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MA Writing for Script & Screen
Individual Script Development Workshop WSS720 21/22
Part-Time Study Block S2
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Portfolio

Writer's Statement	500
Premise	50
Treatment	950
Screenplay	2500
Total Words	4000

PIANO

Writer's Statement

Similar to Jane Campion's masterpiece of the same name, *Piano* explores transactional relationships. Chidi pays Natalya to keep his place clean and wash his clothes. Natalya cleans for Chidi in order to support her son.

Although a dramatic romance, *Piano* also embraces certain defining qualities of the romantic comedy, for example, just as in *Notting Hill* quirky secondary characters advance the plot, so in *Piano* Aleyah provides plot development, reveals character and illustrates theme.

Alexeyev illustrates Natalya's attraction to flawed, broken men while her friend Aleyah illustrates the grand theme of the narrative - the human inner struggle for survival.

With regards to character identification I have attempted to challenge stereotype. Chidi is dreadlocked from Barbados, yet educated at Cambridge while we are introduced to International Law student Natalya wearing 'nothing but a *Pussy Riot* T-shirt.'

The story follows a three act structure. The inciting incident happens immediately when Alexeyev, Natalya's ex, interrupts a moment of sexual intimacy. From that moment, Natalya focuses on her role as mother and her goal of sending money home. Once that has been achieved, she is able to focus on her romance. Active questions include: How will Chidi react to Alexeyev? Will Chidi pay Natalya? And finally, does Natalya believe Chidi loves her?

Although a dramatic romance, *Piano* also embraces certain defining qualities of the romantic tragedy. In *The Souvenir* (Hogg, J. 2019) Anthony (Tom Burke) substitutes the pursuit of love for the pursuit of drugs. So does Chidi. However, unlike Anthony, Chidi has not completely committed to this destructive path. Choosing to pawn his piano and use the funds to pay Natalya (rather than to buy cocaine) is an act of selfless, sacrificial love. Unlike Anthony, the presence of love in Chidi's life is able to inspire him to make a positive choice.

Through Natalya, *Piano* subverts audience expectations in the way it challenges implied readings of her character and forces audiences to reflect on their own values and

preconceptions. In this sense it is the viewer who is subjected to character growth - “character’s want and audience’s need” (Finnegan 320:2016).

I have adopted various dialogue techniques, including the following three, for which I have given examples:

1. Pursuing Own Goals

In scene 5, when Chidi tells Natalya she sounds like a piano, Natalya focuses on her more practical goal (or ‘want’): getting paid.

2. Delayed Response

In scene 32 Natalya ignores Chidi’s request to move in with her, replying ‘I have to send the money to my mother.’ In her next line she responds to the previous request, saying ‘Are you sure you can handle me all of the time?’

3. Defining Genre

In the climax when Mick calls Chidi he turns his phone off, choosing his shared moment with Natalya (need) over his initial desire for validation (want). This illustrates a conflict in values, a defining quality of the dramatic romance.

Piano shows us that even in a fallen world, inhabited by flawed, broken people, there is always the hope of the presence of love.

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Finnegan, J., 2022. The screenplay and the spectator: Exploring audience identification in narrative structure. *Journal of Screenwriting*, Volume 7(Number 3), pp.319-330.

Newton, S., 2022. SOAS University of London. *School of Law | SOAS University of London*. Available at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/law/> [Accessed April 19, 2022].

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Filmography

The Souvenir. 2019. [film] Directed by J. Hogg. UK: A24.

Notting Hill. 1999. [film] Directed by R. Michell. UK: Universal Pictures.

The Piano. [film] Directed by J. Campion. UK: Miramax Films.

Premise

When an advertising executive with addiction issues falls behind paying the salary of the woman he has hired as a cleaner, and with whom he has fallen in love, he pawns his electric piano to pay what he owes. But it's her piano, and not his, that proves his love.

Treatment

NATALYA, from Russia, is fighting to provide for her son while studying for a masters degree in International Law in London.

Natalya works part-time as a cleaner for advertising executive CHIDI, who also happens to be her new love interest.

We join the couple during an act of morning intimacy when Natalya, to Chidi's dismay, breaks off their 'shared moment' to answer a phone call from her ex-husband, ALEXEYEV, calling from Russia.

Chidi retreats to his studio, plonks himself in his chair, takes out a wrap of cocaine from his drawer and uses a bank card to shovel some up his nose.

Natalya appears, and apologises. As she does so she receives a text message, which she keeps to herself, but the look on her face tells Chidi it is offensive, from Alexeyev - no doubt a derogatory slur. Chidi asks why she takes the call, to which Natalya responds she is worried it may be about their son. Natalya reminds Chidi that he owes her money.

Chidi mumbles he has cash flow problems. Natalya has a dilemma. Stop seeing him? See him but stop cleaning for him? She is caught between being his girlfriend and being his maid.

Chidi gets a text message from the bank. His payment for his hire purchase of his synthesiser has been rejected. But, resilient, he moves ahead with his work and starts to record a commercial.

Natalya goes to the bathroom, next door to the studio, and Chidi's microphone amplifies the sound of Natalya as she micturates. It sounds like a musical melody. Chidi spins his chair round to his piano, and replicates the melody on his keys.

A gush of the flush and the pitter patter of the shower, and Natalya reappears in the doorway, again reminding Chidi she needs to be paid today because she has to send money to her mother. (Her son, MISHA, who we never meet, is being raised by Natalya's parents while she completes her masters.)

Natalya takes a shower.

When Natalya reappears, Chidi tells her, when she pees, she sounds like someone playing a piano. Enchanted, Natalya chooses to disguise her feelings and snaps at him, telling him to pay her the money that he owes her.

Natalya leaves the apartment, and, unable to stop performing the tasks for which she earns money to support her son, takes out the trash.

Chidi uploads his advertising pitch to Vimeo.

Natalya is at SOAS with her friend and fellow student ALEYAH. Together, they practise for an oral exam on Carlo Focarelli's *International Law*.

Chidi emails the Vimeo link to his agency.

Natalya and Aleyah ascertain that Focarelli states one of the basic values international law protects is 'the human person'.

Chidi gets a message from Mick at his agency that he likes the advert and is going to pitch the client. Chidi reaches for his coke.

Natalya and Aleyah relax in the SOAS cafe with a coffee. Natalya shows pictures and videos of her son, Misha.

Chidi chops up two lines of coke on his desk (one for each nostril).

Aleyah does Natalya's nails while advising her to go and see Chidi and refuse to leave until he pays her. It is evident in this scene that Natalya has told Aleyah that Chidi smokes marajuana, but not that he takes cocaine - a much more serious addiction. This illustrates Natalya has not been completely open with Aleyah about Chidi. She is protecting her flaw. She is attracted to flawed men. Thankfully Chidi only hurts himself, not others, unlike her ex.

Chidi snorts both lines of coke.

Natalya and Aleyah study *Carlo Focarelli*.

Chidi checks his credit cards. Maxed out.

Natalya tests Aleyah on *Focarelli* ascertaining that International Law embodies 'the inner struggle for survival.' Natalya makes a Freudian slip, calling the law of the jungle, the law of the 'jingle.' Aleyah advises Natalya to 'stop servicing' Chidi if he doesn't pay her.

Chidi phones a pawn shop and enquiries how much he can get for his synthesizer.

Chidi waits at a bus stop in the rain with his synthesizer boxed and bagged.

Taking Aleyah's advice, Natalya calls Chidi.

Chidi and Natalya can't hear each other as the noise on the bus is too loud.

Chidi pawns his synthesizer for £750. He picks up a Narcotics Anonymous leaflet from the counter and pockets it.

Chidi calls Natalya back. Her line is busy because Natalya is on a video call with her son in St. Petersburg.

Chidi arrives home and calls Natalya again. This time he speaks to her and tells her he has her money. Well, part of it.

Natalya arrives at Chidi's to collect the cash.

Chidi buzzes her in and closes the door to his studio so Natalya can't see his synthesizer is missing.

As Natalya goes from the bedroom to the kitchen, she picks up and folds a towel on the way.

Chidi pays Natalya the £500 he owes her, and then, always horny in her presence, tries to have sex with her. But Natalya tells him she has to send the money for her son.

Natalya pays the cash over the counter at Western Union and calls her mother.

Chidi sets up a candlelit dinner for Natalya. They flirt, and find themselves in bed, only to be disturbed by another phone call. This time though, it isn't Alexeyev, but Mick from Chidi's agency. Chidi rejects the call.

Now that Natalya has achieved her outward goal (money) her heart is focused on her need (love). She goes to the bathroom. When she returns, she looks into Chidi's eyes. Was he listening? Does she really sound like a piano? Is *his* the magical love she has been waiting for?

Piano



How will you know if he really *loves* you?

PIANO

by

Steve Edwards

content warning: sex, drug use, strong language

22 April 2022

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1 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

NATALYA, 34, Russian, wearing nothing but a *Pussy Riot* T-shirt, writhes on top of CHIDI, 40, a Cambridge-educated dreadlocked Barbadian.

Through the breath, groans, and moans a mobile ringtone violates.

Fuck.

Natalya reaches over Chidi's head and under the pillow for her phone.

Who is it?

+74954555555

Fuck. Alexeyev.

Natalya rolls off, lies back on the bed, and takes the call.

Chidi, devastated, shrivels and lies helpless, forced to listen to the tinny, drunken rant of Natalya's ex.

ALEXEYEV (O.S)
(in Russian, English subtitles)
You said you would send fucking money.
When are you coming home? My son needs
his mother. You can't just leave and
go around the fucking world...

Chidi understands zilch... but Natalya's reaction.

NATALYA
(in Russian, English subtitles)
Why are you calling me--stop fucking
calling me --

ALEXEYEV (O.S) NATALYA
(in Russian, English subtitles) (in Russian, English subtitles)
You fucking whore -- Stop fucking calling me.

Chidi gets up, wraps a towel around his waist, and trundles to his studio.

2 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi pushes the door closed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His studio has a desk, iMac, podcast mic. and a Clavia Nord Grand - a state-of-the-art synthesizer - with matching headphones.

He plonks in his swivel chair, opens a drawer, takes out a wrap of coke and uses the corner of a bank card to dig some powder out.

NATALYA (O.S)
(in Russian, English subtitles)
Don't call my phone. Ever again. And
get fucking sober or you will never
see him again. Ever. Do you
understand?

Chidi shovels the powder up his nose, snorts and hides the wrap back in the drawer. Natalya pushes the door open.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Sorry. My ex.

A text message PINGS on Natalya's phone. She checks it. Chidi sees the repulsion on her face as Natalya deletes the message.

CHIDI
Why do you answer?

NATALYA
Because it might be important. It
might be about Misha.

CHIDI
Block him.

NATALYA
Chidi, can you pay me please?

CHIDI
I pay you with lurve.

NATALYA
You don't love me, you fuck me.

CHIDI
Who fucks who?!

NATALYA
Fuck you! I am serious.

Natalya leaves the studio.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chidi opens his banking on his phone. Checks the balance. He's in the red.

NATALYA (O.S)
I'm serious. My son needs shoes.

3 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - NIGHT

PING on Chidi's phone: Your £23.99 payment to NORD has been rejected. Chidi: *fuck*.

Resilient, Chidi opens sound editing software and puts his headphones on.

He opens a file named 'Versace' and clicks 'record'.

Text runs in an elaborate italic white font against a black screen, as Chidi reads:

CHIDI
(in a seductive whisper)
If music be the food of...

4 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Natalya enters --

CHIDI (O.S)
...love...

5 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi records --

CHIDI
And love songs are in --

6 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Natalya glances in the mirror.

CHIDI (O.S)
Verse. What is love?

Natalya puts the seat down.

7 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi finishes his recording.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHIDI
Versace.

With the final word, he hears the tinkling of water on water coming from the bathroom, amplified in his headphones.

Instinctively, he swivels to his keyboard and replicates the melody on his keys.

The gush of the flush. The pitter patter of the shower.

8 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY

Natalya enjoys the hot, steaming water washing away the earlier phone call and text message.

9 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Natalya appears in the doorway of the studio in a towel, her hair wet.

NATALYA
I'm serious, Chidi.

CHIDI
You sound like a piano.

NATALYA
What?

CHIDI
When you...tinkle.

NATALYA
When I what?!

CHIDI
When you...pee pee.

For a moment, Natalya is disarmed. She blushes, suppressing a smile, as if someone has said something endearing to her. But then her eyes harden.

NATALYA
Chidi --

CHIDI
Listen...

Chidi tinkles a musical phrase on his keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHIDI
This is your tune.

NATALYA
Well I'm singing a different fucking
tune. It's called money. Pay me what
you owe me. Please. I must send to my
mother.

Chidi tinkles his keys.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Are you listening?

Chidi continues playing the melody.

NATALYA
Chidi! I need to send money for my
son. Are you understand?

Chidi plays the melody.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Chidi!

Chidi tinkles his keys.

NATALYA
Chidi!

He stops and looks at her in wide-eyed wonder.

CHIDI
I know. I'm sorry.

NATALYA
Sorry doesn't buy Misha new shoes.

Chidi tinkles the melody.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Are you thinking I working for fucking
free?!

Natalya goes, angrily. Chidi watches her, sad-eyed.

10 EXT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, ENTRANCE - DAY

Natalya exits the apartment, dumping a bin bag on the street
as she leaves.

11 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi goes back to his keys.

12 EXT. SOAS, SCHOOL OF LAW - DAY

Natalya arrives at college.

13 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi tinkles his synthesizer, experimenting with Natalya's melody. He uploads it to a virtual music program and watches the notes of the melody light up on a virtual stave. Next, he edits the melody into his *Versace* advert, opens VIMEO and uploads.

14 INT. SOAS, SCHOOL OF LAW, CLASSROOM - DAY

Natalya is with her friend and fellow student --

ALEYAH, British / Somali (30), funky, purple extensions escape from her rainbow-coloured headscarf. Her nails are lethal works of art.

The young disruptors have the classroom to themselves. Natalya stands at the front. Aleyah sits at the back, reading from a copy of Carlo Focarelli's *International Law*.

ALEYAH

Pay attention, Sista. Are you ready?

Natalya nods.

ALEYAH (CONT'D)

One. According to Focarelli, what are the four basic values asserted to be protected by international law?

15 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi emails the Vimeo link to: mick@adznfadz.com

16 INT. SOAS, CLASSROOM - DAY

Natalya's got this. She's memorised it.

NATALYA

Sustainable economy, global security, inter-state order, and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEYAH

Five...

NATALYA

Wait --

ALEYAH

Four.

NATALYA

Wait!

ALEYAH

Three.

NATALYA

Wait --

ALEYAH

Two.

NATALYA

Wait!

ALEYAH

One. The human --

NATALYA

The human person!

Aleyah claps.

NATALYA

You want to get a coffee?

ALEYAH

Do you want me to do your nails?

Natalya checks her nails.

17 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi plays a Whatsapp voice message from 'Agency Mick'

AGENCY MICK (V.O)

Chidi, got the link. Love the jingle.
I'm going to pitch the client.

Chidi reaches in his desk drawer and takes out the wrap of coke.

18 INT. SOAS, CAFE - DAY

Aleyah and Natalya sit on a comfy sofa. Natalya is showing Aleyah a video of Misha.

ALEYAH
Oh my God. So cute.

NATALYA
This is when he is taking his first steps.

ALEYAH
Does he look like his dad?

NATALYA
This is at my parents house in Kazan.

ALEYAH
Does he stay with his dad?

NATALYA
He's six now. Almost seven.

Natalya shows Aleyah a photo on her phone.

19 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi chops up two lines of coke on his desk with a bank card.

20 INT. SOAS, CAFE - DAY

Natalya is scrolling insta while Aleyah is taking various nail colours out of her bag and lining them up on the table.

Natalya chooses red.

ALEYAH
Are you sure?

NATALYA
I'm sure.

Aleyah starts on Natalya's nails.

ALEYAH (CONT'D)
Call him. And tell him don't fuck with you. I don't get why he can't just borrow from the bank, innit. I mean, you said he's got bare equipment, and
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEYAH (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
all that, right? Listen, I'm telling
you, let this rude girl speak to him,
you get me? Then he will cough up the
wonga, believe me. Guaranteed.

NATALYA
He will cough up the --?

ALEYAH
Wonga. Readies. Spondoolies. Cash.
Money. Taking the piss, man, you get
me? I bet he's got crypto, still.

NATALYA
He's having some problems with money.

ALEYAH
Hey! Listen, rude girl. He's a big
man. And you're a mother. You've got a
child. He's only got his own self to
feed. You have a son! Listen to me.
You have to tell him. For real. Misha
needs new shoes.

NATALYA
He doesn't have much money.

ALEYAH
Has he got weed in his bong?

21 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi snorts coke.

22 INT. SOAS CAFE - DAY

Aleyah studies her artistry on Natalya.

ALEYAH (CONT'D)
What do you think? I'm wasted being a
lawyer, innit!

Natalya laughs.

ALEYAH (CONT'D)
OK, review time...test me? Where's
Fuckerelli?

NATALYA
OK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Natalya digs the A4 Focarelli text out of her bag, and opens it up to the right page.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
(reading)
OK. Ready?

ALEYAH
Listen, Sista. When you read, I'm ready.

23 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi checks his mobile credit card apps: VISA - over your credit limit, American Express - over your credit limit, Mastercard - over your credit limit.

24 INT. SOAS - DAY

Aleyah is busy on Natalya's other hand, while Natalya reads from Focarelli.

ALEYAH
(suppressing laughter)
- according to Fuckerelli -- wait --

NATALYA
You would like a clue?

ALEYAH
Wait --

NATALYA
(over-emphasizing, mocking)
Inner urge.

Aleyah laughs.

ALEYAH
Inner urge-- Survival! The inner urge for survival!

NATALYA
Correct. Very good. Next question. How does Mr Fuckerelli define ze law of ze jingle?

ALEYAH
The law of the jingle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALYA
Haha. Jungle. Law of the jungle!

They laugh.

ALEYAH
Hey, listen. If my man don't sort you out, you gotta stop servicing him, you get me?

Natalya's eyes quiz Aleyah over 'servicing'.

25 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi searches 'pawn shop near me' online. He finds one in London E1 and calls it.

CHIDI
Yeh, I've got a Clavia Nord Grand. Six months. Three thousand. With a case.

He checks Google maps.

26 EXT. SOAS - DAY

Natalya calls Chidi.

27 EXT. BUS STOP, STREET - DAY

Chidi, bopping in his headphones, waits in the rain under the bus stop with his synthesizer packed up in a waterproof case.

A bus pulls to a stop. The doors hiss open. Chidi boards the bus, just as his mobile rings: 'Natalya' calling.

28 INTERCUT - EXT. BUS - MOVING / EXT. SOAS - DAY

CHIDI
Whassup?

NATALYA
Where are you? It sounds like a train.

CHIDI
Can't hear you. I'm on a bus.

NATALYA
I need to talk.

CHIDI
Can't hear you. I'll call you back.

29 INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The PAWN SHOP OWNER unwraps Chidi's synthesizer. He counts out £750 in cash.

On the counter are leaflets for Narcotics Anonymous. Chidi picks one up, folds it, and puts it in his pocket.

30 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Chidi calls Natalya. Busy tone.

31 INT. SOAS, CAFE - DAY

Natalya is on a video call with Misha in Russia.

NATALYA
(in Russian, English subtitles)
Be good, for grandma. OK? Mummy loves
you. Bye bye!

32 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Chidi arrives home and calls Natalya.

33 INTERCUT - INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO / INT. SOAS, CAFE - DAY

NATALYA
Yes. Hi.

CHIDI
I've been calling.

NATALYA
Sorry, I --

CHIDI
I have your money. Well, five hundred.
That's all.

34 EXT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Natalya arrives.

35 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, STUDIO - DAY

Chidi, at his desk, sees Natalya on the security cam and buzzes her in. He leaves his studio, closes the door to conceal the fact that his synthesizer is missing, and goes through to the kitchen.

36 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM / KITCHEN - DAY

On her way from the bedroom to the kitchen Natalya picks up a towel from the floor, folds it, and hangs it.

37 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Natalya appears.

CHIDI
Here.

Chidi gives Natalya the cash.

CHIDI (CONT'D)
Five hundred.

NATALYA
Spasibo.

Chidi approaches her, his arms around her waist, pressing her against the wall, trying to kiss her.

CHIDI
Move in with me.

Natalya backs away.

NATALYA
I have to send to my mother.

Chidi tries to kiss her. Again Natalya resists.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Are you sure you can handle me all the time?

Chidi pushes forward, but Natalya repels him.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
You just want a maid for free.

Chidi is horny, pushes forward -

NATALYA (CONT'D)
I have to send the money for my son.

Chidi gets the message, and backs off. Natalya kisses him, and goes.

38 INT. WESTERN UNION - DAY

Natalya pays the five hundred pounds in cash over the counter.

39 EXT. WESTERN UNION - DAY

Natalya makes a call.

NATALYA
(in Russian, English subtitles)
Fifty thousand roubles, Mother --

40 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Orange candle flames flicker, lighting up Natalya's eyes. Chidi pours two glasses of bubbly and offers a toast.

CHIDI
To shoes.

NATALYA
To shoes.

They clink flutes and drink.

NATALYA
Spasibo.

CHIDI
Nope. Prosecco. Would you like--

Natalya laughs. Chidi tops her up. The tinkle of water on water.

CHIDI
How do I say "I love you"? Obviously, not for you, just in case, you know, I meet Mila Jovovich.

NATALYA
Mila Jovovich is Ukrainian. So if you want to tell Mila Jovovich you love her you will have to learn Ukrainian.

Chidi has been told.

NATALYA (CONT'D)
Ya lyublyu tebya.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHIDI
Ya lyublyu tebya.

NATALYA
Correct. I love you in Russian. Mne
zhal. Ya ne lyublyu tebya.

Chidi raises his eyebrows, asking, *What?*

NATALYA
I'm sorry. I don't love you. I --

CHIDI
-- fuck you! NATALYA
-- fuck you!

They laugh and kiss passionately, tearing each other's clothes off, pulling each other into the bedroom.

41 INT. CHIDI'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

On the bed now, Natalya crouched over Chidi --

Her eyes, ablaze in the golden light escaping from the ajar door of the bathroom, gaze into Chidi's --

A ringtone invades.

Chidi and Natalya lock eyes in a shared moment of fear:

Alexeyev?

Natalya reaches for Chidi's phone on the bedside table.

"Agency Mick" calling.

Natalya accepts the call and gives the phone to Chidi. She climbs off the bed and walks towards the bathroom.

AGENCY MICK (V.O)
Chidi! Great--

Chidi turns off the phone, replaces it on the bedside table, mesmerised by Natalya.

Aware of Chidi's eyes on her, Natalya flicks a look back at him, before disappearing into the bathroom.

Chidi watches the door close, almost --

In the silence, the tinkling of a stream, a fountain on a mountain, water sprinkling on water, a magical melody, like

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Chidi's eyes glaze over in amazement.

The gush of the flush and the splash of water as Natalya washes her hands. A moment later, Natalya reappears. To Chidi, she is Venus, goddess of love.

Natalya reenters the bedroom, her eyes fixed on Chidi's. She stops at the end of the bed, in silence, except... her breath.

As Chidi listens to her breathe, he watches her staring at him, her bright, shining, quizzical eyes asking the question that is burning in her heart, the answer she wants to know, the answer she needs to know.

In silent hope, her eyes search for truth, asking:

Piano? Do I really sound like a piano?

(Subtext: *do you love me?*)

FADE TO BLACK