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CONTINUED:

Start here.

Larabee and Wanda look up, as the CROWD bursts into applause as -- **

Akeelah and Dylan take their places on stage. Akeelah smiles at the ovation. Dylan takes the mic and stands there stiffly. Akeelah sees his father staring back at him with arms folded. *

PRONOUNCER
"Filiopietistic."

DYLAN
"Filiopietistic." May I get a definition please? *

As Akeelah focuses on Watanabe, the SOUND of Dylan and the Pronouncer drops to a muffle. As we see the audience APPLAUD Dylan's correct spelling, Watanabe sits there motionless, arms still crossed. FULL SOUND returns. *

HEAD JUDGE
Akeelah, you're up. *

Akeelah hesitates, then steps up to the mic. *

PRONOUNCER
"Xanthosis." *

INT. CHEMISTRY ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

139

139

DYLAN
Spell "xanthosis."

AKEELAH
Uh... Z-A-N --

Akeelah & The Bee
Scene "B"

(CONTINUED)

139

CONTINUED:

139

DYLAN

It starts with an "x."

140

INT. INDEPENDENCE BALLROOM - DAY

140

Akeelah glances back at Dylan. He knows she knows the word. *

AKEELAH

Xanthosis?

PRONOUNCER

That's correct.

Akeelah sees Mr. Watanabe, staring at his son. Akeelah struggles with what to do. *

HEAD JUDGE

Akeelah?

(beat)

Miss Anderson?

AKEELAH

"Xanthosis."

(beat)

Z-A-N-

Dylan looks up with a start.

In the audience, Larabee stands up out of his chair, shocked!

AKEELAH (CONT'D)

-T-H-O-S-I-S. "Xanthosis."

The BELL sounds. A GROAN of disappointment from the audience. Mr. Watanabe pumps his fist in elation.

HEAD JUDGE

I'm sorry, Akeelah, that's incorrect.

She glances at Larabee, seeing his shock, but then quickly looks away and goes to stand behind Dylan.

HEAD JUDGE (CONT'D)

Dylan, it's your turn.

But a stupefied Dylan's still staring back at Akeelah, who won't look at him. Finally, she gives him a little gesture to take the mic. Dylan hesitates then steps to the mic.

141

INT. CRENSHAW MIDDLE SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

141

Akeelah's CLASSMATES are clearly disheartened.

(CONTINUED)

3
141

CONTINUED:

141

TED SAUNDERS (ON TV)
Dylan could take it right here.

PRONOUNCER (ON TV)
"Xanthosis."

142

INT. INDEPENDENCE BALLROOM - DAY

142

Dylan glances back at Akeelah, who doesn't look back at him. Dylan thinks. He knows what Akeelah did. He turns back to the mic.

DYLAN
"Xanthosis." X-A-N-T-H-O-S... E-S.

Akeelah looks up, shocked at how he finished the word -- and then there's a DING.

A GASP from the audience, and Mr. Watanabe stands up, outraged.

PRONOUNCER
"Xanthosis" is spelled X-A-N-T-H-O-S-I-S.

DYLAN
Um... Could I get some water please?

HEAD JUDGE
Can we bring both spellers some water?

Dylan takes advantage of this brief pause to walk back to Akeelah and whisper to her.

DYLAN
What are you doing?

AKEELAH
What are you doing?

DYLAN
You threw that word.

AKEELAH
So did you. *

DYLAN
You're just gonna give this away?? *

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

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142 CONTINUED:

111
142

AKEELAH
Your dad will be happy.

DYLAN
Who cares? He never won anything in his life. I won the Regionals three times in a row and finished second in the Nationals last year.

*
*
*

AKEELAH
And now you can finish first. I can do it next year.

*

DYLAN
You do your best this year.

AKEELAH
Dylan --

DYLAN
(leans forward)
You do your best, or I don't want it.

STOP HERE

STOP HERE

A long moment between them. An ASSISTANT brings them both a bottled water.

143 INT. AKEELAH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

143

TED SAUNDERS (ON TV)
Pretty amazing both spellers stumbled on that word.

MARGARET RUSSELL (ON TV)
I think we got a couple really nervous kids up there.

TERRENCE
C'mon, Akeelah -- take him out!!

144 INT. INDEPENDENCE BALLROOM - DAY

144

Akeelah comes back to the mic.

PRONOUNCER
"Effleurage."

Akeelah glances at Dylan, then:

AKEELAH
E-F-F-L-E-U-R-A-G-E. "Effleurage."

(CONTINUED)