

The Peacock

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By revenge, a chaotic world empties its pains on you.

" THE PEACOCK "

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INT. PRISON -- NIGHT

It is a small and dark prison cell where a young woman named Zahra is sleeping in with a scarf on. One can hear a door open. Zahra awakes and sits up. She is scared. An officer with a full bushy beard and in an army suit enters. Zahra and the officer talk in Persian.

OFFICER

Blindfold.

ZAHRA

This time of night?

As she puts a blindfold on

ZAHRA (CONT'D)

What do you want this time of night?

OFFICER (with a serious tone of voice)

Blindfold!?

In the dim lights of the prison cell the officer comes in and closes the door. He takes out a set of cuffs and as Zahra is putting on her veil,

OFFICER (CONT'D)

There is no need for a veil. Hands.

Zahra brings forth her hands. The officer turns her and puts the cuffs on her from the back. Zahra is scared and suddenly screams,

ZAHRA

What are you doing? What do you want?

The officer tries to put a tape on her mouth from the back,

OFFICER

Will you shut up or should I shut you up?

Zahra is struggling with the officer

ZAHRA

Is it time for me to die?

The officer has put on the tape. He takes a breath. Zahra spins. As she struggles her head hits the wall. She rubs her blindfold on the wall so that some of it is removed.

The officer moves towards her to fix her blindfold, Zahra does not want it and sees part of his neck, which has a tattooed heart, as she struggles. The officer fixes the blindfold on her eyes angrily and bangs her head on the wall. Zahra becomes weary and somewhat unconscious. The officer says something to her ears. She suddenly moves towards the wall and bangs her head on the wall. She keeps on repeating this as if she wants to kill herself or make herself unconscious. The officer grabs her and throws her on the floor. In the dim lights of the prison nothing specific can be seen. The officer sits down and undoes his belt. Zahra struggles to get away. The officer grabs her from the back. Zahra is defenseless. As the cameras rest on the prison walls we hear Sara's voice,

SARA (V.O.)
Someone open the door...

INT. A DARK-ROOM -- DAY

From the walls of a dark room the cameras finally reach Sara, who is sitting and screams as she cries.

SARA
Someone open the door. (Crying...) My
brother is dying. Someone help.

She hopelessly hits the walls and the door. She is discouraged, and falls on the floor. As the camera passes her, we hear Jean's voice who is speaking in French.

JEAN (V.O.)
How long?

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

The camera passes Jean's hands till we reach her, who is lying down on a hospital bed. She is an attractive, 25 years old female. She has brown hair and her face seems worried. The doctor sitting in front of her looks over the folders he has in his hands. They both speak in French.

DOCTOR
One year.

JEAN (V.O.)
Why do I have to die so young and
this doctor live seventy years?

JEAN (CONT'D)
So why so much medication?

DOCTOR
So you won't feel pain. If you don't
take the medication you won't even
last a year.

JEAN (V.O.)
 What's the difference? One year or
 six months? (Crying...) I don't
 want to die

She turns her head to the right.

JEAN (CONT'D)
 I don't want to die.

As the camera turns we hear Sheila's voice who is speaking
 in Hindu.

SHEILA (V.O.)
 If you do this, I will kill myself.

INT. PUBLIC AREA -- DAY

As the camera rolls off a painting on the wall it reaches
 Sheila who is talking with her mother in Hindu.

SHEILA
 Mother, Please throw these backwards
 ideas out.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 What are you talking about honey?
 Everybody has their own traditions.
 You have your own traditions. And I
 have my own life.

SHEILA
 Mother all our lives are a chain.
 Not just you and me. All the people
 in the world are connected to each
 other.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 I don't understand what you are
 saying. We have our own traditions.
 What do I have to do with the rest
 of the world? Instead of all these
 talks, pray that your father stays
 alive.

MACHINE (V.O.)
 (English) You have one minute
 remaining.

SHEILA
 Mother, I don't have any more than a
 minute to talk to you. I'm just
 going to say that if you want your
 daughter to kill herself, you can
 burn yourself.

The phone is disconnected. Sheila puts down the phone and sits on the floor. She is upset.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Someone help me!

As the camera backs out, people are passing by and Sheila seems smaller. We hear Zahra's cries from the prison.

ZAHRA (V.O.)
Someone help me...!

INT. PRISON -- NIGHT

We see Zahra's face with the blindfold on, she is crying and there is blood on the corner of her lips. She shakes her head and the officer who has raped her, puts back on his belt.

ZAHRA
Someone help me...!

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Zahra is a beautiful 38 years old woman who is lying down on the hospital bed with a shaved head and shakes her head

ZAHRA
Someone help me...!

Ziba, her daughter, is 21-22 years old, with black hair and an innocent face, sitting on a chair next to her. She anxiously goes towards her mother to wake her up. They both speak in Persian.

ZIBA
Mom...Mom...Wake up...

Zahra opens her eyes, looks around and sees her daughter. She hugs her.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Did you have a nightmare again?

ZAHRA
My past has become a nightmare.
It's always in my mind's eye. I
don't know when it is going to be
over.

ZIBA
Prison?!

ZAHRA
Yes. Prison and some other things.

Ziba looks outside

ZIBA

Mom it's almost morning. Do you want something to eat?

ZAHRA

Not yet. Thanks Ziba honey.

ZIBA

You have never said what it was and what happened that still bothers you.

ZAHRA

It's better not to know some things honey.

ZIBA

But as long as I can remember you keep on waking up. You never say what it was.

The mother coughs. Another cough. Ziba pours her a glass of water. The mother drinks.

ZAHRA

Look Ziba darling. You know I'm not going to be alive for very long. Today, tomorrow...I don't know. I'm worried about you.

ZIBA

Don't start this again. You are more up beat than me.

ZAHRA

I know it my self.

ZIBA

Mom...?

ZAHRA

What?

ZIBA

I don't want you to get upset but I am different than you. I mean...I don't think like you.

At first the mother looks at her in surprise, but then she smiles.

ZAHRA

I felt it earlier than this. But I didn't want to accept it. Well...you have grown up here, so you wouldn't think like me. You do believe in god?!

She coughs.

ZIBA
Don't say anything mom. Rest.

ZAHRA
I can still hear his voice in my ears, "Will you shut up or should I shut you up?" He banged my head on the wall so I lose consciousness.

Ziba is sobbing.

ZIBA
I don't understand. Why!?!

ZAHRA
He didn't want me to go to heaven. They did right. They made a living hell out of my life.

Zahra coughs. Ziba hugs her.

ZIBA
Mom that's enough. It's all over now.

ZAHRA
You are right, it's all done... wish I had died right there...they killed so many, they should have killed me on top of that.

Ziba pats her.

ZAHRA (CONT'D)
I wanted to kill myself...(crying) I found out I'm pregnant in the prison. But I didn't let them find out until I ran away when on leave of absence.

Suddenly Ziba let go of her mother. Ziba is not looking at her.

ZAHRA (with tears in her voice) (CONT'D)
Forgive me.

ZIBA
What are you saying mom... (She hugs her) it wasn't your fault...you are my everything mom.

ZAHRA
You are my everything too...

Zahra coughs one after another. She shakes her hand.

ZIBA
 Mom...? Are you alright?!

Ziba rings the bell above the bed. She puts on her scarf and goes out of the room. Zahra is still coughing. A male and a female nurse come in. They both speak in French.

FEMALE NURSE
 You can wait outside, please.

Worried, Ziba goes out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Ziba comes out of the room and sits down on a chair.

ZIBA (V.O.)
 She didn't kill herself for my sake
 and was tormented for years.

She takes out a small notebook out of her purse and writes

ZIBA (CONT'D)
 Love is generosity even when you
 know you will not get back an answer.

FADE OUT

INT. SARA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sara, her father, and the rest of her family are in the hallway. The doctor comes out of the room. Everyone gets up.

DOCTOR
 He needs blood

FATHER
 That's impossible.

SARA
 Perhaps I...

FATHER
 Shut up.

Sara's father points to the two guys standing close by. They grab Sara, she kicks and pounces in the air and starts screaming.

SARA
 You murderers...I want my brother.

FATHER
 Thank you doctor. We'll take it
 from here.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Ziba, sad and upset, is standing beside her friend Maryam, above her mom's tomb.

MARYAM

Let's go?

Ziba moves.

ZIBA

I'm glad I told her I don't think like her. If I hadn't I would have felt guilty later.

MARYAM

She was very courageous (defiant). Prison, then here by herself, all alone...

ZIBA

I never understood, she was a Muslim like them.

MARYAM

Sometimes religion becomes an excuse for preserving power.

ZIBA

I can't stay in that house anymore. I'm looking for a cheap room.

MARYAM

Do you want to stay with us in Toronto?

ZIBA

No thanks. This is my last year in university. Besides, I wouldn't change Montreal with anywhere else.

They stand still. Maryam is looking at Ziba.

MARYAM

Don't think about it anymore, Okay...? Deep breaths...6 times

Ziba takes 6 deep breaths. Maryam hugs her.

ZIBA

Come visit sometimes.

MARYAM

For sure. You too.
(MORE)

MARYAM (CONT'D)

Come visit if you have the time (with a smile) I know you won't change Montreal for anywhere else, but you can let go for one or two weeks.

ZIBA

Sure...if I have the time I will come for sure.

EXT. A BIG SQUARE -- DAY

A 65 years old woman is lying down, on some firewood, beside her dead husband. The camera backs out and the flames start to take over around her.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY SQUARE -- DAY

A ditch is being emptied out with some shovels. A woman is put in the ditch. She is enclosed with the dirt (soil) such that she can't get out. With an "Allah Akbar" a stone hits her shoulder and scratches her. Another stone is thrown and hits her head. The camera passes and then there is the rush of stones towards the woman and shouts of "Allah Akbar" in the air.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- DAY

- Jean's hands put a room-for-rent ad up on the bulletin board.
- Jean's hands put up another ad on another board.
- Another ad and another board.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- DAY

- A school bag is thrown on the sofa.
- Jean's hands open the fridge door.
- An ice cube falls into a glass and some whisky is poured into the glass.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jean comes in and closes the door. She throws her school bag into a corner. She enters the kitchen and pours some whisky and puts some ice into a glass. She enters the living room as she drinks her whisky. She looks around. She is weary (sluggish). The phone rings. She picks it up.

JEAN

Hello...yes...A big 4 bedroom house with a big kitchen.

(MORE)

JEAN (CONT'D)

Electricity, phone, internet, and heat will be shared...address? Yes, write it down please?!

EXT. STREETS -- DAY

As she holds an address in her hands, Ziba looks at the apartment numbers as she reaches Jean's house. She rings the bell. Jean opens the door.

JEAN

Yes. You've come for a room?

ZIBA

Yes. I'm Ziba.

JEAN

Come in.

They both enter.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jean shows the house to Ziba. Ziba is a bit worried. She looks at the pictures on the wall with curiosity. They are pictures of Jean's theatrical work.

ZIBA

You are a theater performer?

JEAN

Oh...Yes. Actually I study too. And you?

ZIBA

I'm studying painting. I also work part time at a photography studio.

JEAN

Good. We are both somewhat artsy.

JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Should I tell her the truth? Does she have to know? So she can pity me? Or get scared and won't become my roommate? What is she thinking about? She shouldn't be as tied-up as me?! And she is more beautiful than me too. She probably has hundreds of boyfriends like Jennifer. Why did I have to be born ugly? And have so many beautiful girls surround me?!

ZIBA

Which of the rooms is for rent?!

Jean isn't paying attention. She is talking to herself.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Excuse me, but are you alright?

JEAN
Oh, sorry...yes. What did you say?

ZIBA
Which room is available?

Jean shows her the rooms and other parts of the house.

JEAN
It has four rooms. This is my room
... These three rooms are empty.
You are the first person, so you can
chose whichever you want. This is
the bathroom. This is the kitchen.
And this here is the living room.

Ziba looks at everything carefully. She sits down on the
sofa. She is worried.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

ZIBA
A glass of water please.

Jean goes to the kitchen and brings a glass of water.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Sorry. I keep on seeing images of
my mother. She passed away some
time ago.

JEAN
Oh... I'm sorry.

ZIBA
Thanks. She was sick. It's a long
story.

JEAN
Can I ask you where are you from?

ZIBA
I was born in Iran, but I was raised
here.

JEAN
Are you a Muslim?

ZIBA
Almost yes. What about you? You
should be from around here?

JEAN

My mother is Quebecois and my dad an American. I know myself as a Quebecois. Please write down your information in this notebook, and I will be in contact with you.

Ziba takes the notebook and starts writing.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- LATER

- Jean opens the door and a girl with a punk hairdo enters.
- Jean shows the house to a girl who has come with her dog.
- Jean shows the house to a girl who has come with her boyfriend.

Jean is tired and sits down on the sofa. She picks up the phone and calls her mother. She speaks in French... As she is speaking we sometimes see some of the pictures of the plays she has been in.

JEAN

Hi mom...I'm good. Not bad. I'm looking for roommates...don't worry. I'm careful. Is daddy alright? ...how is New York weather? ...Yes, I told you before I'm coming to visit you in a month...Peter? Nothing.He found out I am sick and left me...I don't know. It's up to him... (She holds the receiver at a distance and brings it close again) Are you done crying?! ... What do you want me to do? You tell me what should I do? What? Cuba? I don't know. I will ask my doctor. I'm sure if there was a cure he would let me know...Anyways, I called to see how you are. I will come visit you next month...Mom, someone is knocking on the door, and I have to go...Say hi to father. Goodbye.

Jean goes towards the door and opens it. Sheila is standing in front of the door.

SHEILA

Hi, I'm Sheila. I called to come see the house.

JEAN

Yes. Come in.

Sheila enters. Jean picks up her glass of whisky and shows the house to her.

JEAN (CONT'D)

This is the kitchen...these are the rooms. Someone picked this room before. So, these two are left. This one is bigger than the other so it's a bit pricier.

Sheila takes a closer look.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Are you a student?

SHEILA

Yes. I'm studying medicine. It's been 10 years since I came here. From India.

JEAN

Yeah, I thought so too from the beauty mark on your forehead.

SHEILA

Ok. So if I want the smaller room, when can I come?

Jean goes towards her notebook, but then she suddenly stops. She holds her head with her hands. The whisky glass falls out of her hand and hits the floor. Sheila goes towards her. She moves her, opens her eyes and then starts mouth-to-mouth breathing on her. She strikes her ears couple of times. She takes out her cell phone and calls a number.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Hello. An ambulance please.

INT. BENYAMIN'S HOUSE IN ISRAEL -- MORNING

Benyamin is a 26-27 years old man who is wearing a kippah. He is packing a suitcase. His sister enters the room. She is a happy and healthy 20 years old girl.

BENYAMIN'S SISTER

I wish you stayed longer. I'm going to miss you.

BENYAMIN

Thanks. When your paper work is done, you are going to come over there yourself.

BENYAMIN'S SISTER

I'm late for class. I will see you tonight?

BENYAMIN

Okay, go to your class. Yea I will see you tonight.

They hug each other.

EXT. STREET -- MORNING

Benyamin's sister sees the bus leaving. She runs towards it but she doesn't make it. She waits for the next bus.

INT. BUS -- MORNING

Benyamin's sister is reading her class notes as a young man sits beside her.

EXT. STREET -- MORNING

The camera is showing the bus from the above. After some time, the bus is exploded with a loud blast.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

A CLOSE UP OF A NEEDLE BEING FILLED WITH BLOOD.

A CLOSE UP OF JEAN'S TOES

A CLOSE UP OF A BRANCARD'S WHEELS THAT IS BEING SPED THROUGH

A CLOSE UP OF JEAN'S FACE WITH CLOSED EYES

A CLOSE UP OF JEAN'S HANDS

A CLOSE UP OF A LIGHT THAT IS BEING TURNED OFF

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Jean slowly opens her eyes and looks around. Sheila is sitting close by. She moves towards Jean.

SHEILA

Hey, How are you?...

Jean looks at her in surprise.

JEAN (V.O.)

Why is she helping me? She doesn't know me!! Does she have to know me to help me? She has probably found out that I'm dying within a year...and that's why she keeps on smiling.

The doctor comes in. He speaks in English.

DOCTOR

You were lucky your friend is studying medicine and knew what to do. You can leave in an hour... (He looks at the papers) You know you shouldn't drink anything alcoholic?

JEAN

What's the difference doctor? One year or six months?

DOCTOR

How about I kill myself with a bullet right now and say what's the difference twenty years or two or now?

JEAN

But when you know, it's different.

DOCTOR

It's a river that its end will appear sooner or later. Do you have a number from your doctor?

JEAN

I don't remember his number but it's doctor Tremblay, from the General Hospital.

DOCTOR

Okay, I will contact him myself.
(To Sheila) Please come to my office.

The doctor goes out and Sheila picks up her stuff.

SHEILA

I will be back.

She goes out of the room. Jean looks at the window.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sheila and the doctor are in his office. The doctor is talking on the phone.

DOCTOR

Yes...Alright. Thanks. Goodbye.

He puts down the phone and shakes his head.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

She wants to get rid of herself as soon as possible. She should not drink anything alcoholic. You are her friend, don't let her do that.

SHEILA

Actually, I'm not her friend. I had gone to see her house and this happened.

The doctor looks at her in surprise.

DOCTOR

Okay. If you want to be her roommate, it's better if you know now. She has one year left. She has advanced AIDS. Her medications cause melancholia and depression. Somebody has to be around her at all times.

INT. COFFEE-SHOP -- DAY

Jean and Sheila are sitting at a table. Jean isn't paying much attention and is thinking.

JEAN

25 years is enough, no? No more drinking. Take my medication regularly so I can live one more year.

SHEILA

Look, in India they bury someone, and when they take them out after 2 days, they are still alive. People are stronger than what we see.

Jean lays her head on the table.

JEAN

So what ?

SHEILA

If you can live in the moment everything is possible. Try to erase the past and the future completely and becoming the moment you are in.

JEAN

What does this have to do with what you were saying?

SHEILA

Nothing. I'm just saying so you know that human has powers that you might not even be aware of.

JEAN

But immortality is impossible, isn't it? You can't not die? Can you?

SHEILA

What does that have anything to do with this? I'm just saying as long as you are, just be.

JEAN

Can we go home!?

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jean and Sheila enter. Jean lies down on the sofa.

JEAN

You still want to be my roommate
even with the sickness that I have?

SHEILA

Why not?

JEAN

I made a mistake not telling anyone
about my health. I should have told
them.

SHEILA

Nobody has come in yet. You can
still tell them.

JEAN

You can bring in your belongings
whenever you want.

Jean closes her eyes and falls sleep. Sheila sits further
away and looks at her.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Ziba and Maryam are standing beside a car and are saying
their good-byes. Maryam brings out a box out of her car.
They are talking in Persian.

MARYAM

Here is an insignificant gift.

ZIBA

You didn't have to. Thanks.

She kisses her.

MARYAM

You are going to the house you talked
about? Be careful.

ZIBA

Don't worry. I read about AIDS.
There is no threat.

MARYAM

Okay, I should get going.

Maryam gets into the car.

ZIBA

Say hi to Farid.

MARYAM

For sure. If you ever get tired of
your darling Montreal, come visit us
(she laughs).

Ziba laughs and waves her hand. Maryam Leaves. She opens
the box it's a cell phone.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

- There are boxes around the house. Sheila is taking a box
to her room and Ziba is taking another box to her own room.
Ziba has a lot of canvases and drawing tools that she also
to take to her room. Sheila takes her other things to her
room.

- Jean is cleaning the living room.

- Sheila and Ziba have taken all their belongings into their
rooms

- All three of them are sitting down and drinking coffee

The house bell rings. Jean gets up and goes towards the
door. She opens the door. Sara and Benyamin are behind the
door. Sara is 23 years old and has long black hair. Benyamin
is 27 years old and is wearing his kippah. Both of them are
standing with their musical instruments in their bags and
smiling. They speak in English.

JEAN

You must be Sara.

SARA

Yes. I was supposed to ...

JEAN

Yes. Room. Come in.

They both enter the house. Ziba puts on her scarf. Benyamin
looks at Ziba and Sheila with a smile.

ZIBA AND SHEILA

Hi.

JEAN

This is Sheila who is studying
medicine. This is Ziba who is
studying painting. I'm studying
acting.

SARA

Well all the artists are here. How
do you do (she shakes their hands).

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

I am Sara and this is my boyfriend
Benyamin. We study music.

BENYAMIN

Hi (he shakes their hands).

JEAN

Ok, let's look at the room.

SARA

Yes. Sure.

The three of them go towards the rooms. Ziba talks to Sheila.

ZIBA

Does the guy want a room or the girl?

SHEILA

I think both of them.

ZIBA

No...!

SHEILA

Why? Do you have a problem with
that?

ZIBA

No...No...I just wondered.

Sara, Benyamin and Jean come back.

JEAN

Okay, so the last person is Sara.
Where did you say you are from?

SARA

Lebanon.

JEAN

When will you bring in your things?

SARA

Is tomorrow good?

JEAN

Yeah...Okay, till tomorrow...By the
way I did tell you about my problem
on the phone right?

SARA

I have no problems with that issue.

INT. SHEILA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sheila puts an statue on a shelf. The camera passes some Indian hand crafts and a picture of Sheila and her mom smiling. There is Indian music. Sheila sits down and meditates. The camera passes Sheila's room.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean is playing an opera and is standing in front of the mirror practicing acting. The camera passes her belonging, her medications, and her pictures and reaches Ziba's room.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The camera passes Ziba's miniature frames and old Iranian paintings till it reaches Ziba's hands who is working on a painting in Matisse's style. There is Iranian music playing.

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Benyamin is putting up a poster of John Lennon and Sara is putting up a poster of Simone de Beauvoir. They sit down. Benyamin hugs her and they entwine. There is Arabic music playing.

INT. ZIBA'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

The students are sitting in the classroom in a circle and the teacher is setting up some cubes and cones on the table. Ziba enters. Her university is English speaking.

ZIBA

Excuse me, is this the sketching workshop?

TEACHER

Yes.

ZIBA

Pardon me for being late.

TEACHER

It's alright (picks up a notebook)
what was your name?

ZIBA

Ziba Noori

Ziba sits on an empty chair. The person next to her, slowly and in Persian

ALI

Are you Iranian?

Ziba looks beside her and sees Ali. He is 26 years old with dark eyes and hair.

As she takes out her sketching tools, she points that she is paying attention to the class. Ali smiles.

INT. THEATER HALL -- DAY

It's a theater where Jean is practicing on stage. She is wearing all black and plays the role of death. Opposite to her is another performer whose face cannot be seen and is wearing all white. The director of the play is standing in front of Jean and talking to her.

DIRECTOR

When you talk about your feelings,
you almost beg it in a way as to
make it feel compassionate and become
one with you.

JEAN

Okay...Let's me see.

Jean puts her fingers on her forehead and gets up. The other performer is standing opposite to her and starts circling the stage. She bends down and then gets up as it starts acting. Sometimes she opens her costume in form of a circle and moves towards the performer playing Death who is also circling the stage. Michael, 26 years old with messed up hair, enters the room. Jean doesn't see him and continues on practicing.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for years. You
have been the story of my dreams at
nights for years. Now that you are
here I don't want you to leave.
Stay. (She claws Death's clothing
who is circling around her). I have
been fighting time for years so that
I reach you. Don't get away from
me. Please make me one with you.

Jean sees Michael, who is standing in front of the stage looking at her in astonishment, and stops her play. The director notices and goes towards Michael.

DIRECTOR

Are you looking for someone?

MICHAEL

Excuse me, but is this auditorium
110.

DIRECTOR

You have come to the wrong auditorium.
You have to go to the opposing
building.

Michael takes back the piece of paper and goes out as he is looking at Jean.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Okay. That was good. But where you say make me one with you, try to turn in a way so you face...

INT. UNIVERSITY COFFEE-SHOP -- DAY

Ziba is sitting in the university's coffee shop and is reading a book about women and Islam. Ali comes in. They speak in Persian.

ALI

Hi.

ZIBA (hastily)

Hi. Sorry, I couldn't say anything in the class.

ALI

I realized. Is it okay if I sit here?

ZIBA

Sure. Please.

ALI (sits down)

Isn't it hard?

ZIBA

What?

ALI

Letting go of things that you have lived with for years and now you realize that they were wrong.

Ziba closes the book and puts it in her bag.

ZIBA

I don't know. I have not tried it yet. How about you?

ALI

I went through the same stages. If you want I have some books about it.

ZIBA

Yes. I appreciate it if you could bring them for me. How did you know I'm Iranian that you spoke Persian with me?

ALI

Can you find ziba's name anywhere's
else?

Ziba smiles. She drinks her coffee.

ZIBA

Pardon me. Where are my manners?
Do you want some coffee?

ALI

I will buy some tea. Do you want
anything?

ZIBA

No, Thanks.

Ali goes and comes back after awhile. Ziba looks at him.
He looks at her. Ali sits down.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

I don't think you are studying
painting.

ALI

No, this is my elective. I am
studying architecture. From the way
you speak Persian I can tell you
have been here for along time.

ZIBA

I grew up here since I was three
years old. How about you?

ALI

I came here about 6 years ago.
Actually my dad came here before me
so he can do his paper work for buying
a hotel.

ZIBA

Your dad owns a hotel?

ALI

Yeah. How come?

ZIBA

Nothing. Just wondering

She looks at her watch.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

Pardon me, but I have to be somewhere.
See you later.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sara is in the psychiatric's office and is talking to him. She anxious and can't be still.

SARA

I keep on thinking I should have done something. But I was imprisoned. I couldn't. I feel guilty. That's why I got away from all of them. I can't believe that some people still live such barbaric lives. Do you know how many of their kids die of loss of blood?

DOCTOR

You did your best. Don't blame your-self.

SARA

I don't know. There's something different about me. My brother's death opened my eyes. My family is one way and everybody else some other way. The pope banned condom, in Africa and millions of people die of AIDS. People are killing each other. When is it going to end? I don't know why no one sees anything anymore.

INT. ALI'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ali's dad, whose name is Kazem and is about 55 years old with a flaxen beard, is sitting down, with a rosary. In his hand. He is upset and is talking to himself.

FATHER

What did I do wrong that he doesn't believe?...he is your son. Your son. He is your everything. The only thing that you have.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali is behind his desk and is writing a poem

ALI

When even the clouds Are tired of
raining
It's no wonder when the earth Makes
an eternal treaty with death To
continue
Its unfinished stories of days and
nights With
its never-sleeping death soldiers

Ali's dad knocks on the door. Ali puts away his pen and notebook.

ALI (CONT'D)
Father, the door is open.

His father comes in. He tries to smile.

FATHER
How is studying?

ALI
Good. There is an Iranian girl in my class

FATHER
Oh. How nice. Did you talk to her?

ALI
Yes. A bit.

FATHER
Look, Ali dear. You know that I have not given you anything less than what was in my power. I'd like it if you listened to me a little bit. I'm saying these things for your own sake.

ALI
If you mean praying and mosque and things, we have talked about them before dad.

FATHER
What talking, when everything is still the same as it was before. I gave my entire life for this same praying and mosque. How come you turned out like this?

ALI
Okay dad. I really don't want to argue right now.

FATHER
You are torturing me. Do you even understand?

The phone rings. As he goes out of the room

FATHER (CONT'D)
We will talk later.

The father goes out of the room and closes the door. Ali opens his notebook and continues. A guitar is playing.

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara is lying on the bed and is listening to Benjamin playing his guitar.

SARA

So when are you going to tell your family?

BENYAMIN

I don't know. I still can't do it.

SARA

Just remember that the first day that we met, I told you your marriages are familial and religious, but you said you have nothing to do with your family's name and traditions.

BENYAMIN

I still say that.

SARA

Okay...So what is the problem?

BENYAMIN

Give me some time. I can't be like you and let go of everything all at once.

Benjamin is playing guitar. Sara sits up and goes towards him.

SARA

How about we start with this stupid cap.

She throws his kippah into a corner. Suddenly Benjamin gets angry, flings Sara to the side and goes towards his kippah.

BENYAMIN

Hey...Hey...This is the respect you were talking about!?

Sara is frustrated and upset.

SARA

If the kippah is so important to you how are you going to deal with the rest of it?

BENYAMIN

I'll see you tomorrow.

He leaves the room in anger.

INT. CLASS-ROOM -- DAY

Ziba and everyone else are in the classroom, and looking at some slides. The teacher explains

TEACHER

So, Expressionism was actually a reflection of the crushed and defeated Germany after the first World War, which echoed the bitterness of that period. This is the work of Nolde who was one of the first expressionist artist. If you pay attention, you can see that the exaggeration of the bitterness and pessimism of that era with the sharp and intense shading and gray spaces with dark colors is very common in this school of work. For next week's exercise bring a simple drawing with these characteristics.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- DAY

Ziba is walking in the hallway, when Ali starts following her.

ALI

Excuse me. I wanted to apologize for the other day if made you upset. Pardon me.

ZIBA

Pardon? No, it wasn't your fault. I said goodbye in a very appalling fashion. Would like to go for a tea?

ALI

Yes. Sure. I will get some.

ZIBA

No, I offered. I will get it.

ALI

Here are the books I promised. And this is a book, in both Arabic and English, siting all the Surahs pertaining to women's rights in Islam.

Ziba takes the books and carefully looks at them.

ZIBA

Thanks. These are what I was looking for.

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

SHEILA

Mom if you want to lose your daughter,
burn yourself... you mean there is
nobody there to stop you ?...I will
call who ever I can to stop you from
doing this...(crying) Please me,
don't do this for my sake. Mom...?
Mom...?

She puts down the phone. She is worried.

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

Sara is reading a book and Benyamin is sitting with a worried
look on his face.

BENYAMIN

Are you still hung on Buddha?

SARA

You know my problems aren't just one
or two.

BENYAMIN

I told my dad that you should come
to our house for dinner. As my
classmate.

Sara closes her book.

SARA

How long have we been together in
Montreal?

BENYAMIN

Four or five years.

SARA

Six years. And all this time you
have hidden our relationship from
your family.

BENYAMIN

And do you know why!?

SARA

Of course I know. The question is
why you are always under their
domination. Why don't you make a
decision for yourself?

BENYAMIN

Did you say you got a new Cd by Cohen?

SARA

Sure, change the topic like always.
Yes, do you want to listen to it?

BENYAMIN

No thanks, maybe later.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean is walking around her room and talking to her self.

JEAN

What's the difference? Beauty or
beast? ... Didn't you watch the TV
yesterday?...You want to stay and
see all that? (She arranges all her
medication on the table) ...but no,
this is not all there is...Sometimes
you can still see the remains of a
smile...and love (she laughs)
love?...hmm, you can't even find it
in the museums anymore.

She hears Ziba's screams. She goes out of her room.

ZIBA (V.O.)

Let me go...let me go...help...

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sheila and Jean are standing above Ziba. Sheila shakes Ziba who is moaning and screaming in her nightmare. Further back, Sara is standing by the door. Benjamin is looking at the paintings on the wall. Ziba wakes up. She looks around and hugs Sheila.

ZIBA

Sorry. I was having nightmares. I
I was confined to waist in a ditch

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean comes into her room with a glass of water and closes the door. She is worried. She takes up some of her medications. She can hear Sara's, Sheila's, and Ziba's voices in her head.

JEAN

What are they saying?!!

ZIBA (V.O.)

I'm the product of a rape.

SARA (V.O.)

They didn't give him blood, until he
died.

SHEILA (V.O.)

It's tradition to burn themselves
alive when their husbands die, in
order to go to heaven.

ZIBA (V.O.)

If you have sexual relationships
outside of your marriage they stick
you in a ditch and they throw stones
at you until you die.

As these voices are going through her head, Jean sits behind
her laptop computer and talking to herself

JEAN

No, I can't believe it.

She types Sati in the search engine. She reads some
materials. She clicks on the images area and starts looking
at the images of women burning. She holds her head in her
hands. She types in Jehovah's Witness. She searches. After
some reading, she gets up and starts walking around her room.
She sits down again.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Why the poor children?

She looks for the killings in Iranian prisons, images of
women being stoned or shot to death. She folds her laptop.
She takes up some more pills. She lies on her bed. She
closes her eyes.

JEAN (CONT'D)

My own misfortunes aren't enough,
these just got added too. But, it's
good that I met these girls.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Ali is waiting outside. Ziba is coming from far away.

ZIBA

Sorry I'm late. Has the film started
yet?

ALI

Let's go. It's about to start.

They both go into a building.

INT. CINEMA THEATER -- DAY

Ziba and Ali are in the movie theater and are watching a
documentary about women prisoners being stoned to death.
Ziba puts her head in her hands and doesn't look. She gets
up and leaves the theater. Ali follows her.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Ziba is going away in a hurry, and Ali goes after her.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Ali is still following Ziba

ZIBA

Why didn't you tell me what kind of movie this is?

ALI

I thought maybe it'd be interesting for you to know...

ZIBA

You think I don't know what's happening in Iran? (She moves her hands) what's so interesting? Burying a person in dirt till their waist and throw stones at them until they die? Is this interesting?!

ALI

Sorry. I meant so that we know what's going on so maybe we can do something about it.

Ziba sits down on a bench. She looks into distance.

ZIBA

Sorry, after my mom's death I've been really ill-tempered.

ALI

Your mom has died? I'm sorry, I didn't know.

Ali moves his hand forward to hold Ziba's hands. Ziba pulls her hands away. Looks at him. Ali smiles. Ziba smiles too. She takes his hand and puts her head on his shoulder. Ali takes a deep breath.

ZIBA

You are right, I have to be hopeful.

INT. BENYAMIN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Benyamin's father, with a full beard, is in the living room with Benyamin and Sara. His father is very serious looking. Benyamin's mother brings in some coffee. Sara and everyone else take a cup. Benyamin's brother and sister, who seem to be around 11-12 years old, go towards their father and say good-night.

SISTER AND BROTHER

Good night

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

Good night

Sara realizes that the father has a lot of authority in the household.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Benjamin speaks highly of your music skills.

SARA

Thank you. I still have a lot of work to do. If I had practice since I was a kid in Lebanon, I would have been way better.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

Lebanon?!

BENYAMIN (hastily)

Sara is from a Christian family.

Sara realizes the father's surprise.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

So you are Christian?

SARA

I was. Not now. You know, in our sect, you can't give or receive blood. That's why my brother died.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

Jehovah's witness.

SARA

Yes.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

So you left everything.

SARA

That's the best I could do.

Benjamin's father looks at Benjamin and Sara with surprise.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER (gets up)

I apologize, but I have to wake up early tomorrow. Please excuse me.

Sara and Benjamin also get up.

SARA

Oh no, please. I have to go too.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

I will take you home.

SARA

Thank you. I don't want to be a bother.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

It's no problem. I will take you home.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean sits in front of the mirror as she changes her cloths.

JEAN

Before you die (brings her head closer to the mirror) you have to kill Jennifer first. You can't die before you kill her.

Suddenly she sees another person like herself, in the mirror, who is wearing black clothing and is smiling. Jean turns and looks behind her. She sees Dark Jean. She can't talk.

DARK JEAN

Jennifer is my responsibility, don't think about it.

JEAN

Who...Wh..oo.. Who are you?

DARK JEAN

Now you don't know me anymore!?

Someone knocks on the door.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Are you ready Jean?!

Jean makes a low shriek. She controls herself and moves towards the door. Dark Jean looks at her with a smirk.

JEAN

I'm coming. (To Dark Jean) I will be back.

She leaves the room.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Sara and Benjamin's father are sitting in the car.

SARA(as she gets off)

Thank you for driving me home.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

Wait...

SARA

Go ahead.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

You are not just Benjamin's classmate?
Am I right?

SARA

We have been together for 6 years
now. It's his own fault he hasn't
said anything yet.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

Do you know what happened to his
sister?

SARA

Yes, I do know that she died in a
Lebanese hezbollah suicide bombing.
So what? Do you think we are all
murderers? The US government killed
millions in Vietnam and Hiroshima,
so does that mean all Americans are
murderers? The Israeli government
also killed many people in Sabra and
Shatila. Please leave crazy
governments' accounts separate from
the people.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER

This is my first and last word. You
cannot be friends with Benjamin
anymore than this. And even if you
stay together, it will have no future.
I won't let it happen.

SARA

Sure. I will think about it.

Sara gets out. Benjamin's father leaves.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM -- NIGHT

As Jean slowly opens the room, she looks around the room
worriedly and enters. She goes towards her cloths and
changes.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Jean comes out of the room. Jennifer is a beautiful girl
who is flirting with 4-5 other boys further down. Jean sees
them.

JEAN (V.O.)
I will kill you one day...You will see!

Suddenly she sees Michael in front of her. She is taken. Michael tries to say something. But doesn't.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Where have I seen you before?!

Michael prepares his camera.

MICHAEL
Can I take a picture?

Jean looks at him in surprise. She smiles for the camera.

JEAN
So you are a photographer.

MICHAEL
I have a portrait project. I liked your face.

JEAN
Really? What else?

MICHAEL
Will you accept?

JEAN
I'm not very well right now; can you come back here in another two days or so?

Michael shakes his head happily and leaves. Jean goes out and comes back in again. Michael isn't there. She looks around.

JEAN (CONT'D)
What was his name?

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Sara and Ziba look worried. Jean open the door and comes in. Sara goes towards her.

SARA
It's good that you came.

JEAN (with sadness)
So it was true (she holds her head in her hand).

SARA
What was true?

Jean gives them the newspaper. There is headline news about sati. Sara reads.

SARA (CONT'D)

Oh my god, 4000 people watched a person being burnt alive.

ZIBA

She came in crying and went to her room. She locked her door, and doesn't answer anyone.

JEAN (V.O.)

Why she is here?

SARA

What are we going to do now?

JEAN

I don't know, but we have to talk to her.

Jean sits down on the sofa. She looks at Sara. Jean gets up and goes towards Sheila's room. She knocks. Sara and Ziba are standing close by.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Sheila!...If you want to be alone, just tell us so we know. Sheila?!...Sheila?! ... you did your best. It wasn't your fault.

Jean goes to her own room and comes back with a tin can which contains a bunch of keys.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I think the key to her room might be here...I think this is it.

She tries one of the keys. The door doesn't unlock. She tries another one. The door is unlocked. She slowly enters the room.

INT. SHEILA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

We see Jean first, and then Sara and Ziba by the door. Sheila is sitting in the middle of the room in a lotus position. She isn't with it and is meditating.

JEAN

Sheila? Are you alright?...remember how you were telling me human has a lot of powers that it need to discover?

Sheila opens her eyes and takes a deep breath. She looks around.

The camera shows her from above as she lies down and opens her arms. Her tears roll down slowly. The floor becomes a huge fire pit.

SHEILA

My mom burnt herself alive...she burnt alive...(turns) nobody helped me...(turns. The camera reaches her face)

Jean comes close and hugs her. Sara and Ziba are also crying.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Do you have any drink?

INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean clears her tears as she fills four glasses with whisky. She joins Sara, Sheila, and Ziba. She puts down the tray with the glasses. Sheila holds Jean's hands.

SHEILA

Jean...!

JEAN

Just this one night, okay?

Sheila smiles as she let's go of Jean's hands. Everyone brings their glasses close to make a toast. Ziba hasn't picked up any glasses.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Ziba?! What about you?

ZIBA

Thanks. I never had any before.

SARA

Really?! Then you have to have some to see what it is.

ZIBA

I don't know. I'm scared.

SARA

Is it because of your beliefs?

ZIBA

Yes and no. I don't know.

SHEILA

It's bad for Jean and she has accepted to join. You should forget about it too, for this one night.

Ziba is uncertain. Finally she picks up her glass and toasts. They all drink. Ziba hold her throat. Everyone laughs.

Ziba is laughing too.

ZIBA

I had always read in Persian poems
that it's a sea of fire, now I know
why.

Jean fills the glasses again.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

Thanks. I'm not going to have any
more.

SARA

Oh no, you have to have as much as
us.

The glasses hit each other again and they all drink up.

Indoor-Night-Jean's living room-After an hour

Sara, Sheila, Ziba, and Jean are all drunk. Sheila's head
is on Jean's lap and she is still upset. Ziba gets up, but
falls down.

ZIBA (drunk)

Jean. Can I put on Iranian song and
dance?

JEAN

Oh sure. It can't get any better
than this.

Ziba feels sick and goes to the washroom. Sara laughs.

SARA

Jean will it be a big hassle if I
want to leave before my one year is
done?

JEAN

Me? No. Why?

SARA

I might get a job in Japan. I might
go there.

SHEILA

What about your boyfriend?

SARA

Actually Benjamin is the problem.
His dad was very serious saying no.

JEAN

I knew from the first day that it's not going to happen; I didn't want to say anything.

SARA

I thought love is the most powerful thing in the world.

JEAN (laughing)

Love?! You need the time to know men.

SHEILA

Can we not have a philosophical discussion tonight? Ziba, whatever happened to Iranian dance?

Ziba comes in tottering and smiling. She is wearing a traditional Iranian dress. The rest sit down. They are laughing at Ziba tottering.

JEAN

Wow, what a beautiful dress.

ZIBA

What was this drink? I'm so hot and drunk.

She puts a cd in the player. It's Iranian music, with the song "I went to the tavern..." Ziba starts dancing with the song. Sometimes she is synchronized with the music, and sometimes she is not. When she is tired she stops the music. Everyone claps for her. She bows and falls onto the sofa.

JEAN

You should have become an actress. That was like my play.

ZIBA

Thanks for the compliments. I went to Iranian dance school for some time.

SARA

Ziba do you have a boyfriend?

ZIBA

I met someone in university who is also Iranian. But not boyfriend like that.

JEAN

So you haven't had sex?

ZIBA

No. Not at all.

SHEILA

If you won't have sex, he'll leave
in couple of days.

Everyone laughs.

ZIBA

I don't know him very well yet.

SHEILA

What "knowing him"? Learn from the
men themselves. They want to sleep
with you from the first time.

SARA

That's cause they are just looking
for a hole.

ZIBA (laughing)

Sara you have drank too much.

JEAN

But I like men. They are so simple.
They are fooled so fast. They are
like little kids through their entire
life. They never grow up.

SARA

They are simple but their interests
and emotions are lost with one night
of sexual encounter, as if their
feelings stay attached to their
sperms.

Everyone laughs.

SHEILA (laughing)

The scientists should find a way so
that their feelings stay (laughing)
... stay there and the rest comes
out.

ZIBA

Sorry, but I have a class tomorrow,
I have to go to bed.

SARA (laughing)

If you want we can change the topic.

ZIBA (laughing)

No, it's not because of that. This
was great.

EVERYONE

Good night.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Tottering, Ziba enters her room. She picks up her cell phone and dials Ali's number.

ALI (V.O.)
Hello?

ZIBA
Were you asleep?

ALI (V.O.)
No, no. I was going home from the hotel with my dad.

ZIBA
Okay, then just answer. Do you like me?...Hello...Are you there?

ALI (V.O.)
Yes. I'm here.

ZIBA
Do you like me?

ALI (V.O.)
Very much so.

ZIBA
I like you too.

Ziba hangs up the phone.

INT. HOTEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Ali's father looks at him as he organizes his things on his desk.

FATHER
Is something a matter?

ALI
No...no...

FATHER
Then let's go.

INT. ALI'S HOUSE -- DAY

Ali and his father enter their chic house. Before Ali goes to his room,

ALI
Dad, I wanted to invite my classmate Ziba for dinner one night.

His father looks at him in surprise.

FATHER
Apparently, It's a serious matter.

ALI (laughing)
No, dad. It's a simple friendship.
I wanted you to get to know her too.

FATHER
Alright. Whenever you want you guys
can come to the hotel's restaurant.

ALI
Thanks dad.

Ali enters his room, and his father goes to his own room.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali enters his room. He is happy and smiling. He sits behind his desk and starts to write and whisper to himself.

ALI
On the night that the storm of
suffering was your deserted heart's
companion...

INT. FATHER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali's father hangs his suit and takes out a hand gun out of his pocket and puts it in a drawer. His cell phone rings

FATHER
Hello? ...Hajji Davood, what a
surprise, you thought about
us?...right...I told you before here
I spend most of my time in the
hotel...no sir no...I will email
Hajji Saeed myself and explain
everything to him. Is everything
okay in Iran? ...Thank god. I can't
explain on the phone, but until I
email, just tell them that my son is
all my life now, and that I will not
be doing any missions...thank
you...trust in god...Goodbye to you
too.

He hangs up the phone.

INT. THEATER STAGE -- DAY

Jean is sitting on the stage and behind her, Death standing on a high stool with its back to us.

JEAN
Why did you come when I had just
started the dance of life?

DEATH

If I don't take your life, my own
life will end.

JEAN

Why did you come when I was building
a jungle of hope out of the cemetery
of despair?

Michael enters the hall, takes a look, and leaves. Jean
sees him, but doesn't say anything.

DIRECTOR

Is there a problem?

JEAN

Can I go? I have a headache.

DIRECTOR

Okay. I will practice with Mary.
You can go. Don't forget to come
earlier tomorrow.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM -- DAY

As Jean is getting ready to leave, she sees Dark Jean. She
is shocked.

JEAN

You again?

DARK JEAN

Apparently you don't like me very
much.

JEAN

What do you want from me?

DARK JEAN

You can't kill Jennifer by yourself.
Can you?

Jean is thinking. She looks at her. She goes towards her.

JEAN

Okay...Okay. We will kill her
together. But I'm in a hurry right
now.

DARK JEAN

So you can see that guy?

Jean looks at her in surprise.

JEAN

How can you read my mind?

JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 One day I have to kill you too.

DARK JEAN
 It's too early for killing me. You never know, maybe I will get the upper hand and kill you first.

JEAN
 I'm in a hurry. When are we going to kill Jennifer?

DARK JEAN
 One day, when your roommates aren't home, we will take her there and get it over with. You need to get a big knife though.

JEAN
 Okay, I will let you know. Bye for now.

INT. UNIVERSITY LOUNGE -- DAY

As she is leaving the university lounge, Jean sees Michael who is sitting on the floor and playing with his camera.

JEAN
 Hi.

Michael gets up.

MICHAEL
 Hi, so where? Is my house okay?

JEAN
 I haven't answered you yet.

MICHAEL
 You are an actress you should be open minded.

JEAN
 What does that have to do with this?

MICHAEL
 Never mind. Do accept or not?

Jean smiles.

JEAN
 What do you think about a coffee?

Jean sees Dark Jean standing in the corner and smiling at her. She grabs Michael's hand and pulls him.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Let's get out of here.

Michael, surprised, goes with her.

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Ali is sitting on the ground and Ziba is drawing him. Ali is restless.

ALI
Oh come, finish it off.

ZIBA
Hold on. You are so impatient.

After some time Ali lies down.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Sit down, it's not finished yet.

ALI
Come make me sit.

Ziba gets up and goes towards him. Ali turns and Ziba turns in front of him. Ali looks at her. Ziba hold the palm of his hand and counts his fingers. She lies down besides him and puts her head on his palm. When she puts her head the background is full of snow. They turn and the background is green.

ZIBA
Did your dad say (with a manly voice)
who is this girl who has stolen my
son's heart?

ALI
Come to the hotel for dinner tomorrow.

ZIBA
I'm mortified.

ALI
Don't be scared. My dad isn't a
monster.

ZIBA
I have plans to go to movies with
Jean tomorrow night. Let's have
dinner the night after.

ALI
Okay. How long are you going to
have this on your head?

ZIBA
What? Your dad doesn't like this?

ALI

My dad is all for these things.
That's all we fight about.

ZIBA

So you don't want me to wear it.

ALI

Yup.

Ziba gets up.

ZIBA

You weren't suppose to bother me
with these things.

ALI

Why you are so ill tempered today?
Are you on your period?

Ziba picks up her backpack and moves towards Ali to slap him
but Ali stops her hands and laughs.

ALI (CONT'D)

Okay...my bad...soooooorry

INT. UNIVERSITY COMPUTER LAB -- AFTERNOON

Jean is in the computer lab, standing besides the printer.
She picks up some printed pictures off the printer. Pictures
of children, war, and some other pictures. She puts them in
her bag.

EXT. STREETS -- DAY

Jean looks at the people around her on the street.

JEAN (V.O.)

What are people after? ... Why are
they in such a hurry?...what do we
reach in the end anyways?...why are
we always running after something?
And once we get it we run after
something else. Don't we ever get
tired?

INT. SUBWAY -- DAY

Jean looks at the people in the subway. Some of them have
headphones on and are listening to music.

JEAN (V.O.)

We can't even bear listening to each
other's voice any more. We are tired
of each other. Our smiles, tears,
loves...they are all fake.

(MORE)

JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Our lives have become competitions
 and getting ahead of each other. We
 step on each other. Where are the
 people? Is everyone what you see
 them to be?

Jean hears people's thoughts as she looks at them and they
 are different than what she sees.

PEOPLE (V.O.) *
 Why do I always hide my tears with a
 smile...?

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Is this my country or yours? Why
 can't we all be one country?

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I'm tired of being on the run all
 the time. I wish someone would just
 hug me?

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It'd be so cool if I was a porno
 star. Then I wouldn't have to look
 for sex all the time, plus I would
 get paid for it.

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I don't know what's going to happen
 if this one won't work out either.

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Why can't I be Bill Gates?

PEOPLE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I hope I do well in my interview
 tomorrow.

INDOOR-DAY-JEAN'S ROOM

Jean is standing in front of the mirror and talking to
 herself.

JEAN
 Hey, how are you tonight? You think
 I'm so ugly? Why do I keep on
 thinking about this? Why do I even
 have to be this ugly in first place
 and Jennifer so pretty with guys
 hovering around her all the time?
 How come no one even takes a look at
 me? (With tears in her voice) Is it
 my fault for being like this?
 (MORE)

JEAN (CONT'D)

I know you are going to tell me that the humanity is facing much bigger issues in the world and my problem is ridiculous. Well, am I not a human too? Can't my issue be an important problem too? What are these bigger world issues anyways? (She takes out the printed pictures out of her bag) War? (She shows a picture of war deaths to the mirror), Children dying because of religion (she shows a picture of children to the mirror), or I don't know, a whole bunch of other problems...why am I showing them to you anyways?! Who said the world is a calmer place? Look at this picture (she shows a picture of a mother who is holding her dead child) if I was dead instead of this child, then I wouldn't have to worry about being so ugly. I have become so vulgar. I'm thinking about myself all the time. Ah, I've forgotten what's going on around me. Every time I remember Ziba's words I tell myself how can she smile with all this bitterness in her life?! When she was talking about how (she starts crying)...they have raped her mother I couldn't listen any more. She keeps on calling me pretty lady. Maybe she forces herself to smile so that I won't know what's going on inside her!!! How can you rape someone whom you have sentenced to death so they won't go to heaven? All this followed by years of waiting for death in a dark prison cell. Even the thought of it bothers me. So should Ziba love her father or hate him? What would I do if I was in her shoes? Or in Sheila's shoes? Today's Sheila is totally different from the old Sheila. After her mother burnt herself Sheila has become so quite. What for? Because her husband died she had to burn with him? Nobody believed it. She kept on saying I kept on telling myself is that possible? And now I walk around them and all I think about is my ugliness. (She cries)...well, why no one looks at me then?! I am a human too. As soon as I mention AIDS, they run away.

(MORE)

JEAN (CONT'D)

I didn't want to... I didn't want to die in a year (tears falling down her cheeks). But I have to be happy. This world is becoming unbearable. How can you bear to be in a place where people are burnt alive?! (She cries).

It's all Jennifer's fault. One day I will kill her myself, with the knife I bought (she shows a knife and slithers her tongue on its tip) It will probably feel so good to cut her into pieces. I will put her in a suitcase and take her somewhere very far and leave her to be eaten by the birds. Then we'll know who is more beautiful. Sara said why I need a knife this big, so I told her for a special event, a play, and she believed me. And now she is leaving for Japan. She lost her brother. Poor her, they locked her in a room so she can't give blood to him. I have heard about it before (She cries)...but I didn't take it seriously (She shows a picture) see these kids? They are all like Sara's brother. I can't save the world you know. Ziba smiles all the time and says god will make it right. I tell her, Where was god Ziba when they raped your mother? Where was god when Sheila's mother was burning alive? Where was god when Sara's 10 years old brother was dying? Where was god when some thirty thousand people died in an earthquake? Where was god when some two hundred thousand people died in Japan with one atomic bomb? Look! (She shows pictures of Hiroshima's injured and dying) (She cries)...I tell her, Ziba they made God up so they can do any crime they want in his name and be able to sleep at night. Ziba tells me maybe you are right but I cannot live without god. And then she smiles. Why can't I smile? I'm not going to allow death to come after me. I will go after it myself. Sheila says for killing yourself you have to be both brave and stupid. I have the stupidity. But how about brevity? No...not yet.

As Jean is talking, the camera circling until it turns back into it's origin. Someone knocks on the house door. Jean gets up.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Who is it? I'm coming.

INT. IN FRONT OF THE DOOR -- DAY

Jean opens the door but there is no one there. She looks around but can't see anyone. She shakes her head and closes the door.

JEAN
Another crazy person.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- DAY

Jean opens the door to her own room and sees the Dark Jean who has fastened Jennifer's hands and legs to the bed, with her mouth stuffed, and is sitting close by and smiling. Jennifer is groaning and looking at them with fright. Jean gives out a scream out of shock. She closes the door.

JEAN
What are you doing here? Why have you don't this to her?

DARK JEAN
We had an arrangement for today, you forgot?

JEAN
Was is it today?

DARK JEAN
Yes, it was today. And here is Jennifer. Good, I see you have bought the knife too.

Jean picks up the knife from her armoire. She holds it towards Dark Jean.

JEAN
Let her go, I was just joking.

DARK JEAN
I don't joke with anyone, a promise is a promise.

Jean goes towards the bed. Dark Jean blocks her.

DARK JEAN (CONT'D)
What do you want to do?

JEAN

I don't want to kill her, what is it to you?

Dark Jean throws Jean a hard punch and knocks her to the floor.

EXT. STREETS -- DAY

Ziba and Ali are saying good-byes.

ALI

Ok then I will see you tomorrow at the hotel.

ZIBA

Ok. Thanks for everything.

Ali kisses her forehead.

ALI

I love you.

ZIBA

Me too.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Dark Jean has tied up Jean's hands and legs and has put tape on her mouth and sat her on a chair in the corner of the room. She sits by Jennifer and draws the knife down from her face and onto her chest and stomach.

DARK JEAN

Isn't it a shame for all this beauty to be cut into pieces, (turns to Jean), Look then, and enjoy.

EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The camera follows Ziba from up top as she walks towards the house and reaches the door. She takes out her keys and opens the door, and then she remembers something.

ZIBA

Ah, I forgot to get milk again.

She turns and the camera continues on following her from above until she enters a store. People come and go. Ziba comes out of the store with her milk and goes towards the house. The camera follows her until she comes into the house. This is a long-take scene without cut.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Dark Jean has torn off Jennifer's clothing and her naked body can be seen. Dark Jean drags the knife on her breasts.

Jean is crying but she cannot do anything. Jennifer is scared and doesn't move.

DARK JEAN

Imagine the joy the cockroaches and worms will have feasting on this beautiful body.

As she drags the knife on Jennifer's nipples, she hears Ziba's voice.

ZIBA (V.O.)

Jean, Are you home?

Dark Jean looks at the door. She moves towards the door. Ziba knocks on the door.

ZIBA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We were supposed to go to the movies, have you forgotten?

DARK JEAN

Can we go tomorrow? I have to practice tonight.

ZIBA

I am invited for dinner somewhere tomorrow.

Dark Jean moves around the room. She is angry.

DARK JEAN

Okay, I'll get ready in a second.

INT. JEAN'S LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Ziba is going towards the sofa.

ZIBA

Ok. I will wait right here.

She sits on the sofa but hears some noises from Jean's room.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

Do you need some help?

DARK JEAN (V.O.)

No thanks, I'll be right out.

Ziba closes her eyes.

A green paintbrush fills the picture.

A yellow paintbrush fills the picture.

A red paintbrush fills the picture.

DARK JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm ready

A blue paintbrush fills the picture.

DARK JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Ziba...Ziba...

Ziba opens her eyes. Jean is standing in front of her. Ziba comes out of her daydream and gets up.

ZIBA

I'm sorry, I was...never mind. Let's go.

They go towards the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE -- DAY

Dark Jean and Ziba come out the door. Dark Jean is locking the door. Ziba sees blotches of blood on her hand.

ZIBA

What happened to your hand?

JEAN (with haste)

Oh...nothing. It's a scratch. Let me go wash it.

She goes back into the house. Ziba is shaking her head in amazement. She is still waiting as Sara approaches.

SARA

Hey. Why are you standing here?

ZIBA

I'm waiting for Jean to go to the movies.

Dark Jean comes.

SARA

Have fun.

DARK JEAN

You aren't coming?

SARA

No, I have accepted the work in Japan. So I have to start packing.

ZIBA

Are you serious?

SARA

Yeah.

Ziba hugs her. Dark Jean looks at them with great surprise.

DARK JEAN
So you are going to stay home right
now?

SARA (with surprise)
Yeah. Is something wrong?

DARK JEAN
No...No...I was just wondering.
Ziba, let's go?

Ziba and Jean leave. Sara enters the house.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

It's a night old-style pub, with slow music playing. Benjamin is half drunk and sitting on a stool close to the bar. He calls Sara on his cell phone.

BENYAMIN
Hello...Hi Sara...How are you?...What
did my dad say to you?

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara has one hand on her stomach and is talking on the phone

SARA
You know what he said.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

Benjamin drinks up the rest of his whisky.

BENYAMIN
Look Sara, you have to give me some
time. A person cannot change in one
night. You know that I have changed
so much.

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

SARA
It has been six years; you keep on
asking for more time. You keep on
going in circles...Benjamin...? Are
you at a pub again?...look, I ...I
am leaving Montreal. I got the job
in Japan.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

Benjamin drinks up another glass.

BENYAMIN

What did you say? You aren't serious?
Hello....?

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara hangs up the phone. She is upset. She picks up her violin. She whips off her tears, and moves the bow.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

Benyamin is now completely drunk. We can hear Sara's violin playing. Benyamin hears his friend's voice echoing in his ears.

HIS FRIEND (V.O.)

I know what's your problem. You
have to throw out the nails.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Dark Jean and Ziba are laughing as they are strolling.

ZIBA

That was a funny movie...can we stroll
to home?

Suddenly Dark Jean stops walking.

DARK JEAN

Oh god, I completely forgot.

ZIBA

Is something a matter?

DARK JEAN

I have to go. Sorry.

She leaves in a hurry. Ziba watches her with surprise. She shakes her head and keeps on strolling.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

In his drunken state, Benyamin is talking to himself.

BENYAMIN

So which nail should I start from?

The bartender looks at him with surprise.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

With her bloody face, Dark Jean takes out a luggage from under the bed. Then she takes out Jennifer's segmented arms and legs and puts them in the luggage. Jean is sitting close by and has no energy. We can hear Sara's violin playing.

SHEILA (V.O.)
Jean are you home?

DARK JEAN (with haste)
Yeah, but I am busy right now.

SHEILA (V.O.)
Okay, then I will talk to you later.

Dark Jean puts the last pieces in the luggage and zips it up.

DARK JEAN
Okay, my work is done. I will tidy up a bit.

She tidies the room and cleans the blood away. She picks up the luggage and opens the door. She takes a pick. She comes back.

DARK JEAN (CONT'D)
Sorry, I almost forgot.

She unties Jean's arms and legs and takes off the tape from her mouth. Jean cannot control herself. She wants to make a move but she can't. She is breathing rapidly. She sums up all the energy she has and shouts.

JEAN
Help....Help...

Sheila and Sara come into the room in a hurry. Sheila holds her.

SHEILA
What's going on Jean?....

JEAN (with a shock)
She left....she left.

She points with her fingers towards the door. Sara leaves in a hurry.

SHEILA
It's nothing. Sara left to see who it was?

Sheila lifts Jean up and sits her on the bed. Sara comes back.

SARA
No one was there.

Jean is confused.

JEAN (frightened)
She cut Jennifer into pieces, it
wasn't me.

Sara and Sheila look at in astonishment.

SARA (jokingly)
The black shirt suits you by the
way.

Jean looks at her shirt. She gets up and looks into the
mirror. She covers her eyes. Saddened, she leaves the room.

SHEILA
Where are you going?

JEAN (V.O.)
I have to see someone.

INT. PUB -- NIGHT

Still drunk, Benjamin is chatting with the bartender, who is
a beautiful girl.

BENYAMIN
So do you think I should start with
the societal nail or the Familial
nail?

BARTENDER
I think that's enough for tonight.
Leave the nails for tomorrow.

BENYAMIN
Tomorrow will be too late. She is
going to Japan and I can't let her.

BARTENDER
Well, go get some rest tonight. Do
you want me to fetch you a taxi?

BENYAMIN
Yea...Please. I wish everyone was a
kind as you.

The bartender laughs and leaves.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Tottering, Benjamin comes out of the pub and gets into a
taxi.

INT. TAXI -- NIGHT

After some distance Benjamin hands some money to the driver.

BENYAMIN

Excuse me, I will get out here.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Benyamin gets out of the taxi and stands on the side walk. He isn't feeling good. He can hear voices in his head.

SARA (V.O.)

You are all talk and no action.

FRIEND (V.O.)

This is your action no one else.

BENYAMIN'S FATHER (V.O.)

If you want to be with her, you have to leave all this.

HIS OWN VOICE

You know I'm not the same person as years ago.

ZIBA (V.O.)

Mr Benyamin?...Mr Benyamin...?

Ziba is calling Benyamin's name standing next to him. Suddenly Benyamin notices her presence and looks up.

BENYAMIN

You are..?

ZIBA

I am Sara's roommate. It's strange you don't recognize me.

BENYAMIN

Sara's roommate? So what do you want me to do?

ZIBA

Are you ok?

BENYAMIN

No...No...I don't feel good.

Suddenly he feels bad and goes to the wall to throw up. Ziba takes out a napkin out of her pocket and gives it to him. He takes it.

BENYAMIN (CONT'D)

Thanks. I feel a bit better now. Can you get me a taxi?

ZIBA

Sure.

Benyamin sits down. Ziba waits till the taxi comes. As he totters, Benyamin gets up and gets into the taxi.

BENYAMIN

I will pay the taxi. Can you come with me?

ZIBA (with hesitation)

Okay.

They both get in.

INT. TAXI -- NIGHT

Ziba and Benyamin are in the taxi. Benyamin has lied back as his is worn-out.

BENYAMIN

You know, I will go after her once I have taken all the nails out of my head.

Ziba doesn't want to laugh, but she cannot. She starts laughing.

BENYAMIN (CONT'D)

What's the story of this scarf?

ZIBA

I don't really know. My mother made me wear it since I was a kid. Perhaps one day I will take it off.

BENYAMIN

So you are throwing away one of the nails.

ZIBA (laughing)

Sure, whatever you say...now, why do you wear this cap?

BENYAMIN

Same as you. Actually there is a story about it. You know, We have to make the story for anything.

ZIBA

Yes. You are right.

BENYAMIN

You know Sara is leaving?

ZIBA

Unfortunately yes. I was saddened. We were getting used to each other.

BENYAMIN (crying)
I'm stuck. I love her very much.

ZIBA
In my opinion, with love quantity
doesn't matter. What matters is
being able to keep it.

Benyamin uses his hands to make shapes.

BENYAMIN
Quantity....measure...

Ziba starts laughing.

BENYAMIN (to the driver) (CONT'D)
Oh, hey man, we passed the place,
can you turn around...
(to ziba)
You know the first day that I met
you, I thought, another idiot Muslim.
But I was mistaken. I have a long
ways to go to get to know people.

ZIBA
I was wrong about you too

BENYAMIN
Then we are even.
(to the driver)
Thanks, you can stop right here.

Benyamin pays the driver.

BENYAMIN (CONT'D)
This lady gets off at the Sherbrook
metro, is this enough?

DRIVER
It's more than enough.

BENYAMIN (to Ziba)
Thanks for coming. Tell Sara I love
her.

ZIBA
For sure.

Benyamin closes the door.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jean knocks on Michael's door. Michael's sister opens the
door.

LISA
Hi.

JEAN

Excuse me for bothering you this time of the night. I think I have the wrong house.

Michael comes from afar.

MICHAEL

It's you. Come in. This is my sister Lisa (they shake hands). Lisa this is Jean, one of the best Canadian actresses in the near future.

Jean smiles politely.

JEAN

Your brother knows who to flatter women.

LISA

Please, come in.

Jean goes in and Lisa closes the door.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jean looks at the pictures hung on the wall with great awe. They pass a hallway.

JEAN

These are all your works?

MICHAEL

Yes, how come?

JEAN

Your work is fantastic. It never seemed like you'd be such a great photographer.

LISA

Michael is always like that. He never shows off his work; and if he didn't spend most of his time with girls, he would have had a many exhibitions by now. Sorry, I didn't mean you though.

JEAN

Oh, no. That's ok.

MICHAEL

If I didn't spend so much time with the ladies where do you think all these ideas would come from?

They all go to the living room and sit down.

LISA
Tea or coffee

JEAN
Tea please.

Lisa leaves. Michael is looking at Jean as he is sitting down. He smiles.

JEAN (CONT'D)
Are you looking for an idea by looking at me so much?

MICHAEL
No. For some reason I think I have seen you before.

JEAN
Really? How so?

MICHAEL
I don't know. Just a feeling.

JEAN
When do we take pictures?

MICHAEL
You didn't come for pictures, have you?

Jean looks around. She starts crying.

JEAN
No. I just came to see you. My loneliness is killing me.

Michael hugs her. Lisa comes in with some tea, but Michael points to her to go away. Jean doesn't realize. Lisa gives Michael a look and whines as she leaves.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ziba opens the door and comes in. Sheila and Sara are sitting down and Sara is tuning her violin.

ZIBA
Hey. Where's Jean?

SARA
She went to a friend's house.

ZIBA
Didn't you feel she was different today?

SARA

Yea, she was weird. She said some one has cut Jennifer into pieces and took her away.

SHEILA

Well if you guys took 20 different pills a day, you would have been even worse than this.

ZIBA

She is right. This is so hard. I read somewhere that people like this kill themselves before death gets to them. I'm afraid.

SHEILA

For god's sake don't talk like that. I keep on hoping she gets completely better.

ZIBA

I saw Benjamin.

SARA

Oh. Where?

ZIBA

On the street. He was drunk. He wanted me to get him a cab and go with him for a drive.

SARA

I have told him a hundred times that instead of drinking you should wash out your brain.

ZIBA

He kept on saying which nail should I start from. It was cute.

SARA (laughing)

He has probably remembered his philosopher friend's talks. Anyways, I'm leaving to Japan. It's up to him now.

ZIBA

He told me to tell you he loves you.

SARA

Men are crazy. They keep on talking about love love love. Well, can someone tell me what this love is anyways? Do you think he will let go of his family and their support for this love?

SHEILA

I don't know.

SARA

He keeps on telling me he loves me,
and then nothing changes.

ZIBA

Don't think about it. Whatever has
to happen happens.

SHEILA

She is right. Never mind. Oh by
the way, I might have to go to India.

Ziba and Sara look at her with surprise.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

What? Is it too strange?

ZIBA

No...it's just weird. First Sara,
now you. Can you tell us why you
are going?

SHEILA

I chose India for my internship and
also I have a plan to open a N.G.O
in there.

ZIBA

Does Jean know?

SHEILA

No, I have to tell her that I am
going to find some one to replace
me.

SARA

She doesn't want any more roommates.

SHEILA

Seriously?

SARA

Yea, she told me herself. She wanted
her surrounding to be busy, but she
doesn't any more.

SHEILA

I'm glad that I don't have to look
for anyone anymore.

SARA

I want to tell you guys a secret,
but you have to promise you won't
tell anyone.

ZIBA
Sure, go right ahead.

SARA
I'm pregnant.

SHEILA
Oh my god.

ZIBA
No...

SARA
Two months.

SHEILA
And Benjamin doesn't know?!

SARA
Of course not. Why do you think I'm asking you not to tell.

ZIBA
But he is the father...(her cell phone rings). Sorry, I'm going to go to my room.

Ziba answers her phone as she leaves towards her room.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba comes in and closes the door. She is talking on the cell phone.

ZIBA
How are you?...wasn't it suppose to be tomorrow night?

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali is sitting in his room and talking on his cell phone.

ALI
My dad had a lot of work at the hotel so he stayed there for the night...I thought maybe you can come over...I will pay for the cab.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ZIBA
I don't know why everyone wants to pay for my cab tonight?...no...no one...don't get jealous now...okay...I'm coming.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba's hands hold Ali's. Her face slides on Ali's face.
Their legs are entwined

EXT. ALI'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ziba finds the house number she is looking for and rings the bell. Ali opens the door. He is has combed his and looks very handsome. He looks at Ziba, she looks at him.

ALI
Hello beautiful.

ZIBA
Hi.

Ali is just looking at her.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Did you invite me to stand here and
look at me?

Ali laughs. He bows and asks her in. Ziba laughs and goes in.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba is looking at Ali's collection of books. Ali is looking for something in his closet.

ZIBA
These seem like good books. My
persian reading isn't very good.
But it's good to give it a try. Can
I borrow them at some point?

ALI
They are all yours. Okay. I found
it.

ZIBA
What are you looking for anyways?

Ali takes out a bottle of wine from his closet.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
How come you have hidden it?

ALI
From my dad...You don't want any
right?

ZIBA
Sure, I'll have some.

Ali is surprised.

ALI
I'm glad you are experimenting.

ZIBA
Well if you don't you won't learn anything.

ALI
Do you like traditional Iranian music?

ZIBA
I love it.

Ali puts on some music. He puts two wine glasses on his desk and pours wine in them. He leaves the room and comes back with cheese and crackers.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Don't worry, be comfortable.

ALI
It's nothing. Just a romantic feast.

They sit on the floor, in front of the desk. They toast and drink.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jean is in front of the door. She is saying goodbye to Lisa and Michael. Michael points to the house.

MICHAEL
You can stay here tonight. We have an empty room.

JEAN
Thanks. I have something I have to do. Thanks for everything.

EXT. STREETS -- NIGHT (P.O.V.)

Jean looks at the people as she passes through the streets. She talks about them in her head. She sees an aboriginal homeless.

JEAN (V.O.)
Did you ancestors know what is going to happen to their children three hundred years ago?

A couple are kissing each other. A drunk passes them tottering.

JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Loneliness? Loneliness?
(MORE)

JEAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 People do it to themselves and then
 get stuck in it. They all want to
 just forget about it. (She stands
 still). Why did I lie to him? (She
 turns).

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali and Ziba put their glasses on the desk. They look at each other. Bring their faces close, as they start kissing they throw themselves on the bed.

- Ali's fingers walk on Ziba's body
- Ziba's hands play with Ali's hair
- ALI KISSES ZIBA'S EYES
- Ali's hands are in Ziba's hair
- Ali reaches Ziba's breasts as he comes up from her navel (belly button).

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jean is sitting in front of Michael in his room.

MICHAEL
 Okay, so what is it? I'm all ears.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba's head is on Ali's neck and is watching him sleep.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Michael pats Jean's eyes and eyebrows with his hands. He sits down.

JEAN
 If you don't want to, I understand.

MICHAEL
 No, that's not the problem. I am
 thinking where I have seen you.
 Never mind.

He lies beside her.

INT. SKETCHING WORKSHOP CLASS -- DAY

Ziba and the rest of the students are sketching a nude male model. Ziba looks at him in such a way as if she is just discovering it. She looks at every detail of the body and sketches. (There are some close-ups of the model's body).

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- DAY

Sara is packing her belongings. She gets nauseated and leaves the room.

INT. THEATER STAGE -- DAY

Jean circles around Death and then stands still. Death also stands and takes off its mask. It's another girl who is very beautiful.

DIRECTOR

What happened?

JEAN

You know, I don't want to become one with him. I want to live.

The director looks confused. The girl playing the role of Death sits down. The director comes towards Jean. The situation is rather comical.

DIRECTOR

You are okay, right?

JEAN (laughing)

It couldn't be any better. I'm great.

DIRECTOR

Okay, this is a play. A play. Do you get it?

JEAN

You, yourself said that we don't have plays. This is a part of our life that we show on stage.

DIRECTOR

It can be a part of your life or someone else's life. Right now you are playing someone else's life.

JEAN

You mean it's possible that someone would actually want to die?

DIRECTOR

That's the whole point of this play.

JEAN (pauses, then smiles)

Okay, okay. I got it. Let's continue.

The director takes deep breath.

INT. COFFEE-SHOP -- EVENING

Ali and Ziba are sitting in a coffee shop.

ALI

We can't stay for too long. My dad is expecting us.

ZIBA

We had a model today in my sketch class.

ALI

Oh, all the beautiful models. I should have taken that class.

ZIBA

No hon., it was actually a naked male model.

ALI

Male? I thought they only use female models.

ZIBA

No, sometimes they have male models. I kept on thinking why women's bodies are so important for men, but it's not as important for the women.

ALI

It's not important for you guys?

ZIBA

It is. I don't know how to say it. But it's not like it's something we are after all the time, in the stripe clubs and porno shops...it's mostly men who are the customers for these kinds of services.

ALI

What you are saying asks for a long discussion. But what I'm trying to say something else. I'm saying this is a way to discover.

ZIBA

Discover?!

ALI

Men discover using the body.

ZIBA

Discover what?

ALI

The soul. Existence. The body is a path to discover people. Have you read the book " The unbearable lightness of being" by Milan Kundera?

ZIBA

No, I have heard about it though.

ALI

Read it and you'll know what I'm talking about. We should go, it's getting late.

EXT. HOTEL -- NIGHT

Ali and Ziba are outside the hotel and Ziba is looking with amazement.

ZIBA

This is your dad's hotel?

ALI

Yea, isn't it beautiful?

ZIBA

Your dad must have had a good paying job in order to be able to afford this.

ALI

He did different things. Let's go in.

INT. HOTEL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Ali's father is sitting at the desk. He has some papers in front of him and is calculating something with the calculator. His phone rings and he picks it up.

FATHER

Hello?..Okay, come to the office.

After some time, Ali and Ziba enter. Ziba is shy. Ali's father looks at them.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Ms. Ziba, right?

ZIBA

Yes.

FATHER

Welcome. I'm glad you have kept your religious beliefs.

Ziba doesn't say anything. Ali shakes his head. Ziba laughs. Father Sees her.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Something wrong?

ALI
No. No. Let's go to the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The three of them are sitting at a table. Father takes peeks at Ziba once in awhile.

FATHER
What is this art, that young people are all after these days? I told Ali a hundred times to become the hotel manager; he doesn't listen. I don't know who he takes it after.

ZIBA
The artists say things that other people can't.

Father and Ali pause for a bit and look at her. There is a comical feel to the scene.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
It's not my saying. It's a quote from Tarkovsky, the Russian filmmaker.

Ali and his father continue on looking at her in amazement, as if they are frozen. Ziba eats her food without paying much attention to it. Father also continues on eating his food, but Ali is still astonished.

FATHER
Ali...? Eat. This is what somethingofsky has said. Eat your food.

Ali and Ziba laugh. Father looks at both of them.

FATHER (CONT'D)
I don't really understand what you guys say, but I'm sure it's something that it's beyond me anyways. Do you work?

ZIBA
I worked in a photo gallery. But I quit.

ALI
You didn't tell me!!

ZIBA

He kept on telling me not wear my scarf. So I got out.

FATHER

Iranian?

ZIBA

Yes.

FATHER

I have a great job for you. Come to my office tomorrow.

Ziba is stunned.

ALI

Thanks dad.

ZIBA

I'm very thankful, but my course schedule is just too messed up. It's on different days.

FATHER

It's all taken care of. Bring your schedule for me tomorrow.

Ziba is happy. Her phone rings. She wants to take it out of her bag and as she takes it out, her bag and everything in it drops on the floor. She answers the phone. Ali's father bends down to pick her stuff up. When he is almost done picking up her things, Ziba sees his neck from the above; it has tattoo of a heart. She drops the phone. She is overwhelmed. She faints and falls back.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali and his father are standing. There are two nurses standing by Ziba and shake her face. Ziba opens her eyes. She is confused. She looks around. The nurse speaks in French.

NURSE

Can you hear me? What's your name?

ZIBA

Ziba...

The doctor comes in. He stands beside Ziba. He does a routine check-up.

DOCTOR

It's nothing bad. She is shocked. She can leave in another two hours.

Father and Ali are happy. The doctor leaves. The nurse checks the IV attached to Ziba's arm.

NURSE

Only one person can stay here.

ZIBA (in English)

I want to be alone.

ALI

But I ...

ZIBA (shouting)

I want to be alone.

Father takes Ali's hand and they exit the room.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ziba opens the door and enters. Jean, Sheila, and Sara are sitting down as if they are waiting for her. Jean gets up.

JEAN

Your friend called and told us what happened.

ZIBA

I want to die.

She leans on Jean. Jean hugs her.

JEAN

You should rest.

SARA

Ziba, I'm leaving tomorrow.

ZIBA

No...

They hug.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

You should send emails; send pictures of your baby.

SARA

Sure. You take care too.

Jean and Ziba go towards her room.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean lays Ziba on her bed. She leaves the room and comes back with a glass of water.

JEAN

Drink this so you can sleep better.
Oh, and you can take all your
sketching and painting tools to Sara's
room. I made that our workshop. I
will be practicing there myself.

ZIBA

Thanks. Thanks.

Ziba takes the pill with some water and closes her eyes.
Jean leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Ziba is looking for a knife. She find Jean's big knife.
She feels the drop of blood on it. She puts it in her bag.
Jean comes in.

JEAN

Are you feeling better?

Ziba gets scared and shocked.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Hey, what's going on? What has
happened to you?

ZIBA

Nothing...I'm good. I'm better. I
have to my class or I will be late.

INT. HOTEL -- DAY

Ziba is sitting on a chair; she is nervous. She is waiting.
She holds her bag tightly. Ali's father secretary is talking
on the phone.

ZIBA'S MOTHER

If I catch him one day, all he'll
get is death.

The secretary hangs up the phone. Ziba gets up to leave.

SECRETARY

Excuse me, but they are waiting for
you.

ZIBA

Tell him I will be back.

INT. CLASS-ROOM -- DAY

Ali is looking for Ziba but can't find her.

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- DAY

Ziba has put on some music and is painting. She can't continue. She puts her head on the canvas.

EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Ali knocks on the door. Sheila opens the door.

ALI

Pardon me, I'm Ziba's friend. Is she home?

SHEILA

I don't know. Let me go check her room.

Sheila leaves and comes back.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

No, she isn't here.

ALI

Can you tell her to call me when she comes back?

SHEILA

Sure.

Sheila closes the door.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- DAY

Sheila comes into Ziba's room and starts laughing. Ziba is also laughing.

SHEILA

How do you find these handsome men?

ZIBA

Come on. Don't bug me.

SHEILA

So you don't want to tell me what's happening and why you are all messed up?!

ZIBA

I can't...I really can't.

SHEILA

Okay, if you need me call me.

ZIBA

Okay, thanks.

Ziba goes into deep thinking.

INT. UNIVERSITY OFFICE -- DAY

Ziba talking is in the main office. This is the first time she is not wearing her scarf in a public place.

ZIBA

I only need a leave of absence for this term. An emergency has happened.

Ali sees her behind the glass door. He stands outside, and waves a hand. Ziba doesn't know what to do.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- DAY

Ziba leaves as fast as she can, and Ali follows her.

ALI

Shouldn't I know what's going on?

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Ziba is sitting on a bench, and Ali is further down, looking into the distance.

ALI

So you finally threw it out. It took long enough.

Ziba grabs onto her head and plays with them.

ZIBA

Everything has its time.

ALI

I was always in love with your bravery. Okay, Ms. Brave heart, you don't want to tell me what's going on?

ZIBA

I told you before I have a neural disorder that gets intense sometimes.

ALI

No, you never told me that. You are making up a new story. If you don't love me tell me so. Why do you make up a story? What neural disorder?! Everybody's brain has some sort of disorder these days.

Ziba laughs, but then she becomes serious.

ZIBA

Okay, I don't love you. Is that better?

ALI
You are still lying.

ZIBA
Gosh. What am I suppose to do with you. I don't want us to see each other anymore.

ALI
This weekend we are going to my dad's cottage outside Montreal. He asked if you'd come. He was upset that you left his office.

ZIBA
No....no...don't even talk about it.

Ziba gets up and leaves. Ali follows her. He tries to hold her hand. Ziba pulls out her hand.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

Ali sits down. He is upset and hold his head in his hands. Ziba sits walking in circles in front of him. She is frustrated.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
God, what am I suppose to do?

Ali gets up to leave.

ALI
Okay. However you want it.

Ziba watches him leave.

ZIBA
If you knew you are my brother you'd understand me.

Ziba follows him.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Wait, I

Ali turns back. Ziba catches up with him.

ZIBA (CONT'D)
Can you do something for me?

ALI
Anything.

ZIBA
Promise not to ask me why.

ALI
A man's promise.

ZIBA
I need a gun.

Ali looks at her with great surprise. He looks around. He wants to grab Ziba, but doesn't.

ALI
Let's sit down.

They sit on a bench.

ZIBA
You promised not to ask.

ALI
Ziba...What's going on with you?

ZIBA (gets up)
Okay then. Bye.

ALI
OK, OK...(Ziba sits down) (Ali almost whispers) my dad had a gun, I found it once in one of his drawers. I don't know if he still keeps it or not. The only way is that when we go to the cottage this weekend, he is going to stay an extra two days, I give it to you on of those days.

ZIBA
Why does your dad have a gun? Isn't it illegal here?

ALI
I don't know. He used to be in the military in Iran. I thought maybe he got his license here too. Or maybe he has bought it or something. How do I know!!

ZIBA
Then bring the gun to the cottage.

ALI
Not to the cottage. I will bring it to your apartment.

ZIBA
If you don't bring it to the cottage then goodbye.

ALI

Okay..okay. I will bring it to the cottage. Just tell me you don't want to kill yourself?!

ZIBA

I'm not crazy enough to do that. Besides, can't someone kill herself without a gun?

ALI

You are right. I have been hanging out with you too much, I have become stupid. I'm only doing this because I love you very much. I mean I have lost my mind cause of you, otherwise I know this is a wrong thing to do. But what can I do, I'm crazy about you.

ZIBA

Then, see you on the weekend.

ALI

Bye.

Ali watches as Ziba leaves.

INT. ALI'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ali and Father are eating dinner.

FATHER

So did you figure out what was wrong?

ALI

She said she has some neural disorder, but I didn't believe her.

FATHER

Why?

ALI

Nothing. I just felt it from the way she acted. By the way, she is coming to the cottage with us.

FATHER

Good. I hope we won't have any problems again.

Father finishes his food. He looks up (as in praying)

FATHER (CONT'D)

Thank you god. Okay, you clean up. I'm going to take a shower.

Father goes to the washroom. Ali watches. After a while, he gets up and goes towards the bathroom door. He listens. When he hears the shower, he comes back.

INT. FATHER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali is looking through his dad's drawer but can't find anything. He doesn't know what to do, so he goes towards the closet but can't find anything there either.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Father is shampooing his hair.

INT. FATHER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali is in the middle of the room and doesn't know where to search. He goes towards the book case and looks at them.

ALI

You don't even read these, why bother keeping them?

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Father turns off the tap. We can see the tattoo on his neck.

INT. FATHER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali fixes the books in their place and moves towards the desk drawers. He moves the papers around and suddenly sees the gun.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Father comes out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around him and closes the door.

INT. FATHER'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali hears the door close and puts the gun back into its place. He doesn't know what to do, so he goes towards the books. Father opens the door and enters. Ali looks at him.

ALI

You had a book of Hafez, I can't find it anywhere.

FATHER

Next time, ask me and I will tell you. It's over there on the desk.

Ali goes towards the desk and picks the book up. He goes towards the door.

ALI

Thanks.

FATHER

I told you to clean up the table.

ALI

Okay..okay...

FATHER

I can't understand you guys. On one side you don't pray, on the other side you want to read Hafez, who was a faithful poet!

Ali leaves the room. Father closes the door. He goes towards the desk. He takes the gun out, takes a look at it and puts it back into its place.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali dials Ziba's number with his cell phone.

ALI (whispering)

Hello...Hi...Yea he still has it...okay...remember to return it back to me before my dad comes back...Okay, see you on Friday...Bye.

INT. THEATER STAGE -- NIGHT

Michael is in the auditorium, watching Jean practice. Jean moves in one direction as Death moves in another direction. As Death keeps on turning, it increases in numbers. The Deaths circle around each in a different direction. The camera is shooting the whole scene from above.

JEAN

I don't have your eternal torture.
I'm only a moment.

DEATH

Who runs away from eternity?

JEAN (screaming)

I don't want to unite with you anymore.

All the Deaths moves towards her and Jean leaves to the skies as if a bird. The director claps his hands and looks at the ceiling.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- DAY

Jean and Michael come out of the auditorium. Jean sees Dark Jean. She takes Michael's hand and pulls him in another direction.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Father has put on some Iranian music and looks at Ziba once in a while, who is sitting in the back seat. She is not wearing her scarf.

FATHER

So you wear your scarf once in awhile?

ZIBA

No, I always wore it. But I won't anymore.

Father shakes his head in disappointment. He doesn't say anything. Ziba is thinking. She looks around. She leans her head on the window and looks at the scenery.

EXT. SCENES -- DAY

The outside scenery starts mixing with hung prisoners, and later on with women who are buried till their waist into the ground and are being stoned to death.

ZIBA'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Some years later, in the summer of 1988, they hung everyone.

INT. PRISON -- DAY

Father hits Zahra's head to the wall and she screams.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Ziba screams and wakes up. Father pulls the car to the side.

FATHER

Bad dream?

ZIBA

Sorry...yes, it was a nightmare.

The car is on the move again.

FATHER

Ali, so you guys come back on Sunday?

ALI

Yea dad, we both have classes.

FATHER

Drive carefully. Come pick me up on Tuesday.

ALI

Yes dad.

INT. JEAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jean is sitting in front of the mirror and arranges her medication in front of her. She sees Dark Jean who is sitting on her bed. She turns and she opens the drawer behind her and takes out a rope such that Dark Jean doesn't see.

JEAN

Why don't you leave me alone?

DARK JEAN

We are inseparable.

Jean goes towards her. The rope is in her hand. She sits beside her and smiles.

JEAN

What if I don't want this anymore?

DARK JEAN

You chose it yourself.

In a fast move, Jean puts the rope round Dark Jean's neck. Dark Jean is shocked. She tries to pull it away, but she can't. She searches for something to claw into but she can't. As Jean pulls the rope tighter and tighter, it seems as if she also feels suffocated. Dark Jean makes her last moves and then just falls dead on the bed. Jean massages her own neck. She takes a deep breath. She lies on the bed. She laughs. Louder and louder. And then she becomes calm and quiet.

INT. THE COTTAGE -- NIGHT

Ali and Ziba are sitting outside the cottage and have a fire going.

ZIBA

It's very beautiful here.

ALI

Yea, we always come here for the holidays.

ZIBA

The gun...?

ALI (whispers)

Not so loud...I put it in your purse.

ZIBA

How does it work?

ALI

I read on the internet. It's very simple.

(MORE)

ALI (CONT'D)

It has a safety lock on the left,
you pull it up. Then you pull on
the trigger. You still don't want
to tell me why you wanted it?

ZIBA

I will tell you tomorrow.

Ziba mixes the fire. Ali holds a paper in front of her.

ALI

Read it later.

ZIBA

What is it?

ALI

Read it and you'll know.

INT. A COTTAGE ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba opens up her purse and sees the gun in it. She takes
it out and touches it. She unlocks the safety pin and puts
it back in her purse.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

Ali, Ziba, and Father are walking in the woods. Ziba is
holding tightly to her purse.

ZIBA

Can we take a break?

FATHER

Okay, let's sit down for a bit.

They all sit down with some distance between them.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Ziba honey, did you say your mother
has died recently?

ZIBA

Yes.

FATHER

God bless her. What happened?

Suddenly Ziba gets up. She takes out the gun out of her
purse. She is both scared and determined at the same time.
Father and Ali are both confused. Ali gets up. Father tries
to be calm.

FATHER (CONT'D)

It's not real, right?

ALI

Ziba? Are you okay? What are you doing?

ZIBA (stuttering)

Ali...sit down...(screaming) sit down.

Ali sits down. Father realizes the situation is very serious.

FATHER

Look my child; if this is the real thing, it's not a something to play with.

He gets up.

ZIBA (shouting)

Don't get up.

Father doesn't pay attention to her request and moves towards her. Ziba moves back a little.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

If you come any closer, I'm going to shoot...

Ziba shoots in some direction. Father stands still.

ALI (pleading)

Dad, sit down please.

Father sits down beside a tree.

FATHER

Alright. So I'm sitting down. Are you going to tell us what's going on?

ZIBA (almost in tears)

Yes...I will...But you have to answer me honestly.

FATHER (Laughing)

Answer ?

ZIBA

Go ahead laugh...you have every reason to...

ALI

Ziba why don't you tell us what's going on?

ZIBA

Ali...you just listen...(to Father) where were you 20 years ago?

FATHER
20 years ago? I was in Iran.

ZIBA
What was your job?

FATHER
I was an officer.

ZIBA
That's it?... (she wipes off her tears)
where did you work?

FATHER
Ziba honey, don't tire yourself.
Let's put that gun aside and go back
to the cottage and talk.

Ziba shoots. Father is surprised. Ali is holding his head
talking to himself. He seems regretful.

ZIBA (shouting)
Next one will be in your brain.

ALI (to his dad)
Dad, answer her questions for god's
sake.

FATHER
Okay... I worked in the Evin jail.

ZIBA (crying)
My mother was tormented for 20 years,
until she died. She lost calm and
sleep for 20 years, until she
died...she is free now. For 20 years,
she had nightmares of a tattooed
heart. For 20 years, you built an
expensive hotel by killing and raping
people.

Father hold his head in his hands. He doesn't want to hear
any more. Ali is confused.

FATHER
Allah Akbar...god help me.

ZIBA
Yea, ask help from the same god who
told you to rape my mother.

ALI (confused)
What's she saying dad?...is this
true?

FATHER
Help me god.

ALI

Is she telling the truth dad?!

ZIBA (pointing to Father)

I'm his child...I'm his kid...Rape officer...

Ali gets up and starts walking in circles. He sits back down. He is in shock. Father is still holding his head in his hands.

FATHER

I only did what I was told to do...the religious judge has said that ladies sentenced to death should not be virgins, otherwise they will go to heaven.

ALI (with tears in his eyes)

I don't get it... I don't get it...and you did that?!

ZIBA

You wanted to do it.

Ziba points the gun at him and wants to shoot, but she can't. She drops the gun in front of her.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

I can't kill my dad...I just can't...for 20 years my mother lived like dead people, but with honor...with honor...

Ali gets up. He looks at Ziba who is standing up, and his dad, who still has his head in his hands. He goes towards the gun and before anyone realizes what he wants to do, he picks it up, points it at his own head. The camera passes his head and reaches Ziba's worried face. A bullet is shot. Blood splashes all over Ziba. We hear Father's screams. The camera shows them from above. Ziba has sat down and is in shock. Father comes and sits by his son's body. He doesn't know what to do, he starts throwing dirt on his own head. We hear some Iranian music. The camera moves up from Ziba's face, Ali's lifeless heads, and Father's mourning face.

EXT. FOREST -- LATER

There is a police car and an ambulance. They take Ali away on a brancard. Ziba is still in shock and is shaking. A police officer takes her away. Another police officer takes Father, who is crying, away.

FATHER

I killed him...I killed him...

INT. POLICE OFFICE -- DAY

The officers take a look at some papers and are talking to a man with a beard.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay. He can go.

INT. ALI'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Father is wearing a dark shirt and enters Ali's room sad and worried. He sees the Hafez on his desk and picks it up. He then sits on the bed. He puts his head on the book and cries.

FATHER

What have I done?...What have I done?

He puts the book back on the desk. He sees another book; it's Franz Kafka's " The Metamorphosis ". He opens it and sees a piece of paper with Ali's poem on it. He starts to read.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Wake up god...
Your forgetfulness Has caused my
people's suffering
Listen In the distant...
In your slept sleep A stranger is
singing a song
"The seas are always alone"

Father lies down. He puts the paper back into the book. He reads The Metamorphosis. He starts to dose off slowly. When he opens his eyes, he feels as if he has changes. He looks around. The walls are covered entirely with ayats from Qur'an. He looks at his own body. He sees himself as a cockroach and is scared. He wants to get up but he falls down like a cockroach. He walks up on the walls covered with ayats. He screams, and then he wakes up. He puts the book on the desk and starts thinking.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba is on a hospital room. Jean has fallen sleep close by. Sheila comes in. She shakes Jean. Jean wakes up. She gets up, picks up her purse, and kisses Ziba's forehead and leaves. Sheila sits down on the chair.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Father signs some papers. To his lawyer,

FATHER

So everything is done.

LAWYER

Yes, everything is complete. Rest assured that there will be no problems.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Father turns on the tap and fills the bathtub with water. He turns it off and gets in.

FATHER

Forgive me god.

The water turns red.

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE -- DAY

A police officer and Father's lawyer are talking to a doctor.

DOCTOR

We will tell her in our own way that her father has left her all his wealth, but we will not tell her of his death yet.

LAWYER

She is your patient. You can do whatever you think is better.

A nurse opens the door.

NURSE

Ms. Noori is here Doctor.

DOCTOR

Tell her to come in.

The nurse leaves and Ziba comes in like a robot.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

How are you?

ZIBA

I'm good. Can I go home now?

DOCTOR

If you think you will be more comfortable there, you can leave tomorrow. But I have called you in for another reason.

ZIBA

I have to go and paint.

DOCTOR

Ziba honey, your dad has left Canada on a trip, and he has left all his wealth to you.

ZIBA

I don't have a father.

LAWYER

The hotel, some buildings, a car, cottage, and some millions of dollars. They are all yours.

ZIBA

I don't want the wealth that has come from my people's bloodshed.

She leaves. The doctor and the lawyer look at each other.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Sheila and Ziba open the door and come in. There are balloons everywhere. Jean, Michael, and Lisa are waiting for her.

EVERYONE

Welcome back.

Ziba looks happy. She looks around. She smiles and hugs everyone.

ZIBA

Thank you...thank you...

Everyone sits down.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

So you are Michael?

Michael shakes her hand.

MICHAEL

Nice to meet you.

LISA

And I'm Michael's sister.

ZIBA

Thanks for coming. So what's the story with the balloons?

JEAN

Nothing. Just for fun.

Jean gives Ziba a wrapped up box.

JEAN (CONT'D)

This is also for you Ziba.

ZIBA

I don't get it, why go through so much trouble?

Sheila cries. Ziba looks at her. Ziba opens the box. It's a complete oil paint set and a complete set of painting tools. Ziba is happy and excited.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

Thank you so much...this is life.

Everyone looks at her.

ZIBA (CONT'D)

See these hands? This is me. Ziba. I have a lot to do. A lot.

SHEILA

I'm happy to hear that.

ZIBA

I had inherited a lot of money. First I rejected it. But then I thought what's going to happen to it. I thought to myself that I should return it to where it belongs.

JEAN

That sounds good, so you have plans.

ZIBA

Sheila do you remember you wanted to start up an N.G.O in India? I'm going to help you.

SHEILA

Oh...never mind.. I thought I can get the support of some people and organizations...but it didn't happen.

ZIBA

I'm telling you, I will support you. I will give you whatever you need.

SHEILA

I can't believe it.

ZIBA

You better believe it. Okay, I'm going to go get some rest.

INT. ZIBA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba enters her room. She sits down. She remembers the piece of paper Ali had given her. She searches and takes it out of her purse. She reads. After a while she puts it to the side but we can hear Ali's voice.

The camera gets closer to Ziba's sad face in a slow move.

ALI (V.O.)

In a night that the storm of agony
was a companion for your deserted
heart.

You didn't hear my cries, which the
wind took to the forgetfulness of
the past
And the sun was a kind beast against
the cloud Whose unkindness was
plundered in silence and darkness

The mirrors...The mirrors...
What do they know of your sadness
For you hide your suffering's past
behind a smile?
Listen...!
I am not your sun
I am that same cerulean darkness of
your moon
That same night who has made you
tired

Look at the fire of my existence for
a moment
What are you looking for from the
depth of your gaze?

INT. SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Ziba brings the oil and tools set to the room. Its paints
and paint brushes dancing on the canvas. Paints that fly.
Darkness and sunshine. Ziba is smiling and crying at the
same time.

ALI (V.O.)

Sacrifice me to the tree of time,
oh stranger
By this tree princess and such
dignified people
Have said adieus to their life's
thirst
Oh stranger...
See how the sunniness of my hopes
Have become imprisoned by your moonlit
night
Tomorrow,
when the sun dawns
This snow of hopes will be sacrificed
(MORE)

ALI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 for your love
 And it's only your smile that will
 settle forever calmly on this tree
 of time
 Your smile...

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY -- DAY

- Close ups of feet running around in a hurry
- Nervous faces
- The TV is showing the twin towers that has been hit by an airplane
- Pictures of newspapers with the explosion on the front page.

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jean enters in a hurry. She throws her bag to the side.
 Ziba and Sheila are watching TV.

ZIBA
 Hi jean, what's wrong?

JEAN (worried)
 I don't know...I don't know...this
 stupid cell phone isn't working.

Sheila hugs her. Jean holds her tight.

JEAN (CONT'D)
 I'm so scared. My parents worked in
 there.

ZIBA
 Don't worry, they probably will call
 you themselves.

JEAN
 I hope so.

INT. JEAN'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Jean opens a box of razors and takes one out.

JEAN
 I should have done this long time
 ago. I wasted too much time.

A naked Jean is sitting on the other side of the bathtub and
 is playing with the water in it.

NAKED JEAN
 You never grow up will you?

JEAN

I'm just tired. When is it going to end? First Sheila, then Sara, and then Ziba, and now...me. I'm tired of all this darkness.

NAKED JEAN

Where is Sara now? What is Sheila doing? See how many plans Ziba has. Which one of them killed themselves?

Jean takes off her cloths and gets into the tube with the razor. Naked Jean gets in as well and sits in front of her. Jean is thinking and then starts crying.

JEAN

Why my poor parents?

NAKED JEAN

Give me this for now.

Jean gives her the razor.

NAKED JEAN (CONT'D)

Remember how many dreams you had? You kept on talking about free Quebec, what happened? Why you let go? You made fun of an independent country with coins that carry the Queen's portrait. What happened to becoming a well known actress? Why don't you go to India with Sheila and help her? Want me to say it again? The world has a long way to become better. Can't you see there is so many crazy people in the world? What are you and me suppose to do?

Jean smiles. She waves her arms in the water. She takes her head under water and comes back up.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

From above, the camera shows Ziba, Sheila, Jean, Lisa, and Michael in the cemetery. They are all in different places. Jean and Michael are close to each other and are talking as they move about. The entire scene is shot with no cuts, from above.

SHEILA

The help you are giving, Ziba, will be remembered forever by the people in India.

ZIBA

My pleasure.

JEAN
 Sheila, when are you going to India?
 I'll come too.

Everyone stops.

SHEILA
 Are you serious?

JEAN
 Who's joking? I'm selling the house
 and coming with you.

They continue on walking.

ZIBA
 So you want me to sleep in the
 streets.

JEAN
 You have a hotel with lots of rooms.
 That should be enough.

Ziba laughs.

LISA
 I think Michael is leaving with Jean.
 You can come live with me.

Jean and Michael stop, but others continue on walking. Music starts. The camera shows them from below, they are looking at each other. Then they kiss. As they are kissing, the camera circles around them and their background keeps on changing: Michael's pictures, Ziba's paintings, Sati ceremony, a dark prison cell, Jean's play and her flying. The kiss takes two minutes without a cut.

FADE OUT

INT. A ROOM -- NIGHT

Benjamin throws his Kippah into the fire and watches it burn.

FADE OUT

INT. STREET -- DAY

Ziba is holding a placard that says stop stoning to death in Iran, in a demonstration.

FADE OUT

EXT. WOODS -- DAY

A group of kids, Jean and Sheila, wearing Saris, are sitting in the woods with Michael. As the camera pulls up from them, we see the woods, then India and then the entire world.

FADE OUT

EXT. SARA'S HOUSE (JAPAN) -- DAY

It's raining outside. Sara, wearing a Kimono and holding a child, opens the door. She sees Benjamin standing outside with his suitcases. She smiles. Benjamin puts down his suitcase and holds the child. He puts his head on the child's forehead. Sara is happy. The close up of the child's smile.

THE END

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(THE IDEA AND THE SCRIPT BEGAN IN 2001)

WRITTEN BY: ARIAN

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