

THE BRIDGE

Season 2, Episode 5

Goldenrod Amends

By

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19.03.24

1 ON SCREEN: A SEQUENCE OF COLOUR-PENCIL DRAWINGS WHICH ILLUSTRATE OMO'S STORY. 1

OMO (V.O.)
Long time ago, back in the village,
when I was a small boy, a fire was
EATING the forest! People running
and screaming! But me, I ran to the
river with my little cup to get
water. They laughed at me:

CU: Drawing of a GIRL, blue earrings, commanding, stern:

What are you doing?

OMO (V.O.)
What I can! I shouted, and ran back
to pour it on the fire. Suddenly, a
blue box appeared in the skies over
the fires! And a man stood at the
door with a hose pipe, spraying and
spraying until the fires went out!

2 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGERIA, 2019. DAY. 2

OMO, 60s, is in the barber's chair getting his head shaved. A red light is on. From below, an alarm blares. We see drawings in the shop's window frame, as if from an old projector, and 3 men leaning in, closely listening: TUNDE, OBIOMA, RASHID.

OMO
He landed the box in the middle of
the burnt forest and was scattering
fresh seeds. I went over to thank
him, *Are you a farmer?* I asked. *No,*
I'm the Doctor. Call me that. We
shook hands, and that's how we met.

The alarm below stops. A moment of silence, a MONSTROUS METALLIC GROAN! The 4 men wait, breaths held, ears pricked. The red light turns green, electrical appliances hum: radio, clippers, speakers, fluorescent lights brighten. The shop seems to DIGEST the story. THE MEN breathe out...

TUNDE
Phew! Nice, good, great story. And
you're sure this Doctor will come?

OMO
Yes, he always comes when needed.

Suddenly the monstrous metallic groan ROARS louder than before! The light turns a flashing red! The shop shakes!

Kai! The beast is still hungry! WE
NEED HIM NOW!

3 TITLE SEQUENCE. 3

4 INT. TARDIS. DAY. 4

You NEED to get me home.

I promise I'm doing everything I can to... wait! Why didn't I think of this before? I can boost the Vindicator if we go to.. of course!

...go where?

Lagos, Nigeria! It has the largest communications technology market in Africa! And it's near Omo's Palace.

Omo's Palace?

My favourite barber shop! Omo, the owner, is a friend. Met in a fire.

Barber shop? The TARDIS does your hair.

It does. I don't go there for cuts.
It's... hard to explain.

Okay, try explaining.

5 EXT. TARDIS. LAGOS. DAY.

5

BELINDA watches from the doorway as THE DOCTOR steps out to a quiet side street with the Vindicator. It takes a signal, two seconds, it beeps, satisfied, THE DOCTOR brings it back in.

6 INT. TARDIS. DAY.

6

THE DOCTOR

I'm not human, I'm an evolved life form. My body changes, a lot. It's the first time I've had this Black body. In some parts of Earth, I'm now treated... differently. But here in Africa in that barber shop, I'm accepted... I'm able to forget. We... tell stories, laugh. They -

BELINDA

-treat you like you're one of them?

THE DOCTOR

... Yeah.

BELINDA

My nan took me to India whenever she could for the same reason. You say you're not human, but that's the most human thing ever, Doctor. Go on. Take as long as you need.

CU: On THE DOCTOR, almost in tears at her deep understanding.

THE DOCTOR

First, I need your help. We need to boost the mavitational sensor on the Vindicator, like this.

THE DOCTOR demonstrates with one cable.

BELINDA

Got it! Now, go get changed, scram!

7 EXT. HIGH STREET. LAGOS. DAY.

7

THE DOCTOR, who has changed his clothes, steps onto a busy main street in a market, happy, slipping between TRADERS, greeting all in Nigerian languages.

THE DOCTOR

Kedu! Sannu! E kassan! You good?

8

EXT. SIDE STREET. LAGOS. DAY.

8

He turns down a strangely DESERTED side street to find signs: DANGER! TURN BACK! STAY AWAY! THE DOCTOR frowns, notices a SECURITY GUARD - 30s - dozing in the shade of a tree.

THE DOCTOR

Sister, how far? How's Omo Palace?

SECURITY GUARD

Eh?! If you know what's good for you, turn around. Na danger be dat.

THE DOCTOR

What happened?

She points to missing posters. THE DOCTOR reads, frowns.

SECURITY GUARD

People disappear for there! Five years ago. See poster.

On the poster: 4 men: OBIOMA OKOLI-40 (Igbo), TUNDE ADEBAYO-19 (Yoruba), RASHID ABUBAKAR-35 (Hausa), OMO ESOSA-60s (Edo).

THE DOCTOR

Five years ago?!

SECURITY GUARD

We look every where! We no fit find them! People tink sey na witchcraft

THE DOCTOR

(laughing)

Witchcraft? Used on a barber shop?

SECURITY GUARD

Oga, I done warn you-o! Stay away!

The SECURITY GUARD kisses her teeth and walks away.

THE DOCTOR frowns, walks forward cautiously. There is mist and gloom. He scans with his sonic, reads, and walks into it.

THE DOCTOR

Omo's Palace is straight ahead.
More missing people?! Here goes.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY. 9

THE DOCTOR reads the shop's name above the door, scans the doorway with his sonic - frowns - tries the door, and it swings open slowly. Very carefully, he sticks his head in.

CUT TO:

10 INT. TARDIS. DAY. 10

Alarms! Red lights flash! BELINDA - working on the Vindicator - blocks her ears, turns to find a HUGE HUMAN SKULL floating inside the TARDIS - she screams - and it vanishes.

CUT TO:

11 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY. 11

THE DOCTOR sees THE MEN sat on the bench in the waiting area, focused on OBIOMA who is talking, getting a haircut. Two clothing lines with clothes drying hang off the ceiling, running the length of the shop. THE MEN's clothes are aged, but THE BARBER's barbing outfit is pristine white, spotless.

THE DOCTOR

Omo?

OMO grabs his head in shock. CU: His hair - fully grown now.

OMO

Doctor!?

THE MEN freeze, not quite believing their eyes.

OMO (CONT'D)

...Come... in...

Slowly... THE DOCTOR steps fully into the shop.

OBIOMA & RASHID

Hold the door! Hold it!!

TUNDE

Go back! Go back!

THE DOCTOR turns to grab the door handle, but it slams and *schwups* - vacuum-seals shut like a cabin in a spaceship!

CU: THE DOCTOR: frowns. CU: THE BARBER: smirks.

THE DOCTOR tries the door - doesn't budge - so misses OBIOMA: angry, TUNDE: disappointed, RASHID: hopeful, OMO: pleased.

OMO

I told you he'd come.

OBIOMA

Oya, sit down!

THE DOCTOR, turns confused, complies and sits on the bench in the waiting area beside RASHID & TUNDE. OMO is in the corner.

OBIOMA (CONT'D)

The noise echoed throughout the forest, and that is why the tortoise has a cracked shell!

A moment of silence, the monstrous metallic groan again, THE MEN listen. The shop DIGESTS the story. Appliances hum. The red light turns green. THE MEN breathe out.

TUNDE

Yess! We're getting closer!

OBIOMA

You, you ruined the end!

Then OBIOMA stands, walks past THE DOCTOR who is incredulous:

THE DOCTOR

Erm, excuse you?! Omo, who does he think he's talking to? Wait... Do I know... you're on the missing posters! All of you. The street is full: Tunde, Obioma, Rashid?

OMO

Doctor, you haven't come in years.

They embrace.

THE DOCTOR

And standards have slipped! Damp and misty outside, dust in here?

OMO

It's not me. New management -

OMO gestures to THE BARBER, THE DOCTOR stares at THE BARBER, who feels the gaze. Fury crosses his face, but he rises to his full height, turns, charming -

THE BARBER

Welcome, I've been expecting you.
Welcome to my establishment.

They stand, sizing each other up, THE DOCTOR's instincts kicking in. OBIOMA stands behind the men in the waiting area.

THE DOCTOR

YOUR establishment?! Why's the street deserted? Why isn't Obioma leaving? Why are they on missing posters? Lost for five years, but are in here and haven't aged a day?

THE BARBER

They don't age in here, and he can't leave. No one can.

OBIOMA

You're the all-knowing Doctor who is supposed to save us? And you don't know anything?

THE DOCTOR

Save you from what?

CU: TUNDE looks to THE BARBER, hesitant, scared to answer-

TUNDE

Er... Rest jor, Obioma. He hasn't been in years; he doesn't know, and never makes appointments, right?

TENSE: TUNDE willing OBIOMA to agree, but RASHID saves him-

RASHID

Yes! Besides, appointments don't work in Africa.

OBIOMA

What are you talking about?!

OMO

Shush your mouth!

TUNDE

Bros, no talk dat one.

RASHID

Rigid timing doesn't work!

Alarm blares! The light turns from green to a flashing red. THE BARBER spins the chair, and slaps the backrest-

THE BARBER

Come on, who's next?

CU: OBIOMA - trying to think fast, looks to RASHID, OMO, and TUNDE, all shaking their heads, scared. THE DOCTOR sees this.

THE DOCTOR

...Next to do what?... YOUR HAIR!

CU: OBIOMA's hair is growing FAST! FLOURISHING on his head! Tension builds, THE MEN tense, look to each other -

TUNDE

We're running out of stories!

THE DOCTOR

But, look at his hair-

RASHID

Me! I've got this.

THE DOCTOR watches RASHID rise, walk to the chair, sit. THE BARBER lays his cape on him and flicks on his clippers. When the clippers touch RASHID, images flash up in the window -

RASHID (CONT'D)

Once upon a time, a great musician,
Yo-Yo Ma, was traveling through
Botswana, collecting local music,
when he heard a shaman singing.

THE DOCTOR's eyes widen! He looks at the flashing images, stunned. We zoom into the comic book-like drawings.

RASHID (CONT'D)

*Yo-Yo Ma said Stop! Wow! I have to
write this down! He wrote a bit,
then said Carry On! But the shaman
sang a completely different song!
Yo-Yo Ma said, No! Sing the first
one! The shaman said, I cannot-o!
The first time, an antelope was in
the distance; clouds covered the
sun, but the second time, clouds
had gone, the antelope disappeared,
so the song changed!*

TUNDE

Eh? I don't understand.

RASHID

You see in the old days, music was
a LIVE thing! E go respond to life,
could not be contained. But after
industrial revolution, people
became obsessed with producing
identical things, capturing music
to sell; to package time. But not
in Africa - time cannot contain us
- we still sing for the clouds!
That's why we say we'll come at
one, but won't arrive till three!

TUNDE, OBIOMA and OMO laugh.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Time cannot contain us! It's not
the African way? Am I lying?

TUNDE

OBIOMA

No!

At all, at all.

RASHID

So appointments, bad idea!

THE MEN laugh, then fall silent, ears pricked. The shop
DIGESTS the story, lights turn green, appliances hum to life -

RASHID (CONT'D)

Kai! My heart! Dunno how much more
I can take. The tension is getting-

- but THE DOCTOR is on his feet, running to the window -

THE DOCTOR

Wow! Woow! Incredible, it is -

- THE DOCTOR places his hands on the window, excited. Where
his fingers touch, there is a ripple, as if gooey water -

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

- radiating heat, humming slightly,
the drawings in the window are a
visual interpretation of his story?

TUNDE

Cool right? Wish Nollywood had this
technology! The films I would make!

THE DOCTOR stands back and shouts at the window -

THE DOCTOR

Dalek! Cybermen! Weeping Angels!

OMO

You need to be getting a cut for
that to work. They are connected;
the window, chair, his clippers.

THE BARBER

And you must tell a story, Doctor.
We must feed it, it's always hungry

THE DOCTOR turns to THE BARBER, who disappears to the back.
THE DOCTOR takes the opportunity to scan with his sonic.

THE DOCTOR

Everything seems normal, but the
electricity is unstable.

RASHID
This is Naija! It's always
unstable!

THE MEN laugh. CU: RASHID's hair has grown back.

THE DOCTOR
What is hungry, Omo? What is *IT*?

TUNDE
The size of it... impossible! The
Barber controls it. Him and Abby.

Suddenly - Bang! - Door crashes open: ABBY/ABENA.

CUT TO:

12 INT. TARDIS. DAY.

12

Alarms! Red lights! BELINDA blocks her ears, the skull, a sword and a Benin Bronze Plaque, appear, HUGE, terrifying to BELINDA, then all vanish. The red light and alarms also stop.

BELINDA
Are we under attack? Tardis? Hello?

CUT TO:

13 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

13

ABENA, 40s, sweeps in carrying bags of cooked food. The door *schwups* shut behind her.

TUNDE carefully lifts an elaborate yellow, royal, kente robe from the coat rack, drapes it gently on ABENA's shoulders, adorns her with her gold jewelry then takes her bags of food.

TUNDE
Thank you again, Abby.

ABENA
You're welcome, Tunde.

THE DOCTOR
(whispering)
Abby? Why do I know her face?

TUNDE distributes the food.

ABENA stops before THE DOCTOR with utter fury and contempt on her face, then turns to OMO -

ABENA

This is his fault. He should not be here, Omo.

- and disappears to the backroom.

THE DOCTOR, again confused - What is going on here?!

THE DOCTOR

My fault?! Why? What have I-

RASHID

(eating)

Don't act innocent-o! We know who you are. Intergalactic busy body Time Lord. Last of his kind and so on.

THE DOCTOR

You told them, Omo?

OMO

How could I not? You are the greatest story I know.

THE DOCTOR

...if you put it that way. But, I know her face. Abby?

TUNDE

The Barber's assistant? She told me both of them used to work for her Dad, but he was mean so they left.

THE DOCTOR

Her father? And it's my fault? They are keeping you here because of me?

TUNDE

Until we reach their destination.

THE DOCTOR

We are traveling?! This is getting annoying Omo, what's going on?!

OMO

It's The Barber! He turned up one day and offered to give ME a haircut, in my own shop! I thought it was a nice thing, said okay.

(MORE)

OMO (CONT'D)

He brought out his own clippers,
and soon as they touched me a sort
of current ran through the shop and
like magic, witchcraft, it seemed
to transfer itself, its soul, to
him. I tried to open the doors, my
keys didn't work! Tried to stop my
clients coming, but they love this
place and pushed in.

THE DOCTOR looks at THE MEN, who stop eating to look at him,
then to OMO, tenderness in their faces.

OMO (CONT'D)

These are men I've known for years,
decades, like sons to me.

OBIOMA

I came to get a trim for my child's
naming ceremony. My wife... we'd
been married for less than a year.

TUNDE

I'm an athlete, relay, 100 meters.
I run anchor, came to get a cut for
the championships. I miss my team,
and my big sister; she trained me.

RASHID

My mother is in hospital. Omo was
lending me money for her medicine.
I wanted a fresh cut to see her.

THE DOCTOR

You must be desperate to get home.

OMO

We really are. Someone is waiting
for me too, Doctor; the girl with
blue earrings the day we met. We
came to the city together but I
spent all my time in here, not
enough with her. That Barber is now
in charge; we can't leave.

Then - Flashing red lights! Alarm! - Bang! - Backroom door
flies open. THE BARBER enters and slaps the chair's backrest.

THE BARBER

So! Whose tale will enchant us now?

OBIOMA

I don't have anything.

RASHID

I'm still thinking.

THE DOCTOR
You don't have to say anything.

THE BARBER
(laughing)
Course they do. Come on, story
story! Tunde must have something?

THE BARBER says this, though he stares at THE DOCTOR, daring him to do something. TUNDE sits in the chair and THE MEN lean in. THE BARBER starts cutting and images flash in the window.

TUNDE
So my granddad, a retired policeman
in the North, was sitting outside
his house, when he saw a smuggler,
old, retired like him, crossing the
road. Granddad shouted: *You there!*

THE DOCTOR stares at the photos in the window, coming from TUNDE's imagination.

TUNDE (V.O.)
*Wait! We're both old men, I can't
do anything to you, so tell me the
truth. Years ago, all those times
you were coming and going on those
camels, I searched everywhere,
found nothing, but I know you were
smuggling something. Every single
day, with those camels, back and
forth, back and forth, I know you
were smuggling something. What?*

RASHID
I know what it is!

OMO
Shush!

TUNDE
The smuggler laughed. *All these
years, you still don't know? No!
granddad said, Tell me! You know
what he said... Camels! All those
years, he was smuggling camels!*

RASHID
I knew it!

The red light stills. All fall silent, ears pricked, but it's not enough - METALLIC GROAN! Alarms! Red lights flash again!

THE BARBER
Not enough! We must feed the beast!
Another! Who's next?

OMO

It's too soon! We need more time to think of stories!

THE BARBER

It's your lives we're wasting. 5, 10, 20 years is nothing to me; I'm immortal. Without power we don't move, you stay here, so-

THE DOCTOR

I'll speak.

ALL turn to THE DOCTOR, tense. TUNDE stands as THE DOCTOR rises, walks to THE BARBER, staring unflinching into his eyes - everyone watching - sits in the chair - all watching - THE BARBER lifts the cape like a flag in a bullring. In slo-mo it floats down to THE DOCTOR, but when it lands, an energy jolts through it, shocking THE DOCTOR, pinning him to the chair.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Arggh! Let me out!

THE BARBER

Tell a story, it's the only way.

THE DOCTOR

Changed my mind! Argghhh-

OMO

Doctor, it will be easier for you. A big story. Tell it for us.

THE BARBER turns on his clippers. CU: Its design is like the SPIDER-SHIP: part wooden, ornate, ancient. CU: THE DOCTOR sees this, frowns, decides to talk, and the pain eases.

THE DOCTOR

Grrr..Okay.. You want a story about Weeping Angels and Ice Warriors but NOTHING is more vivid than an ordinary life, no gods or monsters, this is a big story to me: one person, Belinda. On any given day nurses are knackered, and after a thirteen hour shift, she was done.

The shop stops shuddering. In the window, rather than still drawings, a MOVING IMAGE flickers on!

TUNDE

Chineke! His pictures are MOVING?!

THE DOCTOR
She was going home, but heard
something.

We zoom into the window -

14

INT. HOSPITAL. BAY. NIGHT.

14

Curtains drawn, inside a cubicle, A CONSULTANT and PARAMEDIC
are near a PATIENT, 72, conscious, drowsy, uncommunicative.

PARAMEDIC
Hypotensive, systolic's at 95.
Tachycardic just under 100. Vomited
a few times.

BELINDA, walking by with a cake and 'Happy Birthday Nan'
balloons, sees the ward is understaffed and slows down.

THE CONSULTANT
You said she lives alone? Okay.
Obs, bloods. X-ray, for her chest.
IV fluids.

THE CONSULTANT begins to move to another patient, opens the
curtains, and BELINDA looks in.

PARAMEDIC
Infection? Maybe gastroenteritis?

THE PATIENT moans. BELINDA instinctively grabs her hand.

BELINDA
Shhh. It's okay.

She looks at THE PATIENT's hand, notices misshapen fingers,
turns them over... sees hyperpigmentation on palms.

BELINDA (CONT'D)
Have you considered steroids?

THE CONSULTANT
For a chest infection?

BELINDA
No, her fingers - she's got
rheumatoid arthritis. Might've put
herself in an Addisonian Crisis.
See here? Hyperpigmentation.

THE CONSULTANT
No. It's too subtle, barely there.

PARAMEDIC

Dehydration, nausea, vomiting, it's
barn door gastroenteritis.

BELINDA

No an Addisonian Crisis can present
like this. It happened to my nan;
without steroids she could die.

THE CONSULTANT inspects the hand closer, then straightens up -

THE CONSULTANT

You're right. She's yours.

- and begins walking off, a little angry, to another patient.

BELINDA

Wait! My nan's birthday is -

But THE CONSULTANT is gone. BELINDA, completely exhausted, is
close to crying, but gathers herself.

MONTAGE: BELINDA - works through the night on the PATIENT,
taking blood samples, putting up fluids, doing observations,
holding her hand, swaying on her feet, talking to herself-

BELINDA (CONT'D)

No! Stay awake!

15

INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

15

CU: TUNDE: awestruck! Hair is back. CU: RASHID in tears.

RASHID

Just like my mother.

We hear the gears grinding, groaning, engine humming on.

CUT TO:

16

INT. BACKROOM. CONTROL ROOM. DAY.

16

ABENA is sat on the bench before a strange control desk.
There are wooden shelves with books: Half Of A Yellow Sun,
Pyramids and Goldilocks. To her left, a wooden machine
transcribes THE DOCTOR's story onto a scroll beside a wooden
lamp. On a monitor screen: a continuous white line stretching
to infinity - THE NEXUS. Then, an engine hums loudly, the
shop LURCHES forward. She looks up, startled.

ABENA

We're speeding up? Ah!

She looks down at the workbench for her mobile monitor. The battery levels fill up rapidly: red to orange to green.

ABENA (CONT'D)

What?!

She stands, rushes to the wall, pushes a panel, it slides back to reveal a glass window. She looks through. We don't see what she sees.

CUT TO:

17-18 OMITTED

17-18

19 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

19

THE DOCTOR

All night she guarded that frail
life, sacrificing her own joy,
fighting her tiredness, fell asleep
holding the patient's hand until -

Back to the projection in the window. Morning in the room.

THE DOCTOR (V.O.)

- the doctors wheeled her away.

BELINDA looking haggard as the PATIENT disappears.

20 EXT/INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

20

THE DOCTOR (V.O.)

Two weeks later, she came back.

The PATIENT is stood with a bouquet of flowers, looking lost as BELINDA exits talking on her phone, as MRS FLOOD walks in.

MRS FLOOD

Hi Belinda, just getting my pills.

20a INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

20a

THE DOCTOR, looking away from the window, misses MRS FLOOD.

20aA EXT/INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

20aA

BELINDA
Don't be silly! I'll be there round
7. Love you, nan.

BELINDA spots the PATIENT as she recognises BELINDA's voice.

BELINDA (CONT'D)
Oh it's you! On your feet?! Wow!

PATIENT
I know what you did for me. The
doctors took over, but YOU saved my
life, you. Talking to yourself to
stay awake? I held on to YOUR voice
like a lifeline. Thank you.

She hugs BELINDA, who stiffens, then melts into the hug. We
zoom out into the barber shop -

20A INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

20A

THE MEN are completely unaware as ABENA arrives behind them
just as the story ends. They spin round when she talks-

ABENA
The batteries are full! Fullest
they've been since the old days!

The red light turns green. The shop DIGESTS the story and the
appliances hum - louder, doubly pleased. THE MEN breathe. THE
DOCTOR falls out the chair, exhausted. OMO helps him up.

OMO
First time is the hardest. From now
it'll be easy as getting a haircut.

CU: Instantly THE DOCTOR's - whose hair was cut low - starts
growing back! Longer this time! A mini afro. He tries looking
up into his own scalp, feeling each follicle extending.

THE DOCTOR
Argghh! What is happening?!

THE DOCTOR winces as OMO leads him to the bench to rest.

THE BARBER
You were right, Omo! His stories
alone can super-power the engine.

OMO

You see! And look how much his hair
has grown! You can let us go now!

THE MEN look at THE BARBER, pleading, hopeful.

THE DOCTOR

(in pain)

What? You planned this?

ABENA

(to The Barber)

This changes everything. We'll get
there sooner. You can finally take
the throne and rule fairly, justly.

THE BARBER

I must recalibrate the engine - so
much raw power! Check the stasis
field for any structural damage?
Then lets meet in the engine room?

ABENA nods. THE BARBER walks to the backroom as ABENA presses
a button on her mobile monitor to scan the doorframe - THE
NEXUS's white glow flashes - *Schuwmp! Hiss!* - air leaks in.

CUT TO:

21 OMITTED 21

22 INT. TARDIS. LAGOS, NIGERIA. DAY. 22

-Alarms! Red lights! BELINDA blocks her ears as the skull,
sword, Benin bronze plaque and a genie's lamp, flash in!

BELINDA

Tardis, locate origin! Show source!

The TARDIS flashes up a picture of OMO'S PALACE on a screen.

BELINDA (CONT'D)

The barber shop?! The Doctor is in
danger! Hold on Doctor, I'm coming!

She runs, fast, out the door -

23 EXT. STREET, MARKET, LAGOS. DAY. 23

- out of the side street, to the main street in the market,
where she attracts the TRADERS and workers.

TRADERS

Hello Madam! Madam wait now!

BELINDA is disorientated by the noise and explosion of colour as the TRADERS crowd her:

TRADERS (CONT'D)

BELINDA

Come buy fish!

I don't have anything.

Come buy cloth!

Please leave me alone.

You must settle me.

I'm in a rush, please!

She backs away, upturning baskets of food.

TRADER

Ah! Madam, you must pay for dat.

BELINDA

Sorry, I... I have no money.

TRADER

Daz your problem-o! You no dey go anywhere! Na me and you today!

She grows angry, cornered, backing away, until a voice cuts through: CU: SECURITY GUARD - furious.

SECURITY GUARD

WHO DEY CAUSE TROUBLE?!

Everyone stops, turns around. BELINDA slowly raises a hand.

24 OMITTED

24

25 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

25

THE DOCTOR

You planned this, Omo? Waited for me, *INVITED* me in, didn't warn me?

OMO looks at THE DOCTOR.

OMO

I have to get these men home.

THE DOCTOR

And because I have no home, I'm what.. expendable?

OMO

Their families need them.

THE DOCTOR
(heartbroken)
And I have none so I don't matter?

OMO
No no, you have stories, Doctor, so many! That's all I was thinking.

THE DOCTOR
I love this shop, I loved... you. I thought we... I thought this was a home for me... that I was safe...

CU: THE DOCTOR, upset. CU: OMO looks away. THE DOCTOR looks at THE MEN, then gathers himself.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
So, this barber shop is powered by stories. And you all feed it?

TUNDE
For five years now. We have to. Once you're in, you can't get out. Only when we reach his destination.

THE DOCTOR
The Barber's destination? Well he's not here now. Open the door, go.

TUNDE
We can't. There's nowhere to go.

THE DOCTOR, feeling stronger, rises, walks to the door.

THE DOCTOR
You can. I opened it from outside-

RASHID
It's different from inside.

THE DOCTOR reaches the door, tries the handle, doesn't budge.

OMO
- Please don't try to-

THE DOCTOR
-talk to me EVER AGAIN! I trusted you, with both of my hearts, with everything I am. How could you?

On OMO: shocked, realizing how much he's hurt THE DOCTOR. THE DOCTOR turns back round, tries with force, nothing, whips out his sonic, tries again, willing it to budge, pulling as THE MEN, led by OBIOMA, run towards THE DOCTOR as he strains-

THE MEN

Noooo!

THE DOCTOR

If I can just... almost have it...

Something clicks in the doorframe.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Got it.

The door flies open! Instead of the high street: SPACE! Pure, dark, vast. Alarms! Red lights! The shop decompresses! Air and THE DOCTOR are being sucked out to space! Newspapers and magazines fly around, a few pages and a pair of scissors are sucked out to space! OMO and THE MEN grab onto posts, chairs, tables, and wooden beams for dear life!

CUT TO:

26 OMITTED

26

27 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ENGINE ROOM. EVENING.

27

ABENA is near the door, when noise from THE MEN rumbles through the corridor. THE BARBER opens the door, sees ABENA.

THE BARBER

The Doctor!

ABENA and THE BARBER dart back towards the shop floor.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT.

28

THE DOCTOR is hanging off the door frame, dangling out into nothingness, screaming!

THE DOCTOR

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

THE DOCTOR looks down and the shop is on top of a giant half mechanical, half organic spider! His jaw drops! We zoom out and round the SPIDER-SHIP's giant body, then pull far out to see it crawling on THE NEXUS (a web of white light stretching to infinity! Glowing where strands intersect!) We zoom back to THE DOCTOR. He almost loses his grip but pulls himself up -

29 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY. 29

- in and pushes the door closed, which *schwups*, vacuum-seals shut. The red lights go off. The MEN fall to the floor, gasping for air as THE BARBER and ABENA rush in.

THE BARBER
HE TRIED TO LEAVE DIDN'T HE?! Why
didn't you stop him, Omo?!

CUT TO:

30 OMITTED 30

31 EXT. STREET, MARKET, LAGOS. EVENING. 31

BELINDA
Why did you pay for me?

SECURITY GUARD
I want peace not problems. Now, go.

BELINDA
Not without my friend. He went to
Omo's Palace. It's not safe there.

SECURITY GUARD
Everyone here knows! I told him!

BELINDA
You saw the Doctor?! Take me there!

SECURITY GUARD
Never! Another person goes missing,
and na me go enter trouble.

BELINDA
Trust me, there's trouble already.

CU: THE SECURITY GUARD, she frowns.

32 EXT. SIDE STREET. LAGOS. EVENING. 32

They arrive at the top of the street. BELINDA sees missing posters and danger signs, as the GUARD points down the road.

SECURITY GUARD
Down there. Be careful.

BELINDA nods, then walks slowly into the darkness. Further down, she sees a little girl, POPPY (EP7). She takes a few steps closer, but the girl vanishes. BELINDA looks around.

BELINDA

Huh?

CUT TO:

33

INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

33

THE DOCTOR is still catching his breath. THE BARBER crouches down by THE DOCTOR, mocking him as he gasps.

THE BARBER

Confused aren't you? The shop is in outer space *AND* in Lagos at the same time, Doctor.

THE DOCTOR

How? And that... structure I saw?

THE BARBER

The Nexus. Used to call it the World Wide Web until humans named something far uglier after that. There's a time-space compressor that goes between, built into the doorframe. It only lets her and I out and we control it.

THE DOCTOR

And we're traveling on a spider?

TUNDE

You saw the beast? Impossible but true! A spider *they* control.

THE DOCTOR

Where are we going?

THE BARBER
Oh, you'll find out soon enough.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGHT.

34

BELINDA skulks outside, ears pressed to the window, trying to listen. She steps back, reaches for the handle -

34A-34B OMITTED

34A-34B

35 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

35

The door swings open, BELINDA! THE MEN turn, stunned, that someone else has appeared, then -

THE MEN
Hold the door!

BELINDA turns, too late, the door *schwups* shut.

RASHID
Eish! But is that... THE NURSE?!

THE DOCTOR
Oi! Took you long enough! Alarms
musta gone off in the Tardis.

BELINDA
Yeah, almost blew my ears off!

ABENA

You're the nurse in his story? Your companion? The Doctor and The Nurse really? Where've you been? Did he leave you behind? Tell you to wait?

BELINDA

I told him to go actually.

On ABENA, noticing BELINDA's defiance and independence.

BELINDA (CONT'D)

Wait, you're all missing? Omo - your friend!

THE DOCTOR

Ha! *Friends* don't endanger each other. I'd have swam *oceans* to help him, instead he trapped me here.

BELINDA

Trapped? And who is that?

THE BARBER says nothing, and turns to go to the backroom. And THE DOCTOR takes the opportunity to taunt him -

THE DOCTOR

Still working that one out. All he's done is stomp around giving **awful** haircuts.

CU: THE BARBER, getting angry, hand on the door handle.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

And they are scared of him, he, who hides his identity like a coward, a troll on the web? Don't be scared.

THE DOCTOR turns dramatically to deliver the last taunt -

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We'll leave here. There's nothing
he can do. He has no real power.

THE BARBER

You want to know who I am? Okay.

THE BARBER's charming mask slips, he becomes terrifying,
commanding the space: voice, dark, powerful. He turns, walks
to THE DOCTOR, talking and shaving his own head. Drawn STILL
images of gods flash up in the window - mighty and terrible.

THE BARBER (CONT'D)

I've gone by many names. Anansi -
the man-spider, the world weaver.
Saga - Norse goddess of history and
storytelling, Bastet - Egyptian
goddess of music and storytelling,
Dionysus - Greek god of theatre,
even Loki - god of mischief and
stories! I've been them all, many
incarnations in many worlds and
cultures. It doesn't matter what
I'm called. It matters what I do.

THE BARBER stops in front of The DOCTOR, fury in his eyes.
They face off, sizing each other up, tension, thick.

BELINDA

And what is it you do?

THE BARBER

I begin all things, I'm the voice
in the void. The spark. The dark
nucleus. The lie that tells the
truth. The Godfather-Griot. The
tall-tale itself, Doctor, and this
is my domain.

THE DOCTOR

This barber shop? OUR barber shop?

THE BARBER

Yes.

THE DOCTOR

And you were all those Story Lords?

THE BARBER

Yes.

BELINDA

All those gods? You? You sure?

THE BARBER

Yeess!

THE DOCTOR looks at BELINDA. BELINDA looks at THE DOCTOR. Then both burst out laughing, breaking the tension, laughing so much, TUNDE starts laughing.

OBIOMA

Why you laughing? What's funny?

TUNDE

I dunno.

OBIOMA

Stop it!

TUNDE laughs louder! RASHID tries to stifle a laugh, but explodes too. OMO giggles.

CU: THE BARBER - furious, frowning.

THE DOCTOR

He's lying. He's lying-o! I hate liars. Hmmn! Do I hate you?

THE DOCTOR sits on the bench, full of flair and confidence -

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I've met Dionysus. We drank so much wine we caused a drought in Athens! Saga and I watched Marvel movies together, up until Endgame. She didn't like Thor - muscles too small. I played chess with Bastet. I let her think she let me let her win. She kicked my ass, thoroughly, and Anansi purposely lost a bet to make me marry one of his daughters. I know the gods, you're not them. Tell the truth, who are you?

ABENA

You don't have to answer them. Look at me. Don't let him get to -

THE BARBER breathes out, trying to calm himself, until-

THE DOCTOR

WHO ARE YOU?!

THE BARBER
I WAS THE ONE BEHIND THEM ALL! ME!

BELINDA
Keep talking.

THE BARBER
I was once human, back when the world was young - stories shimmered in the air. To grow more powerful, the gods needed to strengthen their bond with humanity. That was my job: to travel, telling their myths and legends, collecting, cleaning up tales to be retold as bedtime stories for kids, as holy books, printed so gods could be worshiped, become *more* powerful. They only exist now because of me, my work!

THE DOCTOR
And The Nexus?

ABENA
He built that too.

THE BARBER sits in the chair, flicks his clippers to shave his head. Grainy footage appears in the window. We zoom in.

35a INT. ANCIENT WORKSHOP. EGYPT. 30,000 YEARS AGO.

35a

THE BARBER, younger, 20s, is bent over a small version of THE NEXUS: a spiderweb of white electrical current (that unravels from a paper scroll) running between nails on a wooden board.

We zoom in on the white web as the workbench fades to a black void, and THE NEXUS grows huge, immense, beautiful, in space.

THE BARBER (V.O.)
I wanted something that worked like the brain, flexible, strong, that could expand and make connections *between* ideas. I asked for strands of their god-blood and essence and built a model, a web-like structure which THEY expanded into what you saw, cross-connecting concepts, cultures and stories; The Nexus!

35aA INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

35aA

THE DOCTOR

And how did you collect stories?

THE BARBER

Started small; a pub lit by candles
listening to drunk history, heat -
powering the engine. Then a
Catholic confession box, warmed by
firewood; a coal-powered theatre,
an electric cinema then, a space
opera powered by sunlight - until I
had the idea to power the vehicle
with stories itself! I worked for
centuries! Upgrading, collecting,
then asked to be recognised - just
a mention in a story, maybe to be
made a minor god.

BELINDA

And they refused, didn't they?

THE BARBER

They said I should know my place! I
primed The Nexus so well, it worked
without me; so they threw me out!
OF MY LIFE'S WORK! MILLENNIUMS
WASTED! All I salvaged was my Story
Engine, alone, in the void.

Silence. Some empathy crosses RASHID, TUNDE, OBIOMA, OMO,
ABENA, BELINDA and THE DOCTOR's face.

ABENA

I met him like that and vowed to
help restore him. He built this
ship, installed his Story Engine,
and bound it to the shop.

THE BARBER

We will have vengeance, Doctor.

Suddenly, the shop shudders.

35A EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT.

35A

WE see the SPIDER-SHIP grind to a halt on THE NEXUS.

35B INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

35B

ABENA takes out a mobile monitor: A light blinks red.

ABENA

Power levels are low. The engine
burned too much holding us together
when he forced the door open.
Typical Doctor; irresponsible.

THE DOCTOR

That's enough! I've never... Wait!
Your face! That's it! Abby, you're
Anansi's daughter? Abena - that's
your full name, isn't it?

ABENA

Do not speak it. You're not worthy.
I grew up trapped with Anansi,
terrified someone would win me in a
bet. I'd heard of you, traveling
through time, I had faith that
you'd help. Instead, you left. I've
been running ever since. I'm here
because of you.

TUNDE

Anansi's the dad you ran away from?
You didn't say? I thought of you
like my big sister; for five years?
Why didn't you confide in me?

ABENA

Confide? In you? I'm thousands of
years old, I've seen empires rise
and fall, kingdoms turn to ash. You
are a blip to me, barely a toddler.

CU: TUNDE - hurt.

ABENA (CONT'D)

You, you humiliated me, Doctor.

THE DOCTOR

I... it took too long to place you.
You look so different now, and that
happened over 6000 years ago; I'm
sorry I could not take you with me-

ABENA is so angry, she sees the version of THE DOCTOR who
abandoned her: FUGITIVE DOCTOR (2020) from a previous life.

FUGITIVE DOCTOR

-I was a fugitive at the time,
Anansi was wrong to offer that bet,
and frankly, darling, I was busy,
in a different story, that might be
finished, one day.

BELINDA

You actually took the bet?

Then back to our DOCTOR.

THE DOCTOR

I tried to lose!

THE BARBER

Doctor, sit, talk, now!

THE DOCTOR

Where're we going?

THE BARBER

To the heart of The Nexus.

THE DOCTOR

To do what?

ABENA

To install this shop there, and
make him the storyteller-supreme, a
trustworthy and careful God.

THE DOCTOR

That's it? That's what he told you?
He's gonna what, get his old job
back? Become everything he hates
and despises?! And you believe him?

ABENA

He... he would not lie to me.

Things get worse - Red lights come on! Alarms!

THE DOCTOR

I know vengeance and I can taste
his. It's bile-black and bitter.
You're planning something. What?
I'm trapped here, there's nothing I
can do. Tell me. *Tell me.* TALK!

THE BARBER

TO CUT THEM OUT OF MEMORY! The
gods, ALL OF THEM!

Red lights start flashing! Alarms!

THE DOCTOR

Severing the gods from the story
web, cutting them from their own
essence... that would destroy them!

ABENA

Destroy?

THE DOCTOR

As in kill, die, dead-as-a-doornail-
done! All those gods, GONE!

BELINDA

That would destroy your father!

THE BARBER

This is my gift to you Abena.

CU: Doubt crosses ABENA'S face. BELINDA sees this.

BELINDA

She don't want your gift, mate.

THE BARBER

Remember what he did? Betting you?
His own child?!

The shop groans and starts shaking.

THE DOCTOR

Humans are storytelling animals.
This differentiates them from other
animals. They're tied to those gods
and destroying them would harm the
VERY ESSENCE of humanity; a world
without stories? How'd they pass on
traditions, technology, romcoms,
recipes? You knew about this plan?

TUNDE

No!

BELINDA

Is this what you want, Abena?

ABENA

We... we... we need power, now!

THE BARBER

Doctor, you will sit and talk!

THE DOCTOR

Think I'll stand and run.

TUNDE

Please, do what he says! We still
have to get home! Our families-

THE DOCTOR

I can't help him do this.

BELINDA

Abena, hurt people hurt people.
Your father hurt you but life comes
with pain. The difference between
good and evil is what we do with
that pain. The good try to stop it
spreading, the bad pass it on.

Alarms ring louder! Red lights flash even faster!

THE BARBER

Heard of you eons ago; dashing
through galaxies, remaking stories.
We're the same.

THE DOCTOR

If you know who and what I am, then
you know I won't power this ship.

THE BARBER

I also know you care about humans;
their self-appointed protector. But
are they yours?

CU: THE DOCTOR: confused. THE BARBER turns to THE MEN.

THE BARBER (CONT'D)

Put him in the chair.

OBIOMA

With pleasure! Come on Rashid.

OBIOMA advances on THE DOCTOR. RASHID follows. TUNDE falters.

THE BARBER

NOW Tunde! Or I'll throw you to The
Nexus.

TUNDE is reluctant, but moves to THE DOCTOR, who backs away.

TUNDE

We have to get back home!

THE MEN grab and drag THE DOCTOR to the chair as he resists.

THE DOCTOR

Not like this! I'll get you home!
Tunde, look at me, I promise you.
You. Do. Not. Wanna. Do. This!

TUNDE falters again as BELINDA lunges to help THE DOCTOR, but
OMO holds her back.

BELINDA

Don't touch him! Don't you
dare!

OMO

They don't have a choice,
Belinda!

The shop is chaos, all shouting, THE MEN holding THE DOCTOR's head still as THE BARBER flicks on his clippers and bends towards the struggling Time Lord.

As shouting builds and lights flash, a voice cuts through -

ABENA
Stop! Stop! STOP!

They turn - alarms ringing - to ABENA, stood by the door -

ABENA (CONT'D)
I'll talk. I'll tell a story.

THE MEN freeze, stunned. ABENA walks down to them - still pinning THE DOCTOR to the chair - and taps their hands.

ABENA (CONT'D)
Let him go. Release him.

THE MEN look to THE BARBER.

THE BARBER
Anansi's daughter? Telling a story?
This is a true honour. Please.

They release THE DOCTOR, who stands up, glaring at OBIOMA.

ABENA sits in the chair, pulls out a small stool from under the table, and pats it, gesturing to THE DOCTOR to sit.

ABENA
Please, Doctor. Trust me.

THE DOCTOR looks at her, still furious, but trusts her, sits.

ABENA opens a drawer for an afro-comb. Its design is similar to THE BARBER's clipper and the SPIDER-SHIP. As she begins to cornrow THE DOCTOR's hair the red light goes still.

In the window, SEPIA sketches illustrate her story:

ABENA (CONT'D)
Long ago, in a time of slavery and
deep suffering, the slaves who
broke their chains and escaped
would return to try to free others.

Zoom into the window, to the drawings.

ABENA (V.O.)

Slaves were not allowed to carry paper; they were always stopped and searched; they could not make maps to freedom. But the women were clever! They could style their hair in many shapes and patterns and in one style, hair could be braided to the scalp, bending and curling like paths or roads, like this, see?

ABENA shows OMO her work: THE DOCTOR's *PERFECT* cornrows.

OMO

Wow.

ABENA

So, the women would weave maps into their hair and pass it on; from mothers to daughters, slave to slave, plantation to plantation.

THE DOCTOR

Slave masters never checked their hair, so like this they shared the routes? And escaped to freedom?!

ABENA

Exactly. There. You're done, and -

THE DOCTOR looks in the mirror as the red light turns green and ABENA checks her monitor -

ABENA (CONT'D)

- battery levels are good. For now.

35C EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT.

35C

We hear the appliances in the shop hum on, and see the SPIDER-SHIP start crawling forward on THE NEXUS.

35D INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

35D

THE BARBER

Good work.

THE DOCTOR

INCREDIBLE work! So fast!

ABENA smiles, but there is something else in her face, a silent plea for THE DOCTOR to understand something...

BELINDA
Amazing, Abena. You look *GOOD*!

THE DOCTOR
So good, I could kiss myself.

ABENA kisses her teeth, laughs.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Shame I'll have to ruin it.

CU: on THE DOCTOR's sleeve: his sonic slides into his hand.

THE BARBER
Why?

THE DOCTOR
You'll find out soon enough.
Belinda, NOW!

DOCTOR points his sonic to the fluorescent lights, which explode in a shower of sparks, causing chaos, confusion!

BELINDA pushes OMO off as THE DOCTOR finds her. They dash to the backroom door - he sonics it open - and through -

36 INT. BARBER SHOP. CORRIDOR. DAY.

36

BELINDA
Took you long enough.

THE DOCTOR runs his hand across his cornrows as he talks-

THE DOCTOR
Oi! I'm tryna concentrate! Abena gave me the map to freedom! This way! Run!

THE DOCTOR and BELINDA dash forward.

37 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

37

THE MEN fumble among the sparks, covering their eyes.

THE MEN
Kai! Watch out, watch out! Sorry-o!

OMO hits a switch. The sparks stop and light floods the room. ABENA is sitting calmly on the bench.

ABENA

This can't go on.

THE BARBER

You... you did this? Why? What have you done? You came to me for help-

ABENA

I wanted revenge! Not killing! Not harming all humans! *ALL!* Including these men who I fed for five years, who fed our ship, you didn't say any of that would happen! You kept that from me? For five years?!

THE BARBER

I... I knew you'd react this way, so decided you didn't need to -

ABENA

NO ONE CAN DECIDE FOR ME! I LEFT ANANSI BECAUSE OF THIS! Deciding MY fate! Betting MY life! MY future! I thought YOU were different!

THE BARBER

After I kill the gods and rule, things will be different.

ABENA

How you *START* ruling *matters!* You'll be just the same.

THE BARBER

I'm sorry you feel that way. I'm too close to stop.

THE BARBER searches ABENA's pocket for her mobile monitor.

THE BARBER (CONT'D)

I can't take any risks, I'm revoking your access.

ABENA

No. NO!

He points it at the door, pushes a button. A current ripples in the door frame and deletes her.

ABENA (CONT'D)

You're trapping me, just like my father?

THE BARBER

All of you, watch her. Don't let
her move if you want to get home.
I'll handle the others.

TUNDE turns to ABENA, as THE BARBER runs after THE DOCTOR.

CUT TO:

38 INT. BARBER SHOP. CORRIDOR. DAY.

38

THE DOCTOR and BELINDA are sprinting.

THE DOCTOR
Engine room is this way. Faster!

BELINDA
This shop is bigger on the inside?

THE DOCTOR
But not like the Tardis; it's
powered by god-blood. Stop!

They stop, crouch, THE DOCTOR runs his hand through his hair, concentrating, as they hear running footsteps approaching.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Almost there. This way!

CUT TO:

38A INT. BARBER SHOP. CORRIDOR. DAY.

38A

THE BARBER is running after THE DOCTOR and BELINDA.

CUT TO:

39 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ENGINE ROOM. DAY.

39

THE DOCTOR
The map leads here.

They arrive outside. THE DOCTOR sonics the door, they enter.

40 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY.

40

The engine's hum is louder! THE DOCTOR and BELINDA hurry past towering shelves stacked with items from famous stories -

BELINDA
Is that a skull? A sword! They
appeared in the Tardis!

THE DOCTOR
They did?

BELINDA

Yeah! And that Bronze Plaque from
Benin City!

*
*

THE DOCTOR

They're famous stories! Of course!
The engine room *would* be a library,
a museum for every story ever told!

They turn a corner - the engine's hums at its loudest - into a room and find, in the center, a HUGE brain-like structure filling the room, white lights pulsing through it like brain signals, all attached to a control desk with pipes and cables running to and from the brain.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

The Story Engine!

They circle it. THE DOCTOR stops in front, reaches to touch -

BELINDA

That's the frontal lobe, Doctor.

Before his finger touches it, the frontal lobe moves, opening - HISSS - air, gas and fumes as if a chamber decompressing - the brain splits in two! And opens to reveal a beating heart!

BELINDA (CONT'D)

A beating heart?! Inside a brain?

THE DOCTOR

Brilliant! What else *IS* a story?
What else could hold all stories?

They step closer.

The heart is divided into four sections: 1st section is made of stone and moss, 2nd - clay and sky, 3rd - water and gas, 4th mud and grass... all encased in wood and glass with pipes of water and steam chugging out to the brain.

THE DOCTOR bends closer, and the 4 sections part to reveal a layer underneath - the most intricate wiring THE DOCTOR has ever seen - silver and gold braids of wire, looping in and out of each other, meshed in a web of electricity and white light. BELINDA and THE DOCTOR squint at its brightness.

CUT TO:

41 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 41

THE BARBER bolts through the door into the engine room-

CUT TO:

42 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 42 *

They hear footsteps. BELINDA, alarmed, looks at THE DOCTOR.

THE DOCTOR

Quick, that control desk! Rip out
as many cables as you can, I have
to disrupt the flow of power.

*
*

BELINDA runs over to the desk and starts ripping. THE DOCTOR hoists his sonic high above his head. Light glints off its edges, as BELINDA rips cables.

*
*

BELINDA

A nurse and a Doctor destroying a
brain feels wrong!

*
*
*

THE DOCTOR brings the tip of his sonic delicately to the wiring, concentrating, as THE BARBER arrives - *

THE BARBER
Get away from my heart!

THE DOCTOR steps back, hands in the air, looking innocent. *
THE BARBER looks at his monitor: green lights.

THE BARBER (CONT'D)
It's built with omnipotent essence;
you've done nothing. We're still on *
track, almost there. I'll cut them *
off! They'll shrivel up and die. *

43 OMITTED 43

44 EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT. 44

We see the SPIDER-SHIP and its terrible face on THE NEXUS.

45 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 45

BELINDA
All this? To kill them?

THE BARBER

They deserve it.

BELINDA

(laughing)

Rubbish! Gods, like chief medical
officers, never thanked us; nurses
just do the work! This is your ego-

*
*
*

THE DOCTOR

Wanna hear a story? There's one I-

*

BELINDA

Don't give him more power! He'll-

THE DOCTOR

Really short! You know Hemingway?
Saw his books back there. *Old Man*
and The Sea, To Have And Have Not.

*
*
*

SHOT: Those books, on the shelf in the engine room.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Met him and wanted to see how good
he was, so challenged him. *Hemmy*
baby, write the shortest story you
can. Short as hell! He did it in
six words. Wanna hear mine?

THE BARBER frowns.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'm born.

SHOT: Brain.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I die.

SHOT: Heart.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'm born.

SHOT: Console inside Control Room. The energy level rises.

SHOT: The wiring in the heart lights up, but a THIRD of it REMAINS dark. It starts glowing white, to gold, orange, then red - overheating - the engine starts to hum. THE BARBER looks at the mobile unit & clippers in his hands.

THE BARBER

You are giving me power? But how...
I'm not connected to you...

THE DOCTOR

The engine is connected to ME now,
to my voice, to my story, look: ON!

THE DOCTOR speaks to small screens on shelves. They flick on and begin flashing images of all DOCTORS: William Hartnell, Tom Baker, Matt Smith, Jodie Whittaker, Jo Martin, to Ncuti-

BELINDA (V.O.)

Tho.. those are all you?

*

THE DOCTOR

Yes. My body is like a barber shop,
all of them inside, telling stories-

*

*

45a INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

45a

THE MEN turn to the window, which begins to flash the same images on the screens in the Engine Room. CU: THE MEN stare, awestruck at all THE DOCTORS - squinting at the brightness of the glowing window - the brightest it has been - RAW POWER.

*

THE DOCTOR (V.O.)

- bickering, I WILL not fail them.

*

45b OMITTED

45b

45A EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT.

45A

The SPIDER-SHIP picks up speed! So much, that bits fall off.

CUT TO:

45B INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY. 45B

The entire shop shakes VIGOROUSLY! THE MEN start panicking!

45BA INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 45BA

THE BARBER *
You told a never-ending story? *
(Laughing manically) *
Gave me never ending power?! *

BELINDA *
He took out a third of the engine! *
You can't process that power. Your *
engine could overload and explode! *

THE BARBER *
I...Everyone would be sucked out to *
space. You wouldn't? The stories *
say you protect life!

THE DOCTOR *
That's what I'm doing! Killing the *
gods would wreck 7 billion lives! *
Save 7 billion, or us? Easy maths! *
I control the engine but you *
control the doors. Open it. Let *
them out. *

BELINDA *
Let us all out, or we're done.

THE BARBER grits his teeth. THE DOCTOR glares back as alarms ring, red lights flash.

CUT TO:

45C EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT. 45C

The SPIDER-SHIP is tearing up THE NEXUS, moving too fast.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. HIGH STREET. LAGOS. NIGHT.

46

The noise and lights bleed out into the mist and fog, waking the SECURITY GUARD up, who stares down the street, frowning.

CUT TO:

47 INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY.

47

ABENA

We're going too fast. The ship will explode. We're going to die.

RASHID

WHAT! NO! What's the Doctor doing? My mother will die without me!

OBIOMA

Useless! I said it! He can't help us! He just made things worse!

TUNDE

Guys, guys, GUYS! Let's not blame him for trying. Even if we don't make it out, we survived this long. I know everything about you, your stories, families; you are now my family. These five years were hard but we survived as brothers, so now, let's stand as brothers.

THE MEN look to each other, and solidarity and bravery grows.

OBIOMA

You're right. I... just miss my son, but let's stand as brothers.

ABENA

-As MY little brother.

THE MEN & OMO stand in a group hug. ABENA walks to join them.

TUNDE

Thanks for making this for us.

OMO

It was my greatest honour.

They group-hug, close their eyes, waiting for death.

BELINDA

I see why the Doctor loves this place.

They spin round to BELINDA, shocked she is there.

CUT TO:

47A OMITTED 47A

48 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGHT. 48

Flashing white light frames the door. THE SECURITY GUARD sees this, hears noises from inside, presses an ear to the door.

CUT TO:

49 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 49

THE DOCTOR

Those men, your brain and heart are
driving their destruction but what
does your gut tell you? Their lives
and stories will end, because of
you. You really want that? Do you?

*
*
*
*

49A OMITTED 49A *

49B INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 49B

CU: THE BARBER can't look at THE DOCTOR, so looks down at the mobile monitor and pushes a secret button.

49C INT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAY. 49C

CU: The door - *schwup! Hiss!*

CUT TO:

50 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGHT.

50

The shop front starts shaking too, the ground rumbling, as if an earthquake. The SECURITY GUARD backs away, terrified.

Suddenly, the door bursts open! White light and sparks spit into the doorframe as the unstable stasis field ripples and the doorway fluctuates between THE NEXUS, the inside of the shop and the face of the SPIDER-SHIP, as THE MEN bide their time to leap through at the *right* moments! BELINDA is the last to land on Lagos soil.

SECURITY GUARD
Rashid? Obioma? Tunde? Omo?!

OBIOMA
Where's the Doctor?

ABENA
He's inside?! What's he doing?

BELINDA
What he can.

CUT TO:

51 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY.

51

The room begins to rumble, the brain and the heart explode in a shower of sparks, lights flash red, alarms blare! THE BARBER sits on the ground. Objects fall off the shelves.

*
*
*

THE DOCTOR
What you doing? We must leave now!

*

CUT TO:

52-53 OMITTED

52-53

54 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGHT.

54

BELINDA runs for the door, ABENA and TUNDE hold her back.

BELINDA
DOCTOR! DOCTOR!

Slo-mo - CU: fear in BELINDA's eyes, disbelief in ABENA's face, guilt on OMO's, and loss as TUNDE falls to his knees.

55 INT. ENGINE ROOM. DAY. 55

THE BARBER is sat like a fallen god. THE DOCTOR crouches down by him as the room vibrates, lays a hand on his shoulder, staring into THE BARBER's eyes, kindly, compassionately.

THE DOCTOR
Listen to me, what would be your
six-word story; the essence of your
life? I want you to live to write
it. Don't let this be how you end.

THE BARBER looks up in THE DOCTOR's face, tears in his eyes.

56 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. NIGHT. 56

All are looking anxiously into the shop.

OBIOMA
There they are!

THE BARBER and THE DOCTOR, run as the shop begins imploding, sparks flying, jump through just as a blue fire ignites. THE DOCTOR slams the door and seals it shut with his sonic.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. SPACE. NEXUS. NIGHT. 57

There is an explosion in the abdominal part of the SPIDER-SHIP. It crumbles down, falls off THE NEXUS, into the deep.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. BARBER SHOP. LAGOS. DAWN. 58

THE MEN cheer ECSTATIC! BELINDA hugs THE DOCTOR.

Minutes later... Dawn is breaking...

OBIOMA
I'm off to find my son. I can't
wait to hear his voice.

RASHID
Maybe my mother is still alive.

TUNDE
I'm still strong, I'll try to run
for Nigeria.
(MORE)

TUNDE (CONT'D)

Thanks for keeping your promise,
Doctor. Abena, he rescued us but
you kept us alive.

TUNDE kneels, then lies flat face-down on the ground before ABENA - the traditional Yoruba way of showing respect to an elder - the others follow. ABENA smiles down at them.

ABENA

Rise. And little brother, run, like the wind. I'll be watching.

TUNDE smiles. THE MEN stand and leave - TUNDE sprints. THE DOCTOR turns, THE BARBER is sat in the dust. He walks over.

THE BARBER

I.. all I wanted was to be credited for my work. I spent my existence serving the gods. What'll I do now?

THE DOCTOR

What you do best: keep collecting stories, but not for gods, for men! Hold space for them. Start your own barber shop.

OMO

No need.

THE BARBER and THE DOCTOR turn, not knowing OMO was close.

OMO (CONT'D)

I have a lot of thinking to do. I had to get them home; I look after them - it's my job, but you look after the WHOLE universe. I thought you could handle anything.

THE DOCTOR

I can, but I can because YOU look after me too.

OMO

You are part of my community. I should've protected you. I'm sorry.

He looks at THE DOCTOR, full of regret and shame.

THE DOCTOR

I'm sorry too; I should visit my barber more often.

OMO

(laughing)

Yes, but I'm retiring. I'm going to find my childhood sweetheart.

OMO shows him a picture of a woman, 60s, in blue earrings.

THE DOCTOR
From the fire!

OMO
I hope it is not too late for us.
(To THE BARBER)
Let all this settle, then continue?

THE BARBER
Me? I don't belong here, don't even
have a name for people to trust.

OMO
Try 'Adétòkunbo', my father's name.

THE BARBER
But... will clients come?

OMO
It's a barber shop! Of course! Just
treat them well, fair prices, and
remember this word: KOWOPE, it
means 'let the money be complete'!

THE BARBER
I.. I don't deserve your kindness.

At a distance, ABENA and BELINDA look as THE BARBER talks.

BELINDA
I understand if you hate him.

ABENA
No. What did you say? '*Hurt people hurt people*' HM! A mortal! Teaching
a god life-lessons? What a wow! No,
I refuse to hate him. I won't carry
that in my heart. I pity him.

BELINDA
So what will you do?

ABENA
(laughs)
Anything I want! Don't you see? I'm
free! From Anansi, him, from those
men, even lovely little Tunde; I'm
done dancing to their whims. I'm
gonna do anything and everything!

BELINDA laughs, happy for ABENA, and bear-hugs her! ABENA
stiffens, then melts into the hug.

CU: On THE BARBER - smiling, he is happy at this.

THE BARBER

Thank you, Doctor.

THE BARBER stretches out a nervous hand, THE DOCTOR takes it.

CU: on their firm handshake.

THE DOCTOR

I'm gonna come back for a hair-cut
and your six-word story. Good luck.

BELINDA and THE DOCTOR turn and walk towards the TARDIS.

BELINDA

Did you see a child?

THE DOCTOR

A child?

BELINDA

Saw a spooky kid in the alleyway
when I was coming.

THE DOCTOR

Didn't see anything. But stories
were leaking out, getting mixed up.

BELINDA

Hmm. Okay. Tell me about Omo.

THE DOCTOR

Long story, but once upon a time...

They enter the TARDIS, and the door swings shut.

END.