

INVINCIBLE

Screenplay
By
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FADE IN:

EXT. DURBAN BRIDGE (UNDERNEATH) - DAY

Thick morning fog blankets all. It's all quiet, save for the DISTANT GRINDING of a train.

Rusted steel meshed with concrete. Graffiti. Cold. Damp. We can almost smell the dried out patches of urine on the walls. A slum.

Nothing should exist here -- he does.

In the shadows: A man -- skinny -- Intense -- Lips dry and parched -- Sprawled on a bed of thin cardboard. Newspapers. A pillow of BOOKS. The HORN blares as the Train spits dust merely meters away from him. His eyelids gingerly peel apart -
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JACOB NGEMA - 20's. The eyes of a man who has been somewhere, seen something, and hasn't entirely come back.

He sits up. Flexes his back. Massages his shoulders. Rolls his neck. Every part of him feels like shit.

Beat. He begins to cry. Not a simple tear down his cheeks, but a rush of silent anguish, good honest pain.

EXT. RAILWAY - DAY

Jacob walks along a well-worn path. As he continues his journey, a lonely figure, he glances behind him --

A troupe of homeless men walk single file along the embankment of the rail tracks, dirty and despondent faces.

Jacob looks up at the path ahead of him, the track snakes all the way to...

INT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM

Busy. We make out Jacob in this stream of busy bodies flowing towards the mouth of a boarding train.

INT. CBD BOUND TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob boards, the doors close. The train takes off. He looks around. No breathing room here.

Jacob searches for a less dense section. He makes out a small space in the corner of the train car. He starts towards it. Pushes past passengers who drill him with hostile eyes. A woman pulls her daughter away as to avoid Jacob bumping up against her.

Jacob finds his seat. Passengers, next to and opposite him, shoot to their feet, keep their distance. He's a commoner among lords.

EXT. CBD - DAY

City Life:

--bridges. Durban railway station.

--a clogged freeway at rush hour.

--busy city streets. Buses. Taxis.

EXT. DURBAN STREET - DAY

Busy. Crowded. STREET VENDERS. Hawkers. Ordinary people going about their daily routine.

Jacob, he's hard to miss. Head bobs among the crowd. Unwelcome looks descend on him.

He scoops TWO oranges from a Vending Table. A quick, practiced manoeuvre. If you blinked you missed it.

We lose Jacob in a crowd of pedestrians.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

A busy market town. Fishing town. Hustler's town. Rundown and happening at the same time.

A WOMAN. We see her in pieces. She carries a bag filled with local produce.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - BUS SHELTER

A BEARDED MAN pushes a cart: tattered suit and tie. None of it matches. Everything scavenged from different outfits and eras.

The rusted cart's wheels let out a plaintive, rhythmic squeak.

Bearded Man finds rest on the opposite end of Jacob's bench. A joint. A lighter. Fires up.

Jacob's feet are buried in Orange skin. He hands the man an ORANGE --

Bearded Man. From his cart, produces a new Pillow(a stack of books) and a joint -- Jacob, takes the pillow. Shakes his head at the joint: "no way". The Bearded Man smiles, reveals a mouth almost devoid of teeth. This is routine.

Jacob's face turns as he looks at something O.S --

The Woman -- tailed by three big ugly DOG FACED men; One casually taps her on the rear. The Woman kicks him on the shin.

He slaps her. HER BELONGINGS FIND THE PAVEMENT. She tries breaking away. He's got her arm. Clenches his fist over her face. An eternal tableau. People look away.

Jacob -- not looking way. Anger amounts on his features. Women being beaten on works him up more than he would ever let anyone know.

The Bearded Man clocks this. He knows what comes next. Grabs Jacob's arm: "don't do it".

Jacob just stares a hole into him until he let's go. The Bearded Man does.

Jacob tears through traffic. No regard for anything else. Tires screech. Honks blare. Disgruntled drivers show him the middle finger, as Jacob jaywalks across to...

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONFRONTATION - CONTINUOUS

Jacob grabs Dog Face#1 by the shoulder. Spins him away from The Woman. The other Dog Faces aren't sure what to make of this.

Jacob catches The Woman's eye, equally bewildered, yet curious to see how this plays out. Now we really get to see her --

SAFIYAH MISRA - 20's. Slim. Small. Delicate featured. Pretty in a flawed, accessible way. Stands out in eclectic-chic.

Jacob, absolutely transfixed by her. They look at each other for a prolonged time. Whatever connection exists here, it is cut short --

Dog Face#1 steps up to Jacob, sends Safiyah to ground in the process, a big mistake because --

Jacob's heart fills with poison -- drills Dog Face#1 in the jaw. He staggers --

Everyone is stunned by the impact. The Bearded Man sees something else. Jacob's fighting spirit.

Dog Face#2/#3 converge on Jacob. He manages to dodge their attempt. Wrestles one guy to the ground --

It's a full on spectacle now. SPECTATORS!

Jacob stands toe-to-toe with these guys -- one little David versus three Goliaths -- he's almost caught with a bottle to the head --

Jacob -- staggered. Bleary -- Dog Face#2 winds up for a shot when a tomato explodes on his head --

Spectators launch edibles. Seven colours in the air as WAVES OF FRUIT RAIN IN!

A scene of inexpressibly wicked beauty.

Bodies trip over each other. Some slip on ripe fruit, and get stomped while they're down -- A human salad.

Jacob -- pinned on the asphalt. Taking hard hits --

BLOOP! BLOOP! -- a squad car rolls by --

And with that, faces freeze -- the Earth stops spinning for a moment. Anticipation of some divine intervention.

The OFFICER winds down his window. Sunglasses off. As cool as you like. A model of indifference.

OFFICER sees -- Jacob on the asphalt, bloody. The Dog Faces stand over him, their fists painted with his blood. They warily start backing away.

Officer remains in his car. Glares at Jacob. Disgusted. Just disgusted. Rolls up his window. Drives off.

In this cold, diseased layer of the city -- scum is scum, injustice is justice.

Jacob hauls himself up. Bleeding, bruised, still crazed and ready to fight. Realizes the boys are gone. Smiles through a bloodied mouth. All in a days work.

Beat. Everyone is gone. He's alone again. Forever alone. He drops his head, inventories his bruises. Catches something with the corner of his eye --

On the asphalt -- a NAPKIN -- in his hand now. We don't have to see what's on it. His face says it all. It calms him. His eyes soften. Some moment of truth here.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - DAY

A pair of diners enter. They are greeted by Safiyah, her tired eyes don't do justice to her practised, yet disarming smile of a working girl. She wears a tight waitress uniform that accentuates her perfect ass.

She seats the diners. Buses a table. Slips the dirty dishes into the rubber tray.

Jacob watches all this through the large front windows. He looks down at the Napkin in his hand. On it -- "The Restaurant" -- something else written in ink on the back (we will later learn the significance of this)

Patrons enter/exit this fine establishment. Every single one of them dressed better than him. Healthier than him. Happier than him.

Jacob tries to engage the passersby, none of whom will give him the time of day.

Beat. Jacob turns to watch through the large windows -- watches Safiyah. A spark has been lit.

EXT. DURBAN STREET - DAY

Jacob walks. A labored pace. Stops suddenly. Stands stock still in the centre of the pavement. Impossible to know what he's thinking.

Bodies flow past him like a river around a rock --

He collapses against a wall. Panting. He sits there. Blankly stares dead ahead.

He watches a beat up old VAN pull up across the street.

EXT. VAN - SAME

The door swings open, about a half-dozen beer cans find the ground before his foot does. He steps out, groggy, off balance. Composes himself. Wipes vomit off his chin --

KOOBUS BOTHA - unshaven. Sad-eyed. Mysterious. You wouldn't tell by looking at him now, but he has the attitude and confidence of a man who's meaner than two rattlesnakes fucking in a dirty boot.

Koobus turns to feel the warm morning sun on his face. Walks over to a WAREHOUSE ENTRANCE -- a sign atop reads 'HAYMAKER'.

BACK TO JACOB:

He sits there for an eternity.

EXT. HAYMAKER - MUCH LATER

A group of Youngsters emerge, boxing gloves slung over their necks. Followed by --

Koobus -- locks up. Climbs into his van. Drives off.

Haymaker -- to most people, a boxing gym -- To Jacob, a lifeline.

He stares upwards at the levels of the city. He just sits there. Blinking. Then shouts jauntily to no one in particular:

JACOB
Any man! Any time!

EXT. CITY SCAPE - DUSK

We travel across the shores of the beach, settle on the working side of the Durban waterfront.

Large freighters are laden with cargo while other ships are being towed to moorings.

EXT. GRAVE YARD - DUSK

TOMBSTONES rise and fall in ever-undulating grave sites.

Koobus speaks, not loud enough to be audible. His eyes are heavy with grief as he stares at the headstone that reads:

MARY BOTHA

BORN MARCH 10, 1975 -

DIED JUNE 11, 2013.

He places a fresh display of flowers on the headstone. Rises. Kisses the headstone with emotional weariness. Heads off.

EXT./INT. KOOBUS'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

Koobus climbs in. for a moment just sits there. Eyes glassy.

Engine roars to life.

EXT. CBD LANDSCAPE - DAWN

EXT. DURBAN BRIDGE (UNDERNEATH) - DAY

The TRAIN HORN blares -- Jacob's eyes peel open.

Tucked under his arm -- A BOOT.

He's up. He's off. A man on a mission.

INT. CBD BOUND TRAIN - DAY

Jacob, solo on one side of the train car. Kung Fu grip on the Boot.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - TOILETRIES ISLE - DAY

Jacob scans the isle. glides a hand over a bar of soap. Stuffs it in his pants. Casually walks past the counter -- Runs...

EXT. DURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jacob sprints. Attracts stares as he carves through crowds --

INT. PUBLIC TOILETS - DAY

A JUNKIE lies passed out on the floor.

Enter Jacob. Winded. Checks toilet compartments. Empty. At the sink, the soap -- scrubs his face -- armpits --

He stares at his reflection in the mirror.

EXT. PUBLIC TOILETS - CONTINUOUS

Jacob exits. Wears the Junkie's clothes. Boot in tow.

EXT. HAYMAKER - DAY

Jacob at the entrance. Neatens up. Rubs the Boot the way Alladin would rub a lamp. A cherished thing -- this is it -- here we go --

INT. HAYMAKER - CONTINUOUS

Exposed pipes on the wall. Heavy bags barely held together with tape.

Trainers work their fighters. Thumps and hissing tear through the room as leather meets leather. Everyone sweats. Hip hop blares through a boom box on a counter.

Koobus moves through the gym barking orders at GYM HEADS.

KOOBUS

- Throw that hook off the pivot!
- Transfer!
- Go through him!
- That's it!
- Leave nothing on the table!

Jacob, starved, disheveled -- marvels at it all with the wonderment of a child.

Everyone studies this fish out of water. Especially the two Gym Heads who spar in the ring:

GYM HEAD#1

Ooh! Looks like we got ourselves a black Oliver Twist.

laughter ripples through the gym.

GYM HEAD#1 (cont'd)

Sorry. Soup kitchen's around the corner, Oliver.

Everybody rips up. Not Koobus.

KOOBUS

Craig! You stopped punching -- why
did you stop punching -- do not
stop punching!

Gym Head#1 gives Jacob the stink eye, then does as he's told.
Koobus already looks for the next problem to solve. It's like
herding cats.

Jacob tails Koobus. Koobus doesn't acknowledge him.

JACOB

You own the place, right?

KOOBUS

Maybe. What the dirty fuck are you?

Koobus slips in behind the counter. Keeps his hands busy.

JACOB

My name is--

KOOBUS

How much do I owe you?

Jacob freezes for a moment. Amazed, stunned, confused. Not the
reception he was expecting.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Who sent you?

JACOB

Nobody.

KOOBUS

Then what do you want?

Jacob tilts THE BOOT -- dozens of coins and crumpled notes
spill out -- a MOLE-HILL on the counter-top.

JACOB

To be a fighter.

Koobus -- Nothing turns him on more than the sight of hard cash. He regards Jacob for the first time.

KOOBUS

(almost amused)

Not a fireman? Not an astronaut?

JACOB

I just want to (fight)--

KOOBUS

Stop talking!

(re: jacob's
wounds)

Whose wunga you stole?

JACOB

It's nothing I couldn't handle.

KOOBUS

Nothing you couldn't handle? Have you seen what I'm seeing?

JACOB

I can fight.

KOOBUS

You can take a beating.

(let's that sting
sink in)

Look, I've been--

An Gym Head taps Koobus on the shoulder. Without even looking at him, he says:

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Get out of my sight before I put you down like a bleeding chicken in Chatsworth.

The Gym Head fades away.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

(to jacob)

I've been doing this my whole life.

(re: ring)

That's home. So look around you,
see the world you've stepped into,
it's where champions are made.
Boxers, not fighters...

(beat)

...and it smells like kak! 'Cause
if your gym smells too good it's
probably not any good. That stench,
I like. Then there's you...

(pause for effect)

...you have thirty seconds.

Jacob knows this is a test, gathers himself, this isn't easy for him.

JACOB

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is
optional. I want to learn how not
to suffer. You seem like a man who
can teach me that.

KOOBUS

Son, flattery gets you knocked out.

Jacob goes silent. Koobus studies him. Overcome with a wave of pity.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Look, I get it. It's hell out
there. But it's the devil's arse in
here.

JACOB

I'd rather die in here, swinging.
Than out there, starving.

The boy's got drive. Koobus likes that.

KOOBUS

See that sack of sand hanging from
the ceiling?

Jacob's eyes follow Koobus' pointy finger across the room -- A heavy bag.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

It's called a punching bag.

Koobus hands Jacob a pair of gloves, then tends to the Mole-Hill. A clear directive: "start punching".

Jacob starts towards the heavy bag. Slips on his gloves, utterly lacking in finesse. The rest of the Gym Heads scrutinize him. If looks could kill.

INT. HAYMAKER - LATER

Jacob works the heavy bag. Flat footed. Looks around for Koobus, he's still at the counter. Keeps punching.

INT. HAYMAKER - MUCH LATER

Almost all the lights are off.

Jacob -- Face awash in sweat. Chin dripping. Muscles throbbing. T-shirt clings to his chest. Bag swinging. Can't land a single punch the way he wants it.

Koobus watches from the counter. He can't take it anymore.

KOOBUS

Stop! Just stop. Enough.

JACOB

I'm not doing it right?

KOOBUS

You're doing it right -- the wrong way.

Jacob thinks about this.

Koobus gives the heavy bag a shove. Moves around it. Maintains the same distance as he slides forward. Back. Pivots. Moves.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Don't waste energy showing off on the bag. Nobody cares.

The bag swings into Koobus. He sidesteps. Throws a right hook, the bag swings back into a perfect figure eight. Jacob stands entranced.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Think of it as just a bag and you might aswell have a welcome mat on your chin that says knock me out.

Koobus pushes the bag towards Jacob. Jacob swings with his LEFT. Awkward. Awful.

Koobus sees a silver lining, eyes brighten up. Jacob is a unicorn of the boxing profession. A SOUTHPAW!

JACOB

How was that?

KOOBUS

(encouraged)

Your stance is backward. Straining your spine. Put your right foot forward and all your weight on your left.

Koobus literally holds his feet, places them in the correct position.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

Stand on the balls of your feet.
The impact of the blow is
determined by the strength of your
pivot. Boxers fight off their toes.
No pivot. No punch. No purse. Got
it?

(off jacob's nod)

Sing it.

JACOB

No pivot. No punch. No purse.

KOOBUS

Elbows tucked in, chin down; Your
body is both a shield and a weapon.
I'm going to teach you how to
utilize both with German precision.
It'll become an unconscious effort.

Jacob assumes the proper stance. Koobus shoves the bag. A challenge.

Jacob moves around the bag. Pivots. Swings. Nails it. Koobus allows himself a smile. The boy is a natural. As we --

A Montage of Koobus training Jacob -- juxtaposed with scenes of how the Mole-Hill came to be.

EXT. DURBAN BRIDGE - DAY

Jacob wakes up to the sound of the TRAIN HORN. A street dweller's alarm clock.

INT. HAYMAKER - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob watches Koobus intently as he works the speed bag.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob in a SCRAP YARD with a cart of scrap metal.

A GREASY MAN counts MONEY into Jacob's hands.

INT. HAYMAKER - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob has a go at the speed bag. Doesn't get the hang of it.

EXT. DURBAN CBD - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob sits on a sidewalk -- blanket over his legs. Dark shades over his eyes. THE BOOT in his hand: "I'm blind".

A passerby drops a coin into The Boot.

INT. HAYMAKER - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob does pull ups.

EXT. DURBAN CBD - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob sleeps on a park bench.

INT. HAYMAKER - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob jumps rope.

EXT. BEACHFRONT - ANOTHER DAY

Jacob runs along the shore. The setting sun on his shoulders.

EXT. DURBAN CBD - PARK - ANOTHER DAY

- Jacob walks up to a group of men engaged in a money brawl.
- His opponent pumps jabs. Jacob bobs. Weaves. Delivers an overhand left/right after each jab.
- Jacob stings him with a floating hook that sets the guy off balance, stumbles into the crowd.
- Jacob collects his winnings. Walks off. A man reborn.

INT. HAYMAKER - DAY

Jacob -- ALL LEAN MUSCLE NOW -- Mad. Motivated. Works mits with Koobus. As they flow together, Jacob's movement is impressive. Fluid. Intense. The resolve now in his eyes. Something has changed.

KOOBUS

(calls out combinations)

Work, work, head, body, body, work,
work, duck, hook, head, body
double-up, duck, jab, jab, hook --
Breath!

EXT. HAYMAKER - ALLYWAY - NIGHT

Koobus out the back door with two garbage disposal bags. Tosses them into a LARGE DUMPSTER. One bag hits the frame --

It rolls behind the dumpster. Koobus reaches for it, he finds --

Jacob. Fetal position. Sandwiched between the dumpster and the wall, on his bed of cardboard. He quickly finds his feet. Attempts to look descent.

They just stand there, staring intently at each other. An unspoken conversation.

INT. KOOBUS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Newspapers. Empty beer cans. Liquor bottles. Barely any furniture. We may notice a painting of Michael Angelo's 'Creation Of Adam' on the wall.

Koobus leads Jacob in, shows him around:

KOOBUS

Kitchen. Living room. Bathroom's down the hall to your right. Your room's on the left. Fresh towels on the top drawer. Touch anything you're not supposed to be touching, you'll wake up in hobo heaven.

Point taken. Koobus walks off.

INT. JACOB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bare walls. A bed. A small night table next to the bed. Jacob takes it all in. More than he's had in years.

He slumps onto the bed. Shifts, something feels unnatural. With the pillow, he finds rest on the floor.

INT. PUB & GRILL - NIGHT

Empty beer bottles, overflowing ashtrays, cigarettes burning out. It's hard not to be drunk here.

Refined but tough. Fond of argument. Speaks with extreme deliberation. A man of much gravitas - **WALTER "SKIPS" MISRA**, has hardly touched his beer. Koobus sips on his third bottle.

It's clear there's a long history of mutual respect between these two men.

SKIPS

You're living with the spawn of
satan.

KOOBUS

(matter-of-factly)

Southpaws should be drowned at
birth. They're a plague. I know. I
get it. But the worst thing about
him is also the best thing about
him.

SKIPS

They're like a roll of film; Watch
these still pictures go by at
twenty four frames per second, and
even though they're not moving,
believe that they are. Believe in
the lie. Deception at its highest
form.

KOOBUS

Don't confuse deception with
destiny.

SKIPS

Don't confuse destiny with faith.

KOOBUS

Faith is for prisoners and
politicians.

SKIPS

Both more rewarding prospects than
our line of work, wouldn't you
agree?

Koobus concedes. A Waiter eyeballs Koobus. It seems everybody
here knows him, but doesn't necessarily like him.

SKIPS (cont'd)

What about, uhm -- The boy whose mother works at the soup kitchen.

KOOBUS

Craig?

SKIPS

Now that boy's got a right hook that could move a tank.

KOOBUS

He's a gatekeeper. That's all he'll ever be. I just don't have the heart to tell him.

(a hint of desperation)

Don't make me beg you.

SKIPS

There must be another way.

KOOBUS

This southpaw -- should've seen him on the bag; he grasped it intuitively in a way you and I just can't. He is the way. All he needs is direction, and we can give that to him.

SKIPS

You know giving is the most selfish thing you can do, all it does is make you feel good about yourself.

KOOBUS

But what do you give a man who has nothing?

SKIPS

(considers this)

Hope.

KOOBUS

A livelihood.

EXT. DURBAN RESTAURANT - SAME

Neighbouring stores have closed shop. Safiyah prepares to do the same. She digs through her handbag, dozens of napkins spill onto the ground. Most of the napkins have been scribbled on with ink, like the one Jacob has in his hand:

JACOB

"I killed the most humane part of my being, and every odd month or so I am haunted by the ghost of my emotions. I am a machine. I am..."

She just swiped THE NAPKIN from his hand. Stuffs it in her bag -- undeterred by Jacob's sudden appearance.

We're looking at a different Jacob - healthier. Cleaner. Seemingly happier.

JACOB

(re: the napkin)

How does it end?

(silence)

Are you happy at your job?

Safiyah doesn't play his game.

SAFIYAH

Most men bring flowers. Girls love flowers.

She finally finds it, a key, locks up.

JACOB

I'll take that as a no.

Their eyes meet for the first time. A change in Jacob as he studies her, she doesn't seem to recognize him.

SAFIYAH

How you take it is none of my business, the same way my levels of satisfaction with my job is none of yours.

Jacob. Safiyah. An impasse. She walks off. He follows.

INT. PUB & GRILL - SAME

A stare-down. Koobus looks away. It's clear that this means more to him than it should.

SKIPS

How about you stop pretending this is about him.

KOOBUS

(after a beat)

I'm not looking for pity or condolences. I fucked up. I eat the consequences. It sucks. I don't know if I can make it right, but this is my chance to try.

SKIPS

And while you rise like a dutch pheonix from the ashes of financial insecurity what do I get?

KOOBUS

I can tell you what you don't get.

Skips finally takes a sip of his drink. Shoots to his feet. Slips his on his coat. Heads out.

KOOBUS

Is that a no?

SKIPS
(already exiting)
It's not a yes.

EXT. CBD - SAME

Jacob. Safiyah. They walk along a row of closed storefronts.

JACOB
The notion that an author's work is a direct reflection of her personality is rather unfair. But you wouldn't be shot for concluding that the writer of *Gone Girl* is fifty shades of Amy.

Safiyah looks at him, half smiles. Surprised how well read he is. A small victory for Jacob. It's about to be shortlived:

SAFIYAH
That's exactly the sort of pretentious bullshit men say to get school girls to sleep with them. It hardly gets you a pat on the back, atleast not from me. Even if it did, and I'm not saying it would, but if it did, you'd hardly be my equal, you know, intellect-wise.

She stops at the passenger side of a METERED TAXI that has been waiting for her. Turns to him with a look of pity.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)
Look, uhm --

JACOB
Jacob.

SAFIYAH

--Jacob.

(maybe next time)

Goodnight.

She disappears into the Metered Taxi. Jacob smiles. Completely beguiled.

He just stands there, staring at the SEQUENCE OF DIGITS illuminated on the roof of the Metered Taxi. And from the mischevious glint in his eye, we know this isn't over.

INT. METERED TAXI - MOMENT LATER

The DRIVER's cellphone rings. He answers.

DRIVER

Hello?

(to safiyah)

It's for you.

Safiyah puts the phone to her ear. Beat.

JACOB/PHONE

Alexander Bell.

SAFIYAH

Excuse me?

JACOB/PHONE

He invented this little gadget back in the 1930's. It's called the Telephone. You'll love it.

(continuing as...)

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - SAME

JACOB (cont'd)

...Unless ofcourse you'd prefer flowers.

INT. METERED TAXI - SAME

Safiyah -- for the first time words escape her -- half skeptical. Half turned on.

INT. HAYMAKER OFFICE - DAY

Koobus' gym manager's office. Small cluttered. Dominated by a desk. Michael Angelo's 'Creation Of Adam' framed on the desk.

He's on the phone with a PROMOTER.

KOOBUS

Eighty twenty.

MANDLA/PHONE

No.

KOOBUS

Seventy thirty.

MANDLA/PHONE

Forget it.

KOOBUS

Sixty forty.

MANDLA/PHONE

Not happening.

KOOBUS

Fifty fifty!

MANDLA/PHONE

He's a southpaw!

KOOBUS

What are you talking about, your guy has eight years experience over mine.

MANDLA/PHONE

So one negative times another
negative makes a positive?

KOOBUS

As a matter of fact (yes)--

MANDLA/PHONE

(interrupting)

Don't answer that!

KOOBUS

(fuck you)

Don't you ever interrupt me again.
If that's a source of problem for
you, well I don't give a shit! Now
either we klaap this purse down the
middle, or I'll tell Gloria about
your Friday night exploits on Point
Road.

MANDLA/PHONE

(after a long beat)

Fifty fifty works for me.

Koobus hangs up. Triumphant. Suddenly Wears a smile. Skips
stands in the doorway.

SKIPS

I don't know if I'm crazier for
agreeing to this or if you're
crazier for thinking you can do it.

KOOBUS

I could marry you right now.

INT. HAYMAKER - LATER

Jacob's first sparring session -- against Craig. Skips.
Koobus. Gym heads watch from ring side.

Jacob lunges. Craig rallies, so nonchalant. So happy to be pounding on Oliver.

From the lunge, Jacob is suddenly suspended in mid-air -- catches Craig with a mean one on the way down. Nods of approval all round.

Craig's ass finds the canvass. Livid:

CRAIG

What the hell was that?!?

JACOB

It's called a superman punch.

CRAIG

Well -- it's illegal! It's not allowed!

JACOB

(looks to koobus)

Says who?

Koobus looks to Skips. Skips just shrugs.

CRAIG

You people are a joke.

Craig storms out. Nobody protests this.

JACOB

(to craig)

Where you going?

(to koobus)

Aren't you gonna stop him?

KOOBUS

That would imply I give I shit.

SKIPS

I think we both know where he's going -- and to whom.

KOOBUS

Can't say I disagree.
 (to gym head#2)
 You're up.

Gym Head#2 steps into the ring, after what he saw Jacob just do, he's a bit shaken.

Jacob -- sweaty. Adrenalin rushing. Peels off his shirt --
 HIDEOUS BURN SCARS RUN DOWN HIS BACK LIKE AN INTRICATE MAZE!

These scars will never once be mentioned.

A painful pause. Skips glances at Koobus. Koobus' is floored.

KOOBUS

Alright. Back to what we're here
 for.
 (gives the nod)
 Andile.

Gym Head#2 -- steels himself -- goes in for the kill. As we --

INT. CLUB RING - NIGHT

Jacob fights a Big Guy. Bam! Bam! Big rights. Bam! Big
 uppercut. Bam! One last right hook sends Jacob spinning into
 his corner, just as the bell rings.

Jacob. Bloodied. Beaten. Overwhelmed. His breath comes in
 short fast spurts.

Koobus throws in the stool while Skips cleans Jacob's cuts.

KOOBUS

How you feeling?

JACOB

He's big, coach.

KOOBUS

What did I tell you about guerilla warfare?

Jacob searches his mental inventory: blank. Koobus refreshes it:

KOOBUS

He's big, you're small...

Skips -- the look on his face: "I knew this was a bad idea".

JACOB

...I'm hidden -- he's exposed.

(beat, dawns
on him)

I fight him on the inside!

KOOBUS

Congratulations, you're a boxer.

The bell...

Skips slips in Jacob's mouth piece.

Jacob gets in on sheer guts, pumps a jab to the head, follows up with a right hook. The Big Guy pushes Jacob back and pummels him with a left overhand. A blow to the kidney sends Jacob back a few steps.

SKIPS

He's getting murdered.

Jacob opens the guy up. Goes to work on his torso.

SKIPS (cont'd)

On the bright side, that guerilla warfare reference was very inspiring.

Jacob drops his left hand, gets punished with another right hook that sets him back.

Skip -- about to make another sly comment. Koobus drills him with a look: "piss off".

The bell --

Jacob -- covered in sweat and blood. Skip and Koobus are at his side the second he hits the stool.

Complete silence while Skip goes to work -- sponges Jacob's cuts -- wipes him down -- applies coagulant. Jacob is mended quicker than a busted tyre.

Skip operates like a Swiss watch. This is the work of a CUTMAN.

JACOB

(To Koobus)

You're uncharacteristically silent.

KOOBUS

You're doing a great job of blocking his right hooks with your chin.

Jacob, crushed. Skip clocks this, overcome with a wave of pity.

SKIP

Your left. Stop dropping it. That's how he's getting in so easy.

Skip glances at Koobus. Koobus glances back.

JACOB

How do I keep him out?

KOOBUS

You don't.

Jacob nods. The bell sounds --

The fighters rush towards the centre of the ring. Jacob dangerously begins to lower his guard, completely exposes his face.

SKIPS

What's he doing?

KOOBUS

Using his head.

Jacob presents his face as an irresistible target. His opponent releases a vicious combination, Jacob slips it and --

Unloads a pair of thunderous body punches. Big Guy comes right back at him.

Jacob rains a ten punch combo on the guy, chops him down to the bottom rope. Moves to a neutral corner as --

The REF gives the eight count.

Big Guy tries to get up. Jacob puts him to sleep with a left overhand -- dances back to his corner. He's a wonder to watch -- CROWD loves him.

Koobus throws his towel down with pure excitement. Skips allows himself a smile. They've done it. They've built a machine.

INT. KOOBUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Koobus -- a BRICK OF CASH on the bed. He counts it, smooths it out. Slips it into a YELLOW ENVELOPE marked:

"EUGENE"

INT. SAFIYAH'S - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Incense on the window sill. Paintings on the wall. Books shelves. Clothes strewn over chair backs.

Atop a desk -- Her beautiful handwriting on napkins -- pages -
- dense notes -- scattered around a Laptop.

She reaches for a cup of tea, cleans the stain left by the cup
on the desk. The cup tips and washes over the desk --

SAFIYAH

Shit!

She hurriedly wipes down the laptop. It's too late for the
napkins though.

She just sits there. Exhausted. frustrated. Beat. A smile.
Pulls out her phone. Hesitates. Nervous -- excited now. Dials.
Waits. Ringing --

INT. KOOBUS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

'The Creation Of Adam' hangs on the wall over a TV set. On TV
-- some sort of boxing documentary. Jacob watches from the
only couch in the room. As old stills of a little boy in
boxing gloves pop up on screen --

NARRATOR (V.O.)

*By the age of fourteen, Kruger was
wowing crowds all over Cape Town.
By his teens, The Iron Lion was
well on his way to becoming the
stuff of legend.*

TALKING HEAD#1

*Like any true great fighter, Kruger
seems to have been born with boxing
in his blood.*

TALKING HEAD#2

*Speed. Skill. Heart. That's Kruger
for you. You always get what you
pay for, if not more.*

Beat. Jacob takes it all in. Especially these words:

TALKING HEAD#2 (O.S.)

That's why he's the Iron Lion.

(Beat)

He just can't be beat.

Jacob turns off the TV. He just sits there. A Phone rings O.S.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob heads for a landline mounted on the wall. Answers:

JACOB

Yeah?

SAFIYAH/PHONE

Hi.

A smiles traces across his face. He'd know that voice from anywhere. Some awkwardness here.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY:

JACOB

Hi.

SAFIYAH

So -- What's up?

JACOB

Nothing -- What's up with you?

SAFIYAH

Nothing.

Beat. He leans into the phone. He likes her. She leans into the phone. She likes him. A sweet moment.

INT. CLUB RING - ANOTHER NIGHT

Jacob faces another opponent. Gives as good as he gets. Jacob flattens him.

INT. KOOBUS' VAN - DAY

Jacob drives. Safiyah rides shotgun.

He tries not to look as nervous as he feels. A stark contrast from the confident facade he put on when they first spoke. She seems to have tamed him.

He feeds a CD into the stereo.

TRACK ON STEREO -- Phoebe Killdeer & The Short Straws - The Fade Out Line.

JACOB

So -- I have this theory that the best music in the world is the music you don't hear on the radio.

She can't help but role her eyes.

SAFIYAH

I thought we agreed you wouldn't do that -- that school yard malarkey. Be you. Be real.

Jacob goes sullen. There's no winning with her. We let a moment pass. She rescues the mood:

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

So why boxing?

He hesitates. Caught off gaurd.

JACOB

Why does there have to be a reason; why can't I just box?

SAFIYAH

Like any man who'd take up a sport of such a primal nature, I figured maybe you're drowning in testosterone mixed with crippling insecurity.

JACOB

Maybe I want to be more than what people see.

SAFIYAH

(half impressed)

Is it working?

JACOB

I can't say for sure.

(weighs her)

What do you see?

Safiyah takes him in for a moment. Then reaches for the stereo, cranks up the volume. She definitely sees more.

INT. ANOTHER FIGHT - ANOTHER NIGHT

Jacob -- up against a small, quick footed opponent who dances circles around him.

Koobus and skips stand ringside. Try to hold a conversation over the screaming crowd.

KOOBUS

Talked to Mandla again.

SKIPS

How's his family? Are they settling in okay? I heard that they bought a puppy.

KOOBUS

A Pitbull that looks like it
swallowed a puppy. Can I get to my
point now?

IN RING -- Jacob fakes a hook, delivers a jab.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

We were considering the possibility
of Southpaw fighting EL Toro for
the undercard.

SKIPS

Sounds lucrative.

KOOBUS

It's the kind of purse that'll put
us where we need to be.

Skips doesn't like where this is going. Koobus knows it.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

You think I've gone maal, don't
you?

(no response)

You don't think he's ready?

(silence)

I think he's ready

(to himself)

He's definately ready.

IN RING -- Jacob gets cut down to his knees, bounces back up
with a haymaker. Knockout.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

You're right, he's not ready.

INT. KOOBUS' ROOM - NIGHT

Koobus slips another roll of cash into the Yellow Envelope.
It's gotten thicker -- a lot thicker!

INT. CLUB RING - ANOTHER NIGHT

Jacob bobs, weaves. Throws a hook. It's deflected, he's stung by a three punch combo. He launches himself off the ropes and into the guy's jaw. Knockout.

EXT. CLUB PARKING AREA - LATER

Skips and Jacob head for the van.

JACOB

I heard coach say he thinks I'm ready for six-rounders.

SKIPS

You care a lot about his opinion of you, don't you?

JACOB

He's gotten me this far.

SKIPS

Just be careful.

JACOB

I'm almost afraid to ask why.

SKIP

When it comes to Koobus, loyalty is and always has been underpinned by benefit.

Skips climbs in. Jacob tries to figure out what this means.

EXT. BEACHFRONT - DUSK

The twilight reflects brilliantly off the water. Durban at her SPARKLING best.

JACOB (V.O)

I feel like what I saw was -- and
forgive how this sounds -- but I
feel like it was definitely my
brand.

Jacob. Safiyah. Deliriously happy. Walk. Dance. Run down the
shore. They put their foreheads together. Very happy.

SAFIYAH (V.O)

Brand? I honestly don't know
whether to be humbled or outraged.

EXT. PIER - DUSK

Jacob. Safiyah. At the pier. He follows closely behind her
along the railing. His eyes travel her length.

JACOB (V.O)

That's what you get when you ask
too many questions.

A breeze catches her hair, she subdues it, ties it back into a
ponytail.

SAFIYAH (V.O)

I'm a writer of fiction,
inquisitiveness is my job. To find
something beyond the real: truth in
artifice.

With her hair back, the sun finds her face perfectly: eyes
brighter, lips fuller. She can feel Jacob's eyes on her.

JACOB (V.O)

Well there's no truth to be found
here. Just me.

She brushes against him playfully. So happy. So inlove. Jacob
has only known this kind of intimacy with Safiyah.

SAFIYAH (V.O)

Well maybe that's just what I've
been looking for.

They kiss gently. Lovingly. Sincerely on the lips. They turn
to take in the view. We let a moment pass.

SAFIYAH

Tell me something personal.

JACOB

Ask me something personal.

SAFIYAH

Fine. You've never once mentioned
your family.

JACOB

So?

SAFIYAH

Well -- do you have any, you know,
family-wise?

Jacob turns away from Safiyah, eyes lost into the distance --

CLIVE (pre-lap)

D'you remember that exhibition
fight?

FLASHBACK - INT. CONTACT ROOM - WESTVILLE PRISON

40's. Snake eyes. Orange overalls. A predator in his natural
element. A man you want on your side in a bar fight. Meet
CLIVE.

He sits at one of the several wooden tables with plastic
chairs placed around them. Several corrections officers stand
by.

TEENAGE JACOB - Eyes that stare blank only because they don't know how to care anymore, not giving anything away. Clive perseveres:

CLIVE (cont'd)

Wladimir Klitchko, Ephraim Philanders. ICC. Ofcourse you remember. T'was the first slug fest we ever saw together. You were so little. Couldn't even lift your tiny head over the seats. I had to put you on my shoulders just so you could watch Philanders get caught with that mean left cross. Man, southpaws are the best thing that's ever happened to the game, I'll tell you that for nothing.

(Beat)

And some day a little boy will sit on his fathers shoulders just to watch you -- I know it.

TEENAGE JACOB

(kill-joy)

There's nothing left to go back to when you get out.

Jacob. Inscrutable. This table may be the only thing keeping him from reaching for Clive's throat.

TEENAGE JACOB (cont'd)

If you get out.

Clive scans the room, sees other inmates in warm embrace with family, friends, smiles all round. Everything he once had, and secretely still longs for. A trace of sincerity in his eyes:

CLIVE

I didn't kill her.

TEENAGE JACOB

You didn't save her.

CLIVE
That's not fair.

TEENAGE JACOB
You don't get to Judge.

CLIVE
I'm your father, I don't have to be
fair.

Clive begins to cough hard, then a little harder. He finally holds a white handkerchief to his mouth -- SUDDENLY COUGHS BLOOD!

Clive will die in prison. A victory for Jacob. He rises to deliver the knock out blow:

TEENAGE JACOB
I never had a father.

Jacob turns for the exit. He's done with this asshole.

CLIVE
Hey!

Jacob -- not turning around.

CLIVE (cont'd)
Jacob!

Jacob continues.

CLIVE (cont'd)
I love you!

Jacob. Unmoved

CLIVE (cont'd)
Jacob!!!!

Jacob. Emotionless. Hollow. Dead inside.

PRESENT - EXT. BEACHFRONT - DUSK

JACOB

No -- no family.

She glances at him. He evades her gaze. This is like talking to a brick wall.

SAFIYAH

Would you believe me if I told you this wasn't the life I had imagined when I was a child?

JACOB

I don't think anybody's living the life they had imagined as a child.

SAFIYAH

When I was ten I had dreams of being a renowned author. But here I am; holding down two jobs, can barely make rent and haven't even seen the inside of a publishing house -- some dream huh?

(beat)

That's me. Your turn -- Give me something.

JACOB

Outwardly calm -- Inwardly raging.

SAFIYAH

Thank you.

INT. CLUB RING - NIGHT

A Stocky Guy throws fists at a bored Jacob. He strikes the guy under the heart. Speed. skill. Precision. Knockout. This has become an unconscious effort.

Crowd starts drumming on the back of their chairs. Chanting:

CROWD
BROKE-BACK-JACOB!!!...BROKE-BACK-
JACOB!!!...BROKE-BACK-JACOB!!!

Jacob moves to his corner. Not as happy as he should be. Not as happy as a championship belt would make him.

Skips and Koobus share a look.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Jacob on the trainer table. Skips unlaces his gloves. Koobus cracks open a can of beer.

JACOB
I want to fight Kruger.

SKIPS
The cavalier manner with which you
said that worries me.

JACOB
You know I deserve it.

SKIPS
Even so. You do not simply fight
Kruger.

KOOBUS
Nobody fights Kruger. You endure
him. An in-ring brawler is what he
is.

JACOB
My own life has been a brawl.

Koobus. Skips -- Touché.

JACOB (cont'd)

I can beat him.

KOOBUS

Because you've won a couple of cat-
shit six-rounders?

JACOB

(matter-of-factly)

Seventeen bouts. Fifteen by
knockout. Two by U.D. -- But who's
counting?

SKIPS

It's that very ego that'll ensure
you never acquire his belt.

KOOBUS

Short distance. Bursts of pace.
That's your niche. Title fights are
a comrades; you don't have the
lungs for it.

JACOB

(to koobus)

I have you.

Beat. Skips glances at Koobus. Koobus just shakes his head.

JACOB (cont'd)

Give him to me -- I'm a winner --
I'm going to win.

KOOBUS

I'll go warm up the car.

Koobus makes his exit. This is too much ignorance for him to
handle. With that, Skips says:

SKIPS

There are two kinds of bears in the world.

(Continues as...)

FLASH ON:

INT. SOMEWHERE - SOMETIME

-WIKUS "THE IRON LION" KRUGER - Powerfully built. Sculptured features. Proud jawline -- thumps a heavy bag. He's covered in sweat.

SKIPS (V.O)

...the bears you poke, and the bears you don't poke; he's the kind you don't.

-Kruger does deadlifts. The rhythmic... CLANG!... Of steel-on-steel drives him -- Focused -- Intense -- A beast.

-Kruger spars with PARTNER -- Partner moves in -- Kruger side steps, nails partner in the jaw, breaks it. We hear the sloppy sideways dislocation.

SKIPS (V.O)

You've never fought anybody like this before, once you do, you never will again...

-Kruger, still pounding. Circling. His shirt, drenched. Shoulders throbbing. Hits harder -- breaths sharper -- hits harder -- and harder -- the heavy bag rips open, bleeds sand. As we --

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. LOCKER ROOM NIGHT

SKIPS (cont'd)

Fourth round knockouts, that's his trademark. There was one man who made it past the fourth, Tsiko The Great. They went head-to-head in a bragging rights bout. Tsiko was brilliant, moved like pure poetry. By the eighth, commentators had already dubbed him Tsiko The Invincible -- Until fifteen seconds before the end of the ninth round.

(beat)

That's when Kruger proved it.

JACOB

Proved what?

SKIPS

Nobody's invincible.

INT. HAYMAKER - DAY

Jacob spars with Andile, who seems to be pissed that Jacob is able to fight him off while holding a conversation with Koobus.

JACOB

You should meet her.

KOOBUS

Smart?

JACOB

I'll bring her over one night.

KOOBUS

I'm not dead yet.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Jacob on a stool. Koobus rubs him down. He's lost in thought. Koobus clocks this.

KOOBUS

So inlove it's pouring out of your eyes. Stop it.

JACOB

Love just doesn't quite say it.

Koobus can't help but laugh at the naivety.

KOOBUS

Do you like ass?

JACOB

Huh?

KOOBUS

Ass -- you fucking southpaw -- do you like it?

JACOB

Well--

KOOBUS

-- wonderful. 'Cause that piece of Indian cuisine you keep following around will be like dust in a hurricane compared to the ass you'll be getting once you win that undercard.

All Jacob heard was "undercard" -- and ever so slowly -- his face dissolves into a grin.

JACOB

Thank you.

KOOBUS

Calm down. EL Toro's no walk in the park.

JACOB

Thank you so much.

KOOBUS

Okay. Alright. We're all very excited.

JACOB

So -- Skips knows then?

KOOBUS

If you tell anyone about this conversation I will shit in you!

The elation drains from Jacob's face. Not a hint in Koobus' tone suggests he didn't mean every word.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - DAY

Jacob leans on the stone wall. Waits.

A group of waitresses emerge, on their lunch break. Safiyah peels away from her friends to talk to Jacob. Pleased to see him.

SAFIYAH

Can't get enough of me, can you?

He's almost bursting with excitement.

JACOB

I scored an undercard bout.

SAFIYAH

What?

JACOB

An undercard bout, Safiyah.
Undercard.

SAFIYAH

That's a good thing, right?

JACOB

It means if I win this fight I'll
be the number one contender for the
title.

(off her blank stare)

Big shiny belt.

SAFIYAH

(getting it)

Oh! Jacob, that's wonderful.

They hug, very happy, put their foreheads together.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

We must celebrate. Dinner? Tonight?
I have a surprise for you.

EXT. CBD - NIGHT

EXT. DURBAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jacob. SAFIYAH. They linger near the entrance in their Sunday
best.

JACOB

So what's the surprise?

SAFIYAH

Not what. Who.

JACOB

Come again?

SAFIYAH

My father. He's already waiting
inside.

And with that body blow, the elation drains from his face.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Surprise.

JACOB

No, no, no, no.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

I appreciate your enthusiasm.

JACOB

Not exactly every little boy's
dream, is it?

SAFIYAH

You'll love him. He's the perfect
gentlemen.

JACOB

So was Hitler!

Jacob trades looks with a group of girls who pass by. Safiyah
clocks this.

SAFIYAH

Don't be juvenile -- you're being
juvenile. It's unbecoming. You'll
be fine.

She straightens his shirt, adjusts his collar, like a mother
would a child.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

...so long as you avoid words like
'car' and 'lunchbox' in one
sentence. He absolutely hates that.

Jacob absorbs this. A quick beat. It dawns on him --

FLASHBACK - INT. KOOBUS VAN - NIGHT

Koobus drives. Skids rides shotgun. Jacob rear seat. Skids concludes an anecdote. Jacob laughs. Koobus doesn't.

KOOBUS

All this because you wouldn't let
her in your lunchbox?

Skids. Koobus. Some eye-contact. Here we go again.

Skids

Don't do that.

KOOBUS

What?

SKIPS

That!

KOOBUS

What?!

SKIPS

Referring to my car as a --

Skids levels himself, if he doesn't he'll explode.

KOOBUS

You can't say it, can you?
(to jacob, amused)
...he can't say it.

Skids scowls at Koobus. Jacob smiles. Beneath the horseplay, these two are closer than brothers.

JACOB

I don't think he likes that very
much.

KOOBUS

You don't like that?

SKIPS

I don't like that.

KOOBUS

That bothers you?.

SKIPS

Oh yes.

KOOBUS

Tough. There are a lot of things that bother me too. Like your little stories about how the daughter; who nobody has ever met, soaked you with caffeine because you wouldn't let her inside the lunchbox; which nobody has ever liked.

(silence)

Seriously, nobody's ever stepped up to claim credit for designing that thing.

SKIPS

Stop.

KOOBUS

It's so tiny.

SKIPS

Drop it.

KOOBUS

Okay.

SKIPS

Just stop.

KOOBUS

Fine.

A long silence.

KOOBUS

It was this big.

Koobus stretches his arm out and puts his hand on Skips' face, carefully, not forcefully. Skips violently slaps it away, incensed!

PRESENT - INT. DURBAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The table, strewn with dishes, desserts, drinks. a FEAST.

Skips, Koobus and Safiyah are halfway through their meals. Jacob is still working on it.

SAFIYAH

(To jacob)

Are you just going to stare at it
the whole night?

JACOB

Garlic bread gives me the runs.

SAFIYAH

Pity, I love garlic bread.

SKIPS

Everybody loves garlic bread.

KOOBUS

All of Durban loves garlic bread.

Silence falls.

SKIPS

Sweetheart, I hope you don't mind,
I brought a friend.

SAFIYAH

No worries, I guess we were on the
same page in that regard.

KOOBUS

Nice to finally meet the infamous
coffee tosser.

Skips disregards the dig. Safiyah reacts. Jacob manages a
smile.

SKIPS

So Jacob, how long have you two
been (together)--

KOOBUS

-- dating? Can't have been too
long, you know how these young
people are; Hormones, urges and
all.

(beat)

Unless you've never -- hold on --
you're not a virgin, are you?

A painful pause.

SAFIYAH

(sotto voce)

Are you?

Jacob lowers his eyes. He's a virgin.

Koobus wears a grin, Pleased with his work here. Safiyah
notices.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Well, you're in for a treat -- I
have a world-class vagina.

Skips almost chokes on his food, whilst the whole restaurant
blankly stares at Safiyah for a moment, then quietly returns
to order.

KOOBUS

(to skips)

You positive you two are related?

Safiyah winks at Jacob. What would he do without her.

SKIPS

So, sweetheart, how's the novel
coming along?

Safiyah gives a tight-lipped smile. Writing has always been a
sore topic for them.

SAFIYAH

It's coming -- It's good.

SKIPS

You don't sound too sure.

SAFIYAH

Yes, well, it is what it is.

SKIPS

You're so smart, and you're
beautiful. You could be doing so
much more. Like --

SAFIYAH

-- Like what, dad, Varsity? I'm
fine! Really. I am doing something!

SKIPS

I'm sure you are. But I'm talking
about a real career.

Nobody at the table says a word. But Safiyah and Skips do some
serious eye fucking. Clearly at an intellectual standoff.

KOOBUS

So, Jacob, we've heard so much
about Safiyah, yet so little about
you.

SAFIYAH

Oh, he's into -- that thing where men express themselves the only way they know how.

SKIPS

Boxing, sweetheart.

KOOBUS

Interesting career choice. I've always found it a bit -- primal.

SAFIYAH

I read somewhere that most boxers are hardly ever hitting the man, so much as fighting their own demons.

KOOBUS

Fascinating. Jacob, you have to tell us, who is your demon?

We linger on Jacob as he struggles with this --

FLASHBACK - INT. JACOB'S CHILDHOOD HOME - BEDROOM

TEN-YEAR-OLD JACOB, on the bed, under the covers. A single tear creeps down his face after a routine beating.

Clive's shadow in the doorway.

PRESENT - INT. DURBAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jacob shifts in his seat. Skips senses his discomfort.

SKIPS

Come now, let the boy eat.

KOOBUS

I say let the boy speak for himself. We're all dying to hear.

SAFIYAH

(takes his hand)

Yes, who are you really fighting,
demon-wise?

JACOB

(encouraged)

Let's just say it took me many
years before I realized the primary
use of a belt was actually to hold
up your pants.

SAFIYAH

That's awful.

SKIPS

Sounds terrible.

KOOBUS

Sounds mediocre.

JACOB

(fuck you)

Maybe mediocre isn't so bad, half
the world's below average.

A stunned silence all round. Jacob: 1. KOOBUS: 0. Jacob puts a
slice of garlic bread into his mouth, triumphant. Koobus gives
him a look. Let the games begin.

SKIPS

(to jacob)

On which half do you fall?

JACOB

Good question.

KOOBUS

Most people your age have that
figured out by the time they leave
school.

JACOB

Everything I've learnt about life I
learnt from inexperience.

Brilliant deflection. Skips and Safiyah nod approvingly.

SAFIYAH

And it's working out beautifully.

SKIPS

How do mean?

SAFIYAH

Jacob's going to be a champion.

Skips reacts. Koobus scowls at Jacob. Safiyah quickly realizes she shouldn't have said anything, but loves the look on her father's face:

SAFIYAH

(to jacob)

Go on, tell them you're going to be
a champion.

JACOB

(half heartedly)

I'm going to be a champion.

SAFIYAH

All the best. You really do deserve
it.

Skips drills Koobus with a look. Quiet. Intense. Furious.

SKIPS

Yes. Good luck, Jacob.

KOOBUS

I'd wish you luck but you wouldn't
know what to do with it.

{MORE}

KOOBUS (cont'd)

I need a piss.

Koobus' chair topples over as the whole restaurant witnesses his graceless exit.

SKIPS

Excuse me.

Skips follows Koobus into the Mens Room.

INT. MENS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Koobus urinates. Skips enters, seething. Locks the door.

SKIPS

Does this have anything to do with Eugene?

KOOBUS

What kind of question is that?

SKIPS

A relatively simple one.

KOOBUS

It's not about Eugene.

(pause)

It's not entirely about Eugene.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S)

Why is this door locked? Open the door!

SKIPS

Fine. Look, I know I'm just a cutman. But as your friend, you're burning this boy.

Man Outside bangs on the door --

KOOBUS

Thousands of innocents are robbed
of their money every day, where's
your bleeding heart for them?

Skips laughs at this asshole.

KOOBUS (cont'd)

What's the problem here really?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S)

The problem is that I need to take
a dump!

SKIPS

I don't like what you're telling
me. I don't like how you're telling
me.

KOOBUS

It's a dirty business, and
sometimes you have to get dirty.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S)

I'm about to get dirty if you don't
open this door!

SKIPS

Who tells you this is okay?

Koobus looks at Skips, holds his gaze for a prolonged beat.

KOOBUS

Find potential. Feed it. Nurture
it. Build a weapon -- a machine!
Then put it on display for the
world to adorn. That's it -- my job
description. There's no applause
for the architect. No. Not for
Koobus. Because when you live your
life behind the ropes...

{MORE}

KOOBUS (cont'd)

There's only one guarantee;
Everything you love -- Everything
you're afraid to lose will turn to
dust. And in time, so will you!

(beat)

So don't you come down on me for
something you'd never, in your
life, have the testicular fortitude
to see through.

SKIPS

You're nothing without him.

KOOBUS

(trump card)

You're right; You are just a
cutman.

INT. DURBAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Safiyah watches Skips storm out of the Restaurant, stewing.
She knows something just happened, turns to Jacob for an
explanation, she finds it:

JACOB

Must be the garlic bread.

INT. CLUB RING - NIGHT

TITLE CARD:

JACOB VS EL TORO

3RD ROUND

UNDERCARD BOUT

Bam! El Toro punches Jacob like a speeding train. His fists
fly faster than Jacob can react. Blood drips from Jacob's
nose.

Jacob dances away from the punishment. El Toro, hot on his trail. Hook to the body. Hook to the body. Hard uppercut.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Jacob stumbles. Hurt. Almost goes down. bloody.

The bell --

Jacob hits the stool. Covered in blood and sweat. No Skips.

Koobus. Jacob. You could cut the tension with a knife.

Koobus sticks swabs up Jacob's nose. Works on the cuts. Without Skips, it all seems perfunctory.

Jacob -- title hopes crushed. His eyes almost tear up.

JACOB

We could really use Skips right
now.

KOOBUS

Tilt your head back.

Jacob does. Koobus rubs him with coagulant. The bell --

El Toro comes back with amazing speed. Jacob blocks, releases his own flurry of punches. El Toro Blocks, counters with a sweet overhand left. A left swing that crushes Jacob's nose. Blood splatter reaches the --

Crowd -- goes BEZERK!

Jacob finds his balance on the ropes. REALLY BLEEDING NOW. It's hard to watch.

Crowd buzzes. Chants Jacob's name. Many chanting EL Toro's. Koobus shouts up to Jacob, tells him to --

KOOBUS

Hands up! Keep your hands up!

Jacob can't hear him over the chants. El Toro nails him, splitting his nose. Jacob staggers -- bleeds out of control.

The Ref waves his hands. It's all over. Ring Official dive in.

RING ANNOUNCER

And the winner, by technical
knockout; Ezequiel El Toro
Maderna!!

The BOOS begin to rain down.

Jacob -- just stands there as the Crowd trickles out of the arena --

SAME SCENE - LATER

The Arena, desolate. Jacob -- bleeding -- broken -- alone.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob sits on the trainer table. Cotton up his nose.

Koobus finishes packing gear. Heads out. He doesn't look at Jacob. Jacob doesn't look at him. The tension is palpable.

Aware of being touched, his wounds washed, iodined. Almost like an autistic Jacob manages to look up at:

EXTRAORDINARY EYES -- Above a pale blue disposable medical mask. The eyes swerve at him: look back at his wounds. She looks at other more recent wounds. Scabs. Inventorying them.

She turns his face, looks at Jacob's swollen lip and then at Jacob. It's nice to meet someone famous. She cleans the cuts with antiseptic pads.

EXTRAORDINARY EYES

(in isizulu)

I saw you fight. You're very brave.

BZZZ!...BZZZ! His phone rings.

JACOB
Could you hand me my bag?

He's not interested in her. She was hoping he was. Hands him the bag.

JACOB
(into phone)
Yeah?

Beat. Jacob's face hardens before our very eyes.

INT. KOOBUS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

On the NIGHT STAND -- A half-empty bottle of Jack Daniels. A cigarette still lit. The Yellow Envelope.

KOOBUS -- on the bed. Distant. Emotionally -- morally -- financially bankrupt.

Beat. His eyes shift to the Yellow Envelope.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Koobus' van screams into a parking space. Jacob Emerges. No Koobus.

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. WARD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Visible through an open door, Clive lies handcuffed to a bed, in a hospital gown, hooked up to breathing apparatus. Jacob stands with a DOCTOR outside the open door. A Corrections Officer stands guard.

DOCTOR
Pneumothorax.
{MORE}

DOCTOR (cont'd)

(off jacob's look)

It's air that gets trapped between a collapsed lung and the inner chest wall. The common cause - and this case in particular - is bacteria in his blood stream that stems from an infection in his right kidney. Extensive surgery on his lungs could prove successful, but it would be a victory short-lived if we do not attack the problem at the source. Simply put, sir, both kidneys have to go. And if we don't replace them with atleast one healthy kidney, he won't make it -- I'm sorry.

Jacob, face hard. Eyes cold. Tries not to care. Tries not to feel.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Sir, are you okay?

Jacob trails off.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jacob walks from a broad corridor to a busy reception area. He moves through mechanically, unemotional. It's like he doesn't even notice anyone there.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

As Jacob heads for the van...

He's jumped by six LEATHER JACKETS -- He's thrown roughly to the ground -- face first -- They extend his left arm -- crush it -- BAM! BAM! --

The bone in his index finger snaps, the most painful sound you can hear -- screams in agony -- It's hateful to watch. Just hateful -- They hoist a BLACK CLOTH BAG over his head.

Fast. Efficient. Quiet. No-one in the parking lot is none the wiser.

INT. MERCEDEZ (MOVING) - NIGHT

A hand lifts the Black Cloth Bag from Jacob's head. He looks like he has just gone twelve rounds with death -- and won. His eyes adjust to the environment. They're immediately drawn to the unnerving model of cool in the front passenger seat --

In fleeting. Silhouetted. Rugged handsomeness. Tastefully dressed. Cool and self-possessed. We hate him already, but we love his shirt. Call him **EUGENE**.

Eugene regards Jacob via REAR VIEW MIRROR -- a drop of blood from Jacob's nose finds the beautiful cream leather interior.

Eugene pops open the cubby hole -- a box of CLEANEX -- a SILVER STAINLESS STEEL 9mm PISTOL --

For a tense moment Jacob sits unsure which way Eugene will go.

Eugene reaches for the cleanex -- hands it to Jacob.

Jacob -- cautious gratitude -- puts the cleanex to his nose --

Beat. Eugene turns to him. So elegant. So stern:

EUGENE
Where's my money?

FLASHBACK - INT. KOOBUS' HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jacob at Koobus' shut bedroom door.

JACOB

I need the Van. Hospital called.
Guess who's in ICU.

No answer. Worry plays across his face --

A faint, repetitive...GONK!...of WOOD MEETING WOOD can be heard O.S --

JACOB

Koobus?

(he tries the door, it's
locked)

Koobus! C'mon, open the door!

(bangs it now)

Open the door, Koobus!

(bangs harder)

Koobus! The door!

Suddenly, Jacob's anger transforms into fear. He tries the door again. Really tries it.

JACOB

Koobus can you hear me?!

Jacob rears back. Comes in hard now and --

JACOB

Shit!

(he just banged the
hell out of his shoulder)

Fucksake, Koobus!

The body slam was useless, but it's not an impossible door.

He stands back. Clutches his shoulder. Kicks as hard as he can near the knob and --

The door groans, gives in a little. Jacob kicks it again. now it splinters. Jacob kicks it with everything he's got this time, and this time the door shatters off its hinges.

The door still sort of hangs there as Jacob scratches and claws his way into --

INT. KOOBUS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jacob stops cold. The WINDOW swings back and forth. Curtain wafts in the WIND. Facing the open Window, a swaying CLOSET DOOR...GONK!

Relief mixed with disappointment. Jacob checks the closet. Empty.

There are shoeboxes laid out on the bed. He opens one: notes - bank statements, dozens of them -- "...FINAL NOTICE..." -- "...PAY ACCOUNT NOW..." -- "...LEGAL ACTION..."

Jacob opens another box: personal affects -- the keys to Koobus' van -- The Yellow Envelope is EMPTY!

A wallet-sized picture of MICHAEL ANGELO's 'The Creation of Adam' takes us into --

FLASHBACK - INT. HAYMAKER - DAY

Jacob on the stool, Koobus rubs him down.

KOOBUS

Let me tell you something for nothing; the tragedy of love will be the furthestest thing from your death bed, 'cause what'll really matter then is, did you really do what you really wanted to do.

JACOB

What is it that you really want to do?

Beat. Koobus wavers. Jacob waits.

KOOBUS

We always spoke of Rome.

Koobus' eyes water. Jacob silent. Never seen Koobus like this. Koobus looks at Jacob, not sure if he should continue, he does:

KOOBUS (cont'd)

To stand in the middle of the Apostolic Palace, and marvel at the art that adorns every inch of the walls and ceiling of the Sistine chapel.

JACOB

I never took you as the religious type.

KOOBUS

(after a beat)

She was.

PRESENT - INT. MERCEDEZ - NIGHT

Leather Jacket#1 at the wheel. Leather Jacket#2 sits rear seat with Jacob. They give Jacob the stink eye. Neither of them believes a word of what he just said.

Eugene just stares there for a moment at Jacob saying nothing.

EUGENE

If you think by lying to me you're making me angry, you're not. You're insulting me. Nobody likes being insulted.

Leather Jacket#2 trains a gun on Jacob. Jacob clenches his jaw, tries to remain cool. Things just got real.

LEATHER JACKET#2

What's wrong with him, why isn't he afraid.

JACOB

Maybe life's most frightening moment isn't as scary as you think.

Jacob is scared shitless. As he should be. He will never admit to this. Eugene likes that.

EUGENE

You'll have to excuse my associate here. He's never met anybody who doesn't hold death in high regard.

JACOB

I'm already dead.

This resonates with Eugene. He really likes Jacob. He signals for the gun to be lowered.

EUGENE

It would seem we find ourselves in a spot of a bother. Koobus is gone. The money is gone. Due to the mathematics of the situation, his debt falls on to you.

JACOB

This has nothing to do with me.

EUGENE

That was my money.

JACOB

I don't doubt that.

EUGENE

My money!

JACOB

I'm just collateral damage here. If there was a way I'd pay you -- believe me, I would. But--

EUGENE

(bingo)

--You beauty. There's always a way.

FLASH ON:

EXT. SOMEWHERE - SOMETIME

A parked SUV rocks back and forth on a side street. Nude body parts pressed against the windows. Steamy. Erotic.

Eugene's Mercedes hums to a stop. Eugene emerges. Walks towards the Rocking SUV. Cool. Calculated.

At the Rocking SUV, Eugene taps the window. Beat. He taps again. The window slides open.

We never see who is inside:

EUGENE

Good evening.

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)

What can I do for you?

EUGENE

Ma'am.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S)

Hi.

EUGENE

Pardon the intrusion. Might you be Ezequiel EL Toro Maderna?

EL TORO VOICE (O.S)

Yes. What can I do for you?

EUGENE
(Genuine shock)

No.

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)
What?

EUGENE
Absolutely not!

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)
What?!

EUGENE
You're black!

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)
Admiro seus poderes de observação.

EUGENE
Again, you'll have to indulge me. I don't speak any derivative of the Latin tongue. French, is it?

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)
(translates, impatient)
I admire your powers of observation. What can I do for you?

EUGENE
You're a black French-man?

EL TORO'S VOICE (O.S)
Three centuries of colonialism does that to a man. And I'm not French, I'm Portuguese. Now, what can I do for you?

EUGENE
But you said you're French.

EL TORO's VOICE

I didn't say I'm French. You said
I'm French! What can I do for you?!

EUGENE

And you're from where exactly?

EL TORO's VOICE (O.S)

This is ridiculous.

GIRL's VOICE (O.S)

He's from Congo.

EL TORO's VOICE (O.S)

Will you shut up -- Why did you
tell him that?

GIRL's VOICE (O.S)

Geez. Okay. I'm sorry.

EUGENE

I know -- I'm aware my line of
inquisition is rather peculiar.
Admittedly, I do find myself in a
conundrum; On the one hand I like
the blacks. On the other hand, I
absolutely despise the French--

EL TORO's VOICE (O.S)

(Overlapping with above)

Portuguese.

EUGENE (cont'd)

-- loathe them. Now you can imagine
my bemusement when you rolled down
your window and low and behold; I
just spent the whole day looking
forward to shooting a black French-
man.

GIRL's VOICE (O.S)

From Congo.

EL TORO's VOICE (O.S)

What the fuck?!

EUGENE
(in perfect portuguese)

Adeus.

Eugene suddenly draws his 9mm and fires three bullets with MUZZLE FLASH into the SUV and --

The Girl explodes out of the other end of the SUV -- literally runs for her life -- butt naked.

Eugene opens the backseat door. El Toro's lifeless body goes to ground -- fires once more -- drops clip -- spits on the corpse. He Walks off. Menacing. Disappears.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. MERCEDEZ - NIGHT

Jacon sags in defeated horror. He's dealing with a psychopath.

JACOB
You don't just get to decide
whether you kill somebody or not.

EUGENE
I don't follow rules. The rules
follow my laws. And Eugene's law
states that you are the new number
one contender for the title.

(pause)
Death, it seems, is not without
reward. Contratulations.

Jacob's face turns to one of confused despair. It dawns on him:

JACOB
You want me to throw the fight.

EUGENE
I swear, sometimes you're too smart
for me. You beauty.

Jacob tries to understand the enormity of what he hears.

JACOB

Jesus.

SKIPS

I'm afraid Jesus is sitting this
one out.

EXT. MERCEDEZ - SAME

The Mercedes comes to a STOP at the mouth of Koobus' driveway.

Jacob -- yanked out -- lands on his broken finger -- reels in pain. He looks up to see the figure of Eugene bearing down on him, silhouetted ominously against the piercing light of a street lamp: for a moment, he looks like the devil incarnate.

EUGENE

(like he's reading
scripture)

On the ninth round, Jacob's ladder
will crumble under his own weight.
Then -- and only then, will the
masses know -- the debt has been
paid.

INT. KOOBUS' ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob just sits there, stark still. Then moves his crushed hand in front of his face. Studies it. Impossible to know what he's thinking.

CRUNCH!...He just snapped his finger back in place. His eyes well up with tears, tries to hold back more than just the immediate pain. This is years in the making.

As his phone rings -- He starts to trash the place -- Boxes fly -- papers fly -- wood splinters -- bed flips over --

Beat. Satisfied, he surveys his work.

EXT. KOOBUS' HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

He walks out onto the street. Phone continues to ring --

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ringling --

He stands in the middle of the street for a moment. Not another soul in sight.

He steels himself with the intensity of an olympic athlete -- jerks forward -- walking -- His strides get larger -- running now -- really running --

SCREEN BLACK

INT. SAFIYAH'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jacob switches the light on. Turns on the tap. Scoops water. Wets his face. Towel in hand.

Safiyah keeps busy with something O.S --

SAFIYAH'S VOICE (O.S)
I've been trying to get a hold of you.

JACOB
Yeah. I know. Couldn't find my phone.

As he dries himself, he notices a cabinet. Opens the cabinet -
- a VIAL of pills.

SAFIYAH'S VOICE (O.S)
You lost your phone?

JACOB

Yeah.

Jacob studies the vial -- TAKE ONE AT BEDTIME AS NEEDED -- a moment. He closes the cabinet. Places the vial on the sink.

SAFIYAH'S VOICE (O.S)

And now you have it?

JACOB

Yeah.

He picks up Safiyah's mouthwash glass, removes the toothbrush from it. Fills glass with water. Empties Vial onto his hand.

SAFIYAH'S VOICE (O.S)

Where?

He stands there. Eyes bloodshot. Breathes heavy. Glass of water in one hand. Dozens of pills in the other. Looks at his reflection --

Under the fluorescent lights, maybe under any kind, his skin is a shade of death.

Safiyah appears at the doorway.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Where did you find it, Jacob --
where did you find your phone?

JACOB

(after a beat)

The car seat -- under the car seat.

Beat. She realizes what he was about to do, he doesn't try to hide it either. She drains the glass. Drizzles the pills back into the Vial.

SAFIYAH

That was rather silly of you.

JACOB

Yeah. I know. Silly.

She turns over his hand -- ugly -- swollen-- bruised.

SAFIYAH

(leaves the room)

I thought boxers wore gloves.

JACOB

Hurt myself when I was uh --

SAFIYAH'S VOICE (O.S)

Looking for your phone?

JACOB

Yeah.

She re-enters with a First Aid kit.

SAFIYAH

Under the car seat?

Jacob desperately tries to mask the turmoil he's feeling. She clocks this.

JACOB

Yeah.

SAFIYAH

I see.

She clips his nails. Wraps each finger with a band-aid. Now the whole hand with a bandage. Literally mends him. She clearly takes after her father.

She regards him for a beat. Then disappears again -- Pheobie Killdeer & The Short Straws fills the apartment. And there she is, moving her body to the rhythm.

She oozes conversant sexuality. Jacob smiles weakly: "I know where this is going".

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

So I have this theory that there's
one other thing you'll be losing
tonight.

Her hand moves against his cheek. Then down the back of his neck. He pulls back, his reluctance folds as she moves into his body --

She finds his mouth, and they kiss and he pulls up her dress and she helps him and his hand moves over her bare thigh --

She unbuttons her blouse and she can't do it fast enough. Still with her mouth on his and his hand between her legs --

He flattens her against the wall and her blouse is open. Pulls off her bra as his mouth moves over her breasts and his hands are everywhere and her bra is gone and they find the floor, there's no rug here, but this is where they're going to fuck because --

Beat. Jacob suddenly goes stock still, face buried in her shoulders.

Safiyah lifts his head, as if to confirm something she already knows. Looks with sympathy into his eyes.

SAFIYAH

Why won't you talk to me?

JACOB

We do talk.

SAFIYAH

Perhaps someday you'll teach me how
to talk without saying anything at
all.

He peels himself from her. Heads out. She follows him into --

INT. SAFIYAH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her living room adjoins a kitchen. Separated only by a counter cluttered by left overs from supper. Some pieces of 80's thrift store furniture.

SAFIYAH

After my parents got divorced there were times when I'd get so sad. So sad that I'd completely shut down. I stare blankly at the wall and it didn't matter what anybody'd say to me, because in that moment I didn't exist -- 'til recently, I didn't realize that I was just running from the inevitable.

JACOB

Don't do that.

Jacob. Dirty dishes in hand, for no particular reason. Walks off. Safiyah gets in front of him.

SAFIYAH

What are you running from?

JACOB

Don't act like you know how I feel.

He bulldozes past her and into --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jacob places dishes in sink.

SAFIYAH

Who are you running from?

He tries to get around her. She blocks him again --

JACOB

(stern)

I said don't do that.

SAFIYAH

What would you have me do? You don't want to fuck me and you don't want to talk to me. Tell me what you want!

He grabs her by the arms, moves her --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SAFIYAH

You won't tell me. Fine. I'll tell you what I want -- for you to stop being afraid.

A pause.

JACOB

Afraid? Is that what you think? How could you possibly come to understand the multiple choice of me?

SAFIYAH

(blocks him again)

Then help me.

Beat. Jacob shoves her. She hits the ground, hard! He stands over her, fists clinched. Fights himself to a calm.

Safiyah almost breaks but keeps herself together. For the first time, she is afraid of him. Rises. Finds her feet. Endeavours to be strong.

A moment of stillness between them. Safiyah stares into his soul.

SAFIYAH

Who is this person? Because I don't know him.

JACOB

Stay away from me.

SAFIYAH

Who do you think you see?

JACOB

Please. Don't.

SAFIYAH

Is there something you need to say to me? Because I'm right here.

JACOB

Are you asking me if I'm keeping things from you?

SAFIYAH

I would never ask you that.

Safiyah moves closer and closer during this whole interchange. Almost traps Jacob, who gallantly tries to not get sucked in by her eyes. He collapses onto a chair. Defeated. Now she stands over him!

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Listen to me, Jacob. Listen to me.

Her eyes are intense. This is harder for her to say than it is for him to absorb:

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

For the sake of my own fucking sanity, you're going to tell me what's going on -- or you'll never see me again.

JACOB

I feel like I'm going to slide out
of my skin.

She straddles him -- they're nose to nose. Jacob fights back emotion that threatens to overwhelm him. Safiyah's face softens. She strokes Jacob's neck. Turns his face to look at her. They speak softer. Slower:

JACOB

I can't stand being alone.

SAFIYAH

You will never have to be.

We drift away from this image: Jacob and his confidant. Safiyah has cracked him.

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. WARD - NIGHT

Jacob. Safiyah. Clive's bedside.

SAFIYAH

Is he on the donors list?

JACOB

Nobody's lining up to offer their kidney to a convict. Even then, the issue of blood type comes into play.

SAFIYAH

Well what type are you, blood-wise?

JACOB

Not the type that saves him. He's type B-positive.

A NURSE enters -- tends to patients in the background --

SAFIYAH

You're going to let him die, aren't you?

JACOB

For the longest time I thought that not having a father was better than having one like mine. But seeing him here -- seeing him like this -- I don't have it in me to let him die.

SAFIYAH

You have options.

JACOB

Operations cost money.

Nurse tends patients closer to Clive's bed.

SAFIYAH

That championship fight you're going into, those are lucrative, aren't they?

(he evades her gaze)

...Hey, look at me.

(firmer)

...look at me.

(he does)

...If -- when you win, your father lives. You need that money.

Nurse, within earshot now. We catch glimpses of her. There's something about her eyes. Her Extraordinary Eyes!

JACOB

It's not my choice to make.

SAFIYAH

If not yours, whose?

JACOB

Put it this way-

(Continuing as...)

FLASHFORWARD - INT. ANONYMOUS LOCATION - NIGHT

Crystal chandelier. Floor to ceiling windows that put us on the SKYLINE OF THE CITY. The place reeks of money and power. We don't know where we are, but we know we'd like to stay.

JACOB (V.O)

...This guy, he thinks he's the son of God. The savior of man...

The stereo plays Mozart's 'Piano Concerto No. 20' in D minor.

JACOB (V.O)

...And what you're asking me to do is exactly the kind of shit that makes Baby Jesus pee out the side of his diaper...

A group of Leather Jackets count a mountain of money. A maid dusts shelves.

JACOB (V.O)

...and when he does that, people die.

A servant walks over to a large polished mahogany table, re-fills a glass of wine. Heads out.

The glass of wine finds the lips of Eugene. He looks as imposing and well dressed as ever. Reads a paper. We don't have to see what he's reading, we know it amuses him:

EUGENE

(To himself)

Psychopaths aren't what they used to be.

PRESENT - INT. ICU WARD - NIGHT

Extraordinary Eyes -- almost unrecognisable without the medical mask -- changes Clive's IV --

JACOB (cont'd)
That's who we're dealing with here.

SAFIYAH
Well maybe it's time the immaculate conception learnt that you're only a threat when you aren't considered one.

(beat)
I'm type B-positive.

INT. ANONYMOUS LOCATION - NIGHT

Eugene. Wooden desk. paper in hand.

LEATHER JACKET
Sir. She's here.

EUGENE
Beautiful. Let her in.

Enter Extraordinary Eyes!

Eugene stands up for her, ever the gentleman --

EUGENE
Have a seat.

She just stands there. Mumbles something in isiZulu. Leather Jacket translates.

LEATHER JACKET
She says what about her money?

EUGENE

Madam, I don't want to kill you,
but that doesn't mean I won't. Sit
down.

(she sits)

The rest of you -- all of you --
get out.

(beat)

That would mean now!

Shuffles... Shuffle. It's just Eugene and Extraordinary Eyes
here now --

He pulls up a chair, sits opposite her. Their knees touch. He
takes her hand, as if about to ask for marriage:

EUGENE

(in perfect isizulu)

My beauty, I want you to tell me
everything.

EXT. BEACHFRONT - DAY

Women. Children. Old men. Once proud faces, now dirty and
scarred -- an army of homeless people scavenge the shore like
children on christmas morning. Among them -- the BEARDED MAN.

He finds a poster advertising the face off between Jacob and
Kruger. The media has dubbed them:

"DAVID & GOLIATH"

The Bearded Man has to smile.

EXT. HAYMAKER - DAY

Jacob opens the front door. Turns to see Skips's Lunchbox pull
up across the street. It's tiny, and hideous. Just hideous.

INT. HAYMAKER - DAY

A solemn mood has washed over a place that used to bubble like champagne on new-years. Training equipment sprawled everywhere. Ring posts unhinged. Heavy bags torn.

Jacob erects a ring post. As soon as Skips chimes in to help, Jacob let's it go. It finds the floor. Beat.

JACOB

Why weren't you there? I needed you, but you weren't there.

SKIPS

Losing is not part of your configuration. I know how you feel.

JACOB

Have you ever tasted your own blood?

SKIPS

Yes.

JACOB

Have you ever realized that you're not good enough for the only thing you've ever been qualified for?

(off skips' silence)

Then you couldn't possibly know how I feel, can you?

SKIPS

I let my issues with Koobus get in the way of my work, for that I am sorry.

JACOB

Don't tell me about Koobus. Koobus is gone. The money is gone. He took everything!

SKIPS

If you think it can't get worse, it can. And it will.

(beat)

Koobus has nicely seen your rise in the division. I commend him for atleast that. But kruger will see your downfall.

JACOB

I've heard this fairytale before.

SKIPS

He's paid by Eugene. Trained by Eugene. Loyal to Eugene. Kruger is his ninth symphony. His masterpiece.

Jacob stands in attentive silence. Processing. Skips knows he has hit a chord.

SKIPS (cont'd)

It's okay to be afraid. Koobus learnt that the hard way. You inherited his debt, don't inherit his fate.

JACOB

What do you suggest I do?

Skips hands him a package he's been holding. Jacob opens it -- Kruger's fight tapes.

SKIPS

A hero is as scared as a coward. One quits. One doesn't. Which are you?

Skips stands over the fallen ring post. Jacob understands -- they erect the post together. Respect earned.

INT. SAFIYAH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jacob, seated at the dining table. Safiyah paces. She has been pitching him an idea.

SAFIYAH

I need you to be realistic. I need you to be practical.

JACOB

You want to risk your health for the man I've hated my entire life -
- I am being practical.

SAFIYAH

Not for him; for us.

(plays her hands
along his back)

You're fucked up, Jacob, but you're my kind of fucked up. I'd do anything to preserve that. Even if it means giving your asshole father a part of me I'll never get back.

(beat)

The question is, will you do what you need to do when the time comes?

JACOB

Safiyah--

SAFIYAH

Imagine what that money could mean for us.

JACOB

We'll be killed.

SAFIYAH

We'll disappear.

JACOB

Have you gone mad?

SAFIYAH

I've never been more sane. The salt of the Earth's no longer enough for us. Your name could only get bigger, and I could be ten year old Safiyah again -- I could start dreaming again.

He regards her for a beat. this means so much to her. She knows she's getting to him, just one last push.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

You have these people who pay to see you do what you do. What do I have?

She disappears. We linger on Jacob as he considers this. She returns with a glass of water, places it in front of him.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

I've been losing my entire life, and now because of you I refuse to, ever again, lose.

She disappears again. A moment later, returns with another glass of water. Joins him at the table.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Unless what you want for us both is to find our last trace of joy together at the bottom of some narcotic.

She produces the Vial of SLEEPING PILLS, pours half the vial into his glass, empties the rest into hers.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

Which I'd understand, ofcourse, because I love you and you love me.

And there they are -- squared off -- each with a glass of about a dozen Sleeping Pills -- A DEATH COCKTAIL.

JACOB

You don't want to do this.

SAFIYAH

Then why does every cell in my body
tell me I do?

JACOB

It's called the human condition.

SAFIYAH

If constantly being on the verge of
tears is what it means to be human
then I don't want to be it.

JACOB

That's not fair.

SAFIYAH

No. But that's how it crumbles,
cookie-wise.

Jacob -- heart thumps out of his chest. She loves it.

SAFIYAH (cont'd)

So, lover, bottoms up?

Jacob studies her, if she's bluffing then she's a brilliant
actress, because her Death Cocktail now lingers dangerously
close to her lips.

An excruciating beat -- Shock. Hate. Love. Uncertainty.
Jacob's wheels turn -- A decision made.

He slides his Death Cocktail off the table... SMASH!

Safiyah has her answer. She smiles, triumphant. Destroys her
Death Cocktail... SMASH!

And with that, she mounts him so they're face to face.

They don't have any illusions. This somber -- sober choice might very well mean their deaths.

SAFIYAH

My darling.

JACOB

My blood.

A kiss, it builds with confidence and passion to a very intense level of connection and abandon and promise.

INT. ICU WARD - DAY

Clive. Weak. Face hollow. Deteriating. Lips dry as a bone. He's handcuffed to the roll-away bed -- Breathing apparatus. Heart monitor. All kinds of sordid machines beep and vibrate -- keeping him alive.

Jacob sits at Clive's bedside. We can almost read the shame, the hurt off his face. He encloses Clive's hand with his. Looks at his father with absolute love. With eyes that have accepted the finality of things, he says:

JACOB

D'you remember that exhibition fight?

EXT. ICC - NIGHT

TITLE CARD:
3 MONTHS LATER

Situated in the heart of Durban. An intimidating structure. A palace by all appearances. If God lived on Earth, this would be his house.

The huge marquee letters advertising the event are being put in place:

"The Iron Lion Vs Broke Back Jacob"

INT. ICC - ARENA - SAME

24 hours from now this place will be vibrating with the beehive energy of 2000 blood thirsty fans, but for the moment it is a vast, empty, half-lit shell.

Jacob in the ring. The look on his face emphasizes the size and power of this arena. A look that builds quietly to the idea that somehow in this building -- somewhere in this ring, hope lives.

INT. JACOB'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Safiyah watches as Skips tapes Jacob's hands. Mood subdued.

BZZ!...BZZ! Safiyah's phone rings. She answers:

SAFIYAH

Hello?

WOMAN/PHONE

Miss Misra?

SAFIYAH

Speaking.

WOMAN/PHONE

I'm calling you from Durban General Hospital. A Mr. Jacob Ngema has you down as his next of kin. We couldn't get hold of him.

SAFIYAH

Yes?

WOMAN/PHONE

Mr. Ngema went into cardiac arrest this afternoon -- I'm afraid to say; he didn't make it. I'm sorry.

Beat. Skips and Jacob wait for her as she just stands there with the phone at her ear. Deadpan. This should make her happy. Instead it makes her feel empty and sick.

JACOB

What is it?

SAFIYAH

Nothing -- nothing at all.

(suddenly becomes
emotional)

I'm so proud of you. I know I don't
tell you that enough. But I am.
Everyday.

Skips glances at Safiyah. Safiyah glances at him.

INT. KRUGER'S LOCKER ROOM

A stark contrast to Jacob's. A boom box pumps with brain-numbing music.

Kruger's Trainer, Deon, plus his four corner people are present. Kruger at a mirror, pulsates to the rhythm. Psyching.

INT. ARENA

A full house -- Supercharged atmosphere as highrollers filter into their seats.

INT. KRUGER'S LOCKER ROOM

The music thumps with feral intensity as Kruger prepares to exit followed with his entourage.

INT. HALLWAY #1

The hallways outside the dressing rooms are lit by glaring lights mounted on stands.

Jacob makes his way down the hall with Skips and Safiyah. Four SECURITY MEN in matching uniform lead the way.

INT. HALLWAY #2

Kruger and company move towards the arena.

INT. RINGSIDE

Eugene helps two BUSINESS PARTNERS settle into their seats.

INT. JACOB'S ENTRANCE

An assistant director gives Jacob and his crew the signal to enter the arena.

SKIPS

Here we go.

INT. ARENA - RING/RINGSIDE/FACES

KRUGER -- Moves forward looking proud.

JACOB -- remains serene. Focused. Touches the hands that extend into the aisle-way.

WIDER -- As they approach the ring, sparks rain down all four corners of the overhead lighting grid.

SAFIYAH

This is amazing.

RING -- The crowd cheers as Jacob enters the ring. Waves.

SAFIYAH -- About to settle into her seat when Eugene grabs her wrist --

He looks dead into her eyes, knowing that if things don't go his way tonight, he will put a bullet in this pretty girl's skull, he says:

EUGENE

Enjoy.

She looks back at this towering figure of a man. Knowing that when Jacob wins tonight, his success will be, in many ways, her success, she says:

SAFIYAH

I will.

RING -- A moment later Kruger and company climb the steps into the ring. He shadowboxes. The crowd cheers louder.

JACOB -- still in his robe. Paces the corner. Gets more focused.

KRUGER -- Leans back over the ropes in his corner. Stares Jacob to oblivion.

RINGSIDE -- Eugene leans over to exchange words with one of his business associates.

IN RING

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the ICC on a night of knockout Entertainment - without further ado; The challenger. A man with a nearly flawless record of eighteen and one, with fifteen knockouts. Weighing in at eighty three Kilo's. A local talent, let's have a big, warm welcome for Broke Back Jacob!!!

The crowd cheers. Jacob lifts a fist in acknowledgment.

RING ANNOUNCER

Hailing from Cape Town. Weighing
eighty-eight Kilo's, with a
colourful record of forty nine
wins, thirty three by knock-out.
Against nine losses and one draw.
Ladies and gentlemen a big applause
for Wikus "The Iron Lion" Kruger!!!

Kruger's legion of fans leap to their feet with unabashed adulation. The place pulsates as spectators stomp their feet. Cheer for the battle to commence.

RING -- Kruger disrobes. Jacob disrobes. They're both in extraordinary condition.

REFEREE -- Waves the fighters forward.

REFEREE

You know the drill - no hitting
below the belt. No kidney punches.
Break when I say.

They are about to touch gloves when Kruger smacks Jacob's gloves hard. A sharp pain shoots up Jacob's arm, he winces. Kruger smirks.

JACOB'S CORNER -- Jacob glances back at Safiyah and nods. She tries to hide her guilt. Her eyes are filled with something else. Call it faith.

JACOB

Guerrilla warfare?

SKIPS

Guerrilla warfare.

Skips slips in Jacob's mouthpiece.

THE BELL --

Jacob rushes to the centre of the ring and likewise, Kruger.

At the last second Kruger cuts sharply to his left with Jacob in hot pursuit.

Jacob tries to unload a right hook and Kruger slips it and waves Jacob forward.

Kruger continues to gracefully avoid Jacob, while almost teasing him with barely lukewarm jabs.

DEON

That's it!

Kruger slips out of the corner. Jacob tries to pin him down in the corner.

SKIPS

Keep it steady. Pressure on. I want you closer than his skin!

Kruger continues to dance. Jacob on the chase. It's a game of cat and mouse. The crowd is quite vociferous in its displeasure.

The fighters dance past the ringside COMMENTATORS. Kruger gives Jacob an excellent exhibition of footwork.

KRUGER'S CORNER -- Deon leans forward as Kruger dances past.

DEON

Show 'em who's untouchable!

RING -- Kruger tries to slip away. Jacob corners him against the ropes. Kruger ties him up.

DEON

Tie him up! Tie him up!

Kruger covers up as bomb after bomb rains on him. He tries to slide sideways. Jacob pulls him back into the corner.

Skips loves it.

SKIPS

Get into the hurting business, boy!

Jacob fires off a beautiful six punch combination. Kruger roars back, pounds a torrent of punches into Jacob that gets people to their feet.

THE BELL --

JACOB'S CORNER -- Skips rapidly works on Jacob's cuts.

SKIPS

All he's trying to do is hit you with a left lead after digging into the body! Do me a favor, keep working that jab, put more speed behind it. Work him like a Russian prostitute.

JACOB

The more you talk the more you sound like Koobus.

SKIPS

Is that a good thing?

JACOB

I respect you too much to say yes.

KRUGER'S CORNER -- Kruger on a stool. Eyeballs Jacob as a cool towel is applied to his face.

The Crowd -- on their feet as the 2ND ROUND commences.

RING -- Kruger charges forward, unleashes a torrent of jabs and vicious hooks to the body.

Jacob once again tries to cut off the fleet-footed Kruger. Hook after hook finds its mark.

Kruger beats him in every way. Power punches. Boxing ring general-ship. His experience shining through.

Jacob lunges at Kruger, nearly stumbles to the canvass.

SKIPS

Get back in there!

Kruger pounds away. Jacob tries to tie him up. Kruger pulls his arm loose, pounds a couple lefts. Then pushes back.

Jacob comes back with a LEFT HOOK. Kruger deliberately blocks it with his elbow. Some bone-crunch. Jacob pulls away, this might be the end of him.

Stepping into the centre of the ring, Kruger delivers a sweet one. Perfectly timed. Perfectly delivered.

Jacob stumbles backward. Down on one knee. Disorientated. The Ref gives the eight count.

SKIPS

C'mon, Southpaw! Keep your feet under you!

Jacob sees the spectre of Eugene, pleased with himself. Jacob, steels himself, finds his feet.

Kruger proceeds to hit Jacob with FIFTEEN UNANSWERED PUNCHES.

Safiyah reacts --

IT LOOKS INCREDIBLY ONE-SIDED!

Kruger backs away. Hits Jacob with three stinging jabs. Throws a whipping right hook that lands on Jacob's ribs.

Jacob absorbs it, comes in with a right hook -- Kruger slips it, delivers a right to the torso. Jacob crumbles in pain.

Kruger has Jacob backing up from a bombardment of punches.

Jacob. Eye swollen. Hasn't thrown a left since that elbow block. In desperate trouble, he leaps forward, throws five right hooks.

Kruger nearly folds him in half with a body shot.

Jacob back-peddles. Just as his head clears he is caught by another tremendous body shot to the liver.

Jacob fights back, tries to keep the machine that is Kruger off him.

Kruger delivers a fist to Jacob's swollen eye. Further damage.

Jacob rallies, backs Kruger up with an amazing combination. Kruger also rallies. They are exchanging blows as --

THE BELL --

The Referee leaps in, frantically separates the fighters.

JACOB'S CORNER --

SKIPS

How your hand?

JACOB

I don't know, I think I heard something snap.

SKIPS

Yes. The whole arena heard that.
It's the third of a twelve rounder.
You're just gonna have to suck it
up and fight this guy hard.
Remember why we're here.

Jacob nods. Looks over to Eugene. He just stares at him forever --

FLASH ON:

Clive drags a young woman by the hair over broken glass in a living room --

BACK TO SCENE:

Jacob's face hardens to a mask of psychotic determination --

THE BELL --

The fighters charge out of their corners and into the incredible heat of the battle.

In an amazing burst of energy Jacob puts on a remarkable display of footwork. Bobs, weaves at everything thrown at him.

Kruger comes in with a right then left hook -- Jacob side-steps, sends kruger flying forward.

JACOB IS A WONDER TO WATCH IN THE RING. FULL OF FIRE AND SHOWMANSHIP!

Kruger chases shadows. Jacob sets him up with two jabs. Delivers a left upper-cut to the liver that shakes Kruger to the core.

As Kruger swings at Jacob --

FLASH ON:

The woman kicks, and she screams, and no matter what she does to try wriggle free, it just gets worse for her --

BACK TO SCENE:

Jacob, eyes glassy, ducks -- he's behind kruger now -- in the air -- SUPERMAN PUNCH. The money shot.

The Crowd leaps to their feet, cameras flash as --

MONTAGE:

WHAT TRANSPIRES OVER THE NEXT FIVE ROUNDS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY GIVE AND TAKE BETWEEN THE FIGHTERS. THE ROUND ENDS WITH JACOB NEARLY BEING BUCKLED FROM A PERFECT COMBINATION AND EXHAUSTION.

JACOB'S CORNER -- His right eye has completely closed up due to the swollen flesh around it.

SKIPS

How many eyes do you need to finish this?

JACOB

Can you cut it?

SKIPS

I could. But it'll be a scar you'll carry around for the rest of your life.

JACOB

Add it to the collection.

Skips smiles. The boy has gusto. He stuffs a towel in Jacob's mouth.

JACOB

(re: towel)

For the pain?

SKIPS

Nobody wants to hear a grown man scream.

Jacob bites down on the towel, steadies himself on the ropes: "I'm ready".

Skips, scalpel in hand. Holds Jacob back. Blood and puss flows as he slices through the swollen flesh --

KRUGER'S CORNER -- Deon discreetly smears a CLEAR FLUID ON KRUGER'S GLOVES.

DEON

A gift from the big man.

Kruger looks up into the stands, sees --

EUGENE -- Gives Kruger the nod: "finish this".

A scantily-clad RING GIRL prances around with the board indicating -- 9TH ROUND!

Skips tapes Jacob's brow. Shifts uncomfortably. They regard each other for a prolonged beat. A moment of reckoning.

SKIPS

This is it.

JACOB

This is it.

Jacob looks over at Safiyah. Lingers on her as --

THE BELL --

Kruger out of his corner. Jacob out of his corner.

Kruger drives hard into Jacob and pins him against the ropes. Drives a series of blows into Jacob's mid-section.

Jacob absorbs the punishment. Spins away.

Kruger unleashes a beautiful six-punch combination that rocks Jacob badly. Finishes it off with HOOK TO THE EYE! Pure malice.

Jacob bounces off the ropes, crashes onto the canvass.

THE REF STARTS THE COUNT.

Crowd on its feet. Everybody Getting their money's worth.

Jacob finds his feet. Swings -- catches thin-air --

A sudden deafening silence.

Kruger sets him up with a couple of jabs --

Jacob swings again and completely misses Kruger --

Murmurs of shock from the Crowd --

Kruger delivers a hook -- sets Jacob off balance and --

Jacob swings wildly at nobody in particular -- almost catches the Referee with a haymaker --

As Kruger winds up for the knockout --

THE BELL --

Jacob hits the stool. Safiyah Joins them at the corner. The mood instantly switches to one of wary fear.

JACOB
(confused, unsettled)
I can't see a thing out there!

Skips holds up two fingers to Jacob's face.

SKIPS
Count them.

JACOB
Nelson Mandela.

SKIPS
Shit!

SAFIYAH
What -- What is it?

SKIPS
He's been drugged.

SAFIYAH

How's that even possible?

SKIPS

Mercury. Kruger must've planted it with that last hook. There might be still time to salvage this.

(to safiyah)

In the car. Back seat. Brown bag. There's a blue container. Go.

SAFIYAH

Is he going blind?

SKIPS

I said go!

She does.

Eugene sees Safiyah run out. He stands. As we --

EXT. ICC - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Safiyah runs towards the Lunch-box. Stops suddenly, she hears something --

Eugene's Mercedes -- BOOM!...BOOM! Somebody is in the trunk --

INT. ICC - SAME

JACOB

(freaking out)

I'm gonna go blind, aren't I?

SKIPS

(applies coagulant)

You're not going to go blind!

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Safiyah cautiously starts towards the Mercedes --

Mercedes -- BOOM! The trunk pops open --

INT. ICC - SAME

Skips watches Jacob sweat bullets. It's agonizing to wait and do nothing.

SKIPS
(to himself)
Where is she?

INT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Mercedes -- a Man in the trunk, hands bound behind his back. BLACK CLOTH BAG over his head. He sits up --

Safiyah pulls the bag off the Man's head -- Koobus!

His head swollen like a watermelon. Puffy slits for eyes. Blood-slicked hair. He has taken a serious beating. One thing on his mind:

KOOBUS
They're going to kill him.

She covers her mouth suddenly, because if she doesn't she'll burst into tears. Because she knows if she starts crying she won't be able to make sense of this.

KOOBUS (cont'd)
Fuck-sake, woman! Are you still here?!?

She runs back in. Completely ignoring Skips' orders.

INT. ICC - NIGHT

Jacob reels. Can't keep still. A time bomb about to go off --

SKIPS

Whatever you do, do not rub your
eyes.

Jacob rubs his eyes and --

A trill of african tribal music, distorting, hallucinatory,
opiated --

HALLUCINATION:

- The Woman lies lifeless in a corner. Wrists slit. Blood everywhere. Her eyes flutter between life and lifelessness.
- Clive on couch. bottle of beer in hand.
- Young Jacob watches all this, starts to cry.
- Clive empties the bottle of beer over Young Jacob. Lights a match. As we --

BACK TO SCENE:

JACOB -- consumed now by something else entirely -- His face shiny with sweat. His eyes burning with madness --

SKIPS -- turns to grab his supplies --

JACOB -- no logic in his brain now -- stings the Ref --

The bomb has exploded.

RING OFFICIALS dive into the ring --

EUGENE -- pistol in hand -- BANG!... BANG! -- two in the air -
- chaos theory --

The Crowd goes APESHIT!

SAFIYAH -- Enters -- caught in the flow of bodies fleeing the arena --

JACOB -- breaks down into tears. Everything inside him pours out through his eyes -- dragged out of the ring kicking -- screaming -- Breaks free -- Heads straight for Kruger --

Whatever demons Jacob has, he is taking them out on Kruger.

SKIPS -- attempts to pull Jacob away -- Fails --

EUGENE -- ever so cool in the midst of chaos -- the sea of fleeing bodies parts before him like he's Moses --

JACOB -- a raging bull -- he's swarmed by bodies -- swings at everybody --

SAFIYAH -- carves through the crowd -- only one running towards the ring -- running towards Jacob --

EUGENE -- pure focus --

JACOB -- catches a ring official with a haymaker -- sends him over the ropes --

SKIPS -- Watches a crazed Jacob -- knows he has pushed himself past what is safe -- no longer anything he can do about it --

SECURITY -- Pounces on Jacob --

JACOB -- Nails a guy in the jaw -- Roars -- an animal unleashed --

SAFIYAH -- Climbs onto the commentator table -- scans the room -- sees Jacob in the distance -- top of her voice:

SAFIYAH

Jacob!!!!

JACOB -- her voice, in his head, turns night into day, chaos into serenity -- His world stops spinning for a moment --

FLASHBACK - INT. SAFIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob. Safiyah. Naked. Spent. Wrapped in each other's arms. Beyond being physically close, emotionally close, They've become so comfortable with one another.

JACOB

I get it now -- the writing on the napkin -- I know how it ends.

She smiles with eyes soaked in pheromone induced serenity:

SAFIYAH

Tell me.

JACOB

I killed the most humane part of my being.

(continuing as...)

PRESENT - INT. ICC - NIGHT

No crowd noise now. Jacob is breathing. Punching.

KRUGER -- comatose in a puddle of blood --

EUGENE -- Advances -- knows he has lost, and what he's about to do will settle the debt --

SAFIYAH -- Sees Eugene -- stands in crushed hysteria as --

JACOB -- held back by the strength of a hundred bodies - smiles through a bloody mouth. All in a day's work.

JACOB (V.O)

...And every odd month or so I am haunted by the ghost of my emotions...

SKIPS -- watches Eugene. If he didn't know someone was going to die here tonight going, he does now --

EUGENE -- At ringside -- homicidal eyes -- trains 9mm on Safiyah --

SAFIYAH -- Tears well up in her eyes -- nothing more she can do, and it's clear she hates herself for it --

JACOB (V.O)
...I am a machine...

EUGENE -- cocks the hammer -- suddenly switches his aim to Jacob --

JACOB (V.O)
I am invincible.

JACOB/SAFIYAH -- eyes locked across the chaos. In this moment, they are the only people who exist in the world. Her darling. His blood. As we --

SMACH CUT TO BLACK

* * *