

INT. A PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO.CARDIFF

*The sound of a Camera being put in place. The photographer, Mr Peterson, gently instructs his customers.*

MR PETERSON

If you'd like to come in to position in front of the camera-

SOPHIA

(Cardiff accent)

No. Dada.

MR ACHEBE

Sophia.

(to the Photographer)

Um. One moment, Mr Peterson, please. Let me just speak with my daughter.

MR PETERSON

Of course, Mr Acaa..

MR ACHEBE

Achebe. It's Nigerian.

MR PETERSON

Mr Achebe. Take your time.

MR ACHEBE

Thank you.

(to his daughter)

Sophia, come my girl. Don't you want to have a nice picture with your father.

SOPHIA

No.

MR ACHEBE

It will be just like the picture your Aunty Nelly has on the mantle over the fire place in her house. The one of her and your mother. We can put our picture next to it. In a golden frame, just like their's. They'll be side by side. And you can look at them while you wrap up warm by the fire and have a cwтч with Aunt Nelly, and-

SOPHIA

No.

MR ACHEBE

While you play Tiddleywinks with Aunt Nelly then. And I can watch and keep score from the picture. It'll be like I'm still with you even when I'm away at sea.

SOPHIA

No, I don't want a picture.

MR ACHEBE

Why my girl. Why not.

GIRL

(teary)

Coz Mama had her picture taken, she got sick and now she's gone.

MR ACHEBE

Darling, you think if I have a picture taken, I might go away too.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Oh, there's no need to be scared of my camera, my dear. You see that circle there, well that is the glass lens and absolutely nothing will come out of it that can hurt you. It just captures your beautiful image and then you get a picture of yourself to keep forever.

(to Mr Achebe)

Would you like some more time?

MR ACHEBE

Just one more moment. Thank You, Mr Peterson.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Of course. I need to...adjust my lens anyway.

*The photographer steps away.*

MR ACHEBE

My girl. Dry your tears. Dada is sad too that Mama had to leave us, but she is with the angels now and she is always looking over you. Loving you. As your forever angel. And when we have our picture together, even when I'm not around, if I'm still away working at sea or...somewhere else, you can always look at the picture of us together and see that Dada is with you.

SOPHIA

How long will you be gone?

MR ACHEBE

Nine months. Maybe more.

SOPHIA

How long's that?

MR ACHEBE

I'll be home before Christmas. Or...maybe a bit after.

SOPHIA

That's long.

MR ACHEBE

While I'm away your Aunt Nelly will take good care of you. Remember I told you about the shipping logs in the paper at the library. Well Aunt Nelly can take you there and you can look in the news paper in the ships section to see

what different countries my ship stops in until I'm back home. And at every stop I make, I promise when I step off my ship, I'll look up to the sky and wave, so when you look in the paper to see where my ship is, it'll be like I'm looking up and waving at you.

SOPHIA

I wave back?

MR ACHEBE

I hope you will.

SOPHIA

But Why do you have to go?

MR ACHEBE

I need to work so I can provide for you. Give aunt Nelly money for food to feed you up. And make sure you have pretty dresses to dance in. Like what you and Mama would dance in, On St Davids Day, and Aunt Nelly's Wedding. You remember?

SOPHIA

Yes.

*The dad takes something out of a bag.*

MR ACHEBE

Here. I brought-

SOPHIA

(surprised)

Mama's dress.

MR ACHEBE

Yes. One of her favourites. We can have it in our picture with us. It'll be like, like she's right here with us. Dancing beside us. Would you like that?

SOPHIA

Yes.

MR ACHEBE

And I have another surprise for you.

*Pulls out jewellery from the bag.*

SOPHIA

Mama's pearls.

MR ACHEBE

And her bracelet. And her ring. They are yours now. To keep very safe. You can wear them in the picture.

SOPHIA

Thank you Dada.

MR ACHEBE

You're welcome my darling. Here let me help you put them on.  
(he does so)

Perfect.

SOPHIA

(excitedly)

Can I hold Mama's dress.

MR ACHEBE

Of course you can. My sweet girl.

*To the photographer.*

DAD

Mr Peterson, we are ready now.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Wonderful. If you'd like to make yourselves comfortable. Perhaps if we have you sitting, Sir. And your lovely daughter standing just there next to you. Very nice. And perhaps Father holding daughters hand.

DAD

Here my girl. Can we share Mama's dress and hold it together.

GIRL

Alright, Dada.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Lovely. And here we go.

*A picture is taken.*

DAD

That's my girl. A huru m gi n'anya.

GIRL

Love you too, Dada.