

We , the Strangers

Written by

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FADE IN:

TITLE: JULY 1970

EXT. MARGALA HILLS - DAY

Summer sun shines down on a emerald field.

Cuddling on a towel is MALIKA(26), princess pretty, and
FASEEH(27) handsome and in love.

A pebble lands right next to Malika. They look over to see
two KIDS spying on them through the bushes.

FASEEH

Hey! Creeps!

The kids laugh. Faseeh scrambles up, dashes for the bush line
but the kids are gone.

He turns around to find Malika giggling. They laugh together.

TITLE: JUNE 1974

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Faseeh, overgrown beard, dressed in old khaki army dress, sits
slumped over. With both hands, he holds a 303 RIFLE under his
chin.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Professor, you are one of the few
survivors of the genocide carried
out by the Pakistan Army at Padma
Ghat in the Rajshahi District. Can
you describe the officer who killed
your younger brother and uncle and
who let you go free?

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

He was a fair man. About six feet
tall. Had this evil charm I cannot
describe. This guy was good looking
in a cruel kind of way.

Faseeh works the trigger with his bare feet.

BAM!! The gun fires. Misses his chin. Hits the ceiling!

Realization. Faseeh swallows his fear.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Malika stands in front of the sink and mirror washing her face. She stops. Notices something in the mirror.

She turns. Looks up at the hole in the ceiling.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cozy living area.

Faseeh lies on a bed as Malika tries to thread a needle to sew a button on the shirt in her lap.

He sits up. Watches.

FASEEH

Here, let me do it. It's about the only productive thing I learnt in the Army.

MALIKA

Why are you so sad?

FASEEH

I'm not really sad at all. I just feel so helpless. Sometimes it feels there's a rat waiting in every corner. I can hear them nibble. Pestilent squeaking. This sound will not let me sleep.

MALIKA

Shh...my sweet kid.

FASEEH

Don't act like my mother. You believe in God, but can't see him, right? Well, same thing with the rodents haunting me. They're there...to me anyhow.

A box of rat poison sits on the side table.

Malika kisses his neck.

MALIKA

My love, everything will be ok...we're here for each other, yes?

Faseeh concentrates on stitching the button.

(MORE)

MALIKA (CONT'D)
MALIKA (CONT'D)
Aren't we?

FASEEH
I'm not really sure.

She snatches the shirt from him. She'll do this herself.

MALIKA
I'm not a stranger, am I? You
even trust me na, my love?

FASEEH
Give it to me.

Faseeh grabs the shirt. The needle pricks Malika's finger.
She stares at him. Confused. A bit hurt.

FASEEH
What? Don't stare at me that way.
You look like the old woman at
Padma River after I killed her
husband.

He rests his head on her lap.

MALIKA
Forget about it.

He starts to cry. Malika caresses him. Runs her hand through
his hair. An anger grows inside him.

FASEEH
Mother fucker was from Mukti Bahni!

A voice like an angel. Malika sings a lullaby.

MALIKA (SINGS A FOLK LULLABY)

Shh. Chanda Mama dooor key, poove
pakaey bhoor kay, aap khaey thali
main, munnay ko day pyali main,
pyali ghai toot, munna gaya rooth.

Malika kisses him. Tries her best to start 'something' sexy
but he turns over instead.

FASEEH

Will you switch the light off?

Malika devastated, switches it off.

TITLE: 23 AUGUST 1974 FRIDAY

EXT. GALLERY - DAY

Three paint buckets(blue, yellow and red) lay in front of Faseeh. He mixes them to create brown in the fourth bucket.

He frowns at the result. Walks in.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

They call our village "the village of widows". Pakistan Army did not shoot any women. It's the men they killed. Every single one of them. Since we lived at the border, we all were Indian agents.

Faseeh holds a bucket of white paint. A faint noise in the drawing room catches his attention. He walks over to the doorway where he can see just across the hall. He stares. Mouth agape at --

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Malika and a STRANGER. She's flirting with the man in an obvious way. Malika says some thing, man seems devastated, She tries to hug him. He pulls back. Turns to leave, but she grabs him and tries to lay a passionate kiss on him-- her eyes lock with Faseeh's. Busted. The man pulls back again.

EXT. GALLERY - DAY

Faseeh goes back to task. He sets the bucket down. Tapes around the electric socket. The tape won't stick.

He smirks irritated.

FASEEH

Great!

He looks at the brownish paint, mixes the white paint in.

Makes frowny face.

FASEEH (CONT'D)
Looks like baby shit!

MALIKA (O.S.)
Faseeh, I am leaving.

Faseeh pretends not to have heard anything. Malika walks in, a suitcase in her grip.

MALIKA (CONT'D)
Did you hear me?

He starts to paint the wall.

MALIKA (CONT'D)
I'm leaving YOU, Faseeh.

She shakes her head. Walks for the door.

He runs to catch her. Steps in the yellow paint bucket. Still manages to grab hold of her suitcase.

FASEEH
Where are you going? Why? I didn't say anything. Did I? Malika?

MALIKA
I can't live like this anymore. It isn't fair.

Faseeh does not let go of the bag. Anger builds deep inside.

MALIKA (CONT'D)
Just let me go...it's too late to fix things.

She lets go of the bag. Steps towards the door.

FASEEH
Babe. Don't leave me like this. Come on. Where will you go? Are you going to that asshole?

Tears swell up in Malika's eyes.

MALIKA
I'll go to hell.

FASEEH
I love you, sweetheart.

She rushes away. He follows. Grabs her by the shoulders.

MALIKA
Why did you go to Dhaka? Why??

FASEEH
Don't snatch my only reason to
live. Please don't go!

MALIKA
(crying)
This war has taken everything, our
love, our trust...those rats of
yours are nibbling at MY soul now!
He embraces her tight in his arms.

FASEEH
Shhh!

She whispers in his ear.

MALIKA
I'm pregnant Faseeh.

Faseeh, Devastated, walks into the bathroom. Shuts the door.

Malika follows him back in to the home

MALIKA (CONT'D)

Faseeh! Faseeh!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Faseeh and Malika lie on the bed, her head on his chest.

MALIKA

How does it feel to kill someone,
Faseeh?

Faseeh stays mute.

MALIKA (CONT'D)
Lets abort the child.

INT. ABORTION CLINIC GALLERY - NIGHT

Faseeh walks through a dingy gallery in to a dim room.

A WOMAN who has just had an abortion totters pass him.

INT. ABORTION CLINIC - NIGHT

The owner of the illegal abortion clinic, dark, shabbily dressed, over grown beard , hands in the abortifacient to Faseeh . A dark woman, NASREEN(30), a nurse, sits there along with the him.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Faseeh lies down on the bed and Malika mixes the abortifacient powder in water. It turns red.

Faseeh closes his eyes. Has a vision of rats, hundreds.

Squeaking. Crawling. Nibbling at his flesh.

Malika gulps down the red mixture.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

They shot all of us. Even those who helped them pile up the dead bodies. They then threw kerosine and set fire. I won't forget that stinky smell and those dark emotions. I felt ashamed of not being part of that hell fire.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Day pass, Malika lies on bed with her swollen belly, She moans as Faseeh lies besides her. Both Malika and Faseeh sweat.

Faseeh kisses her cheek and sleeps.

TITLE: 30 OCTOBER 1974

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

On the TV -- Foreman and Mohammed Ali jabbing each other ferociously.

On his knees, Faseeh is saying his prayers.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Nasreen awaits to see the pregnant woman she is going to perform the abortion on. When Malika walks in with a very pregnant belly, she's not happy. Concern is all over Nasreen's face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Faseeh kneels down for the last of the mantras, the atihyat. Malika walks in and lays her head on his lap.

MALIKA

(scared)

I don't wana have an abortion
Faseeh!

He stands up abruptly in disbelief. She bangs her head on the prayer mat. Begins crying.

MALIKA (CONT'D)

Faseeh the baby .. it kicks me with
its tiny legs...have mercy please!

Faseeh throws the glass full of water at her making sure it does not hit her, Malika knows the answer.

MALIKA (CONT'D)

I'm leaving.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Faseeh grabs a sweeper, soaks it and starts mopping the stairs.

NASREEN

The belly is huge... Lieutenant
sir! It will be a tough
thing to do.

Faseeh does not answer for a moment and keeps mopping.

FASEEH

I'll pay more. What will it take?

Nasreen is worried but nods.

Malika comes out and trips while climbing down the stairs.

Faseeh picks up Malika(unconscious), puts her on the bed and kisses her.

He walks to the door and lets Nasreen inside.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Faseeh paces nervously.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

He asked me my name and I told him
"Jinnah". He said Jinnah is not a
Bangali name.

Nasreen comes out. Nods her head in negation.

Faseeh starts to cry. Then goes after Nasreen, his hands
gripped tightly around her neck.

He stops on hearing a child cry. He rushes towards the living
room. Nasreen wants to stop him but cannot.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malika lies stiff there.

Faseeh picks up the child. Stares at the newborn with
different eyes. He smiles.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

People say it was my name that
saved my life but I believe all of
us are humans, aren't we? Even an
evil man has to create an illusion
for himself that he is not that
evil after all, isn't it?

FADE OUT.