her hand. She allows herself to join the others. *

MASSES (CONT'D)

Enough is enough! Enough is Enough!
No more, no more! Sorrow, Tears and Blood!

Lady lifts her arms into the air. *

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN ON
WHITE:

PRE-LAP: A gentle breeze. The quiet crash of waves.

137

EXT. BEACH - DAY

137

This is PARADISE.

Blue sky sets off white, white sand. A few people hang out on the beach, not many - this is a quieter place.

Tucked underneath a coconut tree, a beach shack - a bit rickety, but it has it's charm - looks out onto perfect water.

A wooden sign, with pretty cursive letters announce it's name:

"Pinky's Bar".

Inside, a baby cries.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END