

FREEDOM RUN

Written By

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FADE IN

OPEN ON a montage of footage of the Olympic games prior to 1984.

NARRATOR

Derartu Tulu, was the 10,000 m Gold Medalist in 1992 and 2000, and the first woman from sub-Saharan Africa ever to win an Olympic gold medal... officially. Her career saw a multitude of title wins between those and the subsequent years and earned her a very important place in the Annals of African Olympian History. This story however, is not really about Derartu Tulu or her competitive achievements. As a matter of fact this story takes place several years prior to Tulu's emergence onto Olympic radar.

CREDITS ROLE:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

ADRIANNE DROUNSE. Early 20's, a picture of meek beauty. She sits cautiously in front of a camera crew. As lighting adjusts, a boom mic hovers over her trying to find its prime position.

NARRATOR

This is the story of Adrianna Drounse of the Sudan. The brave little heroine who simultaneously captured the Gold and the hearts of a nation. You may wonder why you've never heard of her and the answer is simple... her courageous and seemingly impossible accomplishment doubles as an unsightly blemish on the scrolls of Olympic history that whether fairly or not, works to defame an entire country.

Journalist DARVISH SINCLAIR: early 30's, with the clean face of dirty news, sits in the chair directly in front of her. He has his scripted notes in hand, prepared for his big, break out story.

DARVISH

Everything okay, Ms. Drounse?

Adrianna nods. He looks towards the camera.

DARVISH (CONT'D)
We all set?

UNKNOWN (V.O.)
Ready when you are...

DARVISH
Alright in 1... 2...
(beat)
Good evening, and welcome to
'Beyond The Bleachers,' on ESPN
Sports International. As always, I
am your host, Darvish Sinclair, and
today we have with us Adrianna
Drounse whom you all may remember
from her heroic 1984 Olympic
victory in the Women's 10000 Meter
competition.

Adrianna smiles, already mounting a defense.

DARVISH (CONT'D)
Now Adrianna, yours is a
particularly interesting story
because you were later disqualified
in a scandal that rocked the
collective Olympic viewing
community.

ADRIANNA
Yes...

DARVISH
What I want to do is give you a
chance to recount the circumstances
of your experience.

Adrianna takes a breath. Calming herself.

ADRIANNA
Well, I can say that mine
is less the story of an
athlete and more the
story of a sister...

FLASHBACK:

EXT. OPEN MARKET PLACE - DAY

KASSALA, SUDAN. 1983

A mid-city market place: loud, dusty, and packed with merchants and local towns people bartering goods. Colorfully adorned women balance large items on their heads as they navigate the narrow walk ways.

Enter Adrianna Drounse, now 12 years old. A baseball cap obscures a face mature beyond her years. Shades of hidden, perhaps tragically natural beauty are further muted by baggy clothes.

She stands inside a back alleyway. Her eyes fixed on a nearby vendor roasting meats on wooden skewers.

Her tiny stomach growls. Her eyes dart back and forth as she approaches the merchants booth. The aroma of meat and other goods keeps her motivation alive.

She snatches two of the spears and darts into the crowd. The merchant RIMO PUTANI, a mid 40's negotiator by trade, and his son see her.

RIMO

Stop, thief! Malvo, get her!

MALVO PUTANI: 17 years old, scrappy and lean. He darts off after Adrianna. The teens maneuver through the large crowd of buyers.

EXT. BACK ALLEYS - DAY

Adrianna cuts through a labyrinth of alleyways and narrow corridors with Malvo stalking not far behind. Elderly people watch the chase from their respective stoops, far too familiar with the sight.

Adrianna escapes under a fence.

Pleased with her narrow getaway, Adrianna gloats momentarily before departing.

She enters an alley only to be pushed into a wall from the side. She collapses to the ground and is swiftly kicked.

Malvo stands over her.

MALVO

Get up, thief!

Adrianna rises. Her lowered head masks her identity. Malvo snatches the bag from her arm and searches it.

MALVO (CONT'D)
 Just as I thought.
 (beat)
 Take off your hat. Go on, take it
 off!

Adrianna reluctantly removes her hat. Long wavy hair falls over her shoulder. Malvo is momentarily stunned by Adrianna's beauty and, of course, gender.

MALVO (CONT'D)
 You stole these things?

No response.

MALVO (CONT'D)
 But you're a girl.

ADRIANNA
 So.

MALVO
 I should turn you over to the
 police. They may even cut off your
 hands!

ADRIANNA
 Fine, so do it then and stop
 talking!

Malvo's puzzled.

MALVO
 You aren't afraid?

ADRIANNA
 Do what you want, it doesn't
 matter.

Tears stream from her eyes, steeling herself for the worst.

MALVO
 Give me one good reason I should
 let you go.

She looks up and sees Malvo's sympathetic face.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

Adrianna and Malvo arrive at the foster home where she resides. Malvo hands her the sack.

INT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

ADRIANNA

Wait here.

Adrianna enters and is greeted by her younger step-siblings.

The children crowd around her. The youngest of them is TANJI ADEELE, a 3 year old African baby doll. She latches on to Adrianna's leg in a tight embrace.

SIMONE ADEELE, & LINETTE ADEELE, 8 year old inseparable twin peas from the same adorable pod, paw at her bag.

SIMONE & LINETTE

Adrianna, Adrianna, what did you bring us?

Adrianna opens the cloth sack and produces the meat she was chased for, along with a large fish, a loaf of bread and several fruit. The children are delighted at the sight of her haul and run off into the kitchen with the bag.

POULL ADEELE, 5 years old and more than a bit of a problem child, stands in the corner with arms folded and an obvious frown on his dirty little face. Adrianna approaches cautiously.

ADRIANNA

And how is my Prince, today?

He turns his head and crosses his arms even tighter, no doubt upset that she has been gone so long.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

Well, I know I've been gone all day... you must have been worried sick about me.

No response from the boy.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

...but you see I simply had to find the perfect birthday gift. A gift worthy of a true Prince.

Adrianna reaches in her pocket and pulls out a necklace of small shells with an exquisitely blue stone center piece on it. The boy fights to hold his grudge.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

Now, if only I knew where to find a Prince who was celebrating a birthday today.

Poull surrenders and turns to her. His pouting face could qualify for Gerber.

POULL

I thought you weren't coming back.

ADRIANNA

Now, why would I ever leave my Prince?

Poull shrugs.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

Well, the answer is... I wouldn't, so you don't have to worry.

She places the gift around Poull's neck and kisses his forehead.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

Go wash up for dinner.

He hugs her and runs off.

Malvo peeks through the nearby window.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - LATE DAY

Adrianna emerges from the house to meet Malvo.

MALVO

The children, they... are yours?

ADRIANNA

They're my brothers and sisters.

Malvo's relieved.

MALVO

You're very good with them.

ADRIANNA

I'm all they have.

MALVO

I have a brother... he is a part of the resistance. He fights for our freedom and one day I will join him!

Adrianna looks curiously at the boy.

MALVO (CONT'D)
Well, you can go this time... but I
better not see you in the market
again or I WILL turn you in!

No response from Adrianna.

MALVO (CONT'D)
Yeah, well...

Malvo leaves. Adrianna watches him go. She smiles.

INT. FOSTER HOME KITCHEN - LATE DAY

SAFFINA ADEELE, a sickly woman in her late 40's, sits at a small table with her head resting in her hand. She puffs deeply on a cigarette. Adrianna enters the smoke filled kitchen.

ADRIANNA
Feeling any better today?

SAFFINA
What does it look like?

ADRIANNA
I got this from the Market.

She hands Saffina a bottle of medicine and feels her head for fever. She steps away to the sink.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)
It's supposed to ease the
headaches.

SAFFINA
I don't need them eased, I need
them gone!

Saffina opens the bottle and smells the liquid -- foul as the death creeping closer and closer to her.

SAFFINA (CONT'D)
Smells like pig dung!

She attempts to turn the bottle up and drink.

ADRIANNA
No wait!

Adrianna snatches the bottle. She produces a tea spoon while she reads over the label.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

You have to be careful with this,
it's very strong.

She carefully feeds the ailing woman her proper dosage before returning to the sink.

Adrianna removes the food from her sack.

SAFFINA

Is this all you were able to get?
This is not enough for all of us!

ADRIANNA

We will just have to make it
stretch. I can make a stew that
will last us a few days.

SAFFINA

Or maybe next time you can just get
more! If we can't feed all of you,
maybe we should send some of you
back to the shelter. They will
probably split you up... probably
send you away from them.

Adrianna flushes with grief and anger as she prepares the food at the sink.

ADRIANNA

Well, if there isn't enough then I
will just not eat.

Saffina's face contorts into a wicked grin.

SAFFINA

Yes, probably better that way.
Better you should learn to
sacrifice.

Adrianna grips the knife she is holding tightly growing more irritated. She turns to find that the evil old hen has dozed off with the cigarette still burning. She snags it, prepared to put it out.

Suddenly, DUMAS ADEELE enters the kitchen. In his 50's, gruff, and the musk of a tyrant caught in his personal atmosphere, time stops when he makes his presence known.

Adrianna, caught like a deer in head-lights, holds a lit cigarette.

DUMAS

Oh, so you've taken up smoking now?

ADRIANNA

No, Mr. Adeele, I was just throwing it away.

She turns to the sink, but before she can toss the cigarette Dumas grabs her arm and uses it to put the cigarette in his mouth.

Still holding Adrianna's arm, he forces her over the sink.

Adrianna struggles, but it's futile.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

No, please!

He quickly covers her mouth and gropes the young girl, undeterred. Adrianna reaches over and knocks a plate off the counter. The plate smashes on the floor, awakening Saffina.

Dumas quickly pulls away from the girl.

SAFFINA

What the hell happened?

DUMAS

Nothing sweetheart, Adrianna just had a little accident.

Adrianna runs from the kitchen sobbing.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Nothing but sobs.

CLICK

A clutter of worn old books and discarded items come to view under a dim, dying light. Tattered photos stick loosely to the walls.

Adrianna, wet faced, sits on a large pillow looking around at the artifacts. One in particular catches her eye.

A photo of a family -- Norman Rockwell couldn't paint so perfect a family. She closes her eyes, a soft smile growing on her face as she drifts away.

INT. UNKNOWN HOME. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Though many details of the room are obscured to us, the haze of memory provides us with an undeniable warmth.

Adrianna sits on the floor, writing. An unknown woman enters: late 30's, demure, motherly. She sits in a chair near Adrianna; she sews. The two of them share loving words that we cannot hear, words lost to time.

Unknown man enters: early 40's strong and tall, honest blue collar stock. He kisses the woman tenderly on her cheek. He sits on the couch and rubs Adrianna's head with a platonic, fatherly innocence.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Adrianna awakens -- looks around. After a moment, the light flickers out. Reality synchronizing with Adrianna's disappointment.

INT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

Adrianna enters cautiously. No one in sight.

INT. FOSTER HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

Into the kitchen. Her foster parents and 4 younger step-siblings are finishing dinner.

SIBLINGS

Adrianna!

SAFFINA

Adrianna, you are just in time.
There are dishes to be washed.

The family migrates from the kitchen leaving Adrianna at the sink. She looks at the empty pots the family just ate from.

Poull returns to his sister's side.

ADRIANNA

Hello, Prince.

The boy reaches in his pocket and presents some half eaten food he stashed for her. She embraces the boy lovingly.

INT. FOSTER HOME. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A weary Adrianna climbs into bed with her siblings. They instinctively cuddle into her. She stares at the moon through an opening in the wall.

TIME CUT:

Morning-- the front door shuts as Dumas leaves for work awakening Adrianna. She quickly slips out of bed. The children remain asleep.

MONTAGE

- She cleans the kitchen.
- She feeds the animals.
- She collects eggs.
- She fetches water outside.
- She sweeps around the house.
- She milks a cow.

INT. FOSTER HOME. BEDROOM - MORNING

Adrianna wakes the children to prepare them for school.

After feeding them, she looks out through the window as they all walk off.

INT. FOSTER HOME. SAFFINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Adrianna enters the room of her foster parents. She creeps around gathering dirty clothes. Saffina awakes.

SAFFINA

What are you doing in here?

ADRIANNA

Nothing, I just... Do you need anything?

Saffina sits up into a coughing fit, scratching at herself fiendishly.

SAFFINA

Cigarettes, I need more cigarettes.
You will have to go into town.

ADRIANNA

I think perhaps I shouldn't return to the market for a while. I might be recognized. Maybe Dumas can get them.

Saffina shoots a vicious glare towards Adrianna.

SAFFINA

You don't think, you steal! That is the only thing you are good at... and as soon as you decide you're not a thief, we have no more use for you and I will turn you in to the police. Do you understand?

Adrianna bows, defeated.

ADRIANNA

Yes ma'am.

SAFFINA

Since you are suddenly so smart, I think you should be taking better things.

Adrianna raises her eyes.

SAFFINA (CONT'D)

Yes, that's it, you should get things that benefit others, not just yourself.

ADRIANNA

Ma'am.

SAFFINA

Get out of here!

Adrianna cowers out of the room.

NEWS REPORT MONTAGE

The Sudan is at war with rebel forces of the Guerrilla Republic waging bloody battles against the intervention of DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) Military forces and their commander, GENERAL RAGEME SOCOU Late 40's ruthless tyrant with African warrior looks. He is the Country's president-- but not exactly by fair election.

- Rebel forces create chaos by pushing into villages.
- Military troops deploy.
- Citizens die as villages burn. The wounded flood hospitals.
- General Socou rallies his troops.

ANOUNCER

We interrupt this program to bring you a special report.

(MORE)

ANOUNCER (CONT'D)

Rebel forces have invaded the province of Ed Damazin and declared all out war against the Sudanese Republic Military opposition based there. They are engaging in a bloody conflict in which several hundred civilians were killed as a result of wide spread mortar fire. General Rageme Socou has vowed not to allow this latest assault to go unpunished and has even dispatched forces to the cities of Gedaref and Wad Medani for a counter offensive...

EXT. OPEN MARKET PLACE. MONTAGE - DAY

Adrianna skillfully pilfers items without being spotted. She enters a shop specializing in expensive taste.

Malvo, seated near his father's tent, recognizes the thief in the baggy clothing and baseball cap entering the shop. He actually smiles.

INT. SHOP - DAY

Adrianna cautiously explores the store. She scopes the patrons investigating the store's high priced merchandise.

Something catches her eye. A gold plated replica Olympic Medal. She stares in awe. The STORE OWNER approaches.

STORE OWNER

Can I help you?

ADRIANNA

The medal... may I see it?

STORE OWNER

Ahh, of course.

He retrieves the medal from behind the counter and hands it to her.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)

It is nice, yes?

ADRIANNA

Yes, but is it real?

STORE OWNER

Umm yes, sure it is. As a matter of fact that's the first Gold Medal ever won by an African Nation.

A female patron approaches.

FEMALE PATRON

Excuse me, sir. My husband and I would like a closer look at this ring please.

STORE OWNER

Why certainly, Madam.

The store owner assists the female patron, leaving Adrianna alone with the medal. She continues to marvel at the prize.

The store owner turns back to Adrianna.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)

So, should I wrap it up for you?

ADRIANNA

No need.

She darts out of the store.

STORE OWNER

Wait... Stop!

EXT. OPEN MARKET PLACE. MONTAGE - DAY

The store owner emerges.

STORE OWNER

Thief! Stop!

Several nearby officers hear the man and see the suspect running from the store. They chase. She sprints through the market.

Adrianna runs past a familiar tent. Malvo knocks over a stack of baskets, tripping up the officers.

Malvo watches Adrianna disappear into the distance. He adores her.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

Later that evening, Malvo peeks into their window and watches Adrianna read to the children. They gather around her lovingly.

He lingers there a bit more, but then he leaves.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Adrianna hangs the medal she stole on the wall of her hide out. She stares at it: this is her victory.

Adrianna makes for the exit, but is struck on the head before she can.

Dumas quickly pins her to the ground, ripping at her clothes with no hesitation.

Dumas covers the struggling girls mouth, muffling her screams.

Adrianna screams and bites into Dumas's palm, fighting every single microsecond of movement. Dumas insists himself upon her anyway, clinically and coldly raping her.

EXT. SHED - NIGHT

Dumas emerges from the shed fixing his pants. He shuts the shed behind himself and makes his way back into the house.

INT. FOSTER HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dead silence creates the illusion of peace. A mouse scurries along the floor.

The sink is empty, and there's a knife missing from the knife rack.

INT. FOSTER HOME. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The children all sleep peacefully.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - MORNING

Dumas makes his way out to his truck. He sets his tools on the passenger's seat before climbing in.

Just then, Adrianna appears behind him pressing the missing kitchen knife to his throat.

DUMAS

Crazy Bitch... what are you doing?

ADRIANNA

If you ever touch me again, I
promise you... I will gut you like
a fish... do you understand me?

He nods in concession. She allows him to get into the truck and watches him drive away.

INT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

The children watch from the window as Adrianna is taken into custody by officers. Dumas and Saffina watch from the porch.

Poull runs out of the house.

POULL

ANDRINANA DON'T GO... PLEASE DON'T
GO!

DUMAS

GET BACK IN THE HOUSE BOY!

Adrianna mouths, 'I LOVE YOU MY PRINCE,' from behind a tear soaked face.

INT. JAIL. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Adrianna sits in a small room. Seated across from her at the small table is IMANI TARROT: mid 40's, relentless, social worker. Imani flips through the file, seeing Adrianna's charges and foster care status.

ADRIANNA

Will I be able to leave soon?

IMANI

Well Adrianna, there is going to be
a problem with that. Even though
the Adeele's have chosen not to
press charges they have decided to
release you from their care.

(beat)

You will be returned to the shelter
as soon as your paperwork can be
processed.

ADRIANNA

But what about my brothers and sisters? What will happen to them?

IMANI

The children will remain in the care of your foster parents until they reach adulthood. Unfortunately, we are unable to track them past that point.

Adrianna's heart breaks.

IMANI (CONT'D)

Just be grateful that no charges were filed. This could have turned out much worse for you.

Imani grabs her files and gets up to leave. Stops at the door.

IMANI (CONT'D)

We have retrieved your things.

She exits the room.

INT. MISSION - DAY

MONTAGE

- Adrianna's given a stack of clothes.
- She's toured around the facilities.
- She's introduced to the staff.
- And here's her bunk.

She sits on her bunk-- demoralized.

INT. MISSION. CAFETERIA - DAY

Adrianna slides cautiously down the line of women as unrecognizable mounds of food are slopped on her tray.

She sits alone. Silent, detached. The other girls whisper and point at her.

INT. MISSION - DAY

Adrianna sits in her bunk staring at the photo of the perfect family. A female staff member, BANON MAKII, approaches.

BANON

Adrianna? Adrianna Drounse? There's someone here to see you.

INT. MISSION. VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Adrianna enters a room full of tables used for prospective foster parents to meet the children. She is closed in by the attendant.

ABRAHAM NDIAYE, a tall gray wolf of a man in his late 40's, stands at the window. Though we see just his back, there's a distinguished air to his posture.

Abraham turns and approaches the tables. He sits, Adrianna doesn't.

Abraham gestures to the seat across from him and she reluctantly`accepts.

ADRIANNA

You some kind of old pervert or something?

ABRAHAM

You have your mother's eyes...
Hmph, and your father's nose.

ADRIANNA

Who are you?

ABRAHAM

My name is Abraham Ndiaye, I am your father's older brother... Your Uncle.

ADRIANNA

My father? But...

ABRAHAM

Your father, Adam Drounse, and your mother Rianna, were forced to flee long ago to escape political prosecution.

(beat)

They turned you over to the mission for your safety.

ADRIANNA

Where are they?

ABRAHAM

I am sorry but they were killed not long after leaving Kassala. In his will, your father left instructions that on your 13th birthday the states would relinquish custody to his next of kin. Today is your 13th birthday and so I am here to fulfill my brother's wish.

ADRIANNA

How do I know that this is true?
How do I know you are who you say?

ABRAHAM

Well, this is your birthday, isn't it?

ADRIANNA

I'm not sure...

The man removes a tempered old picture from his shirt pocket.

A wedding photo: him with Adrianna's parents, the happy couple. He shows it to her.

ABRAHAM

This is your father, my little brother... and his wife, your mother on the day of their wedding.

Adrianna stares intently at the picture. She runs her finger across it-- the perfect parents.

Abraham again reaches into his pocket.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

...and this.

Slides her another picture.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

This is you.

She stares deeply into the photograph of a beautiful baby girl with her eyes and nose.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - DAY

Calypso Music Plays.

Adrianna sits in silent reflection looking out the window at the countryside passing by. Abraham notices the child's distant state. Turns down the radio.

ABRAHAM

Have you ever heard this song?

No response.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

This is one of the greatest Calypso bands ever to play. This was considered the music of a revolution.

His attempts at conversation don't break down Adrianna's defenses.

EXT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - DAY

They arrive outside of a nice, modest home set on a large piece of land. It has a small barn as well as a garden.

They exit the car.

Abraham approaches the porch. Adrianna hesitates, holding her tattered suit case with both hands.

Abraham stops.

ABRAHAM

Come on... it is alright.

Adrianna cautiously follows.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

They enter a room that feels sterile, more like a motel room than a kid's bedroom.

ABRAHAM

...and this will be your room.

Adrianna steps in and looks around. Still not speaking.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Well, I will give you time to get settled in.

He exits. She's not exactly sold.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna, still mute, sits at a medium sized table with Abraham and his wife, the motherly CLARICE NDIAYE.

Awkward silence as the couple stares at Adrianna pushing the meal around her plate.

CLARICE
It's called MOUSSAKA. My mother
used to make it for us as children.

ADRIANNA
Did her's taste like this?

Abraham coughs, caught off guard by that comment.

Clarice's eyes raise in shock.

CLARICE
Umm. well it's her recipe but I
could probably never get it the way
she did.

ADRIANNA
Something is missing... cinnamon I
think.

CLARICE
Maybe next time you can help me in
the kitchen. I would really like
that.

Adrianna sees Clarice's warm smile. She fights the urge to smile back.

INT. ABRAHAM'S BED ROOM - NIGHT

Clarice sits in bed reading. Abraham enters from the rest room and gets in bed.

ABRAHAM
I'm sorry about dinner. She's been
through a lot. She just needs a
chance to get comfortable. I
thought the meal was wonderful.

CLARICE
You are not a very good liar. She
was right, I left the cinnamon
out... on purpose.

ABRAHAM
Oh, but why...

CLARICE
Silly man. You will love my cooking
no matter what. So what if I lose
one meal when I gain a way to bond
with her.

ABRAHAM
You're as clever as you are
beautiful.

Abraham kisses his wife tenderly and turns over to go to
sleep. She sits her book down and turns out the light.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
I still thought the meal was
wonderful.

CLARICE
You had better say that.

The lovers laugh as their shadows meet in the dark.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna sifts through a box full of the items from the
Adeele Foster Home. She finds a photo of her and the
children. Tears stream.

She places the picture on a mirror above Abraham's pictures
of her parents. The medal is not in the box.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Adrianna wanders around the house.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. OFFICE - DAY

She enters an office-- library like. Full of books, trophies,
plaques and medals. Medals like the one she stole. She
notices several stop watches hanging from a hook.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adrianna tears lettuce for a salad as Clarice stirs stew in a
large pot.

CLARICE

Okay, here we go, lets try this.

She scoops out a spoon full and blows on it. She tests and allows Adrianna to taste. Adrianna grabs a spice from the rack and stirs it in.

She allows Clarice to sample. Clarice's eyes light up with excitement.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Oh my, I think that is it. Perfect.

Adrianna smiles slightly. Clarice continues to stir.

ADRIANNA

So, what does Abraham do?

CLARICE

Abe? Oh, he's a coach.

ADRIANNA

Do Coaches make a lot of money?

CLARICE

They do when they're the coach of the women's Olympic track team.

Clarice notices Adrianna's curiosity.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

You know maybe you can go to work with him sometime. See what he does.

INT. ABRAHAM'S BED ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham and Clarice whisper aggressively in heated debate.

ABRAHAM

It is absolutely out of the question!

CLARICE

And why is it so out of the question?

ABRAHAM

I have worked very hard to establish a certain degree of respect. If I begin to bring family members to the practices, how would that look?

CLARICE

I don't care what it looks like or to whom. That little girl has lost everything and as her guardian you are responsible for helping her to regain some sort of a childhood. And as her Uncle you are all she has left. She needs you even if she doesn't know it yet!

Abraham solemnly reflects.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

I married an amazing man. I trust you will do the right thing.

She kisses him on the forehead.

INT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

The athletes are all practicing their events. Abraham stands near the starting mark with a raised starters pistol. A set of women are prepared to race.

ABRAHAM

Get set...

BOOM! The pistol sounds.

The women sprint out of the blocks and swiftly navigate the hurdles on their way to the finish line.

INT. PRACTICE STADIUM. STANDS - DAY

Adrianna watches these athletes from the stands-- focused.

The athletes taking great pains to perfect their routines. Long jumper taping off marks. A hurdler counting her steps as a sprinter sets herself. The team is a well oiled machine.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - DAY

Abraham loads his equipment into the car and gets in.

ABRAHAM

So what do you think?

ADRIANNA

About what?

ABRAHAM

The team, I noticed you watching them.

Adrianna shrugs.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

This is the best team we've had in years. I really think we have a good chance of bringing home some big wins this time. Maybe even take the gold in track and field.

Abraham smiles widely, imagining the prospect. Adrianna looks at him, curiously.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna lies in bed thinking, her mind focused entirely on the athletes she'd seen earlier.

INT. ABRAHAM'S BED ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham enters the room in his pajamas and slides into bed.

Clarice is knitting a pair of purple socks. She shows them to Abraham.

CLARICE

What do you think?

ABRAHAM

Not my color.

He turns back over. Clarice slaps him playfully.

CLARICE

That's because they're not for you, old fool. They're for Adrianna... these floors get mighty cold at night.

Abraham grunts.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

So...?

ABRAHAM

Yes, they're fine.

CLARICE

No, how did it go today? Did she
open up to you any?

Abraham grunts a defeated "No." Which is not quite enough for
Clarice.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Well what did you say to her? Did
you offer her your friendship...
let her know it's okay to talk to
you if she likes?

Abraham turns over, accepting Clarice's determination to
expand on this.

ABRAHAM

What do you want me to say,
Clarice? I try to talk to the girl
but she doesn't speak... I don't
think she really cares to know me
or allow me to know her. I can't
just somehow impose my influence on
the girl. Now if you don't mind...
it's been a long day.

He turns back over.

CLARICE

Well, with that sort of charm, how
could she resist talking to you?

She turns off the light. His shadow looks back at her.

EXT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - MORNING

Adrianna marks off spots on the ground using rocks;
repurposing the athletes' method like any clever thief would.

She steps off the distance for one hundred meters and sets a
rock there too.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Clarice watches the young girl from the kitchen.

CLARICE

Abraham... Abraham, get in here!

Abraham rushes into the kitchen, battle ready.

ABRAHAM

What is it, are you okay... did you hurt yourself?

CLARICE

No, I didn't hurt myself... look.

Abraham peers out of the window.

Adrianna returns to the starting point of her impromptu training ground. She adjusts her feet against the rocks.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

What's she doing?

ABRAHAM

Well, I don't know maybe she's...

Abraham recognizes the preparations and so does Clarice.

Adrianna pulls a small stop watch out of her pocket-- "coincidentally" similar to the ones on the hook in Abraham's office. She sets herself and darts for the win.

Clarice glances coyly at her husband.

CLARICE

Looks like someone's more influential than he thought.

Abraham glances at her.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

MONTAGE

- Adrianna is detached. Whether in the hall or at class, she's in her own little world.
- She sits alone at lunch.
- She watches the other children congregate outside.

INT. STORE - DAY

Clarice and Adrianna are grocery shopping. Adrianna grabs a hand held basket. Clarice retrieves a list from her pocket.

CLARICE

Okay, we're going to need some
rice, corn, lettuce, ginger, sugar,
bread...

Adrianna walks through the store, collecting what they need.
She spots her favorite candy and after looking around slides
a few pieces into her pocket.

She continues shopping and before long is grabbed by the
store owner SOLOMON GUEYE.

SOLOMON GUEYE

Give it up!

ADRIANNA

What?

SOLOMON GUEYE

You heard me, the candy you
stole... Give it to me, now!

ADRIANNA

Get your hands off of me, I don't
know what you're talking about!

The commotion draws Clarice's attention. She rushes over.

CLARICE

Mr. Gueye, what is the meaning of
this?

SOLOMON GUEYE

Nothing Mrs. Ndiaye, just about to
throw this thieving little rat out
of my store!

CLARICE

What do you mean thief, she is not
a thief... she is my niece!

Adrianna pulls away and hides behind Clarice.

SOLOMON GUEYE

No disrespect but your niece has
sticky fingers.

CLARICE

Adrianna, is this true?

Adrianna shamefully pulls the items she stole from her
pocket. Clarice can't hide her embarrassment and
disappointment.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adrianna and Clarice enter the home.

CLARICE
Go to your room.

Adrianna mopes away.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham sits on the couch reading the paper. Clarice enters and sits next to him.

ABRAHAM
How was the market?

Clarice sighs.

CLARICE
The market, was a lesson in disgrace. It seems that our guest felt the need to steal.

ABRAHAM
Steal? Steal what?

CLARICE
Does it really matter what? She took something that did not belong to her. You need to speak to her.
(beat)
now!

Abraham sits his paper down and heads towards Adrianna's room.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...but she's not there.

ABRAHAM
Adrianna?

Abraham hears whimpering inside of the closet. He approaches the door and places his ear to it. He knocks.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
Mind if I talk to you?

After a moment the door opens, but only slightly. Abraham opens it. Adrianna sits on the floor, sniffing.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

You mind?

Abraham takes a seat and leans back against the door frame.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

You know, your father and I grew up very poor. Of course we didn't realize we were poor at the time. Our father had been lamed in the mines and mother although she suffered from painful Arthritis in her hands, worked long hours to make sure that we always had a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, and a hot meal.

(beat)

She used to tell us that hard work was not a punishment to be rebuked but a privilege to be respected.

Adrianna looks at him.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

... I work hard so that you'll never need something you can't have, nor should you ever feel the need to take something that isn't yours.

(an idea)

What say I teach you the value of work... you complete chores around the house and I will pay you. It is a lesson your father would have wanted you to learn.

She holds her knees to her chest, now even more ashamed.

ADRIANNA

What were they like?

Abraham reflects.

ABRAHAM

Ahh, they were very much in love and very grateful for you. Rianna wouldn't set you down for a second, and there's nothing Adam wouldn't have done to protect you.

ADRIANNA

I know that feeling.

Abraham decides not to pry.

ABRAHAM

So we understand each other, yes?

Adrianna nods. Abraham pats her on the leg and rises to his feet. He makes his way to the exit.

ADRIANNA

Wait!

She retrieves the stop watch from her dresser and hands it to Abraham.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

I took this from your office... and
I'm very sorry.

Abraham looks at the watch. Pays special attention to the time displayed on it.

ABRAHAM

Was this your time?

ADRIANNA

Not the fastest one but, yes.

He looks at it again. Gears are turning.

ABRAHAM

Tell you what, you keep it for now.
And if you really want to learn how
to compete, I'm more than willing
to help you.

He exits the room. Adrianna appears reflective staring at her time on the watch. She smiles -- if only a little.

INT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

Adrianna watches the athletes, composing an eidetic record of their procedure.

CETTIE, a lean gazelle in her late 20's, approaches a water trough near the stands. While drinking she notices the young girl.

Cettie walks into the stands and sits beside Adrianna.

CETTIE

And just who might you be?

ADRIANNA

No one...

CETTIE

Oh come now, they don't just allow
No Ones into these practices. You
must be pretty special as far as No
Ones go.

No response from Adrianna, who's stricken with nerves.

CETTIE (CONT'D)

Do you watch the games?

ADRIANNA

I don't have a television.

CETTIE

Oh, well that's a shame because
they will be returning again in the
Summer and they are amazing to see.

ADRIANNA

You've been before?

CETTIE

Ahh, of course I have.

ADRIANNA

But you didn't win?

Cettie smiles.

CETTIE

No, not just yet... but soon I
think. So which of the events do
you like?

Adrianna surveys the field of athletes practicing and points
to the sprinters.

ADRIANNA

That one looks fun.

CETTIE

Ahh, the 100 Meter. Yes, that is
very fun... and very fast. That
event is where I first began
running. Are you fast?

ADRIANNA

I don't know. What's fast?

CETTIE

Hmm, let's see...

Cettie points to one of the runners.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
You see that girl there?

Adrianna nods.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
She runs a 10.86... that's pretty
fast for this event.

Remembering her own time, Adrianna's face drops.

ADRIANNA
What was your fastest?

CETTIE
Oh, not nearly as fast as that...
part of the reason why I switched
events.

Adrianna stares at her, more engaged now.

ADRIANNA
So, what do you do now?

CETTIE
Now I run distance. 10000 Meters.

You may as well have told Adrianna fairies were real.

ADRIANNA
Ten thooooooooousand meters? But
that's impossible!

Cettie laughs.

CETTIE
Well, when you say it like that, I
suppose it does sound nearly
impossible. But trust me it can be
done.

Cettie glances out on the field.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
Well, I should get to it... nice
meeting you Ms. No One.

Cettie exits the stands leaving Adrianna with a vast new
world open to her.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. OFFICE - NIGHT

Abraham sits behind the desk in his office going over racing data.

A KNOCK at the open door. Adrianna comes into view, waiting to be invited inside.

Abraham waves her in and Adrianna cautiously enters.

Abraham keeps his eyes on his papers; somewhat deceptively, as his ears are all for Adrianna.

ABRAHAM

What can I do for you child?

ADRIANNA

I've been thinking.

(beat)

I want to run in the 10000 meter event. I would like for you to help me... if that is okay?

Abraham stops and sets down his paperwork.

ABRAHAM

10000 meters huh? That's a tough event. You sure that's what you want to do?

ADRIANNA

Yes please, I would like that very much.

Abraham leans back in his chair, assessing Adrianna.

After a relatively short eternity, he finally nods.

ABRAHAM

Well, alright then.

Adrianna's face lights up. She runs to her room. After a moment of reflection, Abraham smiles.

INT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

Abraham takes Adrianna through a stretching exercise-- the child isn't exactly limber. She struggles to straighten her bent limbs, grunting and groaning all the while.

ADRIANNA

I can't do it... I can't reach. It hurts too much!

ABRAHAM

The first thing we learn about
athletics is, 'No pain No gain.'
It's supposed to hurt or else
everyone would do it.

He looks at her.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I can help you if you want... Just
this once.

She looks up at Abraham and nods.

Abraham stands behind her pressing down on her back to extend
her stretch. She groans in obvious discomfort. Abraham
laughs.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Oh come now, it's not that bad.

MONTAGE

- Adrianna begins her training with basic form and technique.
- Hard emphasis on breathing drills, stretching, and agility
exercises. Clumsily; there's much needed work here.
- Sore nights are eased by ice baths, but only somewhat.
- Her body, battered and worn, looks like it can't go anymore
as it plumps into bed...but the picture of her younger
siblings gets her up the next morning.

ABRAHAM (V.O.)

We have to train your muscles to
endure unbelievable stress, teach
your lungs to sustain under
uncontrollable circumstances. Teach
your heart not to give out on you
and teach your brain not to give up
on you. Make no mistake you're
going to feel pain... we have to
teach your body to ignore it.

EXT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abraham and Adrianna arrive home. Abraham gathers equipment
from the bed of his truck as Adrianna hobbles toward the
house.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna enters, visibly sore and exhausted, to find Clarice setting the table for dinner.

CLARICE

Ahh, you're just in time. Supper
will be ready in a moment.

ADRIANNA

If you don't mind, I'm not hungry.

CLARICE

Oh, are you feeling alright?

Clarice looks at her with some concern. Clarice walks over and checks Adrianna's head for elevated temperature -- but it's all good.

ADRIANNA

Yes, I am fine... just tired.

CLARICE

Alright, well if you get hungry
later, let me know.

ADRIANNA

Yes.

Adrianna limps off towards her room just as Abraham enters.

He kisses his wife on the cheek.

ABRAHAM

Hello dear. Mmm, that's smells
good.

He heads towards the kitchen. She glares at him, not so pleased.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Abraham checks the oven finding a simmering roast-- he is pleased. He hears Clarice enter the room and turns to her with a wide smile on his face.

Her expression is still unfavorable, though, and he quickly notices.

ABRAHAM

What?

CLARICE
You're pushing her too hard!

ABRAHAM
Ahh, what are you talking about?

CLARICE
The child is too exhausted to even eat supper and she can barely walk!

ABRAHAM
I train her the same as any other athlete... she will get used to it.

CLARICE
She is not any other athlete, she is your Niece!

ABRAHAM
...and that is precisely why I cannot cheat her!
(beat)
Look, she wants to do this... and I want to give her the best opportunity at success. If that is wrong then tell me now and I will stop. But you will have to explain to her why she can't have this... not me.

Clarice is stumped; certainly a rarity for her. She walks past him to get the food.

CLARICE
You just make sure she eats!

Abraham smiles triumphantly.

ABRAHAM
Yes, dear.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham and Clarice eat supper in silence. He watches her with a smug grin.

Suddenly --

CLARICE
I hope you don't think you won that, because you didn't!

ABRAHAM

Yes, dear.

His smile doesn't waver.

Finally, a smile breaks through Clarice's mug. They laugh.

EXT. STADIUM. PAN-AFRICAN REGIONAL MEET - DAY

Adrianna walks into the packed arena following Abraham and is mesmerized by the huge crowd of cheering fans. She runs into Abraham's back, distracted and overwhelmed by the spectacle.

He finally grabs her and places her in front of him.

ABRAHAM

Pretty unbelievable, yes?

Adrianna doesn't have the words. She smiles at Abraham.

MONTAGE

- Abraham takes Adrianna around the infield, introducing her to the athletes

- Adrianna helps Abraham train them by taping them, bringing them water, timing them.

END MONTAGE

Finally the 10000 meter race approaches. She assists Cettie in pre-event preparations.

ADRIANNA

Are you nervous?

CETTIE

Not nervous... anxious perhaps, but all of that will go away as soon as the race starts.

ADRIANNA

What does it feel like... to compete?

CETTIE

It feels like... like freedom. Like all of that energy you've been bottling up is suddenly released by the sound of the pistol launching you forward. The wind in your hair.

(MORE)

CETTIE (CONT'D)

Feeling of your feet floating along
the track. Your heart beating just
the way you want it to.

(beat)

And as you hit the tape the crowd
roars like waves crashing against
jagged cliffs... and all for you.

Adrianna stares in awe at all the runners.

ADRIANNA

And you win a Medal?

CETTIE

Oh yes, the biggest brightest
Medals there are... but it's not
even about the medals and ribbons.
There is also the respect you
receive from other athletes... when
they know that you are the very
best of the best! That's what
you'll keep forever.

ADRIANNA

But with a medal you can take care
of your whole family.

CETTIE

Yes, I suppose... at least for a
while.

ADRIANNA

How many times have you won?

CETTIE

Oh, I have won my share... but the
biggest test is soon to come. The
Olympics is where I will truly
challenge myself.

She taps Adrianna on the nose. Adrianna smiles.

ADRIANNA

I hope you win.

Adrianna finishes her tape job. They share a smile.

CETTIE

Let us hope the Gods say the same.
Come, let us go.

The ladies make their way towards the track. Adrianna waits
at the tracks edge as Cettie steps into the lanes. Cettie
closes her eyes and says a silent prayer.

The pistol fires very near Adrianna, which startles her. The racers take off pushing and elbowing one another viciously as they work to break up the group.

ABRAHAM

Adrianna... come here I need your help!

Adrianna turns to find Abraham tending to a cramping runner. She reluctantly tears herself from the track.

The runner DIA BAH, 20 years old, lean with long legs, is wincing and crying in pain as the cramp creeps its way up her thigh.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Get me water and ice... quickly!

Adrianna runs to Abraham's ice chest and drags it towards the injured runner, somewhat distracted by the race.

Abraham immediately digs through the cooler.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Okay, hold this on her leg.

Adrianna can't tear her eyes from the race.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Adrianna... Ice... Leg, Now!

Adrianna obeys begrudgingly. She places the ice roughly on Dia's leg and is swatted for her effort.

DIA

Hey!

ADRIANNA

Hey!

Abraham takes over.

ABRAHAM

I've got this... make sure everyone has water.

Adrianna sticks her tongue out at Dia and walks away.

Adrianna stalks the racers around the track, passing out much needed refreshments to the athletes. Many of which aren't Abraham's runners.

Cettie pulls away in the final lap of the race.

Adrianna runs the straight-away to the finish line in stride with Cettie, spilling water on the way.

Cettie crashes through the tape and is immediately met by Adrianna. They hug.

Cettie puts her hands on her knees to rest. Adrianna realizes she spilled her water and swipes a cup from someone she had given it to moments earlier, delivering it to Cettie.

Cettie drinks the water and then takes a victory walk with Adrianna. Adrianna marvels and waves at the applauding fans.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

On the drive home Adrianna is still very excited.

ADRIANNA

Uncle, when will I be ready to race?

ABRAHAM

Well, let's see most of the athletes I've trained were already competing long before they came to me. I would say that normally it takes 2 or so years to prepare.

Adrianna's face hits the floor in disappointment.

ADRIANNA

Oh.

Abraham notices.

ABRAHAM

Then again, I always say... "There is no accounting for natural ability." Some people just have the talent born into them.

He smiles warmly at her and she smiles back, relieved.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abraham carries a now slumbering Adrianna into the house and to her room. He places her in bed and kisses her forehead.

EXT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

Adrianna jogs along with the team during their half-mile warm up. Cettie has taken her under her wing -- you'd think they were four legged, attached at the hip.

ADRIANNA
Are you married?

CETTIE
No, I don't have much time for that.

ADRIANNA
Children?

CETTIE
Nope.

ADRIANNA
Is that not allowed?

Cettie laughs.

CETTIE
No, no rules against that... not yet at least.

They share a smile.

Abraham watches them from the infield. They've unknowingly distanced themselves from the rest of the team.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
Enough about me huh... what about you? Do you have any siblings?

ADRIANNA
Yes, I have 2 brothers Tanji and Poull and twin sisters Simone and Linette.
(beat)
Well they aren't my actual siblings but I love them dearly just as if we share the same blood.

Cettie looks sincerely at Adrianna.

CETTIE
Well it takes more than blood to make a family... they are lucky to have you.

Adrianna and Cettie arrive at the finish line ahead of the other runners. Adrianna is hardly winded.

INT. STORE - DAY

Adrianna feasts on an ice cream cone as Abraham flips through the local news paper. Rebel Forces, havoc unleashed on small villages: he's concerned.

ADRIANNA

So when did you know you would marry Clarice?

ABRAHAM

Easy... when she told me I would.

He smiles at her.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

No, actually I met Clarice when we were quite young... probably around your age. No matter where I was, she always seemed to be around.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

I honestly think she was following me.

Adrianna smiles.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Ahh, but I didn't mind. I always felt secure knowing she was there. We remained friends for a long while until eventually one day I realized that I had loved her all along. I guess that's just how love works... gets you when you least expect it.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Adrianna and Clarice prepare supper.

CLARICE

HE SAID WHAT?

Clarice looks around, but the coast is clear.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
That old fool used to chase me
around all over the place and I
couldn't get rid of him because he
was faster than me... that's how he
got me, I just got tired of
running.

She and Adrianna laugh loudly. Abraham enters the kitchen.

ABRAHAM
Clarice dear, have you seen my blue
tie?

He raises an eyebrow, realizing they've been laughing.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
What... what's so funny?

CLARICE
Nothing love, have you checked your
office closet?

Abraham stares at them, but women are a puzzle he's yet to
truly solve.

ABRAHAM
Crazy women.

He exits towards his office. They start to laugh again.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family sits down to dinner. Adrianna recounts the
exciting details of the meet to Clarice.

ADRIANNA
...and then on the last lap Cettie
began to run faster and the other
runners knew they were beaten, I
could see it in their faces... they
knew it! And then WOOSH... she
broke through the tape and the
crowd... they roared and screamed
for her. Like they loved her.

Clarice listens intently. Abraham smiles at the child's
enthusiasm.

CLARICE
Oh my, that sounds incredible. And
where were you during all of this?

ADRIANNA

That is the best part... I was running with her!

Clarice looks at Abraham, concerned.

CLARICE

Running with her... they let you race?

Abraham clarifies.

ABRAHAM

She ran along the infield during the home stretch.

ADRIANNA

Next time I will run with them for the entire race!

Clarice is less than enthused. Adrianna notices the concern.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

What's wrong... am I not allowed to run with them?

CLARICE

No dear, it's just that there are certain rules for this sport... limitations.

ADRIANNA

Limitations... like what?

ABRAHAM

Well, you see Adrianna, for many of these competitions there are age regulations put in place for the safety of the athletes. At your age you would be considered a Junior runner and would only be allowed to race with other Juniors.

ADRIANNA

How old do I need to be to run with Cettie?

ABRAHAM

In practice... you can run with her as much as you like. But regulated competitions require all runners to be at least 16 years of age.

Adrianna's head drops.

ADRIANNA
May I be excused?

Abraham and Clarice look at one another.

CLARICE
Certainly, dear...

Adrianna gets up and heads to her room.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna lies in bed staring at Abraham's stopwatch.

A KNOCK

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clarice stands waiting for a response.

ADRIANNA (O.S.)
Yes?

CLARICE
May I come in?

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna wipes the tears from her face.

ADRIANNA
Yes.

Clarice enters with a piece of cake on a small platter and a glass of milk. She takes a seat on the bed next to Adrianna.

CLARICE
I didn't want you to miss out on
this cake... it is very good.

Clarice sets the cake on the night stand. She plays with
Adrianna's hair.

CLARICE (CONT'D)
You know if you think about it,
it's not really so bad waiting to
race... perhaps even an advantage.
(MORE)

CLARICE (CONT'D)

By the time the next Olympics come around not only will you be of age but you will have several years of training and experience that most runners don't get.

ADRIANNA

But I don't have 4 years to wait.

CLARICE

Oh, why is that?

ADRIANNA

My brothers and sisters... they are not safe in that house. I was going to win the race and sell the medal to take care of them. Dumas, he will make my brothers steal for him and my sisters... he will rape them.

CLARICE

Rape them... why would you think that?

ADRIANNA

Because... that's what he did to me.

Clarice is appalled. Adrianna crumbles into her arms, forcing Clarice to maintain a calm, comforting composure.

CLARICE

There there, don't worry... It'll be okay.

Clarice sings to the sobbing child.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MORNING

Adrianna exits the bus along with the other students. They head into the school, but she hesitates.

Adrianna hides her books in a set of bushes and runs down the street.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Adrianna approaches the counter looking confused. PATRICE HANSI, mid 20's, unassuming cashier, looks at her.

PATRICE

Yes?

ADRIANNA

I need to go to Kassala.

Patrice checks the fare.

PATRICE

One way?

ADRIANNA

What?

Patrice looks at her oddly.

PATRICE

Will you be coming back or not?

ADRIANNA

Yes. I want to come back.

He calculates.

PATRICE

That will be 44 pounds.

Adrianna empties her saved money onto the counter. Patrice counts it.

PATRICE (CONT'D)

You don't have enough.

Adrianna's face drops.

ADRIANNA

Do I have enough for one way?

Patrice grabs the 22 pounds required from her funds and produces a ticket. Adrianna accepts the ticket and exits.

PATRICE

Next!

INT. BUS - DAY

Adrianna peers out of the window as the countryside passes her. The bus is full of travelers from all walks of African life-- but she is alone in her worry.

The bus arrives in the market place and Adrianna steps off.

As she walks through the city she looks at the shop Malvo's father owns-- he is nowhere in sight. Military troops are, however, and quite prominently.

She spots FARCY BINTO, cruel head-guard, yelling at a slightly younger subordinate -- more disappointed than angry. She quickly detours and sets out running towards the Adeele home.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adrianna watches the house from a safe distance. Just as she makes way to approach someone appears. She quickly hides.

She discovers Malvo sneaking up to the back door of the house carrying a sack.

The back door opens and Poull accepts the sack. The door shuts and Malvo walks away.

As Malvo passes Adrianna's hiding spot she tackles him to the ground holding a pointed stick to his throat.

MALVO

WAIT NO!

He recognizes her.

MALVO (CONT'D)

You?

ADRIANNA

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? TELL ME
NOW OR I'LL KILL YOU!

MALVO

Wait please, I was only trying to
help!

ADRIANNA

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING... HELP WITH
WHAT?

MALVO

The children, I bring them food
from the market.

Adrianna relents.

ADRIANNA

Why, what do you want?

MALVO

Nothing...

(beat)

I came back and Poull found me
peeking in the window. He said they
had taken you away.

She lets him up. Malvo dusts himself off.

MALVO (CONT'D)

I am glad you've come back... the
children will be happy to see you.

ADRIANNA

No, the children can't see me...
and if you tell them I was here
I'll. Well, you don't want to know
what I'll do!

The stick stays pointed at Malvo as Adrianna makes her way to
the window and looks in on her siblings. The children play
with each other -- no foster parents in sight.

Adrianna decides they're safe.

MALVO

Are you not planning to come back
to them?

ADRIANNA

That is the plan, my Uncle is
training me for the Olympics... I
live with he and his wife Clarice
in Aroma.

Adrianna touches the window.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

I will come back for them after
I've won and can afford to take
them from this place.

MALVO

Don't worry, I will look after them
until you return.

Adrianna looks at him.

ADRIANNA

Thank you...

EXT. OPEN MARKET PLACE. SENEGAL AFRICA - DAY

Adrianna and Malvo return to the market place. She's still got questions.

ADRIANNA

You never told me why you went back to the house.

Malvo reflects.

MALVO

When you stopped showing up in the market I was concerned. I went there hoping to see you again.

ADRIANNA

Why?

He stares awkwardly at the ground.

MALVO

I don't know.

Adrianna looks up at sun rounding noon.

ADRIANNA

I have to go.

MALVO

The bus won't return for hours.

ADRIANNA

I'm not taking the bus.

MALVO

But how will you...

Before he can finish his sentence Adrianna darts down the street towards Aroma.

Adrianna runs down a long, long lonely road. Fields and small towns passing her as we lose track of time, trekking hard and fast all the way back to school.

The exhausted child gathers her books from the bushes just as --

BEEP BEEP

-- Abraham's truck pulls up.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - DAY

Adrianna climbs gingerly into the truck. Abraham's stare never leaves this exhausted child.

ABRAHAM
What happened to you?

ADRIANNA
Physical Edu... cation...

He's suspicious, but lets it be. The truck drives away.

EXT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

MONTAGE

- Adrianna continues to train, practicing her speed and endurance on the mile.
- She practices speed and endurance on the mile.
- She practices widening her stride.
- She adjusts her technique at each leg of each practice race.
- Abraham sets her aside for tips, showing her what other runners are doing, hammering in important details.
- The more she trains, the visibly better she becomes.

END MONTAGE

Practice ends. Abraham and Adrianna walk toward the truck.

ABRAHAM
Tomorrow is your first official
competitive meet. Are you nervous?

ADRIANNA
Anxious perhaps, but that will
leave when the race begins.

Abraham puts his arm around her.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. SPORTS TRACK. JUNIOR MEET. REST ROOM - DAY

Adrianna vomits in a stall. Abraham stands outside of the rest room, patiently sucking on a popsicle.

Adrianna emerges.

ABRAHAM

Better?

ADRIANNA

Yes, much.

ABRAHAM

Here you go, eat this.

Abraham hands Adrianna an unopened popsicle as they enter the stadium -- far less fan fair than what she saw at the regional meets. The crowd's made up almost entirely of family of the student athletes.

Abraham stretches and tapes Adrianna. Her eyes are focused; she's sussing out her strategy.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Okay, what's your plan... first lap, let me hear it?

ADRIANNA

Sprint the curve - hug the line - establish position - lane 3...

ABRAHAM

Go on?

ADRIANNA

Tuck behind the leader - open stride on the straight away - lane 3 to 2 - set pace...

ABRAHAM

Next?

ADRIANNA

Focus breathing - pump the arms - conserve energy - don't get boxed in!...

ABRAHAM

Final lap, the half way mark?

ADRIANNA

Take the lead...

ABRAHAM
...then what?

ADRIANNA
Kick...

ABRAHAM
...What else?

ADRIANNA
Kick!

ABRAHAM
...and then?

ADRIANNA
KICK!

CUT TO:

The competitors crowd the starting line nudging each other. Adrianna moves out side of them to lane 4. She glances at the other girls, ready to fight.

Adrianna closes her eyes in prayer, mirroring Cettie.

ANNOUNCER
Get set!

Adrianna opens her eyes -- righteous, focused, powerful.

The pistol fires and the girls take off.

Adrianna immediately attempts her strategy, however by the time she reaches the half-way mark of the race she has built such a commanding lead she can't help but improvise.

Adrianna glides. Winning has become an abstract notion; now it's all about breaking records, marking history.

Abraham watches his stopwatch. A moment of concern leaves his face as he becomes enveloped by the awe induced by Adrianna's speed.

As she rounds the final corner Abraham can no longer control his excitement and immense pride. He jumps around, encouraging her to push through to the end.

Adrianna breaks through the tape and Abraham arrives, almost in his own Adrianna-esque blur. She jumps into his arms.

Abraham presents her to the crowd of cheering on-lookers.

ABRAHAM
That's all for you.

Adrianna waves to the crowd. As they exit the track...

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
What happened to, 'Tucking behind
the Leader?'

Adrianna looks at him, tired but smiling.

ADRIANNA
But, I was the leader.

He gives her another congratulatory hug.

MONTAGE

- Adrianna competing in several junior meets, one after the other. The roar of the crowd, Abraham's pride, other racers eating her dust. Race after race, Adrianna's unstoppable.

EXT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

The coaches watch the team jogging. Adrianna and Cettie lead the pack as usual. Abraham and his ASST. COACH, the Robin to his Batman, watch from the infield.

ASST. COACH
So what are you going to do?

ABRAHAM
I don't know, she's already beaten everyone in the Youth league. There is just no challenge there for her.

Asst. Coach stares at a chart.

ASST. COACH
Well of course... her times are better than many of our professionals.

ABRAHAM
For now we'll have her train with the team...

Adrianna races with the team, her speed naturally outpacing most of them. Except for Cettie, who remains her superior. But not without a noticeable strain that Adrianna lacks.

After the race, Cettie walks gingerly off the track -- no one notices.

EXT. PRACTICE STADIUM. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Cettie, cringes in pain as she submerges her leg in a bucket of iced water. Adrianna enters.

ADRIANNA

Cettie... Abraham is looking for you, he says that we should work with the...

She notices something's wrong.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

What is wrong... are you okay?

CETTIE

Yeah yeah, just a little swelling, it happens to everyone at some point.

Adrianna stares into the bucket.

ADRIANNA

Should I get Abraham?

CETTIE

No!

(beat)

It will be fine... no need to worry him, he already has enough on his mind. Don't worry, it will heal in plenty of time for the Qualifiers.

Adrianna takes a seat next to Cettie, finding it hard to shake her suffering.

EXT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER - DAY

The stadium is packed with spectators pining to see who will qualify to represent the Sudan in the upcoming games. Gen. Socou himself is present. The ruthless dictator enters a luxury VIP box with his military entourage.

He waves to the crowd-- all citizens oppressed by his tyrannical rule, all too afraid to boo him.

Malvo watches along side his father in the stands. The country's anthem plays as the crowd stands in reverence.

Adrianna helps Cettie stretch, being extra careful not to tweak her already damaged ankle.

ADRIANNA
How does that feel?

CETTIE
It doesn't really matter... I have
to win. Help me up.

Adrianna helps Cettie to her feet and the hobbled athlete attempts to put weight on her sore leg. She winces in pain.

ADRIANNA
Perhaps if you jog, it will loosen
up.

The two ladies jog at a very slow pace within the infield, but no luck. Cettie pulls up half way through. Her face struggles to repress her anguish from the pain and her disgust with herself.

CETTIE
Damn it!

ADRIANNA
Okay okay, we have time... let's go
ice it again before the race.

Adrianna helps Cettie off the field.

INT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Adrianna places an ice pack on Cettie's ankle.

ADRIANNA
There, that should help.

Cettie can't stop the tears; the ramifications of her injury is finally sinking in. Adrianna holds Cettie and sings to her the way Clarice had sung to her.

EXT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER

The runners make their way to the track.

Cettie, covered by her hooded track suit, emerges from the locker room no longer hampered by her limp. She trots across the infield to the starting line and commences her final stretches.

Abraham surveys the infield in search of his niece.

ABRAHAM
Where is Adrianna?

ASST. COACH
I saw her headed for the locker
room earlier.

Abraham walks towards the locker room to retrieve her.

INT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Abraham enters the locker room.

ABRAHAM
Adrianna, come on the race is about
to...

He finds Cettie sitting in her sweat suit nursing her injury.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
Cettie? Where is Adrianna?

Cettie drops her head in shame.

EXT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER - DAY

The hooded athlete finally de-hoods and we see that it isn't Cettie at all, but Adrianna wearing her uniform and name tag. None of the runners notice as they are called to take their marks.

Malvo, however, spots her from the bleachers and stands up focusing his eyes to be sure.

The pistol fires and the racers are off in a flash.

Adrianna rounds the first bend masterfully recreating her race routine. She sticks to lane 3 for a good portion of the race.

The other runners battle and push on the inside lanes. One of the women falls in a painful heap.

As the race progresses, Adrianna tucks close to the 3 leaders all jockeying for an advantage.

Abraham runs to the entrance leading onto the track but is halted by security and can only watch as his niece passes into final lap.

As the CLACKING alert for the final lap sounds Adrianna begins to make her move but finds herself boxed in by 2 runners nudging her relentlessly.

Coming into the final turn Adrianna, rather than fighting for the inside track, breaks out to lane 3 and kicks with all her might quickly catching up to the other runners.

The crowd roars noticing the young woman pushing forward.

Turning into the final stretch she blows past the other competitors gaining a sizable lead.

General Socou stands to his feet peering at the beautiful young athlete striding towards victory.

Adrianna breaks through the tape far ahead of her competition. The crowd erupts in a sea of applause -- among them General Socou.

Reporters rush to meet this unfamiliar track phenom.

They surround her asking questions. Adrianna's a deer caught in headlights.

INT. STORE - DAY

Clarice watches on a television set in an appliance store. She's shocked, concerned -- not quite ready to celebrate.

EXT. SPORTS TRACK. OLYMPIC QUALIFIER - DAY

Abraham arrives and immediately swoops his niece away from the reporters. His stern look shoots fear through her as they walk to the locker room.

ABRAHAM

What were you thinking? Do you know
what you have done?

Adrianna does not speak.

As they reach the tunnel military guards cut them off and they are quickly surrounded. Farcy approaches.

FARCY

Congratulations on your victory...
General Socou would like to
personally convey his gratitude for
your service in representing our
Nation in the games.

(MORE)

FARCY (CONT'D)

He has invited you and your Trainer
to dine with him at his Mansion
this evening.

ABRAHAM

Thank you, but I am afraid we will
have to decline... my athlete needs
her rest.

Abraham attempts to pass but is again stopped.

FARCY

I don't think you understand. The
General was quite insistent that
she attend... with or without you.

The Guards grab Adrianna and pull her away while restraining
Abraham. One of them punches him in the stomach, which
quickly subdues him.

They drag the young girl away kicking and screaming.

ADRIANNA

Uncle... UNCLE!

INT. MANSION. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna is forcibly placed at one end of an extravagant
dining table with two men standing sentinel behind her.

Farcy is one of them. His face full of disgust over his
actions. Farcy whispers to the frightened child.

FARCY

It will be best if you just do what
he says... please.

A swanky feast sits in front of her. Gen. Socou is seated at
the other end of the table. He stares at Adrianna, assessing
her.

GEN. SOCOU

What is the matter, do you not like
duck? I had my chef prepare it
special for the occasion... a feast
worthy of a champion.

No response from Adrianna.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)

That was quite an impressive
performance you gave today...
(MORE)

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
one that I trust you will have no
trouble repeating in the coming
games?

The terrified little girl does not respond. The General
signals to his men. Adrianna's brought closer to the
General's position.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
So does my star athlete have a
name?

ADRIANNA
Cettie...

The General flashes the devil's grin..

GEN. SOCOU
That is interesting... perhaps I am
confused because I have met all of
the runners including this Cettie
you claim to be.

Adrianna can feel herself sinking.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
I do not enjoy being misled... so I
will ask you once more... Who are
you?

She hesitates for a moment, but then --

ADRIANNA
My name is Adrianna Drounse...

He takes a sip of wine.

GEN. SOCOU
Ahh, splendid... so tell me
Adrianna, what is it you hope to
gain from racing?

He gives a warm, but disarming, smile as he waits for his
answer.

EXT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. PORCH - NIGHT

Abraham and Clarice wait nervously for Adrianna to return
from her dinner. Clarice's worry shows on her face.

CLARICE
I knew you should have never
convinced her to race.

ABRAHAM

What? Clarice you musn't worry. I'm sure Adrianna is fine... she is a smart girl.

CLARICE

How can you be so sure... that man, he is a murderer!

ABRAHAM

Look, there is no...

Their debate is interrupted by the arrival of a limousine. They stand. Adrianna exits the car and walks past her aunt and uncle without a word.

They wait for the limo to leave, then follow Adrianna inside.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ADRIANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrianna enters her room and removes the track jacket-- still wearing the uniform she ran in earlier that day.

Clarice and Abraham enter. Clarice throws her arms around the girl.

CLARICE

Adrianna sweetheart, are you okay?

ADRIANNA

Yes, I am fine... he did not harm me.

ABRAHAM

Well, what did he want?

ADRIANNA

I'm not sure... he just asked me questions.

The couple looks at one another. Clarice sits on the bed with Adrianna.

ABRAHAM

Questions? What sort of questions?

ADRIANNA

I don't know, just my name... where I am from, how long I've been training. Those sorts of questions.

ABRAHAM

...and that is it?

ADRIANNA

He knew I wasn't Cettie... said he had met the team and I wasn't on it.

ABRAHAM

Did you apologize for your actions?

ADRIANNA

I tried to but he wouldn't allow me. He insisted that I represent the Sudan in the upcoming games.

Abraham and Clarice are shocked, to say the least.

ABRAHAM

But that is absurd... surely he knows this cannot be done. The rules strictly forbid it!

ADRIANNA

Yes Uncle, I told the General this but he would not listen to me... he just kept saying that he would make it so.

(beat)

I don't see what the problem is. If the General thinks I'm good enough to symbolize my country, then why shouldn't I race?

ABRAHAM

Adrianna, this is not about being good enough, it is about participating in a scandal that will put you in harms way. I will speak to the General and tell him you won't be competing.

ADRIANNA

No Uncle, this is about you not believing in me and trying to hold me under your thumb! What do I have to do to prove myself to you?

(tearing up)

I don't know who the real Dictator is, the General or you!

Adrianna folds into Clarice's arms. Abraham walks to the door.

ABRAHAM
Someday you will understand that it
is your best interest I have in
mind.

He exits.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Abraham arrives at front gate of the mansion. Guards flank immediately.

GUARD 1
Who are you?

ABRAHAM
My name is Abraham Ndiaye... I'm
the Head coach for the women's
Track and Field team.

GUARD 1
So? What do you want?

ABRAHAM
I need to speak with the General...
about the team. It is urgent.

The guard looks at him suspiciously.

INT. MANSION. OFFICE - DAY

Abraham stands alone in the office of Gen. Socou. He
patiently surveys the room.

The General enters with Farcy and Guard 1.

GEN. SOCOU
Ahh, Coach Ndiaye it's been far too
long. I was notified about the
mishap with my associates at the
track. My apologies.

They shake hands as old acquaintances might.

ABRAHAM
General...

The General makes his way behind his huge desk. He takes a
seat.

GEN. SOCOU

So, what can I do for you this afternoon, Coach?

ABRAHAM

Well Sir, I needed to speak with you concerning one of my athletes... Adrianna Drounse.

GEN. SOCOU

Oh yes, Adrianna, a fine athlete. She will serve us well in the games.

ABRAHAM

Well, that's just it, General. You see Adrianna does not meet the age requirement to compete, she is only thirteen.

GEN. SOCOU

Yes, I am aware of her circumstance and I've made all the necessary arrangements. The Orphanage and Foster parent's will be completely cooperative. I have notified the school that she will be home tutored from now on and I am having the proper personal documents created for her as we speak. So you see, this is nothing to trouble yourself with...

(beat)

Is that everything?

The General's trademark devil's grin pierces Abraham.

ABRAHAM

Not exactly, General. You see Adrianna is not just one of my runners... she is my Niece. I am just here to inform you that she will not be competing in the Games... not this year anyhow.

The general quickly loses his smile.

GEN. SOCOU

That is actually unacceptable for me, Coach Ndiaye. You see Adrianna is the best chance we have for winning Gold and we simply cannot forfeit another four years.

(MORE)

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)

Our Country is at War and as its leader it is my duty to provide the citizens with a glimpse of Triumph in these troubling times. Also her victory will be a very lucrative indicator for us.

(beat)

I am sorry but I must insist on her inclusion. I do however thank you for bringing your concern to my attention. Now, is that all?

Abraham's speechless.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. ABRAHAM'S BED ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham prepares for bed. Clarice stares at him, worried.

CLARICE

Abraham, what are we going to do?

ABRAHAM

I suppose we could flee. Beyond that, it doesn't appear we have any choice. If Adrianna doesn't race she will not be safe... none of us will.

CLARICE

...and if she's caught then what? What safety can we provide her then?

Abraham gives it real thought.

EXT. PRACTICE STADIUM - DAY

Abraham and his Asst. Coach watch as the athletes practice.

ASST. COACH

Well it's simple then, she has to race! Morals are not worth dying over... yours or mine.

ABRAHAM

Yes, I suppose.

Before the Asst. Coach can press further, a small convoy of black vehicles arrives at the gate.

ASST. COACH

Look...

Abraham directs his attention to the caravan. Several men exit and walk towards the track. The racers slow their training down, having noticed the intrusion.

ASST. COACH (CONT'D)
Stop... don't even get that brain
of yours thinking. It's time to be
good soldiers and follow orders.

Farcy arrives carrying an envelope, surrounded by guards. He hands the envelope to Abraham.

FARCY
The General has instructed me to
deliver these documents to you...
and to verify that everything is
under control.

Farcy's eyes don't leave Abraham's. Abraham looks back to find Adrianna staring back at him, no longer stretching.

ABRAHAM
Yes... everything is fine.

FARCY
Good, the General will be pleased
to hear that. Be sure to let us
know if there is anything you need.

Farcy and his men leave.

Abraham opens the envelope and finds Adrianna's picture and Cettie's biological information, forged into an ID.

LATER

Abraham gathers the team together.

ABRAHAM
Alright, everyone settle down!

They quiet down.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
You ladies have worked very hard to
make it this far and what you've
been able to accomplish is no small
feat... you should be proud and you
should know that I am proud.

The ladies let themselves have a moment of pride.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

We go now to The United States of America to pit our best athletes against the rest of the World.

Abraham smiles. Proud.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Land of the Free, Home of the Brave as it is called. I know things aren't perfect here and there is much we would all like to change. I submit to you that if you want change, you must make the World stand up and take notice... give them a reason to care. For it is not just the recognition of this beautiful land of ours that we fight for, it is those freedoms that give credence to it's magnificence... And not only our freedoms, WE RUN FOR OUR FAMILIES, OUR RELATIVES... FOR OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS... WE RUN FOR PRIDE, FOR OUR TRADITIONS, AND OUR PLACE IN HISTORY... WE RUN FOR OUR COUNTRY... FROM ITS WIND SWEPT SHORES TO ITS GOLD LACED INLANDS... WE RUN FOR THE SUDAN... FOR AFRICA!

The team cheers. Adrianna stares at her uncle. He winks at her.

INT. AIRPORT. SECURITY CHECK - DAY

The team stands in line, getting checked through security.

Abraham and Adrianna wait while EDWON DOMEI, a guard with bulldog looks and an AK47, stares at her passport.

He looks at Adrianna then back at the passport. Adrianna cowers under Abraham.

EDWON

Wait here...

He takes the passport over to an older guard, SGT. NOTRUE ICRUE: late 40's, bearded, cold face, dead eyes. Their conversation cannot be heard but is a mite suspicious.

ADRIANNA

Are we in trouble?

ABRAHAM

Easy child, let me handle this.

Adrianna looks back at her teammates -- nervous faces, all.

Notrue looks at the passport then at the passengers. He approaches.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

Is there a problem?

NOTRUE

I am Notrue, head of International Flight Security and you are?

ABRAHAM

I am Abraham Ndiaye and this is my team.

Notrue gets it.

NOTRUE

Ahh, Abraham, yes! The General said you would be arriving!

He stamps the documents and hands them back to Abraham.

NOTRUE (CONT'D)

And this must be the young woman who's going to bring us the Gold?

He looks at Adrianna.

NOTRUE (CONT'D)

I have heard great things about you.

A smile breaks through his bushy beard. No response from Adrianna.

NOTRUE (CONT'D)

Well, enjoy your flight and may the God's bring you victory.

Notrue pats Abraham on the shoulder. They are allowed to pass along with the rest of the team. As they walk a smile lights Adrianna's face.

ADRIANNA

See Uncle, the General has taken care of everything.

Abraham's not as assured. It might've been better to have gotten caught.

ABRAHAM
Yes, I suppose he has...

INT. MANSION. DUNGEON - DAY

The General walks down a dimly lit corridor with Farcy.

FARCY
...Sergeant Notrue reports that the
team has just left.

GEN. SOCOU
Splendid... this is good news, much
needed on a day such as this.

FARCY
Such as this?

The General looks at Farcy.

GEN. SOCOU
You have been a good Sergeant...
served me well and done all I have
required of you...

FARCY
Yes sir.

GEN. SOCOU
However, in these trying times our
resolve will be tested like never
before and I must be certain that
those who serve me remain devoted
to our cause... I must demand
unquestioned and unwavering
allegiance.

They enter a dank chamber; surgical utensils, restraints, etc
-- most likely used for torture. Several other guards are
inside.

One of them closes the door once the General and Farcy enter,
halting Farcy's progression and, more importantly, hindering
his escape.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
I have suspected the presence of a
defector in our ranks for some time
now and recently my suspicions were
confirmed.

FARCY
I don't understand.

GEN. SOCOU
Someone has been supplying
information to the Gorillas... a
traitor, but perhaps you already
know that.

FARCY
...What are you saying?

The General stops and turns to Farcy.

GEN. SOCOU
I'm saying that as my Lieutenant it
is your responsibility to assure
that these sorts of things don't
happen and as such you have failed
me!

The guards cock their guns. .

Suddenly, from another door a man is dragged in-- his head is
covered by a cloth sack.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
Situations like these require great
consideration. On one hand you've
shown a lack of judgement... on the
other hand this is not a mistake I
feel you will make again.

The sack is removed to reveal LUTER BINTO, the soldier Farcy
was yelling at in the city.

He's been beaten and gagged. Farcy's puts two and two
together.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
Then of course there is the matter
of... the other hand.

Luter's arm is stretched across a table. Another guard
approaches with a machete. Luter's screams are muffled by his
gag. The guard raises the weapon, prepared to hack off
Luter's arm.

The General stares curiously at a sympathetic Farcy.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
STOP... LET HIM DO IT!

Farcy hesitates.

FARCY
But General... he is, my brother.

GEN. SOCOU

Ahh yes, he is isn't he? Well then
I suggest you cut carefully because
you only have two choices... you
either maim him...

Socou pulls out a pistol.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)

Or I kill him... then I kill you!

He points the gun at Luter's head. Farcy glances at his
whimpering younger brother, who's reduced to pleading
pathetically through his gag.

Farcy grabs the razor sharp blade and slowly approaches his
brother.

Gen. Socou's pleased with the muffled screams that fill the
room.

FADE OUT:

INT. PLANE - DAY

The plane sours through billowy clouds on the way to America.

The entire team is unable to contain their excitement.
Abraham sits next to an eager Adrianna, whose view of the
vast ocean has made her immensely infatuated with flight.

INT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

A flight weary team arrives and is met by DANIEL TRACE: late
30's, Caucasian Beatles hair, and a leisure suit -- their
Olympic liaison.

DANIEL

Ahh, Coach Ndiaye I presume...
Welcome to America.

His smile is as inviting as his pronunciation is terrible. He
and Abraham shake hands.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I am Daniel Trace, your Olympic
liaison... pleasure to meet you.

ABRAHAM

Likewise...

DANIEL

Well, you all must be tired after your flight... I'll get you to the Hotel to check in and rest... follow me.

The team of women stare in every direction, awe struck by the simplest things we Americans sometimes take for granted. Some take pictures.

INT. TEAM BUS - DAY

Daniel stands at the front of the bus, talking with the driver as they ride. Abraham, still uneasy, sits in an isle seat next to his Asst. Coach.

ASST. COACH

Are you alright?

ABRAHAM

Right as can be expected under the circumstances.

Asst. Coach isn't convinced.

ASST. COACH

Look, what's done is done... no use worrying over it now. It will only make us look more suspicious.

ABRAHAM

If only it were that simple.

ASST. COACH

...and why shouldn't it be? We are Coaches, our responsibility is to coach, nothing more.

Daniel takes an isle seat directly across from them.

DANIEL

Alright we'll be arriving at the Hotel soon. I have already gotten your passes and itinerary so the rest will be like a structured vacation... no muss, no fuss.

Abraham doesn't respond. Daniel notices his apprehension.

Asst. Coach intervenes.

ASST. COACH

Umm, forgive the Coach he is still
a bit jet lagged.

DANIEL

Of course, of course.

Adrianna sits beside a fairly indifferent Cettie towards the rear of the bus. Her eyes bug out at the universal mecca that is Los Angeles, California.

ADRIANNA

America... I never dreamed it would
be this beautiful. Do you think
they will let us see it?

CETTIE

Doesn't matter... It's just a place
like any other place.

Adrianna doesn't get it.

ADRIANNA

Are you upset with me?

Cettie relents, ashamed of her behavior.

CETTIE

No child, if I am upset with anyone
it is myself. I never imagined this
day in such a way. Always dreamed
that I would be as delighted to be
here as the rest of you. I never
counted on arriving with a broken
heart.

(beat)

But my problems are not yours to
bare. You have done nothing wrong.
You deserve this moment...
forgiven?

Adrianna smiles at her and nuzzles into her chest. Cettie holds her, warmly.

Suddenly, Daniel calls out from the front of the bus.

DANIEL

There it is everybody... Los
Angeles Olympic stadium.

The ladies' attention shifts to the right side windows, where the coliseum emerges over the horizon.

Camera flashes turn the bus into a lighthouse as the team delights in capturing the image of their cathedral.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM - NIGHT

Teams representing 140 Countries stand in the tunnels waiting to make their ascent into the stadium. The 'ROCKET MAN' flies into the arena landing perfectly on his mark.

Adrianna and her ten teammates wait with twenty of their countrymen. Spectators lift cards into the air to display the flags of all participating nations.

One by one the teams emerge and take a lap around the track.

The crowd roars as Adrianna, waving a small Sudanese flag, and her team walk the precession and make their way to the infield.

Once there, US PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN declares the 1984 Olympic Tournament officially open. Etta James sings, 'When the Saints Go Marching In,' and Whitney Houston sings the American National Anthem.

Adrianna watches fixedly as American Decathlete, RAFAEL JOHNSON, runs past her position carrying the Olympic torch. He lights the Rings of Unity on the Olympic cauldron, the flames brightly burning above the audience.

MONTAGE

- Adrianna and Abraham watch as their countrymen are soundly defeated, growing more and more disheartened as her event approaches.

- Other countries are racking up victories and medals, saluting their homes as they're awarded.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. 10000 M QUALIFIERS (INFIELD) - DAY

Abraham stretches Adrianna for the fast approaching 10,000M qualifier. She's clearly terrified. Abraham, having made peace with the situation, focuses on the task at hand.

ADRIANNA

Uncle... I am afraid.

Abraham looks at his niece lovingly.

ABRAHAM

It is alright to be afraid, these are frightening times. But you should know that no matter the outcome of this race, I could not be prouder of what you've been able to accomplish. Fear and Doubt has always loomed for those fighting to make History but those emotions are only defeated by facing them... that is how your courage is shown. I love you dearly, my child.

Abraham smiles and kisses her forehead gently.

MOMENTS LATER

Adrianna stands in her lane trying to shake off the last of her willies as the name CETTIE TULU echoes into her ear from a nearby megaphone.

She raises her hand apprehensively. Her teammates cheer and wave flags from their assigned seating positions.

MONTAGE

- Clarice listens to the radio from home.
- Malvo listens from his home as well.
- The General watches on television, in the comfort of his much better home.
- All of them, in their own way, as constant eyes on Adrianna.

END MONTAGE

Adrianna stares at her competitors -- all older, established athletes. She takes her mark, studying the track. Already painting her path along her mind's canvas.

ANNOUNCER

Get set!

The starter's pistol fires! Adrianna shoots out of her stance with the other racers.

She sticks to her routine, eventually taking her place near the front runners.

However, these athletes are more formidable than the ones she's faced in the past.

She pushes with all of her might as the leader's pack narrows to only a few runners, but it's definitely not a breeze.

They bunch in tightly as the race progresses, each nudging and positioning for a final break out. A ruthlessness Adrianna's never quite experienced before.

On the final lap Adrianna gets caught inside. She's kicked in the leg by one of the runners stumbling her and opening a gash on her shin. She yelps in pain, her third place win more a miracle than a valiant success.

Adrianna falls to the track as blood streams from the cut on her leg. Abraham and Asst. Coach quickly arrive beside the weeping child to assist her.

They wrap her leg in a cloth to stop the blood flow as she screams in agony. Her team watches in dismay.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Oh no, it looks like the Sudanese contestant Cettie Tulu, received a nasty cleating during the race. She is still down being attended to.

MONTAGE

- Clarice, Malvo, and the General all follow the report.
- Clarice and Malvo are worried for Adrianna.
- The General Slams his fist onto the desk.

END MONTAGE

The crowd watches in horror as Adrianna is loaded onto a stretcher and carted away.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

Adrianna, holding Abraham's hand, covers her tear streamed eyes and groans in pain. Olympic paramedics work tirelessly on her wound.

They clean and stitch the gash on Adrianna's numbed leg. Abraham remains by her side, protecting her always.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. INFIRMARY TUNNEL - NIGHT

Doctor SPENCER CROSBY, mid 40's, balding used-car-salesman looks, speaks to Abraham in the hallway.

ABRAHAM

What are you saying Doctor?

DR. CROSBY

Look, it's like this, we've sutured the wound but she's still going to have a great deal of soreness for the next few days, possibly weeks and she needs to stay off of that leg. I understand what's at stake here and it's not up to me, but I have to strongly recommend that she not continue in the games.

Abraham's face drops.

ABRAHAM

Thank you Doctor.

Dr. Crosby departs.

Back in the infirmary paramedic, BEN STOKLEY, mid 30's, African American, side-kick type, tends to Adrianna's injury. He finishes wrapping it. .

BEN

You know, you remind me of my kid sister back home... except she's only 13. But she's got the same innocence in her eyes.

ADRIANNA

Back home?

BEN

Yeah, Detroit... it's in Michigan.

Adrianna giggles.

ADRIANNA

Home of the Great Lakes... yes, I know of it.

BEN

Oh the lakes are just the beginning. We're talking the home of Motown, Kellogg cereal and birth place of the American automobile industry.

ADRIANNA

All that AND lakes?

Ben smiles.

BEN
Yes, those too...

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Abraham and Adrianna arrive to find the team waiting on them.

Adrianna's leg is heavily bandaged; she has to scoot around on crutches. The team cheers the brave child and welcomes her with warm, open arms.

INT. HOTEL. ADRIANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cettie and Adrianna sit in bed together. Huddled up in a consoling embrace.

ADRIANNA
What am I going to do?

Cettie's feels Adrianna's hair.

CETTIE
That is a decision you will need to make on your own. As your teammate I'd say be happy with what you've done. As your friend I will say you don't want to look back over your life with regrets of what could have been. In your heart you know what the right choice is.

INT. HOTEL. ABRAHAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham is on the phone with the General.

ABRAHAM
So you see General Socou, there is no way Adrianna can continue to compete... the risk is far too great.

GEN. SOCOU (PHONE)
Is it now? And do you think the needs of our Country are any less great? I suggest you consider the lives of you and your niece if you fail at this task!

Gen. Socou ends the call leaving Abraham alone, hopeless. He sits, possibly resigning to his fate.

A KNOCK. Abraham opens the door to find Adrianna.

ADRIANNA
I want to race.

ABRAHAM
Do you know what you're asking for
child?

Adrianna doesn't waver.

ADRIANNA
For Freedom...

Abraham nods.

ABRAHAM
Alright then... we must hurry,
there is no time to waste.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Abraham, Cettie, and Asst. Coach all converge to help
Adrianna prepare her leg.

Cettie ices the wound on Adrianna's leg.

CETTIE
How do you feel.

ADRIANNA
Like I want to vomit.

Cettie laughs.

CETTIE
Then you are feeling appropriately.

Cettie gets a bit serious.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
Would you like me to pray with you?

Adrianna nods.

CETTIE (CONT'D)
Close your eyes.

Adrianna obeys. Cettie closes her eyes tightly, pleading:

CETTIE (CONT'D)

Oh gracious and merciful God, we come before you with bowed heads and humble hearts thanking you for your unconditional love. We realize that we could never imagine what plans you have in store for us and so we ask only that you grant us the strength and courage to fulfill whatever task lies ahead... And that you allow us to represent you in the best way we know how. These and all blessings we pray in your matchless name. Amen.

Adrianna opens her eyes. Cettie kisses her cheek.

Abraham bandages and tapes Adrianna's leg.

ADRIANNA

Uncle, what will happen if I lose?

Abraham assures her with a loving gaze.

ABRAHAM

You know, I was a great Sharp Shooter once... won many competitions. You know what my experience taught me?

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)

That there are millions of factors in life that we cannot control... ours is not to focus on the what if's but to trust in the possibilities. Focus on those and you will do just fine.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. 10000M FINALS - NIGHT

Adrianna is staggered back in the second group of runners. She stands on the outer most position of her heat.

The race starts with a single shot. They're off!

Adrianna's heat quickly catches the first group who narrowly close in on her position. They nudge and push Adrianna, fighting for position. She remains in the 4th lane as they cross her, inching further inside.

As the race progresses the groups thin out. Adrianna keeps her lock on the lead group managing to stay on their heels.

She grimaces as the painful wound begins to flare from beneath her bandages. The pack continues to split, spots of blood soak through Adrianna's wrap.

As the final lap approaches, Adrianna glances at the leader times and realizes how much time she must gain to catch the leader.

As she rounds the first turn for the lap Adrianna breaks into an all out sprint quickly gaining ground on the leading pack.

Her face tears as the pain of her injury intensifies. But she persists.

Adrianna takes the lead and separates as the other runners struggle to keep up. Adrianna rounds around the final curve; agony is her co-pilot here.

Her lead has become sizable; victory seems inevitable.

One of her stitches breaks; it feels like death courses through her body. She screams in horror. Blood quickly soaks the wrap around her leg.

The racers don't waste the opportunity: pouncing like predators to gain their ground.

But she persists. She breaks out of her gallop into a precision stride picking up speed. The air fills with the crushed dreams of her enemies.

The crowd erupts as Adrianna breaks through the tape with raised arms. Her blood drenched shoes hobble to a stop. The other racers look upon her with reverence: she's one of them, now.

Abraham makes his way through them and grabs Adrianna, lifting her off the ground.

ADRIANNA
Uncle... we did it!

ABRAHAM
No child, you did it.

He sets her down and tightly ties a towel around the wound.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
We need too have this examined.

ADRIANNA
Yes, please.

Abraham helps Adrianna off the track.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. INFIRMARY OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Crosby sits in his office.

Ben walks in; he's in a hurry. He's got Adrianna's file.

BEN

Doctor... the young Sudanese woman
is back in the infirmary with
ripped stitches.

Ben glares suspiciously at the chart -- something isn't
right.

DR. CROSBY

So... all those years of Med-School
and you need my consult on
something as simple as stitches?

Ben pats the file.

BEN

No sir, I'll handle it... sorry to
bother you.

Dr. Crosby waves him away.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

Adrianna lies on the operating table breathing through the
pain. Abraham hovers over her with his hand on her shoulder.
Ben enters with the file.

Ben looks at Abraham.

BEN

Well I see someone ignored the
Doctor's warning.

ADRIANNA

It's not his fault, I insisted on
competing.

Ben snaps on a pair of rubber gloves and puts on his
spectacles.

BEN

Yep ripped the stitches right out.
Alright you've lost a lot of blood
so were going to need to Transfuse.

The doctor grabs a file and stares at it.

BEN (CONT'D)

Let's see here Cettie Tulu, says here you're O negative. Hmm, that's odd... the blood work up on you the other day says B negative.

ABRAHAM

What does that mean?

BEN

Well nothing as long as we use the right one.

ADRIANNA

What happens if it's wrong?

BEN

Well receiving the wrong blood will most likely result in an acute hemolytic reaction... hemolysis, renal failure, shock, real nasty stuff.

ADRIANNA

Uncle?

Abraham keeps his cool.

ABRAHAM

Doctor, may I have a word with you... privately?

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. INFIRMARY TUNNEL - NIGHT

Ben glances into the room at Adrianna. He turns to Abraham, still processing Abraham's story.

BEN

Look, I can't promise anything. I'll try to keep this away from the media until the two of you have gone but I have an obligation to report this to my superiors.

He glances at Adrianna again.

BEN (CONT'D)

I can repair the leg and give her something to prevent infection but trust me Buddy, you need to be headed home on the first thing smoking... for her sake.

Abraham nods.

SMASH CUT:

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Daniel is a bit shocked.

DANIEL

But the awards ceremony is
tomorrow.

ABRAHAM

I am terribly sorry but Adrianna's
Mother has become very ill... we
must return to Africa immediately.

Daniel, disheartened, concedes.

DANIEL

Yes, of course... I'll get you
booked on the first morning flight.

ABRAHAM

Thank you.

INT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM. AWARD CEREMONY - NIGHT

The following night the crowd waits with baited breath to see
the awe inspiring woman whose bravery, resilience, and
determination captured their collective hearts.

The announcement of the 10,000 M race echoes through the
stadium. All of the participants of the race emerge from the
entrance tunnel-- Cettie has taken Adrianna's place, even
wearing the same hair style. Her leg is heavily bandaged as
she crutches along.

Tear swept faces saturate the stands and the applause of the
crowd is deafening as the Gold is placed around Cettie's
neck. She is given a microphone.

CETTIE

I thank you all so much and I will
never forget this day as long as I
live. I have never before felt as
Free as I do right now. Thank you.

MONTAGE

- Viewers around the world tear up as they watch the televised feed of the award ceremony..

- Those who know Adrianna, however, aren't fooled.

END MONTAGE

Cettie takes a bouquet of flowers which she raises to her adoring, easily fooled, fans.

INT. AIR PORT. SUDAN - NIGHT

Abraham arrives, pushing Adrianna in her new wheelchair. They move quickly through the airport, virtually unnoticed.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

They arrive back at the house later that night. The place is completely dark and the front door is wide open. Something's wrong.

ABRAHAM

Wait here.

Abraham exits the truck and creeps cautiously toward the house.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abraham enters to find the home in total disarray. It has obviously been ransacked-- most likely by order of the General.

He slowly examines his shattered sanctuary, desperate to find Clarice.

Finally, he lifts a rug to reveal a door leading to a hidden cellar.

INT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE. CELLAR - NIGHT

He creeps down the stairs into the dark room. As he reaches the bottom staircase, the barrel of a rifle meets him from the side. He immediately raises his arms.

CLARICE (O.S)

Don't move!

ABRAHAM

Clarice?

CLARICE (O.S.)

Abraham?

CLICK an above head light illuminates the room, revealing Clarice holding one of Abraham's sniper rifles. The lovers embrace.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Oh my God, it is you! I thought they had come back.

They kiss tenderly.

ABRAHAM

What happened here?

CLARICE

The General and his men... they came late in the evening. I hid just before they kicked down the door but I heard him clearly, shouting orders. Telling them to kill anyone they found.

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Adrianna watches, bated breath, as Abraham and Clarice emerge from the house. They make their way back to the truck. Abraham carries some items, including the gun.

CLARICE

Adrianna, my child... are you okay?

Adrianna nods. Clarice hugs her tightly.

ABRAHAM

We must go, the General will be looking for us.

CLARICE

Go where?

ABRAHAM

We have to flee the Country... go far away from here.

Adrianna protests.

ADRIANNA

Flee, but what about my brothers
and sisters... I cannot leave them
here!

ABRAHAM

Adrianna, what exactly did you and
the General discuss?

ADRIANNA

He asked me why I ran and I...

Her fear creeps back to her.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)

I told him I planned to rescue
them.

Abraham immediately, silently, makes his decision. He throws
the truck into gear and speeds off towards Kassala.

EXT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

The truck pulls to a halt outside of the Adeele home.

Abraham gets out with his gun pointed and approaches the
house. He enters.

Adrianna and Clarice remain in the truck... at least
momentarily. Adrianna hops out of the truck and hobbles
quickly towards the house, unable to repress her curiosity.

CLARICE

ADRIANNA NO... COME BACK!

INT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

Adrianna enters the house just in time to see Abraham
standing over the slain bodies of Safinna and Dumas -- both
brutally executed.

She races through the house screaming the names of her
siblings. Nothing.

Adrianna screams out anguish. Abraham embraces the broken
child.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Abraham opens the shed and Adrianna enters. She looks around for a moment and her attention is drawn to the medal she stole, still hanging on the wall with something taped behind it.

She extracts a note from behind the medal.

MALVO (V.O.)

The General's troops took the children. I heard them say they were taking them to the palace but I could not stop them. I have gone for help and will get them back or die trying. I am sorry, I will not fail you again. Malvo.

Adrianna hands the note to Abraham. Upon reading the note, he's made his second decision.

ABRAHAM

Alright, come on.

They exit the shed.

MONTAGE

- The General's men carry out bloody raids on various homes. Their target: Adrianna.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Abraham stands peeking out of the window gun in hand like the famous Malcolm X photo.

Clarice sits on the bed stroking the hair of a slumbering Adrianna.

CLARICE

Abraham... what are you thinking?

ABRAHAM

I keep trying to think what would Adam do. He fought all of his life for his beliefs, but me... what have I ever truly fought to protect?

CLARICE

That is not fair Abraham... to compare yourself to him. You are...

He cuts her short.

ABRAHAM

I am what... a coward?

CLARICE

No, you are diplomatic.

ABRAHAM

I see no difference. I have always compromised rather than confront.

CLARICE

There is no shame in compromise, my love. Compromise is how peace is made.

ABRAHAM

There will be no peace here... not while that man lives!

CLARICE

What are you saying?

Abraham raises his eyes to meet her.

ABRAHAM

I'm saying that some things are worth the fight. Some things are worth dying for.

Abraham's determined. Clarice is terrified.

AMERICAN NEWS REPORT:

REPORTER

The sports World was shocked this afternoon by scandal from the Olympic games as reports surface of fraud surrounding the Sudanese Track & Field team who recently took home their first ever gold medal in the women's 10000 M competition...

INT. AIR PORT. SUDAN - DAY

The rest of the team arrives to the jeers of a packed airport full of their countrymen. They are swarmed by reporters asking about the reports of scandal.

Cettie is bombarded with questions, immediately overwhelmed.

But --

GEN. SOCOU (O.S.)
STOOOOOOOOOP!

The place goes silent as Gen. Socou and his troops arrive. They approach the Olympians, who cower in his presence.

Cettie, sporting the gold emblem around her neck, hangs her head in fear. The General stares at her, then at the medal. He raises her head to confirm that she isn't the child he met.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
I am not a very patient man, so I
will ask you this only once. Where
are they?

Cettie looks Gen. Socou in the eyes.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Abraham, on foot, approaches the gate to the mansion. As he draws close he raises his hands in surrender. Guards quickly descend on him.

GUARD 1
STOP INTRUDER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING
HERE?

ABRAHAM
I have to speak to the General.

GUARD 1
The General is not here... come
back another time!

ABRAHAM
He will want to see me immediately
upon his return... may I wait for
him?

The Guard eyes him suspiciously.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
He will be very angry if you let me
go.

Adrianna watches from the truck-- hidden in the distance.

Guard 1 ushers Abraham into the complex

INT. ABRAHAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Adrianna, worried sick, continues to watch the gate.

The General's convoy rushes past her position into the complex.

INT. MANSION. OFFICE - NIGHT

Abraham waits again. Heavy footsteps approach the office.

The door opens. The General enters with Farcy, Guard 1 and several other armed guards. He is obviously displeased to see Abraham there with out Adrianna.

GEN. SOCOU

You are a very brave man to show
your face here... brave and
foolish!

ABRAHAM

General I must speak to you.

GEN. SOCOU

NO, YOU DON'T SPEAK! Do you realize
the trouble you have caused me old
man? Reporters questioning me as to
my involvement in this so called
scandal... Calling for my
resignation from office!

ABRAHAM

General I...

The General back-hands Abraham.

GEN. SOCOU

I SAID SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

He hushes himself.

Where is she?

ABRAHAM

I sent her some place safe.

The General laughs.

GEN. SOCOU

Safe... there is no safe place for
that little Bitch! And you... you
WILL tell me where she is!

ABRAHAM

I am sorry General, but she is
Family. I will not turn her over...
not even to you.

GEN. SOCOU

Is that so? Don't worry old man, we
have ways of making you talk.

(to guards)

GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

The Guards hustle Abraham away..

INT. MANSION. DUNGEON - NIGHT

They take Abraham to one of several barred cells. Guard 1
delivers a few face splitting blows to Abraham before
throwing him to the floor.

The other cells have occupants who all watch in horror.

The guards lock the cage and depart. Once they've gone,
Abraham sits up with his back against the bars.

Suddenly...

CLANK CLANK

Abraham turns to find Poull standing in the adjoining cell.

The small boy holds a tin cup out to Abraham. He accepts. The
other siblings huddle together at the opposite end of the
cell watching.

ABRAHAM

What is your name, child?

Poull glances back at his siblings.

POULL

Poull...

ABRAHAM

Poull Adeele?

The young boy nods. Abraham smiles.

INT. MANSION. OFFICE - NIGHT

The General sits at his desk watching a local news report.

He angrily swipes at the objects on his desk, sending them to the floor. Farcy stands near him.

FARCY

What do you want us to do with the old man?

GEN. SOCOU

He needs time to think about the severity of his position. Wait until morning... then we will begin enhanced interrogation.

FARCY

But Sir, won't his disappearance only further media speculation?

Gen. Socou glares at his lead henchman.

GEN. SOCOU

DO YOU THINK I GIVE A...

Unfortunately for him,

AN EXPLOSION

The building quakes violently in response to heavy mortar fire.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Adrianna watches in horror from Abraham's truck.

Militants from the Guerilla Republic fire rockets at the gate and Guard tower sending them up in a cloud of flames and debris.

The entrance is quickly decimated. A large faction of troops emerge from the bush storming the compound-- Malvo is one of them.

The heavily armed Resistance forces push through the gate and engage in a bloody conflict with Government Guards marked by explosions and muzzle flashes.

INT. MANSION. HALL - NIGHT

The General rushes through the mansion toward the garages as bombs blow away the exterior walls. They make a detour; or whatever detours they can, given all the structural damage.

INT. MANSION. DUNGEON - NIGHT

The room shakes as the barrage continues above ground. The captives scream and cower in fear.

ABRAHAM
Children... over here!

The children obey, making their way to Abraham.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)
Cover your heads.

INT. MANSION. GARAGE - NIGHT

The General and his Guards finally make it to the garage.

The doors lift Resistance troops are there waiting and pour bullets into the room. Guards engage them, allowing the General and Farcy to escape back into the mansion.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Adrianna cannot sit still any longer. She starts the car and throws it into gear-- reverse.

After backing into a tree, she shifts and lunges forward through the demolished entrance gate.

She speeds up the lawn towards the mansion, slamming the truck through the front door.

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Adrianna climbs out of the incapacitated truck and limps through the massive building. She creeps along, dodging troops from both sides as they skirmish throughout the facility.

As she sneaks up a stair column, someone nabs her ankle.

Adrianna looks down, shocked to find Farcy mortally wounded and bleeding out on the floor. He gasps for breath through blood filled lungs.

ADRIANNA
Where is my family?

Farcy cannot speak.

ADRIANNA (CONT'D)
THEY ARE ALL I HAVE... PLEASE, HELP
ME!

Farcy reaches down and grabs the cell keys from his belt handing them to her. As he takes his final breath he points in the direction of the dungeon. Farcy dies with his eyes open, making up for his misdeeds in his last moments.

Adrianna follows Farcy's finger. She soon rounds a corner and is met by the barrel of a gun. Malvo stands in front of her.

MALVO
You? I almost killed you... what
are you doing here?

He lowers his weapon. Before she can speak Malvo grabs her hand.

MALVO (CONT'D)
Come we must go!

She snatches away from his grasp.

ADRIANNA
No, my family is here... I WON'T
LEAVE THEM!

Malvo looks at her understandingly.

MALVO
Okay, follow me and stay down!

Adrianna obeys, stalking Malvo closely. They come to a set of stairs descending downward -- the dungeon. They enter the dark cavern.

INT. MANSION. DUNGEON - NIGHT

Abraham and the children huddle near the column, just as we last saw them.

Malvo and Adrianna enter. The captives plead for release. The building shakes like the end of the world.

Adrianna quickly unlocks the cells freeing Abraham. Her siblings crowd around and hug her tightly.

MALVO
Give me the keys, quickly!

Adrianna hands Malvo the keys and he unlocks the other cells. Freed slaves run from the tomb.

Malvo returns to Adrianna and her family.

MALVO (CONT'D)
Hurry, we have to go now!

They make their way back up the stairs. Abraham takes the lead, carrying the kids as Malvo helps Adrianna through the house.

MALVO (CONT'D)
Come on, we're almost there... it's just beyond those doors!

They move swiftly towards the garage as the building crumbles around them. Abraham and the children disappear through the doors.

General Socou steps out hall holding a pistol, watching them all run. He has been shot-- not mortally. Blood streams from his mouth.

GEN. SOCOU
NOOOO!

The General raises his gun and fires a shot hitting Malvo in the back. He crumbles on top of Adrianna, pinning her to the floor.

General Socou stumbles over, looking down as Adrianna struggles to free herself from under Malvo's limp body.

GEN. SOCOU (CONT'D)
There's no escaping me... Bitch!

The General points his gun at her head.

ABRAHAM (V.O.)
GENERAL!

The General raises his head just in time for a single bullet to pass through his skull. His eyes wide open, the hole in his forehead draining blood.

He plummets to the ground revealing the one time Sharp Shooting Champion Abraham Ndiaye, standing in the doorway of the garage, rifle aimed.

ABRAHAM
Consider yourself resigned.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Darvish stares in shock. Adrianna is more reflective.

ADRIANNA

A brave man once told me that there are millions of factors in life that we cannot control... ours is not to focus on the what if's but to trust in the possibilities. So you see Mr. Sinclair, I am not seeking the forgiveness or sympathy of the sports viewing community.

(beat)

I don't need their awards accolades or even their approval. Because I have what is truly important... My family.

Adrianna stands and exits -- limping slightly.

DARVISH

Cut!

Darvish watches as she is met by Abraham, Clarice, her now older siblings, her husband Malvo and dear friend Cettie. As the group departs together, Darvish contemplates.

NARRATOR

I may have miss-spoken earlier. True this story is not specifically about Derartu Cettie Tulu, or her athletic accomplishments. Because before it all... before becoming the first sub-Saharan woman ever to win a Gold Medal in the 1988 Olympics... before winning Gold in both the 1992 and 2000 games, the most important role she played as a runner was that of a teammate... a mentor... and a friend to a terrified little girl.

FADE TO BLACK