

TEST OF FAITH

A CREATIVE PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Test of Faith

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My creative project is a screenwriting project that centers on fictional characters living in Lagos, Nigeria. The screenplay aims to showcase my understanding of screenwriting format, structure, content, and style, and to apply the essential techniques of visual storytelling discussed in the screenwriting classes I took. The value of this project lies in the opportunity to develop my skills as a screenwriter by honing my ability to craft compelling stories about a specific group of people's way of life that captivate an audience.

Test of Faith is a feature-length film script that is divided into three acts fully developed in my synopsis and beat sheet. The beat sheet provides a detailed breakdown of the major events leading to the end of the script, while the synopsis clearly states the key ideas of the story. In this project, I am submitting a critical introduction and the first twenty-seven pages that comprise the script's first act. In writing the first act of my feature-length script, I applied the essential techniques of visual storytelling to effectively portray the events leading up to the inciting incident that kicks the story into gear and concludes my first act with the plot point 1.

Through this project, I have strived to apply the principles of cinematic storytelling to create the first act of a compelling narrative that I hope engages the audience and takes them on an emotional journey of standing up against societal pressures and building self-confidence.

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

As a writer, I have always been passionate about storytelling and using my craft to effect positive social change. In that regard, my motivation for writing this particular script stems from my deep-seated dissatisfaction with the messages that are being perpetuated in the Nigerian society and its film industry, particularly when it comes to issues of infidelity, divorce, and the roles of men and women in relationships. Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry, is the largest and most influential film industry in Africa and is best known for its romantic dramas and comedies that are widely popular in Nigeria, across Africa, and beyond. However, many of these films perpetuate harmful and outdated gender stereotypes that normalize infidelity among men and blame women for divorce.

Men's Club is a Nigerian television series produced by REDTV, a digital online television network on YouTube owned by United Bank for Africa (UBA). The series is centered around four wealthy and successful male friends who navigate the challenges of their personal lives, relationships, and careers. This television series glorifies the good, bad, and ugly of what it means to be a man in a Nigerian society today. Although, this television series did an excellent job portraying the realities and struggles of these men, it definitely portrayed infidelity as an acceptable behavior for most men and as something Nigerian women have to accept to have a peaceful relationship or marriage. Another example of a film that perpetuates these negative stereotypes is *Chief Daddy*, a popular Nigerian film on Netflix. The titular character, Chief Beecroft, is a wealthy and powerful man who has multiple wives and mistresses. While some of the characters in the movie express disapproval of Chief's behavior, he is ultimately not held accountable for his actions even after his death and is portrayed as a lovable but flawed, patriarch. Divorce was never an option for any of his wives because they were portrayed to have more to lose (specifically his

wealth after his death) if they chose to leave the marriage. Through my script, I want to present a different narrative that pushes back against these negative messages, one that empowers women and holds men accountable for their actions.

My script, *Test of Faith*, is centered on how a successful hardworking doctor named Adunni Adebayo is faced with unexpected life events that forces her to re-evaluate her belief system and take a stand against the societal expectations that are pressuring her to conform to the biased social norms I described above. In Act 1 of the script, my creative project, Adunni catches her husband, Gideon, cheating on her with his secretary. Act 1 explores how Adunni processes this new development between her and her husband. Several of the scenes in the first act involve a lot of character development for these main characters while establishing the setting/location of the script and societal norms that revolve around the motivation for writing this script. Act 1 ends with Adunni revealing the result of her pregnancy test that shows she is pregnant after making it clear to Gideon that she wants a divorce. The subsequent parts of the script, Acts 2 and 3 (not part of my creative project), navigates the turns of events after this big reveal and how Adunni will define true happiness as her character tries to answer the script's major dramatic question: Will Adunni succumb to the Nigerian social pressures that want to force her to keep her baby and stay in her marriage with an unfaithful man, or will she find her own path toward true happiness?

The art of screenwriting involves a combination of creativity, technical skills, and the understanding of the rules and principles of cinematic storytelling. I chose scriptwriting as my medium of storytelling for two reasons. First, it is the same medium used by Nollywood to promote these harmful beliefs and the societal expectations that support them. Second, scriptwriting is a powerful tool that allows me to challenge and subvert harmful gender stereotypes while also entertaining and engaging the audience. Unlike other forms of creative writing, a screenplay has

the unique ability to combine dialogue, action, and visual elements to create a captivating and immersive experience for the viewer. It allows for the creation of complex characters and situations that are relatable and thought-provoking. Through dialogue and action, a script can challenge the audience's beliefs and make them see things from a different perspective. With collaboration from other creatives, such as the producers, director, actors, and crew, the script can be brought to life in a way that the audience is more likely to connect with the characters and their experiences and understand the impact of the situation.

My project aims to demonstrate an understanding of screenwriting format, structure, content, and style using the essential techniques of visual storytelling discussed in the screenwriting classes I took while at Ball State and as exemplified in *Story* by Robert McKee and *The Screenwriter's Bible* by David Trottier. For example, the concept of a film's "point of attack" is the moment where the story opens. For my script, the story opens with Adunni working as a doctor in the hospital. This lets the audience know that her career is an important part of her identity. Other examples are the concept of a film's "inciting incident" and the "Plot Point 1." The inciting incident is the event/change that kicks the story into gear. In this screenplay, Adunni walking in on Gideon cheating on her is the inciting incident. The Plot Point 1 is the moment of no turning back that typically occurs at the end of the first act. The Plot Point 1 in my script is Adunni finding out she is pregnant after making it clear to Gideon that there is no hope of them ever getting back together again as a result of his infidelity. This event prompts her to re-evaluate her decision to divorce Gideon as she navigates whether she wants to be a single parent or not.

The Screenwriter's Bible provides a more practical understanding of the screenwriting process. It illustrates the importance of the "beat sheet," a scene by scene outline of the key events in the story. Creating a beat sheet for this project greatly helped me with the development of my

plot and enabled me to get an idea of the big picture of the script. By breaking down each scene into smaller beats, I was able to use each beat as a map when I delved into the details of each scene. In *The Screenwriter's Bible*, Trottier emphasizes character development as an essential part of screenplay, which he discusses extensively when describing the ten keys to creating captivating characters. Trottier stresses the importance of creating multidimensional, fully realized characters that audiences can connect with and care about. I feel the protagonist, Adunni, is a great example of a multidimensional character. As a doctor, she is confident and skilled, but her failed marriage and unexpected pregnancy create an internal and external struggle that challenges her self-assurance. Gideon, on the other hand, is a character with many flaws. He is unfaithful and dishonest, but he also struggles with the internal conflict of whether he should come clean to his wife about his infidelity or continue to hide his secret. Although, we are primarily exposed to the ugly and successful side of Gideon, we also get to meet the good side of him when he speaks about his son, Liam, to his mother and when he chooses to show up for his son's birthday despite the risks that Adunni will find out about his child born out of wedlock with Lola, the woman Adunni previously caught him cheating with. All these elements add to his character development.

Screenwriting emphasizes the importance of establishing a strong sense of visual storytelling throughout a script. This means creating scenes that can be easily visualized by the audience, using descriptions that allow readers to see the characters, their surroundings, and the events unfolding on screen. This concept is referred to as scene description, a visual language used to describe the story's action and setting. The inciting incident (Adunni walking in on Gideon cheating on her) and Plot Point 1 (her finding out she's pregnant after asking him for a divorce), are powerful visual moments in action and dialogue that set up the story's conflict. Also, the setting for the script is Lagos Nigeria and there are different social status levels on display in the script. I

was able to show the vast difference between the rich/privileged neighborhood versus the middle class/less-privileged neighborhoods using scene description. I was also able to use scene description to highlight certain actions that incorporated business (the things characters/actors do during a scene) better into the script. Some examples include, the hospital scene, the knitting scene, the golf scene, and the garden scene at Gideon's mother's house. Overall, I think the use of scene description provided lots of opportunity for character development, especially for Adunni. I was able to reveal her strong work ethic (in her job as a doctor), her compassionate heart (tipping the roadside vendor), and her resilience to stand for what she believes in (her stands against infidelity).

On a final note, my ultimate goal for this script, starting with this project and beyond, is to create a story that challenges the harmful stereotypes and expectations perpetuated in Nigerian movies. By using the techniques and narrative structures I learned as a student in the MA program at Ball State University, I aim to subvert the conventional narrative structure with an ironic ending that delivers a powerful message to the audience, inspiring a new wave of storytelling in Nollywood that holds men accountable for their actions and encourages women to take control of their lives.

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Test of Faith
(A Creative Project)
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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - DAY (NIGERIA)

ADUNNI ADEBAYO (mid 20s), in her scrubs with lab coat, her doctor's tag, and a stethoscope, is sitting at the nurse's station, intently studying a patient's chart. She looks exhausted as she brushes sweat off her forehead, placing her hand on the desk.

We ZOOM IN on her expensive looking wedding ring.

NURSE MOPE (middle-aged woman), in her scrubs, approaches her with a concerned look on her face.

NURSE MOPE

Don't you think it's time to go
home and rest?

Adunni checks the time on her watch.

ADUNNI

I'll go when I'm done reviewing
this chart.

Nurse Mope looks over her shoulder to see the NAME of the patient on the chart.

NURSE MOPE

Mrs. Babatunde has been assigned to
another doctor.

Adunni looks at Nurse Mope, frustration written on her face.

ADUNNI

I know that. I just need to make
sure everything is in order before
I leave.

Nurse Mope points to where the chart has been signed off.

NURSE MOPE

Her chart is already signed off.

Adunni hesitates for a moment before handing Nurse Mope the chart.

ADUNNI

Okay, I get it. I'll go home and
get some rest.

Nurse Mope shakes her head, smiling as she watches Adunni leave.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

PEOPLE are going in and out of the entrance.

Adunni walks out of the hospital, holding a cup of coffee as she walks towards the parking lot.

We FLOAT UPWARD getting a view of the building as an ambulance rushes in.

INT/EXT. ADUNNI'S LUXURIOUS CAR - DAY

In the middle of the traffic, Adunni navigates through the busy streets of Lagos with ease in her luxurious car.

The bustling streets are lined with shops and vendor stands selling everything from fruits and vegetables to clothing.

Lots of PEOPLE walk around with a clear sense of direction.

STREET HAWKERS call out to customers on the roadside and in cars, buses, and keke napeps (tricycles).

The BLARING HORNS of impatient DRIVERS fill the air.

Adunni pulls over by the roadside in front of a street vendor stall that displays Nigerian tubers of yams.

Some street hawkers approach her car windows, AD LIBBING as they offer a variety of goods such as phone chargers, bottled/sachet water, and snacks.

ADUNNI

No. Thank you. I want yam.

A young TEENAGE FOOD SELLER steps up to her car.

TEENAGE FOOD SELLER

Good afternoon, ma. What can I get for you?

ADUNNI

Good afternoon. Are you the one selling yams?

TEENAGE FOOD SELLER

My mom is. How many yams do you want?

ADUNNI

Give me ten whole yams. Big ones.

TEENAGE FOOD SELLER

Okay, ma. I'll get the best ones
for you right away.

Adunni watches as the teenager put the yams in her car trunk.

Adunni reaches for her wallet and hands the teenage food
seller a few one-thousand-naira notes.

ADUNNI

Here you go, keep the change.

TEENAGE FOOD SELLER

Thank you, ma.

MINUTES LATER

Adunni watches from her rear view mirror the teenage food
seller jump for joy.

Adunni smiles as she continues her drive, the scenery changes
to more luxurious homes, high-rise buildings, and luxury
cars.

The houses and buildings are grand and imposing with higher
walls and stronger looking security gates.

The streets are less busy and noticeably cleaner.

The waterfront is stunning, with its yachts and sailboats
bobbing in the water.

Adunni drives through the automatic gate of an impressive
mansion with a spacious driveway and pulls up in front of the
entrance.

She steps out of her car and heads towards the front door
where the HOUSEKEEPER is standing.

ADUNNI

I got some yam. They're in the
trunk.

The housekeeper nods as he lets her in.

INT. OTUNBA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wearing a traditional Yoruba clothing, CHIEF KUNLE OTUNBA
(late-50s), not one to take no for an answer, is sitting on
one of the lavish couches, reading a newspaper.

JUMOKE (O.S.)

Here's your cap. I hope you've not forgotten about our event this evening.

MRS. JUMOKE OTUNBA, mid-50s, in a matching African print set of blouse and wrapper (worn as a skirt), walks into the living room holding Chief Otunba's fila (a cap worn by Yoruba men). She is not one to suffer fools.

CHIEF OTUNBA

(taking the fila)

Thank you. I should be done meeting with the investors in time for your event.

Chief Otunba stands confidently as he put on his fila. Jumoke helps him adjust it to fit just right.

JUMOKE

That's what you always say.

ON ADUNNI

As she walks through the hallway towards the living room. The grandeur of the house is evident: large ornate chandeliers, richly patterned wall decors, elaborate carvings on furnitures, and expensive rugs.

Jumoke notices Adunni and looks at her critically.

JUMOKE (CONT'D)

To what do we owe this august visit?

Chief Otunba lights up upon seeing Adunni.

ADUNNI

Can't I visit my parents once in a while? And I brought you some yams.

Jumoke gives her the stink eye.

JUMOKE

You don't visit enough.

CHIEF OTUNBA

Any visit from my lovely daughter is always a pleasure! It was so thoughtful of you to bring us some yams.

Chief Otunba opens his arms wide to hug Adunni. Adunni hugs him tightly.

ADUNNI

I've missed you, daddy.

CHIEF OTUNBA

I've missed you more, my baby girl.
Don't mind your mother, you're
always welcome here.

ADUNNI

Thanks daddy.

JUMOKE

You spoil her silly.

Adunni throws her arms around her mother. Jumoke stiffens.

ADUNNI

(to Jumoke)

And you love me the most.

Chief Otunba laughs. Jumoke tries to hide her smile.

Chief Otunba adjusts his fila.

CHIEF OTUNBA

How is your husband?

JUMOKE

We see him less than we see you.

Adunni fakes a smile.

ADUNNI

Gideon is doing okay. He sends his
greetings.

Adunni helps Chief Otunba adjust his awosoke (a large, free-
flowing outer robe) to fit just right.

CHIEF OTUNBA

I'm off to meet some new investors.
Tell Gideon to call me. They're
loyal and I think they may be
interested in his company.

Adunni nods, hugging him goodbye as he leaves.

ADUNNI

I'll inform him. See you, daddy.

JUMOKE

See you later, dear.

Chief Otunba kisses his wife goodbye before leaving.

JUMOKE (CONT'D)
(to Adunni)
Come with me, I have some fabric
I'd like you to see.

INT. OTUNBA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jumoke and Adunni are sitting on the couch opposite the TV that is on, but they are not watching it.

On the center table in front of them are two glasses of orange juice and a bowl of fruit salad.

Adunni eats from the bowl while Jumoke is checking out various patterned African lace fabric.

A HANDMAID stands timidly next to Jumoke, holding other fabric samples.

JUMOKE
I'm planning a party for Methodist
Women's Association. I have to make
sure your father and I look our
best. What do you think?

Jumoke lays out a few of the samples for Adunni.

ADUNNI
You mean your socialite group.

JUMOKE
You've started.

Adunni laughs as she points to one of the samples.

ADUNNI
Let me see that one.

Jumoke hands her the fabric. Adunni unfolds it to reveal the design. Adunni hands it back to her.

ADUNNI (CONT'D)
I like this one best.

Jumoke examines the fabric again and nods in agreement.

JUMOKE
You have good eyes. I will go with
this one.

Jumoke hands the fabric to the handmaid.

JUMOKE (CONT'D)
 (to the handmaid)
 Take this fabric to Iya Rotimi.
 Tell her this is for the end of the
 year event.

The handmaid nods.

ADUNNI
 (to the handmaid)
 Can you tell the cook to prepare me
 pounded yam.

JUMOKE
 (to Adunni)
 We don't eat yams anymore. We're
 reducing our carb intake.

ADUNNI
 I'll just take the rest home.

Jumoke turn to the handmaid.

JUMOKE
 Tell him to make wheat as well.

ADUNNI
 (to the handmaid)
 Also, can you bring me a pain
 reliever, please?

The handmaid nods before leaving.

Jumoke looks concerned as she starts to examine Adunni,
 placing her hand on her forehead and neck.

JUMOKE
 Are you sick?

ADUNNI
 I've just been very tired lately.
 It makes my head hurt.

JUMOKE
 It could be stress. Maybe you and
 Gideon should take a vacation.

ADUNNI
 I can't. The hospital needs me.

JUMOKE
 Your father is growing grey hairs.
 We need to carry our grandkids.
 Gideon needs you.
 (MORE)

JUMOKE (CONT'D)

When was the last time you surprised him at work? Look at you, here alone without him.

ADUNNI

You're just being paranoid, mom. Gideon and I might be in a weird situation for now, but we're fine.

JUMOKE

Me, paranoid? You don't say.

Adunni nods, pretending to watch the TV.

Jumoke picks up the remote and turns off the TV.

JUMOKE (CONT'D)

Do you realize what is at stake here? Your father's legacy needs an heir. We won't be here forever.

The handmaid arrives with a tray, holding a bottle of water and a bottle of pain reliever.

ADUNNI

If it makes you feel better, I will go eat lunch with him today. Pounded yam is his favorite.

JUMOKE

Good. And be sure to bring him with you when next you come around.

Adunni takes the painkiller medicine.

ADUNNI

I hear you, mom.

Jumoke sighs.

INT. CONSULTING FIRM - GIDEON'S OFFICE - DAY

A modern office space, decorated in sleek and stylish furnishings. The room is spacious and brightly lit, with large windows offering a view of the city skyline.

GIDEON ADEBAYO (mid-20's) a handsome and well-built go-getter in an expensive suit, is sitting at his executive desk, discussing business with DERELE, a young employee dressed in a business causal outfit, who is sitting in a chair across his desk.

Around the office space are portraits and awards showcasing Gideon's professionalism, ambition, style, and achievements.

DERELE

And here is the physical copy of the performance report.

Derele hands him the document. Gideon scrutinizes it.

GIDEON

This is not looking too promising.

DERELE

I think we need to prioritize projects based on budget and not timeline.

GIDEON

Timeline is important. Try both but apply the eighty-twenty rule.

LOLA FAPONDA (early 20s), in a seductive dress, walks in holding a purse. She carries herself with a level of pride and self-respect that demands attention as she moves with the grace and poise of a model.

Gideon looks up from his desk, feasts his eyes, and smiles.

Derele sees Lola and almost immediately turns to face Gideon.

DERELE

(to Gideon)

I will let the accounts department know about the updates.

Gideon nods.

Derele notices Lola looking at him with disdain. He gives her a look that says he could care less as he walks out.

GIDEON

You look stunning.

LOLA

Someone missed his secretary.

Lola drops the purse on his desk, walks towards him, and sits on his lap.

GIDEON

How was your girls' trip?

LOLA

It was amazing. It would have been perfect if only you were there.

She kisses him, but he pulls back.

GIDEON

You know we can't be doing this here. Anyone can walk in on us.

LOLA

Like everyone can't already tell that we're together.

Lola rolls her eyes as she gets up to sit in the chair across his desk.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Besides the only thing holding us back is that ring on your finger. Sometimes I doubt that you truly want to be with me.

Gideon plays with his wedding ring.

Gideon leaves his chair and sits on his desk in front of her, holding her hands.

GIDEON

You should never doubt how I feel about you.

He pulls her up to himself.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I just need a little more time and then I'll be all yours.

LOLA

Forever?

GIDEON

Now and forever.

They kiss, caressing each other.

BY THE DOOR

Adunni walks in on them. She stares at them in disbelief, dropping the lunch basket in her hand.

As the basket HITS the floor, Gideon turns to the doorway and sees Adunni.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Adunni.

Gideon and Lola let go of each other. Lola sees Adunni and hides her face in shame, adjusting her dress.

Adunni walks out. Gideon goes after her.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Adunni, wait. It's not what you think it is.

Lola stands there alone in the office. She fidgets as she paced back and forth.

INT. ADEBAYO'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adunni walks into the living room. She drops her purse on the couch, taking off her lab coat and stethoscope.

Gideon walks out of the kitchen with a dish of cooked meal and sets it on the dining table set for two.

GIDEON

I made dinner.

Without acknowledging his presence, she walks away.

BEDROOM

Adunni stands next to the dresser, taking off her jewelry. Gideon walks in.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Please, can we talk.

Adunni takes off her makeup, starting with her lipstick.

ADUNNI

There's nothing to talk about.

GIDEON

What you saw earlier today was nothing. A mistake that will never happen again.

ADUNNI

Why don't you start with the truth; how long have you been seeing her?

GIDEON

Lola was a mere distraction. Nothing more. You're my wife and...

ADUNNI

I said how long have you been seeing her?

GIDEON

Ever since your miscarriage, we've grown apart and you buried yourself in your job. I was left here, all alone.

ADUNNI

I was broken and you were gone, trying to build your company. You left me here. Alone. My job became my escape. And now, you blame me for your infidelity?

Adunni takes a deep breath and then wipes tears away.

GIDEON

Adunni, I'm truly sorry.

Gideon tries to walk towards her, but she steps back.

ADUNNI

I need some space. Either you leave or I do.

Gideon watches as Adunni walks off into the bathroom, closing the door behind her.

Behind the closed bathroom door, Adunni breaks down in tears.

EXT. PATIENCE'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

A typical Nigerian bungalow-style house with a small garden in its backyard, surrounded by a low concrete fence.

PATIENCE ADEBAYO (MID-50s), wearing a local native attire, is tending to her vegetables while humming a tune. She turns around and sees Gideon walking towards her.

Gideon fakes a smile as he approaches her. He begins to prostrate but she stops him half-way, giving him a hug.

GIDEON

Good afternoon, mommy.

PATIENCE

Good to see you, son. You've come at a good time. My vegetables are ripe for harvest. Join me.

Gideon nods as he follows behind her.

GIDEON

You know you don't have to do this anymore.

PATIENCE

It's hard to get rid of old habits. Maybe I'll stop when you give me grandchildren to play with.

Gideon's face lights up as Patience hands him some vegetables that he puts in the basket next to him.

GIDEON

You have a grandchild. Liam wants to meet to meet his grandma. I can tell Lola to bring him here sometime.

Patience gives him a death stare.

PATIENCE

I'll never accept that illegitimate child of yours.

A beat.

Patience stops handing him vegetables, so he joins her in plucking them instead.

GIDEON

Adunni found out about Lola.

Patience pauses, staring at the vegetable in her hand.

PATIENCE

Does she know about the boy?

GIDEON

No. She asked for space.

Patience does not look at him.

She puts the vegetable in the basket, picks up the basket, and walks over to the outdoor sitting area next to the house. Gideon follows behind her.

PATIENCE

I warned you about this. Do you even realize what is at stake here?

(MORE)

PATIENCE (CONT'D)
 Once Chief Otunba hears about
 this...and about that
 child...you'll lose everything,
 starting with your company.

GIDEON
 What should I do?

She places the basket on the table and starts sorting the
 vegetables, ignoring him.

Gideon stops her.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 How do I fix this?

PATIENCE
 You made this mess, so you fix it.

EXT. PARK - POND AREA - DAY

TOLANI ADELAJA, 26, sits next to Adunni on a bench, facing a
 large pond. Adunni's eyes are downcast.

Tolani takes Adunni's hand in hers, giving it a gentle
 squeeze. Adunni looks up at Tolani and gives her a small
 smile.

They sit in silence for a moment, watching the ducks swimming
 in the pond.

ADUNNI
 I thought he loved me.

Tolani gently places a hand on Adunni's shoulder. Adunni
 leans into Tolani's touch.

ADUNNI (CONT'D)
 I just can't believe he would do
 this to me. To us. To think that he
 even blamed me for it.

TOLANI
 None of this is your fault.

ADUNNI
 That's not what people will say.
 Even my mom thinks I sacrificed my
 home on the altar of my career.

TOLANI
 Adunni, you're one of the strongest
 women I know.

(MORE)

TOLANI (CONT'D)

You have a great career because you pour your heart into everything you do. Your marriage is falling apart because Gideon gave up on you.

ADUNNI

I can't stay married to him and if I choose divorce, I'll have to bear the shame of being a divorcee.

TOLANI

No matter what you say or do, society will always have an opinion. Just remember, I'm here for you.

Tolani leans her head on Adunni's shoulder and Adunni leans her head on Tolani's. They both continue to sit in silence, watching the ducks swimming in the pond.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Approaching the tee box of the 9th hole of a lush golf course, Gideon, AXIELL NWAEZE, and IBRAHIM KAZAH are dressed in golf attire, carrying their clubs and chatting as they walk.

AXIELL

It feels good to be back in Lagos.

IBRAHIM

It's good to have you back.

AXIELL

Ready to have some fun with my guys and, of course, meet some beautiful ladies in this town.

GIDEON

That's the spirit, Axiell! We've got a lot of catching up to do.

They reach the tee box and prepare to tee off.

AXIELL

So, what's the dating scene like here? I heard there are some pretty hot women in town.

IBRAHIM

Gideon is the ladies' man so he can definitely lecture you on that.

GIDEON

It's never that deep. There's definitely no shortage of ladies here. You'll have no problem finding someone to spend your time with.

Ibrahim is up first, and he steps up to the ball, takes a deep breath, and swings.

The ball flies off the tee and arches down the fairway.

AXIELL

I thought you were off the street when you married Adunni.

IBRAHIM

Are you kidding me? He has more women after him than all the bachelors in Lagos combined.

AXIELL

(laughs)
You're joking.

GIDEON

That's not true.

IBRAHIM

His face is everywhere on the news. People are always talking about his good looks, his marriage to the billionaire daughter, and his fast-growing company.

Axiell angles his club and makes a solid shot.

AXIELL

What does Adunni think about all that?

IBRAHIM

The real question should be how he has not yet dropped dead from everybody wanting a piece of him.

Axiell and Ibrahim laugh.

Gideon rolls his eyes as he gets ready to take his shot.

GIDEON

Well for starters, Adunni and I are separated.

Gideon swings, CONNECTS, and sends the ball sailing out over the fairway.

We FOLLOW IT through the air until it lands on the green.

BACK TO THE TEE BOX

As the three start off onto the fairway.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

She found out about my affair with my secretary and now, she has asked for some space.

IBRAHIM

Wow, that's rough. I'm sorry to hear that.

AXIELL

So, does that mean you'll soon be officially back on the street.

IBRAHIM

That's not funny, Axiell. This is serious.

GIDEON

After kicking me out of our home, she resumed her role as a voting shareholder at my company.

AXIELL

That sounds like she's about to make your life a living hell.

IBRAHIM

What will you do? Once her father finds out, it's game over.

GIDEON

My only option is to win her trust back and save my company.

We FLOAT UPWARD, getting a better view of the fairway as the three men continue their journey.

INT. OTUNBA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jumoke and Adunni are sitting on the couch, surrounded by knitting supplies. Yarn and needles are scattered on the coffee table, along with a knitting pattern book.

Jumoke holds a ball of yarn and a pair of knitting needles, demonstrating the techniques to Adunni. Adunni watches intently, trying to copy her mother's movements.

As they knit, their fingers move swiftly and smoothly, creating a colorful fabric.

JUMOKE

I'm glad you joined me today.

ADUNNI

I miss knitting with you. I forgot how relaxing this is. I should invite Tolani next time.

Jumoke scoffs.

JUMOKE

Can anything good come out of your friendship with that girl? At her age, she is still going on dates. When will she settle down and start a family of her own?

ADUNNI

Mom! You need to stop judging her. God's timing is always the best.

JUMOKE

All I'm saying is she is a potential trouble, and her provocative dressing isn't helping matters.

Adunni rolls her eyes as she continues to knit.

ADUNNI

Tolani is a good girl with a kind heart, and you would know this if you gave her a chance. But no, you keep judging her based on one occasion.

The room becomes quiet except for the gentle CLICKING of the needles and the occasional RUSTLING of yarn.

JUMOKE

So, did you work things out with Gideon?

ADUNNI

I'm going to ask him for a divorce.

Jumoke sets down her knitting, shock on her face.

JUMOKE

You're going to do what?

Adunni has a look of concentration on her face as she focuses on her knitting.

Jumoke stops her.

JUMOKE (CONT'D)

You'll do no such thing.

ADUNNI

I'm a full-grown adult and I can make my own decisions.

Jumoke sits still in disbelief.

Adunni works the needles methodically, looping the yarn around and pulling it through.

JUMOKE

We'll not allow it. You can't bring the shame of divorce to our family. Whatever the situation is, you and Gideon must figure it out.

Jumoke continues knitting.

Adunni sets her knitting into her lap and turns to Jumoke.

ADUNNI

So, you'd have me stay with a husband who sleeps with his secretary?

Jumoke watches tears roll down her daughter's cheeks. Adunni wipes the tears away.

ADUNNI (CONT'D)

I gave him everything, mom. Everything. And he still did this to me. Why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this?

Jumoke puts aside her knitting to hug her daughter.

JUMOKE

Everything will be okay. We'll get through this together as a family, but first, we need to tell your father.

INT. ADEBAYO CONSULTING FIRM - GIDEON'S OFFICE - DAY

Lola, dressed in a blazer dress, walks into the office holding a folder. She stands by the entrance.

Gideon sits on a couch opposite the entrance, but he is working on his laptop.

LOLA

Here is the folder you asked for.

Gideon looks up briefly before continuing his work.

Lola closes the door behind her, sets the folder down, then sits next to him.

LOLA (CONT'D)

You've been ignoring me all day.

Gideon is still not paying attention to her.

GIDEON

When is my meeting with the P&G representative?

LOLA

You're still ignoring me.

He finally looks at her.

GIDEON

You've still not answered my question.

LOLA

2pm. Friday.

He turns to continue working.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Giddy bear, you'll have to talk to me sooner rather than later. What will you have me do to help make things easier for you? For us?

Gideon puts down his laptop, turns to Lola.

GIDEON

I just need a little more time while I figure things out. Okay?

Lola fakes a smile as she nods.

LOLA

Just a reminder. Liam's birthday is coming up. It will mean the world to him and to me if you make it.

GIDEON

I'll try.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY OF PATIENT'S WARDS - DAY

Adunni, wearing her doctor's uniform, walks into a PATIENT'S ROOM.

The patient, MRS. BABATUNDE, lying in the hospital bed.

Adunni smiles warmly as she checks the intravenous drip system. Mrs. Babatunde frowns.

ADUNNI

Good morning Mrs. Babatunde, how are you feeling today?

MRS. BABATUNDE

Not great, doctor. The pain in my stomach just won't go away.

Adunni nods as she begins to examine Mrs. Babatunde, taking her pulse and blood pressure. Suddenly Adunni goes pale and puts her hand on her stomach.

MRS. BABATUNDE (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You look pale.

ADUNNI

I'm fine. I'll like to check your stomach.

Mrs. Babatunde reluctantly lifts her blouse, revealing the bruises on her abdomen.

ADUNNI (CONT'D)

Can you tell me what caused all these bruises?

Mrs. Babatunde hesitates.

MRS. BABATUNDE

I fell down the stairs.

She turns her face away from Adunni, putting down her blouse.

Adunni lifts the blouse, checks her stomach again.

ADUNNI

So, you're sure these injuries are from your falling down the stairs.

MRS. BABATUNDE

Yes.

ADUNNI

You know you can trust me with the truth.

MRS. BABATUNDE

That's the truth. I fell.

Adunni nods as she continues the examination.

DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Adunni paces back and forth, a worried look on her face as she holds a hand against her stomach. Nurse Mope walks into the office.

NURSE MOPE

Doctor Adebayo, here is Mrs. Babatunde chart.

Nurse Mope hands Adunni the chart. While reviewing it, Adunni suddenly gets lightheaded and leans against her desk.

NURSE MOPE (CONT'D)

Are you feeling, okay?

ADUNNI

Yes, I'm fine.

Nurse Mope pulls up a chair for her. Adunni sits, continuing to look over the chart.

ADUNNI (CONT'D)

Thanks. Something is not right with Mrs. Babatunde. The bruises on her abdomen look worse than the last time.

NURSE MOPE

It's sad the thing married women in our society have to put up with. Even martyrs didn't suffer this much.

ADUNNI

I need to know the extent of her injuries. Can you please request a CT scan for her?

NURSE MOPE

Yes, doctor. I'll get that done.

Adunni hands her the chart. The nurse looks her over.

NURSE MOPE (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're feeling okay?

ADUNNI

Yes, I'm fine. Just a little tired.
I think I'll go home early.

Nurse Mope nods as she exits the office with the patient's chart.

Adunni places a hand on her forehead, feeling a wave of nausea wash over her.

INT. LOLA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

LIAM ADEBAYO (4), holding an airplane toy, is surrounded by balloons, streamers, and gifts. He looks excited about his birthday party.

Lola and her mother, HELEN FAPONDA, are still setting up more decorations and balloons.

LOLA

(to Liam)

Are you having fun?

LIAM

Yes!

Liam runs off to the background, playing with his airplane toy.

LOLA

Thank you, mom, for always being here to help.

Helen smiles, nods, picks up another streamer, and starts to tape it to the wall.

HELEN

Is his father going to come?

LOLA

Ever since his wife found out about us, he has been acting very weird.

HELEN

Does his wife know about the boy?

LOLA

No. He won't even introduce us to his mother. I'm getting worried that he wants to keep us hidden forever. I'm starting to think all his promises are lies.

Helen holds her hand to console her.

HELEN

Just give him time, he will come around. For now, let's just hope he shows up for his son. If he does, be nice to him.

The doorbell RINGS, Lola goes to open the door.

She is surprised to see Gideon as he walks in with a large gift bag in his hand. Liam rushes towards the door.

LIAM

Daddy!

GIDEON

My boy! Happy birthday, son.

Liam hugs his dad and takes his present.

Gideon starts to prostrate, but Helen stops him halfway, looking slightly embarrassed.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

(to Helen)

Good afternoon, ma. I'm sorry I'm late. Lagos traffic.

HELEN

Good afternoon, my son. That's fine. Good to see you.

Lola hugs him.

LOLA

Thank you for coming.

GIDEON

You are welcome. I'm glad I came.

Liam opens his present, revealing a large toy truck. He is overjoyed as he runs off to the background to play with it. His grandma follows behind him.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I won't be able to stay for too long. I have something I need to do before heading back to the office.

LOLA

That's okay. We're just glad you made it.

Gideon goes over to join Liam and his grandma playing with his toy truck. They all look happy as they smile and laugh together.

Lola smile fades as she watches them. She turns away to hide the tears forming in her eyes.

INT. ADEBAYO'S RESIDENCE - BATHROOM - DAY

Adunni stands in front of the bathroom mirror, staring at the pregnancy kit in her hand.

She bites her bottom lip and hesitates for a moment before finally unwrapping the packaging and opening the kit.

LATER

Adunni is sitting on the edge of the bathtub, waiting for the results.

Adunni stares at the test, her face blank. She hears the sound of the BEDROOM DOOR CLOSING.

She sets the test down, walks out of the bathroom into the

BEDROOM

to see Gideon standing in the doorway.

GIDEON

(frantic)

Adunni, I didn't expect you to be home. I just came by to grab a few things. I thought you'd be at work.

Adunni gives a non-committal shrug and moves past Gideon, heading towards her dresser.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I know I don't deserve your forgiveness, but I hope you can find it in your heart to give me a chance to make things right.

Adunni stops in her tracks and turns to face Gideon. Her expression is unreadable.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

All I want is my wife back.

Adunni takes a deep breath. She looks numb and indifferent.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life making it up to you.

A beat.

ADUNNI

I want a divorce.

Gideon's eyes widen.

GIDEON

Adunni, please don't do this.

ADUNNI

My lawyers will be in touch. Lock the door on your way out.

She turns away, walks back into the

BATHROOM

shuts the door and locks it. She stands in silence for a moment.

She HEARS him leave after the bedroom door is SHUT. She then picks up the test stick.

The test stick result reads positive.

Her eyes widen as she takes in the positive result. She feels a wave of nausea wash over her. She leans against the sink for support.