



Listen To Your Parents Benjamin Zephaniah

The Campbells are a Black British family living in Birmingham. Mark Campbell is pursuing his dreams of becoming a footballer and poet. Yet as he does so, his family life becomes increasingly troubled through violent outbursts from his father. In this speech, he talks about his dreams for the future, and vows that he will never follow his father's violence.

MARK: *(Shout.)* Go forth and score. *(Speaking quickly - excited as he shows off his books.)* Yes. Wicked. Check this out, this one's poetry, and this one's football. This one's called 'Oh My Word' and it's lots of short poems and raps by different poets. Fun poems you know, word play and stuff like that. And this one, well it's easy ain't it? 'The Complete Encyclopaedia of Aston Villa'. Brilliant or what? Mom said if I look after these I could get more when she can afford it. Not bad hey? And I wasn't even expecting anything.

This is what happened right. We were coming from school, Mom was doing her shopping, Carlton was in his pushchair, Angela was there, talking, talking, talking. Then we stopped to buy some vegetables and then after that I saw right in front of me, in the window of a bookshop, this book, the poetry one. Because I got it from the library before I knew it was really funny so I said to me Mom that one day I'll get me own copy of that. Then we went into the bookshop and we started just looking around and Mom saw this book she liked about Jamaica, and then I saw this big Villa book. So I started looking at the pictures and me Mom came up to me and she said do I really want a book to take home, and I said yes, and she said which one and I said, 'Boy it's so hard to choose.' Then she went away, in a corner like, and I saw her looking in her purse and counting all her money and then, guess what? She came back and said I could have both, I couldn't believe it guy, both of them. And then guess what? She bought a book about horses for Angela, and she brought that book about Jamaica for herself. Look at that man, I can't believe it, brand new, don't mess, and I don't even have to take it back to the library.

(Beat.)

You wait, it's gonna happen, guy. One day you'll see me in the paper, Mark Anthony Campbell, footballer and poet, so watch out. I ain't showing off or anything, I just know what I know. Me poems are gonna make people laugh and cry, they're gonna be like intelligent poems that make people think about things going on in the world. And maybe I'll get meself a big house like Aston Hall, you know those types of houses that have a long drive and a garden like a park, that kind of house. And if I get married, Might marry a poet, yes guy, a poet wife for a poet husband...I wonder if Maria Shah is really a poet. Anyway check this out, I had this idea right, we could even have a poet priest to marry us, so he could say something like:

'Do you take this poet as your lawful wedded wife?
Do you want to live with her for all your life?
She's cool and she's wicked and she's standing at you side,

Si do it poet, drop a rhyme and kiss your lovely bride.'

(Slowing down the pace.) But I tell you what, I wouldn't hit her. I wouldn't marry someone and then bear them up, what's that for? Why marry someone and then spend so much time beating them up? If I really get upset and lose me temper, I'll just go for a walk or write a poem. I'd just say, 'We must talk dis ting over Maria, ' and then we would talk about it, you know what I mean? If Angela had a husband and he hit her I would fight him but that's different ain't it? That's helping Angela, defending me sister but I ain't gonna be no wife-beater.

Scene 13, 'Friday'