

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria is bustling with activity. Students and staff enjoy their lunch amidst brightly coloured walls adorned with posters promoting healthy eating habits and upcoming school events. Among them sits Sofia Kwinga(21), picking at her food with a troubled expression.

Enter Michael, a tall, dark-skinned and middle-aged man dressed in a black suit and is sitting adjacent to Sofia's table. He is also eating and looking around the cafeteria. He notices Sofia who's sitting alone and looking absent-minded. He then approaches her table.

CUT TO:

MICHAEL :
(Gently)
Hey there, mind if I join you?

Sofia looks up, startled by the interruption, but gestures for him to sit.

SOFIA :
Um, sure.

Michael settles into the chair opposite Sofia, observing her troubled demeanour.

MICHAEL :
I'm Michael.

SOFIA :
Sofia

MICHAEL :
You seem a bit preoccupied. Everything okay?

CU:

Sofia hesitates, fidgeting with her napkin.

SOFIA :
(Forces a smile)
Yeah everything is fine. Just... some personal stuff.

Michael nods understandingly, respecting her boundaries but also sensing her need for support.

MICHAEL :
I understand. But sometimes, talking
about it can help.

Sofia looks down, her voice barely above a whisper.

SOFIA :
It's... it's my school fees. I've been
struggling to keep up.

MICHAEL :
(Sympathetic)
I'm sorry to hear that.

SOFIA :
I've been cutting back on expenses,
but it's still not enough.

MICHAEL :
It must be really tough trying to
balance everything.

SOFIA :
(Nodding)
Yeah, it is. Actually, you know things
have not been like this the other
semesters. It's just that my mother is
a housewife and my father was
retrenched and he was the
breadwinner. Now that the semester is
ending soon with examinations, I don't
know how I'll manage to cater for the
pending fees.

Michael nods in understanding, his expression filled with
empathy.

MICHAEL :
I can imagine how stressful that must
be. But you're not alone, Sofia. There
are resources available to help
students in situations like yours.

Sofia looks up, a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

SOFIA :
(Tentatively)
Really? What kind of resources?

Michael: The university has a bursary programme which helps deserving students with clearance of pending school fees balances.

CU:

Sofia: ...surprisingly..No way...how come i did not know about this?

Michael :

(Smiling)

Well... now you do. I am actually the head of bursaries at the university. We have slots left to assist students who are facing financial challenges this semester. I can help you with the application process for enrolment.

SOFIA :

You would do that for me?

(Michael nods, his gaze kind and reassuring.)

MICHAEL

You are in need aren't you?

SOFIA :

(Nodding in response)

That would be amazing. I don't know how to thank you enough Michael you are really God sent.

MICHAEL :

(Smiling)

Absolutely. Here, take my card. Come see me tomorrow, and we'll work something out.

Sofia reaches out to take the card, her hand trembling with gratitude.

SOFIA :

Thank you... thank you so much.

Michael gives her a warm smile before rising from his seat.

MS:

MICHAEL :
It's my pleasure. Take care, Sofia.

Sofia smiles gratefully, shakes hands with Michael. She takes her sit and watches as Michael walks away, a sense of relief washing over her.

FADE TO BLACK: