IN THE AUTO-RICKSHAW

Armaan and Mandira are both in their early teens. Armaan has some facial hair on his face, showing that he has never shaved.

They are both in their school uniform. Armaan is sitting next to Mandira, who is happily chatting with him, she giggles a lot and Arman is enjoying himself.

Armaan looks into the rear view mirror of the auto-rickshaw and sees the reflection of Mandira in it. Then he reads what is printed on the mirror - "objects in the mirror are closer than they appear". Armaan smiles to himself. It is established that he is in love with her. Armaan looks at her and smiles, oblivious to whatever she is saying.

The auto rickshaw stops at a traffic junction. Beside the auto-rickshaw, a man stops his motorcycle, and he has a lady sitting behind him, who is leaning on him, and a bit of her back side is shown in the gap between her tee-shirt and jeans. The Man is dark and ugly looking whereas the girl is gorgeous. Armaan and Mandira, both look at them.

ARMAAN
(softly) odd couple......I mean, the guy totally doesn't deserve her..

MANDIRA
Oh that's nothing...I was in the park next to my place and I saw this girl kissing a guy with a moustache, oh that was disgusting...imagine kissing a guy with a moustache, its like brushing your teeth..

ARMAAN
(a little lost) oh... ugly
Armaan looks into the rear view mirror on the other side and sees his own reflection and notices that he has a growing moustache as well...

The auto-rickshaw moves on.

MANDIRA
Yea....you can drop me here...

ARMAAN
(to the auto-driver) hello! Haan, yahaan rok do!

MANDIRA
Alright....see Ya..thanks for the lift..

ARMAAN
No problem....bye...

(to the auto-driver) yahaan se straight jaana...

The auto moves on..

Armaan again looks at his face in the rear view mirror...his moustache seems more prominent.

ARMAAN (CONT'D)
(to himself) have to do something about it...

AT ARMAAN’S HOUSE

Armaan rings the doorbell, enters the house, says a brief hello to his mother who had opened the door for him and rushes into his room, without paying mush attention to what his mother is saying.
ARMAAN'S ROOM

Armaan enters the room and flings his school bag on the bed and turns towards the mirror on his cupboard. He looks at himself a couple of times in the mirror and then examines his developing moustache for sometime, He places his index finger over his moustache and imagines how he would look with out it.

ARMAAN
No...this won't do....I'll take a snap of myself and edit it on the computer and see how I look without the moustache...

Armaan quickly exits the room.

Armaan enters the room along with a digital camera and closes the door behind him.

He stretches his hand as far as he can, turns the camera towards him, and takes a photograph of himself. He sees the photograph on the camera and realizes that half his head is missing in the snap. He tries several times and finally manages to take a snap a photograph in which his head is properly seen.

He connects a wire to the camera and then to his computer which is in his room and boots the computer. He opens a software and just starts cropping his moustache when his younger sister(tanya) enters the room.

Armaan sees her and minimizes the window of that software.

TANYA
Hello bhaiya! What are you doing?

ARMAAN
Nothing...don't disturb me..

TANYA
If you aren't doing anything then why can't I disturb you...(laughs to herself and leaves the room)

Armaan is seen sitting, looking intently at the computer screen, when the landline phone starts ringing.

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    (her voice is heard from outside the room) Armaan! Its for you!

    ARMAAN
    Yeah!

Armaan turns off the monitor and leaves the room.

Armaan enters his room holding a cordless phone in his hand.

    ARMAAN (CONT'D)
    (on the phone) yeah fine...I'll get the notes tomorrow, now..I was a little busy, I'll speak to you later?....okay Fine...Bye.

Armaan pulls his chair and sits back on his computer and turns on the screen.

In less than a minute his mother walks into the room.

Armaan minimizes the window of the program he was using.

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    Armaan , you've just come from school and you're already on the computer! Atleast change your uniform

    ARMAAN
    Yeah...I'll just do that

Armaan's mother leaves the room and Armaan gets up from his chair.
ARMAAN (CONT'D)
I just can't do this right now,
I'll do it at night...
The screen fades out.
Later that night...
It is completely dark, everyone in the house is asleep. Then
a figure moves in the darkness and reaches for the computer
switch and switches it on. From the light of the computer
screen, we see Armaan who is pulling a chair for himself.

He sits on his computer and opens the editing software and
starts cropping his moustache from his photograph. He takes
some time and finishes one half of the lip and he takes a
break to stare at it.

ARMAAN (CONT'D)
Umm...not bad...

He began editing again.

Suddenly the tube light of his room is turned on and Armaan's
mother is standing there, with an expression of anger on her
face, dressed in a night gown.

In a panic, Armaan presses the Turn off button on his CPU and
the computer gets switched off.

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
What were you doing?

ARMAAN
I was just surfing the net..

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
At one o' clock at night? And why
did you turn it off as I came?

ARMAAN
It just happened accidently...I got
startled....
ARMAAN'S MOTHER
Now go to sleep right away, you should realize you have school tomorrow.

Armaan's mother leaves the room.

ARMAAN
Oh shit! I wonder what she'll tell papa...

Armaan tip toes out of his room and places his ear against the door of his parents' bed room and hears them talking.

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
Your son is growing up a little too quickly..

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Why? What happened?

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
I walked into his room and saw that he was not sleeping but sitting and surfing the internet.

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Oh he must be just e-mailing somebody...

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
And when I turned on the light, he quickly switched off the computer, now you tell me what he must be up to...you better have a little chat with him tomorrow

Armaan holds his forehead with both his hands. And slowly walks into his room.

ARMAAN
Oh hell! What are they
thinking....... 

THE NEXT DAY - ARMAAN IS SITTING IN AN AUTO AND RETURNING HOME

ARMAAN
I think i'll just tell them....I 
Mean what's the real big real, 
everyone shaves, papa shaves...and 
now that I'm a grown up I should 
start shaving too, after last night 
I'm sure they must have realized 
that I'm a grown up boy! (laughs to 
himself)...i think I'll ask dad after dinner today.

LATER THAT NIGHT:

DINING ROOM OF ARMAAN'S HOUSE

A laughter is heard. Armaan, Tanya and their parents are sitting around a dining table having dinner.

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
And you remember when Tanya was just four years old, when we used to stay in our old flat, she had run out of the house, when I had accidentally left it open...

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Yeah, you were so scared....we Later found her playing near the roadside garbage bin..
A laughter
TANYA
No....

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
And once when we came home after shopping....I noticed that one of Tanya's eye brows was almost gone...it was like shaved off...it took me two hours to find out for her that she had tried to trim it with Papa's razor!

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Our little daughter wanted to become a beauty queen at the age of four.
A laughter.

TANYA
What about Bhaiya?

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
He was never so stupid to play around with Papa's razor...

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Yes, he knows that once you shave hair off, it grows back thick and hard like Papa's beard, right Armaan?

ARMAAN
...(unsure)yeah...right..

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
See, both of you must realize that there is an age for everything...and you must never be in a hurry to do what you are too young to do..

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Just yesterday, in Dehli a fifteen year old boy died in a road accident, he was riding his father's bike, a truck came and hit him...

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
Imagine the plight of the boy's poor parents...you children just think about yourselves...

Armaan's face is shown, showing that he's thinking

ARMAAN
(thinking) okay! I think I've already got my answer, they think i'm too young to shave...But I look ugly like this!

After dinner, Armaan walks back into his room and looks at the mirror on his cupboard

ARMAAN (CONT'D)
Yes I look ugly.

THE NEXT DAY-
A few school boys and girls are standing in a hall in front of a stage and discussing...

GIRL 1
Yes but we still haven't cast anyone for the role of Mangal Pandey

BOY 1
Yeah, we need somebody who can really act, it's an important role

MANDIRA
I think we can use Armaan...
BOY2
He can act?

GIRL1
Yea...he was in a play last year as well right?

BOY1
Yea..I remember, he had done an amazing job, I think we can use him...

GIRL2
There he comes...

GIRL1
Hey Armaan!

Armaan walks towards the group.

BOY1
Listen, in the theatre fest this year, we want you to play the role of Mangal Pandey

ARMAAN
Oh hell! I'm not doing it.

GIRL1
C'mon, we need someone who can act...

ARMAAN
That's fine but why Mangal Pandey?

GIRL1
'cause that's the lead role...

ARMAAN
I'm not doing it, you find yourself some other actor
BOY2
Hey c'mon man, be a sport..

MANDIRA
Please Armaan?

ARMAAN
(defeated) yeah, alright fine!

The screen fades out.

IN ARMAAN'S ROOM

Armaan is standing in front of his mirror

ARMAAN
Mangal Pandey? I even look like him because of this pathetic moustache. I know those guys just want to make fun of me having a moustache so they've decided to make me Mangal Pandey....last year no one was willing to give me the role of Romeo....but This year suddenly, I've become the greatest actor right? that i'm given the "lead" role of Mangal Pandey... Its all because of this bloody moustache, I'll shave it off one and for all

Armaan rushes into the washroom. He pulls his face close to the wash basin mirror to examine his moustache again. He reaches for the shaving cream and puts some of it on his face and then wets the shaving brush and rubs it against his face till a thick foam is formed on his face. Then he looks at the razor as though it was a butcher's knife and he was about to kill someone.

He picks it up and gazes at the mirror for a while..he brings
the razor close to his face...his hands shaky...

A knocking is heard on his door

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
(angry) Armaan! Are you going to come out today or not?

Armaan panics, he quickly washes his face and the shaving brush, then places everything back in place and opens the door.

ARMAAN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
What were you doing inside for so long?

ARMAAN
Just washing my face...

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
For how long? And this place smells a bit weird...

ARMAAN
Oh that must be my deodorant

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
Thanks god you started using one.

Armaan's mother closes the door of the toilet, Armaan walks towards his room, shaken up.
A few days passed

Armaan was sitting in the living room watching TV and Tanya was on the carpet, drawing.

Armaan's mother enters.

TANYA
Look mama, what I drew...

Armaan's mother sat on the sofa and took Tanya's drawing book
in her hands

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    Oh that's out family...wonderful...

The picture is of one lady and a male figure with a moustache
This is me, and this must be Papa?

    TANYA
    No! This is Bhaiya...

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    Then where is Papa?

    TANYA
    He's in the office

Armaan and his mother laugh

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    Look how well your sister draws, Armaan..

She hands over the drawing book to Armaan

He looks at it grimly

    ARMAAN
    (thinking) yes...the bloody moustache is still there.

A few more days pass...

IN ARMAAN'S SCHOOL

The play is on the next day and everyone is preparing for the dress rehearsal.

    BOY1
    Ma'm, the props have come, here's
Boy1 hands the teacher a bill

    TEACHER
    Alright, just call the crew boys there and tell them to put it backstage

Armaan enters with a costume

    ARMAAN
    Ma'am do you think this fits?

    TEACHER
    Yeah, that's fine, and you'll have to wear black shoes with this..

    ARMAAN
    Alright ma'am...

    TEACHER
    And Armaan...I think you should shave your moustache

    ARMAAN
    Ma'am, why? I thought this role requires a moustache

    TEACHER
    Yes, but yours is too faint, we'll have to stick an artificial one and if you don't shave, it'll be very painful for you when we take off the artificial moustache

    ARMAAN
    (smiling) alright Ma'am

Armaan exits
ARMAAN IS SITTING INSIDE AN AUTO

Armaan looks at the rear view mirror and smiles to himself

    ARMAAN
    Now, nobody can say anything, I have to shave it off!

IN ARMAAN'S APARTMENT CORRIDOR

Armaan is entering the elevator. The Elevator already has a man standing inside who is holding a little girl in his hands, who is just old enough to speak

IN THE ELEVATOR

The little girl looks at Armaan.

She point a finger at him and says

    LITTLE GIRL
    Papa, uncle!

    MAN
    Nahi beta! Bhaiya..

    LITTLE GIRL
    (insists) uncle!

Armaan smiles

    ARMAAN
    (thinking) not any more..

AT ARMAAN'S HOUSE
Armaan enters the house, happier than what he usually is

ARMAAN'S MOTHER
You seem happy today...

ARMAAN
I always am!

Armaan goes to his room.
At night after dinner, Armaan's father is sitting on a sofa, Armaan approaches him.

ARMAAN (CONT'D)
Papa, we have our school play tomorrow, and my teacher wants me to shave off my moustache for the role

ARMAAN'S FATHER
What's your role?

ARMAAN
Mangal Pandey

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Then why should you shave it off?

ARMAAN
No, the teacher says that they are going to have to stick a fake one, so I have to shave this one off

ARMAAN'S FATHER
Alright, do it tomorrow morning, just be careful..

ARMAAN
Alright papa...(leaves)
ARMAAN'S ROOM

Armaan enters his room full of excitement

    ARMAAN
    He agreed! Yes!!!

Armaan turns towards the mirror and examines himself again.

The screen fades out.
It is completely dark, everyone in the house is asleep. Then a figure moves in the darkness and enters the bathroom door and switches on the light.

INSIDE THE TOILET

    ARMAAN
    Let me see how I look!

He reaches for the shaving kit and starts shaving.

As he washes his face after shaving, he is surprised by what he sees in the mirror.

    ARMAAN (CONT'D)
    Oh shit! This is bad! this is miserable! I look like a eunuch.

He turns off the light and enters his room in disappointment.

He switches on the light in his room and examines his face again.

He nods his head disapprovingly

    ARMAAN (CONT'D)
    Its ugly

He turns off the light and goes to bed.
The next morning, Armaan wakes up and enters his living room
Tanya is the first to see him.

    TANYA
    Bhaiya looks different today!

She stares at him for about a second and then runs out shouting

    TANYA (CONT'D)
    Bhaiya shaved of his mouuchhi!

    ARMAAN
    Tanya!

Armaan's mother, who was preparing breakfast, enters the room

She looks at him and smiles

    ARMAAN'S MOTHER
    Oh great! I have two daughters now!

    ARMAAN
    Thanks mama!

The screen fades out

ARMAAN IS INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

The same man as before, is standing in the elevator, with his daughter in his hand

The daughter points at him and says

    LITTLE GIRL
    Bhaiya!

Armaan smiles at her.

The screen fades out.
IN ARMAAN'S SCHOOL

Armaan sees his group of friends and walks towards them, trying to look as normal as possible.

    ARMAAN
    Hi guys! What time is the final rehearsal?

    GIRL1
    Armaan! Did you do something to your face?

    GIRL2
    Oh my god! It looks bad! Like really really bad!

    BOY1
    Man! You look like a pansy!

    ARMAAN
    Hey! We all have to take the plunge someday!

END