

INT. PHOTOGRAPHERS STUDIO/OFFICE.

A knock at the door. The door creaks open.

EMMANUEL

Mr Peterson. Hello, your door was a bit open. Are we a little early for the pictures.

Peterson lays some heavy cloths on the floor.

PETERSON

Ah, hello, Emmanuel. I was just preparing some potential backdrops for your picture, but please come-

An excited six year old boy runs in and races around the room.

JOSEPH

Make way for the royal prince

EMMANUEL

Be careful in here, Son.

LYNDA

No running around, Joseph. You'll trip.

JOSEPH

Yes, Mama.

LYNDA

(to the photogrepher)

Sorry, he's excitable.

PETERSON

That's quite alright.

EMMANUEL

Ah, this is my wife, Lynda. I showed her the brochure you gave me.

LYNDA

(waving the brochure)

Hello.

PETERSON

A pleasure. Can I take your bags.

EMMANUEL

Oh thank you.

EMMANUEL

And this is our little prince, Joseph. He is very spirited.

PETERSON
(kindly)
I can see.

EMMANUEL
He's thrilled to be having his picture taken for the first time with his mother and father.

JOSEPH
The king and Queen.

PETERSON
King and Queen?

LYNDA
That's what he calls us. I wouldn't mind having King George and Queen Mary's fortune, that's for sure.

PETERSON
Well you certainly are all looking very fine. All three of you in your attire. Very nicely turned out. Like royalty indeed.

JOSEPH
I'm a prince.

EMMANUEL
That's right my son. Come Here.
(lifting his son and holding him)
A descendant of Chief Nyagua. King of the Mende people.

PETERSON
Mende?

EMMANUEL
My people. Of Sierra Leone.

PETERSON
So you really do come from Royalty?

EMMANUEL
My boy here comes from Kings of my land. Making him a Mende prince. Isn't that right, son?

JOSEPH
Yes your highness.

LYNDA
(to the photogrepher)
And I'm from Splott. Originally. A perfect pairing.

PETERSON
Well I truly am privileged indeed to be able to photograph a royal Family.

LYNDA

(to father)

Now let's put our little prince down shall we, Dada, and stop creasing his new suit.

(whispers to father)

We only just bought it and can't be affording a new one if you rip it, Emmanuel, with all your lifting.

EMMANUEL

Down you go, son.

(to the photogrepher)

Forgive us. Where would you like us to-

PETERSON

Ah, we can have you just over here-

Joseph starts running around.

LYNDA

Joseph stop running.

EMMANUEL

Listen to your mother, Son.

LYNDA

Joseph watch out for the cam-

EMMANUEL

Look out. KOH-MOHT!

PETERSON

Oh no-

The camera crashes.

LYNDA

Oh, flaming Heck.

EMMANUEL

(to the photogrepher)

I'm sorry. A bay g(o) (padin).

PETERSON

Let me check it.

EMMANUEL

Son you must be careful.

LYNDA

Say sorry to Mr Peterson.

JOSEPH

Sorry.

PETERSON

I'm sure I can fix-

LYNDA

Oh, It must cost a fortune. How are we going to pay for it.

EMMANUEL

We will. I will pay for it.

LYNDA

How. With what. We've not got much left from your dock work and these photos were a stretch. I said they were an unnecessary expense.

EMMANUEL

I wanted to have a picture of us all before I go to sea.

LYNDA

Exactly. And you're shipping out in a few days. You don't have your pay from that for a while yet. Can't your...royal Chiefs send you some money from back home.

EMMANUEL

You know all that's long gone. That's what colonial rule does for you.

We hear Peterson trying to fix his equipment.

PETERSON

It might just be the casing which has come loose-

EMMANUEL

(new thought)

Half pay. Half pay from the shipping company when I'm away. Tell them you're my wife. You can get some money from them soon, give some to Mr Peters when it comes and we'll pay the rest as soon as I get my wage off the ship. I'll send it back to you, with extra, and you can pay the gentleman.

LYNDA

Oh, It won't be enough.

Peterson still fixing his equipment.

PETERSON

If angle the camera base to tilt the lens axis up-

JOSEPH

I can help.

ALL ADULTS

NO.

LYNDA

Maybe I can sell food out of the front room like Mrs flowers, two doors down.

PETERSON

Madam-

LYNDA

I can make up pots of that peanut, chicken soup you taught me, Emmanuel.

PHOTOGREPER

Madam, its-

LYNDA

Sell it to the seamen. Oh but it still won't be enough, not with three mouths to feed.

EMMANUEL

But with me at sea, it'll just be two. You and Joseph.

LYNDA

And the baby.

EMMANUEL

What baby?

LYNDA

Our baby.

JOSEPH

A baby?

PETERSON

Oh my.

EMMANUEL

We're having a baby? You're pregnant.

JOSEPH

(MISPRONOUNCES)

What's peg-rnant?

LYNDA

Yes, Emmanuel. Of course I'm pregnant. Couldn't you see I was getting bigger.

EMMANUEL

I thought you were full from all the peanut soup.

PETERSON

Madam, It's alright. No harm done. Mainly loosened some the film holder. Just a little tightening needed. Luckily most of it landed on my pile of backdrops. Cushioned the fall. Should work fine.

LYNDA

Oh, thank god.

EMMANUEL

Tenki God.

PETERSON

Well, lets get you all in position for your picture, shall we.

EMMANUEL

Oh yes.

LYNDA

Of course.

PETERSON

If we have mother sitting here and Father stood proudly here and the little prince just there. oh, and congratulations on your soon to be new arrival.

EMMANUEL

Oh yes, Tenki. You hear that, Son. You're getting a new brother or sister.

JOSEPH

No. A prince or princess.

EMMANUEL

(laughing)

That's right. A complete royal flush.

LYNDA

Never mind royal flush, I'm having a hot flush with all this excitement. Give me that me that brochure, Emmanuel. I need to fan myself.

Lynda fans herself with the paper.

PETERSON

Alright. Your royal highness if you wouldn't mind lowering your makeshift fan.

Lynda lowers the paper.

PETERSON

Nice and still and...

We hear a camera flash. Some sierra Leone Mende music plays and fades.

THE END.