Silent Reflections

Written by Kanesha Kelley

Inspired by Paul Schrader Transcendental Style & real life events

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

The dim light of dawn filters through the thin curtains. KANESHA, a 34-year-old single mother, is already awake, dressed in her work uniform. She moves quietly, careful not to wake her 10-month-old son, KACEN, who is asleep in a crib nearby. A clock on the wall shows 5:00 AM.

KANESHA
(whispering to herself)
Another day, another dollar.

She pours herself a cup of coffee, the only sound the faint hum of the refrigerator. She glances at the clock, then at Kacen, who stirs slightly in his sleep.

KANESHA
(softly)
Time to wake up, little one.

She gently lifts Kacen from his crib. He rubs his eyes and gives a small, sleepy smile.

KACEN
(babbling)
Mama...

KANESHA
(kissing his forehead)
Grand Rising, sweetheart.

INT. KITCHEN – MINUTES LATER

Kanesha prepares a simple breakfast with one hand while holding Kacen in the other. The camera focuses on her weary face, showing signs of fatigue and worry.

Kacen reaches for a piece of bread, and Kanesha smiles faintly, handing it to him.

KANESHA
(softly)
Eat up, little one.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY BUS - 6:30 AM

Kanesha sits on a crowded bus, Kacen in her lap. The bus is filled with a mix of people: some are dressed in business attire, others in casual clothes, all lost in their own thoughts. The bus jerks forward, and Kanesha instinctively holds Kacen tighter. She looks out the window, watching the city slowly wake up.

Kacen looks up at her, his eyes wide with curiosity. Kanesha smiles down at him, finding a moment of peace in the chaos.

The city outside is a blur of early morning activities: shop owners setting up for the day, joggers on their morning run, and children with backpacks heading to school. The bus stops frequently, picking up more passengers, making the space even more cramped.

A woman in her 50s, dressed in a nurse's uniform, sits next to Kanesha. She gives a tired but warm smile.

NURSE
(smiling)
He's adorable. How old is he?

KANESHA
(smiling back)
Ten months.

NURSE
(nodding)
Enjoy these moments. They grow up so fast.

Kanesha nods, her eyes returning to the window. She sees a young couple walking hand in hand, a stark contrast to her solitary journey. She sighs, feeling the weight of her responsibilities.

Kacen, sensing his mother's unease, reaches up and touches her face, babbling softly. Kanesha's expression softens, and she kisses his tiny hand.

KANESHA
(to Kacen)
We'll get through this, baby. One day at a time.

The bus continues its journey, the hum of the engine and the murmur of conversations creating a background noise that lulls Kacen to sleep. Kanesha looks down at him, finding a moment of peace in the midst of the chaos.

As the bus approaches her stop, Kanesha gathers her things, carefully cradling Kacen. She stands up, navigating through the crowded aisle, and steps off the bus into the bustling city.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Kanesha takes a deep breath, adjusting Kacen in her arms, and heads towards the daycare next to her workplace, ready to face another day.

INT. KANESHA'S OFFICE – DAY 9:00 AM

Kanesha sits at her desk in a bustling office. The room is filled with the hum of conversations, ringing phones, and the clicking of keyboards. Her desk is neatly organized, with a picture of Kacen prominently displayed next to her monitor.

Kanesha is focused on her computer screen, working on a detailed report. Her fingers fly across the keyboard as she inputs data and writes analysis. A colleague, JAMES, approaches her desk with a stack of files.

JAMES
Hey, Kanesha. I need your help with these. Can you take a look?

KANESHA
Sure, James. Just give me a minute to finish this section.

James nods and leaves the files on her desk. Kanesha quickly wraps up her current task and turns her attention to the new files. She flips through them, her brow furrowing in concentration.

KANESHA
(to herself)
Okay, let's see what we've got here.

She starts reviewing the documents, making notes and highlighting important sections. Her phone buzzes with a notification, but she ignores it, staying focused on the task at hand.

Time passes, and Kanesha's desk becomes cluttered with papers and notes. She takes a deep breath, stretches her arms, and takes a sip of coffee. The clock on the wall shows it's almost lunchtime, but Kanesha is too engrossed in her work to notice.

A senior manager, MS. ROBERTS, walks by and stops at Kanesha's desk.

MS. ROBERTS
Kanesha, I just wanted to say you're doing an excellent job. Keep up the good work.

KANESHA
Thank you, Ms. Roberts. I appreciate it.

Ms. Roberts smiles and continues on her way. Kanesha feels a surge of motivation and dives back into her work. She knows that every bit of effort she puts in here is for Kacen, to build a better future for both of them.

Kanesha checks her messages and sees a picture of Kacen at daycare smiling that reads “I love you mommy and Kacen is having a great day”

KANESHA

(Smiling at her desk) putting her phone away to get back to work.

CO-WORKER

(Mrs. Pam passing by)

How's Kacen doing?

KANESHA

(smiling)

He's doing good. Walking, trying to talk. He is growing so fast.

Mrs. Pam

(nodding)

Yup. Sounds about right! That’s what they do! Before you know it, he will be taller than you.

They both laugh

Mrs. Pam

Have a good day baby and hang in there!

Kanesha nods, her smile fading as she returns to her work. The disparity between her dreams and her reality is palpable.

Kanesha sits at her desk, typing away. The photo of Kacen fresh in her mind and another photo sitting next to her computer. She glances at it often, a small smile playing on her lips.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT -6:00 PM

Kanesha and Kacen are back home. She feeds him dinner and plays a few games with him until his eyes get heavy.

As night falls, the apartment is bathed in the soft glow of a single lamp. Kanesha rocks Kacen to sleep, humming a lullaby. The camera lingers on her face, capturing the mix of love and weariness etched into her features.

KANESHA

(softly, to Kacen)

Sleep tight, my sweet boy.

She places Kacen in his crib and stands by the window, looking out at the city lights. The disparity between the bustling world outside and the stillness of her life inside is stark.

The apartment is quiet, the only sound the ticking of a clock.

INT. KANESHA'S LIVING ROOM - 8:00 PM

Kanesha sits at a small desk in her living room, her laptop open in front of her. Kacen is asleep in a crib nearby. The room is dimly lit, with only the soft glow of the laptop screen illuminating Kanesha's face.

On the screen, a virtual classroom session is in progress. The instructor is explaining a complex concept, and Kanesha listens intently, taking notes. The clock on the wall ticks softly, marking the passage of time.

INSTRUCTOR (ON SCREEN)
...and that's how we derive the formula. Any questions?

Kanesha hesitates for a moment, then raises her hand virtually. The instructor notices and calls on her.

KANESHA
(speaking into the laptop's microphone)
Could you please go over that last part again? I didn't quite catch it.

INSTRUCTOR (ON SCREEN)
Of course, Kanesha. Let's go through it step by step.

The instructor patiently explains the concept again, and Kanesha nods, jotting down important points. She glances at Kacen, making sure he's still asleep, and then refocuses on the class.

As the session continues, Kanesha's eyes occasionally flicker to the clock. She knows she has limited time before Kacen wakes up, but she's determined to make the most of it.

KANESHA
(muttering to herself)
I can do this. Just a little more.

The class eventually comes to an end, and Kanesha closes her laptop, stretching her tired muscles. She looks at Kacen, who stirs slightly but remains asleep. She smiles softly, feeling a sense of accomplishment.

KANESHA
(whispering)
One step closer, baby. One step closer.

She tidies up her desk, ready to catch a few hours of sleep before the cycle begins again. The clock continues to tick, marking the relentless march of time, but tonight, Kanesha feels a glimmer of hope.

KANESHA
(sitting by the window, looking out)
Maybe tomorrow will be different.

She sighs, then turns away from the window, walking over to Kacen's crib. She watches him sleep, her face a mixture of hope and resignation.

KANESHA
(whispering)
But for now, this is enough.

FADE OUT.

EXT. SMALL APARTMENT - NIGHT

The camera pulls away from the apartment, showing the quiet, still neighborhood. The sound of a distant siren echoes, emphasizing the solitude and isolation of Kanesha's world.

FADE TO BLACK.

TEXT ON SCREEN:
"In the quiet moments, we find the strength to carry on."

END.