

Pole Position

By

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FADE IN:

INT. HAWKWOOD COLLEGE, MIDLANDS - DAY

We are in a centuries-old posh boarding school, somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Imposing interior that promises to store - and keep - secrets. Hogwart meets Oxford.

We are in the POV of ŁUKASZ DOBROSŁAWSKI who we haven't seen yet. That's right, *ŁUKASZ* not LUCAS. The struggles to pronounce the name - and hold onto the original spelling - are very much a part of this journey.

POV THROUGH UNFOCUSED, BLINKING EYES: a crowd of MIDDLE AGED ALUMNI, sitting in the audience. Faces visibly flushed from the mixture of booze and excitement. They are all staring right at Łukasz, right at us.

Still in the POV of Łukasz, we look down at a paper with a printed speech which he holds in his hands.

He takes a deep breath, looks up.

Now we finally see him. Łukasz -- late 30s, ardent and determined --- stands on a podium, about to give a speech to a full room, filled with prominent Alumni.

He hesitates. Everybody at the audience stares at him expectantly. He takes a deep breath in.

ŁUKASZ

Dear Class of 2000, it is truly an honour....

Suddenly he stops. Awkward silence. The Alumni exchange suggestive looks.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

No dobra... Raz sie zyje.

[Translated: "Ok right....you live only once"]

He chucks the paper, straightens up.

ŁUKASZ

Dear Class of 2000 - it is not only an honour, but a miracle to be able to address you today. Who here has already forgotten that in the year of 2000 the world was expected to end?

He pauses, looks around. A few people smile politely, somebody raises a hand. Still, it all feels a bit awkward.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

But the much dreaded millennial bug never happened. No airplanes fell from the skies, and no debts were magically erased.

Łukasz turns to COACH ROBERTS (50s) sitting in front of the room.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Coach Roberts. You probably should've never bought that car.

Now there's laughter. The audience relaxes, and so does Łukasz. He's got this.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

For better or worse, our computers did just fine. Speaking of computers - back in the year 2000, I didn't even own one. All of my essays and my midterm papers, my emails and my chats, were typed in a public computer room.

Few people nod, others smile politely.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Does anyone today even know what a computer room is? Anyway.

ŁUKASZ

But the year of 2000 still had its own fears. I often wonder, how much of our drive and ambition was subconsciously instilled by Anna Robinson's foreboding question "If brains were taxed, who'd get a refund?".

The audience laughs, and so does Łukasz.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

Let's be honest, none of us wished to become "the weakest link". Or "the least likely candidate for human cloning". And so we studied. Hard.

Now the whole room is laughing out loud. Łukasz looks around with a victorious smile.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Good. Time to punch you with some drama.

He pauses for a bit longer, gets serious.

ŁUKASZ

Dear Class of 2000, it is truly an honour to be able to address you today. Particularly for a foreigner who arrived here with a non-EU passport, the first Polish student the school had ever seen.

The audience gets quiet, looking at him with a certain unease.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

No tak, EU... Too tricky? To jeszcze humor.

[Translated: "Of course, the EU....Too tricky? No need for getting uneasy about this"]

ŁUKASZ

Long gone are the days when I walked around saying "I give head" every time I meant to say "I bet" something happened. Or when I made Headmaster Davis blush telling him I quit my clarinet lessons because "I hate to blow".

Hysterical laughter. Everyone now is looking at HEADMASTER DAVIS -- late 60s, fatherly. He blushes slightly, but nods to confirm that he remembers.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

No to grand finale.

ŁUKASZ

Those linguistic adventures are best left in the past. But what I wish to never forget, is that crazy kid from a small Polish town, who hopped on a double-decker bus to spend two-years in a place he only knew from a 10-page prospectus.

(pauses)

(MORE)

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)
 His courage, idealism - and his
 hair - is something I wish I would
 never lose.

TITLE CARD "POLE POSITION"

A long corridor decorated with portraits of patrons, teachers
 and prominent students.

We stop by one of the paintings. It captures the 16-year-old
 ŁUKASZ DOBROSŁAWSKI.

He is painted against the backdrop of the Hawkwood College.
 The caption reads: 'Headboy of the Hawkwood College (2001-
 2002)'.

Łukasz's ardent eyes and triumphant smile seem to add a
 footnote - 'The sky is the limit'.

As we watch the painting, it begins to morph.

END TITLE SEQUENCE.

BLUR TO:

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO, GDYNIA - DAY

ŁUKASZ DOBROSŁAWSKI -- 16, but looks much older than his age,
 a boy in a man's body -- sits on a chair, staring straight
 into the camera. The same victorious look we know from the
 painting.

ŁUKASZ
 (V.O.)
 My face on that painting?
 Photoshopped. Sort of. My friend
 James wanted to make a surprise
 birthday gift so they took a
 passport photo from my room.

TITLE CARD: GDYNIA, POLAND, 2001

Łukasz remains in the same position, staring straight at the
 camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 (off screen)
 I usmiech!

[Translated: "And smile!"]

Łukasz smiles. Flash. The picture is taken.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER STUDIO, GDYNIA - DAY, LATER

Printed passport photographs placed on the counter. The PHOTOGRAPHER - 50s, jovial - nods with approval, then hands Łukasz the pictures.

PHOTOGRAPHER
To gdzie jedziemy?

[Translated: "So where are we off to?"]

ŁUKASZ
Do Anglii.

[Translated: "To England"]

PHOTOGRAPHER
O! Na zmywak czy na budowe?

[Translated: "O! Washing dishes or laying bricks?"]

Łukasz pauses, smiles. He's been waiting for this question.

ŁUKASZ
(with pride)
Na budowe... mojej kariery znaczy
sie!

[Translated: "Off to building... my own career if you know what mean"]

The Photographer stares at Łukasz, unsure whether he's joking.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Mowic czy nie mowic... A powiem!
Niech wie, ze i Polak potrafi.

[Translated: "To say it or not to say...I will say it! Let him know that a Pole can do it"]

ŁUKASZ
Dostałem stypendium.

[Translated: "I got a scholarship."]

(faking British accent)
Hawkwood College, West Midlands.

The Photographer nods, impressed. As if he knows exactly where that is.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
He has no idea what I'm talking about. But to be honest, neither do I. My idea of the perfect world of a posh British school is solely based on a prospectus they sent to my home... pretty sad, but hey!

INT. STUDENT DORM, GDYNIA - DAY

Łukasz and his two roommates - BARTEK (16) and MARCIN (16) - gather around the prospectus of the Hawkood College.

We are in an austere, retro interior of a shared student room. The single beds, desks and chairs still remember the pre-1989 era.

But the room is brightened up by the views of the Baltic sea right outside the windows. We hear the sound of the CRASHING WAVES and SEAGULLS as the boys study the prospectus.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
It was the year of 2000. We did not have access to internet to check out the school. Nor did we even think of checking it... Who would've thought that in 20 years we wouldn't be able to live without Google maps... Simplicity and naivety rules!

The boys reach the last page. It shows a map of England, with Hawkwood College marked in the middle of Midlands.

Bartek and Marcin look at Łukasz questioningly.

BARTEK
No ale ty w ogole wiesz gdzie jedziesz?

[Translated: "Do you know where you are actually going?"]

Łukasz's shrugs his shoulders and takes away the prospectus. His face beams with joy.

ŁUKASZ

(faking British accent)

It's England, mate! The land of the Beatles and Oasis, Benny Hill and Mr Bean, 5 o'clock tea, strawberries and cream... "Let it be, let it be, let it be..."

MARCIN

(with hard Polish accent)

Beatles are from Liverpool and Oasis are from Manchester... as opposed to Oxford or Cambridge.

ŁUKASZ

I heard Robbie Williams comes from the Midlands so it cannot be that bad, can it? And anyway, the real question is...

Łukasz waits a moment for the extra dramatic effect.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

Do I care?

The boys laugh in response, high-five Łukasz. He stands up, victorious.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

And the answer is - not at all. The school looks like an Oxford college and it is a dream come true.

EXT. PROMENADE, GDYNIA - DAY

Łukasz steps out of the dorm, straight onto the impressive promenade, filled with sunshine and breeze. It's an early summer and the PEDESTRIANS walk unhurriedly, eating ice-cream, drinking cold beer, laughing. An atmosphere of an idyllic summer resort.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Of course, you could ask why I even wanted to leave a place like this?

BEGIN "LIFE IN POLAND" MONTAGE

-- Gdynia. Łukasz (15) and a GIRL (15) sit alone on the beach, watching the sunset. He coyly puts his arm around her. An innocent kiss.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
The place where I had my first
girlfriend...

-- Gdynia. Łukasz (15) is studying late in his room. Bartek and Marcin storm in, excited. A can of beer lands on Łukasz's desk. He hesitates, opens it.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
...drank my first beer...

-- Sopot. Łukasz, Bartek and Marcin line up in front of a nightclub. In their best, unironed shirts and heads shining from tons of hair gel, they nervously wait to be let in.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
... or had my first party in a
night club.

-- A school basketball TEAM, gathered together right before the match. Łukasz is among the PLAYERS.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
The place that happens to love
basketball the way I love it...

-- End of the match. Łukasz and the team comes onto the stage with their basketball trophy.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
... even though our whole region
used to be called a bunch of nerds.

END 'LIFE IN POLAND' MONTAGE.

EXT. GDYNIA PROMENADE - BACK TO PRESENT

Łukasz stops at the end of the promenade, looks at the sea.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
But I was ready for a new chapter.
And Hawkwood College seemed to see
in me what I saw in myself.

He turns around, looks straight at us.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
 Unlimited potential.

He puts on the headphones of his WALKMAN, presses 'Play'.

QUEEN'S SONG 'DON'T STOP ME NOW' begins playing and Łukasz runs along the promenade as fast as he can.

INT. ŁUKASZ'S FAMILY HOUSE, KUTNO - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

Łukasz's childhood bedroom. The walls are covered in various diplomas and certificates, the shelves store multiple trophies.

It's a middle of the night, but Łukasz is still awake. For a moment we watch him literally roll from one side to another and back again.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 The night before I did not sleep a
 single hour. But I wasn't stressed.

We now see his wide open eyes, dilated pupils.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
 I was full of adrenaline. There was
 the fear and the excitement of the
 unknown. Everything to the West
 surely is better...

EXT. COACH STATION, GDYNIA - DAY

A double-decker international coach parked at the bus stop.

The doors are open, ready to take the passengers on the 36-hour-long bus ride across Europe, from Gdynia to London.

We are in the POV of Łukasz, as he looks around the bus stop.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 It's like a Noah's arc of Polish
 society.

We see YOUNG MEN in tracksuits and ELDERLY LADIES in their best clothes. Both groups are anxious, heading into the unknown. The Young Men hold tightly to their cans of beers while the Elderly Ladies hold to their family members.

There are the excited STUDENTS and modellesque looking YOUNG WOMEN, hoping for a better life. Some Passengers prepare for the long-overdue family visits and others are returning to their new homes in England.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

It's the year 2000, and Poland can
still only dream of joining the EU.
For us, Poles, entering the UK
feels like winning a lottery.
Unlike the rest of Europeans, we
need to have a valid reason, a job
there or a visa to be even let in.

In charge of this eclectic bunch are the BUS DRIVER ONE and
the BUS DRIVER TWO, each decorated with an impressive
moustache.

They stand on the side, smoking one cigarette after another,
as if to store the nicotin until their next cigarette break.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

So no matter how we might look - we
are the chosen ones.

Now we finally see Łukasz. He stands on the side with his
parents, MAMA --early 40s, fragile but nurturing -- and TATA
-- late 40s, insecure and trying hard to hide it.

MAMA

No, to pokaz im tam, synku! Pokaz,
co potrafisz!

[Translated: "Show them what you are made off, son!"]

Tata sneers.

TATA

No, juz tam, akurat pokaze. Sam
bedzie, jak palec. Pamietaj,
Brytyjczycy łatwo sie nie otwierają

*[Translated: "Well, he might not show. He will be alone.
Remember, British people are not the ones who open easily"]*

(with hard Polish accent)
„my home is my castle”. Od teraz to
tylko herbata z mlekiem i garnitur
w szkocka krate, no!

*[Translated: "my home is my caste. Tea only with milk, suit
in the Scottish tweed, right on!"]*

(MORE)

TATA (CONT'D)

(to Mama)
To oni mu pokaza, no... gdzie jest
jego miejsce.

[Translated: "They will show him his place"]

Tata turns to Łukasz, giving him a fatherly tap on the shoulder.

TATA (CONT'D)
I dobrze. Przyda ci sie.
Spokorniejesz!

[Translated: "Better for you. This will be handy. You will gain some humility!"]

ŁUKASZ
Dzieki, tato.

[Translated: "Thanks, Dad"]

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
He's scared. All he can offer is an
advice based on outdated
stereotypes and some random ideas
he got from movies... true wisdom!
This whole situation begins to feel
a bit like a scene from "Miś"...

CUT TO:

FOOTAGE FROM STANISŁAW BAREJA'S COMEDY "MIŚ" (1981)

Post Office in Polish People's Republic. RYSIEK tries to send a telegram to London.

POSTAL WORKER
Nie moge wysłać tej depeszy. Nie ma
takiego miasta, Londyn. Jest Łądek,
Łądek Zdrój!

[Translated: "I am unable to send this telegram. There is no such city "Londyn" (London)...We have only "Ładek Zdroj" (a scene from 1981 comedy set at the communist Poland where travelling abroad was very rare and the lady does not recognise London being a capital of Great Britain, searching for a city in Poland.)"]

END FOOTAGE.

Łukasz looks at his parents with sympathy.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

That's how it is for them...
London? There is no such a city.
There is only Ładek-Zdrój.

Mama rolls her eyes at Tata and turns back to Łukasz. She gently takes his face in her hands.

MAMA

Nie słuchaj ojca! Dla nas już
jestes najlepszy! Ale pamiętaj -
jak coś, to rzucaj wszystko i
wracaj. Tu zawsze jest Twój dom.

[Translated: "Don't listen to your dad! For us, you are the best. But remember, if anything, drop it all and come back. Here, there is always your home."]

They hug.

DRIVER ONE

No to co? Jedziemy! Komu w droge,
temu czas, hehe.

[Translated: "So? Lets go! Time is money haha"]

Everybody starts saying their goodbyes and moving into the bus.

Łukasz kisses Mama goodbye and smiles reassuringly.

ŁUKASZ

Wszystko będzie super, zobaczysz.

[Translated: "Everything will be amazing, you will see"]

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Rodzice... trzeba mieć ich pod kontrola. Im mniej myślą, mniej się martwią - tym lepiej.

[Translated: "Parents...one has to control them. The less that they know, the less they are worried, the better."]

He turns to TATA, about to hug him awkwardly.

ŁUKASZ

Tato? Pamiętasz tą piosenkę Beatelsów? "Let it be, let it be"...

[Translated: "Dad? You remember the song by the Beatles 'Let it be, let it be'"]

(pauses)

Miejmy nadzieję, że za moment nie będę śpiewał „Help”..

[Translated: "Let's hope, I won't be singing 'Help...' momentarily"]

Tata unexpectedly grabs Łukasz and presses him hard against his chest. He holds him like this, very tightly.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

He's not just scared. He's terrified.

INT. COACH, STATION, GDYNIA - DAY

Łukasz sits down by the window. The seat next to him is free.

We are again in the POV of Łukasz as he looks around his fellow Passengers.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

You can tell a lot about the people from the first sight. The way they dress and speak. So what have we got here...

Just this moment, a new PASSENGER enters the bus. JOANNA - a gorgeous blonde, sex on legs - rushes in, delayed. She sports a short dress completed with strong make-up. Everyone's eyes are on her.

The SOUND of Łukasz SNEERING.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

My point exactly. Here it is, one of the best known goods we export globally - a beautiful woman looking for a rich men abroad. Great, just great.

Joanna looks around for a free seat. We now see Łukasz, quickly removing his jacket from the seat next to him. He then goes back to watching Joanna.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Here I am, trying to break the stereotypes about Polish builders, plumbers and sexy waitresses, and you are just feeding them, huh? Aren't you even a little bit ashamed that over 1000 years of our history, our entire cultural heritage, has been summarised into these three professions?

Joanna spots the free seat next to Łukasz. He flusters a little and quickly moves towards the window. Casually inviting.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Polish stands for poor, shy and just not good enough. But I am different, I am on top of the world. I will prove them... Or I will marry a lady of leisure with rich benefactors. If you can't win them, join them! Wearing dinner jackets to breakfast with every third word consisting of "extraordinary"...I could do with a little horse-riding and waltzing... Actually this does not sound like a bad idea... It cannot be that hard, can it?

BOGUMIŁA
 (off screen)
 Wolne tu?

[Translated: "Is this seat free?"]

Łukasz jerks, turns around. BOGUMIŁA - 60s, round and retro - stands in front of the free seat, a large canvas bag over her shoulder and a couple of filled up plastic bags in her hands.

She looks at Łukasz expectantly.

He quickly looks again to Joanna. She stops, unsure what to do now. Then another MAN approaches her, pointing to a free seat next to him.

Łukasz sighs, turns back to Bogumiła.

ŁUKASZ
 Wolne. Proszę!

[Translated: It is free, please!"]

Bogumiła immediately puts all of her bags on the seat. She then turns around and shouts to her HUSBAND standing outside the bus.

BOGUMIŁA
 (shouting)
 Zdzisiu?! Jest miejsce! No, to dawaj te torby tu, no! Jak sie nie zmiesci, jak sie zmiesci...

[Translated: "Zdzisiu? I found a place! Just pass me the bags! As long as it fits."]

INT. COACH, GDYNIA - DAY, LATER

The doors are closed, everybody is in their seats. The bus is ready to depart.

Łukasz squeezes against the window. The entire space underneath the seats and around Bogumiła is filled with all kinds of bags. The large canvas bag is placed on Bogumiła's lap. She has her arms around it, holding it tightly like a pillow.

BUS DRIVER ONE
 (behind the wheel)
 To jak, wszyscy na swoich
 miejscach? Gotowi do drogi?

[Translated: „So then, everyone has a seat? Ready to go?]

A collective, affirmative MURMUR.

BUS DRIVER TWO
 No, gotowi!

[Translated: "Ok, Ready!"]

The bus takes off. Bogumiła makes a quick sign of cross and the immediately takes out her homemade sandwich. She unwraps the paper and begins eating, just as the bus is leaving the station.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 Of course. Classic.

He takes a quick look at her many bags.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
 Now I get it... Prowiant.

[Translated: "Now I get it....Provisions."]

(pauses)
 I guess that should keep her busy
 for the next 36 hours.

Bus Driver Two walks towards the VHS machine with a little monitor at the front of the bus. He takes out an impressive selection of VIDEO TAPES.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
 And that's another classic - VHS.
 From one screen we all have to
 watch the same thing. That's a
 Polish version post-communist
 democracy - everyone gets the same,
 we all got to compromise. But it's
 not all bad.

(MORE)

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

The delayed dubbing lets me focus
on mistranslations, keeping me on
my toes...

BUS DRIVER TWO

(to the Passengers)

To co puszczamy? Kevina czy
Killera?

[Translated: „What are we going to watch? Kevin (denoting the comedy “Home Alone”) or Killer (referring to the Polish comedy)"]

BOGUMIŁA

(trying to cover full
mouth)

Kevina!

[Translated: "Home alone"!]

BUS DRIVER TWO

No to Kevina!

[Translated: "Home alone it is!"]

Łukasz takes out his walkmen and puts on his headphones. He presses play. We hear POLISH RAP SONG, 'Nie ma skróconych drog' ['There are no shortcuts'] by "Grammatik".

Łukasz turns to the window. We watch the passing cityscape of Gdynia while the song plays in the background.

GRAMMATIK

(lyrics)

"Nie otworzysz drzwi dopóki nie
otworzysz zasuw Zrozum mnie dobrze
nie ma dróg na skróty nie ma Daj
sobie czas na poznanie prawdy
Zamiast narzekać rób coś i zacznij
świat swój zmieniać.

[Translated: „You will not open the door until you unlock the lock. Understand well there are no shortcuts in life. Give yourself time to get to know the truth. Instead of complaining, go and start to change your world.”]

INT. BUS, CALAIS, FRANCE - NIGHT

Łukasz dozes off with his headphones on. The bus rapidly halts. His head hits the window, Łukasz wakes up.

We are in the POV of Łukasz, as he opens his eyes.

Right in front of him is the tiny monitor of the VHS player.

It still plays 'Die Hard' - with a slightly delayed MALE VOICE OVER of a Polish LEKTOR.

The video paused.

DRIVER ONE
(to the microphone)
Granica w Calais. Prosimy
przygotować dokumenty do kontroli.

[Translated: „We are approaching the Calais border. Please prepare for a document control.”]

The SOUND of CRUNCHING. We turn in the direction of the noise and see Bogumiła nervously stuffing her mouth with "wafelki".

We look around the bus. Agitated passengers are looking through their bags and pockets, double checking their documents. Tension in the air.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
We all heard horrible stories about people stopped at the boarder and told to go back if they do not have good enough reasons to enter. So now everyone wonders - would I be next?
(pauses)
Everyone but me. I am ready. Captain my captain. I have a game plan, I rehearsed it. Nothing can stop me from reaching the promised land. "The red sea waters have divided...".

Now we see Łukasz diving into his backpack and calmly taking out a perfectly assembled folder with documents.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
I am ready to cross my Rubicon!

INT. BORDER CONTROL, CALAIS, FRANCE - NIGHT

Łukasz walks into the building. Straight back, confident movements.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

I want them to question me... I want to see the looks on their faces when they see my papers. Private school, full scholarship - does that sounds like a good enough reason to enter? What do you say, sir?

He joins the queue, looks up. Right in front of him is Joanna.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Ha! No way. But this is great. I'd love to hear your *very important* reason for entering the United Kingdom. What is it, darling?

Łukasz watches Joanna smile at the OFFICER who slightly flusters in response. She plays with her blonde, lush hair. We see her perfectly manicured hands with bright red varnish.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Wow. Can you be any more obvious?

Joanna nonchalantly takes a big folder. Łukasz's eyes pause on the the logo of London School of Economics.

ŁUKASZ

Wait, what?!

In slow motion we watch Joanna take out her student documents. Our eyes stop at the her student status, printed in bold font: Joanna Poniatowska, PhD Candidate. Everything blurs for a moment, emphasising the words.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

This girl is an academic?!

He looks back at Joanna. She catches his gaze and smirks with satisfaction, as if she knew exactly what he was thinking.

Like she could read his mind. Łukasz blushes, embarrassed.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Okay, fair enough. I deserved it. But lesson learned! Never again judge a book by its cover. But how could I be so wrong?! I know how.

(MORE)

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

We, Poles, are competitive. We think we are better from one another. If only we joined forces, helped one another... together, we'd be unstoppable. That is the essence of my mission now!

It's his turn now, he steps forward. Somehow his desire to make a show has evaporated. He hands in his papers, the Officer reads through them.

OFFICER

(surprised)

Hawkwood College?

ŁUKASZ

Yes, sir.

The Officer nods, impressed.

OFFICER

Congratulations.

ŁUKASZ

Thank you, sir.

The Officer stamps his passport.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Another lesson? Our greatest exporting goods are not just our people, but their brains. Or their aspirations... Let's see how it all pans out. I have just received a visa and I am legit. Easy part is to turn up, the tough part is to ride it out...

EXT. VICTORIA COACH STATION, LONDON - DAY

Łukasz, already carrying a backpack, lifts up two large travel bags without wheels. He straightens up, looks around in confusion.

People from all over the world run around the station chaotically. Tears of joy mix with tears of despair. Some are lost and walk around in circles, while others are late, rushing to still make their connections.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Victoria station!

Łukasz spots an exit, heads out.

EXT. ECCLESTON SQUARE PARK, LONDON - DAY

Łukasz, effortlessly carrying his luggage, enters the square.

And immediately stumbles, taken aback by its unexpected beauty.

His eyes sparkle, as he takes in the view of the historic garden surrounded by the perfectly white, perfectly lined up Victorian terraced houses.

ŁUKASZ
(whispers)
Oh England... you beautiful thing!

He drops his bags and lifts up his arms in a victorious gesture.

We hear U2 iconic SONG "BEAUTIFUL DAY" resounding quietly in the background.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)
Veni, vidi, vici!

The song gets louder, Łukasz runs the square around ecstatically.

INT. BUS, WEST MIDLANDS - DAY

A grey cityscape seen through the window. Industrial neighbourhood, endless row of council houses.

KEVIN
(off screen, loud and slow)
Are you here for work?

Łukasz slowly turns around, his face shocked. For a moment he stares blankly at Kevin -- 50s, self-important and condescending -- still processing what he has just seen. Then he shakes his head, as if to shake off the images.

ŁUKASZ
No, not for work. For school.

KEVIN
Oh? Is that a language school?
(pauses)
In Birmingham?!

Łukasz shakes his head again.

ŁUKASZ
No. Hawkwood College.

Kevin laughs out loud. Łukasz stares at him with confusion, unsure whether he said something funny. Kevin realises Łukasz wasn't joking, looks at him again.

KEVIN
And you said you from where?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Czechoslovakia?

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Czechoslovakia?

ŁUKASZ
Poland.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
That's what I mean.

KEVIN
That's what I mean.

ŁUKASZ
I got a scholarship.

Kevin looks him up and down.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Bloody foreigners, taking our
scholarships... taking the
education from our English
children!

KEVIN
That's very nice, isn't it?

ŁUKASZ
It is, yes.

Kevin continues staring at Łukasz, as if something there wasn't quite adding up. To buy time, he smiles diplomatically.

KEVIN
And have you ever been to England?

ŁUKASZ
Just once. Last summer.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMERSET, ENGLAND - DAY, FLASHBACK

Beautiful old cottages wrapped in lush greenery, charming little streets, picturesque landscape. An embodiment of the British idyllic countryside.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

The language course in Somerset,
which must've cost my parents a
fortune.

INT. COTTAGE, SOMERSET, ENGLAND - DAY, FLSHBACK

A quaint country kitchen, with floral patterns on two large
DOGS resting in the corner.

It's tea time and Łukasz sits around the table with his host
family, MR ALLEN (50s) and MRS ALLEN (50s).

Mrs Allen lifts up a little porcelain jug with milk.

MRS ALLEN

Would you care for some milk?

ŁUKASZ

Ah no, thank you. In Poland,
actually, we drink our tea with
lemon.

Terror cringes the faces of Mr and Mrs Allen alike.

MR ALLEN

I beg your pardon?!

ŁUKASZ

You know, we just add a slice of
fresh lemon.

Mr and Mrs Allen exchange scandalised looks. They slowly turn
back to Łukasz, blinking rapidly and trying to smile.

MRS ALLEN

That's... extraordinary!

MR ALLEN

Most extraordinary indeed...

(pauses)

Poland...

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Everyone was interested in my
culture.

MR ALLEN

Have you ever heard about the
Battle of Britain?

ŁUKASZ
 (enthusiastically)
 I have, yes! On the day of the
 battle, one in five of the pilots
 in action was Polish!

MR ALLEN
 Most extraordinary indeed!

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 But somehow dismissive.

MR ALLEN
 Darling, do we still have some
 clotted cream to go with the
 scones?

Mrs Allen brings the clotted cream. Łukasz helps himself to
 the homemade scone with a generous serving of cream and jam.

He takes a bite, smiles with delight.

He looks out the window, at the scenic view.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 Still, that summer I fell in love
 with England. I thought it was a
 bit of a fairyland. Indie music,
 lamb chops and clotted cream on my
 scones...

INT. BUS, WEST MIDLANDS - DAY, BACK TO PRESENT

Kevin blinks rapidly.

KEVIN
 Right... Well, you might find West
 Midlands a tad different, I'd say.

INT. COACH STATION, BIRMINGHAM - NIGHT

An early evening. Łukasz stands in the middle of the
 stations. He is surrounded by a CACOPHONY of BRUMMIE dialect.

We hear the MUSIC THEME from PEAKY BINDERS.

Łukasz blinks rapidly, turning from one side to the other,
 trying to make sense of what he hears.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 A tad different, right.

Finally he spots an information centre. Relieved, he charges ahead, oblivious to the line in front of it.

MAN'S VOICE
(angrily)
Eym, no podging in!!

Łukasz turns around. A LOCAL MAN (30s) stares at him with fury.

ŁUKASZ
I'm sorry?

LOCAL MAN
(Brummie accent)
I was here *first*.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Say what? I was here **fast**? Maybe

ŁUKASZ
I'm sorry, I didn't know you were
in a hurry!

Local Man sneers.

LOCAL MAN
Ain't you you a joker?

Łukasz joins the line. A LOCAL MAN TWO (50s) who stands in front, turns around.

LOCAL MAN TWO
Y'aright cock?

Łukasz stares at him in shock.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Wait, did he just call me a cock?

EXT. BUS STOP, HAWKWOOD, WEST MIDLANDS - NIGHT

Łukasz waits alone at the bus stop in the middle of nowhere.

The SOUND of a CAR APPROACHING.

COACH ROBERTS
(off screen)
Lucas?

Łukasz turns around. COACH ROBERTS -- 30s, athletic and jolly
- steps out of the car.

Łukasz effortlessly picks up his bags and springs towards the car. Coach Roberts sizes up his impressive posture, then looks at the large, wheelless luggage with disbelief.

COACH ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Second row in the scrum it is!

Coach Roberts grabs one of Łukasz's bags and stretches out his hand.

COACH ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Coach Roberts. Welcome to Hawkwood!

INT. ŁUKASZ'S ROOM, HAWKWOOD, WEST MIDLANDS - NIGHT

A small, single room. Łukasz is unpacking.

The SOUND of KNOCKING, followed by the DOOR OPENING.

TIMOTHY COLLINS (16) -- looks much younger than his age, in equal measure pompous and fragile - and HENRY REILLY (16) -- jovial and clueless, Timothy's right hand - enter the room.

TIMOTHY
So how's the new boy doing?

Timothy looks around with envy.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
How come were you given a single room?

HENRY
Maybe no one else would've wanted to live with him?

Timothy smiles with approval but pretends otherwise.

TIMOTHY
Henry! Be civil. What will they say about English hospitality?

He turns back to Łukasz.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
I do apologise.

ŁUKASZ
That's okay. English humour, right?

TIMOTHY
Right.

Timothy stretches out his hand.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Timothy Collins.

Łukasz shakes his hand.

ŁUKASZ
Łukasz Dobrosławski.

HENRY
Say what?!

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Okay, I really should've prepared
this one better...

ŁUKASZ
Say "Wu-tang" and then say "Cash".
WuCash.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
As if everyone here is deaf when it
comes to Slavic sounds. One would
agree that there is letter "dzi" in
between the words "Orange Juice".

Timothy and Henry look at him expectantly. Łukasz suddenly
brightens up.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
Oh, I know!

ŁUKASZ
You've got like a pound sign
instead of L in the beginning.
(draws in the air the
sign)
Ł.

HENRY
A pound sign?! In your name?

Timothy cringes, rolls his eyes at Henry.

TIMOTHY
Charming.

Henry chuckles. Łukasz seems baffled.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Charming? Charming should be
good...
(MORE)

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
 but somehow it sounds too good...
 Is that the infamous sarcasm or
 just pure ignorance?

ŁUKASZ
 (tries again)
 It's like a Polish Lucas. You
 pronounce it 'Wu-cash'.

TIMOTHY
 Fascinating. But we'll just call
 you Lucas. Is that alright?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 Is it alright? Not sure... I'm
 Łukasz, not Lucas. I am not going
 to call you "Tomek" as opposed to
 Timothy... just because it is
 easier. Maybe I should call him
 Tomek?

ŁUKASZ
 I'd prefer Łukasz, actually.

HENRY
 But you are in England now,
 Lucas.

Henry walks around the room, picks up a book. He looks at the
 cover, trying to read the title.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 Pan Ta-tee-s...

ŁUKASZ
 Tadeu*sz*. It's pronounced as
 'shh', just like Łuka*shh*... Same
 name as Tadeusz Kosciuszko,
 actually.

Timothy and Henry stare blankly. They have no idea who he's
 talking about.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)
 The hero of the American
 Revolutionary War?

Nothing.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Right. I guess you do not go that far in your history knowledge.

Henry shrugs and points to the title.

HENRY

What does it mean?

ŁUKASZ

(enthusiastically)

It's a name - Mr Tadeusz. The book is super famous, actually. Everyone in Poland knows it. You can ask anyone on the street, at any age - they'd all know it. The author, Adam Mickiewicz...

(pauses)

... he's like a Polish Shakespeare?

TIMOTHY

Well I don't know about that...
We, here, have never heard about him...

HENRY

Yeah, and everybody in the world knows Shakespeare!

Timothy hesitates, takes the book and passes it to Łukasz.

TIMOTHY

Read it.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

On zartuje?

[Translation: "Is he joking?"]

ŁUKASZ

Right.

TIMOTHY

I mean it. Fine poetry should sound well in any language.

Łukasz hesitates.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Oh come on. Let us hear this Polish masterpiece.

Timothy holds the book expectantly. Łukasz takes it. He clears his throat, begins reading.

ŁUKASZ

Litwo, ojczyzna moja! Ile cie
trzeba cenic, ten tylko sie dowie,
Kto cie stracil.

[Translated: "Lithuania, my homeland! How much one can value you, he will only find out who lost you."]

HENRY

(interrupts, addresses
Timothy)

I don't know about you, but to me
this does not sound quite right...

TIMOTHY

(to Łukasz)

So what does it mean?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Seriously?

ŁUKASZ

You want me to translate it?

TIMOTHY

Why not? Isn't cross-cultural
exchange the very reason of you
being here?

Łukasz considers, decides to take up the challenge. He looks down at the book and begins translating -

ŁUKASZ

Lithuania, my country....

TIMOTHY

(interrupts)

Lithuania?!

HENRY

You said it was a Polish epic?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Cross-cultural exchange, huh? Here
you go then...

(MORE)

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

The intricacy of Polish empire and its partition and subsequent demise... the weight on my shoulders to diffuse misinformation or total ignorance.

ŁUKASZ

Well, yes, it is a Polish epic. But Poland and Lithuania were one country in the past. It was a commonwealth, actually. And before that, the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania...

TIMOTHY

(mockingly)

The kingdom?!

He looks to Henry who feels obliged to chuckle.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Okay, I think I've heard enough fables for one night. What do you say, Henry?

Henry spectacularly yawns in response. Timothy turns back to Łukasz, forces a condescending smile.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Thank you for this lesson in Polish storytelling. It was most amusing. And now goodnight.

Henry mockingly curtsy Łukasz.

HENRY

Good night, prince Lucas.

INT. DINING HALL, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - NIGHT

Dinner time in the centuries-old dining hall. Dark wood, portraits of serious alumni and patrons hang from the walls.

They seem to keep a watchful eye on the students, now gathered around the long heavy tables.

With a tray full of food, Łukasz enters the dining hall. And immediately stumbles. He looks around, unsure where to sit down.

After a moment he spots a free seat, walks up there.

ŁUKASZ

Hi!

Łukasz sits down.

ŁUKASZ (CONT'D)

I'm Łukasz!

Everybody around the table stops eating, staring at him with surprise. WEI ZHE -- 17, stoic and refined -- nods at Łukasz politely.

WEI

I don't mean to be rude, but that's not your table.

Łukasz looks around in surprise. He realises everyone around him looks Asian or Oriental.

ŁUKASZ

Right... Sorry. Which one is my table?

WEI

Where are you from again?

ŁUKASZ

Poland.

WEI

I don't think we've got anyone from Poland at Hawkwood...

ŁUKASZ

(enthusiastically)
No, I'm the first!

Blank faces, no one seems to share Łukasz's joy.

WEI

Well, you look a bit like them...

He points to another table of tall, well-built STUDENTS, where everyone looks at least five years older than the rest.

Łukasz hesitates, then takes his tray, about to get up.

ŁUKASZ

Thanks!

Łukasz's sleeve goes up. Wei notices his cheap watch.

WEI
Wait, how again did you get into
Hawkwood?

ŁUKASZ
(proudly)
I won a scholarship!

WEI
Then I'm afraid that's not your
table either.

ŁUKASZ
(confused)
No?

WEI
No. These are oligarchs' children.

We are in the POV of Łukasz, who looks again at their table.
Only now we notice expensive watches and jewellery.
Łukasz stands with his tray, helpless.

WEI (CONT'D)
You can always join the English-
lot. Speak some football, rugby and
cricket and bob's your uncle
"init".

INT. DINING HALL, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - NIGHT, LATER

Łukasz sits by the table with the English students. We
recognise Timothy and Henry among others. CHLOE HARRIS (16) -
- a clever and naughty provocateur -- watches Łukasz closely,
amused.

Timothy notices her interest in Łukasz, rolls his eyes with
annoyance.

But Łukasz remains clueless about the interest his presence
triggered. He's busy staring down at his plate and
investigating a white, watery puree with suspicion.

He senses Chloe's eyes on him, looks up. She smiles at him
flirtatiously. He blushes and sends her a disarming smile
back.

ŁUKASZ
(point to his plate)
What's that?

CHLOE
 (surprised)
 Mashed potatoes?

He looks back at his plate in disbelief. He tries a bit of the puree and immediately cringes.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 Potatoes?! I might not know much about cooking, but whatever went into making this thing - it wasn't potatoes...

ŁUKASZ
 It doesn't really taste like potatoes...

CHLOE
 They probably just used an instant mash. You know, from a powder.

Łukasz cringes, pushes the plate away.

ŁUKASZ
 In Poland, we make mashed potatoes by actually mashing the potatoes.

HENRY
 Yeah, you should trust him on the potatoes, Chloe. They're the Polish national dish.

ŁUKASZ
 Yeah, and what's yours? Tikka masala? Or fish and chips? And have some delicious "Marmite" when you are at it... "You either love it hate it" right?

Chloe laughs.

TIMOTHY
 We do apologise that our cuisine is not quite up to your standards.

Everybody around the table chuckles. Łukasz blushes, suddenly embarrassed.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
 We'll make sure to pass your feedback onto the kitchen. Hopefully they'll do better next time.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

A dream-like large basketball court.

We are in the POV of Łukasz who watches a group of tall BOYS go at it with all the seriousness of NBA players.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

No to jest boisko! Wow. To czas
poakazac, jak sie w Polsce gra w
koszykowke...

*[Translated: „That's what I call a basketball court. Wow,
it's time to show how one plays basketball in Poland...."]*

Łukasz enters the court, approaches the boys.

ŁUKASZ

Hey! Anyone needs an extra player?
I know a thing or two about
basketball...

The boys look at each others suggestively, smirk. MATT (17) -
- authoritative, captain of the school's team -- sizes him
up.

MATT

The beginners' training is on the
weekends. You might give that a
try.

A collective chuckle from the rest of the boys. He glares at
them with disapproval and turns back to Łukasz.

MATT (CONT'D)

No offence intended, mate. It's
just that we here are playing at a
professional level.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

I represented my region on a
national level, *mate*. But sure. I
have just witness girls warming up
to something that resembles
"basketball in skirts"- Netball.
Anything can happen... So I might
as well sit back and observe how
the situation develops.

ŁUKASZ

Sure.

MATT

You can stay and watch how it's really done.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Fine, let's see what you've got.

ŁUKASZ

Thanks, mate. I will!

Łukasz walks to the side. We are back in his POV as the game resumes.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Guys, if that's a professional level here... You better never play outside of Midlands.

(pauses)

But it's pretty good news for me. I guess I'm about to become this school's brightest star.

INT. ŁUKASZ'S ROOM, HAWKWOOD, WEST MIDLANDS - DAY

Early morning, first day of school. Łukasz is about to leave the room.

He is wearing a dark moss green suit, paired with a honey-roasted yellow shirt.

He glances in the mirror.

BLUR TO:

INT. MAN'S TAILOR SHOP, GDYNIA - DAY, FLASHBACK

Łukasz and Tata stand in front of the mirror. Łukasz wears suit trousers and the honey-roasted yellow shirt.

Tata helps him put on the dark moss green jacket.

TATA

Jak do Anglii, to tylko zgniła zielen. Nie żadna tam czern czy granat.

[Translated: "When it comes to England, only a rotten green. Not your black or navy."]

Łukasz looks a bit doubtful. Tata taps his shoulder reassuringly.

TATA (CONT'D)
 Sam zobaczysz, oni tam wszyscy
 właśnie tak noszą.

[Translated: "You will see, they all wear such uniform like that."]

Łukasz straightens up. Now both him and Tata look in the mirror. Tata smiles with satisfaction, nods.

TATA (CONT'D)
 No i cały Anglik.

[Translated: "Englishman it is entirety"]

EXT. COURTYARD, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Łukasz enters the courtyard. EVERYBODY wears a dark blue or a black suit.

Students begin noticing Łukasz's eccentric outfit, elbowing each other and laughing.

An OLDER STUDENT turns around, then freeze in shock.

OLDER STUDENT
 What the fuck?!

Łukasz, pale with terror, tries ignoring the attention.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
 Ja przecież teraz nie kupię nowego
 garnituru, ja nie mam żadnych
 pieniędzy!

[Translated: "How will I buy a new suit now, I have no money!"]

Timothy and Henry spot him. Timothy looks him up and down with delight.

TIMOTHY

First day of school and you're off
what - fox hunting? Or pigeon
shooting?

Henry bursts into laughter. Łukasz forces a smile.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

No to dzieki tato...

[Translated: "Well thanks, Dad"]

EXT. CHAPEL, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

He makes it just on time. As he approaches the staircase, a group of younger GIRLS (14-15) spot him. Their eyes widen with delight. They start elbowing each other, pointing to Łukasz.

He doesn't notice the attention, heading straight to the entrance. But the moment he enters the stairs, the Girls surround him, blocking his way.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Ale jak to... co sie dzieje...

[Translated: "But how come....what is happening..."]

The Girls start poking his muscles and pinching his ass.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

Ouch! No way... did you just...

THEMA

(off screen)

Ai!

The Girls turn around, surprised. THEMA OMACH-SHIDA -- 16, British-Kenyn, statuesque and formidable -- fends them off.

THEMA (CONT'D)

Off you go, you little perverts.

Łukasz, shocked and embarrassed, looks at Thema, his saviour.

She sizes him quickly, slightly raising her eyebrows.

THEMA (CONT'D)

Can't really blame them, can you?

She passes Łukasz without waiting for his response, leaving him speechless.

INT. CHAPEL, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE, MIDLANDS - NIGHT

First assembly of the year.

HEADMASTER DAVIS -- early 40s, kind-hearted and fatherly -- stands by the microphone, speaking to the students. But we do not hear his speech. We are again in the POV of Łukasz, who

tries to discreetly look around instead of listening.

We see Timothy and Henry in the first row, listening attentively to the Headmaster Davis. Not far from them is Chloe, shamelessly dozing off. Wei sits on the opposite side of the chapel, again surrounded strictly by other Asian students.

As our eyes keep wandering, suddenly we face the eyes of the Girls we just met outside.

They are staring straight at us, amused. The moment our eyes meet, one of them sticks her tongue out, imitating kissing.

Łukasz rapidly turns away.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Jesus! Co sie dzieje?! What is wrong with you?!

[Translated: Jesus! What is happening? What is wrong with you!"]

(pauses)

Or with me?

Łukasz looks back at Girls, but this time smiles meekly.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)

The local culture grows on me by the minute... Maybe I should embrace it? If you cannot fight them, join them. Although my experience with girls equals a pretty big round sum of zero.

INT. HEADMASTER OFFICE, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Łukasz sits across from Headmaster Davis.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
Lukash... is that how I pronounce
your name?

Łukasz hesitates.

ŁUKASZ
(unconvinced)
It's close...

Headmaster Davis smiles with amusement.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
Good. I'll try improving my
pronunciation.
(pauses)
See, you and I have something in
common. Do you know what it is?

ŁUKASZ
No, sir.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
We're both new here. And do you
know what that means?

Łukasz remains silent, unsure whether he's expected to
answer. Headmaster leans forward, continues.

HEADMASTER DAVIS (CONT'D)
It means that our stay here is
conditional. We still need to prove
that you belong here, that the
decision to have us here, at
Hawkwood, was the right one. To
prove our worth. Do you understand?

ŁUKASZ
I think I do, sir.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
Very well.
(pauses)
There's something else to keep in
mind.

ŁUKASZ
Sir?

HEADMASTER DAVIS
In my previous school we were
fortunate enough to host a number
of exceptional Polish students.
(MORE)

HEADMASTER DAVIS (CONT'D)

But here, at Hawkwood, you're the first. They're not used to having scholarship students from abroad either, and I admit the board was initially a little sceptical.

(pauses)

That is why you need to be an example.

ŁUKASZ

I'll try my best, sir.

HEADMASTER DAVIS

I know you will. And remember - if you do well and show that you deserve the chance you were given, you might open the door for other young men as well. Who knows, maybe in future more students from Poland can be awarded such a life changing opportunity. Their future, in a way, is now in your hands.

INT. CLASSROOM, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

English literature, end of the class. MR PATEL -- melancholic and intellectual -- leans against his desk, reading Emily Dickinson.

MR PATEL

I'm Nobody! Who are you? Are you -
Nobody - too? Then there's a pair
of us! Don't tell! they'd advertise
- you know!
How dreary - to be - Somebody! How
public - like a Frog - To tell
one's name - the livelong June To
an admiring Bog!

Mr Patel closes the book and looks up. His eyes meet the eyes of Łukasz, who listens to him, mesmerised. Mr Patel smiles.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)

And now, your assignment.

He stands up and writes on the blackboard: 'What is poetry if it doesn't save nations or people?'

He turns back to the class.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)

Anyone can tell me which of the great poets wrote that?

Silence. Timothy turns around to Łukasz.

TIMOTHY
(mockingly)
Lucas? Could it be that Polish hero
of yours? What was his name again?
Mee...

MR PATEL
(startled)
Miłosz. Very well Timothy! I am
genuinely impressed.

Mr Patel writes on the blackboard below the quote.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)
(perfect pronunciation)
Czesław Miłosz.

Mr Patel underlines the name, turns around.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)
If you struggle to pronounce his
name, ask our new Polish student,
Łukasz.

Mr Patel nods at Łukasz, who flusters a little. But his face
beams with pride.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)
Miłosz, who won the 1980 Nobel
Prize in Literature, was one of the
most prominent poets of the 20th
century.

Mr Patel points to the blackboard.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)
I want you to write, in your own
words, a response to Miłosz's
question: 'What is poetry if it
doesn't save nations or people?' 3-
4 pages, standard font.

Łukasz suddenly turns pale. Mr Patel notices, smiles at him
encouragingly.

MR PATEL (CONT'D)
Write from your heart, what you
really think.
(pauses)
All right then, I look forward to
reading your essays!

The class ends. Łukasz leans forward, approaching Timothy and Henry sitting right in front of him.

ŁUKASZ

He said standard font... Does it have to be printed? Or can it be handwritten?

TIMOTHY

I'm sure it can... in the kingdom of Poland.

HENRY

And Lithuania!

They sneer and get up, shaking their head with disbelief.

Łukasz remains seated, unsure what to do. ALI ALIEV (16) -- Georgian, strong and serious -- approaches Łukasz.

ALI

There's a computer room in the main building. It's not ideal, but it should be quiet. And empty. I don't think there are any students who arrive at Hawkwood without a computer.

(pauses)

Except you.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, HAWKWOOD - DAY

Łukasz is strolling around the countryside. Opposite him appear two SCHOOLGIRLS (13) in their uniforms, coming back from school.

They SING out loud FILL ME IN by Craig Davis.

SCHOOLGIRLS

"Why were you creeping 'round late last night? Why did I see two shadows moving in your bedroom light? Now you're dressed in black When I left, you were dressed in white Can you fill me in?" (Can you fill me in?)"

The Schoolgirls see Łukasz and stumble, covering their mouth in shock.

Łukasz flusters, looks down. He tries to ignore them and just keeps walking.

The Schoolgirls suddenly run up to him.

SCHOOLGIRLS (CONT'D)
(singing)
"Can you fill me in? (Can you fill
me in?)"

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Zaraz... ale co sie dzieje?!

[Translated: "Wait a sec....but what is happening?"]

The Schoolgirls lift up his shirt.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS (CONT'D)
No way!

SCHOOLGIRL ONE
You fucking kidding me!

SCHOOLGIRL TWO
I told you!!

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
No i co ja mam teraz...

[Translated: "So what I supposed to..."]

THEMA
(off screen)
Ey, leave the guy alone!

The Schoolgirls freeze, look up at Thema. She approaches from behind, a professional camera hanging on her shoulder.

THEMA (CONT'D)
You heard me!

The Schoolgirls hesitate, then sigh with annoyance.

Reluctantly, they walk away. Thema approaches Łukasz.

THEMA (CONT'D)
You need a strategy - I won't be
always around, huh?

She checks him out quickly.

THEMA (CONT'D)
But really, you shouldn't be upset
with them...
(MORE)

THEMA (CONT'D)

The girls here grow up so much faster than the boys, who are still babies at our age. Then you show up, looking like a teen girl fantasy.

She hesitates, then suddenly points her camera at him and takes a picture.

Łukasz blushes rapidly. Thema shrugs it off.

THEMA (CONT'D)

Don't stress, huh? I'm not into boys. At least for now.

Łukasz nods, as if he knew exactly what she's talking about.

ŁUKASZ

Into girls then? That makes us two.

She shakes her head, points to her camera.

THEMA

I found romance interferes with my art. And that's something I try to focus for now. I channel all this burgeoning sexual energy into my work.

Łukasz nods his head earnestly.

ŁUKASZ

Right. Cool!

Thema smiles, pleased. She stretches out her hand.

THEMA

Thema.

Łukasz shakes her hand.

ŁUKASZ

Łukasz.

THEMA

(perfect pronunciation)
Woo-kash. Got it.

ŁUKASZ

So you want to be a photographer?

THEMA

I **am** a photographer.

ŁUKASZ
Sure. Sorry!

THEMA
And a sculptor.

ŁUKASZ
(super impressed)
Wow! That's amazing! Do you sculpt people?

THEMA
Nah. Just their genitals.

Łukasz looks terrified. Thema laughs.

THEMA (CONT'D)
Female genitals, to be exact.
They've been grossly
underrepresented across the
centuries. It's my contribution to
help evening it out.

EXT. RED LION, HAWKWOOD VILLAGE - DAY

The main street in the village. Łukasz passes by a local pub, The Red Lion. He notices an ad posted by the door - 'Bar Stuff Wanted'.

MALE VOICE
(off screen)
Y'aright cock?

Łukasz turns around. DAVID (30s) -- groomed and charming -- stands on the side, looking at Łukasz with with sparking eyes.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Why in the world would I be called
a cock again?!

David looks him up and down.

DAVID
(reading his mind)
You ain't from here, huh?

Łukasz shakes his head.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Cock means 'mate'.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Alright... cock!

David pods to the job ad.

DAVID

Looking for work?

ŁUKASZ

Ah, no, sorry. I was just passing by.

DAVID

Where are you from?

ŁUKASZ

Poland.

DAVID

Okay.... Well, if you *were* looking for work, the job is yours.

David pauses, looking at Łukasz intently. David leans forward.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Best part? I'd be your gaffer.

Łukasz blushes rapidly, David laughs.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That means 'boss'. I'd be your boss if you took the job.

David winks at him. Łukasz tries to smile, embarrassed.

ŁUKASZ

Alright!

DAVID

Safe!

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Okay, I knew I'd have to step up my language game here... But this thing is on a whole different level...

DAVID

So? What do you say? Taking the job?

ŁUKASZ

Thank you very much. But I'm here to study, not to work.

DAVID

So where about do you study?

ŁUKASZ

Hawkwood College.

David goes pale, looks Łukasz up and down in sudden panic.

OWNER

How old are you?!

ŁUKASZ

16.

OWNER

16?! Mate, you could easily get someone in trouble... you look at least five years older.

(pauses)

Hawkwood, huh? That must've cost your family a fortune.

ŁUKASZ

I'm on a scholarship.

DAVID

Right. Well, if you ever need any extra money...

(pauses, thinking)

You need to be 18 to work here. But I think we could make an exception, if you wanted a gig on the weekend.

ŁUKASZ

Thank you, but I'm fine, really.

DAVID

Student life can get expensive.

ŁUKASZ

I didn't come here to work in a pub.

(flusters)

I'm sorry, that's not what I meant!

David laughs it off.

DAVID

That's alright. Life has a tendency to work a bit differently from our plans... So if anything changes, you know where to find us.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - NIGHT

Łukasz sits alone in the computer room. His cheeks are burning, his eyes glow. He types quickly, very inspired.

The SCHOOL GUARD enters the computer room.

SCHOOL GUARD

We're closing in 5 minutes.

Łukasz freezes, startled. He looks at the School Guard in shock.

ŁUKASZ

Five minutes?!

The School Guard checks his watch.

SCHOOL GUARD

Four, to be exact.

Łukasz turns back to the computer, sheer panic in his face.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Dobra, spokojnie. Jedziesz.

[Translated: "Ok, keep clam. Go for it."]

He takes a deep breath in, then begins typing as fast as he can.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Dokładnie tak, super! Mamy to. Just keep going...

[Translated: "Exactly that, super! We have got it. Just keep going..."]

SCHOOL GUARD
We are closing now.

This time Łukasz doesn't react, but continues typing even faster.

The School Guard switches off the lights.

SCHOOL GUARD (CONT'D)
I'm locking the door in 3 minutes.
With or without you inside. Your
choice.

Łukasz rapidly halts. He looks at the screen, hesitates. With a heavy heart, he deletes the last, unfinished paragraph.

INT. DORMS, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - NIGHT

Łukasz sits alone in the common area. On his lap is the printed assignment, in his face an utter heartbreak.

Wei walks into room, sees Łukasz. He quickly looks him up and down, hesitates. He then takes a chair and sits down next to him.

WEI
Have you called your parents yet?

Łukasz shakes his head, while continuing to stare blankly in space.

WEI (CONT'D)
I think it's time you called home.

ŁUKASZ
I don't have a card. I have not
figure out how to use the pay phone
for the long distance calls. It is
impossible, isn't it?

WEI
International calling cards are
available in local stores, post
offices and gas stations. They cost
ten pounds and let you call
countries outside the EU for about
an hour.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Ten pounds I didn't have.

WEI
So? Will you now buy one?

ŁUKASZ

I don't have money.

WEI

Just use your credit card.

ŁUKASZ

I don't have a credit card.

WEI

Then email your parents to wire you some cash.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

Wire?! Dobrze!

[Translated: "Wire?! Too funny!"]

ŁUKASZ

I don't have a bank account.

Now Wei pauses, speechless. He stares at Łukasz as if he was an alien. After a moment --

WEI

But this is a school for people with money...

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

It feels like I have been already called to the bottom draw of the society for my lack of entrepreneurial spirit and sheer stinginess...

WEI

So what will you do?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS

The ancient civilisation survived without phones, or emails... Perhaps I will improvise...I might not be as honest next time... it is exhausting!

He suddenly collects himself, forces a smile.

ŁUKASZ

I'll be fine!

INT. CLASSROOM, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

English literature, end of the class. Mr Patel is handing back the marked assignments.

MR PATEL

Łukasz? Really interesting. Just for the next time, try adding conclusion.

Łukasz nods, takes the paper.

ŁUKASZ

I will. I'm sorry.

MR PATEL

I'm sorry I had to mark it down.

Łukasz looks at the paper, sees B-.

ALI

(off screen)

That's not too bad.

Łukasz looks up. Ali stands next to him, looking over his shoulder. Łukasz angrily turns the paper upside down.

ŁUKASZ

'Not too bad' is not good enough.

Ali puts down a retro USB flash drive on the table.

ALI

You know what that is?

Łukasz shakes his head.

ALI (CONT'D)

It's the "ThumbDrive".

ŁUKASZ

(clueless)

Okay...

ALI

Like the newest USB. It's all the rage now. Just came out. My father got me a few of these.

Łukasz examines the USB, fascinated.

ALI (CONT'D)

Next time you're working late, just save it here.

(MORE)

ALI (CONT'D)
Then you can use my computer, if
all you need is a conclusion.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

The casting for the school basketball team. Łukasz stands on the side, waiting for his turn.

COACH ROBERTS
Lukash? All yours!

Coach Roberts passes Łukasz the ball.

COACH ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Show us what you've got!

Łukasz effortlessly kills all the tasks. He's not just the best, he plays at a whole different level.

Chloe, Timothy and Henry sit on the side, watching. Chloe springs to her feet CHEERING Łukasz. Timothy glares at her, quietly fuming.

COACH ROBERTS (CONT'D)
And here I was, thinking you'll be
supporting our rugby team!

INT. CHANGING ROOMS, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Łukasz finishes dressing up. The door opens, Timothy and Henry walk in.

The SOUND of CLAPPING, loud and theatrical.

TIMOTHY
And here is our champion.

HENRY
(genuinely impressed)
You were really quite good out
there, weren't you?

Timothy glares at Henry..

TIMOTHY
Quite good indeed.

ŁUKASZ
Thanks! I love basketball with all
my heart... so I guess that's just
sort of shows?

Timothy forces himself not to roll his eyes and smile instead.

TIMOTHY

That's very interesting.

(pauses)

Now, we've come here with an invitation. Since you're such an outstanding athlete, we thought you might consider joining our horse ridding club?

ŁUKASZ

Horse riding? I've never done it...

HENRY

It's super easy, especially for someone who's already so fit!

ŁUKASZ

Okay, I guess... Sure, let me try it! Why not?

INT. HEADMASTER OFFICE, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Headmaster Davis stands by the window, watching Łukasz come back from a horse ride. He is in the group of the other English students: Chloe, Timothy and Henry.

EXT. COURTYARD, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

Łukasz, Chloe, Henry and Timothy walk together, all wearing their ridding apparel.

CHLOE

And? What do you think?

Łukasz's face beams with joy.

ŁUKASZ

Loved it!

HENRY

More than basketball?

ŁUKASZ

Ah, no, you can't ask me that! That's not a fair question.

They all laugh. Suddenly Timothy looks up, sees Headmaster Davis in the window of his office.

Timothy smirks with satisfaction, turns to the group.

TIMOTHY
Excellent! Then shall we do it
again soon?

ŁUKASZ
Count me in!

INT. HEADMASTER OFFICE, HAWKWOOD COLLEGE - DAY

A stack of papers, outlining student activities at Hawkwood College. Next to each of them is a price.

Łukasz stares at the papers, unsure what to look for.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
You're a smart young man, Lucash.
And you're great at mathematics.
That's why I thought to talk to
you, rather than your parents.

Lukasz goes pale.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
I dzieki Bogu... Tylko o co chodzi?
What have I done?

[Translated: Thanks God...But what is happening? What have I done?]

Headmaster Davis points to the papers.

HEADMASTER DAVIS
In front of you is a complete list
of student expenses at Hawkwood
College. I highlighted the ones
that your scholarship covers.

Łukasz looks again at the papers. The highlighted lines are sparse, making only about 10% of the list.

HEADMASTER DAVIS (CONT'D)
Can you find horse ridding there?

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
Wiec o to chodzi...

[Translated: "So what is happening?"]

ŁUKASZ
No, I don't think so...

HEADMASTER DAVIS
No. You're right - it isn't there.
(pauses)
I'll be quite direct here, as I
think it's in your best interest.

Headmaster Davis points to the list.

HEADMASTER DAVIS (CONT'D)
Everything that the school has on
the offer, is available to you.
Everything. Horse riding, private
tennis lessons, Chinese language
course. You are welcome to try
anything you fancy.

Łukasz tries following Headmaster Davis, but he seems utterly
confused.

HEADMASTER DAVIS (CONT'D)
But that's just in principle. In
practise, your scholarship only
covers the basics - room and board,
school tuition. Everything else you
would like to take up while at
Hawkwood, would be added as extra
costs and billed to your parents
when the term ends.

ŁUKASZ'S THOUGHTS
In 20 years we'd call a Ryanair
deal. For now, I just think that
life's utterly unfair.

Łukasz grows completely pale, finally understanding why he is
here.

ŁUKASZ
I... I didn't know. I'm so sorry.
It's just that my parents... they
can't afford it.

Headmaster Davis nods.

HEADMASTER DAVIS

That is what I suspected. And so just this one time, I decided to turn a blind eye. To make an exception.

(pauses)

I am willing to cover the horse riding lessons you took until now from my own pocket. You should've been informed earlier about the practicalities of your stay at Hawkwood.

Łukasz, ashamed, blushes.

ŁUKASZ

(quietly)

Thank you. And I'm truly sorry. That will never happen again.

HEADMASTER DAVIS

I believe you. And I am confident you will find a way to make the most of your stay here.

INT. THE RED LION, HAWKWOOD - NIGHT

Friday night. Łukasz stands behind the bar. Two local, BOB and JOE sit in front of him, waiting for their pints.

As Łukasz pours their beer, he can't help but to hear their conversation.

BOB

They now come here in hundreds!

JOE

Hundreds?! Thousands!

BOB

Have you seen these buses in which they travel? For 20, 30 hours?

JOE

Can't imagine anyone willing submitting himself to it.

Łukasz turns around, hands the men the pints. He's completely red in his face, but the men don't notice it.

BOB

(to Łukasz)

Cheers, gaffer!

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
(to Joe)
They just have no standards.

BOB (CONT'D)
That's exactly right.

The clink their glasses, take a big sip of their beer. For a moment they drink in silence.

JOE
You know which ones are the worst?

ŁUKASZ
Poles?

They turn to Łukasz, surprised. Then they crack in laughter.

JOE
That's my boy! Exactly!

BOB
Bloody Poles, coming here and
stealing our jobs!