

THE SUN SHALL RISE AGAIN

SCENE 1

(It is deep into the night; it has been raining heavily and there is a heavy flow of runoff water on either sides of the gutters along a dimly lit street. The street is dimly lit by one streetlamp hanging loosely on an electric pole close to the centre of the street; the last of its kind in this part of the city. Apart from the streetlamp, occasional lighting lightening across the sky lights up the street, followed by vicious thunder rumbling. The street floor, slightly drowned in rain water, is reflected against this light and one can be able to make out figures in the dark. All is still and almost quiet except for the incessant rumbling of the rain water and occasional thunder rumbles.

In the stillness of the dark, a silhouette of a woman, seen against the light from the streetlamp, frantically dashes by. From the dark, a woman, soaking wet with water dripping off her rugged clothing is seen running around and calling out. She steps onto the verandas of buildings on either sides of the streets searching and throwing cardboard boxes and canvas rags around carelessly like someone trying to uncover something)

Maria: *Musa! Monica! Buki! (silence) Monica! Musa! Buki! (silence) Mungu Wangu! (Swahili for 'My god') (before she can call out for the third time, there is a roar of a truck engine in a distance, she aimlessly rushes from one side of the street to the other jumping over the dangerously overflowing gutters and all this time calling out as before. She is about to cross over to another side of the street when another figure, a man, tall well built in city security uniform emerges out of the dark and pulls her from the back to the ground, she goes down without a sign struggle aside from shrieking loudly for a few seconds before a deafening slap squarely finds her face sending her quiet.)*

(Maria's shrieks seem to have brought the entire street to life because as soon as the slap silencing her reverberated in the air, the street was filled with people, running about in a chaotic frenzy; children and old persons alike emerged from the verandas all along the street and ran to whatever direction they found themselves facing. There were dozens of them and one

of them, a girl about 12 years of age began running following a group of young boys when Maria, who was now being hauled away by the security man, called out.)

Maria: *Monica! (the young girl froze for a moment then slowly turned around, she took another long moment before replying as if thinking otherwise, she turned back around to look at the group she was following but they are now only a disappearing vague figure in the darkness. Turning back around, she calls out)*

Monica: *Mama! Is that... (before she finishes what she is saying, another security man materialises out of the darkness of the veranda, as she turns to face the approaching dark figure, she is taken off her feet and frisked away she attempts to put up a struggle kicking and screaming and trying to bite off the man's fingers but he is too powerful for her and her screams made no impact as there were now similar screams coming from every direction of the street.)*

Maria: *(screaming) Please! Please! That is my daughter, don't take her from me!*

Officer 1: *(mocking her while at the same time laughing) Please! Please (laughs) where would I take your fatherless child woman! (he says this and pushes the girl towards the mother with so much force it appears as if he intended to toss the girl over to the mother) here, take your product, we well finally clean this town of this smug!*

Monica: *(sobbing as she lands on the freezing wet street floor a few inches from her mother's feet) Mother, why are they doing this? What have we done mother? What is wrong? (she goes on sobbing)*

Officer 2: *(the officer holding the mother lets her loose after she struggles away to rush to her daughter's aid) what have you done? (laughs) Who are you here? Do you think this is your home? Ask your mother here, you are ticks sucking away at the beauty of this city, you are a scum that we must rid the city of!*

(while this is happening, all over the street seen from the back of the four on focus, people are being chased around and those who are captured are thrown into a waiting truck, some are strong enough to get in on their own while the children who can't reach the height of the trucks are lifted and thrown without so much as a hesitation from the officers)

Maria: *(Picking her daughter up from the cold wet street floor and using a piece of her overly torn dress to wipe away the tears on our face)* Monica, where are your brothers?

Monica: *(she tries to answer at first but she can't stop crying and she stops half way before she answers)* I was with them there, *(pointing to the veranda)* sleeping, when we heard you scream everybody woke up and people running, they were faster than me and I couldn't catch up, when...

Officer 2: Take these two Jabali! We don't have all night here; we need to gather all those runaways before they infest another part of this beautiful town.

Maria: *(As the officer approaches her and tries to get hold of her)* No! Please, please don't do this *(sobbing)*

Officer 1: *(Pulling the child away from Maria)* We have seen this before, your screams will not melt our hearts woman! *(Maria unable to bear watching her screaming daughter being dragged away, begins following the officer carrying her child sobbing and wailing)*

Officer 2: Shut up! Wait until we find your sons, then you will have a reason to wail!
(Maria and Monica are dragged to the truck, all this time they sob and try to get away from the officers who seem unbothered by their pleas and cries. They are thrown into the back of a now almost full truck. Lightning flashes across the sky and thunder rumbles on, after a few moments, it begins drizzling a little heavier again, the truck in which Maria, her daughter and about two dozen others are in is uncovered, the rain hits them directly. The two officers return and run around the side of the truck and bang on it shouting at the driver to go)

Officer 1: Kamau! Time to go, and make sure you hurry, we need this truck tomorrow
(the driver, and old man with a bush of greying beards and his head covered in a hat, does not say anything, instead he passively shakes his head and engages the drive gear before easing the truck down the street. Maria screams at him to stop)

Maria: Wait, please wait! My sons! They are...

Officer 2: *(Pointing a club at her from the back of the truck)* we chokoraa you will shut the hell up or I will make you quiet, Permanently! Your sons? Chokoraas just like you! Don't worry, we will find them, if we are in a good mood then like we are tonight, we will package them and send them your way alive!

(the officer bangs on the truck side once again and the truck begins easing off once again, it takes a left at the end of the street and proceeds out of the city. The occupants of the truck are shivering to near death, those with little rags use them to cover themselves while others cuddle together in silence, everyone resigned to fate at this point. Maria and her daughter who are still sobbing snuggle together as the wind and the rain at the back of the truck intensify. The truck picks up speed as it drives out of the city. Lightening keeps on flashing and thunder occasionally rumbles)

SCENE 2

Act One

It is dawning on an open field in the country side, the sky is painted gold in the east, there is a clear stretch of sky to the west. The air is calm in this part of the country and there are birds flying about. There are puddles of water spread about randomly, signs that it has been raining the previous night. There are sheep, about a hundred of them already out in this field grazing lazily, there is one man, dressed in a traditional Shuka with a long stick slung across his shoulders, shepherding the sheep. He is calm and relaxed. On his left shoulder hangs a rifle, most of it appears to have been carved out of an acacia wood but the muzzle and the magazine are metallic; a traditional Kenyan Pastoralist rifle. The herdsman does not see a truck emerge from a road snaking up a hill and down from a mile away, it is when the sheep after hearing the roar of a diesel engine, pause and look towards the hill that the herdsman notices the truck. He seems unbothered as the truck keeps coming towards his direction and the sheep resume their grazing, totally ignoring the oncoming truck as well.

The truck, nothing more than a body of metalwork desperately clinging to each other on a frame, comes to a halt about two hundred metres from where the flock is grazing.

The herdsman looks keenly at the truck for a minute without moving, then in a flash, working like a machine, he turns around to squarely face the truck, his gun already in motion, he raises it and within a second he is heard coking it and aiming it at the driver through the truck window.

Kamau: *(on seeing the gun aimed straight at him, raises his hands from the wheel high enough for the herdsman to see) Don't shoot, I am city officer, I mean no harm.*

Herdsman: *(in a husky voice carrying with it a clear intent that he will not hesitate to use the gun) You have come again! I have heard about you before, you those people who bring people from the city and dump them here like you do your garbage.*

Kamau: We are cleaning up the city, yes but we are not dumping them, we are giving them an opportunity to begin a new life here.

Herdsmen: New beginning you say. *(shouting and turning slightly around)* look around my friend, is this a place that anyone can begin anything! This is a place for herdsmen, Morans, fighters like I am, not men and women who have been thrown out of their homes!

Kamau: They have not been thrown out of their homes! They had no home to begin with, perhaps they can create one here.

Herdsmen: This is our land, it is a home to no one, not especially strangers to our ways, to our struggles. Friend this is a war zone, do not allow yourself to be fooled by the peaceful allure of grazing livestock and silent atmosphere. Get your people out of there!

Kamau: They are not my people and I am taking them nowhere beyond this place, so I suggest that you lower your gun and let me open the back of this truck so I can be on my way.

Herdsmen: I said turn around and get back to your city before I make you!

Kamau: *(lowering his hands and moving to open the truck door)* I don't think you understand my friend, this is an order directly from the city hall with the blessings of the president himself, this place is not a choice I had to make, I am fulfilling a presidential order in other words what makes you think you can stop that, your wooden gun? What will you do, shoot me and invite the wrath of the entire military force over your poor selves?

Herdsmen: *(Cringing angrily)* You come here and speak fancy about a presidential order! I will show you order. *(pointing his gun directly at the driver who is alighting from the truck at this point)*

Kamau: *(alighting and appearing completely unbothered that the herdsman has a aimed at him, he begins moving to the back of the truck before pausing to speak to the herdsman)* Lower your gun and go back to whatever it is you were doing young man, you are going to do nothing. Imagine how your community would see you if out of your foolishness you shot a city officer and invited the wrath of the government upon them.

(the herdsman lowers his gun and the driver continues speaking) yes be wise now, there is no need to play hero here.

(The driver moves to the back of the truck and after loud banging and clanging, manages to pull the two heavy metal slabs forming the truck doors apart, he looks in briefly before sharply covering his nose. He looks away and sends a long stream of spit from his mouth before shouting into the back of the truck)

Kamau: *My god! You smell worse than shit! Did you have to go on the back of my truck! Get out (knocking viciously at the back of the truck to compel the occupants of the truck to get out)*

Now, in the clear light of day, it is possible to see fully the persons who had been shoved into the truck. One by one they highlight and one after the other their appearance becomes more and more depressing. There are children, some barely a year old, clung to their mothers who are themselves so frail they barely pull themselves out of the truck. Some collapse to the ground as they alight. There are children crying and mothers sobbing. Men getting out of the truck are quiet, unmoving and seem unaware of what is happening; broken beyond words.

It is then that Monica and her mother alight from the truck along the others. The sight is haunting. A woman, would be said to be young but her face is shows years of despair pain and suffering. She has been crying the entire night and now appears withdrawn and resigned to fate. She takes her daughter's hand and pulls her away from the truck, the daughter is still, though weakly, sobbing.

After a while, everyone from the truck is highlighted, the driver takes a long look into the back of the truck before smirking and then begins to shut the truck doors before going back around and climbing into his seat. He ignites the truck and it trembles like it is going to fall apart before it steadily roars, he reverses, turns around before violently driving away.

Left on the open fields, the people begin to finding faces that are familiar, it isn't that hard really because there is one thing with street families, they all know their own and within time there are conversations inquiring into the whereabouts of the rest of them and whether they would ever get to meet ever again.

It is while they are huddling together that the herdsman, after seeing the truck disappear off the hillside, approaches them, his gun now lowered and slung across his left shoulder as before, he has his stick balanced across his shoulders and both his arms hanging on both ends of the stick.

Herdsman: *(to the entire group)* Jambo!

(only a few manage to respond to his greeting as others cast their gazes down in fear)

I mean you no harm!

(one, a young man man, Morio, from the group decides to speak up)

Morio: *(in a shaky voice filled with fear)* Whe... where is this place?

Herdsman: This sir, is the 'far North' as your city folks call it. This is Kalkol.

Maria: *(gasping but not really able to understand where exactly the place is supposed to be)* we have to go back, my son...

Herdsman: Forget it! Were you passed out in the truck or something! You have been on the road all night if I am not wrong, this is as remote as you can get.

Maria: *(weakly)* but we left our children there, our families, we have to go back, we cannot stay here, what will we eat, where will we sleep if it rains tonight? *(at this question, everyone begins to mummer, no one giving a meaningful solution, the herdsman looks on silently as he waits for them to finish)*

Morio: But surely there must be a town nearby, we can spend the night on the verandas and we can hike a truck back to the city, *(turning to the group that is looking on eagerly)* we can hang on to the back of those long trucks, the drivers never notice, we have done every day in the city. *(The group begins to mummer in agreement before they are cut short by the herdsman)*

Herdsman: Hey, before you get your hopes up, the nearest town from here is about a hundred kilometres that way *(pointing towards the Southeast)* now I know that with the kind of transportation that you had, you did not likely get to see the landscape you came past. To get to the town, you have to

transverse kilometres of open fields and wilderness crawling with wild animals and people like me, but unlike me, they will shoot at you first before they decide to ask questions.

Maria: What do we need to do to get there? Will you help us?

Herdsmen: I am sorry lady; I am a poor herdsman as you see. My gun would run out of bullets before I killed two lions and believe me, lions out there are the least of your worries.

Morio: So what do we do then, we wait here and die? *(at the sound of dying, the group stirs and there are a lot of mummies from everywhere)*

Herdsmen: I don't know, that is your problem, I am a poor herdsman as you see.

Maria: So you are going to watch us die here?

Herdsmen: No! I am going to move my flock over there *(pointing to a leafy, green spot further at the side of the hill from where the lorry had disappeared, he begins to move away. A woman, a little elderly, calls out to him and something about the pain and agony joined together in her voice stops him)*

Muri: My son, please, if you leave us here, we are going to die, please I beg you in the name of your fathers, help us.

Maria: *(with tears on her eyes, she struggles to compose her voice and speaks almost inaudibly) please. (Her daughter Monica, begins sobbing as well and it somehow appeals to the herdsman as he turns back towards the group)*

Herdsmen: I am not sure I can help you much, I am from further South, I travel grazing this flock on greener pastures and I don't know much but we have heard stories of people like you from the city. They are brought in trucks because the city office sees them as a bad image for the city both locally and internationally so they ship them to such a place where from they are sure they cannot return to the city. *(He pauses and sombre music begins to play in the background as he continues)*

You are not the first people to be brought here, there have been people who have tried to settle right over there (*pointing to an open section of the field with scorched parts of the vegetation*) but this place is not safe, there are bandits here, people like me but ruthless, to them human life is of no consequence. They burned down straw huts that they had set up to shield themselves from the cold and the hyenas while they slept. Many of them died by the fire and those who survived were forced to move further North in search for a better place.

Muri: So there is hope?

Herdsman: That I cannot say for sure, but that is the story we hear, they say there is camp, set up by an international group to help your likes. I heard recently from a friend who ventured that far that the camp is now overcrowding with people being shipped from the city in numbers.

Morio: How far? How far to the camp?

Herdsman: I don't know for sure, a three days walk probably. But considering your present states, a week maybe, plus you would have to be conscious of the wildlife here and hope you don't come across a party of bandits out to draw blood.

Maria: We cannot survive a week, look at us (*she looks around the group for a while in one long sweep before she begins speaking again*) there are children here, there are old people here and even those of us who would be strong enough to make the journey will not last three days.

Herdsman: I cannot help you beyond this lady, even if I could, what can I do? I know only as much as I have told you. Look it hurts me to see you like this but believe me, there is nothing I can do for you.

Morio: One thing, food (*the group mummurs in support*)

Herdsman: (*Takes a long look around the group and then pauses*) I have no food with me. This is how we live out here. But you don't look like you can survive the day without food, you will need to hunt for wild meat.

Muri: Look at us son, we have lived on the streets all our lives; hunting is as foreign to us as this place. please help us

Herdsman: I have helped you! Were it another person in my position, you would be running to hiding right now!

Morio: Tell me what we need to do *(as he nodes to a group of young men to come over and join in as he listens to the herdsman)*

(the herdsman begins explaining how the hunt is done while a few young men gather around him listening to his instructions. As he begins speaking to them, a guitar and drums begin playing a little African hunt tune in the background, a flute soon joins the music too creating a tense melody)

Act 2

As this is happening, over at the capital, there are growing concerns in a boardroom meeting. There are about five men around a conference table and two women. They are all in neat well pressed executive suits and everything around them radiates power. There are files placed on the table before each of them. About four of them have their files open and them are printed pictures of a number of streets within the city.

The pictures capture the street families and the little temporary shanty structures they set up to shelter from the elements at night along the closed buildings at night. There are pictures as well showing them walking around other people during the day very comfortable. There is one particular picture of a group of street children gathered around a garbage disposal bin in one edge of a busy street, some are holding pieces of rotten fruit while others have plastic bottles containing a brown paste, held with their teeth so that the mouth of the bottle can be as close as possible to their noses. It is this picture that sparks yet another heated debate in the boardroom. One lady seated at the far left of the room takes the picture out of her file and raises it for all around the table to see before she begins speaking

Essie: Do you see this! Do you really see this or are you so blinded by the comfort from your high places to see?

Richard: *(a man seated at the far right of the table, in an immaculate blue suit begins to speak in response)* Look Essie, we have been over this, there is nothing we can do about it. Let god help them.

Vic: *(a young man, probably in his late twenties, he looks well kept, he carries an aura of power with him, he carries command in voice when he begins to speak)* It is sad to see this, it is, but *(pauses and takes a large gulp of water from a glass in front of him before speaking again)* there is nothing anyone can do for these people, their population keeps mushrooming at an alarming rate. We have a responsibility towards this city to place it before everything else, that includes keeping it clean and inviting to investments both nationally and internationally.

Essie: Is this it Vic, it this how you keep the city clean and inviting? *(pulling out yet another picture from her file, this time showing a number of city officers, others shoving these street families into the backs of old and rusty city trucks with their belongings while others in the background were going after runaways along a street in the gloom cover of the evening sunset.*

Vic: *(Clenching his teeth and muttering under his breath)* those bastards, how dare they do this before dark!

Dominic: *(a little elderly man from the appearance of his greying hair, he appears like someone the years have been kind to from his calm face. He carries with a strong commanding yet kind and candid voice when he speaks.)* Vic, if I am getting you right, which I presume I am, you are saying that this is a fully sanctioned operation from your office.

Vic: It is Dom; I am sorry to say but something had to be done!

Essie: And this is what you thought of doing, good Lord, have you no humanity left in you people!

Richard: Bad as it may seem, we are actually helping this people, we give them an opportunity to start over again away from all the chaos and the violence in these streets. We are not the bad guys here as you may want to believe.

We are doing this for the good of this city and the good of every one of you here, we are...

Dominic: Please help me understand how capturing street families and loading them into construction trucks and shipping them to god knows where is doing anyone any good.

Vic: *(sifting through the papers in his file before coming to one in particular which he picks up and hands it over to Dominic and hands another copy to Essie)* what you have before you are copies of a report conducted by the independent crime watch body (Crime Watch) showing the crime rates in the city, be particular when you look at the rates of burglaries and break-ins in the last six months of last year and compare it to the rates reported since this year began. Ladies and gentlemen, it is more than just how the city appeals to the eyes of our visitors and investors, it is also about keeping our city safe. We don't do this because we want to, we do it because we have to.

Essie: Is the parliament aware of this?

Dominic: How would they not be, this has been going on for what, eight months now?

Richard: The parliament is aware of the city hall's move to protect the interests of this city. They, unlike you, are aware that something needs to be done. They know that the city needs this. Gentlemen and ladies, we have the life and success of the city on one hand and these street families going against all possibilities of building a modern city, choices have to be made.

Martin: *(a middle aged man, similarly expensively dressed with a seriousness around him that when he begins to speak, everyone is silent and they accord him keen attention)* I don't know much about the city's needs but I know this, *(going through the pictures in his file until he comes across one he is looking for and raises it from the file, he scrutinizes it for a minute and then hands it to Vic who is seated next to him, Vic looks at the picture passively and quickly passes it to Richard who is next to him before turning back to look at Martin)*

Vic: And what is this to do with us?

Martin: This picture together with tens of others surfaced online a week ago posted by an NGO group calling for help abroad for displaced persons living in the North. At first of course it looked like the normal pictures of international refugees. Imagine my surprise when I came across this article. *(going back to his file and pulling out a large bundle of papers and hands them around to everyone seated in the room before proceeding)*

And yes, the report is published by an international magazine, with these exact pictures I am showing to you right now. What does it say? Yes, the City hall has gone on a rampage and decided to dump street families to die in deplorable conditions in the North.

Essie: Heavens! Good lord, have mercy! Vic! What have you done!

Vic: What, why do you all looked surprised, you think I want to be doing this? Trust me I find no joy nor does it give me peace but someone has to make these calls.

Richard: Don't make it sound like it's something so evil as you put it Essie, these are people who had a life in these streets. Some died here every day. Look at this picture, *(taking a picture capturing a number of street children having clear cans half filled with glue gripped on their teeth with the bottle mouths as close as possible to their noses)* do you know why they take this? They sniff it because its fumes aside from being mildly intoxicating, they create a falls sensation that one is not as hungry. They can go for days without eating a thing because of this and one day they just fall and die because of starvation so please, let us not get overly emotional on this subject.

Dominic: What do I report back to my firm, do I tell them that because the city is not as safe as we want to imagine, we then stand aside and let this city continue committing such evil against its people?

Vic: Let us not be so judging my friend, remember that even if there was something your “Haki Africa” foundation could do, you are not going to stop this, we have our orders to move forward and as I said, the president is fully aware of this and he even, though not expressly, supports this move, there is only little you can do about it.

Essie: Vic C’mon, this is inhuman, how do you transport people like this? If all is to be forgotten Vic, Richard, don’t forget your humanity. How do you sleep at night knowing that this is happening under your captaincy?

Richard: Ooh I do sleep, because unlike you, I believe in what we do here, this is for the good of the city and I know you don’t see it now but in future, you will see that we were right.

Vic: Unless there is anything more ladies and gentlemen, *(raising up to leave, Richard follows suit)* we have a city to run, excuse us. Give our regards to your director and I hope you understand; this is something that we cannot stop doing because of a feeling that human rights have been violated.

Richard: I hope we meet again under a different setting, excuse us. *(they leave the conference room leaving the persons behind in a small discussion of disbelief)*

Essie: I cannot believe this; we have to do something.

Martin: Much as I feel the same way too, it is also true that there is very little we can do to stop the city from continuing what it is doing.

Dominic: The president is okay with it, perhaps even, secretly, sanctioning it, trust me, there isn’t a fight strong enough to stop this. Even if we moved to court, how long do you think it would take before we can be granted a prohibition order? By then their city would have already shipped them off, all of them.

(they scratch their heads a little as the conversation continues animatedly, now muted as the show transitions)

Act 3

back in the open fields, the herdsman has been guiding the young men from the group. It is way past noon, the sun is a quarter way from setting. They are yet to catch a thing and their faces are ashy from the hunger and the frustration. They are tucked in a bush a little further away from the rest of the group, waiting for any movement before they pounce.

The rest of the group is clustered together under an acacia tree; some are deep into sleep while others stare vaguely ahead. Their mouths are bark dry, there are flies about them and those awake have to occasionally wave their hands in the air to send them away. The children who had been sobbing earlier are all quiet if not asleep, only the sound of the grazing sheep and birds chirping as they go about their business oblivious of the guests in their presence are heard.

After a long wait, the herdsman signals the young men to emerge from their hiding in the bush.

Herdsman: This is not going to work, there are no wild animals here, we have the wrong spot. We need to move, find a new location, somewhere with water, we will intercept them as they go to drink.

Morio: how far?

Herdsman: The nearest water point is about an hour's walk North; I believe we can make it there before sunset. There are no clouds so there shouldn't be much worry about finding shelter tonight. We should go now.

Morio: *(To the rest of the young men)* Let's go before we die of hunger.

(they begin exiting from the bushes and head back to the group who look on in anticipation before realising they are returning empty handed just as they had left. After a little conversing, the group, seeing no other way of surviving agrees to follow the herdsman

They walk North with the herdsman guiding his flock along with them. They make small conversation as they go along. They are hungry but in the circumstances, they look a little optimistic and the agony and despair on their faces is a little disappeared and the herdsman has a little chitchat here and there some asking him what community he belongs to and why he is

all alone with such a large flock in the middle of nowhere. He explains that he was banished because he refused to go on raids like the rest of his age mates and that he is now tasked with his clan's flocks and he enjoys the solitude that comes with being alone in such places. The sun slowly sinks on below hills in a distance until all that is left is an orange evening shade in the evening sky. It is as darkness begins to fall, they get to a small lake on a vast open field. There are scattered thick bushes in all directions and immediately the herdsman on approaching the lake swings into action giving orders here and there in preparation for the hunt and the rapidly approaching darkness)

Herdsman: *(Issuing orders to different members of the group pointing to different directions and what he requires them to use from time to time) You and you! (pointing to two averagely built) I want you to gather a lot of those dried thorn bushes from over there; you will place them in an enclosed circle all the way around here. Make it as a fence with the help of the rest of you (pointing to a number of ladies in the group) make it as high as possible, this will be our camp together with my flock to keep the wildlife out for the night.*

I will start a fire here (pointing to part of earth with no vegetation), you and you (pointing yet to another group of three young boys) find dry wood from the bushes over there, make sure they are dry and they are heavy enough to burn through the night. Bring a lot of them. The four of you, watch my flock until the fence is ready and then drive them into the enclosure and keep this fire going. (he goes on his knees and pulls to metal knives from his pockets. He drives their sharp edges across each other causing sparks until little dried leaves underneath catch fire and begins burning. He places on the fire little pieces of wood he gathers from around him and begins fanning it until it begins to burn and then he leaves signalling the rest of the young men who had been with him to follow him.)

(the herdsman lead them to a hiding spot a little further from the lake and they lay in the evening silence, significantly far from the group who are bursting into a hive of activity. As it darkens further and further and the fire

is burning high in the centre of the enclosure, with the group seated in a circle around the fire, the sheep begin bleating, there is an instant tension in the group before the herdsman appears first followed by four men all burdened with heavy game meat. The sheep go quiet and they begin chopping them into pieces and begin roasting them on the fire as stories begin being said now with the prospects of food)

(Dawn comes and the sheep's bleating wakes most of the members of the group who are still asleep, the herdsman and a number of young men are already returning to the enclosure from the lake. They begin gathering their little belongings together with gathering large pieces of roasted meat and stacking them together in clean 'shukas' before they set out due North.

They continue their journey occasionally resting briefly before they continue as a Safari African Tune plays in the background. There is animated talk as they go. As the sun reaches its peak, they sit under huge acacia tree and share pieces of the roast meat before resuming their walk. Soon, evening is upon them and they find a small enclosure, similar to the one they had made, they drive the sheep in and begin a fire. There is enough meat to go around and they eat and spare some. There are talks all round. Monica in particular is having a talk with her mother.)

Monica: Mama, do you think they will catch Buki and Musa and bring them here as well? I miss them

Maria: *(with a paint of sadness all over her face as the light from the fire makes it impossible to hide the pain)* I don't know my child, I don't know. I hope they are safe and that we will get to see them soon.

Monica: What happens if those people catch them?

Maria: I hope they don't catch them my child. When we find our way back to the city we will be reunited with them. Don't worry, we will see them soon.

Monica: Okay mother. *(she curls up and falls asleep at her mother's feet)*

(it darkens and dawns again and they continue their journey through plains dotted with acacia from place to place and giant elephant grass all around.

The herdsman keeps them heading North occasionally looking at the position of the sun as they go along. They go over a small hill when the sun is high up and take a break soon after before proceeding.

As evening approaches, they get to a place where vegetation begins becoming a little more prominent, the elephant grass is no longer everywhere but on little patches on random spaces. The earth becomes more exposed and it goes on progressively as they walk along until it is once again sunset. They find a small abandoned compound with a Manyatta in between and they look at it with suspicion for a moment before the herdsman notices and begins explaining it to them.)

Herdsman: It is a nomad's homestead, when the drought came, they had to move South in search of water, the rains have not yet adequately returned to this place, until then, it is common practice in this place to occupy such a home if you are a traveller as we are.

Monica: Can I sleep in that? *(asking the herdsman as she points to the Manyatta on the centre of the compound)*

Herdsman: No, it is unsafe why don't you stay out here with us, I will tell you a story tonight.

(The herdsman takes one of his fully grown sheep and goes behind the Manyatta, he is followed by two men, there is a fire running outside the front of the Manyatta when they return carrying sheep meat with them)

(As the meat is roasted and they eat, the night eats away and it soon dawns once again. As dawn approaches, the herdsman gets up ahead of everyone and begins gathering his sheep ready to leave, when the rest of the people wake up, he is up and ready to leave, his flock already ahead of him, Muri, the old lady is the first person to notice him and she goes to where he is standing watching over his flock)

Muri: Is there anything wrong, you look prepared for war?

Herdsman: This is as far as I travel with you. The rest of the journey you will have to make on your own.

Muri: How will we journey alone?

Herdsmen: The camp is half a day's walk from here, you won't miss it. You go straight North, beyond those hills (*pointing at a pair of high rising hills covered in brown soil with little vegetation further from each other in the distance*). A little beyond there you will find a river, there is a bridge, you cross it and come to a narrow road. You follow the road for about an hour and you will come to right to the camp.

Muri: So this is it then, you are really not coming with us?

Herdsmen: I have helped you enough, I have to get my sheep to pasture. There is nothing here for my sheep. Good luck. (*He begins to walk away, back the way they had come the previous evening. Monica, noticing that she is walking away as she approaches where the old lady is standing, calls out to him.*)

Monica: Hey Mister, where are you going? You are not going to go with us?

Herdsmen: No little girl, I am not. I have to take care of my sheep, but I have told your elder here where you will find the camp, so don't worry, I hope I will meet you again one day. (*he turns and begins to walk away but once again Monica calls out to him and he turns back to face her*)

Monica: But you did not even tell us your name

Herdsmen: It is better if you did not know little girl.

Monica: Why did you help us then?

Herdsmen: Because I am human and someone has helped me before. (*walking a little back towards where Monica is standing*) someday, I hope you too can help this people. This place has had bad people fighting in the past, now there is a little peace, and every day when darkness came, everyone would pray for the sun to rise so that they may not be attacked in the dark. Don't worry, you will see your brothers, the sun shall rise. (*he turns around and walks away, he does not stop this time but keeps on walking following his sheep and slowly he disappears in the distance until his hazy figure is seen in the distance.*)

When the rest of the group awake fully they find themselves alone and the journey begins in earnest, through to the distant hills down to the river, up the narrow road just as the herdsman had described. They come to a dusty open field as the road opens up to a vast plain.

SCENE 3

The place is nothing more than one large cluster of tents and tin ironed structures acting as houses. The structures are so closely structured together that the spaces between them are not more than two feet above. The structures stop at what seem to be an invisible line around the camp. There are children playing in groups outside these tents. They are emaciated, they are in nothing more than pieces of rag clothing barely covering their bodies, they are dusty all over their bodies and there are flies all around them and all of them have nothing on their feet.

As soon as one of the kids see the new arrivals, he rushes around one tent, dodges a little gutter and jumps over what seems to be a puddle on the ground before disappearing out of sight. Three more children disappear to among the tents in the same manner and soon a crowd begins emerging from the structures growing as it advances towards the just arrived guests. By the time the crowd gets there, there are more than one hundred people. There noise build up as the crowd begins getting around the group looking for a familiar face, Monica holds her girl close to her as the chaos grows all around them. She is trying to wriggle a way for her and her daughter out of the crown when she hears someone call out her name and she turns around to meet a smiling face of a woman a little aged, with her lips dry and withered, but strongly standing on her frail body)

Gaku: Maria!

Maria: *(turning around in surprise, she sees the person that called out her name and she freezes for a moment before saying anything, during which time the world around her seems to come to a pause, the noise ceases for a moment and her mind seems to go blank) Mother! How... How is this possible? (as she says this she moves in and hugs Maria long and tight*

before releasing her, she then looks at Monica for a long moment then looks back at Maria who gets the question and nods back at her.

Gaku: Hi little girl, how are you? What is your name?

Monica: Monica.

Gaku: *(to Maria)* I heard that you had a son...

Maria: I don't know where they are mother, they descended upon us dead in the night. I had gone to look for any good fruit at the market before the garbage trucks showed up when I saw them arrive, I was lucky to find my daughter but my sons were not that lucky.

Gaku: You had two sons?

Maria: There has been so much that has happened Mother, but I cannot begin to believe this.

Gaku: Believe what? That I am here in this place or the fact that I am still alive?

Maria: Both, but mostly the fact that you are still alive. *(as she says this, Gaku begins to lead them out of the noise and chaos all around them)* we were told that you and five others were arrested and thrown into prison, news later followed that you had passed on. I mourned you mother, for months. And now this, seeing you here? I don't even know how I am to feel right now.

Gaku: They came for us in town while we were trying to find water from the central reserves. They took us and brought us here, they told us that the government was going to one day clean the city and none of our kind; the people without a home, would be allowed to dwell in the city.

Maria: It has been eight years Mother!

Gaku: Yes child, it has. But there is nowhere to go in this place, I have tried to go back to the city, desperately but I have not succeeded. Back then when we were first brought here, things were not that bad, we would have food from the neighbouring communities and even white people who ran an NGO here, but for nearly a year now, they have been forced to cease by the

population growing everyday here. The government is no longer afraid to dump our kind here in full glare of the public. You are the third group to be brought here in the last month. Everything now is a challenge here. There is no water, we don't even have places to go to when were pressed, you have to wait for darkness so you can run to those bushes. *(pointing to a cluster of bushes covered with flies flying around relentlessly in a distance.)*

The arrivals continue to be the centre of attention a little while longer but soon people begin moving from them back to the tents as the sun begins to set in the west. There are those who have found someone they know and they are walking away in animated talk while few, including Morio, are left, not knowing where to go. He remains standing as the rest leave and looks around desperately trying to identify anyone passing by. He begins walking following the last crowd to depart when someone calls out to him. He turns around and yelps in surprise)

Morio: Mose! It can't be! How? I thought I will never...

Mose: It really is you then! *(he says this as he rushes and shakes Morio's hand very excited, he proceeds to hug him briefly before releasing him and taking step back to look at him a little more)*

Morio: How is this possible? When they took you they said they were going down South; down to the border. When were captured and we found ourselves this far North, I was sure I would never see you again.

Mose: I thought I would never see any of you again, but then a few weeks back Muthoni arrived.

Morio: Muthoni!

Mose: Yes, she arrived although she was in a very bad shape when she did. She was expectant when she arrived...

Morio: Yes, she was pregnant when she disappeared from us

Mose: How do you know that?

Morio: Because she was expecting my child, at least that is what she said.

Mose: My god! This makes the next part difficult to tell you then brother.

Morio: What is it!

Mose: Muthoni! She... she...

Morio: She what! Say it already!

Mose: When she arrived, there were only five of them in a group. They were near death *(lowers his head in recollection, through his memory, the events of Muthoni; a slender young woman with her hair braided into dreadlocks, her eyes carrying a hopeful anticipation about her, arriving in the company of four others are seen. She is heavily expectant and she is supported by two her companions as they arrive, she is limping with one leg having a rag tied around it close to the ankle. The rag is stained with dried blood and she appears to be in a lot of pain as they arrive. She is helped into the camp into one of the old structures where an old woman attends to her.*

As Mose's recollection of the events closes, he continues to narrate the story to an Eagerly waiting Morio.) She arrived and was taken into Nyaikwo's house, an old healer and a midwife here in the camp. It was close to midnight when we heard the news that her baby had died soon after it was born. According to Nyaikwo, the child was born prematurely because the mother had suffered substantial injuries to her body.

Morio: What injuries?

Mose: They were attacked by a troop of bandits where they had settled after being brought out of the city like the rest of us. They were however, not lucky enough to find the camp like you did. They say that one night, while they were asleep, they were descended upon and their little camp was set on fire. There were about forty of them at the camp. They were the only ones that made it out.

Morio: Where is she now?

Mose: Hey *(taking Morio by his shoulders and looking straight into his face)* the person you knew back then my friend has seen the worst side of this place, no one that has been through what she has been is ever the same again.

Morio: I only want to see her my friend. That only nothing more.

Mose: Have you thought what you seeing her might do to her? But again I understand, she stays with an old lady, the first people to ever arrive at this place. Her house is this way, *(leading off into the camp towards where Maria, the new old lady and her daughter had disappeared towards)*

(the next act takes place in small dimly lit room that makes Gaku's household. There are a few utensils in an old wooden rack painted black with years of exposure to soot from the fireside next to it. On the opposite corner facing the door is a sleeping mat spread out on a dusty floor. There is a pair of old sandals made from wheel remains next to the mat. There is a water container and a bag by the wall next to the door; this forms everything in the house. As Gaku, who is holding Monica's arm, enter this household, a young, slender woman raises from the mat, her eyes clear in the little darkness in the room. Her face is clear, but if one looks a little longer, one will see agony, despair and sadness in her face. Maria follows in and soon there are four people in the room.

The lady laying on the mat rises as Maria enters and greets Gaku before looking at the new faces)

Muthoni: Gaku, umerudi? 'are you back?'

Gaku: Yes my child, and I have brought visitors.

Muthoni: *(turning first towards Maria then to Monica and politely offering her hellos)* hello. *(Maria and Monica both reply to her greeting in unison before Gaku proceeds to invite them to sit, Maria on the water container by the door while Monica proceeds to sit on the mat next to Muthoni, Gaku pulls another water container from behind the door and places it opposite Maria, such that she is facing Maria directly and at the same time looking outside her door. She begins to speak once again.)*

Gaku: *(Addressing Muthoni first)* My child, I see you are wondering who these guests are, of course you heard that new visitors from the city had joined us when I went outside.

Muthoni: yes, I heard the children calling out.

Gaku: This here *(pointing at Maria)* is my daughter. My flesh and blood. And this here is my grandchild. Her daughter.

Muthoni: This is Maria!

Gaku: Yes my child, this is Maria, the daughter I told you I would never get to see. The heavens have been gracious enough to allow me to see her again and her child.

Muthoni: Great news indeed.

Gaku: *(To Maria)* This here my child is my daughter as well, you may call her your sister, she has been with me for a while now. She has been my friend and family and in here we take care of each other. Her name is Muthoni.

Monica: *(Shyly)* My name is Monica *(laughs a little and everyone breaks into a small sensational laugh briefly before the conversation continues)*

Muthoni: I was from the Westside streets, there were not many of us there as that part of the city is associated with the rich. There wasn't a lot of competition for resources like food and clothing. There is this thing with the rich people dumping fresh food and good clothing on the streets. We had a little shelter here and there from time to time as there were a number of abandoned store houses at that part of the city. We were occasionally well dressed and we couldn't be distinguished much from the normal city dwellers. Our parents and the adults among us then didn't have a hard time finding jobs in the stores and the houses of the rich, we had what was the most one could have being a street dweller. We survived like that for a very long time until one day they came, in the cover of the night after a city official tipped them off and they took us away.

Maria: I am very sorry for what happened.

Muthoni: Don't be sorry just yet, this is but the beginning of my story. You see, while we were at the streets, my mother thought it would be life changing if one of her children got to go to school and carry the hope that we would one day leave that place. My brother refused and that left me and so I went. I went to school all the way to Class 5 when one day, after a rainy afternoon as my mother was returning home from one of the rich people's homes, she was attacked. They say it was a robbery, I didn't understand much then but it changed my life as it left her nursing serious back injuries that didn't allow her to work. The school refused to let me continue because I couldn't pay up. I stayed on the streets for a long time and tried very much to convince myself that I would one day leave the streets and make a home of my own. Life has brought me here.

Maria: What you have been through child, no one deserves to go through.

Gaku: You haven't heard her story yet child, but I best believe that we will tell her story some other day. Today, let us be a little happy although there isn't much to celebrate as you will learn.

(As the conversation continues, Gaku looks outside through the door for a moment before the tension on her face clears and she stands heading towards the door. At the door she meets Morio and Mose standing side by side outside her house. She steps out to listen to them)

Mose: Forgive us Gaku, I know you have visitors, we will be brief. We are here to see Muthoni.

Gaku: *(In a sudden protective voice)* Why?

Mose: My friend here, Morio is his name. He came today together with your visitors, he says Muthoni is a friend of his and he only wants to see her, that is all Gaku.

Gaku: You're Muthoni's friend?

Morio: Yes, we...

Gaku: You are him aren't you?

Morio: *(looking away to avoid meeting Gaku's eyes)* yes it is I and don't worry, I have heard.

Gaku: Please be careful with your words. That girl has been through a world of hurt. *(after a brief awkward pause)* You may come in and see her.

(Mose goes first before Gaku follows and finally Morio goes in. Muthoni seems unbothered by the entry of these people and continues to sit with Monica who is now comfortably cuddled into her. Muthoni stays like this for a couple of seconds before noticing the person that came in last. She scans his face for another long moment. Unsure of what to make of it and then she slowly rises to her feet shaking at the same time stammering)

Muthoni: Could it.... M... Morio?

Morio: Msoo! *(he doesn't wait for her to fully stand on her feet before moving in, in smooth step and taking her off her feet hugging her tightly. The hug lasts for a very lengthy moment until Mose clears his throat to get their attention. When they finally release each other from the hug, Muthoni's face is covered in tears and she is trembling a little)*

Gaku: Are you okay child?

Muthoni: Yes, yes I am Gaku.

(Muthoni and Morio realising that they are drawing way too much attention from the room, decide to step outside. The rest of the people are left in the room wondering in silence briefly before Monica moves from the mat and slumps in between her grandmother's laps)

~end~

SCENE FOUR

Act One

It is dawning at the camp and the sun is just visible over the hills on the East. The camp is still quiet, people are still asleep with smoke rising out of a few huts and little embers visible outside a few tents with few women attending to the fires. Gaku is just up and about. As she steps out of her house, a group of three children come running. They stop a few feet from Gaku and catch their breath before one of them begins to speak)

Kikuu: Gaku!

Gaku: Yes child, what is it, is someone after you?

Kikuu: No, they say they the water has come, there are people going to the tanks right now. My mother has sent us to tell you.

Gaku: Thank you, child! *(she rushes inside and goes down by the mat where everyone else in her household is still sleeping and shakes Muthoni by her shoulder until she is awake. Monica too awakes at this)*

Muthoni: Gaku! This early, what is going on?

Gaku: The tanks have been opened, there is water. Let us go now before the queue becomes too long.
(Muthoni doesn't listen to the last statement by Gaku as she is already at the door as Gaku finishes speaking. She is already holding two containers on both hands and a 'leso' hanging from her shoulders. She looks at Gaku who gets the message and takes the one remaining container in the house and follows her. Just before they are completely out of sight, Monica goes rushing after them, calling out Muthoni's name. They pause waiting for her and on getting to them, they begin once again walking)

(As Muthoni, Gaku and Monica are heading out of the camp, Mose and Morio appear and greet them before they begin walking along with them. Morio and Muthoni soon fall behind, walking close to each other while speaking in low tones. Gaku leads the group and Mose and Monica are slightly behind, Mose is asking questions of Monica and they seem to be getting along well)

too. They walk this way for another while longer before Morio and Muthoni catch up to them and they keep walking together.

All along the way as they walk, the other residents of the camp are walking in the same direction. All of them carrying containers headed to the water point.

On getting there; a place in the middle of a vast dry open field with huge water tanks towering high above the ground, there is already a long queue of people waiting. There are about four taps and the end of the queues and there are hundreds of livestock waiting on by a long trough where a number of herders are fetching water on their containers and walking filling it. They place their containers on the queue and stand along them just as everyone else. They go on talking as they move along the line.

It is past midday when they finally get to the front of the queue and as they fill their last container, it becomes visible that the water pressure is dropping fast; the water levels are dropping. As they leave, the people begin to break the queue each one aiming to get to the front and soon there is a commotion and a scramble to get to the water. It soon turns out into a near fight as Muthoni and Morio, the last of the group, walk away burdened with the water containers.)

Act Two

It is dawn, several weeks have now passed since Monica's and Maria's arrival at the camp. This morning is uncommonly cold, there are people walking around the camp covered in blankets. There are little pools of water scattered all over the camp and the sky is still heavy with dark clouds.

A car; a high raised, double cabined pick-up truck, approaches the camp raising the attention of the people passing by. Some rush back into their huts and tents and emerge a little afterwards with their children. Some are being carried cradled on their parent's arms while others are being held by their arms while they weakly walk along. They all head to the direction the vehicle had gone., a little forward, towards the East end of the

camp, the car is packed outside a little more spacious tent opened on one half where there are a number of seats outside now filled with children. The tent has the initials USAID in bright blue and a touch of red around it.

There are four doctors in crisp white dust coats attending to the children under the tents. One is carrying a stethoscope listening to their heartbeats while another is taking samples for testing behind the covered portion of the tent. There are more children arriving, others are crying while their parents try to make them comfortable.

Monica is one such child, her mother, Maria and Muthoni who has now become a very close friend, are standing behind the seat she is sitting on as the doctor attends to her. As the doctor drives a needle into her skin to collect a blood sample, she yelps a little then begins asking questions of the doctor.

Monica: Doctor, do I have Cholera as well?

Doctor: No, I don't think you do. Why do you ask?

Monica: Because my friend told me that because of the rain and since we do not have proper ways of waste management, there will be an outbreak.

Doctor: Well, yes that is true, there is an outbreak at the camp. Many children have had it. But there are symptoms, you don't exhibit any of it.

Monica: What are symptoms doctor?

Doctor: *(sighs as he places the sample of blood in a small test tube and turns to look at Monica)* They are signs, like fever and diarrhoea. If you have those, you are susceptible to have cholera.

Monica: How do you learn these *(pause)* symptoms doctor?

Doctor: You go to medical school.

Monica: I want to go to medical school too. But my friend told me that I couldn't go to any school because we can't pay.

Doctor: *(as he goes on adjusting his microscope and placing samples beneath it as he goes on talking with Monica)* If you went to school, you would have to work hard to get to medical school.

Monica: I wish I could go to school.

Doctor: *(he pauses working on the microscope and turns to face Monica and pauses for a long moment before speaking)* Are you sure?

Monica: Yes, and become a doctor so that I can treat all these children who are sick like you. And then I will build my mother and my friend a beautiful house like those big homes in the city. Grandmother could even live with us. *(She concludes this statement smiling a little in reflection)*

Maria: *(A bit uncertainly)* Please let the doctor do his work Monica. *(To the doctor)* I apologise for that doctor; she doesn't mean to bother you.

Doctor: *(To Maria)* She is hardly a bother, *(turning to Monica)* what is you got an opportunity to go to school, would you go?

Monica: I can go now *(they all break into a little laugh and Monica smiles a little as well)*

Doctor: Do you promise that if you went to school you will work hard?

Monica: Yes.

Doctor: *(Facing Maria and Muthoni after looking briefly into the microscope and writing down something in a large book on the table next to him)* Your daughter has not been affected by the outbreak. However, she has an iron deficiency. You will be given some drugs at the door but you will need to find her some green, leafy vegetables and yes, I know it is hard to come by those in this place but you have to try.
(turning to face Monica once again) Good bye little girl, I will see you soon.

Monica: Why doctor? Will I still be sick again?

Doctor: No, you are going to go to school.

Muthoni: You mean?

Doctor: Yes, there is a scholarship award for children who display a desire to learn this is all the desire I need.

Maria: School, where?

Doctor: In the States?

Maria: *(Seemingly not getting what the doctor is saying)* Where did you say?

Muthoni: In the United States Maria!

Maria: No! You can't take away my child; she is the only one I am left with.

Doctor: Okay madam, she is your child.

Muthoni: Maria! Do you know how golden this opportunity is? This is a one in a million gift. What would you do with your daughter here, she can't even have a proper diet for her treatment here, listen to the doctor. I would go without a second thought.

Monica: I want to go!

SCENE FIVE

A graduation ceremony is underway in the background at a university's graduation square, there are families, friends and all sorts of groups of people going about happily. There are people taking photographs all around the place, others are happily hugging. About half of the people around are in graduation gowns. There is a look of glamour all around.

A young lady, donned in graduation regalia, is standing near a path in the square, seemingly unaware of the buzz around her. She is still, deep in thought as she looks straight ahead, focusing on nothing at all. Two similar graduates; a male and a female, approach her until they are only a foot away, still she doesn't notice. The man clears his throat and it seems to jolt her back to present)

Mark: You look lost, are you worried?

Monica: ooh Please! I got this.

Melanie: Well, let's find out, it's time. Shall we? *(Pointing down the path to the door leading to an auditorium where the graduates are all heading. They begin walking down the path towards the auditorium)*

The trio get into an almost full auditorium. There are graduates seated in the middle rows with well decorated professors and VIPs seated towards the front. They move to a series of three seats at the front and take their seats and soon the ceremony is underway.

The dean invites a number of speakers who speak briefly before inviting the student's president for the graduating class.

Dean:

It is now my pleasure ladies and gentlemen, to invite Mr. Mark Matheson, the graduating class' president. *(There is a loud cheer of appreciation as he moves to the podium. He briefly looks at the audience from right to left in the auditorium before he begins to speak.)*

It is perhaps the happiest day of our lives today to those of us dressed as I am. It is perhaps the most uncertain day of our lives as well. Where do we go from here? Is probably the most asked question as well. But hey, we made it, despite the thousands of deadlines, projects, assignments, a million pages of texts; we made it.

There is one of us today, whose story, you all ought to hear. Permit me then to call on Miss. Monica Jeruto. *(As he steps off the stage, there is once again a loud cheer as Monica delicately walks to the podium)*

Monica:

Ladies and gentlemen *(a rather lengthy pause)*

I first wish to express my gratitude to everyone who has made it possible for my being here today. I cannot mention you all individually for the list will go on and on. It has been a surprising journey I must say, eighteen years have gone by just like that. Today, I am seated with the best of the best, the brightest from everywhere in the world, it is more than humbling I have to say. Standing here, addressing you is almost unimaginable. You may wonder why I say this, to understand, let me give you a little story.

I was born in Nairobi, Kenya into a street family; these are those families with nowhere to call home. And for nearly a decade, that is the only life I knew until one night when we were taken and dumped in the middle of nowhere in what the government called 'cleaning up' the city.

We were forced to live under inhumane conditions at an IDP camp in the North. *(As she speaks of the conditions in the camp, the struggle for water back then plays and her story appears as a voiceover. The children getting treatment in the tent are also shown as she goes on speaking)* The struggles to survive in the camp are unlike anything I had ever experienced nor have I experienced ever again. There was a constant fight for water, for food, for spaces to pitch a little tent. Then there was a fight against outbreaks in the camp.

By chance I got to come here, to the United States and study. It has been 18 years since. And you can understand my joy today because I am nearly there, nearly making my promise of making a place better for those I left behind in the camp and for thousands of street families in my country.

Many of you seated here today have been key in beginning this second part of my journey. You have helped me create awareness in the international realm, you have helped me run contribution programmes and we have together, been able to drill boreholes enough to see not only the camps, but also the surrounding communities have water all year round, we have been able to build two schools from the primary all the way to the high school levels close to the camps and most importantly, we have set up a standard hospital in the camp with your help. To this end I say thank you.

(As she says this part, the display shows herdsmen with their livestock drinking lazily in new, concrete and long troughs, there are taps around the camps and people are no longer queuing to get water as before. The video then shifts to students going to class in a series of schools, newly built and well equipped. The video then finally shows a hospital with doctors walking in. It stands where the USAID tent stood before. All this happens as Monica's speech goes on and she goes on, the video display refocuses on her.)

The interest in the international realm has pushed the local town governments resort to reconsidering its treatment of street families. There are progressive steps being undertaken to ensure that they are handled humanely. These ladies and gentlemen, are only the beginning.

I see what we have achieved I am amazed at how far I, we, can achieve for our communities. Allow me to share a little on my dream at this point.

I graduate today with my bachelors in Science as a medical doctor from one of the best universities in the world, I graduate as well, with a minors' degree in community development. I plan to continue working with all of you to create even more global awareness of the plight of IDPs in my country.

I am in the process of soliciting for funding set up a programme to help those who demonstrate exceptional academic abilities to progress further and study abroad and return to build their communities further. I intend to set up health facilities that will double as medical training schools to help further move my community forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, I began by saying that my standing here today was unimaginable but here I stand and this is why I know that nothing is impossible, I hope you continue holding my hand. I hope that your support, in whichever form, keeps on coming and I hope that one day, when this all has been achieved, we shall once again, gather to celebrate.

Thank you. *(She leaves the podium and the entire auditorium is completely silent for a long minute before completely erupting into a loud applause with the audience getting on their feet. She goes on and hugs Mark and Melanie smiling with tears flowing from her face.)*

~End~