

A SPECIAL CASE

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For the evil and good there can never be the same end.

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FADE IN:

SUPER: "TAJIKISTAN - 1990th"

EXT. PRISON - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A grey breeze block of a building.

Teenage prisoners in black jam the yard.

Guards watch them.

INT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Dark, cold, small cell, with walls half a century old.
Pictures are scattered everywhere.

A beautiful woman in one picture, a dog in another. An old smiling man with a rifle on his shoulders holds a bear, with sheep in the background.

An ugly burned boy draws a new picture. It is YUSUF, 15, brave eyes, honest face, and high chin.

The chatter of other inmates echoes through the hallways.

EXT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

TWO GUARDS, one tall one burly, walk an INMATE to a cell. The inmate looks upset and mumbles something.

BURLY GUARD

Well you shouldn't lie. She senses it from miles. Now you messed up your chance.

They lock the inmate in and come to open Yusuf's cell.

TALL GUARD

Come out ugly. Major Shamsiya is waiting for you.

Interrupted, Yusuf puts his brush down and steps out. The guards cuff his hands and take him through the hallway where prison life is seen.

The place is more like a concentration camp than a prison.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Guards beat inmates in their cells and take money from them.

HALLWAY

-- An inmate brings a bag of food and puts it by the guards. They check the bag and take most of the food giving back the little left.

VISITING AREA

-- A WOMAN dressed in old clothes gives money to an inmate during their visit.

WOMAN

(to inmate)

Please give it to them before they ask. The doctor says you can't take anymore beatings.

Inmate takes the money and nods his head.

The guard behind them sees the money and smiles.

THE MAIN BUILDING

-- OFFICERS are asking for any amount of money that comes to their mind and the relatives of the prisoners are bargaining...

-- A FAT OFFICER sits on his chair and puts sugar cubes in his tea cup, taking his time. A MAN wearing modest clothes sits opposite of him and waits for him to talk.

OFFICER

Two thousand... in dollars and I put your son's name on the list.

MAN

Where am I going to find that kind of money?

Officer smiles and sips his tea.

-- An old couple offers bribe to another OFFICER. He pushes back their money and yells at them.

OFFICER

You are getting your son back, not your goat!

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - DAY

The guards open the door quietly and bring Yusuf in. A woman talks on the phone. It is MAJOR SHAMSIYA, 45.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

(on the phone)

Honey I need you to have patience.
Mommy is very busy. I can't visit
you every week.

(beat)

I know, I know. I miss you too. Bye
honey mommy has to work now.

Major Shamsiya hangs up the phone and gives the guards a cold look.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)

What are you staring at? Free his
hands and close the door behind
you.

BURLY GUARD

Yes, comrade Major.

They do as ordered and leave the office. Major Shamsiya spins around Yusuf, studying him. She kills her cigarette in the ashtray.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

Morning.

YUSUF

Good morning, comrade Major.

Major Shamsiya pulls out a chair.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

Sit.

Yusuf sits.

YUSUF

Thank you.

Major Shamsiya puts her eyeglasses on, picks up a file and goes to sit by the window. She reads out loud.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

Yusuf Rustam, age fifteen,
sentenced ten years for first
degree murder. Served six.

(MORE)

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Outstanding behavior, good
attitude, respect and blah, blah,
blah.

She closes the file.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Do you know why are you here?

YUSUF
I killed a person.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I mean here, in my office.

Yusuf nods his head affirmatively.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Always answer yes, or no.

YUSUF
Yes, comrade Major... I know why I
am here.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
The law gives you a second
chance... so this interview is your
opportunity. The only opportunity.
If I hear a single lie, your case
will be dismissed and you will go
to serve the rest of your term.
Understood?

YUSUF
Yes. Comrade Major.

Major Shamsiya sits on her chair, takes a sip of tea from her
old Persian style cup, and opens the file again.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Do you admit to the killing?

YUSUF
Yes, I do.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
That is right. Do you believe that
killing is bad?

YUSUF
Yes, I do.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Do you regret committing such a
horrible act?

YUSUF
No I don't!

Major Shamsiya looks at Yusuf.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Do you realize that I can send you
back to your cell for such a --

YUSUF
You asked me to tell you the plain
truth.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Well. Why don't you regret it?

YUSUF
It's a long story.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I believe you and I, we have enough
time.

YUSUF
I am telling the truth. It is a
very long story.

Major Shamsiya looks at her watch and grins.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Go ahead Yusuf. I'm listening.

Yusuf looks at the mountains through the window.

YUSUF
... About three hundred kilometers
from here, high in the Pamir
mountains there was a beautiful
village, called Sarrez...

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A beautiful blue lake is surrounded by broad mountains that
stretch for miles.

Cattle pasture on the lush mountainsides and drink from the
lake.

The lake leads to a waterfall - crystal clean water tumbles over the edge, breaking into two narrow streams that flow down to a small village below.

EXT. VILLAGE - GATE

Two big wooden poles on each side of a dusty driveway hold up a SIGN which reads: VILLAGE of SARREZ, in bold letters.

COMPOUND STYLE MOOD HOUSES are dotted along the road.

A boy wearing clean clothes sits by the stream under the shade of the pole and feeds a few stray DOGS. It is Yusuf, 8. Handsome, neat and gentle.

All the dogs eat hesitantly, except one. It is GYPSY, the only female in the pack. She is comfortable with Yusuf. Yusuf strokes Gypsy and looks around cautiously.

YUSUF

How many times did I tell you
Gypsy, don't bring your friends
here. It is too dangerous!

Gypsy just looks at him and licks his hand.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

You never listen.

Yusuf takes a small paper boat out of his bag and puts it on the stream. The boat floats down towards the village.

Yusuf watches it in excitement.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Look, look Gypsy, how my boat is --

The sound of gunshot rings out.

Frightened, the dogs run to the mountains. Gypsy stays with Yusuf.

Yusuf turns back to look.

A man sits on a black horse and points his rifle at them. It is MERGUN, 50. Mergun is a hunter.

A group of VILLAGE KIDS jam around him.

Mergun reloads his rifle and trots his horse towards Yusuf and Gypsy. The kids run after the dogs. The biggest boy in the group is Najib, 12.

NAJIB
Catch the dogs guys.

Yusuf is panicked. He pushes Gypsy away.

YUSUF
Run, Gypsy! Run!

Gypsy runs up the mountains and Yusuf down to the village.
Najib points at two of his companions.

NAJIB
You two. Go get Yusuf.

Two of the kids chase Yusuf. Mergun goes after the dogs.

The floating boat in the stream races with Yusuf. As Yusuf runs through the streets the village life is exposed.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- A man beats a donkey who struggles to walk because of the weight imposed on her.

-- A man beats a woman.

-- Kids snatch a Dervish's bag and mock him.

-- A woman runs to the center of the street, pours gas on her body and sets herself on fire.

-- People watch her, just watch.

-- A man handles a sheep to a fat police Officer and the officer lets a boy go. The officer is ATTO, 55.

ATTO
(with a mouthful of
tobacco.)
Next time I catch your kid with a
slingshot, one sheep will not save
him.

-- Atto sits on his motorcycle, spits out his tobacco and drives away.

EXT. YUSUF'S COMPOUND - DAY

Yusuf runs into his yard and locks the gate behind. He looks down at the stream which runs right through their house.

Paper boat floats by and goes through the yard disappearing under the barn walls at the end of the yard.

A COW with an expectant stomach drinks from the stream. Yusuf goes to her and strokes her back.

YUSUF
How are you Anna?

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A beautiful woman, RANO, 33, leans on a window sill and looks out. One of her eyes is swollen. She closes her eyes and a tear runs down her cheek.

FLASHBACK

INT. HOSPITAL DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY

Rano sits on a chair and cries. A female doctor calms her down.

RANO
(pointing at her chest)
But you said I was going to be
saved after cutting off my second --

DOCTOR
That is what I thought at that
time... but now your cancer is
developing again and I'm afraid
there is nothing we can do, but
pray and hope.

RANO
You must do something doctor!... If
not for me, do it for my son. He
can't handle this. Now is the time
he needs me the most.

DOCTOR
Therefore you should make the most
of your time, and make each day
count... Your son is going to have
a hard time after you are gone, and
there is nothing you can do about
that... What you can do, is to
spend the remainder of your time
together creating memories that
will help him get through --

YUSUF (V.O.)
Mommy! Mommy! I'm home.

END OF RANO'S FLASHBACK

Rano wipes away her tears hurriedly and rushes outside.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

They meet in the yard and Yusuf jumps into her arms.

RANO
What took you so long, honey?

YUSUF
Mommy, today I got A in all the subjects.

RANO
Oh. Well done, honey.

Rano kisses Yusuf on both cheeks and hugs him tightly.

The sound of KIDS running and yelling in the street.

Yusuf looks at the gate.

YUSUF
Mom?

RANO
Yes honey?

YUSUF
Why do our neighbors hate those dogs?

RANO
Because they are evil.

YUSUF
Who, dogs?

RANO
No, honey. Our neighbors.

Yusuf looks around cautiously then whispers in Rano's ear.

YUSUF
Mergun was here today. He was shooting the dogs.

RANO
Stop being afraid of him! There is nothing he can do to you!

YUSUF
But he killed so many dogs.

RANO
May God break his hand and rifle.

YUSUF
Why does he come here and kill dogs
anyway? He is not even from our
village.

RANO
Because he is crazy and our crazy
neighbors pay him to do so...
enough about evil. Let's go in, I
cooked something delicious for
lunch.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Yusuf looks at Rano while she fusses with his shirt.

YUSUF
Mom?

RANO
(smiling)
Yes, honey?

YUSUF
My classmates made fun of me again.

Her smile disappears.

RANO
What did they say?

YUSUF
They said, "If you want your dad
back, tell your mom to buy new
boobs."

Rano hugs Yusuf.

RANO
Don't you pay attention to those
immoral people honey. They say
these things because they are
jealous of you.

YUSUF
Jealous of me?! Why?

RANO

Well... because you are the smartest, the sweetest and the most handsome kid they have ever seen.

Yusuf smiles.

YUSUF

Is it true, or you are just being a hedgehog mother?

RANO

Hedgehog mother?

YUSUF

Yeah. We read that every time the hedgehog strokes her baby she feels as if she was stroking the softest pillow.

Rano laughs.

RANO

No. I am not being like a hedgehog mother. Now go wash your hands the food is getting cold.

LATER

The two are eating lunch. Yusuf finishes his soup and pushes the bowl to Rano.

YUSUF

It was great, mom. Can I have some more please?

RANO

Sure.

She fills the bowl and passes it back.

RANO (CONT'D)

Help yourself, honey.

Yusuf eats.

The loud and continuous noise of a cow MOOING is heard.

RANO (CONT'D)

Oh God, it is Anna. I think she is giving birth.

Rano and Yusuf run out.

EXT. COMPOUND -

The sweat drips from Rano's forehead. Her hands are covered in blood. She is helping the cow to give birth. The calf's head is out already.

Yusuf is amused watching the show. He laughs out-loud.

After more struggle, Rano manages to pull the calf out safely. It is a beautiful brown and white calf. Rano washes it in the stream and dries its body.

RANO
It is yours honey.

Yusuf hugs the calf and yells with joy. Rano smiles.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - NIGHT

Yusuf sleeps.

A slight noise of a woman CRYING is heard.

Yusuf rolls over in the bed.

The noise increases, added with a man's loud VOICE cursing.

Yusuf opens his eyes.

RUSTAM (O.S)
I hate you! You ugly bitch!

Yusuf crawls to the window.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf's POV -- Rano sits on the bench covering her face with both hands, crying. A man with a rifle in his hand stands in front of her and curses. It is RUSTAM, 40. He is drunk.

Rustam grabs Rano by the hair and slaps her face.

YUSUF
(whining quietly)
Don't touch her, you animal! Don't touch her!

Rustam releases Rano's hair.

RUSTAM
Get out of here. I don't want to see your face.

Rano stands up and walks to the house.

Yusuf rushes back to his bed and pretends to be asleep.
Moonlight from the window plays on his face.

Rano gently enters the room, wipes her tears away, and lies behind Yusuf, hugging him.

They both look at the window. Tears roll down their cheeks.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - MORNING

Yusuf looks at Rano while she combs his hair. They are both silent.

Rano smiles, but it is strained.

YUSUF

Mom?

RANO

Yes, honey?

YUSUF

Did he beat you again?

Rano stops combing his hair.

RANO

What?

YUSUF

Did he beat you again?

RANO

No, he didn't.

YUSUF

Why are you lying, mom? I saw it last night. I have seen it before. I see it every time... Why don't you call the police?

RANO

It will just make it worse.

Yusuf cries.

YUSUF

I hate him. I want him to --

Rano puts her hand on Yusuf's mouth.

RANO
Whatever he is, he is still your
father. He would never hurt you...
it is me he has a problem with.

YUSUF
I would rather have no father.

RANO
Be patient honey. Everything is
going to be fine.

Rano buttons Yusuf's shirt and stands up.

RANO (CONT'D)
Now, let's go to school. We don't
want to be late.

Rano puts some food in Yusuf's schoolbag and gives it to him.

RANO (CONT'D)
And when you come back, we will go
see a movie.

YUSUF
You are just saying that to calm me
down.

RANO
This time I am serious.

YUSUF
(excitedly)
Did Garry come?

RANO
Yes. He was driving around his
funny car and yelling about a class
movie.

YUSUF
Classic movie mom.

RANO
Yeah, whatever.

YUSUF
Then I better be quick.

Yusuf takes his bag and runs out. Rano waves him.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Villagers sit around the white school wall which is used as a screen and wait for the movie to start.

Yusuf and Rano sit apart from the crowd in the far back.

Yusuf moves impatiently in his seat, looking back and forth at a man who fixes a projector placed on top of a van. It is GARRY, 60, an old eccentric man.

Najib and other village kids whistle, yell, and scream impatiently.

NAJIB

Come on Garry. Let it start.

Garry smiles and continues his job.

YUSUF

What's taking him so long?

RANO

Relax honey. It is always like this.

Garry turns off the van's lights. Audience is engrossed. They lean forward looking at the screen. Kids scream as the movie starts.

INSERT SCREEN which shows:

Charley Chaplin in MODERN TIMES.

People yell out of happiness. It is Chaplin again.

Yusuf can't close his mouth. He keeps laughing and laughing. His happiness makes Rano laugh.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Rano digs the ground by the stream. There is a big cup and a small broken pine tree next to her.

Gate opens in the background and Yusuf rushes in.

YUSUF

Mommy! Mommy! I'm home!

RANO

Hey honey. I have been waiting for you.

Yusuf approaches Rano, kisses her shoulder and tries to hug her. Rano holds herself back.

RANO (CONT'D)
My hands are full of clay honey.

YUSUF
Will we go to the movie tonight?

RANO
We went just yesterday.

YUSUF
But it is Chaplin.

RANO
We will watch it some other time...
Now look what I got for you.

Rano picks up the tree.

YUSUF
A pine tree?

RANO
It is not just a tree. This tree is
always green, no matter what, and
lives very long.

YUSUF
Aha.

RANO
I want you to be like this tree
Yusuf. Always happy, no matter what
and live very long... Now, let's
plant it together.

They plant the tree. Rano fills the cup with water from the stream and passes it to Yusuf.

RANO (CONT'D)
You first.

Yusuf waters the tree, and gives the cup back. Rano finishes the water. They stand next to each other and look at it.

RANO (CONT'D)
It is beautiful. Isn't it?

YUSUF
Aha.

RANO
Give me your hands honey and lets
pray for our tree.

They encircle the tree.

RANO (CONT'D)
Close your eyes and say after me.

They close their eyes.

RANO (CONT'D)
Oh God, take care of our tree.

YUSUF
Oh God, take care of our tree.

RANO
Let it be green for ever and never
wither.

YUSUF
Let it be green for ever and never
wither.

Rano opens her eyes and looks at Yusuf.

RANO
Oh God. Thank you for my son.

YUSUF
(with closed eyes)
Oh God. Make my mom happy, healthy,
and don't let my dad hurt her
again.

Rano's smile disappears.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
We are not bad. We love you. We
pray to you.

Yusuf is about to weep. Rano hugs him.

RANO
He has already made me the happiest
mother. I would never complain
about what I've got!

YUSUF
Why?

RANO
If you ask for too much, you will
lose what you have.

Yusuf looks at her, considering.

YUSUF
Then I will not ask for anything
else mom. I have you.

RANO
And I have you.

They hug.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A CLOWN, 40, drives a van with big pictures of ice cream on
it. He sings while driving...

CLOWN
*Ice cream is here. Ice cream is
sweet. Ice cream is here. Ice cream
is cheap. Ice cream is here. Ice
cream is cream. Ice cream is here.
Ice cream is dream...*

The villagers are drawn to the van. They line up at the
window waiting to buy ice cream.

Yusuf and Rano join in and sing along with the clown.

CLOWN (CONT'D)
*Over, over here, ice cream is sold.
Hurry, hurry people, ice cream is
cold. Hurry, hurry people ice cream
is --*

NAJIB
Shut up and start selling your
frozen milk. We are here already.

Clown stops singing and starts selling the ice cream. Rano
gets a big scoop for Yusuf and a smaller one for herself.

YUSUF
Mom. I thought you couldn't have
ice cream.

RANO
Now I can have everything honey,
everything.

Yusuf licks his ice cream impatiently and gets brain freeze.
It makes Rano laugh.

RANO (CONT'D)
Take it easy, honey. Nobody is
chasing you.

EXT. COMPOUND - MORNING

Rano gives Yusuf his schoolbag and kisses him on the head.

RANO
Okay honey. Go to school and come
straight back. Tonight is a special
night.

YUSUF
A special night?

RANO
Tonight is our birthday night. You
did not forget, did you?

YUSUF
How could I... So we are having our
usual midnight celebration?

RANO
And have fun 'til morning.

Yusuf gazes at Rano. Her face shines.

RANO (CONT'D)
What is wrong?

YUSUF
Mom. You are so beautiful, today.

RANO
Today?

YUSUF
You're always beautiful, but today
I see something I have never seen
before.

Rano laughs and gives him a big hug and a kiss.

RANO
Now go to school. I don't want you
to be late.

Yusuf runs down the street, then stops and looks back at Rano smiling. Rano smiles back. They look at each other for a moment. Wind blows their hair.

They wave goodbye to each other and Yusuf leaves. Rano watches him.

INT. SCHOOL YUSUF'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Students make noise.

A female teacher checks their homework.

She checks Yusuf's drawings and gives him an "A"

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Yusuf looks around and playfully picks the best flowers in the field.

The sound of kids YELLING.

Yusuf turns around and sees Najib and his band coming towards him.

Yusuf hides behind some bushes, and lies on the ground.

Kids pass by him making a lot of noise. Yusuf sees their faces and closes his eyes.

YUSUF
Oh God help me.

Kids go away not noticing him. Yusuf stands up, picks his flowers, and runs down to the village.

EXT. YUSUF'S COMPOUND - SHORTLY

Yusuf looks around and sees no one. He fills up his bottle with water from the stream and runs into the barn.

INT. BARN -

Yusuf places the flowers inside the bottle, puts the bottle on an old table and walks out.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A small and beautiful cake is in the middle of the table.
Rano cooks in the background.

Yusuf enters the kitchen silently. Walks up to Rano and opens his arms.

YUSUF

I'M HOME.

RANO

Oh GOD. Yusuf. You scared the life out of me... Why are you late?

YUSUF

Today I was on duty. I had to clean the classroom, water the flowers, dust the blackboard, and this and that.

RANO

But you were on duty just two days ago?

YUSUF

Uh... the girl that was supposed to do it got sick and the teacher asked me to replace her.

RANO

Never mind honey. Change your clothes and wash your hands. It is lunch time.

YUSUF

Are we having that delicious cake for lunch?

RANO

No. That is for tonight... For lunch we are having soup.

Yusuf looks at the cake.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The two eat lunch. Rano takes her time eating and looks at Yusuf.

RANO

You're so handsome... You will grow up to become a ladies man.

(MORE)

RANO (CONT'D)

Girls will fight for your heart.
They'll faint if you look or smile
at them... You will have a long and
happy life. I'm so proud of you. I
am so happy for you.

Yusuf finishes his soup and pushes the bowl to Rano.

YUSUF

May I have some more please?

She takes the bowl smiling, refills it and passes back.

RANO

Enjoy.

YUSUF

You know what makes me so handsome?

RANO

What?

YUSUF

Your food... it has something.

Rano chuckles.

RANO

You're so silly... Eat your soup
and go to sleep. We will have a
long night tonight.

YUSUF (V.O.)

That night we were celebrating
Mom's 34th and my 9th birthday.
Everything was going great. We were
singing, dancing, reciting poems
and having fun...

EXT. YUSUF'S COMPOUND - NIGHT - BIRTHDAY PARTY

SERIES OF SHOTS

-- Yusuf and Rano sit on the bench which is now setup as a
small party table filled with food and the cake in the
middle.

-- Yusuf sits, laughing and clapping. He watches Rano dance.
Rano dances a beautiful traditional dance. She dances as if
she was waiting to dance for a long time.

-- Rano sits, laughing loudly. Yusuf dances in front of her. He has a funny paper hat, painted mustache, and a wooden cane in his hand.

-- They both sit and laugh. Yusuf tells silly jokes.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

They both eat.

Dogs BARK and HOWL from the streets.

YUSUF

(looking at the gate)

Why are those dogs howling so much?
Is somebody beating them?

RANO

No. Nobody is beating them. Old people say, that dogs howl only when they see something bad is coming.

YUSUF

I don't understand.

RANO

Dogs howl when they see the angel
of --

The noise of a TRUCK ENGINE from the street interrupts Rano.

They turn to the gate and see a glow of light from the headlights of a truck. The truck seems to have pulled up outside their gate.

The engine noise cuts off and the light dies out as well.

INT/EXT. STREET/COMPOUND

Rustam gets out of the truck with his rifle on the shoulder. He shuts the door and laughing stumbles around to the passenger side. He is clearly drunk.

RUSTAM

Come on, honey. Welcome to your new house.

Rano stands up.

RANO

Oh God, please. Not now. Not today.

Yusuf stands next to Rano and takes her hand. Rano pulls him closer.

The sound of howling dogs grows louder.

Gate opens and Rustam enters the yard, hand-in-hand with a beautiful woman. It is GULLY, 40, tall, beautiful. Gully is drunk as well. They laugh out-loud.

RUSTAM

How did I shoot that bird --

Rustam sees Rano and Yusuf stand by their party table and stops talking.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)

Look at that, they're having party over here.

RANO

Go to your room honey.

YUSUF

What?

RANO

Go to your room.

YUSUF

No. I won't go. He will beat you again.

RANO

Don't worry, dear. He will not touch me!

Rustam lets go of Gully's hand and takes a step towards them.

RUSTAM

Come here Rano!

RANO

Please, Yusuf. Go inside.

YUSUF

(crying)

I will not leave you alone.

RUSTAM

I'm not going to say it again! Come here, you ugly bitch.

Rano takes Yusuf's hand and they rush to their room.

RANO
Okay. Let's go together.

Rustam flies into a rage. He rushes up to their table and kicks Yusuf's chair with his foot. The chair and Yusuf's cane are sent flying.

RUSTAM
Come here, Rano!

Rano opens the door, gently pushes Yusuf inside the room, and kisses him.

RANO
Go to your bed honey and don't open the door for anyone! Okay?! Anyone!

YUSUF
But mom --

Rano closes the door shut and turns to face Rustam, shielding the door with her body.

RUSTAM
Come here. Don't make me come get you!

RANO
Please, Rustam. Not today. Not now.

RUSTAM
No. I want to talk right now!

RANO
Please, Rustam. Have mercy. Yusuf is up, it is our birthday.

INT/EXT - COMPOUND/YUSUF'S ROOM

Yusuf watches them through the window and cries.

Rustam comes towards Rano cursing.

RUSTAM
You ugly bitch.

Rano draws back in fear and falls on her knees.

RANO
Stop, Rustam! Please! You're drunk.

Yusuf's tears stream down his face washing half of his painted mustache. He still has his paper hat on.

Rustam grabs Rano by the hair and pulls her up.

RUSTAM
I'm still your husband! Obey me!

Rustam slaps Rano's face so hard that she falls to the ground.

Yusuf beats on the window with his hands yelling.

YUSUF
Mommy! Mommy!

Rano covers her face with both hands.

Rustam beats and kicks her savagely.

Gully watches the show with a satisfied look.

RUSTAM
Gully is pregnant. It is her first time in my house and this is how you welcome her?

Yusuf runs out screaming and bites Rustam's leg. Rustam grabs Yusuf by his hair and shakes his leg free.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)
Get out of here, Yusuf.

Rustam pushes him away. Yusuf falls down on his cane. He grabs it and rushes back to fight.

Rustam beats Rano. Yusuf comes from the back and swings the cane at Rustam's head. The cane breaks into two pieces.

Rustam snatches the cane from Yusuf and knocks him down with one slap. Yusuf loses consciousness.

Rano pushes Rustam away and runs to Yusuf --

RANO
No! Yusuf!

Rustam grabs her by the hair and beats her with the cane. Rano falls down. She tries to stand up, but he puts his leg on her face and keeps beating until she faints too.

RUSTAM
If you want your son to be happy,
then die faster.

Rustam takes Gully's hand and they walk into Rustam's room.

EXT. COMPOUND - LATER

Dogs bark.

Rain showers the motionless bodies of Yusuf and Rano.

Yusuf opens his eyes slowly and sees Rano laying. He stumbles over to her, puts her head on his lap and wipes her face.

YUSUF

Mommy, mommy. Open your eyes...
Open your eyes mommy. Please.

Rano opens her eyes gradually and gives a painful smile. Yusuf smiles back and helps her to sit up.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Let's run away mom, or he will kill
us.

Tears fall down Yusuf's face. Rano wipes them away.

RANO

Don't cry, honey. I can take
anything, but not your tears.

Rano hugs him. Tears now fall from her eyes.

Rain intensifies.

Yusuf is calmer now. Rano smiles at his funny moustache, kisses him.

RANO (CONT'D)

Happy birthday, my little Chaplin.

YUSUF

Happy birthday, Mommy.

They hug each other again, then release.

RANO

Let's go to sleep honey. Our party
is over.

EXT. COMPOUND - STREAM - CONTINUOUS

They wash their faces, clean their clothes, and walk to their room.

They walk past their party table where the cake catches Yusuf's eyes. He just glances at it and looks away.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - SHORTLY

Rano and Yusuf lay on the bed and look at the window. Short flashes of lightning light up their faces.

Dogs howl and bark from a distance.

RANO

One day you will grow up strong,
smart, kind. Marry a beautiful girl
and live a very happy life... I
wish I could live long enough to
see that.

YUSUF

What are you talking about, Mom?

They make an eye contact.

RANO

Promise me.

YUSUF

Promise what?

RANO

Promise me, that you will live, no
matter what!

YUSUF

What do you mean, mom?

Rano is deadly serious and looks like she has lost her wits.

RANO

Promise me. You will keep living
and be happy every single day of
your life!... Promise me that
you'll never think about death!
Never!

Yusuf is about to cry.

YUSUF

Why are you talking like this, mom?
You are scaring me.

RANO

Please, Yusuf. Promise me!

Yusuf nods his head.

RANO (CONT'D)

Say it, honey.

YUSUF

I promise.

RANO

Promise me, that you will never forget your promise.

YUSUF

I promise.

Rano hugs and kisses him.

RANO

I love you honey and I would die a thousand times for you to live once... I will never let anybody harm you. Neither in this world nor hereafter! I love you Yusuf. I love you so much.

YUSUF

I know mom. I love you too.

Rano sniffs Yusuf's neck deeply, like a flower.

RANO

Now close your eyes honey and let's sleep. It's too late.

YUSUF

Good night, mommy.

RANO

Sweet dreams, honey.

Yusuf closes his eyes. Rano wipes his tears them and sings.

RANO (CONT'D)

*Sleep baby sleep, you're at home.
Sleep baby sleep, you're not alone.
Sleep baby sleep, I am with you.
Sleep baby sleep, we'll make it
through...*

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - LATER

The thunders clap and the lightening flashes their faces.

Yusuf sleeps. Rano lies next him patting his head. She looks strange and deeply distraught.

Rano stands up and kisses Yusuf repeatedly, all over his face. Then his head, shoulders, hands, legs, feet...

RANO

(whispering)

I'm sorry, honey. Forgive me for what I am about to do, but sooner this day comes, sooner it goes. Today, because of me, he raised hands on you. I promise that won't happen anymore. I don't know when my time will come, but I don't want you to share the punishment with me.

Rano opens a chest, takes all her belongings out, wraps them all in a blanket.

RANO (CONT'D)

I don't want these to remind you of me. I want you to move on as fast as possible.

Rano goes to Yusuf and kisses him more.

RANO (CONT'D)

Farewell, honey. I will miss you.

(kissing his face)

Your handsome face.

(kissing his eyes)

Your beautiful eyes.

(looking at him and smiling)

Your silly sense of humor...

Farewell honey.

Rano picks up the blanket, goes to the door, looks at Yusuf one last time and leaves the room.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Rano turns the light on, puts the blanket of her stuff in the middle of the room and sets them on fire. Yusuf's flowers are visible in the background.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - SAME

Yusuf breathes fitfully in his bed --

A series of loud thunderclaps break the silence and Yusuf jumps up screaming.

YUSUF

Mommy!

Yusuf lies back, extends his hand to hug Rano, but she is not there. Yusuf looks around.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Mommy?

He gets off, crawls to the window. Light from the barn reflects in his eyes.

INT/EXT. YARD/BARN - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf approaches the barn and notices something is burning inside.

He gets to the door and tries to open it, but it is locked from the inside. He looks through the cracks, but can't see anything.

The noise of liquid pouring onto the floor is heard.

YUSUF

Mom. Is that you?

Yusuf goes to look through the barn window. He reaches for the window sill and pulls himself up to look inside where Rano stands by the fire, pouring gasoline all over her body.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Oh God. No mommy! No!

Rano is crazed. She keeps pouring gasoline. Yusuf beats the window with his hand and screams crying.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Mommy! Open The door! Open the door
please!

Rano throws the can away and steps towards the fire. Yusuf stops crying and is motionless for a moment.

Then he gets down, picks up a rock, smashes the window into pieces and climbs in.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Rano takes a last step into the fire.

YUSUF

No!

Flames engulf Rano. She screams in agony and thrashes about wildly. Yusuf runs to her.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
 I am with you, mommy! I am with
you!

He runs into the flame and hugs Rano tightly. Now they both burn and scream wildly.

Rano picks up Yusuf and runs to the door. She manages to open it and runs out.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Rano runs to the stream and jumps into it extinguishing the fire instantly. Water splashes the pine tree.

FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - DAY

Super: "One Month Later"

DR. HASSAN (O.S.)
 Open your eyes. Can you hear me?
 Open your eyes.

SHAHLO (O.S.)
 I don't think he hears you.

DR. HASSAN (O.S.)
 But he just moved his fingers.

SHAHLO (O.S.)
 He does it every day.

DR. HASSAN (O.S.)
 But he just whispered, mommy.

FADE IN"

Yusuf's POV - Two figures look at Yusuf - they whisper. It is Dr. HASSAN, 40. And SHAHLO, 8.

SHAHLO
 (excited)
 He is opening his eyes.

DR. HASSAN
Hi, Yusuf. Welcome back.

Dr. Hassan squirts some liquid in Yusuf's eyes and his sight gets clearer.

YUSUF
Where am I?

DR. HASSAN
You are at home.

YUSUF
Where is my mom?

Dr. Hassan looks around, considering.

DR. HASSAN
She is here son. She is here.

YUSUF
Who are you?

DR. HASSAN
I am doctor Hassan and this is Shahlo.

YUSUF
What Shahlo?

DR. HASSAN
Your sister.

YUSUF
I don't have any sisters.

Dr. Hassan smiles.

DR. HASSAN
How do you feel Yusuf?

YUSUF
It hurts.

DR. HASSAN
Where?

YUSUF
Everywhere.

DR. HASSAN
That is a good sign... It means you are recovering.

Doctor takes a syringe and plugs it into Yusuf's IV line.

DR. HASSAN (CONT'D)
Now you sleep, Yusuf... sleep.

YUSUF
Where's my mom? I want to --

Yusuf falls back to sleep.

EXT. COMPOUND - SHORTLY

Rustam sits on the bench reading some drug prescriptions. He sees Dr. Hassan exiting Yusuf's room and stands up.

DR. HASSAN
Congratulations Rustam. He is back.

Rustam smiles, exhales with relief.

RUSTAM
Thank you, doctor.

DR. HASSAN
Would you like to see him?

RUSTAM
I don't think he wants that.

DR. HASSAN
I gave him a sedative and right now he is sleeping. He needs some rest... the wounds are deep and haven't completely healed yet.

RUSTAM
Is there anything I can do?

DR. HASSAN
I will have to come here every other day until he is back on his feet and --

Dr. Hassan slyly looks at Anna who is licking her calf in the backyard.

Rustam looks at Anna too.

RUSTAM
Anna will be in your house before sunset.

DR. HASSAN

Anna huh? An interesting name for a cow... I usually don't take bribes, but Yusuf's comeback after being in a persistent comma for month is a true miracle and needs to be celebrated properly... Many thanks.

RUSTAM

You are welcome.

Rustam sees the doctor off and shuts the gate behind him.

INT/EXT. COMPOUND/YUSUF'S ROOM - DAY

Yusuf's POV -- Everything is blurry...

YUSUF

(to himself)

Where am I?

... The swirling light overhead slows down and gradually stabilizes. The door of his room is open.

Two men talk in the distance.

Yusuf turns his head and looks outside.

Rustam brings the calf with her legs tied and puts it in the sidecar of the police motorcycle.

Officer Atto holds the steering wheel and chews tobacco.

OFFICER ATTO

So... the doctor did not do anything and got the cow... I am giving you freedom and get just a goat?

RUSTAM

It is a calf.

OFFICER ATTO

My goat weighs more than this calf.

RUSTAM

Right now it's all I have.

OFFICER ATTO

What about your truck?

RUSTAM

My truck?

OFFICER ATTO

Yes. Sell it and be as generous to me as I am to you.

Rustam nods his head affirmatively, but doesn't say anything. Officer Atto spits out his tobacco, takes a file from his suitcase, and reads it out loud...

OFFICER ATTO (CONT'D)

... She was making bread and Yusuf was sitting next to her. As she leaned to put dough into the tandoori, Yusuf felt dizzy and fell on her, she lost her balance and they both fell into tandoori full of fire.

He closes the file and smiles at Rustam.

RUSTAM

You are a good writer.

OFFICER ATTO

Experience, son, experience.

Officer Atto drives his motorcycle away.

Yusuf extends his hand.

YUSUF

No. Don't take my calf --

-- Yusuf sees his hand, burned, ugly. He removes the blanket and looks at his body which disfigured, ugly and scary. Yusuf screams.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

No, no. Help. Mommy!

Rustam rushes into the room and runs to Yusuf.

RUSTAM

What happened, Yusuf --

Yusuf is terrified seeing Rustam. He escapes to the corner of the room and covers his face with hands.

YUSUF

No, no. Leave us alone. Don't kill us. Don't hurt us!

RUSTAM

Calm down, Yusuf. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm your father!

YUSUF

No, no!

Dr. Hassan and Shahlo rush in. Dr. Hassan embraces Yusuf and tries to calm him down.

DR. HASSAN

It is okay son, it is okay.

RUSTAM

Yusuf --

DR. HASSAN

I think it is better if you leave.

RUSTAM

But --

DR. HASSAN

Please, Rustam! Close the door from behind you!

Rustam leaves.

YUSUF

Where is my mom? I want to see her!
I want to see my mom!

Dr. Hassan thinks, realizes. It is the right time. He whispers in Yusuf's ear.

DR. HASSAN

Yusuf... Your mom loved you the most and she did everything she could to save your life. But...

Dr. Stops talking.

YUSUF

I want my mom! I want her now!

DR. HASSAN

I did everything I could and was barely able to save you, which is still a miracle. But your mom... there was nothing I could do for her... When I came to your house she was already gone.

YUSUF

Gone where?

DR. HASSAN
 She passed away Yusuf. Rano is dead
 now. Your mom is dead.

Yusuf closes his eyes and screams with all his might. He
 cries with such a sorrow that it makes Shahlo cry too.

YUSUF
 No, no, no. You lie. Why would you
 say that? She is not dead. She
 can't be dead!

Dr. Hassan keeps Yusuf in his hug.

DR. HASSAN
 Cry son, cry. It will help.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Rustam and Gully sit on the bench.

YUSUF (O.S.)
 Mommy. I love you. Come back mom. I
 need you. I'm alone. I'm scared.

Rustam buries his head in his hands. Gully hugs him. No trace
 of sympathy on her face.

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

SUPER: "A Few Month Later"

-- Yusuf sits on a rock. Looks at rising moon, lonely.

YUSUF (V.O.)
 She was my only friend, my only
 hope and she left me. She left me
 at the time I needed her the
 most... I can't find the words to
 describe what I felt. Pain was the
 only thing I had or felt --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON - MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - DAY

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 Stop! Stop right there!

Major is emotional, but still firm. She throws her long
 finished cigarette and lights new one.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
 (at the door)
 Guard! Guard!

The same two guards come in.

BURLY GUARD
 Yes. Comrade Major.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 You can take him. We are done.

Yusuf looks at her, worried.

YUSUF
 But I didn't lie, comrade Major.
 I'm telling the plain truth. I --

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 I will see you tomorrow Yusuf. Now
 go!

Yusuf's facial expression changes. The guards lead him out.

Major Shamsiya inhales her cigarette deeply staring at the ceiling.

EXT. PRISON - PARKING LOT - LATER

GUARDS chill out, smoking.

Major Shamsiya rushes out the building. Guards throw away their cigarettes and salute her quickly. Fear and respect in their faces.

She passes by them not saying anything. They look at each other. Confused.

TALL GUARD
 What's wrong?... She didn't
 complain?

Major Shamsiya walks through the rows of expensive, chic cars, and reaches an old police piece of junk.

First she struggles to open the door and get in. Then the engine doesn't start. Major Shamsiya tries many times and gets annoyed.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 Damn it!

Guards look at her.

Major Shamsiya puts the side mirror down, also with a struggle and looks at the guards.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
 What are you people staring at?
 Come and help.

Guards come running and push her car until the engines starts.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
 Thank you!

Major Shamsiya drives away and dust covers their faces.

GUARDS
 You're not welcome.

EXT. NORRAK CITY - DAY

Major Shamsiya's car pulls up next to a building.

SIGN in the building reads: ORPHANAGE FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - CONTINUOUS

Major Shamsiya enters the yard where children with different health defects jam the playground.

TWO NURSES sit on a bench gossiping. They see Major Shamsiya coming and start her gossip.

NURSE #1
 Here she comes. Miss justice. The woman of law... Takes thieves, robbers and killers out of prison, but leaves her only, blind child in an orphanage.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 (passing by them)
 How is the gossip going?

Major Shamsiya goes to the end of the yard, where a lonely kid sits on the grass and listens to a small portable radio. It is DONISH, 8. He wears big sunglasses.

Major sits next to Donish and surprises him with a kiss in his cheek.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Hello, Donish.

Donish turns the radio off.

DONISH
Mom?! Is that you?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Yes, honey. It is me.

They hug.

DONISH
I missed you, mom. I missed you so much.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I missed you, too.

DONISH
Did you find me a friend, mummy?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I will, soon... Now I want to take you for an ice cream.

DONISH
Yay! Ice cream!

EXT. CITY PARK - EVENING

Kids and their parents hang out, enjoying the fun and adventures the park offers.

Major Shamsiya and Donish sit at a table.

Major Shamsiya watches Donish enjoy the ice cream and smiling kisses him.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Honey... did you know that the ice cream has a song?

DONISH
The ice cream has a song?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Yes. A very good one.

DONISH
It doesn't make sense. I never heard of it.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Do you want to hear it now?

DONISH
Okay?

Major Shamsiya looks around to see if anybody is looking.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
If you want, I can sing it for you.

DONISH
You never sing mom!

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I will try.

DONISH
Okay. Go ahead.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Promise not to laugh?

DONISH
I won't.

Major Shamsiya looks around again.

DONISH (CONT'D)
I'm listening...

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
(clearing her throat)
Ice cream is here, Ice cream is
sweet. Ice cream is here, ice cream
is cheap. Ice cream is here, ice
cream is cream. Ice cream is here,
ice cream is dream...

She is so out of tune and her voice is terrible.

Donish struggles not to laugh.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Ice cream is here, ice cream is
cold. Hurry, hurry people ice cream
is sold. Hurry, hurry --

Donish bursts out laughing.

DONISH
Stop it mom. Please stop it.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
You said you wouldn't laugh.

DONISH
I just said, I won't.

Major Shamsiya surprises Donish with another kiss.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
My little liar.

INT. ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

Donish lies on his bed. Major Shamsiya kisses his cheeks.
Donish is confused.

DONISH
You never kissed me so much mom. Is everything okay?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
From now on, You'll have more kisses, hugs and visits.

DONISH
Yay. When will you come back?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Soon baby. Soon... Now go to sleep. You had a long day.

DONISH
No mom. I had a short day.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
(grinning)
Me too.

She covers Donish with the blanket and gives him one more kiss.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Good night, honey.

Major Shamsiya walks to the door.

DONISH
I love you, mom.

She smiles at him and turns the lights off.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I love you too.

INT. PRISON YUSUF'S CELL - MORNING

Yusuf contentedly draws. Guards come and take him away.

INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Major Shamsiya smokes by the window, walking back and forth like a lion in the cage.

The guards bring Yusuf in, take his cuffs off and leave the office.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Good morning, Yusuf.

YUSUF
Good morning, comrade Major.

Major Shamsiya takes out an ice cream bar from her fridge and offers it to Yusuf.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
This is for you.

Yusuf takes it.

YUSUF
It is cold. Ice cream? Thank you very much!

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
You are welcome.

Yusuf wants it badly, but he is too shy to open.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Go ahead, enjoy it.

Yusuf rips open the package, takes a big bite, and gets brain freeze.

Major Shamsiya chuckles.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
That is why they call it ice cream.

Yusuf finishes the ice cream instantly and nods his head gratefully.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
Shall we start the story?

YUSUF
Oh. I am sorry.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
You are fine. Take your time.

Yusuf licks his sticky fingers and starts the story...

INT. COMPOUND YUSUF'S ROOM - EVENING

... Yusuf sits on his bed and looks around the room. The mirror in the corner catches his eye. He stares at it. Undecided.

After a few moments he finally stands and crawls to the mirror.

Yusuf sees his disfigured face and cries --

RANO (V.O.)
Promise. You will never forget your
promise. Promise, you will live no
matter what and laugh everyday.

-- Yusuf stops crying, takes his hands off his face and bravely looks in the mirror.

YUSUF
I promise!

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - NIGHT

Yusuf sleeps.

A soft knock on the door wakes him.

Yusuf ignores it at first, but knocking continues.

YUSUF
Leave me alone.

More knocks.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Go away! I don't want to see you!
You are not my father anymore!

SHAHLO (O.S.)
It is not your dad. It is me.

Yusuf gets off the bed.

YUSUF
Who are you?

SHAHLO (O.S.)
It is me Shahlo... Your sister.

YUSUF
I don't have any sisters.

SHAHLO (O.S.)
I am Gully's daughter. I am your
step-sister. Open the door please.
I want to talk to you.

YUSUF
I don't want to see anyone... and I
don't like your mom.

SHAHLO
I know. Open the door.

YUSUF
No. Leave me alone.

Yusuf closes his eyes.

More knocks.

Yusuf gives up and opens the door.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
I said I don't --

Yusuf sees Shahlo's smiling face and stops talking. She has
food in her hands.

SHAHLO
Hi, Yusuf. I brought you some food.

YUSUF
Who cooked it?

SHAHLO
I did.

Yusuf grabs the food roughly and goes to his bed. Shahlo
enters the room --

YUSUF
I didn't invite you.

Shahlo goes back to the door discouraged.

SHAHLO

I just wanted to be your friend.

Shahlo leaves. Yusuf uncovers the food, takes a bite and looks at the door.

YUSUF

She cooks like --

Yusuf runs after Shahlo.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf catches up with Shahlo.

YUSUF

Hey. Wait a minute.

Shahlo turns around.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

I am sorry. I was mean to you. I know you helped me a lot... I mean, the doctor told me how much you did for me... Can we go back to my room and talk?

Shahlo smiles and they walk back.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

So how old are you Shahlo?

SHAHLO

Eight.

EXT. COMPOUND - MORNING

Yusuf makes a slingshot. He breaks a branch from a tree and ties a thick piece of elastic on two ends. Shahlo watches him with excitement.

SHAHLO

What are you doing?

YUSUF

I am making a slingshot.

SHAHLO

Why?

YUSUF

Because I need it.

SHAHLO

Why?

YUSUF

Because I am by myself now.

SHAHLO

Why?

Yusuf is annoyed, but smiles to be nice.

YUSUF

Why do you ask so many why questions?

SHAHLO

Why not?

Yusuf laughs and fixes his slingshot. He test fires a few rocks at the sky.

SHAHLO (CONT'D)

Are you going to shoot the birds?

YUSUF

No.

SHAHLO

School windows?

YUSUF

No.

SHAHLO

Then why do you need it?

YUSUF

Stop asking questions... Do you want to go to cemetery with me?

SHAHLO

When? Uh I mean why?

YUSUF

Right now. To visit my mom's grave.

SHAHLO

Yes... but don't tell my mom.

YUSUF

Trust me, I won't.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Yusuf knocks on an old wooden door of a small dilapidated shed. An old man wearing dusty clothes opens the door, and puts his eyeglasses on. It is AMIN, 70, the cemetery keeper.

AMIN

Have you no patience --

Amin sees Yusuf's face and stops talking. Yusuf and Shahlo are dressed up. Shahlo smiles, but Yusuf is serious.

AMIN (CONT'D)

Oh boy.

YUSUF

Good morning, uncle Amin. Can you please show us where my mom's grave is?

AMIN

Yusuf? Is that you?

YUSUF

Yes. I came here to see my mom.

AMIN

Just give me a minute.

Amin puts his sandals on and leads the kids through the graves all the way to the top of the cemetery.

AMIN (CONT'D)

Watch your steps kids. It is a big sin to step on people's graves.

They walk their way through and reach a humble grave.

AMIN (CONT'D)

This is where your mom rests.

Yusuf is speechless. He just stares at the grave.

AMIN (CONT'D)

I will wait for you down there.

Amin leaves. Yusuf wipes his tears away.

YUSUF

Hello mommy. Sorry, I promised not to cry, but --

Yusuf bursts into tears. Shahlo puts her arm around his shoulder. Yusuf stops crying and wipes his tears again.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
I will not disappoint you mommy. I
promise.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Amin cuts grass off a grave. Yusuf and Shahlo approach him
from behind.

YUSUF
Why are you doing that uncle?

AMIN
Because graves are supposed to be
clean and neat.

YUSUF
You clean my mom's, too?

AMIN
Yes. I do it for all those who have
nobody else to do it for them, or --

YUSUF
May I please do my mom's?

AMIN
I bet you may.

Yusuf looks around and notices that many graves have trees
planted next to them.

YUSUF
Can I plant a tree too?

AMIN
That would be a kind thing to do,
son.

YUSUF
Thank you uncle. Have a nice day.

AMIN
You too son.

Yusuf and Shahlo walk down to the village.

EXT. VILLAGE - SHORTLY

Najib and other village kids play soccer in the middle of the
street. Najib sees Yusuf and Shahlo pass by and stops
playing.

NAJIB

Look at handsome Yusuf. Now my butt
is more pretty than him.

Boys laugh.

Yusuf and Shahlo ignore them and keep walking. Najib steps in
Yusuf's way and doesn't let him pass.

NAJIB (CONT'D)

Where are you going, ugly?

SHAHLO

We are going home.

Najib grabs Shahlo's hand and pulls.

NAJIB

And who are you?

Yusuf grabs Shahlo's other hand and stops Najib from pulling
her.

YUSUF

Let her go!

Najib and others are caught off guard. They laugh again.

NAJIB

What if I won't let her go?

YUSUF

Then I will make you.

Kids laugh again.

Shahlo is scared. Yusuf is deadly serious.

SHAHLO

Don't talk back. They will --

Najib pulls Shahlo roughly by hair. Shahlo screams in pain

NAJIB

Go ahead, ugly! Make me!

Yusuf punches Najib in the stomach. Najib gets crazed and
beats up Yusuf ruthlessly. Yusuf fights back, but other kids
join to help Najib.

Yusuf falls down and Shahlo jumps in for help, but Najib
kicks her too.

NAJIB (CONT'D)

Don't you ever talk back again. You
little monkey.

Yusuf and Shahlo lay on the ground and hold their stomachs.
Shahlo cries. Yusuf doesn't.

Najib and his gang continue their soccer game.

Yusuf wipes dust from his clothes. Shahlo sits next to him.
Still crying.

YUSUF

Stop crying and go home.

SHAHLO

What?

YUSUF

Just run home!

SHAHLO

Why?

YUSUF

Stop your why questions and go
home!... Now!

Shahlo sees how serious Yusuf is and just runs home.

Yusuf watches her run all the way to the end of the street
and enter their compound. Then he takes off his sandals and
slips them on his wrists like bracelets.

Unaware Najib and boys play yelling and screaming.

Yusuf loads his slingshot with a big rock and aims at Najib.
A kid sees it.

KID

Najib! Watch out.

Najib turns to Yusuf right as Yusuf shoots.

Rock hits Najib in the head. Najib falls down holding his
head and cries. Blood pours from between his fingers.

Yusuf runs away smiling.

NAJIB

Ahh. Go get him!

Boys run after Yusuf.

EXT. VILLAGE/COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Shahlo waits for Yusuf nervously.

Yusuf rushes in and locks the gate behind him.

Boys throw stones. Yelling, cursing.

BOY # 1

Open the gate. You coward.

BOY # 2

We will break your head.

The boys stay for a while then go back to Najib.

Yusuf and Shahlo watch them from behind their gate and laugh.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Yusuf and Shahlo dig a small hole next to Rano's grave. There is a bucket and a small pine tree next to them.

They finish with the hole and put the tree in it. Shahlo gives the empty bucket to Yusuf.

YUSUF

Oh. We didn't bring water?

They laugh. Yusuf looks at the lake.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Okay. You stay here and I'll go to get some water.

Yusuf walks down towards the lake. Shahlo looks around at the graves, scared. She runs after Yusuf.

SHAHLO

It is intimidating to be alone by the... lake.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - SHORTLY

The bucket is full of water.

Yusuf and Shahlo chase each other, playing around in the lake.

MIRHOJI, 65, tough, grey beard, bald head, watches them from across the lake, amused. A BIG HERD OF CATTLE pasture around him.

Mirhoji sees a goat going away from the flock and whistles out loud.

MIRHOJI

Feew, feew! Misha! Get that damned goat back to the pack.

A GREY BEAR, crawls from behind a tree and chases after the goat. It is MISHA. He forces the goat back to join the rest.

Yusuf and Shahlo are dumbfounded.

SHAHLO

That man has a bear?

YUSUF

That is so cool.

The sound of boys whistling and yelling, is heard.

Shahlo and Yusuf turn and see Najib with his gang coming to the lake. Najib has a bandage on his head.

They pull a DOG tied with a wire around its neck. It is Gypsy, the same dog Yusuf used to feed. Her body is all bloody.

Fear in Shahlo's face. Yusuf steps forward and pulls out his slingshot. Already loaded.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Get me some more rocks.

SHAHLO

Let's just run.

YUSUF

It is too late. Rocks. Right now!

The boys reach the lake. Shahlo hides her face behind Yusuf.

NAJIB

Well, well. Look who is here.

(pointing at his head)

You will pay for this ugly... now!

YUSUF

Yes. I will pay you another one...

Let the dog go.

The boys stare at him, confused faces.

NAJIB
Since when did you become so brave?

YUSUF
Didn't you hear me? Let the dog go!

Boys let Gypsy free, but Najib yells at them.

NAJIB
Hold it back. You cowards.

Boys grab Gypsy back.

NAJIB (CONT'D)
What are you going to do now, Ugly?

YUSUF
I'll make another hole in your head.

NAJIB
We are five. You are only one.

YUSUF
No, we are two.

NAJIB
Ugly Yusuf and a girl?

Boys laugh --

YUSUF
No. Ugly Yusuf and his slingshot.

NAJIB
If officer Atto sees your slingshot, he will --

YUSUF
I don't care!

Najib looks at Gypsy.

NAJIB
(to his friends)
Tie her legs up.
(to Yusuf)
You don't know who you're playing with, Ugly. I will --

YUSUF

There is nothing you can do! You
son of a donkey father and a whore
mother!

The boys tie up Gypsy and wait for Najib's order.

NAJIB

Throw her into the lake.

They do so.

Yusuf slips his slingshot around his neck and jumps in after
Gypsy.

Kids charge for Shahlo. She walks backwards to the lake.

EXT. LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Mirhoji shoots at the sky shifting Najib and the kids
attention to himself.

MIRHOJI

FWEE! FWEE! Misha go get those
little bastards!

Misha gets up and runs towards the boys.

NAJIB

Damn. That man has a bear.

Najib and his gang disperse.

Yusuf brings Gypsy to the shore and checks if she is alive.

Mirhoji and Misha come.

Shahlo and Yusuf see Misha and hug each other. Eyes wide
open, full of fear.

MIRHOJI

Oh sorry. Don't be afraid. He is
absolutely harmless.

Kids are not convinced.

Mirhoji ties Misha to a tree.

Then comes and revives Gypsy. Gypsy opens her eyes and spits
water.

SHAHLO

She is alive!

Mirhoji takes a cloth from his pocket and ties the wound in her paw.

YUSUF

Hi Gypsy.

MIRHOJI

Do you know her?

YUSUF

Yes!... We are friends.

Yusuf hugs Gypsy.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I won't let them hurt you again.

Mirhoji studies Yusuf.

MIRHOJI

What is your name, son?

YUSUF

I am Yusuf, and this is Shahlo.

MIRHOJI

Very good. Very good. (Stroking dog) She is pregnant.

YUSUF

Pregnant?

SHAHLO

My mom is pregnant too.

Yusuf looks at Shahlo, then back at Mirhoji.

YUSUF

How do you know she is pregnant?

MIRHOJI

I've had dogs since I was born. I grew up with them. So trust me, I know.

Mirhoji stands up and pats the kids shoulders.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

I bring my sheep here everyday at noon... Whenever you get bored and feel like listening to some interesting shepherd stories, be my guest.

Mirhoji unties Misha and they go to his cattle.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

And remember son. Dogs are better
friends than humans.

Yusuf nods.

They take the bucket and walk. Gypsy stares at them.

YUSUF

Come on Gypsy.

Gypsy follows them.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

That's right. You are mine now.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

The tree is planted and watered.

Yusuf and Shahlo take turns feeding Gypsy.

Yusuf puts a piece of bread by her and she eats it instantly.

Shahlo puts another one and she does the same, making them
laugh.

YUSUF

She always does that.

SHAHLO

What are we going to do with her?

YUSUF

We will take her home.

Shahlo smiles. Yusuf picks up their stuff and walks down.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Let's go. It is getting dark.

The three walk towards the village as the sun sets on the
horizon.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Gully and Rustam sit on the bench, sipping tea. Rustam
strokes Gully's expecting stomach.

Gate opens and Yusuf enters the yard followed by Shahlo and Gypsy.

Gully chokes and spits her tea back.

GULLY

A dog?

RUSTAM

Let him be.

YUSUF (V.O.)

Gypsy became a light in the darkest part of my life. We'd play all the time, every where...

MONTAGE - YUSUF, SHAHLO AND GYPSY'S TIME

-- FIELD -- Gypsy is chasing Yusuf and Shahlo.

-- LAKE -- Yusuf and Shahlo sit by tent and listen to Mirhoji telling a story. Gypsy is playing with Mirhoji's dogs.

-- SCHOOL -- Yusuf gets inside the classroom followed by Gypsy, disgusted faces of teachers and students.

-- LAKE -- Yusuf and Gypsy wrestle.

-- COMPOUND -- Yusuf and Gypsy sit on the bench and look at the sky. Yusuf counts the stars...

END OF MONTAGE

YUSUF (V.O.)

... We had so much fun, that days and months passed by like hours and minutes. The next thing I knew, Gypsy gave birth to five puppies...

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - DAY

Yusuf comes in wearing his school uniform. Gypsy lays on the bed with FIVE NEWLY BORN PUPPIES all around her.

YUSUF

Oh-My-God. Gypsy!

Yusuf throws his bag aside and rushes out.

INT./EXT. COMPOUND - RUSTAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf goes to the window and looks in.

Yusuf's POV - Shahlo sleeps. Yusuf knocks at the window.

YUSUF
Shahlo, Shahlo.

Shahlo wakes, looks at the window.

Shahlo's POV - Yusuf's ugly face looking at her and smiling.

Shahlo comes to the window wiping her sleepy eyes.

SHAHLO
(whispering)
What do you want?

YUSUF
(loudly)
Come to my --

SHAHLO
Shh!...

Shahlo looks back at Gully who sleeps by the door.

SHAHLO (CONT'D)
... My mom is here.

YUSUF
(whispering)
Come to my room. There is a
surprise... five surprises.

SHAHLO
(pointing at Gully)
I can't right now.

YUSUF
Come through the window.

Yusuf extends his hands. Shahlo holds on to them and gets out.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Now close your eyes.

SHAHLO
Why?

YUSUF

Don't start your why questions.
Just close your eyes.

Shahlo closes her eyes and Yusuf takes her to his

ROOM

Yusuf brings Shahlo close to the puppies.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Open your eyes.

Shahlo opens her eyes. Surprised face.

SHAHLO

Oh, my God. There are so many...
are they male or female?

YUSUF

That is what we're about to find
out.

They pick up the puppies one by one and check their genders,
but neither Yusuf nor Shahlo can tell.

SHAHLO

I don't really know which is what.

YUSUF

Neither do I.

They look at each other thinking.

SHAHLO

Hey. The old shepherd.

YUSUF

What about the old shepherd?

SHAHLO

I think he can help us.

YUSUF

You're right.

SHAHLO

... How are we going to take them?

Yusuf looks around, thinking.

YUSUF

Ope. I have an idea... I will be
right back.

Yusuf runs out.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN

Yusuf looks around and finds a wooden BASKET. He checks it out.

YUSUF
It should be fine.

He cleans the dust from it and leaves the barn.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shahlo plays with the puppies. Yusuf comes in.

YUSUF
Look what I found.

SHAHLO
That is for mushrooms.

YUSUF
It will be fine.

They put a cloth inside the basket and place all the puppies in it. Then Yusuf picks it up and they leave.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Yusuf and Shahlo stare at Misha as Mirhoji checks the puppies' genders. Mirhoji picks up the puppies one by one and looks at their stomachs.

MIRHOJI
(checking the first one)
Female.
(second)
Female.
(third)
Female.
(fourth)
Female! Oh my goodness.
(the last one)
Finally, male... Four females and
one male... He is going to have
many nieces and nephews.

They laugh.

YUSUF
Let's name them.

MIRHOJI
I'd advise you to wait for them to grow a little bit. Then you can name them according to their characters.

Yusuf nods his head approvingly.

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

Yusuf and Shahlo sit by the campfire and watch Mirhoji stroke Misha's head. Gypsy chews a bone in the background whilst her puppies suckle on her.

YUSUF
Why he doesn't bite you?

Mirhoji smiles.

MIRHOJI
Because I am his dad. I mean, I brought him up.

SHAHLO
Where did you find him.

MIRHOJI
I killed his mother.

SHAHLO
Oh, God.

MIRHOJI
I didn't know she had a baby. She would follow me all the time and eat my sheep. I shot her dead and then found out she had a baby. So I took him and here he is... Let me tell you about the wolf instead. That is more interesting.

YUSUF/SHAHLO (IN UNISON)
You have a wolf too?

MIRHOJI
No, no. I don't... There was this wolf long time ago, who would not leave me alone. She would follow my sheep everywhere...

(MORE)

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

Wolves sense it when a shepherd doesn't have his rifle. So she would attack every other night and kill many of my babies. She wouldn't eat all of them, but she would kill... One rainy day I decided that enough was enough and went out to face my enemy...

Yusuf and Shahlo are totally involved in the story. They listen with full anticipation.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

... So I stood in her way, armed with my bamboo stick. She was looking at me showing her sharp teeth. I was looking back. Rain was pouring like water from the hose. Smart wolf tricked me by looking around and walking back. I thought she was afraid of me and I decided to charge, but the slippery soil caused me to fall down and the wolf jumped on me...

Mirhoji stops talking just to check if the kids are following the story. Yusuf and Shahlo get impatient.

SHAHLO/YUSUF (IN UNISON)

What happened next?!

Mirhoji smiles.

MIRHOJI

... Then she tried to bite my face, but I grabbed her mouth with both hands and tried to keep it away from my body as far as possible. I managed to keep her mouth away, but her claws tore my face, arms and chest. I bled a lot and died...

Mirhoji stops talking and waits for their reaction.

SHAHLO

Oh my God. You died?

YUSUF

Wait. Wait!... How could you die then and be alive now?

Mirhoji laughs.

MIRHOJI

... I mean I thought I was going to die. I was yelling and calling for help... Your neighbors came, and instead of helping, they were just watching and enjoying the show.

Yusuf smiles.

YUSUF

Sounds like them.

MIRHOJI

Finally, I remembered about my knife in my vest. I used one hand to keep her mouth away, and another to grab my knife. Wolf was about to crush my head like a paper box, but I managed to stab her first. I stabbed her numerous times and she fell on my shoulders... Then I fell down too. Your neighbors came running to us and I thought they were coming to help me, but they came to get the wolf.

SHAHLO

Wow. That was awesome.

MIRHOJI

Well, I would say that was OUCHSOME.

They laugh.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

Anyway. I think you better get going. It is getting dark.

Yusuf and Shahlo put the puppies back in the basket.

YUSUF

Thank you very much uncle.

MIRHOJI

Always welcome.

They leave looking cautiously at Misha.

INT. COMPOUND KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shahlo looks around cautiously, then grabs a bowl of milk from the table and turns to leave, but Rustam steps in.

SHAHLO

Oh.

Rustam sees the bowl of milk in her shaking hands.

RUSTAM

Who's this for?

SHAHLO

For me.

RUSTAM

But you don't like milk.

SHAHLO

I changed my mind. Now, I love it.

RUSTAM

Honey, I hate lies. Who is this for?

SHAHLO

For the puppies.

RUSTAM

For the puppies?

SHAHLO

Yes. Gypsy can't give them enough milk and they are always hungry.

Shahlo cries.

RUSTAM

Don't cry honey. I'll get you a bowl of milk every day so you can feed them. But Yusuf can't know about it, okay? It is going to be our little secret.

Shahlo nods her head.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)

Good girl. Now go and give it to them.

SHAHLO

Thanks.

Shahlo runs out.

Gully peeps at them from the background. She strokes her expecting stomach, makes a bitter face.

GULLY

Yusuf.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Rustam fixes his truck.

Yusuf enters the yard with his schoolbag on his shoulders.
Rustam sees Yusuf and blocks his way.

Yusuf goes left keeping his head down, but Rustam stands in his way.

Yusuf goes right, Rustam steps in his way. Yusuf stops.

RUSTAM

Why don't you look at me?

No respond.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)

I am talking to you Yusuf!

Yusuf still looks down.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)

What can I do for you to forgive me?

Yusuf gives him a very cold look.

YUSUF

Bring my mom back!

Rustam looks down, speechless.

Yusuf walks away.

GULLY (O.S)

Rustam! Baby is coming!

Rustam runs to his room.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Rustam and Gully enter the yard. Gully holds A BABY.

They pass by Yusuf's room and Gully sees Yusuf watching them through the window.

GULLY
 How much do you love our baby
 Rustam?

Rustam turns to her and smiling looks at the baby. Then he
 kisses both of them.

RUSTAM
 I love him a lot.

GULLY
 And me?

GULLY (CONT'D)
 And you too.

Gully looks at Yusuf mockingly, smiles. Yusuf looks away and
 closes his eyes...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON - DAY

Teenage Yusuf sips tea from a cup.

YUSUF
 Gully thought I would feel jealous,
 but she was wrong. It didn't matter
 to me anymore. I was a new person,
 with a new life and a new family.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 So did you ever get along with your
 dad?

YUSUF
 Never! Every time I looked at him,
 I saw my mom burning. I'll never
 forgive him for that. Never!

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 So then what happened?

YUSUF
 After giving birth to a boy, Gully
 was determined to kick me out of
 the house... She knew that I loved
 Gypsy more than anything else. So
 she started beating and torturing
 her. Being afraid of Gully, I
 started locking up Gypsy and her
 puppies in my room everyday when I
 went to school. One day...

INT. COMPOUND YUSUF'S ROOM - MORNING

... Yusuf dresses in a hurry.

The puppies play on the bed. He notices Gypsy standing by the door waiting for him.

YUSUF
Oh, sorry. I forgot.

Yusuf opens the door and lets Gypsy out.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
How could I oversleep on the test day.

Finishing to dress, Yusuf takes his schoolbag and leaves the room.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf locks the door of his room hurriedly and leaves the house.

Gypsy pees in a corner and comes back to Yusuf's room, but the door is locked. She barks a couple of times, then sits by the door.

EXT. YUSUF'S ROOM - LATER

Gypsy sleeps by the door.

Gully silently approaches from behind and BANG! Smacks her head with a stick.

GULLY
Get out of here. You worthless dog!

Gypsy jumps up barking and runs out. Gully chases her to the gate.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Gypsy stops at the corner of the street and looks back at Gully.

GULLY
If you come here again, I'll kill you!

Gully gets back to the compound closing the gate behind her.

Gypsy stays where she is for a moment then slowly goes back to sit by the gate.

EXT. VILLAGE - NOON

Gypsy sleeps by the gate.

A sudden sound of kids yelling and screaming wakes her.

She looks at an OLD DERVISH passing through the street.

Najib and other village boys chase and throw stones at him.

Gypsy barks at the kids trying to protect the man, but they beat her to.

They kick and beat her until she loses her wits and starts biting them. Najib is first victim, then others.

ADULT NEIGHBORS who were enjoying the scene until now, pick up stones and start stoning Gypsy.

INT. COMPOUND RUSTAM'S ROOM - SAME

Gully listens to the radio. Shahlo cooks in the background.

The sound of Gypsy barking is heard.

SHAHLO

Gypsy?

Shahlo puts out the fire under the pot and runs out.

GULLY

Don't open the gate!

Gully runs after Shahlo.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Gypsy is bloody, wounded, but stands her ground.

Neighbors kick her.

Shahlo comes out.

SHAHLO

Stop it! Don't beat her!

Neighbors pay zero attention to Shahlo.

NEIGHBOR#1
How dare you bite my kid.

NEIGHBOR#2
Make sure she doesn't run away!
I'll go get my rifle.

Shahlo tries to let Gypsy through the gate, but Gully slams the gate closed and grabs Shahlo's hand.

GULLY
It is a street dog!

Gully enjoys the spectacle.

Shahlo cries, then stops, remembering something.

SHAHLO
Yusuf.

She breaks away from Gully and runs down the street.

GULLY
Come back at once!

Gully chases her for a little bit, then stops and turns back.

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Shahlo runs across the playground and enters the building.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf and his classmates do an assignment.

TEACHER checks their work.

Shahlo throws the door open and rushes in interrupting everybody.

YUSUF
Shahlo?

SHAHLO
Hurry, Yusuf! They will kill Gypsy!

YUSUF
What?! She is outside?

Yusuf runs out.

TEACHER

Yusuf. Your bag.

Shahlo picks up Yusuf's stuff in a rush and runs after him.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf runs down the street.

The sound of Gypsy barking is heard.

YUSUF

Oh God. Sorry, Gypsy. Sorry.

Yusuf turns in the main street and sees the crowd of people outside their compound. They are yelling and cursing.

Yusuf runs through the crowd and hugs Gypsy.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Stop it! You animals! Leave her alone.

A neighbor pulls Yusuf by the shoulder.

NEIGHBOR

Ugly. Get your crazy dog out of here or I'll kill her.

He shoves Yusuf onto Gypsy.

Gypsy continues to bark.

The neighbors disperse.

Dissatisfied Gully grabs Shahlo by the ear and pulls her inside the compound.

GULLY

Do you have any idea what you have done?

Yusuf hugs Gypsy. He cries.

YUSUF

I am sorry, Gypsy. I am so sorry.
It is all my fault.

INT. COMPOUND YUSUF'S ROOM - LATER

Yusuf puts Gypsy on his bed and ties her wounds. Gypsy barks.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - SERIES OF SHOTS

NIGHT -- Gypsy stands in front of Yusuf and barks. Her eyes are red and bloody.

MORNING -- Yusuf puts food by Gypsy. She doesn't eat, just barks.

NIGHT -- Yusuf sits on the bed and stares at Gypsy who is looking out the window and howling.

MORNING -- Yusuf grabs his schoolbag and leaves. Gypsy follows him to the threshold barking.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - MORNING

Yusuf gets ready for school.

Gypsy barks at him. She is crazed now and seems very dangerous.

YUSUF

What do you want Gypsy?

Puppies play and whine on the bed. Yusuf looks at them, considering.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

I think I have to separate you. I don't want you to harm the puppies.

Yusuf looks around the room looking for something then leaves.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

I will be right back.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf takes a rusty chain from the pillar and checks it out.

YUSUF

This should be fine --

The bottle with dead flowers standing in the corner catches Yusuf's eyes. It is the same flowers he got for his mom's birthday. He looks at them for a moment, sorrow in his eyes.

INT. YUSUF'S ROOM - SHORTLY

Yusuf puts the chain around Gypsy's neck.

YUSUF

Sorry, buddy. But I don't want to risk the puppies. Hope you'll understand.

Gypsy keeps barking. Yusuf holds the chain and gently pulls her outside his

ROOM

Yusuf locks the door and ties Gypsy to the door handle.

YUSUF

It's better if you stay right here. You look scary now. I'm sure nobody will approach you.

Yusuf leaves the house.

Gypsy looks up at the mountains and continues to bark and howl.

INT. COMPOUND RUSTAM'S ROOM - SAME

Rustam is having breakfast. Gully brings a bottle of vodka and puts it next to him.

RUSTAM

It's morning!

GULLY

Once in a while doesn't hurt.

Gully fills up a glass and gives it to Rustam who empties it in one gulp.

RUSTAM

For us.

GULLY

Yes! For us!

INT. COMPOUND RUSTAM'S ROOM - LATER

Gully holds her baby and argues with Rustam. Rustam is drunk.

Gypsy's barking and howling is heard.

Gully pinches her baby and baby starts to cry.

GULLY

That damned thing has been keeping us up for three days. The baby's sick! He is scared and cries all the time. Why don't you do anything about it? What kind of man are you?

RUSTAM

What do you want me to do? You think she'll listen to me, when she doesn't obey Yusuf?

GULLY

(pointing at the rifle on the wall)

What do you keep that rifle for?

RUSTAM

No! I am not going to shoot her!

GULLY

Now you love that homeless dog too?

RUSTAM

I just don't want to lose Yusuf.

GULLY

You've already lost him. And trust me, you will lose us, if you don't make that beast shut up!

EXT. COMPOUND - LATER

Gypsy howls.

Rustam rushes out of his room with a big stick in his hand. He is clearly drunk.

RUSTAM

You will shut up or I will make you.

Gypsy barks at him. Rustam grabs the chain around her neck and starts beating her.

RUSTAM (CONT'D)

I've already lost one family. I don't want to lose another. Especially, because of a damned stray dog!

Rustam hits her ruthlessly. Gypsy tries to run away, but she is tied up. Rustam keeps beating her.

EXT. SCHOOL - SAME

Yusuf walks out of the classroom.

The crowd of TEACHERS and STUDENTS gathered in the yard. Everybody looks at the sky that is covered by black and boiling clouds.

The sound of dogs howling is heard. Instinctual talks and worries.

Yusuf runs through the crowd.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf runs towards his house crying.

Gypsy's barking gets louder and clearer.

YUSUF

What's going on Gypsy? What's wrong?

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf rushes in and sees Rustam hit Gypsy. He runs to them screaming.

YUSUF

No! No! Don't you dare touch her!
Don't you dare kill her!

Yusuf falls down on Gypsy and covers her with his body.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

No! Don't beat her!

RUSTAM

Make her shut up, or I will.

Rustam throws away the stick and goes back to his room.

YUSUF

Please, Gypsy. Calm down. I don't want you dead to. Please!

The wind blows and lightening strikes across the sky. Thunder rumbles.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Wait here. I'll take your puppies
and we'll get out of here.

Yusuf goes into his room.

Gully comes out carrying her baby in a baby carrier, sits on the bench and puts the carrier next to her.

Then she lifts the blanket and takes a look at the baby. Baby is sleeping.

Gypsy barks at her.

GULLY

Good job, Gypsy. Keep on doing
that. You're making my job easier.
I hope ugly gets out of here after
Rustam kills you.

Yusuf comes out of his room, holding all the puppies in the basket.

He comes to Gypsy and remembers something --

YUSUF

My bag!

Yusuf puts the basket down and goes back to his room.

Gypsy looks at her puppies and barks. She barks loud and tries to break free from the chain.

Yusuf comes back and stares at Gypsy. Gypsy tries tenaciously to break the chain.

After many attempts she finally breaks the chain and rushes towards Yusuf.

Frightened, Yusuf runs back to his room and shuts the door behind. Gypsy paws at his door for a moment, then turns to Gully who is shocked.

Gypsy runs towards her ferociously. Gully flees towards the barn, leaving her baby on the bench.

GULLY

(running)

Help, Rustam. Help!

Gully enters the barn and shuts the door. Gypsy stands by the barn and barks.

Rustam comes out his room boldly and rushes towards Gypsy yelling.

Gypsy charges at him barking. Rustam chickens out and runs back to his room.

INT/EXT COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

The roar of thunder gets louder and the rain starts to fall.

Gypsy's POV -- Rustam and Shahlo look at her through their window.

Gully from the barn window and Yusuf from his room. They are all stunned.

Gypsy circles the yard barking. Then she stops and looks at the basket where her puppies are whining.

Gypsy grabs the basket with her mouth and runs towards the gate.

On her way she sees the baby carrier on the bench and stops. Gypsy is immobilized. She stares at the baby carrier, considering.

Gypsy puts her puppies down, grabs the baby carrier, looks at Yusuf one last time, and runs to the street.

YUSUF

Oh God.

Gully rushes out the barn and chases after Gypsy, screaming.

INT. RUSTAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rustam is outraged. He grabs his rifle and runs out.

EXT. COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf sees Rustam with the rifle in his hand.

YUSUF

Oh, no.

Yusuf runs after them. Shahlo runs after Yusuf.

EXT. VILLAGE - SHORTLY

Gypsy exits the village gate and looks back where Yusuf and others are chasing her.

Gypsy runs up the mountain.

Rustam runs faster and passes Gully.

Yusuf sees that and runs as fast as he can.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

Gypsy is midway up the mountain and continues to climb.

Yusuf overpasses Rustam.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SUMMIT - CONTINUOUS

Gypsy comes up, puts the baby under a big rock, and heads back to the village.

Yusuf runs upwards.

Gypsy, downwards.

Gypsy and Yusuf come face to face midway. Yusuf smiles.

Gypsy tries to avoid him and continue on her way. Yusuf grabs her, hugs tightly.

YUSUF

No! Don't go there! It's dangerous.

Gypsy tries to break free, but she can't.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Calm down. Everything is okay.

Gypsy howls and barks trying to free herself --

The thunder hits about ten times in a row, like successive gunshots.

Gypsy rests her head on Yusuf's shoulder and stops barking. Tears fall down her face.

Yusuf's eyes are closed. He strokes Gypsy.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

Good girl, good girl. Calm down.
Everything is going to be --

Yusuf's hand goes down Gypsy's back and pauses.

Yusuf opens his eyes. He looks at his hand. It is bloody. Rustam is visible from between Yusuf's fingers. He is pointing his rifle at them.

Yusuf is dumbfounded. He puts his hand at Gypsy's wound and screams.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
No! No! No! My God!

Rustam runs up the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SUMMIT - CONTINUOUS

Rustam takes the baby carrier and removes the blanket just to see the baby is smiling. Rustam looks at Gypsy. He is confused.

Gully comes and takes the baby from him.

The rain stops.

GULLY
Let's go back before the rain
starts again.

Gully gives Rustam the baby and they descend.

MIDWAY

Shahlo sits by Yusuf, strokes Gypsy. They both cry.

Gypsy looks at Yusuf, satisfied.

YUSUF (V.O.)
She was looking at me the same way
my mom did that night, when she
said, "I love you Yusuf and I would
die a thousand times for you to
live once."

Rustam and Gully reach them.

Yusuf gives Rustam a cold look. Rustam is speechless. He looks down and continues on his way.

Gully grabs Shahlo's hand and pulls.

GULLY

Let's go home. It is dangerous up here.

SHAHLO

No! I want to stay here.

Shahlo resists hysterically.

Gully slaps her face and drags her away.

EXT. VILLAGE GATE - CONTINUOUS

They reach the village gate. Baby cries. Rustam tries to calm him down, but no luck.

RUSTAM

Take your baby, Gully. I think he is hungry.

Gully lets Shahlo's hand go and takes the baby.

Shahlo takes advantage of the moment and runs back to the mountain.

GULLY

Catch her, Rustam. She is going back there.

RUSTAM

Let her be. She is going to Yusuf.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - MIDWAY

Tears roll down Yusuf's face. Gypsy's head lays on his lap.

Shahlo comes and sits next to him.

EXT. VILLAGE - SAME

Lightening bolts flash in the sky, striking various places.

One of them hits an electric wire and a fire erupts.

The fire jumps from pole to pole and reaches the houses instantly.

VILLAGERS come out and try to put the fires out. The streets are jammed.

Najib and his gang try to help too.

Officer Atto rides his motorcycle.

An electric pole collapses and falls on top of him. He escapes it by inches, but his motorcycle is crushed.

EXT. LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Rain and wind collide causing a tornado which takes power in a matter of seconds and spins down to the

VILLAGE

where people are busy putting out the fires.

Officer Atto tries to pull his suitcase from the motorcycle. He pulls hard and handle breaks causing him to fall down.

Falling down he sees Tornado coming straight to him. Officer Atto stands up and runs in horror.

OFFICER ATTO
Tornado! Tornado!

People see the tornado and panic ensues. They disperse, seeking shelter.

The tornado whirls very fast destroying everything in its path.

Officer Atto and Najib are blown first.

-- MOUNTAINS

Shahlo and Yusuf watch the spectacle in horror.

EXT. VILLAGE

Rustam and Gully enter the compound. Gully looks around and shuts the door behind.

Seconds later tornado blows up the whole compound.

INT. VILLAGE/VARIOUS HOUSES

People hide in their houses, looking up at the sky, terrified.

EXT. VILLAGE

Tornado dies out after destroying half of the village.

People come out of their houses.

Suddenly the earth shakes. It trembles strongly and the remaining houses collapse.

The quake gets violent and the ground splits in two and men fall into crevices as if the earth was swallowing them.

The gigantic crack splits the village and the

ROCK

that held back the lake water collapse causing water gushes down onto the village.

People run, but can't escape.

Water roars down washing away everyone and everything in its path.

MOUNTAINS

Yusuf's POV -- Water gushes over the entire Village and goes down, leaving nothing behind.

Yusuf and Shahlo are astonished.

The rain stops. The skies calm down.

Yusuf stares at Gypsy.

YUSUF

Is that what you were trying to say?

Yusuf hugs Gypsy's dead body and cries.

YUSUF (CONT'D)

I am sorry! I am so sorry!

Shahlo puts her hand on his shoulder.

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

Yusuf and Shahlo stand by the village gate. Yusuf carries Gypsy's body.

They look around and see nothing. Nothing, but ruins.

Yusuf leaves Gypsy's body on a rock and they go to look around the ruins.

Wandering around the debris, Shahlo comes across something and calls Yusuf.

SHAHLO
Come here Yusuf.

Yusuf comes and sees a small pine tree stands untouched. It is the same tree he planted with his mother.

YUSUF
My tree.

SHAHLO
That means we are at home.

Shahlo cries.

YUSUF
Why are you crying?

SHAHLO
For my little brother.

Yusuf hugs her.

SHAHLO (CONT'D)
What are we going to do now? We don't have anybody.

Yusuf wipes her tears.

YUSUF
You have me, and I have you... Now go sit over there. I have to bury Gypsy.

Shahlo watches Yusuf burying Gypsy next to the tree --

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (V.O.)
Stop! Stop right there!...

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - EVENING

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Please, stop.

Yusuf stops talking. Major Shamsiya points at the window.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
 It is already dark. We will
 continue tomorrow.
 (to the door)
 Guard! Guard!

Guards come in and take Yusuf away.

Major Shamsiya rests her head on her chair, considering.

INT. ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

Donish sleeps. Major Shamsiya shakes his shoulder gently and
 whispers in his ear.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 Wake up, honey. Wake up.

DONISH
 Mom? Is that you?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 Yes honey.

DONISH
 What time is it?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 It doesn't matter. Do you want to
 go home?

Donish smiles wide.

DONISH
 Yes!... But you have to work all
 the time.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
 I think I can afford to cut back.

Major Shamsiya picks Donish up and leaves the clinic.

INT. PRISON YUSUF'S CELL - DAY

Yusuf draws the last line in his picture, then steps back and
 looks at it.

The guards open his cell.

TALL GUARD
 Come out Ugly. Your date is waiting
 impatiently.

Guards laugh and take him away.

INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - SHORTLY

Major walks back and forth in the office. Yusuf walks in.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Good morning.

YUSUF
Good morning, comrade Major.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Take a seat and continue the story.

Yusuf rushes to his chair and starts.

YUSUF
Where were we?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Your village was washed away and
you were burying your dog next to
your pine tree...

YUSUF
Oh, Yes. I buried Gypsy and...

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

... The two sit and look at Gypsy's grave.

A low whining sound is heard.

They both turn around and look.

SHAHLO
Did you --

The sound is heard again. Now it is louder and clearer.

YUSUF
Yes, it is a whining. A dog
whining.

The sound gets louder and louder.

Yusuf and Shahlo follow the source which leads them to a
PILE of debris.

Shahlo points her finger.

SHAHLO
It is from here.

Yusuf removes rubble fast and without caution.

SHAHLO (CONT'D)
Be careful.

They move the rubble away and Yusuf finally sees the noise maker.

YUSUF
I see him. Oh my God. It is our puppy!

They pull the puppy out. It Gypsy's male puppy. Yusuf and Shahlo jump and scream with joy.

SHAHLO
Let's keep looking Yusuf. Maybe there are more.

YUSUF
You are right.

Yusuf hands the puppy to Shahlo and continues to dig.

Shahlo walks around with the puppy in her hands and whistles.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
That is clever. Keep whistling.

Yusuf whistles and digs.

EXT. RUINS - SUNSET

Shahlo sits by the tree, holding the puppy.

Yusuf comes and collapses by them.

YUSUF
There are no more.

SHAHLO
I think he is the only one left...
Lets name him.

YUSUF
Lucky.

SHAHLO
What?

YUSUF
We will name him Lucky.

Shahlo looks at the puppy.

SHAHLO
I think Lucky is hungry... and so
am I.

Before Yusuf can say anything a hand full of bread extends
from behind Shahlo's shoulder.

They turn around and see Mirhoji standing right behind them.

MIRHOJI
Take it, son.

Shahlo takes the bread from him and eats.

SHAHLO
Thank you.

Shahlo tries to feed Lucky with the bread, but he can't chew.

Mirhoji smiles.

MIRHOJI
I think he is too young for
something hard like that... He
needs milk.

SHAHLO
There is no milk in here.

MIRHOJI
My sheep are right behind the
ridge. There I have milk.

Mirhoji walks towards the ridge.

Yusuf and Shahlo look at each other then follow him.

EXT. RIDGE - SHORTLY

Lucky laps up the milk hungrily.

YUSUF
He is hungry.

MIRHOJI
What about you?

Yusuf and Shahlo exchange looks, but feel shy to ask.

Mirhoji smiles at them, then goes to bring one of his sheep.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S TENT - NIGHT

The whole lamb is skewered and cooks above the campfire. Trio sit around and eat big chunks of meat.

Every now and then Yusuf and Shahlo look back at Misha.

Misha looks at them. They seem to share a common curiosity.

MIRHOJI

You are lucky. Just this morning I
ran out of meat.

Yusuf throws a bone at Misha. He looks at it confused.

YUSUF

He doesn't like bone?

Mirhoji smiles.

MIRHOJI

I brought him up vegetarian.

YUSUF

What for?

MIRHOJI

Well I want him to take care of my
cattle, not eat them... Talking
about taking care of my cattle,
What are you guys going to do now?

YUSUF

Excuse me?

MIRHOJI

Do you have any relatives left... I
mean in other villages?

YUSUF

We have God.

MIRHOJI

(chuckles)

That's for sure... Nobody would
survive that, without having God on
his side.

YUSUF

We survived thanks to Gypsy. She sacrificed her life and the lives of her puppies for us.

MIRHOJI

I told you. They are better than people.

Mirhoji goes to his tent.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

I will be right back.

Misha comes to sit between Yusuf and Shahlo. They freeze.

Mirhoji comes back with two army blankets and tosses them to Yusuf and Shahlo.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

You can sleep here tonight. It is absolutely safe. Wolves are afraid of my Misha. They also know I have a rifle now... Good night.

Mirhoji goes back to his tent and starts to pray. Yusuf and Shahlo watch him prostrate.

SHAHLO

I think he is good.

YUSUF

He knows God.

Misha goes to Mirhoji.

The two make their beds, and go to sleep.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S TENT - MORNING

Misha sleeps snoring loud.

Yusuf and Shahlo are ready to go. Yusuf puts the blankets next to Mirhoji's tent and they walk away.

SHAHLO

Be quiet. You will wake him up.

MIRHOJI (O.S.)

So, you are leaving?

They turn and see Mirhoji standing behind them.

SHAHLO
You are not sleeping?

MIRHOJI
I wake up very early... Where are you heading to?

YUSUF
We don't know... yet.

MIRHOJI
I have a house in Tagob... A village about ten kilometers from here, and I was looking for somebody to take care of it for me.

YUSUF
And you want --

MIRHOJI
I would give each of you a sheep every month.

Shahlo and Yusuf look at each other.

YUSUF
You don't know us. I mean nobody likes us.

MIRHOJI
That is because they don't see you from the inside... I do.

Yusuf and Shahlo exchange looks. Considering.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE TAGOB - EVENING

Mirhoji, Yusuf and Shahlo enter the village gate followed by Misha and the cattle.

SIGN on the gate reads: VILLAGE TAGOB.

Yusuf keeps looking back at the sheep.

YUSUF
Your sheep follow you like ducklings after their mom.

MIRHOJI
After a while, they will follow you too.

They reach the main street and Yusuf's attention shifts to the people around.

Yusuf'S POV -- A smiling woman gives food to a beggar.

-- A group of kids sit in a circle in one corner and listen to an old dervish telling them a story.

-- Another group of kids play soccer.

Kids see Yusuf and stop playing. They look at each other, then back at Yusuf and Shahlo.

Yusuf is nervous.

Kids run towards them, yelling.

KIDS
Uncle Mirhoji. Misha!

Kids come running and jump at Mirhoji and Misha, playing. Mirhoji hugs and kisses them one by one, then introduces them to Yusuf and Shahlo.

MIRHOJI
Kids this is Yusuf and Shahlo.

KIDS
Hi, Yusuf. Play with us.

Yusuf is confused. They are not even staring at his ugly face.

MIRHOJI
They had a long day and are little bit tired now, but the next time for sure.

KID #1
Make a wolf, uncle Mirhoji.

MIRHOJI
Oh, not today. Next time.

KIDS
Please, please! Make a wolf.

MIRHOJI
Alright, alright... I don't know if I can still do that, but I will try.

Mirhoji turns his eyelids inside out and howls.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

AAU! AAU!

Kids run away screaming.

Mirhoji turns back and looks at Yusuf and Shahlo.

Shahlo freaks out looking at his eyes.

SHAHLO

AHH!

Shahlo cries.

MIRHOJI

Sorry. Sorry.

Mirhoji blinks a couple of times and his eyes get back to normal.

Yusuf turns around chuckling and sees a big house at the end of the village.

YUSUF

Whose house is that?

Mirhoji turns to look at the house and his smile disappears.

MIRHOJI

That is Mergun's house... Try to avoid it.

Yusuf tenses up.

YUSUF

Mergun the hunter?

MIRHOJI

Yes. Mergun the hunter.

YUSUF

He lives here?

Yusuf takes Lucky from Shahlo and quickly follows Mirhoji to his house.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

They enter the yard followed by sheep and Misha.

MIRHOJI

This is my house.

An old blue car in the corner catches Shahlo's eye.

SHAHLO

You have a car?

MIRHOJI

An old one, but it still runs.
 Anyway let me show you what is
 where. See that small room in the
 corner? That is the bathroom.
 The one next to it is the barn.
 That room in the middle is going to
 be your room. Let's go in and I
 will show you.

They go into the

ROOM

Mirhoji takes off his rifle.

MIRHOJI

Never play with this thing! It
 doesn't like jokes.

He hangs the rifle on the wall next to a family picture of
 four. A young couple each holding a small baby.

SHAHLO

Those are your son and daughter?

Mirhoji chuckles.

MIRHOJI

That is me, my wife and my two
 little angels.

YUSUF

Where are they?

MIRHOJI

(pointing at the sky)
 Up there, waiting for me... but
 something is taking me too long.
 Anyway, enough about me. Let me
 show you --

CLOWN (O.S.)

*Ice cream is here, Ice cream is
 sweet. Ice cream is here, Ice cream
 is cheap...*

The sound of singing clown interrupts Mirhoji. Yusuf and Shahlo are excited.

YUSUF

Ice cream man! He comes here too?

Yusuf and Shahlo rush out.

Mirhoji goes after them, smiling.

MIRHOJI

Kids, kids.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Yusuf and Shahlo join the other kids in singing the ice cream song.

CLOWN

*Over, over here ice cream is sold.
Hurry, hurry people, ice cream is
cold. Hurry, hurry people, ice
cream is cold...*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON - DAY

YUSUF

... So, that's how we started a new life. Mirhoji is a great man. He did everything to make us feel at home... We started going to school and made many friends. I would help Shahlo with her homework, and she would cook me delicious food. Above all, Lucky was growing fast and beautiful... I was starting to think that the worst was behind but...

Yusuf pauses. Major Shamsiya becomes impatient.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

But what?

YUSUF

Mergun... I learned that everybody hated him and his son Farruh, who was as bad as him. Farruh would torture and kill helpless animals.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Why would he do that?

YUSUF
I don't know. Maybe just for
fun?... One day --

EXT. VILLAGE TAGOB - DAY

A DOG sleeps under the shade of a tree next to Mergun's house.

A boy silently approaches her from behind. It is FARRUH, 14. A tall, skinny boy with a nasty smile.

Farruh approaches the dog quietly and steps on her paw deliberately.

The dog jumps up barking, bites Farruh's leg and frees her paw. Farruh falls down and screams.

Mergun rushes out of his house and sees the dog running away.

INT. MERGUN'S HOUSE - LATER

Mergun pats Farruh's head who lies on the bed, crying.

A DOCTOR wraps his leg.

MERGUN
Don't cry son. Everything is going
to be okay.

FARRUH
My leg hurts.

MERGUN
I promise you son. They will never
bite you again.

EXT. MERGUN'S COMPOUND - DAY

Mergun saddles his black horse. He has his rifle on his shoulder.

EXT. VILLAGE TAGOB - EVENING

Yusuf plays soccer with the village kids when suddenly a dog runs across the field and interrupts their game. The kids watch the dog running when --

BANG! A gunshot is heard and the dog falls down.

They turn around and see Mergun sitting on his horse, aiming his rifle at the dog.

YUSUF

No!

Yusuf runs to the dog.

Mergun looks at the terrified kids.

MERGUN

Get out of here!

Kids run away.

Mergun reloads his rifle and trots his horse towards the dog.

The dog breathes roughly.

Yusuf sits next to her and puts her head on his lap.

Furious Mergun approaches them and aims at the dog.

YUSUF

No! No! Please don't do that.

MERGUN

Get out of here. Ugly kid.

Villagers jam the street. They do nothing, but watch. They are too afraid of Mergun.

Yusuf hugs the dog closely and covers her with his body.

Mergun is about to pull the trigger, when suddenly another dog wandering around catches his eye.

Mergun aims at that dog and shoots. The bullet hits the ground and the dog runs away. Mergun chases her.

Yusuf pulls away and looks at the dog. She is dead.

A KID runs up screaming and takes the dog from Yusuf.

YUSUF

Lucky!

Yusuf runs towards Mirhoji's house.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S COMPOUND - SHORTLY

Yusuf rushes in and calls.

YUSUF
LUCKY! LUCKY!

Lucky comes out from under the car and jumps in his arms.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Oh my God. I was so scared.

Yusuf locks the gate and takes Lucky inside the house.

EXT. VILLAGE - EVENING

A dog runs in the street. It is the same dog that bit Farruh.

BANG! A sound of a gunshot and the dog falls down.

Mergun approaches it and shoots six more holes in its body. Then he spits on the dog's lifeless body and rides his horse away.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

THE NEIGHBORS are gathered in the street. Mirhoji is among them. They argue with Mergun who sits on his horse chuckling.

MIRHOJI
Stop doing that, Mergun. They're just dogs. If you want to, we can go ahead and hunt deer, wolves, but leave the dogs alone.

Mergun stops chuckling.

MERGUN
They bit my son!

MIRHOJI
Only one of them. And you have already killed it... ruthlessly.

MERGUN
It's better if we kill them all so our village is safe for the children.

MIRHOJI
But, you're killing the neighbors' dogs, too.

MERGUN

It doesn't matter. They're all the same.

MIRHOJI

Don't be crazy, Mergun. It was your son's fault to begin with.

MERGUN

You are crossing the line shepherd.

Mirhoji grabs Mergun's horse by the reigns.

MIRHOJI

No. You are crossing the line, hunter!

They look at each other like two bulls. Neither is backing up. The neighbors stay behind Mirhoji, showing their support. Mergun grins.

MERGUN

You little people. You don't know who you are arguing with... I am not going to listen to --

A DOG wandering nearby catches Mergun's eye and he rushes after it.

MIRHOJI

If you hear another gunshot people, call the police.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S COMPOUND - MORNING

Shahlo and Yusuf sit on the bench and feed Lucky and Misha. Mirhoji comes out of his room and stares at them.

MIRHOJI

Ever since you came Misha lost interest in me. Good morning kids.

SHAHLO/YUSUF

Good morning, Uncle Mirhoji.

YUSUF

Yeah. We are good friends now.

SHAHLO

Eat with us uncle.

MIRHOJI

No thanks. I have to meet somebody... But we all can go swimming when I come back.

YUSUF/SHAHLO (IN UNISON)

Yeah! Swimming!

MIRHOJI

Now I have to take Misha with me.

Mirhoji gets in his car and starts the engine.

Misha gets in the car clumsily.

MIRHOJI (CONT'D)

Somebody open the gate, please.

SHAHLO

Go open the gate Yusuf.

YUSUF

No, you go. I did it yesterday.

SHAHLO

Okay. Let's choose by the stone.

Shahlo takes a small piece of bread and hides it in her fists behind her back. Then extends her closed fists to Yusuf.

Mirhoji waits patiently.

YUSUF

Right one.

She opens her fists and it is in the left one.

Yusuf goes to the gates reluctantly, opens it in a hurry and comes back to the bench.

MIRHOJI

Don't forget to close the gate.

Mirhoji drives away.

Yusuf plays with Lucky laughing. The open gate is visible in the background.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S COMPOUND - SHORTLY

Yusuf and Shahlo play with Lucky --

BANG! Gunshot.

Lucky falls in Yusuf's arms. Yusuf is shocked. He looks back at the gate.

Mergun on his horse, aiming at them. Smoke comes from his rifle. He reloads his rifle and trots his horse towards them, slowly.

EXT. VILLAGE TAGOB - SAME

Mirhoji in his car, was talking to some NEIGHBORS and they are also interrupted by the gunshot. They all look at Mirhoji's house which is in the distance.

MIRHOJI
Somebody call the police.

He jumps out of the car and runs to the house.

Misha and neighbors run after him.

EXT. MIRHOJI'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Shahlo runs away screaming.

Yusuf is crazed.

YUSUF
No! Don't you dare to come any
closer!

Mergun is unstoppable.

Yusuf puts Lucky down and runs screaming into Mirhoji's room.

Lucky lies on the bench, defenseless, bloody.

Mergun approaches, points the gun at his head.

Mergun's finger touches the trigger and is about to pull it --

-- Yusuf rushes out of the house holding Mirhoji's rifle. He aims at Mergun and screams.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Go to hell!

BANG!

Yusuf shoots and the gun's recoil knocks him down.

The bullet hits Mergun in the head and he falls from the horse. The horse runs away.

Yusuf goes to Mergun who lies next to Lucky. His body shakes. Blood is all over the place.

Yusuf hugs Lucky.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Hold on Lucky. Hold on.

Mirhoji and the neighbors enter the yard.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S OFFICE - DAY

Major Shamsiya looks at Yusuf, there's an obvious change in her face.

YUSUF
So, that's why I am here. Serving my term.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
You won't be serving for too long. That I promise!... Tell me, what happened to Lucky?

YUSUF
During one of his visits, Mirhoji wanted to tell me something about him, but looking at his sad face, I stopped him, because I couldn't handle another loss... I don't know what happened to Lucky. What I know is if I could, I would die a thousand times for him to live once!

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I am sure you would.

YUSUF
I know, in order to be paroled, I have to admit that I was wrong and that I regret my actions... but I honestly don't. And yes, I would do that again.

Major Shamsiya grins at Yusuf's seriousness.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
You should... Now you can go and start packing up. This place is not for you.

Yusuf smiles.

INT. PRISON YUSUF'S CELL - MORNING (ONE MONTH LATER)

Yusuf packs up all his stuff and puts them in a bag. He puts all his drawings in. Then he takes his last picture and looks at it. He considers something, smiles.

EXT. PRISON - SHORTLY

Yusuf walks towards the gate. A bag on his shoulder, a big frame wrapped in newspapers in his hand. He is no longer dressed in black.

Major Shamsiya follows him a few steps behind.

They approach the gate and Yusuf gives the frame to Major Shamsiya.

YUSUF
This is for you.

Major Shamsiya backs up.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
I don't take bribes.

YUSUF
It is not a bribe... It is my thank
you!

She takes it reluctantly, but doesn't open.

YUSUF (CONT'D)
Thank you! You are different... You
are good!

Gate opens slowly.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Goodbye, Yusuf. God be with you.

Yusuf puts his bag down and hugs her.

Major Shamsiya hugs back. Reluctantly. She is not used to hugs.

Guards see that, confused faces.

BURLY GUARD
She can hug?

TALL GUARD
She can be hugged?

Yusuf releases her.

YUSUF
Goodbye.

He takes his bag and walks out of the prison.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
Yusuf!

Yusuf looks back.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA (CONT'D)
It was a special case!

Yusuf grins and steps out the gate.

EXT. PRISON PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Mirhoji waits leaning on his car.

The gate opens and Yusuf steps out smiling. They greet and hug.

MIRHOJI
Hello, Son.

YUSUF
Hello, Dad!

Mirhoji's eyes open wide in surprise.

SHAHLO (O.S.)
Hello Yusuf.

Yusuf turns back and looks at Shahlo. She has grown tall and beautiful.

YUSUF
Wow. Shahlo? Is that you?

Shahlo laughs, they hug. Mirhoji takes Yusuf's bag and they walk to the car.

MIRHOJI
Yusuf. Can I ask you something?

YUSUF
Yes.

MIRHOJI

How did you use to call Lucky to you?

YUSUF

By name.

MIRHOJI

Would you mind calling him now?

Yusuf stops, looks at them, surprised.

YUSUF

Is he alive?

MIRHOJI

Call him and you will see.

YUSUF

Lucky, Lucky!

Lucky jumps out from the back seat of the car right into his arms. He has grown big and beautiful too.

Major Shamsiya jumps up cheering.

Guards are caught off guard, again.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA

Yes! He is alive!

Yusuf, Lucky and Shahlo jump in the back seat.

Mirhoji sits in the driver's seat and tries to turn the engine on, but it doesn't work.

MIRHOJI

Come on! Not today!

He tries again, but no luck.

Major Shamsiya just glances at the guards.

They run to the car and start pushing.

Engine turns on and they drive away.

Yusuf nods his head to Major Shamsiya.

Major Shamsiya salutes him. A tear falls down her cheek.

INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Donish listens to his radio.

Major Shamsiya comes in and puts a small box on his lap.

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
This is for you honey.

Donish takes the box.

DONISH
What is it mom?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
A friend.

Donish opens the box and searches inside with his hands.

A SMALL PUPPY excitedly sniffs and licks his hands. Donish pulls the puppy out the box.

DONISH
Puppy? You got me a puppy?

MAJOR SHAMSIYA
They're better than people.

Donish reaches for his mom and hugs her.

DONISH
Thank you, mommy. You are the best!

INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Major Shamsiya reads a file and throws it on the table. Something catches her eye.

It is Yusuf's present. She picks it up.

INTERCUT - EXT. FIELD/INT. MAJOR SHAMSIYA'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

-- Mirhoji sleeps under a tree surrounded by his sheep.

Yusuf and Shahlo play with Lucky and Misha.

Shahlo throws a bone far away. Lucky brings it back. Yusuf takes it from him and throws it far behind the ridge.

-- Major Shamsiya unwraps the present, smiling.

-- Lucky runs after the bone and disappears behind the ridge. Yusuf and Shahlo go after him. They get to the top of the RIDGE and look at the other side.

-- Major Shamsiya pulls out last piece of paper from the gift. It is a picture. She turns it over and looks.

INSERT THE PICTURE, which shows:

A BOY, GIRL, DOG and a BEAR play around a big and beautiful PINE tree. A stream flows under tree.

-- Yusuf and Shahlo look down the hill and see Lucky playing under a big and beautiful pine tree.

Yusuf looks around.

YUSUF
We are here.

SHAHLO
Where here?

YUSUF
It is where our village used to
be... and that is my tree.

They take hands and run to the tree.

Misha rolls down too making exactly the same picture Major Shamsiya is looking at.

Yusuf laughs.

Major Shamsiya smiles.

FADE OUT