SIGNS

A Television Pilot by

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COLD OPEN:

INT. CHEICK’S ROOM – DAY

Panicked eyes open.

CHEICK (28), Tall, very dark, handsome, sits up in bed confused.

A FRAMED PICTURE OF CHEICK, WAMBLE AND LAMINE AS SCHOOLBOYS adorns his dresser.

Just across from it is a FRAMED PICTURE OF BEAUTIFUL MAI.

The room is a mess. Ashtrays overflow with cigarette butts. Beer bottles here and there. Papers and books are strewn about.

One poster of THOMAS SANKARA in military uniform on the wall.

Cheick looks at MAI (28), curvy, golden brown skin, beautiful lips, sleeping gracefully on his bed, and he smiles.

A hairy dark arm flaps onto Mai. She coils in disgust and smacks it off her. Wamble isn’t bothered. He snores even louder.

WAMBLE (30) is also in bed with them.

WAMBLE has traditional scars on his face and looks like he could be cast as a village chief in any film about ancient Africa. His hair is in a messed up ‘fro with some random dread locks added in the mix. Not a tidy dude.

Cheick smiles at the both of them.

Wamble snorts ridiculously and Mai gets up, annoyed.

Cheick remembers something and looks at the time on his phone.

CHEICK

Shit. My interview.

He jumps out of bed.

CUT TO:
INT. CHEICK’S ROOM - DAY

Cheick is putting on a tie in front of the mirror. He is in a three piece suit and looks good.

Cheick is one third focused on his tie, one third checking his watch, one third looking at Wamble hoping he would get up already.

MAI
(to Cheick)
Why don’t you just wake him up and tell him he needs to leave?

Cheick puts a finger on her lips and checks to see if she woke up Wamble.

CHEICK
Mai. You’re being rude.

MAI
Are you fucking...

Cheick puts his hand over her mouth and carries her outside the room, closing the door softly.

EXT. ROOM - DAY

Mai bites Cheick’s hand and he opens his mouth to let out a loud non existent scream.

Mai feels vindicated.

Cheick takes a deep breath and smiles at his beautiful girlfriend.

She smiles back, innocently.

CHEICK
Mai. I know what you’re going to say. But today is the day that everything changes. I have an interview and it is a solid lead.

Mai lets her imagination run with it.

MAI
So if you get this job...he can’t stay over anymore because WE will be getting ready to go to work in the morning?

CHEICK
(hesitant)
Mmmm. Did I say that?
MAI
(frustrated)
You know what? Why don’t I let you guys sleep together and I’ll remove myself from the equation. I sleep in a bed with two dudes every night and I still don’t get any.

CHEICK
Ok... but you know I can’t sleep unless you’re right next to me.

MAI
So tell him to sleep somewhere else.

CHEICK
Yeah... but you know I can’t sleep unless he’s there either.

Mai throws up her hands in despair.

WAMBLE SCREAMS FROM INSIDE THE ROOM.

INT. CHEICK’S ROOM - DAY

Wamble opens his eyes and notices a gecko on the wall staring right at him. It scampers off. Wamble screams.

WAMBLE
Oh my god. Did you see that?

Cheick enters and sighs relieved wamble is awake.

CHEICK
See what?

WAMBLE
Dude, that gecko was staring right at me.

Cheick rolls his eyes.

Mai comes in.

MAI
Maybe it’s a witch that transformed itself into a gecko so it could eat your soul.

This freaks Wamble out.

He sits up.
Oh my god. That is exactly what I was thinking. Did you see how it looked at me?

Mai nods (sarcastically).

Mai

I did.

Wamble gets out of bed and runs outside, whimpering.

Mai smiles. Her plan worked.

Cheick gratefully draws her near and they kiss intimately. Their first intimate moment in a while.

Cheick

I love you.

Mai

I love YOU.

Cheick

This could be it. The start of our new life.

Mai smiles.

Mai

I’ve dreamt of the day when I wouldn’t have to share a twin bed with you and your best friend.

Cheick

I know. Now I can afford to buy a queen sized bed so there is room for all of us.

Mai pulls back.

Mai

Wow. So when we have babies are they also going to grow up sleeping with their uncle in our bed?

Cheick

Wamble loves kids. That would be so cute.

Mai

No. It would not.

Wamble stands behind them with a coffee pot. He overheard everything.
WAMBLE
Actually the way it usually works
is the wife sleeps with her kids
in her own room and the husband
sleeps alone, or, in this case
with his ‘bro.

He points to himself with the coffee pot.

Mai is going in for the kill.

MAI
Some would call that gay.

WAMBLE
(defensive)
It’s not gay if all you do is
tell each other stories until you
fall asleep...while holding
hands.

Evil eyes.

Wamble remembers what he came in for.

WAMBLE (CONT’D)
Coffee, anyone?

Cheick is relieved.

CHEICK
Yes.

MAI
You know I only drink tea.

Wamble avoids her evil eyes while chugging his coffee.

WAMBLE
(whispering to himself)
It’s the same look that gecko
gave me.

EXT. VILLA GATE - DAY

Cheick wheels out Mai’s moped, starts it for her, hands it
to her. She puts her helmet on and waves goodbye before
driving off.

Wamble wheels out Cheick’s bike and stands it in front of
him. Wamble is wearing Cheick’s helmet.

Cheick is perplexed.

CHEICK
Where is your moped?
Wamble shrugs.

WAMBLE
I have no idea.

Cheick is even more perplexed.

CHEICK
If you knew you needed a ride, why didn’t you go with Mai? She could have dropped you off at the taxi station.

Wamble shrugs again.

WAMBLE
I guess it just wasn’t meant to be. It’s all good though, you can give me a lift, right?

CHEICK
Dude, are you kidding me? Do you see how I’m dressed?

WAMBLE
Yeah. I was wondering if your mom dressed you this morning?

CHEICK
I have an interview.

WAMBLE
You can still give a guy a lift.

CHEICK
Um, in case you didn’t notice. This is a bicycle.

WAMBLE
Hey, nobody forced you to get a bike. Your choice.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cheick is sweating through his three piece suit and struggling to keep the bike going on the bumpy dirt road.

Wamble wears a helmet and sits like a lady in the backseat enjoying the view. Occasionally, he waves to an acquaintance on the road.

ACQUAINTANCE
Wamble. What’s up?
WAMBLE
Nothing much, bro. I saw a possessed gecko this morning.

ACQUAINTANCE
Oh man. Bad omen.

WAMBLE
Right? I hope it’s not directed at me though.

Off of Cheick’s sweaty, frustrated face:

TITLE: SIGNS

END OF TEASER.
ACT ONE

INT. TAXI - DAY

LAMINE (29), a muscular man who always dresses like he is trying to stand out looks markedly more uncomfortable than the other 5 CLIENTS squished in the taxi. Limbs are sticking out the windows, bums are searching for just the right angle for sitting to not be unbearable.

Lamine taps on the taximan’s shoulder. Without looking back, the TAXIMAN (50’s) a short stocky man says:

TAXIMAN
What?

LAMINE
I can’t feel my ass, is what. This shit has to be illegal.

TAXIMAN
If you want to call the police, be my guest.

LAMINE
(to clients)
Ouaga is so behind. This would never happen in Abidjan.

TAXIMAN
Then you should go back to Abidjan.

LAMINE
Listen, Mr. Taximan. Number one: I’m from here and Number two: I’m ashamed that there are people like you who give the city a bad name. No wonder everyone thinks we’re villagers.

The taximan and one of the guys in front share an amused look: what an idiot.

This riles up Lamine even more.

LAMINE (CONT’D)
What’s worse is you don’t even know who I am. I ride in limousines. Have you ever heard of a limousine?

The taximan and his friends bust out laughing.
TAXIMAN
If it’s a limousine you’re looking for then you shouldn’t be standing by the side of the road flagging down taxis and then actually get into one.

Lamine has had enough.

LAMINE
You know what? Just stop this...thing. Whatever it is. I’m getting out.

The taxi stops.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Lamine gets out and wipes himself down, disgusted. He walks away.

TAXIMAN
Um..my money?

Now, it’s Lamine’s turn to be amused.

LAMINE
You should pay me for having stepped foot inside that carcass.

The taximan gets out of the car: He’s going to beat the shit out of Lamine.

Lamine isn’t scared.

CLIENT (O.S.)
Oh my god. I’ll pay for him if we can just go already.

The taximan gets back in the car.

TAXIMAN
It’s your lucky day, jackass.

LAMINE
Thanks, bro. Here’s my autograph in return.

He writes his name in the air. Emphasizing the punctuation. Arrogance central.

Now everyone in the taxi wants to beat him up, but the taxi is already driving off.

Lamine waves goodbye.
INT. LE MAQUIS - DAY

Wamble opens the door letting the sunlight in and beholds the mess of bottles and dust behind the bar area.

He is going to kill someone.

WAMBLE

Siaka!

EXT. LE MAQUIS - DAY

Siaka is sleeping on top of Wamble’s broken moped under a mango tree, mouth opened and legs spread out.

WAMBLE (O.S.)

Siaka!

Siaka rolls over and falls off the moped, to Wamble’s delight.

Siaka sprints up. He does this all the time.

WAMBLE (CONT’D)

What the hell are you doing on my moped? I told you I don’t want your nasty ass on my property. It’s bad luck.

SIAKA

You haven’t been able to drive it for 5 years.

WAMBLE

Did I ask you a question? No. I just need you to follow instructions and do as you are told.

SIAKA

Yes sir.

WAMBLE

Yes sir my ass. Why is the back of the bar a mess again?

Siaka shrugs.

You know what? Now I know why that gecko was staring right at me this morning. It was staring at me and I could read it’s thoughts.

(MORE)
It was saying: Wamblé you idiot. That dumb ass waiter you have working for you is a lazy ass bitch and you’re an even bigger one for paying him to screw you over every day.

Siaka looks at him dumbfounded. Is he really reading that much into a gecko’s stare?

Yup. And he’s not even finished:

And then, the gecko dared me. It dared me to do what I want to do every day but stop myself from doing because I feel sorry for you because you are such a fucking dumb ass and I know that no other idiot in this town would ever hire you.

Siaka knows where this is going.

Fire me? But you do that every day.

Wamble has to rethink his logic for a second.

Well, today it’s different because... Today it’s final: you’re fired. Go sleep under somebody else’s mango tree.

Like the one in my yard?

Wamble grabs his jaw to slap him but Siaka slips away and runs off, free as a bird.

He turns back to say one last thing:

You know you need to pay me for the week though, right?

Wamble lets out a visceral groan. Siaka always gets to him.

I’m not paying you for shit.

Siaka laughs as he disappears on the horizon.
EXT. ROAD - DAY

Cheick’s shoes are busted and his suit is drenched in sweat. He stares at his flat tire, desperate for help.

He looks at the time and breathes.

CHEICK
Ok, I still have 20 minutes.

He begins to jog with his bike.

INT. LE MAQUIS - DAY

Wamble is barefoot and cleaning the back of the bar. Soapy water glistens on the cemented floor.

A huge FRAMED PICTURE OF HIM AS A CHILD AND THOMAS SANKARA hangs on the center of the wall.

Wamble stops to look at it. He is mesmerized by it even though he has seen it millions of times before.

KOURA (O.S.)
Sir?

Wamble is startled and turns to see KOURA, a 12 year old girl with a shaved head.

WAMBLE
What?

KOURA
Siaka told me to tell you that there is a dude here who is dressed like a rapper and wants to see you.

WAMBLE
I don’t deal with yoyo’s. Scram.

Koura runs off.

Wamble continues cleaning. This time, he puts his back into it. He doesn’t need Siaka.

KOURA (O.S.)
Sir?

Wamble slips and falls.

WAMBLE
(annoyed)
What?
KOURA
Siaka says to tell you that the
guy says he knows you since
primary school.

WAMBLE
Tell Siaka that since he is a
genius he must have asked for
this person’s name, right?

Koura runs off.
Wamble doesn’t bother to get up.
This time when she comes back he is prepared.

KOURA
Sir?
He looks at her annoyed and doesn’t answer.

KOURA (CONT’D)
Siaka says he doesn’t appreciate
your sarcasm but that he got the
hint and that the guy’s name is
Lamine.

Wamble’s face lights up and he scrambles to his feet, super
excited.
He has to contain his excitement until after he gets out of
the soapy floored room so he doesn’t trip and fall. But
once he is out he runs for it.

EXT. LE MAQUIS - DAY
Wamble runs to where Lamine and Siaka are standing. Siaka
thinks he is coming to get him and jets.
Lamine opens his arms and he and Wamble embrace.
Wamble wraps his legs around Lamine and starts crying.

WAMBLE
You asshole. Where have you been?

LAMINE
You know where I was.

WAMBLE
Things just haven’t been the same
without you. Cheick and I...oh my
god. Cheick. He is going to die
when he finds out.

Lamine can’t help but laugh.
LAMINE
Dude, you are so emotional.

Wamble hugs him tighter.

WAMBLE
Now we can all three have sleep
overs just like we used to.

LAMINE
You village freak. Get off me.

WAMBLE
Just one more second. It’s going
to be just like when we were in
school.

EXT. INTERVIEW BUILDING - DAY

A mechanic is tinkering with the flat tire as Cheick answers the phone.

CHEICK
What’s up?

WAMBLE (O.S.)
You need to drop everything and
get your ass to headquarters NOW.

CHEICK
Uh, no. I have an interview. I’m
getting my life together unlike
some people who should be rich by
now but never bothered to study
accounting...

WAMBLE (O.S.)
Dude. Can you hear yourself?
Because I can and it’s
embarrassing.

LAMINE (O.S.)
(shouting into the
phone)
Cheick what up? It’s your bro,
Lamine.

Cheick takes a breath.

CHEICK
Lamine? Seriously? Are you back?

LAMINE
Yeah, man. I’m here. Where are
you?
CHEICK
I’m. Uh. I have an interview.

LAMINE
Lame! Drop it and get over here. Wamble’s opening a bottle of champagne.

CHEICK
(doubtful)
Champagne?

LAMINE
That’s what he said.

CHEICK
I don’t think he knows what that is.

Music blasts through Cheick’s phone.

WAMBLE
Get over here, bitch.

Cheick is hyped.

CHEICK
Oh man. Ok. I’ll be there as soon as I’m done.

WAMBLE
Yeah, well hurry up cos you know I don’t like to stay in the same spot for too long.

Cheick is in a quandry.

He looks at his watch and to a window up the building.

The MECHANIC (50) behind him interjects with:

MECHANIC
I’ll be done in 30 tops.

CHEICK
Ok. Well I’ll be in there. I might be longer than 30 though.

The mechanic shakes his head.

MECHANIC
I go home for a nap at noon. So you’ll have to get your bike at 3 if you don’t get it by then...
CHEICK
Really? You go home for a nap?
You’re a fucking mechanic.

MECHANIC
A man’s gotta get his rest.

Cheick rolls his eyes.

MECHANIC (CONT’D)
So, 3 o’clock?

CHEICK
What? No, didn’t you just hear
that I have to be somewhere right
after this?

MECHANIC
I don’t like to eavesdrop.

CHEICK
I’ll be back in 30.

Cheick sprints toward the building. This is it.

INT. KAREN ‘S LIVING ROOM - DAY

PLUMP BABY LAUGHTER.

Mai pulls back from making funny noises on PLUMP BABY’s
stomach.

Baby loves her. She loves baby back.

KAREN (O.S.)
You are so good with her. You
should really have your own.

Mai wakes from her baby trance and looks over at KAREN (30)
elegant but with some leftover post baby pudge.

Her TODDLER (2) sits in her lap while her 5 year old SON
plays on a PSP.

Mai sighs and looks back at baby.

MAI
Cheick is at his interview right
now.

A MAID (20) rushes in and refills her coke.
MAI (CONT’D)
I hope he gets this job, then everything will be ok.

Baby smiles.

MAI (CONT’D)
And I can have my own Cheick babies.

Karen’s smile is full of pity for her friend.

KAREN
Mai, you need to take control of your situation.

MAI
How do you mean?

KAREN
His best friend still sleeps with you in your bed, which means you’re not even getting any. I mean, really? Are you Wamble’s mother?

Off of Mai’s horrified face...

CUT TO:

INT. IMAGINARY MAI LIVING ROOM - DAY

It’s the home of Mai’s dreams. She is dressed just like Karen and is cooing at her own baby.

As she prepares to breast feed she notices the horror: it’s Wamble’s face on a baby’s body.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. KAREN ‘S LIVING ROOM - DAY

MAI
(mortified)
No, I am not. Oh God.

KAREN
You need to stop being so accommodating and set limits. Cheick needs to choose. It’s either you or his friends. He can’t keep partying as though he were college. You’re old.
Mai is offended.

MAI
I’m not old.

KAREN
You’re old. You should be planning for your grandchildren now, not your first baby.

MAI
(breaking down)
Oh God. I’m old. You’re right. Cheick had better get that job.

KAREN
Where is it?

MAI
The Ministry of Commerce.

KAREN
I’ll call my nephew. He works there. Maybe he can help.

MAI
Oh my God. Thank you.

Karen puts a hand on her friend.

KAREN
(earnestly)
I just feel so sorry for you.

Mai nods. She’s right.

Karen’s 5 year old son decides now is a good time to slap the 2 year old sitting in Karen’s lap. Chaos ensues.

Karen screams for the NANNY (20) who runs in with the MAID. They each take a child and go their separate ways.

KAREN (CONT’D)
He’s such a little shit. Just like his Dad.

Mai nods and looks down at the baby sleeping contentedly in her arms.

MAI
(to herself)
Please get that job, Cheick.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The door opens as a newly minted Cheick enters cautiously.
He is surprised to see a SECRETARY (60) who looks more like a grandma, tinkering with awe at the computer in front of her.

He can hear two men laughing in the office adjacent.

Cheick approaches the secretary slowly. She doesn’t seem to notice.

CHEICK

Hello?

He comes up to her desk.

She is startled by the sight of him.

SECRETARY

(scolding)
Who the fuck are you? How did you get in here?

CHEICK

Through the door.

SECRETARY

What? Oh.

CHEICK

I have an appointment with ‘Uncle’.

SECRETARY

Whose uncle? Not mine.

CHEICK

Probably not.

SECRETARY

Let me check.

She disappears in the next room interrupting the laughter.

Once she reappears the laughter starts up again.

SECRETARY (CONT’D)

He’ll just be a second. He’s finishing up another meeting.

Cheick takes a seat.

The secretary takes a stick and starts whacking the computer with it.

Cheick can’t believe what he is seeing.
CHEICK
I don’t think you’re supposed to do that...

She shoots him a look. He shuts up.

Whatever she did seems to have fixed the computer.

SECRETARY
There we go.

Cheick frowns.

He looks at his watch. 5 to noon.

MECHANIC (V.O.)
By noon or at 3 o’clock.

Sweat beads begin to appear on Cheick’s forehead.

The laughter in the other room gets louder.

WAMBLE (V.O.)
You missed the party of the year because of your goddamn bike, you idiot! Get a moped like everybody else.

Cheick peers out the window and sees the Mechanic standing, waiting with his bike, all fixed up.

CHEICK
(under his breath)
Fuck.

SECRETARY
What was that?

CHEICK
Huh. I need to go to the bathroom. I’ll be right back.

He sprints out.

From the window: we see Cheick sprint up to the Mechanic, pay him and park his bike.

The door to the other office opens and UNCLE (60) and his FRIEND (60’s) come out still laughing. A cloud of cigarette smoke follows them.

The secretary doesn’t notice them until Uncle crouches down to her to ask:

UNCLE
Anything I need to know about?
The secretary jumps in her seat.

SECRETARY
What?

UNCLE
Anything I need to know about?

SECRETARY
Nope.

He waves goodbye and leaves with his friend.

Just as their footsteps disappear in the hallway, the sprinting steps of Cheick appear.

He stands in the doorway, panting and catching his breath.

The secretary can’t hear him or see him.

He waltzes in and sits down, triumphant.

She notices him now and frowns, realizing...

SECRETARY (CONT’D)
Oh.

Cheick knows that can’t be a good thing.

SECRETARY (CONT’D)
He just left. You’ll have to come back another time.

End on Cheick’s innocent look of despair... combined with the unhealthy desire to strangle a 60 year old woman.

END OF ACT ONE.
ACT TWO

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Cheick slumps down, dumbfounded.

The old secretary feels sorry for him.

SECRETARY
Listen, you can try him again at 3 o’clock. He usually comes back then.

CHEICK
Usually?

SECRETARY
Most of the time. Sometimes he doesn’t make it back.

It’s better than nothing.

Cheick stands tall and triumphant.

CHEICK
Then I will see you at 3 o’clock, m’am.

He salutes her and walks out the door.

EXT. OUTDOOR INFORMAL PARKING AREA - DAY

A flat tire stares Cheick in the face.

His bike has a flat again.

The guard gives him back his bike with his parking tickets and holds his hand out expectantly.

CHEICK
Are you kidding me?

PARKING GUARD
Hey, I made sure it was safe until you got back.

Cheick hands over his last bit of change.

He walks with his bike.
EXT. STREET - DAY

Cheick is hot and pushes his bike. He flags down a water vendor who hands him some water. When it’s time to pay, Cheick doesn’t have enough.

WATER VENDOR
You had money to pay for that suit but not for water?

CHEICK
I’m sorry, I just spent...

WATER VENDOR
If you’re not making enough money to buy water what is the point?

Cheick takes one last sip, eyeing his opponent.

CHEICK
Getting an education is more important than making money.

WATER VENDOR
Maybe you should drink your books next time. What a waste. I feel sorry for your family. If someone had given me the same opportunity, I...

CHEICK
You would be selling water in the streets of Paris.

PHONE RINGS.

Cheick picks up as the Vendor insults him further.

WAMBLE (V.O.)
Dude, what the hell?

CHEICK
Don’t test me, man. You have no idea what I’m dealing with right now?

WAMBLE (V.O.)
Just take a taxi. What’s the big deal?

CHEICK
I have no more money left.

WAMBLE (V.O.)
I’ll pay for it.
CHEICK
If you were going to pay for a taxi, why didn’t you say so earlier. I could have saved myself a lot of...

He realizes Wamble hung up.

He hangs up frustrated.

Flags down a taxi.

The same TAXIMAN Lamine fought with earlier helps him tie his bike to the back with a bunch of goats and baskets full of fruit and vegetables.

One look through the back seat window lets Cheick know if he dares to open the door everyone inside will spill out.

So, he dives in through the window and shakes everyone’s hand happily.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
Hello. Hi. What’s up. How are you?

The taxi drives off.

EXT. BAR - DAY

The cash register is almost overflowing with money. Koura stands guard while Wamble runs from guest to guest serving and taking orders. He is practically stumbling over himself. It’s obvious he is not used to doing this.

Siaka watches closeby, amused.

From time to time, Wamble stops to hang out with Lamine but then has to run off to deal with a guest. It’s messing up his flow.

Lamine spots two guests, CLARA (26) AND VALERIE (26), stunning and well dressed girls enjoying some gossip and drinks under the mango trees.

He approaches them, drinking in their laughter and charm as he gets closer.

LAMINE
Is anyone sitting here?

He points to an empty chair.

Clara immediately sets her purse on it and says:
CLARA
Yes.

Valerie does the same with her purse and to top it off takes a long swig of her cigarette and blows smoke in his face.

Lamine is out of his league.

A FEW FEET AWAY

Wamble is running from table to table when he stops dead in his tracks:

A GECKO with it’s tail chopped off is scurrying in front of him, stops and looks him dead in the eye.

Wamble screams.

The gecko runs away.

WAMBLE
Another one. Did you see that?

No one did.

Wamble points to one table of guests.

WAMBLE (CONT’D)
You saw it, right?

Lamine runs over and drags him away.

LAMINE
Dude, you are talking like a crazy person.

WAMBLE
Listen, we don’t have the same problems. I have witch geckos that I’m dealing with. What are you dealing with?

LAMINE
Like I said...

The taxi arrives in a cloud of dust revealing Cheick and his bike completely drenched in red tinted dust.

The boys scream and run toward each other for a hug.

Lamine stops when he realizes how dusty Cheick is.

Wamble just jumps right onto Cheick and won’t let go.

WAMBLE
This is going to be epic.
He looks down at Cheick’s beat up shoes.

Wamble (CONT’D)
Dude, your shoes are banged up.

Cheick
Really? I wonder why?

Wamble offers him his flip flops.

Wamble
Here, have mine. I don’t need them.

Cheick gladly puts them on.

The taximan and Lamine recognize one another.

Taximan
You again?

Client
It’s a sign. Let’s get him.

They all jump out, glad to not be squished any longer and run toward Lamine.

Wamble stops them.

Wamble
Drinks on me.

Taximan and clients hug Lamine and carry him to a table underneath a mango tree.

He escapes to join Wamble and Cheick.

The guests can’t get enough of the ridiculous sight: a boy in a three piece suit and flip flops, the owner of the bar dressed in raggedly clothes and walking barefoot and a yo yo at their side.

The boys don’t think they are ridiculous, though. They walk confidently, oblivious of the guests. They are in a special brand of neverland.

They know they are awesome and most importantly, they know how much fun they are about to have together.

Cheick pours the first drink and downs it in one gulp.

Cheick
Guys. I have to be back in town by 3pm. It’s a matter of life or death.
WAMBLE
Done. Let there be life.

HOURS LATER.
Lamine’s hip hop song plays on the speakers.
Siaka wakes Wamble to ask if he wants anything else.
Wamble opens one eye and looks around.
The bar is hopping but it’s a mess. He and Cheick are passed out at their table.
Lamine is coming out from the bathroom with Clara leading the way. Their clothes are disheveled.

CLARA
I really like your music.

She hands him a card.

CLARA (CONT’D)
Call me.

LAMINE
If I get around to it.

Lamine smirks: He got his mojo back.

HONKING CAR.
Valerie is rushing Clara.
She runs to the car and gets in before the girls jet.
Lamine sits at Wamble’s table, waking Cheick up.

LAMINE (CONT’D)
You guys are lightweights.

Cheick sits up, confused.

CHEICK
What time is it?

SIKA
It’s 4 30.

CHEICK
Shiiiiit. Why didn’t you wake me up?

WAMBLE
You looked really tired.

Cheick can’t believe it.
WAMBLE (CONT’D)
(to siaka)
Why are you here?

SIAKA
You hired me back.

WAMBLE
When I was sleeping.

SIAKA
When you were drinking.

Lamine is rolling a fresh joint and sees Mai approaching the scene.

LAMINE
Whoa. Who is that babe?

Cheick sees her coming and wipes his face clean of its drunkenness and overall despair.

He gets up.

CHEICK
Hi, Honey.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

LAMINE
Honey?

CHEICK
Lamine, this is Mai. MY girlfriend.

LAMINE
Oh. Care for a hit?

He hands her the joint.

Mai highly disapproves.

Wamblé pretends he is sleeping again.

Cheick leads her away from the trio.

CHEICK
I missed you.

MAI
I missed you too.

She looks over at Wamble who has awoken yet again so quickly.
MAI (CONT’D)
How was the interview?

CHEICK
The what?

MAI
The interview?

CHEICK
Oh god. So good. Soooo good.

She smiles and glances at Cheicks bike and notices the flat tire.

She sees all the bottles lying around Wamble’s table.

MAI
Is that why you are partying?

CHEICK
Yes.

She sees Wamble and Lamine share a secret ‘bro handshake.

Mai is pissed.

MAI
So do you think you got it?

CHEICK
Yes.

She locks eyes with Cheick. He can tell something is up.

Mai squints her eyes and folds her hands over her chest.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
What is it?

MAI
Why don’t you tell me.

Cheick plays innocent.

MAI (CONT’D)
Cheick. I love you but I’m about to leave you in 5, 4, 3, 2.

CHEICK
Ok. Ok. I blew it with the interview.

She shakes her head.

MAI
You are such an asshole.
She walks away. This is the last straw.

Cheick runs after her, desperate.

CHEICK
You have to hear what happened though.

She turns to face him, angrier than ever.

MAI
It’s just not that hard, Cheick. You show up, you nod your head and you smile. You don’t drink yourself to death with a bunch of losers in the middle of the day... on a Monday.

Wamble stumbles over.

WAMBLE
Yo, are you guys coming or what? That blunt isn’t going to smoke itself.

Mai looks at Cheick one last time before turning on her heels and walking to her moped.

It roars with anger and she speeds off, leaving both of them in a dusty cloud.

WAMBLE (CONT’D)
Two geckos in one day.

END OF ACT TWO.
ACT THREE

INT. BAR – DAY

Cheick is crying in front of an unsympathetic Koura. Lamine and Wamble are finishing the blunt.

CHEICK
I’m a nice guy. I’m a good person. Why does it have to be so complicated? Why is her dad such a douche? He’s just jealous because she likes me.

Koura rolls her eyes.

KOURA
(sarcastic)
That’s what it is.

CHEICK
Then, what is it?

KOURA
Really? You think being nice is a job description? He doesn’t want to be the one taking care of your kids.

Cheick sighs.

CHEICK
You’re right.

Cheick jumps up full of energy and ideas.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
Lamine. Isn’t your Dad some hot shot politician?

LAMINE
(straight faced)
I don’t actually know what he does.

He and Wamble crack up, and high five.

Cheick ignores them.
CHEICK
Can you call him and ask him if he knows this dude who was supposed to give me the interview?

LAMINE
Sure, do you have phone credit?

He and Wamble crack up again.

WAMBLE
He doesn’t even have a phone ‘bro.

CHEICK
(shouting)
Wamble, phone credit, now.

Wamble snaps to attention.

WAMBLE
Siaka, go get me some cash.

Siaka runs to it then remembers something and does a U turn to come right back.

SIAKA
There is no money in the register.

WAMBLE
What do you mean? There had to be at least 50 people here since noon.

SIAKA
You bought them all drinks and fed them for free to celebrate Lamine’s arrival.

WAMBLE
When did I do that?

CHEICK
Idiot. You always do that. That’s why you’re the only broke bar owner in all of Ouaga.

WAMBLE
(sarcastic)
How much you got in your bank account?

LAMINE
Or just in your wallet.
CHEICK
At least I have a bank account.

WAMBLE
(waving him off like a pesky fly)
Bank accounts are bad luck.

Cheick rolls his eyes.

LAMINE
Look, that guy is leaving. Go check his basket.

Siaka runs to it and snaps a 500 f coin raising it in the air victoriously.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - DAY
The boys watch as Lamine dials a number.

WAMBLE
Ok, look. You only have 500 francs so you need to be quick.

CHEICK
Yeah and remember that you’re high, so try to impersonate the fastest rapper you’ve ever heard.

LAMINE
Busta Rhymes. I got this.

RINGS.

LAMINE’S DAD (V.O.)
Who is this?

LAMINE
Dad. It’s me. Listen, I don’t have a lot of credit, I need you to text me the number of your friend who works at the Ministry of the Interior, like right now, please, sir.

No answer.

LAMINE’S DAD (V.O.)
You mean to tell me you arrived in Ouaga, didn’t bother to come to your own house and now you’re calling me from a random number to ask me for my friend’s number?
LAMINE
Dad, it’s an emergency. I’m trying to help Cheick, my friend from school, remember?

LAMINE’S DAD (V.O.)
Likely story. Are you smoking drugs? You know that’s what happens when you become a musician, right? Stop doing drugs.

CLICK.

Phone screen says 200 francs left.

LAMINE
Shit.

WAMBLE
Your old man hasn’t changed.

LAMINE
He’s such a dick.

CHEICK
Do you know anyone else?

LAMINE
Um. I don’t know.

The phone beeps.

Incoming text reads: 76.33.66.74 TRY NOT TO PUT SHAME ON OUR FAMILY NAME.

Lamine yelps.

EXT. STREET – DAY

The three boys are squished on Wamble’s broken down old fashioned moped.

Stares abound on the road.

CHEICK
I can’t believe you are related to this guy. He’s actually your uncle?

LAMINE
I guess. Our village is really small.

WAMBLE
You can say that again.
LAMINE
Shut up. Nobody’s every heard of your village.

WAMBLE
Not true.

Cheick soaks up the moment.

CHEICK
Guys, even if this doesn’t work, you’re the best friends ever.

LAMINE
Yeah. Just make sure you don’t get a boner back there.

CHEICK
Stop flattering yourself.

Cheick composes a text message to Mai:

TELL YOUR DAD I’LL BE COMING TO VISIT HIM TOMORROW TO PROPOSE.

He looks up and smiles.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
Maybe that gecko was a good sign.

Wamble sighs, content, as he steers them through the mess of donkeys, bicycles, cars and trucks dangerously cramped on the slim paved road.

INT. MAI’S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mai wipes the tears from her eyes. She reads the text message and smiles.

Her hero is on the way.

EXT. UPSCALE BAR - DAY

Through the open doorway, Uncle sees the three boys arrive on the moped, park it and come inside.

INT. UPSCALE BAR - DAY

Right beside Uncle, is Clara.

Beside Uncle’s Friend is, Valerie.

When Lamine sees her, he understands what is going on.
Uncle’s face lights up when he sees Lamine.

    UNCLE

Lamine shakes his hand, kneeling down.

    UNCLE (CONT’D)
    Sit down. Who are these hooligans following you?

    LAMINE
    Uncle. These are my friends.

    UNCLE
    I was told you would come.

    LAMINE
    (oozing fake charm)
    It is so good to see you uncle.

    UNCLE
    (to Clara)
    He used to love sitting in my lap as a kid. Nobody else’s.

    CLARA
    (awkward)
    Really? How cute.

    LAMINE
    (rubbing it in)
    Isn’t it though?

    UNCLE
    Sit. Sit.

Lamine pulls a chair up in between Uncle and Clara.

    LAMINE
    (to Clara)
    Excuse me.

She moves slightly.

Lamine inches in, every time saying:

    LAMINE (CONT’D)
    Excuse me. Excuse me.

She moves all the way over.

Finally:

    LAMINE (CONT’D)
    I just want to be next to my uncle. Thanks.
Cheick clears his throat suggestively and makes eye contact with Lamine: not now, please!

Uncle is beaming and doesn’t notice a thing.

Cheick and Wamble pull up seats.

**UNCLE**
So, tell me.

**LAMINE**
Uncle. I just came back from Abidjan.

**UNCLE**
Yes. Your father told me what an unfortunate career you have chosen.

Cheick stands and shakes Uncle’s hand.

**CHEICK**
Cheick, sir. Pleased to meet you.

Wamble stands also and follows suit.

**WAMBLE**
Wamble.

**UNCLE**
What kind of a name is that?

**WAMBLE**
From Bouaba country.

**UNCLE**
Boaba’s like to drink. Serve yourself.

**WAMBLE**
(to all clients in the bar)
A good man.

Cheick pulls Wamble down into a seat and whispers into his ear:

**CHEICK**
Do my a favor and just shut the fuck up for like five minutes.

Drinks are served.

**UNCLE**
So tell me, Cheick. Where did you go to school?
Cheick dusts his suit off and gets ready.

CHEICK
I attended Sciences Po in Paris, sir.

UNCLE
Wow. How did you like Paris?

Cheick looks over to Lamine who gives him an enthusiastic thumbs up.

CHEICK
I loved it. I just loved it.

UNCLE
I did too. Not in the winter time though.

CHEICK
Oh man. Too cold. Makes it hard to concentrate.

UNCLE
So, tell me, how is it that you missed our interview earlier today?

Dead silence.

Lamine has no advice.

Wamble stares at a fly drowning in his beer. He shakes his head.

CHEICK
Well, sir, I was there...and then...to be honest, I had to go to the bathroom and...when I got back, you were already gone.

Silence. And then...

Laughter (Uncle’s laughter).

UNCLE
Who hasn’t been in that situation before?

He looks around the table.

Everyone smiles and nods.

Wamble retrieves the fly and throws it out before throwing back his beer.
I admire your honesty young man. It’s refreshing. So what exactly do you think you have to offer us in the Ministry of Commerce, Cheick?

Cheick is back and he is full of energy.

My ideas, my passion, my love for this country. My stellar accounting skills.

I hope you’re not a Sankarist.

Silence.

Lamine makes a cut it out motion to Cheick with his hand.

I really hope you’re not one of these yo yo’s who are obsessed with Sankara. I can’t stand them.

Lamine makes a choking motion behind his Uncle: this is the kiss of death.

Wamble falls from his chair and stays seated on the floor. He can’t watch this.

I mean, it’s really all nonsense, we are lucky the French colonized us. We would have no educational system otherwise, no modern infrastructure whatsoever. You would never have gone to Sciences Po, for instance.

Lamine begs Cheick from behind his uncle to just keep quiet.

Cheick takes a deep breath.

If we hadn’t been colonized, we might have our own Sciences Po right here, so I wouldn’t need to.

Bite your tongue, young man.
CHEICK
I don’t think so. Sankara is the father of this nation. You’re a disappointment.

UNCLE
(chuckling)
Says the boy in flip flops and a ripped three piece suit. You get any action looking like that?

LAMINE
No, but I do. Right, Clara?

Clara doesn’t answer. Uncle gets the message: it’s a massive diss.

CHEICK
Spoiler alert: these lovely ladies aren’t with you because you look good. And they get what they really need with yo yo’s like us. P.S: Sankara put women to work with real jobs.

Cheick stands and buttons up his dusty blazer.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
Boys, let’s go. Our work here is done.

WAMBLE
I knew this day would be full of action. That gecko stare was long...and intimate.

Clara and Valerie recoil.

VALERIE
Ew.

He stands and points to Uncle.

WAMBLE
(to all clients in the bar)
A good man.

Only this time: it’s a diss.

He finishes his beer, and every other glass of beer on the table, slamming the glasses down each time.

A server brings a to go package.

SERVER
Your porc, sir.
Wamble grabs it and follows his boys.

From the doorway, Uncle, a very uncomfortable Clara et al watch as the boys struggle to get the moped started.

They finally have to push it out of sight.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Lamine pushes the moped with Wamble eating his porc on it. Cheick follows close by.

The mood isn’t great.

EXT. BAR - DAY

The boys are lounging as dusk begins.

Siaka mans the busy tables. From time to time, he dropps by the table to hand money over to Wamble, who grabs it away from him suspiciously.

Cheick rolls his eyes at the archaic exchange.

Wamble contemplates the sky and then gets an idea: eureka!

WAMBLE

Dude, you should work for me.

CHEICK

Ugh. The humiliation.

WAMBLE

Can’t be worse than right now, right?

He’s got a point.

LAMINE

You should. And book me to do gigs there. I’ll lend my voice for your success...for a cut.

Cheick doesn’t answer. Has his life really come to this?

PHONE RINGS.

Cheick checks: it’s from Mai.

He answers immediately.

CHEICK

Mai, honey, hi.
He fumbles as he remembers what he promised her earlier.

CHEICK (CONT’D)
How are you?

MAI (V.O.)
Ok. How are you?

CHEICK
(stalling)
Good. Um. Yeah. Good.

MAI
So, how did it go? Did you find him?

Cheick looks at his friends. He can feel the lie coming on.

CHEICK
Yeah?

MAI (V.O.)
(hesitant)
So you got the job?

Cheick so wants to please her. He just can’t say no.

CHEICK
Um. Yeasss?

He looks at Wamble.

Wamble smiles knowingly.

Mai’s squeals pierce through the phone.

MAI (V.O.)
Thank God. So no more hanging around with those sorry losers all day?

CHEICK
MMMM. MMMMM.

MAI (V.O.)
I’m so excited. We should celebrate.

CHEICK
We should.

MAI (V.O.)
So, I’ll tell my dad to expect you tomorrow?
CHEICK
Yes. He should expect me
tomorrow...because I have a job?

MAI (V.O.)
Oh. Cheick. It’s happening. I
love you.

Cheick smiles. That’s what he needed to hear.

CHEICK
I love you too, Mai.

He hangs up.

Wamble puts his hands up as if to say: what did I tell you?

WAMBLE
Welcome aboard.

LAMINE
Our crew has been resuscitated.
(he points to the east)
Like jesus christ of nazareth.
(he points to the west)
Like a phoenix rising from...

CHEICK
Please stop.

END OF ACT THREE.
TAG

INT. CHEICK’S ROOM - NIGHT

Cheick is tossing and turning.

LIGHT RAP at his door wakes him. He jumps up and opens the door.

It’s Mai. It’s as though they are both in a dream.

    MAI
    I couldn’t sleep.

Cheick sighs, relieved.

    CHEICK
    I couldn’t either.

She smiles.

He ushers her in, romantically.

Mai stands over the bed and sees Wamble AND Lamine in bed.

    MAI
    Is this a joke?

Cheick stands with her.

    CHEICK
    It’s just for tonight. Come on.

Mai doesn’t have the energy to fight anymore. It’s been a long day.

Somehow, the two of them find a way to fit into the twin sized bed and before you know it, they fall asleep.

Off of the framed pictures of Cheick and his ‘bros versus Mai we...

    CUT TO:

    A GECKO STARING AT ALL OF THEM AS THEY SLEEP PEACEFULLY.

THE END.